

**After The Battle: War Films**  
**The Photography of PATTON**  
by George J. Mitchell

**After The Battle**  
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PATTON was an in-depth screen portrait of the most controversial and successful commander of World War II.

Filmed by 20th Century-Fox in Dimension 150 at a cost of over five million pounds, PATTON is not only superior screen entertainment but is also an exceptionally well-made picture. This was due primarily to the talented people producer Frank McCarthy brought together for the production. For example, there is an unforgettable performance by George C. Scott as Patton; powerful and incisive direction by Franklin J. Schaffner; a definitive screen play by Francis Ford Coppola and Edmund H. North; an inspiring music score by Jerry Goldsmith that makes use of an old Army fife and drum tune at the *leitmotif*; and superb photographic imagery by Director of Photography Fred J. Koenekamp, ASC.

PATTON opens with a prologue before the titles appear. The screen is filled with a giant American flag painted on a background. From the bottom of the frame, a tiny figure emerges and strides purposefully forward until we see the full figure of Patton, resplendent in polished helmet liner and an immaculate, bemedalled battle jacket. There is the brace of ivory-handled pistols that was a Patton trademark. And the confident belligerence that Patton projected.

Scott's performance in this scene sets the right note for the picture. What follows is an acting *tour de force*. But one is not conscious that this is just a performance. Instead, one feels that it is real. Scott *is* Patton. This is acting of the highest order.

Fred Koenekamp is enthusiastic about this powerful opening scene and explains how it was filmed: "This was an approximately five-minute speech. We shot it in one afternoon in the Sevilla Studios in Madrid. The flag was painted on the back of the stage wall with curtains hung on the sides. It was as big as it looked on the screen—*enormous*. Scott did this scene perhaps six or eight times for various reasons, either close-ups or something else, and he never fluffed his lines once. Never once! In fact I can't remember him once during the picture fluffing because he didn't remember a line or got confused. He was always right there on the ball just as professional as it was possible to be."

The sharpness and resolution of the D-150 lenses is amply demonstrated in the prologue. There are screen-filling close-ups of Patton's pistols, his decorations, his West Point ring.

The clarity of detail, despite the magnification, is amazing. So, too, is the forcefulness of Koenekamp's camera work which seems to emphasize the striking resemblance Scott had to the real-life Patton.

"Actually, without make-up Scott does not look anything at all like Patton," said Koenekamp. "The make-up people did a remarkable job. Scott's hairline was shaved back, white hair pieces were added and they gave him white eyebrows. His nose was built up, but the most unusual thing was the way his teeth had been changed to look like Patton's. I am told that General Patton's teeth were heavily stained as a result of cigar chewing or something else. Caps were made to cover Scott's teeth, giving them this stained appearance. There was a lot of discomfort in all this for Scott, but it is uncanny how much it made him look like Patton."

Dimension-150 is a photographic and projection system developed several years ago by Dr. Richard Vetter and Carl W. Williams. The optical system they designed includes a 150-degree photographic lens (which closely approximates the normal peripheral field of human vision),

separate projection optics and a patented deeply-curved screen. The combined photographic/projector system provides a virtually distortion-free image, and can be adapted to any current theatrical film aspect ratio, including normal 35mm, Cinemascope, and conventional 70mm. The system offers a complete range of photographic lenses which are adaptable to Todd AO-Mitchell 65mm cameras.

Patton's highly emotional nature is shown in the infamous incident where he slapped a soldier he suspected of malingering during the Sicilian campaign. It was an episode that almost finished Patton's career. It is handled with taste and honesty by Scott and Schaffner. And it is one of the relatively few studio-made scenes Koenekamp had to photograph.

In the doghouse because of the slapping incident and awaiting re-assignment in England, Patton gets into trouble again, albeit innocently. At the dedication of a service club near his headquarters, he ad-libs a little speech of the importance of Anglo-American unity. (" . . . since it is the evident destiny of the British and Americans to rule the world, the better we know each other the better job we will do.") He is accused of slighting the Russians—then our wartime allies—and his enemies howl for his dismissal. But General Eisenhower appreciates Patton's soldierly qualities and refuses to allow his enemies to claim his scalp.

"This sequence was filmed in the actual place it happened—a red brick building in Knutsford, England, that was Patton's wartime headquarters," said Koenekamp. (*Incorrect. See "Patton at Knutsford" 51. Editors.*)

"We flew in on a Sunday in beautiful weather. It was overcast the next day when we began shooting. The following day it poured down rain. We finished on Wednesday morning and flew out that afternoon." Koenekamp brought his crew over from Spain. However, a stand-by British crew was also engaged.

Patton's incredible advance across France, hard on the heels of the fleeing German Wehrmacht, was filmed in the Pamplona region of Basque Spain. "People have asked me what I did to make the grass look so green," remarks Koenekamp. "The answer is nothing. It looks that way because there is a lot of rainfall in that area. It is near the French border and resembles Normandy and Brittany."

Actually, PATTON was filmed on seventy-one locations in six countries. The bulk of the photography was done in Spain because only the Spanish Army could provide the necessary World War II equipment (acquired by the Spanish Government under the US Military Assistance Programme). Spain also provided a wide variety of landscapes and architecture necessary to simulate the locations of North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France and Germany. Other locations included Morocco where Roman ruins were used and a review of Moroccan troops was filmed and Greece and Sicily where amphibious landing scenes were made. A few scenes—black and white newsreel footage, were photographed in Hollywood at the 20th Century Fox Studio.

PATTON is a photographically interesting picture because of the extensive use that was made of natural locations, especially many of the interiors. These scenes have a very realistic quality and a number of the interiors appear to have been filmed solely with existing light. But lights had to be used on all of them!

"Roughly eighty per cent of PATTON was filmed in natural locations," said Koenekamp. "We worked in several buildings, such as La Granha and Rio Frio, that are national shrines. We could do nothing that might mar or deface the premises. Consequently we could not use tape, tack lamps to the walls, put up spreaders or do any of the usual things that help in the lighting. Everything had to be from the floor. In this respect, we made extensive use of "quartz" lights, especially the clusters or banks of uniflood lamps known as FAY globes. We used these lamps in clusters of six, nine and twelve. Of course, we could always replace the FAY bulbs with regular tungsten globes if necessary."

Koenekamp was fortunate in being able to bring his long-time assistant, Gene Stout, to Spain, but the bulk of the electrical crew was Spanish. "The Spanish crew was really quite excellent," said Koenekamp. "They are truly amazing people. If you tell them you want something and it's not immediately available, they will make it even if it means working all night in some foundry or machine shop."

Koenekamp relied on the banks of FAY lights as daylight fill in some of the more rugged locations where it would have been difficult to haul in the giant arc lamps.

Koenekamp had a full Hollywood camera crew which included Bill Norton, camera operator, and Chuck Arnold, Emilio Calori and Mike Benson, assistant cameramen. These men were backed up by a Spanish crew assigned to man the additional camera equipment. A total of six Todd AO-Mitchell cameras was available.

"We generally used a total of three cameras on most of the scenes," said Koenekamp. "Bill Norton, an old-timer in the industry, did an exceptionally fine job with the first camera. We had an excellent Spanish camera operator named Ricardo who handled the second camera. He and one of the Spanish assistant cameramen spoke some English which was a big help. As it turned out I ended up operating the small AP hand camera quite a bit of the time. I prefer to use this camera without the shoulder brace that comes with it. Generally, I would hand-hold the camera on an approaching tank or vehicle and inch it out of the way of the treads as it passed. When you use the 28mm wide-angle lens you can obtain a very effective shot. For example, I used this technique in the scene at the end of the picture when the farm wagon breaks away and races downhill almost hitting Patton. We made many, many hand-held shots with the AP and I'm surprised at the number that were used in the final picture."

Initially, as production got under way, the zoom lenses were not available and were sorely missed. Several were eventually sent over and were put to good use. "We missed the zoom very much, especially when we were doing the Ardennes battles. I personally like the 100mm-300mm zoom best because it has a greater range. Zoom lenses are useful for me because you have so many lens positions at your immediate disposal. It isn't that I like to zoom in and out but that I can rack in on a scene quickly."

The company had a Chapman boom but made very few boom shots. It was extensively used, however, for positioning the camera.

PATTON is a big, complicated picture with many action scenes. Consequently, a second unit headed by Mickey Moore worked very closely under Franklin Schaffner, Clifford Stine, ASC, and Cecelio Paniagua, a Spanish cinematographer, worked under Moore's direction handling the second unit photography. "The second unit worked alongside us all the way," explains Koenekamp. "They filmed the night battle sequence, special stunt work, tanks and vehicles exploding, tanks crashing through walls-things like that. We met in the evening and planned our work together so that we would generally be shooting under the same lighting conditions."

Weather plays an important part in PATTON.

"When I first met Franklin Schaffner in his office at 20th Century-Fox studio, I had only very quickly read the script. As we discussed the picture, I happened to mention that in war you can't always wait for the weather. You have to take what comes. Because of this, it was my feeling that we should shoot in any kind of weather. Schaffner told me that I had expressed his thoughts exactly.

"We shot in rain, in snow and slush, and in overcast. There were many times when we had light changes in the middle of a scene when the sun would either come out or go behind a cloud. I let it stay that way without any change in the lens. Of course, I had to keep the actors properly lit and looking their best, but, otherwise, that was it! There was only one time during the picture that we waited for the weather. We had begun filming explosions on a distant hillside when it started to rain. So we waited until the next day when we could finish the scene."

Perhaps the thing that most PATTON crew members will remember longest about the location was how cold Spain was that winter.

"Our very first day's shooting was, I believe, February 2, 1969 in Rio Frio castle just outside Segovia. We were doing the scene where Patton is having his portrait painted when he receives a telephone call from General Bedell Smith telling him he has been relieved of command of the Third Army. It was about lunch-time and Scott asked for a glass of water. A man brought him one and when he got it the water had frozen! This location was one that had to be lit entirely from the floor with quartz lights. These were placed in every conceivable crevice, doorway, corridor and behind furniture.

"The Battle of the Bulge was filmed a few days after this scene, recalls Koenekamp. "It was staged in the Segovia highlands eighty miles northwest of Madrid on terrain that is quite like the Ardennes. We had to wait several days for the snow but it soon came and with it more cold weather. We had on every piece of clothing we could get on our bodies but by noon we were all shaking with the cold. Franklin Schaffner always had a cigar in his mouth. By afternoon, he was so cold that the cigar was shaking." No fog or effects filters were used on these scenes because it was not necessary. The cameras had all been winterized so they did not mind the cold.

The Battle of El Guettar, a large-scale battle sequence, was filmed in one day in the desert country outside Almeria in Southernmost Spain. Over two thousand members of the Spanish Army were outfitted in German and American uniforms, and an impressive collection of vintage tanks and military equipment was assembled with an eye to as much authenticity as possible. Koenekamp feels that a great deal of credit for the mechanical effects in this sequence should go to special effects chief Alex Weldon. The explosions, shellfire, and small arms action are spectacular. "I saw several tanks on one of the stages at Sevilla Studios," recalls Koenekamp. "They looked like the real thing but as I got up close to them I discovered they had been made of sheet metal and fiberglass by Weldon and his Spanish crew. He had built them from photographs. They were later blown up in the battle scenes."

At this point, it should be noted that the special photographic effects were executed with consummate skill at the 20th Century-Fox California studios by Bill Abbott, ASC. and Art Cruickshank, ASC.

"This was the one big battle where the first and second units worked together," said Koenekamp. "I was up on the hill with three cameras shooting down into the valley at the advancing German tanks and infantry. The second unit was concealed in the valley catching close-in action with their three cameras."

In one gripping vignette made from a low angle, a German soldier is knocked down by a Mark IV tank and run over. "The second unit was responsible for this shot," says Koenekamp. "Actually, the man fell down accidentally. He was not a stunt man but a Spanish soldier. Apparently, he stopped to cock his rifle and the tank hit him enough to knock him down. The tank kept going but the treads somehow managed to miss the man by inches. He got a torn jacket and was very lucky." This shot was made from a pit and is a good example of the excellent material the second unit contributed to PATTON.

PATTON contains a number of shots made with long focus lenses showing tanks, vehicles, soldiers on the march. In several instances, Patton is seen marching among them or in his command car. This feeling of compression is effective. "Many times you can get a very nice effect with a long lens by staying back," says Koenekamp. "It pulls things in together—a different effect. It's not something I want to do often but it can be effective if used properly."

In one interesting shot, Patton's command column is seen moving over the crest of a hill, in silhouette, against a sunset. "This shot was Made with a 500mm lens. That's why it has a little bit of a fuzzy quality," explains Koenekamp.

The field of view of the D-150 prime lens is amply demonstrated in a chapel scene where Patton is seen in prayer just prior to the moment when he apologizes to his troops for the slapping incident. This was done in the medieval chapel at La Granda castle. The ceiling is perhaps sixty-five to seventy feet high and is covered with beautiful religious frescoes. The camera points straight up, directly at the ceiling, and very slowly pans over the fresco. "I used the little AP-65 with the 18mm 150-degree lens for this shot," says Koenekamp. "This is the widest lens in the D-150 family so there was a little distortion as we panned, but I think it worked out all right."

On many of the natural interiors, there was often the vexing and difficult problem of balancing sunlight with artificial light. An example of this occurs in the scene following the battle of Ell Guettar where Patton meets his new aide-de-camp (Paul Stevens) for the first time. As the scene opens, Patton is standing in a vestibule opening out on a small balcony from which the Mediterranean can be seen. He speaks some dialogue with a player and then moves inside the rather dark, somber Moorish-style room, where he meets the aide, speaks some more dialogue, and then walks down a small stairway and into a corridor.

"We did this scene in the Governor's Palace in Almeria," said Koenekamp. "I placed two arc lights in the vestibule to bring Patton into balance with the outside background which was, I think, an f/16 light. This I brought down to f/11 with an 85N3 filter. As the players walk into the room, I covered them with banks of FAY lights. Down the small stairway and along the little corridor, I placed arc lamps covered with blue gels. There was a two-stop change coming through the door and into the dark room. I think I went down from f/11 to f/6.3. To be quite honest, this scene turned out to be more than I figured when I looked at the location. I never intended to use the arc lamps and if I'd had more of the FAY lights, I'd have used them instead. As it was I used everything I had. It took the entire camera crew—the operator, the assistant on the focus and myself on the other side of the camera making the lens change. Since we had two dolly moves and the lens change, it was difficult to time out. I think we must have done it around ten times before it worked. I've learned from bitter experience that a lens change has to be absolutely right or its terrible." But despite the complexities of this scene, it was done in a morning and by afternoon the company was outside shooting exteriors.

There is a truly beautifully lit interior in a long corridor of windows where Patton exits from Eisenhower's office after having been rebuked for the so-called Knutsford incident. His loyal and faithful orderly (James Edwards) patiently waits for him and a very moving and touching scene is played between them. The hallway is long and flanked on one side by many windows. Sunlight streams through them making interesting patterns of light on the polished floor. The walls and ceilings are a soft pastel colour and there are beautiful mirrors on one wall.

"This scene was done in the tapestry room at La Granda castle," comments Koenekamp. "This great hallway is over one hundred feet long with a ceiling clearance of fifteen feet. We waited until the sun struck the windows at just the right angle, throwing patterns of light on the floor. Four arc lamps were used. Two were pulled down to full spot and directed at the far wall. The other two were at flood so the foreground was covered. Nets were placed in front of these two arcs since the actors moved close to the camera. The long shot was done with the 28mm lens. For the close-ups, I used FAY lights and a two-inch lens. This scene was shot entirely for daylight balance. No filters were placed over the windows nor did we use any arcs outside them." This scene seems to be illuminated solely by the sunlight coming in through the windows—a testament to the skill of the Director of Photography and his crew. Koenekamp is understandably proud of this scene.

Two other interesting natural interiors were filmed inside an old Spanish fort located in the centre of Madrid. The buildings had been condemned and were virtually falling apart. This latter point worked to the advantage of the company in one instance by providing a strikingly dramatic set.

While the Battle of the Bulge rages, all of the Allied commanders—including Patton and Bradley—are assembled for a conference at Verdun. This was staged in a barren and bleak room of the old fort. There are whitewashed walls. Soft winter light comes through a number of windows that can be observed in the background. Once more Koenekamp used daylight balance. "I used arc lamps to match the exterior light coming in through the many windows," explains Koenekamp. "It was an overcast day and after we went to work it started to rain so no correction was needed on the windows. It was supposed to be a cold, somber scene, so again the weather worked for us.

The riding academy of the old fortress provided the setting for the press conference where Patton made the verbal "*faux pas*" that cost him command of the Third Army. A shaft of sunlight streams in through a skylight and strikes Patton, seen riding a beautiful white horse, like a giant spotlight. Around him stand the eager newsmen firing their questions. To capture this episode, Koenekamp once more went the daylight route, leaning heavily on arc lamps and FAY lights. "We were incredibly lucky when that beam of sunlight came through the window and on to Patton," says Koenekamp. "Once again the weather worked to our advantage."

At the height of the Ardennes counter-offensive, there is a moment in Patton's headquarters when he asks an Army Chaplain to pray for clear weather so Allied planes can attack the Germans. This scene was done in low-key with dramatic shadows playing on to the dark wall of what seemed to be an old wine cellar. "The floor had collapsed in this room and a little gangway had been built over the hole," says Koenekamp. "You could never build a set to equal this place. That's exactly the way it looked and we left it that way. This scene was done with tungsten balance because I could control the light. The windows were covered. We used our 10K lamps and smaller units which made it a hundred times easier."

PATTON is a film with several hauntingly beautiful moments. My favourite is a somberly photographed scene at a military cemetery in North Africa where Patton and his young aide (Morgan Paull) speak of the dead soldiers who lie there. "It's lonely out here," Patton remarks. "And cold," replies the younger man who will soon die in battle. Patton walks to the edge of the desert and stands there thoughtfully looking towards the enemy lines in the half-light of a leaden, foreboding sky. It is a scene played entirely as a long shot and it is poignant and tender. To me, it reveals the compassion and warmth of the director, Franklin Schaffner. I can think of no greater compliment than to say that his work in this film is in the finest tradition of the great John Ford.

## **After The Battle: Where Are They Now Patton's Vehicles**

### **After The Battle**

Number 7

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General Patton used many vehicles during his W.W.II army career. Both the Patton Museum of Cavalry and Armour at Fort Knox, Kentucky and the Quartermaster Centre at Fort Lee, Virginia, have vehicles on display which were used by him.

At Fort Knox, the last jeep issued to and used by General Patton is on display. It was delivered to Army Ordnance on March 21, 1945 and modified by them to the General's specifications by adding special front wings, doors, and cushioned seats. It has been on display at the museum since it opened on May 30, 1949.

Here also is the 1939 French-assembled Cadillac in which he was riding when he sustained the injury which brought about his death. After the accident the car was repaired and returned to

government service. It was used until the late 40s when it was retired and put on display for the opening of the museum. The speedometer reads in kilometers rather than miles. Also on display is the General's command van.

Probably the more well known of General Patton's vehicles is the jeep currently on show at the Fort Lee Quartermaster Museum. It was manufactured by Ford on July 22, 1944 and was modified by fixing the windscreen and adding armour plating, raising the roof allowing more headroom, upholstering the seats (except the driver's) and fitting a pair of brass air horns on the bonnet blown from an air tank behind the front bumper. The front wings on this jeep were also modified and flag brackets were added displaying the 3rd US Army formation sign.

At the end of the war the vehicle was returned to the Richmond Quartermaster Depot and as it had been issued by the Quartermaster Corps, was brought to the Quartermaster Museum as an item of historical property.

## **After The Battle: It Happened Here The Death of George S. Patton**

### **After The Battle**

Number 7

1975, pp 46-50

On October 2, 1945, General George S. Patton was transferred to command the 15th US "historians" army. On December 9 he embarked on his final journey, described here by Ladislav Farago in *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph*.

It was a Sunday and Patton planned to spend it bird hunting around Speyer in the Rhenish Palatinate, where the woods were rich with pheasants. It was 11.45 a.m. He was riding south on Highway 38, the Frankfurt-Mannheim road, with Major-General Hobart R. Gay, still his Chief of Staff, a 1939 French-assembled Cadillac driven by Private First Class Horace L. Woodring, a twenty-three-year-old soldier attached to Patton's paper army. A sergeant named Joe Spruce following in a jeep.

Passing through the northern outskirts of Mannheim, crossing a maze of railway tracks, Woodring slowed the car to ten miles, then accelerated again on the open road, cruising at about thirty miles an hour. Traffic was relatively light. The weather was crisp.

On leaving the tracks, Sergeant Spruce passed the sedan to lead the way. He spotted a big truck coming up on the other lane at a speed of about fifteen miles, apparently slowing down as it was approaching a drive-way on the left side of the road.

Patton was carefree and genial, chatting easily with Gay, his curious little eyes darting from left to right as he surveyed the countryside. The litter of the recent war was piled high everywhere. It was now 11.48 a.m. The sedan was passing through a canyon of junk. Pointing to the right bank of the road, Patton said to Gay:

"How awful war is! Look at all those derelict vehicles, Hap!" Then he turned in the other direction, exclaiming, "And look at that heap of rubbish!"

Reacting automatically, Woodring also looked away from the road. Just then, T/5 Robert L. Thompson, the driver of the truck, who was alone in its cab, signaled that he was about to turn left, and took his vehicle at a ninety-degree angle across the road. He was making for the half-hidden driveway leading to a roadside camp of his Quartermaster Corps unit.

Woodring had his eyes back on the road again. But it was too late. As the big truck seemed to bear down on him. Woodring jammed down the brake and swerved sharply, as did Thompson, but they could not avoid a collision. The sedan crashed into the truck's tank and had its front

smashed in, yet it still appeared to be a minor accident. Gay, Woodring, and Thompson were shaken up a bit but were otherwise unhurt.

It was different with Patton. Riding on the right-hand side of the back seat, he was thrown forward and was then hurled back, falling limply into General Gay's arms with his head to the left. He was bleeding profusely from cuts in his forehead and scalp, but was sitting up and was fully conscious. He was the first to speak. "Are you hurt?" he asked Gay. "No, not a bit, sir," Gay said. "Are you, General?"

"I think I'm paralysed," Patton said. "I'm having trouble in breathing. Work my fingers for me Hap."

Gay tried it several times, until Patton said again, "Go ahead, Hap, work my fingers."

Gay now merely said, "I don't think it's advisable to move you, General."

A unit of the 8081st Military Police Company commanded by Lieutenant Peter Babalas arrived on the scene and Patton was driven to the 130th Station Hospital at Heidelberg, in the zone of the Seventh Army which was now commanded by General Geoffrey Keyes, his old friend and companion in arms. It was a small hospital the Germans had set up in a cavalry barracks towards the end of the war and which the Americans took over. Its medical staff was headed by Colonel Lawrence C. Ball. He had been advised of Patton's coming and was waiting downstairs with Lieutenant-Colonel Paul S. Hill, the chief surgeon. Obviously in shock but lucid, Patton merely said, "My neck hurts," as he was taken to surgery.

News of the accident had been flashed to Frankfurt, and Major-General Albert W. Kenner, Patton's Medical Officer in the Western Task Force, now the Theatre Surgeon, arrived within hours to take charge. Then flying in from London, Brigadier Hugh Cairns, famed professor of neuro-surgery at Oxford, joined the doctors. Before too long, X-ray pictures gave them the definite clues they needed for their diagnosis.

"Fracture simple, third cervical vertebrae," it read, "with posterior dislocation of fourth cervical. Complete paralysis below level of third cervical. Condition critical, prognosis guarded."

In the layman's language this meant that Patton had broken his neck and was paralysed from the neck down.

Mrs. Patton arrived at 3.30 p.m. on December 11, and when she was taken to her husband, she found him resting quietly and taking some nourishment. His condition had slightly improved. His temperature was 100, pulse 70, respiration 22. He greeted his wife with a grateful smile, but told her:

"I am afraid, Bea, this may be the last time we see each other."

By the 13th Patton had shown such improvement that his doctors began to weigh the possibility of flying him to Boston. The 130th was a small hospital, but it was as good as any in Europe, with all the facilities Patton needed, and he was enjoying the best of attention and care. But Mrs. Patton felt, and Colonel Spurling concurred, that hospitalisation closer to home in Beverley Hospital, Massachusetts, would be an added boost to his recovery. As a matter of fact, the doctors expressed guarded optimism as his condition continued to improve, but feared that he might remain paralysed for life.

Up to the afternoon of December 19, Patton had made what the bulletins described as "very satisfactory progress." But then, a crisis suddenly developed. He began to experience difficulty in raising the mucus that was accumulating in his bronchial tubes squeezed by fragments of the shattered vertebrae. Simultaneously, the pressure on the spinal cord increased.

At 2 p.m. on the 20th, he had an acute attack of breathlessness and pallor, lasting about an hour. The symptoms convinced Colonel Spurling that Patton had suffered a pulmonary embolism when a blood clot had got loose in his circulation and was pumped by the heart into his lungs, virtually destroying one.



He had a history of embolism—he had two embolisms when he was hospitalized with a broken leg eight years before in Boston—and survived them. This time, however, he had only a slight margin left for what the doctors called such compatibility.

He recovered satisfactorily from the initial shock, but then the symptoms of the embolism multiplied. He filled up with mucus more and more, and had increasing difficulty in raising it. His lungs became wetter and wetter. But he seemed to be bouncing back from hour to hour. The doctors did their best to halt this gradual deterioration of his condition but it was becoming evident that the General was now locked in his biggest battle, his struggle for survival itself.

Patton remained fully conscious all this time, never for a moment lapsing into coma.

One of Patton's beliefs was that "the only way for a soldier to die is by the last bullet in the last battle of his final war." To his brother-in-law he confided that "This is a hell of a way for a soldier to die!"

At 2 p.m. in the afternoon of December 21 he fell asleep and his wife tiptoed out of the room. At 3 p.m. Colonel Spurling looked in on him. Awake and cheerful, he told Spurling that he was feeling better and was comfortable. Then he fell asleep again. He was breathing heavily but showed no other outward signs that his struggle was nearing the end.

He died at 5.50 p.m. of acute heart failure when another embolism struck his remaining lung at the left side of his chest. "General Patton Dies Quietly in Sleep," the newspapers headlined the front-page story.

For two days before the funeral, while he was lying in state in the Villa Reiner, one of the stately homes of Heidelberg, the GIs claimed him as one of their own. They came in a seemingly endless procession to pay their last respects to the great soldier who, unlike themselves, would not be going home soon, or ever.

*Even in Heidelberg, where the editor visited the Patton Barracks and Army hospital (still the 130th Station Hospital), the exact location where General Patton had his accident is not recorded. However, with the help of an old map of the Mannheim district, the original route of Highway 38, now Bundesstrasse 38, could be traced. In about 1960, the level crossing over the railway tracks on Kaifertalstrasse was removed, and the track fenced in when Bundesstrasse 38 was diverted west over a flyover about 300 yards away. It is therefore impossible today to drive across the tracks following General Patton's route of December 9, 1945. However, after driving round the diversion, if one continues along Kaifertalstrasse on the far side of the railway line, the open spaces where the derelict vehicles were heaped still remain, one on the right-hand side, then one on the left.*

*The entrance to the US Quartermaster Corps unit still lies back on the right-hand side of the road. The Americans departed in 1947 and it now houses the Mannheim refuse collection service.*

*At the 130th Station Hospital, we were given a cordial welcome by the adjutant, and together with Major Simpson and a letter and a plan sent by Lieutenant-Colonel Hill, the chief surgeon attending General Patton in 1945, we determined the room in which General Patton died. It is now used for X-rays and this revelation caused quite a stir with the young radiographer and her patients.*

*Dr. Hill wrote to us from Maine in the United States to give some further details. The General's body was first removed to one of the brick stalls below the ground floor room in which he died. Dr. Hill and Colonel Ball then covered the body with the American flag. A casket with a plexi-glas cover at one end was flown over from England. Since the body was to be embalmed, Dr. Hill was fortunate in locating a soldier in his former evacuation hospital unit with the necessary ability to accomplish this.*

*The general's body then lay in state at the Villa Reiner in Heidelberg and a service was held at Christ Church, Heidelberg, on December 23. His burial took place on Christmas Eve, 1945.*

*General Patton is buried in the American Military Cemetery just outside Luxembourg City at Hamm. There he lies in a grave separated from the 5075 other burials , symbolically, still out in front of many of the men he commanded.*

## **After The Battle: England General Patton at Knutsford**

**After The Battle**  
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1975, pp 51-53

The stormy career of General George Patton was marked with publicity—some good, some bad, some unjustified. In the latter category falls the so called "Russian insult" which occurred at Knutsford, Cheshire on April 25, 1944.

General Patton was based at Poever Hall, a stately home four miles south of Knutsford, whilst his Third Army troops were camped nearby at Poever and Toft Camps. During this build-up period for the D-Day landings in June, Patton was much in demand at local functions and enjoyed his associations with the local gentry. At the same time, the Knutsford Women's Voluntary Service, led by Mrs. M. Constantine-Smith, was organising a Welcome Club for the American officers whom they felt, unlike the enlisted men, were short of a recreation centre. Accordingly she asked General Patton if he would speak at the opening of the club.

Patton mindful of a recent spate of "*faux pas*," agreed only when assured his remarks would be unofficial and off the record.

However, when he arrived at the British Legion HQ at the Rudkin Rooms in Drury Lane, where the opening ceremony was to take place, he found the press in attendance and he was photographed leaving his car with "Willie" his bull terrier.

In view of the presence of the newspapermen Mrs. Constantine-Smith, speaking in the large second floor room, emphasised that General Patton was attending in an unofficial capacity and that "he will be speaking to you in a purely friendly way and nothing he will say must be quoted."

Replying to the opening speech by Miss Foster Jeffries, Patton ad-libbed a little speech in which he said that "the idea of these clubs could not be better because undoubtedly it is our destiny to rule the world we British American and, of course, Russian people, and the more we know each other the better it will be."

Although the speech was recorded faultlessly in the British press (as our cuttings indicate), by the time the text reached the United States, the essential reference to our then allies, the Russians, had been omitted. The story hit the headlines there in the next morning's papers.

General Marshall in Washington fired off an angry message to General Eisenhower in response to the outcry in the American press and also Congress about the insult to the Soviet Union. SHAEF Public Relations called Patton's Deputy Chief of Staff, General Gay, to find out what the General had said. Angry Congressmen, both Democrats and Republicans, criticized Patton on the floor of the house. This time, the molehill of an innocent remark became a mountain of trouble for Patton.

During the next week the uproar escalated and threatened to deprive the Allies of one of their most promising combat leaders. Patton went to see Eisenhower and offered to resign his commission so as to relieve the Supreme Commander of any embarrassment.

Finally, the American Secretary of War, Stimson, intervened on Patton's behalf and Eisenhower himself considered the incident, if there was such, as far too trivial to warrant

punishment. On May 3, Eisenhower sent a telegram to Patton advising him of his favourable decision which he followed up with a letter of confirmation.

Despite the exoneration, we are told that the whole incident left General Patton with a deep-seated bitterness that was never to leave him, innocent as he was of any wrongdoing.

*This incident was portrayed in the Patton film but unfortunately, perhaps for more dramatic effect, two drastic errors crept in, in spite of claims by the film company's publicity department "to keep it as true to fact as possible." To this end they replaced the original "welcome" banner, which included the town name "Knutsford" when told by the townspeople that town names and signposts were never seen during the war.*

*In the scene the actual words of General Patton were again quoted incorrectly and the reference to the Russians omitted. Then the scene was portrayed out-of-doors in front of the old town hall (now a furniture store, Allen and Appleyard) whereas the actual speech took place indoors. It seems the film company, who sent researchers to Knutsford in advance of the film crew, could not trace anyone that knew the correct details; with help from Mr. K. L. Wilson of the Knutsford Guardian, we traced Mrs. Constantine-Smith, now the holder of an OBE for her seven years WVS work in the town, living a few miles from Knutsford at Holmes Chapel. She kindly agreed to return to Knutsford with the editor, to the Ruskin Rooms for the first time since she resigned from the WVS in 1946. There, although the large room has now been partitioned off into separate offices, we were able to reconstruct the scene. Mrs. Constantine-Smith confirmed that General Patton included a reference to the Russians in his speech.*

## **After The Battle: Crossing the Rhine General Patton Steals the Glory**

### **After The Battle**

Number 16

1977, pp 13-14

By the third week of March 1945, the Allied armies had reached the west bank of the Rhine throughout its length and held the unplanned bridgehead on the east bank at Remagen.

The master plan for the Rhine crossing had been approved some months previously by General Eisenhower. This was to take place just north of the Ruhr in a huge air and land operation due to take place on the night of March 23-24 under the command of Field-Marshal Montgomery. As always, the Field-Marshal's planning was meticulous, detailed, and necessarily lengthy.

One hundred and fifty miles to the south, the US Third Army had closed the Rhine after a victorious campaign in the Saar-Palatinate triangle led by the formidable General George S. Patton. The General had already been given permission to cross the Rhine by General Bradley, Commander of the 12th Army Group, on March 19. With the glory of the first crossing of the Rhine having gone to a unit of the First Army, Patton was determined that the first assault crossing should be made by the Third. Before the Saar-Palatinate battle had been won he was busy moving bridging equipment, assault boats and other engineer material up to the Rhine. He was aware that Montgomery was scheduled to cross during the night of March 23; Patton therefore decided to steal his thunder and cross on the 22nd.

Patton told Major-General Manton S. Eddy, commanding XII Corps, to make a feint at Mainz while actually crossing the Rhine ten miles further south at Oppenheim. When, on the morning of March 22, General Eddy told Major-General S. LeRoy Irwin, 5th Division commander, that Patton had ordered a crossing of the river to be made that night, Irwin protested that a well-planned orderly operation could not be carried out that quickly. All that could be done, he said, was to 'get some sort of bridgehead'. This was all Patton wanted. By late morning, the 5th Division's 11th Infantry Regiment had been singled out for the assault.

In spite of the rush, Patton's advance preparations proved adequate. Nearly 500 boats and 7,500 engineers were on hand to assist the 11th Infantry. Two crossing points were selected for the two battalions which were to spearhead the attack: the 3rd Battalion was to cross at Oppenheim whilst the 1st Battalion would cross a mile or so to the north at Nierstein. Unlike the large, preparatory artillery barrage with which Montgomery preceded his attacks, Patton ordered a surprise attack against, he hoped, an unsuspecting enemy.

At 10.30 p.m. on March 22, the leading boats of Company K left the west bank of the Rhine at Nierstein. All was quiet. The first boat to touch down on the far bank contained the Company Commander, 1st Lieutenant Irven Jacobs, who was followed quickly by the rest of his men. Seven surprised Germans promptly surrendered and obligingly paddled themselves back to captivity without a guard!

Upstream at Oppenheim, Companies A and B of the 1st Battalion did not receive quite the same welcome. While the boats were crossing, a German machine gun opened up on them, but, after a brisk, thirty-minute battle, the Germans surrendered. The entire 11th Infantry assault crossing had cost the Americans precisely twenty casualties, and by midnight, all the 11th Regiment were across. During the morning, tanks and tank destroyers had been ferried across and, by late afternoon, a Class 40 treadway bridge had been completed at Nierstein. By the time the long-awaited Rhine crossing was beginning in the north, Patton's 5th Division bridgehead was five miles deep and the important road junction of Gross Gerau was only a mile away.

*General Patton had telephoned the news of the successful crossing to General Bradley at breakfast time. "Brad, don't tell anyone but I'm across," said Patton "I sneaked a division over last night. But there are so few Krauts around there they don't know it yet. So don't make any announcement—we'll keep it a secret until we see how it goes!"*

*During the morning, Patton's liaison officer at 12th Army Group HQ could not conceal his smile as he announced that, "Without benefit of aerial bombardment, ground smoke, artillery preparation, and airborne assistance," (giving a direct dig at Monty) "the Third Army at 2200 hours, Thursday evening, March 22, crossed the Rhine River."*

*General Patton timed his announcement to the world carefully. Just hours before Field-Marshal Montgomery's crossing began he phoned Bradley again: "Brad," he shouted, "for God's sake tell the world we're across . . . I want the world to know Third Army made it before Monty starts across!"*

*Unfortunately Field-Marshal Montgomery did not publish his thoughts when he heard the news of Patton's triumphal announcement and Winston Churchill, calling it "unpremeditated," gives it only one sentence in his six volume history of the Second World War.*

*When Patton arrived at the Nierstein crossing site (always incorrectly stated as being at Oppenheim) on March 24, his ADCs Colonel Charles R. Codman and Major Alexander Stiller, were with him as he crossed the bridge. "Time out for a short halt," Codman reports Patton as saying. Then the General walked to the edge of the bridge and surveyed the slow-moving surface of the river. "I have been looking forward to this for a long time," the General said, unbuttoning his trousers and straightaway showing his disdain for the mighty Germany Empire by relieving himself into the Rhine.*

*Reaching the far side where the grassy bank had been churned up, as the history-minded Patton stepped off the last pontoon, he deliberately stumbled onto the soft ground in an imitation of William the Conqueror (who is supposed to have said as he fell flat on his face as he stepped out of his boat, "See, I have taken England with both hands") Patton, kneeling, steadied himself against the bank with both hands and, rising, opened his fingers to let two handfuls of earth fall, exclaiming: "Thus William the Conqueror!"*

## **After The Battle: Crossing the Rhine Patton's Hat-Trick**

### **After The Battle**

Number 16

1977, pp 40

By nightfall on March 26, General Bradley's 12th Army Group had secured four solid bridgeheads across the Rhine—the First Army's at Remagen, the Third Army's at Oppenheim and the Rhine gorge, and the Seventh Army's at Worms. Although General Patton still had one corps on the west of the Rhine and could easily have passed these troops through one of his other two bridgeheads, he chose to do it the hard way with another assault crossing. Even the official American historian can only conjecture as to why Patton chose to make another assault crossing at this stage.

The General himself was probably preoccupied with the ill-fated Hammelburg Mission in which Task Force Baum drove thirty-five miles behind German lines to rescue American POWs including Patton's son-in-law. (Patton later denied he had known his relative was at Hammelburg.) It was left to his Chief-of-Staff, Major-General Hobart R. Gay, to work out the plan for the assault. This was to be a pincer movement by the 80th Division to clear the junction of the River Main with the Rhine.

At 1.00 a.m. on March 28, the 317th Infantry Regiment embarked from the slipways and docks of the Mainz waterfront whilst the 319th Infantry crossed over through the previously won Oppenheim bridgehead to attack the Germans across the River Main from the rear.

The operation ran smoothly and the 317th suffered only five men wounded, the 319th a little worse with three men killed, three missing and sixteen wounded. Perhaps luckily for the reputation of the Third Army Commander this third, rather unnecessary, crossing was accomplished lightly. Engineers immediately began the construction of a 2,223-foot railway bridge to speed up supplies to Third Army. Work continued non-stop, day and night, under the glare of spotlights. On April 14 it was finished and when Patton arrived for the inauguration he was offered a pair of oversize scissors to cut the ceremonial ribbon. True to form, he refused these with the remark, "What are you taking me for, a tailor? God-damnit! Give me a bayonet!"

## **After The Battle: Where Are They Now Guns of the Great**

### **After The Battle**

Of all the Second World War commanders, George S. Patton is undoubtedly the one most remembered for his personal display of firearms. His ivory-handled revolvers became the trade mark of his flamboyant leadership and gave him an image instantly recognizable to the troops.

The pistols usually photographed being worn by him were not a matched pair. One was a Colt .45-Long Single Action 1873 Army Model and the other a Smith & Wesson .357 revolver, both now displayed in the Patton Museum at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

Patton had, of course, been issued with the standard 1911 .45 Government Model semiautomatic pistol. We are told that he ground the hammer notch down so fine that it reputedly went off when he stamped his foot, grazing his thigh. This story, although recounted by several sources, is rather difficult to believe of an expert "pistolero" who had already competed in the Olympic Games in 1912. The Colt .45 Auto is a difficult weapon to render unsafe and also the grip safety would have to be taped down and safety catch left off.

Be as it may, the fact remains that Patton was known to prefer revolvers and he purchased a new Colt Single Action from Shelton Payne Arms Company in El Paso, Texas in 1916. The Colt .45 was still accepted as a substitute personal side-arm and, carried in the traditional Western manner of a "five-shooter," it hung on his right hip when he went to Mexico in 1916 as aide to General Pershing after the Pancho Villa brigade had attacked the border town of Columbus.

Traveling widely in northern Mexico, (in 1916 Model Dodge touring cars), Patton personally led an attack on the rancho San Miguelito later that year. In the gunfight that followed, "General" Julio Cardenas and two bodyguards were killed and, as a result, Patton carved two notches on the left-hand ivory grip of his Colt.

The Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum had been sent to Patton on October 18, 1935 while he was serving on Hawaii as an intelligence officer. This was worn with the Colt in matched holsters made by S. D. Myers, the Smith & Wesson having initialed ivory grips to match the general appearance of the Colt. The belt also held a Myers handcuff case, containing a compass, and a Myers slide-on cartridge carrier to hold twelve .45 cartridges. When the belt and pistols were donated by the Patton family to the West Point Museum in 1952, the slide contained nine rounds—as it still does today.

General Patton also entered World War II with a .38 Colt Detective Special with the old "long" grip, purchased before the butt shape was changed in 1934, but he is usually only seen wearing this pistol in behind-the-line staff offices. A small automatic, a .32 Colt, was also carried concealed under his blouse in a "fast draw" waistband holster.

In 1944 there was a general issue of the Colt .380 Government hammerless model with the General Officers Pistol Belt designed and made by the Swank Leather Company to a specification laid down by General George Marshall. It became as much an insignia of rank as actual General's stars. Patton wore his pistol with ebony grips inlaid with ivory stars and it is the gun most seen in photographs taken of him (with both three and four star grips), prior to his death in 1945.

Patton's opposite number, as far as British troops were concerned, was undoubtedly Field-Marshal Montgomery. The clashes in their personalities are well known and recorded and although both men were highly regarded by their own troops, there, as far as guns are concerned, the comparison ends.

Montgomery is never photographed wearing the official British officer's weapon of the time, the Webley and Scott .38. When we questioned the Field-Marshal's son, Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, as to whether any firearms belonging to his father still existed, he replied that "as far as personal weapons are concerned, when my father died we opened the safe here (at Isington Mill) and the first thing that confronted me was a revolver. I handed it immediately to the local

constabulary for safe keeping and, subsequently, requested that it should be transferred to the Imperial War Museum who now have possession of the weapon. I do not know the history of this revolver or for how long it had been in my father's possession."

We contacted the Firearms Department of the Imperial War Museum and discovered that the "revolver" was in fact a Colt .380 automatic No. 22766 supplied by Wilkinson of Pall Mall. Although this model was an official American issue from 1944, and it could well have been presented to Monty during the war, the gunsmith's inscription makes its history a mystery.

Nevertheless, the Field-Marshal always had a weapon handy in his Humber staff car. Surprisingly, with his intensely patriotic nature, he chose the American .30 M1 Carbine, certainly a handy weapon, well favored by officers as a two-handed pistol. This was carried clipped to a bracket in front of the folded-down hood of his car. At some period in its career, the car was fitted with an additional pair of brackets on a bar behind the front seats. It is in this condition (minus the actual weapons), that the vehicle is displayed at the National Motor Museum at Beaulieu, Hampshire.

Winston Churchill had already given King George VI a similar carbine for his personal use. In 1940, Churchill records, "His Majesty had a shooting range made in Buckingham Palace garden at which he and other members of his family and his equerries practiced assiduously with pistols and tommy-guns."

It took us quite a time to obtain an admission from the Palace that a range had, in fact, been constructed in the grounds. It had been situated on the right-hand side of the lawn in front of the Palace (we see the rear of the building from the Mail) where there was already a bank of earth. No trace remains today but its position is indicated on the aerial photograph.

The King's M1 Carbine .30, No. 2387, manufactured by the Inland Division, was given on permanent loan to the Imperial War Museum, London after the war together with his personal Sten gun. This weapon, a Mk 11 No. E2D, was handed over complete in a fitted wooden case (reputed to have been constructed by the King, who was a keen carpenter) containing three spare magazines with separate provision for ammunition storage. Unfortunately neither weapon is currently on display to the public.

Winston Churchill himself was never far away from firearms during the war years, although he had lost his old German Mauser semi-automatic pistol in the Boer War in South Africa.

The Mauser, No. 13769 had been sold to a Mr. Balfour on December 30, 1898 with instructions to engrave it W. L. S. Churchill. The pistol traveled with the young Winston to Ondurman where Churchill came very close to death. The Dervishes fought fanatically and he only escaped being hacked to death by shooting his enemies at close range with his Mauser.

In 1899, Winston Churchill was determined to see and report on another war against the Boers in South Africa and he sailed on the *Donottar Castle* in October as a correspondent. He secured a place on an armored train leaving Estcourt but at Chieveley, fourteen miles to the north, the train was ambushed and Churchill captured.

After Churchill was taken prisoner, the Mauser was found by an NCO of the Royal Irish Fusiliers in a Boer Laager. Finding its way back to England, it was taken from one, Matthew Dodds of 36 Marilenne Street, Stockton-on-Tees, on Monday, December 23, 1907 at 9.30 p.m. by Deputy-Sergeant T. Phizacklea as Dodds was threatening to shoot his wife and daughter with it! Dodds refused to name the NCO but agreed to sign a letter the following day on the history of the revolver.

On March 22, 1971 the Mauser was auctioned at Sotheby's of London when Carl Foreman, producer of the film "Young Winston," purchased it for 4,100-pounds. It seems, however, that some doubt exists in some circles as to its authenticity . . . long before police in Caracas, Venezuela, apprehended a 12-year-old boy in January 1978 who had in his possession an 1898-model Mauser, automatic pistol engraved with "Winston Spencer Churchill" . . . !

During the Second War, the Prime Minister was provided with a personal bodyguard—Detective-Inspector W. H. Thompson. Thompson had already served as Churchill's bodyguard from 1921-32 carrying the Webley .32 and Scott MP semi-automatic pistol which was official issue to the pre-war Special Branch. Bill Thompson told us in 1977 (then aged 87) that Churchill asked him to take over his own pistols—a Colt .45 and a Webley and Scott .38—both semi-automatic pistols. Thompson wrote to us that he carried these everywhere he went and that Churchill regularly practiced with both weapons.

"In August 1939" continued Thompson in his letter to the editor, "I received a telegram from Mr. Churchill asking me to meet him at Croydon aerodrome. I did so and was requested by him to follow on to Chartwell. Here he informed me that from information he had received in France the Germans intended to take his life. 'Go and get your gun Thompson and guard me at night I will look after myself in the day time.' After informing him that I did not have a gun he sent me to his secretary for her to give me his Colt for the time being. She was far from obliging and wanted to know for certain my authority."

However, after she was satisfied, she handed me the Colt which I returned two weeks later when I was officially re-called to Special Branch and issued with a Webley .32 and Scott and two magazines. I was then given another officer to help with Mr. Churchill's protection and he also was supplied with a Webley .32 and Scott.

"Owing to the dangers which surrounded No. 10 Downing Street we eventually took over part of the building at the end of Whitehall which we called "The Annex" and arrangements were made here for me to sleep in a small room the main part of the room being for the Marine Guard.

"Each day my colleague and I checked our guns as well as Winston's. For the first twelve months of the war Winston did not practice at all but, as soon as he became Prime Minister and went to Chequers, he frequently went to a quiet part of the grounds where he used both his pistols and practiced at length. One day later, when the Sten gun became well-known, he asked me to acquire one and bring it with me for practice. However he did not appear at all happy using the Sten gun and did not use it again until October 26, 1941. On that occasion General Alan Brooke with several others were guests at chequers and went with Winston to see a demonstration of the Bombard mortar, after which Winston, who had asked for the Sten gun to be brought with us, decided to have some practice with it and also with his two automatics. Again the Sten gun did not appear to please him and whilst practicing with his two automatics he put one down on an improvised seat at his side. The pistol was already loaded and one of the secretaries picked the gun up to hear Winston speak very loudly and in an angry voice: 'Put that gun down at once and never touch my guns again! Thompson and I are the only ones to touch them.' He appeared to be very angry and suggested that his guests returned to Chequers. We then proceeded to a quiet spot in the grounds at Chequers where he continued his practice. But he never used the Sten gun again. Brooke, seeing me bring the Sten gun from the back seat of the car was, I believe, under the impression that we always carried it with us. However that was the only occasion for to carry his Colt, my pistol and also a Sten gun would have been a considerable embarrassment in public places in civilian clothes.

"The trips abroad during the war caused me quite an amount of trouble carrying Winston's Colt as well as my own pistol. In the United States, where I came into contact with my opposite numbers guarding the President, they expressed surprise at the small caliber pistol I carried and occasionally expressed disdain at such a small weapon being used.

"One Friday in 1943 I was instructed by one of the secretaries that Mr. Churchill, who was due to leave for Chequers, would be delayed; this gave us an opportunity to take tea before leaving. As at that time I had the use of the Prime Minister's garage I went there for that at purpose. Shortly afterwards the telephone rang—a direct line to the Annex—and I was told that the Prime Minister was waiting to start for Chequers. In leaning across a settee to answer the telephone my pistol



slipped out of its holster passing down inside the left leg of my trousers. I followed the gun down with my hand, knowing that the safety catch was on and that the pistol should not fire. However the hammer hit the ground first and fired, the bullet passing upwards hitting my left calf and, as I was in a crouching position, the bullet crossed to my right knee and eventually finished up hitting my hip and in passing did not damage the artery. Winston was very concerned about this and daily telephoned the hospital until I showed improvement.

"When the time came for me to be released from hospital and report to Mr. Churchill, I wondered what his reaction would be and asked him, 'Sir, have you still got confidence in me to continue to take care of your guns?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'you have always been most careful but I would like to see the pistol that you were carrying at the time.' I had brought it with me having been told that he wished to see it. After he examined it he said it was faulty, 'You must obtain a different type of pistol.' Many pistols had been handed in to Scotland Yard when war broke out and had been placed in storage. I examined several and decided on a Luger which I carried with me until the end of the war. I obtained special permission from Special Branch to use the Luger which was not officially used but permission was granted to me after Winston had examined it and Robert Churchill (the gunsmith who bore a striking resemblance to the Prime Minister) had checked it thoroughly.

"On no occasion abroad during the war did Winston practice until on meeting a number of United States generals who were firing with an American Carbine which at that time was being spoken of very highly and he was asked to try his skill. As usual his marksmanship was outstanding and he was congratulated by the Generals around him." (This was the occasion in March 1944 when Churchill paid an inspection visit to the US 2nd Armored Division on Salisbury Plain where he tested his skills with a Thompson, Garand rifle and M1 Carbine against Generals Bradley and Eisenhower, see photograph Ed.)

"Nevertheless the years were passing," continues Thompson, "and we were spending little time at Chequers so Winston had little opportunity for practicing with his Colt. However, in the early part of 1945, we went to Chequers and, to my surprise, Winston asked me to fix up a target about 25 yards away and quite close to the house. We all practiced for a while then, having replaced the target with a new one, he fired his Colt. Except for one bullet, all the others were around the center of the target. This was the last time that we practiced together for, at the conclusion of the war, being a reserve officer, I resigned.

"I handed Mr. Churchill his two automatic pistols, He thanked me for the manner in which I had taken care of them and then handed to a secretary, placed in box and put away. I returned to Special Branch, handed in my resignation and also the Luger and two magazines of bullets."

When we wrote to the Special Branch concerning the present whereabouts of Thompson's Luger they replied that all records relating to the period in question no longer existed. The reason for our request to them for confirmation is that Thompson's story is, in respect of the type of pistol he carried, in direct conflict with the account given us by ex-Detective-Sergeant Roy Astley Richards. Mr. Richards records that the Model 1911 Webley and Scott semi-automatic was 'highly unsuitable for protection duty because, when cocked, the external hammer frequently caught on some part of the clothing. For this reason I loaned my own pistol (a 7.65mm Menta hammerless semiautomatic pistol No. 8787 made by Becker & Hollander held on Thames Valley Firearms Certificate No. 8000) to the officer appointed as Winston Churchill's bodyguard, ex-Detective-Inspector W. H. Thompson, until the end of the war. The pistol was carried by Mr. Thompson and used by him to protect the Prime Minister'. When Thompson retired, according to Mr. Richards, the weapon was handed back with the comment: "It went everywhere with me."

In November 1945, the Menta was carried by Detective-Sergeant Richards (who served as Churchill's new bodyguard from June 1945 to April 1946) to protect him in Paris and Brussels where he received the freedom of those cities. In 1969 Astley Richards retired from the

Metropolitan Police and, in spite of his thirty-eight years official service was himself, subject to a directive from the Chief Constable of the Thames Valley Constabulary to relinquish ownership of the weapon. In a letter to Mr. Richards in January 1970, the Chief Constable relented in so far as he was willing to agree to continued ownership subject to a steel rod being sweated into the barrel. Not wanting to be a partner to the virtual destruction of such an historic weapon, Mr. Richards returned the pistol to the Southern Armory in New Kent Road, London, which had originally supplied him the weapon early in 1941. It was there that veteran gunsmith Tom Collins showed us the pistol now in his personal collection.

However, from what we are told of Winston Churchill's own prowess with arms, he had little need of a bodyguard. One of the most well-known photographs of Churchill was taken on July 31, 1940 at Hornsea, on the north-east coast of England, while the Prime Minister was inspecting anti-invasion defenses. A Thompson sub-machine gun, complete with Cutts compensator, was offered to Churchill for inspection the whole sequence being photographed by Captain Horton. The famous picture is usually shown with the accompanying party masked out and it was used by the Germans in this form on propaganda leaflets dropped over England.

On the way inland from the beach, Churchill stopped to inspect the Home Guard in Seaton, a mile or so from the coast, and without his tommy gun he was defenseless when a small boy, Dennis Vickerton, held him at gun point!

General Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, also remembered a visit to Chequers in March 1941: "The P.M., suffering from bronchitis, came down to dinner in his "siren suit," a one-piece garment like a child's romper-suit, of light blue. He was in great form and after dinner sent for his rifle to give me a demonstration of the "long port" which he wanted to substitute for the "slope." He followed this up with some bayonet exercises. It was one of the first occasions on which I had seen Winston in one of his real light-hearted moods. I was convulsed watching him give this exhibition of bayonet exercises with his rifle, dressed in his siren-suit and standing in the ancestral hall of Chequers. I remember wondering what Hitler would have thought of this demonstration of skill at arms."

At Sir Winston's death in February 1965, quite an armory existed at Chartwell, his country home at Westerham, Kent. There the weapons remained until 1974 when the ownership of all firearms in private collections in the UK, especially semi-automatic and full auto weapons (the latter classed as prohibited weapons under Section 5 of the Firearms Act 1968), was tightened up. The result was that the local police expressed concern for the security of the collection and instructed that the weapons should be deposited with an authorized gunsmith. Accordingly, on the instructions of Winston Churchill the grandson, the weapons were transferred to the care of Cogswell and Harrison Ltd of Piccadilly pending a decision on their ultimate disposal. With no possibility of retaining the collection at Chartwell, ten weapons were put up for auction at Sotheby's on July 15, 1975. The firearms were as follows:

**Lot 40** A 9mm. Sten Mk. III Sub Machine Gun, serial no. L.B.-A56843, with fixed barrel, blackened finish, detachable butt, 29-3/4 in., with magazine. Sold for 100-pounds.

**Lot 41** Another Sten Mk. III Sub Machine Gun, serial no. L. B.-A42485, 29-1/4 in. Sold for 100-pounds.

**Lot 42** A 9mm. Patchett Sub Machine Gun, serial no. 8930, with parkerized finish overall with chequered plastic pistol grip and hinged folding butt, 19in., with stock folded, 28-1/8 in. overall, with bayonet in scabbard and two magazines. Sold for 100-pounds.

**Lot 43** A 9mm. presentation Lanchester Sub Machine Gun, serial no. P.G.8., with commercial finish, the magazine receiver inscribed "Sterling, Lanchester Sub Machine Gun," the bolt housing inscribed "To The Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, P.C., C.H., M.P. We shall fight on the beaches, on the landing ground . . . in the fields . . . in the streets . . . in the hills . . . we shall

*never surrender." House of Commons, 4th June 1940;" half-length walnut stock with finger grip, iron trigger guard and detachable fifty round box magazine 33-1/2 in. Sold for 520-pounds.*

**Lot 44** *A Mahogany Case, the lid with brass plate inscribed Sten, fitted inside with compartments containing screw driver, four magazines, two magazine chargers and a detachable Sten butt, 27-1/4 in x 11 in. Sold for 140-pounds. 140.*

**Lot 45** *A .30 U. S. M 1 Carbine with plain 18-inch barrel and receiver, straight bolt handle, three-quarter length stock, the butt cut for a sling, iron barrel band with sling swivel, chequered heel plate and original magazine, 35-5/8 in., in canvas bag. Sold for 1280.*

**Lot 46** *A 7.65 Webley and Scott Semi-Automatic Pistol, serial no. 130104, polished hammer, the left side of the frame stamped "Webley & Scott Ltd, London & Birmingham, 7.65 M/M & .32 Automatic Pistol," chequered hard rubber grips, 6in., about 85% blued finish, both grips chipped, magazine lacking. Not sold at auction—disposed of later in private sale.*

**Lot 47** *A 9mm Webley and Scott Semi-Automatic Pistol, serial no. 55419, with 3-3/4 barrel the slide stamped "Webley & Scott Ltd, London & Birmingham 9mm Automatic Pistol" and engraved "W.S.C. from J.M.B. 1911" chequered horn grips, the grip safety inscribed "The Rt. Hon. W. S. Churchill MP, House of Commons, Westminster," polished hammer, 8-1/8 in., about 70-percent blue, in velvet-lined leather case. Sold for 300-pounds.*

**Lot 48** *A Presentation. 303 Ross M1910 Mk. III Bolt-action Rifle with 30-1/4-inch barrel, the receiver stamped "Ross Rifle Co, Canada M-1910 Patented," straight pull bolt, the housing with adjustable rear-sight, walnut full stock with pistol grip, the butt with oval silver presentation plaque inscribed "To Rt. Hon. W. L. Spencer Churchill with the compliments of Colonel "The Hon. Sam Hughes M.P. Minister of Militia and Defense for Canada 14th February 1914" box magazine and blued steel furniture, 50-1/2 and a Mauser '98 Bayonet, 16-in. Sold for 750-pounds.*

The Ross rifle and the Lanchester submachine gun were purchased by the Imperial War Museum although the weapons are not currently on display, The two Sten guns and the Patchett (the early name for the Sterling sub-machine gun) went jointly to gunsmiths Roberts of 5 King Street, London and Weller and Dully of Birmingham and are still available for sale. However the withdrawal of all Ministry of Defense permits for prohibited weapons during the past five years has meant that private buyers in the UK are virtually non existent. Certain museums are still allowed to retain fully automatic weapons although, if on public display, these have usually been deactivated.

The 9mm Webley and Scott was purchased by gunsmiths Holland & Holland of 13 Burton Street, London and has since been resold.

Winston Churchill retained four pistols owned by his grandfather, a Wilkinson .45 revolver which he had used in north-west India in 1897 and a Colt .45 automatic which he had carried in the trenches in World War I and two post-war presentation weapons, a 9mm Browning and a Colt .45 Commander.

General Eisenhower was another Second War personality who liked to practice pistol shooting when time permitted but who also did not bother about official ranges. Captain Harry Butcher, his aide, records that they practiced at Telegraph Cottage (a weekend retreat for the General at Coombe Hill in south London) with a .22 pistol on several occasions in 1942.

He also records an amusing incident when this training was put to good use by the General on December 19, 1943 in Italy:

"After Ike returned from the front Sunday afternoon, he visited for the first time the hunting lodge, where he took up quarters. I had found this remote and ancient stone building, nestled amongst the hills which make the mountain ridge rising behind Caserta.

"I had perhaps oversold the joint to the boss and to myself In any event, when he arrived at the "dream cottage" he was tired and a bit disgruntled.

" So he sat down in the first room he entered—the living-room with the Italian stove—which was warm and, I thought, attractive. He wasn't inclined to move to accept my invitation to inspect my "dream cottage."

"Presently Mickey came dashing down from Ike's bedroom. He shouted, "There's a rat in the General's bathroom," and added that he was afraid of rats. He carried Telek (Ike's dog), who had discovered the rat, and wouldn't let him down.

"The rat was sitting on a toilet seat, a perfect target for Ike, who put on his spectacles, growled that the light was bad, and carefully took aim and shot—furrowing the seat under the rat. It jumped to a pipe. Always an advocate of trigger squeeze, he again took careful aim and shot. He clipped its tail. The rat jumped a foot higher, clinging to the pipe. Again Ike shot. The rat tumbled to the floor after a final shot and lay quivering. Williams was the mobile reserve and was on hand with a large stick of firewood and did the mopping up.

We wrote to Harry Butcher in Santa Barbara, California for more details of the incident and he kindly gave us a sketch map of the layout of the building where the shooting took place but, unfortunately, could not remember its location. However, Miss Anna Ortolani at the British Consulate General in Naples made inquiries for us and discovered that Ike used the "casina di caccia di San Silvestro"—Prince Umberto's hunting lodge in the San Silvestro reserve. We are indebted to her and to the Director of the Caserta Tourist Board for providing a photograph of the historic toilet! General Eisenhower's pistol is now at the United States Military Academy.

One weapon possessed by a wartime leader which can be seen on display in London is the Schmeisser MP 38 sub-machine gun captured from a German parachutist during the 1940 raid of Narvik and presented to the C-in-C of Polish forces, General Sikorski. The General died on July 4, 1943 but the gun, with a suitably engraved plate, remained in London. It can now be seen in the Sikorski Museum at Princes Gate, London.

On the opposite side, any weapon belonging to Adolf Hitler obviously rates the highest for interest value. We traced three pistols whose provenance can be reliably traced back to the Fuehrer.

The most impressive is a special presentation model Walther PP in 7.65mm caliber with deep engraving and thick, initialed ivory grips which was presented to Hitler on his 50th birthday by the Walther company at Zella-Mehlis. The pistol has no serial number but is engraved "Ehrengabe der Familien Walther" roughly translated as "a peace offering from the Walther family!" and has been authenticated by Heinz Linge, Hitler's valet. The entire pistol is a masterpiece of the engravers art. Minute attention has been given to every face of the weapon, on the sides of the trigger and trigger guard, head of the grip plate nut and bolt and even inside the safety well. The pistol was "liberated" by an American colonel in Germany in 1945 and brought back to the United States. Later the pistol was purchased, together with other personal items which had belonged to Hitler, by an antique firearm dealer in Cleveland, Ohio. In the late sixties, Andrew Wright, who has one of the largest collections of Third Reich memorabilia in North America, bought it for his museum located in the grounds of his farm at Swift Current, Saskatchewan, Canada. However, because of its value, the Walther is not on display and is kept in a bank vault.

Mr. Wright believes that his Walther is possibly the one used by Hitler to commit suicide. There are traces of human blood under the grips which have been analyzed by a laboratory as being of the same blood group as Hitler's. However the editor has positive information that the weapon which Hitler used on April 30, 1945, probably the most infamous weapon of all time, was picked up by one of those present in the bunker. The present German owner does not wish to be identified and has declined to reply to our request for a photograph.

Andrew Sivi of Jamestown, New York, served as a jeep driver for his headquarters' captain in the 45th "Thunderbird" Division. In Munich he was sent out with an advance detail to obtain quarters for the next day and Hitler's house at No. 16 Prinzregentenplatz was chosen as the unit's command post. Hitler's 65-year-old housekeeper Anny Winter, still living in the building, soon

befriended Pfc Sivi because, he says, "I looked German and the housekeeper said I had kind eyes." It was from her that he obtained several of Hitler's possessions, one being a fully-loaded 1904 Smith & Wesson .22 pistol No. 709 "in a fancy black case with gold hinges from Hitler's desk," says Sivi. "It was in the same drawer as his medals which included the Iron Cross." The housekeeper told him that it was the pistol that Hitler's niece Geli Raubal had used to commit suicide in that building on September 17/18, 1931 although this conflicts with Heinrich Hoffmann's description of the weapon as being "a small 6.35mm pistol" which is .25 caliber.

All the items were cleared by the US Army as legal war plunder and, shortly after Pfc Sivi was discharged in September 1945, his collection was displayed in Buffalo by the Army which placed its value at \$50,000. Mr. Sivi told us that he would sell the collection including the pistol, "if the right price can be had."

Another interesting German weapon is the pistol belonging to Albert Speer, now in the Air Force Museum at the Wright-Patterson right-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.

The German armaments minister, Albert Speer, celebrated his fortieth birthday on March 19, 1945 with an informal gathering in his office on the Pariser Platz in Berlin. With the broken windows boarded up with cardboard and the central heating inoperative for lack of coal, General Leeb, an officer with whom Speer had a strong friendly working relationship, presented him with an engraved 7.65mm Walther PP automatic pistol No. 21S361P. He presented it, he said, with thanks for Speer's co-operation.

In April 1945, Albert Speer had a tentative escape plan using the long-range seaplane which throughout the war had plied between northern Norway and the German weather station in Greenland. He was to be flown there by the German ace Werner Baumbach. However, when Hitler committed suicide and Grand Admiral Doenitz was appointed to be his successor, Speer scrapped this plan. When Germany surrendered on May 7, 1945, Albert Speer was a member of Doenitz's government. British troops surrounded Flensburg but, for two weeks, a hiatus reigned with neither arrest or freedom and Speer was permitted to accept the offer, by the Duke of Holstein, to stay at Glucksburg Castle near the Danish Border.

There he freely discussed the effects of, and his counter measures against, the bombing of Germany with members of the United States strategic Bombing Survey team attached to General Eisenhower's staff. General F. L. Anderson, Commander of Operations for the Eighth Air Force, came personally to thank Albert Speer for his help during these discussions. Anderson said of Albert Speer that, "Had I known what this man was achieving, I would have sent out the entire American Eighth Air Force merely to put him underground."

In an inspiration of the moment, touched that General Anderson his former enemy had visited him, Albert Speer presented Anderson with the Walther given to him two months earlier. Sitting in a room on the first floor of Glucksburg Castle, Speer wrote a letter of its surrender. The pistol was later given to the Air Force Museum by General Anderson and it is now on display together with the original letter and its translation.

The surrender of a personal weapon, be it a sword by a Japanese or a sidearm by a Western officer, has always been a token of the laying down of arms. Such weapons are obviously greatly prized by their recipients and none more so than the four pistols taken by Major General Robert V. Hasbrouck following the surrender of the German L111 Panzer Corps in the Ruhr pocket when four German generals visited his command post near Minden on April 16, 1945. Generalmajor Fritz Bayerlein, commander of the L111 Panzer Corps surrendered a Spanish Royal which he had obtained during the Spanish Civil War. Generalleutnant Ernst Hammer of the 190th Infantry Division handed over his 9mm Luger whilst Generalmajor Siegfried Waldenburg of the 116th Panzer Division surrendered a 7.63mm Mauser complete with its wooden holster/ shoulder stock. The fourth pistol, a 9mm Walther P.38, was surrendered by the commander of the 180th Infantry Division, Generalmajor Bernard Klosterkemper.

As is evident by this mixed bag of pistols, German generals had no uniformity concerning their personal sidearms. Nevertheless, Major General Hasbrouck writes that "I have retained them to this day . . . mounted on a board along with a copy of the surrender picture . . . as souvenirs of a gratifying war experience."

## **WC57: A Dodge for Patton** by Chris Benedict

**Army Motors**  
Winter 1980-81, #16, pp 9-10

During the Second World War George S. Patton, Jr. had a variety of vehicles modified for his own use in the field. These ranged from an M3 half-track with complete armored roof, to a GPW with wider fenders and more comfortable passenger seating. The Dodge command car shown in the accompanying U.S. Army photos was rebuilt for the then Lieutenant General Patton. Dated March 1944, these shots were taken shortly after Patton had assumed the leadership of what was to be his most famous command, the Third Army. Unlike some of Patton's other, special vehicles, at first glance the WC-57 appears little different than stock. Actually, the entire floor and sides of the body were armored against mine fragments. This work was carried out, along with a number of detail changes, by Ordnance soldiers at Cheltenham, England. The writer would like to thank Bryce Sunderlin for pointing out several interesting features of this unusual Dodge 3/4 ton.

The finished, or nearly so, product. A grab rail with cloth cover has been installed behind the front seat. This was no doubt for use by the colorful general when he stood in the vehicle reviewing his troops. A siren was bolted on just behind the right tow hook in front. On the wall the sign reads: IT THAT ENTERS/THIS DOOR ALL/ BROKEN AND/BENT WILL RISE/AGAIN SOME DAY/FOR YORE, THAT/SOME CRAZY/SOUL MAY/WRECK ONCE/MORE./ RECEIVING and INSPECTING DEPT.

Armor plate being welded into Patton's jeep. The floor plate looks like it was salvaged from the side of a half-track, complete with star insignia. The cab doors from a half-track extend the armor up behind the passenger seat. The holes for the door handles can be seen just above the back of the welder. Small armor plates have been attached to the body sides between the command car's door cutouts.

This was clearly a lieutenant general's command car. A hinged armor plate protected the radiator. It appears that its supports were borrowed from a Dodge windshield. A compressor for the air horns was installed under the hood. This unit was the same part used for tire inflation in the desert kit for the MB/GPW. The headlights have both been masked for blackout work. This was a change often made on American Army vehicles operating in the United Kingdom, where blackout driving was the rule rather than the exception. The left hand flag had not yet had the insignia of the Third Army added.

The luggage rack was a very neat modification, using the tailgate from a weapons carrier. A pioneer tool bracket and blitz can holder had also been attached to the rear of the 3/4 ton. The five gallon can bracket was displaced from its usual spot on the right running board by the machine gun mount. The right rear reflector has been repositioned to accommodate this alteration. The

gasoline can was sometimes moved to the rear of ordinary command cars in order to provide more room on the running board for getting in and out of the vehicle.

A close-up of the machine gun installation. A slightly modified M31 mount was fitted. This item was intended for 1/4 ton trucks. Even with the armor plate extending under the running board, putting the M2 HB there may not have been a very good idea. During the war the recoil of the .50 cal. was known to sometimes rip the floor and even the intermediate frame cross-member right out of jeeps. It seems questionable that the running board location would have had the structural strength to resist the hammering of the heavy mg. The machine gun, perhaps only borrowed for the photo session, lacked its spade grips.

## **Patton and the Press** by Martin Blumenson

**Army Magazine**  
Volume 32, Number 5  
May 1982, pp 66-72

No wonder he drew a crowd. No wonder they listened intently to his words, reluctant to miss a nuance or a joke. No wonder they laughed at his exuberance and penchant for exaggeration, even as they were impressed with his knowledge and professionalism.

He dominated the assemblage. A big man, handsome, beautifully and carefully dressed, he exuded a distinct charisma. He was definitely a personality, with great natural authority as well as great charm. He spoke easily, confidently, sometimes boisterously, and always with a talent for profanity.

If he were wary of them, it was with good reason. They had burned him twice before: once in Sicily where they had sensationalized his slapping of two soldiers whom he considered cowards and again in England just before the invasion when they had distorted his innocent remarks and splashed them across the printed page. On both occasions, they had put him into the doghouse, come close to wrecking his career and to ending his participation in combat.

They had almost had him removed from the war, he, the most daring and the most successful American field commander on the European side of the conflict. No one yet knew that they would do it to him once again-after the war was over.

As a matter of fact, they both needed each other. General George S. Patton Jr. wanted his soldiers and their families to read accounts of what his troops were doing because that was good for morale. In addition, he had no aversion to having his name in the headlines and blazoned across the newspaper pages.

The correspondents, on the other hand, found that he made their job easier because he was good copy. What he said was quotable. The information he gave made sense. He treated them fairly. Furthermore, he always put on a good show.

During the campaigns of 1944 and 1945 in Europe, General Patton enjoyed an unusually close relationship with members of the press. He was already a legendary figure from his exploits in North Africa and Sicily, a hero, a military genius of undoubted stature. And even though newspapermen are generally supposed to be a cynical, hard-bitten lot, ready to take advantage of a

slip of the tongue or an indiscretion for their own purposes, they genuinely admired and respected the man for his obvious contributions to winning the war.

So the two antagonists, Patton and the press, enjoyed each other, jousting and sparring with each other good-naturedly, and laughed together during the dozen times they met formally in an office, a tent or a field for an exchange of views during the campaigns in Europe.

Normally, General Patton started with an announcement or an explanation or a few words of caution. Then the reporters asked questions and he responded, frankly if he could tell them what they wanted to know, evasively if the information was classified secret—but always succinctly and in high spirits.

He handled them well because he had had plenty of experience dealing with the press. Throughout his 35 years of military service, he had often been the object of reportorial curiosity.

As early as 1912, when he had participated in the Olympic games in Stockholm, the only American entered in the modern pentathlon event, he had attracted reporters' attention and been interviewed. Four years later, in order to convince General John J. Pershing to take him with him into Mexico on the Punitive Expedition, he had said that he was "good" with newspaper correspondents.

In Mexico, in addition to his other duties, he had worked with newsmen, censoring their dispatches, making sure that their housing and mess facilities were as comfortable as possible. Among them were veteran reporters—Floyd Gibbons, who later gained international renown, as well as representatives of the *New York Times*, the *New York Tribune* and the Associated Press.

Patton became a national hero a few months later when, in command of a dozen men in three automobiles, he killed three of Pancho Villa's soldiers. All the correspondents interviewed him at length before sending out their stories. Six months afterwards, having burned his face and hand badly in an accident, he took leave and went home to California, where his father was campaigning for election to the U.S. Senate. The son accompanied him on several trips and met and spoke with the reporters on hand.

During World War I, he was in frequent contact with the press on the achievements of his tankers. And in World War II, starting with his prominent efforts to publicize and glorify in the press the prowess of the newly emerging American tanks, he was almost constantly engaged in a friendly dialogue with the news media. His accomplishments in North Africa and Sicily, widely reported in *Time* and other journals, made him very well known in the United States.

He was already a considerable public figure when he arrived in Normandy on 6 July, 1944, a month after D-day. Many people, including some professional photographers and reporters, wanted to take his picture and talk with him. He waved them off and warned them that he was still a secret."

That was the problem. A gigantic Allied deception plan was in progress to fool the Germans, to make them believe that still another and larger invasion was scheduled for the coast of northern France and Belgium. At the head of this fictitious force was George S. Patton Jr. If the press made known his presence in Normandy, the hoax, which the Germans had swallowed hook, line and sinker, would collapse.

As he wrote to his wife two days later, "If you guess where I am, keep it dark as I am supposed to be somewhere else." Somewhat later he referred to himself as "a secret weapon."

While Patton and his Third Army waited in July to be committed to battle, nearly 40 newspaper and radio reporters were assigned to his headquarters. They lived in a press camp nearby, attended news briefings given by Patton's public relations officer every day, traveled around to visit units and see the sights, and wrote their stories or their broadcasts to keep the people back home informed on how the war was proceeding.

The first time that Patton met formally with them as a body was to discuss an unfortunate breach of security. General Omar N. Bradley's First Army was preparing a plan code-named



"Cobra" for a massive surprise attack using airplanes and tanks. It was so secret that General Bradley's public relations officer did not brief the First Army correspondents on it. Patton's public relations officer did so after swearing them to secrecy. Newspaper reporters from the Third Army let their counterparts at First Army know that they were privy to a very hush-hush plan, and the latter complained. General Bradley was disturbed, and he let Patton know.

Patton learned about this at ten o'clock on the night of 17 July, but he immediately took action. Going out to the correspondents' camp, he called them all together and lectured them on the danger of violating his trust in them and on the danger to the projected operation.

Stating that he did not know whether he was more shocked or disgusted, he stressed the menace to American soldiers' lives if news of Cobra leaked to the enemy. He wanted them all to understand the gravity of the situation, to realize the extent of their responsibility to the course of the war.

"I am not threatening," he told them, "because it is not necessary—it is foolish to threaten—but as patriotic citizens" the reporters had to be aware of the importance of security. "I shall continue to trust you, but you must realize that you must not—I repeat—not, never, never, never talk about anything that you are told unless it is specifically told you that you can mention it."

He concluded by saying, "If anybody asks you whether you have been briefed on the operation, you must stand mute. I am trusting you, gentlemen."

That evening in his diary, Patton wrote, "I do not think they divulged the plan to the other correspondents, but like little boys boasted that they knew something."

The Third Army became operational on 1 August, and in two weeks broke out of the Cotentin, swept through Brittany, flashed around the flank of the two German armies in Normandy, and liberated an enormous part of France. But no word of Patton or his army was permitted to appear in the press, for the Germans were still being fooled by the deception.

Finally, on 16 August, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the supreme Allied commander, announced publicly that Patton and his Third Army were actively involved in the campaign.

Now that Patton was no longer, as he said, "incognito," now that he was "released to the public," he was excited and happy beyond description. His name began to appear with startling regularity in the public prints and over the air.

Yet, he refrained from meeting with the correspondents assigned to his headquarters until the pursuit across France petered out for lack of gasoline. Then, after repeated requests from the reporters to meet formally with him, he agreed. On the evening of 7 September, he appeared before them.

"The inquisition is now on," he said, grinning. "Before starting the inquisition, I wish to reiterate that I am not quotable, and if you want to get me sent home, quote me, goddamn it."

The point was, what Patton told them was either for color or as background information for their own knowledge. Nothing was to be attributed directly to him. Otherwise, they might distort his remarks, get him into trouble and prompt his removal. Despite his ban on quotation, he talked in a most quotable manner. "I am very proud of the troops of this army for getting across the goddamn river (the Moselle). I like it because I like that kind of wine, but I am not quotable, goddamn it. I don't drink anything but lemonade . . . when I can't get anything else."

They laughed, of course. But he had done that for effect, to get the reporters in a good mood. He quickly asked that they render more recognition to the work of the airplane pilots who were giving the ground troops excellent close tactical support. That was serious.

Then rapidly he shifted the mood and told a story on himself, how he had been wounded in the last war, in 1918. "I was shot in the ass." (That was not true, but it served his purpose.)

"There was a good story about that, but you mustn't tell it. Some fellow said that Patton must have been going to the rear when he was shot. My general said, 'You goddamn bastards, if Patton had sat in an armchair as long as you have, the bullet would have bounced.' "

He turned serious again and described briefly and impressively the previous operations of the Third Army and the projected plans. He concluded by saying, "I hope to go through the Siegfried Line like shit through a goose. That is not quotable."

Then he threw the meeting open to questions. When a reporter referred to the gasoline shortage, he said, "We mustn't talk about that." He had serious reservations on the competence of the supply people. But he kept them to himself to avoid controversy and instead brought them up to date on the logistical deficiencies—"off the record and not to be quoted." Referring to the German enemy, he said, "I never cared where I killed the bastards."

There were many questions, and he answered some soberly, some with jocularly and some with profanity. Asked what basis there was for his belief that he would go through the Siegfried Line quickly, he sought to push it aside. "My natural optimism," he said with a grin. When the questioner persisted, he said, "You can't have men (the Germans) retreating for 300 or 400 miles and then hold anything—the psychological result in long retreats."

But the Siegfried Line was supposed to be many miles deep. Patton did not think so. Actually, he did not care. "My personal opinion is that I don't give a goddamn where the German is; I will lick him."

That sounded like bragging or worse, and he corrected himself at once. "I mean the American or British or Canadian troops will lick him."

Was the Third Army going to Berlin? He didn't know and didn't care. "I am going to lick the next SOB in front of me." To what extent did the FFI—the French Forces of the Interior—assist the troops?

"Better than expected and less than advertised." Had any buzzbombs fallen on the Third Army? "No, thank God. I don't like buzzbombs; that is a damn impersonal way of going to hell."

How had he kept his army going so fast? "I never worried about flanks. That was probably due to my long-felt masculine virility." Could they quote him on that? "No, by God. If you do I will send you home."

Then he spoke professionally about the Siegfried Line, about the effect of artillery air bursts, about air support, the use of tanks and other technical matters. At one point he talked facetiously and somehow poignantly about himself.

"As a matter of fact, gentlemen, I have the unfortunate ability to be good press for some reason or other, and as far as my military future is concerned, it is not good for me to be good press. So I would prefer not to be. After all, a goddamn army commander doesn't do anything but sit around and curse . . . Really, I am sincere about this. It is rather a disadvantage to be large and florid and profane, because people say all kinds of things about you which are not true. For every man that I have goddamned, there have been a thousand that I have patted on the back . . . So I am considered to be a self-made SOB who goes around cursing everyone."

How about supplies? "In my opinion, it has been magnificent."

This was less than candid, but he had to display loyalty to the command system. Privately, he had moaned and groaned about the deficiencies of supply.

No criticism of the supply? he was asked again. "God, no. Not only no criticism, but the supply of the armies . . . has been better than any human being imagined would be possible."

Patton certainly had his fingers crossed when he said that. And again, he was less than honest when he said, "Nobody has greater admiration for General Montgomery than I have." But he had to say that in the interest of promoting and solidifying the Anglo-American partnership in the war.

His performance was magnificent. He played up to the reporters, reinforced his image, followed instructions rather than his own inclinations and praised Bradley, Montgomery and the supply people. He was extremely good copy. He put on a great show.

The next time he met with the correspondents was on the evening of 23 September, a time of depression, disappointment and discouragement for the Allies. The weather was bad, the offensive

had slowed and the supplies getting forward to the troops were still in small quantities. Yet Patton showed only optimism. He was positively jovial. Asked how he thought things would go beyond the Siegfried Line, he answered, "I think we will go like shit through a tin horn."

Was the neighboring First Army on easier terrain? "Sure. How the hell do you think the SOBs are getting along? They laughed. "But don't tell them that I said that." They laughed again.

After a learned discourse, both historical and technical, on the forts around Metz, he was asked whether he knew of any German secret weapons. "Bull," he answered. Would the Nazis go underground when the Allies got to Germany? "Six feet."

Then he told a story about a cadet at West Point who was reproved for wasting toilet paper and who defended himself by saying, "that he could not have been more careful if he had used both sides."

After the burst of sustained laughter, Patton concluded, "Well, gentlemen, I repeat, whatever I said will not be used against me." He did not wish to be quoted or misquoted.

In October, the number of newspaper and radio correspondents accredited to his headquarters rose to 65. He met with them in his office late in the afternoon of 6 November, and the first thing he did was to ask for a favor.

"Sometime ago," he said, "I told you we were going to be stopped for a while . . . Now, we are going to start again." He wanted them to mislead the enemy. "You all do some lying and say this is simply what we called in the last war correcting a line. In other words, I do not want the Germans to start moving reserves" against the Third Army.

Then came the quest question-and-answer period. In response to a query on whether the Germans had much strength in the Siegfried Line, he said, "Yes, they have." But he was undismayed; he would get through.

"This reminds me of years ago when we first started making armored cars. Everybody wanted to put more and more armor on them . . . The chief of cavalry then said, 'Gentlemen, I have always feared that in the next war someone would get killed.' The sooner we start, the less time the Germans will have to fix things up."

Someone complained that there had been no real news for a long time. "Well," Patton said, "You gentlemen have been very patient. Now remember, I want these junior officers given breaks in this. They walk in the shit and sleep in the mud. They don't have a nice warm office like this, and you men should give them the breaks."

He wanted fewer stories about him and the brass, more coverage of the combat soldiers.

Finally, he cautioned them about the impending operation. "Don't even talk about it at mess because it could cost a great many thousands of lives. I know I can trust YOU."

Little more than two weeks later, he met with the reporters again. He had little to say, and the question period was short. The Germans were conducting a stubborn defense; the terrain was difficult and the weather was bad. His mind was on other matters, mainly on how he could gain a decisive tactical victory.

His next meeting was in Luxembourg City on 1 January, 1945, a time of great personal success. The Germans had launched their climactic Ardennes counteroffensive against the First Army in mid-December and had carved a great bulge in the Allied line. Patton had swung his Third Army 90 degrees around, and his subsequent attacks had relieved the surrounded airborne division in Bastogne, struck the German flank and sealed off all possibility of a further German triumph. He was happy and ebullient as he outlined the amazing movements that his army had made.

"Now that sounds like what a great man George Patton is, but I did not have anything to do with it. (That, of course, was nonsense.) I told General Gay and the staff, and they got the movement orders out. The people who actually did it were the younger officers and soldiers . . . I take off my hat to them."

That was nice. Obviously, he had had a lot to do with the events. Yet he wanted the credit to go to the men in the freezing foxholes.

Downplaying his mastery of tactical movements, he referred to an operation in which there was a particularly fortunate matter of timing: "If I were a liar," he said, "I would have said that I planned it, but actually I was lucky as hell."

"All this," he added, "is, of course, off the record."

If you pinch off a lot of Germans, someone asked, was there any chance that the front would collapse? "What do you think I went to church for yesterday?" Patton responded with a broad grin. Did the enemy have much armor? "They got damn little armor left—unless they have reproductive tanks."

The strength of the enemy in Holland? "That is out of my line. I am only interested in the SOB where he is right now in front of me . . . We can lick the German any place. I don't really care where he fights. We'll find him and kick his teeth in."

He was buoyant, obviously riding the crest of a wave of popularity.

At a rather short meeting on 12 January, he stressed the same themes. He hoped that the Germans would attack because, "we'll wipe their ass right off." He hoped that "these SOBs attack somewhere soon" because "we can lick them anywhere." "The Germans were shit out of luck." He was "just waiting to bite this fellow (the German) in the ass."

But he was upset. His superiors would not let him go over on the offensive. In a letter to his wife that day, he wrote, "Personally, I would attack them right now . . . but others don't like to take the chances I do. I feel that if we attack him (the enemy), he can't attack us."

When he next met with the correspondents, still in Luxembourg City, on 23 February, everyone was tired and discouraged because of the bad weather and the mud. Not Patton. He was his usual irrepressible self. He talked about the operations in the Moselle-Saar triangle, said they were "exceedingly well timed," and gave credit to his corps commanders. He spoke about "the utter futility of defense." Action, offensive action, was what was needed. "Wars are won by the people who actually go out and do things."

On the subject of the next war sometime in the future, which he thought was inevitable, he warned about false prophets who said that the 3,000 miles of the Atlantic Ocean would protect the United States. "Twenty years from now this 3,000 miles of ocean will be just a good spit. This is a very serious thing, and many people don't visualize this very grave danger."

He spoke on the danger of believing that weapons were more important than soldiers and soldiering. The contrary was true. Someone asked whether he was going to take Trier. "I fear we lost the boat on that one," he admitted. "We had a bridge train knocked out-but don't say that. This is the first bad luck the army has had."

Still in Luxembourg on 17 March, he met with the reporters for half an hour. He started out by saying that the Marines gained publicity by reporting the large number of casualties they had in battle. In contrast, he always tried to fight without suffering many casualties.

He was proud of the fact-and he said they could publicize it-that in 230 days of operations, the Third Army had captured 230,000 prisoners." That is a thousand a day," he said.

He was authorizing them to take a picture of the 230,000th prisoner, but they were not to humiliate the captured man by showing his face. They could "take a picture of his ass."

He had another favor to ask. Not for himself—"God knows," he said, he had had enough publicity. "I could go to heaven and St. Peter would recognize me right away."

He wanted more stories about his officers and men. And he wanted the names of his divisions released to the public. Furthermore, he wanted "the Germans to know we have four armored divisions jumping on them . . . Of course, you needn't say where."

Then he had second thoughts on his statement at the beginning. "Don't say that the Marines advertise casualties. I was merely trying to emphasize my point."

The First Army had captured a bridge across the Rhine River at Remagen a week or so earlier. Patton was disappointed that they had crossed the Rhine before his army had done so. Yet, when someone asked which was more important, the fighting in front of the Third Army or a bridge across the Rhine, he answered forthrightly: "A bridge across the Rhine."

On 30 March, they were in Oberstein, Germany, and Patton was in fine form and fettle. "I first want to thank all of you," he said, "for helping me out with those remarks I asked you to make about weapons. I read several editorials from home and, while I was not quoted, it was damn well said."

In the interest of Allied unity, he added, "I also wish to thank the members of the British press for the very fine write-ups we have received in England."

He was extremely proud that the Third Army had taken so few losses. He hoped that the press would "continue, as you have so nicely done," to give credit to the junior officers and to the combat soldiers. He thought that if the Germans could read, "what you wrote, they would surrender quicker."

Did he know where the Third Army was headed? "I don't know," he replied, "and I'm sure nobody else knows. It has gotten to the point where you go where you damn well please."

The German resistance was breaking, and the end of the war was obviously approaching.

On 20 April, in Herzfeld, Germany, Patton thanked the press for the publicity they had given the concentration camps. The existence of the infamous death camps proved how evil the Nazis were, gave point to the Allied war effort, and convinced the people back home that the war was necessary and worthwhile.

He had just been promoted to full general, and someone in the press corps congratulated him on behalf of all of them. He responded with a simple "Thank you." He was on his way to meeting the Russians, and the prospect dispirited him.

On 27 April, he flew over Nuremberg, "the most completely destroyed place I have ever seen," he later wrote in his diary. "It is really rather pathetic to see such a historical monument so completely removed."

Later that day he met with the correspondents at Erlangen, and he was rather subdued. He told them that he appreciated "your staying mum" on a change of direction of the Third Army. "I am very much obliged. That was a very nice operation for which the staff gets the praise."

Could he say anything about the Nazi redoubt area in the mountains of Germany and Austria, where high-level German officials were rumored to be holing up for a last-ditch stand? "I think it is a figment of the imagination." When did he think the war would end? He wagered it would be 10 May, two days too late, as it turned out.

"The war is sort of petering out," he wrote to his son, "He wrote to his son. Personally, I cannot see why the Germans keep on fighting." In his diary he wrote, "Personally, I cannot see where there is very much more glory in this war, and I am afraid it will end on an anticlimax."

Germany surrendered, and on that day in Regensburg, Patton held his last wartime press conference. "I certainly appreciate your efforts," he said, "in informing the people back home of the various units composing this Army and their whereabouts. I have received hundreds of letters from parents of soldiers I don't know emphasizing that point, and I want to thank you for it."

Were there any questions? Someone said that troops had just overrun "the worst concentration camp yet." Patton immediately put his personal airplane at their disposition, saying that several reporters could fly up and take pictures.

Could he explain why his army did not go into Prague? "I can tell you exactly," he said. "We were told not to. I don't know the exact reasons, but those were the orders. Of course, there are probably many reasons which we don't know which would explain this."

But he resented that he had been prohibited from liberating the capital of Czechoslovakia.

His resentment turned to momentary sullenness when he was asked the next question: did he object to releasing the story about the capture of a large cache of German state gold? "I have no objection to anything," he said. Was there a problem on who owned the gold? "I don't give a damn."

Then came a question that foreshadowed trouble. What about the Nazi SS troops? "SS means no more in Germany," he said, somewhat thoughtlessly and irresponsibly, "than being a Democrat in America—that is not to be quoted. I mean by that that initially the SS people were special SOBs, but as the war progressed, they ran out of SOBs and then they put anybody in there. Some of the top SS men will be treated as criminals, but there is no reason for trying someone who was drafted into this outfit."

Some of the correspondents would remember this reply, and after the war they would stalk Patton on this point.

For the moment, there was not much more to be said, except, "Well, I wish you good-bye and all the best of luck."

Then, as he later wrote in his diary, Patton "was excessively photographed by them and with them. I also signed a large number of short-snorters (dollar bills with autographs of friends and colleagues) and handed out a general letter of thanks, which I had personally signed."

That was the end of the pleasant association between Patton and the press. His unfortunate statement that Nazis were hardly different from Democrats or Republicans rankled in some reporters' minds. They wondered whether Patton, whom they admired for his magnificent wartime achievements, was qualified for and equal to his postwar mission of heading the occupation of a portion of Germany.

The confrontation came on 22 September. The daily briefings during the war had become Saturday-morning sessions and, on that day, Patton met with 11 newspapermen. He was touchy and in bad humor, and during the discussion he lost his temper. Again he compared members of the Nazi Party to members of the Democratic and Republican parties.

Patton himself recorded in his diary his impression of the dialogue. "This morning," he wrote, "we had the ragtag and bobtail remnants of the great U.S. press present . . . always had them on my side. Today, there was very apparent hostility, not against me personally, but against the Army in general." He had become "mad, which I think is what they wanted."

On the following day, stories broke in the newspapers at home quoting Patton as having said, "The Nazi thing is just like a Democrat-Republican election fight." So completely at variance with the actuality, this statement, along with other thoughtless pronouncements of his, made it necessary for General Eisenhower to relieve him from command of his beloved Third Army.

Relegated to command the Fifteenth Army, a paper organization concerned with writing up the lessons of the war, Patton was in the doghouse again. He spent the next two months, the last two of his life, in bitter rumination of his fate.

He would have been surprised—nay, astonished—at the outpouring of sincere grief and the array of dazzling praise that appeared in the press upon his death just before Christmas.

Never again, since then, has Patton been in the doghouse. On the contrary, the fact that he is an American folk hero is due in large part to the publicity this authentic military genius received, during his life and afterwards, from members of the press. They have more than atoned for the three times they burned him.

**Patton in Mexico**  
by Martin Blumenson

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George S. Patton, Jr.'s participation in the Punitive Expedition is recorded in a variety of his papers left to posterity—letters to his wife and parents, almost daily entries in a journal he started when he went off to Mexico, and more or less formal documents like reports and official correspondence. During the eleven months of the expedition's life, Patton's point of view changed drastically. The great excitement of taking part in a military action turned into an attempt to cope with the monotony of a static existence that had virtually lost its meaning.

Despite the disappointment that the events failed to meet his expectations, Patton in the end drew profit from the experience of taking part in his first campaign. What he learned and how he grew he logged explicitly in his papers.

U.S. troops were patrolling the Mexican border to guard against depredations from a country in revolutionary turmoil when Patton, in mid-1915, was assigned to Fort Bliss, Texas, then commanded by Brigadier General John J. Pershing. After several months of service in the field, Patton was transferred to the post headquarters. He secured a house, and his wife Beatrice joined him. Not long thereafter, on March 9, 1916, Pancho Villa and a band of several hundred men raided Columbus, New Mexico, shot up the town, and killed seventeen Americans. Pershing was instructed to form a Punitive Expedition and pursue Villa into Mexico.

A second lieutenant seven years out of West Point, 30-year-old Patton quickly discovered that his regiment was not to accompany Pershing. The reason was that Pershing wanted young, lean, and tough officers and troops with him. The colonel who was Patton's regimental commander was old, fat, and out of shape for active campaigning. We "will sit here and watch the rest go past us," Patton wrote his father. "It is hell to be so near a fine fight and not get in it . . . so I went to General Pershing and asked him to take me as an aid[e]. He said he would if he could so I still have hopes."

Actually, Patton was Officer of the Day on March 12, when he learned definitely that his regiment would stay in Texas. He immediately went to see his regimental adjutant and asked him to recommend Patton to Pershing as an aide. When he found out that Major John L. Hines was to be Pershing's adjutant general, Patton asked him the same thing. He repeated his request to Lieutenant Shallenberger, one of Pershing's two aides.

Someone must have told Pershing about Patton's wish, for later that afternoon Pershing called Patton to his office and said he had heard that Patton wanted to go with him. Patton emphatically confirmed his desire. The general was noncommittal. After supper Patton called on Pershing, repeated his wish, and suggested that he could work well with the newspaper correspondents, although he would do anything.

Next morning Pershing called Patton at 8:30 and said that Patton could be a provisional and temporary aide, since his regular aide, Lieutenant Collins, was absent but would soon rejoin him.

Patton was overjoyed. He would be where the action was. That was what was important to him.

Eight years later, recalling why Pershing had selected him, Patton embellished the story:

I . . . learned by grapevine methods and good eyesight that a Punitive Expedition was in progress of formation . . . Determined to participate, I got permission to speak to the General and asked him to take me to Mexico in any capacity. He replied, "Every one wants to go; why should I

favor you?" "Because," I answered, I want to go more than any one else." This modest reply failed to get any answer except a curt "That will do."

. . . Undiscouraged I then went home and packed my bedding roll and saddle. At 5 o'clock next morning the telephone rang and on answering it, the General's voice inquired, "Lieut. Patton, how long will it take you to get ready?" When he heard that I was ready, he exclaimed, "I'll be G.—D.—You are appointed Aide."

They traveled to Columbus by train, saddled their horses, crossed into Mexico in the early morning hours of March 16, and traveled fifty-two miles that day. "The Gen loaned me a saddle blanket to replace one that someone stole from me while we were eating," Patton wrote in his diary. I stole another one for him."

Fifty-eight miles farther, they reached Colonia Dublan, a Mormon community, where they camped. Patton's horse fell on him but "did not hurt me much." More exasperating was that he broke his flashlight, a valuable piece of equipment.

Patton watched as Pershing planned his campaign while sitting under a large tree near the river. Undoubtedly Pershing asked for no advice, but he probably discussed his thinking with the young officer. On the following day, his two regular aides arrived with four automobiles: a Buick, a Dodge, and two Fords. Patton's service should have come to an end but he had by then proved his usefulness. Because Pershing's staff was extremely small, his aides were kept busy performing a variety of functions. A photograph appearing in the San Francisco Chronicle in mid-April showed Pershing and seven officers "somewhere in Mexico." They were standing in front of tents and wearing campaign hats and a variety of nondescript field uniforms. Patton was the only one wearing a tie—his fetish for dress was already apparent.

Patton volunteered to take a message from Pershing to a field commander who had engaged Villista forces in a skirmish somewhere in the south. He rode all day long. At night when he slept, the weather was "Very cold. All I took off was my field glasses." He found the unit and delivered the dispatch. It was cold in the mountains, and sleet, snow, hail, and rain added to the discomfort. "We all suffered much." Reporting back to Pershing, Patton rode for 16 hours at a walk with one hour's rest. At camp he "took a big drink and went to bed 11 P.M. Slept well. Awoke at 6, covered with snow."

About three weeks after he arrived in Mexico, early in April, Patton accompanied a column of troops hunting for Villa. They rode for five hours but found no one. He was disappointed. In a letter home to his parents he said that they were all getting "plenty to eat but nothing else to amuse us."

There were other opportunities for diversion. Soon afterward he wrote that he had had "a most exciting ride the other night. I went 26 miles through the mountains at night with two men. We expected to be jumped and once hid from some six horse wagons whom we thought were Mexicans."

By the end of April the boredom had started to set in, "Fine day," Patton wrote in his diary. "Nothing to do. I trapped chipmunk," The following day, "I inspected horses for Gen."

"We have been very idle ever since reaching here," Patton wrote his father, "and it is most tiresome sitting out on a bluff over a river in the sun and dust. We can't go to town because they shoot at us now and then and the Gen. does not want to start any thing unless he can finish it."

in May came the highlight of Patton's Mexican service. Pershing sent him with three automobiles and fourteen men to buy corn from Mexicans in the area. On a hunch Patton decided to visit a ranch reputed to be owned by an uncle of Julio Cardenas, a noted Villista. A few miles out on the road leading north from the village of Rubio, Patton stopped his vehicles and carefully explained to his men what he planned to do.

In the leading car, Patton would have his driver speed up as soon as they came within sight of the Saltillo ranch. He was to pass the house and halt just beyond it. The driver and a soldier were



to remain in the car while Patton and two others ran across the northern end of the hacienda. The second and third cars were to stop just south of the house. Three men from each of these cars were to race across the southern end of the ranch. That would leave six men in the cars to cover the road and the northern, western, and southern sides of the house. The other nine men were to meet on the eastern side and search the place.

They carried out this plan and found only Cardenas' uncle, who sold them some corn. Something in the uncle's behavior led Patton to suspect that Cardenas might be at home at the San Miguelito ranch, some six miles away, where his wife, mother, and baby lived. He decided to carry out the same operation.

As Patton's car was approaching and speeding past the house, he noticed three old men and a boy skinning a cow in the yard on the eastern side of the house. One man ran into the residence, then returned and continued his work.

When his car stopped just beyond the northwestern corner of the ranch, Patton jumped out and ran along the northern edge of the house. One man was immediately behind him. Patton rounded the northeastern corner and walked toward a gate and a big arched door. The two other cars had stopped near the southwestern corner of the building, and six men rushed along the southern end of the building.

When Patton was about fifteen if teen yards from the main gate, three men armed with rifles and pistols dashed out on horseback. Seeing Patton, they wheeled to the right toward the southeastern corner of the house. Patton refrained from firing his pistol, for he did not know who they were. Perhaps they were not Villistas at all.

The horsemen reached the southeastern corner and saw the six Americans coming from that side. They turned back and galloped toward Patton, firing their guns. Patton returned the fire with five shots from his pistol at a range of about 20 yards. He did not know it then, but two bullets struck home. One hit a man in the right arm and broke it. The other entered the belly of the man's horse.

The Americans at the other end came around the corner and started to shoot. Since Patton was in their line of fire, he and the man with him ducked around the corner. Consequently, he failed to see the man and the horse his bullets had hit turn into the arched gateway and re-enter the interior court of the ranch.

Patton reloaded, then came around the corner to the eastern side again. A man on a horse was coming right at him. Remembering someone's advice to shoot at the horse of an escaping man, Patton fired at the mount, broke the horse's hip, and the animal fell on his rider.

The rider disentangled himself, rose, and brandished his pistol. Patton and three others all fired at him; he crumpled and fell. Another man was about 100 yards away and riding eastward until Patton, together with four or five other Americans, felled him with rifle fire.

Suddenly they noticed the third man about 300 yards away and running along a wall. He was the one who had been hit by Patton at the beginning of the fight and had turned his wounded horse into the courtyard. He had re-entered the house and jumped out of a window on the western side, then fled on foot.

Several of Patton's men fired at him and he dropped. A soldier went to him and saw that the wounded man had lifted his left hand in surrender. When the American was about twenty feet from the man, the Mexican raised his pistol in his right hand, fired, and missed. The American killed him.

The three men and boy who were skinning the cow had coolly continued their work. Patton called them, and, using them as shields, he and three of his party entered the house and searched all the rooms. They found a young woman, an older woman, and a baby—wife, mother, and child. No one spoke.

Outside, the cow skinners said that the bodies were Colonel Julio Cardenas, Captain Isador Lopez, and Private Juan Garza. To verify the identification, Patton's men strapped the corpses on the hoods of their cars and took them back to headquarters.

Pershing was pleased by the exploit, was very complimentary to Patton-these were important Villistas he had killed-and called him his "bandit."

The New York Times correspondent interviewed Patton immediately afterward and filed a story. When it appeared, it made Patton a national hero for about a week. Many newspapers picked it up and ran it on their front pages, for there had been no real news about the expedition, no real results, no glorious triumph; there were only accounts of columns marching endlessly through difficult country, of soldiers enduring hardships, and of the general and his staff inspecting units. Now, suddenly, an attractive young man had accomplished something, and all America came to know about it.

Patton wrote to his wife: "As you have probably seen by the papers, I have at last succeeded in getting into a fight . . . I have always expected to be scared but was not nor was I excited. I was afraid they would get away.

In Mexico the excitement was short-lived. There was nothing to do. Patton played horseshoes, had a chill, and went to bed early: "did absolutely nothing but take a bath." Duties were routine.

Patton was promoted to first lieutenant in May, but it would take the news and the orders a long time to reach him. The days in June dragged. It was hot. There were no organized sports, no shows and entertainers, no amusements.

When a troop of cavalry went out to look for a noted Villista named Pedro Lujan, Patton secured permission to accompany the troopers. They spent three days in the saddle, surrounded a house, and actually captured Lujan. This was exciting work, Patton decided. Field operations, so far as he was concerned, were far more satisfactory than hanging around headquarters, even in the company of high—ranking officers.

"I am very well," he wrote to his father, "and having a stupid time."

Pancho Villa had disappeared, his bands had melted into the mountains, and the pursuit phase of Pershing's operations had come to an end.

Meanwhile, life continued. Patton censored correspondents' dispatches and soldiers' mail. He wrote his father-in-law his impression of the Mexicans: "You have no idea of the utter degradation of the inhabitants," and his longing for his wife: "I miss her terribly because the longer I am married to her the more I love her. She is so wonderful and always new."

A field day featuring field, track, and horse events broke the monotony. Patton participated in a jump contest for officers on horseback. This provided a diverting evening. But it was all "very tiresome and hard on every one. The flies are getting bad too."

"We are all rapidly going crazy from lack of occupation," he wrote his father, "and there is no help in sight." Several boxing matches were a welcome break.

In August General Tasker Bliss, the Army Chief of Staff, came to Mexico to inspect the troops. Upon his departure Patton was detailed, along with several others, to act as escort. When they arrived at Columbus, Beatrice, who had come by train from El Paso, was there to meet her husband. They had three days together before Patton returned to Pershing's headquarters.

To break the monotony, Pershing decided to conduct a week-long series of inspections of all I the troops in Mexico, and to that end he formed a team of inspectors. Patton checked horses and their equipment, the condition of the animals, their shoes, and their saddles. "I am glad to have something to do," he wrote in his diary. In addition, he noted Pershing's meticulous attention to details.

When Pershing went north to the United States for several days of vacation, he took Patton with him. The time passed too quickly. Suddenly they were back again in Mexico where the

boredom was stifling. "Nothing to report," Patton wrote his wife. "Even the wind did not blow today."

Early one October evening as Patton sat in his tent working on a paper, his lamp burned him badly on the face and hand and set his tent ablaze. He put out the fire, then went to the hospital where he spent a "pretty bad night" of pain and fever. The doctors called it severe first degree burns of his whole face and of his upper right hand.

Several days later, when he felt well enough to write his wife, he told her how fortunate she was "in not being able to kiss me right now." His skin looked "like an old after-birth of a Mexican cow . . . smeared [with] several very much decomposed eggs." He was trying to make a joke. But after describing what had happened, he became serious. His eyes, fortunately, were not hurt at all. "I love you with all my heart and would have hated worst to have been blinded because I could not have seen you."

He obtained sick leave and together with Beatrice went to California, where his father was campaigning for election to the U.S. Senate. Although he accompanied his father and drew much favorable notice, his father lost the election.

In Mexico again, Patton devoted much of his time to writing papers on the proper use of the rifle, pistol, saber, and machine gun. He helped plan and supervise troop exercises and maneuvers. He had long discussions with Pershing on the functions of cavalry, on the role of airplanes, on the advantages of trucks and autos. He played some polo, went to bullfights, and practiced his horsemanship.

But most of all he observed how Pershing performed his command duties, how he gained the loyalty and respect of his subordinates, and how he performed in the field. Awed by Pershing's meticulous attention to detail and by his strength of will, Patton consciously modeled himself on the general, not only because imitation is the greatest sort of flattery but more importantly because Patton was consumed by the burning desire to make good in his profession. His enthusiastic attention to duty, his increased military proficiency, and his firm loyalty to Pershing paid off in the end: In the following year, after the United States entered World War 1, when Pershing was appointed to command the American Expeditionary Force and to take it to France, he took Patton with him. A provisional and temporary aide to Pershing in Mexico, Patton had become indispensable.

Patton turned his Mexican adventure into profit. As he wrote his wife just before the Punitive Expedition returned to El Paso, Texas, "This is the last letter I shall write you from Mexico. I have learned a lot about my profession and a lot how much I love you. The first was necessary, the second was not."

## **Bradley–Patton: World War II's "Odd Couple"**

by Martin Blumenson

### **Army Magazine**

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Lieutenant General George S. Patton Jr. and Lieutenant General Omar N. Bradley had an awkward relationship in the European campaigns of World War II. Although individual feelings

have no place in military operations, the underlying, if rarely overt, resentment between these great soldiers had an adverse impact on the course of events.

In particular, during the momentous developments of August 1944, when the Allies endeavored to encircle the two German armies in Normandy, Generals Bradley and Patton were less than well synchronized. Their difficulties with each other inhibited forming and implementing a single firm concept, maintaining a strict control over movements and displaying a clear direction toward the proper end.

The Allies had the opportunity to surround, trap and destroy the Germans in Normandy. Had they succeeded in doing so, they would probably have brought the war in Europe to a victorious close in 1944. The Allies came close to sweeping the German armies from the field and in the process gained a great triumph.

In the end, however, a substantial part of the German forces escaped to fight again. The losses they inflicted on the Allies at Arnhem, in the Hürtgen Forest, during the Battle of the Bulge and elsewhere illustrated the extent of their survival.

Why the Allies failed to close the Falaise pocket early enough to bottle up all the Germans has been explained many times and on various grounds. The reasons given include the skill of the German soldiers, the inability of the Allied coalition command to react with sufficient cohesion and speed, the hesitation and caution of certain commanders and the lure of conflicting Allied objectives.

No one has ever before considered the personal Patton-Bradley equation as a factor. Their problem of accommodating their distinctly different styles and outlooks was a contributory cause of why the Allies faltered.

The function of command is, essentially, the exercise of authority. Subordinates may, of course, question and discuss, advise and suggest, even try to persuade; but once the commander reaches his decision, no further debate is permitted; everyone has the duty to execute the commander's desire.

Two implicit conditions usually support the commander's absolute authority. He is generally more senior in rank and more experienced in the work to be performed.

There are exceptions. General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Allied commander in chief in the Mediterranean and European theaters, was notably junior to and less experienced in combat than some of his subordinates, for example, Field Marshal Sir Bernard L. Montgomery. Part of General Eisenhower's difficulties with Field Marshal Montgomery came from this source. It rankled Field Marshal Montgomery to accept General Eisenhower's senior status.

Major General Ernest N. Harmon, commander of the 2nd Armored Division in North Africa, was another case. Dispatched by General Eisenhower from Morocco to Tunisia to take temporary command of the Americans battling at Kasserine Pass, General Harmon, a rough and ready customer supposedly less than sensitive, was uncomfortable with Major General Orlando Ward, who commanded the 1st Armored Division.

"Ward," General Harmon said gruffly, trying to conceal his embarrassment, "I'm about one thousand files behind you," meaning that he was junior to General Ward in the Regular Army, "but these are my orders and that's how it is." General Harmon commanded; General Ward graciously obeyed.

In Italy, Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark, the Fifth Army commander, had several older corps commanders under him, among them Major General Geoffrey Keyes, Major General John P. Lucas, and Major General Willis D. Crittenger, all of whom served General Clark faithfully. Major General Ernest J. Dawley, the VI Corps commander at Salerno, however, was unable to stifle his resentment. Savagely calling both Generals Clark and Eisenhower "boy scouts," thus referring to their relative youth and combat inexperience, General Dawley had to be relieved in the interest of preserving the chain of command.

Imposing junior commanders over more senior officers usually worked without friction. A partial explanation lies in the power of the traditional military discipline. Furthermore, rarely was a junior placed over a senior who had formerly commanded him. Field Marshal Montgomery had never commanded General Eisenhower, General Ward had never directed General Harmon, and Generals Keyes, Lucas, Crittenger and Dawley had never had General Clark under their command.

This is what makes the relationship between Generals Patton and Bradley so curious. In North Africa and Sicily, General Bradley was General Patton's direct subordinate. In Europe, General Bradley was General Patton's immediate boss. Both men were uncomfortable in their new positions.

In Tunisia, General Patton temporarily commanded the II Corps, and General Bradley was his deputy corps commander. When General Patton departed to prepare the invasion of Sicily, General Bradley succeeded him in command of the corps. In the Sicilian campaign, General Patton commanded the Seventh Army; General Bradley, under General Patton, commanded the II Corps.

The association was normal. General Patton, U.S. Military Academy class of 1909, was considerably senior to General Bradley, who graduated in 1915. General Patton also had much more combat experience. In World War I, while Major Bradley served in the United States, Lieutenant Colonel Patton commanded the American brigade of light tanks in France and fought in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne offensives.

In World War II, Major General Patton participated in the North African invasion, landed his I Armored Corps in Morocco and captured Casablanca. In Tunisia, General Patton directed the II Corps in the aftermath of the battle of Kasserine Pass and gained victory at El Guettar, as well as his third star.

General Bradley entered combat as a major general and as General Patton's understudy. After General Patton left, General Bradley led the corps in the final battles in North Africa and captured Bizerte. Together, they fought in Sicily, General Patton as the senior, General Bradley as his junior.

The reversal of positions was foreshadowed shortly thereafter, in the summer of 1943. With the cross-Channel attack, code named Overlord, scheduled for the following spring, Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall instructed General Eisenhower to send an officer to England to take charge of the American preparations.

Among those who were close to General Marshall, General Patton was the obvious choice. He was the most senior and the most experienced American battle general. By his exploits in Tunisia and Sicily, General Patton had attained the status of a star, well known and widely admired by the American and British publics. His reputation as a driving leader who spurred his troops to triumph was well established.

Unfortunately, because General Patton had lost his self-control and slapped two soldiers in a hospital, General Eisenhower questioned General Patton's judgment. Despite his expertise, his battle achievements and his seniority, General Patton was perhaps too impulsive for the sensitive task of coordinating the American effort with the British.

Also one of General Marshall's favorites, General Clark was a logical candidate for the post. He worked well with the British and was admired by Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Unfortunately, he was about to lead his Fifth Army in the invasion of Italy at Salerno, and he could not be spared.

General Eisenhower selected General Bradley, who was then a rather obscure corps commander. He, too, was well thought of by General Marshall. For Generals Marshall and Eisenhower both, General Bradley was untemperamental and solid. He could hardly match General Patton's flair and aggressive push, but he was competent, balanced and prudent.

General Bradley traveled to England in September and began to organize the First Army and what would later be known as the 12th Army Group headquarters. As plans developed for the Normandy landings, General Bradley's tasks became clear.

He would take the First Army ashore on D-Day. When another American army came to France to join the American forces on the continent, General Bradley would step up to command the army group.

In January 1944, Generals Marshall and Eisenhower designated General Patton to command the follow-up army. General Patton, an army commander, would be directly under General Bradley at the army group. This is what happened on 1 August, 1944, when General Patton's Third Army became operational in Normandy. General Bradley turned over the First Army to Lieutenant General Courtney H. Hodges and then moved up and assumed command of the 12th Army Group, thus becoming General Patton's immediate superior.

From the point of view of seniority and battle experience, the whole Allied command structure in Normandy was peculiar. General Eisenhower, the supreme Allied commander, was junior to and had less combat experience than everyone except General Bradley.

A member of General Bradley's U.S. Military Academy class, General Eisenhower graduated six years after General Patton, and, like General Bradley, spent World War I in the United States. Then-Lieutenant Colonel Eisenhower trained tankers near Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. After the war, when then-Major Patton's (his combat rank of lieutenant colonel having been temporary) tank brigade returned from France to Camp Meade, Maryland, Colonel Eisenhower moved his units there. In the consolidated tank corps, Patton was a colonel. Colonel Eisenhower served under Colonel Patton.

In 1940, when Brigadier General Patton took command of the 2nd Armored Brigade, then of the 2nd Armored Division, he urged Colonel Eisenhower to transfer to the tanks and become his chief of staff or a regimental commander.

Colonel Eisenhower followed a different path to high rank and responsibility, and in 1942, he was Major General Patton's boss in North Africa. Although General Patton sometimes grumbled privately in his diary over what he considered to be then Lieutenant General Eisenhower's deficiencies, he accommodated himself to General Eisenhower's status and was completely loyal.

In Normandy, General Eisenhower temporarily delegated the direct command of the Allied ground forces to Field Marshal Montgomery. During the first three months of the invasion, Field Marshal Montgomery directed the Allied armies on the continent. General Eisenhower was there much of the time but more or less as a passive observer, available for advice and for tacit approval of decisions made by Field Marshal Montgomery and General Bradley.

General Bradley, the senior American commander in France, was junior to General Hodges, who took over the First Army on 1 August and who had fought in France in 1918. General Hodges had flunked out of the U.S. Military Academy, had enlisted in the Army, and had gained a commission before General Bradley graduated from West Point. In 1941, then-Brigadier General Hodges was the post commander at Ft. Benning, Georgia. Succeeded by then-Brigadier General Bradley in that position, then-Major General Hodges went to Washington and became the prestigious chief of infantry.

Despite his seniority, General Hodges was no problem for General Bradley. No prima donna, General Hodges was workmanlike. He had little flair for personal publicity. Quiet and solid, he had few tactical ideas. Unlike General Patton, he contributed little when commanders gathered at General Eisenhower's or General Bradley's behest to discuss strategy. Because General Bradley had commanded the First Army, he was more partial to it, and he tended to supervise General Hodges closely.

For General Patton, General Eisenhower was three echelons above him and not a factor in the unfolding situation. Field Marshal Montgomery, two levels above General Patton, was also

remote and, furthermore, issued his orders through General Bradley. It was General Bradley who defined General Patton's missions and roles, and General Patton found it difficult to adjust to his new status, below his subordinate of the previous year.

Military historians have, of course, remarked on the change in positions between Generals Patton and Bradley. They have made little of the arrangement and have never questioned the relationship. The two men, they have explained, apparently worked in harmony.

General Patton, they have said, was a good soldier and completely devoted to the chain of command. General Patton wanted to fight so badly that he would have accepted command at any level under anyone. Finally, Generals Patton and Bradley had such personal affinity and mutual respect that it was easy for them to cooperate loyally in the interest of winning the war.

Much of this is undoubtedly true. From the moment they met in 1941, Generals Patton and Bradley liked each other. In 1941, Major General Patton commanded the 2nd Armored Division at Ft. Benning, and Brigadier General Bradley was the infantry post commander. A year later, when General Patton had the I Armored Corps and then-Major General Bradley had the 28th Division, General Patton wrote, "My dear Omar . . . I never was associated with anyone who more wholeheartedly and generously cooperated with everything we worked on together."

"Omar is good," General Patton reported from Tunisia in letters to Generals Eisenhower and Marshall, as well as in his correspondence to his wife, "Omar did a swell job." He praised General Bradley's "magnificent work" in Sicily and called him "a very sound" soldier. For his part, General Bradley demonstrated his loyalty to his boss General Patton by locking in his safe the damaging medical report of the slapping incidents.

A distinct change in feelings came soon after General Bradley's departure from Sicily for England. General Patton began to understand General Bradley's future place in the American command structure. Virtually certain of General Bradley's ultimate climb to army group command, a post that General Patton had hoped to obtain, General Patton was profoundly disappointed.

In chagrin, he confided some denigrating lines to his diary. "Bradley," he wrote, "is a man of great mediocrity." He cited General Bradley's inability to promote discipline and his operational timidity. Yet he ended his unflattering portrait in more objective fashion. "I consider him," he said, "among our better generals."

In England, the two commanders saw each other infrequently. Both were busy. When together in public, they were cordial.

On 6 June, General Bradley put his First Army ashore in Normandy, then captured Cherbourg and fought the wearing battle of the hedgerows. In July, General Bradley prepared what would be his masterstroke, the Cobra attack, which would penetrate the German defenses.

General Patton, having languished in England, fearing that the end of the war would come before he could enter combat again, arrived on the continent early in July, a month after D-Day. He was burning with eagerness and ambition.

Unemployed almost a year, ever since Sicily, having been in the doghouse after the slapping incidents, General Patton was bursting with desire to fight again. He wished to seize the headlines once more; he needed to restore his reputation. Yet he tried to be properly diffident in his new role as General Bradley's subordinate, for he was always respectful of the chain of command.

Unable to restrain his high spirits on at least one occasion, General Patton irritated General Bradley, who resented General Patton's apparent familiarity. General Bradley set General Patton straight. Seeking to establish the formal and traditional distance or aloofness between senior and subordinate, General Bradley said, "You know, George, I didn't ask for you."

The point was that General Patton's presence in Normandy was the result of a decision by Generals Marshall and Eisenhower, who saw General Patton, a proved combat leader, as indispensable for the successful prosecution of the war in Europe. General Bradley would have

preferred a younger, less flamboyant officer, a subordinate commander more amenable to General Bradley's direction, less headstrong in character, someone more like General Hodges.

As the top American commander on the continent, General Bradley was attracting wide public notice. He was in the process of winning his reputation. What helped was the absence of General Patton's name in the newspapers.

General Patton had fulfilled an important role before the invasion as the mythical commander of the fictitious 1st U.S. Army Group, an organization designed for German consumption. The Germans waited for this nonexistent army group, supposedly headed by General Patton, to cross the English Channel in the main Allied invasion. Their respect for General Patton led them to hold the considerable forces of the Fifteenth Army across from Dover in the Pas de Calais to await landings that never came.

To continue the deception, General Eisenhower ordered General Patton's whereabouts to be unreported and secret. Not until mid- August would General Eisenhower permit General Patton's accomplishments and activities to be mentioned.

General Patton chafed with impatience as General Bradley fought in the hedgerows and then launched on 25 July the concentrated Cobra blow that not only pierced the German defenses but also demolished the German left flank. This brought the town of Avranches, the entrance into Brittany, within view.

Because General Patton's Third Army had the initial task of conquering Brittany, General Bradley asked General Patton on 27 July to direct unofficially the corps leading his army into the province.

Joyously, General Patton took hold. Moving two armored divisions through the American infantry divisions, General Patton placed them at the head of the advance, which spurred forward. With Avranches secured on 31 July and the way into Brittany open, General Patton's Third Army became operational on the following day, as General Hodges assumed command of the First Army and General Bradley took command of the 12th Army Group.

General Patton started westward into Brittany as projected, but the disintegration of the German left flank prompted General Eisenhower, Field Marshal Montgomery and General Bradley to alter the preinvasion plans. Instead of sending the entire Third Army into Brittany, they decided that a single corps was sufficient.

The bulk of General Patton's army was to go east, toward the Seine River, and South, to the Loire River. General Patton complied. With the VIII Corps heading westward, General Patton moved the XV Corps eastward around the German left flank forces. He then pushed the XX Corps to the south and the Loire River. Before he could start the XII Corps, the XV Corps, having advanced with exceptional speed, was 75 miles southeast of Avranches and at Le Mans.

During this week-long period, a Patton-Bradley contretemps arose. Without consulting General Patton, General Bradley changed some of General Patton's dispositions. When General Bradley informed General Patton of what he had done, he did so apologetically.

General Patton was outraged but said little, perhaps because of General Bradley's implicit regret, possibly because General Patton regarded General Bradley's interference as justified, more probably because the incident was minor. But in a remark that would have been normal in their previous relationship, he warned General Bradley against what he called "getting the British complex of overcaution."

The arrival of the XV Corps at Le Mans provoked an extraordinary development. According to the Overlord plan, the Allied objective during the first 90 days of the campaign was to seize a lodgment area-that part of France bounded on the south by the Loire River and on the east by the Seine River and the Paris-Orleans gap. In possession of that vast region, the Allies were to pause, build up their resources and launch an offensive to reach Germany.



In swift succession, three events altered the Overlord concept. The Germans attacked westward in an attempt to restore their nonexistent left flank and were stopped at Mortain. The Canadians launched a drive from Caen southward toward Falaise and were soon bogged down.

General Bradley, probably after a conversation with General Patton, had the bold idea of surrounding the German armies in Normandy. If the Canadians reached Falaise, and if the XV Corps, instead of continuing east, turned north from Le Mans toward Argentan, the Allies would be on the verge of encircling the German forces. General Eisenhower and Field Marshal Montgomery agreed, and General Patton received instructions to send the XV Corps north from Le Mans.

General Patton preferred a deeper hook. He requested permission to push the XV Corps all the way to the Seine River before turning to the north, "but Bradley," he wrote, "won't let me." His superiors were concerned about overextension and danger.

"If I were on my own," General Patton wrote to his wife, "I would take bigger chances than I am now permitted to take. Three times I have suggested risks and been turned down."

With no alternative, but recognizing the prize awaiting the Allies if they acted quickly and took Argentan and Falaise, General Patton moved the XV Corps northward. Slashing forward against virtually no resistance, the corps reached the outskirts of Argentan in five days.

Although the corps had crossed the army group boundary separating the Anglo-Canadian and American forces, Falaise, which the Canadians had yet to reach, lay 15 miles ahead to the north. In view of the lack of opposition facing the XV Corps, there was every possibility of its getting to Falaise and trapping the bulk of the German forces in Normandy.

Adolf Hitler, against the advice of his military men, who were aware of the snare forming about them and who wished to retire from Mortain and Normandy, stubbornly insisted on renewed efforts to restore the left flank. As a consequence, the two German armies in Normandy were west of Falaise and Argentan.

Instead of permitting the XV Corps to go through Argentan to close the pocket at Falaise, General Bradley, on the night of 12 August, told General Patton to halt. Upset, General Patton argued. If they were to trap the Germans, they had to move decisively and without hesitation. General Bradley was adamant, preferring, as he said, a solid shoulder over a broken neck at Argentan.

In General Bradley's view, the XV Corps had exposed flanks, the First Army was more than 50 miles away, and the Germans were pulling back from Mortain and planning to attack the XV Corps. There was nothing for General Patton to do except follow General Bradley's order. He stopped the XV Corps from further advance to the north. "I am sure," he wrote in his diary, "that this halt is a great mistake take."

After pondering for a day, General Patton revised his estimate of what was possible. To him, Field Marshal Montgomery was indecisive, General Bradley was cautious, and the British and Canadians were too slow. The Germans retiring from Mortain would probably escape. The chances were that the Allies would fail to surround them at Falaise and Argentan. In that case, the Allies could head the Germans off at the Seine River.

General Patton persuaded General Bradley to let the XV Corps headquarters and two of its divisions, as well as the XX and the XII Corps, go eastward. "It is really a great plan, wholly my own," General Patton wrote in his diary, "and I made Bradley think he thought of it."

General Bradley, without informing Field Marshal Montgomery, uncomfortably acquiesced to General Patton's suggestion. Leaving three divisions in the Argentan area, General Patton sent the rest of the XV Corps off at a gallop, together with the other two corps.

Two days later, on 16 August, the Canadians finally reached Falaise. On that day, Adolf Hitler, reacting not only to the danger of losing his two armies in Normandy but also to the Allied

invasion of southern France on the previous day, at last gave permission for the German forces in the Argentan-Falaise pocket, which was still not closed, to withdraw.

General Patton then had his XV Corps at Dreux, his XX Corps at Chartres and his XII Corps at Orleans, all three facing eastward. It would have been relatively simple to turn them all to the north to cut off at the Seine River the Germans extricating themselves from the pocket.

Instead, Field Marshal Montgomery directed the Canadians to move south of Falaise to Trun; he asked General Bradley to push the Americans north from Argentan to meet the Canadians.

General Bradley was embarrassed. General Patton had left three divisions at Argentan but no corps headquarters to direct them. Apprised of Field Marshal Montgomery's request, General Patton immediately sent his chief of staff, Major General Hugh J. Gaffey, and several key officers to the locality as a provisional corps headquarters. He instructed General Gaffey to attack on the following morning at Trun.

General Gaffey formulated a plan and was ready to jump off when Major General Leonard T. Gerow, whose V Corps headquarters had been pinched out 100 miles away, arrived with orders from General Bradley to take over.

Confused, Generals Gaffey and Gerow telephoned General Patton. Concerned by the necessity for speed to trap the Germans at Trun, General Patton suggested that General Gerow let General Gaffey get off his attack that morning and take over at an appropriate time later.

General Bradley, however, was in the process of changing the boundary between the First and Third Armies to place the Argentan area under General Hodges. Because General Gerow's corps belonged to General Hodges, General Gerow was to attack, not General Gaffey. As General Gaffey returned to the Third Army headquarters, General Gerow postponed the advance to Trun and drew his own plan. There was no American movement toward the projected meeting place with the Canadians until the following day, 18 August.

In sum, by stopping General Patton from continuing to march north through Argentan toward Falaise on the night of 12 August, General Bradley gave the Germans five precious days, until 18 August, to re-form their dispositions. Allowed by Adolf Hitler on 16 August to withdraw, the Germans skillfully retired from the pocket during four nights, from 16 through 19 August. When the Americans and Canadians met at Trun, most of the Germans had escaped.

Was General Patton able to cut them off at the Seine River? He sent a division of the XV Corps across the Seine on the night of 19 August. He requested permission to cross the other division, then to sweep down the right bank to the sea with both. General Bradley refused. He instructed General Patton to move the other division down the left bank, where the Germans were erecting defenses that slowed the American effort.

General Patton was disgusted. The Germans managed to get a substantial part of their troops out of the Argentan-Falaise area and were crossing the Seine River with little interference.

Could they be cut off again? General Patton suggested a third hook to trap the Germans farther north, along the Somme River. This too was rejected. An American thrust to the English Channel, General Bradley said, would drive across the projected avenues of advance for the British and Canadian armies.

Now General Patton was dejected. Field Marshal Montgomery and General Bradley had failed to capitalize on the marvelous opportunity to destroy the two German armies in Normandy.

Renouncing further interest in trapping the Germans, General Patton was happy to set out at full speed for Germany. This was because General Eisenhower, in possession of the lodgment area and preparing to take over Field Marshal Montgomery's position at the head of the ground forces, decided not to pause at the Seine River in accordance with the preinvasion plans. Unleashing his armies, General Eisenhower sent them streaming ahead in pursuit of the Germans retiring to Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany.

The battle of Normandy was a great Allied triumph. But all of the Allied principals, the high commanders, were disappointed. A surprisingly large number of Germans had skillfully avoided almost certain destruction.

The Allies had failed to demonstrate the cohesion required for a complete victory. Field Marshal Montgomery had been unable to keep operations under his firm control. General Bradley had succumbed to his inexperience in directing operations of such magnitude, and he had not played it straight with Field Marshal Montgomery. General Eisenhower, lacking what is sometimes called a feel for the battlefield, had refused to intervene.

Only General Patton understood the vital need to surround and destroy the Germans, at Argentan-Falaise, at the Seine River or at the Somme River. That was the key task. His relatively junior status prevented him from exercising the concept, direction and control needed to sweep the Germans from the field.

The Bradley-Patton relationship improved during the remaining months of the war. In part, the simple passage of time enabled both men to accommodate themselves better to the command structure and to settle the nature of their association. In part, General Bradley recognized his errors in Normandy and listened more closely to his subordinate's advice.

Yet throughout the rest of the campaign, General Patton constantly complained in the privacy of his diary of the caution displayed not only by General Bradley but also by General Eisenhower. A far bolder strategy, in his opinion, would have brought final victory much more quickly.

Ironically, the slapping incidents denied General Patton the army group command. In that post, he would have been General Eisenhower's major operational advisor. As such, he would no doubt have shaped the events far differently and in his image. Instead, General Eisenhower preferred his classmate General Bradley.

The uneasy feelings between Generals Patton and Bradley in August 1944, although hardly the main factor, contributed to the lost opportunity in Normandy. The German escape prolonged the conflict. It took the Allies eight more months of fighting to win the war in Europe.

## **The Patton Museum** by John A. Campbell

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On 30 May 1949 the Army and the nation dedicated a building and an Armor collection in memory of General George S. Patton Jr. and the many thousands of soldiers who have died fighting in the armored forces of their country. That date marks the official beginning of the Museum of Cavalry and Armor, but in reality it began, perhaps, in Mexico on 14 May 1916 at the Rubio Ranch when Lieutenant Patton commanded the first mechanized assault conducted by US troops in armed combat; or 10 November 1917 when General Pershing directed formation of an American tank corps in France; or later still on 10 July 1940 when Congress authorized activation of the Armored Force at Fort Knox, Kentucky, under the command of General Adna R. Chaffee.

The Patton Museum has its roots in each of these milestones. Several more new and important milestones are in the museum's future and the purpose of this article is to outline what these will accomplish for the members of modern Cavalry and Armor over the next several years.

An Army museum is more than a collection of a few old guns, a couple of tanks and artillery pieces plus walls and walls of Army photographs; it is an institution with a definite role in preserving and presenting the history of the US and foreign armies.

In 1974, when General DePuy spoke to the Third Annual Army Museum Conference he stated, "Your mission is to present history—good and bad. The soldier of today must know of the mistakes of the past and the soldier of tomorrow must be made aware of those which are made today." Although General DePuy did not specifically mention equipment as he directed his remarks to the tactical and leadership influences, I feel he would agree we must present our technological discards and preserve them for future soldiers.

How does an Army museum come into being? How does it fulfill that purpose?

The goals and purposes for which the many Army museums are collected and exhibited are varied and complex, but nevertheless, once established and recognized by the Department of the Army, the mission is explicit preservation, education and entertainment.

Recognized museums operate under the provisions of several Army regulations which establish standards of personnel qualifications and security of historical property which includes weapons, preservation, restoration, and general areas of representation. The latter provision is quite essential to preclude uncontrolled competition within the Army system for funds and historical property and to avoid pointless duplication in wide areas of exhibits.

The basic regulation (AR 870-5) which establishes unit history programs and annual historical reports also is the regulation that permits the installation commander to establish and support an Army museum. An authorized museum may well be the only organization in the Army without a requirement for an equipment TDA.

Within parameters implied by the museum's recognized and authorized mission, the commander may allocate that equipment necessary to support the collection. Obviously, Sound judgment and budget limitations are the prime controls applied.

Since World War II many efforts have been made to construct museum facilities under MCA programs, but, although authorized, they were justifiably placed in the lowest priority in the Army program. Since facilities were available in other buildings, collection and presentation programs were possible and practical. These programs developed several outstanding collections and produced a viable system throughout the Army and the other armed forces. A bonus frequently realized from the selfless efforts of a few devoted individuals was the military and public awareness that these collections fostered plus a very fine group of dedicated museum curators. This resource hasn't reached its potential—most Army museums are still in the first generation of professional evolution. Perhaps surprisingly, museum professionals are a mobile group and this factor alone will strengthen our museum system and enhance professional competence.

Reduction or the non-existence of MCA support and rather austere quarters fortunately has not dampened the military and civilian community enthusiasm and appreciation of the fine collections available following World War II.

Foundations and associations have been formed to assist the local commanders in realizing what hard pressed defense budgets couldn't afford. Many local merchants, citizens, industry and, almost without exception, military personnel of all ranks have been afforded the privilege of contributing to museum memorial building funds. These associations are authorized by the Secretary of the Army, when sufficiently financed, to construct DA-approved buildings on federal property for the specific purpose of housing historical collections. The structures, when complete, are donated to the Army and become government buildings, meeting all requirements and receiving identical support as other structures on that installation. What this means is that the

museum, the property, both historical and issue, plus employees are identical in relationship and responsibility to the US Army as are the other staff organizations on Fort Knox or any other installation. The aforementioned organizational relationship is explained because of the question frequently raised regarding museum logistical support and the role of the closely allied foundations and associations.

In essence, two functions have been identified in museum support and operations; however, in the Patton Museum and many other museums in the Army system there is a third very essential element—the non-appropriated souvenir or gift shop. They provide a service to the visitor plus a financial benefit to the parent museum.

The Army cannot be in the business of selling things, not even in a museum which is visited by hundreds of thousands of civilians as well as military annually who, almost without exception, want a souvenir of the post, the museum or, in the case of Fort Knox, General Patton. The benefit to the visitor is readily understood—he remembers the museum and, above all, the US Army and Fort Knox. Materials purchased by the gift shop fund for the museum cover a wide range of select necessities and rare historical properties otherwise impossible to procure.

In 1965 a group of dedicated citizens signed a memorandum of understanding with the Commander, US Army Armor Center in which they pledged to collect funds and construct facilities to accommodate the armor collection at Fort Knox. This marked the beginning of a long financial struggle. Elaborate designs and plans were proposed—these were magnificent and without reservation envisioned the finest military museum in the world.

The plan was too ambitious and obviously beyond the fiscal grasp of the community, however, money was raised and errors in judgment recognized and, as for any developmental programs, many good sound features were developed. The viable and energetic Cavalry-Armor Foundation, Incorporated, emerged ready to meet a challenge and work with the Armor Center on a bite-size program, segments of which the foundation members and commanders could undertake and complete during their periods of assignment.

The program which evolved along with the realigned Cavalry-Armor Foundation goals is a modular concept of construction, which the Armor Center refers to as phases, each encompassing the building and museum collection for a section of the museum.

Phase I of this program was dedicated on 11 November 1972, the 87th anniversary of General Patton's birth, and contains the basic requirements for the museum; the lobby, offices, theater, comfort facilities and souvenir shop area. These obviously will not have to be repeated in the succeeding phases, however, certain modifications and realignments will occur when additional space becomes available in following phases. Phase I also accommodates several other features wanted in the museum: recognition of Armor's heritage, Fort Knox and Armor's role in those periods of history from World War II to the Vietnam Conflict, and exhibits of the personal effects of General Patton. Again, this phase of the museum will not change to any major extent. It will be improved and several small additions realized, however, the theme for this phase is established and of course fulfills the basic assigned mission, from DA, for the museum of Cavalry and Armor.

Phase I required eight years of effort on the part of both the military and civilian communities to develop the plan and raise the necessary funds. However, success begets success and following one year of record attendance (404,000 visits—the highest of some 68 Army museums), the Cavalry-Armor Foundation informed the Commanding General they were financially set to construct the second building.

Construction was started on 1 April 1974, sixteen months following the dedication of Phase I. Construction was completed in the late fall and the building was released to the Armor Center for completion and installation of refinements necessary to accommodate the exhibits.

Phase II, dedicated on 16 May 1975, provides the museum with a basic reference library, historical property storage and an increase of some 8,000 square feet of exhibition galleries which is an increase over the 6300 square feet available in Phase I. This phase, like Phase I, has limited basic requirements to support the museum operation. In future phases, it will be noted, the support requirements decrease.

The library of Phase II is not a lending library; however it is available for use to all members of the Armor community, military students and individuals conducting technical equipment research related to properties in the museum collection. The museum, at present, is not staffed to answer detailed questions nor assist in involved research. Basically, the library inventory is limited to support the museum mission and collection.

The conference room, adjacent to the library, is an educational facility available to the Armor Center and recognized associations dedicated to military history and to the military community.

Phase II continues the theme of Phase I, with the requirements of historical recognition covering the period since the Army's formation, and enters the modern mechanized era of Armor. Again, as in Phase I, the Armor Center has accomplished the basics—at a glance, the visitor views 50 years of Armor; on his left the tank engines spanning the years from the Renault *FT17* of World War I to the modern engine of today, the basic *AV1790*. There are gaps certainly, but this must be part of the Armor community goal, to fill gaps. Opposite the engines are the tank representatives of battlefields which span much of the world. Physically separated, but only for the visitor's appreciation, are the latest additions to Cavalry and Armor: the *UH1B* gunship, the *AH1G Cobra*, the *AH56A* Cheyenne and an *OH6* resting in its sandbag revetment. The reader and the visitor will be prone to point out the Cheyenne is an impostor among this proven company, however, the Cheyenne must be regarded as another technological milestone in our history and belongs to the future.

Following the success of Phase I and the unexpected, but welcome, announcement by the Cavalry-Armor Foundation that money was available to begin construction of Phase II in early 1974, the Armor Center Commander directed, in September 1973, the development of plans for Phases III and IV (plans for Phase II were approved in April 1973) and also plans for grounds and streets improvement.

The Commander was not directing plans for the building as these had been agreed upon prior to Phase I. Requirements were to determine what exhibits were needed and which priority should be applied to each.

A vast majority of the museum's priceless collections is on exhibit in the open park surrounding the museum and is being subjected to the most rapid deterioration armor vehicles have experienced. Many of these are rare, one-of-a-type remaining models in museums. With a criterion of which was the most valuable, rarest and in most critical state of deterioration the selection was made to exhibit those vehicles in Phase III which represent the classics in armor design from pre-World War II through the close of that war, thus limiting the exhibits to those shown in the floor plan (page 20).

In conjunction, Phase II will be redesigned in theme and exhibits to reflect World War I armor. Minor realignment of helicopter exhibits is planned to accommodate change in configuration of the armor vehicle displays. The changes indicated in the library are inconsequential.

Phase II will provide the final planned support accommodations, a workshop-storeroom on the ground floor level and a second floor vendor-operated snack bar. This complex will occupy an area 24 by 78 feet in the east wing of Phase II. From the snack bar window the visitor will have a panoramic view of the exhibit floor, the Keyes Park area and a general view of Fort Knox. Phase III will have the same 17-foot ceiling as Phase II. The floor and doors are all designed to accommodate the largest equipment in the collection which includes an M103 tank.

Several items now on exhibit in Phase II will return to storage when Phase III is complete to return in Phase III and Phase IV upon completion of the latter phase. These measures, which might appear to deny the visitors appreciation of the complete collection, are necessary for preservation and for the purpose of avoiding extremely costly restoration. Many of the items currently on display outside will be removed in the near future, when determination is made by the museum staff that deterioration is approaching an advanced state.

The final phase in the current program will exhibit the vehicles and equipment shown in Phase IV. As in Phases II and III this phase will have the 17-foot ceiling, large doors and floor capacity to accommodate the largest vehicles. It should be noted that the various phases include only items which are now on hand. In the event new items are received, and hopefully they will be, selected substitutions will be made. But, nevertheless, there will always be outside displays and a sizable number of items in storage for limited exhibit.

This floor plan depicts the completed program as currently planned. Phase III, in the completed plan, has changed from armor of the world for the World War II period to US armor, pre-World War II to the present. Phase IV will exhibit primarily armor of the world and limited US vehicles which cannot be accommodated in Phases II and III. Each phase has life-size dioramas which are indicated by the vehicles in the dark areas along one of the phase walls. Throughout the entire program the visitors will be afforded a view of a relatively complete phase of Armor history—care has been taken to avoid disrupting an established phase while constructing and integrating the next phase.

At the conclusion of the four-phase program, the museum will occupy over 42,000 square feet of floor space of which 36,000 will be exhibit space. While not one of the largest museums in the military system, the Patton Museum will provide the most complete collection of armor in a climate-controlled environment and, within limits, perpetual preservation.

In conjunction with the four-phase program, an external improvement plan was developed which would be accomplished with Phase II and be extensive enough to accommodate the balance of the program. Primary changes are in sidewalks, state flags on individual 14-foot poles and evergreen shrubs bordering the building and sidewalks.

Fort Knox historical recognition is not bounded by the walls of the Patton Museum and the streets of Keyes Park where the armor of nations pose in their military positions. The Armor Center, before it became the home of the Armored Force in July 1940, served as an Artillery training center in World War I and, following cessation of hostilities, was host to thousands of summer maneuver troops, Civilian Military Training Corps (CMTC) students and was, for a short period, set aside as a national forest. Fortunately for future generations, representatives of these early post missions and the local community have not been entirely pushed aside in the expansion of half-a-century.

This area marks the second effort of the Armor Center historical endeavors. Many volunteers and contributors of the community, both military and civilian, have worked and are continuing to collect the records and properties which will provide the soldiers of today and the future a window to the past.

In conjunction with the bicentennial of the nation and the 200th birthday of the Army, the Armor Center will dedicate five bronze plaques marking historic sites on Fort Knox. These will be followed by four additional plaques before July 1976.

The following are texts of the plaques which will mark the initial high points of the historic tour of Fort Knox.

### **Visitor's House**

This building, completed in the summer of 1919, was originally known as the Visitor's House. It was built by The National Catholic War Council, an organization of the Knights of Columbus,

to accommodate families and friends that came to visit soldiers of early Camp Knox. The House had 14 guest rooms, a lounge, writing rooms, a cafeteria and a dining room. A Catholic chaplain affiliated with the Knights of Columbus managed the guest house. In the early 1930s when the Mechanized Forces moved to Fort Knox, it was converted to provide a post hospital and later served as the hospital annex.

In July 1940, when the initial armored divisions in the US Army were formed, the 1st Armored (Old Ironsides) Division established its headquarters here. This building has been occupied by various staff sections of the Armor Center since April 1942 when the 1st Armored Division departed for Europe.

### **Early Camp Knox**

This building is one of four aircraft hangers constructed during World War I to house the JN4 and JN6 (Jenny) aircraft of the 29th Aerial Squadron. Following inactivation of the 29th Squadron, the building was occupied by the 31st Balloon Company. These units were stationed with the Camp Knox Field Artillery Training Center to provide observation support. In 1930, this hanger was moved to its present location, from the area now occupied by Godman Army Airfield, to serve as a dance pavilion and later a gymnasium. It was converted to a Teenage Hangout (TAHO) Club in 1955. The hanger and the adjoining fountain occupy the site of the Construction Quartermaster Club called the "Con Quar Club." Con Quar members beautified the park in 1919 and constructed the fountain as a memorial to those members who built Camp Knox. These structures are some of the original buildings of Camp Knox.

### **U.S. Army Armor Center**

The Armor Center Headquarters Building, Chaffee Hall, was constructed in 1934 to accommodate the headquarters of the new Mechanized Force, which was activated at Fort Knox in 1932. The initial unit to join the new force was the 1st Cavalry Regiment from Camp Marfa, Texas. In 1936, the 13th Cavalry moved from Fort Riley, Kansas, to join the 1st Cavalry and other units at Fort Knox to form the 7th Cavalry Brigade (Mechanized). A commander of the brigade was Brigadier General Adna R. Chaffee who also commanded Fort Knox and the Mechanized Force. General Chaffee retained his dual command until 10 July 1940 when the Armored Force Headquarters was activated at Fort Knox. General Chaffee commanded the Armored Force until his death in August 1941. He is regarded as the father of American Armor.

The headquarters of the US Army Armor Forces has remained in Chaffee Hall since its formation. The Court of Honor which surrounds the Armor Center flag pole, was dedicated in 1953 in memory of those who served in the 16 armored divisions of the US Army. The Court was enlarged in 1957 to include the Mechanized Cavalry Groups of World War II.

### **Mail Post Chapel**

Formerly Saint Patrick's Parish Church, erected in 1899 by the Stithton Catholic community. Originally the Saint Patrick's Church was located at the Post Cemetery and recorded its first baptism in 1831. When the government purchased the town of Stithton in 1918 for the building of Camp Knox, the majority of the Catholic community joined the Vine Grove St. Brigid's Parish. In 1920 the church was converted to an auditorium for the post and used for this purpose until 1938 when it was restored as the main post chapel. Housed in the steeple is the original bell, inscribed "St. Patrick's Church, Stithton, Kentucky 1904." The church building is constructed of hand made bricks and handcut foundation stones. This is one of the few remaining buildings on post from the town of Stithton, Kentucky.

### **Post Cemetery**



Saint Patrick's Parish Church and cemetery occupied this site from 1831 until 1899. The church was relocated to Stithton in 1899. When the Post Cemetery was established in 1920, the stones from the foundation of the Old Saint Patrick's Church were used to build the small caretaker house and cemetery walls. The first grave in the Post Cemetery was that of Gerald Collins, a dependent child, in April 1920. The first soldier buried was Norman Curry in June 1921. The Armor Center Commander, Major General Hugh J. Gaffey, killed in an airplane crash at Fort Knox was buried here in June 1946. German and Italian prisoners-of-war who died at Fort Knox during World War II were buried in a special section of the cemetery. Prior to development of the Van Voorhis housing area in 1957, the Reuben Jones and Pearson family cemeteries were relocated to the Post Cemetery area.

### **Additional Plaques**

The four plaques programmed for 1975 will mark historical sites of the town of Stithton, the Army hospital, the Armored Force School and the Armored Force Replacement Training Center.

Members of Armor, in the rush of a 30-plus year career, often do not stop to feel the history they live with and in many instances shape. They do after many years, but then it is frequently too late. The markers are gone—progress couldn't tolerate the buildings of the last generation and through modernization we succeed in destroying a very vital heritage. These sites and structures are the campaign streamers and decorations that Fort Knox has won for the several generations of its service. It is the home of Cavalry and Armor and the home of many soldiers, from privates to general officers.

In recognition of this noticeable heritage the Commanding General in September 1974 approved a program of historical importance. The Visitor's House, more commonly known to most members of Armor as the Army Community Service building, and the TAHO club center were set aside in the post master plan as historic sites and when no longer required for official purposes will become annexes to the Patton Museum. In addition, classic buildings of World War II will be retained in original condition and eventually moved to the vicinity of the Visitor's House to form a historical park of Fort Knox history. The buildings, a company mess hall, battalion headquarters, platoon barracks, chapel and a unit orderly room/supply room combination will be furnished and equipped to authentically depict the soldier's life in the early 1940s.

Although this is an ambitious project and will extend over several years, the initial steps have been taken and the value to future generations recognized. The rest is up to future commanders and historical staffs charged with the Army heritage to bring this worthwhile program to fruition. Let's give future soldiers and the tercentennial something to write and talk about.

### **Patton: Guns Made Him Great** by Whit Collins

**Guns & Ammo**  
Volume 15, Number 8  
August 1971, 30-33, 80-81

More than mere window dressing, General George S. Patton's pistols were symbols of a sometime maverick's unwavering dedication to leadership.

The ivory-handled pistols that rode on George Smith Patton's hips may have been the world's most powerful handguns. They inspired respect and confidence in troops and allies, while they carried forward the image of Patton as a warrior and leader to friend and foe alike. Their role in World War II contributed to the defeat of literally hundreds of thousands of Axis troops.

Although popularly remembered as the "two-gun" General, Patton actually seldom wore both of his "carrying guns" together. And, he owned several personal pistols aside from the two usually photographed on him in World War II. Further, his guns were usually ivory handled, NEVER pearl, as they were sometimes mistaken. The handguns most associated with him, and which are now in the Patton Collection of the West Point Museum, are a .45 Long Colt Single Action revolver, 1873 Army Model, and a .357 Magnum Smith & Wesson revolver.

Of the two of them, aides and relatives have said that the .45 Colt was the one Patton stressed for everyday carry, while the .357 was to be the "killing gun," in his words, if the battlefield situation ever demanded it. The .45 was his oldest companion, having been purchased in 1916. There are two notches filed in the left-side ivory grip of the highly engraved .45. They came to be through a 1916 gunfight which took place in Mexico.

When Pancho Villa's band of "revolutionaries" attacked the little New Mexico border town of Columbus, on March 9, 1916, General "Black Jack" Pershing was sent across the U.S.-Mexico border on the famous Punitive Expedition. Lt. Patton went along as Pershing's aide, after having all but forced himself on the General. When they crossed the border, the .45 Colt Single Action swung at his right hip.

Patton traveled widely in Northern Mexico by touring car, on foraging and information-gathering patrols. Arriving one day at a ranch belonging to the uncle of "General" Julio Cardenas, Patton became suspicious that the Villista leader was in the neighborhood. He decided to mount a raid on a nearby rancho known to have harbored the Mexican.

Patton's three 1916 Dodge touring cars rumbled straight for the rancho at 50 miles per hour and split up, covering every exit. Under Patton's leadership, the rancho San Miguelito had been neatly surrounded and flanked, with his nine riflemen in position behind the steel bodies of their cars, before the dust stopped blowing.

In the sharp gunfight that followed, Cardenas and his two "Dorado" bodyguards were killed. Patton wounded Cardenas personally, knocking him off his horse and breaking up a carbine-firing charge by all three men, as they tried to ride him down and escape. A moment later, Patton stopped a second attempt by shooting down the horse of Cardenas' lieutenant. When the Mexican kept on shooting, Patton and two riflemen replied in a lethal volley. Cardenas and the third Villista were soon dispatched.

In one high noon gunfight, there occurred the U.S. Army's first mechanized engagement, and the blooding of George S. Patton, who would one day be the world's master of mechanized warfare and the man who handed the "Blitzkrieg" back to the Third Reich.

The young officer whom the "Dorados" had thought to brush aside had to be their worst possible choice, because Patton had become one of the U.S. Army's best personal weapon handlers. His record included competing for the United States in the Decathlon event of the 1912 Olympics, where he fired a .38 Long Colt service revolver in a silhouette-target match that was normally won by .22 rimfires—breaking the world's record in practice.

The pressure of the entire event, encompassing pistol shooting, cross-country riding, swimming and cross-country running, kept him from doing as well in competition. He placed far down the list in actual pistol competition because one of his rounds may have passed exactly through an earlier hole. Still, even with this dispute, he managed an over-all showing that credited the United States. This included his defeat of the French World Champion in fencing, which led to Patton's being named the first U.S. Army Master of the Sword, in 1913.

To do the job well, he obtained leave to study the sword and related subjects—which undoubtedly included the use of the pistol and carbine in cavalry engagements—at the renowned French Cavalry School in Saumur, France. While there, he and his wife, Beatrice Ayer Patton, motored throughout the area, actually reconnoitering the watershed road net with troop movement in mind. This was the exact theater where he drove so fiercely with his armored columns in 1944-45!

The term "fierce drive" describes Patton the boy, as well as Patton the commander. He was actually a weak and sickly child, who was kept at home on his father's comfortable ranch near Pasadena, California, without public schooling until the age of 11 (1897). However, his father, at the time the District Attorney of Los Angeles, gave him an excellent education at home. Along with the classics, came expert instruction in shooting, hunting and fishing.

Patton the boy was taught early that to overcome his slight build and tender constitution, he had to push himself in body and mind. Consequently, when he entered Virginia Military Academy in 1901 (he was the second George S. Patton, Jr. to do so, as his father had), he was already an accomplished game shot and pistol handler.

Like many historic figures, Patton was a "one-idea" man. Since early childhood, while receiving a complete home education from his father in civil war history and the classics, he had known he would be a commander in war. His personal background pointed him toward a cavalry career, and his family training included the purchase of every kind of personal arm for his use.

Because Patton had developed his study of all small arms at a very early age, he was capable of forging and tempering his own prototype cavalry saber, in 1913. This was a very straight, light weapon, designed for cavalry fighting as it was being practiced on the fields of Europe in the early 20th century, but incorporating his knowledge of cavalry combat of the latter Civil War battles. Often called the "Patton Saber," it was the last sword adopted for issue by U.S. Armed Forces, also in 1913.

After service as both instructor of fencing and command student at the U.S. Cavalry school, Fort Riley, Patton was assigned to Sierra Blanca, Texas, for mounted border patrol duty in 1915. Patton's already advanced ability with handguns helped to earn him friends among the tough "hired guns" and Texas Rangers alike. He describes one as "a quiet-looking old man with a sweet face and white hair." The sweet little old man had, the week before, shot five Mexican bandits through their heads at 60 yards. Which ability probably explains how anyone who took \$100 a month to be Marshal of Sierra Blanca could get to be old. Another bandit fighter was also described by Patton as being "about 60 and . . . the only American who can bluff the bandits over the (Rio Grande) River."

These men, and others who hunted and shot with Lt. Patton in those days, had grown up with the .45 Colt Single Action revolver. He spent many hours with one man shooting cigarettes at 50 paces (according to his letters) and filing down Colt trigger sears to make the "hair trigger" so beloved by pistoleros of that period. It was an unsafe conversion, but Patton carried his Colt with the hammer down on the proverbial empty chamber.

Patton had, of course, been issued a Model 1911 .45 Government Model Automatic Pistol. During his border patrol service, he stoned or filed the hammer notch down so "fine" that it reportedly went off when he stamped his foot, grazing his thigh. Instead of discontinuing the practice of honing down actions, Patton rather characteristically blamed the automatic pistol itself and soon ordered a brand new Colt Single Action from the Shelton Payne Arms Company of El Paso, Texas. He thereafter carried it in the Western fashion of a five shooter, as noted. In that period, many U.S. cavalrymen did the same, as the gun was still accepted as a substitute standard personal arm.

Actually, although this story was recounted by several sources, it should be noted that it is very hard to render a Colt .45 Auto unsafe. Not only does the hammer and sear connection have to be

modified, but the grip safety has to be "de-horned," taped down, or pinned in. On top of that, the thumb safety must be left in "off " position. It seems bard to believe that a gun handier of Patton's class would alter any gun to such an unsafe state. However, the fact remains that he was known to prefer powerful revolvers to any semiautomatic pistol, all his life.

In those days, Patton was quoted as saying that the auto was an arm of two parts, while the revolver required nothing other than loose ammunition. Also, the pistol was totally dependent on the condition of the magazine for proper functioning. He once told his nephew that the automatic pistol was a fine noisemaker for scaring people but that it was well to practice with the revolver if it was going to be necessary to fight with handguns to live. Patton also often stated that the handgun should never be drawn and pointed unless it was intended to shoot to kill. The nephew, Frederick Ayer, Jr., went on to become a fine pistol shot, eventually serving as a high-ranking FBI agent during WORLD WAR II.

As a boy, Ayer witnessed a very early version of Hogan's Alley (FBI Academy) animated target training, as practiced by his Uncle George Patton and a well-to-do Massachusetts sportsman. Col. Francis Throope Colby had set up a white-painted metal screen in his basement in the early 30s and projected upon it his own pictures of charging African game and spear-waving natives. Colby and Patton loaded .22 pistols with the now-unobtainable explosive-tipped rimfires and competed with each other in naming and hitting marks on the pictures. It is said they also competed in profanity, something else Patton used as part of his "warrior" window dressing. These practice sessions were part of Patton's life in the period between World Wars I and II.

Shortly after the 1916 excursion into Mexico, he was ordered to the Allied Expeditionary Force for the World War in Europe. Patton was still on Pershing's staff, but now detailed to be the first U.S. commander of tanks. When he landed in France in 1917, he carried an ivory handled .45 Auto. As far as is known, he left his Single Action behind, for all of World War I.

Patton earned the Distinguished Service Cross and promotions for WORLD WAR I tank operations that go beyond the scope of this article. There is no record of his having to fire his handgun in hand-to-hand combat, although in later years he was known to have claimed six Germans for that period.

At one point, Patton lay severely wounded after a foot charge on a machine gun nest, his ex-orderly tending him in a muddy shell hole. As he did so, Corporal Joseph T. Angelo used his own and Patton's .45 Autos to fire on German emplacements not far away. In later years, Patton also joked about how he (when conscious) and Angelo took pot shots at low-flying German planes during the several hours before heroic action by Corporal Angelo resulted in Patton's rescue and recovery.

The .45 Auto which Patton carried evidently served with more dependability than the earlier .45s he tried and put aside, yet there is little or no record of his carrying it again. The ivory-handled pistol was seen briefly during maneuvers in 194 1, but was superseded for a time by a Colt .22 Woodsman! The .22 rode with Patton while he was training tankers in the California-Arizona desert near Indio, in 1942.

During the period 1919 to 1942, Patton had continued to buy and experiment with personal handguns. One of his lesser-known acquisitions was a .38 Special-caliber Colt Detective Special, with the old "long" grip frame. This 2-inch, all-steel Colt is based on the Police Positive frame and was evidently purchased sometime before the butt shape was changed in 1934. The gun was seldom seen in WORLD WAR II, other than a few appearances on his belt while he caught up on paper work in behind-the-lines staff offices.

Patton's .38 holster was a stab of leather that, when suspended from his belt, put the butt of the revolver at the same height as all the other guns he carried. The pistol itself rode in a fitted body centered on the wide, flat, back panel. There is no record of the holster maker.

Patton's second most famous handgun was also purchased in the peacetime 30s. At a distance, especially when observed by the less knowledgeable, this ivory handled .357 Magnum S&W double-action revolver was often mistaken as a mate to the better-known .45 Colt Single Action. Patton carried out the "twin" theme by wearing both in Sam Myers holsters that were matched to the length of the longer-barreled Colt. While the Colt had a 4-1/4-inch barrel, the .357 S&W was a 3-1/2-inch number.

These two pistols were carried, together or singly, on a belt also custom made by pioneer holster specialist Sam Myers of El Paso, Texas. Patton adapted the buckle of the U.S. Army Officer's Pistol Belt (web), Model of 1910, to this specially made belt. The buckle itself has only "U.S." on it, not the ornate eagle pattern seen in the recent film "Patton."

The film was, however, generally well-detailed on the General's personal handguns, at least his two main revolvers, and one of his smaller automatics. In one sequence, actor George C. Scott, as Patton, plants himself squarely in the path of a strafing plane and proceeds to fire back with a .380 Colt automatic which he draws from the waistband of his pants. Several similar incidents involving pistols are attributed to Patton. In this case, the little auto is one of what he called his "insurance" guns. They were often worn under his blouse in what was reportedly a "fast-draw" waistband holster.

Toward the end of the war in Europe, the little automatics, surprisingly, began to appear more and more. Patton had relatives obtain a completely reconditioned Remington Model 51 .380 automatic pistol and send it to him sometime early in 1944. To this day, many authorities consider the 51 to have been one of the best-handling pistols ever designed. Only a relatively few were made and sold from 1918 to discontinuance in 1934. Even ten years later, secondhand 51s were so rare that a much-used unit was obtained by the Remington factory and rebuilt for purchase by the General.

This automatic was one of two that had ebony grips with ivory stars inlaid into them. The second was a .380 Colt auto hammerless pocket model which was purchased by the U.S. Government for issue, with a special pistol belt, to general officers in 1944. Although several reporters state that the Remington was most often carried by Patton from 1944 to his death in 1945, the Colt .380 is the one seen consistently in pictures from that period, with both three and four-star grips.

The General Officer's Pistol Belt was a unit designed and made by the Swank Leather Company, through the specification of General George Marshall. It is as much an insignia of rank as actual General's stars.

A third pocket auto was also carried in a hideaway holster by Patton; this was a .32 Colt, made concurrently with the .380 "concealed hammer" Colt, from 1908 to 1945. This is one which he had also purchased in the period between wars, and was probably his first "insurance gun." Although he liked big revolvers, he was of the opinion that .32 and .380 autos were more effective than similar revolvers with the ammunition then available.

So far as is known, Patton did no handloading of his own, preferring to use ready-made ammo. He did, however, understand the theory of load development, because he had followed closely the inception of the .357 Magnum. He ordered his soon after the announcement of the new revolver, taking delivery of a "registered-order" gun in Hawaii on October 18, 1935. It was shipped directly to him while he was on duty as an intelligence officer on the islands. Interesting to note that he once wrote a report stating the possibility of an effective attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese.

So it was, when World War II exploded, Patton shipped out with at least four pistols and four custom-made holsters. The S&W .357 and Colt .45 revolvers he wore in left and right matched holsters in the Myers-made rig. By this time, the S&W had ivory grips with initials to match the

general appearance of the Colt. Also with him were the .38 Detective Special Colt and the .32 Colt auto, with their own holsters.

Patton generally wore the .45 alone, with a Myers cuff case adapted as a compass box, and a Myers slide-on cartridge carrier holding 12 .45 Colt rounds. Although correspondents often called him a two-gun man, he actually only wore both the .45 and .357 on special occasions like landings, and when addressing troops.

It is said that he found one gun—the flashy Colt—to serve the purpose of building his image as a fighting man for the troops. When he wanted to portray the part to the largest possible gallery, he wore both, so that he would be unmistakable from any angle of observation. Another equally practical reason would have been that the weight of a .45, a .357, and .380 hideout—plus gear—would have been a lot to pack around.

In doing a review of General George S. Patton's personal pistols, it is hard to separate the topic from an examination of the man himself. He was an unforgettable Commander to the 325,000 troops of the U.S. Third Army, and his guns were certainly not mere decoration. His appreciation for the effective use of personal arms may have seemed strange to those who saw him foremost as a disciple of armored thrusts, but as he himself put it, "I am sure that if I could get the American infantryman to shoot his rifle, we could win the war much more cheaply."

So this was the man who wore a cowboy pistol in a tank-tread war, turning personal sidearms and the ability to use them into a trademark of leadership, unparalleled since the days of Stuart and Lee.

## **Patton At The Pay-Off**

by George Creel

**Collier's Magazine**

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Whatever else may be said about life in the United States, it is never dull. The convulsive shifts in public opinion—daily and sometimes hourly—make St. Vitus look like a cataleptic. The Hall of Fame can change into a rogues' gallery overnight, and vice versa with equal ease and rapidity.

Take the strange case of Lieutenant General George Smith Patton, Jr., who stormed the bastion of Metz for the first time in modern history. Scarcely more than a year ago he was in the doghouse without even a bone to gnaw or straw to sleep on. He had given the back of his hand to a hospitalized soldier in Sicily, and an enraged people searched their souls for louder denunciations.

Congress scored his brutality and temporarily denied him further promotion, as one unfit to hold command, and yet in the second battle of France, Patton again was in the thick of the Allied dash toward Germany, and his name again was in the headlines. What brought about this transformation of public attitude? How did Patton escape from the doghouse? How has he justified his escape?

If people think that the change is due to a change in General Patton, then they will do well to ready themselves for rude awakenings. He is just what he was and always will be—a man set in an iron pattern. You can praise him or scorn him, but look the whole world over, and it is doubtful

if a human being can be found whose mind, thought, and habits of life are cast in a more lasting mold.

From childhood he has held with simple faith to the creed that a soldier must never admit a single weakness of the flesh, and must take it without whining, no matter how tough the going. If occasion rises, tomorrow will find him rawhiding all who fail to measure up to his own Spartan standards, and that without any loss of rasp and fluency as a result of the Sicilian incident. His hand is still a fist.

Undersecretary of War Robert Patterson, on his recent inspection trip through France, decided on a visit to Patton's Third Army headquarters—not an easy chore, as he was charging forward at the rate of thirty and forty miles a day. The party located him at last in a dreary patch of woods and were guided on the final stretch by the general's stentorian bellows as he acquainted his men with the facts of life from the military standpoint. The headquarters consisted of three battered trucks, one for Patton's cot, one for his maps, the third for his radio equipment. Scattered around were pup tents for his staff officers.

"Well, I can't say much for your housing," commented the Undersecretary. "Why don't you find yourself a chateau?"

"To hell with 'em!" rumbled Old Blood and Guts. "Too comfortable. Get in a chateau, and those birds," flicking a thumb in the direction of the staff, "never would want to get a move on. When it's like this, they're glad to hop along, hoping the next halt will be better. But it *won't*."

If Patton hasn't changed, neither has his reputation as a soldier changed among either his supporters or his enemies on the field of battle. That he has such a reputation must be obvious. Had he been no more than a bold and impetuous cavalryman, the soldier-slapping incident would have ended his career. The incident put General Eisenhower on a spot. He considered General Patton his ablest broken-field runner.

Moreover, there were other men in the War Department who had respect for Patton. He was one of "Pershing's boys," hand-picked by old "Black Jack" himself. General Marshall believed Patton could not be spared, and insisted only on a public apology. Patton was aide to Secretary of War Stimson in 1911 when the Secretary was serving his first term at the War Department. Stimson, like Patton, is a horseman, and the two have been lifelong friends. Weighing the mistake against Patton's long career, General Eisenhower dared to take in unpopular course. Was his decision a wise one? Has Patton come through?

Eisenhower gave one answer recently after Patton had taken Metz—the first general to take it by all-round assault since 451 A.D. He pinned the Bronze Star on Patton's battle jacket. For one day the general wore no other ribbon. The Bronze Star is not one of the highest Army awards, but Patton valued it because it is almost the only one he hadn't already won.

Before D-Day in France, Eisenhower began to use Old Blood and Guts again. He was the commander the Germans most feared. He had outmaneuvered them in Sicily, running them dizzy with his tactics and strategy, his swift marches and furious descents. It was Patton whom their eyes were fixed on. It was this fear that Eisenhower played upon. Few things were ever more insecure than our first toe hold in the drive on Rome. At any moment the Germans might ascertain the weakness, and smash down from the north.

To Corsica, therefore, went Patton with much blaring of trumpets, and straightway the Nazis fell into it dither. What did it portend? A drive across into Northern Italy? It was just the daring sort of thing that might be expected of him. As a result of their sweating indecision, the Germans sat at tight, not knowing where a Patton blow might fall, and as a result the Allied toe hold below Rome became a firm foothold. This chore chored, Old Blood and Guts was quietly transferred to England to head the Third Army.

Patton's personal popularity has been the Subject Of much controversy. but his terrific driving methods are intended to avoid being pinned down and thus escape the heavy casualties of position

warfare. Many experienced soldiers have expressed appreciation of this characteristic, regardless of Patton's other traits. Europeans, too, have looked upon him as colorful and flamboyant and they are inclined to hail him—however mistakenly—as typically American.

During the first weeks of the Allied invasion of Normandy, one question was most often asked in the American ranks, "Where's Patton?"

Army and Navy officers, Negro duck drivers and assault troops asked the question, and often added, "When Old Blood and Guts gets here, we'll start moving."

On D-plus-seven, our Second Armored Division was rushed up to meet a German counterattack west of Carentan. Two grimy M.P.s stood in Isigny and watched the Second Armored roll through to battle—miles of bristling, roaring monsters crammed with soldiers. The M.P.s shook their heads in admiration.

"That's Patton's old outfit," one said. "Toughest bunch in this Army. Hitter never saw nothing like them!"

The German radio said: "Our main blow cannot be struck until we see where General Patton will land."

On a French roadside one day, two German paratroopers argued noisily with an American sergeant. They insisted that they had surrendered to a "unit of General Patton's Army." They resented being told that Patton was not in the field; that they had been taken by men with a lesser reputation for violence.

Finally, one night the news got out that Patton was landing. Third Army tanks had begun rolling ashore.

### **The Infection of the Patton Legend**

"Several of us had jerked on our shoes, jumped into it jeep, and were hurrying to the beach before we took time to ask one another why the hell we were behaving like military sophomores," a Navy lieutenant, who had been it writer in civilian life, reported later. "Hadn't we seen a thousand tanks land already? Did we think that Patton's tanks rumbling out of LSTs at midnight would look any different? All of us were becoming infected with the Patton legend. Of course, Patton's tanks wouldn't look like ordinary tanks! Would Forrest's cavalry have looked like ordinary cavalry?"

"Next day I saw the general himself on the beach," the Navy lieutenant continued. "And when you see General Patton on a battleground you get the same feeling as when you saw Babe Ruth striding up to the plate. Here's a big guy who's going to kick hell out of something. Everybody on the beach was running to join the crowd around the general's jeep, but when I arrived I detected disappointment. The general was behaving strangely. He was wearing only one six-gun. Instead of boots he had on G.I. shoes.

The only thing unusual about his dress was a close-cut jacket which emphasized the drumhead tightness of the general's belly. Worse, the general was neither scowling nor cussing; he even smiled now and then. He was just talking casually with some of his men."

But the general's heroics saved the scene. He knows that At Jolson must always sing Mammy for every audience, and that Patton must utter at least one Pattonism. He stepped into his jeep, stood up, and unlimbered his buzzsaw voice: "Men, I'm proud to be here to fight beside you." Then, ripping the air with an imaginary trench knife, he roared.

"Now let's cut the guts out of these Krauts and get the hell to Berlin!"

Corny? Well, it got a cheer.

"And when we get to Berlin," he bellowed. "I'm gonna personally shoot the goddamn eyes out of that paper-hanging so-and-so! Just like I'd shoot a snake!"

Patton can never be anything but flashy. He's stopped driving his own tank, but he still frequently wears "pink" jodhpurs, polished cavalry boots, and his burnished helmet. Three silver



stars distinguish his jeep which also has red leather seats, an anti-aircraft gun and a multi-tone horn.

But his flamboyance impresses the Nazis. Recently they dropped leaflets stating he was a five-pistol man and comparing him to Al Capone and John Dillinger. The general was amused, had the insulting passages read aloud to a press conference, and no one laughed louder than he.

The famous Patton pistols are not an affectation. The general happens to be the world's finest pistol shot. Practicing for the Olympic games in 1912, he broke the world's record for pistol shooting, and his mark still stands. He developed the Army's method for firing from the back of a galloping horse, and wrote the Army's textbook on handling the pistol.

One of the pistols he now carries—the ivory-handled revolver with the American eagle carved on it—was made for him specially by the Colt company in 1914. It is notched twice, because while Patton was on the border as General Pershing's aide, he used this pistol to kill General Julio Cardenas and another Mexican in a running gun fight.

The general's other pistol—the .45 service automatic—is carried as a spare. He has never given it his complete trust. When the general was asked which one of his pistols he intended to use on Hitler, he replied: "Well, because it's the G.I. weapon I guess I'll let the automatic have first shot, but if the damn thing jams, I'll call on Old Faithful and give Corporal Hitler the same medicine I gave General Cardenas."

Much was made of the general's "French sword" with which he was photographed in France. But here the story is the same as with the pistols. Representing America in the modern pentathlon in the Olympic Games of 1912, Patton won the world's fencing championship, defeating the champion of the French army. Then, in 1913, while studying cavalry tactics at the famous French school at Saumur, the general worked steadily to improve his technique with both the épée and the broadsword. To help him, Mrs. Patton translated the French lectures on the use of the sword, and the general returned to Fort Riley its that post's first "Master of the Sword."

Patton remembers that somber day when mechanization came, and veteran cavalymen of his command marched up with tears in their eyes to junk their sabers. He regards posing with a French sword as a gesture to those men and to their gallant past. But this is a sentimentality for which the general is notorious, and it has nothing to do with killing Germans.

Tanks, on the other hand, are good weapons for winning battles and it is interesting that when, in 1917, General Pershing gave him command of the first American Tank unit, Patton replied in these words, "Sir, I accept my new command with particular enthusiasm because, with the light tanks I believe I can inflict the greatest number of casualties on the enemy with the smallest expenditure of American life." From that day, he has devoted himself to learning how the cavalry tactics of Phil Sheridan and "Jeb" Stuart could be implemented and improved with modern weapons.

It is significant that Patton commanded light tanks during the first World War. The War Department has been criticized at intervals because our Sherman tank cannot slug it out with the heavier German Tigers. The Tiger has more armor and is heavier than the Sherman, but the Sherman is built to implement General Patton's theories of tank warfare. When he must choose between mobility and armor in a tank, he chooses mobility. In Patton's book, American tanks do not seek duels with German tanks: this is a job for our self-propelled heavy guns. The task for American tanks is to exploit break-throughs: to sweep around flanks and across enemy supply lines, in the manner of the Patton maneuver at Le Mans when he closed the lower jaw of the Falaise trap. It was in light, highly mobile Sherman tanks that Patton's men galloped the four hundred miles across France from Avranches to the Moselle Valley. And Jeb Stuart's ghost was riding with Patton, because the sweep had all the elements of Stuart's famous ride around McClellan's Army in northern Virginia in 1861.

Patton knows everything about Stuart's famous ride, because, curiously enough, there is a direct link between Jeb Stuart and General Patton. The man who planned Stuart's ride and who was Stuart's scout on the ride was John Singleton Mosby, the Confederate raider. Mosby was the most daring of all the wild-riding Southern horsemen; he wore a plumed hat, a scarlet-lined cape, and two large Colt pistols "well-studded with brass." Long after the war, he was a close friend of George Smith Patton, father of the general, and was the idol of young George.

The Patton campaigns in this war have been distinguished, above all, by a factor he first learned to value from Mosby—thorough reconnaissance. The general demands personal knowledge of every foot of terrain he is to fight over. Throughout his career, wherever he has been stationed, he has driven himself, his family, and his men almost to exhaustion in his effort to get the "feel of the land."

When he was in Hawaii, he tramped over every foot of the islands. In the years he was stationed at Fort Myer, Virginia, he took his wife and three children to all the Civil War battlefields and re-enacted the battles. If a battle had lasted three days, the Pattons stayed three days while the general studied every fold, every cove, every ditch. When Patton rides through a countryside, he sees a spot here for an ambush, another fold there, behind which he could hide a tank and forty men.

While his Army was training in England, General Patton worked eighteen hours a day studying the terrain of Brittany, of the Seine and Loire valleys, of the battlefields of the last war. Himself a licensed airplane pilot and owner of his own planes, he flew many hours over the very country in which his troops were to maneuver. He came to France in advance of his Army and swept up every new detail which could be gained from German prisoners, French spies, and by additional low-level airplane flights.

It is no exaggeration to say that when the Third Army began pouring through the German line at Avranches, Patton knew the width and depth of every stream he was going to cross, the location of every likely spot for ambush, and the thickness of every wall which might give him cover. It is no wonder that he moved so rapidly that new maps had to be dropped to him by plane as his forces drove to Brest in one direction and to the German border in the other.

The speed of Patton's advance was remarkable and was a result of teamwork by all our forces. A tank column is like a Fleet task force. In a modern Fleet task force, supply ships—called "fat girls"—go along with the warships. The same is true of a tank column. Trucks and trailers loaded with gasoline and ammunition rumbled along between Patton's tanks. Because of the impotence of the Luftwaffe and the potency of his own air umbrella, General Patton could carry big motor tankers in his column in broad daylight, a practice which would invite catastrophe if the enemy had plenty of strafing planes.

### **Miracles of Engineering**

Also, the engineers with Patton's Army—and our other armies, too—can work fuel-line miracles. They can lay a fuel line along a safe road at the rate of better than a mile an hour, and this line is almost human in its operation. If the line is cut at any point, its safety valves are so arranged that only a few gallons of fuel will be lost, and the engineers can tell instantly where the break is. Of the millions of gallons of fuel required by one of our armies in action, only a small portion is trucked to the front. Most of the fuel is pumped to the front directly from tankers lying offshore or from port storage tanks. The fuel line, however, can be operated only over a safe road, and much of the mileage covered by Patton's columns certainly was not left safely in the hands of our troops. Where Germans still threatened the roads over which he had passed, General Patton used "armed convoys" to supply his spearheads. In short, just like two destroyers shepherding a fleet of supply ships through submarine-infested waters, Patton used tanks to shepherd convoys of fuel and

ammunition trucks along roads still threatened by enemy ground forces. Planes, too, rode herd on these "armed convoys" as they raced along.

We now have fuel tanks and ammunition cases which can be dropped from planes without parachutes and still not be damaged. When Patton's tanks, racing for Brest, got ahead of their "fat girls" planes dropped a few "sticks" of gasoline and ammunition, and the column rolled on.

Of course all of these operations were possible only because the air overhead was unchallenged American air. When you can operate all types of planes, even heavy, unarmed, fuel-laden planes over your column in daylight, almost anything is possible. The planes give the column extra firepower, superb reconnaissance, insurance against ambush, power to decimate the fleeing enemy, and supplies during the emergencies. Patton is in constant contact with his air weapons overhead, and no Allied general has given the Air Force more generous praise.

Patton's 400-mile dash from Avranches to the German border and, later, the slow pounding assault on Metz were not accomplished by a leader who is simply Old Blood and Guts. It was performed by a scientific soldier, a tireless student of warfare, a man who has devoted his life to studying how to move large bodies of dangerous men across great distances in the shortest possible time.

Old Blood and Guts was there all right, hurling curses against the enemy, imploring his men with elegant oaths to "rip Kraut belly buttons" and to boot Kraut rear ends up one hill and down another." But it was the calculating soldier who set a record for moving an army against a stubborn enemy and won a gamble for Eisenhower.

Now fifty-nine, Patton drove himself no less tirelessly than his men. The shorter the action, the fewer the casualties! The Germans halted Patton's sweeping flank movements and fiercely sudden thrusts only after he had crossed all of France but, when position warfare became necessary at Metz, the general again showed his industry, his determination, and his ability to adapt himself and his men to less spectacular fighting and to drive out the enemy from almost impregnable positions.

There is a picture of General Patton painted by himself. It is his regular habit to write letters of advice and instruction to his corps, division, and regimental commanders. The War Department forbids publication of passages that deal with strategy and tactics, but what can be printed is typical of the man.

"Attack rapidly, ruthlessly, viciously and without rest. Your own fire reduces the effectiveness and volume of the enemy's fire, while rapidity of attack shortens the time of exposure. A pint of sweat will save a gallon of blood.

"Our mortars and artillery are superb weapons when firing. When silent, they are junk."

Fire and movement. That is the essence of the Patton principle. Shoot, shoot, shoot. By-pass the points that cannot be captured swiftly, and press on after the quarry like hounds baying for the kill. There will be plenty of time to rest after the war is won.

"Infantry must move in order to close with the enemy. It must shoot in order to move. When physical targets are not visible, the fire of all infantry weapons must search the area probably occupied by the enemy. Use marching fire. It reduces the accuracy of the enemy's fire, and increases our confidence. Shoot short. Ricochets make nastier sounds and wounds. To halt under fire is folly. To halt under fire and not fire back is suicide. Discipline is based on pride in the profession of arms, on meticulous attention to detail, and on mutual respect and confidence. Discipline must be a habit so ingrained that it is stronger than the excitement of battle or the fear of death.

"Officers must set the example. More emphasis will be placed on the hardening of officers and men. All soldiers and officers should be able to run a mile with combat pack in ten minutes. and march eight miles in two hours.

"Officers are responsible not only for the conduct of their men in battle, but also for their health and contentment when not fighting. An officer must be the last man to take shelter from fire, and the first to move forward. He must be the last man to look after his own comfort at the close of a march. The officer must constantly interest himself in the welfare of his men and their rations. He should know his men so well that any sign of sickness or nervous strain will be apparent to him. He must look after his men's feet and see that they have properly fitting shoes in good condition; that their socks fit. for loose or tight socks make sore feet. He must anticipate change of weather and see that proper clothing and footgear are asked for and obtained."

### **Solicitude is Efficiency**

Yes, those are Patton's ideas on how to run a war. "See that their socks fit." If you didn't stop to think that a soldier whose socks don't fit can't march, you might think Patton was getting soft or had been changed by the public reaction to the soldier-slapping incident. In fact, that suspicion was in the minds of some men who accompanied Undersecretary Patterson to Patton's headquarters in France.

The day had seen one of Patton's spectacular advances, and the visitors twiddled thumbs while he made the rounds, seeing to it that the sick and wounded had proper care, taking a look at the chow, and dropping a gruff word of praise here and there. What solicitude, thought the guests. How the man has been misjudged! A half hour later, the general was telling how he meant to ride infantry battalions on the tanks, thereby hastening the speed of an advance.

"But how in the name of heaven are they going to hang on?" asked Patterson.

"That," came the grim answer, "is their problem."

No. he hasn't changed. You can take him or leave him. but he's the same guy.

### **Polo Field to Battlefield**

by Carlo D'Este

#### **POLO**

January-February 1998, pp. 124-129

George Smith Patton still looms large in the annals of 20th-century American military leaders. His World War II exploits on the battlefields of North Africa, Sicily, and northwest Europe have become the stuff of legend and were glorified by George C. Scott's Oscar-winning performance in the 1970 film Patton.

Yet Old Blood and Guts, as he was called, was far more than an exalted general officer. He excelled in all facets of horsemanship, including steeplechasing, and was a self-taught sailor, as well as a Master of Virginia's Cobbler Hunt. Patton finished a respectable fifth as the only American competing in the modern pentathlon in the 1912 Olympic games in Stockholm. The following year his fencing skills earned him the appointment as the Army's first Master of the Sword.

Patton was first introduced to polo while a cadet at West Point, where he graduated with the class of 1909 and received a cavalry commission. The U.S. Army of Patton's day was a small, harsh institution. Although polo was common throughout the Army, the sport was an essential

regimen in a cavalryman's life and was played with a spirit and toughness that often left the officers and their competitors bloody and battered. Broken limbs and, occasionally, death were consequences of the aggressive game favored by the men of the cavalry.

As a young lieutenant living on a meager salary, Patton was obliged to turn to his father to help finance the purchase of his polo ponies. After his 1910 marriage to Beatrice Ayer, the daughter of a self-made Massachusetts tycoon, the cost of polo ponies was no longer a consideration. As Patton's career progressed and he was transferred to different Army posts around the United States, his large stable of polo ponies was never far behind.

Patton's military brilliance was mirrored by his play on the polo fields. The sport was an essential part of Patton's professional life and social milieu, and he not only played the game but also commented on various aspects of the game for *The Cavalry* journal, a military publication. In a 1922 issue he wrote of the "constant and real physical hazards of polo," noting that "no man can stay cool in battle unless he is habituated to the exhilarating sense of physical peril. No sport . . . is so good in this respect as polo."

Outwardly always fearless, Patton suffered from dyslexia and was often quite insecure. A devout Episcopalian, he regularly prayed before his matches, a habit that, on one occasion, led his wife, Beatrice, to ask the purpose of his prayers. "For help in the polo game," he replied. "Were you praying for a win?" she inquired. "Hell no," he said, "I was praying to do my best." Patton believed that offering prayers merely to win was sacrilegious. The prayers dispensed with, Patton played with the same passion and intensity he brought to everything he undertook. The results were often bloody.

It is an understatement to label Patton accident prone. It was almost miraculous that he survived an endless series of mishaps—including concussions, lacerations, and broken bones—to fight in World War II. During a particularly bloody match, Patton endured such a nasty scalp wound that he held his head over a bucket to avoid ruining his clothing. Since no doctor was present, Patton allowed the wound to be stitched up by a veterinarian, whereupon he returned to finish play.

During his lifetime Patton required more than 100 stitches from head injuries alone, many of them incurred on the polo field. In 1935 Patton was thrown from his horse during a match and knocked unconscious. Upon regaining consciousness, he mounted his horse and completed play. For two days afterward he had no memory of the events after his fall. His doctor advised caution; Patton ignored him.

While he acted with ill-controlled aggression on the polo field, he consistently demonstrated his respect for the sport by lecturing his men on their good fortune to be playing a game that developed such superb leadership skills. Patton required all players to replace divots unearthed during a match and even extended the obligation to members of his own family. He also believed that his soldiers' responsibilities included a post-match visit to the stables to ensure that the ponies were properly cared for.

Nowhere in the Army did polo flourish more than in the Hawaiian Territory, where the rigors of cavalry polo were matched by stout local teams. Patton's most dramatic—and humiliating—moment on a polo field came in 1936 during the annual Inter-Island Polo Championships, a week-long series of matches that was one of the major social events of the year for the territory's elite. Patton's Army team was playing a Hawaiian foursome captained by his close friend Walter Dillingham in front of a large crowd that included the commanding general of the Hawaiian Department, Major General Hugh Drum.

Patton's high-pitched voice did not carry particularly well, a curse he compensated for by yelling. During polo matches he shouted a 1930s version of "trash talk" while horses and riders furiously banged into one another. Amid the slapping of mallets and the pounding of hoofs, many four-letter words clearly could be heard as Patton attempted to ride off his friend Dillingham. After

numerous expletives, Patton screamed: "Why you old son of a bitch, I'll ride you right down Front Street!"

Without warning, Drum, a dour, humorless man known to be quite envious of Patton's wealth and social connections, summarily ordered the match suspended and summoned Patton to his box. Drum then publicly reprimanded Patton, ordering him off the field for conduct unbecoming an officer. "I'm relieving you of the captaincy of the Army team," he said, "for using offensive language in front of the ladies and for insulting your competitors."

Patton's daughter, Ruth Ellen, recalled, "There was a stunned silence. All you could hear were people and horses breathing." An equally shocked Patton drew himself stiffly to attention and, with a "Yes, sir," saluted Drum, and began to lead his mount from the field.

Dillingham rode up to Drum's private box and announced in a loud voice that if Patton were dismissed, then Dillingham's team would refuse to retake the field. A chilling silence ensued as the two most powerful men on Oahu stared each other down. Drum blinked: Rather than ruin the popular matches, Drum relented, reinstated Patton and, with his family, hastily left the polo fields.

Five years later during military maneuvers in the Carolinas, Drum was captured at a roadblock by troops reporting to Patton. The repercussions of this humiliation left Drum's career floundering. He retired into obscurity in 1943, his hopes of a wartime command far from fulfilled. Conversely, Patton's star was on the rise and by the summer of that same year he had achieved battlefield brilliance and international fame.

Though Patton's aggressive nature on the polo field paralleled his victories on the battlefield, he was not the only successful polo-playing cavalry officer. Some of the most masterful battlefield commanders of World War II were former cavalrymen who had been superb horsemen and polo players. Among them were Major General Ernest N. Harmon, who commanded two armored divisions in North Africa, Italy, and at the Battle of the Bulge, and General Lucian K. Truscott, who led the U.S. Fifth Army in Italy.

One of the most competitive polo players the Army ever produced, Truscott perceived an expressed connection between polo and war, which he made clear to his young son: "Listen, son: You play games to win, not lose. And you fight wars to win. Every good player in a game and every good commander in a war, and I mean really good player or good commander, every damn one of them has to have some son-of-a-bitch in him. If he doesn't, he isn't a good player or commander. And he never will be a good commander. Polo games and wars aren't won by gentlemen. They're won by men who can be first-class sons-of-bitches when they have to be. It's as simple as that."

Although intensely autobiographical, Truscott's depiction illustrates the passion Patton and his fellow cavalrymen brought to the polo field.

General Douglas MacArthur wrote of West Point sports, "On the fields of friendly strife are sown the seeds which, in other days and other ways, will bear the fruits of victory." MacArthur would have gotten no argument on that point from Patton and the other generals of World War II whose training included many long afternoons on the polo field. The strife may have been friendly, and they may have been gentlemen off the field, but during matches they played polo as it was meant to be played.

**The real George Patton was not entirely the iron man he seemed, suggests biographer Martin Blumenson.**

by James Dakin

## World War II

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George S. Patton and Erwin Rommel were the finest cavalry generals of World War II. The iron cavalry, that is—tanks. Americans of dignified years and mileage remember the exhilarating headlines that accompanied Patton's fabled Third Army as it slashed its way across France. The Third Army's exploits were a gladsome offset to the earlier victories of Rommel's *Afrika Korps*.

Patton! To a wartime generation, he seemed the perfect soldier. Hard and stern, a disciplinarian, but his men swore by him even as they swore at him, and he infused them with a will to win. A daring strategist who broke the rules and broke the enemy, too; a gambler whose risks usually paid off. A swashbuckler, booted and spurred, his Patton the pearl-handled revolver on it turns out his hip. He was clearly in the line of descent from Stonewall Jackson, Nathan Bedford Forrest and Phil Sheridan (although he might not have appreciated the inclusion of a Yankee). The nation gloried in Patton.

Then it was revealed that he had cursed and slapped two hospitalized American soldiers in Sicily, accusing them of malingering. It was an appalling insight. The nation had thought of Patton as an uncomplicated cavalier *sans peur et sans reproche*; now it learned—rudely—that he could be something else. Just how intensely complicated he was, and the surprising reasons for his complexity, are the principal themes of Martin Blumenson's book, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, 1885-1945* (William Morrow & Co., 1985, \$17.95).

"Coming to a man shivering in bed," Blumenson writes, "Patton asked him what the trouble was. 'It's my nerves,' the soldier said and started to cry.

" 'Your nerves, hell,' Patton shouted. 'You are just a goddamned coward, you yellow son of a bitch. You're a disgrace to the Army and you are going back to the front to fight, although that's too good for you. You ought to be lined up against a wall and be shot. In fact, I ought to shoot you myself right now, goddamn you.'

"He pulled his pistol from the holster and waved it, then struck the man across the face with the gloves he held in the other hand. As the soldier trembled on his cot, Patton said to the physician, 'I want you to get this man out of here right away. I won't have these other brave boys seeing such a bastard babied.' He started to leave the tent, turned, rushed back, and hit the weeping soldier again."

Some rules can be broken, and some cannot. There were furious protests from the nation's mothers, an important voting group, and consequently from members of Congress. Patton survived the tempest—but just barely. The Allied commander, Dwight D. Eisenhower, returned essentially the same answer that Abraham Lincoln had given to the critics of Ulysses S. Grant: "I can't spare this man—he fights."

The slapping episodes become more comprehensible in this sensitive and balanced biography. Blumenson had access to Patton's diary and his letters to his wife. They reveal a deeply troubled man beneath the iron exterior. Patton was beset, more than most, by the twin demons of extreme ambition and deep uncertainty. He created, beginning in his youth, an entire new personality—an adamant military *persona*—to suppress or at least conceal steel inside, character traits that he considered weak or unmanly. He worshipped his military ancestors and tried unrelentingly to equal or excel them, and he fought a lifelong battle for self-control. Then he had to live with the contradictions inherent in his efforts.

Blumenson's research discloses that Patton, in childhood and adolescence, suffered from dyslexia, the reading and writing disability in which written or printed words appear upside down

or reversed. The condition has been understood only in recent years; at the turn of the century, when Patton was growing up, dyslexia victims were thought simply to be "slow learners" (Nelson Rockefeller was another prominent figure who suffered from dyslexia). Patton struggled ferociously against his disability; he compensated for it with an equally-ferocious ambition. This is a fairly familiar phenomenon among humans: adversity is the spur. The other side of the proposition—i.e., that prosperity is ruinous—has been little examined although frequently demonstrated.

Patton's ambition raged, but so did his insecurity. Again and again, his diary shows him tortured by self-doubt and anxiety. One moment, he is convinced that he is going to fail; in the next breath, he is sure that fate has ordained he will ultimately succeed. It is a remarkable document—remarkable in the frequency and intensity of his swings between confidence and despair.

"I have greater ability than these other people (Eisenhower and other Allied generals)," Patton tells his diary, "and it comes from, for lack of a better word, what we must call greatness of soul based on belief—an unshakable belief—in my destiny."

But when his ambition is thwarted, he writes to his wife that "I felt so low that I just stayed in bed." Or he wishes for a "nice clean death" in an airplane crash. He writes repeatedly of being in a "slump," and he bitterly disparages his military colleagues when they get another star; they are either undeserving mediocrities or "glamour boys." He writes: "I had thought that possibly I might get this command. It is another disappointment." Then his self-confidence reasserts itself: "But so far in my life all the disappointments . . . have finally worked out to my advantage . . . If I am predestined, as I feel I am, this too will eventually be to my advantage." Again and again, he has to reassure himself about his military ability: "I truly feel that I did my exact and full duty . . . and demonstrated that I am a great leader," and "I really feel like a great general today."

So this is a psychological study of military brilliance. But while tracing the development of the man, Blumenson does not neglect the development of the warrior. Patton's training in war, and his triumphs on the battlefield, are treated as fully as his transgressions. As much or more than any military leader of World War II, Patton exemplified the maxim usually attributed to Napoleon but probably more accurately to Danton: *Il nous faut de l'audace, encore de l'audace, toujours de l'audace*. That made George Patton an anachronism. But a fascinating anachronism.

**George C. Scott gives Patton a fair Shake**  
by Jeff DeRome

**American West**  
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One look tells you that you're nowhere near the Mojave. You're out West alright. About thirty miles west of London, at the former Canadian Red Cross Memorial Hospital on the grounds of Cliveden, the Astor estate in pastoral Buckinghamshire, England. Recently closed, the hospital has become the temporary production headquarters for *The Last Days of Patton*, a film project that is, in television terms (the medium for which it is destined), a Major Project.



Major, if for no other reason than its star, George C. Scott. Scott is a certified Movie Star, who won the Oscar in 1970 for the feature film *Patton*. (Scott refused the award as he considers the process unfair—a contest between apples and oranges, "a beauty pageant in a slaughterhouse.") He has again donned Patton's four stars for the purpose of depicting the General's last days—or, more accurately, last months, as the film covers Patton's life from the war's end to his death in December 1945 from injuries sustained in an automobile accident.

No one held an ivory-handled revolver to Scott's head to get him to do this picture. He wanted to do it. In fact, he himself bought the rights to the book *The Last Days of Patton* (written by Ladislav Farago, author of *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph*, upon which the 1970 film *Patton* was based).

"It's taken me four years to get this damn thing going," says Scott during a break in the filming. "Seriously . . . four years. And a lot of money. My personal money," he adds, grinning. "But I believe that much in it."

Scott was impressed that Farago, after writing the exhaustive *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph*, still felt compelled to write *The Last Days*. . . . "Farago wrote the book on his deathbed," says Scott, "because he thought there was more to be said about Patton. And that's what I think."

Though it was almost universally hailed as a triumph, and won a total of seven Academy Awards, Scott feels that *Patton* was incomplete. "If you go back and watch the film, you realize that his wife and family aren't in it. Eisenhower isn't even in it! There's got to be more of a story to tell. Our appraisal of him brings in shadings of the man and his life that have never been presented before."

But why does Scott care? It has something to do with that strange alchemy that sometimes binds character and actor. Around the set, when they're waiting for George C. Scott to film a scene, you can hear the crew asking, "Where's the general?" There's an underlying sense of Scott's importance to the production. He's the general, too, on this set. He's not just an actor in the title role.

"I've lived with the guy for sixteen years!" proclaims Scott. "With all due modesty, I may know as much about Patton as anyone in the world. And I'm extremely fond of him as a human being. Extremely fond . . ."

On the set *The Last Days of Patton* is getting first-class treatment, at least in part due to Chrysler Corporation, full sponsor of the film that will fill three hours of prime-time network television on CBS sometime in 1986. Among the cast and crew assembled are four Academy Award-winners: Scott; Eva Marie Saint who plays Patton's wife, Beatrice (*On the Waterfront*, 1954); director Delbert Mann (*Marty*, 1955); and costume designer Phyllis Dalton (*Dr. Zhivago*, 1965).

"I wanted to know what Beatrice Patton looked like, how she dressed," said Eva Marie Saint. But there were not many photos of Mrs. Patton in the library. So, Miss Saint telephoned Frank McCarthy, producer of the 1970 feature film *Patton* who suggested that she get in touch with the Pattons' daughter who was living in Massachusetts." I called her, and after apologizing for invading her privacy, asked if I might ask a question or two about her mother. We talked for more than an hour," said the Award-winning actress. "She was wonderful, and the next day this arrived by express mail."

"This" is a package of photos and memorabilia from the family albums of Ruth Ellen Patton Totten, now seventy-two. In an accompanying letter, Mrs. Totten said she was delighted that Miss Saint was to portray her mother and that she had decided to lend her this rare collection, "to make a character come alive through an actress."

Moved by Mrs. Totten's generosity, Eva Marie Saint has taken her stewardship very seriously. "The materials never leave my sight. I take them with me to the set each day. And they have been

a help not only to me, but also to our costume designer." Phyllis Dalton has created a wardrobe for the character of Beatrice Patton based on Mrs. Totten's photos.

"I learned so much about Beatrice from Mrs. Totten and through these photos," said Miss Saint." An actress has decisions to make in the creation of any character, but if you're playing a woman who actually lived, you might as well let her make some of those decisions for you.

Scrupulous attention is being paid to costuming, props, and general historical accuracy. Helping to insure that accuracy is a retired United States Army colonel named Julius L. Blatt. He was at Utah Beach on D-Day, got attached to the Third Army when Patton was activated, and had his Bronze Star pinned on by none other than General George S. Patton, Jr., himself. As Military Advisor on the project, Blatt says, "I've never been overruled. Del [director Delbert Mann] has accepted my recommendations at all times." Everybody on this project seems intent on getting it right. One suspects that this trickles down from on high, starting with Scott's own commitment to and affection for Patton.

"Everybody seems to want to see Patton as a swashbuckling loud-mouth," says Scott. "That's what they did to him in the press all through his life. I want him to get what I call a fair shake. And that's what I'm attempting to do."

### **The General Idea**

George C. Scott Makes Patton a Four-Star Film  
by Thomas Doherty

### **American Movie Classics Magazine**

Volume II, Number 1  
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The grand military epic of the Second World War, in which the Americans were unquestionably the good guys, used to be one of Hollywood's most lucrative and prestigious genres. Its glory days date roughly from *Battleground* (1949) to *The Longest Day* (1962) though, by the time of *Midway* (1976) and *A Bridge Too Far* (1977), the old soldierly form had all but faded away.

*Patton* (1970; January 10, 30, 31) may well be the last of that vintage breed. Indeed, it boasts all the regulation equipment; panoramic action sequences, eye-popping widescreen cinematography, and, of course, a larger-than-life hero.

A biopic of General George S. Patton had been the dream of producer Frank McCarthy almost since V-E Day. Having worked under General George C. Marshall as a staff officer and with Darryl F. Zanuck as an executive at Twentieth-Century-Fox, McCarthy had just the credentials for a Hollywood war movie. For two decades he nurtured the project, considering nearly every sturdy male star for the title role; Spencer Tracy, John Wayne, Burt Lancaster, Robert Mitchum. Finally in 1966, with the enthusiastic backing of Zanuck, *Patton* got the affirmative—plus a then-lavish budget of 12.5 million dollars.

McCarthy next recruited a seasoned director (Franklin J. Schaffner, fresh from the 1968's *Planet of the Apes*) and a young Turk screenwriter (Francis Ford Coppola, fresh from UCLA film school). Schaffner had actually glimpsed Patton during his own wartime service in Sicily and the sight had made an impact. More to the point, he was a scrupulous organizer experienced in large-

scale productions and overseas locations (*Patton* was filmed on 71 sites in six countries, mostly in Spain). For his part, Coppola was a rising screenwriter with a major big screen credit, *Is Paris Burning?* (1966). Though veteran screenwriter Edmund H. North later came in for rewrites and co-credit, the final cut was true to Coppola's original vision of *Patton*; he was, as he once told an interviewer, "a man out of his time, a pathetic hero, a Don Quixote figure."

The film they made is a fine hybrid; part combat flick, part psycho-biopic. Like a good military action adventure, it charges briskly through the major campaigns—beginning at the Kasserine Pass in North Africa, rumbling on to the invasion of Sicily, and roaring towards a climax with the Battle of the Bulge. Yet all the furious armored activity is filtered through the mythic lens of a warrior alternately inspirational and delusional, sentimental, and brutal. Surveying the carnage of battle, for instance, Patton exclaims, "I love it! God help me, I do love it so!" In the end, against genre expectations, *Patton* is more character-driven than action-oriented; there are only eleven minutes of battle footage in the entire film.

Though the setting of *Patton* is World War II, the context was Vietnam. In an age of hawks and doves, hard-hats and hippies, *Patton* managed to play to both sides of the generation gap; either as a rousing tribute to a selfless patriot waging the Good War or a subversive critique of American militarism gone mad. Doubtless the most idiosyncratic reaction came from the Commander in Chief; after watching the film twice, President Nixon felt vindicated in his decision to invade Cambodia.

Even so, *Patton's* spirit often seems more Age of Aquarius than V for Victory; his flair for colorful adornment (riding crop, ivory-handled revolvers), his belief in reincarnation (previous tour of duty; with the Roman Legions at Carthage), and his gruff irreverence (he orders the chaplain to whip up a prayer for good weather during the Battle of the Bulge). Initially, Twentieth-Century-Fox contemplated marketing the film as a kind of youth protest pie in khaki: *Patton: Salute to a Rebel* read early ad sheets.

Patton was a rebel, of course, in some ways. Just the wrong kind; indeed, his lack of self-control nearly ruined his career when, in a field hospital in Sicily, he slapped a shell-shocked GI, thinking the man was malingering. Wartime censorship would normally have kept the incident under wraps, but reporter Drew Pearson broke the story and a national uproar ensued. Calling the act "despicable," General Eisenhower ordered Patton to apologize publicly.

In the film, General Omar Bradley (Karl Malden) plays the calm counterpoint to this shoot-from-the-hip Patton. General Bradley himself served as technical advisor on *Patton* and personally checked the script for inaccuracies. But what made the film feel accurate, of course, was the fire-breathing performance of George C. Scott, whose erratic temperament and infuriating brilliance actually does seem to reincarnate the General.

Prior to *Patton*, Scott had been known mainly as a scene-stealing character actor in *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959), *The Hustler* (1961), and especially, *Dr. Strangelove* (1964), where his over-the-top performance as General "Buck" Turgidson is less backstory than baggage for his finely etched portrait of Patton.

From the first seconds of Patton's innovative "cold opening" prologue, where an American flag fills the screen and Scott-as-Patton marches out in full fighting regalia to limn the fine points of his philosophy of war ("We're going to murder those lousy Hun bastards by the bushel!"), moviegoers were ready to take their marching orders. Variety summed up popular opinion: "War is hell and Patton is one hell of a picture."

No other actor that year came within barking distance of Scott's command performance; he was a shoo-in for the Best Actor Oscar. Yet Scott did the unheard of by refusing, in advance, to accept so "demeaning" an award. Needless to say, the actor's own slap in the Academy's face only heightened the fevered publicity swirling around the film and the suspense during "the envelope, please" moment, "Oh, my God!" squealed Goldie Hawn. "The winner is George C. Scott!"

Producer Frank McCarthy picked up the statuette, but returned it the next day to the Academy, in whose custody it remains. The other six Oscars won by *Patton*, including Best Picture, Best Director, Best Art Direction-Set Direction, and Best Screenplay, were accepted without complaint.

The real Patton died not as he dreamed—killed with the last bullet of the last battle of the last war—but in a jeep accident in December 1945. In the film, a German officer putting together a psychological profile of Patton offers an apt epitaph of the man. He was, he said, "a magnificent anachronism, a romantic warrior lost in modern times."

Recently, anticipating AMC's showing of *Patton*, I asked a former tank commander who served with Patton—my father-in-law, John L. Williams (Third Army, 748th Tank Battalion)—how George C. Scott's personification measured up against his memories of the real thing. He considered the matter carefully and allowed that Scott had done, on the whole, a very good job. There was a pause. Then he added, in all seriousness: "But he underplayed the part."

*(Note: General Patton did not die in a jeep accident. He was injured in an automobile accident near Mannheim, Germany and died 12 days later on 21 December, 1945—ed.)*

## **Patton vs. Schwarzkopf**

by Jonny M. Duffy

### **American Patriot**

Volume 1, Number 1

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In any field of endeavor, certain individuals rise to the top, the creme de la creme. In the history of U.S. desert warfare, two names will always stand out as the greatest exemplars of military leadership: General George S. Patton, Jr. and now, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf III. Yet for all the parallels as commanders, the men behind the stars were as different as fire and ice.

Both men were somehow destined for military greatness. Patton was born in 1885 to a Virginia family with a long Army tradition; Schwarzkopf, born in 1935, knew even as a boy that he wanted to grow up to be a soldier. Both men attended West Point Military Academy, Patton graduating in 1909, Schwarzkopf in 1957. And both men saw combat early in their lives as junior officers.

During his two tours in the Southeast Asia theater of war, Schwarzkopf rose through the ranks and earned two Purple hearts, three Silver Stars, and the Distinguished Service Medal with Oak Leaf Clusters. Not an armchair officer, Schwarzkopf suffered physically with his men, leading troops through minefields and sustaining a compressed spine because of his many paratrooping missions.

Patton distinguished himself as a young cavalry officer during the final years of World War I, then organized and commanded the first U.S. Army tank battalion, in 1917. In the mechanized armored vehicle, Patton saw the 20th Century version of the cavalry: mobile, fast, able to strike.

During peacetime, both men were similarly frustrated: warriors without wars. Patton taught the new art of mobile tank deployment—all speculative, as the use of cumbersome tanks in WWI was minimal. According to family members, Schwarzkopf was embittered about the lack of

military success his nation had had, and occasionally snapped at them if they argued about the validity of war.

In personality, the two men stand at opposite poles. Schwarzkopf, though physically imposing, was nicknamed "the Bear" by his troops, a name that implies both ferociousness and cuddles (he dislikes the moniker "Stormin' Norman"). As millions have seen on television, he comes off as intelligent (with an I.Q. of 170), affable, informed, and approachable. His is the modesty of confidence. Rather than wear all the medals he has earned, his dress during press briefings was a simple infantryman's uniform with a combat badge and paratrooper's wings.

Patton's nickname was "Old Blood 'n' Guts" a far cry from bear-like cuddles. At times aloof, other times abrasive, Patton brandished identical Colt .45 revolvers on each hip, both with polished ivory grips. One reporter mistakenly identified the pistol grips as "pearl-handled," to which Patton responded, "Only a goddamn pimp has a pearlhandled gun!"

Both generals came into their own at the age of 56, commanding tank forces in distant deserts against high odds, and led their armies to triumph.

Patton's first major victory in World War II was during the invasion of North Africa in 1942, held by the crack Afrika Korps, led by the brilliant "Desert Fox," Field Marshall Erwin Rommel. Prior to Patton's arrival, the U.S. contingent of the Allied desert force was disorganized and undisciplined, compared to the British force led by Field Marshall Montgomery. Patton reorganized his soldiers into a top force and used Rommel's own strategies against the Afrika Korps. Long a student of warfare, Patton had in fact possessed a copy of the text on armored battle authored by Rommel before the war. Patton knew Rommel's penchant for fast deployment and sweeping around his enemy's flank, and anticipated the movements to outflank the German general. Patton wrote at length about this in his biography, but a single line in the movie Patton summed up the general's exultation when he realized he'd out-tricked the Desert Fox. In the film, Patton (George C. Scott) watches the enemy tanks being outmaneuvered and destroyed and shouts, "Rommel! I read your book!"

Knowledge of the enemy's thoughts was equally paramount to Norman Schwarzkopf in Operation Desert Sword. In an age of TV and satellite communications, Schwarzkopf and his allied commanders kept a finger on the battle-pulse of Saddam Hussein-and conversely made sure Saddam knew as little as possible. Numerically outmanned, the Allied commander used what he called the "Hail Mary play," like a football end-run fake-out. Precise knock-outs of Iraqi communication centers made that army "blind." Knowing that much of Saddam's information now had to come from sources like the press and television, Schwarzkopf and his generals dropped subtle hints that Kuwait City would be the site of a massive sea invasion, supported by land forces. (Actually, many reporters knew the secret "Hail Mary play," but kept the information secret.)

When Saddam's forces braced for an assault on one side, Schwarzkopf blind-sided the Iraqis by moving the VVIII and VII Corps to the west of the entrenched enemy, sweeping past their flank and continuing into Iraq. The mileslong lines of berms, pits, buried artillery and booby traps were circumvented, and the potential for a long and bloody war was bypassed. "We studied him;" Schwarzkopf reflected, "and he did exactly what we expected he'd do."

As widely reported, Schwarzkopf respects the men who serve under him, and the feelings are mutual. He lavished praise on the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions, for example, who performed the thankless task of keeping Iraqi forces busy with a frontal attack along the Saudi-Kuwait border while the main allied thrust swept into Iraq. He continuously praised the troops of every allied nation, and during press briefings would diplomatically say "allied forces" rather than "US. forces," though the United States services obviously made up the bulk of the fighting machine. Shortly before the brief ground war began, the Commander in Chief, U.S. Central Command (CentCom) in Riyadh addressed his combined U.S. Forces on the Armed Services Radio.

Schwarzkopf said, "I have seen in your eyes the fire of determination to get this job over quickly. My confidence in you is total, our cause is just. Now you must be the thunder and lightning of Desert Storm."

After the cease-fire, when asked about the incredibly low number of casualties, a grim Schwarzkopf said, "The loss of one human life is tragic." He has not been entirely free of controversy: in 1974, he commanded a battalion in which American soldiers accidentally killed one another in "friendly fire," but he was exonerated of any blame.

Overall, he comes off as cool and restrained, like when he discreetly used the phrase "Bovine scatology" during a press conference.

But where "the Bear" is cool, George Patton was white-hot and he discreetly courted controversy. His North African, Italian and French campaigns yielded high casualties, and many "grunts" feared his drive to win over their dead bodies. On August 1, 1943, in a field hospital in Nicolsa, Sicily, he slapped a corporal with his glove and unleashed a torrent of abuse on the young man, who was suffering from battle-induced psychosis. Ten days later, Patton redoubled his gaffe by striking two more enlisted men, one suffering malaria, the other mental anguish from seeing his friends blown apart. He yelled at both men, then angrily told the physician, "I won't have those cowardly bastards hanging around our hospitals! We'll probably have to shoot them some time anyway, or we'll raise a breed of morons!" That was hardly the sort of comment to endear him to his men. A biographer wrote, "From then on, any one of 50,000 men would have gladly killed him."

Yet when he ignored orders from Allied High Command and pushed into Palermo with his own troops, he appeared before his soldiers and said, "I thought I'd stand here and let you men see if I'm as big a son of a bitch as you think I am," His men cheered loyally and loudly.

Reprimanded for not allowing the British to liberate Palermo, Patton found himself in a similar position after the Battle of the Bulge. The Nazis' overwhelming force of tanks and troops counterattacked the approaching Allies. Patton's Third Army swept across France and pushed ahead into Germany, crushing the once-mighty Nazi army before them. Many observers believed his Patton would drive all the way into the heart of Berlin, capture the city, and perhaps even put his ivory-handled pistol to Hitler's head.

But Patton was denied this potential triumph, and ordered by General Eisenhower to hold his position and wait for the Red Army, which was moving westward toward Berlin. High-level decisions by the heads of the Allied nations had already decided that the Soviet forces would claim Berlin first, to give them a chance to exact revenge for the Nazi invasion of Russia, followed quickly by the Allies from the east and south.

Similarly, few people in the world doubted that the Schwarzkopf-led allied forces could be stopped if they decided to keep moving straight into Saddam Hussein's backyard. "We're 150 miles from downtown Baghdad," bragged Schwarzkopf at the end of the brief ground war. The much vaunted Iraqi army was in tatters, surrendering by the tens of thousands. Saddam's Republican Guard had long-since moved out of the range of fire, retreated north, or withdrew back to Baghdad to protect their leader.

But the stated purpose of Operation Desert Sword was accomplished: liberate Kuwait and drive the Iraqis back to their own country. The United Nations resolutions did not include toppling Saddam and occupying Iraq's capital. Politics had begun the war, and politics ended it.

Unlike Patton, Schwarzkopf took his "setback" with good grace. "The gates are closed," the allied general said simply. A few weeks later, visiting the small Arab country for the first time, "the Bear" walked on a Persian Gulf beach and filled two small bottles with sand. "This is sand from the liberated beaches of Kuwait," he said. "This is something that I promised myself that I'd do."

Patton's last months were spent away from the front lines, in a support company. His flamboyance and outspoken attitude had been muzzled by the more diplomatic Dwight Eisenhower. An automobile accident in Mannheim, Germany, led to hospitalization and, a few days later, death to Patton. He had outlived his war by six months. A born warrior who believed he had been reincarnated from generals in eons past, Patton probably would have spent the post-war peace as uncomfortably as he had the period between 1918 and 1941, a man without a purpose.

The peacetime future for Norman Schwarzkopf seems bright. Some civilians have suggested he receive a fifth star and become the nation's sixth General of the Army, after Dwight Eisenhower, George Marshall, Douglas MacArthur, Omar Bradley and Henry Arnold. General Schwarzkopf's own modesty, not to mention military law, would prevent wartime promotion, and the Gulf War is now thankfully over. But even though he faces mandatory retirement next year, prospects are good for him. Certainly he will be able to find a place in private industry, and his popularity would insure his prospects on lecture circuits. Much like America itself, Norman Schwarzkopf will continue to show his true colors at peace as proudly as at war.

*A great deal can be learned from how both George S. Patton and H. Norman Schwarzkopf III felt about winning. Schwarzkopf's comments came at the conclusion of the war. In the Gulf and Patton's remarks sum up how he felt about victory to his men on the eve of battle.*

*"I can't say enough about the two Marine divisions. If I use words like 'brilliant' it would really be an under description of the absolutely superb job that they did in breaching the so-called impenetrable barrier. It was a classic, absolutely classic, military breaching of a very, very tough, minefield, barbed wire, fire trenches-type barrier. They went through the first barrier like water. They went across into the second barrier line even though they were under artillery fire at the time. They continued to open up that breach and then they brought both divisions streaming through that breach. Absolutely superb operation. A text book and I think it'll be studied for many, many years to come as the way to do it." -- H. Norman Schwarzkopf III, 1991.*

*"I want you to remember that no bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. He won by making the other poor dumb bastard die for his country. Men, all this stuff you heard about America not wanting to fight, to stay out of the war, is a long of horse dung. Americans, traditionally, love to fight. All real Americans love the sting of battle. When you were kids you all admired the champion marble shooter, the fastest runner, big-league ball players, the toughest boxers. Americans love a winner and will not tolerate a loser. Americans play to win all the time. I wouldn't give a hoot in hell for a man who lost and laughed. That's why Americans have never lost and will never lose a war, because the very thought of losing is hateful to Americans. Now, an army is a team. It lives, eats, sleeps, fights as a team. This individuality stuff is a bunch of crap. The bilious bastards who wrote that stuff about individuality for The Saturday Evening Post don't know anything more about real battle than they do about fornicating. Now we have the finest food and equipment, the best spirit, and the best men in the world. You know, my God, I actually pity those poor bastards we're going up against. By God, I do. We're not just going to shoot the bastards, we're going to cut out their living guts and use them to grease the treads of our tanks. We're going to murder those lousy Hun bastards by the bushel. Now, some of you boys, I know, are wondering whether or not you'll chicken out under fire. Don't worry about it. I can assure you that you'll all do your duty. The Nazis are the enemy. Wade into them. Spill their blood. Shoot them in the belly. When you put your hand into a bunch of goo that a moment before was your best friend's face, you'll know what to do. Now there's another thing I want you to remember. I don't want to get any messages saying that we are holding our positions. We're not holding*

*anything. Lot the Hun do that. We are advancing constantly and we're not Interested In holding onto anything except the enemy. We're going to hold onto him by the nose and we're going to kick him In the ass. We're going to kick the hell out of him all the time and we're going to go through him like crap through a goose. Now, there's one thing that you men will be able to say when you got back home. And you may thank God for It. Thirty years from now when you're sitting around your fireside, with your Grandson on your knee, and he asks you what did you do In the Great World War II, you wont have to say, 'Well . . . I shoveled shit In Louisiana.' All right now, you sons of bitches, you know how I feel. I will be proud to lead you wonderful guys into battle anytime, anywhere. That's all." -- George S. Patton, 1943.*

## **Death of Patton** by John Enigl

**Military**  
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Have you ever read a newspaper story, or story in a book, about an event that you witnessed, only to wonder if you and the reporter are talking about the same happening?

Well, that has been the experience of Earl Staats, Sturgeon Bay, WI. For 41 years he has been telling his friends about the most memorable event in his life, being on the scene of the accident that resulted in the death of General George S. Patton in Heidelberg, Germany.

Sometimes Earl would have to explain who Patton was, especially to those who were not in the military services in World War II. (Incidentally, the name of Patton is almost forgotten in Germany today, despite the fact that Patton was given the job of leading the Third Army against the country by General Eisenhower.)

But there has been a resurgence of interest in this controversial general, resulting in a number of books and films about him, such as "The Brass Target," "Patton," with George C. Scott, and the latest television movie about him, "The Last Days of Patton," adapted from the book by Ladislav Farago, and again starring George C. Scott as Patton.

However, Earl looks with curiosity and disbelief that the piece of history, which he witnessed on December 9, 1945, could be so distorted and so poorly portrayed by the media. Author Farago, who died of stomach cancer before his book could be printed, admitted that the accident which caused Patton's death was one of the most poorly documented events concerning World War II.

He said, "In fact, the accident of (this) four-star general—one of the greatest masters of warfare and an American hero on the grandest scale—was "investigated" more casually, superficially, and perfunctorily than any ordinary traffic mishap would have been under similar circumstances."

Farago interviewed many people regarding the accident that resulted in Patton's death, including the driver and a passenger in the car. Yet, considering that the driver and passenger were probably dazed by the accident which resulted in General Patton's death, Staats' firsthand observation at the scene of the accident may shed some new light on this historical event. So much fiction has surrounded the death of Patton, and perpetuated by films about the man that perhaps the



army should file an official report of the accident after a complete investigation, something that has never been done, according to Farago.

The following information was gathered in taped interviews with eyewitness Earl Staats, numerous books, and the assistance of the director of the Patton Museum of Cavalry and Armor in Fort Knox, KY.

Only a brief mention will be made of Patton's background and military career. There are many alive who participated in the conquest of Europe under Patton's direction; many who were engaged in the drive towards Bastogne, Belgium, under Patton's leadership, to rescue the Americans surrounded by the Germans in the Battle of the Bulge. The story about Patton's slapping of the battle-fatigued soldier has been well-publicized. His feeling that the Russian Communists were even a greater threat than the Nazis, and desire to drive the Russians back to the borders of their country rather than let them occupy East Germany was highly publicized. (In an interview, he answered "Yes" to a reporter's question about whether joining the Nazi party wasn't about the same as an American joining the Democratic or Republican party. He also suggested that former Nazis, since they had experience in running a government, should be used in setting up the post-war German government.) It is also true, however, that some Nazi groups had contemplated his murder; in fact, there is a legend that there were American plans to murder Patton so he could not discredit, by his actions, the reputation of General Eisenhower who looked like a presidential possibility.

All of this led to Patton being relieved of his command and being placed in a job where he could do no harm. On December 9, 1945, he was planning to retire, at the age of 60, from the army, and go back to the United States to spend his first peacetime Christmas with his family. He decided to go on one last bird hunting trip 100 miles away, in the fields below Mannheim. His route took him through Heidelberg, where 19-year old Earl Staats was stationed in the army of occupation.

Staats, who lived in Carlsville at the time, and Ray Mattie, from Sturgeon Bay, left for the army at the same time in 1944. Their mothers saw them off on the train in Green Bay, Ray Mattie recalls. They took their training down at Camp Blanding, FL, then came back for a furlough. Afterward, they were shipped by train to New York, then by a convoyed ship overseas to La Havre, France. They were in 14th Field Observation Battalion of the Fifteenth Army but in different batteries. Ray was doing guard duty and Earl was driving. Doing duty with them were a few other Door County natives. Ken O'Hern included.

Earl Staats was only 17 years when he entered the army. His brother Ernest joined about the same time and brother Lloyd was already in, being a little older.

Earl got into the war, with 12 weeks of basic training, four years before he could vote, and fought with the heavy artillery during the invasion of Germany. In May of 1945 Germany surrendered and Earl expected to be sent to the Pacific.

But instead he was picked to be the official driver for Colonel Sitzinger and be a part of the army of occupation.

Washington, and General Eisenhower, as well as President Roosevelt, felt that it was very important that military forces be kept in Europe after the war was over. Everything was in chaos: farming had come almost to a standstill: nearly all the rail lines, a major source for the transportation of food and supplies, had been blown up. There was danger of starvation of the populace. And there was the danger that some die-hard Nazis might attempt to rekindle the war.

The biggest threat of all probably was the possibility that, although they had been tremendously weakened by the war, that the Russians might attempt to take over much of Europe.

Patton had been keenly aware of that threat and because of his widely publicized statements that he considered communism an even greater threat than the Nazis, he was removed from his command of the Third Army and placed in charge of the Fifteenth Army, the army of occupation.

Grudgingly as Patton accepted that post, he still had to carry out his duties, and in order to travel around Germany, he had to have a driver.

Patton chose a young man from Sturgis, KY, Horace Woodring, 19 years old. Colonel Sitzinger, also working with the army of occupation, chose 18 year old Earl Staats from Carlsville, WI.

In many respects, "Woody" Woodring and Earl Staats were alike. Both had entered the army, not, knowing what was ahead for them. Pearl Harbor already was a thing of their boyhood days. They had the confidence, the brashness of youth, the surety that they were going to survive. As they say, they both still had all their arrows. And then, of course, the war was suddenly over, and they were doing what they both did for fun and sport back home, driving fast cars as often and far as they could. They were doing what they loved to do and getting army pay for it. Neither had any idea that their paths would cross, if ever so briefly, and at such an eternally remembered time as it turned out to be.

General George S. Patton, 60, and Colonel Sitzinger, 58, liked these teenage drivers. These gutsy officers identified more with these voting men than they did with men of their own age. (As another Door County veteran, Frank Orthober, who fought for Patton, recalls, the guys who injured themselves on purpose to get out of fighting were on the other end of Patton's list. Frank remembers seeing Patton at the front, not in some office behind the lines, in his polished up Sherman tank and polished helmet liner. He was highly visible: that's why he is so well remembered, and probably is why his men fought so hard for him.)

Patton liked his driver: Woody got him where he wanted to go, despite sentry posts and at speeds considered fast even for the Autobahn. On the morning of December 9, 1945, Patton was heading north for pheasant hunting in the forests around Mannheim, when his path crossed that of Door County native Earl Staats.

"I was stationed in Handschuhsheim," Earl recalls. "That's just across one of the branches of the Rhine River, north and a little west of Heidelberg. (Mannheim, where Patton was headed, is 20 some miles to the northwest of Heidelberg and Handschuhsheim.) Hitler had built a big stadium up there.

"Handschuhsheim is where the Germans worked on their atomic bomb, at least one of the most important parts, and the Heavy Water. We had guards all around the place, which was called the Phillip Lenard Building."

(Phillip Lenard was a German physicist who fit right into the Hitler scheme. A Nobel prize winner, he advanced the theory that the atomic theories of Einstein and Niels Bohr were "Jewish physics," and therefore had no validity. This prejudice, extending later on the Lutherans, Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses and others, led to an exodus of intelligence from Germany before 1933 and the extermination of those who disagreed with Hitler's philosophy after that time.)

(Another reason we developed the atomic bomb before Hitler, in addition to accepting eagerly the "Jewish physics" of Einstein's and Bohr's brilliant minds, was the fact that our atomic research was done by a single organization while Germany's was split among several, sometimes rivaling, groups.)

An important point to remember from here on is that Earl Staats has not read any of the numerous books about the life of Patton. What he knows is from first hand experience as an 18 year old soldier. He's views, with some amusement, the fictionalized versions of the accident that resulted in Patton's death in films and television specials.

Most accounts place Patton on Route 38, the Autobahn between Heidelberg and Mannheim, at close to noon on December 9, 1945, headed for a final hunting trip. Officially, he would soon be on a 30 day leave but he had decided to retire from the army within the next few days and expected to be home in the States with his family for Christmas. But that would not be the end for him. Some say he intended to run for the presidency.

On his way up to Mannheim, he ordered his driver to turn off into some side streets so he could view some of the destruction in the countryside. And as Earl Staats recalls, he made the final stop of his life to visit an old friend of his, Colonel Sitzinger.

"Patton stopped in at the orderly room that morning," Earl recalls. "He talked to Colonel Sitzinger and me for a while. In 30 days, I'll be a free man," Patton said. "I'm going home to straighten this mess out."

"I walked out to his car with him and his driver, who was maybe a little older than me, when he left. Patton got into his car, a 1941 or 1942 Plymouth staff car, painted an o.d. (olive drab) color. It was not a Cadillac like the stories say. He might have had a Cadillac, but he wasn't driving a Cadillac that day. I know because I stood right by the front fender of the car. I was waiting for the colonel to come out of the orderly room. (Patton had a Packard coup stateside, which was at the Wally Rank auto show in Milwaukee a couple of years ago but he is supposed to have commandeered a 1938 Cadillac over in France for his personal car for use in Europe.)

"Patton's driver drove the car right down the street past the house where I was staying and about five houses further to the end of the block, and went south. Then he went east another block and started south. When he got to the next block south, I heard 'Bang!'"

"I ran in the orderly room and got Sitzinger, and I said, 'Patton must have had an accident! Let's run over there!'"

"So we ran over there right away in the Colonel's 1937 Packard. We were the first ones there.

"I got out of the car, parking it before I went across the intersection. The truck that hit it was just past Patton's car, which was pushed up

against a building. A big army truck from the Phillip Lenard Building had come out of a side street and hit it (while making a left turn in front of Patton's car.) It smashed the whole side and the door, because the truck had a winch on the front. It smashed the front door.

"I got hold of the top of the door and yanked it open. (Patton had been sitting in the rear seat, and his head had struck the back of the front seat, breaking his neck.)

"We called the 115th Station Hospital and they came out there. We didn't take him out of the car until they got there. I reached in and felt of his pulse, but he didn't seem to have much pulse.

"We put him on a stretcher, and followed the ambulance right out there to the hospital, which was like a medical center. We took him in, down a long walk, wheeled him in through two big doors, down the corridor to a room.

"I just walked around outside the room, where I could see they were working on him.

"Pretty soon Sitzinger came out and said, 'That's it.'"

Although history records that General George S. Patton lingered on, paralyzed from the neck down for another 12 days, he was, for all intents and purposes, dead at the scene of the accident.

"Patton's funeral was at a white church in Heidelberg," Earl recalls. "After the funeral, General Eisenhower came over and shook my hand. He said, 'I know you're Sitzinger's driver, and I hear you're a pretty good driver. You're going to lead the funeral procession (to Hamm, in Luxembourg)."

"Patton wanted to be buried with his men, see, and none of them were to be buried on German soil. So he's buried in the big military cemetery in Luxembourg."

Some accounts of the story of Patton's accident say that General Hobart "Hap" Gay was in the car with him. He wasn't in the car when Patton stopped at the orderly room, in, Earl says, neither was Gay around at the scene of the accident. Perhaps Patton had left him off, picked him up around the corner, and Gay might have left the car to get help immediately after the accident occurred. As was said before, no investigation of the accident has ever been conducted.

Certainly Earl Staats' recollection of the accident scene, which have always been the same in the 41 years he has been telling about it, would be more accurate than that of Woodring, the dazed driver, who is still living and just barely 60 years old now.

Director John M. Purdy, of the Patton Museum of Cavalry and Armor in Fort Knox, KY, has been very helpful. He says, "The stories we know generally support Mr. Staats' claims. Most of the stories I have heard have some indisputable factual errors . . . The sedan has been mis-identified by many historians. We were able to positively identify the make and model only as recently as 1982, when we received a copy of an archives photo from the old "Stars and Stripes."

It's unlikely that Earl Staats would have mistaken a Cadillac for a Plymouth, however, even after it was smashed up.

Besides that, the pictures I've seen on the car in Patton Museum, which is supposed to be the one in which he had the accident, isn't a 1938 Cadillac. It's a '39, and they look far different.

Perhaps Earl Staats' recollections can bring out the true facts in the case of Patton's death, if an investigation is finally made, 41 years after the fact. Was there any chance that Patton's death could have been planned to get rid of him as a possible presidential candidate?

"No way!" says Earl Staats. "There's no way it could have been planned to have that truck come out and hit his car when and where it did.

"I know. I was there."

## **General George Patton** by George Forty

**War Monthly**  
Volume 8, Number 73  
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"Debonair and independently wealthy, handsome and impeccably groomed, erudite and exceptionally well-read, devoutly religious and genuinely moved to tears by suffering." All these are accurate descriptions of a man who was reputed to be a foul-mouthed martinet, who thought nothing of slapping sick soldiers and rejoiced in the nickname "Blood and Guts." These two descriptions of the same person are so incredibly opposite that one cannot help but surmise that someone got his facts confused about General George Smith Patton, Jr.

Patton was perhaps the greatest mixture of opposites one could find in one person. Loyal and dependable, yet unpredictable and capricious. Brutal yet sensitive, gregarious yet always a loner, as easily moved to tears as to anger, a man who gloried in battle and yet wrote sensitive poetry from his heart, the list of 'opposites' is endless. It is inevitable that such a man should have had a many critics as ardent admirers. Like Montgomery, he was a man who excited people's passions in one direction or another. However, whatever has been written or said about him, not one single word can truthfully be found that is in any way derogatory about his ability to win battles. Without a shadow of doubt Patton was one of the best, if not the best, tactical field commander of World War II.

He had little opportunity to show his real grasp of strategy, but his reading of the Ardennes situation in 1944 was more far sighted than those above him. It is sad therefore, to discover, that the Germans appreciated his prowess and not the Allies.

**Patton, America's Rommel**

Why else would they have swallowed the complicated deception plan, known as "Fortitude," (see WM 69) which was designed to make them think that Patton, who had not been used in operations since the Sicilian "slapping incident," was actually the head of an Army Group preparing to launch the real invasion into the Pas de Calais area? Surely the Allies could not be so idiotic as to pass up such a provenly successful general for a trivial incident that would have caused no comment whatsoever in the Axis armies? A captured senior German officer said: "General Patton is for the American Army what Rommel stands for in the German Army"—could any German fighting soldier pay anyone a higher compliment?

George Smith Patton, Junior, was born at San Gabriel, California, on 11 November 1885, on the 1,000 acre Wilson-Patton ranch, belonging to his wealthy Californian rancher/lawyer father. Considered at first too delicate to go to school, he was kept at home where his Aunt "Nannie" Wilson read aloud to him. So, although he did not learn to read or write until he was 12 years old, he knew vast tracts from the Bible, the Iliad, the Odyssey, Plutarch's Lives and all the books on Napoleon almost by heart. Once he had mastered the art of reading, he read avidly for the rest of his life and had an almost photographic memory. His mathematics and spelling suffered from this early lack of schooling and he never spelt well. It was therefore quite a strain for him to get through school in order to reach West Point—from a very early age he had been determined to be a soldier. Once at West Point he was equally determined to do as well as he possibly could and to become the Cadet Adjutant. It took him five years instead of four to achieve this, due to his poor performance in maths, but throughout his time at West Point he was top in military discipline and deportment.

### **An early lack of schooling**

Commissioned in 1909 into the 15th Cavalry, Patton excelled at horse riding and the individual sports of fencing and pistol shooting. Handsome, wealthy and self confident, he was married the following year to Beatrice Ayer, the daughter of a rich and influential industrialist and financier. Their marriage could not have been happier. She was a beautiful, cultured and talented woman, who cheerfully gave up a luxurious life in high society to follow her husband around remote and primitive army stations, making it her life's work to further his career. They were devoted to one another throughout their long and happy married life.

A good example of the character of the young Patton can be gauged from his attendance in Stockholm at the Olympic Games of 1912, where he represented the USA in the military pentathlon—at his own expense! Swimming was his weakest event, so he spent the entire crossing over to Europe in a makeshift swimming pool, practicing against the pull of a large rope attached to the side. The pentathlon demands a variety of skills and great stamina, as it comprises a long steeplechase, pistol shooting, swimming, fencing and a 5000-meter run. Patton broke the Olympic record on the pistol range in a practice round, but in the actual competition was placed 27th, as one of his ten shots apparently missed the target. As his other nine were all bulls, it is probable that the missing shot went through the same hole as one of the others. However, in those days without any of the modern measuring or sensing devices, his score had to be counted on the evidence of the judge's eyes. This low score in one of his best events pulled him down to fourth place—he had won the fencing, was third in the riding on a borrowed horse and also third in the running and the swimming, otherwise he would undoubtedly have been the Olympic champion. He was to prove that his prowess with a pistol was not confined to shooting at targets a few years later, when he went with General 'Black Jack' Pershing, into Mexico in 1916, chasing the notorious outlaw Pancho Villa. In a pistol fight he shot and killed three bandits, including one of Villa's "generals" called Cardenas, returning to Pershing's headquarters with the dead bandits strapped to the wings of his open touring car. "We have a bandit in our own ranks," chortled Pershing, "this Patton boy!"

### **My guns are ivory-handled**

He's a real fighter!" Although Patton's pistols were to become an essential part of his flamboyant "War Face" during World War II, it is worth remembering that he certainly knew how to use them. The pistols are often described wrongly as being pearl handled, but as Patton himself was quick to point out in his own inimitable manner: "Goddamit, my guns are ivory-handled. Nobody but a pimp from a cheap New Orleans whorehouse would carry one with pearl grips!"

Patton and Pershing were close friends so it is not surprising that when "Black Jack" was chosen to command the American Expeditionary Force in April 1917, he chose Patton to be his ADC and Headquarters Commandant. For his part, although Patton enjoyed the close association with Pershing, he rapidly decided that he hadn't come to France to do a desk job, and soon requested a posting to a fighting unit. Pershing understood and offered him command of an infantry battalion or a posting to the newly forming Tank Corps. How many Germans must regret that Patton had the foresight to choose the latter! Promoted to major, Patton was given the task of training the first two battalions of tanks and then of leading them into action.

To start off with, he was the only one who could drive the light two-man French Renault tanks with which he chose to equip his force, in preference to the cumbersome 30 ton British Mark Vs. He visited as many of the tank battlefields as he could reach, had a ringside seat at the famous British tank victory of Cambrai, learned all he could and then did his level best to make his brigade better trained than any other in the AEF. He personally wrote all the training manuals and regulations for the brigade, at the same time insisting on the highest standards of dress discipline and saluting. By mid-July, his brigade had achieved the reputation of being the smartest in France, and a "George Patton" had become the name for a super-correct salute!

His daughter, Mrs. Ruth Ellen Patton Totten told me that her father, whom she adored, told them: . . . of a strange thing during the Meuse-Argonne offensive in September 1918. He was to take his light tank brigade into combat and was waiting for the command. Their position was being sprayed with German machine-gun fire, and the bullets were cutting through the grass along the ridge. Occasionally a man would be hit and he could tell by the grunt or the scream and the way the body fell whether the hit was high or low. He said that he was getting more and more scared, his mouth was dry and his hands were sweating, and he felt like turning round and running like hell toward the rear. He happened to look up, and there, on a low bank of cloud he saw the faces of his ancestors, watching him; he recognized his grandfather, George Patton, and his great uncle Tazewell, and General Mercer, from their pictures, but he said there were scores of others, in different dress, some almost fading into the cloud, but they all had a family look and he said to himself: "Here is where another Patton gets his." The command came to move forward, and he suddenly was not scared at all. That was the day he was wounded critically. Patton went on to win a DSC that day for his bravery, leading the tanks into the attack sitting outside on top of the leading tank and urging his men forward.

Patton finished World War I at the age of 33 as a temporary colonel, highly decorated (DSC and DSM), greatly respected, and with probably more combat experience than any of his contemporaries, so it was a little galling to have to return to his substantive rank of captain—it would be 18 years before he regained his highest wartime rank. Between the wars the Pattons lived the life of many rich cavalry officers in the US and British armies, putting his energies into polo and the hunting field. But he kept abreast of military thinking, wrote numerous articles on tactics in military journals, never lost his enthusiasm for armour as a battle winning factor in a mobile war, and read widely from his vast personal library. He visited France, studied the campaigns of Napoleon, and revealed at this stage yet another fascinating side of his make-up, as a firm believer in "deja vu" (lit: "I have been here before"). In other words, not only did he know all about the campaigns of past wars through reading about them, but also he believed that he had the

personal experience of having actually been there at the time in a previous existence. His peacetime assignments included staff tours (which he hated), in Hawaii among other places. There he wrote a theoretical and highly prophetic paper, devising a plan for the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

### **Hell on wheels**

When the expansion of the US armoured forces was begun in the summer of 1940 after the German blitzkrieg through France, Patton was on tenterhooks worrying that he would be passed over due to his age. Fortunately General Adna R. Chaffee, who had been appointed to command the Armored Force, created on 10 July, remembered his WORLD WAR I record, and he was given command of the 2nd Armored Brigade at Fort Benning, Georgia, which was soon followed by that of 2nd Armored Division. Patton was in his element. As General Essame puts it, in his book on Patton: ". . . for a whole year from April 1941 the 2nd Armored Division sustained the full blast of the Patton drive . . ." "Hell on wheels" was the division's nickname and Patton gave them ample opportunity to prove it! His success in inculcating the entire division with his spirit of aggression, was graphically proved in the army manoeuvres of September 1941, when all the exercises were finished hours ahead of time as no one could stop the 2nd Armored! In April 1942, General Patton was promoted to command 1st Armored Corps, and once again got down to the job of training them in his own inimitable manner. Selecting the wildest piece of desert he could find he really put them through it. They learned how to make do on a single canteen of water a day, how to go without sleep for 36 hours at a stretch, how to live, eat, sleep and fight on their tanks and trucks, how to navigate by the sun and stars.

Patton's first operational assignment of WORLD WAR II came with the Torch operations in November 1942 in North Africa. He was chosen to command the all American Western Task Force of 24,000 men, which was one of the three pronged landings. His task was to land on the Moroccan coast and capture the port of Casablanca. En route to North Africa Patton read the Koran, to understand the religion and customs of the Moslems. Unfortunately it was the French who needed understanding; hopes of a rapid, bloodless surrender of their forces being foiled by the pro-Vichy Admiral Darlan, who had returned to North Africa only two days before the invasion took place. The Allies therefore met fierce French resistance, which combined with bad weather conditions on the exposed beaches, to make things difficult for them. However, landings began on 8 November and by the 11th (Patton's birthday) the city of Casablanca had surrendered, but not until over 1,000 French lives had been lost needlessly. As usual Patton, once he was able to get ashore—he had been held up on the first morning by losing all his kit, when the landing craft in which it was stowed was blown to bits during the naval battle—by his personal intervention sorted out many of the beach-landing problems, using "his touch of magic" as Mountbatten's liaison officer with Patton put it.

Patton's period in North Africa is probably best remembered for the way in which he sorted out 2nd Corps in Tunisia the following spring. Badly led by General Fredenhall, they had suffered a series of humiliating defeats at the hands of the Afrika Korps, culminating in the rout at Kasserine Pass. Morale was rock bottom when Patton hit them like the wrath of the Almighty and it is a tribute to his brilliant leadership that it took him little more than a month to revitalise the whole Corps and get them back "on the ball." "You have done a fine job and have justified our confidence in you," signaled General George Marshall, US Army Chief-of-Staff. Then Patton was given command of the US Seventh Army for the invasion of Sicily.

### **The face slapping incident**

Sicily is remembered not for his brilliant tactical handling of Seventh Army, nor for the unfortunately rivalry which developed between Patton and Montgomery, but rather for the face slapping incident that overshadowed everything else, and threatened to bring Patton's career to an

abrupt halt. On two separate occasions, whilst visiting the wounded, which was something Patton did frequently, he struck two soldiers who were suffering from what was called "shell shock" in WORLD WAR I and "battle fatigue" in WORLD WAR II. The first time was on 3 August, in the receiving tent of the 15th Evacuation Hospital, the second on the 8th in the 93rd Evacuation Hospital. Patton on both occasions physically struck the soldier concerned on the face and in the second instance the blow was hard enough to knock off the helmet liner which the man was wearing. He also shouted and swore at them, more strongly in the second case, when the CO of the hospital finally had to intervene. General Patton argued that he did so in order to administer a short, sharp shock to the man concerned, but it is clear that he let his emotions get the better of him.

Patton abhorred cowardice, he knew how infectious it could be and that spelled disaster in any army—and he had a recent example of that with 2nd Corps in Tunisia. At the same time no commander could have been more genuinely moved to compassion by what he felt were proper casualties. "The Red Badge of Courage" was something which Patton revered and he was often moved to tears when he visited the wards. Clearly he did not expect the furor which his spontaneous and ill-advised action sparked off, but at least he had the guts to take his punishment like a man. He apologised not only to the two men concerned, but then personally to each of his divisions. Then and there General Eisenhower decided that Patton would never be promoted above Army command. How the German General Staff would have laughed had they known!

Fortunately, despite considerable misgivings, it was decided that he should still get command of the US Third Army, and by so doing ensured Patton's place in history. "Georgie's Boys" would do him proud in a campaign in which he would again show brilliant leadership and ruthless determination "to get the fustest with the mostest." Once again he would show as he had done in North Africa and Sicily, that he considered being a leader meant just that, and that he should constantly be seen by his manoeuvres. leading troops. "An Army is commanded by a visual presence, not via coded messages" was one of his maxims. Patton met the vanguard of his new headquarters as they disembarked off the *RMS Queen Mary* on the evening of 28 January 1944, at Greenock on the Clyde. They then traveled to their new home at Peover Hall, near the small town of Knutsford in rural Cheshire.

Here, during the training period before the Normandy invasion another calamity struck the unfortunate Patton. "The Knutsford Incident." It began harmlessly enough, with Patton being asked to open a club for American servicemen in Knutsford. After trying unsuccessfully to get out of the whole thing, he finally agreed to speak, provided the press would not be present—but of course they were. In his short speech he made passing reference to the need for better understanding between Britain and America, ". . . as it seemed the destiny of America, Great Britain, and of course Russia, to rule the world after the war was over." The story was reported quite correctly in the British press, but certain American papers deliberately omitted the reference to Russia and then castigated Patton for casting a slur on "our gallant Russian allies." Patton made no secret of his dislike for the Russians and distrusted their motives, so he had many Left Wing enemies. Once again his career hung in the balance, but reason prevailed and he was let off the hook and told not to speak in public again. Champing at the bit, Patton waiting impatiently in England, as the D Days landings went ahead with increasing success, wondering whether there would still be a war for him to fight by the time they let him into it.

Finally the order came for Third Army to move over to France. Patton himself, arrived by air on 6 July, and made a typical, Patton speech to the crowd of army and navy personnel who had rushed to see him arrive at an airstrip near the Omaha Beach. In it he said how proud he was to be there to fight with them and went on to add that he would, ". . . personally shoot that paper-hanging son-of-a-bitch just like he would a snake!" Patton was famous for his profanity—he did not consider the use of swear words to be out of place provided they were not blasphemous—and there are many "gems" which delighted his GI audiences and embarrassed certain senior officers



and politicians. One pep talk which he gave to his soldiers during the pre D-Day build up concerned what they could say to their grandchildren when asked what they did in the great World War: ". . . you won't have to cough, shift him to the other knee," he told them, "and say—well your granddaddy shoveled shit in Louisiana—no sir, you can look them straight in the eye and say 'Son, your granddaddy rode with the great Third Army and that son-of-a-bitch Georgie Patton!' "

Unleashed at long last for the breakout Operation Cobra, Third Army was soon deep into the enemy rear at Coutances. Officially they were operational from 28 July onward and by early August, his three corps were going in three different directions, clearing the Brittany peninsula as far west as Brest, driving southwest to Rennes, Vannes, and St. Nazaire; whilst at the same time beginning their remarkable gallop across France by taking Le Mans. Thereafter Third Army's triumphal progress added a new dimension to the term "fluid warfare," out-blitzing the Nazis. His troops required only one order—to seek out the enemy, trap and destroy them. And this they did, driving on in fair weather and foul, across good going and bad.

It was a masterpiece of teamwork and Patton had the ability to control a vast force of all arms, with air support, and to forge them into the most hard hitting army the world has ever known. The cold figures of their campaign make incredible reading—81,522 square miles of territory liberated, containing 12,000 cities, towns, and villages, including 27 of more than 50,000 inhabitants. In 281 days of campaigning they killed 144,500 enemy, wounded 386,000 and captured a staggering 1,280,688 prisoners. It was certainly not "Roses all the Way" and there were many stiff battles.

Patton, who having read the battle correctly, was the only one able to restore the situation when the Germans made their last despairing attack through the Ardennes into the First Army area. He had already planned for such a contingency and consequently was able to carry out the seemingly impossible manoeuvre of executing a fast ninety degree turn with his entire army and be in a position to attack with three divisions in under 72 hours. No wonder his claim was initially greeted with disbelief and consternation by SHAEF! And yet he proved that it could be done, not by magic, but by his far-sighted planning, for just such an emergency, days before. Judging by a typical remark made by a sergeant in the beleaguered garrison of St Vith, the troops on the ground had more faith in him. When the said sergeant heard that Third Army had turned north and was attacking the southern side of the "Bulge" he said to his commander, Colonel (later General) Bruce C. Clarke: "That's good news. If Georgie's coming we have got it made."

After a victorious campaign in the Saar-Palatinate triangle, Third Army had closed up to the Rhine by the third week of March 1945. Apart from the opportune and brilliant capture of the Remagen bridge in the First Army sector, no assault crossings had been made. Montgomery was making methodical and careful preparations to get a secure crossing, scheduled for 23 March. Once again Patton decided to beat his old rival to the punch and this he did. "Without benefit of aerial bombardment, ground smoke, artillery preparation, or airborne assistance" announced Patton's liaison office at 12th Army Group HQ, making a deliberate dig at Monty detailed preparations, "the Third Army at 2200, Thursday evening, 22 March, crossed the Rhine River." What Monty thought about Patton's one-upmanship is not recorded!

Shortly after crossing the Rhine, Patton was involved in another of "those incidents," this time it involved sending a force to rescue POWs from the Hammelburg camp. Patton's critics say this was deliberately done so that he could rescue his son-in-law Lieutenant Colonel John K Waters, even though there was no firm evidence that he knew that Waters was actually in this camp as he had been captured in Tunisia in February 1943. Events proved that Waters was in the camp and the small force (not anywhere near as large as the one which Patton had wanted to send) reached the camp and liberated the POWs. Getting back to American lines, however, proved impossible and after fighting bravely against overwhelming odds, all were recaptured. If it did nothing else the raid proved to the Germans that they were vulnerable to this type of deep penetration raid, which undoubtedly affected their already crumbling morale, at the same time boosting that of Third

Army. It is unfair to accuse Patton of needlessly sacrificing lives just to rescue his son-in-law, although he clearly hoped that this would be achieved. Perhaps the real reason for the raid lies in the fact that various stories had been circulated to the effect that the Germans were killing POWs as the Allies approached, rather than let them be liberated. This was not true, but it was certainly an emotive enough reason for someone of Patton's make up to try to rescue American POWs at any cost.

Patton finished the war in a blaze of glory, the press had been singing his praises for so long that the final and fatal furor, which came after peace in Europe had been declared, was all the more unexpected. This time it concerned his insistence on keeping certain known Nazis in positions of authority in some parts of Third Army's area of jurisdiction. Patton did not try to deny it when the subject was broached at a press conference. However, he argued that it was essential to keep these men in their administrative posts if he were to find food to feed the starving civilian population, restore the minimum of services such as sanitation and medical, and start to prepare for the first terrible postwar winter. The American Jewish lobby found out, the press branded him a "Nazi-lover" and howled for his dismissal. With no more battles to fight, those in authority took the easy way out and he was posted out, to command US Fifteenth Army, which existed on paper only, and had the task of compiling an historical record of the war. "The more I see of people the more I regret that I survived the war," Patton wrote in his diary in one of his blacker moments.

Patton had always said that the finest way a soldier could hope to die was by the final bullet of the last battle of the war. This was not to be the case as far as he was concerned. On 9 December 1945, whilst traveling in his staff car along the Frankfurt-Mannheim road, accompanied by his Chief-of-Staff, his car was in collision with a big truck belonging to a quartermaster corps unit. In the crash Patton was the only one to be hurt. On being rushed to the 130th Station Hospital at Heidelberg, it was found that his neck was broken and that he was completely paralysed from the neck down. Mrs. Patton flew out, and although he rallied for a while, on 21 December, he died of acute heart failure, having confided to his brother-in-law that: "this is a hell of a way for a soldier to die'."

**Patton's Third Army by Charles M. Province**

Hippocrene Books Inc., 177 Madison Avenue, New York

NY 1000 16, \$22.50 ISBN 0-87052-973-0

by George Forty

**British Army Review**

The House Journal of the Army

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Charles M Province—Mike to his friends—is the President and Founder of the George S Patton Jr. Historical Society, and as such, a leading expert on the remarkable "Old Blood and Guts", as Patton is often incorrectly called. General George S Patton, Jr., was undoubtedly one of the best armoured generals of World War Two, who was feared and respected by the Germans, yet invariably in hot water with the Allies, usually for saying something he should not have said in public! Nevertheless, his prowess in armoured warfare has left him with a legendary reputation.

He was also one of the very few generals of World War Two who had actually held a senior armoured command in World War One.

Mike Province's previous book entitled: *The Unknown Patton*, which was also published by Hippocrene Books Inc. in 1983, contained a wealth of anecdotal material about one of the most controversial American military figures of all times. His new book: *Patton's Third Army* is by contrast, entirely factual and is a chronology of Third Army's incredible advance through North West Europe, from August 1944 to May 1945, when, under Patton's hard driving command they traveled further, faster than any other army had ever done before, in the entire history of war. They liberated or captured 81,522 square miles of territory, containing an estimated 12,000 cities, towns and communities, which included 27 cities of more than 50,000 people. They killed 144,500 enemy, wounded 386,200 and captured a staggering 1,280,688. This is a record well worth recording!

After a general introduction which deals with the early years of Third Army, from its formation in November 1918 as the army of occupation in Germany, to its pre-operational phase in Normandy in July 1944, the book then covers the subsequent ten months, one month per chapter, with a detailed day by day account of the major activities of Third Army. The final two chapters comprise an operational summary and then details of the staff of HQ Third Army.

Love him or hate him, despise him or revere him, Patton was throughout his life a larger than life character of whom much has been written, but I do not believe that anyone has taken the trouble to catalogue the doings of his great Third Army—one of the finest fighting formations of World War Two—in such a concise and methodical manner. Certainly had I been able to refer to such a complete work of reference when I wrote *Patton's Third Army at War*, then my task would have been made immeasurably easier.

The book forms an invaluable work of reference which contains a vast wealth of facts and figures. I'm sure it will be of great interest to both the professional and amateur historian alike.

## **The Man in the Pink Britches** by E. Quentin Gulliver

**Reminisce**  
Volume 2, Number 5  
October 1994, pp 25

*Odd attire wasn't the only thing that made this hard-tiding cavalryman different from the rest.*

It was a spring day in 1934 when I encountered the man in the pink britches. Near my home in Massachusetts was a riding stable, and I often rode my bike there to help Jim, the stable manager, brush and braid the ponies on days when there was a polo match at the Dedham Hunt Club.

On this particular day, as Jim and I rode up, we noticed three faded tan vans parked beside the field. On their sides were painted a pair of crossed sabers.

These army vans were being unloaded under the stern direction of a tall, lean man dressed in traditional cavalry clothing, including riding britches with a faint pink tint and the shiniest riding boots I'd ever seen.

Both Jim and I were struck by the contrast between these army visitors and the local club players. The brisk, hard-riding cavalrymen were tanned, tough and tenacious, while the local players were all cool country gentlemen.

One of them, a "teddibly proper" Englishman named Nason Hamlin, had an unusual habit: Wherever he was when a chukker ended (polo matches are divided into 7-minute periods called "chukkers"), he'd dismount and lead his winded horse off the field.

I'd been instructed to run out and take the reins so Nason could join his friends under a shaded pavilion. After the first chukker, this ritual caught the eye of the man in the pink britches.

He rode up so close to me on his blowing charger that Nason's pony nearly jerked the reins out of my hands. "What's wrong with that horse?" growled Mr. Pink Britches.

"Nothing, sir," I replied. "Mr. Hamlin likes to rest his horses as soon as the chukker's over."

"Well, I'll be!" he huffed, spurring his horse off the field.

When play resumed, the most prominent performer was the man in the pink pants—as much for his unending exhortations of the army team as for his aggressive style. He also had a high-pitched voice that tended to rise with excitement.

Though the competition was intense, that screeching cavalryman was an object of humor among the Dedham players. Obviously, they knew him well and were not the least intimidated. "Now, Georgie. Temper! Temper!" they'd caution, laughing at his frustration when his team missed a goal.

### **"Georgie's Boys" Prevailed**

But Dedham was no match for the cavalry. By the middle of the match, the outcome was no longer in doubt. Still, at the end, the men in brown were riding just as hard as they had at the opening toss.

And right up 'til the finish, "Georgie" kept on urging his troops with dire threats. After the match ended, Jim and I were cooling off the horses when I heard Jim comment to Nason that it would be hard to ever win a polo match from the cavalry, what with all the expensive government stock and equipment they brought with them.

Nason's clipped British reply spoke volumes about the unique man in the pink britches: "Not what you might think, old chap. Colonel Patton owns every one of those horses . . . he even pays rent to the cavalry for the use of those vans out of his own pocket!"

So that's how I met the man destined to become one of the most famous generals of World War II. Looking back now, I believe that polo was a proving ground for him. On that secluded country field, he led his men in charge after charge against the enemy.

To the man in the pink britches, the contest was a rehearsal for the momentous battles to come.

## **Ancestral Gray Cloud Over Patton**

by Ashley Halsey

### **American History Illustrated**

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"I looked upon myself during the charge as if I were a small detached figure on the battlefield watched all the time from a cloud by my Confederate kinsmen and my Virginia grandfather."

The imaginary cloud floating overhead in the mind of a future great World War II general must have been majestic. It had to accommodate well over a dozen Confederate relatives, including an awesome array of colonels, as George S. Patton, then a lieutenant colonel, reflected on leading a forlorn charge in the Argonne on September 26, 1918.

The Pattons and their kin commanded at various times during the Civil War the 7th, 21st, 22d, 25th, 56th, and 62d Virginia Infantry regiments; the 1st Georgia Volunteers and 51st Georgia; the 21st and 22d Louisiana; and the 2d Missouri Infantry. The list of their hundreds of battles reads like a Civil War geography. This phenomenal outpouring of military enterprise and martial audacity may be explained by the three letters V.M.I. and the strong drive of heredity.

Four of the seven Confederate Patton brothers and a number of their warring cousins attended the Virginia Military Institute at Lexington under a long-standing family tradition. Three of the brothers and several cousins studied under a dour professor, Major Thomas J. Jackson, later immortalized as "Stonewall," and subsequently helped him win victories. Abraham Lincoln supposedly referred to V.M.I. when he said that a "certain military school" in the South supplied so many trained Confederate officers that it prolonged the war. The remark might have been aimed almost personally at the Pattons.

The martial instinct arose naturally in the family. Their probable immigrant ancestor, fiery Robert Patton, fled Scotland apparently after opposing the Crown in the interminable conflict for Scottish independence. He married a daughter of Revolutionary War Brigadier General Hugh Mercer, another Scot, who died by British bayonets at the Battle of Princeton in 1777 rather than yield.

In 1903, seeking to enter the future General George S. Patton at West Point, his lawyer father disclaimed "false pride of ancestry," but cited his son's direct descent from the martyred Hugh Mercer. As additional evidence of hardy fighting stock, he also claimed descent from John Washington, ancestor of George Washington.

It is understandable that in battle this martial genius of World War II fancied himself under the close scrutiny of his forebears. Being something of a mystic as well as an unabashed ancestor worshipper, he presumably divined it. The thought buoyed him while he lay hospitalized with a wound received in that 1918 charge. He felt himself lucky. Four of the six enlisted men who followed him in his reckless sortie lay dead in the bloodied mud.

Foremost in the ghostly group on that imaginary cloud must have stood the first George Smith Patton, grandfather of the World War II leader. As a young lawyer, the 1852 V.M.I. alumnus foresightedly raised his own Virginia militia company in 1859 after the John Brown insurrection. By 1861 it was mustered in as Company H, 22d Virginia Infantry.

Fate promptly pointed a grim finger at the dashing young officer. In his first engagement, at Scarey Creek, in western Virginia, on July 17, 1861, a spent minie bullet—an ounce of pointed lead more than half an inch wide—knocked him stunned from his horse. But the momentum of the Confederate attack crumpled the Union forces with fifty-two casualties to one Confederate killed.

Soon a lieutenant colonel, Patton played a vital role in Major General Stonewall Jackson's first significant victory in that trough of battle, the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. At McDowell, Jackson ordered Patton and his 22d Virginia to hold the important valley turnpike at all costs. In doing so, Patton suffered a severe wound and was captured. Exchanged and healed, he was elected full colonel of the 22d Virginia by his men.

For nearly two years, during which Stonewall Jackson won lasting world fame, Patton served as a regimental or brigade commander under the former V.M.I. professor. In one engagement the young colonel doubled over from the impact of a minie bullet. "I am hit in the belly," he cried out.

"it is all over." Nearby Brigadier General Henry Heth leaned over the fallen man and probed the wound with his finger. "I think not, George," he said. Heth held up a small bent object, a \$20 gold piece from Patton's vest pocket. The bullet had spent itself against the coin.

Patton and his kinsmen shared their finest day in the vaunted Confederate victory at New Market, Virginia, on May 15, 1864. At least six of the clan served in the gray ranks. In retrospect, it emerges as a Patton military picnic.

At one point the musketry of George Patton's 22d Virginia Infantry helped to shatter a powerful Federal cavalry charge. At another, the 22d rushed to aid the 62d Virginia; they were trapped in a ravine where canister leveled half of the officers and a fifth of the men, including five consecutive color bearers. While the 62d was pinned down, Patton arrived with his troops to bolster the stalled 62d and become among the principal architects of the triumph. He also rendered a family service. The colonel of the battered 62d was his first cousin, pipe-puffing George Hugh Smith, an 1853 V.M.I. graduate.

In the climactic assault along a 1,200-yard front charged the two cousins; a company of the 62d Virginia commanded by a younger cousin; the V.M.I. cadet corps with Cadet Sergeant William M. Patton, youngest of the seven brothers in gray; and cadets John R. Patton and Mercer Slaughter.

George Patton and his 22d Virginia Infantry, as part of fiery Lieutenant General Jubal Early's army, tramped through the July heat and dust to the very back door of Washington, D.C., in 1864. To view the Rebels approaching the alarmed city, a tall, gaunt man in a stovepipe hat climbed on top of a fortification, but was hauled down amid cries of "Down, Mr. President."

The World War II General Patton, a dedicated military historian - though not an infallible one - mistakenly wrote with pride that his grandfather commanded the only Confederate force "which ever camped within the city limits of Washington." Always an avid researcher, he claimed he could prove it. He located in 1919 "an old lady on the road there" who assured him that two wounded soldiers of Patton's brigade had stayed at her house. Early's exhausted and outnumbered troops, confronted by heavy Federal reinforcements who rushed back to save Washington, perforce withdrew to Virginia.

That fall the pugnacious Early misstepped. Defending the valley against superior forces, he divided his troops in quest of a Jackson-type victory. But Major General Philip Sheridan struck hard for the Union. His soldiers sent Early's Confederate army reeling with a forty percent loss at the third Battle of Winchester on September 19, 1864. High on the Confederate casualty list appeared the name of George S. Patton. Even the enemy Sheridan noted the loss in a report. Thirty-three-year-old Patton fell mortally wounded shortly before the brigadier's commission arrived from Richmond making him the first General George S. Patton. Nevertheless, one of his small sons would grow up to father his namesake in World War II.

Three of the first General Patton's brothers meanwhile rose to full colonelcies. Only one brother survived in sound health. Of the two remaining, one, his health broken, was invalided out of the army, and another died of a frightful wound suffered at Gettysburg.

The oldest brother, Colonel John Mercer Patton, an 1846 V.M.I. graduate, commanded the 21st Virginia Infantry, but a complicated illness of the "stomach, bowels and liver," aggravated by wartime service, compelled him to return to civilian life on Aug. 15, 1862. The next brother, Isaac Williams Patton, deviated from the family tradition in only two respects: he did not graduate from V.M.I. or head a Virginia regiment. Having moved to New Orleans before the war, he commanded the 21st and 22d Louisiana in action in the Mississippi Valley.

The youngest of the four Patton colonels, 1855 V.M.I. graduate Waller Tazewell, received an unusual recognition of his valor. Badly wounded at Second Manassas, he was elected to the Virginia Senate on the assumption he would quit the battle field. Instead, he led his regiment, the 7th Virginia of Major General George Pickett's Division, in the famous charge at Gettysburg on

July 3, 1863. As he turned to encourage his men, a bullet shattered his jaw. Captured, Waller Patton died three weeks later in the Gettysburg College hospital. He chalked his last words on a slate—a message sending love to his mother and regretting that he was about to die "in a foreign land."

Two of the youngest Confederate brothers, James French and Hugh Mercer Patton, enlisted as privates in the Culpeper Minutemen, a militia unit first raised in 1776 by an ancestor named Slaughter. Both became teen-aged lieutenants, one wounded at Second Manassas, the other at Cold Harbor.

There is a drum roll to any recitation of other Patton kinsmen. Brigadier General James E. Slaughter, an 1846 V.M.I. graduate, served the U.S. Army through the Mexican War to 1861. At Palmito, Texas, on May 12, 1865, his gray troopers ironically won the last land battle of the Civil War. Colonel Philip Slaughter, a V.M.I. graduate in 1857, of the 56th Virginia, was disabled at Gaines' Mill, Virginia, in 1864 while still in his twenties. Colonel William Slaughter, an Albany, Georgia, planter, was killed at Chancellorsville, Virginia, almost in sight of his ancestral home while leading the 51st Georgia. Brigadier General Hugh W. Mercer, a West Point graduate turned pre-war Georgia banker, commanded Georgia troops around Savannah and Atlanta. And in the seething Mississippi Valley campaigns, Colonel Thomas Patton, 2d Missouri Infantry; Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Patton, 1st and 15th Arkansas Infantry; and Lieutenant Colonel John Patton, Missouri militia, all served the Confederacy.

Noteworthy even in a family of warriors, cousin George Hugh Smith set a record blazing with bravery. Leading the 25th Virginia, he suffered a thigh wound at McDowell where George Patton was wounded and captured. At Second Manassas he sustained an arm wound and was taken prisoner. Exchanged, he served the duration as colonel of the 62d Virginia. Refusing to take the oath of allegiance, he quit the conquered South for California, and there he became a distinguished state judge.

Unreconstructed Judge Smith filled an influential family role. He married the first George S. Patton's widow. Thus in 1885 he became the devoted step-grandfather of a tow-headed youngster born at San Gabriel and soon known as little "Georgie." The infant was brought into the world in the home of his maternal grandfather, Benjamin D. Wilson, a rancher, former Indian fighter, and Tennessean in the grand manner. The land and atmosphere resembled a transplanted sector of the Old South. Ladies, gentlemen, and faithful retainers populated it. Horsemanship, gallantry, strong talk, and strong drink punctuated it.

Among the aging Confederate cronies for whom old Judge Smith held open house was a wiry old lawyer in a worn black suit. Mounted on a gray steed, he is said to have taken little Georgie on his pony down to the Pacific beaches to play war. The old man knew his subject; he was Colonel John S. Mosby, the famous Confederate partisan commander.

Georgie's father, a V.M.I. member of the class of 1877, thanks to a Confederate-son scholarship and hard work, graduated into the long peacetime spell from 1865 to 1898. So he practiced law with marked success. He owned part of Catalina Island and became District Attorney of Los Angeles County.

The Patton family produced soldiers, lawyers, and clergymen in that order. Young George S. Patton, a devout Episcopalian despite his latter-day reputation for florid profanity, feared for a time that he might receive a "call" to enter the clergy. But the only summons he heeded was the martial call of trumpets. After a year at V.M.I., 1903-04, he moved on to West Point, graduating in 1909, a year late because he failed plebe math and had to repeat his first year.

Although only a second lieutenant of cavalry in a period of very low army pay, Patton, through independent means, acquired a car when few Americans could afford one. The vehicle expedited not only his road travels but also his transition from horse cavalry to tanks. Becoming a skilled though breakneck driver, he pursued enemy "bandits" by army automobile in the Mexican

campaign of 1916, killing one man with his pistol. In applying for tank command in 1917, his Mexican experience enabled him to say "I believe I am the only American who has ever made an attack in a motor vehicle."

Patton's wish to command tanks sped him from one military age to another. Having designed the last horseman's saber ever adopted by the U.S. Cavalry, he now headed the first U.S. Army tanks. Not one was made in Detroit. All were French Renaults, light machines with stubby cannon and two-man crews. These creeping embryos of World War II's steel monsters became the first United States armor to enter combat. Leading supporting infantry on foot to within 150 yards of German machine gun nests, Patton caught a ricocheting bullet upward through his left leg and out one buttock.

It was during this episode that Patton envisioned the array of ancestors watching him from cloud. An authorized account published many years later makes no mention of Confederates or Virginians. Patton is quoted as saying he felt "a great desire to run" until he suddenly seemed to see his progenitors "in a cloud over the German lines looking at me." In fact, one Patton biography asserts that he "never thought of himself as a Southerner," that the general considered himself a Californian, although he spent only the first seventeen of his sixty years in that state. Much of Patton's own thinking and writing bears witness to the contrary.

At any rate, Patton's pride in Southern-and Patton-military tradition ran high. In a memoir of his boyhood that he wrote in 1927, he recalled that "One night Papa began talking about Robert E. Lee." "I got all excited," Patton remembered. And when referring to his oldest Confederate uncle, Colonel John M. Patton, the future general grew almost ecstatic. That Patton, he eulogized, "commanded a regiment throughout the entire war," in more battles than any of his brothers, and "though his clothes were hit six times and his horse was killed under him he never was hit."

Only the phrase "he never was hit" withstands the cold scrutiny of time. General Patton either got his many gallant uncles confused or let his skill as a raconteur skip nimbly ahead of fact, for the great-uncle who aroused the general's enthusiasm retired without fanfare before the war was half over. A Confederate officer, John H. Chamberlayne, who encountered him in 1861 described him mercilessly as "but a pigeon-headed fellow with a mind as narrow as any king's that ever tormented mankind."

The general, himself a master of pungent phrases, was not above taking a dig at a relative. He wrote his fiancée in 1909: "My cousin Mercer Patton is Professor of Languages at the V.M.I. I. Should you go there you will find him dirty but very nice." Whether the fiancée, Beatrice Ayer, a proper Bostonian, ever met the dirty cousin at the military institute is unclear, but V.M.I. and his Virginia relatives held a high place in Patton's esteem throughout his life. He relished telling how, when he first reported as a plebe, the V.M.I. tailor, Mr. Wingfield, got out Patton's father's and grandfather's measurements. To Patton's delight his own were the same, "so that my first uniform was made to the measure of my father and grandfather." When his parents came to the East in 1920, George and his wife Beatrice joined them in an ancestral pilgrimage. They visited family graves in Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Winchester. Patton, then a colonel, posed beside the tombstones of the two slain colonels, his grandfather and "Uncle Tazewell, Colonel, 7th Virginia, killed at Gettysburg." At Fredericksburg they inspected the statue of his ancestor Hugh Mercer of the Revolutionary War, standing tall in bronze with a saber in his hand. Surveying the nearby Chancellorsville battlefield of 1863, Patton observed that "[Joseph] Hooker's plan was masterly; its execution cost him the battle." The Federal general had paused too long at a crucial point.

Patton eagerly explored the Virginia plantation country of his forebears, one of whom, Congressman John Mercer Patton, tried to suppress antislavery debate in 1837. Patton's attitude toward blacks hints at an inherited paternalism. He noted approvingly that after his grandfather was killed, the "nigro body servant who had followed him throughout the war" bore home the fallen hero's saber and saddle, and that "Papa supported this man until he died."



Patton's Civil War interest reasserted itself regularly. When Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson spent the night of May 6-7, 1945, with the general and his Third Army in Austria, Patton noted in his diary: "He is exceptionally well-informed on history, particularly that of the Civil War, so we had a very enjoyable talk together."

The famed Third Army rolled across Europe to Austria spurred by Patton's "hit 'em first, hit 'em hardest" philosophy. They inflicted ten times the number of combat casualties they took. Summoned suddenly into the icy Battle of the Bulge, they turned impending defeat into an American victory. Patton, always dramatic-like General Douglas MacArthur he believed leaders should be highly visible -at times leaped from his command car to direct troop movements personally, behavior characteristic of Civil War leaders.

Patton also displayed a temperamental kinship to General Stonewall Jackson in his attitude toward strategy and military policy. The sole recorded difference between the first George Patton and Stonewall Jackson occurred near Front Royal, Virginia, when Union cavalry made an unusually bold attack and were killed or captured almost to the last man. Reporting this to Jackson, Patton voiced regret that so many brave Federals died. "No," Jackson is said to have countered, "shoot them all. I do not wish them to be brave."

The Patton of World War II saw eye-to-eye with Stonewall Jackson and Lieutenant General Nathan Bedford Forrest, the Confederate cavalry genius who defined war in one word—killing. Patton restated it in his own vivid way: "No poor bastard ever won a war by dying for his country. He won it by making the other poor dumb bastard die for his country."

Patton's military dicta rang with the resolute fatalism of Confederate generalship. Not many generals between Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson in their time and George S. Patton in his dared to risk their flanks in long lunges against the enemy. Patton was one of the rare ones who dared.

Ironically, near the end of 1945, this general who ushered in United States mechanized warfare in World War I and out blitzed the Nazi panzers in World War II was fatally injured in a peacetime collision between a car in which he was riding and a U.S. Army truck in occupied Germany. It was not the death in battle he might have wished for, but Patton's ancestors, peering down from that cloud, must surely have recognized his lifetime of military achievement as making him one of them.

## **Patton II -- The M47 U.S. Medium Tank** by Roger Hathaway

### **Military Modeler**

Volume 6, Number 4

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*Italaerei recently released an exacting 1/35th scale kit of the U.S. Army's M47 Medium tank. Armed with a 90mm gun and developed in the 1950s, the M47 was too late to see action in Korea, but was provided later to a number of countries including Italy, France, and West Germany, and was to see action during the Sinai war in the Jordanian army.*

Often known as the tank that missed Korea, the U.S. Army M47 Medium tank was a direct descendant of the T26/M26 series of heavy/medium tanks that were developed late in World War Two. The M47 was also the last American MBT that used an assistant driver. Weighing in at 48.5 tons and being 27 feet 9.5 inches long over the gun, the M47 was a large tank by comparison to its predecessors.

Built as a combination of the M46 hull and utilizing the new turret from the T42, the M47 was built by the American Locomotive Corporation. Production started in 1950 and the various armored divisions of the Army were being equipped with the new tank in 1952.

With the M47 came several improvements that had been lacking in American tanks since the discontinuance of the Sherman in 1945. These included the stabilizer for the main gun mount and an increased ammo storage and best of all a greatly increased rate of fire for the main gun.

With the maximum armor of the M47 approaching 5 inches on the gun mantlet and 4 inches on the hull front, the vehicle required almost a direct hit at point blank range for it to be knocked out of action. Even with the thick armor and the overall weight the M47 was capable of reaching speeds of nearly 35 mph on good roads and nearly 20/25 cross-country.

The crew of the M47 consisted of the commander, a driver and co-driver and the loader and his gunner. These men crewed a vehicle that was armed with a high-velocity 90mm gun that was developed from the same gun that was used in the M26, being developed from the World War Two antiaircraft gun. In addition there were two internal .30 caliber model 1919A4 machine guns, one mounted in the hull front for the co-driver and one mounted co-axle with the main gun. There was also provisions made for a .50 caliber AA machine gun mounting on the turret top between the two hatches.

The new tank proved so versatile that it was supplied to all of the NATO countries by the United States. In the late 1950s the M47 was supplemented by, but not replaced by, the M48. The M47 saw action as late as the 1973 "Yom Kippur" war where it was in service with the Jordanian Army. It was also used by Pakistan in the last conflict with the Indian forces. The M47 is still used by the Austrian Army as a main battle tank.

## The Model

Well, it looks like MRC/Tamiya is going to have some real competition in the field of armor modeling if Italaerei continues to put kits like this one on the market. The latest releases by this Italian model company are so far and above the other competition they are well worth the prices they carry. The detailing on the molding is so fine that one can hardly find room to add anything except interiors. The latest release is no exception to the rule. The kit of the M47 is so fine that one need only take care and time to have a really outstanding kit and model.

There are almost no flash marks and there are no major mold lines to contend with on the small parts that exist in these kits. The designer of these kits is to be commended for the way that he engineered the molding process. The M47 kit consists of well over 200 parts, both large and small. And some of these are really small. The rule for Italaerei must be "if you could move it on the real thing then make it an add on for the kit." This is very true.

The only area that I might find fault with is the really funky way that they did the engine compartment. This is a slip in single piece which is not very representative of the real thing. It was for this reason that I chose to leave the louvers for the engine compartment closed.

All of the hatches are of the optional position type, but the interior detail is very sparse. The suspension is totally separate and could very easily be made to look displaced. The rear plate extension has a very nice telephone box that has an optional door that covers a very nice field telephone with the handset separate.

There are three types of muzzle brakes that can be mounted on the 90mm gun. They are the "T" bar style, the "Bell" style, and the simple straight through type that was most common in Europe. The kit that I built was straight from the box with the exception of several small changes that greatly enhance the overall appearance of the finished model. The first modification that was made was the casting of the turret. After the turret was assembled, but without all the add on bits the seam was filled with liquid plastic and allowed to dry for several days.

After this the entire seam area was filed down with little regard for the file marks that were left.

At this point I took out my bottle of Testors Liquid Cement and proceeded to stipple with the very tip of the brush that comes with the cement. By working in small areas you can create a very nice cast effect on the turret. Some of the file marks were left, but if you look at the turret of the M47 you will see that the actual turret is very rough and has some file marks where the casting marks were ground off. When you are creating the cast effect DO NOT do the scribed off area in front of the two hatches or the commander's cupola inside the splash rails.

The next change that I made to the turret was the cutting out of the commander's vision blocks and replacing them with clear plastic after I had painted the turret. After I had assembled the entire turret I made new gasoline can holders out of card stock and added the retaining straps, out of card stock also, with fine wire loops for the buckles. That was all that was necessary for the detailing of the turret in this kit.

The hull was assembled without any of the add on bits and pieces and was then given the same treatment that the turret received. Do not do the area between the drive sprockets and the front idler wheel. This is the area where the road wheels are mounted and was not a cast unit. This area extends all the way under the vehicle. After this is completed you can begin to add all of the bits and pieces that go to make this kit one of the most beautiful that is being sold on the market today.

I should mention that for those of you who have never built an Italaerei kit you are in for a pleasant surprise when you look at the tracks that are included in these kits. They are detailed on both sides very well.

After the kit was assembled it was sprayed Pactra Olive Drab and set aside to dry for the night. The decals were next and they were applied using the MicroScale system. You can do this with these kit decals as they are thin enough to almost disappear on the tank surface. The tracks were painted with track color from Humbrol, but only in the center and the outer edges. The center sections were made of rubber and were dull black with some wear.

The entire kit was then given a light wash of flat black to pick out all of the hidden details on the hull and turret. The rims of the road wheels were painted flat black and the mufflers and their covers were given a light buff of track color and rust to simulate heat from the engine. After all the detailing was completed the entire tank was given a coat of dull semi-gloss.

The kit was then given a light coat of chalk dust to simulate road dust only. This was done as the kit was built to represent a vehicle that was assigned to the Headquarters company of the 372 Armored Infantry of the 2nd Cavalry stationed in Nuremburg, Germany in the mid-1950s. The only identification that these vehicles carried was the platoon and platoon number. I would like to thank Don Scott for the information that he supplied me with about this particular unit.

Once again I would like to commend Italaerei for the fine job that they did in marketing this kit. My only other source for this kit was *The Encyclopedia of Tanks*, by Duncan Crow and Robert J. Icks.

**World War II Company Street**  
The National Infantry Association Fulfills a Mission  
Frank G. Lumpkin, Jr. Saves Patton's Headquarters  
and World War II Company Street  
by The Infantry Bugler

**Infantry Bugler**  
Volume V, Number 3  
Fall, 1999, pp 3-6

Through the generosity of Mr. Frank G. Lumpkin Jr. and his family, seven World War II era buildings will be saved as part of the permanent collection of the National Infantry Museum. The buildings, which include the Headquarters and sleeping quarters of George S. Patton, will be restored as a historical monument to the soldiers who served our country during World War II. The project was initiated by the National Infantry Association, when, in 1993 Major General Jerry White (now retired and President of the National Infantry Association) ordered the buildings relocated from Sand Hill to the Main Post. According to Major General White (Ret), hunters were shooting at the buildings.

He had seen a World War II Company Street monument while stationed at Fort Ord and realized that the same preservation could be done at Fort Benning.

Although the buildings were moved and temporarily protected from stray bullets, neither the Army nor the post had funds to protect the buildings from further deterioration. They remained untouched until Monday, September 13, 1999, when Mr. Frank G. Lumpkin Jr. donated the funds necessary to restore the buildings. The seven buildings will be used to demonstrate the traditions and values of the World War II Infantryman, a lasting tribute to the service. When restored, the buildings will be relocated to a site near the National Infantry Museum and placed on a square dedicated as "Frank G. Lumpkin Jr." Plaza.

Frank G. Lumpkin Jr., the man who was commemorated for support of the World War II Street Project, was just ten years old when his father traveled to Washington D.C. in an attempt to persuade Congress to establish an Army training post on the Chattahoochee River. Two years later Camp Benning was founded.

On September 13, 92-year-old Frank G. Lumpkin Jr. was honored for his role in preserving the history of Fort Benning. The ceremony was held at the current location of General George S. Patton's headquarters and World War II Company Street, located immediately behind the National Infantry Museum on Bergen Street.

"Frank G. Lumpkin, Sr. ensured there would be a Fort Benning in 1918, and Frank G. Lumpkin Jr., has ensured that Fort Benning history will be protected," stated Frank Hanner, director of the National Infantry Museum.

During his remarks, Major General Carl F. Ernst lauded the family's vision and commitment to Fort Benning, "No family has been more supportive of Fort Benning, there must be something in the genes."

Mr. Lumpkin Jr. was escorted by wife, Edith; daughter, Julia Willcox Lumpkin; and son, Frank G. Lumpkin III. "My entire family is here. This is the greatest honor I've ever received, and Fort Benning is the greatest place in the United States," Lumpkin Jr. said.

Lumpkin Jr. served on active duty from 1940-1946, after graduating from the University of Georgia Law School. He was in the 66th Armored Regiment, which was commanded by Colonel George S. Patton. Later he served as a Major in the 709th Tank Battalion and fought in the European Theater of Operations in Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe.

Lumpkin talks candidly about his time serving the Nation, and proudly boasts of his family ties to Fort Benning and the military.

His father's affiliation to the Trust Company of Columbus, through the Willcox- Lumpkin Co., grew out of rescuing a friend from financial devastation. His fight, during World War II, to save Fort Benning from politicians, won him the lasting and intimate friendship of Generals George Marshall, George Patton, Courtney Hodges and Omar Bradley. Lumpkin Road, which runs through Fort Benning, is the only one named to honor a civilian.

Six of the buildings are currently located behind the National Infantry Museum. The Harmony Church Chapel, the seventh building, is still standing at Harmony Church. Other buildings on the street include an enlisted men's barracks, mess hall, supply room and orderly room.

Contractors did not waste any time after the ceremony to get down to work on General George S. Patton's headquarters building. One of the first tasks is to get the building structurally stabilized, then the crew can begin the removal of asbestos and lead paint.

"The National Infantry Association has taken on the leadership of this to make sure it gets done," Major General White (Ret) said. "Frank G. Lumpkin Jr. made it a reality, we are very grateful for his vision."

When the National Infantry Association was founded in 1994, its stated mission was to serve the interests of the Infantryman, assist the Chief of Infantry, and support the preservation and exhibition of the traditions, history and values of the Infantry. The entire World War II Company Street will help to develop a lasting legacy for the Infantry and tell a story about the soldiers who bravely guard and defend our ideals, morals and aspirations.

By sharing information about the training, history, and traditions of the Infantry, the National Infantry Association feels that we can teach the values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Courage.

### **A Step Back with General Patton**

Imagine stepping into the enlisted soldier's barracks, complete with tightly wrapped bunks, polished floors and busy young soldiers in training. Walk over to the headquarters, which is alive with the images of our nation's heroes, General Ridgway, Patton, and others.

Take a moment to visit the Mess Hall, and see what it takes to keep these troops fed. And then enter the chapel and hear the voices of young men away from home, many for the first time, keeping their faith while they train to defend their country.

Walking down the Company Street you may reminisce of past service, understand the challenges of those that served and live, for the moment, the history that shaped our region and the nation.

These are the images that the National Infantry Association seeks to advance through the restoration of these seven buildings. "The project secures a unique and authentic exhibition with a rich history" noted Frank Hanner, Director of the National Infantry Museum.

JRA Architects, Inc. began work on the World War II Street in February 1998. At that point the project was only an idea, yet one that would save the history of the World War II temporary facilities at Fort Benning, Georgia.

JRA has worked closely with the Department of Public Works and the National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning, the Natural Resources State Historic Preservation Office, and the National Archives to determine the original layout of the seven World War II facilities.

Work to this point includes proposed site layouts, hazardous material surveys, emergency temporary repairs to Patton Sleeping Quarters, and renovation drawings for the Headquarters Building. State approval has been given to stabilize structures and remove hazardous materials. DE/TE Builders, Inc. of Columbus will oversee this work. JRA Architects is one of the largest fully staffed architectural firms in the South East with offices in Columbus, Georgia, Panama

City, Florida, and Tallahassee, Florida. (*Special thanks to the Bayonet for information used in this piece.*)

### **World War II Company Street—As they currently stand before renovation**

**Headquarters Building:** In reality, this was the headquarters of the newly formed 2nd Armored Division which was activated at Fort Benning, Georgia on July 15, 1940. General George S. Patton, Jr. would take command of the 2nd Armored in January of 1941. It was inside these walls that all of the planning and organization for the division's upcoming maneuvers and training would take place.

**General Patton's Sleeping Quarters:** General Patton had this built because operations were running 24 hours a day at the headquarters building, and he needed a small place to rest and be ready to take command decisions at a moments notice. He would tell his officers to wake him at any time.

**Mess Hall:** This building would become the place where the men ate together and took on enough food to see them through the rigors of training six days a week. Camaraderie over their food also helped them to become team players, and every junior enlisted soldier got his taste of KP (kitchen police) duty.

**Supply Building:** As the new draftees came to Fort Benning to learn how to become soldiers, they all had to draw their equipment. It was here in the supply building they would receive blankets, sheets, canteens, ammo belts, mess kits, and, whatever else it would take to provide them needed tools to survive being a soldier.

**Orderly Room:** It was here the Company Commander (CO) had his office and the First Sergeant and his company clerks processed all the paperwork to keep the unit running. No young soldier wanted to be ordered to see either the CO or the Top Hat (First Sergeant).

**Barracks:** This was the area where young men from all walks of life and from every state in the union became the citizen soldiers that would eventually secure the victory. Men overcame homesickness, "Dear John" letters, and above all else, learned how to work and live together in a new world. There was the right way, the wrong way, and the Army way.

### **Patton Country** by Bill Jennings

**Desert; Magazine of the Southwest**  
Volume 40, Number 9  
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His memory has not dimmed for thousands of desert residents, yet the physical signs of General George S. Patton's World War II "invasion" of the Colorado and Mojave deserts are gradually fading away—as old soldiers are reputed to.

In January, 1942, the famed cavalryman and U.S. Olympics equestrian, one of the modern Army's first armor specialists, established the largest training center in the history of the nation's military forces—encompassing most of the arid parts of California south of Death Valley, from

Las Vegas, Nevada, and Kingman, Arizona on the east to the escarpment of the San Bernardino, San Jacinto, and Santa Rosa Mountains on the west.

Patton himself spent only a few months at Camp Young, as the headquarters nucleus itself was called, before leaving for North Africa and his textbook success against the Germans there, in Sicily and across France and Germany.

He died, just after the war ended in Europe, the result of a car-truck crash.

Patton came to the desert from Ft. Benning, Georgia, establishing his original headquarters at the old red-brick Hotel Indio. Advance units of his new First Armored Corps moved via troop train to Indio and Freda siding, 45 miles northwest of Blythe, initially in April, 1942.

The huge base, covering more than 16,000 square miles, expanded under succeeding commanders, becoming the Desert Training Center. The second major headquarters area was established near Freda. The late General Walton H. Walker formed the XX Corps after his mentor, Patton, departed. Known as the "Ghost Corps" by the Germans due to his elusive attack and disappear tactics, Walker's force was second only to Patton in its exploits.

The Patton mystique has grown in recent years, particularly since the hit biographical movie starring George C. Scott. Patton was the grandson of Don Benito (Benjamin) Wilson, one of the first Anglo-Saxons to reach Spanish-Mexican California before the Gold Rush. The general was born at San Gabriel in 1885, graduated from West Point and was a mainstay of the U.S. Olympic team in 1912, although he did not win a medal. He fought in Mexico with Pershing and distinguished himself in France during World War I.

Such is the Patton legend today that a new commemorative group has recently formed to honor both the Californian and the desert training complex he established. Headquarters of the Camp Young Patton Historical Society are in Whittier, not far from the general's birthplace.

The mark he left behind is more symbolic than actual—many of the scars remaining in the perimeters of his maneuver area actually date to 1964, when the Army again used much of the Patton Country to stage Desert Strike, the largest desert training exercise since World War II. Most impact around Twentynine Palms is due to current Marine Corps training, and Naval aerial gunnery and rocketry have marked the Chocolate Mountains northeast of Niland more than Patton ever did.

Because of the huge size of the Desert Training Center, nee Camp Young, this story will concentrate on only a small part of the region, a roughly rectangular area bounded on the west by the Coachella Valley, on the north by Metropolitan Water District's Colorado River Aqueduct, on the east by the river itself, and on the south by the Riverside-Imperial counties boundary. Even that arbitrary division encompasses more than two million acres, most of it administered in 1977 by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

Patton's field headquarters were located a mile north of present-day Interstate 10, a half-mile east of the Cottonwood Springs Road which leads to Twentynine Palms through Joshua Tree National Monument. All that's left today are several long lines of once white-painted rocks that bordered entrance and service roads. Several tons of coal are scattered around what once was the headquarters laundry and power house.

Eight miles to the east, along the Hayfield aqueduct pumping station road north of I-10, a Desert reader recently found 51 World War II-vintage Army dogtags, perhaps dating to Patton days. Hayfield, which takes its name from the distinctive seasonal grass that grows on the dry lake or playa after wet winters, is just east of Chiriaco Summit, one of two freeway oases in the area that date to Patton's time. The other is the Ragsdale family's Desert Center, 19 miles to the east.

Joe Chiriaco has operated his auto and driver refreshment stop since 1933. He has his own memorial to Patton, whom he remembers somewhat fondly. Two white-painted metal frameworks near the front door are identified as "skeletons of Camp Young, in honor of General George S. Patton and the men who trained in the desert during World War II."

These were the frames of canvas-covered targets, in the shape of light tanks that were used by low-flying aircraft and tank gunners. They are among the few tangible remnants of those exciting days.

The mile-long Shavers Summit Airport east of Chiriaco's is now maintained by Riverside County but was one of several strips used by Patton's staff for speedy transportation to outlying training sites. Others are near Freda, Rice, Blythe and near Wiley Well to the southeast.

Most of the central area of Patton Country is classified for careful use under the BLM Desert Plan. You must stay on marked routes in the national monument to the northwest and in two "special-design" sectors that straddle or adjoin the old Desert Center-Rice Road. It is officially State Route 177-62 all the way from 1-10 to Earp, on the Colorado River just west of Parker, Arizona.

There is one closed area, well-marked, at the BLM's Desert Lily preserve, six miles northeast of Desert Center on State 177. Another restricted area surrounds Palen Dry Lake, which includes some private land, a zone of unexploded artillery and aerial bombs and shells, some charted archeological sites. You are urged to stick to existing trails, of which there are literally hundreds in Patton Country.

Ford Dry Lake, opposite the Corn Spring-Graham Pass off ramp on 1-10, 25 miles east of Desert Center, is the jumping off place for one of the few unrestricted travel areas under the BLM plan. You can drive north into the Palen Pass country or northeast across the McCoy Mountains to the Arlington Mine and the almost deserted company town of Midland, on the Santa Fe Railway's Rice-Blythe branch. Midland was abandoned when gypsum quarries in the Little Maria Mountains were closed a dozen years ago. Many of these mines, in the Little Marias, the McCoy's and the Palens are still active claims so heed the no-trespass signs.

The only major paved roads in this part of Patton Country are the state-federal routes, 1-10, SR 177, and 62, and the portion of the Blythe-Rice road to Midland, maintained by Riverside County. State Highway 95, paralleling the Colorado River to the east, marks the perimeter of Patton Country here.

The Bradshaw Trail, described in Desert two months ago, is the main access to the southern perimeter of Patton Country, and is generally in good, slightly washboard condition, except after those rare cloudburst storms when it is likely to be impassable.

Off these major routes are countless desert tracks, some of them frustrating deadends, others good secondary through routes.

Accurate maps for Patton Country are hard to come by. The U.S. Geologic Survey 15-minute series topographic maps, generally the best overall for these monthly trips, are not totally satisfactory in this case, because of their age. Some of the area has not been surveyed or mapped in more than 25 years and roads shown on them may not be passable—or exist at all! This is particularly true of the Ford Dry Lake-Palen and Chuckwalla Valley area east of Desert Center.

Part of the problem stems from construction of Interstate 10, which does not follow the old 60-70 route. Some of the secondary roads can be reached from the old highway which is a frontage road with overpasses for the Corn Spring, Graham Pass-Chuckwalla Spring and Wiley Well routes to the south. Some of the old tracks to the north of the freeway can be reached from these off ramps, or cross country from the Desert Center-Rice highway.

Camping is generally permitted throughout the Patton region but the only organized campgrounds are the BLM enclosures at Wiley Well, Corn Spring and Coon Hollow. There is no safe water other than at the campgrounds and perhaps Chuckwalla Spring—which has been refurbished since the big storm of September, 1976.

The only off-roaders route across the rugged middle of Patton Country from east to west is the old Palen Pass-Arlington Mine road. It leaves SR 177 (Desert Center-Rice road) 10 miles south of its junction with SR 62, near Iron Mountain Pumping Station. It emerges on the east on the



Blythe-Rice road near Inca siding 19 miles northwest of Blythe. In between, it traverses the Palen-Granite and McCoy Mountains over some little traveled but highly scenic and historic mining country.

Watch for the fading paint on some prominent signboards near the Palen and Granite Mountains denoting unexploded ammunition, mostly artillery shells and practice aerial bombs. These signs frequently end up as campfire wood for unprepared groups, which is a bizarre form of Russian roulette for those who venture after them-but no off-roaders have been blown up out there in my memory!

The most visible areas of Patton's tenure occur along the west and northern perimeters of this area-along Cottonwood Springs Road and near the Iron Mountain pumping station on the Metropolitan Water District's Colorado River Aqueduct.

Two hand-hewn rock altars, a crumbling sand and cement relief map of the entire Desert Training Center and a network of confusing roads between Iron Mountain and Freda mark the vicinity of the old northern headquarters. The altars were built by tanker and armored artillery crews under the Walker regime, while the huge relief map apparently was built by Patton's first troops.

Much of the Iron Mountain area is MWD property and it's advisable in advance to inquire if you can visit these historic sites.

The best places to get accurate information about what is still there—and just where—are Rice, Chiriaco Summit, and Desert Center—also the only reliable places for gas, water, and food in Patton Country.

Whether you find souvenirs of Patton's regime or not, a visit to his historic Camp Young-Desert Training Center is worth the long trip.

### **Patton**

The last of the line, old soldier General George Smith Patton isn't fading away. He's farming. And cursing the fates that put him in the pastures of Massachusetts instead of the deserts of Iraq.

by E. J. Kahn III

### **Boston Magazine**

Volume 83, Number 10

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"It pained me to miss that war," George Smith Patton says, cigarette smoke curling toward the ceiling of the small library tucked into his eighteenth-century farmhouse on a couple of hundred acres hard by the Ipswich River.

"Or that *campaign*," the general adds, a bit contemptuously. "I'd hardly call it a war."

The sun has been up for several hours at Green Meadows Farm, and the day's chores-tending to a balky refrigerator motor, filling the planters at the farm stand, checking on the strawberry pickers-await. By October, if some damn rain would fall, the corn, the peppers, and the tomatoes will have been harvested, and the old general can put himself at ease again, hunting ducks along the riverbank. But for now, Patton carries his 67 years heavily, showing the strain of a decade at the farming game, with its accompanying frustration, red ink, and \$26,000 tractors.

For a couple of months, Patton was distracted by the image of Desert Storm, by the overwhelming triumph he had never tasted himself and the vindication of the tactics and strategies he once taught at West Point, the War College, and the armored school. Through those winter weeks, he had watched the young war on CNN with a bitterness that gave way to incredulity and, finally, admiration. For 34 years, George Smith Patton had trained for a battlefield that would serve as *his* defining moment, as the North African desert, the hills of Sicily, and the forests of Bastogne had framed his father. An enemy he could see, with a uniform and a fixed position. A country with boundaries that mattered.

Sitting in his South Hamilton farmhouse, Patton was amazed at the Iraqis' ineptness and the blunder Saddam Hussein committed by sending his air force to Iran, thereby blinding himself. Proudly, he watched Schwarzkopf's left flanking maneuver unfold, a topic Patton had lectured on time and again at West Point—a classic tactic Napoleon had used at Ulm and Stonewall Jackson, 60 years later, had called upon at Chancellorsville. "The Hail Mary," Patton thought. "Fantastic."

Now, in the dim light of the dark-paneled room, the old general weighs Iraq With Vietnam. "What you got to understand about Vietnam," he says finally, "is that practically every contact I was in was a meeting engagement. We weren't sure where they were, but, based on intelligence, we got a report they were located *here*." Patton's finger makes an emphatic stab at the table.

"After we got contact, the problem was to hold the contact so you could do what I call compression. And exterminate them. That wasn't like the Gulf, where we knew there were forces along the Kuwait border. We *photographed* them.

"But in Vietnam—well, they were just like ants. Go and kick an anthill, and—psheew—all over the place."

Slowly, Patton lifts himself from the leather armchair and, his six-foot frame no longer ramrod straight, limps toward the door. His right hip still carries a piece of a North Vietnamese grenade.

"Not being in the Gulf," Patton finishes, his deeply lined face turned toward the five-foot-tall oil portrait of his father in full four-star regalia, hanging a few yards away, "yeah, it kind of broke me up. I miss it. I'd go back today if I could."

From Asbury Street, a mile or so outside the bucolic business center of South Hamilton, Green Meadows Farm is unprepossessing. A small sign—Fresh Produce and Fire Wood—lures passersby to the farm stand, a garage-like structure housing display shelves, a cool room, and a small bakery. A hundred yards away, hidden by trees, are the farm garages, a bunkhouse, and the manager's cottage. Still a bit farther east is the Patton homestead, where the general and his wife, Joanne, who works as a consultant to non-profit agencies, live with their son George, a farm worker. Four other children have moved away: Margaret, a nun; Helen, an actress; Robert, a writer; and Ben, an environmentalist. "A family of nonprofits," Patton once told his wife. "I never expected *that*."

The purchase of this farm, in 1928, established Patton's father, George Smith Patton, Jr.—Old Blood and Guts to the press, Georgie to peers such as Dwight Eisenhower—as a Massachusetts presence. The elder General Patton's wife, Beatrice Ayer, already had blue-blood credentials, but the Pattons hailed from Virginia by way of California, and the general's forefathers had distinguished themselves in the Civil War on the other, the Confederate, side. Nevertheless, Patton the Elder impressed the nabobs at the neighboring Myopia Hunt Club with his horseback-riding skills and was embraced as a member, albeit nouveau, of the Brahmin aristocracy. That he was one of the wealthiest officers in the U.S. Army didn't hurt, either. By the end of World War II, though, he had become much more: the liberator of Sicily, the occupier of Germany.

It was to Green Meadows Farm in June 1945 that General George Smith Patton, Jr., returned, triumphant, for his last night in the commonwealth. The trip was General Eisenhower's idea, although the trappings were classic Patton. The general had become a bit of a problem for Ike,

who was beginning to nurture political ambitions. In Germany, where Eisenhower had installed Patton as head of the occupying Third Army, reporters quoted the general as suggesting that the Soviets, not the Nazis, were the true enemies of the United States. When stories began to circulate that Patton was permitting SS divisions to remain intact and was allowing German soldiers to guard displaced persons camps in Bavaria (camps populated mostly by Jews), Eisenhower and President Harry Truman concluded he ought to come home for a while.

Heralded by a public relations campaign that Schwarzkopf could have envied, Patton arrived in Massachusetts on June 7. Boston, the newspapers said, gave the general a reception that "dwarfed the memory of the Tea Party," and a million people stood along the 25-mile parade route, cheering Old Blood and Guts, who was festooned with medals, ribbons, and stars. Even on home ground, however, Patton couldn't keep his foot from his mouth, telling 400 wounded vets who had been brought to the Esplanade for a speech at the Hatch Shell that "a man is a fool when he gets killed."

Patton the younger, who rode with his father to the farm in South Hamilton that night and returned the next morning to West Point, never saw Patton the Elder again. He died after an auto accident in Germany that December that left him paralyzed from the neck down. His wife, Beatrice, with Patton the Younger's acquiescence, arranged for the general to be buried in the Third Army Cemetery in Luxembourg. She died in 1953 from injuries sustained in a fall from a horse.

George Patton is bored with the myths surrounding his father. Like Elvis Presley sightings, though, they persist. One, that the elder Patton was assassinated, the victim of a conspiracy surrounding caches of Nazi gold, even became the basis of a Hollywood film, *Brass Target*, with George Kennedy playing the general.

The two most-asked questions, according to Joanne Patton, Patton are, Why are there no Pattons in the military? and What did you think of the movie? ("I liked it," George Patton says brusquely. "They did a fabulous job.") Questions like these have become tiresome, and Patton is as impatient with them as he is with his father's legend. But if some publicity can help Green Meadows, he'll tolerate the interviews.

When Patton left the army, in 1980, Green Meadows was virtually abandoned, overgrown with woods and brush and weeds, its main house home to transient caretakers from a local divinity school. Patton came to the North Shore because he had no other choice. He was bored by the Pentagon consulting racket and he ached for a combat he knew he'd never see again. He had rarely stayed at the farm, even as a child, but the property was there and he had decided to farm it.

"It's the only reason we live in Massachusetts," says Patton. "I got a lot of Virginia blood."

And, as reasons go, economically it's not very compelling. Farming isn't booming in Essex County. Massachusetts Farm Bureau records show 350 other farms in the county (of 5,500 in the state), but Patton sees only 3 as competition. Is Green Meadows self-sufficient? Not yet. And Ken Wirkkala, his manager of six years, doesn't expect to turn the corner this year.

"It's a tough, tough place to be a farmer," notes Pam Comstock of the Massachusetts Farm Bureau. "With our land values, it makes no sense. A farmer's lucky to break even. But George is serious, even if his family is wealthy. He's got a real Yankee farmer's attitude."

At midday, Patton is on the move, his dusty blue Dodge pickup bouncing along the dirt roads connecting his fields. A baseball cap—with an embroidered U.S. flag and the words *These Colors Don't Run* stitched underneath it—is tugged low on his forehead. The general is remembering an earlier tour he gave, when retired general William Westmoreland came to Green Meadows in 1988.

The fortunes and careers of Patton and Westmoreland—commander of the U.S. forces in Vietnam—became forever entangled in those confused, agitated years at the close of the sixties. After living in the mountains and eating dog with the Montagnards, as a Special Forces adviser, Patton was posted to the Long Binh military headquarters as Westy's chief of force development. Patton had been a tank man all his career, first assigned to the Armored Brigade in 1949 and later

commander of a tank company in Korea for 13 months. But Westmoreland was looking for the light at the end of the tunnel, and he needed Patton to help document his plea for an additional 250,000 troops. The Tet offensive, at the start of 1968, had brought an urgency to that mission, and Patton was shuttling into Saigon regularly to meet with Lyndon Johnson's defense secretary, Robert McNamara; the chairman of the joint Chiefs of Staff; and other bigwigs.

"I remember thinking we couldn't sink any lower than those days," he says. "I was driving near the embassy, going to a briefing, and saw Ellsworth Bunker, the U.S. ambassador, riding to work in an armored personnel carrier, his old, bald head sticking out of a turret surrounded by MPs and machine guns. It really sickened me."

Like his father, Patton saw himself as a warrior. In the spring of 1969, General Creighton Abrams, Westmoreland's successor, gave Patton command of the Eleventh Armored Cavalry and a mission to clear Highway 13, near the Cambodian border. There was nothing like the Eleventh Cav in Vietnam: 3,800 people, 41 planes and helicopters, 148 tanks, Highly mobile, lightly mechanized, a superb killing machine. *Find the Bastards, Then Pile On*, read the sign in front of the Eleventh Cav's headquarters, and Patton, then a colonel, embraced the motto.

In the dry season, Patton's tanks, on the edge of Zone D, had little trouble with the terrain, and brigade companies found themselves in daily firefights. Before long, Patton was in his glory: posing for a portrait by combat photographer Tim Page, hunting the North Vietnamese through the rubber-tree maze of the Michelin plantation, sending Christmas cards illustrated with a photo of a pile of Vietcong corpses to war correspondents.

As the light in the tunnel was proving to be the proverbial approaching train, Patton—after just nine months—was rotated out of the country. He spent the next 11 years teaching, learning to fly helicopters, and facilitating arms deals with countries such as Ethiopia, Iran, Israel, and Kuwait. No, he's quick to respond, he never dealt with Ollie North. When, in 1979, he became director of the Readiness Command, in Alexandria, Virginia, Patton understood the message: army rules were that after 30 years of service and 5 as a major general, he could rise no further. It was time to go. Vietnam—Westy and Saigon and Bunker and Highway 13 and the Michelin—had been as good as it would get.

So when Westmoreland arrived at Green Meadows, Patton had something to share. Bouncing on these same dusty trails, Patton showed his ex-commander the five fields and their modest red-on-white signs. Hayes Field, for the officer commanding B Troop, Eleventh Cav, killed in action by a rocket grenade. Yayno Field, for a posthumous Medal of Honor winner, also Eleventh Cav. Lucas Field, after one of his West Point cadets, KIA. Sinclair Field, for a classmate killed in a copter crash. And the biggest field, with the sweetest corn: Blackhorse, the Eleventh Cav itself.

The Dodge is parked and Patton's looking at the Sinclair sign. He's spending \$400 to have the others repainted, although—other than the farmhands—no one but Patton or a touring guest will read the citations.

"I was pretty lucky," Patton says quietly. "Got shot down four times. The helicopter was hit and had to land. That's what I mean."

Patton has one more stop, a visit to the strawberry patch. "Gotta say hi," he explains. As the truck comes over a small rise, he spots two pickers, both Cambodian, dressed in native garb, complete with broad, conical straw hats. If Patton is struck by the incongruity of the image—Southeast Asian peasants working with their hands in a field of green, surrounded by forest, for the U.S. general—he doesn't show it.

Honking the truck's horn, Patton stops, "Hello, there," he shouts. "How you?" One picker, her straw basket full, walks across the road to a shade tree, where other baskets sit. "Hello," the general continues loudly. "How you?"

Hesitantly, the picker hands Patton a strawberry. "Okay?" Patton is now shouting, in a near-pidgin dialect, as if the Cambodian were hard of hearing. "Okay?" He stops long enough to take one bite, then throws the half-eaten berry away.

If farming has been a struggle, the other Patton family enterprise—consulting to nonprofit agencies—is booming. Directed by the general's wife of 39 years, a vivacious, youthful woman whose carefully coiffed look suggests only a passing familiarity with field labor, Patton Consultant Services was Joanne Patton's solution to coping with the end of the Patton military line. The firm, which employs one other staffer, operates out of a small three-room wing of the main farmhouse and ties into a network of nonprofit experts and trainers across the country, an extension of Joanne Patton's own networking in Washington.

The Patton's oldest son, George, is mentally retarded and lives with his parents. This, says Joanne Patton, is the simplest explanation of why she does what she does. Besides, caring for others less fortunate has been a lifelong interest. Just back from the National Volunteer Conference in Nashville, she's energized. Local architect Statler Gilfillen has completed a specially designed home for George and a live-in companion not far from the main farmhouse. And a contact from the past has given her credit for the domestic support system for the Gulf War. "I got a call at my hotel from a woman I'd known at Fort Hood," she says. "We had a drink, and she told me that the volunteer structure we'd designed in the seventies had helped make Desert Storm a success. I was so proud."

Which, of course, begs the question: How can a family with such a proud military heritage—Joanne Patton herself is, as her husband puts it, "fifth-generation army brat"—have no progeny in uniform?

"That's question number one, isn't it?" Joanne says with a sigh. "'You don't have any kids in the army? How embarrassing!'" Her explanation: "We encouraged them to find what it is they love best and what it is they do best, and try to marry the two." The children's heritage made a sense of service part of their vocations. They had many options because of travel and experiences, and they would tell you, Joanne says, that they're not mad at the military, not at all.

"As for my husband," she says, "I can't imagine he would have been happier in any other career line. Other sons of public figures have tried it and gone down for the count. In a very unhappy way. But George never pretended he was the same kind of person, or the same soldier, that his father was."

Unlike his father, who died in the Germany he had helped conquer, Patton the Younger has never returned to Vietnam. "Sometimes you have to get over what it means to you inside," Patton's wife says. She chooses these words carefully, delicately: "How it was life-changing, before you can become a tourist about that place."

There is a room in the main house at Green Meadows that serves as a kind of museum of war. Civil War belt buckles and portraits hang on its walls; sabers from the 1912 Olympics, in which the elder Patton participated, dress its rafters; along with helmets and parade hats from the turn of the century, flags, shields, a rocket grenade launcher, a bronzed artillery shell, and the manuscript of a poem Patton wrote to his helicopter, *Little Sorrel V*, fill its shelves. "Goodbye, old friend," one line reads, the paper sharing a counter with a plastic model and a photo of the original, a now-stuffed horse.

Nineteen medals are framed together. "Those and a couple of dollars," Patton says, shrugging, "will get you a beer."

For the Pattons, war has meant life, a crucible that for generations redefined the family character, and—in this Patton's opinion—the character of the country. When the antiwar movement's conviction that ROTC had no place at Harvard led to the spring 1969 University Hall takeover, it was Patton who arrived on campus the following year to inform the university that

under no circumstances would the program return. Harvard Yard was no Michelin plantation, but a fight was a fight.

"Did you know that Harvard men formed the Lafayette Escadrille?" Patton is sitting in a deep leather armchair in the war room, recalling that visit more than two decades ago. "They'd changed. They all became lover boys. Longhaired, flower children lover boys."

Ellsworth Bunker in an armored car, longhaired lover-boy offspring of the Escadrille—no wonder Patton believes Desert Storm demonstrates that we've finally learned from our mistakes. There are two great lessons to take from the Gulf conflict, he argues. One was the advantage of rapidly mobilizing the reserves, which brought the American people closer to the problem.

And then there was the handling of the press. For many journalists, the blanket thrown over press freedom and travel by the Gulf coalition was stifling. For Patton—a favorite of the rogue correspondents in Nam—it was about time.

"In Vietnam," Patton says, "we had no control. Joe Smith from the New York Times could jump on a helicopter anytime he wanted to, go to the battle, and come to his own particular conclusion." The conclusion was often that our troops weren't faring as well as our commanders represented, but Patton says he was more bothered by the lack of judgment, of respect for battle. And war.

Out on Highway 13, Patton remembers he pulled his pistol on a photographer who had taken a picture of a dead GI. He ordered the man to open the camera and expose the film. "I could not have the face of that soldier showing on the front of Time magazine," he says.

It's late, and the old general has missed his evening swim. The farm stand is shut; the chores are completed. But George Smith Patton hasn't forgotten the ultimate purpose of the intrusion.

"Make sure you emphasize this," says Patton, raising his voice. "We are limited in our use of pesticides. If we don't use 'em, our prices go up. But we are very limited."

The general still doesn't trust reporters. Like father, you could say, like son.

## **General Patton's Mistake**

by Kenneth Koyen

### **The Saturday Evening Post**

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General George S. Patton, Jr. made one mistake while commanding troops in Europe. The late commander of the 3rd Army said so himself in a personal journal published in The Saturday Evening Post. "I can say this—that throughout the campaign in Europe I know of no error I made except that of failing to send a combat command to take Hammelburg," wrote the general with a self-confidence that history may not seriously question.

His old 3rd Army soldiers, vainglorious or cynical in the fashion of veterans, may not be prepared to say that their commander made only one error. But veterans of the 3rd Army's 4th Armored Division will agree that General Patton was being completely honest about the Hammelburg affair.

The mistake was a beauty, too—except that errors in warfare are not beautiful. General Patton's mistake might be clearer if his statement had been put this way: ". . . throughout the campaign in

Europe I know of no error I made except that of failing to send a combat command instead of a task force to take Hammelburg."

To those unfamiliar with the military terms of World War II, it may be explained that "a combat command" is a measure of military strength as specific as the word "brigade." A combat command was usually half the flexible fighting force of an armored division. A combat command usually included a medium tank battalion, an armored infantry battalion, an armored field artillery battalion and such supporting troops as mechanized cavalry, tank destroyers, engineers, heavy artillery and sometimes air support. It was a powerful force.

A task force, on the other hand—as the term was used in the armored forces—could mean anything from a couple of beat-up cavalymen in a jeep—the tankers seldom called it a jeep—to a couple of companies or a major offshoot of a combat command,

In ordering a task force instead of a combat command to take the big prisoner-of-war camp deep behind the German lines at Hammelburg, Patton sent a boy on a man's job.

The complete story has never before been told, although whispers of it trickled through all 3rd Army while General Patton was still in command. It is the story of 293 soldiers of the 4th Armored Division and what happened to them on a strange mission that began on a night five weeks before the end of the war in Germany. For a long time the facts were befogged in a top-secret atmosphere. Later, when the Hammelburg affair was all over, men of the 4th Armored had little heart to talk about it with outsiders. Among themselves they discussed it more in sorrow than in anger. It is a remarkable tribute to the combat leadership and flint-and-steel personality of General Patton that the 4th Armored Division still admired him tremendously after he sent the task force to meet its fate.

The 4th was the outstanding armored division of an army that gained fame by its armored thrusts. In action from Normandy all the way through to Czechoslovakia, the outfit was the only entire armored division in Army history to be decorated with a Distinguished Unit Citation. The division as a whole was also awarded the French fourragere, equivalent to a collective Croix de Guerre. Patton himself once said flatly, "There never has been such a superb fighting organization as the Fourth Armored Division."

In turn, the division esteemed General Patton second only to Major General John S. Wood, who first commanded the outfit in combat. In Patton, the division felt it had an army commander who knew how to use tanks, understood attack, and was never uncertain. The 4th Armored gave Patton as much loyalty as a general could ever want, but this faith was severely shaken by the Hammelburg episode.

It began on March 26, 1945, when an order by General Patton came from 3rd Army headquarters through 12th Corps to the headquarters of the 4th Armored at Rossdorf, southeast of Frankfurt. The order called for formation of a task force with the mission of fighting its way to a huge prisoner-of-war camp for American officers. The camp was near Hammelburg, sixty miles behind the enemy's unbroken front line based on the east bank of the Main River.

The order confirmed a plan that had been hotly tossed to and fro among division, corps, and army headquarters. At the 4th Armored command post, indignation became as open as it could in a well-disciplined outfit. The words "suicide mission" were used more than once by angry, grave-faced officers. Stories and reports, many of them garbled—as is usually the case—spread through the outfit.

Now, three years after the fateful orders, General Patton's reasons are still not entirely clear. The Department of the Army says now that the mission had three objectives, and that the first two were accomplished: (1) to feint the Germans away from the direction of the next major thrust; (2) to create confusion in the enemy rear; (3) to free the Hammelburg prisoners.

But there was another aspect which 4th Armored Division veterans have discussed. Unfortunately, General Patton's son-in-law, Lieutenant Colonel John Knight Waters—a prisoner

of the Germans since his capture at Faïd Pass in Tunisia in 1943—was in the Hammelburg prison camp. General Patton later said that he did not know that his daughter's husband was there until nine days after the dispatch of the rescue force. His concern, General Patton insisted, was to save the prisoners from the not unlikely possibility of being killed by the retreating Germans.

The prisoners were American. He knew only that, and it was reason enough for him, the general said.

Somehow, some officers in the 4th Armored knew almost as soon as the mission was announced that Colonel Waters was believed a prisoner at Hammelburg. But this was not, properly, the concern of the people who had to plan and lead the task force, carrying out the order. The trouble was that those who had to execute the plan could not believe that the task force would succeed. Perhaps a small armored task force could slash its way through the enemy and deep into the rear. Maybe the tank column could free the prisoners. Then what? The force did not have enough vehicles to carry more than a few prisoners to safety. The task force might not be able to get back itself. Only an entire combat command—armored equivalent of a brigade—or better still, the whole 4th Armored Division, could do the job and get back with the prisoners.

The orders descended to the headquarters of the 10th Armored Infantry Battalion and stuck with a certain captain, a husky extrovert, the operations officer of the battalion. He was given command of the task force, which then became identified by his name. His name was Abraham Baum, he was twenty-four, and not so many years before he had been a civilian in New York's Bronx.

Captain Baum had exactly 292 officers and men and some fifty-odd vehicles with which to do the job. From the 10th Armored Infantry Battalion he got A Company, an assault-gun platoon and a reconnaissance patrol; from the 37th Tank Battalion, he got C Company and a D Company platoon of light tanks. From 3rd Army headquarters, Major Alexander C. Stiller, an aide to General Patton, came down to accompany the column.

The vehicles consisted of twenty-seven half-tracks, ten medium tanks, six light tanks, three assault-gun carriers mounting 105-mm. guns and six peeps. Only the half-tracks, with their token armor plate, were capable of transporting many soldiers in addition to their crews.

At five p.m. on March twenty-sixth, not many hours after the orders came through, the little force assembled—battle-weary men who had slept only one night in the last four. Captain Baum told them the mission—strike northeast toward Hammelburg, sixty miles behind the enemy's front lines, and free the Americans from the German prisoner-of-war camp near the city.

Captain Baum distributed fifteen maps, all that he could scrape together, among his ten officers, and they returned to their platoons with the march order. Jericans of gasoline clattered into the half-tracks, bolts slammed, and triggers clicked as the guns were checked. The ready racks of the tanks filled with shells. The crews mounted up.

As it grew dark, the division's artillery emplaced to help the task force break out of a bridgehead which Command B held over the Main River below Aschaffenburg. Concurrently, at seven p.m., B Company of the 37th Tank Battalion and B Company of the 10th Armored Infantry Battalion attacked Schweinheim as the 22nd, 66th, and 94th Armored Field Artillery Battalions shelled the village. The tanks and armored infantrymen were to clear the main street so Task Force Baum could pass through and get going. Afterward the tankers changed the name of the village from Schweinheim to "Bazooka City."

"The town was reported not to have much in it, but when you hear that, watch out!" said Corporal William W. Smith, of Clarksville, Tennessee, who drove a Sherman tank that night. "While the artillery fire was lifting, we started to move in. The lead tank was stopped within a hundred yards of the first building. A Nazi got it with a Panzerfaust—one of their bazookas. The CO called the next tank in column and told it to keep moving. The abandoned lead tank was blocking the road, but one of our boys started the engine and moved it to one side.



"While the Germans fired bazookas and swept the area with burp guns, the sergeant in command of the second tank swung his turret from side to side, spraying the buildings with machine-gun fire and seventy-six millimeter cannon stuff. The sergeant kept up the fire until he was through town.

"Our platoon moved in to clear the street on the left side. The platoon leader's tank was hit and it blocked the street. And the Krauts slipped in back of us and hit our rear tanks with bazookas. We were trapped, and I began to sweat. But the armored infantry boys with us threw a blast with their Garands and everything else they had. The crew of our rear tank found that they could make it run and they backed it out."

It was 2:30 in the morning before the path-clearing units got back. Meanwhile Captain Baum's column, with this bitter sample of what was ahead, struggled through and disappeared in the darkness—the light tanks, like coursing greyhounds, taking the lead from the bulkier medium tanks.

The armored infantrymen riding the tanks and the gasoline-filled half-tracks sensed the Germans closing the roads behind them. Now the little column was beyond the comforting range of artillery support. The only link with the division was the uncertain radio. Task Force Baum was on its own.

Radio messages, some relayed by a Cub liaison plane flying out to pick up the weak transmissions, told of the task force's progress. Early on March twenty-seventh, Captain Baum radioed: "Tell air, of enemy troop marshaling yard at Gemünden." As Gemünden was more than half way to Hammelburg, the news was good. Task Force Baum was moving fast.

By 10:10 on the morning of March twenty-seventh, the task force was reported at Rieneck, and less than three hours later at Gräfendorf. The areas from which the messages were sent indicated that the column had swung north, but was still working toward the objective. Other messages told of losing four medium tanks, two officers and an undetermined number of men. Air support was asked.

Then the messages petered out. Shortly before one A.M. on March twenty-ninth, a radio message from 4th Armored Division headquarters crackled forth in code to anxious listeners at the division's three combat commands: "No news of Baum."

The division, meanwhile, was on the move. Heartsick at having to march still farther from Task Force Baum, the 4th Armored crossed the Main River on a floating bridge at Hanau. As the division fought its way through Saxony in a typical armored thrust, a strange series of jubilant news reports was heard on enemy broadcasts. The German radio said that American tanks had been fighting at far-off Hammelburg. A great victory had been won over the Americans, the Nazis boasted.

Nazi propagandists tried their best to convince the terrified German people that the entire 3rd Army had been checked. American war correspondents, puzzling at a distance over these reports of United States tanks fighting unexpectedly deep in the enemy rear, were hard put to explain the German comments. The correspondents were not enlightened at 3rd Army's headquarters.

Ten days after the column first vanished into the night there was still no word. The 293 men of the task force were regretfully written off as "missing in action"—the hardest single blow ever dealt the 4th Armored Division. Then Captain Baum, bandaged and shaken, finally returned on April ninth. A scattered few of the task force came back at the same time. Maybe thirty-five, Captain Baum estimated wearily, and gestured with an injured hand. He told what had happened.

Task Force Baum had existed from five p.m. on March twenty-sixth until nine a.m. on March twenty-eighth—forty hours, filled with the shattering blasts of Panzerfausts, the crack of Karabiner, the rip of burp guns, the crash of artillery, and the evil singing of 88's. They had reached their objective with only half of the force still in fighting shape. Wounded men lay on the gas cans in the half-tracks and helped steady one another at the machine guns. If a man was so

badly hurt that he would die in a jolting vehicle, he was given first aid and left at the side of the road, with a prayer that the Germans would soon find him and give him medical care.

It was bitter going from the time they first broke through Schweinheim. The next towns, Haibach and Grunmorsbach, are probably known now—if at all—as two more places where cigarettes can be bartered or a Fräulein picked up. That March night the towns were not hospitable. Rifle fire, machine-gun bursts, and the red arcs of tracers flashed along the charging column. Gushes of flame, followed by a blinding shower of sparks, showed where German bazooka men harassed the flanks.

Several of Captain Baum's armored infantrymen were wounded, but none of his vehicles was hit badly. He kept the column rolling. The streets of Strass-Bessenbach and Keilberg passed under the tank tracks about two a.m., and Task Force Baum turned east on the main road from Aschaffenburg to Lohr. Aschaffenburg, strongly held and bitterly defended, was by-passed by one task force.

Through Frohnhofen, Laufach, Hain, a stretch of woods, then Rechtenbach. Outside of Lohr the task force lost its first tank when a Panzerfaust struck it in the flank. The tankers retaliated when a convoy of twelve German vehicles drove into the task force at Lohr. The gunners left the startled German column riddled and burning.

At Lohr the task force plunged into a dangerously steep valley and raced along the railroad toward Gemünden.

"All along the railway from Lohr to Neuendorf, Langenprozelten, and Gemünden, there were trains," Captain Baum recalled. "I estimate there must have been about twelve trains, some with as many as twenty cars." The tanks shot up these trains, as well as a thirtycar flak train loaded with anti-aircraft weapons and concrete pillboxes.

Morning found the task force thirty-two road miles from its jump-off. After a night of hard driving and fighting they could expect even tougher going in the daylight. They found it at Gemünden while trying to get over the Saale River.

"We got into Gemünden and lost three tanks to bazookas," said Captain Baum. "The tank and infantry company commanders and I were standing next to a medium tank when a bazooka smacked it and the exploding particles hit us. The tank company commander was pretty well bit in the leg, so I ordered him into the half-track. I was hit in the knee and right hand. We lost a bunch of infantry, including a platoon leader, who was wounded. The Krauts blew up the bridge over the Saale in our faces."

Two armored infantrymen were running the span when it blew up. Things got still hotter. "After losing three tanks and finding the town loaded with soldiers, I decided it was best to find another route," Captain Baum said. "We backed out of town, and hit north."

Two streams, the Sinn and the Saale, were between the column and the Hammelburg prison camp. The task force could only run north up the west bank of the Sinn and hope to catch a bridge. The fight in Gemünden showed the bridges would come hard. At least two German divisions—one a panzer outfit—were believed to be in the area. By the end of the mission, there were probably at least three. The countryside seethed with alarmed Germans. They were confused, scared, and thoroughly on the alert. They figured at least one American armored division and maybe all 3rd Army was hell-bent their way.

Road blocks were thrown up, bridges prepared for blowing and some of them were blown without reason by the nervous Wehrmacht. The road was getting rougher by the hour for the task force, but there was no use in thinking of getting back yet.

The force went through Schaippach, then Rieneck, found to be without a bridge. Captain Baum needed a guide to Burgsinn, the next village, and two reluctant Germans were collared in Rieneck. The unhappy guides brought the tanks to Burgsinn, where a German general and his staff were added to the bag. The general, in a motorcycle, didn't want to come along at first, but was

persuaded to climb into a half-track. In all, the column took 200 prisoners along the way. Most of them had to be released later.

Across the Sinn River at Burgsinn Task Force Baum left the roads and struck across the countryside up a mountain trail to the Saale Valley. On the way, the tankers freed 700 Russian prisoners—who grabbed German arms and took to the woods.

The column crossed the Saale at Gräfendorf and followed the river and the railroad line to Weickersgruben. At two o'clock in the afternoon they heard bad news—the sound of vehicles roaring and creaking in the distance. The veteran tankmen could tell that the sounds were not from American vehicles. Captain Baum quickly checked his maps to orient himself and plan the attack into the prisoner-of-war camp, now only a few miles away.

"I knew damn well that we were going to have a tank fight real soon," Captain Baum said grimly. "We went on through Eschenbach and over two bridges, and passed around the town of Hammelburg. German tanks showed up and we got into our fight near Pfaffenhausen. My assault guns and mediums—I had about six left—engaged these Krauts, knocked out three of them, and destroyed three or four ammunition trucks in the German column."

While the mediums and assault guns protected the flank of the attacking column, the platoon of light tanks, one assault gun, most of the half-tracks, and a platoon of infantry started the final assault on the prisoner-of-war camp. German shellfire flashed among the vehicles. Five half-tracks, one filled with gasoline and another with shells, were blown to bits. Three peeps were hit.

The sun was down and it was getting dark as the task force fought to the edge of the objective. The camp was big and set in a saucer-like hollow on a hill. Around the camp was strung a double row of barbed wire and a series of guard towers. Artillery and bazooka ranges and pillboxes from which bursts could be observed were scattered about the enclosure.

As the American tanks and armored infantrymen moved up the ridge, the two remaining assault guns supported them from the hill. The Germans opened on the infantrymen with automatic weapons, and the assault guns dealt direct fire on the German positions. Sergeant Charles O. Graham, of Beckley, West Virginia, the assault-gun platoon commander, saw the 4th Armored infantrymen bore into the stockade.

The first shots were fired into the camp guards about 4:30 in the afternoon. Two hours later, after tanks of the task force had crushed the barbed-wire fences, the first American prisoners came out. Several had been severely wounded in the fight.

One of them was General Patton's son-in-law, Lieutenant Colonel Waters. He had been shot at short range by an SS soldier while coming out under a white flag with a German officer from the prison-camp hospital. Colonel Waters wanted to spare the hospital area fighting in which patients might be hit. But the SS man's bullets hit him in the thigh and ranged through the lower part of his abdomen. He was carried back into the prison hospital for first aid.

The freed prisoners climbed on the tanks and hugged and kissed the crews. The tankers learned that there were at least 2,000 prisoners, including a number of American enlisted men and a large group of Serbians. Until the prisoners heard the shooting and saw the American stars on the tanks, they had no idea that a force had been sent to free them. Some of the prisoners eagerly took rifles and machine-guns from the wounded. The prisoners were ready to fight back to the lines with their rescuers.

But the grim situation quickly became plain. There was no room for the prisoners in the vehicles, and the task force was not strong enough to escort them back on foot. Sick and hungry, as some of the prisoners were, they could not have walked back the first mile. Sadly they grouped together, left their freedom behind and shuffled back into the prison camp under a white flag.

Captain Baum put as many of the fit prisoners as he could on the vehicles and prepared to turn back. Scores of the other American prisoners fled into the countryside to take a chance on working their separate ways through the German lines.

Task Force Baum, a battered remnant of the original, started back to the north. Captain Baum had been told that the 4th Armored Division would probably advance along a zone arching from southwest to northeast above Hammelburg. But his column hadn't moved fifty yards when another bazooka hit a tank. Forced to husband the dwindling strength of his small band, Captain Baum avoided battle by turning away to the southwest after checking his compass.

The column reached Höllich, where three more tanks were shattered under a blazing shower of rockets. Knowing he couldn't "mess around," Captain Baum pulled his troops out to assemble on Hill 427, a mile east of Höllich. The exhausted band got onto the hill at 3:30 a.m. of March twenty-eighth. They had, Captain Baum found, enough fuel to move all the vehicles another thirty-eight to forty miles. To give the column a greater driving radius, Captain Baum ordered the gas unloaded and drained from eight of the half-tracks, which were to be destroyed to prevent them from falling into the enemy's hands.

In the dawn, what Captain Baum saw might have been called heartbreaking, if the mission had not been heartbreaking from the start. In his own words, "I could barely scrape together two platoons, about a hundred and ten men. I had three mediums and three light tanks left, plus one command tank. The half-tracks were full of non-serious casualties and the infantry were on the tanks. It was then that I sent my last radio message to the battalion that the mission was accomplished and we were on our way back." The message was not received.

Captain Baum gave the orders for the next move. If the vehicles were scattered in combat, the tanks and half-tracks were to avoid towns whenever possible and work their way northwest. He suggested crossing streams away from bridge sites. Winding up his orders with a self-styled "pep talk," he stepped into his jeep to lead his reduced column. The Germans chose that moment to attack.

"Up to this time I had never seen the Krauts pull a good co-ordinated attack with artillery cover and tanks backing up the infantry the way they should," Captain Baum noted with professional interest. "But this was the time. They opened up just as we were ready to move out. It was like automatic fire.

"They had an unknown number of self-propelled guns to my south, six tanks and the equivalent of two infantry companies advancing on my position from the southeast, backed up by more self-propelled guns. To the northeast were six Tiger tanks in position and firing on us. Northwest, a column of tanks came in from the direction of Weickersbruben.

"My tanks returned the fire as best they could and jockeyed for position. All our vehicles were soon knocked out and burning, and the infantry was blown to bits. We moved into the woods and assembled. We tried to get back to see what we could salvage out of the mess, but each time we showed our faces the infantry opened up with small arms on us and the advancing tanks started firing again.

"By then the Krauts had the situation well in hand. After giving an order for the survivors to scatter in small groups to try to make their way back, two officers and myself took off in the woods. The Germans ran us down. Around nineteen-thirty hours a German took me. He shot me with a pistol. I got a grazing wound in the thigh from his bullet, and that was just enough to tell me the fellow could shoot. About fifteen of my men who had been captured were lined up a little distance away. If I had shot the German, my men would surely have been killed. I was convinced I had enough for a while." Major Stiller and Second Lieutenant William C. Weaver, Jr., of San Antonio, Texas, were captured with Captain Baum.

The captives were marched to the town of Hundsfield and from there to the prison camp they had so recently broken open. The German guards were so jittery they forgot to search the prisoners and identify them. Advised by veteran inmates at Hammelburg, Captain Baum pretended to be one of the escaped prisoners instead of a member of the task force.

In the prison hospital he found thirty-five other members of his force, as well as camp prisoners who had been wounded in the abortive operation. American and Serbian medical officers in charge of the hospital put Captain Baum in a corner out of casual view of the Germans. There the task force leader was just another patient, so far as the guards were concerned.

Nine tense days passed, and then, on April sixth, the sound of American tanks was heard once more in Hammelburg. After hard fighting, a combat command of the 14th Armored Division with the 3rd Infantry Division rolled in and liberated the prison. Meanwhile a score of the escaped prisoners and a scattered few of the task force were making their way like hunted animals to the American lines.

The whole desperate operation was later credited by General Patton with diverting German strength and aiding in opening the way for the armored drive to the northeast.

"I can say," commented Captain Baum, "that the area within a twenty-mile radius of the task force was in the most confused state I ever saw the Kraut. They didn't know what direction we were coming from or what we were doing there. They sure threw in enough stuff to stop us."

Captain Baum ended the war a major and one of the 4th Armored Division's most decorated officers, with the Distinguished Service Cross and four Purple Hearts. Today he is back in civilian life, happily engaged in the manufacture of women's blouses in Manhattan.

Major Stiller, the staff officer from Patton's headquarters who accompanied the task force, wound up, like most of the others, in the Hammelburg camp. Currently he is serving with an Officer Reserve Corps Instructor Group in this country. The star prisoner of Hammelburg, Lieutenant Colonel Waters, spent a long period in Walter Reed Hospital recuperating from the SS man's bullets, but eventually returned to active duty in the Army.

A week after the liberation of Hammelburg, a first lieutenant from the 4th Armored Division made his way back to the rear areas and the rare luxury of an officers' sales store. An infantry lieutenant in a new field jacket, with shiny gold shoulder bars, fresh-bought from the store, looked at the other officer's shoulder patch.

"You're from the Fourth Armored," the second lieutenant said eagerly. "You've got some boys in your division I'll never forget. I was in that Hammelburg PW camp when they came in. I didn't know they were American until they came over the hill and I saw those white stars on the tanks. They shot hell out of the Krauts. I grabbed a gun and took off with them. When there wasn't anything left, I made it back to the American lines on foot. Now I just got this new outfit and I'm going home. If any of those men got back, I want you to shake their hands for me."

Some were not back. Of the 293 men and officers who went forth in Task Force Baum, thirty-two were reported wounded, nine killed, and sixteen missing. Almost all the other 236 were taken prisoner at one time or another. Some hid after that final battle, were captured, escaped again or were finally freed by advancing American troops. Many did not straggle back until the end of the war in Europe. Some carried scars of unreported battle wounds. Nine were suffering non-battle injuries. As the survivors returned, they were shipped back to the United States fast.

They had earned their passage.

**General Patton Is Laid To Rest**  
by Life Editors

**Life Magazine**

Volume 20, Number 1  
January 7, 1946, pp. 28-29

### **Famous soldier is buried in Europe**

General George Smith Patton Jr. had survived two great wars, three battle wounds, and dozens of narrow battlefield escapes. It seemed likely that he would be able to survive the terrible auto accident in Germany in early December which had broken his neck. Encased in a plaster cast, he fought back from the edge of death. But then, on Friday, December 21st, 12 days after the accident, death came suddenly and peacefully. A lung clot killed "Old Blood and Guts" while he slept.

The body of General Patton was taken from the military hospital in Heidelberg to a mountain villa overlooking the old city. There it lay in state all day Saturday. Then his steel-gray, flag-covered casket was carried down a winding road to Heidelberg's Christ Church for a simple funeral ceremony. In a half-track that had helped spearhead Patton's brilliant drive through France, the coffin was carried to a special funeral train. Seventeen guns saluted him and, as the train doors closed, taps was blown by a GI whose division had been saved by Patton's Third Army in the Battle of the Bulge.

After a slow trip through the night, the train eased into the city of Luxembourg. From the station the funeral cortege marched solemnly to an American military cemetery, followed by citizens of Luxembourg who trudged the four miles in bareheaded respect to their "liberator." Then, in the white-crossed cemetery whose rolling land General Patton's army had liberated only a year before, the soldiers' rifles volleyed crisply and the general was laid to rest.

The next day General Patton's widow, who only a few weeks before had planned to celebrate a Christmas furlough with her husband at home, returned from his funeral on Christmas Day alone.

### **General Patton—Heel or Hero?** by Look Magazine Editors

**Look Magazine**  
Volume 9, Number 2  
January 23, 1945, pp. 40, 42, 44

*New stories and analyses never before printed help answer  
questions always asked about "General Blood and Guts."*

"George Patton," one of his superior officers once said, "is the most offensive officer in the United States Army." It's easy to make a phrase, but it's harder to equal General Patton's record. He delivered the first successful blow by an American force against the Nazis in North Africa. He played a major role in the conquest of Sicily in 38 days. He led the drive which liberated France. Before he even entered Germany, General Patton had won the respect of professional soldiers of every army.

To him, however, there clings a dubious odor. Lieutenant General George Smith Patton, Jr., may be a great general, it is admitted, but what about George Patton the man? Is he a brute who

slaps the faces of shell-shocked soldiers, loves bloodshed, crowds hapless peasants off the road, curses obscenely?

### **An Unmannerly Aristocrat**

When you look at Patton you see a man well over six feet tall, with a muscular body—broad shoulders and narrow hips—slender and fit, though he is 59. You see a face that is lean, freckled, blue-eyed. It is a lively face with a small mouth that can turn up with a sly quip—or as easily turn down with a wrath that makes the blue eyes flame. His thinning hair is sandy, his eyebrows almost disappear against his skin.

You see a man who wears gorgeous uniforms on the Hollywood model. Sometimes he carries two pearl-handled pistols (Pistol-Packin' Patton, his men called him behind his back) and sometimes a fancy riding crop that has a short-bladed sword in its handle. With the fancy uniforms goes a cocksure manner which is inevitably annoying.

The explanation is that Patton comes from a rich, aristocratic, Virginia family—although California-born—and aristocrats are not taught to behave as politely as ordinary people. Which is, of course, no excuse for slapping a soldier hospitalized for battle fatigue, as Patton did in Sicily.

### **A Romantic with a Gun**

The moving passion of George Patton's life is glory. Glory has been the lodestar of his life. He believes he is fated to die gloriously in battle. In an age when glory has been driven to refuge in comic books and horse operas, he is a man who has dedicated his life to heroism.

Because such dedication is rare, General Patton is not widely understood—but he is understood by Generals Marshall and Eisenhower. He is "Georgie" to Eisenhower, who is "Ike" to him.

One thing about Patton's epic advance through France has never been published. This is the record of a highly unorthodox exchange of official messages between Patton and Eisenhower during that campaign. Eisenhower ribbed, insulted, cussed, and bedeviled Patton all the way across France.

Did Patton make a particularly spectacular advance, Eisenhower messaged him to get the lead out of his pants. When Patton's reconnaissance missed a pocket of Germans, Eisenhower needed him by reference to some prewar hunting incident Patton had fluffed.

Patton got his own back when supplies failed to arrive. Held up three days awaiting gasoline, he sent increasingly sulphurous messages to Eisenhower, capping them with a threat to shoot up the next truck that arrived with food. "We can eat our blankety blank belts," he wrote.

### **He's a *Fighting* Fighting Man**

Patton is brave, an officer who insists that men must be led, not driven. With Pershing in Mexico in 1916, he led a patrol that was to capture a Villa lieutenant named Candelario Cervantes. Cervantes set up a one-man fort in a walled, easily defended Mexican house. Patton isn't siege-minded; before sundown he had grown impatient. Gun blazing, he went in alone and came out with the man's body over his shoulder.

In September, 1918, he led a tank brigade into the Argonne, and when his outfit was cut off Patton went alone for help, mixing up with a German machine-gun nest on the way. He was badly shot up—but knocked out the gun with hand grenades.

In Tunisia, the sight of General Patton riding a tank at the front—head and shoulders sticking out of the turret—was one of the things that kept our men fighting in a war that was new to Americans.

In France, he was always near or at the front. One day in Luxembourg a reporter found him inspecting a position held by only a few armored cars—against two panzer divisions.

"The Germans can't come through here," Patton said with a grin. "I'm standing in their way."

### **He Takes Orders—but Not Meekly**

A notoriously rigid disciplinarian, Patton—like any GI—is himself subject to orders from above. These he accepts without complaining even when they hurt. An order that hurt was the one which stopped his advance when he first reached Metz and penetrated the defenses there without meeting serious opposition.

There wasn't a war correspondent with his Third Army then who didn't think Patton might have been able to roll right on to the Rhine or Berlin—if he had been supplied. Patton thought so too. But such an advance was not then in the larger plan.

Patton is a good fighting man, and his doctrine of the offensive may make him great. At Avranches, at the foot of the Cherbourg peninsula, a reporter witnessed an incident in the breakthrough which illustrates this Patton doctrine.

In a gun duel there, at the spearpoint of his armor, the enemy had just knocked out five of Patton's tanks. His remaining tanks had barely enough gasoline to carry them 15 miles. Their supply line had been cut by the Germans. The supporting infantry was left hopelessly behind.

General Patton ordered the tanks to move forward—immediately. They moved, threw the Germans off balance and kept moving. Eventually, the entire invasion followed them.

### **No Polite Warmaker**

That is what the doctrine of the offensive means in action—and it saves thousands of American lives by keeping the enemy on the defensive, cut up, demoralized.

Patton also advocates "reconnaissance by fire." This means a tank column pulls into an enemy-held town with all guns blazing, asking no questions. Innocent people get hurt in this kind of war, but it works.

In urging his men to wage war on this model, General Patton can say some brutal things. As: "The way to fight Germans is to ram a bayonet into their belly buttons and rip 'em up and down." That is one of the more printable Patton quotations.

### **Glory and Gutter Lingo**

General Patton expects his men to be tough—so he swears at them. He expects them to fight hard for the glory of it—so he gives them lots of medals and publicity. He has won a fight with higher-ups in insisting that his units be identified in newspaper dispatches, so they can get the glory that is coming to them.

He doesn't mind if they swagger, or if they hell around a bit on leave. When military policemen started posting all the towns in France "off limits," General Patton started ripping the signs down again.

Strict about little things, Patton will sometimes wink at unorthodoxy in a good fighting outfit. At least three of his crack reconnaissance units—the outfits that push ahead of tanks and infantry—carried girls with them across France as interpreters. It was strictly against the rules, but the girls stayed.



Patton wants his men to keep moving. In France, everywhere he went, Patton told the boys he didn't like to see foxholes dug. "When you're with my army, you won't need to dig in. You won't be here long enough."

Patton is a student of warfare. Originally a cavalryman, for 24 years before the invasion of Africa he studied tank warfare, wrote on tank tactics, invented new tactics. As far back as 1913, touring Normandy with his wife, he walked over the ground around St. Lo, planning out loud how he would fight a battle there.

### **Family Man Patton**

Finally, Patton is a human being. [See psychological analysis below—Ed.] He has a farm home at Hamilton, Massachusetts, a wife to whom he writes every other day, three children, four small grandchildren. He even writes to the grandchildren.

He likes athletics, even today. He is an expert pistol shot, a fine horseman, a competent yachtsman, a good swimmer. Once he taught the Prince of Wales how to shoot craps.

Christmas, 1944, was the sixth Christmas Day Patton has been out of the country, away from his family, fighting three wars. He was lonely then, just like any GI.

In private conversation General Patton can speak without profanity, and in a Southern drawl with a Southerner's picturesque similes. Washington hostesses miss him.

Patton has no discernible political ambition. He wants glory only. In Normandy he faced the trial of his life like a gladiator. If he had failed there, his name would have been forgotten. But he didn't fail. When his success became apparent, Congress approved his appointment to the permanent rank of major general.

George Patton is determined to go on from there.

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### **A Psychiatrist Explains Why Patton Curses**

The following analysis of the character of General Patton was made by a nationally prominent psychiatrist:

"General Patton is a man who combines a love of chivalry and of combat reminiscent of the days of knighthood. To him, war is glorious, the proper function of he-men.

"And he takes the glory of war literally. He strives for perfection. He dresses to perfection. He expects to die with his boots on—but the boots must be shined. His men must dress up for war, too, for Patton identifies himself with his men. It is not contempt for his men but desire to identify himself with them that leads him to curse in his talks to them. His contempt is for what stands in the way of war—whether peasant carts, mules, or war neuroses.

"This last partially explains why Patton slapped a soldier suffering from combat fatigue. Further, we must assume that Patton himself was a combat fatigue victim at the time. A GI with a war neurosis weeps; a general screams. Both actions are symptoms of the same illness."

**General Patton**  
by Look Magazine

**Look Magazine**  
Volume 7, Number 11  
June 1, 1943, pp. 10

When Americans landed on the west coast of Africa they were commanded by a six-foot, gimlet-eyed, bald-headed general with the most profane vocabulary known to the U. S. Army. He led his troops through snipers and artillery fire in an attack on Casablanca, walked into the office of the local commander with two .45's swinging from his hips, a tommy gun cradled in his arms.

Later he wrote his wife: "It was a real nice fight."

Born on a ranch in San Gabriel, California, in 1885, Lieutenant General George Smith Patton grew up a poor student but a great athlete (he nearly won the Olympic pentathlon in 1912). Graduated from West Point, he entered the Cavalry, and in 1910 married Beatrice Ayer, a girl of wealth and talent.

Patton soon became known as a hell-for-leather cavalryman. He accompanied Pershing into Mexico in 1915, hounded his chief until he was permitted to go after a Mexican badman. He shot it out with the bandit, brought him back dead, and strapped to the hood of an old car. "That," he said later, "was the first motorized action of the U. S. Army."

In 1917 he went to France as a member of Pershing's staff and commanded the only tank brigade in the Army. It is said he rode into battle sitting on top of his tank, brandishing a cutlass, and at least once leaped to the ground to pursue an astonished German. Wounded in an action in which five of his seven men were killed, he received the D.S.C.

Between wars, Patton saw duty in many posts. Then, in 1940, he was ordered to Fort Benning, Georgia, to serve with the 2nd Armored Division. He found confusion, red tape, rusty tanks. Patton repaired the tanks, cut the tape, bought quickly needed equipment from a mail-order house. Soon he had his men training under the worst possible desert conditions. He lived with them, was always at their head. "Tank warfare," he explained, "is like spaghetti—you can't push it from behind." During maneuvers staged for visiting South American officers, one of his tanks stalled in a stream; down jumped Patton, hauled away at the tank while screaming epithets which alone should have lifted it out.

A rigid disciplinarian, a wily tactician, he took his men to North Africa prepared for anything.

While winning their admiration, Patton has continually astonished his troops. Sometimes they call him "Flash Gordon" because of the helmet he wears and the grim face he sticks out of a tank turret as he bounces across country. But their pet name for him is "Old-Blood-and-Guts," a title earned partly through his speeches, to which they look forward with fascination. His most famous sentence begins: "When you put your hand on the mess of goo that a minute before was your best friend's face . . . " And he works up from there.

Patton expects his own death to be spectacular, expects to be blown to bits in an advancing tank. And if he has his way, that's how it will come.

**Flamboyant and controversial,  
General George Patton proved to be  
one of the war's best field commanders.**  
by David Martin

**World War II**  
Volume 9, Number 4  
November 1994, pp 24, 26, 28

George S. Patton, Jr., was born on November 11, 1885, in San Gabriel, California. From the time he was a young boy, Patton dreamed of being a soldier. His grandfather had fought for the Confederacy and lost his life in the Civil War. Patton followed his family's military tradition by entering the Virginia Military Institute and later the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, where he graduated in 1909. He later wrote, "It is as natural for me to be a soldier as it is to breathe."

Patton believed in continuous preparation for the outbreak of war. He often compared maintaining a strong peacetime army to children practicing a fire drill. "If we go the extreme of saying that preparedness produces war," he said, "then the instruction in fire drills would produce fires." He felt that a militarily strong America was essential for lasting world peace.

Between the wars, while America was trying to isolate itself from Europe and the world, Patton was the first to lobby for production of a new weapon, the tank. General John J. "Blackjack" Pershing introduced Patton to the tank and asked him to form the first armored unit in the U.S. Army. The tank, in Patton's mind, was the weapon of the future. He was also convinced that another war was approaching and that the tank, along with air power, would be the primary tool used to wage it. His prediction of the tank's pivotal role in wars to come proved accurate when Adolf Hitler unleashed the might of Germany's war machine with the invasion of Poland in September 1, 1939.

The general was a voracious reader who placed great value on the knowledge of history. He believed in reincarnation and saw himself as an archetypal warrior who had fought and died on a number of occasions through the centuries. As a timeless warrior, Patton remembered fighting as a Roman legionnaire and as a French marshal.

A number of incidents involving Patton have achieved near legendary status with the passing of time. The most familiar, perhaps the "slapping incidents" have been surrounded by conjecture and misinterpretation and almost ruined Patton's career.

In 1943 during the Sicily campaign, Patton was visiting medical aid stations when he slapped two soldiers, Private Charles Kuhl on August 3, 1943, and Private Paul Bennett on August 10, 1943 both of whom he believed were attempting to shirk their duties by claiming to suffer from battle fatigue. When Eisenhower received a detailed report of the incidents, he was furious. However, because Eisenhower respected and admired Patton, he did not relieve him from future service but instead ordered him to apologize to the soldiers and units under him. Patton told Eisenhower that his intentions had been for the good of the soldiers. He explained that he had no intention of purposely hurting the men and intended to help them regain their self-respect.

Private Kuhl was suffering from a severe case of malaria and had a seriously high temperature. If Kuhl's illness had been properly diagnosed and treated, he would never have roused Patton's ire, since Patton would have thought of him as ill rather than a soldier with battle fatigue.

Private Bennett's situation was quite different. Bennett was AWOL (absent without leave) at the aid station. In addition, he had consistently faked battle fatigue to avoid fighting on other occasions. For such actions, Bennett could have been court-martialed and possibly shot according to the Articles of War.

Patton issued orders on August 5, 1943, explaining his lack of patience with soldiers admitted to aid stations when nothing was wrong with them. Nevertheless, the incidents created a furor when reported in the American press.

Patton has been viewed by some as a good field commander but a poor strategist. Eisenhower wrote: "George, you are a great leader, but a poor planner." To which Patton replied: "except for [Operation] Torch, which I planned and which was a great success, I have never been given the chance to plan." But others believe Patton was an outstanding strategist. For instance, he proved himself in North Africa with Operation Torch and in the rejuvenation of II Corps against Field Marshal Erwin Rommel. In spite of those successes, the Patton supporters say, Eisenhower ignored Patton's plans consistently throughout World War II. Further, they argue, some of his ideas were "borrowed" by other commanders. One such commander was British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, who "used" Patton's plans for the invasion of Sicily.

The Sicily invasion was set for the summer of 1943, and Patton reportedly had been working on the plan (codenamed Husky) for quite some time beforehand. Operation Husky was initially designed for Patton to land at Palermo and drive along the coast road to Messina. Montgomery would land at Syracuse and drive north to Messina also. If successful, the Allies would cut off all Axis escape routes to the Italian mainland. After Operation Husky was approved, Montgomery pressured Eisenhower and British General Harold Alexander to change the plan and give Montgomery the most prominent role. Instead of landing at Palermo and driving to Messina, Patton was to land at Gela and protect the exposed flank of his rival Montgomery. Montgomery's revised plan allowed thousands of German and Italian troops to escape and fight later in Italy and Central Europe. When Montgomery's advance began to falter, Patton took Palermo and later Messina, much to the chagrin of the British commander.

On a number of occasions, Patton and his Third Army consistently outperformed Montgomery and his command. After the breakout from the coast, the Americans advanced five times as far in half the time. By August 15, 1944, the Third Army had reached the town of Argentan, only 12 miles from the town of Falaise, whose capture was the key to a swift victory and would cut off the escape route of thousands of fleeing German soldiers. Patton and his Third Army had encircled the retreating Germans, except for a gap about 12 miles wide. The Third Army was ready to enter Falaise and close the gap when Eisenhower ordered Patton to halt, although the German Seventh Army was in full retreat and plainly defeated.

Two reasons were given for ordering the Third Army to halt at Argentan. The British had dropped bombs with delayed action fuzes behind the German lines, and an advance by the Third Army's XV Corps might have placed American troops in peril from British bombs detonating in their midst. In fact, these bombs were rigged for a 12-hour delay, and an advance by XV Corps might have been timed to avoid casualties from this source. Eisenhower and Bradley both believed that Patton could have "collided" with the British forces if XV Corps had been allowed to advance. Eisenhower stated that many "Mix-ups" existed along the front and there was no way to grasp the situation without a complete halt.

Had Patton been allowed to advance, the escape route of the German Seventh Army would very likely have been choked off much sooner. In fact, Patton wrote in his diary: "The XV Corps could have easily entered the town of Falaise and completely closed the gap to Argentan." This halt was a great mistake as I was not certain that the British would [take Falaise]." Between 20,000 and 50,000 German troops escaped the Falaise Pocket to fight against the Allies another day.

Despite his sometimes caustic personality, his continuous run-ins with other commanders, and his penchant for doing things his own way, Patton became an integral part of the winning combination that brought victory to the Allied cause in World War II.

Eisenhower's broad-front strategy in the summer of 1944 led to stagnation on the Western Front and allowed the Wehrmacht to regroup and reorganize. Hitler envisioned a bold winter offensive that would drive through the Ardennes Forest, sweep across the Meuse River and capture Antwerp, a major Allied port of entry. A lack of fuel and other resources, along with

isolated pockets of stubborn resistance, soon brought the German offensive to a halt, stranding the 101st Airborne Division in Bastogne.

When the crisis struck, Patton's Third Army relieved Bastogne and inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy. During the relief effort, Patton and the Third Army moved farther and faster and engaged more divisions in less time than any other army in the history of the United States, possibly in the history of the world.

It is ironic that Patton's superiors seemed to rarely give him credit for his military genius, while his adversaries lavished praise on him for being both an excellent leader of men and a brilliant strategist and tactician. General Siegfried Westphal, German chief of staff in the west, said: "As far as General Patton was concerned, I was of the opinion even then that he was by far the outstanding commander in the [enemy] camp." General Hermann Balk, commander of Army Group G, summed it up: "General Patton was the outstanding tactical genius of World War II."

Patton died on December 21, 1945, of complications from injuries received in an automobile accident. The celebrated general was a highly complex individual, and his legendary status has grown even larger in the decades since his death-as time has accorded his career the study and appreciation deserved by a truly remarkable military personality.

### **Patton's Combat Car**

by Gil McSheehy

#### **Military Modeler**

Volume 4, Number 8

August 1977, pp 8-10, 62, 64-67

*Converting an M3A1 Stuart into an M1A1 Light Tank in the color scheme of the Command Vehicle used by Patton During the Louisiana Maneuvers of 1940 in 1/35th scale.*

Designed in 1935 for use by cavalry, this 9.7 ton light tank had a maximum speed of 50 mph, a crew of four, armor from 0.25 to 0.625 inches and was armed with a .50 caliber and a .30 caliber machine gun in the turret, a .30 caliber machine gun in the front hull on a ball mount, and another on a pedestal outside the turret for use as an antiaircraft gun. Powered by a Continental seven cylinder radial air-cooled engine of 250 hp, the tank had a five speed forward and one speed reverse transmission.

Agile and dependable, the M1A1 taught most of the officers that later fought World War II most of the armor tactics they knew. The rubber block tracks and vertical volute suspension were carried over in American tanks until the introduction of the M4A3E8 medium tank with horizontal volute suspension.

Originally called a "Combat Car," the M1 and M1A1 series of light tanks were used until 1941 and the M3 light tank was a direct descendant.

The MRC/Tamiya 1/35th scale kit of the M3A1 Stuart has been on the market for a couple of years now and is an excellent kit though MRC/Tamiya did cut a few corners in detailing, i.e.; grab irons and so on.

The M1A1 light tank's hull is almost exactly the same as the Stuart's and therefore the M3 kit lends itself well to the conversion we are concerned with.

The hull of the Stuart must be cut at the overhang and the overhang completely removed. Using the kit end plate, build up the hull and deck according to instructions. You will notice a 1/4-inch gap between the end plate and the motor access hatches at the rear of the hull. Cut a piece of sheet plastic to fit the open space and build up a line of rivets along it. I used liquid plastic to build up the rivets, but any method the modeler is comfortable with may be used.

Once glued in place, the hull is converted to an M1A1 hull. When completing buildup of the hull, leave the stowage boxes off and replace these with two half-inch diameter cylinders. I can find no reference as to the purpose of these cylinders but from the shape must assume they are fuel tanks.

The turret sides were extended 3/8-inch with sheet plastic and a solid sheet of plastic glued across the front. Two rectangular extensions were made from sheet plastic and glued to the face plate of the turret. A vision slot and a hole were drilled in each, the hole being for the ball mounts of the machine guns that later fit into the rectangles. Rivets were run across the bottom of the face plate and around the machine gun mounts with liquid plastic.

The turret top from the kit was not used and a new one was made from sheet plastic. Vision ports for the turret were also made from sheet plastic, the one on the rear of the turret being slightly smaller than the side ports. The larger of the two turret machine gun mounts, the one to the left of the turret, carries the .50 caliber machine gun.

The color scheme used on my model represents General Patton's command vehicle during Louisiana maneuvers 1940. He was commanding general of the 2nd Armored Division at the time and not being the most sedate general in the army, painted his vehicle so that it would stand out in a crowd.

The entire model is painted with Floquil's Pullman Green and when dry was given several coats of black wash. The turret stripes were then painted on. The entire vehicle was then weathered with white pastel and Silver Rub'n Buff.

As far as I could determine, the pennant on the right front of the tank was made of some stiff material, probably wood, and was not a flag. I made mine from sheet plastic and painted it appropriately. The 2nd Armored Division insignia comes from an old decal sheet I found in my decal file. The hull numbers are Letraset dry transfers.

The M1A1 light tank, though obscure historically, played an important role in the development of the U.S. Army's tank program. It served as a test bed and a teaching aid and though it never saw combat, it makes an interesting addition to any collection of American Armor.

## **The Lieutenant's First War** **Stories Of Our Times**

**Modern Maturity**  
Volume 25, Number 3  
June-July 1982, pp 14-15

Seven years out of West Point, he was a young, dashing, somewhat brash second lieutenant with a thirst for combat. But now, he feared, the only available war was passing him by.

It was March 12, 1916, and Fort Bliss, Texas, was embroiled in frantic activity. Several days before, the Mexican bandit Pancho Villa had staged a bloody raid on Columbus, New Mexico,

killing 17 Americans. Now General John (Black Jack) Pershing was busily preparing to mount the "punitive expedition" into Mexico. His mission: Pursue Villa and break up his marauding gangs.

Much to his chagrin the young lieutenant learned that his outfit would not be included in the campaign. Instantly he buttonholed every staff officer he could, trying to get assigned to Pershing's force. Late in the day, Pershing personally called the lieutenant to say he'd heard he wanted to go, and would take him if possible.

That wasn't good enough for the lieutenant, who had the temerity to present himself at Pershing's quarters that night.

"Everyone wants to go," Pershing replied sternly to the lieutenant's entreaty. "Why should I favor you?"

"Because," the junior officer replied, "I want to go more than anyone."

Continuing his steely-eyed gaze at the lieutenant, Pershing flatly said "That will do." The interview was over.

Next morning Pershing called the lieutenant to ask how long it would take him to get ready. Foresightedly, the lieutenant had already packed and could report immediately. Bemused, Pershing informed him that he would be assigned as his personal aide on a temporary basis.

Thus began 11 months of a sometimes exciting but more often frustrating trek through rugged northern Mexico—and something of a turning point for the lieutenant's career.

From the beginning, this young officer showed his desire to be where the action was, and his penchant for derring-do. Early on in the campaign, he volunteered for a two-day mission as courier between Pershing and forward columns engaging Villa's troops in the south. Riding his horse through sleet, snow, hail and rain across rugged mountains, he made contact. With only one hour's rest, he rode back to headquarters in 16 hours. Soon thereafter, he again volunteered to ride with a column of troops in what turned out to be an unsuccessful pursuit of Villa.

The real highlight of his tour in Mexico came in May, when he was dispatched with a small number of soldiers by Pershing to buy corn from the locals.

On a hunch, the lieutenant decided to visit the ranch owned by Julio Cardenas, commander of Villa's bodyguards, the Dorados, in search of the Villa aide. A gunfight ensued. When the smoke cleared, three Mexicans lay dead; one of them was identified as none other than Julio Cardenas.

Pleased by the feat, Pershing complimented the lieutenant, dubbing him "our bandit." The junior officer's exploit was reported widely in newspapers across the United States, which had little news to report about the largely uneventful expedition.

In the months in Mexico after that duties became routine and somewhat monotonous for the lieutenant. Yet his close association with Pershing proved to be a golden opportunity. He watched closely as the general planned his campaigns, observed Pershing's performance of command duties, and had long discussions with him on military tactics. He began to model himself after the general, whom he admired, even idolized.

Twenty-six years later, on October 11, 1942, the swashbuckling young lieutenant of the 1916 Mexican expedition—now a senior officer—was visiting the ailing Pershing in his room at Walter Reed Army Hospital.

"When you took me to Mexico in 1916, you gave me my start," the younger man recalled.

"I can always pick a fighting man," Pershing replied, "and God knows there are few of them. I'm happy they're sending you off to the front."

They reminisced some more. The younger man asked for Pershing's blessing, and saluted him. As Pershing returned the salute smartly, 25 years seemed to drop from his age.

And with that, Major General George S. Patton Jr. left, soon to depart for the battlegrounds of World War II.

**Patton's Prayer**  
by Patrick R. Moran

**VFW Magazine**  
Volume 72, Number 4  
December 1984, pp 21-23

For almost three solid months the fall of 1944, before the Battle of the Bulge, the whole Western Front had been subjected to a steady downpour of rain that made roads virtual quagmires, turned creeks into swollen torrents and soldiers into soggy masses of muddy olive drab.

On Dec. 8, 1944, General George S. Patton, Jr., commander of the 3rd Army, hit on what he thought was the solution to the problem.

He telephoned the 3rd Army chaplain, Brig. General James H. O'Neill, a Roman Catholic monsignor, at the army's headquarters in Nancy.

"Do you have a good prayer for weather?" he asked. "We must do something about these rains if we are to win the war."

Chaplain O'Neill immediately agreed to look for such a prayer and report back within an hour.

"I looked at the steadily falling rain—immoderate, I would call it—the same rain that had plagued General Patton's army throughout the Moselle and Saar campaigns from September until now, Dec. 8," he noted in his daily log.

In another week, Hitler would take his last gamble, a major offensive against Lt. General Courtney Hodges' 1st Army to the north off the 3rd. The Belgian port city of Antwerp and the French city of Reims and its huge supply of gasoline were the objectives.

Prayer books were scarce, and those at hand did not contain any formal prayer on weather that might be acceptable to General Patton. So Chaplain O'Neill typed an original and improved copy of a prayer on a filing card.

Logically he typed General Patton's Christmas message on the reverse side of the prayer card. No Hallmark and hurriedly printed, the greetings read:

*"To each officer and soldier in the United States Army, I wish a Merry Christmas. I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty, and skill in battle. We march in our might to complete victory. May God's blessing rest upon each of you on this Christmas Day."*

Veterans of 3rd Army units remember the little card as "Patton's Christmas Prayer." The 3-1/2 by 2-inch card proved that prayer can be powerful even in small packages. It went like this:

*"Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech Thee, of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for Battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call upon Thee that armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to victory, and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies, and establish Thy justice among men and nations. Amen."*



"After reading the card, Patton gave this directive, 'Have 250,000 copies printed and see to it that every man in the 3rd Army gets one.' (The size of the order amazed me. This was certainly doing something about the weather in a big way.) Very well, sir!" the chaplain's log continued.

Then Patton asked him, "How much praying is being done in the 3rd Army?"

The chaplain replied, "I don't believe much praying is going on. When there is fighting, everyone prays, but now with this his constant, rain—when things are quiet, prayer out here is difficult."

Patton commented, "I am a strong believer in prayer. There are three ways that men get what they want—by planning, working and praying. Any great military operation takes careful planning or thinking. Then you must have well-trained troops to carry it out—that is working.

"We were lucky in Africa, in Sicily and in Italy, simply because people prayed. But we have to pray for ourselves, too."

"Great living is not all output of thought and work. A man has to have intake as well. I don't know what you call it, but I call it Religion, prayer, or God," Patton said.

Monsignor O'Neill wrote that the approximately 486 Chaplains in the 3rd Army represented 32 denominations. The chief of chaplains' contact with chaplains in his command had been chiefly through training letters issued from time to time to chaplains of the four corps and the 22 to 26 divisions comprising the 3rd Army. General Patton directed him to put out a training letter to encourage prayer among the troops.

"We've got to get not only the chaplains but every man in the 3rd Army to pray," he said. "We must ask God to stop these rains. These rains are the margin that spells defeat or victory. If we all pray, it will be like plugging in on a current whose source is Heaven. I believe that prayer completes that circuit. It is power!"

Chaplain O'Neill related that the 250,000 copies of the prayer card were made to reach the troops by Dec. 12 through Dec. 14.

Two days later, on Dec. 16, the Germans commanded by Field Marshal Gerd von Runstedt broke through the thinly held center of the 1st Army sector in the Schnee Eifel, followed quickly by attacks all along the 1st's line from Luxembourg in the south to Elsenborn and Monschau in the north. Hitler employed two panzer armies and one field army in this last offensive to halt the advancing Allies. The route was the same one that had proved so successful in 1914 and 1940, but his weakened forces were stopped short of the Meuse and began withdrawing on Jan. 22. Three days later the Ardennes-Alsace Campaign was officially over. The Germans suffered 100,000 casualties, the Americans 81,000 (19,000 killed and 15,000 captured) and the British 1,400. Equipment losses were massive; a thousand German planes were destroyed.

Patton moved north to relieve besieged Bastogne, the vital center of a road network held by the surrounded 101st Airborne Division, CC13 of the 10th Armored Division and other units. Brig. General Anthony McAuliffe, the 101st's acting commander, penned his famous "Nuts" reply to German surrender demands on Dec. 22. Fourth Armored Division tankers under Creighton Abrams, later army commander in Vietnam, broke through on Dec. 26.

A turnabout in the weather came on Dec. 20. Rains and fogs ceased, but snow took their place, and a week of bright clear skies followed. It was perfect flying weather. Veterans of the campaign still remember the "planes coming over the forests by the tens, hundreds and thousands, knocking out the enemy" and testify to the seemingly miraculous appearance and support by the Army Air Force. Patton's prayer apparently was answered.

Whether fate or irony, Patton's death occurred almost a year later on Dec. 21, 1945, his neck was broken when his automobile and an Army truck collided 12 days earlier near Heidelberg, Germany.

In his eulogy of the general, Chaplain O'Neill quoted him as saying, "Anyone in any walk of life who is content with mediocrity is untrue to himself and to American tradition."

O'Neill himself died in 1972. He had retired from military service as army deputy chief of chaplains. At his death, he was rector of Sacred Heart Cathedral in Pueblo, Colo.

**Flash Gordon**  
**The New Yorker**

**The New Yorker**  
Volume XX, Number 39  
November 11, 1944, pp 22-23

November 11th, is not only Armistice Day, it's the fifty-ninth birthday of Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr. We have rounded up a few legends, and bits of biographical data to celebrate the occasion. In the first place, though he calls himself George Smith Patton, Jr., he's actually a III, and his son, now at West Point, who calls himself III, is actually IV. There was a Colonel George Smith Patton in the Confederate Army; that's the General's grandfather. He was killed at the battle of Cedar Creek. His son, our Patton's father, went through V.M.I. and then entered the law and went West. He married the daughter of Benjamin Wilson, who was the first mayor of Los Angeles and for whom Mount Wilson was named. Wilson left a large ranch to III's daughter, and there the General was born. He grew up in the saddle, as the saying goes, and was an accomplished polo player at eleven. He entered V.M.I. at eighteen and the next year went to West Point, where he was a poor student but a terrific athlete. Soon after his arrival, he boasted that he would be cadet captain (the highest cadet post) and that after graduation he would become the first general officer of his class, 1909. As things worked out, he was cadet adjutant, the second highest post, and the second general officer.

Patton has always been a formidable fencer. In his youth, his most awesome feat with a saber was to charge, blindfolded, and knock an apple from the head of a trusting friend ten paces away.

One of his first jobs after his commission was to design an improved cavalry saber which was better for a thrusting than a cutting attack. He represented the United States in the modern pentathlon at the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm and finished fifth in a field of more than thirty. The four men ahead of him were all Swedes, and since the pentathlon was a specialty of Swedish athletes, it was a sort of moral victory for Patton. Of the five pentathlon events—swimming, riding, shooting, fencing, and running—he did the worst with a pistol, finishing twenty-first. For some reason, his misses weren't even on the target. He has since improved to the extent that he can shoot from the hip, even on horseback, or in a moving car, and bring down a small animal. He has kept on being athletic; he has been the polo star of every Army post he has been stationed at and a master of such varied accomplishments as skeet shooting, squash racquets, tennis, and riding to hounds. He and Mrs. Patton are both interested in sailing; they and their eight-year-old son once sailed a fifty-seven-foot schooner-rigged yacht to Honolulu with the assistance of only one deckhand.

Patton has accumulated one of the largest and best military libraries in the world, and is considered an authority on military history—"from Genghis Khan to yesterday afternoon," one of his admirers told us. During the Normandy campaign he spent all his spare time reading a lengthy history of the Norman conquest of England. Aside from military writings, his taste runs to Kipling, Robert Burns, and Shakespeare, and he can quote long passages from them. He has

composed two volumes of poetry, which are to be published posthumously; the subject matter is said to be exclusively military and the style, naturally, epic. He has several times composed poems to read to his men and on Special occasions, as you probably know, one was printed last Year in the Woman's Home Companion.

One of Patton's nicknames, Flash Gordon, dates from the time he designed an outfit he thought should be worn by men in tanks, patterned after a fencer's costume. It was green with black stripes and had white buttons, and it included a gilded, futuristic helmet. The Army rejected the design, except for the helmet (without the gilt), but Patton continued to wear the model he had made up, and even his well-wishers could not deny that he looked like somebody from Mars. Patton has always been clothes-conscious. For instance, he customarily showed up at Army horse shows in civilian dress clothes and at civilian shows in a dress uniform. If we had the space, we could tell you a lot about Mrs.—who is a worthy wife—an heiress, a collector of fossils, a yachswoman, a novelist, and the composer of a march for the Tank Corps.

## **Murder No Shock To Spooks**

by George Nicholas

### **The Spotlight**

Volume 5, Number 42

October 15, 1979, pp 17

Among veteran officers of U.S. and British intelligence—a clannish fraternity of insiders from diverse backgrounds, united by the ruthless determination that whoever stands in the way of their internationalist designs must be "terminated"—the disclosure of Douglas Bazata that General George Patton was murdered evoked knowing nods.

"The vicious conspiracy against 'Old Blood-and-Guts' was by no means an isolated incident," said Colonel Paul Lyon, an experienced military intelligence officer who saw duty with OSS in the Mediterranean. "Other officers who were stubbornly patriotic or who clung to their anti-communist convictions met quick, violent, unexplained deaths, especially when a chance assignment landed them at the fulcrum of a critical situation," he said.

"Take the case of Major Francis Holohan," Colonel Lyon said, "who was a gallant, patriotic, and principled officer in the pattern of Patton himself. Holohan believed that Americans should not conspire with communists, and he steadfastly refused to call in U.S. arms supply drops to strengthen the so-called 'partisan' formations of the Italian Communist Party.

"Other senior OSS field commanders," recalled Colonel Lyon, "urged Holohan to submit, since arming the left was Washington's covert policy in the European theater. But when Holohan stubbornly refused to collaborate with the communists, he was assassinated by a hit team of American OSS officers reportedly led by Lieutenant Aldo Icardi, and his body was dumped in a deep mountain lake.

### **"Tall Tony" Dies**

Other veterans of the OSS in World War II told *The Spotlight* of the widespread belief among intelligence insiders that Lieutenant Colonel Anthony "Tall Tony" LoScalzo, a regular Army finance officer attached to OSS in Italy, was assassinated when he threatened to wreck a scheme

by a group of New York banks to defraud the American taxpayer of \$14 million in illicit currency exchange profits.

Although most OSS officers served long and hazardously in World War II, some of them were also known to rake off large and illicit sums from currency exchange transactions. Such deals were difficult for common GIs, but officers assigned to clandestine "special operations" received special privileges to turn large sums of French francs or Italian lire in for U.S. dollars at the official rate of exchange which, in comparison with the black market, meant a handsome profit.

In 1944, a group of Wall Street bankhouses decided to follow the GI route to sudden wealth by arranging the exchange of large amounts of devalued European banknotes into U.S. dollars at the official rate. Wires were pulled and the "fix" was in: all it required for the multi-million-dollar currency swap to go through was a finance officer's certification that the suitcases full of European banknotes had been in the possession of the American banks prior to a certain date.

"Tall Tony" LoScalzo was the finance officer picked for this job by the OSS conspirators. But unexpectedly, "Tall Tony" stood up for honesty and refused to sign the phony currency certifications. Shortly afterwards, he was reported to have died of injuries received in a collision involving a huge Army truck. His death aroused enough suspicion to trigger a criminal investigation, but as invariably happened in such cases, there were no indictments.

### **Protect Each Other**

"Those OSS guys were wild and ruthless," a veteran of World War II intelligence operations recalled, "but they were not stupid. They knew how to make a hit and get away, and they were a close-knit bunch; giving evidence to the CID, the Army's Criminal Investigations branch, against a brother OSS officer was taboo."

The OSS, as *The Spotlight's* investigators found, was a "close-knit bunch" and more: it was the elite, exclusive "social laboratory" in which the scions of America's leading banking and financier families—Paul Mellon, Walter Hanna, Raymond Guest, Junius Morgan, and many others—learned how to collaborate with the younger leaders of the Communist Party, USA—Irving Goff, secretary-general of the Young Communist League, Milton Wolff, Irving Fagans, Vincent Lassowski, and others for the common post-war goal of one world under a single supranational government jointly dominated by Soviet bureaucrats and American bankers.

The OSS—or Office of Strategic Services in the official terminology—came into being by authority of an Executive Order signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on June 13, 1942.

Theoretically situated in the chain of command under the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the OSS quickly emerged as the president's personal "special operations" force. Its founder and undisputed chief, General William "Wild Bill" Donovan, in civilian life a millionaire Wall Street lawyer, had round-the-clock direct "backstairs" access to the White House. Donovan often used his easy access to President Franklin Roosevelt to make his own views prevail over those of the bitterly jealous service chiefs.

Although OSS was an Army component, authorized to operate everywhere in the world except the Western Hemisphere (which remained the preserve of the FBI), it was loathed and despised by America's most gallant and victorious field commanders, especially Douglas MacArthur and George Patton.

### **Scorned by MacArthur, Patton**

MacArthur, who was known to refer in private to OSS as "saloon subversives" and as the "assassins from the Racquet Club," moved heaven and earth to keep them from his command in the Pacific. General Patton "kicked 'em out on their backsides" as he put it in recalling, shortly before his death, the famous scene when a delegation of senior OSS officers called on him at Third Army headquarters, requesting permission to join his staff.

"Dammit, I've got French liaison in my Army," bellowed Patton. "I've got British liaison in my Army. I've got military government and relief workers in my Army. What I need is some soldiers in my Army. Are you soldiers?" Old Blood-and-Guts thundered, sweeping the well-groomed, richly equipped OSS contingent with a contemptuous glance. "The hell you are! Dismissed!"

Still, according to most of the intelligence sources interviewed by *The Spotlight's* investigative reporters, it was the international bankers and comintern bullyboys of the OSS who had the last laugh.

"The OSS was officially abolished by Executive Order 9621, signed by the president on September 20, 1945," Colonel Orrin Brokaw, a historian of U.S. intelligence, recalled. "Most of its 12,000 field personnel were 'demobed,' but the core elements lingered on, now designated SSU or Special Services Unit under General John T. Magruder, until they re-emerged as the organizers of the newly chartered CIA in 1947."

Thus the CIA was born tainted with all the corrupt practices of the old OSS: a predilection, under the guidance of the preschool offspring of banking and financier dynasties such as the duPonts, Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, et al, to favor collaboration with the communists to the detriment and ultimate destruction of America's genuine national interests, and a penchant for exclusivity, dirty tricks, and assassination.

**Patton's Peacemaker**  
by Ronald A. Ogan

**American Rifleman**  
Volume 134, Number 5  
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Colt's Single Action Army revolver is often called the most famous handgun ever manufactured. Of the nearly 358,000 revolvers that left the Colt factory between 1873 and 1941, perhaps the most celebrated was shipped on March 4, 1916, its destination the Shelton Payne Arms Company in El Paso, Texas.

Our subject revolver—serial no. 332008—is chambered in .45 Colt with a 4-1/4" barrel and is finished in full silverplate, with ivory grips. The right side is carved with inter-twined initials "G.S.P." and filled with black enamel. The left side grip bears a carved eagle with wings spread, clutching a U.S. shield in its talons. Both grip sides have an inlaid deep-set Colt medallion. The weight of the revolver is 38 ounces. Colt factory records relating to this revolver say nothing about it being factory engraved.

The purchaser of Single Action Army No. 332088 was 2nd Lieutenant George S. Patton, Jr., a graduate of the West Point class of 1909, then assigned to the 10th United States Cavalry Regiment near the Mexican border. Patton carried this Colt with him almost continuously from the time he received it in mid-March of 1916, until his mysterious and untimely death in 1945. By the end of World War II it may have been the best known handgun in America.

Patton was born in California, but his roots were in the South. Patton loved firearms from his youth and during his lifetime accumulated many fine handguns, including a Colt Government Model 1911 and a Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum revolver. He had both fitted with ivory grips

bearing the inter-twined "G.S.P." monogram, filled with black enamel. During his career, Patton was often pictured with these arms, as well as with a Colt Detective Special and a Remington Model 51 which he highly prized.

The Remington .380 ACP pistol bears the inscription, "George Patton from his shooting partner of many years, Kenyon Joyce." Patton allegedly was very taken with the presentation of the pistol from General Joyce. He took off the standard grips and had wooden stocks with three inlaid ivory stars put on it. When he was made a four-star general, he had an extra star added to the grips. He also had a Colt Model 1903 pocket automatic chambered for the .380 cartridge.

Patton was a fine shot and at the 1912 Olympic Games in Sweden he competed in the pentathlon. Although terribly disappointed in his showing in the revolver shooting stage, Patton brought his score up in the other four events that the contest featured. One of the reasons Patton felt he did so poorly in the revolver shoot was because he used an Army issue .38 caliber service revolver. His score probably would have been higher had he used a .22 caliber revolver with open sights, but being the man he was, Patton stuck to the service issue revolver.

When he was stationed near the Mexican border in 1915, Patton practiced shooting during his off-duty hours, sometimes in the company of well-known gunfighters, lawmen and marksmen he met there. By the time Patton received his Single Action Army in 1916, the Mexican Revolution was in full swing. Border towns such as El Paso were armed camps full of revolutionaries, pseudo-military personnel, gunfighters, and ex-lawmen, all looking for employment. For American soldiers stationed in the area, it made good sense to carry a loaded firearm at all times and Patton was known by friends and fellow officers to do just that. A photograph from the time shows him smoking a large curved stemmed pipe and wearing his Colt on his right hip, his right thumb jauntily thrust into his field jacket.

On March 9, 1916, a group of Pancho Villa's raiders attacked the town of Columbus, New Mexico. A battle raged for several hours and approximately 20 Americans were killed and about the same number wounded. Members of the U.S. 13th Cavalry Regiment, assisted by the citizens of Columbus, drove the raiders back across the border. The following day General "Black Jack" Pershing received orders to disperse the "raiders of Columbus, New Mexico," even if that meant following them across the international border between the U.S. and Mexico. General Pershing's force was officially titled "The Punitive Expedition" and Lieutenant George S. Patton, Jr. was appointed acting aide to the commander. Patton and his new Peacemaker were off to war.

It was Pershing's policy to visit his installations as often as possible, accompanied by a small bodyguard of armed aides. On several occasions while acting as Pershing's bodyguard, Patton thought he was going to have to use his revolver in battle. However, he did not get an opportunity to use the pistol in an altercation until the afternoon of May 14, 1916, when, in a shoot-out with three Mexican bandits, he wounded one bandit in the left arm and assisted other soldiers in killing a second. The left grip of Patton's Single Action Army bears two notches just under the Colt medallion. These notches are attributed to his first direct combat with the revolver. The New York Times for May 23, 1916, called the incident "one of the prettiest fights of the campaign."

Pershing promoted Patton to first lieutenant, and the press made a great hullabaloo about the gunfight. The Patton legend of "blood and guts" was beginning to be formed in the heat and dust of old Mexico.

On May 26, 1917, Pershing officially assumed command of the American Expeditionary Forces in Europe. His first general order listed personnel who would make up his staff in the European campaign. Many of the people on this staff were members of his search and destroy mission in Mexico, and Patton was on the first list of personnel. For some unknown reason, he did not take his Single Action Army to Europe, but instead left it with his wife for safekeeping.

After the war Patton returned to the peace-time Army and had numerous duty assignments in various Army camps throughout the country. The next time he was seen wearing his Peacemaker

in public was during the Bonus Marches of 1932. There he was seen riding up Pennsylvania Avenue on horseback, with the reins in one hand and the other on the butt of his Colt revolver.

On Oct. 8, 1935, the third ivory-gripped handgun to bear the G.S.P. monogram on the right grip was shipped from the Smith & Wesson factory to Patton, who was then a general staff officer at Fort Shafter in the Hawaiian Islands. The blued .357 Magnum revolver with 3-1/2" barrel actually was shipped with standard walnut grips. Shortly after its arrival, Patton had the walnut grips changed to ivory with the monogram on the right grip.

Although I am sure that Patton's choice of ivory grips for the three handguns was a matter of personal taste, he stressed over the years that the ivory-gripped guns would serve as a form of identification between himself and his men. When asked why he carried the old revolver rather than a more modern arm, his reply was, "No one would know me if I didn't wear this pistol." Of course, he was referring to his Single Action Army.

Patton almost lost both his ivory-gripped revolvers when the assault landing craft assigned him and his staff was destroyed during the invasion of North Africa. It seems that Patton had an aide stow the guns in his landing craft. When the naval bombardment started, Patton had his aide bring him the revolvers, as well as binoculars, to observe the effects of the naval bombardment of the beaches. Shortly thereafter, his assault craft was destroyed. Had the two revolvers been aboard at that time, they surely would have been lost forever.

The landing in North Africa was the only time that Patton was ever photographed wearing his two ivory-gripped revolvers. Patton is shown standing on the beach at Fedhala in water-soaked fatigues, the two guns strapped to his waist. The Single Action Army, in an Myres style holster, is on his left hip.

Patton continued to wear his Peacemaker from the Fedhala, North Africa, campaign landing on November 8, 1942, through the numerous campaigns he participated in in that country, as well as in Italy and France. His old Single Action traveled with him and was carried on an almost day-to-day basis.

In mid-August of 1944, Patton, Bradley, Eisenhower, and General William H. Simpson received Colt Model 1903 .380 automatic pistols for their personal use. Folklore indicates that the standard walnut grips shipped on this arm were quickly replaced by Patton with either ivory or pearl, most likely the former. However, the pistol's grips were replaced again with wooden grips bearing four ivory inlaid stars, and it was carried by Patton in a light-weight military holster for reviews and parades.

The last known official appearance of General George S. Patton, Jr. was at Campbell Barracks, just south of Heidelberg, Germany. The occasion was a review and parade, and, ironically, Patton was wearing his old favorite Single Action Army. Shortly after the parade, Patton was involved in an automobile accident, and he died of injuries sustained in that accident on December 21, 1945.

The winter before his death, General Patton was in London, one of his favorite cities in the world. He went shopping and theater-going as was his habit. One night while standing in the cold and fog of London's theater district, he was approached by a young lady who offered an ageless proposition to the 65-year-old general. As he stood there, bemused by her Cockney forwardness, quite possibly his thoughts reflected back over the years to riding at Pershing's side in Mexico, or pushing through the mud in the trenches of France during W.W.I. He was finally nearing the end of an illustrious career, a career which actually started on the frontier of Southwest Texas in a horse and buggy era. The horse and buggy era changed during W.W.I to the mechanized era, and now as W.W.II was coming to an end, George S. Patton, Jr., was still actively engaged in his profession, professional soldiering. The answer he offered the lady may well have reflected his feelings about his life and perhaps even the life of his favorite Colt revolver when he said, "I am sorry my dear, but you're one war too late."

**High Lights From General Patton's Own Story**  
by General George S. Patton, Jr.

**The Saturday Evening Post**  
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**How the Story Was Written**

It is our privilege to offer, in the following pages, a few of the pungent observations of one of our greatest soldiers. Set down during the heat of battle and in the few lulls between his brilliant campaigns in Europe in World War II. The late General George S. Patton, Jr., who led his 3rd Army farther and faster and engaged more divisions in less time than any other commander in the history of the United States, somehow was able to snatch an hour here or a few minutes there in which to keep an informal journal of the activities of his troops.

No dull recording of unimportances—which would have been out of keeping with the forthright character of this man of military genius—the journal provided a basis for what General Patton called, "a hastily written often personal narrative for the benefit of my family and a few old and intimate friends." It was written in July-September, 1945.

In it, with the bluntness and candor for which he was noted, the General let blame fall where he felt it belonged, never stinting in his praise of good troops or a good commander, emphasizing always his military philosophy that in order to win battles it is necessary to attack the enemy. General Patton had no sympathy with indecision nor with men who took counsel of their fears.

Under the title of *War As I Knew It*, the full text of General Patton's narrative will be published soon by the Houghton-Mifflin Company, of Boston. by arrangement with whom *The Saturday Evening Post* is enabled to give its readers these high lights from the book.

We have not attempted a chronology of the campaigns of the 3rd Army, as space did not permit, but have drawn most heavily from the Army's famous end run after the St. Lo breakthrough, its brilliant river crossings, and its lightning change of front to break up the German attack at the Battle of the Bulge.—The Editors

High Lights From  
**General Patton's Own Story**  
by General George S. Patton, Jr.

*Before his tragic death in Europe, America's most colorful soldier wrote a forthright narrative of the war as he saw it. Here, in his own salty words, the leader of the Third Army tells you about the armored dash across France, the Battle of the Bulge, his annoyance with Montgomery, his occasional disagreements with Eisenhower and Bradley on matters of strategy.*

**Touring France With an Army**  
**August 1 to September 24, 1944**



The first Sunday I spent in Normandy was quite impressive. I went to a Catholic Field Mass where all of us were armed. As we knelt in the mud in the slight drizzle, we could distinctly hear the roar of the guns, and the whole sky was filled with airplanes on their missions of destruction . . . quite at variance with the teachings of the religion we were practicing.

I shall always remember very unpleasantly the time spent in the apple orchard, because I was obsessed with the belief that the war would end before I got into it.

I was also certain that, by pushing harder, we could advance faster. I stated at the time, and still believe, that two armored divisions, preceded by a heavy artillery concentration using air bursts, and followed by two infantry divisions, could have cut straight down the west coast to Avranches without the necessity of waiting for an air blitz.

While the 3rd Army did not become operational until 1200 on the first of August, General Bradley appointed me to command it by word of mouth on the twenty-eighth of July and explained the plans for the initial use of two corps, the VIII (Middleton) on the right and the XV (Haislip) on the left.

In conformity with this plan, I visited the troops near Coutances on the twenty-ninth and found an armored division sitting on a road, while its headquarters, secreted behind an old church, was deeply engrossed in the study of maps. I asked why they had not crossed the Sienne. They told me they were making a study of it at the moment, but could not find a place where it could be forded. I asked what effort they had made to find such a place, and was informed that they were studying the map to that end. I then told them I had just waded across it, that it was not over two feet deep, and that the only defense I knew about was one machine gun, which had fired very inaccurately at me. I repeated the Japanese proverb: "One look is worth one hundred reports," and asked them why in hell they had not gone down to the river personally. They learned the lesson, and from then on were a very great division.

After supper on July thirty-first, Gaffey and I drove to the command post of the VIII Corps at Bréhal. Middleton was very glad to see us, as he had reached his objective, which was the Sélune River, and did not know what to do next. I told him that, throughout history, wars had been lost by not crossing rivers, and that he should get over at once. While we were talking about how to bridge it in the vicinity of Pontaubault, the telephone rang and we were told that the bridge, though damaged, was still usable. At the time, I considered this an omen of the future success of the 3rd Army. We also heard that the 4th Armored Division had just captured the dams east of the bridge, which also served as crossings and that they had taken four thousand prisoners.

The passage of the two Army corps (VIII and XV) through Avranches is one of those things which cannot be done, but was. It was made possible only by extremely effective use of veteran staff officers and by the active part taken in it by corps and division commanders, who, on occasion, personally directed traffic. It was very evident that if a jam occurred, our losses, particularly with truck-borne infantry, would be terrific, and I had to say to myself, "Do not take counsel of your fears."

By the evening of August first, the 6th Armored Division had taken Pontorson. On the same day the 4th Armored Division was near Rennes. About an hour before sundown we received a report that an armored column was fifteen kilometers southwest of Rennes, moving in rapidly. I asked General Weyland, commanding the XIX Tactical Air Command, to send some fighter bombers to stop it. The bombers were unable to find the column, because it actually was the 4th Armored Division, which was moving in from the northeast. However, the planes did do some very effective work knocking out enemy resistance ahead. It was love at first sight between the XIX Tactical Air Command and the 3rd Army.

On the fourth, my aides, Codman and Stiller, and I decided to find the 6th Armored Division. Stiller rode in the armored car to lead the way and Codman and I followed in the jeep, moving via Avranches, Pontorson, Combours, and Merdrignac. We met a very excited liaison officer who

told us that the road was under fire. Afterward we found out that the poor boy was slightly touched in the head. However, proceeding down a road for more than fifteen kilometers in country known to be occupied by the enemy and not seeing one of our soldiers was rather exciting.

Next day, at the briefing, I learned with considerable perturbation that I had driven right through a German division. I did not wish to chagrin our G-2 by telling him I had not been able to find it.

The seventh of August was the heaviest air bombardment we received. During this operation they got one of our ammunition dumps to the tune of about 1000 tons.

At 0830 an American Air Corps officer, who had been shot down near Angers and rescued by a member of the French Forces of the Interior, came in and told us that he had driven from Angers to Chateaubriant on the back roads and found no large formed bodies of Germans—only a few signal-corps men taking up wire and moving east. He stated that the bridge at Angers was intact. I sent General Gaffey, the Frenchman and Colonel Carter, of the staff, to Vitré to pick up a combat team of the 5th Infantry Division with some tanks and a reconnaissance troop, and attack Angers. It was a slightly risky operation, but so is war. In this case it was successful, except that the bridge was blown up in our faces just as we reached it.

On the eleventh, Codman and I visited the headquarters of the XV Corps northeast of Le Mans, then the 79th and 90th infantry divisions and the 5th Armored Division. I could not find General LeClerc, of the 2nd French Armored, as he was running around up in front, although I followed him farther than caution dictated. The 2nd French Armored and the 5th Armored had had quite a fight the day before, in which they lost between them some forty tanks.

An amusing incident occurred on this trip. I have always insisted that anti-tank guns be placed where they can see without being seen. I came to a crucifix in the middle of a three-way road junction, and sitting exactly under the crucifix was an anti-tank gun completely unconcealed. I gave the noncommissioned officer in charge the devil for not having carried out my instructions. When I got through, he said, "Yes, sir, but yesterday we got two tanks" from this position."

On the thirteenth, it became evident that the XX Corps was hitting nothing, so we moved it northeast of Le Mans. The XV Corps, consisting, as before, of the 5th Armored, 2d French Armored, 90th and 79th divisions, had taken the Alecon-Sées-Argentan line. It could easily have entered Falaise and completely closed the gap, but we were ordered not to do this, allegedly because the British had sown the area with a large number of time bombs. This halt was a great mistake, as I was certain that we could have entered Falaise and I was not certain that the British would.

Thanks to the foresight of Colonel Cummings, the Adjutant General, the system of administration in the 3rd Army passed direct from divisions to army, leaving the corps in its proper sphere as a tactical unit. Because of this arrangement, we had perfect facility in shifting divisions without losing a moment's time. We never had to regroup, which seemed to be the chief form of amusement in the British armies.

Just east of Le Mans was one of the best examples of armor and air co-operation I have ever seen. For about two miles the road was full of enemy motor transport and armor, many of which bore the unmistakable calling card of a P-47 fighter-bomber, namely, a group of .50-caliber holes. Whenever armor and air can work together in this way, the results are sure to be excellent. Armor can move fast enough to prevent the enemy having time to deploy off the roads, and so long as he stays on the roads, the fighter-bomber is one of his most deadly opponents. To accomplish this happy teamwork two things are necessary: first, intimate confidence and friendship between air and ground; second, incessant and apparently ruthless driving on the part of the ground commander. A pint of sweat saves a gallon of blood.

On the nineteenth, in company with General Wyche, of the 79th Division, we went to Mantes and saw the Seine River. I was strongly tempted to order the 79th across, but did not do so until I

had seen General Bradley. When I did see him that evening, he not only approved the crossing of the 79th but ordered the 5th Armored Division of the same corps to attack north along the western bank of the Seine, while the XIX Corps—Major General C. H. Corlett—of the 1st Army came up on its left rear. Furthermore, he sanctioned my plan to cross the XX Corps at Melun and Fontainebleau and the XII Corps at Sens. It was evident that when these crossings were effected, the Seine and Yonne became useless to the Germans as military barriers.

Colonel Codman went to Vannes and brought back my old friend, General Koechlin-Schwartz, of the French Army. In World War I, he was one of the leading instructors at the Army General Staff School at Langres. We had a very pleasant evening talking over old times, and he said, among other things, that had he thought, much less taught, at Langres what I had been doing, he would have been put in the madhouse.

In consonance with the plans I had already made on the twentieth, I fixed the time of attack for the XX and XII corps on Melun, Montereau, and Sens respectively as of daylight Monday, the twenty-first of August, so that no one would be up in time to halt me. However, to play safe, I gave them the code word "Prosit," which, if it came over the radio, would mean "Halt in place."

I always had a very funny feeling at such times. The plans, when they came into my mind, seemed simple, but after I had issued the orders and everything was moving and I knew that I had no reserve, I had a feeling of worry and, as usual, had to say to myself, "Do not take counsel of your fears." The sensation is very much like that I used to have steeple-chasing. I was always very anxious to ride the race, but when the saddling bell rang, I felt scared; when the flag dropped and the race was on, my fear left me.

When this move started, Eddy, of the XII Corps, asked me how much he should worry about his right flank. I said that that depended on how nervous he was by nature. Of course, there was nothing to cover his right flank, but by advancing in depth, that is, one division following the other—this lack of defense was immaterial. If I had worried about flanks I could never have fought the war. Also, I was convinced that our Air Service could locate any groups of enemy large enough to be a serious threat.

The crossings over the Seine and Yonne rivers were successful at Montereau and Sens. The XX Corps had not yet got across at Melun, owing to the fact that there had been a very severe fight between our 2nd Infantry (Colonel A. W. Roffe) of the 5th Division and several thousand Germans at Bauillet. I felt at this time that the great chance of winning the war would be to let the 3rd Army move with three corps, two up and one back, to the line Metz-Nancy-Epinal. It was my belief then, and still is, that by doing this, we could have crossed the German border in ten days.

On the morning of the twenty-third, I flew to Laval to see Bradley on the question of supply. He was at the airport waiting for me, as he had to go to see Generals Eisenhower and Montgomery. He was very much worried, as he felt that Montgomery was over-influencing General Eisenhower and would cause all or part of the American armies to turn north. Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory had been talking to Bradley all day, trying to sell the idea. After Bradley left and in the short period of time, about ten minutes, which was necessary to ride from the airport to the headquarters, I had what I believe was my greatest tactical idea, namely, for the 3rd Army to turn north, the XX Corps from Melun and Montereau, the XII Corps from Sens. This could be done faster than anything else. We would head initially on Beauvais. After reaching Beauvais, we could have paralleled the Seine River and opened it to the British and Canadians, and thereafter have taken our supplies across at Mantes, saving at least 50 per cent of the haul necessary to take them via Montereau. General Leven C. Allen, Bradley's Chief of Staff, was enthusiastic, so we decided that when Bradley returned, if he telegraphed me "Plan A," I would turn north, and if "Plan B," I would continue east.

If the doings of the 3rd Army and its general are subject to inquiry by future historians, the two points just mentioned should be a warning. In the space of two days I had evolved two plans,

wholly distinct, both of which were equally feasible. The point I am trying to bring out is that one does not plan and then try to make circumstances fit those plans. One tries to make plans fit the circumstances.

On the twenty-fifth of August, we moved the 3rd Army command post to a point between Orleans and Pithiviers. Just before starting for this point, Bradley wired me to come to Chartres.

Monty had won again, and the weight of the operation was to be turned north rather than east. The 3rd Army, with seven divisions, was to advance alone in the direction of the line Metz-Strasbourg. So far, things were not too bad, as we still had seven good divisions going in the direction in which Bradley and I always wanted to go.

On the twenty-eighth, we took Chateau-Thierry and closed in on Vitry-le-Francois, Chalons, and Reims. General Bradley came about 1030. I had considerable difficulty in persuading him to let me continue the attack to the Meuse. He finally assented.

The twenty-ninth of August was, in my opinion, one of the critical days in this war. It was evident at this time that there was no real threat against us as long as we did not allow ourselves to be stopped by imaginary enemies. I therefore told Eddy, of the XII Corps, to move on Commercy, and directed Walker, of the XX, to do the same on Verdun. Everything seemed rosy, when suddenly it was reported to me that the 140,000 gallons of gas we were to get that day had not arrived. At first I thought it was a back-handed way of slowing up the 3rd Army. I later found that this was not the case, but that the delay was due to a change of plan by the High Command, implemented, in my opinion, by General Montgomery.

It was my opinion then that this was the momentous error of the war. So far as the 3rd Army was concerned, we not only failed to get the back gas due us, but got practically no more, because in consonance with the decision to move north, in which two corps of the 1st Army also participated, all supplies—both gasoline and ammunition—had to be thrown in that direction.

After receiving the above heart-breaking news, I went to our new command post at La Chaume, near Sens. There I found that Eddy had obtained permission from Gaffey to halt at St. Dizier, because he said that to continue beyond that point would find his tanks without any gasoline. I immediately called him and told him to continue until the tanks stopped, and then get out and walk, because it was mandatory to get crossings over the Meuse. I was sure it was a terrible mistake to halt even at the Meuse, because we could continue to the Rhine in the vicinity of Worms.

On the second of September, at Chartres, General Eisenhower gave Bradley, Hodges and myself his plan which was to support Montgomery in clearing the Pas de Calais area.

We told him that the 3rd Army already had patrols on the Moselle in the vicinity of Nancy, and that patrols of the 3rd Cavalry had entered Metz.

We finally persuaded General Eisenhower to let the V Corps of the 1st Army and the 3rd Army go on and attack the Siegfried Line as soon as the Calais area was stabilized. Until that time we would be able to get very little gas or ammunition. It finally ended up with permission to secure crossings over the Moselle and prepare to attack the Siegfried Line whenever I could get the fuel to move me.

Since our progress from now on had to be along the lines of what General Allen calls the "rock-soup" method, I will describe it. A tramp once went to a house and asked for some boiling water to make rock soup. The lady was interested and gave him the water, in which he placed two polished white stones. He then asked if he might have some potatoes and carrots to put in the soup to flavor it a little, and finally ended up with some meat. In other words, in order to attack, we had first to pretend to reconnoiter, then reinforce the reconnaissance, and finally put on an attack—all depending on what gasoline and ammunition we could secure.

On the fourth of September we learned from Bradley that the situation in the north having been stabilized, we would now get our half of the available supplies, and could cross the Moselle and force the Siegfried Line.

I drove to the front, passing through Verdun and Etain. Conflans was on the front line and was being held by elements of the 2nd Infantry, of the 5th Division. On the eastern edge of the town, I found a combat command of the 7th Armored, which had been held up for more than an hour by machine-gun and mortar fire. Of course, it was absurd for an armored unit to make such a statement. I ordered it to advance, and then went back to the division headquarters to express my opinion to the commander. This was the second occasion it had been my personal duty to demand more combat activity from him. General Walker had first noted his lack of pugnacity when we were at Chartres, and at that time recommended that I relieve him. In spite of my reputation as a head-cutter, I really am very long-suffering.

On the twelfth, we had a meeting at 12th Army Group Headquarters on the question of supply. We heard that Montgomery had told Eisenhower that the delay in the advance of the American VII Corps had been due to lack of gasoline. This was not the case; it was simply another instance of Monty's trying to force everything to the north to attack the Low Countries and the Ruhr. If the High Command yielded to his blandishments, there would be nothing left for the 3rd Army to do but hold the west bank of the Moselle. However, I felt that, could we force a crossing, this unfortunate situation could be prevented, and Bradley gave me until the night of the fourteenth to do it. Had I not secured a good bridgehead by that time, I was to stop arguing and assume the mournful role of a defender.

By the evening of the fourteenth I had made good my promise to Bradley and had secured, in both his opinion and mine, a good bridgehead across the Moselle, and felt that I could still, with luck, keep edging toward the east.

We moved to a new command post five miles south of Etain. On the way there I stopped for lunch at Verdun with General Bradley and General Bull. Bradley was quite depressed, because apparently Montgomery had again succeeded in persuading the High Command to move all the supplies to the 1st Army, leaving the 3rd Army to hold; but Bradley thought that the 3rd Army could push on.

While all this discussion was going on, we received a very welcome message that Nancy had fallen and that the XV Corps had destroyed the 16th German Infantry Division.

While the command post was at Etain I visited the Verdun battlefields of World War I, particularly Fort Douaumont. This is a magnificent, though futile, monument to heroism. You can see all over the ruinous fragments where brave men died to maintain something they could have saved much more easily by attacking. To me, Douaumont epitomizes the folly of defensive warfare.

Bradley called to say that Monty wanted all the American troops to stop, so that he, Monty, could make a "dagger thrust with the 21st Army Group at the heart of Germany." Bradley said he thought it would be more like a "butter-knife thrust." In order to avoid such an eventuality, it was evident that the 3rd Army should get deeply involved at once, so I asked Bradley not to call me until after dark on the nineteenth.

### **Forcing the Line of the Moselle—The Flood September 25 to November 7, 1944**

The period from September twenty-fifth to November seventh was a difficult one for the 3rd Army. For the first time in our experience we were not advancing rapidly, if at all. We were fighting, with inadequate means, against equal or superior forces in excellent defensive positions, and the weather was against us. On September twenty-fifth, I received from General Bradley a

Top Secret document reiterating the fact that we were to assume the defensive. In order to make it a matter of record, I drew up and gave to General Bradley my plan for occupying a defensive position and enlarging the bridgehead over the Moselle River. The whole plan was based on maintaining the offensive spirit of the troops by attacking at various points whenever my means permitted it.

On the twenty-second of October, Bradley and Allen, his Chief of Staff, came and we went over the plans for the impending attack. General Bradley's contention was that if all the armies—that is, the two British, three American in the 12th Army Group, and 7th Army in the 6th Army Group—attacked simultaneously, it might well end the war. I contended, as I had set forth to him in the letter of October nineteenth, that we were fighting three enemies. One was the German, the second was the weather, and the third was time. I further stated there was not enough ammunition to supply all the armies, but there was enough to supply one army, and that the 3rd Army could attack twenty-four hours after getting the signal from then on. After considerable argument, I was given a minimum date of November fifth, the attack to take place any time on or after that date that air bombardment would be available.

On November second, General Bradley and General A. Franklin Kibler (his G-3) came to Nancy and stated it was evident that the British would not be ready to jump off prior to November tenth, and probably not before the first of December. He further stated that the 1st Army could not jump off until at least two of the American divisions then attached to the British were released and returned to the 1st or 9th Army. He wanted to know when I could jump off. I told him that, as already stated, I could jump off the day after a successful air attack, or not later than the eighth, in the event that weather prevented an air attack. General Bradley said he was glad to find somebody who wanted to attack.

At 1430 on the afternoon of the seventh, it was raining hard, as it had been for some time. At 1900, Generals Eddy and Grow came to the house and argued with me to hold off the attack on account of bad weather and swollen rivers. I asked them whom they wished to name as their successors, because the attack was to go off as scheduled. They immediately assented and, as usual, did great work.

## **Stuck in the Mud**

**November 8 to December 18, 1944**

Woke up at 0300 on the morning of November 8, 1944, and it was raining very hard. I tried to go to sleep, but finding it impossible, got up and started to read Rommel's book *Infantry Attacks*. By chance I turned to a chapter describing a fight in the rain in September, 1914. This was very reassuring, because I felt if the Germans could do it, I could, so went to sleep and was awakened at 0515 by the artillery preparation. The rain had stopped and the stars were out. I complacently remembered that I had always "Demanded the impossible," that I had "Dared extreme occasion," and that I had "Not taken counsel of my fears."

At 0745, Bradley called up to see if we were attacking. I had not let him know, for fear I might get a stop order. He seemed delighted that we were going ahead. Then General Eisenhower came on the phone and said, "I expect you to carry the ball all the way."

I visited the headquarters of the 80th, 35th, and 26th divisions and also saw General Wood. By dark that night every unit was on its assigned objective for the day; unfortunately, it started to rain.

On the tenth, the river had gone down a little and the bridge at Pont-a-Mousson, which went out on the night of the ninth, was again usable. This was very satisfactory, as, prior to that time, I had seven divisions across an unfordable river and no bridges.

Bradley called up at 1710 and, in my opinion, crawfished quite flagrantly in forbidding me to use the 83rd Division. I believe he had been overtalked, either by Middleton or Hodges, or both.

Had two combat teams of the 83rd been used to attack Saarburg, that town would have fallen on the twelfth or thirteenth, and we would probably have captured Trier. With Trier in our hands, Von Rundstedt's breakthrough could not have occurred. This probably is another case of "For want of a nail the shoe was lost," and so on.

Eddy called me to state that his allowance of shells for the eighteenth was 9,000 but I told him to go ahead and shoot 20,000, because I could see no reason for hoarding ammunition. You either use it or you don't. I would lose more men by shooting 9,000 rounds a day for three days than I would by shooting 20,000 in one day—and probably not get so far. I believe in fighting until lack of supplies forces you to stop; then digging in.

On the twentieth we made arrangements to have the III Corps absorb the 5th Division and take over Metz. This would not only relieve the XX Corps from looking over its shoulder but would also get the III Corps operational; so that in the event the enemy attacked the VIII Corps to our north, we would have something to use against him. The XX Corps, then consisting of the 10th Armored, the 90th, and the 95th divisions, could continue the attack already in progress against Saarburg and initiate a second attack between Merzig and Saarlautern. At first glance, an attack at this point seemed foolhardy, as it was the strongest position of the Siegfried Line. However, apparent strength sometimes produces weakness, because people are inclined not to occupy strong positions with as many men as they should.

Averill Harriman, Ambassador to Russia, visited us on the twenty-fourth, and I took him to the 4th Armored Division to show him that the Russians were not the only people who had to contend against mud. Harriman told me that Stalin, in the presence of the Chief of Staff of the Russian Army, had paid the 3rd Army a very high compliment when he stated, "The Red Army could not have conceived and certainly could not have executed the advance made by the 3rd Army across France."

In driving from Chateau Salins to St. Avold on the twenty-ninth, we crossed the Maginot Line and were impressed by its lack of impressiveness. In fact, elements of the 80th Division fought their way through this part of the line without knowing it.

On the fourteenth of December, we drove through Thionville to Luxembourg to see Bradley. Apparently Montgomery, with the assistance of the Prime Minister, had secured the services of the 9th Army. Montgomery was bitterly opposed to the operations of both Patch and myself. He still wanted all available forces massed on the north and wanted to command them himself, maintaining that the Rhine could be crossed only in the vicinity of Cologne, and that it must be done under him. All this was very distressing to me, because, while my attack was going forward by short leaps, it was not very brilliant, and I felt that, if I failed to break through after the air blitz, I would have to go on the defensive and lose several divisions.

General Allen, Chief of Staff of the 12th Army Group, called on the night of December sixteenth to have the 10th Armored Division attached to the VIII Corps of the 1st Army in order to repulse a rather strong German attack. This was the first official notice we had of the, to us, anticipated German assault, later called the Bulge.

On the seventeenth, information about the German attack became more definite. Quite a number of single enemy units were located on a wide front, but no large body of troops could yet be found. The night of the seventeenth there was considerable movement among the Germans in front of the XX Corps. This might have been a feint to cover the attack on the VIII Corps of the 1st Army, or the attack on the VIII Corps might be a feint to cover an attack on our XX Corps. I rather believed that the attack on the VIII Corps was the real thing.

I had General Millikin in and talked over with him the possible use of the III Corps in an attack to the north, in case the Germans attacked the VIII Corps of the 1st Army. I also directed Eddy to get the 4th Armored engaged, because I felt that, if we did not, it, too, might be moved to the north

by higher authority. The fact that I did this shows how little I appreciated the seriousness of the enemy attack on that date.

On the eighteenth about 2300, Bradley called and asked me to meet him and Eisenhower at Verdun at 1100 on the morning of the nineteenth. I immediately called a staff meeting for 0800 on the nineteenth, with all members of the General Staff to be present.

When it is considered that Harkins, Codman, and I left for Verdun at 0915 and that between 0800 and that hour we had had a staff meeting, planned three possible lines of attack, and made a simple code in which I could telephone General Gay which two of the three lines we were to use, it is evident that war is not so difficult as people think.

We reached Verdun at 1045. Eisenhower, Bradley, Devers, Air Marshal Tedder, and a large number of staff officers were present. General Strong, SHAEF G-2, gave a picture of the situation which was far from happy. Eisenhower stated that he wished me to get to Luxembourg and take command of the battle, and asked when I could do it. I said that afternoon, December nineteenth. He also stated that he would like me to make a strong attack with at least six divisions.

I told him I would make a strong attack with three divisions—namely, the 4th Armored, the 26th and 80th Infantry divisions—by the twenty-second, but that I could not attack with more than that until some days later, and that, if I waited, I would lose surprise.

When I said I could attack on the twenty-second, it created a ripple of excitement. Some people thought I was boasting and others seemed to be pleased.

## **The, Bulge**

**December 19, 1944 to January 28, 1945**

Spent the night of the nineteenth with the XX Corps in Thionville, and telephoned from there to have the 5th Division pulled out of action and started on Luxembourg. The next morning I arrived at Bradley's house in Luxembourg.

While Bradley and I were talking over the plans for a combined operation with the 1st and 3rd armies, Eisenhower called up and informed Bradley that Montgomery was to have operational command of the 1st and 9th United States armies, owing to the fact that telephonic communications between Bradley and these armies were difficult. As a matter of fact, this was not entirely true, and it appeared to me at the time that Bradley was being side-tracked, either because of lack of confidence in him or as the only way Eisenhower could prevent Montgomery from "regrouping."

In any case, General Bradley took what was practically a demotion in a most soldierly manner, nor did he at any time during the subsequent campaign inject himself into the operations of the 3rd Army, as he might well have done, since that was the only unit he had to command. On the other hand, I always informed him of what I was going to do, and profited by consultations with him and his staff.

At the end of a rather hectic day, my driver, Sergeant Mims, said to me, "General, the Government is wasting a lot of money hiring a whole General Staff. You and me has run the Third Army all day and done a better job than they do." Actually the remarkable movement of the 3rd Army from the Saar to the Bulge was wholly due to the superior efficiency of the 3rd Army Staff, particularly General Gay, General Muller, Colonel Nixon, and Colonel E. Busch, Quartermaster of the 3rd Army.

On the twenty-first, I received quite a few telephone calls from various higher echelons, expressing solicitude as to my ability to attack successfully with only three divisions. I maintained my contention that it is better to attack with a small force at once, and attain surprise, than it is to wait and lose it.



The corps staffs of the III, XII, and XX met me at Luxembourg. The VIII Corps was too far away and could not attend the meeting. As usual on the verge of action, everyone felt full of doubt except myself. It has always been my unfortunate role to be the ray of sunshine and the back-slapper before action, both for those under me and also those over me. I can say with perfect candor that, at that time, I had no doubt as to the success of the operation, even when, at 1700, December twenty-first, the 4th Infantry Division reported a violent attack, which later turned out to be nothing. My chief feeling at that time was that I wished it was one day later, because, when we are attacking, the enemy has to parry, while, when we are defending or preparing to attack, he can attack us.

The day of the twenty-fourth was rather discouraging. All along the line we received violent counter-attacks, one of which forced Combat Command B of the 4th Armored Division back several miles, with the loss of a number of tanks. This was probably my fault, because I had insisted on a day-and-night attack. Such an attack is all right for the first night of battle and possibly the second night, but after that the men become too tired. Furthermore, unless you have very bright moonlight and clear going, armored battle at night is of dubious value. I remember being surprised at the time at how long it took me to learn war. I should have known this before.

Christmas dawned clear and cold; lovely weather for killing Germans, although the thought seemed somewhat at variance with the spirit of the day. I left early in the morning with the purpose of visiting all the divisions in combat, and succeeded in seeing two combat commands of the 4th Armored, the 26th, the 80th, the 5th, and elements of the 4th Infantry and 10th Armored divisions.

As a whole, the day was not too successful. We continued to advance, but we had not relieved Bastogne. Owing to weather conditions, Bastogne had not been resupplied from the air. The only bright spot was that the 5th Infantry Division had driven the enemy back to the Sauer River in its front, and killed quite a few when they tried to escape across the river.

Late that night we had a quiet Christmas dinner at General Bradley's mess. Afterward Bradley and I had a long talk, during which he told me that Montgomery stated that the 1st Army could not attack for three months, and that the only attacks that could be made would be made by me, but that I was too weak. Hence, we should have to fall back to the line of the Saar-Vosges, or even to the Moselle, to gain enough divisions to permit me to continue the attack. We both considered this a disgusting idea, which would, we felt, have tremendous political implications and probably doom to death or slavery all the French inhabitants of Alsace and Lorraine, whom such a move would abandon to the Germans.

On the thirtieth, the 11th Armored and 87th Infantry jumped off, the 87th on the left. They immediately ran into the flank of a large German counter-attack, consisting of the 130th Panzer Lehr Division and 26th Volksgrenadier Division. This meeting engagement upset both attacks, but was very fortuitous, so far as we were concerned, because had we not hit the flank of the Germans, they might have again closed the corridor into Bastogne. All the generals concerned in this particular attack were in favor of my postponing it twenty-four hours. Had I done so, it would have permitted the Germans to drive home their attack.

Our progress on New Year's Day was not outstanding, except in the case of the 6th Armored Division, which did fairly well; we had nothing to worry about. All the troops in the 3rd Army were exactly where they were supposed to be, so that if they lost, they would lose because of better fighting qualities on the part of the enemy, and not through any mistakes which I had made in deploying the soldiers.

We were delighted to see a SHAEF directive that the 12th Army Group would resume control of the 1st Army as soon as the 1st and 3rd armies made contact at Houffalize.

The desire to get to Houffalize was thus one of the important motives for our next few days of fighting. At this time Montgomery had the nerve to get someone in America to suggest that

General Eisenhower was overworked and needed a Deputy Ground Force Commander for all troops in Europe and that he, Montgomery, was God's gift to war in this respect.

On the eleventh of January it became quite evident that the end of the Bastogne operation was in sight. The final attack for the VIII and III corps to take Houffalize was planned for the thirteenth.

General Bradley told me the plans for the use of the Army Group. He wanted the 1st Army to attack east on Cologne, while the 3rd Army maintained pressure and really held a defensive flank somewhere in the vicinity of St. Vith to the junction with the 7th Army. This plan had the advantage of utilizing the existing breach in the Siegfried Line west of Cologne, which had been made by the 1st Army in November, and also of using the shortest route. Personally I was opposed to it, as it prevented me from attacking, and I believed that the XX Corps, supported by the III or XII, could attack straight east through Saarlautern with better chance of rupturing the German Army and capturing the Saar Valley. I still adhered to my theory that in order to keep the Germans from attacking, we had to attack.

The attack on Houffalize started on the thirteenth, but the progress was not so rapid as we had hoped. However, the mental attitude of the men was excellent. Heretofore they had been somewhat dubious; now they were chasing a sinking fox and babbling for the kill.

On the seventeenth, I personally congratulated Millikin and Middleton on the successful termination of the Bulge. Although we had not driven the Germans back to the line from which they started, we had on that date begun this final operation.

On the twenty-fourth, the 5th Infantry Division found elements of five German divisions in one group of 100 prisoners, while on the same date the 6th Armored Division, in a group of 150 prisoners, found elements of ten German divisions. This indicated a bad state of disorganization among the Germans. Unfortunately, we did not realize how bad it was at that time. All during this period higher headquarters were very pessimistic and kept warning us not to have a reverse. This was a bad attitude.

By dark on the twenty-sixth, it was evident that all the shifts in troops would be accomplished on time and that the new attack could start on the twenty-eighth. Had anyone proposed such a troop movement at Leavenworth, people would have gone crazy, but here it was being done. However, the difference between this operation and a problem at Leavenworth was that here we had an old and experienced staff of extremely capable men, while at Leavenworth one could have nothing but students more or less bemused with formulas. So ended the campaign of the Bulge which had cost us 50,630 men.

During this operation the 3rd Army moved farther and faster and engaged more divisions in less time than any other army in the history of the United States—possibly in the history of the world.

The results attained were made possible only by the superlative quality of American officers, American men, and American equipment. No country can stand against such an Army.

### **Many Rivers and Passive Defense January 29 to March 12, 1945**

The VIII Corps jumped off as per schedule, January twenty-ninth, one battalion of the 4th Infantry Division getting over the Our River. The 90th Division was to cross the same river that night farther to the north. The 87th Division, which, owing to the configuration of the ground, was farther from the river, was closing up to start its attack.

Eddy proposed starting his attack on Bitburg on the sixth. I told him he must attack on the fourth. He complained very bitterly that I never appreciated time and space factors. I told him that, had I done so with him or any other corps commander, we would still be west of the Seine River.

The 5th Division jumped off on the morning of the seventh at 0100 and crossed the Sauer River. Owing to the rapid current and flood conditions, there were a great many boat casualties and probably more than sixty men drowned.

One combat team of the 76th Division—417th, commanded by Colonel George E. Brumer—attacking on the right of the 5th Infantry Division, did a better job than the 5th in getting across the river because they did not realize how dangerous it was. After they got across, they did very little for about three days—probably recovering from the shock of their own heroism.

The 80th Division, attacking west of Wallendorf, which is west of the junction of the Our and Sauer rivers, had less difficulty and succeeded in getting two battalions across.

The crossing of the three divisions over these rivers was a magnificent feat of arms. The rivers were in flood to such an extent that the wire along the Siegfried Line, which abutted on the rivers, was under water, and, when the men disembarked from the boats, they were caught in it. The whole hillside was covered with German pillboxes and barbed wire. Actually the audacity of the attack and the strength of the position materially aided in our success.

On the tenth, Bradley called up to ask me how soon I could go on the defensive. I told him I was the oldest leader in age and in combat experience in the United States Army, and that if I had to go on the defensive, I would ask to be relieved. He stated I owed too much to the troops and would have to stay on. I replied that a great deal was owed to me, and unless I could continue attacking, I would have to be relieved. He referred to Montgomery's attack, using the 9th Army, as the biggest mistake SHAEF had yet made. I was not sure it was the biggest, because I had always felt that that was made when General Eisenhower turned the 1st Army north to help Montgomery, toward the end of August, and, as a result, the supplies to the 3rd Army stopped.

Eddy and I crossed the Sauer River on the thirteenth, in the area of the 5th Division, and then drove along the northeastern bank in a peep, which was on the far side. I think this is the origin of the story of my swimming the river. We crossed on a partly submerged assault bridge under a smoke screen, so, when we arrived on the far side, an excited soldier could believe that we had swum. Neither of us did. However, crossing the assault bridge in the smoke, where we could not see more than a foot ahead and there were no guard rails, was a very interesting operation. The men were glad to see us.

On the nineteenth, I wrote General Bradley a letter saying that all the United States troops except the 3rd Army were doing nothing at all, and that while I was still attacking, I could do better with more divisions. I asked for from one to three additional. I believe this is the only letter I ever wrote for the record, but I felt very keenly at that time that history would criticize us for not having been more energetic.

I called Bradley at dark on the twenty-seventh, as I had promised, to tell him that I was not yet in Trier, but was within eight kilometers of it, and asked if I could keep on. He said to keep on until he was ordered by higher authority to stop me, and added that he would keep away from the telephone.

On the twenty-eighth, the 10th Armored was still out of Trier, but was doing better, having reached country in which it could attack with multiple columns. Heretofore it had been necessary to attack in a single column, which, for an armored division, is always difficult.

At 1415 on the first of March, Walker called up to say the 10th Armored Division was in Trier and had captured a bridge over the Moselle intact. The capture of this bridge was due to the heroic act of Lieutenant Colonel J. J. Richardson, deceased. He was riding in the leading vehicle of his battalion of armored infantry when he saw the wires leading to the demolition charges at the far end of the bridge. Jumping out of the vehicle, he raced across the bridge under heavy fire and cut the wires. The acid test of battle brings out the pure metal.

I called Generals Smith and Bradley and told them Trier was ours. Both seemed very pleased.

Pacifists would do well to study the Siegfried and Maginot lines, remembering that these defenses were forced, that Troy fell, that the walls of Hadrian succumbed, that the Great Wall of China was futile, and that, by the same token, the mighty seas which are alleged to defend us can also be circumvented by a resolute and ingenious opponent. In war, the only sure defense is offense, and the efficiency of offense depends on the war-like souls of those conducting it.

A general who had been relieved came in at his own request and tried to explain why he was no good. I offered him a lesser command in another division, but he told me he needed forty-eight hours to consider it. I did not tell him so, but I realized that any man who could not make up his mind in less than forty-eight hours was not fit to command troops in battle.

Here ended the campaign which will probably be referred to in history as that of the Eiffel. It had been a long, hard fight with many river crossings, much bad weather, and a great deal of good luck. It was March twelfth.

### **The Last Roundup**

The eighth of May marked exactly two and one half years since we had landed in Africa. During all that time until midnight of May 8-9, we had been in practically continuous battle, and, when not in battle, had been under the strain of continuous criticism, which I believe is harder to bear.

At 1130 I said good-bye to the war correspondents after having a final briefing with them, during which one of them said, "General, why didn't we take Prague?"

I said, "I can tell you exactly why," whereupon they all got out their notebooks and looked expectant. I said, "Because we were ordered not to," which produced a laugh, even though they were disappointed.

I received a very fine letter of congratulation from the Secretary of War, Mr. Stimson, which reads as follows:

*I congratulate you and your heroic soldiers of the 3rd Army. I commend you for the dashing and spectacular victories which have played a great part in bringing about this glorious day. The exploits of the 3rd Army have been in the highest traditions of the armies that have defended America throughout its history. You and your gallant forces well deserve the nation's homage.*

This letter, I think, very fittingly marks the termination of the war, and I fear, my last one.

I can say this—that throughout the campaign in Europe I know of no error I made except that of failing to send a combat command to take Hammelburg. Otherwise, my operations were, to me, strictly satisfactory. In every case, practically throughout the campaign, I was under wraps from the higher command. This may have been a good thing, as, perhaps, I am too impetuous. However, I do not believe I was, and feel that had I been permitted to go all out, the war would have ended sooner and more lives would have been saved. Particularly I think this statement applies to the time when, in the early days of September, we were halted, owing to the desire, or necessity, on the part of General Eisenhower in backing Montgomery's move to the north. At that time there was no question of doubt but that we could have gone through and on across the Rhine within ten days. This would have saved a great many thousand men.

### **The Press Conference of September 22, 1945**

This conference cost me the command of the 3rd Army—or rather, of a group of soldiers, mostly recruits, who then rejoiced in that historic name—but I was intentionally direct, because I

believed that it was then time for people to know what was going on. My language was not particularly politic, but I have yet to find where politic language produces successful government. *[In the course of this conference, General Patton was asked if it were true that he had employed Nazis in certain civil posts under his jurisdiction. He was quoted as having replied: "This Nazi situation in some ways is like the Democratic and Republican fight back home. You always find the "outs" back home making charges against the "ins." That's exactly what is happening here. The "outs" are coming to me and saying the "ins" are Nazis."—Ed.]*

The one thing which I could not say then, and cannot yet say, is that my chief interest in establishing order in Germany was to prevent Germany from going communistic. *[It must be remembered that General Patton wrote this in 1945.—Ed.]* I am afraid that our foolish and utterly stupid policy in regard to Germany will certainly cause them to join the Russians and thereby insure a communistic state throughout Western Europe.

It is rather sad to me to think that my last opportunity for earning my pay has passed. At least, I have done my best as God gave me the chance.

## **Notes on Tactics and Techniques of Desert Warfare**

by General George S. Patton, Jr.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Desert operations involve no change in the fundamental principles of tactics as laid down in the Field Service Regulations of the United States Army and manuals of the Armored Forces. They do involve, however, certain new techniques with which our officers are in the main totally unfamiliar. The notes emphasize those features of desert operations which differ from the traditional technique of tactics and which are vital in the successful prosecution of any campaign and which must be followed if the command is to avoid disaster.

The formation and methods herein set down are not the result of theory, but have been derived from repeated experiment in accordance with the method of trial and error.

The exigencies of the training situation and the requirement that these notes be made available without further delay, has prevented having them put in finished form. It is hoped that serious lapses in the art of writing will be overlooked and that the substance rather than form will be taken and used.

## DISPERSED FORMATION

The purpose of the Desert Training Center is to determine the technique of living and moving in the desert and the tactics of desert fighting, particularly when opposed by armored formations, and in the face of inevitable air attack.

Since there is little or no terrestrial cover in the desert, it is necessary to completely revamp all previous ideas of security based on concealment either from the ground or from the air. In the desert security from the ground must be obtained through ample and distant reconnaissance in all directions which must be continuous. This reconnaissance is performed both by ground units and air observation units. THESE AIR OBSERVATION UNITS MUST HAVE A RADIO WHICH IS CAPABLE OF COVERING TWO WAYS WITH THE RECONNAISSANCE ON THE GROUND in addition to the normal Air-Ground communication in the Air-Ground Net.

Security from surprise air attacks is attained by having at least two air watchers in each platoon or equivalent and by having strict air discipline. Further, it is a function of our reconnaissance aviation to inform us of the existence and proximity of hostile air units so that we will not be surprised. In addition to the attainment of security above described, it is necessary to base security on dispersion. The object of dispersion is to make our forces a non-lucrative air target and a highly defensible ground target while at the same time not extending the dispersion to the point of loss of control.

## METHOD OF SECURING DISPERSION AND OF RETAINING CONTROL

The principles here set down are applicable to all units. They are based on the utilization of a line and columns, each column consisting of a tactical unit, that is, of a platoon or company. The commander of each of these units (forming a column) is in the leading vehicle and is distinguished by a specific flag.

In column the distances between vehicles is a minimum of 75 yards and every effort must be used to prevent this distance from becoming excessive. The interval between the columns is 150 yards. There is less difficulty in maintaining interval than there is in maintaining distance. The diagram shows that where any cover is available, the vehicles may follow in trace, whereas in the bare open desert they assume staggered column.

It is essential to remember that there must be no lines of vehicles from front to rear, crosswise, or diagonally, because it is against a line of vehicles that a diving airplane can best direct itself either to use bombs or machine guns.

The movements in dispersed formations will be taught initially through the use of battalions or companies of one particular arm. When this mechanism has been mastered and the technique of driving and maintaining distance acquired, the units will be mixed up into task forces as the tactical situation demands.

In order to avoid repetition, it is here set down that formations and materiel are of secondary importance compared to discipline, the ability to shoot rapidly and accurately with the proper

weapon at the proper target, and the irresistible desire to close with the enemy with the purpose of killing and destroying him. Throughout training, these things must be stressed above all other.

## NOTES ON INSTRUCTION

**The following points are important with respect to instruction in dispersion and should be stressed.**

Except when in park, no vehicle must ever be permitted to approach within 75 yards of any other vehicle. This does not apply to the quarter ton truck.

Only cargo vehicles have tops up; all other tops are down.

Stress the maintenance of distance, not to exceed 75 yards, particularly in road marches, but also in group movements.

Jamming must be prevented. The senior officer locally present is responsible that jams do not occur. He must dismount from his vehicle to insure this by active command.

Demonstrate to individual drivers on sand table or on the ground, using blocks, the formations and methods of movement. Make the formation of march groups, either from bivouac or from parks, a precision drill.

Any desert with a yellowish tinge is apt to be sandy and should be carefully reconnoitered before attempting to cross. This type of desert frequently occurs on the west slope of north and south ridges.

For desert operations, tires on wheeled vehicles can safely be deflated to 70 percent of specified inflation. When stalled they may be deflated fifty percent, but should be reinflated to 70 percent after the stall is over. For movement of more than ten miles on roads, normal inflation must be resumed.

In sand, avoid abrupt turns, either with full track or half track vehicles.

When stalled, see that front wheels are straight ahead before attempting to get out. Dig out sand in front of wheels in direction of movement. Some brush placed crossways under wheels helps. Don't burn up your engine.

Use a long tow rope, 30 to 50 feet, to pull out stalled vehicles. Towing vehicle must be on hard footing.

Never exceed authorized load of vehicle. Try to keep to three-quarters load.

In desert operations you can figure on getting only one-third of your rated gasoline and oil mileage in all types of vehicles.

At regular halts, all crew members except the AA gunner dismount. All ports in tanks will be opened and not closed until after engine is started at resumption of march.

Half of all wheeled vehicles and half tracks should have as standard equipment, air-pumps, patches, spare inner tubes, a jack, and two ropes or cables.

Clean and brush off radiators at all halts. Check inflation, water, and oil.

Oil all glass windshields, leaving a 2 by 8 inch clear space in front of driver and assistant driver. The windshields of quarter tons are put down and covered. If they have no cover, they should be oiled.

Tanks should take sand slopes at right angles, not obliquely. Oblique slopes pull tracks.

Never send less than two vehicles on distant missions. In case of a breakdown, crews remain with vehicles. The disabled vehicles are thus easier to find from air.

In driving on an azimuth, pick distant objects along the azimuth and steer on them.

Move rapidly over soft sand. Change gears before you get to it. Better to select a lower gear and shift up than to try a higher gear and shift lower when engine is about to stall.

At the close of a drill or of a march, all vehicles must be serviced and made ready to move out. Radiators should be cleaned and sand removed from the cooling fins on radial engines. This will be done under the direction of an officer.

In all movements across country, vehicles should be in dispersed formation. Constant practice is the only way of learning. After men have become accustomed to moving across country in task forces, roads may be used to some extent to avoid waste of rubber.

## TYPICAL TASK FORCE IN DISPERSED MARCH FORMATION

### DESCRIPTION OF TASK FORCE

A Task Force, comprising all of the elements of an armor division, is the smallest force depicted which normally should be used in a separate march formation. The largest would comprise half the combat command of an armored division or half the combat team of a motorized division.

Several such groups (task forces) may move abreast, the interval between them should not exceed visual contact. That is, the flanks of one should be apparent to the adjacent flank of the other. The minimum of non-fighting vehicles accompany each group. The vehicles carry one day's refill of oil and water, fuel, ammunition, and rations. It is desirable that kitchens form part of this train so that the men may get one or two regular meals daily. Tactical conditions will frequently prevent the presence of these kitchens. Every effort must be made to get them up where humanly possible.

Intervals and distances, except as between vehicles will be changed in consonance with the ground conditions. The intervals and distances shown are illustrative only.

The diagrams in the text are not to be glanced at. They must be studied. Through studying them a great many words are saved.

**Reconnaissance Unit:** This unit is provided from the Reconnaissance Battalion of the division, or occasionally from the Corps Reconnaissance Battalion. It precedes the advance guard by from three to five hours. It reports on the half hour or on gaining contact with the enemy. It MUST RETAIN CONTACT and work around the hostile flanks to discover what is in the rear. Its primary mission is information, not fighting. IT MUST HAVE TWO-WAY RADIO COMMUNICATIONS WITH AIR OBSERVATION UNITS. Air observation should cover the entire perimeter of the march group at a distance of least twenty-five miles. This circumferential air reconnaissance need not be continuous, but should be repeated often enough to locate enemy at least ten miles away. In other words, in this desert, it takes from three to five hours to go twenty-five miles. Consequently, two-hourly reconnaissance must be more frequent or more distant. The last air reconnaissance before dark must be thorough.

Note: There is a tendency to have the reconnaissance elements too thick. It is better to use the minimum number of vehicles which can mutually see one another to cover the front than it is to use a great density of vehicles and have no reserve.

**Advance Guard:** Type A. This is composed of half tracks and quarter ton trucks, in the ratio of two quarter ton trucks to each half track. This advance guard precedes the leading elements of the main body by from one to one and a half miles. Its mission is to locate hidden enemy antitank units and artillery; and, in cooperation with the reconnaissance, to locate and report the contour of the hostile front. It should be equipped with radios on the same wave length as the reconnaissance. The advance guard must move rapidly. On the other hand, circumstances will arise when it is necessary to dismount and reconnoiter on foot. Such action will save both time and casualties. When dismounted reconnaissance entails undue delay, the column commander will be notified in order that he may halt the main body and not close on the advance guard.



Type B. This consists of a line of light tanks completely across and slightly overlapping the front of the main body. These tanks should be at visual intervals and should be assisted by two quarter ton trucks per tank. These tanks must have radios and be in radio communications with the reconnaissance and with the main body. The use of tanks as the advance guard is particularly desirable against hostile infantry delaying action.

**Tank Destroyers:** The diagram shows tank destroyer units abreast of the leading tanks of the main body, covered on their outer flanks by their own security vehicles. The purpose of placing them here is to prevent incursions of hostile tanks, and to give a point of maneuver about which tanks of the main body can operate. Note further, that one element of a tank destroyer unit is with the trains. The purpose of this tank destroyer unit is to afford protection to the trains. It is aided in this by a proportion of light tanks and Anti-Aircraft Artillery.

**Anti-Air Defense:** The diagram shows certain AA units with combat vehicles and the remainder with the trains. Defense of the trains is the particular and vital mission of the antiaircraft artillery. It provides the main fighting escort for the trains, and should be weaponed with dual purpose cannon on self propelled mounts of great cross country ability. If the number of anti-air vehicles is limited, they should be with the trains because armored vehicles of a Task Force do not present a lucrative target. The trains, however, being supposedly unprotected, are the constant target of hostile aviation and armored patrols. The antiaircraft vehicles with armored units must have their weapons on self propelled mounts and these weapons must be dual purpose of at least 37mm caliber in order that they may not only prevent bombardment but also aid other elements with the trains in driving off hostile tank attacks.

Owing to the dispersed formation of the trains, it is obvious that high altitude bombardment will not be very effective. Hence, if the enemy seeks to destroy the trains he will execute bombardment at a low altitude or by diving. Under such circumstances, 50 caliber weapons are highly effective. Therefore, each dual purpose antiaircraft, antitank cannon mounted on a self propelled vehicle should in addition have a pair of 50 caliber antiaircraft machine guns on the same vehicle.

**The Remaining Vehicles of the Main Body:** The remaining vehicles of the main body, i.e., tanks, artillery, infantry carriers, and engineers, are so grouped that they can go into attack formation immediately either to the front or to one or the other flanks. If more time is available (than in an emergency), the change of direct is effected by a turn. In general, the theory is for the tanks to lead so that the infantry and artillery, moving in the center, can go into action in any direction.

**Trains:** These follow the main body by some one and a half to three miles. Their contents have been specified. When combat opens they close to a mile to half a mile in order to be able to immediately resupply ammunition and fuel.

**Roads:** The success or failure of any operation will usually hinge on the ability of supply columns to reach the fighting units with refills of ammunition, water, and fuel. In desert or other roadless terrain, the sustaining speed of an advance will be restricted by the time required for supply columns to negotiate the area between railheads and ports, and the fighting front. The provision of supply roads will extend the operating radius of any force, by increasing the speed of supply columns, and reducing vehicle maintenance, thereby increasing in two ways the tonnage of supplies which can be moved in a given time by the available vehicles before a refill becomes necessary. From the diagram, it will be noticed that a road construction unit follows the train. This will be noticed that a road construction unit follows the train. This is so composed that it can build one or more well marked supply roads at the speed of any normal advance. Most of the equipment is drawn by reserve tanks.

**Trailers:** In addition to the ammunition and fuel carried in the supply trains, it is believed that one or more trailers per platoon for all types of armored vehicles in the task force should be used

in a manner similar to the caisson with Field Artillery. These trailers are of cheap construction, are small arms bullet proof and can be uncoupled readily when they have been emptied. They can be recovered by the trains. Through their use, an adequate supply of ammunition and fuel can be assured during an attack.

## OPERATIONS OF A TASK FORCE

**Thrust Line:** A thrust line is a reference line drawn in the general direction of the proposed operation. It need not be axial and need not be a right line. It must have an origin. The thrust line is marked off with quarter inch spaces; each tenth space is numbered. In order to orient any unit, it is only necessary for the unit commander to place a right triangle with a quarter inch scale against the thrust line and his position; then count the number of quarter inches he is away. If he is on the right side of the line and opposite the twelfth dot, and three quarter inches away he reports his position as twelve right three (12R3). Similarly, if he is opposite fifteen, and two and a half inches out, he reports his position as fifteen left ten (15L10). The same procedure can be used in a retrograde movement, the origin and right and left always remaining the same. In order to confuse the enemy, the second day, the origin of the thrust line can be stated as forty. Then the original position of ten out would be fifty out, and so on.

**Phase Line:** Using the thrust line as a basis, phase lines may be inserted. These phase lines are for the purpose of coordinating the movement. The first phase line should be sufficiently far from the bivouac so that the rearmost elements in the march group have moved for at least twenty minutes before the head reaches the first phase line. Thereafter, phase lines should be approximately every two hours of march. They halt on the phase line should be for thirty minutes. During these halts all crew members except the antiaircraft gunner dismounts. The observers dismount but continue their duties. During the halt, the first thing to do is to execute first echelon maintenance under the immediate supervision of the officer present.

**Lateral Communication and Control During March:** This is of great importance, both between element of a march group and between march groups. It can be executed either by radio or by liaison planes, or a combination of the two. During a march, the rate of movement must be governed from rear to front, to prevent undue elongation; that is, the reconnaissance guides on the advance guard and so on. Special emphasis must be placed on having the trains maintain their distance. If necessary, halts on phase lines will be prolonged in order to close up.

During the training period, particularly, liaison planes are vital to obtain results. The difference in speed on the desert between a column and an individual vehicle is so small that a commander on the ground cannot maintain touch with his units. He must do so from the air. The larger liaison planes have two-way radio, the Cubs do not. If only Cubs are available, it is necessary to utilize dropped message.

**Guides:** Guides from the main body with marker flags should accompany the elements of the reconnaissance unit preceding that portion of the main body. These guides are dropped off when the going gets bad or when there is any doubt as to the road being used. They are picked up by the main body.

**Command From Air:** It is my opinion that the force commander can exercise command from the air in a liaison plane by the use of two-way radio. He should remain in the plane until contact (with the enemy) is gained, after which one of his staff officers should be in the plane and he himself on the ground to lead the attack.

**Full Track Company Maintenance Vehicles:** Owing to the fact that a half track is slower than a tank in the desert, it is desirable that a company maintenance vehicle be a full track vehicle, so that having halted to make repairs, it has the capacity to catch up. A half track can never catch up after it's first halt. This full track vehicle will also be used for battlefield recovery.

**Servicing:** Immediately upon halting at the close of each day's march, or maneuver, all vehicles will be serviced; filled with gas, oil, and water, and have three day class "C" rations, and three day's water on board. In addition, it is requisite that at least one day's additional water for the men and vehicles be in the vehicle.

**Refueling:** Normally, refueling takes place just before entering bivouac. If, however, the length of the march demand earlier refueling, where ever refueling takes place, arrangements are made. All antitank weapons and antiaircraft weapons with the command are put into position of "Alert," and by pre-arrangement with the air force, an "Umbrella" of pursuit aviation remains over the command during the period of refueling. Units and vehicles remain dispersed during refueling. The trucks with the fuel move by, drop the cans, and later pick up the empties.

**Reconnaissance:** In reporting contact (with the enemy), reconnaissance units must locate themselves with reference to thrust lines, and locate enemy reported by reference to the same thrust line. Otherwise, the reports are useless.

**Radio Silence:** Where the situation indicates that the column is not observed by hostile air, radio silence will be enforced. Radio silence means that no messages are sent. It does not mean that the system is closed. All operators must continue to listen in. Even during radio silence, reconnaissance or any other units making contact will report by radio.

**Rule for Using Voice Radio:** If the period of reaction by the enemy, as a result of overhearing the message cannot influence the period of action of our forces, voice radio IN CLEAR will be used. Example, if attack is ordered for eleven o'clock and the order issued at nine o'clock, and it is known that it will take the enemy at least three hours to react, it is perfectly justifiable to give the order in the clear. If, however, the order is issued at nine o'clock for an attack at four o'clock, and you know the period of reaction of the enemy is three hours, clear radio should not be used.

**Axis of Assembly:** An axis of assembly will be laid down for each March Group. In unmapped desert, it will be an azimuth from a definite point of origin. Where maps or landmarks exist, they will be used to define the Axis.

The purpose of this Axis of Assembly is to provide a line to which walking wounded can move, or where reports of disabled vehicles can be sent. Finally, it gives a definite line on which a reassembly of the unit can be ordered.

**Security During March:** A definite routine procedure must be adopted to insure that all strange vehicles, not part of the march group, are challenged and examined upon approaching or leaving the group. The enemy often employs captured vehicles with crews in captured uniforms to enter columns from the rear or flanks for reconnaissance.

## ATTACK FORMATION

Since marching is a science, it is susceptible of more or less dogmatic treatment. Battle, on the other hand, is an art. Hence, he who tries to define it closely is a fool.

Nonetheless, in armored combat in desert country, the situations move so fast that there should be an almost drill-like method for converting a march formation into one for attack.

In considering movement from a march column, we must remember that unless we are inexcusably surprised, many hours have elapsed since the air first located and reported the enemy. During this time the ground reconnaissance and the advance guard have both had ample opportunity to determine the contour of the hostile front and to locate his artillery, antitank guns, and mine fields. Exact information on these points is vital.

Further, it must be remembered that our force will consist of several march groups. The march formation must flow smoothly, without halting, into the battle formation, and the transition must be completed while the enemy is still some 3000 yards away. While this transition is taking place,

our air must be attacking the enemy, especially his artillery, antitank guns, and close-in trains. In these attacks, the air is acting on its own, picking those targets which it can see. Furthermore, it is learning the terrain so that in the final phase the air attack will have a better chance of functioning. During this phase the reconnaissance and advance guard have cleared the front and are acting as ordered by the higher command always remembering that they must never lose a chance of hurting the enemy. Sitting on a tank watching the show is fatuous, killing wins wars.

From the standing procedure, it appears that initially only four-ninths of the tanks moving into the first firing position (turret defilade wherever practicable), engage the enemy from a staggered line formation.

Under the cover of this fire, probably opened at 2000 yards, the artillery moves up and enters the fire fight. All this fire is concentrated on the enemy's artillery and antitank guns. The leading elements of the tank destroyer units, from their positions on the flank, also engage in the fire fight with the same targets. If it is certain that your own rear is not in danger, the tanks which have heretofore been guarding the trains have meanwhile joined the reserve tank units.

When sufficient dust and smoke have been developed or a partial fire superiority gained, the leading tanks advance to a nearer firing position. This move is accomplished by rushes of some of the tanks under the supporting fire of the remaining tanks, the artillery, and the tank destroyers. The new firing position is selected by the unit commanders through personal reconnaissance in their tanks. The first rush should be for at least 500 yards. Whether the artillery displaces forward with each rush made by the tanks depends on the observation they can secure. But, certainly as the battle nears its climax, the artillery must be in line with the tanks.

By a number of successive rushes, as described, the line is advanced to a point between one thousand and five hundred yards from the enemy. Sometime during this advance the support tanks of the leading units have joined the firing line, thus placing two-thirds of the tanks in the frontal attack.

As the fight progresses, and the dust could prevent observation, the reserve tank unit should move out to encircle the enemy and attack him from the rear. When it is in position to make this attack, it should signal the force commander so that a synchronized assault may be executed.

Prior to this time, the air should have been notified of the probable time of the final attack. This information must be given sufficiently in advance to enable them to load with the proper type of bombs and to be ready to take off. A few minutes before they are over our force, they should notify the force commander by radio. On the receipt of this message, the fronts of our main assault and encircling force are outlined by clouds of specially colored smoke produced either by grenades or by artillery. This smoke gives the air a datum line as they are then able with safety to attack the narrow zone of the enemy front between the two lines of smoke. It is to be remembered that prior to this they have been attacking the enemy and should therefore know approximately where he is.

There are other possible methods of coordinating the bombardment attack with the ground attack in this mobile situation. By pre-arrangement, observation aviation using successive sorties in situations where enemy pursuit is active, maintains contact with the enemy and leads bombardment aviation to the target upon order from the force commander.

Another system utilizing Krypton light contemplates bombardment aviation proceeding to the battle upon orders from the force commander, who must anticipate in conference with the Ground Air Support Commander that a proper target will exist when the bombardment arrives. When the bombardment aviation arrives within radio range (about 20 miles) of the Ground, Air Support Control station it is given the description of the target and its azimuth and estimated distance from the location of the Krypton light. When within visible range of this light, the bombardment, using the light as a reference point, proceeds to the attack. This system should be advantageous in terrain that has few well defined landmarks or when maps are unavailable or imperfect.

As soon as the air attack is completed, the final assault from the front and rear is ordered. In this assault the tanks move rapidly forward to close with the enemy, while the enveloping tanks attack him from the rear. The armored infantry, moving in their carriers, follow the tanks until they are forced to dismount by hostile fire, and then rushing forward mop up and secure the spoils of victory. I repeat that the foregoing description is a great generalization. For example, in the situations where the enemy is covered by a minefield or we have been unable to locate and destroy his guns the infantry will attack first supported by the fire of all guns, Tank, Artillery, Tank Destroyer, Dual Purpose Anti-Aircraft, and by the Air Force.

Again, it must be remembered that in a larger scale battle than that shown, one or more task forces will make the rear attack.

To go into further discussion here is futile; for as has been said, battle is an art and the commander, the artist, must paint his own picture.

### **The following points apply particularly to the phase of instruction just completed**

All problems must be first solved on a sand table. At the close of a problem, and when secrecy permits, at the beginning of the problem, the men must be informed of what they have done or what they are expected to do. This is a vital requirement.

Upon entering new terrain, have all gunners estimate ranges, because the lighting conditions materially affect their ability to estimate correctly.

Orders must be mission orders, that is, you must get your people together and tell them the general situation and what you expect them to do. The order itself should not be more than one page, with a map on the back containing the axis of assembly and the thrust line, and other pertinent information. If no orders are received the force continues to act on it's original mission, don't halt.

Tank crews should first be instructed by walking through the various formations with reduced intervals and distances using flag signals. In armored battle, movement must be of the nature of a drill.

In armored warfare seek surprise as to time, direction, and formation of attack.

Where circumstances permit, attack should be staged so as to have the sun in the enemy's eyes.

Tanks do not attack until hostile artillery and tank destroyers have been destroyed or neutralized and mine fields cleared.

Tanks entering a fire fight should place themselves at an angle to the direction of hostile fire, so as to increase the probability of glancing hits from the enemy.

Tank crew members and tank destroyer members must track all hostile vehicles within sight during maneuvers.

Tanks, in resuming the advance from a halt, always do so with a change in direction by at least 45 degrees. When making a rush, tanks should similarly do so by tacking, that is, by changing direction about 45 degrees at frequent intervals.

During battle, tanks must report their location, and what successes they have had.

Tank crews are responsible for reporting to the maintenance with the position of injured tanks. Experiments should be tried to do this by flag signal or by Very Light pistol signal. The company commander must see that injured tanks are reported and evacuated.

Tanks should not attempt to physically crush with their tracks enemy guns or machine guns because of the danger of grenades and mines. They should destroy them with intense fire at from two to three hundred yards.

Artillery must be placed in depth, not only by battalions, but by battery. No guns should be within 75 yards of any other gun, and right lines in formation must be avoided.

Tank destroyers and artillery must be prepared to exercise dual roles. That is, in the opening of a fire fight, they must be prepared to fire as artillery normally fires. In the final stages, the artillery must close up and fire by individual guns after the manner of tank destroyers. To attain this, special instruction to tank destroyers and to artillery is requisite.

Fire should be low instead of high. Shoot the tracks from under enemy vehicles and use ricochet fire at his guns. The fragments come under the gun shields.

Do not fire at extreme ranges when attack or pursuit. It is useless and wastes ammunition.

Impress on artillery, tanks destroyers, and machine gunners that concealment is not cover, bushes do not stop bullets. Always seek a position which gives ground defilade as far as it is possible to obtain it.

Artillery with armored units must have forward observation, in tanks, in radio connection with the artillery. It should further have liaison planes to adjust fire. The forward observation tanks are usually placed on the flank well forward where they can see around the smoke clouds.

It is highly desirable for larger caliber dual purpose antiaircraft guns to have high powered telescopes, probably of eight power in addition to those of normal power. This permits them to pick out targets with considerable accuracy at long range.

Armored infantry must drive into action and remain in their vehicles until effective hostile fire forces them to dismount. To do otherwise fails to use their mobility. Owing to the fact that tanks can always cover the withdrawal of armored infantry, it is not necessary for armored infantry to worry about a reserve. They must attack with great violence.

Use your machine guns as soon as they come in range. They are very discouraging to artillery and antitank personnel as well as to infantry. They must be used. There is too much of a tendency to forget their deadly effectiveness.

Infantry, machine guns, and heavy weapons should attack tank destroyers and artillery whenever they get into range.

The air force should be informed of the color of the smoke which is put out, just prior to the final attack, so that they will not be confused with colored smoke set off by the enemy.

During maneuvers and marches, at least air and one ground attack should be signaled daily to accustom the men to carrying out instruction.

A sketchy smoke screen rapidly put down is better than a good one which is put down too late.

It is believed that all vehicles in the reconnaissance units should carry a 37mm mounted coaxially with a 30 caliber machine gun. This will permit them to fight.

You should expect to find mines in all defiles and in front of all river crossings. Further, you should expect to find them in front of any position which the enemy has had time to organize.

Before entering a defile, crown the heights on each side, bring up the antiaircraft guns, emplace them, and see that the far end of the defile is clear.

On the defensive use your tanks as reserves, and do your fighting with artillery protected by infantry. The tanks are placed either on the most dangerous flank or covering gaps in the line. If you have plenty of tanks it may be advisable to place them on both flanks.

On the defense, riflemen and machine guns try to remain concealed from tanks and await the infantry which follows. If, however, they have means of attacking the tanks, they should do so.

When a battle is not decided in one day, it is best to withdraw at dusk and reform after dark, leaving in place some or all of the artillery supported by infantry to attack at dawn, from a new direction.

At the close of a battle, leave the field in the hands of your infantry and artillery, and pull out the tanks to refit and resupply, and then move them to a new position from which you can attack, should an attack be desirable.

When it is necessary to withdraw, do so in time. That is, you must withdraw to the next ridge in rear before the enemy can occupy your former position and fire on you while you are

withdrawing. If this is not possible, an intermediate position must be occupied by a portion of your command to cover your withdrawal.

In withdrawing, move your supply vehicles to the rear as secretly as possible, preferably at night. It is then well to threaten or actually attack with some tanks to cover the withdrawal of the remaining tanks. The tanks making the attack should then withdraw to a concealed position or else withdraw passing other tanks in a concealed position. The tanks in the concealed positions cover the withdrawal of the guns and remaining tanks, and should the enemy be too courageous, strike them in the flank.

In all maneuvers, certain soldiers should be tagged as wounded in order to give practice to the Medical Department. These soldiers should be tagged by the unit commanders and not by the medical officer.

In small fights during a battle, where either we surprise the enemy or are surprised by him, part of the force should attack frontally and the remainder, on the authority of the officer present, must immediately initiate a rear attack.

Officers are responsible for the destruction of their own or enemy tanks found on the battlefield, which are so badly damaged that they cannot be readily evacuated by our troops.

In vital matters such as first contact with the enemy, do not trust the radio, even if you get a receipt. The message must also be sent by messenger. In any case, every radio message must be acknowledged.

Officers must be practiced using their radio, otherwise, they waste a lot of time clearing their throats and collecting their minds. It is best to write an oral radio message and read it over the radio rather than try to compose it. It also saves time.

## BIVOUACS

The same lack of cover and certainty of air attacks which caused the creation of special march and attack formations for the desert, requires the use of a special bivouac formation. Units must be trained to defend bivouacs by fire and counter attack.

A desert bivouac through limited and controlled dispersion must provide a poor air target, good defense against ground attacks, and a means of rapidly resuming the march or combat formation.

Prior to starting any operation, unit commanders will be shown their position within any bivouacs to be occupied during the operations.

The easiest way to form a bivouac is for the leading tanks on the right to form the right forward side. The leading tanks on the left to form the left forward side. The reserve tanks to form the right rear side and tank destroyers or artillery if no tank destroyers are present to form the left rear side. Where the task force consists of two battalions or more of tanks, the tanks themselves are sufficiently numerous to occupy the four sides. In this case, the artillery and tank destroyers occupy the positions within the area conforming to their position for the next march or combat. The advance guard forms a march outpost until the bivouac is made, then enters it.

The infantry carriers of the unit which formed the double sentry post are in rear of the perimeter, vehicles adjacent to their crews.

The half track patrols outside the infantry listening post should move on a prearranged time schedule so that all vehicles will not be moving at one time. They should be provided with very light pistols which they should fire at low elevations, at right angles to their line of patrol and away from the bivouac at unexpected intervals, with a view of catching any enemy who may be trying to sneak up.

Where possible, a staff officer should precede the command to the bivouac area and place a quarter ton truck with a flag at each of the four corners. This applies to occupation during the day.

If the bivouac is occupied during the night, use an initial point at the center of the bivouac and move on azimuths and odometer reading to the four cardinal points. Vehicles, then, go on right or left into line as the situation demands.

All vehicles on the perimeter clamp their automatic weapons for grazing fire at 200 yards. The traverse of these weapons is limited by the use of a rope or traverse stops so that they will not hit adjacent vehicles.

Vehicles on the perimeter must be staggered so as not to present a line which can be attacked from the air.

Engines should not be operated or vehicles moved about in the bivouac during the night. All moving vehicles within the bivouac should be challenged by the guard. The enemy will often attempt to move captured tanks and trucks into bivouacs, disguised as stragglers.

When the trains come up, they enter the bivouac and immediately resupply the vehicles. The trains leave after dark. On reaching the road they move in column. By Pre-arrangement with the air force, pursuit aviation should form an umbrella over the bivouac during its formation and during the issuance of gasoline (if by day). Patrol protection is afforded at night.

Air observation will make a thorough reconnaissance of the whole perimeter of the bivouac just prior to dusk. If an enemy is located within striking distance of the bivouac, the ground commander is informed, and the commander of the reconnaissance unit will move out and make contact with the enemy, whose azimuth should have been reported to him from the air. For this purpose he will use his reverse vehicles.

Where night flying is possible and conditions are favorable for night observation, air reconnaissance and bombardment will visit the enemy during the night and take appropriate action to keep him disturbed. Also to notify the main body in case he moves.

### **The following points are important with reference to the instruction just given**

It is important to practice moving in march formation in the dark by azimuth and also in bivouacking in the dark. Initially only small task forces should be used for this practice.

Until much practice is had, at least two hours should be allowed in training for getting into bivouac and refueling.

Where there are sufficient tanks to cover the perimeter of a bivouac the tank destroyers should be held in mobile reserve.

When going into bivouac all artillery, antiaircraft, and tank destroyer guns should be placed so that they can fire to cover the arrival of the trucks and resupply of gasoline.

While it is impossible to conceal vehicles, it is possible to use brush and camouflage nets to deceive the enemy as to the type of vehicle. Trucks can be made to look like tanks, and tanks like trucks.

In bivouac, all soldiers not carried in armored vehicles will construct slit trenches at right angles to the perimeter of the bivouac. These slit trenches will be filled in before moving out.

Upon arrival in bivouac, all weapons must be thoroughly cleaned and serviced. Care must be taken that all guns are not dismounted at the same time. Cleaning and servicing will be under the supervision of officers. Scotch tape placed over the muzzle of any weapon from a pistol to a cannon keeps out the dirt and the weapon can be fired without removing the tape.

First echelon vehicle maintenance will be started immediately upon arrival in bivouac, and will be thorough and supervised by all officers. Clean the dust from the fins of radial engines, otherwise it becomes baked into a sort of porcelain and prevents cooling. Before filling with gas or water, wipe the dust from funnels and nozzles.

Upon forming bivouacs, all vehicles must be headed in a prearranged direction which will facilitate moving out into march or battle formation. Direction of movement out of bivouac in case



of a night attack must be prescribed before settling down for the night. Every must be supplied with a small funnel for filling canteens.

No light nor smoking are permitted in bivouac, except under cover wholly light proof.

No tents or cots will be taken. Mattresses will be reduced to a minimum of size, preferably a sleeping bag.

Cooking by vehicle or individual is accomplished by filling a can, frequently the container for the food being cooked, two-thirds full of gravel, saturating it with gasoline, and bonding three points on the circumference in with the fingers. When lighted, this provides an excellent stove that will burn from twenty minutes to half an hour and uses very little gasoline. Officers must supervise the men's eating. In very hot weather the men become so fatigued, they will neither cook their food nor eat it. It is up to the officers to see that they do, or the men will become useless. Cooking must be completed before dusk.

It is highly desirable that men be trained not to drink any water during the heat of the day. If a man takes one drink during the heat of the day, his resistance is reduced and he has to keep on drinking. The water he drinks does him no good as it is immediately perspired out. Men should be taught to drink all they can in the morning and after the sun goes down in the evening. Men should be cautioned not to smoke in the desert during the day, and they are not allowed to smoke after dark. They smoke in the dawn or in the twilight. Smoking during the day may remove the skin from the lips and always creates thirst. Hot coffee or hot tea is the best thing to start drinking in the evening.

After the meal has been prepared, everything which is not necessary for sleeping should be repacked so that in case of a night alarm, nothing will be lost.

The water in the five gallon containers gets almost to the boiling point during the day. However, if it is put where the wind can get to it in the night, it will cool down and be palatable for drinking in the morning. It is best to take the canteens out of the covers, fill them and let them cool during the night. Then in the morning, drink from the containers and not from the canteens.

The reconnaissance elements do not come in, but form small all-round protective groups and remain in position. They refill from their supply vehicles which have accompanied them during the day, and then send the empty vehicles to join the supply train for replenishment. Normally, the supply train will send up full vehicles to the reconnaissance units as soon as it arrives near the main body. This method of supply is different from other supply and must be adapted to the existing situation.

One man per vehicle and one officer per company, battalion, regiment, etc., is always awake. No vehicle in the bivouac will be within 75 yards of any other vehicle. Where kitchens accompany the column, they remain in the bivouac and do not depart with the empty trains. Additional food for the kitchens is brought up with the next echelon of the trains to arrive about dawn (See supply).

**Forming Bivouac on Breaking Contact:** The location of the bivouac is given and the order of units to break contact and to withdraw to the bivouac area designated. The first unit to arrive at the bivouac area lays out the bivouac and posts guides to conduct the succeeding units to their location in the bivouac upon arrival. After bivouac is formed, the above stated doctrine applies. If it is probable that the enemy does not know our location, radio silence should go into effect at least two hours before entering the bivouac.

## SUPPLY

The way to success in desert operations, as in all other forms of war, hinges on supply. It will be noted from the diagram of the march that the supply train moves closely behind the march groups. This train carries one day's supply. Upon reaching the bivouac, or if it is intended to bivouac after dark, then just before dark the train should close up and refill the armored fighting

vehicles. This refilling time should be prearranged so as to insure an umbrella of pursuit aviation over the formation during the time devoted to refueling, which should not take more than one hour. At the same time, special attention must be given to reconnaissance, by air and ground, and to see that all weapons, both ground and A.A. are ready to fire.

The question of supply of the second day's refill obtrudes itself. It is almost impossible to move trucks in dispersed formation at night, and it is also practically impossible to move them in columns at night without lights, except on a road. It is mandatory, therefore, to construct a road immediately following the column. (See Engineers Section Below).

The train which accompanied the force during the first day called train "A" having replenished the unit, moves out at dark along a supply road, and passes a similarly loaded train called train "B" during the night. Train "B" replaces Train "A" with the force. On the second day's march, this second train follows the Task Force as did "A" on the first day, and on the second night replenishes the Task Force. It then moves to the rear by the road, while "A," having been refilled at the base, moves up. It is probable that owing to the distance of the second bivouac from the base, possibly a hundred miles, that "A" must move out from the base before dark, and that "B" will not reach the base until after daylight.

During the third day's march, "A" again follows the Task Force and replenishes on the third evening, and then starts to the rear. Now, the distance has reached 150 miles or more so that a third train, called "C" must have left the base on the afternoon of the third day, and will pass "A" sometime during the night. "A" will not reach the base until well after daylight. This method of advance may be continued, but not to exceed 200 miles. A halt must be made, a good road or railroad constructed, and a new base formed. While this delays operations, it avoids disaster.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### ENGINEERS GENERAL

The chief role of engineers in desert operations is the same as in any other operations, to assist the movement of the fighting units, and to impede the movement of hostile units. The chief duties of engineer troops will be:

- a. Water supply.
- b. Roads.
- c. Minefields.
- d. Demolition.
- e. Camouflage.
- f. (exceptionally) Field Fortifications.
- g. Maps.

**Water Supply:** All desert operations revolve around water supply. Engineers dig and drill wells, operate the necessary pumps, lay and operate pipelines, construct and operate water storage points, purify and distill water, transport water from water heads to forward water distributing points, and control the issue of water to unit trains at such forward DP's. In desert operations water supply ranks in importance with ammunition and fuel supply. It is essential that all commanders assist the water supply units (of whom there will seldom be enough), by enforcing the strictest water discipline. Frequent problems should be held in which strict water discipline is involved.

**Roads:** In the American desert, supply columns cannot operate without roads at night, and only with difficulty by day. In the deserts where the ground is harder, the provisions of roads will allow more round trips in a given time, with less wear and tear on supply vehicles. Each combat group should have an engineer road pioneering team, composed of plow-doers, drags, pull-graders, and motor patrols, capable of building roads at speeds up to six miles per hour, to take

supply columns traveling at twenty miles per hour by or ten miles per hour at night. In soft going, the road is dug out, by removal of the softer surface materials. In normal going, vegetation and hummocks are leveled off, and washes are filled in and their banks cut down. On rocky terrain, loose rocks are removed, and rock projections are knocked down by jack hammers and occasional explosives. In gravelly terrain with large quantities of loose rock, the larger rocks dug up by equipment will have to be removed by hand.

The supply roads should not be straight or composed of small curves. They should be laid out in long tangents, so that hostile aircraft will have difficulty in following them at night, at the speeds at which they operate. Dummy roads should be constructed at all changes of directions, so that the real road appears to be a side road. Supply roads should not usually be built any closer than three miles to the bivouac area of a combat group; the last tangent should never point toward the bivouac.

**Minefields:** Engineers must be the experts on minefields, both our own and those of the enemy. Engineers must be thoroughly trained in the details of enemy mines and booby-traps, from the point of view of both material and technique.

Minefield reconnaissance and clearing paths through enemy minefields in preparation for an attack is done by divisional engineers, usually at night or during dust storms. If required to clear paths during a day attack, the engineers must be given an intense smoke or dust screen to cover the operation, preceded by heavy artillery fire on the minefield to provide shellholes for cover.

Laying and lifting friendly minefields may devolve upon Corps and Army Engineer troops as well as Divisional engineers. Constant practice is essential to provide rapid and effective work, and to insure that all fields are adequately recorded so that they will not be a menace to friendly forces.

**Demolitions:** Engineer demolition activities in desert operations differ little from those in normal terrain. Particular training should be given in demolition of water sources, railroads, roads, ports, utilities (power plants, bakeries, machine shops), and large supply dumps.

Small mobile engineer tank demolition detachments should accompany tank units into battle, to demolish disabled enemy tanks beyond possibility of recovery. Such detachments do not destroy our own disabled tanks except on authority of the local commander.

**Camouflage:** Camouflage in desert operations is more a matter of deception than hiding. Division engineers are responsible for training and supervising the fighting units in camouflage technique and camouflage discipline. They are not equipped to do any extensive camouflage work; this is the responsibility of all commanders. Camouflage units will be engaged on schemes for large scale deception, such as dummy tank units, dummy supply points and railheads, supply of sunscreens (to make tanks look like truck, guns look like cargo trailers, light trucks to look like tanks, etc.). Such large schemes must be included in the large plan of operations from its inception or the work of the camouflage troops will be ineffective.

**Field Fortifications:** Because of the nature of the terrain, and particularly in the case of armored forces, field fortifications will not have the importance in desert operations that they have in more normal terrain. Nevertheless, skillful use of field fortifications will always increase the effectiveness of a force on the tactical defensive, and help the commander build up his principle striking mass or counter attacking force. The engineers assist fighting units by giving constant advice on the latest types of emplacements, obstacles, trenches, and dugouts and by constructing rear defensive positions.

**Maps:** Engineers revise and reproduce maps and are responsible for map supply in the field. All commanders must cooperate by closely controlling the use of maps in their organizations, and collection all maps and turning them in to the unit engineer headquarters when relieved from an area.

**Health Measures and First Aid:** Desert warfare presents problems that are not encountered in any other type of combat. Instructions as issued from time to time by Desert Training Center

Surgeon will be enforced by unit commanders under supervision of unit medical officers. Military personnel are cautioned to use common sense in the extreme heat of this section and to attempt to hold casualties from heat prostration to a minimum. Avoid unnecessary exposures to the sun, keeping the head and body covered at all times during the heat of the day. Men will not be permitted to strip to the waist.

Salt must be taken to replace that lost through excessive perspiration. Food should be salted freely and salt tablets taken. Extra salt does no harm. Additional salt should be taken after vomiting, diarrhea, in cases of loss of appetite, or an "all in" feeling due to heat. The amount of salt to be taken depends on the temperature, activity of the individual, and the amount of perspiration. It must be remembered that, due to low humidity, perspiration is more excessive than it appears to be because of rapid evaporation. A guide as to the amount of salt to be taken is about 15 grains for each quart of water or other liquid consumed. The need of salt is not a theory, but a proven fact.

All troops in desert operations must be trained thoroughly in first aid and in the proper use of the vehicular first aid kit.

Badly wounded men must be reported by radio through unit Radio Net or by signal to supporting medical troops for further medical care and evacuation.

### ADDITIONAL PRECAUTIONS

Do not wear tight clothes, shoes that are too small or leggings that bind.

Do not eat large heavy meals.

Eat food sparingly during the heat of the day.

Fruits and vegetables, preferably cooked, and fruit juices are the best types of food.

It must be realized that in the desert distances are deceptive, mirages a possibility, general assistance from other sources is lacking, and water, other than that carried on the person or in the vehicle, is not available.

If lost do not panic and do not attempt to walk for help during the heat of the day.

Vehicles or persons on foot in the desert must always travel in pairs and not alone.

Guard against injury to the eyes. Wear goggles while riding in open vehicles over desert areas.

Be on the lookout for snakes. They become active when it gets cool. Be particularly careful when reaching for an object on the ground, especially when it is dark.

If bitten by a snake, use the snake bite kit according to directions in the container.

In any event, use common sense and DO NOT PANIC.

### WATER

The training to be accomplished depends to a large extent upon the physical endurance of the troops operating under desert conditions with a limited water supply.

No vehicle will ever be dispatched into the desert areas without at least two gallons of water per individual in addition to that contained in canteens. One gallon of this water is for current day's use and the other for reserve.

### Patton vs. MacArthur

by Jack Pearl

## SAGA

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Any attempt to compare Douglas MacArthur with George S. Patton could plunge the United States into a second Civil War, so inflexibly partisan are the beliefs of those men, civilians and military, who knew and served under these two most famous and most controversial fighting generals this nation has ever put on a battlefield.

MacArthur, five-star general of the Army, possibly the greatest American military strategist since Robert E. Lee. MacArthur, as patrician and glacially aloof as a Roman pro-consul. MacArthur, the most decorated soldier in the U.S. army (12 rows of decorations, including the Medal of Honor, three Distinguished Service Crosses and seven Silver stars).

Patton, the Stonewall Jackson of modern warfare, the perfect combat commander. Patton, gruff and gaudy as MacArthur was (and is) austere . . . a hell-bent tank genius whose famed Third Army blistered blitzkrieg on German backsides from St. Lo to the Rhine and would have taken Berlin if the top authority had let it!

It was that profound baseball thinker, Leo Durocher, who once said: "Nice guys finish last!" In war, however, nice guys finish dead—which may explain the extraordinary success of both Patton and MacArthur. Neither was a "nice guy." But as Admiral Ernest King once said, "When wars break out, America calls for the sons-of-bitches." Using this cuss word to describe Douglas MacArthur and George Patton is hardly blasphemy; it's the supreme compliment. Both were warriors who had to be hated to be great.

Who was the better general—Patton or MacArthur? Perhaps a better, more personal question would be: "Which would you rather have served under?" Strangely, no comparison has ever been attempted. So perhaps it's time to strip away the idolatry—and take a square look at MacArthur and Patton, the men—on the battlefield and off the battlefield. They were contemporaries. They were acquaintances, if not friends. They both fought in the two biggest and bloodiest wars in the history of the world. Their careers paralleled each other, crossed at times, and held many striking similarities.

The best place to start is at the beginning—at West Point—where both launched their military careers.

MacArthur, born in 1880, was five years older than Patton and graduated from West Point in the class of 1903, six years ahead of Patton, who spent a year at VMI before transferring to the Point. Patton was big, broad-shouldered, physical, aggressive, with a passion for sports: particularly polo, dueling, and boxing. MacArthur, who graduated from the Point with a 98-plus average, the highest ever recorded, was primarily an intellectual, although he did win his letter in baseball. In military subjects both were at the top of their respective classes. MacArthur attained the highest cadet rating, First Cadet Captain. Significantly, Patton scorned this post, aspiring to the second highest Academy rating, Cadet Adjutant. The cadet captain was primarily an administrator who ran the corps from behind a desk. The cadet adjutant worked directly with the cadets in the field. Even as a four-star army commander, Patton was happiest when he was up front with his troops.

One thing the two future generals had in common was their fanatic, single-minded devotion to the military way of life. Both had a distinguished military heritage. Seven Pattons served as officers in the Civil War; three of them were killed. While MacArthur was still a cadet at West Point his father, General Arthur MacArthur, a Civil War hero, commanded the American Volunteers who crushed the Philippine Insurrection.

Patton once wrote: "It is as natural for me to be a soldier as it is to breathe and would be as hard to give up all thought of it as it would be to stop breathing . . ." He simply could not get war out of his mind. When he made a triumphant visit home after VE-Day in 1945, he was asked to address a Sunday school class. Patton stood before the children and said, with intense sincerity: "You are the soldiers and nurses of the next war. There will be a next war. There always has been and always will be a next war."

Soon after graduation from West Point, Second Lieutenant MacArthur was assigned to the Engineers and served his first tour in the Philippines.

Second Lieutenant Patton's first tour was with the cavalry at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, where he captained the polo and dueling teams. In 1912, he represented the United States in the Olympics at Stockholm, and finished fifth in the pentathlon. Subsequently, Patton went to France to attend the world's finest fencing school at Saumur. His instructors' efforts to improve his defense were totally unsuccessful. "Attack is the best defense in any contest," he maintained. "It's the only way to win. The most brilliant defense accomplishes nothing except to delay defeat."

It was a concept that both he and MacArthur embraced without qualification throughout their fighting careers.

During his stay in France, Patton spent every free moment sightseeing, noting landmarks, and jotting entries in a little black book.

"Whatever are you doing, Georgie?" his young wife once asked.

"Never can tell," he said prophetically. "I might be leading an Army through here someday!"

Although no two men could have been more different in temperament, MacArthur and Patton were both egotistical, flamboyant men with the actor's sense of drama.

The flamboyance of MacArthur and Patton manifested itself in the unconventional uniforms they affected. Each style was unique and reflected the personality of each man. For Patton, the swaggering, swashbuckling extrovert, it was riding breeches and polished boots, ivory-handled pistols, and a gleaming helmet with the stars of his rank plastered boldly across it so that friend or foe would know him two miles away. MacArthur played it on the casual side, rumpled sun tans with shirt opened carelessly at the collar and the beat-up, crushed Air Force-style cap with the broad brim and rich gold braid that became his trademark. Instead of ivory-handled sidearms, MacArthur chewed on a long corn-cob pipe.

Both men were at their best when playing to an audience, preferably newsmen with cameras. Both were compelling orators, though with different styles. A typical Patton talk, delivered in a rasping voice once described as sounding like "a buzz saw tearing through a pine knot" went like this:

"Remember, war is kill, kill, kill! You kill them or they'll kill you! The Nazis are the enemy. Wade into 'em and spill their blood. Shoot 'em in the belly! Rip out their guts with your bayonets! That's what war is—blood and guts! . . ."

MacArthur's speeches were and are flowery, filled with rolling prose and lofty sentiment and rich with references to God, country and duty. Who will ever forget his masterpiece, delivered to Congress and millions of TV viewers after his dismissal and recall by President Truman in 1951:

" . . . I am closing out fifty-two years of military service . . . But I still remember the refrain of one of the most popular barracks ballads of that day, which proclaimed most proudly that: Old soldiers never die. They just fade away . . . "

If "Old Blood and Guts" Patton had been alive to hear that one, chances are his comment would have been succinct: "Bull!"

Both Patton and MacArthur saw their first military action in the border disputes between Mexico and the United States following the Mexican Revolution of 1911. In 1914, when American business interests in Mexico were being threatened, the U.S. sent a provisional expeditionary force to occupy Vera Cruz. Captain MacArthur, as a special emissary of the Army

Chief of Staff, undertook a one-man reconnaissance mission deep into Mexican territory to try to locate some locomotives of the Inter-Oceanic Railroad the Mexican Army had hidden. In the event of a war with Mexico, these missing locomotives would be vital to U.S. logistics.

Bribing two former Mexican railroad workers to lead the way, MacArthur boarded a railroad handcar and probed far behind the enemy lines. He located the hiding place of the locomotives uneventfully, but on the trip back to Vera Cruz he and his companions were ambushed three times by bandits. The handcar was splintered by bullets and MacArthur had to kill seven of the attackers with his pistol.

Patton's adventures in Mexico were equally spectacular. In March, 1915, he joined General John J. Pershing's punitive expedition against Pancho Villa's bandit army. The climax of the expedition came when Patton and a detail of 12 enlisted men cornered Villa's first lieutenant, General Julio Cardenas, in his San Miguelito ranch, a fortress of adobe brick. In what he later referred to as "the first mechanized charge in military history," Lieutenant Patton and his men stormed the ranch in three speeding Dodge touring cars. The sudden attack flushed out Cardenas and two of his henchmen. In a classic Wild West gunfight, Patton killed one of the bandits and winged Cardenas, who was promptly finished off by one of the enlisted men. It was a fitting baptism for Patton's newly purchased Colt Model 1873 .45-caliber revolver, with its silver-plated frame and ivory stocks.

This performance won Patton his first lieutenant's bars, and the lifelong devotion of "Black Jack" Pershing. During World War I, Pershing was named Commander of the American Expeditionary Force dispatched to fight in France. He nominated Patton as his HQ commander with rank of captain.

MacArthur, who at the time was military aide to Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, conceived the idea of an infantry division made up of National Guard units from all 48 states to spearhead the AEF. "It will be an outfit whose glory will spread over the whole land like a rainbow," MacArthur predicted. The name stuck, and forever after the 42nd Infantry Division would be known as "The Rainbow Division." MacArthur served with the 42nd throughout the war, first as its chief of staff, and later as its commanding officer.

About the same time, Patton, then a colonel, was put in command of the first U.S. mechanized force in history, the 304th Tank Brigade. In the two major American offensives of World War I—St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne—Colonel Patton and Brigadier General MacArthur actually fought side by side. At Pannes, keystone of the German defenses protecting the St. Mihiel salient, there was a dramatic confrontation between the two men.

The battle was the first big test for Patton's 304th Brigade and, predictably everything that could go wrong went wrong. Before they had even made contact with the enemy, Patton's tanks were strangled by dust-clogged carburetors, empty gas tanks and a variety of mechanical ills. On the outskirts of Pannes, the young colonel had one operative tank, and the infantry officers began hooting at him:

"Get a horse!"

Shells were whistling overhead and exploding all around Patton when a thin young brigadier, clad in a pullover sweater, wearing a crumpled overseas cap and twirling a riding crop like a drum major's baton, ambled over to him. "Don't let them get you down, Colonel," he said with a grin. "Those tin cans of yours will alter the entire character of war as we know it today."

"Thanks, sir," said Patton in surprise. The ground shook as a German shell scored a near hit. Calmly, the general lit a cigarette.

"Say, what's going on up there?" Patton asked, gesturing with his thumb toward the front.

"I don't know," MacArthur said. "Why don't you climb in that tank of yours and go up have a look?"

"Good idea. I think I will."

At that instant there was an especially ominous whine and flutter from an incoming shell. "Hit the dirt!" a captain shouted, and everybody dove for cover. Not General MacArthur and Colonel Patton. They remained standing, arms folded carelessly, almost as if they were watching a fireworks display at a Fourth of July picnic. The shell exploded with a furious roar, pelting the two men with dirt and pebbles.

By his own admission, Patton ducked his head slightly in reflex. MacArthur never blinked an eye or moved a muscle. Obviously delighted with the unknown colonel's remarkable self-discipline—and even more pleased with his own performance—MacArthur smiled and said slyly:

"Don't worry, Colonel, you never hear the one that gets you!"

Both MacArthur and Patton agreed that the first two requirements for a soldier were: (1) personal courage and (2) self-discipline. To be a successful leader, an officer had to demonstrate constantly that his own personal courage and self-discipline exceeded that of his men.

During the dark days of Corregidor, MacArthur would stand on the highest, most-exposed part of "The Rock," bareheaded, with arms folded, while Japanese dive bombers rained bombs down on the American positions. "I expose myself to set an example for the troops," he explained. Adds the great reporter, John Gunther: "It is quite safe to say that no other general officer in modern history ever took such risks."

Patton embraced the same soldier's philosophy. "Every man fears death and pain," he once said. "But that fear can be disciplined and must be if you are a soldier." One of the exercises he devised to develop this discipline in himself in peacetime was to stand up in the rifle range target pits between two targets while slugs sprayed all around him. Another hair-raiser he invented, after he learned to fly, was to cut the engine of his private plane, kick it into a flat spin and see how long his nerve held out before he pulled the ship up again.

Patton believed that "leadership" meant just that. "Goddammit!" he once said of armchair generals. "It's a leader's duty to lead. That means up front! An army is like a piece of wet spaghetti. You try to push it from behind and it folds up and goes nowhere. You've got to get up front and pull it along after you! . . . A soldier will defend his homeland out of a sense of duty, but he'll storm the gates of hell if a real leader is in front of him!"

One of the major tragedies of World War I was its narrow concept of battle, rooted in obsolete tactics. Many American officers, including MacArthur and Patton, were horrified by old-fashioned methods of warfare that resulted in needless slaughter of troops.

Simultaneously, both men began to develop a revolutionary concept of battle strategy which military experts would not accept for another 25 years and then only after Hitler sent his armored divisions streaking across France in the spring of 1940.

In the Pacific War against Japan, it would come to be known in typically MacArthurian prose: the "die-on-the-vine" concept.

Patton's definition was also typical: "I tweak 'em on the nose, then sneak around and kick 'em in the ass!"

From the very beginning of their military careers, however, MacArthur and Patton held irreconcilable views on the training of a soldier. Patton was a harsh disciplinarian, a spit-and-polish martinet. In World War II, he heaped verbal abuse and leveled drastic fines and punishments on soldiers for seemingly insignificant offenses: having unpolished hoots or unbuttoned pockets or neglecting to wear helmets or leggings. On the drill field, on maneuvers and on the battlefield, he drove men to the point of exhaustion. A dirty rifle or a sloppy salute would invite his terrible wrath. His explanation was simple: "Drill and spit-and-polish are the foundation of discipline. A soldier must be conditioned to react to every command instantly and reflexively. Discipline, obedience, that is the secret of survival in battle. A good commander demands absolute obedience from his men. Those who fail are murderers and suicides!"



Strangely, the tankers almost all ended up loving cantankerous "Old Blood and Guts." As one of them phrased it: "He broke your balls, but you always knew that he was right there alongside you breaking his, too."

Ironically, MacArthur never won the fierce devotion from his troops that Patton gradually enjoyed—despite the fact that he preferred the velvet glove to the mailed fist. MacArthur's psychology was demonstrated early in World War I. In mid-June of 1918, the Rainbow Division came off the line after 85 days in combat. They had suffered 2,000 casualties. Back at the rest area, MacArthur, the chief of staff, relaxed all discipline. The men were permitted to lounge around unshaven, unbathed, smoking, playing cards, drinking wine and cognac.

During World War II, both Patton and MacArthur were unjustly accused of being ruthless commanders who were willing to pay any price in human lives in their obsession for military glory.

The fact is that in the three years it took MacArthur's Sixth Army to fight its way 3,000 miles back from Australia to the Philippines, its total casualties were 13,000 dead and 37,000 wounded. In the Central Pacific Area, where the Navy was in command, the casualty figures for the invasion of Okinawa—a single campaign—were 90,000, including 12,000 dead! One island! One seven-week campaign!

Patton's record in Africa, Sicily, and Europe was impressive, too. The casualty figures for all the armies he led into battle were one-third lower than those of other outfits during the same period.

Of course, Patton invited much of the unfavorable publicity he received back in the States with those infamous face-slapping incidents. Both took place at the height of the Sicilian campaign in 1943. As the story was circulated in the press and on the radio, General Patton had stormed into a hospital ward in Sicily and cursed and hit two of the patients, accusing them of being cowards and malingerers.

Basically, the story was true, but there were extenuating circumstances. While touring a ward of critically injured soldiers, the general came upon one GI fully clothed and with no apparent wounds. He remained sitting, went on smoking his cigarette and shrugged when Patton, in a controlled voice, asked him what was wrong with him.

"I guess I just couldn't take it. General," he said.

At this point Patton exploded, called him a "miserable coward," among other things, and slapped him across the face with his gloves, knocking the man's helmet liner off.

Then he turned to the medical officer in charge of the hospital and ordered: "Get that son-of-a-bitch out of here and back to his outfit. I won't have him contaminating the air for all these other good men!"

The repercussions created by this incident—and a similar one that occurred shortly thereafter—almost ruined Patton's career. Congress shelved a bill to promote him to permanent major general, and a campaign to have him recalled to the United States and to stand court-martial almost succeeded. Probably the only thing that saved him from disgrace was the realistic attitude of his Supreme Commander General Eisenhower:

"We can't afford to lose him," Ike told a special War Department investigating committee. "If we cashier Georgie, it will be a major victory for the Nazis."

There was also the startling response from GIs who had fought under him in Africa and Italy. Their unanimous backing was best expressed in one letter from a Seventh Army infantryman: "You can tell the folks back home that as far as we're concerned, Patton can slap the whole damn regiment, one by one. You know why? Because he knows how to fight and we like guys who know how to fight . . ."

Ultimately, Patton received a chewing-out from Ike and instructions to apologize. No piker, "Blood and Guts" apologized in public to the entire Seventh Army.

Patton himself summed up the matter better than all the millions of words that have been written about it. "Sometimes I think I would have made a better top-kick than a general!"

Where Patton felt a commander had to show his troops that he was a better, stronger, braver man than any of them, MacArthur believed a commander had to be something more than a mortal man. As a Theater Commander and a four-star general, he consciously cultivated the image of an Olympian figure, a demi-god who, from afar, pulls the strings that control men's destinies. MacArthur's aloofness was generally resented. Because he chose to run the war in the Southwest Pacific largely from his headquarters, some detractors accused him unjustly of timidity. That's where the malicious nickname "Dugout Doug" came from. But to the people who really knew MacArthur, the accusation was too shabby to dignify with a denial.

Ultimately, a military leader is judged by his achievements on the battlefield. In the case of MacArthur vs. Patton, it is not a simple matter of consulting the record book, the way you compare two baseball players, noting their "lifetime batting averages." Although both won fame and glory in World War II, they actually were fighting altogether different wars.

Patton's European war was primarily a conventional land war fought on sweeping, open battlefields with massive deployment of men and armor.

The Pacific war was, primarily, amphibious. The land battles had to be fought on cramped islands in impenetrable jungles not at all suitable for Patton's "hell-on-wheels" tactics. The Pacific Theater was a huge chessboard and MacArthur was a keen strategist. The European Theater was a Coliseum and Patton was a gladiator of enormous courage and skill.

MacArthur's battle plans were elaborately drawn, with all the detail of an architect's blueprints. Patton preferred abbreviated battle plans, no longer than one typewritten page, "so simple that the lowest private can understand what is going on."

Both possessed the ability to fight back after being badly hurt by an opponent. In the first days of World War II, outnumbered four to one and squeezed from three sides, MacArthur's forces in the Philippines seemed destined for an early knockout by Japanese General Homma's troops. But, in one of the most brilliant military operations of the war, MacArthur conducted a skillful withdrawal, fighting bitter rearguard actions, and eventually jockeyed his forces through the bottleneck of Manila and into temporary sanctuary on the Bataan peninsula. The famous "Side Slip into Bataan" set back the Jap timetable of conquest 13 weeks, unquestionably saving New Guinea and Australia—possibly averting a quick, conclusive victory for the Japanese in the Pacific War.

A great deal of criticism was leveled at MacArthur for leaving his command on the doomed Philippines and "escaping" to Australia. The truth is that twice he was ordered to leave Corregidor by the War Department and both times he refused. It took a direct order from President Roosevelt to make him go.

In Korea MacArthur was once again asked to perform the seemingly impossible. In June of 1950, he was given the monumental assignment of stopping the Red steamroller which was swallowing up all of South Korea. By mid-summer, MacArthur's piecemeal forces were clinging grimly to a 90-by-60-mile hunk of real estate around the port of Pusan. While the world moaned about "a second Dunkirk," MacArthur carried the fight to the enemy. Overriding the objections of all his advisers—and superiors—the general planned a daring amphibious strike at the port of Inchon, far up the west coast of Korea. The experts pointed out that, geographically and militarily, Inchon was the worst possible place to establish a beachhead.

MacArthur agreed. "The North Koreans know that, too, so they won't be expecting us to hit 'em there. We'll hit 'em where they ain't!"

And that is precisely what he did. The Inchon landings were virtually unopposed, and the invading Marines eventually sealed off 13 Red divisions—130,000 men—in the southern half of the country. Overnight, imminent defeat had been turned into overwhelming victory. Even

MacArthur's critics conceded that the Inchon operation was one of the most brilliant coups in history.

Fighting with his back to the wall, General George Patton was second to none. But his style was different from MacArthur's. He reacted like that of a wounded water buffalo.

One classic example of Patton's style occurred on the second day of the Sicilian invasion, when the Hermann Goering Division counterattacked at Gela and threatened to roll Patton's 2nd Armored Division back into the sea. Patton strapped on his ivory-handled sidearms and called for a boat to take him ashore—to the dismay of his staff.

"You could be captured or killed, General," they told him.

Patton exploded. "What in hell ever gave you the idea that I am unexpendable? When it comes to risking one general's life or risking the loss of a beachhead, there just ain't any choice!" Patton stormed ashore and rallied his demoralized troops with threats and curses. "It's a helluva lot safer up there in those hills than it is on this open beach," he told them. "Now let's get the lead out and kick those bastards back where they came from."

The 2nd Armored went catapulting forward. The crisis was past, and the Seventh Army never lost its momentum again.

But Patton was more than just a heavyweight slugger. Near the end of the Sicilian campaign, the Seventh Army stalled when it ran into strongly defended German defenses overlooking the narrow coastal road to Messina.

"We try to run that gantlet, they'll slaughter us," Patton told his staff. "This calls for a swift kick in the ass. We'll slip in behind them from the sea."

Like MacArthur at Inchon, he was opposed by virtually all of his advisers. "All the odds are against the success of an amphibious landing," they said.

"You're right," he conceded. "But I'm going to do it anyway."

The amphibious landing was an unqualified success, and diverted the Germans so that the 3rd Division was able to punch through the coastal road defenses with minimum casualties.

But Sicily was a cramped little island with no room for Patton to flex his armored muscles. It was not until he took his Third Army into France that he was able to fully exploit his "break-through" theory. On the sprawling battlefields of France, his mastery as a field commander won the admiration of the world.

In the last week of July, 1944, the U.S. First Army smashed the Nazi anchor position at Avranches and Patton's newly activated Third Army exploded through the gap in all directions, fanning out across the Brittany Peninsula, looping north into Orne Province to bottle up the German Seventh Army in the Falaise Pocket, and stabbing down a long corridor into the heart of France.

The German armies had been weaned on blitzkrieg, but Patton's lightning warfare left them reeling. Never before in history had offensive warfare been waged with such savage, unrelenting ferocity. The Third Army fought a leapfrog war. As soon as one advance unit made contact with the enemy, another unit would hurdle it to pounce on still another enemy force. Dozens of isolated battles were fought simultaneously. The Germans had no respite, no time to reorganize.

Eisenhower's headquarters was almost as bewildered by Patton's whirlwind advance as the Nazi High Command. How did you supply an army that had cut itself off from its base of operations? The necessity of keeping the Third Army supplied with gasoline, ammunition and supplies spawned the "Red Ball Express." A superhighway was cleared of traffic from the coast to Patton's front, and a fleet of trucks was mobilized to maintain a continuous shuttle back and forth to the supply dumps of the fluid Third Army. "It was like riding the Pony Express through Injun territory," one driver recalled. "Patton had left more Germans in back of him than there were in front of him."

The SHAEF High Command also had three other Allied armies to think about, and finally Eisenhower cut off Patton's fuel and the Third Army ground to a stop at the German border. Patton howled with rage.

"We've got them on the ropes now, let's finish 'em off!" he pleaded. "If we give them a chance to counterattack, it will be the biggest mistake of this war."

General Gerd von Rundstedt's Ardennes break-through in December, 1944, and the subsequent Battle of the Bulge, proved just how right Patton was.

Primarily, Patton was a man of action. On December 19, all army commanders were summoned to Eisenhower's headquarters. Subject: how to stop Von Rundstedt. Casually, Patton offered to turn the Third Army and attack the left flank of the Ardennes salient within 72 hours. Everybody stared at him incredulously. What Patton suggested was unprecedented: pull an entire army off the line, pivot it at a 90-degree angle, then move it through 100 miles of the most rugged, most savagely defended terrain in the world—all within three days! Reluctantly—probably because it was the only possibility—Eisenhower gave Patton the green light.

All roads leading north from the Third Army front were designated one-way thoroughfares. Speed limits were lifted. So were black-out regulations. Patton ordered his trucks and armor: "Keep Your lights high and don't spare the horses!" Where there were no roads, engineers built them: long rolls of steel mesh that could be stretched out rapidly. Tanks carried their own bridges with them to span gullies and streams. At 0630 on December 22, five divisions of the Third Army struck the left flank of Von Rundstedt's salient. The miracle had been achieved. By mid-January, the tide had turned again, and the badly mauled German panzers had been shoved back to the positions they had occupied before their December 16 counterattack.

Patton shared MacArthur's scorn for static defense. He dismissed the "impregnable" fortress of Metz and the vaunted Siegfried Line as "monuments to man's stupidity." The Third Army merely "flowed" around Metz and bypassed it.

On March 6, 1945, the Third Army blasted a narrow corridor through the Siegfried Line and raced 56 miles to the Rhine. Patton poured two corps down this corridor, pivoted them south and north behind the Siegfried to bottle up 250,000 prisoners in the Palatinate and an additional 50,000 in the north. With a flip communiqué to Eisenhower—"I just spit in the Rhine!"—Patton was off again, rolling into the heart of Germany.

With the capture of Frankfurt, the Third Army knifed the heart of Germany unopposed. At this point Patton was confronted by a situation incomprehensible to a soldier. As the Third Army approached Kassel, BERLIN OR BUST banners streaming from its tanks and trucks, Patton received a communiqué from SHAEF. He read it and turned to his officers, stunned, "They want the Sixth Armored pulled back to Frankfurt . . . At Kassel we're ordered to swing east to the Czech border, then south into Austria to mop up."

"What about Berlin?" his generals demanded.

Patton crushed the message angrily in his big hand. "They're leaving Berlin to the Russians . . . Sheer idiocy! This is a decision the United States will rue for the next hundred years!"

Six years later, during the Korean conflict, another old soldier would be faced with a situation just as incomprehensible. General MacArthur could not understand why he was forbidden to bomb the bridges on the Yalu River, or why he was ordered to sit tight on the 38th Parallel when his forces were poised for the blow that would decisively defeat the Red North Koreans.

Both MacArthur and Patton were vehement anti-Communists. Although Russia and the United States were wartime allies, the two generals never could accept it as a "moral" union. Both believed Russia to be an enemy only slightly less despicable than the Axis.

Shortly after World War II had ended, SHAEF Headquarters complained to Patton—then military governor of Bavaria—that the Russians were protesting U. S. laxity in disbanding German Army units in his zone. Patton's answer caused an international ruckus:

"What the hell do we care what the Russians think? Sooner or later, we're going to have to fight them anyway . . . Let's do it now while our army is still intact and we can kick their hind end back into Russia in three months. We can do it easily with the help of the German troops we have . . . they hate the bastards."

There was panic at SHAEF. "Shut up, you damned fool!" a high-ranking colleague said sharply. "The Russians may have this line tapped. Do you want to start another war?"

Patton was unmoved. "That's exactly what I've been saying. I would like to start one. If you people are scared to do it, let me handle it down here. In ten days I can create enough incidents to start a war and still make it look as though it was their fault. So we'll be entitled to run the sons-of-bitches out of Germany."

The climax came at a news conference, when Patton aired his views on Russia, his differences with SHAEF and Washington, and vigorously defended his administration in Bavaria. "What the hell," he said, "how much difference is there between Nazis and non-Nazis? Not much more than between Democrats and Republicans back home!"

That did it! On October 3, 1945, General Patton was relieved of his command and "exiled" to Mannheim, where he became nominal commander of the 15th Army—a "paper" army consisting of scholars and researchers who were writing a history of the war. Two months later, the 60-year-old warrior died in an auto accident, his greatest ambition unfilled: to die a soldier's death in battle. To this day, while other World War II generals have written books about their experiences, the Patton memoirs remain unpublished—although they do exist. Reportedly they are simply too controversial and explosive.

As an administrator—and a politician—in enemy-occupied territory after World War II, MacArthur did better than Patton. (He also enjoyed greater authority as a theater commander.) For five years MacArthur was literally the dictator of Japan. His accomplishments were remarkable. He helped eradicate Japanese militarism and transformed a nation of 80 million people—who believed that the only true glory was to fight and die for the Emperor—into a working democracy.

Ironically, MacArthur's military career—like Patton's—was terminated because of his refusal to accept the fact of life that the United States must coexist with world Communism. Time and again flouting Presidential orders during the Korean conflict, MacArthur advocated use of the A-bomb against the Chinese Reds, the employment of Chiang Kai-shek's Chinese Nationalist Army on Formosa in an invasion of the China mainland, and openly accused the Truman administration of sacrificing U. S. interests in the Pacific to placate Russia. In April, 1951, he wrote a letter to Republican Congressman Joe Martin in which he complained of the restrictions imposed on him as UN Commander in Korea and criticized the administration for negotiating for a cease-fire with the Reds, intimating that it was "sell out."

"We must win," he said. "There is no substitute for victory."

Martin read the letter on the floor of the House. It was MacArthur's military obituary. Three days later, President Truman relieved him of all his commands in the Pacific. After 16 years, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur returned to the United States and retirement.

For years to come, maybe forever, Monday morning quarterbacks will hotly debate the issues which produced the stalemates in Korea and Berlin. And these same analysts will endlessly argue the debits and credits of MacArthur and Patton.

It is intriguing to conjecture what a formidable combination MacArthur and Patton would have made working together. One thing is certain. Both these great fighting men have left an indelible mark on history. As MacArthur said:

Old soldiers never die . . ."

## **Two-Gun Patton** by Jack Pearl

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The Column of tanks rumbled down the winding dirt road at top speed. It was a hot July day in 1943, and Lieutenant General George S. Patton's Seventh Army was chasing the Germans up through Sicily. Then, without warning, the tanks came to a dead stop. The general's jeep, following the column on its way to the front from headquarters, slowed as it approached the motionless tanks,

"What the hell's going on here?" Patton growled to his driver. "Let's go up and find out."

The jeep swerved off the road and bumped its way through a rutted field to the head of the column. There the general was greeted by a scene that might have been lifted straight out of a Charlie Chaplin movie. A cumbersome wagon was parked in the middle of a narrow bridge which spanned a small stream. It was loaded with furniture. Pulling the cart—or rather, not pulling the cart—were two mules. Both were seated on their haunches, long ears folded back on their necks, as they steadfastly ignored the small, dark man with baggy pants who tugged at the reins, slapped his head and denounced the animals in loud, savory Sicilian. A detail of soldiers added their weight to the reins, while another group got behind the wagon and pushed. But the mules didn't budge.

The tank commander looked around at the officers and men surrounding him and asked desperately: "Any suggestions? "

A voice that sounded like a buzz saw going through a pine knot answered him with an explosive burst of profanity. The major stiffened. There was only one man in the Seventh Army—in the whole U.S. Army for that matter—with such a ripe and pungent vocabulary.

"Attention!" the major shouted without bothering to turn around. George S. Patton bulled his way through the soldiers to the center of the scene. He was a big man, six-foot-one, 200 solid pounds of muscle and raw bone.

In a front line area where even colonels removed their eagles so as not to tempt enemy snipers, General Patton flaunted his identity in a way that the most myopic German or Italian could not mistake a mile away. Three large silver stars glittered on the front of his steel helmet. His battle jacket was emblazoned with campaign ribbons. He wore butter-bean colored riding breeches and cavalry boots polished to the sheen of enamel. A pearl-handled, nickel-plated revolver hung from his right hip on a belt studded with .45-caliber cartridges.

Patton took one look at the comic opera on the bridge and turned to the riflemen. "Shoot those goddamn mules and shove that cart into the stream."

"General!" the major interceded. "We can't do that!"

"Who says so?" Patton demanded in his high-pitched voice.

"These are civilians," the major said. "You know what the regulations say about the treatment of civilians."

Patton's gaze raked the officer like a flame-thrower. "You can take those goddamned regulations and—" He told the major graphically what he could do with the regulations. "Now shoot those mules and be quick about it!"

Five minutes later the tank column was crossing the bridge while the poor Sicilian farmer stared sadly at his dead mules, his broken cart and his possessions strewn across the stream bed.

Not long after, the general was dodging bombs from German Stukas as he sped to the front in his jeep. He ordered the driver to pull up by an anti-aircraft emplacement that had been strafed and bombed. The sergeant in charge snapped to attention proudly. Several of the gun crew were wounded, but they had knocked down a couple of German planes. The least the sergeant expected was a pat on the shoulder and a few words of encouragement from the man they called "Old Blood and Guts."

Patton regarded him coldly. "Where are your leggings, Sergeant?" he demanded angrily.

The man blinked incredulously. "My—my leggings, sir?"

"Your leggings! You know the orders as well as I do." He surveyed the rest of the gun crew, glaring at a private who was slumped with his back against the revetment sandbags, nursing a cut in his scalp. The man's helmet liner rested in his lap. "Were you wearing that liner without a helmet, soldier?" Patton asked ominously.

"Yes, sir," the man confessed miserably. "You see, sir—"

"Shut up!" the general cut him off. "I don't want to hear any excuses." He looked back at the sergeant. "You know the penalty for being out of uniform. Turn yourself in to your unit commander."

He climbed into his jeep and drove off.

Near the end of the same campaign, General Patton, inspecting a military hospital, exchanged angry words with a private and slapped his face.

The War Department panicked. There was no telling how American mothers would react if they heard that their sons were being maltreated by the brass. The incident was suppressed; rather, the army tried to suppress it. But they had underestimated the enterprising American reporter. Military censors were horrified when the story turned up, luridly exaggerated, in a flood of dispatches for transmission to stateside newspapers. The censors compounded the error by penciling out all references to the unhappy occurrence on the grounds that it was inflammatory and injurious to civilian morale. All they really accomplished was to sow the seeds for an even more explosive story.

A more practical man than General Patton might have taken to the bottle and spent a sleepless night chewing his nails, cursing his temper and waiting for the fuse to burn down to the powder keg. But not George Patton. He promptly zeroed in on another victim.

In the words of Private Charles Herman Kuhl, who later described the encounter in an impassioned letter to his parents: ". . . Lieutenant General George S. Patton slapped my face, kicked me in the pants, and cursed me . . ."

That did it. Drew Pearson broke the story on a quiet November Sunday evening on his radio program, stating that the Commander in Chief of the Allied Forces, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, had "severely reprimanded" the Seventh Army commander.

It was a Sunday, as one editorial writer said solemnly: ". . . that will rank in infamy with Pearl Harbor."

"Who's that Patton working for?" a woman interviewed on the street asked. "Roosevelt or Hitler?"

Congress was deluged with letters from all sections of the nation.

Some people found an ironic humor in the fact that American mothers could become so concerned over a slap in the face when their sons were being shot at with live ammunition. To the tune of a popular wartime song, they sang: "Pistol packin' Patton laid that private out . . ."

The Army appreciated the jokes less than anybody. Having failed to plug the dike with all fingers and thumbs, the brass promptly put both feet into the breach. In a cautious release that sounded as if it had been written by an ex-Madison Avenue public relations man, the army

insisted that the whole affair was a wild rumor, adding that: "General Patton has at no time been reprimanded by General Eisenhower for any misconduct."

The statement did not deny that General Patton had slapped an enlisted man or men. It simply ignored the basic charge and dismissed the secondary charge with a bit of military double-talk. In the service, "a reprimand" is an official document enumerating specific charges and signed by the commander. The recipient is expected to make any answering statements in reply at the bottom of the document, countersign it and return it to the commander. This formality had not been observed in the case of General Patton. Ike had administered a dose of informal, old-fashioned "hell" and dropped it there.

But Congress, the public and the newspapers refused to be fooled by such diversionary tactics. On November 23, Secretary of War Stimson admitted grudgingly under terrific pressure by the Senate Military Affairs Committee that the slapping incident—or incidents—had happened pretty much as reported.

And now unexpectedly the government found itself on the target line alongside Patton, only more prominently so. One New York paper summed it up like this: "The real issue is not the fact that General Patton slapped an enlisted man. It is that the War Department tried, and almost succeeded in, suppressing the fact. If the people cannot have confidence in the truth and integrity of their leaders in petty matters such as these, how can they have confidence in their leadership in more momentous affairs?"

Quietly, and reluctantly, Commander-in-Chief Eisenhower relieved Patton from the active command of the Seventh Army. It was a hard decision. Patton was a brilliant field commander, and at this critical stage in the war good generals were at a premium.

The Senate Military Affairs Committee crossed Patton's name off its promotion list; he had been up for the Permanent rank of major-general.

As committee chairman Albert B. (Happy) Chandler of Kentucky put it: "There's only one thing stands in the way of that boy—him"

This, then, is the image of General George S. Patton Jr. which most Americans still carry in their minds more than 15 years later: A foul-mouthed, bad-tempered exhibitionist without pity or humanity; an arrogant, cruel leader who, like the old Prussian generals, regarded his men as unfeeling pawns in a game and used them recklessly and relentlessly; a general whose undeniable accomplishments on the battlefield are more of a testimonial to his ruthless determination than to his tactical skill.

Is it a complete and accurate picture of the man? Many of us would be disappointed if it wasn't. Patton was the kind of man you don't particularly want to hear anything good about. Those best qualified to judge him are the men who were closest to him, the soldiers of the Second Armored Division and the Seventh and Third Armies, the men who bore the brunt of his violent rages, his terrific tongue and his iron discipline and who had to satisfy his insatiable demands for perfection. These men fought with him and lived with him through Africa, Sicily and, after his reinstatement, in the "Hell-On-Wheels" race across France and Germany that led to final victory for the Allies.

It is significant that after the first furor over the slapping episodes had subsided, the American public paused for reappraisal. Letters were still flowing in to Congress and the newspapers, but their condemnation of General Patton had been tempered by more practical considerations. Even John Lewis, editor of the left-wing newspaper PM, who was the most persistent advocate of court-martial, admitted reluctantly that the mail was running 5-1 in favor of Patton retaining his command. The writers did not approve of the general's treatment of U.S. soldiers, but—well, this excerpt is typical of the tone they took:

". . . We come to expect and tolerate numerous indignities and hardships enforced on us by war: standing in line for ration stamps, begging the grocer for an extra pound of sugar, seeing our



boys drafted and shipped overseas, huddling in the dark like cave-dwellers when the air raid sirens go off, and many more. This slapping business is just one more indignity, and rather a small one when you stop to think about it. This man Patton is apparently a pretty good general. I have a son who fought under him in the II Corps in Tunisia (Author's note: I think this should be the Second Armored Division) and his opinion is: ' . . . he is a s.o.b. all right, but I would rather be in his outfit than in any other. . . . ' I guess we can put up with his nasty temper if he can get our sons back home even one day sooner . . . "

The startling thing was that Patton's chief defenders were the fighting men, the infantrymen and the armored troopers. His most violent critics, on the other hand, were his superiors, his fellow officers, and the official Army and Navy publications.

The personnel of the field hospital in Sicily where the alleged slapping incident took place made some interesting observations about Patton at the time which were never publicized. They knew him as a gruff, boisterous man who visited the wards several times a week, gabbed democratically with the patients, sat on their beds, listened attentively as the men described where and how they had been wounded, and who, on several occasions, almost chewed the head off an orderly who surprised him sniffing in the latrine after a session with some especially pitiful case.

Apparently, he had gone directly from a particularly harrowing ward to the psychoneurotic ward on the day of the slapping, and he was stung by the sight of outwardly healthy men lounging on beds and in easy chairs, reading magazines and playing cards or checkers. As is typical of the extrovert, physical male, Patton had little understanding of or patience with timid, nervous people. Neurosis sufferers were all malingerers so far as he was concerned.

He made a remark to an unidentified man, suggesting that it was about time "you guys stop goofing off and get back up where they need you." Hot words were exchanged back and forth, and the patient had a hysterical outburst.

Then the slap. This was hardly conduct becoming a general, but understandable to every combat soldier who ever cursed a 4-F. The truth is that Patton had the temperament of a tough top-kick, and almost none of the tact, polish, and political savvy demanded of a general officer.

A U.S. diplomat in England described Patton like this: "He could put both feet in his mouth, cavalry boots and all."

The general illustrated this graphically when a naive civic group in London asked him to deliver the welcoming speech to a mixed audience of English, American and Russian dignitaries.

"The only welcoming I have done for some time," Patton began jovially, "is to welcome Germans and Italians to Hell. I guess I have put some hundred and seventy-seven thousand there . . . "

He went on to say: "The sooner our soldiers write home and say how lovely the English dames are, the sooner our dames will get jealous and force the politicians to bring this war to a successful conclusion."

And he finally dropped the big bombshell: "The idea of these little get-togethers couldn't be better." He beamed at the intimate group. "Because undoubtedly it is going to be our destiny to rule the world."

Within hours, following a storm of protest from our lesser allies, Secretary of War Stimson issued a statement: "The opinions expressed by General Patton are strictly his own, and do not reflect the attitude of the Army of the United States."

One American editor commented tartly: "General Patton should limit his remarks to "Forward march" and "Open fire, men."

Patton loved good soldiers and good soldiers loved him—for a good reason. He was a leader, not a commander. On the beaches of Morocco, the first time American troops were under fire, an epidemic of foxhole-itis threatened to stall the landings. When bullets and shells began to explode all around them, the GIs who were unloading supplies and ammunition from the barges burrowed

into the sand and began digging there in spite of threats and appeals by their officers. Unless the supplies were brought up to the tanks and the infantrymen holding the perimeter of the beachhead, it meant certain disaster. It was the kind of situation where Patton's critics conjure up a picture of the stormy general foaming at the mouth and ordering mass executions for cowardice under fire. Actually, he was the calmest man on the beach.

With cigar in mouth, stars gleaming on his helmet, pearl-handled Colts and flashy cavalry uniform insolently advertising his identity to the enemy, he paraded leisurely back and forth on the beach, urging the paralyzed soldiers to get back to work.

Laughter broke the spell as a slug kicked up sand just behind Patton and he grabbed the seat of his pants. The next instant a cheer went up for "the Old Man" and the soldiers began to climb sheepishly to their feet. The supplies were unloaded and the day was saved.

In the opening phase of the Sicilian campaign, two tank regiments twice broke into the strongly fortified town of Gela, and twice the Nazis threw them back to the beach. Aboard the headquarters ship standing off the Coast, Patton walked away from the operations desk, put on his helmet and called for a boat to take him ashore. He waded through the surf, waved to the weary tank men, and told them: "These bastards can't take a hint, so let's stop acting polite. Let's go kick their butts out for good."

This time Gela stayed in American hands, and the invasion began to roll. To the critics who charged him with recklessness, both in his employment of troops and in his seeming disregard for his own safety, he had a quick answer.

"Every man is expendable—generals included—if the results warrant it."

The enlisted men approved, even if the generals didn't. And statistics show that Patton's casualty lists were no higher—in many cases were lower—than those of other commanders.

It was Patton's contention that soldiers will defend a position to the death out of a sense of duty, but they will get up on their feet and move forward to storm the gates of Hell only behind a leader they respect.

The image of Patton as an Olympian figure pushing men around on the battlefield like pawns on a chess board is manifestly unfair. He despised armchair generals who campaigned from the sandbagged recesses of dugouts, penciling circles and Xs on maps. To one general in the Sicilian campaign who was wringing his hands over the plight of his tank regiment at a river crossing a mile away, he growled: "You better get up there and straighten them out, buster, or you'll be looking for a new job."

A captain who supervised his company from the rear tank in the column received a milder lecture: "A leader must lead, even if he gets killed. Trying to lead from the rear is like trying to move a piece of string by getting behind it and pushing. You have to get up front and pull."

He personally demonstrated this point again and again, and enlisted men in his command respected him for it, and overlooked his frequent abuses. They forgot the rigid regulations that penalized a combat man for minor infractions like not wearing a helmet or leggings.

The combat soldier knew, too, that the regulations had a purpose. They frequently saved lives. Also, Patton knew the psychology of the common soldier, the tremendous advantage in morale that personal pride and esprit de corps, pride in the outfit, lent to a fighting man. This was the reason why crack regiments in the German and English armies wore distinctive uniforms. The U.S. Marines and the paratroopers were examples of high-morale units.

At one point in the war, Patton waged a determined campaign for distinctive uniforms for his tankmen, one that would also be more practical than the standard uniform. Men speeding over rough terrain in steel-walled tanks took a terrible buffeting. The general conceived a padded outfit with a helmet that protected more of the head and face than the regulation helmet. To give Washington and the American public an idea of what he had in mind, he got hold of a fencer's outfit and a football helmet, had them dyed green, put on the paraphernalia himself and posed in

the turret of a tank for news photographers. It came as a shock when the pictures appeared in the U.S. papers with such captions as:

"Is it a bird? Is it a plane?"

"Flash Gordon!"

"The Green Hornet Rides Again!"

It was Patton's last excursion into the field of public relations, although the tankers eventually did get the helmets.

Patton freely admitted that he was a tyrant. "It is the obligation of an officer to demand strict, absolute, uncompromising obedience from his men," he pounded into his junior officers. "Those who fail end up murderers or suicides. A man's life is far more valuable than his pride or self-respect."

He liked to recount his own experience in France during World War I as an illustration. During a critical phase of the Meuse-Argonne campaign, Patton became detached from his outfit and fell in with an infantry battalion. The unit was in a confused retreat after all its officers had been killed. Patton rallied them and led them in a counterattack on the German positions. Hit and badly wounded, he kept issuing orders and sending out patrols. The Germans were thrown back.

Later, when he was awarded the D.S.C. for his heroism, Patton laughed. "I wasn't brave. I didn't know what the hell I was doing after I got hit. I don't remember a thing. All I did was react to years of discipline and training."

George S. Patton was, literally, the father of the American Tank Corps. He was the first man assigned to the first tank brigade in France in 1917. A West Point second lieutenant of cavalry, he rode with Pershing into Mexico and accompanied him to Europe at the beginning of the war. In France, he won the D.S.M., D.S.C., Silver Star, and Purple Heart for his service at St. Mihiel and in the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

In 1940, as a permanent colonel of cavalry, Patton was promoted to temporary major-general and given command of the Second Armored Division when it became obvious that U. S. involvement in World War II was imminent.

He commanded one of the first task forces to go ashore during the Allied invasion of North Africa in 1942.

In the African campaign, Patton fulfilled an ambition he had nourished for years. Nazi Field Marshal Erwin Rommel had already established himself as a legendary figure before the United States entered the war. "The Desert Fox" had won the respect and grudging admiration of Allied military leaders for his genius in mechanized warfare. Patton was impressed, but resentful.

"He's good all right," he admitted, "but I don't know about that genius stuff. Hell, he's never had any real competition."

Once he approached Chief of Staff General George Marshall with a wild inspiration. "I'd like to challenge Rommel to a duel," he said enthusiastically.

"A duel?" Marshall said quietly, uncertain whether to laugh or put Patton in for a Section Eight.

"Sure, with tanks," Patton said, grinning like a kid. "He'll get in one of his tanks, and I'll get in one of ours and we'll blast away at each other. If I kill him, then I'll be the champ."

"And if he kills you?" Marshall asked.

"Well, if he kills me, then—" Patton stopped and his face darkened. "Damn it! He won't kill me!"

Patton never was allowed to submit his challenge to the German panzer leader. Long after both generals were dead, close friends of the German expressed the view that had Rommel received the challenge, he would have accepted it eagerly.

Without a doubt, Patton's great moment of the war came in Africa when his Second Armored Division fought the Nazi Afrika Korps in Tunisia. Advance intelligence reports indicated that

Rommel was concentrating his forces at a certain point on the line, but Patton had a hunch. "If I were him, that's exactly what I'd try to make the enemy believe," he told his staff. "Then I'd smash through right here." He pointed to a small cross on the map. "I think we'll set up a snare for that old fox at El Guettar."

They did, and Rommel's badly battered legions retreated from the fight with over 50 per cent casualties.

After it was over, General Patton went storming into the field hospital where his own wounded were being patched up. He stopped at every bunk, shaking hands, rumpling hair and pounding men on the back. "You did it!" he told them. "You guys stopped the Tenth Panzer. It's never been stopped before, but you stopped it!"

He wasn't being patronizing. Nor was it an act of phony modesty on his part. It was Patton's blunt conviction that a general rated only a minimum of credit for winning a battle. "All he can do is to draw up a simple plan and try to stick with it. Its success depends ninety-nine per cent on execution."

"This was a view that did not endear him to 'tin god' commanders who liked to believe that military strategy was incomprehensible to all but a few fellow geniuses. To judge by their battle plans, which looked like novels and read like Einstein's Theory of Relativity, they may have been right. Patton ridiculed such tomes. It was his aim to draft his orders on a single page. "If every soldier understands exactly what is going on, privates as well as generals, you're halfway to victory," he maintained.

Ex-GIs remember the frequent premonitions of disaster in the ranks arising from ignorance, and the wonderment that battle, begun in utter confusion and chaos could ultimately end in triumph.

Fully aware that he was inviting the displeasure of the War Department and Congress, Eisenhower nevertheless assigned General Patton to one of the key commands in the Allied war machine that invaded Europe in June, 1944.

Patton responded with the zeal of a sidelined football star reprieved in the final quarter of the big game. Progress was slow and bloody for the first five weeks. But near the end of July, the Third Army "rounded the corner" in Brittany, smashed through the Nazi lines at Periers and fanned out across northern France. Dinan, Rennes, Mayenne, Le Mans, Nantes, and Angers fell within ten days.

To the experts, it appeared as if Patton might have over-extended himself. Eisenhower and General Omar Bradley, the ranking American commander in the field, had a bad five days when the Germans launched a fierce counter-attack at Avranches on August 7. (It should be pointed out that Patton was still being kept "under wraps"; as yet, the army had not made public the fact that the controversial general was leading the spectacular advance of the Third Army.) If the Germans succeeded in breaking through, Patton's army would be immobilized, cut off from fuel, ammunition and supplies. Here was Rommel's chance to avenge the stinging humiliation of El Guettar.

At Avranches, Patton's armor proved to the world that the long run around the Germans' right end had not been a lucky joyride. The panzers rammed head-on into a steel wall, shattered themselves in repeated assaults, and by the 12th were fleeing toward the Seine with the Third Army in relentless pursuit.

The German armies in France now found themselves inclosed in a sack whose mouth was rapidly being drawn shut. This area, within the jaws of an Allied pincers at Falaise, came to be known as "the killing ground." Only remnants of the German 5th and 7th Armies escaped from the famous Falaise Gap.

Patton swept on to Chartres, Dreux, and Orleans. Fontainebleau, Troyes, and Nantes on the Seine fell before the end of the month. Now, for the first time, the world learned that the driving

and guiding force behind the stunning series of victories was none other than "Pistol Packin' Patton."

It was a vindication not only of Patton but of the faith so many Americans had pledged to him 11 months before when almost everyone was screaming for his blood. And of course, it was a vindication of Eisenhower's confidence in him.

"From heel to hero!" one editorial commented pithily. In a sense it was true. For Patton had become the man of the year. Even Congress forgave him. Late in August, his nomination for permanent major-general was quietly approved.

As the Allied armies closed in on the German border, the front stabilized. Winter brought a temporary stalemate and the near-disastrous Battle of the Bulge. But on January 15, Patton broke out again. By the end of the month, he had pierced the Siegfried Line and established bridgeheads across the Our and Sauer Rivers.

It was during the Sauer crossing that Patton gave one of the most dramatic demonstrations of leadership of World War II. The 4th Infantry Division had reached the river and was preparing to cross it in rafts and barges under heavy German fire, when Patton arrived on the scene. "Those damned boats are sitting ducks," he told the officers, and ordered them back to shore. "You'd be better off to swim across."

A colonel surveyed the bitter cold, ice-choked stream and turned to the general in disbelief. "Swim that? With rifles, packs and equipment? Impossible, sir!"

Patton grunted and walked over to a private crouched on the bank. "Give me your pack and rifle, soldier!" he ordered. With the pack on his back and the M-1 slung over his shoulder, he waded into the frigid water, swam to the far bank, then swam back again. As he emerged dripping from the river, he grinned at the appreciative audience of GIs and said. "Now, if an old man like me can manage it, you young fellers shouldn't have much trouble."

The men plunged into the water with chattering teeth and war whoops, and the Sauer was forded with minimal casualties.

Trier was captured; the Rhine was crossed north and west of Coblenz. Frankfurt fell on March 26. The Third and Seventh Armies encircled the Saar Basin and swept across Germany to Arch, Czechoslovakia, cutting the Third Reich in two. They were pushing into Austria when the war ended in Europe.

After the armistice, Eisenhower appointed Patton military governor of Bavaria, and probably could have cut off his hand a week after he had signed the order.

Patton promptly leaped into neck-high hot water by criticizing the Allied deNazification program as unrealistic. "There's about as much difference between all these people as there is between the Democrats and Republicans," he announced. "The 'outs' go around saying that the 'ins' are Nazis, and who can make any sense out of any of it? . . . We just have to face up to the fact that to get things going in this country again, we're going to have to compromise with the devil . . ."

Undeniably, there was truth in what he said, but in the post-war struggle for power, with its bewildering shuffling of aims and alliances, double-talk and double-dealing, it wasn't a very politic statement. Shortly thereafter, Patton found himself transferred to the nebulous 15th Army Command, in charge of compiling a history of World War II. He wasn't the kind of general who enjoyed fighting battles over again on paper, but he exacted the same kind of discipline from himself as he would from any soldier. His approach to the job was thorough and determined.

There was little to relieve the monotony except hunting trips, which he liked, and an occasional brush with newsmen. One reporter liked to rib Patton about the pearl-handled revolvers he still wore religiously on his hip.

"Hey, General," he said one day, "I'll bet those things are just ornaments. I don't think you ever shot them off, did you?"

Patton ignored the remark. But later that day, when they were riding in his command car, a rabbit shot out of a clump of brush and crossed the road in front of them. As smooth as a movie gunslinger, Patton drew his .45 and dropped the bunny on the run. Without a word, he picked up the conversation where it had stopped a moment before.

In December, 1945, Patton was on his way to a pheasant hunt when his command car collided with a jeep and overturned. The general was rushed to the hospital with a broken neck. It was a serious injury for a 60-year-old man, and the doctors didn't have much hope for him. But his recuperative powers amazed them. "He's got the heart and circulatory system of a twenty-year-old," one surgeon marveled.

Within a week, he had mended so well that he was taken out of traction and put in a plaster cast. Preparations were made to fly him home for Christmas. But, unexpectedly, pneumonia set in, and five days later George S. Patton Jr. died in his sleep.

As death closed in, Patton must have been cursing, as only he could curse, the cruel humor of the fates. They had sustained him through battles, through gunshot, shrapnel and fire, only to turn him finally into a helpless invalid in the antiseptic environment of a hospital, with nurses and orderlies humiliating him with bed pans, feeding tubes and needles jabbed in his leathery rump; and where he would wheeze out his life like any old gentleman with his family grieving at the bedside. It was hardly the gallant end he had pictured for himself.

Once, after he had been relieved of command in Sicily, Patton had visited General Mark Clark in Italy. Wistfully, he had asked Clark if he might go up to the front at Cassino, one of the major Allied stumbling blocks of the entire war. Clark said "sure" and lent him his staff car and chauffeur.

Patton arrived at the front just as the Germans defending the abbey were opening up one of their "saturation" mortar barrages. While officers groaned and hid their eyes, Patton strolled calmly through the black blossoms of smoke and fire, inspecting the hilltop fortress from all angles.

Later, when Clark reprimanded him for risking his neck without any purpose—he had no business or responsibility on the line—he looked deeply troubled.

"I want to die in battle," he said. "And now it looks like I may never get another chance."

A great deal has been written in retrospect about General George S. Patton. Opinions vary. Some consider him an unparalleled military genius; others rate him merely as a crap player who made a dozen straight passes.

"... a man who demanded the impossible from his troops and got it sometimes."

"... the kind of reckless tactics that win battles—and can lose wars."

"... best field general to come out of the war."

"... not so much a good sculptor as a good cutting tool."

He was a fierce inspiration to many; many hated him.

Patton's evaluation of himself was simple: "General Grant used to say that there was a time in every battle when both leaders think they are defeated; that the man who persists wins it. I persist."

Patton was laid to rest along the famous route his Third Army carved through France in the memorable days of 1945. Many epitaphs have been written for him, but there is one with which neither his critics nor his admirers will disagree:

"He loved a good soldier and a good fight."

**On The Way To War  
With Patton and GIs on the Western Desert**  
by Thomas W. Pew, Jr.

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Forty years had passed, and they came to stand under the summer sun and remember. To stand where once they had rumbled across the Mojave Desert in tanks, jeeps, and half-tracks. To stand and listen to speeches delivered by assistants to their congressmen—important people too busy to attend themselves, much less remember that this barren Western desert is where the United States began winning World War II. And a place where many GI's got their first startled taste of a larger-than-life commander who possessed a unique ability to inspire his men, infuriate his superiors, and intimidate everyone else—especially the German high command.

Not until Porter Williamson began by confessing that even after forty years he still felt uneasy about standing in the shade in that desert, did the veterans know they were listening to one of their own. "Why if General Patton could look down from wherever he is and see me standing here in the shade, while troops were out in the sun," Williamson said to a round of laughter, "he'd have my hide for sure. We all stood in the sun then," he reminded them with a reference to the commander who pushed his men with an iron fist—an officer "who looked like a general, but talked like a top kick," with a blue-streak in his tongue that matched the curses of the toughest boys in the ranks.

Several hundred GI's who trained for the war in the deserts of California, Arizona, and Nevada and later served under General George S. Patton, Jr., in North Africa, Sicily, and Europe assembled for one last time in the middle of the Mojave Desert this past summer. They came to Chiriaco Summit (Camp Young) near Indio, California, to celebrate V-E Day and to commemorate with a permanent historical marker the training camps established by a commander who went to war with all the religious zealotry of an early Christian Crusader. Then, when the speeches were done, to swap memories of training for and fighting a war that General Patton assured them (with numerous four-letter expletives) they'd one day be proud to "put our grandchildren on our knees and tell them how we did it!" Even Harry Kies, a post-war naturalized German-American who served with the Eighth Panzer Regiment under Rommel and spent most of the war in stateside POW camps in McLean, Texas, Roswell, New Mexico, and two midwestern states, came to the Desert Center ceremonies to meet "some of you guys I fought against."

Gathered together for one final time were men of the Third, Fourth, Sixth, and Seventh Armored Divisions; the Fourth, Thirty-third, and Ninety-fifth Infantry Divisions; several independent units that included Field Artillery, Engineers, Tank Destroyers, and Cavalry. To hear the stories told today, the grim business of preparing for war was alleviated with an endless supply of practical jokes and tricks played on one another, even by (but never on) the fearsome general himself. Porter Williamson, who served on Patton's staff in the desert at the beginning, recalled a time when Patton made surprise inspections of night guards during simulated combat-alert conditions.

"We were driving towards our own camp outside of the perimeter when we saw one of the outer guards, and General Patton asked me to make sure he knew his assignment," Williamson remembered. After the guard properly challenged Williamson, pointing his rifle directly at the lieutenant's chest until the passwords were exchanged, Williamson questioned him about his orders, while Patton remained out of sight in the dark.

"From Which direction do you expect trouble?" Williamson queried. When the guard pointed to the center of the camp, Williamson proceeded to dress him down angrily, knowing full well that the general had overheard the guard's error. An error that would mean friendly fire directed at the soldier's own headquarters in combat. "That's the center of our camp," Williamson said with disgust. "The enemy would be in the opposite direction. "

The guard stared back at him, poker-faced, and without blinking replied: "You didn't ask me anything about the enemy, Sir. I know where the enemy is. You asked me where I expected trouble, and I expect trouble from right back there. That's Patton's headquarters, and that's where I expect trouble."

Williamson, now painfully aware that the general was sitting in the open command car just yards away overhearing word of this, and as a member of the general's immediate staff equally aware of Patton's unpredictable, violent temper, stared back at the soldier in disbelief. But before he could reply, out of the desert dark he heard Patton laughing and calling out: "Come on back, Williamson. That man understands his mission."

Equally surprised at this disembodied command out of the dark, the guard gave Porter a quizzical look and asked, "Who's that?" When he heard the general's name he exclaimed, "My God, you gotta expect Patton from all directions."

Williamson recalls today that when he climbed back into the car, Patton was still chuckling and remarked: "We are doing better! We are up to the training of the Roman legions!" It wasn't until years later, Porter admits, when he read Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, that he finally understood what Patton meant that night in 1942. As a man who was equally at home with the phalanxes of ancient Greece and the legions of Rome as well as the columns of Napoleon and the mass armies of World War I, and who applied all of the lessons of warfare from all military history, Patton believed in the maxim of inflexible Roman military discipline, that a good soldier should dread his officers far more than the enemy.

The story also illustrates another basic Patton tenet. Whether he was testing troops in the Mojave or going after the Germans in the desert of Tunisia, Patton always wanted to be where he was least expected, preferably moving swiftly and undetected behind enemy lines until he was ready to strike. As he put it, in his unique vernacular, the trick is: "Catch the enemy by the nose with fire and kick him in the pants with fire emplaced through movement . . . The enemy's rear is the happy hunting ground for armor. Use every means to get it there."

Patton was a tough taskmaster among his troops and he was not above tweaking the noses of his officers. Walter Hennessey (known as "Three Star" to his friends) spent four years fighting overseas as a tank driver and a machine gunner with the 757th Tank Battalion. He recalls that the officers were awed by Patton far more than the men, "who weren't bucking for anything."

One day when we were practicing decontaminating our tank, a procedure we had to learn in case of gas attack (Hennessey remembers), out of nowhere pops the general, salutes the lieutenant in charge of the platoon, jumps up on the tank, and talks to Sergeant Rucker. He questions him about what he is doing and why. There are now about five company and battalion officers at the foot of the tank, including our colonel. When Sergeant Rucker explains what he is doing, General Patton shakes his hand and whispers something into his ear. He jumps off the tank, salutes the assembled officers, and doesn't say a word to them as he gets in his car and is driven away.

The minute Sergeant Rucker gets off the tank, of course, the officers want to know what General Patton whispered in his ear. Sergeant Rucker says, "What General Patton whispered in my ear was: 'The minute you get off the tank, Sergeant, those dizzy bastards will want to know what I whispered into your ear.'"

Sergeant Charles Jeglinski, who trained in the Mojave and joined Patton's army after D-Day in Europe, did double duty in the Mojave. Looking across the flats near the temporary reviewing stand, he can still see 1,700 1942-tanks in one sweeping maneuver crossing the desert, stirring up



a manmade dust storm. "That was something to see," he recalls with an infectious excitement for the ghost tank corps rumbling through his memory. Then gazing across the great Mojave Caldera towards the Chocolate Mountains, he adds, "It was also something the night the first big wind came up and swept all our tents away, leaving us scrambling around in the dark in a desert windstorm in nothing but our skivvies." On maneuvers away from camp, he recalled, when they didn't even use tents, they slept with ropes around their sleeping bags to keep the rattlers away, and every morning before putting on their boots, shook out the scorpions.

Sergeant Jeglinski was called back into the Army during the Korean War, and shipped right back to the Desert Training Center to help train a new generation of soldiers for that war.

I'd already retired from a career in the Army (Jeglinski recalls today), and the first thing I know they come after me in 1951 and say: "Jeglinski, we need you. We need someone who's been out there in the desert and knows it, and can train these guys." At first I told them, "Like hell, I did my time." But after they agreed I could sign up on my own terms and get out again when I wanted, I agreed. You know, once I'd been out on the desert in 1942, I never forgot it. It gets to you. In a way you never want to leave. Truth is I was glad to be back."

Jeglinski remembers the Korean War days as like living his earlier life over again, except the second time he was dishing up the training, and afterwards he didn't have to do the fighting.

General Patton selected the remote Mojave for training troops because war-scale maneuvers and mock battles could be conducted there without encountering civilians. The original World War II training area covered some 18,000 square miles. It extended from near Boulder City, Nevada, on the north, south to the Mexican border, east to Phoenix, Arizona, and west to Pomona, California. It had all the hardships of weather and terrain that a general, who thought like a Roman legionary, wanted to harden men and equipment for the real thing. He believed that leading untrained men into battle was a crime. At the end of the war a survey of Patton's Third Army battle statistics showed that the Third Army caused the enemy 1,443,888 casualties, of whom 47,500 had been killed and 1,280,688 taken prisoner. In the same period Patton's men had 160,692 casualties, of whom 27,104 had been killed. In other words, the Patton army inflicted about ten casualties for each one they received, making the general good on his tough guarantee that to win a war you "had to make the other poor bastard die for his country." Thousands of Germans surrendered when they knew they were facing Patton's Third Army. To surrender to Patton's men, it was said, was not so great a dishonor as to surrender to any other unit.

It all began according to the general's plan in the Mojave where temperatures climbed to 120 degrees in the shade and up to 152 degrees inside some of the tanks. ("Three Star" Hennessey wrote home to his Mother on June 24, 1942, that it hit 185 degrees inside his tank during maneuvers that month.) The troops remember the open-top, turreted tank destroyers as being the hottest. Inspection of tools and equipment was made early in the morning or late in the evening as any equipment or tools laid out on tarps beside individual vehicles, in the desert sun, could not be picked up without serious burns. Even climbing in and out of the tanks at midday required wearing heavy gloves. Water in the Lister bags sometimes reached 90-degrees but after climbing out of a 150 degree tank, GI's found even 90 degree water cool. By the Colorado Aqueduct that skirted some of the desert camps, there were showers that could wash the dust off 500 men at once. It wasn't unusual for soldiers to take showers in their fatigues; by the time they walked to the mess tent, they were dry. Ev Hayes, Area Manager for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management at Needles, California, a man dedicated to preserving what's left of the training camps today, has calculated that more than one million young Americans were trained in the Mojave Desert camps from February 1942 through June 1944. That number included at least twenty-three of the more than eighty-five army divisions fielded in World War II. Also included in the total were elements of the Army Air Force, as well as numerous support units.

But as for the desert being entirely devoid of civilians during the training years, Sergeant Joe Delgado and other soldiers who gathered after the ceremony recalled a mock battle, with tens of thousands of rounds of live ammunition that failed to take into account one civilian. The battle of Pelen Pass was a training exercise put on near Desert Center for the benefit of forty-eight State Governors. "We threw everything we had at that pass in the mountains across the valley," Delgado remembers, shading his eyes and pointing off at an and gap in the mountains.

First came the airplanes and strafed hell out of it. Then the artillery shells began to cover the ground, next came tanks rumbling into the pass blasting away and finally streams of troops. There was so much dust and smoke up there you wouldn't think anything could be alive for miles. But when we stopped, and the smoke began to clear, someone shouted, "Hey look up there, what's that moving? " And just like nothing at all had been going on, this old dusty prospector and his burro, looking like something from the last century, came walking through all that smoke and dust and debris paying no attention at all to any of us or all the live ammunition we'd blasted that pass with.

In the end, when the smoke from the pass cleared, when the dust from the rumbling tanks settled, when the echo of bugle and cannon ceased in the desert, when the practical jokes that alleviated the tension and fear for what was ahead were played, the soldiers of the Mojave followed their general off to war. First to North Africa where Patton commanded the amphibious landing of the Western Task Force in French Morocco, part of the first major campaign of the United States in World War II. Later to Sicily where what was won on the battlefield—besting his British rival General Montgomery as well as the Germans and Italians—was eclipsed by scandal and humiliation over Patton's slapping of a soldier in a field hospital. And finally to Europe, where in command of his beloved Third Army, Patton rolled across western Europe making his mark on history as a warrior to match those warriors he'd read and dreamed about since he was a boy in California, fighting a war he'd waited thirty-three army career years to fight.

In the end it was for this man, in spite of all his bombast and bravado, that the old soldiers gathered in the Mojave last summer. In an era that is short on heroes and long on international frustrations for the country they had fought for in World War II, here was a man who in time of war dealt with frustrations in a vernacular of word and deed everyone could understand: Grab them by the nose, kick them in the pants. In the last analysis, of course, the battles were fought, as John Wayne put it in the war movie *In Harm's Way* as "all battles are fought, by scared men who'd rather be someplace else." From the spring of 1942 to the spring of 1944, for each American soldier who had his thirteen weeks of desert training, the Mojave was the someplace else before the battle.

*Bibliographic Note:* For background on Patton, see: H. Essame, *Patton: A Study in Command* (1974); Charles M. Province, *The Unknown Patton* (1983); Porter B. Williamson, *Patton's Principles* (1979); Charles Whiting, *Patton* (1970); Ladislav Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* (1963).

### **Remembrance Day in Ettelbruck (Sidebar A)**

General George S. Patton, Jr., is a national hero to the citizens of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. To express affectionate gratitude for liberation from Nazi occupation by Patton and the United States Third Army in 1944, inhabitants of the little town of Ettelbruck in Luxembourg have celebrated Remembrance Day each summer for over thirty years. Usually held on the last Sunday in June, ceremonies take place in Patton Park on the edge of town, where a nine-foot, bronze statue of the general in combat garb looks out over the valley. Nearby is one of the Sherman tanks that rolled into Ettelbruck with American forces in 1944, kept in apple-pie order by the townspeople. At the far end of the mini-park a twenty-five-foot obelisk, surmounted by the

defiant figure of an American eagle, is inscribed with the names of the units of the Third Army that fought in Luxembourg to free the duchy in the summer of 1944 and then to protect it from re-invasion by the Nazis at the end of that year in the historic Battle of the Bulge. Embedded in a rock wall near the obelisk is a plaque (placed there by the son of General Patton on Remembrance Day in 1977) with a diagram of the battle zones in Luxembourg during World War II.

With thousands of spectators in town, civilian and military representatives of Luxembourg and the United States hold ceremonies in Patton Park that reflect the appreciation of Luxembourgers for the heroism of American soldiers and the generosity of the United States in rebuilding the Luxembourg economy after peace came. At the close of emotional proceedings, the local band plays the national anthems of the United States and of Luxembourg, while U.S. jet planes from a nearby base fly over in low passes.

The military parade that follows takes on the festive air that pervades the town. Because Ettelbruck has always singled out Patton as its especial hero, it is known as "Patton Town." The streets are decked out in American flags, homes are decorated with red, white, and blue bunting, photographs of Patton appear in many windows, and the local Patton Museum has its busiest day of the year. Festivities continue into the night, with most of the town gathering in the soccer stadium to enjoy band concerts and military drills. On this day, many Luxembourgers travel to Hamm, a village near Luxembourg City, where a U.S. military cemetery holds the bodies of over 5,000 American soldiers, including that of General Patton, who died in 1945 after complications following an automobile accident.

Information about Remembrance Day in Ettelbruck and travel to the battlefields of the Bulge may be obtained from Icelandair, 630 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10111

### **When You Go (Sidebar B)**

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management has plans for a permanent exhibit at the Desert Training Center to display memorabilia from the years 1942 to 1944, when over one million young Americans trained on the sands of this area for duty in World War II. The Bureau also plans to make some of the abandoned camps accessible to visitors.

At present, the only camp accessible to automobiles without four-wheel drive or without considerable walking is Camp Iron Mountain, located north of California Highway 62, approximately fifty-five miles east of Twentynine Palms, California, and fifty-five miles west of Parker, Arizona. Traveling east on highway 62, pass the intersection with highway 177, continue on for seven miles to the Iron Mountain Pumping Plant Road, and turn left (north). Proceed on this paved road to the entrance of the Pumping Plant, and then turn left (west). Follow this dirt road to the power-line service road (dirt). Turn left (south) and follow the power-line service road for two miles to a sign that will direct you to turn left again (east) and follow the dirt road to the campsite, approximately one-eighth mile away. Visitors must always be cautious about driving on these dirt roads. Often, flash floods with deep sand drifts over the roads, making them impassable. So, before you drive on—stop, look and consider, to avoid getting stuck. Visitors should realize that summer daytime temperatures often climb above 115 degrees.

Acres of stone work line the abandoned roads and walkways of Camp Iron Mountain. Many rock designs of company symbols remain as well as special insignias such as; the seal of the United States made of small pieces of white quartz, the medical profession symbol (caduceus) made of small pieces of reddish-purple and white stone, and stones outlining the shape of an ambulance.

The chapel southwest of the flag circle is in good condition while the outdoor altar northeast of the flag circle is in fair condition. A large relief map of the area is in fair condition, though

showing the effects of weather and vandalism. The Bureau is seeking information regarding the map, as nothing is known about its history. Everell Hayes, BLM Area Manager, asks, "Does anyone know who built the map or what material it's made of?"

The Bureau asks that no one treasure-hunt in this area. Do not take anything from the Camp, and do not move any of the rock alignments. Leave only your footprints. For more information, write to U.S. Bureau of Land Management, 901 Third Street, Needles, California 92363, Telephone (610) 326-3896.

**View From The West**  
by Tom Pew

**American West**  
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*An appeaser is one who feeds the crocodile—hoping it will eat him last.* Winston Churchill

The first explorers who saw it called it the land of the dead. Later, pioneers headed for California avoided its dry wastes, rumored to be littered with the bones of those who had gone before. Even today the modem towns on its edges—Twentynine Palms, Indio, Needles, Blythe—seem desiccated, stark, tenuous.

Still, like other places in the West, the Mojave Desert is a vast natural theater—owing its most powerful impressions to the fearsome qualities that simultaneously attract and repel the visitor. Desert basins filled with exotic Joshua trees, agave, and cactus spread like taut drumheads between distant rings of volcanic mountains that thrust up and stab the sky like rows of barbed wire.

It is a place where the sound of a fly at noon takes on the ominous whine of a lost airplane. Where the wind makes cave-mouth moans blowing by the ear. Where a man walking alone turns around from time to time, haunted by the sensation that someone is there, following just behind.

Only once in its history has the Mojave been filled with men, and the signs of their presence are all but obliterated by the passage of the forty years since they left. The Mojave was the epic-scale stage where General George S. Patton, Jr. chose to gird himself for war. It's the place where he strapped on his most famous wartime stage prop—the six-shooter, symbol for all his men to see. Symbol of the American-style, aggressive, personal war he would wage against Germany.

I went to the Mojave this summer in search of the memory of the man and the million GIs who followed him into the American desert to prepare themselves for war. I left convinced that General George S. Patton, Jr., for all his polo playing and erudite academic understanding of military history, owed more to this harsh Western landscape and its heritage of self-reliance and action than history has ever credited.

Like Gary Cooper in *High Noon* taking on both the outlaws and the foot-dragging, cowering hometown or like Clint Eastwood in this summer's *Pale Rider* stalking into battle outnumbered (and letting the enemy worry about exposed flanks and uneven odds), General Patton left the Mojave training camps and was soon cutting a wartime swath across northern Africa, Sicily, and western Europe and through the collective allied imagination in a fashion that confounded supreme command headquarters even as it consumed the Nazis.

Here was a commander who led his men with all the verve and dash of a Western sheriff (popular among his deputies, if not among his superiors). And here was an enigmatic, cultured warrior who relished the chase. A chase he executed with all the blood-thirsty determination of a territorial bounty hunter, using Sherman tanks instead of horses to ride down and destroy his enemy.

Even in his own camp, among his officer peers, he was more often than not treated like some kind of pariah, renegade—a hired gun, respected, envied (and simultaneously feared) for his skills as a single-minded, unabashed killer of Nazis and a leader of men.

The niceties of peacetime don't have room for such men. Patton understood this and like some fairy-tale warrior, poetically wished to die by the last bullet fired in his last battle—not humiliatingly dismissed in peacetime because of an egregious political blunder, and as the result of a neck snapped in the back seat of a jeep in a minor accident.

Near the end of the war when Patton was held back so that General Alexi Antonov's Red Army could take Czechoslovakia (for good as it turned out), Patton blurted out in frustration and anger: "For God's sake, Brad [General Omar Bradley], it seems to me that a great nation like America should let others worry about complications."

As the editors wrapped up this issue of *American West* with its stories of Patton, the men who remember him, and the actor whose name is practically synonymous with his, we read in the press that three crew members of the hijacked TWA flight 847 had positively identified the terrorist torturer-killer of Navy diver Robert Dean Stethem. Stethem is the young American sailor whose bludgeoned body was dumped out the rear door of the airplane in Beirut while the world watched. We read that the FBI is aiming to get enough evidence to obtain a federal grand jury indictment against the terrorists.

We couldn't help wonder what the General's reaction might have been. We couldn't help wonder if Americans would be a little less vilified, a little more respected even in those nations Patton and his fellow soldiers liberated and then rebuilt forty years ago—if we spent a little less time worrying about complications.

Complications in Patton's time might have meant a free Czechoslovakia. Complications today would arise out of world protests over an appropriate American response—like the posting of "Wanted, Dead or Alive" signs under the picture of Stethem's murderer.

It's not a civilized response, but then neither are continuing human sacrifices to the crocodile. The harsh lessons of training in the Mojave, the harsher lessons of war have one unblinkable reality: peace means working for survival before one becomes the last mouthful for the crocodile.

## **Who Killed Patton?**

by Martin Price

### **The Spotlight**

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*Super Spy Said He Was Paid \$10,000 to Murder World War II Hero. After more than three decades, the terrible truth has at last emerged: General George S. Patton, America's greatest military leader since Robert E. Lee and a hero of World War II, assassinated by his own*

*countrymen. The official version of Patton's death—"an auto accident"—is torn to shreds. Now that the cover-up has been torn apart, more shocking information will be emerging in the weeks ahead.*

As thousands of concerned and informed Americans have long suspected, the legendary World War II hero General George S. "Blood and Guts" Patton was assassinated.

The staunchly anti-communist general, who refused to join the other high-ranking members of the U.S. military and the members of the Truman administration in their post-war kow-towing to Soviet Russia and its communist leader Josef Stalin, has long been alleged to have died of complications resulting from injuries sustained in an auto accident in December, 1945.

While there is no doubt that some type of "auto-related mishap" did indeed occur on that fateful day, a re-examination of reports and statements concerning the incident and the events that followed it—together with new and explosive statements by involved persons who for more than 30 years have kept their silence—at long last gives the lie to the official U.S. Army and government position that Patton was merely an "accident" victim.

Instead, the truth is that this highly popular general—who some have called the greatest American military leader since General Robert E. Lee—was most probably the first in a long series of assassination victims, the best known of whom are the Kennedy brothers, John and Robert.

There is no question that Patton was murdered because he was looking at the post-war world as a pragmatic, realistic military man and not as a political lackey of the Rockefeller banking interests and internationalist one-worlders who cheerfully plunged the U.S. into World War II and thus forever changed the face of this nation.

While it is impossible at this moment to accurately lay the blame for Patton's death at the feet of any one individual, it appears without question that this great patriot died on the orders of his fellow countrymen, at least several of whom banded together into a criminal cabal determined to remove so potentially explosive an obstacle as the indomitable general.

### **Bazata Spills The Beans**

Among those to come forth with new information on the murder of Patton is Douglas Bazata, a veteran intelligence agent, who said he received a contract on Patton's life in 1944. According to Bazata, the order for "the hit" came down to him from none other than the legendary Office of Strategic Services (OSS) director "Wild Bill" Donovan. Bazata stated: "I was paid \$10,000 to do the job. I didn't do it, but I know the guy who killed him." He adds, "Apparently quite a number of top-level people were jealous of Patton."

Bazata's claim that efforts to get rid of the enormously popular general date back to 1944 appears to be accurate, since *The Spotlight's* probe revealed that the general escaped a number of close calls approximately eight months prior to the fateful incident of December 9, 1945, and that he had for some time been telling family and friends that he believed the time left for him to live was limited.

Interestingly, the general, who survived the bloodiest and most dangerous years of the war without major incident, was nearly killed on April 21, 1945, while flying in his Piper Cub to the Third Army Corps Headquarters at Fedfield. On that occasion his plane was attacked by what was first believed to be a German fighter, but which later turned out to be a Spitfire, flown by a so-called "inexperienced" Polish volunteer serving with the British Royal Air Force.

Not long thereafter on May 3, 1945, Patton was again nearly killed when an ox-cart, coming from a blind lane, suddenly appeared on the road where Patton's jeep was traveling at its customarily fast clip. His driver, a Sgt. Mims, miraculously managed to avoid a collision, but a huge protruding pole to which the oxen had been tied grazed the general's head.

In June he returned to the states, for what was to be the last time, and received a tumultuous hero's welcome from the American people. There was even talk among friends and associates that he should consider seeking the presidency, either as a major party candidate or an independent. Nevertheless, official biographers report that in the course of this visit home the general was preoccupied with thoughts of death which he voiced openly to his family. When they protested these remarks, he replied simply: "It is true. It has been revealed to me."

Upon his return to Germany, Patton's innate respect for the fighting prowess of the German military and his avowed and outspoken anti-Soviet feelings kept him in continuous hot water, and in late September General Dwight D. Eisenhower informed him that he was being removed as head of the Third Army. About a week later the decision was made to place Patton—one of the greatest fighting men in American history—in charge of the so-called Fifteenth Army, which one biographer describes as, "an 'army' only by the most generous stretch of the imagination."

The new command placed Patton in charge of a so-called "paper army" whose mission was to piece together from existing records a history of the war from D-Day to the German surrender.

Apparently, however, this move did little to stem the Establishment's fear of the resilient general, for the "accidents" continued. On October 13, 1945, Patton was in still another auto accident in which he received minor injuries. However, it was Sunday, December 9, 1945, that marked the beginning of his end.

The official version of the so-called accident and its aftermath is reported by biographer Ladislav Farago in his work *Patton* and is essentially as follows. Patton had decided to embark on a day's hunting outing, and was traveling south in his sedan on the so-called Frankfurt-Mannheim Road with his aide, Major General Hobart R. Gay, his longtime friend and chief of staff. The driver of the vehicle is identified as Pfc. Woodring, a 23-year-old soldier attached to the "paper army." At the start, Patton's sedan was being followed by a quarter-ton truck driven by Sgt. Joe Spruce.

According to the official account, Woodring encountered a maze of railroad tracks while passing through the northern outskirts of Mannheim. He slowed the car to about 10 mph, and subsequently accelerated to about 30 mph when he once again reached open road. As the entourage passed the tracks, Spruce's truck passed the sedan and took the lead. Suddenly another truck was sighted coming toward them at about 15 mph.

Just as Spruce's vehicle passed the truck, the approaching vehicle made an abrupt 90-degree turn into what reportedly was a half-hidden road leading to the roadside camp of the Quartermaster Corps Unit to which the driver belonged. As the truck made the sudden turn it appeared to be bearing down on the sedan and veering somewhat from its 90-degree angle.

The general's driver swerved to avoid hitting the truck, which in turn also swerved. As a result a seemingly minor accident occurred: the general's sedan smashed into the rear of the other vehicle.

Although the impact of the crash was negligible later reports and photos showed that the sedan was totally demolished. There is seemingly unanimous agreement among all sources that the "auto mishap"—whether it occurred as described in this account or not—resulted in injury only to Patton. According to Farago, the general sustained cuts in his forehead and scalp that were bleeding profusely, although he was fully conscious, and supposedly the first to speak.

The account notes that he is said to have asked Major General Gay, who was seated to his left in the rear of the sedan, whether he was injured. When Gay responded that he seemed all right, Patton then announced, "I, think I'm paralyzed. I'm having trouble breathing." This account makes no mention of what may have happened to Patton's driver, Sgt. Spruce in the quarter-ton, or to the driver of the approaching vehicle that allegedly precipitated the accident.

### **Seriously Injured**

When the ambulance deposited the general at the 130th Station Hospital at Heidelberg, X-rays were supposedly taken immediately which showed a simple fracture of the third cervical vertebra and some dislocation of the fourth cervical vertebra. Complete paralysis was noted below the area of the third vertebra, and his condition was marked "critical" with prognosis guarded. The injuries noted seem indeed strange for an accident of minimal impact.

Moreover, if, as official accounts of the accident state, Patton was thrown forward and then hurled back while sitting on the right back seat with Gay on his left, it is difficult to comprehend how such extensive damage might have occurred. Whiplash normally is limited and negligible when impact with an object is made by the head when it's going either backward or forward. The snap motion does not normally occur. For example, if, as the official reports state, he was bleeding profusely from cuts in the forehead and scalp, then his head did indeed make contact in both front and back.

Medical sources consulted by *The Spotlight* agree that if such impact was indeed made by his head, then the type of injuries suffered to his vertebrae would have been virtually impossible to sustain—especially at such minimal speed.

There is still another factor that has been overlooked, and that is that Patton was an athletic man, in excellent physical condition and quite used to the recoil from large weapons of the type used in hunting. This in itself should have created a certain amount of scar tissue and strengthened the entire front and back where the vertebrae are located. He was, of course, also a veteran of tank warfare and should have also developed a resiliency to such jolting.

These are not the only strange circumstances surrounding the accident and its aftermath. Although the general survived from the date of the incident on December 9 until December 21, Farago makes no mention of traction having been used in treatment, and Bazata has said that to the best of his recollection traction was used initially but was removed when the general began to show improvement. There was no mention of any surgery having been attempted, despite the fact that operations were being performed at that time to reduce pressure on the spine from the type of injury from which Patton was suffering.

Then, of course, there remains the entire question of Patton taking his paralysis in the car so calmly and of Major General Gay, who was seated beside him, having suffered no injury at all. Presumably Gay, too, should have suffered at least some trauma, considering that his seat-mate allegedly sustained such extensive and ultimately fatal injuries.

Given the evidence available, a shocking conclusion is drawn: The dislocation and fracture of the vertebrae occurred in the ambulance, and these injuries—together with some highly questionable medical events that occurred subsequently—resulted in the general's death. He was, in short, murdered.

### **Patton Has "Relapse"**

Unfortunately for the perpetrators, however, while this well-planned assassination attempt succeeded to a considerable degree, Patton's excellent physical condition enabled him not only to linger until December 21 but in fact to improve. He had gotten so much better that his wife finally decided that he could and should be flown home to Massachusetts and hospitalized near his family home.

Barely had this decision been made, and steps taken to implement it, than the General's condition began to deteriorate. Suddenly and mysteriously he developed an inability to breathe and began to bring up mucus. The diagnosis made was that he had suffered a clot in the leg which traveled to one of his lungs, and his condition was going downhill. Still the general battled on and even again seemed to be recovering. Then again it was diagnosed that he had suffered still another embolism—this time in the other leg—which had traveled to his other lung.

Although he was now suffering from pulmonary embolisms in both lungs, Patton's indomitable will continued to survive and to triumph over his afflictions. Suddenly it was



diagnosed that he was suffering from acute heart failure from the strain of the lung embolisms. The official cause for his death was in fact heart failure which resulted from an inability to breathe and a total congestion of the lungs.

Interestingly, while reports of the death and accounts by his biographers nowhere mention the word "pneumonia" and in fact there is no evidence to suggest that the general ever contracted pneumonia, there have been widespread news accounts that this was the cause of death. In addition, there have never been any test data revealed to the public indicating that the general had in fact suffered from pulmonary embolisms, nor has it ever been stated precisely what measures were taken to combat his horrendous final collapse.

So extensive is the shroud of secrecy that government officials have dropped on this matter that an inquiry by *The Spotlight* to the Pentagon public affairs office brought forth the finding that the Defense Department had no news clips on file that dealt with Patton's death. A public affairs spokesman said the office often received calls about the general's military career, that it kept available an extensive clip file on his exploits, but the file contained no mention whatsoever of his fatal accident or of his death. Indeed, the spokesman was among those who believed that Patton was ultimately the victim of pneumonia.

Thus it appears that stubborn, iron-willed "Blood and Guts"—who refused to die even after suffering almost complete paralysis at the hands of skilled assassins—was ultimately killed in the hospital either through the administering of a drug designed to induce clotting (many of which were available even at that time) or by the injection of minute amounts of air into his veins.

Interestingly, in a scenario reminiscent of the aftermath of John F. Kennedy's death, stories and reports dealing with the death of Patton make no mention of an autopsy having been performed, and Bazata told *The Spotlight* that "a type of autopsy"—but "not a normal autopsy"—was performed. The ex-OSS officer specifically compared the Patton post-mortem to the one that was done on Kennedy and which has in retrospect been shown to have been incomplete.

There is no doubt that Patton was marked for extinction by the now triumphant power elite of internationalist, one-world bankers, and their lackeys in the highest ranks of the military and the U.S. political system. His profound hatred of the Soviets, coupled with his realistic assessment of them as an enemy that should be immediately vanquished—even if it required the enlisting of top German military men in the effort—and his extreme popularity with the voters, could simply not be tolerated.

### **Who Killed Him?**

Those who might have sought and arranged his death are legion, and the caliber of Patton's enemies is such that OSS chief Donovan could have easily been enlisted into the effort. General Eisenhower, for example, was a chief proponent of "world peace and accommodation" with the Soviet communists and it was Eisenhower—in contravention of the Geneva Convention—who arranged for the notorious "Operation Keelhaul" (*Spotlight*, Sept. 18, 1978). As a result of this infamous program, somewhere between two and five million unwilling Christians were forcibly repatriated to Stalinist Russia where they met death by firing squad or in labor camps at the hands of Stalin's hangmen. It was Eisenhower who removed Patton from his command of the Third Army, and who took full responsibility for stopping Patton—and indeed all American troops—from taking Berlin.

Still another staunch opponent of Patton was General George Marshall, who almost single-handedly was responsible for U.S. unpreparedness when the Japanese attack was launched upon Pearl Harbor. Marshall, who was horse-back riding in the Virginia hunt country on that infamous morning, had the day before obtained decoded Japanese messages giving the details of the attack. Calmly he informed the military leaders at Pearl Harbor of his coup—by sending a commercial

telegram that would arrive hours after the Japanese assault. Marshall was, of course, also a committed internationalist.

Also singled out as a particular foe of Patton's was General Omar Bradley, who, according to one former OSS operative (not Bazata), particularly disliked Patton and who had crossed swords with "Blood and Guts" on numerous occasions.

Any or all of these men—as well as many others—could have banded together against Patton, and in addition to Donovan and his boys at OSS, the relations between the U.S. government and the Mafia were also booming at that time. And from what better source could one obtain an operative ready, willing and able to carry out the job? During the European conflict then-New York Governor Thomas Dewey and Donovan, as well as Roosevelt's infamous hatchet man Allen Dulles, had come to an accommodation with the notorious Mafioso Lucky Luciano.

The accommodation was that in return for Luciano's cooperation and for maintaining close ties to his Mafia brothers in Italy (who were under heavy siege from the government of Premier Benito Mussolini and who would act as a fifth column against Mussolini), Luciano was to be set free from his maximum security prison and brought to a minimum-security—almost country club—facility near New York City. Here he could in part help direct the Mafia's war effort and keep peace on the docks of New York among the labor unions which, even then, were controlled by organized crime. Luciano was, to say the least, an extremely powerful man and one who would grant almost any favor so that he might someday obtain the promised release from prison.

There are many incidents both spoken of in hushed whispers among surviving OSS men and referred to historically where hit men and small cadres of experienced killers were supplied by Luciano to be the handmaidens of the OSS. Thus it was as far back as World War II that the American intelligence community developed its close ties to organized crime, which were to subsequently be maintained and nurtured by the CIA.

Sources have in the past alleged that it was indeed Luciano who supplied Mafiosi, masquerading as American soldiers and at the direction of Donovan, to assassinate Patton.

Among the trained killers that the Mafia has so generously supplied to this country have been experts in the dislocating of essential bones, nerves etc., which, when expertly done, can result in death. Indeed it is well known that a man can receive a beating without having a single mark on his body or—if under the influence of a narcotic—even a memory of the beating. Could this have happened to Patton once he was loaded into the ambulance after the fateful accident?

Another event that occurred just prior to the accident, according to reports in a 1971 edition of the *Washington Post*, was an alleged statement by Patton that he was going to quit the Army rather than retire. It was also reported that the general had promised to go out with a bang, and that he had planned a statement that would make headlines around the world. This report confirms other information gathered by *The Spotlight* about the general's plans.

Moreover, what is particularly interesting is the fact that in 1945—and continuing to this day—there were countless tales and allegations of missing German gold said to be worth approximately \$250 million. A pervasive rumor spread through the Army that this gold had been found and removed from the European battlefield to a neutral country. There it was incorporated into a type of "trust fund" for the private financial use of the top commanders of the Allied forces. It has been alleged that this money—on which Patton may have been preparing to blow the whistle—was drawn upon to arrange payments for his death.

While *The Spotlight* cannot say with any assurance precisely who killed General Patton, it seems an indisputable certainty that this far-sighted American patriot and leader did not die from the natural causes of injuries sustained in an auto accident but was foully murdered by other Americans.

## **General Patton and his Guns** by Charles M. Province

**Guns Magazine**  
Volume XXXII, Number 12-6  
December 1986, pp 36-39, 76-78

General Patton, in December of 1944, explained to Major-General Robert M. Littlejohn that, "I want the men of Third Army to know where I am, and that I risk the same dangers that they do. A little fancy dress is added to help maintain the leadership and fighting spirit that I desire in the Third Army."

Over the years, that "fancy dress" included a number of personal weapons definitely not government issue.

The best remembered "trademark" of General Patton is the ivory handled Colt .45 Peacemaker that he wore.

During the early days of World War II, when the news media was discovering that Patton was good copy, Patton was often referred to as "two-gun" Patton, alluding to the suggestion that Patton wore two ivory handled Colt .45's all the time. These reports are not wholly correct on two counts.

First, Patton neither owned nor wore two "matching" Colt .45's. The pistol commonly thought to be a Colt was actually a Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum. It was never worn as often as the Colt.

Secondly, the "two-gun" image of Patton is largely a creation of some inventive reporter. According to extensive research, there exists only one photograph of Patton wearing two ivory-handled revolvers at one time. Of course, Patton never said anything to hamper the image created by the media, since it served his purpose. The photograph spoken of was taken of Patton standing on the beach on the day of his landing at Fedala, North Africa with his Western Task Force in November of 1942. It was the first major American naval invasion in the history of the United States.

It has been reported that another photograph of Patton wearing two pistols does exist, taken during maneuvers at the Desert Training Center in California in 1942, but that photograph has yet to be located.

Periodically, Patton would wear the Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum in place of the Colt .45, but it was an exception rather than the rule. As proven by "wear marks", the Colt .45 was the usual weapon worn in the right holster of the set. The Smith & Wesson .357 fits the left holster exactly.

Although the Colt .45 and Smith & Wesson .357 are the so called "favorites" worn by the General, over the years Patton collected and used many different pistols. In Europe during World War II Patton had a small .32 caliber Colt automatic pistol which he called his "social pistol". He usually wore this .32 in a small clip-holster in his right hand trouser pocket when he was in the rear areas. He wore it inside his jacket as an additional "safety precaution" when he was in the front lines. On rare occasions, such as the formal ceremony when Patton turned over the command of the Third Army to Lt. General Lucian K. Truscott, Patton wore a more "subdued" weapon; a Colt .38 snub-nosed Detective Special with black, hard rubber grips.

Being a General when he entered the action of World War II, Patton had the prerogative of "designing" his own uniform. This privilege allowed him to wear the pistols and any accouterments as he desired.

As a captain at the outbreak of World War I, the "Great War", Patton was required to wear a regulation uniform. Accordingly he sailed to France aboard the liner Baltic with the Army issue Model 1911 Colt .45 automatic pistol. The pistol was "regulation" with one exception. Patton had managed to replace the issued grips with ivory grips in which his initials were deeply engraved.

This same Colt .45 automatic was often worn by Patton during the Army's preparatory maneuvers and war games which took place in 1941 and 1942 in both Tennessee and Louisiana.

On the cover of Life Magazine's "Defense Issue" dated July 7, 1941, Patton is seen in the turret of his command tank. He is wearing the M1911 Colt .45 automatic in a government issue shoulder holster. The tank is adorned with red, white, blue, and yellow stripes along with two flags attached to the front sides; one flag with the two stars of a Major-General; the other is a flag of the Second Armored Division.

According to his planning, it was impossible for Patton's troops not to know who or where he was.

A photograph of Patton in front of his Desert Training Center command tank appears on the cover of Newsweek Magazine dated July 26, 1943. In this photograph Patton is wearing yet another of his pistols. Another Colt, this one is a semi-automatic .22 "Woodsman" target pistol, with a long narrow barrel which required a special holster.

While at the Desert Training Center in California in 1942, Patton seems to have favored this .22 pistol, probably because he was not in actual combat and in the desert he could use it as for "plinking". There is also an abundance of jack rabbits, varmints, and rattlesnakes in the desert to keep a shooter's eye and hand in practice.

The Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum that Patton owned was shipped to him from the Smith & Wesson factory on October 18, 1935. It was a newly developed gun manufactured especially for the new cartridge that Smith & Wesson had created. It was the most powerful handgun in the world at the time. Although Patton's Colt .45 was chambered for a special large revolver cartridge weighing 255 grams with enormous shocking power, he purchased the Smith & Wesson as a "killing gun", as he termed it.

The newly introduced Smith & Wesson firearm was a double action revolver with a special chrome-nickel-steel alloy hammer and cylinder which were necessary to withstand the great pressure of the cartridge explosion. Because of the two types of metal in the gun, the originals were unique in that they were "two-tone", with the frame a blued gun metal and the hammer and cylinder an almost white alloy. They originally retailed at \$60.00. It was offered as the most powerful handgun ever made. Today it is still advertised as one of the most powerful in the world, but the price has risen astronomically.

Upon leaving the factory, the revolver had standard walnut stocks, but they were soon replaced with the initialed ivory grips so loved by the General.

Throughout World War II, Patton had predominately worn the Colt .45 Peacemaker, but at the start of 1945, it seemed to be headed for retirement.

General Kenyon Joyce, a longtime friend of Patton, acquired and sent to the General a pocket-type pistol. It was a Remington Model 51 .380 automatic. It had been a difficult gun to locate as it had not been manufactured since 1935, but one was found by the Remington firm. It was re-conditioned and engraved on it was, "To George Patton/From his shooting partner of many years/Kenyon Joyce." Patton wore it from time to time.

Patton's "special" weapons deserved other than average accouterments, so "special" belts and holsters were selected that would enhance the appearance of them, much the same as a beautiful setting displays a precious gem.

The belt and holsters for Patton's Colt .45 and Smith & Wesson .357 were made by S.D. Myers of El Paso, Texas. S.D. "Tio" Myers had started his leather business as a saddle

manufacturer in Sweetwater, Texas in 1897. In 1920 he moved his business to El Paso where it remained until his death. His son took over the business and ran it until he retired in 1978.

The belt and holsters are made of light brown hide. The holsters have flat, closed tips with a safety strap to fit around the hammer of the pistol to prevent accidental discharging.

The belt is 1-15/16 inches wide and the buckle on it has a convex brass disc marked with the letters " U S ". The buckle was taken from a Model 1910 Officer's web belt.

Other items made to fit the belt are a "#4 Hand Cuff Case" in which Patton carried a lensmatic compass; a "#19 Belt Slide Loop" which holds 12 cartridges; and a small leather "box" used as a first aid kit.

These pieces of equipment, along with the Colt .45 and Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum, fell into disuse when Patton began to favor a smaller, lighter Colt .380 automatic.

In the book "Patton and His Pistols" it is reported that Patton began to favor the small Remington that General Joyce had sent to him. According to that book, it is the Remington that replaced the Colt .45 revolver as Patton's favorite. That, however, is incorrect. Upon very close examination of the photos available of Patton wearing an automatic pistol, some discrepancies are noted in the claims made by the authors.

Plainly visible are features of the Colt .380 displayed on the automatic with the inlaid ivory stars which are discernibly different from the Remington .380. The butt is straight; the grip rivets are of a light color and are located at the rear, middle portion of the handle. The clip catch is located on the bottom, rear of the pistol. The "wear marks" of the filled holster indicate, in a very pronounced way, a fully extended barrel of the same size as the portion near the trigger housing. These features are indicative of an exact description of the Colt .380 automatic pistol.

Conversely, the Remington automatic has a curved butt; its grip rivets are of a dark color and are located at the top and bottom of the handle. It has a longer, tapered barrel which would not completely fill the bottom of the holster used by Patton, therefore not being of sufficient size to create the wear marks which are shown on the holster.

For carrying the Colt .380, Patton used the new "General Officers" belt, sometimes called the "Marshall Belt", because General George C. Marshall personally had them created for general officers. This belt, like the stars of rank, were and are today, considered as part of the insignia of a General Officer in the U.S. Army. It is made of soft rolled leather 1-3/4 inches wide and the buckle is convex bearing the U.S. Army eagle with laurel wreaths curving up either side.

Along with the belt were issued two holsters. One made to fit the M1911 Colt .45 automatic and one made to fit the newly issued Colt .380 automatic. The Colt .380 automatic greatly resembled a small version of the M1911 Colt .45, which it was since it was designed from similar specifications.

One of the most probable reasons that Patton liked the small Colt was because of its size and weight. It was a mere 13 ounces, as compared to the Colt .45's 38 ounces and the 41 ounces of the Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum. Though small, it was a hard hitting pistol.

Patton liked the Colt .45, but it was a very heavy sidearm. To his nephew, Fred Ayer, Jr., he explained, "People ask me why I swagger, swear, wear flashy uniforms, and sometimes two pistols. Don't you think these guns get awfully heavy, wearing them all the time? Well, I'm not sure whether or not some of it isn't my own fault. However that may be, the press, and others have built a picture of me. So, now, no matter how tired or discouraged, or really ill I may be, if I don't live up to that picture, my men are going to say, 'The old man's had it. The old son-of-a-bitch has had it'. Then their own confidence, their own morale will take a big dip."

With the "Marshall" belt and the Colt .380 adorned with three stars, Patton had a classy, effective, and attractive combination. It could easily supersede the Colt .45 revolver and at the same time it was a complimentary addition to Patton's colorful, cavalier uniform.

Most people, and especially Patton fans, are aware that Patton hated for his pistols to be referred to as "pearl-handled".

Of the 1,500 Colt .380's obtained by the Army for issue to General Officers, only one of them was different. Someone along the supply line had removed the standard grips from the pistol to be issued to General Patton and had replaced them with pearl grips, undoubtedly in an attempt to please the general.

In it's original condition, the pistol had black, hard rubber grips. Patton replaced them with grips different than the usual ivory grips with his initials. This pistol had black stocks with three large ivory stars inlaid. Upon his promotion to full General in 1945, Patton again replaced the grips. These new ones had four large stars inlaid.

In photographs of Patton after acquiring this pistol, he is rarely seen without it.

Patton took violent offense at any reference to his pistols being pearl handled. He said, "Only a pimp in a New Orleans whorehouse or a tin-horn gambler would carry a pearl-handled pistol." In no uncertain terms he would have the offender know that his revolver was indeed "IVORY-GOD-FUCKING-DAMN-HANDLED" and with that he would turn on his heel and leave.

There were two very plausible reasons for Patton's disapprobation toward pearl. One was that Patton, being a firm believer in luck, considered pearl to be unlucky, and consequently refused to wear it. The other was that Patton, as a young lieutenant, spent many years on border patrol in Texas and New Mexico. That territory in those days was still the "old west" and many a time personal opinions were assisted with a few ounces of hot lead. Patton personally knew and associated with many of the types about whom movies are made today. One of them was a town Marshall named Dave Allison who had, while Patton was stationed at the town of Sierra Blanca, killed a gang called the "Orozco outfit". With no help and from a distance of 60 yards he had shot all six of them squarely through the head. Patton often went hunting with the Marshall and they were quite good friends.

Truthfully, in those "old days" only pimps and tin-horn gamblers did carry pearl handled sidearms.

### **The Colt Revolver**

Name: .....Colt Single Action Army Revolver Model 1873  
Caliber: .....45  
Barrel Length: .....4-3/4 inches  
Overall Length: .....10-1/4 inches  
Weight: .....38 ounces  
Finish: .....Silver  
Stocks: .....Ivory, Carved Eagle, left hand stock  
.....GSP in black enamel, right hand stock  
Purchase Date: .....March 5, 1916  
Cost: .....\$50  
Serial Number: .....332088

### **The Smith & Wesson Magnum**

Name: .....S & W Double Action Revolver Model 27  
Caliber: .....357 Magnum  
Barrel Length: .....3-1/2 inches  
Overall Length: .....8-7/8 inches  
Weight: .....41 ounces

Finish:.....Blue / Nickel Alloy  
Stocks:.....Ivory, GSP in right hand stock  
Purchase Date:.....October 18, 1935  
Cost: .....\$60  
Serial Number: .....47022

### **The Colt Automatic**

Name:.....Colt Automatic Pistol Model 1908  
Caliber: .....380  
Barrel Length:.....2-1/4 inches  
Overall Length:.....4-1/2 inches  
Weight: .....13 ounces  
Finish:.....Deep Blue  
Stocks:.....Black / Inlaid Ivory Stars (4) on right grip  
Serial Number: .....135170

### **General Specifications**

<b>Pistol</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Caliber</b>	<b>Magazine</b>
Colt.....	Match Target Auto.....	22.....	10
Colt.....	1903 Pocket Auto.....	32.....	7
Colt.....	1908 Hammerless Auto .....	380.....	6
Colt.....	Detective Special Rev .....	38.....	6
Colt.....	Single Action Rev.....	45.....	6
Colt.....	Army M1911 Auto .....	45ACP.....	7
Remington.....	1908 Model 51 Auto .....	380.....	8
S&W.....	Magnum Revolver.....	357.....	6

### **George S. Patton, Jr. — CEO** by Warren J. Ridge

#### **Supervision**

Volume XXXVII, Number 8  
August 1975, pp 20-22

The mere thought of a nameplate inscribed, "George S. Patton," on the President's 'office door would reduce the student and practitioner of today's management science to apoplexy. The concept of the stern authoritarian with the pearl-handled revolvers simply does not fit the modern approach to management. His theories on war are totally unsuitable for business. This daring, hell-bent, blood-and-guts vision created by movies, reporters, and biographers couldn't possibly mask a brilliant administrator. Or could it?

Assuming the General had chosen a business career and had attained the position of CEO of a firm, what kind of direction would flow from his office? Fortunately, we can examine some of his

reflections and suggestions on military affairs and with moderate conjecture, change the mood from a military to a business environment. And then, evaluate. The quotations selected are but a small sampling that appear to have a high transfer potential.

### **On Planning:**

*"The best is the enemy of the good. By this I mean that a good plan violently executed now is better than a perfect plan next week."*

Many business managers have a tendency to wait until all the facts are available before executing a plan, thereby eliminating risk. When all the facts are available, the need for the plan, in many cases, will have passed. Planning is an attempt to make things happen, and planning the future is, at best, imperfect. The available facts should be used to develop the plan, and then the plan should be executed at the time needed, with enthusiasm.

Haste and Speed: *"There is a great difference between these two words. Haste exists when troops are committed without proper reconnaissance . . . Speed is acquired . . . launching the attack with a predetermined plan."*

Haste in business is not uncommon. It is used as a substitute for planning. When an urgent problem presents itself, it is far better to delay hasty immediate action until a plan is developed. Haste will initiate action faster but will entail redundant and unnecessary effort and will lengthen the time required to solve the problem. Speed, (proceeding with a plan) will defer initial action but will use the required resources to resolve the problem in a shorter time period.

Issuing Orders: *"The best way to issue orders is by word of mouth . . . Failing this, telephone conversation which should be recorded at each end . . . The issuance of an order, or the devising of a plan, is only about five percent of the responsibility of command. The other 95 percent is to insure . . . that the order is carried out."*

Much of the heralded unnecessary paperwork in business is in the form of memos to other people within earshot. The overt purpose, in many instances, is to initiate action, but the covert and more important purpose is to document excuses for failure. The memo, pulled from the file, proves the allegation that the manager tried but other people failed to carry out his plan. Ergo, he does not share responsibility for failure. Also, management expends money to provide employees with telephones, but their use in lieu of the office memo is skimpy. It appears that oral instructions can only be effective when issued by confident managers.

### **On Organization**

Look Before Changing: *"In the old Navy of sail there was a custom that the new Officer of the Deck did not call for any change in the setting of the sails for one half hour. The same thing might well apply to commanders who take over new jobs. They should wait a week before they make any radical changes . . ."*

When assuming leadership of an organization, the new manager should avoid sudden moves and rash or quick decisions. There is a penchant for a new manager to initiate some violent changes in organization or procedure to prove to the onlooker that he is a dynamic manager. Since all improvement requires change, some believe that all change is improvement. These instant moves are usually detrimental to all. Before making any drastic changes, a new manager should observe how the organization or procedure is reacting to the current winds.

*"This habit of commanding too far down, I believe, is inculcated at schools and at maneuvers. Actually, a General should command one echelon down and know the position of units two echelons down."*

Many business schools treat span of control as a lateral movement only, and insufficient time is allotted to vertical control. As a result, many managers succumb to the practice of directing all effort in their organization or conversely, directing only their staff. Below that level, they exhibit a



laissez-faire attitude. Actually, a manager should direct his staff and in addition, know the objectives and plans of one management level lower. In this way, he avoids redundant management and still retains control and perspective of the most decisive levels.

### **On Motivation**

*"A General Officer who will invariably assume the responsibility for failure, whether he deserves it or not, and invariably gives the credit for success to others, whether they deserve it or not, will achieve outstanding success."*

The above statement should require very little discussion and explanation—it is simply a concession to human nature in two modes. It is against human nature to do it, and it is aligned with human nature to receive it. The positive motivation that a manager can glean from his employees and associates by this "bigness" is as much a guarantee of success as exists. For most business managers—and most human beings for that matter—the practice of this precept will entail a conscious effort of awareness.

*"All officers . . . must be vitally interested in everything that interests the soldier. Usually, you will gain a great deal of knowledge by being interested, but, even if you do not, the fact that you appear interested has a very high morale influence on the soldier."*

Often in business, the management circle, the mahogany row, closet themselves in the relative security of their offices and "speak only to the Lowells." Apartheid need not be racial or strictly South African. It can be and is noticeable in some companies. The success of a manager depends, to a great degree, on the ability and enthusiasm displayed by his employees. They are his most important resource, and they are the only ones who know what is really going on in the organization. The excellent manager must be seen as a real person and treat his employees with the dignity that they have a right to expect.

*"Never tell people how to do things. Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity."*

Job enrichment programs in industry were devised to accomplish this very thing. Employees are people and as such are endowed with the talent of creativity and the need for fulfillment. The manager who directs the last detail in each given assignment, "because that's the way that he would do it," is extremely presumptuous and wasteful. Such a practice will force the organization into a static state in which mental atrophy will emerge the victor.

### **On Control**

Reports: *"In war nothing is ever as bad, or as good, as it is reported to Higher Headquarters. Any reports which emanate after dark . . . should be viewed with skepticism by the next higher unit. Reports by wounded men are always exaggerated and favor the enemy."*

For some reason, a report that is printed, or better yet, one that is computer generated, is always believed. This blind faith has resulted in many erroneous and costly decisions. The conditions under which the basic data is collected and compiled deserves at least a cursory examination for possible bias. The misuse of statistics in business has provided many an example. Reports from managers who have failed in a given task often overstate the complexities of the task and the problems encountered. It's human nature again.

Judging Reports: *"When you receive reports of counter-attacks, find out who sent them—that is, the size of the unit which sent them. A squad occupying it position will report an enemy section approaching it as a counter-attack, but such a counter-attack has no material effect on a division or a corps."*

A very interesting observation on discrimination. One of the most important qualities of a good manager is the ability to discern between the important and unimportant matters so that his time and resources can be allocated accordingly. The effect that a reported incident has on the total

organization should be considered in perspective before inordinate effort and cost is expended. An isolated omission that cost the company \$100, should not promote a control system that costs \$1,000 a month to operate so that future isolated omissions of the same kind will be averted.

### **Summary**

An analysis of General Patton's reflections might cause some to question the portrayal of this leader as the harsh taskmaster of immense ego. His sincere interest in his soldiers is evident throughout his book as is his constant awareness and use of, what business deems to be the functions of management. He had the ability to perceive the total situation without losing perspective of the job at hand. This coupled with a deep understanding of human nature and enthusiasm would, very likely, propel him into the company's front office.

General Patton's observation, "War is a very simple thing and the fact that his many reflections, suggestions, and actions, are directly transferable to the business scene, poses the provocative hypothesis-business is a very simple thing. His reliance on the basic functions of management proposes that these functions, at a certain level of abstraction, are not indigenous to business management activities. War and business are alike. Both seek the attainment of goals, through people, with strategy in the use of resources. They differ mainly in that war does not have the luxury of "game-playing" or a Chapter 11 bankruptcy law.

Perhaps the General was an industrial magnate in a prior life.

**Lieut. Gen. and Mrs. George S. Patton, Jr.**  
by Adela Rogers St. Johns

**Cosmopolitan Magazine**  
Volume 115, Number 5  
November 1943, pp 8, 9-10, 137

I have never met Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr. But it doesn't matter. I know his wife. In the Army, it is a recognized fact that to know one of the Pattons is to know the other.

Every true marriage of the spirit affects men and women like that at the end of many years. They become indissolubly united. Beatrice Ayer and that young shavetail just out of West Point she insisted upon marrying, though lots of folks thought she could do better, have grown into the General Blood-and-Guts Patton of today together. So that behind Bea Patton's straight little back the General's aides will tell you with an affectionate and admiring grin she has as much right to that terrific title as he has, even if she isn't any bigger than a pint of milk.

If this too is written with affection and admiration, I'm proud of it. You might as well know right now that I fell head over heels in love with Mrs. Patton the first time I met her, That is an acrobatic feat which has been going on at Army Posts all over the globe for some thirty years.

All she, as a wife, has made for and with her husband stands as her contribution to her country. Though I doubt if that has ever occurred to her. Because if Bea Patton ever thinks about herself I've never caught her at it.

When a man's wife, having lived with him half a lifetime, gives him a full and unqualified respect glinting with steel truth, it's a decoration beyond any even the Commander in Chief can bestow. When her voice holds a sure, unshredded thread of confidence and devotion, the kind you

could hang onto if life and death were at stake, that's a tribute greater than the cheers of millions thrilled by bravery and daring.

Because, believe me, the General's lady knows a soldier when she sees one; anybody can tell you that.

We think a lot of General Patton now, in our hearts as well as in our heads. For thirty years little Mrs. Patton, an almost brutal individualist, has been kneaded into everything that has made his victories, which of course are our victories. This, you see, is one of those marriages as marriages ought to be, a partnership vital to endure all things, so that each has made and strengthened the heart and soul of the other. Wherever the Stars and Stripes flew over a peacetime Army, the Pattons became a tradition of real union—which today inspires the wartime Army that becomes aware of it for the first time to the sound of guns.

Sort of thing that makes you feel well, proud and comfortable; makes you surer about the girl back home, about what America is fighting for and what American women are really like.

They've sailed little boats in races from the mainland to Hawaii—the General's wife may look as if the first strong wind would blow her overboard but he'd rather have her as first mate than any man. That's a test: two people alone in a sailboat on the vast Pacific. They have to be very good comrades for that, able to trust each other's disposition as well as guts, in a pinch. They've ridden steeplechases together, winning one silver cup after another to be packed when they moved again, as Army people do. A great horseman, Patton of the Armored Divisions, but he can't outride his featherweight wife.

So that when Bea Patton says wistfully, "He's never been away from me except when he's gone to a war," you are not sure whether her wistfulness is for the poignancy of that separation or because she wanted to fight through the Mediterranean surf with the shells kicking up a wilder spray Jr. and land with him on the shores of Sicily. The General's lady, as becomes a soldier's—rife, is shy of sentimentality, but I thought I detected a "whither thou goest" note in her voice just then.

"There," the entire United States Army will tell you, "is a two-fisted lady." Think how seldom you've seen those two words side by side. In the case of Bea Patton, they wrap her up as well as Shakespeare could.

"Dresden china," a captain's bride said to me in describing her. But behind me I heard a mingled chuckle and snort and the bride's captain said, "Dresden china—oh, sure, filled with TNT! I was with the Pattons in Indio."

That is why I say that though it would be a great privilege to meet the General sometime when he isn't so busy, it doesn't matter. When you know his wife, and it is revealed to you how she feels about him, you know he has to be a great guy.

In her direct, bubbling conversation the General's wife illuminates the character of one of our greatest leaders, simply, without effort and absolutely unconsciously.

One day I asked her if it didn't add to concern for her husband, then hurling his armored divisions across Rommel's path in Africa, when she thought of the men under his command. The knowledge that her husband held in his hand the lives of many thousands of American men, that his judgment was final and his orders sent them into battle, might increase for her that minute—by—minute tension—women must know whose men are at the front.

Mrs. Patton gave me a swift look from the bluest eyes I've ever seen. "I always think how lucky they are to be with General Patton," she said simply.

And that was exactly what she thought—the boys of the Armored Divisions were lucky to be with General Patton. You came suddenly upon the magnificent fact that across the miles of sea and sand, danger and terror, the General's wife was sending him supplies no submarine could menace, no torpedo destroy—supplies of faith and steadfast courage.

Beatrice Ayer Patton is a fastidious little lady, daintily gowned, white-gloved; sometimes she wears small square gold earrings and her hats are fashionable without being ridiculous. One day not long ago when I met her at the Waldorf in New York I thought her quite the most attractively dressed woman there. With all her air of being somebody, of command—she has been the Colonel's lady, the General's lady a long time—she has an eager shyness. In spite of her friendliness, you would never ask her a personal question. I never saw it happen, but I think she could turn those incredibly blue eyes upon you with a “we are not amused” expression.

So you learn in roundabout ways, when you meet her over a luncheon table, what she does and thinks and feels.

You find out that she is very, very proud of the daughter (there are two daughters and a son) whose husband is in a German prison camp, because her daughter has shown the same cool courage, the same quiet faith that the General expects of his womenfolk.

That after many years of living at Army Posts, the moment her husband went overseas she was “homeless.” A General's wife is just like any other soldier's wife; she has to shift for herself once her man leaves the United States.

I saw one home that Mrs. Patton made while she was in the Army. It's at Fort Benning, Georgia, where the General was stationed before he went to Africa, and she built it herself.

Fort Benning is so vast a place that you never really catch up with it. And Tiger Camp, where some training units have their headquarters, is a good many miles from Headquarters Post, where the quarters of the officers are located.

General Patton didn't like that. “He believes,” Mrs. Patton said, “that an officer must be very close to his men. We didn't like living an hour's drive away from the men. The General felt we ought to live out at our own camp.”

So the War Department agreed to build them a house. But Mrs. Patton said she'd build it, so she designed the most delightful house out there among the Georgia pines. I don't suppose there's another house like it in the world. Outside, it was a glorified log cabin, long and sprawling. Inside, it was all soft pine, with a great fireplace of native stone and such huge windows that the outdoors and the indoors seemed to mingle.

In some way I can't explain it was a perfect house, a perfect setting for a man like General Patton, and yet it was just right for the lady who is his wife. When I visited there it was occupied by four Army officers, but though it belonged to the United States Army, it was still known as Mrs. Patton's house.

When I saw Mrs. Patton later in New York she wanted to know all about it. “I hated to leave that house more than any of the others,” she said. “We put down a lot of roots at Benning.”

They left them there, too. The new officers' club at Tiger Camp still is called Mrs. Patton's club, and the beautiful social center is referred to as “Mrs. Patton's.” Over in the near-by town of Columbus, I found her name a magic word wherever I went. “Oh,” everybody said, “you know Mrs. Patton? Well, what can we do for you?”

Bea Patton does not tell you directly that she loves her husband the way Juliet might have loved Romeo if they'd lived on through the years. She'd be horrified at the mere suggestion.

But one day we were talking of farewells, the farewells of wartime. The ones that must be said bravely and cheerfully, though they're the hardest of all to say.

“The thing is, actually,” Mrs. Patton said, “not to say good-by at all. You are just—sort of very casual about it. After all, the only important thing is how he feels. How you send him away. You can say I love you and I'll miss you, but it's not fair to cry or make a scene. Too tough on the man who's going.”

With a twinkling smile and a ripple of her shoulders she added, “Of course, young people don't believe older ones can really be in love. They think love is the possession only of youth.

They don't realize that love grows stronger and closer, bigger and finer and more essential, with each year that passes. Especially if it's the only love you ever had."

As it has been with the Pattons. They saw each other first, you see, when she was a very small girl lugging around a very big doll, and he was a tall, gawky kid of twelve or fourteen. Little Bea was visiting an aunt of his in California, and he sort of liked the kid; let her tag around and saw that she didn't get into any trouble. I talked with people in California who remember that and smile at the memory—the very small girl with her big doll following at Georgie's heels. When she was thirteen she made up her mind that if she couldn't marry Georgie Patton she'd die an old maid, and when he saw her once more—quite grown-up, this time—it didn't take him long to decide they'd been meant for each other.

"Neither of them," a member of the Patton family told me, "ever had another sweetheart."

"I've never seen Mrs. Patton blue or downhearted. We've all seen too many pictures of the General in action not to know he's always in there with his troops, always leading the assault. When the papers are full of that kind of news, the General's lady gets busier and busier, that's all.

Once during the Tunisia campaign, a broadcasting company telephoned her in the middle of the night to ask if she'd do a radio talk across the Atlantic with General Montgomery's wife. "Of course I said yes," Mrs. Patton told me, "but next morning I remembered that General Montgomery is a widower. I felt so disappointed. You know, I thought somebody over there would have seen Georgie and they'd be able to tell me how he looked and have later news. He's very good about writing, but he doesn't have much time. You know how it is, waiting for letters. But of course you always know that they write just as often as they can, and you never let yourself worry. My husband wouldn't like that. I learned about that in the last war."

Her humor is dry and twinkling. At Easter she went to see her son who, like his father before him, is a cadet at West Point. With a little laugh she said, "I told him he'd better be on his toes, too. I told him it was a long time since I'd been dragged by a plebe."

The War Department thinks highly of Mrs. George S. Patton, Jr., as an Army wife. Ever since her husband went overseas, she has been making speeches and radio addresses. She makes tours all over the country, speaking at Army camps, women's clubs, factories. Her speeches have been sensationally successful; her audiences always want her back.

"I never knew I could make a speech," Mrs. Patton said, looking still a little surprised about it. "I never had. But then of course you can always do anything you have to. Especially now. You don't do it all by yourself. I think in times like these you get an inner strength from God. I just shut my eyes and know I'm going to say the right thing because I'm a sort of channel and I have this chance, and—they seem to like it. I hope it helps, and of course it keeps me busy."

We were lunching together that day at the Carlton and I found myself just sitting and looking at her, remembering how startled I'd been the first time I met her because I'd visualized her as a big woman, with a tanned skin and a loud voice. Not as this little figure with tiny hands and feet, and a tiny face with astounding blue eyes. She is not a beautiful woman, but she has so beautiful an expression that the effect is the same.

I remembered the first time I met her, which was on a business appointment connected with some information about the Army, and how the tables were completely turned and she found out all I know about writing. How did I write; when and where? Which kind of writing did I like best? How long did it take me to do a short story—an article?

"You see," she said diffidently, "I write—a little."

Just like that. It was some time before I discovered that when she and her husband were stationed in Hawaii she published collections of Hawaiian fairy tales, legends, historical stories of first importance. It was longer before I found out that, besides being a first authority on Hawaiian matters, the General's lady has a rare gift and would make any professional writer look to his laurels if she took up writing seriously.

Sinclair Lewis sat on her other side at a luncheon I attended one day, and after talking with her for an hour-and—succumbing completely—he said, “She has the story mind. She knows how to tell a story and she knows what a story is.”

The General, she says, has always been interested in her writing.

I was remembering all these things when she told me how amazed she was to find she could make speeches. I wasn’t amazed at all. First of all, there is her enormous zest for living, her interest in everything and everybody under the sun, her innate joyousness. Life and love have been so worth living and loving, you know it every minute you are with her and it makes you warm inside. When I am with her I always think that so many people are only half alive; so many people go through life wearing blinkers, never getting a glimpse of the broad horizons. They miss so much. This woman never misses anything. Never refuses anything; packs her days full to the brim, now that her husband is away, with every opportunity for usefulness.

“What do you say in your speeches?” I asked her.

“Do you know,” she said, with that blue-eyed twinkle, “half the time I can’t remember what I tell my hearers? Only—I’m very proud of them all; very proud of the young Army wives, of the women of America. I think I tell them so. You know, I don’t feel like a speaker—I feel more like a yell leader. I want to start ‘em all rooting for a touchdown. It’s a great thing for a team to have the gang behind it cheering, working, believing, giving it everything they’ve got. You can’t be the whole American people. But every one of us can be us—and do our working and our sacrificing and our rooting and there you have it.”

Somehow, just then, I was perfectly sure that the General thousands of miles away could hear her rooting for him.

## **Desert and Patton Kicked Hell INTO Troops**

by S. Lee Rourke

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France was defeated. The British had failed to secure the Balkans and Greece, and General Archibald Wavell was holding Egypt with a depleted force. On Feb. 12, 1941, Hitler's genius general, Erwin Rommel arrived in Tripoli to join his Italian allies for the desert campaign.

Soon afterward, General George S. Patton received a new assignment. To a friend at the War Department, he wrote: "I have been detailed to organize and command a Desert Training Area . . . I should deeply appreciate your sending to me . . . any and all information, pamphlets, and what-not, you may have on the minutia of desert fighting, to the end that I may duplicate . . . the situation which exists in the desert of North Africa . . . Pardon me for writing you such a dry letter. We will try to correct the dryness when we see each other."

In January 1942, Patton announced, "The War in Europe is over for us. England will probably fall this year. It is going to be a long war. Our first chance to get at the enemy will be in North Africa . . . The desert can kill quicker than the enemy. We will lose a lot of men from heat, but training will save hundreds of lives when we get into combat."

It is not clear just when the War Department foresaw that Americans might have to fight in North Africa. Perhaps Patton's continuous prodding was the decisive factor when on Feb. 5, 1942, the Army Ground Forces Commander concurred with a recommendation that a Desert Training Center (DTC) be established, commanded by Patton.

By November 1943, the DTC communications and combat zone included "a barren stretch of wasteland, sand, rock, and cactus" from Pomona, Calif., eastward almost to Phoenix, Arizona, and from Yuma, Arizona, northward to Boulder City, Nevada.

One tank destroyer crewman called the DTC "Eighteen-thousand square miles of nothing, in a desert designed for hell." Another soldier reported that "Water in the Lister bags sometimes reached 90 degrees. After you have been inside the tanks for a while, water at 90 degrees seemed cool. The tank destroyers were even hotter because they had the open top turrets. Sometimes the heat registered at 152 degrees."

Another member of the tank destroyer battalion recorded that, "My worst experience was being stranded for two days in a disabled half track with four crewmen during which time we had one can of sardines, one can of corn, and one and one-half canteens of water."

All accounts agree that as first commanding general, Patton burned his brand on the training center. From a vantage point on a hill dubbed "The King's Throne," the general would scrutinize, critically, the line of march of tanks and mechanized units below. Detecting a mistake or a way to improve, he would shout instructions into his radio.

Porter B. Williamson, in his book, *Patton's Principles*, gives a detailed account of Patton's communication system. "General Patton's first concern was always the welfare of the troops, so he purchased radio broadcasting equipment. The initial investment was his own money! The station broadcast only news and music. Patton wanted to talk to the troops as often as possible. At a staff meeting he said, 'This new station could save several weeks of training. We can reach the troops, every one of them, as often as we need. In an emergency, we could reach every man in seconds.'"

Williamson continued, "Our desert radio broadcasting station had one unusual feature. There was a microphone in General Patton's office and a second microphone by his bed . . . Day and night General Patton would cut off all broadcasting . . . When the music would click off we knew we would hear 'This is General Patton.' He would use it to commend the special efforts by the troops. He would announce, 'Found a damn good soldier today!' He would continue giving the name of the man and the organization. Often his harsh words for an officer would provoke laughter from others. For example, one time General Patton ordered, 'Col. Blank, you are removed from command! If you know what is good for you, you will stay away from me for a week.' "

The commanding general was not easy on his men. When they did not drill they policed. He was a driver and a disciplinarian. Patton was also uncompromising with himself. Despite the heat and sand he himself wore his uniform in the military manner he demanded of his men. He did not live in the relative comfort of the hotel at Indio but in a tent at Camp Young, 60 miles to the east. In fact, one of the first acts on reporting to the DTC was to empty that hotel of his officers. Only one was left behind; it was said that he was sick and could not be moved.

The first DTC maneuvers were October 18, but Patton was not to command them. As the North African Campaign wound down in 1943, Rommel had given the Americans their first severe drubbings at Kasserine Pass and Gafsa. Patton departed to fight in the North African Theater.

The DTC was a war baby and it was a thorn to the spirit with its isolation, evasive dust and extreme shifts in temperature.

So rigorous was the training and so ghastly different was the environment to mostly urban troops, that the experience caused 1,130 "neuropsychiatric" casualties. Doctors found the best cure was simply exposure once more to green grass and running water.

The 3rd Armored Division also suffered many casualties from heat prostration. Other units did too, but there is very little in the official reports on this subject. The surgeon under Patton warned the command that danger lurked in reaching for an object on the ground unless one was sure a rattlesnake wasn't coiled in its shadow.

The DTC severely taxed civilians as well as the military. When the troops were on leave, especially weekends, civilians could not get into restaurants, movie theaters, trains and buses. The increased demand sometimes deprived the local population of certain foods. After the 6th Armored Division spent a weekend in Yuma, eggs and beef were in very short supply.

Telling the unique story of each unit that trained in the desert would strain the limits of a thick book, let alone the space available in a magazine. So we will concentrate on three major units which received rigorous training under austere conditions: the 81st Infantry Division at Camp Horn; the 77th Infantry at Camp Hyder, and the 9th Tank Group, shrouded in secrecy at Camp Bouse with what was promised to be a "weapons system that would change the course of the war."

After 12 months of basic training at Fork Rucker and a shakedown on Tennessee maneuvers, the 81st Infantry, proudly known as "The Wildcats," found themselves at a Southern Pacific Railroad flagstop in the Arizona desert. The advance party, arriving in late June 1943, found no sign of civilization except the railroad track and a sign—"Horn"—to name this pinpoint on the map.

This region is noted for low sand dunes inadequately anchored by widely spaced creosote bushes and cacti. Consequently, the slightest winds generate sandstorms that make life miserable. Awesome clouds of billowing fine sand penetrate one's clothing, dust the hair and fill every wrinkle in the skin. Cloudbursts often follow sandstorms and result in flash flooding. Yet annual rainfall is 5 inches or less.

In the 1,200 square miles assigned to the Division, there lived only two civilians, both hermit guards at inactive gold mines.

The whole division had moved into camp by July 25, when the temperature reached 126 degrees. Three days later, the continuing high temperatures caused two deaths and many severe sunstrokes. Daily highs had exceeded 110 degrees for 45 consecutive days, before the heat wave was broken on July 31 by rain. That day the camp was almost washed away!

Nearly every company constructed an underground icebox, but ice did not appear. This non-arrival was part of an experiment conceived by higher authorities. No ice and no fresh fruit were to be furnished, and B rations (meat, crackers, fruit and vegetables) were all to come from cans. The 81st Division did not have to wait until combat days to develop the WWII soldier's dislike for pressed meat, canned sausages, and dehydrated foods.

Tactical training was the first priority; interest was maintained by using large quantities of live ammunition. Long marches by day and night were frequent. A 24-hour march was purposely planned to prevent any sleep, to move over difficult terrain at night, and to require exertion approaching the limits of human endurance—all with limited food and water. One Wildcat who made it declared: "The horrors of hell no longer frighten me."

Neither officers nor men who completed the six-day platoon leadership problem will ever forget it. The platoons maneuvered, mostly at night, in "enemy" territory; only by reaching their objectives would they usually find their day's supply of food or water.

During the final division field exercise when the whole outfit and its equipment were exposed in the desert, a violent thunderstorm was climaxed by hailstones the size of pigeon eggs. Some units were camped in dry gulches for better concealment. Within minutes, those gulches became raging torrents, upsetting trucks and scattering equipment for miles.



By November 1943, the Allies had won the North Africa Campaign, so there was no longer a need for a desert-hardened Infantry Division. Thus the 81st was retrained in amphibious operations in California and Hawaii.

At the entrance to Camp Horn, near the Southern Pacific Railroad, a pyramid of concrete and stone stands in memory of seven men who died while training there.

The 77th Infantry had spent a year shedding sweat and fat on the drill fields of Fort Jackson, and had taken a shakedown maneuver in Louisiana. Its men were self-reliant, cocky, and impatient when they dismounted from the Southern Pacific Railroad at a water stop called Hyder.

The 77th's men were convinced they were ready to fight. But the Allies had not yet won the North African Campaign, so several infantry divisions, including the 77th, were scheduled to train at the DTC originally established to train Patton's 1st Armored Corps.

The 77th Division Band welcomed the troop trains with such appropriate tunes as *This Is The Army* and *There'll Be A Hot Time* as one by one they rolled to a stop at the siding. Somebody pointed out the inauspicious date: April Fool's Day, 1943.

The transition from comfortable Pullman cars, good food, and clean sheets to powdery ankle-deep dust, piles of folded tents and two miles of survey stakes was a morale-busting shock. As each company detrained, it was marched off through choking dust to an assigned area where it erected a double row of pyramidal tents. Besides government issue gear, each tent soon contained lizards, scorpions, and flies. This experience was so unforgettable that even 77ers who have retired to nearby Arizona towns show little interest in revisiting the site of their old tent city.

The 302nd engineers drilled a very deep well near the railroad and luckily obtained a flow of 120,000 gallons per day. A huge shower facility was built at the well site, but its value was reduced by long dirty marches between the tent city and the showers.

Training was impeded by Mother Nature. It was necessary to police the firing range each morning to remove rattlesnakes. Platoon-sized, six-day compass marches were impeded by deep, unmapped arroyos that slowed travel to caches of water and rations. When the division maneuvered as a whole, 13,000 men and hundreds of vehicles churned up enough dust to engulf the landscape for days.

Soldiers also served as "guinea pigs" to test drinking water requirements of foot soldiers in the desert. Patton, who had established the DTC rules and training program, planned to develop lean and hard desert troops who could operate on one canteen (one quart) of water per day. Unquestionably, the general was a superb military tactician, but he lacked knowledge of human physiology. His water-rationing program's failure was measured in casualties. The 77th Infantry Division proved the hard way what Sir Hubert Wilkins, an Australian-born explorer and desert expert had tried to tell Patton: One quart of drinking water per day is far from sufficient to replace body losses in 120 degrees desert temperature without shade. Still, the carefully recorded results of these experiments are still the standard guide to what desert water requirements really are.

Discipline was not maintained by a conventional stockade. Instead a "training company" was established in a very isolated location where prison life was even more rigorous. News of the fate of one attempted AWOL limited the size of this company to only a few. The story of the buzzard-torn remains and empty canteen spread rapidly and with effect.

With Army logic, after months at the Desert Training Center, the 77th Infantry Division was sent to fight in Pacific jungles.

Nature celebrated the 77th's departure with a great phenomenon. It rained. Not once but on several successive nights. An awesome wind and dust storm preceded the rains and ripped and flattened whole rows of tents. And flash floods washed away parts of the camp, as if to say "Farewell, 77th!"

Although unrecognized by the Department of the Army, the Hyder Campaign Ribbon still ranks high today among those who know its story. One soldier who lost 30 pounds in the desert

summer described it: "The Hyder Ribbon is a strip of sandpaper on which is mounted a broken thermometer. If you fought at Palen Pass (maneuver area), you can mount one salt table on it, and if you climbed Fourth-of-July Butte, you are authorized to wear on it one small cactus lobe."

Camp Bouse was the mystery post of the DTC. This large tent city complex located in remote Butler Valley in Western Arizona was an ideal location for the 9th Tank Group to train in absolute secrecy with the British-developed "Canal Defense Light" in 1943-44.

The first train load of GI's and equipment arrived at the Bouse, Arizona, rail stop October 14. The 23-mile trip to Camp Bouse was made on newly built, rocky, and dusty roads and to make morale worse, the troops passed the remains of an ammo truck that had blown up scattering duds 200 yards in all directions.

Secrecy became a way of life. Some families were firmly convinced their sons were under military arrest because they were accompanied home on leave by sergeants. Even today, there are former members of this special unit who insist their project has never been declassified and will not discuss it.

The men of the 9th Tank group encountered not only the usual rattlesnakes, cactus, Gila monsters, and tarantulas, but also homesteaders who refused to leave Butler Valley. This problem was quickly resolved by firing artillery in close proximity.

Most of the old soldiers remember the meals being the finest of modified "B" rations which looked and tasted the same as dog food served with a coating of fine golden dust that seemed to hang in the air.

Beer was sold at the PX, but did little to improve temper because the limited-ice edict meant the beer could be barely cooled, to 100 degrees. However, this did not slow consumption if the bottle cap residue in the PX area today is an indication.

Almost every night artillery was fired directly over the camp with minimum clearance, so that those who were having a rare duty-free evening for relaxation would not forget why they were there. Sleep was hard to come by, but troops adjusted.

Finally, the "weapon system that would change the course of the war" arrived at Camp Bouse. Affectionately called "Gismo" by the troops, the CDL had its genesis during World War I when Commander Thoren of the Royal Navy proposed using a searchlight, mounted in an armored housing on a tank, to blind the enemy during night attacks. The theory was that if a very bright light were shown through a shutter, mechanically opened and shut with regular frequency, the onlooker's eyes would be unable to adjust to the ever-changing conditions and he would become virtually blind.

At Lulworth Range in Dorset, England, a volunteer agreed to test an experimental tank at some risk to his life. During the day, the range was swept clear of all previous tank tracks and a 25-pound field gun was emplaced with instructions to the gun crew that they were to fire and stop a vehicle using live ammunition. After dark, the tank was driven onto the field and while under fire from the 25-pounder, the driver maneuvered his tank from side to side, stopping, reversing, all the while keeping the light aimed at the gun using various color filters. After the fire was stopped, observing officers were asked to draw a line representing the path taken by the tank. Almost without exception, the officers drew a straight line from the starting point of the tank to their positions. Then to prove his point, the driver turned and illuminated his track marks, to the incredulous officers.

When the M-4 Sherman tanks replaced the M-3 General Lee/Grant tanks in the Western desert in 1943, some of the spare Lee/Grants were converted to CDL configuration. The 13-million candlepower light was generated by carbon arcs mounted on the right side of the turret and passed through various reflectors. The reflectors were made of polished aluminum so they could not be shattered by machine-gun fire. It was found that the light's intensity was hardly affected even after repeated hits.

The CDL light could cover a cone shaped area beginning at 90 yards in front of the tank to a maximum of 340 yards wide by 35 yards high at 1,000 yards. The combat deployment concept was to have 15 tanks advance abreast, maintaining a 30 yard interval thereby providing a solid wall of light with supporting infantry following closely behind the vehicles.

But American experiments soon showed that the blinding effect was not so great as originally believed. It was also determined that the German 88mm gun sight, when fitted with a green sun filter, actually enabled the gunner to clearly see the slot through which the light passed.

The 9th's combat units were deployed with various divisions across the broad American front. Somehow the opportunity to use the CDL tanks in combat failed to materialize and most of the 9th's units were re-equipped with Sherman amphibious tanks.

Their Gizmos were sent to the rear, and when the long-awaited call came, were used but briefly and with little fanfare. Late in the war, the 738th Tank Battalion used 13 Gizmos to illuminate the Rhine after the capture of the Remagen Bridge. One German officer interrogated after the war said, "We wondered what those lights were as we had the hell shot out of us while we tried to destroy the bridge."

Most CDLs had been withdrawn from active service by late 1944, with the majority being destroyed in a large fire at the tank park in Cherbourg, France. They are now the foundation for the Cherbourg city dump!

Patton's war baby remained active for 13 months and was then closed due to the inability of the Army Service Forces to properly support it. General George Marshall lamented closing the post-graduate course for his infantry and armored units, but with most of the Army overseas and the few remaining divisions enroute to ports of embarkment, the value of continued operation of the Desert Training Center was questionable.

The author, S. Lee Rourke, is a free-lance writer who spends most of his time writing and researching in the ghost towns and mining camps of the Southwest. He thanks Lieutenant Colonel John Lynch (Ret.) and the Council on America's Military Past (CAMP) for supplying the data and photographs in this article. To obtain more information about the DTC, write *CAMP, 518 West Why Worry Lane, Phoenix, Arizona, 85021*.

**George C. Scott marches boldly  
into *The Last Days of Patton*  
by Vernon Scott**

**TV Week; The San Diego Union**  
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Hollywood—George C. Scott won an Academy Award in 1969 for the lead role in *Patton*. He may now win an Emmy for playing the World War II general again—this time in a CBS-TV movie, *The Last Days of Patton*, airing at 8 p.m. this Sunday on Channel 8.

Scott scoffs at the thought of an Emmy, contending that performers should not compete for awards. Seventeen years ago, after the movie at the *Patton*, he refused to appear at the Academy Award presentations or accept his Oscar.

It has been said that the only thing more menacing than a George C. Scott scowl is a George C. Scott smile.

After a recent day of golf, however, he seemed relaxed and amiable in the men's grill at the Bel Air Country Club. He had showered and was dressed in a sweater, open sports shirt and slacks.

His rugged face testifies to his boozing days of the past. His nose, broken a couple of times in barroom brawls, reflects the pugnacity of his nature. But the overall portrait is softened by the warmth of his baritone voice and his easy smile.

He has been a Patton scholar since the first film. Five or six years ago, he read author Ladislav Farago's *The Last Days of Patton* and was eager to see it made into a movie, with Scott in the lead role.

"After I read Farago's book I waited a year and a half for the announcement that some studio or producer had bought screen options for the property," he said.

"When nobody came forth, I bought the film rights to the book myself. Then it took me three and a half years to get someone to finance the project.

"The problem was simple. There was a great deal of interest in making the book into a feature film, but the costs were projected at between \$25 million and \$30 million. No one wanted to jump into that kind of financing with both feet.

"\$30 million is a lot of money for a movie with very little action and no war scenes at all. This is a story of the last 40 days of Patton's life, and still they were talking that kind of money. It would be impossible today to make *Patton* as it was produced 17 years ago. It cost \$25 million then.

These days the price could be twice that amount or more.

"Anyway, I talked to Bill Storke of Entertainment Partners Limited—I worked for them in *Fagin* and *Scrooge*—and Bill said he could put the Farago property on TV for \$8 million.

"We took the property to NBC, which turned us down. Storke said the best way to finance the picture was to find a single sponsor for the entire film, then any network would be happy to put it on the air."

"Storke then saw (Chrysler president) Lee Iacocca who was very enthusiastic. He told us Chrysler would sponsor the whole three hours and would hold the air date for their 1987 model campaign."

Finances, then, were the sole consideration for making *The Last Days of Patton* a three-hour TV movie instead of a feature theatrical film. Scott received a generous salary and will share in the profits. The film will be released abroad in theaters.

"More people will see this film on television than would have in theaters and we were able to put in almost an hour's more story than we could have for a feature," he said.

"After a 17-year interval a brand new generation has come along that has never seen *Patton*. This TV movie could revive the first one. It wouldn't hurt for people to see *Patton* again before we go on the air. But this new project stands on its own."

Scott, who has a home in Beverly Hills as well as in Connecticut, is a willful, often stubborn man who stands by his convictions. Once he had purchased the Farago book, he hired screenwriter William Luce to draft a script.

"Bill wrote eight drafts," Scott recalled. "Then behind my back the producers hired another writer. I was busy working in the movie *Mussolini* in Yugoslavia at the time. When I found out, I made them rehire Luce. That's one of the nice things about owning the rights to a project.

Speaking of the finished product, he said, "This is a more personal story of Patton's life than the first picture was. There are flashbacks to his youth—not with me in the role, of course—but there is no World War II stuff. We did enough of that the last time.

"Our intent is to give a fuller portrait of the man. I think I've come to know him pretty well. I'm not sure how I'd have gotten along with him. Those people close to Patton were loyal. They adored him. Those less close didn't like him. I'll say this, if I had met him, I'd have paid attention."

Scott said the TV movie offers a somewhat different view of Patton.

"This is a softer interpretation of Patton, but he remains a difficult egocentric. We show his sentimental side. We also tell the story of his love affair with Jean Gordon, his wife's niece who traveled with him throughout Europe as a Red Cross worker. Their affair lasted off and on for a dozen years.

"But we only touch on Gordon briefly. The real love story is with his wife, Beatrice (played by Eva Marie Saint) to whom he was devoted.

"We touch on his anti-Semitism and his hatred of the Russians. He wanted to continue the war after Germany was defeated by attacking and conquering the Soviet Union.

"There wasn't time to explore all the idiosyncrasies of this complex man. Some people attribute his eccentricities and erratic behavior to a blood clot on his brain suffered in a horse accident early in his career.

"In this script Patton's career is over. He's been kicked upstairs, fired from command of the Third Army by General Eisenhower. He's an embittered man. After VE Day he wrote to his wife, 'I love war and responsibility and excitement. Peace is going to be hell on me.'

"I had no trouble assuming the role again. It was like shaking hands with an old and dear friend. I found the same passion. I'm devoted to Patton and I hope this rounds out the picture on this remarkable creature."

Scott grinned and laughed his gruff laugh. He raised his brandy snifter in salute to Patton.

"Patton was almost killed the day before he was to return to the United States and probable retirement," Scott said. "He was riding in a limousine when it collided with an army truck. The accident left him paralyzed. He lived 11 courageous days after that, fully conscious and aware of his fate.

"I have a videocassette of *The Last Days of Patton* and I run it about once a week. I cry. I get so wrapped up in the story I can only think of the character on screen as Patton, not me.

"There's a sense of foreboding about this film. You feel something terrible is going to happen and, of course, it does. Patton died at the age of 60 on December 21, 1945.

"I'm the only actor appearing in this film who also appeared in *Patton*. After all, the war is over and all his military associates have disappeared. There's a whole new cast and no repetition of characters."

In addition to Eva Marie Saint as Beatrice Patton, Richard Dysart is seen as Eisenhower and Murray Hamilton as Patton's chief of staff, Brigadier General Hobart Gay.

Scott himself is not a sentimental man. Playing Patton, he says, was not what he would call fun. After 40 movies, 30 TV shows (not including his *Eastside-Westside* series) and some 150 plays, Scott says his favorite roles were screwballs.

"I'd have to go along with Buck in *Dr. Strangelove* or Mordecai Jones in *The Flim Flam Man*," he said. "Much as I enjoyed playing Patton, I think my best part was Willie Loman in *Death of A Salesman* on Broadway.

"However, Patton is right up there with the great roles. The responsibility of playing a flesh-and-blood man of his stature is responsibility quadrupled. To this day I walk down the street and have cab drivers and garbage collectors yell at me, 'Hi, General!'

**These are the Generals—Patton**  
by Ted Shane

**The Saturday Evening Post**  
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*"Old Blood and Guts," also known as "Buck Rogers,"  
proved his right to both titles at Casablanca.*

I'll never forget hearing Maj. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., talk about the realities of leadership. It was at lunch and he was describing his ideas with something dangling from a fork.

"Suppose," he explained with blue-eyed innocence, "that I have a piece of wet spaghetti lying here on the table. I cannot move that piece of spaghetti forward by pushing on the tail end. It will only buckle up in the middle. So will the unit of an officer who tries to command from the rear. A piece of spaghetti or a military unit may be moved forward only by being led from the front end."

That lunch was a few months before "Old Blood and Guts" Patton commanded the American forces landing at Casablanca, where our troops experienced the hardest fighting of the first phase of the African invasion. There Old Blood and Guts had plenty of chance to demonstrate his theories of leadership personally. And when he stormed ashore in a tank, that is precisely what he did on the historic Sunday of November eighth.

Tall, tough, and agile as a snake, Major General Patton is a living advertisement for a life well spent out of doors. His shrimp-pink complexion, steel blue eyes and sandy hair are the perfect physical complement for the astonishing initiative and incredible courage that have given him his honorary Army title, Old Blood and Guts. His sense of the dramatic and his flair for designing extraordinary battle costumes also have led his men to call him "The Green Hornet," "The Man From Mars," and "Buck Rogers." These labels are pasted on him with affection, although not within his hearing. The general is photogenic and he is quite an actor. He enjoys these distinctions to the fullest, but he is not the kind of general whose subordinates could find enjoyment in reminding him of these qualities.

Patton comes from the fox-hunting and bourbon aristocracy of Virginia. He was born to a lot of money in San Gabriel, California, on November 11, 1885. At the age of eleven he was an accomplished polo player, polishing his game to perfection later at Virginia Military Institute. Because of his inability to spell and an imagination which expressed itself in new costumes for old forms of practical jokes, he did not exactly set V.M.I. intellectual standards. He majored in polo, football, and horsemanship.

Later, at West Point, he continued to specialize in football and horsemanship, dismounting long enough to set an intercollegiate 220-yard-dash record. "End," he says, when asked for a résumé of his football career. The Navy was beating the Army regularly in those years, and Patton cannot abide the thought of losing. At the Point he also began to exercise a plentiful supply of brains. Although his spelling was held to be worse than George Washington's, and he took five years to cover four, he turned out to be an excellent student and a voracious reader of military lore. He could dash off jingles with the facility of a Kipling, his favorite poet after Bobbie Burns and Robert Service. He grabbed off the second most coveted honor at West Point—that of upper-class adjutant.

In 1912 he went to Stockholm as a one-man modern pentathlon team, coming in fourth because they could not find his tenth bullet on a target. Obviously it had passed through one of the nine other holes in the bull's-eye, but the judges would not allow it.

Like all true Virginians, Patton hated to walk anywhere as long as there was horseflesh in the barn. So he went into the cavalry. Believing in the principle that a cavalry officer should be an eternally fit athlete, an expert swordsman—he can cut an apple on your head, blindfolded, charging

from ten paces—and a crack pistol and rifle shot, Patton perfected himself at all these somewhat dated military arts. He got so he could shoot accurately from the hip at a gallop.

Arriving at a Texas cavalry post as a young lieutenant, he greeted his commanding officer with, "Is there place for officers to keep their horses?" The commandant allowed as how he could give the young lieutenant's horse stable room. Imagine his horror when he learned that Patton had brought not one horse but twenty-six. Polo was the answer. At fifty-seven, his game is still very much on the "for-keeps" side.

"Boy, he rides you down," a young officer told me. "And he hits hard—often on the head. You can't ride him down."

Three officers in Patton's old cavalry outfit have one eye. "Lost them in polo," the boys say, with a wink.

But the genuine Patton legend begins in 1916, with Villa's raid on Columbus, New Mexico. Pershing was in command. A Villa bandit called Candelario Cervantes had killed some American boys. Patton chafed in his tent, anxious for a crack at Candelario. "I will snuff out that Candelario like this," he said, taking shots at the light in the tent. To this day he occasionally potshots cans and light bulbs to keep his hand in.

"In time, in time," Pershing soothed his young officer.

Patton thereupon sat on Pershing's doorstep until he was given permission to hunt the Mexican. He filled a car full of his chosen men—he's a great guy to pick his team—and entered Mexico in a cloud of dust. They trailed Candelario to a small Mexican town. Within a big *cuartel* of adobe walls, the bandit entrenched himself. Patton and his men surrounded the place and loosed a hot fire. Nothing happened. The long, weary day went by; Candelario still withstood the siege and seemed to have plenty of ammunition.

"I'm going in," Patton announced.

Patton is not a restrainable man. So in he went. There was a sound of firing. Yells and moans. Then silence. Covered with grime and sweat, out came Patton, carrying Señor Cervantes like a deer over his shoulder, very much dead. "He tried to get me when I was reloading," said Patton. "He shot fast, but not too well." He carried the body to the car, tossed it over the fender, climbed in, and headed for home.

## **Iron Steed**

Now, as everybody knows, the last war was peculiarly safe for the cavalry. In fact, the cavalry, through no fault of its own, got an undeserved going-over in the press for absenteeism from action. But there were no trenches for horses.

No six-footer with a body like a ramrod and the fighting heart of Tecumseh is going to sit around and neck his horse while there's fighting on tap. With an instinct for the future which always has marked him, Patton took a look at the new iron cavalry—those strange, snorting, hard-riding mounts called tanks. What he saw was good. Like cavalymen, tanks could scout, feel out the soft spots, then cut through like a spear, fan out behind the lines, and raise hell in the back country with communications, supply dumps and generals.

Patton fitted into his new armor more snugly than you do into your wartime woolies. Another chapter was added to the Patton legend. Going into combat a captain, he soon became known for his rash daring and finishing punch.

While no two stories agree in exact detail as to how he fought World War I, it is generally understood that his style was to fight, not in the tank but on it. The indelible picture in the minds of all who saw or heard Patton—it's impossible to go anywhere in our Army and not meet someone who vividly recalls him—is of a sandy-haired screwball mounted outside the lumbering tank, waving his savor—years before, he invented a keen new cavalry saber—his spurs digging into the tank's sides, urging his tank drivers onward to the foe. This was done to the tune of a rich, creative,

ebullient profanity, exploding over the terrain like. 9.2's. When the tank moved too slowly for him—tanks were not so fast in those days—he'd leap from it and run alongside, waving his savor, cutting at the luckless krauts flushed from their hiding places.

Patton organized and commanded the American Tank School at Langres, and then led the 304th Brigade of the Tank Corps through the St. Mihiel offensive triumphantly in September of 1918. Moving swiftly with his brigade into the Meuse-Argonne sector, he got his on September twenty-sixth, the first day of the offensive there. Because Patton won't talk, there are a lot of conflicting stories as to where he got it, anatomically speaking. Some say he was wounded in the head and carries a silver-plate patch on his dome. That isn't true. "His head is too sound," a fellow general told me, laughing. Others say his legs were riddled—an odd spot for a tanker to be hit. The best guess seems to be that he collected a sizable collection of slugs somewhere around the midriff.

There is no doubt about how he got his. Young Captain Patton broke through the German front lines with his tanks. He and his tank crews found themselves alone, without support. Patton himself went back to find the infantry and do some eloquent lobbying for support. While on that one-man mission he ran smack into a pillbox well populated with Fritzies and their guns. He dealt with that problem in characteristic fashion, making a frontal charge while pitching high hard ones and a few curves with hand grenades. One of the grenades got the pillbox, but the pillbox also got Patton through the middle.

It was Colonel George S. Patton, Jr. after the Armistice. The colonel not only skipped a lot of numbers in winning this promotion, but came out of World War I with the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, and the Purple Heart.

The ways of peace go hard with the Pattons of this world. He married Beatrice Ayer, of Boston and the American Woolen Mills family. He rode. He played polo and he showed his fine horses. He learned to fly. He raised a happy family and he enjoyed making editorial criticism of the good adventure books his wife wrote. He and Mrs. Patton were the happiest of comrades, and their especial joy was to sail the seas together in their seagoing boat. They once made a 9000-mile cruise with their eight-year-old son in a secondhand forty-footer, finishing in Hawaii. Seagoing generals are rare in any man's army!

### **The Claws of the Army**

But all this was not enough. Patton held the deep and flaming conviction that those were not years of peace, but the nervous and irksome quarter century of an armistice. He continued to lead the Spartan life of an athlete in training. (He still can run the one hundred faster than the average West Point graduate.) He devoured military history and news to keep himself ever ready for the resumption of world war. He wrote textbooks, and concentrated especially on tank maneuvers, inventing some new ones. He preached the necessity of more and better tanks to all who would listen during those years when our military was considered sort of out of season. "An Army without tanks is like a lobster without claws," he said. "Tanks are the claws that penetrate and envelop and pinch."

So it was in the military cards that when our country began to go on a war basis Old Blood and Guts was swiftly promoted to major general and given command of the 2nd Armored Division, then of an Armored Corps. Patton was willing and ready. The way he trained his corps for the current offensive in North Africa gives you an idea of just how ready for realities George Patton was.

Training for desert war was the big idea. After a flying trip to Washington in March of 1942, where Patton conferred with Generals Lesley J. McNair and Mark W. Clark, a Southwestern area lying directly west of the Colorado River was selected. Patton had made reconnoitering expeditions over the terrain, which permitted troop movements over an expanse 180 miles long



and ninety miles wide. Mountainous contours made it possible for opposing troops on maneuvers to make marches up to 400 miles without catching sight of each other. The desert training site—as no country in Europe could offer troops—was bordered on the east by the Colorado River; on the south by a line extending from Desert Center, California, to Yuma, Arizona; on the north by a line extending from Desert Center to Searchlight, Nevada. Within the triangle a base camp for a training center was established twenty miles east of Indio, California. Divisional camps were set up at Desert Center, Iron Mountain, and Needles. The region is so sparsely populated that once during a reconnoitering trip Patton's party traveled four days without seeing an inhabitant.

Patton fought for equipment and he fought for the men he wanted as subordinate officers. Then he told them what he wanted from them in the way of leadership.

"Dugout-telephone days are over, gentlemen," he said. "You can't run a war from a desk. You can now run it from a tank or a motorcycle. Never ask a man to do anything that you wouldn't do yourself."

Patton's hand-picked subordinates were selected for physique, first; intelligence, second; and an ability to absorb profanity without curling up, third. "You cannot run an Army without it," their general has remarked. Riding the tanks is not easy; it is a little like riding in a spike-lined upper berth on a tropical single-track railway built over a volcano. All Patton's officers are athletes who have lots of nerve and whee. Their training was exactly like that of the average tanker. They had to go into the bull ring like any private. Like Patton, they had to be able to change a bogie wheel in a mud bed or the scorching heat of the desert, sleep on the ground as every tanker does, get bumped out of jeeps and right them in mid-air—and even ride the suicidal motorcycles, the motorized jerks of the Armored Force. If they made it, they were admitted to the Battalion of Death. If they failed, back to the infantry they went. Few failed. Patton has a way with men.

Speaking of men, he likes all kinds. Though it costs, paradoxically enough, a little more to make a tanker out of a Minnesota tractor driver than it does out of a Georgia cracker—crackers being more warlike—Patton managed to get a pretty hardy crew together. "An ideal tanker," he told me, "is a fellow who can drive three hundred miles all day, then stay awake seventy-two hours after that." On maneuvers his troops got in the habit of going without sleep for thirty-six hours. When they slept, they did so on the ground next to their tank, like their general.

Patton rode the tanks—small, medium and jumbo—rode the motorcycles, jeeps and anything else on four wheels. His own tank, spinning along with a tin flag with two red stars gleaming in the sun, Patton glaring out of it, mouth drawn, eyes peering, his head encased in a giant gold crash helmet, yelling encouragement, advice, criticism—that was a sight to see on maneuvers.

Because the tank has a way of coming up and socking the rider inside of it an iron punch in the most unexpected places, Patton designed a giant crash helmet, guaranteed to keep your brains inside your skull and equipped with two leather gadgets to hold the earphones in place. His coverall has a snap-on place for the divisional insignia.

### **A Bow to Buck Rogers**

For himself, the general invented a forest-green Buck Rogers uniform with diagonal brass buttons. On these are hooked respirators and other gadgets a tanker should carry. Patton also made a special holster in his bosom in which to carry his inevitable pearl-handled pistols, for the close work. No one has ever been able to puzzle out the uses of all the gadgets on the uniform's many hooks.

"What are those two buttons?" a fresh reporter once asked the general.

"To keep my pants up," he replied blandly.

Patton adopted the football coach's skull practice for training purposes, and added fireside chats after the maneuvers had been carried out. For skull practice he uses a sand-table model of a battlefield for demonstration purposes, and profanity for emphasis. Patton's picturesque language

is much more effective than if the lecture were delivered in good dull Army manual terminology. Most typical is his classically simple description of tank fighting:

"The idea is to hold the enemy by the nose and kick him in the rumble seat." His Signal Corps photographers have illustrated this most graphically, using live models.

I watched the general put a platoon of tanks through a maneuver. When it was over, he made a little speech into a field microphone.

"Gentlemen," he said in a squeaky but sharp voice, "I congratulate everyone on this performance. It was clear and excellent. Gentlemen"—he changed mood—"let me warn you that this may be the last time you will use blank ammunition. I therefore remind you that you are in a killing business. Kill the other ——— before he kills you. The quicker you kill him and the farther forward you go, the longer you will live."

The effect of the speech was chilling, yet more inspiring than a long oration. You could feel the thrill go through the loose ranks of officers.

He changed mood again. Now his eyes twinkled. "I'm sorry, gentlemen, I couldn't say what I really wanted to. I have a slight cold." The ensuing laugh was warming, that bleak Georgia morning.

More recently, just before the African offensive, the general talked to an entire division about battle.

"Don't be afraid of how you will act in battle," he said. "You will act with courage. You will do your duty. Being under fire will scare you, but it isn't as terrible as you think it is."

He wound up his talk with a poem on battle on which I did not take down in my notes. It was a stirring poem, though, I remember well, and there was no guff about it. He felt so very deeply about his subject and about the destinies of his men that, for the first time in the knowledge of any officers I talked to subsequently, he choked up.

He is a man with a tough, rigid discipline of mind and emotion. There was a tightening of the muscles in his throat, a rigidity in his jaw, and then he went on as before.

"Thanks to you men and to General Devers, we are ready, I shall be delighted to lead you against any enemy anywhere." And a dozen thousand and more of his men jumped to their feet to give him a burst of spontaneous applause.

Later, sitting in his simple barracks office, the general was another man. In his khaki shirt, he looked sandy and pink and gentle, his eyes twinkling constantly. We were surrounded by staff officers who bent to catch every word that fell from his lips.

We spoke of dogs, and he felt regretful at having to leave his own beloved bird dogs behind. But, he told me, you can always pick up a dog in a foreign country.

He was reminded of a British officer who got the Victoria Cross for saving the regimental goat, which had wandered out into no man's land in the last war, gilt horns and all.

"Posthumously," he pointed out.

"That's the only way you can get that damned medal!"

We spoke of Man Mountain Dean, the 300-pound wrestler who fought with Patton in the tanks in the last war, and whom Patton had got back as a sort of sentimental mascot. Dean was doing clerical work, being near-sighted, and was occasionally called out to lift a tank out of a ditch or mudhole. Man Mountain Dean was left behind when the boys were taken overseas.

That morning Patton told me he had stopped a soldier in his outfit and asked him his age.

"Bless my soul, sir, if I see thirty again."

After a gruff, good-natured shaking, the boy admitted that he was just fifteen.

"Why did you join the Army?"

"Cause the food was better than at home, sir."

Surprisingly, Old Blood and Guts likes the orientation courses in which our soldiers are being taught what it's all about. "They'll not be political morons, as in the last war," the general said succinctly.

General Patton fought fiercely against my "writing him up." He made me promise that I wouldn't print anything about him until he was in his first battle.

"Then we'll see what kind of a general I am," he explained. "Of course, if I don't live up to the article, it won't matter. Because if I don't make good, I'll never come back alive."

### **The Will to Win**

Well, after Casablanca, it looks to me as though it's okay to print the article.

As a footnote, I'd like to say something about the boys who are with Old Blood and Guts, the boys with whom I rode tanks when they were training in this country. They were all champions, and they were all convinced that Patton had accomplished that. There was Lieutenant Lou Winterberger, who gave me my tanking baptism as he knocked down tall pine trees with an accuracy and tenacity the Germans are learning about even now. And Lieutenant Jones, graduate of Drexel Institute and General Electric, who cared for his men and their equipment with the same tenderness he showed toward his one-year-old daughter. Not to forget handsome, black-haired Lieutenant Neil McClean, who sat with me in a twenty-seven-ton tank for a solid hour and pointed out its beauties with the enthusiasm and diffidence of a lovesick swain trying to tell a pal about the virtues of his girl. A clean-living youngster from the South, McClean treated the idea of death with contempt.

"Hell," he said, "sure I may get my head sheared off by a hunk of something, and maybe then I will die like a rat in a cage. But I don't figure to do that and, if I do, anyway I'll know what it's like."

They were former New York taxi drivers, farm hands with calluses from the tractors still coating their palms, ranchers who figured tanks weren't as temperamental as windmills, college athletes and just plain run-of-the-mill young men. Some of the latter were among the ablest. I particularly recall the deadly drive of the quiet former undertaker's assistant who wanted to get the business of war over quickly because he was eager to get back to driving that hearse in Hammond, Indiana.

The will to win and the ability to carry out the dictates of that will had been poured and sweated into them relentlessly by their general. I wish them Godspeed and all luck. Beyond that, I fervently hope all of them will keep their eyes on the back of their general at all times. If they do, they'll find themselves in the damndest places, doing the damndest things. And they'll come home sooner than they expected, marching to their own divisional marching song. Yes, they have one; it's a good one too. It begins with the bandmaster drawing two pistols and firing them off, one after the other. Mrs. Patton wrote it.

## **The Patton Legend—And Patton As Is** by Vincent Sheean

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*An intimate portrait of the war's most spectacular and bewildering general,  
by a noted author who served as a staff officer under his command.*

The combination of godliness, Virginia ancestry, California birth, great wealth, good looks and strength, plus a passionate inherited patriotism, started George Smith Patton, Jr., off on the creation of the half-legendary and half-real character that he is today. Much of his play-acting is perfectly deliberate, and he says so. He considers it a necessary part of the equipment of a commander, and he freely explains why.

General Patton rightly points out that Napoleon—at twenty-seven—filled all Europe with his fame merely by brandishing a sword and leading the ragged French republicans across the bridge at Lodi. It was not a great feat of generalship, but it was a great feat of play-acting, which is part of generalship.

"This Colt Forty-five that I carry," General Patton once remarked to me. "Don't you think I get tired of it? It's damned heavy. But I can no more leave it off than William Jennings Bryan could have left off that white tie of his."

The general can talk like Macaulay or Gibbon at one moment, and like an angry drill sergeant at another. He swears like a trooper because, after all, he is a trooper. A very great trooper. And I do not believe that he wanted, or ever will want, to be anything else.

"A lot of damned fools say I have political ambitions," he says. "What are they talking about? I have no kind of political ambition at all. No—take that back—maybe I'd like to be mayor of Junction City, Kansas."

Most of us who have seen his 3rd Army and his results will hope that he does not become mayor of Junction City until this whole war, in all its parts, is won.

This article will attempt to set forth some of the reasons why General Patton creates legend as easily as he breathes, and why all these legends are solidly rooted in the reality of a great field commander. But the great general cannot operate unless all the other conditions operate as well. Before we can correctly see Patton's achievement, we must set it against the background of America's will to win, the fabulous productive effort which resulted, and the quality of the fighting men which the conditions of our life produced for us when they were needed.

Set against all these circumstances—America's war—the personality and achievement of a single general can be profitably studied without false emphasis. General Patton himself would not have it otherwise. He never tires of telling men under his command that teamwork is the whole thing, that an army lives, works, fights, and eats as a team, and that "individual heroism is"—I paraphrase—"the bunk." This does not mean that he does not appreciate to the fullest those rare and exceptional deeds which brighten the story of every battle. He does. I once heard him say, as he hung the blue ribbon of the Congressional Medal of Honor around a platoon leader's neck, "I would give my immortal soul to have one of these myself."

Patton appreciates the rare deed and wishes to see it fully honored. He also knows that such rare deeds make one element of an army's pride. But an army, week in and week out, in the dull days as well as in days of action, depends first of all upon the ability of everybody in it to do his job as well as possible in association with everybody else. It is the effort to get this result which has made Patton so attentive, at all times, under all circumstances, to the training and discipline of those under his command. If they are properly prepared for battle they will win—this, in brief, is why training and discipline seem to him the basis of an army's existence. The whole grinding period of drill, the discipline and saluting and uniforms and exercises, have but one end—to which the button on the soldier's coat and his leggings and helmet, as well as his soldierly bearing and knowledge of weapons, all contribute. That end is victory in battle.

The general will be sixty on next Armistice Day. For all of that time, as far back as he can remember, he has wanted to be a soldier. When he was seven years old, his father used to read to him out of the Iliad, and he performed his first military maneuver by dragging a dead chicken around the house, as Achilles dragged the body of Hector around the walls of Troy. His imagination was fed on the poetry and legend of war, with its combination of cruelty and splendor, from the earliest period. Unlike most boys who are similarly kindled by the military dream, he did not turn back from it when he found out how much hard work it involved. His father was district attorney in Los Angeles, a Democrat in a Republican state, and the young Patton, when the time came, won his appointment to West Point by competitive examination.

It took him five years to get through the academy, because he failed in mathematics, and to this day he will say, "I'm a stupid man, and I can prove it by the West Point record." Actually, his record at the academy was excellent; he was a model cadet, the sergeant major of the corps, and made the fencing, rifle, track, and riding teams. His weaknesses were in mathematics and spelling; the latter he has never wholly corrected. He is somewhat consoled by the similar failings of Washington and Napoleon. But he was the head of his class in military engineering, deportment, and English, and his way with a horse was about what you would expect from a boy who played polo at the age of twelve.

One of the stories most often told of him is about his arrival at a cavalry post in Texas after he left the academy. He asked his commanding officer if there would be room for his polo ponies, and the answer was that there might be room for one. Lieutenant Patton—who even then did not do things by halves—had brought twenty-six.

The Patton legend abounds in stories of that kind, and, short of verifying each one with the general himself, it would be difficult indeed to separate fact from myth. The story of the twenty-six polo ponies, since it is in character, was seized upon with delight by the Army, and has been told many times in recent years. Another is the tale of how young Patton, a little later on, when he was aide to General Pershing in the expedition into Mexico against Pancho Villa, shot three raiding Mexicans and deposited them behind the general's tent. Or how, at about the same time—1916—besieged the bandit Candelario Cervantes in a house in a Mexican village. Wearing of the siege, he went into the house and shot it out with the bandit himself, emerging with the dead Candelario carried over his shoulder.

The evolution of a cavalry officer in modern warfare leads inevitably to armored vehicles, and Patton was about the right age for that evolution when the tank was invented in the last World War. He studied the new weapon with the British and French and then organized the American Tank School at Langres, in France. With the rank of captain, he went into our new Tank Corps as a brigade commander. There are many stories about his ebullience in combat at that time, his taste for close quarters with the Germans, the cavalry saber he carried as he rode a tank, and the eagerness with which he tried to make the cumbersome vehicles of those days behave like a troop of horse. He was ahead of the mechanical development, perhaps, and his character, too, was still immature. Some of the stories indicate that both he and the tank itself needed further experience.

"The first appearance of a new weapon," he said once, "is the highest point of its effectiveness and the lowest point in its efficiency."

It was left for him to prove, so far as the tank is concerned, that he could grow up with the weapon and get a maximum on both points.

Captain Patton, of the Tank Corps, emerged from the last war with the Distinguished Service Cross, the Silver Star, and the Purple Heart, among other things. His wounds came in the Meuse-Argonne drive of 1918. Riding on the front of a tank, he rallied some disorganized infantry, led them forward, and then, although severely wounded, retained consciousness long enough to send out flank patrols to save his men from being surrounded and captured. He told Fred Painton—the late Frederick C. Painton, noted war correspondent who rode with him in Tunisia and died of a

heart attack on Guam early this April—that this was a proof of the value of training. "I still have no memory of putting out those flank patrols," he said to Fred. "I reacted automatically to years of training."

The general's reputation as a tank commander grew throughout the years of peace, which were for him years of preparation. He once told me that his most prolonged and earnest study of military history, theory and practice, took place during a time when he was stationed at Fort Myer, when he had as his fellow student his present Supreme Commander, Dwight Eisenhower. They used to explore the books and maps together, and together undertook the study of military science as expounded by Clausewitz. It would be difficult to find anybody who has read as much as General Patton has on every aspect of the art of war or who has retained so much in his capacious memory. Much of this study was undertaken—as were his studies with Eisenhower—without any view to Army promotions, but merely to fit himself for the job he felt would one day fall upon him. This was accompanied by unceasing practical experience in command and maneuver, and by unceasing propaganda—whenever he got the chance—for modern mechanized warfare.

General Patton also learned to fly, and acquired a vivid appreciation of the importance of air power. It will be remembered that during a great part of his phenomenal breakthrough in Normandy and race across France last August, Patton entrusted the cover of his flanks to the 9th Air Force (tactical)—a thing never done before in history.

His marriage to Miss Beatrice Ayer, of Boston, of the American Woolen Mills family, was a happy one, and Mrs. Patton accompanied him on all the stations to which he was sent in the peace years. Her personal fortune, like his own, is considerable—indeed, they say that Patton is the richest man in the Army. Whatever the case, he certainly was never bothered much about money. For a man whose tastes run to polo, horse shows, airplanes, and speedboats, this was fortunate. Riding and shooting never lost interest for him, and he kept up his training as an athlete. Even today he takes long walks and whirlwind expeditions around the front to tax his endurance.

When war came, Patton's rise was rapid. He became a major general and commanded first the 2nd Armored Division, afterward an armored corps. By air reconnaissance he picked out the desert area in the Southwest, 180 miles long and ninety miles wide, over which he was to train American tankmen. With a base about twenty miles east of Indio, California, and other camps at Needles, Desert Center, and Iron Mountain, he was ready to begin thirty days after the area was chosen. He picked his subordinates well and worked them hard. With their help, he created an organization which was remarkable for physical endurance, discipline and esprit de corps.

From this period of his life—the spring of 1942—dates the nickname "Old Blood and Guts," bestowed upon him by a startled public after some of his picturesque speechmaking had been allowed to get into print. I must say that I have both served under his command and reported as a war correspondent with his 3rd Army, and I never heard any officer or soldier call him that—when they call him by any nickname, it is either "The Old Man" or, more usually, "Georgie." But the nickname got into print, and no doubt will always get into print, whether it was ever actually used or not. It, too, is part of the Patton legend.

The field campaigns of General Patton begin with the American landings in Morocco on November 8, 1942. I landed at Fedala on that D-Day as an officer on the staff of Brigadier General John K. Cannon, who commanded the 12th Air Support Command and now commands the Mediterranean Allied Air Forces as a lieutenant general.

It was our mission to operate as part of General Patton's Western Task Force. From those earliest days and weeks—the three days of hostilities, the armistice, the months of occupation that followed—I date my own first impressions of General Patton, which happen to coincide with his own debut on the actual stage of war.

It is difficult now to separate those first impressions from subsequent ones which overlay them and have become mixed with them. For example, I cannot distinctly remember exactly what

uniform the general wore then, because I so vividly remember that which I lately saw him wear in Germany. But the overwhelming impact of his personality, his electrifying effect upon everybody under his command, his demand for swift and decisive action—all this was just as clear then as it is today. As has often been said, we were all "seared to death of him." We would do almost anything to avoid his censure or deserve his praise. I knew most of his staff well and had crossed the ocean with a battalion of his foot soldiers—from that wonderful 3rd Division which has since distinguished itself in every campaign.

The general was caught on the Augusta by the naval battle of Casablanca, in which the Augusta took such a great part that there was no time to send the commander ashore. Consequently, he could not land until D-plus-1. I saw him first on Red Beach Number 2, one of our landing places just south of the town of Fedala. With his six-feet-one of height, his steel helmet and—as I remember it—his strictly G.I. uniform, he was an imposing figure in the midst of his officers, giving orders for the movement of troops, the setting up of communications, the assault on Casablanca. The 3rd Infantry Division was moving down on Casablanca, the 2nd Armored was moving up from Safi. French aircraft flew overhead and the battery on the point at Fedala had still not been silenced. Resistance on the road to Casablanca was light but incessant. General Patton was, during those days, I assume, doing his best to spare the city; but, if any determined French resistance had developed, I have no doubt that he would have taken it by storm.

The confusion of those first days seemed great to me, an incorrigible civilian. While the divisions moved along the coast roads, we of the staff moved into the Miramar Hotel and tried to get headquarters going. It was astonishing how quickly this worked. With Patton raging up and down the roads, in and out of the headquarters, everybody did whatever he was supposed to do as fast as possible, and order emerged out of chaos. By the time the French resident of Morocco, General Nogues, came to the Miramar Hotel in Fedala to ask for an armistice, we had already occupied the roads, had our communications and possessed a working headquarters. When we moved into Casablanca the next day General Patton's headquarters was set up in the Shell Building, and almost immediately this, too, looked as if it had been going for some time.

In the first staff meeting in Casablanca, which I attended as General Cannon's representative, the whole of the general and special staffs were grouped around the directors' table in the big conference room of the Shell Building. Colonel Gay—now a major general—was then, as now, General Patton's chief of staff. This mild-mannered, efficient and kindly officer was talking to us about details of organization when the general's entrance brought us all to attention. Patton sat at the head of the table and spoke to us very briefly. His talk went something like this:

" Gentlemen, you have done well. This operation was successful. But we are only at the beginning. A great and momentous struggle lies ahead of us. I intend to ask more of you all the time. You have worked, but you must work harder. And don't stick around in your damn offices all the time, either. I have no use for a staff officer who doesn't know what his problems actually mean in the field. I don't want to have a lot of staff officers who get waffle-tailed from sitting in chairs. That is all, gentlemen."

He got up and stalked out. I doubt if any of us drew a breath until he was in the corridor outside.

This short speech was delivered in a characteristic Patton manner. The first part was very gently spoken, in a rather thoughtful voice. When he came to the part about not sitting in our offices all the time, his voice started to rise and rasp, with the sharp, high note of command which many thousands of American soldiers know so well. In the last words he reverted again to the gentle and courteous voice he had used in the beginning.

There followed a period of waiting. There were political problems as well as military ones to be solved. I think Patton's future biographer might usefully study the months of November and December, 1942, and January, 1943, as revealing many elements in a complex character. For

example, the hard riding and sharpshooting which had been Patton's accomplishments in peacetime were exceedingly useful in Morocco.

Nothing so impressed the French and the Arabs alike, nothing gave them greater respect for the American general.

Other things that come to mind are his liking for ceremony, smart uniforms, and military music. This was absolutely right and served its turn admirably. He wore our older regulation uniform, as a rule, in those days—greens and pinks with decorations. I remember seeing him one day when French dignitaries made a formal visit to the Western Task Force. Patton's band played the Marseillaise and The Star Spangled Banner in the square in front of the Shell Building, there was a gaudy guard of honor. The whole thing was done with military precision and stateliness.

At the time, I thought all this was done simply because General Patton liked it. I now know that he puts on this sort of show when he judges it useful for the purposes of the war—I know, in fact, that he regards a good deal of this kind of thing as "a damned nuisance." But he firmly believes that uniforms, bands and ceremonies, at times when the actual battle is far enough away, do reinforce morale and respect for the Army both within and without its own ranks. Certainly in Morocco our way was greatly smoothed by such things. Meanwhile, the divisions were undergoing rigorous training.

In February, General Patton went forward to Tunisia—after our defeat at the Kasserine Pass—and commanded the Americans in a brief campaign which was the prelude to final victory. The high point of this campaign was a tank trap he set for Rommel in March, 1943, at El Guettar in the lower Tunisian plain. Rommel marched right into it and lost half of his sixty tanks. The 10th Panzer Division retired and never attempted another counterattack. Patton was withdrawn to Oran to prepare his 7th United States Army for the next campaign, the conquest of Sicily.

In the Sicilian campaign I served again with Patton's Army, as an air officer attached to the staff of Major General Edward House, commanding the 12th Air Support Command. Again I saw my friends of the 3rd Division in their phenomenal advance which cut the island in two, and again I had glimpses of Patton storming up and down the roads, hurrying everything on faster, certain as always that speed, daring and maneuver could shorten the war. He usually rode in a command car in this campaign, and was ruthless in his determination that the whole Army—including the Air Force—should stay in woolen uniforms until the fighting was over. The man who didn't have his leggings or tin hat on was sure to be fined if the general saw him.

There was excellent reason for this, for the Sicilian nights were cold, and the infantry and artillery would have been in a bad way in cotton khaki. But work on the airfields in the boiling sun of July was almost impossible in woolen uniforms. Seeing this; General Patton—who may be the stubbornest of men, but is not unreasonable—relaxed the rules for the Air Force and let them wear what they liked—frequently nothing but shorts. From him, this was a great concession, because he was and is firmly convinced that all soldiers should be in prescribed uniform at all times and that the discipline of the Army is psychologically affected by any lapse from it.

It was on the north road in Sicily, between Palermo and Messina, that Patton's obstinacy, combined with his tactical genius, paid enormous dividends to us all. The advance had been hard. The Germans were holding on to every inch of ground as long as they could, and the terrain was with them. We had to advance along the coast road with the wild mountain country on one side and the Tyrrhenian Sea on the other. The Germans had had many months to plant their guns in the hills for a long defense. Patton—who hates having casualties if there is any way to avoid them—decided that he could greatly expedite our advance and save thousands of lives by doing some small amphibious operations, landing foot soldiers and artillery and tanks at chosen spots behind the German front lines on that coast road.



His decision was contested by others who thought it would be too costly. He stuck to his decision and argued it out. As I understand it, he was supported from on high to this extent—that if he was fully convinced his decision was right, he could go ahead and do what he wanted to do.

We were at Santo Stefano then, in a gully which ran down the hillside to the coast road. General Patton's headquarters was on the higher ground, and ours—the air—a little lower down the gully. I was sitting in the A-3 tent one night, playing poker with some other officers who had to listen for the telephone. Patton came down the hill in the darkness and lost his way looking for General House's tent. His aide stuck his head in our tent and asked for help in getting down the gully. One of our officers led them down through the foxholes and tent ropes to House's tent.

General House told me about it afterward. Patton had wakened him up and demanded exactly how many planes he could put over the beach at a given time on the following morning, and how long he could keep them there. I forget how the calculation worked out, but it came to something like an hour and a half of fighter cover. When Patton found out that he could get this, he said, "We'll do it."

The troops were already on the LST's and LCI's, of course, and had been for some days. During the time wasted while other authorities argued against Patton's decision, these ships—which lay, some of them, right in front of us—had received the attention of the Luftwaffe. We used to look at them and curse in language which Patton himself could not have surpassed. "Either use 'em or for God's sake unload 'em," was more or less what we all said.

The operation proved a most brilliant success and was followed by two smaller ones which brought the Army to Messina. When I saw the natural features which had thus been skipped, I was convinced that Patton's decision had saved thousands of American lives, besides clinching the success of the whole Sicilian campaign. One of the features was an immense promontory called Cape Orlando, which could be traversed only through a long tunnel with a gorge on the other side—on which, of course, the Germans had blown the bridge. How on earth that obstacle could have been circumvented in any other way than Patton's, I have never understood.

"People are unduly scared of amphibious operations," Patton says. "No largescale amphibious operation I can remember right off ever did fail in the whole of history. Except, that is, the landing of the Athenians at Syracuse in 413 B.C. That was a failure for a lot of reasons. It was not a failure of the Athenian soldiery."

The Sicilian campaign seems to General Patton his most successful operation up to now. He never highly regarded the demoralized German army which he cut through so brilliantly this year, and, in fact, considers that no German operation he has ever encountered was properly mounted, from the staff and command point of view, with the single exception of Rundstedt's counteroffensive in the Ardennes last winter.

But, brilliant though it was, the Sicilian campaign ended with an episode which almost cost General Patton his field command and America a great general. In a hospital in Sicily he slapped a soldier patient. He was made to apologize, in an actual military formation, by superior order, and was caustically rebuked by General Eisenhower—his own old friend—in a way that seldom comes to an army commander. Only Eisenhower, indeed, it appears on the evidence, saved him from permanent retirement at that time, in the face of a wave of indignation which swept the United States. The general was called a brute, a Nazi, and worse—persons bestirred themselves even to insult members of his family at home. He went into retirement at Palermo, lost most of his divisions to another Army, and for a time it seemed uncertain whether his superb talent was not to be thrown away altogether.

I do not defend General Patton's rash act in that hospital, but it should at least be understood. It was never contended that he did any harm to the soldier patient, the "humiliation" was the grave offense. But General Patton himself suffers a rage of humiliation whenever he sees an American

soldier who does not come up to his idea of what a soldier should be. He does not believe in battle fatigue or in neurosis. This is his conviction, and no doctor will ever shake it.

Patton thinks that courage and fear are phenomena which can be governed by training and discipline. He believes that every man in his right mind feels fear and conquers it by means of training, discipline, self-respect and patriotism.

He believes all this so strongly that he is quite incapable of understanding any other point of view. Nowadays when he goes into a hospital, he invariably says to the medical colonel in charge: "I want to see wounded men only, real patients only. No battle fatigue and no neurosis, please."

As a matter of fact, it is an ordeal for him to go through a hospital at all. The spectacle of brave men who have been shattered in battle is very hard for him to take, and he does it only so that he can thank them in the name of the Army. Fred Painton went through a hospital once with him in Tunisia and describes him as uncontrollably shaken when he spoke to some wounded men.

He wiped tears from his eyes as they went away, and said to Fred, "They're the best damned soldiers the world has ever seen. One day I bawl hell out of them and the next I weep over them."

After the long wait in Palermo, Patton was summoned to England by Eisenhower to form a new army, the 3rd, for the breakthrough in Normandy. This mark of confidence on the part of the Supreme Commander in the face of the previous winter's storm was proof that Eisenhower knew, better than anybody else concerned in the matter, what a magnificent field general he possessed.

The rest is fresh in memory. On August 1, 1944, Patton's 3rd United States Army went into battle. He had been given the 4th and 6th Armored, the 5th Infantry, the 90th Infantry, the 4th Infantry, and other divisions which were to pile up a tremendous battle record. His mission was to cut and go. He slashed a line right down to Rennes, cutting off the Brittany Peninsula and Brest, and then drove the 4th Armored down to Nantes. From there the eastward turn began, to Orleans and then to the Seine, outflanking Paris and forcing German withdrawals from a whole series of pockets, and ending up—after the most astounding month's advance in modern history—before the forts at Metz.

The only reason why the Army stopped at Metz was that it had run out of gas, ammunition, and rations. The task of keeping up with Patton's columns strained the supply services to the utmost. His system is to load up the tanks with all they can carry, and go as far as they can go. With his habit of demanding and obtaining maximum performance, he was always ahead of every calculation, including those of the Germans, who were in a constant state of surprise. At Sens, for example, the 4th Armored rolled in upon a German garrison which was taking sun baths while its officers strolled around in dress uniforms.

When the 5th Infantry ran out of supplies at Metz, the 4th Armored ran out of supplies on the other side of the Meuse, and more or less all the advanced elements of Patton's Army went dry all at once. This was on September 3, 1944. It will always be an open question how much the war could have been shortened if this had not occurred. The Germans were running so fast that they could not even reform to defend the great natural fortress of Verdun. They had already left Metz, and only when they saw that Patton was stopped did they come back to defend the forts there. It took weeks, of course, to reduce those forts, once they were properly defended.

The final success at Metz was followed by a Saar campaign which was going full tilt when Field Marshal Karl Gerd von Rundstedt made the last great German offensive last December. This counter-offensive was properly carried out, according to General Patton, because it concentrated an attack by all available force at a vulnerable point, and then exploited the advantage to the fullest. Most German counter-offensives have failed because they fritter away their resources in various places at varying times, instead of putting everything into one blow.

Patton's contribution to the defeat of Von Rundstedt was to move the 3rd Army up from the Saar and attack with it within three days. The feat was considered impossible, and probably it is—the only thing to be said is that it was actually done. Since his capture, Marshal von Rundstedt

has paid ungrudging tribute—an astonishing thing for a Junker general—to the feat. Patton had tactical leeway in this matter—he could, for example, have pivoted more gradually and cautiously, holding in one place and moving in another. He chose to hurl his entire army, except a relatively small covering force in the Saar, at the rampaging Germans in the Ardennes.

Rundstedt had made a great success of his attack—how great was not fully made public at the time, for obvious reasons. At times, we did not know just where his advance columns were. He was protected by five days of weather so impenetrable that our tactical and reconnaissance aircraft could not operate. In fact, the exact position and strength of the enemy were unknown. One of Patton's divisions—the 26th, the Yankee Division—after moving at breakneck speed up to Arlon in Luxemburg from the Saar, had to go ahead in the snow for what is called a "meeting engagement." That is to say, it had to go on until it met the enemy in unknown strength at an unknown place. Such an engagement is rare in organized warfare, except in the very first stage.

The enemy was met and defeated. Patton believes that if the meeting had not happened by December twenty-first, he would himself have been outflanked, since the enemy was moving swiftly and would have had far more troops south of the Bastogne salient in another two days. The resistance of the 101st Airborne Infantry at Bastogne made possible the rapid exploitation of that salient, once the 3rd Army had been moved north. But the rapidity of Patton's movement determined the outcome.

Some of those moves defy imagination. The 4th Armored Division had moved eighty miles in a single day in early August—Rennes to Nantes—and this was considered an astounding performance. It is. But during the Bastogne operation Patton got some even more startling results, and not always from armor either. His manipulation of infantry and transport has drawn much less public attention, but it is equally skillful. He uses the doughfoots in conjunction with armor and gets the same swift, maximum results.

He got the 10th Regiment of the 5th Infantry Division up from Sarreguemines to Arlon—sixty-nine miles—in the evening and night of one day, and attacked with the unit the next. During the operation against Rundstedt he made forty-two divisional moves in forty-two days, for an average of 100 miles a day.

The tide in the Ardennes battle had turned when I arrived at 3rd Army headquarters as a war correspondent—having returned to civilian status. During the remainder of that battle and those which followed for the Rhine and the Moselle, I was able to study General Patton's methods in the Army he commanded. I did not often see the general, although at any moment his armored jeep with its machine gun protruding from the windshield might turn up at any point. It was desperately cold in January, and we all wore as many suits of G.I. underwear and sweaters and coats as we could crowd on. Jeep riding was a cold business in that wintry forest country. But Patton ranged the front indefatigably, always in the same open jeep. When I saw him get out of it, he did not seem to have on any unusual amount of clothing either. Of late he has worn a short jacket—the American modification of British battle dress—with all his decorations, cavalry breeches and boots, and the steel helmet with his stars on it. He was never one of the invisible generals—"a commander must be seen," he says—but during this winter campaign, when things really were tough, he was seen more than ever. And in my experience, his presence, even if only glimpsed as he tore down the icy road in the jeep with his arms folded, was always something which stirred the spirit of the troops.

"That's Georgie," they would say, standing straight to look after him with a kind of awe. His commendations were always repeated throughout any division which received them—and during this period he was particularly assiduous in telling the commanders and the troops how good they were. "The Old Man says—" or "Georgie says—" the commanders would say, in relaying the good news down the line until it reached every rifleman.

The Ardennes success was completed on January 21-22, when Rundstedt got back behind the Siegfried Line. What came next was a headlong assault upon that line, beginning on February fifth, which cut through it along the whole 3rd Army front in about two weeks. In the next phase of the campaign, the 3rd Army was to be on "active defense," while other armies took the offensive. A number of divisions also were transferred to other armies for this period. "Active defense" is a term of considerable elasticity. General Patton does not believe in defense and is sorry the word was ever invented. "Nobody," he says, "ever successfully defended anything."

He used his period of "active defense" to move the 4th Armored Division sixty miles in sixty hours, knifing through the Germans to the Rhine above Coblenz. Just before this startling exploit, he had used the 10th Armored Division for an unprecedented maneuver from Saarburg right up through the Saar to Trier, with Germans on both sides of it. These cutting operations, while they are going on, look terrifying on a staff map. They are just so many fingers stuck into the enemy's eye, and you wonder why the enemy does not cut them off. But when you actually follow the divisions along the road on such a thrust, you see that the enemy is bewildered by them. Daring as they are, these moves save many lives because they completely obfuscate the enemy. Every day, on our maps and charts at the 3rd Army HQ, we saw that the 3rd Army was having very low casualties and capturing more prisoners than anybody else.

On March thirteenth, Patton turned south across the Moselle and cleaned up the Saar in no time at all, with General Patch's 7th Army pushing from the other side. He then turned across the Rhine and traversed the whole of Germany in a single month to Czechoslovakia.

His concept of the tactics suited to the present stage of the war has been brilliantly proved in action. Some of his critics—he still has many—say that he could never have done this against the German army as it was in 1940. The answer to that is that he would never have attempted such tactics against the German army as it was in 1940. He would have modified, adapted, and suited his tactics to the capacities of the enemy. He possesses a remarkable instinct for what the enemy will do, and the essence of his method is to move so fast that the enemy cannot possibly succeed.

He has other remarkable technical gifts. Nobody can read a road map as he can; nobody can pay more intelligent attention to terrain, or to how it can be utilized. He knows how to get the best out of his engineers, to whom the Army as a whole owes so much in this year's campaigning. He pays almost equal attention to the Signal Corps. Indeed, of all the legends about Patton, the most inaccurate is that he is a tank general. He may be a tank general in the sense of knowing how to use his armor, but he is an Army general first and foremost, in that he knows how to use the whole Army with everything that it has in it.

In the first sentence of this article, I mentioned "godliness" as one of General Patton's qualities. It very definitely is. He believes as a little child in God, and in his simple faith he is certain God is on his side. Last Christmas, when he sent a card of greeting to every soldier in his 3rd Army, it carried with it a prayer of his own composition. The prayer read:

"Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech Thee, of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call upon Thee that, armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to victory, and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies, and establish Thy justice among men and nations. Amen."

The answer to General Patton's prayer has become one of the most inspiring chapters in the history of the world.

**The Fort Knox Museum Honors General Patton**  
Southern Living Magazine

**Southern Living Magazine**  
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The Patton Museum of Cavalry and Armor at Fort Knox, Kentucky, near Louisville, shows how the cavalry evolved from horse and saddle to tanks and helicopters. It winds visitors through displays of uniforms and equipment of the cavalry soldier from the Revolutionary War to the present.

Much of the museum, however, is devoted to a colorful cavalryman whose career spanned both eras—Gen. George S. Patton, Jr. Patton's life in the army after he graduated from West Point began in the horse-mounted cavalry. In 1917, he was one of the first men detailed to the newly established Tank Corps.

By 1941, Patton was commanding general of the 2nd Armored Division at Fort Benning, Georgia, and just beginning his career as a flamboyant, profane, but brilliant general of World War II. He played a leading role in the North Africa campaign and swept through Sicily with the 7th Army.

From early 1944 throughout the rest of the war, Patton commanded the 3rd Army, racing across France and grabbing headlines such as "Going Our Way—Patton 40 Miles East of Rhine" that appeared in an issue of the Chicago Sun displayed in the museum. Some historians say his greatest moment was when he threw back a German thrust in the Ardennes offensive in the winter of 1944-45 and liberated the 101st Airborne Division surrounded in Bastogne.

The museum displays the McClellan saddle of Patton's grandfather and namesake, Col. George S. Patton, a Confederate cavalryman. From Patton's early life are his childhood toys, his football uniform from West Point, and his swimming uniform from the 1912 Olympics.

Other personal effects include the picture of his wife he carried with him throughout World War II and the two ivory-handled pistols he wore. Visitors can peer into the truck that served as his field headquarters—its bed converted into office, bedroom, and washroom. They also may look into the staff car in which Patton was riding when he was fatally injured in 1945 in an automobile accident near Mannheim, Germany. He is buried in Luxembourg.

The museum, located near the Chaffee Avenue entrance to Fort Knox, is open every day except December 24-25, December 31, and January 1. There is no admission charge.

**El Paso Saddlery's Patton Holster**  
by Phil Spangenberg

**Guns and Ammo**  
Volume 29, Number 4  
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In the past few years, El Paso Saddlery has been one of the pioneers of a unique idea in the gunleather field—that of producing practical and functional, yet authentic looking commemorative holster rigs. This type of gunleather maintains the lines and flavor of the original it honors, but is not cluttered up with unnecessary decorations which not only detract from the original idea of the subject, but add so much to the cost of the project that it becomes prohibitive to the average gunner's budget. These are working commemoratives and have been eagerly accepted by the shooting fraternity. Their first effort, the Pat Garrett Commemorative, which quickly sold out, I might add, was a reproduction of the holster and cartridge belt worn by this 1880s Western lawman at the time he killed the outlaw "Billy the Kid." This Texas firm soon followed up with the Tombstone Commemorative, which faithfully recreated the style of gunleather originally produced by Arizona Territory gunsmith and holster maker, G.F. Spangenberg (sorry, no relation), and was likely to have been worn by the legendary shootists who fought it out in the historic 1881 gunfight at the O.K. Corral. Incidentally, there are a few Tombstone Commemorative holster rigs still available as of this writing.

Currently, El Paso Saddlery is offering an exact copy of the belt and holster rig worn by famed World War II General George S. Patton, Jr., a man who, through his colorful though controversial personality, combined the traditions of the old horse cavalry with the most modern armored tactics of his time to become one of the most respected and feared generals of the Second World War.

Interestingly, El Paso Saddlery owns the original pattern used by famed holster maker S.D. Myres back around 1936 when the original rig was designed for General Patton. This same pattern was used to produce this high quality commemorative which has the approval of the Patton family. Like General Patton's famous rig, El Paso's commemorative uses a 1-3/4-inch wide, military-style leather belt which incorporates a brass replica U.S. Model 1910 enlisted man's garrison buckle. As with the original, this belt is made with brass grommets for waist size adjustments and for attaching various accessories. It also includes a slide-on leather cartridge carrier (which holds 12 rounds), a police-type handcuff case which Patton used for carrying a compass, and a single holster.

These Patton rigs are available for Colt Single Action Army revolvers with 4-3/4-inch or 5-1/2-inch barrels, Ruger Blackhawks with 4-5/8-inch tubes, any "K" or "N" frame 4-inch S&W, or Colt's Python model in the 4-inch barreled configuration.

Production of this historic replica will be limited to 1,000 units. Each rig will be serial numbered and embossed with "GEN. GEORGE S. PATTON JR. COMMEMORATIVE" along with the purchaser's name. A certificate of authenticity, signed and dated by the artisan and Bob McNellis, president of El Paso Saddlery, accompanies each outfit. Holsters can be made for right or left-hand use and although General Patton's original gunleather was made in russet brown, El Paso Saddlery is offering their reproduction in black as well. The Patton Commemorative set retails for \$150 postpaid. For an additional \$55, a second holster, for any of the above mentioned handguns, will be furnished for the opposite side of the belt. General Patton's personal set included two holsters to accommodate his ivory-handled 4-3/4-inch barreled .45 Colt SAA and his .357 Magnum S&W (now known as the Model 27) with a 3-1/2-inch barrel, although he usually wore only one sidearm on his hip with the rig, and a second hideout gun secreted in his uniform.

A portion of the proceeds of this commemorative belt and holster set will be sent to the George S. Patton Armor Museum in Ft. Knox, Kentucky, a privately-funded museum dedicated to the preservation of arms and armor of the past and the memory of General George S. Patton, Jr.

I've examined the George S. Patton, Jr. Commemorative and have found it to be of top quality leather, fine workmanship, and faithful to the original. This is the type of commemorative that I feel is worth investing hard-earned dollars in. It not only honors the spirit and memory of one of our nation's most famous fighting men, it is also a practical rig that could be used on hunting trips or during casual shooting sessions. That's my idea of a true commemorative—an authentic

looking, working rig! When ordering, be sure to specify whether you want a right or left-hand holster, color choice, type of gun and caliber and your waist size. Orders, or requests for more information, on this or any of El Paso Saddlery's quality replica or modern gunleather should be sent to: El Paso Saddlery, Dept. GA, P.O. Box 27194, El Paso, TX 79926, or call them at (915) 544-2233.

## **I Was Paid To Kill Patton** by The Spotlight Staff

**The Spotlight**  
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*Douglas Bazata is not the type of man you would usually associate with murder plots. A pleasant, witty and charming gentleman when on his good behavior, his career displays the epitome of the professional intelligence agent whose dedication to the cause he fights for is far greater than the rewards offered. Bazata began his career in U.S. intelligence in 1926 at the age of 15 and since that time has acquired three or four lifetimes of experience. He has parachuted and fought behind enemy lines, been wounded by enemy fire eight times (not all of it from a recognized enemy), learned to survive under very harrowing circumstances and been involved in many activities that would provide grist for James Bond. Now willing to tell the truth about some of the hidden side of recent history, Bazata was interviewed in The Spotlight's offices on October 2 about the death of General George S. Patton. Asked why, after all these years, he was finally willing to tell the truth about this matter, Bazata said that he was 69 years old, in poor health, and wanted the American people to know the truth. Patton had asked that he would wait one generation before telling the story. A new generation has grown up since the general's death. His story makes fascinating reading—and provides important insight. Incidentally, we had a professional analyst subject Bazata's interview to the rigors of a content analysis survey using a Psychological Stress Evaluator (PSE). The PSE is an advanced polygraph machine ("lie detector") in use by hundreds of police departments and intelligence agencies. His report: Bazata gives no evidence of lying.*

**Spotlight:** Could you tell us a little bit about your background? How long you were in the OSS and some things like that?

**Bazata:** I've been in the spy business for more than 50 years. I started in December 1926 when I was not even 16 years old. That was with Naval Intelligence aboard ships going through the Panama Canal. We made 37 round trips aboard ships going through the Panama Canal. Later I joined the Marine Corps where I served from 1933 to 1937, and I did intelligence work for them also. Not long after the war broke out I went into the Army, and I applied for the OSS. I was one of the original 38 lads who began the OSS, but I was their senior by about 10 to 12 years. At the time that was very important, because the other men were just out of Princeton or wherever.

**Spotlight:** Now as a member of the OSS you worked for "Wild Bill" Donovan? Is that right?

**Bazata:** Yes. That is correct. I never liked him, however. In fact I disliked him intensely, although as far as I know I was the only one who thought of him as evil. That's "evil" with a small "e." He wasn't bright enough to be "Evil"—with a capital "E."

**Spotlight:** And you recently told a reporter for the *Washington Star* that you were paid \$10,000 by Donovan for the purpose of killing General George Patton. Could you tell us how that came about?

**Bazata:** Actually the *Star* was somewhat incorrect. I was paid a total of \$10,800 on two occasions. Donovan called on me in 1943 and during a series of eight meetings he told me that he wanted to "stop" Patton. He didn't use the word "kill" at that time. He said he wanted to stop him or "to put him down" like a horse or a dog.

**Spotlight:** So he wanted you to stop him or kill him in 1943?

**Bazata:** That's right. And I thought about it for a long time after Don Donovan first broached it to me. I thought if I don't take it, then I'm walking around with poison. I'll certainly have an automobile accident in London. If I don't take it, I'll be killed. He'll have to deduce that if I don't take it, then I'm against it. Therefore I could denounce him. Conversely, if I took it and didn't do it, then I'll have to give the appearance of having appeared to at least try. So I decided to work with Donovan on a scheme that wouldn't kill Patton.

**Spotlight:** So what did you decide to do then?

**Bazata:** Ultimately we succeeded in stopping him—or rather stopping his advance in France. By this time it was August of 1944 and Patton and his men were located near Dijon. He was advancing toward the East, and the military brass wanted him slowed down. Stopped. So we stopped him militarily. The idea was that I would jump into France, which I did. I jumped between Belfort and Bisancon. We used a certain trick and it worked. He was stopped just north of Bisancon and southwest of Belfort. But it was a disastrous story for me. It embittered me, because we were in effect stopping Patton from going on and winning the war. Here was everyone sitting home waiting to win the war, and we're stopping him from doing just that. Anyway, I was paid \$800 for that.

**Spotlight:** Did you ever ask why Donovan wanted him stopped? Do you think he was acting on orders from the White House?

**Bazata:** Well, Roosevelt was president then. I assume, since Donovan was directly responsible to the president, that FDR knew and had authorized the action. As to why they wanted it done—I never asked why. But it was Montgomery, Eisenhower, and the others who didn't want Patton moving into Germany.

**Spotlight:** Now, what about the actual assassination of Patton? You were paid \$10,000 to do that?

**Bazata:** That's right, I was. I was paid by Donovan and that was in 1945. I took the money. But I didn't have any intention then of killing Patton. I knew Patton. I'd known him for years and I finally went and told him that they wanted him assassinated.

**Spotlight:** You knew Patton? How had that come about?

**Bazata:** Well, Patton knew my father. He was born in California close to where my father attended school, and because of a certain sports incident—back in 1899 that was—Patton came to admire my father very much. As a matter of fact, Patton came to me during the war and he asked me to fight with him. I said no. I'm fated to work alone. I don't want to be killed in combat. I prefer to remain in intelligence. We kept in touch during the war, however. We even decided upon some code words to be used in keeping in touch. One of them was "Occidental," which was the name of the school my father attended. If one of us had something urgent to say to the other, we'd get a message with that word—or there were other code words—to each other.

**Spotlight:** But you took the job of killing Patton finally? You took the \$10,000 and you didn't intend to kill Patton?

**Bazata:** That's right. I warned Patton many times that they wanted him killed. This caused him to become very pathological in the last years of his life. He knew that he was going to die.

**Spotlight:** Even though you didn't kill Patton, you know who did. How was it done?



**Bazata:** That's correct. In 1945 Donovan approached me again. He was no longer head of OSS at the time. OSS had been more or less disbanded by then, and was known as SSU or the Strategic Service Unit. Nevertheless he contacted me again about killing Patton, and asked me how much I wanted. I said \$10,000 and he whipped out the money and peeled it off in cash. So I agreed to kill Patton. Not long afterwards this other chap whom I knew and who was in the business got in touch with me. He said, "I hear that we're both working on the same job." How he knew that I don't know, because Donovan and I had agreed that the Patton thing was strictly between the two of us, and that we'd never tell anyone. Perhaps one of us slipped up, however.

**Spotlight:** Do you believe Donovan hired this other man?

**Bazata:** I don't know. I rather doubt it however, since Donovan congratulated me after the job was finally done. He seemed to think that I did it.

**Spotlight:** If it wasn't Donovan, who might it have been?

**Bazata:** I really don't know. It could have been (Harry) Truman though—it's possible. Truman would have been the kind to arrange for a back-up person or persons.

**Spotlight:** And this man came later and told you how he had actually killed Patton? Could you tell us how it was done?

**Bazata:** Well, he did come to me later and tell me. It had turned into a very messy job, because Patton was supposed to die in the auto accident. He didn't, however, die, so there was even more to it than the accident.

**Spotlight:** And what about the accident? How was it arranged? Carried out?

**Bazata:** As you know Patton was on a hunting outing that day, and he was driving with General Hobart Gay, who was his chief of staff. The driver was a young man named Woodring. It was a very carefully plotted and orchestrated thing. It involved some extraordinary timing.

On the way up to the hunt country Patton and his party stopped off at some type of ancient ruin or castle. Everyone got out of the car—Patton and Gay were in his big Cadillac sedan. While they were wandering around the ruin, the assassin came up to the car and he rigged the window. He fixed the window by Patton so that it was open for a few inches, and he inserted something to prevent it from being closed. That was the first step.

Then as they were driving along, this truck approached Patton on the other side of the road. Suddenly it made an abrupt turn to the left across Patton's path. The driver of that truck—or at least I believe this to be so—was completely innocent. He was forced over on the road by another truck that had been waiting for the opportunity. This second or forcing truck was part of the plot. My friend, as I recall, had arranged for several trucks to be on hand that day. Whether he himself was driving the particular truck that precipitated the accident, I don't know. He never told me. In any event the first truck was forced in front of Patton, but the accident that occurred was a minor one. No one was traveling at a high speed—on the contrary.

In any event, Patton's driver swerved and the accident occurred. It was a very minor accident, but it enabled the assassin to deliver what he believed would be the death blow. He used a special weapon made in Czechoslovakia and which was designed to propel any type of object one might desire. In other words, instead of shooting bullets, it could forcibly and lethally propel any object—such as a rock, a piece of metal, or whatever—with sufficient force as to be deadly.

**Spotlight:** Why did they use this type of weapon? What object was Patton shot with?

**Bazata:** Well, the advantages are obvious. There was no bullet to be found. Patton was hit by a piece of metal—or at least that is what I was told. The advantage, of course, was that there would be no evidence of a weapon being used. If the projectile were even located, it would be assumed that the rock, metal, or whatever had simply gotten into the car in the course of the accident or that it had been there all along.

**Spotlight:** And this weapon caused the total paralysis that Patton suffered?

**Bazata:** That's correct. He never suffered any whiplash. But the force with which that projectile hit was the equivalent of a whiplash suffered at a speed of 80 or 100 miles an hour.

**Spotlight:** This was a very intricate plot. How did the assassin know that there would be an innocent truck driver on the road? Or that Patton would be stopping at this castle?

**Bazata:** Well, of course it was a beautiful piece of timing. However, you must remember that this was not the first time that an attempt was made to kill Patton. They had been trying for months. There was an incident with an ox-cart crossing a road in front of his car. On that occasion the bar from the ox-cart grazed Patton's face. He could have been decapitated, however. I'm certain that they tried it many times, until it finally worked.

**Spotlight:** What about the piece of metal or whatever it was keeping his window open?

**Bazata:** Well, that was simply removed in the excitement following the accident. At a time like that you can do almost anything, and it isn't really noticed.

**Spotlight:** And the projective weapon? Was it fired at close range? Did Patton see his assassin?

**Bazata:** Certainly not. That type of weapon is accurate up to a certain distance. It was probably fired from about 10 yards away. You had to be a superb marksman, of course.

**Spotlight:** But Patton didn't die. He got better.

**Bazata:** Ah, yes. And that made it very messy indeed. He was in the hospital and he was paralyzed. But he was going to live.

**Spotlight:** So then what happened?

**Bazata:** Well, when it was clear that he wasn't going to die—indeed his wife was planning to take him home—he was given cyanide.

**Spotlight:** How was this given?

**Bazata:** Well, it was a certain refined form of cyanide that can cause or appear to cause embolisms, heart failure, and things like that. It was a form of cyanide that was made in Czechoslovakia and it is very effective in small amounts. It can even be timed to kill in a given period such as 18 to 48 hours.

**Spotlight:** And this is the story that the assassin finally told you?

**Bazata:** That is correct.

**Spotlight:** Why do you suppose he came to you? Why did he tell you?

**Bazata:** I really don't know why he did. I can only speculate, and, of course, he had already let me know that he knew I had accepted money to do the same job. But in the 50 years that I have been in this business, I have met thousands of agents from all countries, and there is one common tendency that they all have in common. That is to brag. It stems from the terrible loneliness of the job. Perhaps he felt that if he needed to tell someone that I was the safest one to tell. After all, I couldn't very well tell anyone else about it.

**Spotlight:** And you don't know for whom he might have been working?

**Bazata:** That he never told me. Although I wouldn't discount anything.

**Spotlight:** There has been talk over the years from persons knowledgeable on this matter that the hit man might have been working for the Mafia—that he was supplied by Lucky Luciano.

**Bazata:** Well, I know how the Mafia works too. This type of thing isn't really their style. They want someone dead, they get him in a quiet place and they pop him. No fuss, no muss. He's dead.

**Spotlight:** But with someone of Patton's stature that wouldn't have worked? Would it have?

**Bazata:** Well, it would have raised a number of questions. As I said, though, it might have been anyone. It could have been the Mafia. It could have been another intelligence agency. I would not even put it past Truman—as I said earlier—to have arranged for a back-up man or men.

**Spotlight:** You said earlier that you took the money to kill Patton, but you had no intention of doing it. That you went to him and told him about it. If this second assassin hadn't gotten you off

the hook, more or less, weren't you afraid of the consequences if he didn't die? That they would come and kill you?

**Bazata:** I wasn't afraid of them. When we had our farm here in Virginia my wife saw me shoot at someone six times before he could get off one shot. It's part of the risk of the business—but no, I thought I could take care of myself.

**Spotlight:** You had warned Patton that he was wanted dead. After he survived the accident, why do you think that he didn't go public with the information? Why was he in effect content to let it go?

**Bazata:** When I talked to Patton the last time, which was of course before this incident, he realized it was over and he was satisfied with how things were coming out. He was resigned to death. He told me that he had always wanted to die in combat. But he said he thought it over one day and it occurred to him that if he died in combat he wouldn't know if he had won or lost. Patton was worse than Lombardi (legendary football coach Vince Lombardi). Winning was everything. It was the most important thing to him to know that he'd won. He had a tremendous ego. He perceived of himself in the same terms as Caesar, Alexander—even Joan of Arc.

**Spotlight:** You say you do not know who actually supplied the assassin who killed Patton. Do you know who might have been behind the hiring of the assassin? You mentioned Truman.

**Bazata:** Well, again Donovan was probably acting on Truman's behalf, although he wouldn't tell me. But Patton had made so very many enemies. Eisenhower hated him. Eisenhower wanted desperately to be president, and he knew, for example, that had Patton wanted it he would have gotten it. Truman knew this also. Truman managed to beat Dewey in 1948, but I doubt he could have beaten Patton. The other generals hated him also. Bedell Smith despised him, for one. Patton was very flamboyant. He was a self-promoter. He worked for over a year to win himself a Distinguished Service Cross. He came from a wealthy family with society connections. He used all of this to advance himself, and he made scores of enemies in the process. Say, for example, he offended 300 people. Of those 300 at least 30 would never forget it. Of those 30 at least 10 would be determined to take some revenge on him. And of course he was becoming an embarrassment. He despised the Russians. He wanted to fight them, even if it meant taking German troops and marching with them into Russia. There is no question Patton was a great combat general—a great man. But he did too many controversial things. He made too many enemies.

### **Film's Few Facts Sell Much Fiction** by The Spotlight Staff

**The Spotlight**  
Volume 5, Number 42  
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A current film and a book published in recent years offer a few facts to promote a lot of fiction about the assassination of General George S. Patton.

The film, called *The Brass Target*, and the book, entitled *The Algonquin Project*, accurately reflect the mechanics of Patton's murder as described here by Douglas Bazata. But the film and book will try to convince you that stealing gold was the motive for killing Patton. "There was a gold theft, but that had nothing to do with Patton," Bazata said in an interview October 9.

How did the authors of script and book know about the complex methods used to kill Patton? Eight years ago, Bazata said, two writers were working with him to prepare a book on Patton's death. They never did make a deal, but the information procured from Bazata later appeared in the book and, now, the film. "I was urged to sue but that wouldn't get me anywhere," Bazata said. So the authoritative information on how Patton was killed is being used to falsely convince the public that the motive was gold.

Why did they want Patton killed? Bazata's orders came directly from General William J. "Wild Bill" Donovan, chief of the OSS. Donovan reported directly to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Bazata is convinced that the assassination orders did not originate with Donovan, who had only one superior. An order to kill Patton could easily have survived Roosevelt, who died in April of 1945; the assassination was not successful until December.

Bazata observes that many people, including U.S. generals, hated Patton. Roosevelt was also known to have been angered because Patton constantly warned America that the Soviet Union was this nation's real enemy. Patton even advocated a military conquest of the Soviet Union with assistance by the defeated Germans. (Patton, in fact, was sacked as commander of the Third Army in September, 1945, for opposing the infamous "Operation Keelhaul." The forced repatriation to the Soviets of millions of anti-communist East European refugees after World War II was exposed by *The Spotlight* (Sept. 8, 1978) at the commencement of its "Christian Holocaust" series.)

During this period, Roosevelt and, on his death, Harry Truman, were busily giving away East Europe to the Soviet empire at the infamous meetings at Yalta and Potsdam. And it was Roosevelt who ordered General Dwight D. Eisenhower to slow the allied advance through Europe so the Soviet Union could catch up and occupy the eastern portion.

Patton was obviously an embarrassment to the Establishment.

### **Patton's Bloodiest Blunder** by Michael Stanley

**Argosy War Annual**  
1975, pp 14-22, 80-81

The explosion ripped through the narrow, low-ceilinged tunnel. Packed with the American GI's, the underground gallery was instantly transformed into a raging inferno. Dozens were killed outright when the German sappers set off the blast. Countless others—hideously maimed and mangled—lay screaming in agony under heaps of rock and rubble that crashed down upon them.

The shrieks of the injured were choked off even as a few dazed and bloody survivors clawed their way to the dubious safety of the tunnel's bullet-swept mouth. Deadly carbide fumes filling the wrecked gallery quickly snuffed out the lives of the trapped men.

Grim and costly though it was, this tunnel slaughter was only a minor incident in the ghastly fiasco that proved to be the bloodiest, and most needless, battlefield catastrophe of World War II.

Had anyone else been responsible for the mass-butchery of "Operation Thunderbolt," he would have been relieved and court-martialled on the spot. But Lieutenant General George S. Patton was safe. His previous record of hits, with no errors, saved his hide.

Flashy, flamboyant "Old Blood and Guts" and his beefy palace favorite XX Corps Commander, Major General Walton Walker, rode through on past performances. They succeeded in throwing away entire regiments in a hideously bungled series of battles without so much as a wrist-slap for having ordered the senseless massacres!

It was pure Patton at his self-confident, swashbuckling best—or, in this case, worst. Having led his Third Army in a lightning drive across France after St. Lo, he was convinced of his own infallibility. Halted in Lorraine due to supply, fuel, and ammunition shortages, fearful that Lieutenant General Courtney Hodges' First Army would steal all the glory, Patton champed at the bit. He eyed the Nazi stronghold of Metz with impatience. Typically, he wanted to take the city immediately—if not a hell of a lot sooner.

"The Krauts will fight hard for Metz," his intelligence officers warned. "We have neither the strength nor supplies to take it yet."

George Patton refused to listen. The way he figured it, Third Army would make mincemeat out of Metz.

"Supplies be damned!" he roared at a staff conference one morning in early September, 1944. "Metz will fall like an over-ripe plum!"

Old Blood and Guts would break teeth on the "over-ripe Plum" when forced to eat his words several bitter weeks later, but he was supremely confident that morning. He tossed the problem into the ample lap of Walton Walker, whose XX Corps had but recently pushed across the Meuse River and now faced Metz.

"Sure, General," Walker nodded. "It'll be a cinch . . ."

"Get moving and draw up your operations plans!" Patton snapped. And that was that. The fantastic snafu had begun its snowballing course. Thousands of totally unnecessary death warrants were sealed.

"Operation Thunderbolt" is the characteristically bombastic name General Walker gave his scheme for shaking the Metz "plum" out of its Nazi tree. He came up with it, in twelve copies, on September 17th. It looked good—on paper. Patton studied it, made some minor changes, and then approved it with great enthusiasm.

Tragically, unbelievably, the elaborate scheme for the conquest of Metz was drawn up with almost no understanding of the situation!

Metz, astride the classic German invasion route into France, had been a fortress city for decades. It was virtually impregnable, protected by a complex of the world's most modern underground fortifications. The Germans had taken over more than a dozen of these one-time French forts and improved and strengthened them even further.

All were built far below ground. Only armored, low-silhouette turrets, cross-sited pillboxes and bunkers showed above the earth. Bunkers and underground galleries and six-foot-thick reinforced concrete walls. All were roofed with fifteen feet of reinforced concrete layers of earth. Moats, trenches, barbed wire, and mine fields ringed the forts.

The Patton-Walker "Thunderbolt" operation called for taking these fortifications. As a battle-plan, it was an incredibly botched and bungled blueprint for the murder of American troops.

The opening phase of "Operation Thunderbolt" was an attack on Fort Jeanne d'Arc by two regiments of the 90th Infantry Division. It was a colossal failure. The 358th and 359th Infantry Regiments were cut to ribbons by the Germans before either unit got beyond Jeanne d'Arc's outer defensive perimeter. Both units suffered appalling losses and had to be withdrawn.

"Operation Thunderbolt" had begun to fizzle, but neither George Patton nor Walton Walker would back down. Press releases had already been handed out to correspondents with Third Army predicting the fall of Metz "within days." The slaughter, once begun, would have to be carried through to its terrible end.

With the attack on Fort Jeanne d'Arc smashed and other efforts in the sector going badly, the two generals unaccountably turned their attention to the toughest and most powerful of all the Metz bastions-Fort Driant. This was the keystone of the Metz fortress system, a masterpiece of military engineering. Fort Driant or, as the Germans called it, *Kronprinz*, was quite literally invincible.

Six 150-mm and nine 100-mm guns, all turret-mounted, plus scores of lighter artillery pieces and machine guns commanded every route of approach. The weapons had 360-degree traverse to fire in all directions. Five formidable fighting bunkers, each large enough to hold 250 to 500 troops, bolstered the defenses. Vast quantities of food and ammunition were stockpiled inside, and Fort Driant was manned by Nazi fanatics ordered to fight to the last cartridge by Hitler himself.

No one will ever know what went wrong with George Patton's and Walton Walker's thinking processes.

Certainly, they could hardly have been thinking clearly when they issued the instructions for the attack on Fort Driant.

*Despite the debacle previously experienced at Fort Jeanne d'Arc, a considerably lesser objective, they directed that Fort Driant be assaulted by a single battalion of infantry!*

"A good pasting with HE and the Krauts will fold," General Walker theorized. "Then the infantry can breeze right in . . ."

The effort against Fort Driant was initially scheduled for September 21st. For one reason and another, this date was postponed a number of times, although no change was made in the proposed size of the attacking force. The preposterous plan stood, despite early indications it would end in a massacre. Major General Stafford Irwin, whose 5th, "Red Diamond" Division was to "take" Fort Driant, tried to reason with his superior.

"My men are fought out," he pleaded. "A third of them are green replacements. We should use a much stronger force . . ."

No one listened. In the meantime, blunder was piling on top of blunder. Shortages of artillery ammo in Third Army were still serious. Firing batteries were strictly rationed. What slim reserves Division and Corps artillery officers had hoarded were all used up in the abortive attacks against Fort Jeanne d'Arc.

The jump-off was finally set for 1425 hours, September 27th. The 2nd Battalion, 11th Infantry Regiment, having won the suicide mission, moved to its line of departure early that morning.

"It won't be so bad," officers tried to reassure their jumpy men. "Air Force heavies will plaster the Krauts . . ."

This is what *they* had been told in briefing sessions. Fleets of heavy bomber, B-17's and B-24's, were scheduled to smother Fort Driant with hundreds of tons of blockbuster bombs.

*But, unknown to the assault companies, the mass aerial attacks had been canceled days earlier!*

General Omar Bradley, top U.S. Field Commander in Europe, had gotten wind of Georgie Patton's ill-advised "Operation Thunderbolt" and nixed the bombings. His reasoning was logical. There wasn't enough artillery ammunition in the whole Third Army to support such an ambitious offensive, he declared. Hence, he want the whole thing called off to prevent needless loss of American lives.

How Patton and Walker got away with bucking Bradley's decision is something no one will ever know. In any event, they refused to cancel the operation against Fort Driant. In a last-minute effort to provide stop-gap air support, "Old Blood and Guts" made a personal deal with his longtime XIXth Tactical Air Force buddy, Brigadier General Otto Weyland. General Weyland agreed to go along with Patton's plan and send in several flights of P-47 fighter-bombers to work over the German positions.

The single-engined P-47's roared in to bomb Fort Driant with 1,000-pound bombs. It was like trying to hole the armored sides of a battleship with an air gun. Waiting infantrymen stared out of

their shallow foxholes in horror as the bombs, far too light for the type of penetration needed at Driant, literally bounced off bunkers and turrets to explode harmlessly on the ground!

(Author's note: In raiding German submarine pens, which were only somewhat more heavily shielded than Fort Driant, the British Air Force found that bombs weighing as much as ten tons were needed to smash through the reinforced concrete roofs!)

Fire from 155-mm howitzers supporting the 11th Regiment's assault force was wasted effort. The 96-pound projectiles glanced off the smallest pillboxes without even denting their concrete exteriors. Nevertheless, two companies, "E" and "G", moved out promptly at H-hour. At the last moment, a company of tank-destroyers was sent along to act as assault artillery.

The GI's didn't get very far. Nazi artillery, mortars and automatic weapons poured out a murderous flood of fire and cut them down. The area over which the troops tried to advance was blanketed by a deadly cross-fire. Even pointblank fire from the self-propelled, high-velocity 90-mm guns of the tank destroyers failed to silence a single enemy pillbox or bunker.

Pinned down, raked by HE and machine guns, the GI's didn't stand a chance. It soon became horribly clear that the attack had been crushed. The shattered remnants of the assault companies struggled back to their own lines without having gotten farther than the forward aprons of German wire.

A top-level post-mortem aimed at saving the pieces of "Operation Thunderbolt" was held the next day. Generals Patton and Walker, as well as General Irwin and other divisional commanders were present. The reports were bleak, indeed. So far, "Thunderbolt" had used up two regiments at Fort Jeanne d'Arc, and all three of XX Corps three divisions had been very badly mauled in related actions. The bitterest pill of all was that Fort Driant still stood—unscratched. George Patton's dream of smashing into Metz looked pretty sick.

It was Walker who picked up Patton's ball and tried to run with it. While Patton watched, he stormed and ranted and accused 5th Division officers of not being "sufficiently aggressive." General Irwin vainly pointed to the sad shape of his outfit, which had suffered over 4,500 casualties recently. Walton Walker cut him off with a curt order to continue the attack against Fort Driant!

The next push against the objective was slated for October 3rd. The XX Corps Commander unbent sufficiently to promise the Red Diamond increased artillery support, chiefly 8-inch and 240-mm. weapons.

The basic snafu pattern hadn't changed one iota, however, despite the lessons of the first attempt, Walker and Patton still clung to the belief that one battalion could take Driant. General Irwin, whose under-strength division was spread out along a ten-mile front, scraped together the remnants of the 2nd Battalion, 11th Regiment. He reinforced it with the 11th's "B" Company, a company of combat engineers and twelve M-4 tanks.

*This time, the mess-up was to be even worse than before. The limited amount of air support AF General Weyland had been talked into promising for the attack never showed up!*

*Prodded unmercifully from above, Patton and Walker were constantly on the phone or radio to demand the attack begin—General Irwin was finally forced to order the jump-off without preliminary aerial bombardment at 1200.*

True, the artillery laid down a heavy barrage, but no field gun, regardless of size, could dent Driant's massive protective cover. One 8-inch battery registered ten direct hits right on top of a single German 150-mm gun turret only to find that the enemy weapon did not even pause in its steady firing!

The attack itself was a bloody fiasco. "E" Company, recently filled out with raw replacements, was caught in a raging storm of Nazi shells and bullets and never got beyond the first line of wire. Company "B", taking casualties every inch of the way, somehow drove through the entanglements

and into the fort area. There, the GI's tried to knock out pillboxes with demolition and satchel charges but found the explosives did not even scar the concrete walls!

The bits and pieces of companies that remained were ordered to launch an attack that night. It was shattered by Germans who swarmed up from their underground shelters and wiped out the first two platoons spearheading the attempt. Half the available tanks were blasted by hostile guns. The casualty rate skyrocketed.

Dawn found a few exhausted infantrymen still clinging to their shell-rowelled positions. General Walker finally admitted that more troops would be needed, and reinforcements from the 2nd Regiment were sent in. Despite the arrival of the fresh outfits, no advance was possible in the face of the savage German resistance.

George Patton raged with fury. He got Walton Walker on the phone and ordered him to take Fort Driant at all costs.

"If it takes every man in XX Corps. I cannot allow an attack by the Third Army to fail!" he thundered.

By October 5, all units thus far committed to the action were decimated. The Intelligence Officer of the 11th Regiment's 2nd Battalion, sent General Irwin a message that told of the impossible odds and the unbearable losses.

"Enemy artillery is butchering the men until there is nothing left to hold with," he declared. "We can't get our wounded out, and there are a hell of a lot of dead and missing. We have no men, our equipment is shot and we just can't go on . . ."

General Irwin's request for outside reinforcement was refused by XX Corps. He was forced to further strip his division's dangerously thinned-out front. General Irwin called upon his assistant division commander, Brigadier General A.D. Warnock, to form a scratch task force.

Warnock got together the 1st Battalion, 10th Infantry, beefed up by the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, and the entire 7th Combat Engineer Battalion, together with some odd fragments of units. Leading this force personally, Warnock threw it into the blazing cauldron of Fort Driant. Third Army ordered him to renew the attack on the fort by 1000 hours, October 7th.

There was one bright spot in the picture. Some genius had thought of sending to Paris for a plan of Fort Driant's underground construction. This was located with amazing ease in the offices of the French Defense Ministry. Copies were flown to the 5th Division immediately. General Warnock discovered that there was an old tunnel leading from the section held by his men to the main subterranean communications galleries.

"I am trying to locate the tunnel," he messaged the division command post. "We might be able to fight our way through it and into Driant itself. It's our only chance . . ."

Fierce fighting continued "topside" while 10th Infantry GI's searched frantically for the tunnel mouth. Once it had been located, they worked feverishly to claw away the earth masking the entrance. They found a small shaft, barely seven feet high and three feet wide. Entering the tunnel, they saw it was blocked solidly some distance from the entrance by a huge metal door.

Combat engineers blew a jagged hole in the door. It was of little help. Behind the door, a great heap of old cannon and chunks of rusted metal made further progress impossible.

"Get an acetylene torch in here," an Engineer NCO barked. "We'll have to cut down the whole door before we can haul this junk out . . ."

Outside the tunnel, Nazi machine guns and cannon swept and pounded every square foot of ground. Embattled American soldiers fought-and died-as they struggled to hold on long enough for the tunnel to be cleared. But bringing up an acetylene rig in the daylight was impossible. Engineer squads tried it, but the Krauts singled them out, and snipers gunned them down as they inched forward with the bulky gear.

It wasn't until well after nightfall that torch and tanks got through and into the passageway. The blasted door was finally cut down. The junk was laboriously removed by hand while the tunnel



rocked and heaved under the impact of bursting shells. The work took all night and most of the following morning.

Once they'd cleared the block, the weary soldiers found still another steel door several score yards down the tunnel. A 100-pound charge was set against this door and detonated. The blast filled the gallery with poisonous fumes and those inside were forced to retreat topside. Two hours passed before they could again venture inside.

It was then learned that the explosion had failed to knock down the door. Only a part of the thick steel plating had been peeled away by the blast. More charges were being brought in when the GI's heard the unmistakable sounds of digging coming from beneath the tunnel floor. An Engineer officer was the first to realize what this meant.

"For Christ's sake, hurry!" he told the men. "The Krauts are setting mines under us. The minute that digging stops they'll blow this tunnel—and us—sky high!"

The American troops renewed their efforts only to be cut down by a hail of bullets and rifle grenades that suddenly poured through the hole in the steel door.

"Krauts! On the other side!"

What ensued was one of the most bizarre engagements between U.S. and German troops in the entire European War. Sandbags and a .30-caliber machine gun were rushed into the tunnel. A non-com volunteered to build the sandbag barricade before the door—and was killed. Other men took his place. The bags were heaped up, the gun set up, and GI's and Germans fought each other through the gap in the steel plating!

Separated by only a few yards, the machine gunners dueled, firing at each other at pointblank range. It was now pitch dark inside the tunnel. All the portable lamps and torches had been extinguished. It lasted for several minutes, until the enemy sappers finished their work beneath the passageway and detonated the charges they'd set beneath the tunnel floor.

Many of those inside were killed outright, or trapped and soon asphyxiated. The few who escaped managed to stumble back up the tunnel and reach the Outside. Here, confusion bordering on chaos reigned. The remaining GI's from the various units that had been thrown into the hopeless battle were being subjected to renewed and increased enemy fire.

German guns made a howling, roaring hell of the barren flats around Fort Driant. The 100's and 150's hosed out bore-sighted shells as fast as their crews could work the breeches of the weapons.

Miraculously, despite staggering losses, the Yanks still held. Platoons of Nazi infantrymen boiled out of the bowels of Fort Driant and launched fanatical counter-attacks against them.

Hit from all sides, the GI's fought back and saw their already decimated ranks being whittled away as the slaughter continued without pause. Replacements and reinforcements were burned up in the battle almost as soon as they arrived. The dead and dying littered the shell-pocked, blood-soaked earth.

Entire companies, and battalions, were dying at Fort Driant. Several companies had only one officer remaining. Many had none. Sergeants and corporals led platoons and commanded companies.

Despite the butchery, George Patton and Walton Walker continued to insist that the battle be continued. They ordered some diversionary attacks by other units on Driant's flanks, but all these were driven back with heavy losses.

XX Corps' three divisions were fast melting away in the hell of "Operation Thunderbolt." The 5th Division was about used up, and the 90th was in bad shape. The 7th Armored had been seriously mauled.

On October 9th, General Warnock, who still led the shambles that remained of the Fort Driant task force, made his way back to the 5th Division Command Post. Declaring his advanced

positions untenable, he pleaded that either massive reinforcements be poured into the fight, or that the pitiful tatters of his battalions be allowed to pull back.

There was plenty of big brass at the Red Diamond's CP. General Irwin, the 5th's commander, was being harangued by the ubiquitous Walton Walker who demanded again and again that the fort "be taken without further delay."

Also present was Brigadier General Hobart Gay, Patton's Deputy Chief of Staff. General Gay, in an action practically Unprecedented in the United States Army, personally assumed responsibility for ordering the attack abandoned.

Walker could hardly be contained, he saw the failure of his ill-conceived, blundering "Operation Thunderbolt" as a black mark in his career.

*Despite Hobart Gay's order, the last 5th Division soldier did not withdraw from the Fort Driant slaughter-ground until the night of October 12-13th!*

The catastrophe of "Operation Thunderbolt" received the biggest and best hush-up and cover-up treatment that George Patton's crack public relations officers could devise. Security classifications were slapped on several phases of the operation. Records of XX Corps and Third Army normally open to newsmen were hastily put under wraps.

What was left of XX Corps, and it wasn't much, took up defensive positions, and replacement depots scraped the bottoms of their manpower barrels to rebuild the shattered formations.

Metz, George Patton's "over-ripe plum" held. It was not until November 22nd that the city itself fell and then only after Hitler had ordered the bulk of the garrison to withdraw so that he could use the men in the forthcoming Ardennes offensive.

*Despite the surrender of the city, the Metz forts continued to hold out. Fort Driant did not capitulate until December 8th, while Fort Jeanne d'Arc finally surrendered on December 13th!*

The total cost of Third Army's suicidal attacks on Metz has never been published. Some indication may be obtained from the casualty reports of only one division—the 5th.

In two months of fighting for Patton's "plum," the 5th Infantry Division alone had lost considerably more than 12,000 men—well over its normal combat-troop strength. In a single week of the battle, the 90th Division suffered over 3,000 casualties. The 7th Armored was a mere skeleton outfit by the time the city fell . . .

Old Blood and Guts had made his bloodiest blunder—one that many say was the worst bungle of the whole war. If anyone else had done it, his military career would have ended right then and there.

But Patton and Walton Walker, who was equally responsible for the ghastly foul-up, both managed to squeak through.

The men they butchered can't talk about it. Those who lived through the inferno would rather forget.

**Patton**  
by John Strawson

**War Monthly**  
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General George S. Patton was a strange mixture of blood-thirsty ravings and military sentimentality. On the one hand he would scream at his soldiers: "Remember. War is kill, kill, kill! You kill them or they'll kill you. The Nazis are the enemy. Wade into 'em and spill their blood! Shoot 'em in the belly! Rip out their guts with your bayonets!" On the other hand he could raise a glass and, tears in his eyes, propose a toast to his officers and their ladies: "Here's to Army wives. God bless 'em!" And—under his breath—"They'll make such pretty widows."

Few military commanders exhibit such glaring contrasts of character, least of all Americans, yet when one does the more powerful is his appeal. Such was the case of the Duc de Luxemburg, one of the most famous of Louis XIV's Marshals of France, whose eccentricities in the late seventeenth century caught the imagination of the English historian Lord Macaulay. And what attracted Macaulay was not the Marshal's incomparable military talent but rather his habit of living on active service in the same style and luxury as he did at Paris. His choice of military disposition was dictated as much by what good food and agreeable companions were to be found for his supper table as by their strategic soundness. The need to inspect fortifications or reconnoiter enemy movements usually gave way to the superior claims of cards and conversation in his tent. But when circumstances cried out for action, and contemplation had to be put aside, Luxemburg could be as fierce and swift to act as the most energetic and ascetic of commanders. Nonetheless, it is his eccentric attachment to good living that leaves the most lasting impression. It was an approach to warfare that would have appealed to George S. Patton.

And when we think of Patton, it is his eccentricity which we remember first! The tough, weather-beaten face; the ivory-handled revolvers; the profane and extravagant speech; the appeals to God to lay on good weather for his soldiers; the endless reiteration of "Kraut-killing" and the insistence on Third Army's great mission.

### **Merits and shortcomings**

Patton's merits and short-comings are best illustrated by his conduct during the battle of the "Bulge" in the winter of 1944. On 19 December, three days after the German offensive in the Ardennes started and just as its scope and gravity were beginning to be realized, the Allied Supreme Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, was conferring with three of his principal subordinates-Lieutenant Generals Omar N. Bradley and Jacob L. Devers, commanding 12th and 6th Army Groups, and Patton. Eisenhower made it clear that since the Germans had left the protection of the Siegfried Line defenses, they ran the risk of annihilation and there was every reason to be cheerful.

Patton responded with a typical comment: "Let the sonnuvabitches go all the way to Paris!;" then they would "cut 'em off and chew 'em up." When Eisenhower outlined his plan for stemming the German advance by plugging holes in the American line and then counter-attacking the German bulge from the south with Third Army, Patton astonished and delighted his colleagues by stating that he could start his counter-attack on 22 December, only three days later.

This claim, fulfilled in practice, underlined one of Patton's greatest attributes as a soldier—an ability to turn his forces round with remarkable speed and skill. But Third Army's superb organization and aggressive enthusiasm to "get up and go" had serious flaws. Failure to disguise preparations and a prodigal use of radio communications told the Germans what was coming. That Patton, in the space of a few days, was able to break off one offensive in the Saar region; regroup his Army; switch half of it 90° north for a mid-winter attack towards new objectives, and actually get everything moving on time is a real tribute to his determination, flexibility and driving energy.

Patton's 3rd US Corps began to attack the southern flank of the German Ardennes penetration on 22 December, making its main effort along the Arlon-Bastogne road. It was especially important to relieve Bastogne, a key road center besieged by the Germans and vitally necessary to

them, for its defiant stand was proving to be "an abscess on our lines of communication," as General von Luettwitz, commanding 47 *Panzer* Corps, had predicted. Patton, brimming over with customary confidence, had expected to reach Bastogne and even St. Vith, by Christmas. He was in for a bitter disappointment. Nor was this surprising. For, whereas Patton's success in making troops available for the counter-attack was phenomenal, the actual deployment for the attack itself was a masterpiece of poor planning, insufficient preparation, and appalling tactics.

### **Zeal and blunders**

Furthermore, it manifested an extraordinary zeal for rushing ill-trained troops pell-mell into a battle where their baptism of fire would be discouragingly unpleasant—one of the worst blunders that a commanding general can make. In spite of this, and after four days of slogging forward, during which sheer weight of numbers and ironmongery overcame a skillful and obstinate German resistance, Bastogne was reached and relieved.

There was nothing new about Patton's love of sheer speed and activity for its own sake. In the North African campaign of 1942-43, it was a source of great regret and envy to him that he could not always be in the front line from the start and remain there until the very end. On the second day of Operation Torch, Patton spent 18 hours on the beaches driving his raw troops inland. But his bustling, determined methods were exactly what appealed both to the American soldiers he led and to his Allies who, beyond the showmanship, recognized an absolute conviction that only by fighting could the Germans be defeated. British war correspondent Alan Moorehead's glimpse of Patton in Tunisia caught the demeanor of the general at war:

"General Patton, a large and gregarious man with a fine weather-beaten face, and pearl-handled revolver strapped to his side, stood on a bare rock and surveyed the village of Gafsa a little uneasily. There was no answering gunfire from the enemy. He decided to go forward at once. 'Go down that track until you get blown up,' he said to his ADC, 'and then come back and report.' "

Yet underneath the hard-bitten pronouncements, the truculence, the contempt for fear and the longing for death or glory, lay a deeply sentimental nature, easily moved to emotional display. This combination of toughness and soft-heartedness sometimes got him into trouble. The celebrated face-slapping incident in Sicily in which Patton struck a soldier who "just couldn't take it," seriously prejudiced his position as a commander and gravely embarrassed Eisenhower. Fortunately, Eisenhower stood firm against the public outcry and military misgivings, for he knew he could not afford to lose Patton's brand of leadership.

But, in spite of Patton's overbearing and swashbuckling manner, his actual method of command conformed to the American tradition—that is, by committee. Matters of strategy and tactics would be freely discussed by his subordinate commanders and staff in a democratic way; a practice utterly foreign to the British way of war. And, having decided what was to be done, Patton then allowed other people to get on with it. "Never tell people how to do things," he subsequently observed. "Tell them what to do and they will surprise you with their ingenuity!" Coming from a man who was a Virginian by descent and autocratic by inclination this was surprising and sound advice.

It was in the Normandy battles of July to August 1944, after the lessons learned during the North African and Sicilian campaigns, that Patton came into his own. The break-out from the Normandy bridgehead was exactly the task most suited to his talents, even though the plan had been engineered by a British general—the circumspect and calculating Montgomery. For it had always been Montgomery's intention that the British and Canadian armies should so tie down and "write off" the German Panzer divisions in the eastern part of the Normandy bridgehead so that when the right moment came the Americans under Bradley would have little difficulty in bursting out of the western part.

On 15 July 1944, Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, commanding the forces containing the Allied bridgehead, had given it as his opinion that before long the enemy would succeed in breaking through the thinly held line and thrust deep into France. Ten days later the American break-out operation began. The initial punch was to be made by Bradley's First Army. Patton (his Third Army almost ready for action) was to follow up with the 8th US Corps. By his rapid maneuvers between 28 and 30 July, Patton succeeded in whipping 8th Corps through the gaps made by Bradley's attacks. He then advanced on Avranches, fanned out from there across the River Selune and reached Brittany.

On 1 August Patton, by this time in command of his Third Army, was ordered to secure the line St. Hilaire-Fougeres-Rennes in order to protect the Avranches exit from the east, and then turn westward into Brittany. Putting his own very bold—and certainly liberal—interpretation on these orders, Patton sent one Corps to motor straight for Brest and Lorient, while another made for Fougeres and Rennes. In doing so, he disobeyed all the rules of movement discipline and traffic control; sent division after division over the vulnerable bottleneck of the Avranches bridge; and moved so fast that no fewer than seven divisions, 100,000 men and 15,000 vehicles, were despatched along this one road in three days.

His orders were: "Get going and keep going till you get to Brest." In this fashion the Third Army swept through Brittany and on to Orleans, Chartres, and Dreux. Patton's divisions were sometimes covering 50 miles a day; a speed which astonished even those German generals who had first developed and applied the doctrine of blitzkrieg. They had not foreseen that the Americans would think and act with such initiative and daring. They had reckoned without Patton.

Like all controversial figures Patton inspired many revealing comments from those who served with him. Eisenhower, the most balanced and successful of all World War II American commanders, regarded command of an Army as the ideal position for Patton because "for certain types of action he was the outstanding soldier our country has produced." The Supreme Commander meant bold, thrusting cavalry-type moves with a powerful and flexible force, large enough to influence the outcome of battles, but not so large that grand strategic ideas were involved.

### **Bravado and ambition**

Fortunately, Patton himself agreed with this estimate. Eisenhower recognized that underneath all the "Blood and Guts" bravado lay a real student of war, an extremely able leader, who, despite his overriding ambition to be a successful commander, always received the loyalty and support of his subordinates and had a fine judgment of tactical situations.

Above all, Patton seized opportunities and fully exploited them: his dash for Palermo and Messina in July to August 1943; speed at disengagement and redeployment during the Ardennes battles; his subsequent crossing of the Rhine at Oppenheim with one regiment of infantry on 22 March 1945; and his tearing rush through the Palatinate, as the war drew to its close, simply confirmed an astonishing flair for rapid advance and improvisation. The only "fly in the ointment" was that Patton regarded the operations of his own Third Army as the be-all-and-end-all of Allied strategic matters. This conviction ruled him even to the extent of getting his troops so committed to a battle that they needed supplies which would have been far better employed elsewhere. It also led him to ensure that his own command could be used only in pursuit of his aims; notwithstanding broader strategic options.

It was because Eisenhower valued Patton's generalship so highly that he was able to smooth over the Sicilian slapping incident. The blow itself had sprung from Patton's emotional state brought about by the strain of operations and the presence of many suffering, wounded soldiers. Patton rejected the psychiatric concept of "battle fatigue." And when a soldier, apparently unharmed, spoke of "his nerves,;" the general flew into a rage. And when yet another man

answered in similar vein, Patton actually swung his hand at the soldier's head, knocking his helmet off.

Afterwards Patton wrote to Eisenhower: "I am at a loss to find words with which to express my chagrin and grief at having given you, a man to whom I owe everything and for whom I would gladly lay down my life, cause to be displeased with me." Eisenhower knew that underneath the hard-boiled attitude lay Patton's greatest handicap as a commander: his soft heartedness. The Supreme Commander tried to restrain Patton from making explosive and controversial public statements which did more harm than good. But despite all the difficulties and criticisms caused by Patton's indiscretions and extravagances, Eisenhower was right to retain him in command. "You owe us some victories," he told Patton, "pay off and the world will deem me a wise man." The victories were not long in coming.

### **Judicious and stimulating**

Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein is predictably cooler on the subject of Patton and in his book 'Normandy to the Baltic' makes no mention of the man or his doings. In his "Memoirs" too, he offers no word of appreciation or praise. Bradley, on the other hand, while making use of proper qualifications, is lavish with it. "Few generals could surpass Patton as a field commander. But he had one enemy he could not vanquish and that was his own quick tongue." These two men made a good team. "No longer the martinet that had sometimes strutted in Sicily," wrote Bradley of his friend in July 1944, "George had now become a judicious, reasonable and likable commander." And then again: "His vigor was always infectious, his wit barbed, his conversation a mixture of obscenity and good humor—at once stimulating and overbearing, George was a magnificent soldier."

To Patton, war was a holy crusade. At one moment he would kneel humbly before God and at another finish off his orders with a pronouncement perilously close to the worst sort of ham—"if his troops were not victorious in the next day's attack, then no one need come back alive." Bradley was unable to accustom himself "to the vulgarity with which Patton skinned offenders for relatively minor infractions of discipline." He could not agree that profanity was necessary for communicating with troops. Patton, he thought, was undoubtedly a good corps or army commander, but was unable to command himself. "While some men prefer to lead by suggestion and example, Patton chose to drive his subordinates by bombast and threats. These mannerisms achieved spectacular results. But they were not calculated to win affection among his officers or men." That was true, but then the vast majority of military commanders have inspired fear rather than love. By this method Patton whipped the 2nd US Corps into shape after the debacle of Kasserine in Tunisia during March 1943.

Yet one of the most extraordinary of Patton's achievements, his dashing field exploits apart, was the handling of his staff. Bradley recorded that he had not initially thought much of Patton's staff, either individually or as a team. The Ardennes battles changed all that. He saw that Patton had seasoned and coaxed his staff to be capable of the most brilliant efforts in turning Third Army inside out and pointing it in a different direction.

Moreover, Patton was even able to get excellent work out of mediocre material. Improvisation was, of course, his great metier, and in swinging his troops about and pushing them up the road to Bastogne, he improvised superlatively. Most of it was done on the telephone, adjusting and adapting from day to day as road capacities changed. However if dependability for your own side is the yardstick, then right up until the end of the war Bradley was able to be sure that Third Army would move swiftly and effectively.

When Patton was given the task of cutting off the so-called National Redoubt in Southern Germany during April 1945 (which, so far as a last stand by Nazi diehards was concerned, turned

out to be myth), he rapidly reached Austria, drove down the Danube towards Vienna and was before long on the Czech frontier; Patton's far flung columns had driven 200 miles in three weeks.

Then he begged Bradley for permission to liberate the Czechs, and when the latter asked him why Third Army was so keen for the task, "George grinned. Onto Czechoslovakia and fraternization!" he whooped, "How in hell can you stop an army with a battle cry like that?" Patton could have entered Prague three days before the Russians; he even planned to "get lost" on 6 May and report the city's capture to Bradley from a phone booth in Wenzel Square. But categorical orders from Eisenhower halted Third Army on the Czech border.

Patton's own account of affairs is naturally enough full of good stuff. One of the combat principles he laid down sums up his tactical ideas in a single sentence: "Catch the enemy by the nose with fire and kick him in the pants with fire emplaced through movement." It was just another way of describing the two basic elements of fighting, mobility, and applying agents of violence, but colorfully done and characteristic of the man. His letters show him in a broader light-wide interests (which ranged from horses and yachts to archaeology and ethnology), his humor and humanity, his religious convictions, his absolute dedication to a cause-these speak out clearly. Patton's unwavering confidence in himself, in the justness of the Allied cause and in God were emphasized by his prayer for fine weather on 23 December 1944.

### **Get God to work.**

He told the Third Army Chaplain: "I want you to publish a prayer for good weather. I'm tired of these soldiers having to fight mud and floods as well as Germans. See if we can't get God to work on our side." When the chaplain objected that it was not customary to pray for fair weather in order to kill fellow men, he was sharply reminded that he was the Third Army Chaplain and was not required to give his commander a lesson in theology. The prayer produced fine weather and enabled the first of many airdrops to bring much needed supplies to beleaguered Bastogne.

What did the enemy think of Patton? The German view of the decisive battle for Normandy leaves us in no doubt about the conclusiveness of Patton's break-out. Major General Guenther Blumentritt, Chief of Staff to Field Marshall von Kluge, Commander-in-Chief, West, judged Patton to be the most aggressive of the Allied "Panzer" Generals and spoke of his incredible initiative and lightning speed. It would be a view shared by all the former practitioners of *blitzkrieg*, who referred to his command not as the Third Army but as *Armeegruppe Patton*. Field Marshal Gerd von Runstedt, canniest German general of the war, made Montgomery and Patton strange bed-fellows in his estimation of old adversaries; "the two best I met."

Patton's pistols were so renowned that they even provided material for a book. He wore his pistols, sometimes one, sometimes a pair, endlessly—in North Africa, in Sicily, in France and in Germany. He used them in anger only once. This was at San Miguelito in 1916 during the Mexican War crisis, while serving with Gen. John "Black Jack" Pershing.

Second Lieutenant Patton was in charge of a foraging expedition when he decided to combine this duty with a hunt for a wanted bandit. It ended with a gun battle in the finest traditions of the Wild West. Three Mexicans, surprised by Patton's patrol, rode straight at the young officer and his companions, shooting as they rode. Patton returned their fire with his revolver. He hit one bandit who fell, then shot the horse of a second, killing the still shooting Mexican as he rose, and finally helped to run the third one to earth. Ironically, the gun he used was a Peacemaker. It was Pershing who saw Patton off to war again in October 1942, saying "I am happy they are sending you to the front at once. I like Generals so bold they are dangerous." When he subsequently wore a pistol together with the rest of his "showmanship" outfit, it was, he confided to another general, because he wanted "the men of the Third Army to know where I am and that I risk the same dangers that they do. A little fancy dress is added to help maintain the leadership and fighting spirit that I desire

in the Third Army." He was perhaps the last general to consider his personal weapons an important factor.

But he left his pistols behind him on the day that Eisenhower relieved him of command of Third Army in September 1945. It was the result of Patton's defiance of orders and his having left certain Nazi officials in key positions of the Bavarian district he commanded. It was the saddest day of his military life when he said good-bye to the Headquarters of his beloved Army. "All good things must come to an end. The best thing that has ever come to me thus far is the honor and privilege of having commanded the Third Army."

He wore one of the famous pistols once more at a parade south of Heidelberg, early in December. A few days later came the car collision which resulted in his death on 21 December. For eleven days, Patton fought to live against a broken neck, paralysis, and lung embolism, leading to heart failure.

Eisenhower recorded that the Army had lost "a brilliant figure" whose daring execution of bold plans "struck terror at the heart of the enemy." President Truman spoke of the great loss to the nation and of the inspiration which Patton's career had been. General Douglas MacArthur, a kindred spirit if ever there was one, called him "a gallant romantic soldier of unquestioned greatness." The *New York Times*, expressing its wonder that Patton had not died in battle because of all the chances he had taken, referred to him as "spectacular, swaggering, pistol-packing, deeply religious and violently profane." But it was plain that in this contradictory and outspoken figure lay both a unique tank leader and an earnest, profound military thinker.

Was George Patton, as some people have it, the best field commander in United States history? He had neither the political and strategic vision of MacArthur, nor the genius for management and compromise of Eisenhower, nor even the tactical grip and brilliance of Bradley. But if we may judge a commander by his imagination in making plans; his flair in organizing and training his troops; his thoroughness in equipping and administering them; and his character in making them feel capable of doing anything, then his claims must remain high.

Luck, eloquence and character were all attributes of the good general that Patton displayed. He had a quick eye and a stout heart, although not always a cool head. And he was the last commander to consciously act the part of a warrior, the last Napoleonic general in a century of mass warfare.

## **The Strange Death of General George S. Patton, Jr.**

by Blaine Taylor

### **Military Modeler**

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The two Generals were talking in the back seat of a gleaming black 1938 Model 75 Cadillac sedan, which Patton had used as a staff car since the war in Europe had ended on May 8, 1945. At the wheel was Patton's new chauffeur, 19-year-old Private First Class Horace L. "Woody" Woodring of Kentucky.

Woodring had become Patton's driver only by chance, as the General's driver of more than five years, Master Sergeant John L. Mims, had left the service the previous May 20th to return



home to the United States. Patton's farewell note to Mims stated, "You have been the driver of my official car since 1940. During that time, you have safely driven me in many parts of the world under all conditions of dust and snow and ice and mud, of enemy fire and attack by enemy aircraft. At no time during these years of danger and difficulty have you so much as bumped a fender"

Sergeant Mims' replacement, however, was a speed demon who regularly liked to drive at 70 miles per hour, and Patton took to him immediately, as both loved to dare the odds. This was an ominous sign for a man like Patton who'd been accident-prone all his life. As his biographer, the late Ladislav Farago, wrote, "He had broken his nose, his ankles, both legs, several ribs—too numerous to list them all. He had wounds galore—a head wound, injury to his left eyebrow, a gash over his right eye, lacerated lips again and again.

He had fallen on his head twice, and had been kicked in the head by horses . . . Most of his injuries were brought on by horseback riding and in football, except the one extra-special wound, remnant of World War 1, whose prominent scar was enshrined, so to speak, in a crease in his right buttock. Patton made the most of this. 'It may be symbolic for something or another that the only permanent memento of my historic service in the First World War is this goddamn scar on my ass!'"

Some historians—and Patton's fellow US. Army Generals—felt that he may have suffered actual brain damage due to these many injuries, particularly those to his skull and this even led the US. Army Signal Corps to bug his personal telephone after the war and a psychiatrist to be assigned to evaluate Patton for feared insanity.

His personality had seemed to change after the departure of the safe-driving Sergeant Mims and his clean record of no accidents on the road. Even before the arrival of PFC Woodring—who had been demoted three times, once from Sergeant, for fraternization with the former defeated German enemy—Patton had seemed to be daring death on the road in that Fall of 1945. He had already had two close shaves in car accidents with drivers selected from the local motor pool in between Mims and Woodring, and in one of these he was almost killed when a pole from an ox cart hit him in the head.

Now Woodring, egged on by Patton himself, drove at 70 mph past Military Police and bystanders alike, racing past checkpoints and railroad crossings. Patton would boyishly joke, "Woodring is the fastest and the mostest!" But the situation, in reality, was a disaster waiting to happen—and it did.

On this December 9th, the sedan was stopped at a railroad crossing outside Mannheim, Germany in the oddly-named "Valley of the Bug," waiting for a passing train to go by. Behind the limousine of "Old Blood and Guts" was an Army GMC Signal Corps truck with three GIs hung over from a night of beer drinking the previous Saturday night out for a Sunday joy ride with a spare vehicle.

Ahead of both the truck and Patton's car was an MP jeep with two officers that crossed the tracks as the gate was lifted. As Patton's car went over, MP Lieutenant Peter K. Babalas heard a muffled crash behind him, and turned to see the big, shiny black staff car entangled with the truck in a cloud of dust.

The two MPs went back to investigate and concluded that the truck had crashed into the car by a sudden sharp turn to the left as the Cadillac was moving up. Woodring confirmed this by alleging, "The driver (T/5 Robert L. Thompson of Chicago) made no hand signal. He just turned into my car." Neither vehicle was moving at more than 20 mph. The accident appeared to be trivial.

The radiator of the Cadillac was smashed, but not a single window of the big car was broken. The right front fender of the sedan and the motor were pushed back, but no other part of the body

had so much as a scratch. And though three people were riding in the car, only one appeared to be hurt—Patton himself.

"My neck hurts, Lieutenant. I'm having trouble breathing, Hap. Work my fingers for me," asked the most famous Four-Star General in the United States Army. General Gay did so, but Patton kept asking him, "Go ahead, Hap. Work my fingers." Having bumped his head on the car's steel frame at the moment of impact, Patton's face was covered with blood from a cut.

An ambulance was sent for, and the first doctor to examine the stricken General, Captain Ned Snyder, told Babalas, "He broke his neck. He needs the very best we've got."

This was a true statement, as fully twelve percent of all injuries to US. service personnel during World War II had resulted from those done to the spinal cord. Patton, suffering from a broken neck due to whiplash, was now a part of that figure, as he suffered from total paralysis from the neck down, which he himself realized on the twenty minute drive to the hospital.

The next day, the *Stars and Stripes* reported the accident as a minor affair, and that Patton was recovering normally, but in fact he was doomed from the start, as two prominent doctors discussed the case that night. "What do you think of General Patton's chances to recover?" one asked the other. "None." "What chances does he have to live?" "From very slight to none," was the response. The doctor was right.

It was to be an incongruous end for one of the most combative generals in the entire history of recorded warfare, a man whose decorations included the Distinguished Service Cross, the Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, and numerous other US. and foreign decorations. The man who had fought in two world wars and chased Mexican bandit Pancho Villa died in bed eleven days after the accident at age 60 of pneumonia, killed by a wayward blood clot that caused heart failure.

On the day he died, December 21, 1945—forty years ago—Patton said, prophetically, I am going to die—today." At 5:45 pm, he did, "With sudden stopping of the heart." He was buried in the U.S. War Cemetery at Hamm, Luxembourg, near the graves of the men who had fought under him in North Africa, Sicily, France, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and Austria as well as the defeated Nazi Reich.

Because of the unlikely nature of his accident and death—and because there was neither autopsy nor inquest following it—the rumors of a "plot" to kill Patton have persisted down through the past four decades. Seen as possible plotters have been the defeated Nazis, Russians who feared he might start a new World War against them, US. Generals who agreed with the Reds on this point, and thieves out to steal captured German gold that Patton's troops had discovered.

In 1978, the movie *Brass Target*, starring George Kennedy as Patton, received mixed audience acceptance, and George C. Scott recently revived his 1970 role as Patton in the TV special *The Last Days of Patton*, named after Farago's book of the same title.

And so, more than forty years after the strange end of the man Adolf Hitler called "that crazy cowboy general" the legend of the life and death of one of history's greatest prima donnas is once again front and center in the full, harsh glare of worldwide attention. One senses that the shade of the late General George S. Patton, Jr. is not entirely unhappy.

**Blood and Guts Patton**  
by the Editors of True War Magazine

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Part I: Blood and Guts Patton

"Our blood, Patton's guts" was the comment drawn from many of the soldiers of the American Third Army. Yet, these same men were unbelievably inspired by General George S. Patton.

According to official records, George S. Patton, Jr. was born on Wednesday, November 11, 1885 on a 1,800-acre ranch in San Marino, near Pasadena, California. But, as Patton himself told it, this was only one of many reincarnations, only a link in a timeless historic chain. He often traced his ageless career as a warrior from prehistoric times to his days in World War I.

General Sir Harold Alexander once informed him during the war in North Africa: "Really, George, you would have made a great marshal for Napoleon if you had lived in the 18th century."

Smiling, Patton softly replied: "But I did." He left it at that.

The military was a tradition in the Patton family, and young George carried it on by attending Virginia Military Institute. Then, after passing the entrance examinations, he went on to West Point. He graduated from West Point in June 1910, and was assigned to his first Army post at Fort Sheridan, in Illinois. Lieutenant George S. Patton, Jr. was the lowest man on the totem pole of Troop K, 15th Cavalry Regiment.

Young Patton met and married Beatrice Ayer, the daughter of a New England textile magnate. The elaborate marriage ceremony took place near Pride's Crossing in Saline Harbor, Massachusetts, at the Beverly Farms Episcopal Church on May 26, 1910. After a honeymoon in England, the young couple settled down at Fort Sheridan.

In 1916, Patton was a dashing, cocky young cavalryman and aide to General John "Black Jack" Pershing, serving on a brief tour of duty at Fort Bliss, Texas, with the 8th Cavalry Regiment. It was at this time that Patton took part in an adventurous expedition into Mexico, chasing will-o'-the-o'-wisp Pancho Villa. Patton became a favorite of Pershing, who judged a soldier by his ability to fight.

Villa was successful in evading the American force, but foolhardy Patton went out of his way to look for him. The young American cavalryman never did locate Villa, but he did track down his bodyguard, Colonel Julio Cardenas. Finding Cardenas hiding in his father's hacienda, young Patton shot it out with him in a quick fight that resembled a Western movie scene rather than a military action.

From then on, Patton's military career skyrocketed. Between 1916 and 1918 (only 22 months), Patton rose to a full colonel in charge of a tank brigade in France.

In 1917 Patton was assigned the task of organizing, training and commanding two battalions of tanks which would comprise the first brigade of the United States Tank Corps. At first, Captain Patton wasn't too happy about the tanks, referring to them as "coffins on wheels." wheels." Brigadier General Samuel D. Rockenbach would be the C-in-C of the new Tank Corps and argued bitterly with the British and French to obtain their cooperation for the development of the Tank Corps. Then Patton worked against overwhelming odds in creating it.

Since the tanks were an entirely new venture for the Americans, Patton started from zero by attending the British tank school at Bovington in England and the French tank school in Chaplieu to learn everything he could before attempting to train men to use them in warfare.

Nor did he stop there. Patton made it a point to observe Allied tanks in action. Watching the various heavy tanks in action, he requested to be equipped with the light French Renault tanks, which were a two-man operation and weighed six tons. The heavier ones ran up to 30 tons.

Finally, Major (by now) Patton felt he was ready and set up a training center near Langres in the Haute Marne, utilizing the villages of Bourg and Bren for troop billeting. Surprisingly, volunteers for the tank duty came in swarms. When the 22 Renaults that the French allotted him for training purposes arrived on flatcars, Patton had to get up in the middle of the night and unload them—he was the only man there who could drive one.

The primitive tanks presented many baffling problems, sometimes making training a complicated, exasperating procedure. There was no communication between tanks, and the two men inside the tank had to communicate in total darkness. A kick in the driver's back told him to go forward, a kick on his head was the signal to stop.

They traveled at a maddening four miles per hour, often not being able to keep up with the marching infantry. They did not have enough trained mechanics, and most of the few tanks Patton had in his command were idle a large portion of the time.

By July 1918, Patton had his six companies in shape and it became generally recognized that they were the sharpest in the A.E.F. Patton insisted on spit and polish and he developed the simple gesture of the salute into a high-and delicate art. It became common in the A.E.F. to refer to a smart salute as a "geogepatton." Already, he was becoming a Patton legend.

As soon as Patton went into combat, he acted as though he must win the war single-handedly.

## Part II: Advent of World War II

In France, Patton won the D.S.M., D.S.C., Silver Star and Purple Heart for his service at St. Mihiel and in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. He also received a very definite chewing out . . .

With the Germans retiring too far and the Americans not advancing far enough, there was an extremely wide "no man's land" between the two adversaries near Cheppy, France. The terrain was ideal for the light tanks, so Patton led his tank force down the ridge, fanning out into the broad valley of Aire and halting only when they were a half mile from the Hindenburg Line. Spotting some Germans and hungry for action, Patton ordered Captain Semmes, commander of Company A of the brigade's First Battalion, to capture them.

However, when Semmes closed in on the Germans, he found they were already prisoners. They were on the march to a nearby prisoner-of-war cage.

Still craving action, Patton sent Lt. Ted McClure, a daredevil tank driver from Richmond, Virginia, directly against the Hindenburg Line. In fact, Patton was launching the first Allied assault upon it. For this grand assault, McClure was in charge of three tanks. For an hour after he disappeared behind the high ground, McClure was not heard from. Then suddenly the eerie stillness was broken by the din of battle. All at once, silence closed in again. This time it was a heavy, oppressive silence. Patton began to have second thoughts about sending McClure.

An hour and a half passed. There they were, rolling swiftly over the ridge and down into the plain toward Patton. McClure had acted as ordered, hitting the Hindenburg Line in a direct frontal attack. He had wheeled into the direct fire of a German battery. Instead of turning and running, he charged the guns at full speed and knocked them out of action. As an afterthought, McClure retrieved the breech block of one of the pieces to prove his success to Patton.

Since Patton had broken out of the American front lines on his own, General Rockenbach was fiery mad over the incident and threatened to send Patton home with the permanent rank of captain.

During a critical phase of the Meuse-Argonne campaign, Patton became detached from his outfit and fell in with an infantry battalion. The unit was in a confused retreat after all its officers had been killed. Rallying them, Patton led them in a counterattack on the German positions.

Hit and badly wounded, with a hole in his side; Patton continued to issue orders and sent out patrols. The Germans were thrown back.

In 1940, as a permanent colonel of cavalry, Patton was promoted to temporary major-general and given command of the 2nd Armored Division when it became obvious that the United States involvement in World War II was imminent. At first he was assigned to Fort Benning, Georgia, to organize a brigade of the 2nd Division; but after running into all sorts of difficulties, he almost muffed it.

He had tried to perform the task as he had in 1918, but quickly learned the situation was entirely different. Then he was handling a small force; now he was facing a vast organization of hundreds of tanks, trucks half-tracks, jeeps, motorcycles and thousands of men. He seemed to render nothing but confusion, and many of the officers begged the Chief of Staff to transfer the old man to something more befitting an old-timer living in the past.

Suddenly, Patton straightened out and began to reorganize his methods. Soon he was getting things done. General George C. Marshall, the Chief of Staff, turned the 2nd Armored Division over to Patton to do with as he pleased. It wasn't long until Patton had honed the 2nd Armored into a precision combat weapon in his own image-gaudy and demonstrative. He continued to retain personal contact with his troops, but he had to initiate new methods of doing so.

Back in 1920, Patton had fought for the development of armor but had lost out, and now America was far behind the Germans in modern mobile armored vehicles, as well as the training of men to handle them in warfare. Now, in 1940, Patton found himself again promoting and defending the formation of Tank Corps, as well as the development of more modern, up-to-date tanks.

Patton argued: "The tank is a special, technical and vastly powerful weapon. It will mean the difference between defeat and victory."

While at Fort Benning, Patton bought himself a small private aircraft, a Stinson Voyager, using it to observe the exercises of a new generation of tank men he was training from the air. It enabled Patton to get a bird's-eye view of the tanks in various field maneuvers and spot their errors.

Finally, the 2nd Armored was perfected as much as was possible in the time allowed. Many of the officers and men were shifted to tank schools to train the rookies, to new companies, or to form the cadres of the 3rd and 4th Armored Divisions which were in the process of being organized.

Early in 1942, Patton was shuttled off to Indio in southeastern California to organize the Desert Training Center and to prepare the nucleus of an American "Panzer Army" to be soon shipped overseas for participation in the desert war in North Africa. Here he drilled his men to fight in the blazing 120-degree heat in terrain resembling that of North Africa. He insisted that they keep their sleeves rolled down, and get along on a minimum of water. Not long after they arrived in North Africa, their grumbles changed to praise for what the old man had taught them.

A strong desert force had taken shape, and most of these men followed Patton overseas to the landing beaches of Morocco. His assignment was to seize Casablanca. He commanded one of the first task forces to go ashore during the Allied invasion of North Africa in November 1942.

On the beaches an epidemic of "foxhole-itis" broke out when shells and bullets began exploding around the GIs who were unloading supplies and ammunition from the landing barges. It threatened to stall the landings. With a cigar in his mouth and two pearl-handled pistols on his hips, Patton paraded back and forth on the beach, urging the paralyzed soldiers to return to work.

Laughter broke loose when bullets kicked up sand behind the old man and Patton grabbed the seat of his pants. The next instant a cheer went up and the soldiers began to climb sheepishly to their feet. The supplies were unloaded and the day was saved.

After four rip-snorting days, Patton's forces, captured Casablanca. At the end he strode into the French headquarters with a tommy gun under one arm and the two .45s strapped to his hips. So impressed was the Sultan of Morocco that he presented Patton with the special order of *Ouissam*

*Alaonite*, with the citation: "*Les Lions dans leurs tanières tremblent en le voyant approcher.*" (The lions in their den tremble at his approach.)

Soon, all of coastal French Morocco was in American hands.

### Part III: The Third Army

In March 1943, Patton became a Lieutenant General and took command of the central sector in Tunisia, where U.S. troops had received a humiliating trouncing a month before.

He celebrated his appointment by advancing. He had replaced Major General Lloyd R. Fredenhall, an infantryman and tactician, whose forces were defeated.

Patton's favorite motto (expurgated) was "Grab 'em by the nose and kick 'em in the tail." And this he proceeded to do!

Advance intelligence reports indicated that General Erwin Rommel was concentrating his forces at a certain point on the line, but Patton had a hunch. He believed that was what Rommel was trying to make the Allied commanders believe, then would smash through somewhere else. Patton decided on El Guettar and set up a snare for the Desert Fox. Rommel fell into the trap, and his badly battered legions retreated from the fight with over 50 percent casualties. Afterward, Patton congratulated his men, those still in the field and those in the field hospitals.

"You did it! You stopped the 10th Panzer. It's never been stopped before, but you guys did it."

In the opening phase of the Sicilian campaign two tank regiments twice broke into the strongly fortified town of Gela, and twice the Germans threw them back to the beach. Aboard the headquarters ship standing off the Coast, Patton walked away from the operations desk, put on his helmet and called for a boat to take him ashore.

He waded through the surf, waved to the weary tank men, and told them: "Those bastards can't take a hint, so let's stop acting polite. Let's go kick their butts out for good."

This time Gela stayed in American hands, and the invasion began to roll.

Patton loved good soldiers and good soldiers loved him-for a good reason. He was a leader, not a commander. He proved this numerous times during his lifetime.

Then in the fall of 1943, Patton was relieved of his command for slapping two hospitalized soldiers whom he had accused of malingering. It was a hard decision for Supreme Commander Dwight Eisenhower to make. Patton was a brilliant field commander at a stage in the war when good generals were at a premium.

The startling thing was that Patton's chief defenders were the fighting men, the infantrymen and the armored troopers. One stated, "He may be an s.o.b., but I'd rather be in his outfit than any other." To many soldiers, Patton was an inspiration.

Fully aware that he was inviting the displeasure of the War Department and Congress, Eisenhower nevertheless assigned Patton to one of the key commands in the Allied war machine that invaded Europe in June 1944.

The reprimanded general responded with the zeal of a sidelined football star reprieved in the final quarter of the game.

For the first five weeks, progress was slow and bloody. But near the end of July, the Third Army "rounded the corner" in Brittany, smashed through the German lines at Periers and fanned out across northern France. Dinan, Rennes, Mayenne, Le Mans and Angers fell within 10 days.

To the experts, it appeared as though Patton had over-extended himself. Eisenhower and General Omar Bradley, the ranking American commander in the field, suffered a bad five days when the Germans launched a fierce counter-offensive at Avranches on August 7. If they succeeded in their break-out, Patton's 3rd Army would be immobilized, cut off from fuel, ammunition and supplies.

At Avranches, Patton's armor proved that the long run around the Germans' right end had not been a joyride. The panzers rammed head-on into a steel wall, shattered themselves in repeated assaults, and by the 12th were fleeing toward the Seine with the 3rd Army in relentless pursuit.

Patton swept on to Chartres, Dreux and Orleans. Fontainebleau, Troyes and Nantes on the Seine fell before the end of the month. Before now, the fact that the controversial Patton was leading the spectacular advance across France had been kept from the public, but now the news broke that "pistol-packing" Patton was the guiding force behind the 3rd Army drive.

"From heel to hero!" one back home editorial cried. Patton had become the man of the year. Even Congress forgave him. Late in August, his nomination for permanent major-general was quietly approved.

As the Allied armies closed in on the German border, the front stabilized. Winter brought a temporary stalemate and the near-disastrous Battle of the Bulge. But on January 15, Patton broke out again. By the end of the month, the 3rd had pierced the Siegfried Line and established bridgeheads across the Our and Sauer Rivers.

During the Sauer River crossing, Patton again displayed his special gutty leadership that endeared him to his men. The 4th Infantry Division had reached the river and was preparing to cross it in rafts and barges under heavy German fire, when Patton arrived on the scene.

"Those damned boats are sittin' ducks," he barked at the officers, and ordered them back to shore. "You'd be better off to swim across."

Eyeing the ice-choked bitter-cold stream, a colonel queried in disbelief: "Swim that? With rifles, packs and equipment? Impossible, sir!"

Patton snorted and turned to a private. "Give me your pack and rifle, soldier!"

With the pack over his back and the M-1 slung over his shoulder, he waded into the frigid water, swam to the far bank, then swam back again. As he emerged dripping from the river, he grinned at the appreciative audience of GIs and asserted: "Now, if an old man like me can manage it, you young fellows shouldn't have much trouble."

The GIs plunged into the water with chattering teeth and war whoops, and the Sauer was forded with minimal casualties.

Trier was captured; the Rhine was crossed north and west of Coblenz. On March 26, Frankfurt fell. The 3rd and 7th Armies encircled the Saar Basin and swept across Germany to Arch, Czechoslovakia, cutting the Third Reich in two. They were pushing into Austria when the war ended in Europe.

After the armistice, Eisenhower appointed Patton military governor of Bavaria. Within a week, Patton was again in hot water for criticizing the Allied de-Nazification program. There was truth in his statements, but in the double-shuffling, double-dealing post-war struggle for power, it wasn't good for politics. Shortly he was transferred to the nebulous 15th Army Command, in charge of compiling a history of World War II.

On November 11, 1945, Patton became 60 years old. Slightly less than a month later, on December 9, he was on his way to a pheasant hunt with Major General Hobart R. Gay in a car driven by Private First Class Horace L. Woodring, a young soldier attached to Patton's paper army. They were headed south on Highway 38, the Frankfurt-Mannheim road, when their sedan collided with a large Quartermaster Corps truck making a left turn. Patton was the only one injured, and he was rushed to the hospital with a broken neck.

The doctors gave Patton little hope for recovery. However, his recuperative powers amazed them. He fought with the same tenacity with which he had fought his enemies in warfare.

He mended so well that medics took off the elaborate traction apparatus and put him in a plaster cast. There was talk of flying him home to Boston. Then a respiratory infection set in. Twelve days after the accident, George S. Patton died in his sleep.

There was no doubt that Patton had always pictured a gallant end for himself-upon the battlefield, amid shot and shell. Instead, he passed away in an antiseptic hospital room with nurses and orderlies humiliating him with bedpans, feeding tubes and needles.

He was laid to rest along the famous route his 3rd Army carved through France in the memorable days of 1945. Patton the man was gone, but Patton the legend will live forever.

### **Patton's Talk With God**

by Lt. Col. Jack Widmer

#### **True: The Man's Magazine**

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*We feel this account of the miracle at Bastogne to be a remarkable Christian experience, appropriate to the Christmas season, reaffirming once more the eternal triumph of faith. After reading this article by Lieutenant Colonel Widmer, who was General Patton's press chief, turn to pages 60 and 61 of this issue for a reverent portrait of the late General, along with appropriate excerpts from his impassioned prayer, along published here in full for the first time.—The Editors*

Two days before Christmas, 1944, The blood of the dead and wounded showed in frozen scarlet pools against the three feet of snow that blanketed the Ardennes Forest. The living crouched in their hastily dug foxholes in the ragged front lines, repelling attack after attack, and doubted that they would survive to see another Christmas as Von Rundstedt kept up his relentless advance on this, the seventh day of the Battle of the Bulge. Only a miracle could save the situation—and that's what General Patton managed to get. In the valley that held Bastogne, a then little-known Belgian crossroads town, the 101st Airborne, reinforced by scattered groups from other divisions, was holding out against the tremendous weight of five top-flight German Panzer divisions and the American chaplains were comforting the dying and burying the dead with little thought of Christmas.

To the south of this surrounded and ill-supplied garrison, Major General Hugh Gaffey's 4th Armored Division was fighting desperately to break through the iron circle of German troops who momentarily threatened to capture Bastogne and to annihilate the entire garrison that was holding out in this all-important road center.

At Third Army Headquarters, in the picture-book city of Luxembourg, a radio was blaring the current hit of the season, *White Christmas*, a delightful little ditty for comfortable home listening. But during the Yuletide season of '44, it sounded more like a dirge to the Army staff that was making flying trips back and forth from headquarters to the front lines in a desperate attempt to bolster the American counterattack.

Morale of the men of both the First and Third U. S. Armies was at an all-time low. The German attack had been as much a success as it had been a surprise and American troops were fighting in their first winter campaign, for which there had been little preparation.

Temperatures were at the zero mark. Tanks slipped off the second-class roads to roll into slush-filled ditches, and the three-inch film of ice covering the paved highways into the battle area sent self-propelled field pieces crashing through bridge railings to tumble into frozen streams



below. Supply columns, unable to pass wrecked vehicles that blocked the narrow lanes, jammed the roads; critically needed ammunition trains were held up in the unfathomable mess behind the lines. Infantry replacements (scared, green kids with little more than basic training led by second lieutenants fresh from officers' candidate school) trudged forward on foot when their truck convoys mired down.

The infantry fought in half-frozen mud, wondering what was holding up the artillery that had been promised to knock out the tremendous Tiger Royal tanks that the German army was using for the first time.

They were a hungry, half-frozen, ill-equipped army, suffering their first major defeat, and they died in the mud of northern Luxembourg, cursing the quartermasters who had decided there would be no winter campaign and that light field jackets were all a doughfoot needed.

From a command standpoint, the most serious aspect of the continued rain and snow was the total lack of reliable information. No air reconnaissance had been flown for days; and without the watchful eye of our 19th Tactical Air Command, which had kept us so well informed on our dash across France, Von Rundstedt moved his units in utter secrecy. Intelligence was going crazy trying to figure the disposition of enemy units, and through it all rain and snow fell in constant swirls from a leaden, forbidding sky.

Behind the lines, young pilots sat around in their mud-floored tents gambling next month's flight pay while waiting for the break in the weather that never came, with their fighter-bombers, reconnaissance planes, and night fighters bogged in the slush that covered the runways.

Through all this the Third Army Commander, Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr., was accomplishing what everyone considered the impossible, for, despite the hindrances of winter storms, he somehow managed to move enough fresh units in from the south to continue an aggressive prodding attack on Von Rundstedt's southern flank in the Bastogne-Echternach area.

To say that the Old Man's disposition had long since passed the boiling point would be gross understatement, and as day passed into sleepless night, and into stormy day again, he rapidly lost all patience with the weather—the most formidable foe that he had encountered in three years of action.

His every waking hour had been spent either at the front or bucking traffic on the crowded roads that led to the head end of the war, but on the evening of 23 December, he roared into his headquarters in Luxembourg and, brushing his aides aside, stomped past the guard at the doorway and burst into the map-filled War Room.

Third Army Headquarters had been rushed up from Nancy at the start of the Battle of the Bulge, and Colonel Rufus S. Bratton, our Headquarters Commandant, had commandeered a big stone building that had at one time been the old ladies' home for the Duchy of Luxembourg.

The War Room, with its huge map boards, had been set up in the only place large enough to accommodate its paraphernalia, a roomy, beam-ceiling chapel, the religious paintings and figures standing out—in sharp contrast to the battle maps that lined three sides of this converted house of God.

Patton made his brisk way into the chapel, tossed his battered overcoat into a corner and waved the war-room attendants from his presence. He marched up to the map boards and made a scowling inspection of the current situation. Then, turning from the casualty report (which showed some 3,000 Third Army casualties during the past twenty-four hours), he faced the far wall of the chapel, with the life-sized statue of the Crucifixion that stood in a deep recess of the heavy masonry.

To those who knew and fought with him, his frank and lengthy reports to his God were nothing new, for the many members of his staff knew him to be a deeply religious man who thought it wise to explain "current situation" and to never forget the value of "divine guidance,"

and it was of little surprise to us of the staff when we learned of his standing before the Christ image to give forth his now famous prayer.

(These are Patton's own words. Part of my job was to keep a record of everything Patton said. I talked to several staff officers and compared their versions of the prayer with my own. After making a transcription, I checked it with the General and he okayed it.)

"Sir," he began quietly, the dim lights of the War Room lamps flickering on the crucifix, "this is Patton talking. The last fourteen days have been straight hell. Rain, snow, more rain, more snow—and I'm beginning to wonder what's going on in Your headquarters. Whose side are You on, anyway?

"For three years my chaplains have been explaining this as a religious war. This, they tell me, is the Crusades all over again, except that we're riding tanks instead of chargers. They keep insisting that we are here to annihilate the German Army and the godless Hitler so that religious freedom may return to Europe.

"Up until now I have gone along with them, for You have given us Your unreserved co-operation. Clear skies and a calm sea in Africa made the landings highly successful and helped us to eliminate Rommel. Sicily was comparatively easy, and You supplied excellent weather for our armored dash across France, the greatest military victory that You have thus far allowed me. You have often given me excellent guidance in difficult command decisions and You have led German units into traps that made their elimination fairly simple.

"But now, You've changed horses in midstream. You seem to have given Von Rundstedt every break in the book and, frankly, he's been beating hell out of us. My army is neither trained nor equipped for winter warfare. And, as You know, this weather is more suitable for Eskimos than for southern cavalymen."

The General stopped, took a hasty glance at the weather forecast that was thumbtacked to the war map. "Cold. Continued rain and snow. Ceiling 100 feet. Visibility 300 feet."

"But now, Sir," he went on, an underlying quality of anger in his voice, "I can't help but feel that I have offended You in some way. That suddenly You have lost all sympathy with our cause. That You are throwing in with Von Rundstedt and his paper-hanging god. You know without me telling You that our situation is desperate. Sure, I can tell my staff that everything is going according to plan, but there's no use telling You that my 101st Airborne is holding out against tremendous odds in Bastogne and that this continual storm is making it impossible to supply them even from the air. I've sent Hugh Gaffey, one of my ablest generals, with his 4th Armored Division, north toward that all-important road center to relieve the encircled garrison, and he's finding Your weather much more difficult than he is the Krauts."

Again the general paused to study the crucifix. His eyes softened, a quieter tone crept into his voice.

"I don't like to complain unreasonably, but my soldiers from the Meuse to Echternach are suffering the tortures of the damned. Today I visited several hospitals, all full of frostbite cases, and the wounded are dying in the fields because they cannot be brought back for medical care.

"But this isn't the worst of the situation. Lack of visibility, continued rains, have completely grounded my air force. My technique of battle calls for close-in fighter-bomber support, and if my planes can't fly, how can I use them as aerial artillery? Not only is this a deplorable situation, but, worse yet, my reconnaissance planes haven't been in the air for fourteen days, and I haven't the faintest idea of what's going on behind the German lines.

"Dammit, Sir, I can't fight a shadow," he was using that voice that he reserved for patient explanation to superior commanders. "Without Your co-operation from a weather standpoint, I am deprived of an accurate disposition of the German armies, and how in hell can I be intelligent in my attack? All this probably sounds unreasonable to You, but I have lost all patience with Your chaplains who insist that this is a typical Ardennes winter, and that I must have faith.

"Faith and patience be damned! You have just got to make up Your mind whose side You're on! You must come to my assistance, so that I may dispatch the entire German Army as a birthday present to Your Prince of Peace."

Again Patton stopped, walked to the large Gothic window that looked out upon the centuries-old courtyard—looked out upon two feet of snow, with heavy flakes continually adding to the white blanket that covered the cobblestones.

"Sir," he said, again turning toward the image of the Crucifixion, "I have never been an unreasonable man. I am not going to ask You for the impossible. I do not even insist upon a miracle, for all I request is four days of clear weather.

"Give me four clear days so that my planes can fly; so that my fighter-bombers may bomb and strafe, so that my reconnaissance may pick out targets for my magnificent artillery. Give me four days of sunshine to dry this blasted mud, so that my tanks may roll, so that ammunition and rations may be taken to my hungry, ill-equipped infantry. I need these four days to send Von Rundstedt and his godless army to their Valhalla. I am sick of this unnecessary butchery of American youth, and in exchange for four days of fighting weather, I will deliver You enough Krauts to keep Your bookkeeping department months behind in their work . . . ."

The General lowered his head, stood silently for a moment. " . . . Amen," he said, softly.

Then, putting on his helmet, he started for the doorway, only to pull up short, for there, standing in the shadow of the ornamental archway, he encountered one of the Third Army chaplains.

"Well, Chaplain," Patton's voice held surprise. "Been standing there long?"

"Some time, sir," the chaplain replied.

"Long enough to hear me talking with your Boss?" And when the chaplain nodded in assent, "Think He heard me? Think He'll do anything about it?"

The chaplain, not long under Patton's command, was naturally taken aback.

"I'm sure I don't know, sir," he stumbled. "Personally, I've never heard anything quite like this before. I was amazed to hear you pray in this beautiful chapel. I have heard that you prayed often, but as to the Lord hearing you—I just don't know."

"Huh. Don't suppose that you do." The General's voice was once again that of the Army Commander, accustomed to immediate and unquestioning obedience. "To get to more practical things, Chaplain: if there ever was a time for prayer, this is that time. If our Lord couldn't hear the voice of one man, perhaps he could hear 300,000 voices."

The General studied the man of the cloth who stood before him. Apparently satisfied with what he saw, he went on:

"Chaplain, as your army commander, I order you to do something for me. I want you to write a prayer suitable for printing on the back of my Christmas message, which has already been prepared for distribution to every officer and man in the Third Army. Boil down what I have been trying to say here this evening, and we'll have the engineers print it so that distribution can be made by noon tomorrow. If we can do this, perhaps your Boss will hear our plea and appreciate the seriousness of the situation. That's all!"

The chaplain hurried to his quarters and, after the production of many drafts, presented a copy to the General. Then, between them they rewrote the Christmas Prayer and the engineers hurriedly produced the desired number of copies.

Next morning, cards went forward with each unit's supplies and before noon every member of the Third Army who could be reached had the card in hand. On one side was the Patton Christmas message:

"To each officer and soldier in the Third United States Army, I wish a Merry Christmas. I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty, and skill in battle. We march in our might to complete victory. May God's blessing rest upon each of you on this Christmas Day.

G. S. Patton, Jr.,  
Lieutenant General,  
Commanding, Third  
United States Army,"

while on the reverse side:

"Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech Thee, of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for Battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call upon Thee that armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to victory and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies, and establish Thy justice among men and nations. Amen."

History is spotted with miracles that have been confirmed by single individuals or a handful of so-called reliable witnesses, but that which followed the issuance of the Patton Prayer was witnessed by over 300,000 men and they all tell the same story. Some have passed the result off as a fluke change in the weather despite the adverse predictions of army meteorologists. But to those 300,000 men of his army, none described it better than the private soldier who shouted, "Patton has thrown a miracle!"

And a miracle it was. At noon the snow turned to a warm rain. By 1 p.m. the skies had lightened; by 2 o'clock the sun majestically broke through the cloud banks to shine upon the battle field for the first time in fourteen days. Heavy rain clouds were washed from the sky like straws before a tornado and by 3 o'clock the first of the fighter-bombers came roaring over the foxholes at tree-top level.

Infantrymen rose to cheer the Thunderbolts that came over the snow-covered trees in waves, and the men in the forward observation posts joyfully listened to the crashing of tons of bombs and the cracking of machine guns as the fighter-bombers dumped their 500-pound bombs and strafed the German concentrations. The Thunderbolts kept up the relentless attack until dark and then the Black Widow night fighters (radar-equipped) took over and strafed the German supply columns that moved in the total darkness.

Christmas morning broke clear—two days in succession—and the 8th Air Force sent hundreds of Flying Fortresses and Liberators from their English bases to plaster the German rear areas, their vapor trails a glorious sight to the ground forces below. In that one day the fighter cover accounted for 361 enemy planes that tried to break up the American formations. Our reconnaissance planes darted in to photograph the entire German penetration area, and Intelligence was once again reasonably intelligent.

On the ground the doughfoot morale skyrocketed. Once again air-support officers, working with the infantry and in radio contact with the fighter-bombers, called for close-in support against troublesome targets, and a spectacular air drop from C-47s dumped hundreds of tons of rations and ammunition to the encircled men of the Bastogne Pocket.

A warm, chinook wind came up at noon, and the snow began to melt and the mud started to dry. Supply columns dug themselves out and began to move on the ice-free roads, and the quartermasters rushed turkeys up so that every man who could be reached had his promised helping of turkey for Christmas dinner.

Taking advantage of the break in the weather, Hugh Gaffey's 4th Armored Division, along with some components of the 80th Infantry, advanced on Bastogne, and late on Christmas Day

came within sight of the besieged garrison. On the third day of the miracle (26 December) they broke through the last of the German resistance and Bastogne was relieved.

Forty truckloads of supplies followed Gaffey into the rubble that was the town, and twenty-two ambulances were given road priority so that the wounded could be brought to the evacuation hospitals set up in the Luxembourg area.

Next day the air force had a field day and destroyed so much of Von Rundstedt's army that he was forced to give up his ambitious plan and call for a general withdrawal to positions behind the Siegfried Line, his original jumping-off point. The Battle of the Bulge was virtually over. The Second World War on the European continent was practically ready for the history books.

Late that night, General Patton returned to his headquarters a tired but contented man. His usually resplendent uniform was crusted with mud—dried mud—as he marched past the guard at the War Room entrance and into the converted chapel.

The mobile power plant that had been used to light up the high-ceilinged chamber had failed, and dozens of candles had been called into service to light up the deserted room. They cast long shadows across the war map, and the image of the Crucifixion glowed in the half-light of the long tapers against the darkness of the recess in the far wall.

The General placed his helmet on the draftsman's table, picked up a pointer and, half-turning toward the crucifix, began quietly:

"Sir," he said. "This is Patton, again, and I beg to report complete success on the Third Army front.

"At Bastogne (he placed the pointer on the map) our gallant troops have been relieved by an armored column. At Wiltz my artillery is pounding hell out of the retreating 5th Para Division. Here in the north Luxembourg sector, my infantry is mopping up the last of German resistance.

"As You know, the mud is drying rapidly, almost miraculously, and my tanks are rolling again. My supply columns are moving thousands of tons of supplies, ammunition, and rations into the battle area. Best of all, we have managed to remove the wounded from Bastogne, and losses there were much lighter than I had first feared."

The General paused to study the map. "On the way back from the front this evening, a thought occurred to me that I find most interesting," he went on. Before this German break-through, Von Rundstedt had a choice of two possible courses of action. One, he could crawl, into his hole behind the Siegfried Line and wait for us to start beating our brains out against his prepared defenses. Two, he could attack in the Ardennes in the hope of pushing to the English Channel and driving a wedge between the Allied armies.

"To accomplish this second and most ambitious plan, Von Rundstedt had to gamble on foul weather so that he could concentrate enough divisions to make the push and to do it secretly, so as to fool our intelligence, and have the advantage of surprise. You, Sir, have gave him this opportunity. If he had not had snow and rain, he would never have come out from behind his West Wall, permitting us to meet him to our advantage—in the open. Instead, he would have stayed in his powerful Siegfried Line, and I shudder to think of the American casualties that would have been the result of our trying to push him from these prepared defenses.

"Sir, it occurs to me that perhaps You were much better informed of the situation than I was, for it was that beastly weather I was cursing so loudly that permitted the German army to commit mass suicide. This, Sir, was a stroke of military genius, and I bow humbly to a superior military mind!"

The General bowed slightly, turned to the window and looked out onto the open court. Snow was starting to fall again; huge flakes that soon covered the cobblestones of the court yard. Thanksgiving services for the Allied victory were being held throughout the thankful town. As he stood thus, a gentle smile on his tired face, he listened to the ringing of the church bells of Luxembourg calling the faithful to prayer.

