



VOLUME XIV

FALL 2008

ISSUE 2

# A Korean War Vignette — 1950-1952

By John Covach

*I traveled among unknown men  
In lands beyond the sea:*

—WORDSWORTH

This is a story of friendship, a friendship born out of war. It is about the lives of two young men both brought into life in the year 1929. The one, an American, John Covach, born of immigrant parents in the coalfields of Pennsylvania. The other, a Korean, Soo Koon Ai, born in Suwon, Korea, then under Japanese subjugation.

The most fateful day in both of these young men's lives came on 25 June 1950. John had just graduated from Pennsylvania Military College. He accepted a Regular Army commission and was awaiting Department of the Army orders posting him to his first duty assignment. Soo Koon had graduated from an elite university speaking fluent English and Japanese. Neither one had the slightest inkling that his life was about to be dramatically shaped by events on that June day. Neither knew that they would share a common destiny because of a violent upheaval in Asia.

It was on June 25 that powerful armored units of the North Korean Army smashed over the South Korean border at the thirty-eighth parallel. The infamous parallel was a line drawn by the Allies after World War II separating Russian and American interests in Asia. The poorly trained and equipped South Korean Army was no match for the North Koreans. They, the North Koreans, swept south advancing upon Seoul the capital city.

Initially, the city's occupants were in a state of denial. Then on the 28th a collective realization suffused the populace with one overriding thought: they were about to be overwhelmed by their foes. A mass exodus of refugees exploded out of the city moving south like some giant amoebae. Soo Koon Ai was but one of perhaps a million frightened, fleeing people. He walked until he reached his ancestral home about 40 kilometers south of Seoul near the city of Suwon.

There he decided to stay with his parents. There he also resolved to fight the North Koreans as a partisan. But first he had to organize the local men into a guerrilla band. He soon prevailed upon a group to meet one night atop a nearby mountain. For the meeting he was careful to don the Korean farmer's dress consisting of white, baggy trousers and a white shirt, both made of home-spun cloth. At the meeting site he began to cajole the young men; explaining to them the urgent need to resist the enemy that were even then sweeping by on their way down the Korean peninsula.

As Soo Koon talked, the group suddenly became aware that North Korean soldiers surrounded them. Soo Koon had been betrayed. It was useless to feign innocence since some of the gathered men pointed their fingers at Soo Koon Ai as the instigator of the meeting. The young man was taken into custody and placed under guard. In short order he was marched off by

two soldiers, through the darkness, down the scrub covered hill ... destination, the lazaretto in Suwon.

Soo Koon knew that once he reached Suwon he was a dead



man. A bullet in the back of the head was sure to follow a torturous interrogation. He decided to try to escape. Soon, at a point along the gradually down sloping ridgeline, there appeared a sharp drop-off to one side of the path. Soo Koon did not hesitate. He broke loose from his captors and dashed down the sharp incline while simultaneously stripping off the target that was the traditional Korean white farmer's shirt he had worn that day. After some initial confusion wild shots were fired into the darkness by the two guards; none hit their madly plunging ex-prisoner as he raced pell-mell down the ridge.

Soo Koon now faced a decision. He could either try to thread his way south through the North Korean Army in hopes of reaching sanctuary somewhere in the southern reaches of Korea, or, he could go back to Seoul and there fade back into the remaining populace of the city. He quickly decided upon the latter course. He believed he could get aid from an uncle that lived in Seoul.

Soo Koon's uncle, however, was too frightened to render aid in the form of a hiding place. He gave Soo Koon some food and asked him to leave. With nowhere to go, he and another friend, who was also on the run, decided to go underground literally. They dug a hole in the ground, cleverly concealed in a secret place on the outskirts of the port city of Inchon. There, together with the provisions they had gathered from relatives, they disappeared from sight. In their grim voluntary prison hole they awaited developments. They were to remain in their underground hiding place from mid July until mid September when the Americans landed at Inchon.

While these dramatic events were taking place in Korea, John received orders to report to the 31st Infantry Regiment, nicknamed the Polar Bears (from Siberian service in 1919). After a short duty tour with "E" Company at Camp Crawford near Sapporo on the Island of Hokkaido, he and a handful of other officers and enlisted men were ordered to move to Camp Fuji. Camp Fuji was sited on a barren volcanic plain at the base of Mount Fujiyama. At the Camp they were to organize, from scratch, the Polar Bear's 1st Battalion. Until then the 1st Battalion was a battalion existing on paper only.

It was an impossible situation. The Polar Bears had been repeatedly levied of officers and men to fill out American units that had already been committed to the battle then raging in Korea. In August the Regiment and its parent division, the Seventh Infantry Division, were only at half strength. The bottom of the barrel had been reached and scraped clean. What to do?

The solution lay in incorporating Korean conscripts into the US Army. In Japan tales made the rounds of brutal round-ups made by South Korean military police in cities still under their control. This press gang action yielded 10,000 Korean men that were summarily conscripted into the Seventh Division at Camp Fuji. John, then commanding a rifle platoon in "A" Company, received 20 of these KATUSAs (Korean Augmentation to the US Army). He now had a full platoon of 45 men.

John's main problem was one of communications; that is, the Koreans in the platoon spoke no English and the Americans no Korean. Nevertheless training such as it was went on. After all, the men were soon to "see the elephant," that is, armed combat.

"A" Company, poorly trained as it was, landed on the beach

at Inchon shortly before midnight on 17 September. John, leading his platoon of half Koreans and half Americans, quickly moved his men through the center of a burning city and on into its suburbs. Sometime in the middle of a very dark moonless night the unit halted and went into bivouac on the local ball diamond.

Early the next morning after but a few hours of sleep "A" Company was issued c-rations in preparation for the attack south to Suwon and its critical airfield. It was at this moment of preparation to move out of Inchon that a young Korean man approached John. John was surprised when the man spoke flawless English. This man was none other than Soo Koon Ai. He had come out of his underground hideaway that by happenstance was located near the ball field.

Soo Koon proposed to John that he join the platoon as an irregular. John, desperately in need of an interpreter jumped at the proposition. In the Inchon meeting of the two young men East met West and began a joint enterprise to fight the common enemy.

Soo Koon Ai was at John's side when the platoon took its first casualty, Sgt. Gale Ferguson, the platoon's 1st Squad leader. He was with him when they were approaching Suwon at twilight only to be strafed by their own aircraft. He was with him as they made a hazardous night march to attack a North Korean unit near the village of Osan-ni and in the process crashing through a log bridge while riding on a Sherman tank. They were together advancing on the enemy's position through what seemed endless rice paddies all the time enduring heavy enemy cannon and machine gun fire. And, on the next day, 28 September, they together stormed and overran the enemy stronghold. Thus, in the fire of close combat, did John and Soo Koon become brothers

Ironically, on the objective, the enemy dead lay very near Americans killed in the initial attempt to stem the North Korean assault in June. The dead Americans were thrown in shallow graves with just an inch or two of dirt covering them. Some lay with their hands bound behind their backs obviously executed by their captors. From scenes such as this Soo Koon realized that the Americans were not only Korea's saviors but that they did the saving at a high price.

In October John and Soo Koon parted company. Soo Koon took a position with the US Army General Headquarters then located in Pusan. At the same time John and his platoon were preparing to board the transport ship, the *USNS Mitchel*, for the invasion of North Korea and their subsequent horrific ordeal suffered that winter. They last saw each other on 31 October 1950.

The years went by and John and Soo Koon kept up at best a desultory correspondence. Then in 1961 John was in Berlin, Germany, when the Berlin Wall was erected. Such were the tensions of the time that John and Soo Koon suspended contact.

Strangely, in 1967, but unknown to one another, they were both in Saigon, Viet Nam. John was then a Lieutenant Colonel serving on General Abram's staff while Soo Koon Ai was becoming wealthy importing and selling goods to the Korean Army in Viet Nam.

More years went by. In 1997 John decided to again make contact with his friend. He wrote to Soo Koon Ai's last known address but received no response. Then in early 1998 John made



7th Division patch

the acquaintance of a Korean reporter for the Korea Times of Los Angeles. The reporter, Woo Sung Han, had taken to the Internet to try to make contact with American soldiers who had served with Colonel Young Oak Kim. Colonel Kim had been John's battalion commander in the winter of 1951. John then commanded "A" Company under Kim who was not only his commander but also his mentor. Han was writing Kim's biography.

Woo Sung wrote and had published an article in the Los Angeles *Korea Times* covering the two friends. On 17 March 1998, John's birthday, five calls came in from individuals purporting to know the whereabouts of Soo Koon Ai. The first caller dashed John's hopes for any contact for he claimed that Soo Koon had died five years ago. But then, the second caller happened to be Soo Koon's nephew living in California. He reported Soo Koon alive and well, and told John that he would be calling him the next day. That next day they talked with each other after a period of almost 50 years. On the telephone the friends planned to meet at a Korean veteran's reunion in September.

However, it was not to be. Fate intervened with a vengeance. John was diagnosed with stomach cancer and was to be operated upon in mid April 1999. Soo Koon found out about John's medical situation shortly before the operation. He called John immediately. Soo Koon told John that he and his wife, Jung Ja, would immediately fly from Manila to be with John at the operation. John was deeply touched and moved by this display of friendship and camaraderie after all these years. Surely, Soo Koon's trip to the US was a symbolic return of the support that the Americans provided South Korea in 1950.

Several days before the operation the Als arrived in Fairfax, Virginia, and stayed with John and his wife, Waldtraut. The family, led by Pastor Ralph Wiechman, prayed together the night before the operation. Jung Ja said a special prayer in Korean. The operation went well and John continues to improve in his health.

The two friends are making plans for a reunion in Korea. There they will tramp again the ground where so many fought and died those many years ago.

PRO PATRIA. (*Motto of the 31St Infantry Regiment*) 1999

*From this day to the ending of the world,  
But we in it shall be remembered;  
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers:  
For he today that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother:"*

—King Henry V, Shakespeare

This story was written by Colonel John Covach, USA, (Retired) in 1999, following surgery for stomach cancer. It was written at the behest of granddaughter Kirsten Kennedy's grandmother, Anne Kennedy. The story was used by various chapters of the Louisiana Department of the Daughter's of the American Revolution in their chapter reading programs.

### First Command

It was 17 July 1950 when I said my goodbyes to Tommy Downes in San Francisco. Tommy, a Pennsylvania Military College (PMC) veteran, (both of us were brand new Regular Army officers) was on his way to Okinawa and I to Japan. We

stayed at the Presidio's Bachelor Officers' Quarters. Tommy and I arranged the meeting to spend a little time together in San Francisco before going overseas. I recall that we had one date: two blonde Swedes whom Tom's brother, Bart, introduced us to. I note this because those girls were about the last Caucasian females that I was to see for quite some time. Also, we had dinner aboard the cruiser *Manchester*, Bart's ship. In the Officers' Mess I got to know an opulent side of the military; one that I was not to see in the infantry.

Alone I flew on to Seattle and the Port of Embarkation at Fort Lawton. After a few days at Lawton I went on to nearby McCord Airbase. There I was given charge of a packet of replacements. By being the senior, really the only officer, on board I was presented with a nice, comfortable bunk bed, which believe me was most appreciated. The chartered Connie flew the great circle route to Japan with refueling stops at Anchorage and Shemmia Island. After what seemed an interminable flight the plane landed at Tokyo's Haneda Airport. From Haneda we were bussed to the crossroads of the world, Camp Drake. There, with hardly a pause, four of us assigned to the 31st Infantry Regiment were hustled aboard a Japanese train bound north to Camp Crawford on the island of Hokkaido.

We were an odd little band of pilgrims. However, the one who impressed me the most was Captain George Cody. Cody was tall, walked with a bit of swagger, and he knew precisely where he was going and what for. I had never met an officer who breathed so much confidence, determination, and patriotism; it seemed to bubble up like red-hot magma out of every pore in his body. He understood and was able to articulate the duty of courage. Just being near him took the edge off of my apprehension. Next in seniority was a grizzled lieutenant from New York, Terrence Major. Major was short but had a visage that spoke of latent bulldog pugnacity resident deep inside his bowels. Major also came across as a man who had spent quite a few years as a non-commissioned officer. Without his hat on he looked like he could use his head as a battering ram; perhaps he did, maybe in brawls down in Panama, his last assignment. Then there was Lieutenant Clifford Fox. Fox, bespectacled, mild mannered and on the quiet side. I kept thinking: why isn't he in the Finance Corps? But, looks can be deceptive. A greenhorn second lieutenant, yours truly, rounded out the group.

We got off of the train at the city of Sendai in Northern Honshu. The train did not go on so we had to overnight there. Quarters awaited us at a place with the improbable name of Camp Schimmelpfennig. Later that evening we ate supper at the camp's nearly deserted Officers' Club. When we commented on the lack of patrons the Club's bartender told us that virtually the entire Camp's compliment was dispatched to Korea.

After supper, we mostly sat and listened to George Cody. As Cody held forth I could not help but remember something that George Orwell had written. Orwell said, "We sleep safe in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those that would do us harm." There was no doubt in my mind that Cody was prepared to do violence to the North Koreans. And I must tell you this ... none of these gentlemen exhibited any apprehension as to where they were headed nor did they make



31st Infantry Regiment  
Coat of Arms

one complaint about being sent into a place where the probability was great that they would not return. These men were prepared for the final reckoning, the decisive human argument, the killing of the enemy in combat. I thought, would I be ready? Would I come to know the meaning of Cody's words: "the duty of steadfast courage?"

We crossed the straits between Honshu and Hokkaido at night; departing by ferry from Amori and landing at Hokkadate in the morning of August 4. In no time at all, I found myself in the presence of my superiors. My introduction to the 31st started with a flying visit with the regimental commander, Colonel Richard Ovenshine. The colonel who politely welcomed me to the Regiment was a courtly looking, white-haired gentleman known to the troops as the Great White Father. The 2nd Battalion Commander impressed me so much that I neither remember him nor his name. Finally, I was sitting together with Captain Jack Spilker, West Pointer; the Commander of "E" Company. I was assigned to "E" or Echo Company of the 31st Infantry. The Regiment was nicknamed the Polar Bears. Its fighting motto: *Pro Patria*, or *For Country*. The motto was quite apt since back then the Polar Bears had the distinction of being the only US Army regiment that never served on US soil.

Captain Spilker was of medium build and height. His torso was topped off with a rather squarish face. A close cropped flat top haircut further emphasized his boxy looks. He had rather full lips and spoke with an air of toughness. He also spoke slowly and with great precision; it seemed to me that he was calculating the total number of spoken words he could thus save daily. Captain Spilker, it turned out, was very interested in my football background. Here, I headed him off from the proffered coach's job, claiming that a green officer like me needed all the time he could get with his platoon.

Yes, time with my platoon, my initial Army assignment. My very first command and one I shall never forget. The platoon was the 3rd Platoon of Echo Company. We were quartered near Company Headquarters. Two squads in each of two nice one story brick buildings. I met the platoon sergeant, a sergeant first class, who had been leading the platoon, sans officer, for some time. Funny, I had such a wretched time with this man yet I can not recall his name. Let's just call him Sergeant First Class Bullnek.

To say that Bullnek and I did not hit it off is putting it mildly. As far as he was concerned, the 3rd Platoon was "his" platoon and was to be "his" stepping stone to a master sergeant's chevrons. I was just as determined to get it through his head that I was the one who did the leading ... as in Platoon Leader.

There was no open rebellion—just a consistent, subtle program on his part to undermine my authority. He not only was thick necked but also thickheaded. He never realized that I was his best ticket to higher rank. What the hell did Wild Bill Tuttle back at PMC teach us about such a situation? I must have missed that class.

We Polar Bears trained feverishly. Echo Company was in and out of the training areas day in and day out. I was quite pleased with the caliber of my men. They were indeed young but exhibited a professionalism that made me proud of them. It all seems a blur now but there were a couple of incidents, or events, that somehow stuck in my mind. Telling of them will, I hope, give you some idea of what it was like for me, a brand spanking new

second lieutenant, on his first tour of duty.

Shortly after my arrival, Captain Spilker announced that the entire company was to take a 10-mile speed march. Lt. Phelps Womble, Company Executive Officer, was to set the pace. I did not give the thing a second thought. What, me, a football player, worry about making it. No way! Well, sir, let me tell you.

In reflecting back on this episode, I believe that Womble deliberately placed my platoon last in the order of march. You well know that's where the maximum impact of any accordion action would be felt. Womble set a blistering pace and the company began to spread out as the classic accordion effect began to work on the column. At the five-mile mark the 3rd Platoon was virtually in a steady trot. Trotting along with combat packs and weapons weighing us down. Men started to fall by the roadside. As we approached the cantonment area the laggards were spread out for at least a mile behind the head of the column. To my everlasting chagrin, I was one of them. No, I was not a mile back, but at least 50 yards behind the platoon as we pulled in. Bullnek must have gloated over my embarrassment. It seemed that my leg muscles were on fire, not to mention that they seemed to be twisted like pretzels. Was I glad to crawl in bed that night? I will tell you this never happened again. Within a week I ramped up physically to a point where I was comfortable with any rough training no matter how demanding.

Then, there was my first experience with so-called extra duty. The Regiment's birthday soiree was held in early August. The war would have to wait while the entire regiment celebrated the day. Guess who had to pull courtesy patrol in Sapporo that night? None other than the company's junior officer—me. I was paired with a young squad leader, Sgt. Jones. The idea was for Jones and me to make our selves visible enough to discourage any really gross behavior by the troops that were on leave of absence in the city.

On that hot, humid August night Jones took me to every GI haunt in the city. The streets were teeming with people as only an Oriental city could. Vendors everywhere one looked. Mama-sans squatting comfortably on their haunches peddling every thing from vegetables to young girls. The buzz of people jammed together was omnipresent. Mostly a Japanese buzz but with some English thrown in when the pair of us were spotted. Ribald calls and gestures were steady fare. This went on late into the night. Luckily we had no incidents.

That night Jones and I became friends. Friends that is, within the the bounds prescribed by the customs of the Army. If not custom, the regulations dictated the course of relationships between differing ranks. That night he gave me a bit of advice, He told me to get myself a pair of Corcoran jump boots. He went on to say, "You need classy boots Lieutenant! Get rid of those scruffy looking GI boots." With my OK, Sgt. Jones ordered a pair for each of us. When they came in the mail I was totally pleased with the comfortable, bulbous toed boots that were just a tad lighter brown than issue boots. There was no one else in the battalion with such boots. They were destined to take Jones and me into combat in a little over a month's time.

As a junior lieutenant I also was on the receiving end of such duties as Article 31 Investigation Officer. You may already know that this refers to the paragraph in the Code of Military Justice directing line of duty investigations. Simply, when a soldier got into trouble an investigation was initiated to make a determina-

tion whether the incident occurred while the soldier was on duty. A finding of not line of duty could result in the soldier paying out of his own pocket for medical attention or damages resulting from his peccant ways.

Right after the courtesy patrol duty I drew an Article 31 investigation. From it you will get the flavor of the sort of incident that was more or less common at Camp Crawford. I will simply quote from the testimony of a witness, one Cpl. Donald Bortner. Bortner, in his deposition to me said, "...On the night of 20 July 1950, at about 1730 hours, at the apple orchard, across from "L" Company, PFC Saw Aquilar and Pvt. Billy Sloan were looking for food. There was a big ditch and he (Sloan) went to jump over it and hit a big hole breaking his leg, and then we started to help him to the Company when an MP shouted for us to halt. The MP took Sloan to the dispensary and took myself and Aquilar to the MP Station."

Yep, that's the sort of thing that went on fairly regularly. In this case Sloan did not have to pay up when I found his little peccadillo to be not-line-of-duty. With Korea staring us in the face the Great White Father left him off the hook.

Another memorable incident took place during a night-march back to Camp. We were moving in a column of twos on a raised road. Along the left side of the road and down the embankment grew a stand of bamboo. At about midnight Lt. Holzapfel, 2nd Platoon Leader, halted his platoon without warning. I saw Holzapfel run down into the bamboo. There ensued a hell of a ruckus. I thought, what in the world is going on down there? In a few minutes the lieutenant emerged dragging a man out of the brush. He was a US soldier who happened to be AWOL for quite some time. The fellow had been hiding out with his girl, or Mooseme. He had, for reasons unknown, been shadowing the company. Well he was taken straight to the stockade. I thought: thank God, he isn't in the 3rd Platoon.

While I sunk my teeth into various and sundry military duties our heightened training program went on. The struggle with Sergeant First Class Bullnek went on. It became obvious to me that a denouement had to await combat in Korea, for neither of us carried the combat infantryman's badge. Korea and the war would at least provide a level playing field.

Then one night just as I was about to crawl under my mosquito netting a company runner came up to me. "Lieutenant," he said. "Grab your gear. You are leaving in the morning for Camp Fugi." He explained, "You are cadre to form a new battalion."

What can I say? The force was with me; the numina shined down upon me. I was elated as I stood on that mosquito-infested hillside listening to that bearer of good news. I glanced over to Bullnek's position and wondered if he could see the glowing aura hovering over my head? Nah, he would just have to find out what transpired in the morning. I did not say goodbye to him; it would have been impossible to conceal my glee. Why, I might even have slapped him on the back? As a matter of fact, I do not remember taking leave of Captain Jack Spilker, my company commander. Such was the press of time.

I thought, well, old sod ... God has reprieved you, and a new day lies ahead. On to Camp Fugi!

PRO PATRIA!

## Camp Fuji

I came in from the field and started to pack immediately. The

Company First Sergeant told me that I would be taking the early morning train south to Hokkodate and there change to the ferry. As I packed I began to muse about my situation. The best part of it was that the cadre, of which I was officially a part, was destined to be the founding fathers of a US Army Infantry Battalion. There were no predecessor's policies to worry about. No previously established standard operating procedures. No, it was a clean slate to go to work on. I was exhilarated with the idea of being a charter member of the new battalion. So far as I knew, I was but a platoon of one. Still, I felt pretty damn good about it. Little did I know of the problems that awaited me?

The 1st Battalion's cadre departed Hokkodate around the middle of August. There were no overnight stops on this trip; the Division Transportation Officer saw that we were provided with sleeper cars. That first night out I came to know, and yes, hate, those uncomfortable Japanese mini bunk beds. We got underway in good order, i.e., everyone was present. There were no laggards. The ferry crossing would be the first opportunity for me to meet the other cadre members. I was particularly anxious to meet the officers of the rifle-company that I would be joining. It was to be "A" Company.

The cadre consisted of a full officer compliment for the battalion. In addition, there was a group of key non-commissioned officers such as first sergeants, supply sergeants, mess sergeants and so forth. As we boarded I met the other officers of "A" Company. It did my soul good to learn that there was another second lieutenant in the company. He was Thomas I. Walker. Tom was a tall soft-spoken South Carolinian from the little town of Summerton, just off of present day Interstate 95. He was a 1950 graduate of the Citadel. We soon became fast friends and still are over 50 years later. Incidentally Tom was the junior officer in the Regiment and as such was given the honor on the polar Bear's Organization Day to propose the traditional toast to the President of the United States. Tom and I had the 2nd and IS Platoons respectively. The 3rd Platoon Leader was Lieutenant Alan Legge. Lt. Legge was a pleasant, quiet man from Virginia. The 4th Platoon Leader was a fellow that I remember all too little by the name of Dowell. Lt Dowell was the company's weapons platoon leader. He had under his control three 57mm recoilless rifles and three 60mm mortars. The recoilless rifles were always farmed out, one per rifle platoon. Thus Dowell was left with the mortar section to manage. Consequently he was usually located near the Company CP. Thus, we rifle platoon leaders saw very little of him. I was pleasantly surprised to meet the Company's Executive Officer, who turned out to be my fellow pilgrim, Lieutenant Terrance Major. Major was in our replacement group on the trip North out of Camp Drake back in July. The three first lieutenants had quite a few years experience on Tom and me, but we were game to learn the ropes.

Thus far I have said nothing about "A" Company's Commanding Officer, Captain Richard Hertel. I will tell you now that he was the star actor on our little stage. "All the world's a stage, and most of us are desperately unrehearsed." When the playwright Sean O'Casey made that remark he understood perfectly well how haplessly prepared most men are for life's trials. Not Captain Hertel though; he knew his role perfectly. At least he thought he did.

From whence did the man get his immense store of authority? For authority is a form of capital to be spent wisely or squandered

foolishly. I believe a great deal came from his past service with Darby's Rangers in Italy during World War II. Hertel wore the Silver Star, the bronze star for valor, the Purple Heart, and the combat infantryman's badge. For his experience alone he was respected and granted authority by those under him.

What did he look like? Captain Hertel was a man of average build and height. However, he would stand out in any crowd because of two features: a shock of rusty red hair and a wicked looking handle bar mustache. His face was somewhat puffy and marked as if by chicken pox. He had a way of cocking his head and staring you down with his slightly pop-eyes. Captain Hertel also had a peculiar facial tic. It started as a squint of the eye and ended up with a sort of nasal snort. I should add quickly that the man simply exuded confidence; nothing, but nothing, could shake or rattle him. His style of command was that of a dictator; he gave orders- there was no consultation-and the orders damn well better be carried out pronto. Lastly, Captain Hertel was of the mindset that he owned everything under his command to include its officers and men. It looked to me like he was the one rehearsed man in a sea of us who were desperately unrehearsed.

In summary—look at Dick Hertel as the lord of the manor and look at the rest of us as his villains. He was our omphalos stone, for he marked the center of our little world.

I almost forgot another but important trait of the man. He, unfortunately for himself and also for his underlings (as you will learn as this tale unfolds) was an apparent alcoholic. We junior officers were already on board the ferry when Captain Hertel made his appearance. He boarded the ferry drunk. The battalion commander, Major Red Mason, was fit to be tied when he saw our stalwart commander staggering aboard. We, Major, Walker, Legge, and I were standing off to one the side as he glared at Hertel. Surprisingly, he ignored Hertel and came over to us. In no uncertain terms we were told us that he expected us to keep our commander sober. Of course we all chimed in with a not so sincere "Yes, sir." This little scene gave me the first insight into Major Mason's moral deficiency ... the man had no cojones.

There was no keeping Dick Hertel away from the bottle. It was as if he sensed that there would be no booze available once we hit the enemy shore. So he feasted before the lean times that he knew were coming. How did we take care of Major Mason's problem? By simply steering Hertel out of Major Mason's sight. This tactic worked well aboard the ferry and on the subsequent train ride.

We got off the train at Gotemba Station without any mishap and boarded vehicles for the short ride to Camp Fuji. All of us were most anxious to see this camp that we all heard so much of.

Allow me to describe what I saw on that August day First: surprise, surprise, there were no quarters awaiting us. There was nothing at all. The first thought that struck one was the absolute barrenness of the place. Camp Fuji was situated on a gently sloping plain of ancient volcanic lava. Lava that had worn down and crumbled over the centuries. As I gazed upon it, it looked to me like so much black gravely slag disgorged from a 19th century steel mill. There was an old Japanese cantonment of wooden buildings, but they were not for the likes of us. The area selected for our bivouac was barren of any growth. Any idea that we may have held of a camp, perhaps like Camp Crawford, evaporated as we viewed that barren, desolate landscape. But not all was lost, we had an incomparable view of majestic Mt. Fujiyama; perhaps

the most revered spot in all of Japan

Since we needed a place to sleep we immediately began erecting squad tents. Four tents were put up the first day. They were for use as a command post, supply room, officers' quarters, and a mess tent. The next day we erected an additional sixteen of the squad size tents. This was enough for four platoons of infantry. It was not an easy job mostly because of the loose gravely soil. After much work, bitching, and moaning, we got the tents erected. There were eight on either side of what became our Company Street. The arrangement was akin in form to that of a long staple with the headquarters tents at the head and perpendicular to the Company Street.

The very day that we erected our little tent city, I received my first direct order from Captain Hertel. He pulled me aside and in an almost conspiratorial manner asked me to construct an icebox. What the hell did this have to do with training for war? He gave me explicit instructions. The box had to be large enough for ice and a couple of six packs of beer. It had to have a removable lid and was to be dug into the soil under my cot He told me further that Walker and I should maintain a supply of iced beer for all of the officers to enjoy. He assured me that before we left Camp Fuji that a reckoning would be made and accounts settled up. As it turned out, Legge and Dowel never did avail themselves of the beer. Lt. Major was a teetotaler. Only three of us ended up drinking from the handsome box made from salvaged lumber. To be sure, the iced-down beer pleased our captain immensely. But as we got to know him better, Walker and I began to suspect that a day of reckoning would not come. Sure enough, the good captain never paid off his chits, and we had enough sense to leave that sleeping dog lie.

So, we now had a company with all of its required officers. We also had a hand full of non-commissioned officers, and perhaps 20 enlisted men. This number was about one-tenth of our authorized strength We did not know it then, but we had about three weeks to organize, equip, and train an infantry company that was expected to land on a hostile beach and destroy any North Korean forces we came across. We were not off to a good start.

Replacements, one or two at a time, started to drift in. They were nothing to write home about. The platoon's machinegun squad leader was a grizzled old curmudgeon, Corporal Lawrence Rossi. Corporal Rossi claimed to be 54 years old; I was inclined to believe him every time I looked at his wizened, alcohol stressed face. From Rossi's mouth came a continual stream of curses, epithets, and complaints. Another replacement soldier was our 3.5-inch rocket launcher gunner, Anteola Marciano. Marciano told me that he had spent his last 12 years in the Army as a bartender in an Officers' Club. I'm sure you get the picture? Of course, then there was the platoon leader, a man right out of college with no formal military training behind him and not but one month on the job training.

Training, even with my skeletal platoon, got underway. Mostly, the training involved basic maneuvers such as squad and platoon formations, arm and hand signals, and other basic subjects. Hardly the kind of training we needed. There were no live fire training exercises that I remember. However, hope springs eternal, as they say, and after a week of mostly putzing around, things changed for the better.

However, big change came about. Manna from heaven! From Fort Benning (School Troops) we received a full compliment of

non-commissioned officers. I could not have been more pleased with the sergeants that were assigned to me. My new platoon sergeant was Master Sergeant Roy B. Clanton from Waycross, Georgia. He knew his business and what's more (with the experience with Sgt. Bullnek's running through my mind), I was pleased to find that Sergeant Clanton and I hit it off immediately. You can't imagine my relief; since the prospect of another Bullnek was too horrible to contemplate. To top this off I had a wonderfully competent assistant platoon sergeant in Sergeant First Class Carl Schoening. Plus four outstanding squad leaders. Now at least we had a fighting chance, for these were men who knew what they were about.

At about the time we received the tranch of non-commissioned officers, Camp Fugi was hit by a violent typhoon. It began to really blow a sustained wind around noontime. Keeping the tents secured became brutal work. The tent stakes would not stay seated in the gravelly soil. Nevertheless we worked our tails off until supper-time. As the wind picked up, tents began to blow away. Some were torn to shreds. Captain Hertel decided to save one tent per platoon and all of the headquarters tents. As we struggled on trying to keep the bare minimum up Colonel Ovenshine gave the command for the entire Regiment to strike tents. The decision was a sound one because more and more of the tents were being blown apart. Nevertheless we were devastated. All of our work went for naught.

There we sat on Fuji's inhospitable, volcanic, plain. We were totally exhausted; we were wet through and through, sitting out in the open, under a lashing wind and beating rain. It was growing dark when Captain Hertel, always decisive, led us over to the cantonment area, thinking that there we could at least get out of the weather. It seemed that everyone else in the Regiment had the same idea. The old former Japanese barrack we went into was packed shoulder to shoulder with troops of all grades.

The barrack, built prior to World War II, would be thought primitive by any American. They were shed like buildings about thirty feet in length. The shed had an eight-foot wide dirt runway bisecting it. On either side, raised about 2½ feet above the dirt runway, was an area covered with floor boards. The boarded area extended from the runway to the building's outer walls. The Japanese soldiers slept on the boards, apparently on a futon, at least I hope so. This design gave you two rectangular sleeping areas. Oh, yes, there was a 6-inch by 6-inch log running along the wall on both sides of the raised areas. I concluded that the log was the Japanese equivalent of our goose down pillow. Each barracks provided sufficient room for a platoon. After looking upon this inhospitable hostel for ten minutes or so, we left. Back we went to our jumble of torn canvas.

Fortunately, when the tents came down, the tent poles falling on cots and equipment boxes left some crawl space. Enough to get under and out of the weather. We ran jeeps onto selected tents to keep the canvas from blowing away. The entire company lay under the jumble of downed canvas that had just yesterday been a neat, clean company area.

In the officers' tent there was a few feet of leeway under the fallen canvas, and there under we crawled. We drank a couple of brews and finally went to sleep. The next day was beautiful. We immediately went to work to reconstruct "A" Company's Main Street.

The company was still woefully short of men. We were rich

in chiefs but had but a few indians. This situation changed dramatically and in a wholly unexpected way. We learned that our authorized strength was to be filled out with Korean soldiers. Now in the main, these boys were not trained soldiers. They did not have even the barest of basic training behind them. What they all had in common was that they were of military age. They were rounded up in the cities and towns of South Korea, and nolens volens, packed into sea going barges, and given free passage to Japan.

I watched as these strangers began to move into an open spot not far from "A" Company. Their clothes looked more like rags than clothes. They were herded out in what appeared to be an endless column of four abreast. I soon saw where they were headed—to a landfill where they were stripped of their clothes and issued US Army field uniforms. The Division received about 6,000 of these KATUSAs or, Korean Augmentation to the US Army. I ended up with about 20 of these boys which brought my platoon up but still shy of full strength.

The Koreans were mostly youths but there were exceptions. A few were veterans of fighting with the Japanese Army. I had three of these Japanese Army veterans. The best of these was a well built, handsome fellow named Chin Te Ho. I made him a sergeant on the spot and kept him close by me. Even though we could not speak each other's language, we still managed some progress in integrating our new recruits into the platoon. Chin Te Ho understood the military business well. With a few arm and hand motions and finger pointing Chin Te Ho got the Koreans on their way to becoming American soldiers.

The smartest thing I did was to pair each Korean with an American. The American soldiers grumbled at this at first, but in a surprisingly short time they accepted their new foxhole buddies as if they came from the same hometown. There was another problem. Our Army chow did not go down well with our Korean soldiers. Most of them were sick with stomach problems and diarrhea for days. But they soon began eating the food prepared by our company mess and even enjoying the meals. However, there was one thing they never got used to. This was the paucity of rice on Army menus. Whenever they could get hold of it they cooked it and ate the rice more or less privately.

With my slightly understrength platoon we commenced some serious training. The training we did, hampered as it was by the language barrier, began to show results. The platoon was now able to maneuver as a cohesive unit. Again we went over and over the very simple stuff. For example, the men could quickly move from a column formation into the basic skirmish line without missing a step. You may laugh at this and think it preposterous doing these basics barely 10 days from combat, but that's the way it was.

Even more important than the training was the need to build a cohesive unit. Some how we needed to instill an esprit d'corps into the unit. The Korean strangers made that objective all the harder. With the Americans it was not a problem. Most if not all of our soldiers were Regular Army. They were already showing the cohesiveness that is so critical in combat.

As August came to an end we received some special training from a detachment of Marines. From this training session we now knew that we would be making a landing on a hostile shore. The training itself was simple. With a mock-up transport ship we spent all of one day climbing up and down the rope netting used

to disembark a troop ship. We learned how to get down into a Landing Ship Personnel (LSP) for the ride from the ship and onto the beach. We had no inkling where the landing was to be made.

We trained through the first week in September. At the end of the week we packed our B-bags. Into the B-bag (an Army issued duffle bag) went any and all personal items including our Class A uniforms. Any thing not marked for combat operations went into the B-bag. They were taken into storage to be returned on three occasions only: when the soldier rotated out of the war area, if he were wounded and evacuated, and if he were killed in action.

Then on 7 September the men of the 31st Infantry departed Gotemba Station for the last time. Our destination was the port of Yokahama. There we boarded the *USNS Butner* and prepared to go out to sea. Our destination still a mystery. The greatest adventure of our lives was now set in motion. How would it end? I don't think anyone even thought along those lines.

PRO PATRIA

### Inchon

Time and tide wait for no man. This applied to the men of the 31st Infantry in September of 1950; time was moving us inexorably toward a momentous clash of arms. We departed Gotemba Station on the first leg of a journey that would ultimately lead to our baptism of fire. We knew not where the trial of arms would take place. We did know that Col. Ovenshine was in possession of sealed, top secret orders He was not to open them until we were at sea for some days. General McArthur, in command of the theater of operations, was taking extraordinary measures to insure that the invasion's landfall would be a complete surprise to the enemy.

The *Butner* was tied up to the dock in the Port of Yokahama. The 1st Battalion of the 315th Infantry boarded about mid day. The Navy arranged to get the men down into the cavernous holds that would be their home for the next 12 days. The officers were shown to their cabins. I had a small room to myself. Because of its triangular shape I concluded that it must be right up at the ship's bow.

After putting my gear in my tiny cabin, I went out on deck to see what was going on. Looking out at the port side rail, I noticed that there was another troop transport tied up to the dock not but 100 yards from the *Butner*. Soon men were coming down its gangplank. In a single file they marched right up to the *Butner*. My God, I thought, those boys are being assigned to the 31st. They were the last of the replacements we received prior to the invasion. They must have been shocked to learn that, after a three weeks cruise across the blue Pacific, they found themselves assigned to a combat unit that was but days before going into battle. The newcomers were given their unit assignments as they walked up the *Butner's* gangplank...

It, the assignment process, seemed simple enough but in practice soon became a chaotic mess. No. the Germans have a more descriptive word, *Massenkarambolage*, or, mass confusion. For days men looked for their units. Bill Quinn, who eventually became one of my platoon runners, said that he had stumbled around the ship for three days before running into Sergeants Clanton and Schoening. Contributing to the confusion was the overcrowding. This was so bad that only two meals a day could be served. Typically when a soldier finished his meal he had to

think about getting in line for the next meal.

As I recall, we left Yokahama Port on the 7th. But all we did was move out into the roadstead and drop anchor. This was necessary to form up the huge invasion armada Our fleet was nothing like that which invaded France in 1944. Nevertheless, it was quite an enterprise. The number and variety of ships jockeying for position amazed me. We stayed at anchor from the 7th through 9 September. Then at 5:15 in the morning of the 10th, the *Butner* headed out to sea. We were the 21st ship in the invasion flotilla.

Most of "A" Company, including my platoon was housed in hold C-302. This particular hold had room for 168 bunks. The bunks were stacked at least four high as I recall. Right next door was the head (Navy talk for latrine) and a large shower that ran without interruption. The men settled down into the cavernous hold as best they could.

On the next day we rounded the southern-most point of Honshu and headed into the Yellow Sea. As we entered the sea we ran into another typhoon. I remember the name of this one—it was Jane. Jane stayed with us until the 14th when she just petered out. As the storm ended, I saw an amazing sight. What I saw was out in the almost pellucid sea. I had been scanning the sea from the *Butner's* port side rail. I saw untold numbers of Portuguese Men O' War. They hung in their watery environment like gossamer parachutes, their long tentacles streaming behind them. They floated serenely, just beneath the waves, as far as the eye could see.

As a direct result of the storm a lot of the troops on board became seasick. I can still see at the edge of the deck a huge pile of black-eyed peas. Some poor devil tried to make it to the rail but missed by a hair. The ship was a mess for some time.

Colonel Ovenshine opened his sealed orders on the 10th. We then learned that our objective was the city of Suwon. Suwon with its strategically located airfield lay to the south of Inchon. The Regiment's line-of-march was along a string of totally incomprehensible place names: Walmi-Do, Kunp'ojang, Namwang, Panwokchang, Suwon. When I had these names thrown at me, I thought of Ambrose Bierce who once said, "War is God's way to teach Americans geography."

What did we do while aboard ship? Not much. Some training went on, but what could be done in spaces that were jammed with bodies shoulder to shoulder. Very little. The regiment did, however, present our Korean boys with a special pocket patch. It was a small but thoughtful gesture. All you had to do to get this patch was to lay your life on the line?

The day after the storm I had a last minute replacement join the platoon. He came to us, from of all places, the ship's brig. Sergeant Clanton introduced me to none other than Private Quire. I could not believe what I saw. There, in front of me, stood Private Quire. You will recall that he was the AWOL flushed out back in July. Yes, the very same man that Lieutenant Holzapfel dragged out of the bamboo patch as we tramped back to Camp Crawford. You can imagine the thoughts that raced through my mind. But one has to make the best of such things. I assigned Private Quire to the 1st Squad as a Browning Automatic Rifleman, a job he did well despite his small stature. As a matter of fact, he did his duty so faithfully that I regretted what I thought of him back at Crawford.

Could there be a gathering of soldiers without poker being

played? Hardly. The time aboard the *Butner* was passed by playing at cards, mostly poker, bridge, or cribbage. George Cody, the captain whom I traveled with up to Camp Crawford back in July, soon inveigled me into a game. There were five of us sitting around a makeshift table in his stateroom. I can't remember who was there with the exception of Cody. Now I am no poker player, but I did learn a bit back at Pennsylvania Military College. What I knew I learned from such masters as Bobby "Hooker" Martz and Chips Margavage. Bobby and Chips would rather play poker than study, sleep, or even eat for that matter. I must have learned something because when the game broke up I won around 300 dollars. A huge sum back then. At the rate I was to spend money in Korea it would take me a year to get rid of 300 dollars.

On the 17th we made a landfall. We had breakfast at 4:30 that morning and went immediately to a debarkation drill. In the morning's light all one could see was what appeared to be a hazy line of scrub covered hills. The hills rose just back from the shoreline. No sign of life at all on the shore. Up ahead we heard the sound of big guns. This cannon fire was the first that I heard fired in anger. It was said, euphemistically, that they, the guns, would "soften up the enemy." The fire from the warships cannon also signaled the end of the campaign designated as the United Nations Defensive: 27 June-15 November 1950. Most likely it was from naval and air units softening up Inchon for the Marines who landed that day. We were to follow them. The X Corps plan was called for the Marines to head north to Seoul once Inchon fell and for the 3 J.' to move south to Suwon.

The *Butner*, escorted by destroyers and cruisers, moved slowly into the Inchon estuary. We were getting close now. The regiment's war diary shows us landing on the 19th, but some of the old veterans believed the date of our landing was the 17th. It's the sort of thing that seems impossible to forget. You would forget the day you were born rather than the day such an enterprise that we were poised to take. Still I will recognize the 19th as the landing date since the time line that ensues from that date makes more sense now that I look back to the events of the following week.

The regiment was beefed up for the operation. It was now what back then was called a Regimental Combat Team (RCT). The team consisted of the 31st Infantry; "A" Battery, 57th Field Artillery Battalion; "B" Battery, 15th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion; and the 73rd Heavy Tank Battalion. Company "C" 13th Engineer Battalion, normally part of the RCT, was not with the RCT for the landing but joined later. All told we were about 4,000 men strong.

On the night before the actual landing, I spent some time thinking about my situation, expectations and yes—worry. Here I was a charter member of the 1st Battalion. What did that mean? I was happy about the assignment when the company runner brought the news to me back in August. But in the cold light of reality it also meant that the 1st Platoon was a rifle platoon headed by a second lieutenant with less than two months on-the-job training. The platoon had a particularly strong set of non-commissioned officers which, I might add, was a God-send. The strong NCO component was offset by the rank and file soldiers, who through no fault of their own, were not trained nearly to the level they should have been. Plus one half of the men could not speak or understand the other half. I thought perhaps my happiness upon leaving "E" Company was premature. The 3rd Platoon of "E" Company that I led back in Camp Crawford was infinitely better trained and staffed than my present platoon. Well, the fat was in the fire, and I just had to make the best of it.

We debarked at around eleven o'clock. It was a very dark night. The platoon descended into the waiting LSTs without incident. It wasn't but minutes before that we hit the beach. The bow ramp dropped and we got off without getting our feet wet. Without hesitation the company moved out in a column of twos down a deserted street. Buildings were afire here and there. The smell of fire and explosives hung in the air. There was some fighting going on because one could hear the stutter of rifle and machinegun fire not too far away. I saw not one human being. It was as if the population left the city. We paid no mind to this and moved silently on.

The company moved into a perfectly clear and flat area sometime after midnight. There we went into bivouac. No resistance, not a shot fired. I'm not sure today if I was relieved or disappointed about the days outcome. One word would describe it all—anticlimax. However, the regiment did incur its first casualty on the 21st. The dubious honor went to Private Paul H. Nielson. He was killed after failing to stop when challenged by a sentry. Thus our first casualty was the result of so-called friendly fire. I was soon to learn how commonplace this phenomenon, euphemistically called friendly fire, was to play in our lives.

Thus began for us the campaign designated as the United Nations Offensive: 15 September-2 November 1950. The next morning would see us on the road to Suwon.

PRO PATRIA!

*To be continued*

## Songs of the military

Men and women of the U.S. Military love to sing. When the words to a popular song do not fit their mood, the words are changed. Thus it is that many of the songs most popular with soldiers, airmen, and sailors may never be heard by the civilian world.

Remember the theme song to the movie, "Casablanca," featuring Humphrey Bogart? After its first experience supporting the ground troops, the Army Air Corps composed its own lyrics to the melody:

*You must remember this:  
The flak won't always miss.  
Some day you're bound to die.  
You're all so uncoordinated as flak goes by.  
The twenties always hit,  
The forties never miss,  
The eighty-eights, they fill the sky.  
It's all so very complicated as flak goes by.  
You hit the throttle,  
You go right through the gate.  
And then the water.*

*You hope you're not too late.  
You look around you,  
The flak it fills the sky  
No pilot can deny.  
And when you hit the deck  
You're sticking out your neck.  
The small arms fire will fly.  
The last place for the Air Corps is in the sky.  
What was your favorite war-time song? If the lyrics are fit to print, send them to RECALL. They will spark lots of memories.*



# The Naval Chaplain of World War II

by

LT (jg) Sion H. Harrington III, Chaplain  
Battleship NORTH CAROLINA Living History Crew

One of the most important billets aboard a ship of the United States Navy during World War II was that of the chaplain. Though most small vessels did not have chaplains assigned, or even attached, the captain of the ship was charged with insuring that those members of the crew who desired to attend religious services were able to do so. In the absence of a chaplain, the captain or some other officer he appointed could lead divine services. But, whenever possible, every effort was made to either bring a chaplain aboard, or allow crew members to attend services ashore or aboard a nearby ship with an assigned chaplain.

Chaplains were commissioned officers ordained by officially recognized religious denominations. Men of God, they were also warriors, caste into the maelstrom that is war and tasked with providing comfort and spiritual guidance to the officers and men of the Navy's many ships and shore stations. Many of these men and women were very young, away from home for the first time in their lives, and in roles for which they were emotionally ill prepared. The anxiousness and fears associated with the horrors of war, the long periods of mind numbing, repetitious work and boredom, the lack of restful sleep, and the strains of separation from family, friends, and the comfort and familiarity of home

spawned psychological mindsets with which chaplains were thought uniquely qualified to deal.

Chaplains were faced with the awesome task of dealing with this daunting array of distractions, which if left untended, were guaranteed to have a negative effect on the morale and military efficiency of the officers and sailors of the Navy. They were special men, and needed to be endowed with special attributes. Padre Christian Brydges, a retired chaplain of the Royal Canadian Navy, observed that two of the most important attributes required of a Naval chaplain were grace and a strong sense of humor. Though certainly not expected to condone irreligious or improper conduct, the chaplain was advised not to adopt a "holier-than-thou" attitude, being reminded that the judgment of others is God's territory, and that like all Christian men and women, the chaplain is also the recipient of God's saving grace and mercy. They were advised to remember that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God—even chaplains!

Neither could a chaplain afford to be a "goody two shoes," as this was almost certain to alienate him from the very people to whom he was to provide succor and spiritual support. The minister who could not stand to hear the occasional curse word or "off color" story or remark was ill suited to the chaplaincy. Jesus himself had commanded his disciples to live "in" the world without being a part of it. In other words, his people were not to separate themselves from the as yet unsaved, but, on the contrary, were to walk among them as a witness, sharing in the daily joys and sorrows of earthly life, but without succumbing to the sins and temptations that abounded therein. How better could God's word be proclaimed than by the example of Christian witness?



Religious services on deck aboard the battleship *USS South Dakota*.

By custom and tradition, chaplains were treated as senior officers, regardless of actual rank. They were expected to conduct themselves with the utmost dignity and decorum at all times. By long standing tradition, and unlike other officers, the chaplain had direct access to the captain of the ship. Though was careful not to abuse the privilege, the chaplain had to be free, within reason, to address the captain on

matters of importance related to the morale of the crew. The chaplain had unlimited access to any part of the ship, with the exception of the private quarters of senior officers and areas that were off limits for security reasons. With the captain's permission, the chaplain normally performed all marriage and funeral services. Under certain circumstances, he might be called upon by the captain to serve as the judge in trials at sea, or be charged with insuring a fair trial for a defendant in the absence of a proper legal officer or other senior staff officer.

The history of the Navy Chaplain Corps goes back to its establishment on November 28, 1775. The Act of 1794 authorized a chaplain for each of the Navy's six frigates. By 1802, they had acquired a new role in the growing Navy. They were charged with teaching writing, arithmetic, and navigation. In 1865, chaplains were officially classified as staff officers. Naval chaplains had no official military rank until 1899. Prior to this date, they were simply address as "chaplain," as was the custom during World War II, regardless of their actual rank.

On November 5, 1917, Captain John B. Frazier was named the first Chief of Chaplains to serve as an assistant under the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation (changed to the Bureau of Personnel in 1941). Even before this, the chaplaincy had experienced several notable firsts. Though not technically a "first," the youngest minister ever appointed to serve as a Navy chaplain was the Reverend Philander Chase, Jr., who was appointed in 1818 at the tender age of 18! The first Roman Catholic known to have served was Father Adam Marshall, appointed in 1824. In 1917, Rabbi David Goldberg became the first of his faith to serve as a chaplain in the United States Navy. In keeping with their long tradition of education in the sea service the first academy of midshipmen was started by a chaplain. And, finally, of more interest to the average sailor, seaman of the United States Navy can thank the tireless efforts of chaplains for the abolition of flogging as a punishment!

The idea of a formal career path for chaplains in the Navy is a relatively new idea. It was not until 1909 that a formal policy regarding the general fitness of applicants for appointment was included in Navy Regulations. During both World War I and World War II commissions were appointed to assist in the procurement of chaplains and to direct the activities of the denominations concerned in serving the men and women of our armed forces. Denominational endorsement was required before any candidate for the chaplaincy could be considered in order to determine his qualifications and aptitude for naval service. Problems associated with proper indoctrination and training for appointees were not addressed in any organized manner until early in 1941. During World War II there was a school for naval chaplains at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia.

In the First World War some 203 ministers served in the United States Navy as chaplains, while in the Second World War over 2,800 served. In both wars, Navy chaplains served with both the Navy and Marine Corps, since, as with medical support, the Marine Corps does not have its own.

The chaplain's battle station was normally with the surgeon

in the dressing station, which may or may not have been in the sick bay. The rationale for assigning the chaplain here was based on the fact that this location offered the chaplain the best opportunity to minister to the wounded and dying-his paramount duty in time of battle. If trained in first aid, the chaplain could even lend an extra pair of hands to aid the surgeon and his Pharmacist's Mates with basic life saving actions. Wounded men tended to get quite thirsty. At a minimum, the chaplain was able to provide a cool drink of water while at the same time providing soothing words of encouragement.

Contrary to the misconceptions of some, the life of the World



Chaplain Joseph T. O'Callahan, LT(jg), USNR, ministering to a wounded sailor aboard the stricken carrier *USS Franklin*, March 1945.

War II Navy chaplain was not a life of ease. His duties were many and quite varied. They consisted of those duties set forth in Navy Regulations, as well as collateral duties assigned by the commanding officer of his ship or station. Though collateral duties were important, the chaplain was to consider his official Regulation duties as primary and having priority on his time. According to an article by World War II Navy chaplain Lieutenant Commander William J. Kuhn, which appeared in Captain Harley F. Cope's book, *Navy Shipboard Administration, A Guide For the Naval Officer*, the chaplain's chief duties were the "performance of divine

services aboard his own ship when prescribed by his commanding officer," manning his assigned battle station, and daily visits to those in sick bay. The chaplain's visits to the sick bay were of great importance to the sick and wounded men confined there. Lying around the sick bay, immobilized and isolated from one's division mates was boring and potentially damaging to morale. A visit by the chaplain, bringing books, magazines, and writing materials, was most welcomed.

The chaplain's collateral duties were eclectic to say the least. He was likely to be designated as the ship's librarian, provided there was room for one on board. When war was declared in 1941, most ships threw anything that was flammable or deemed non-vital to combat operations overboard. Quite often, this included the library's wooden bookcases.

Another common additional duty was that of motion picture officer. Movies were good for crew morale, even if they were not the most current issues, or had already been viewed by them several times before. The fleet's oil tankers were designated as the primary medium for movie exchanges. An enterprising chaplain with a gift for barter might do considerable good for the morale of his ship through a combination of hard work and savvy. On some ships, the chaplain edited the ship's newspaper. With wartime shortages, these multi-page, pre-war publications were often reduced to one or two page mimeographed newsletters typed from information received from radiomen as they listened on radio watch.

Another rather mundane, though important duty was that of Insurance Officer. This duty required the chaplain to make available information regarding national service insurance coverage and to fill out insurance policies for crewmembers. Ancillary to this chore was that of insuring that all aboard were aware of the benefits of various dependent's allowances to which their families were entitled.

Of more direct benefit to the morale of the ship's crew was the chaplain's duty as Recreation Officer. As such, he was not only to procure and make available such items as playing cards, board games, cribbage, fishing tackle, and musical instruments, but athletic equipment such as boxing gloves, balls, bats, gloves, volleyballs, footballs, and the like for individual use as well as the ship's various organized teams. In conjunction with this, he was to encourage inter-ship and intra-ship competition, as the situation allowed, as a means of relieving stress and building division and ship spirit de corps.

Although rarely appointed as the Welfare Officer per se, the chaplain was normally responsible for the expenditure of the ship's welfare funds. These funds were often made available to crewmembers in need of cash for various emergencies, especially travel. Because of his role as counselor and, when required, purveyor of bad news, the chaplain more than anyone else aboard ship was more often than not in a better position to know a man's real needs at home. The welfare fund helped many a shipmate in distress.

When the situation demanded it, the chaplain sometimes became the guardian of the valuables of wounded crewmembers. The same applied to the belongings of those survivors of ships lost in combat that his ship might pick up. He also was expected to lead the effort to find clothing and personal hygiene items for these men plucked from the sea.

When circumstances required, the chaplain officiated at burials at sea for men who died of sickness or were killed in action. In addition, the chaplain was often asked by the captain of the ship to prepare letters of condolence for his signature. In many cases, the chaplain penned an additional letter under his own signature to send along to those who had lost a loved one. In shore billets, the chaplain was usually expected to assist with the difficult and unpleasant task of the notifying the next of kin of deceased naval personnel.

Perhaps of all those duties assigned to or expected of the chaplain, none was more important than that of counselor. His ability to roam the ship at will in order to mingle with the crew meant the chaplain perhaps more than any other man aboard had his finger on the pulse of crew morale. Many men would confide in the chaplain who would not even consider such openness with their own division officers or leading petty officers. Wise ship commanders valued the counsel of the chaplain.

Despite the many additional duties assigned to the chaplain, his primary duty remained that of spiritual leader. This sacred trust was not left to the whims of the individual ship's captains, but was backed up in black and white in Navy Regulations. During World War II, the ship commander's responsibility in regards to divine services was outlined in Article 2 of the "Articles for the Government of the Navy of the United States." In summary, the commander was to "cause divine services to be performed on Sunday, whenever the weather and other circumstances allow it to be done; and, it is earnestly recommended to all officers, seamen, and others in naval service diligently to attend at every performance of the worship of Almighty God." Though the weather rarely interfered with the opportunity for religious services, the enemy quite often did.

The hour of worship in peacetime was set at either nine or ten o'clock. In wartime it might be held whenever most practical, given the rigorous schedule of drills and other duties associated

with running a modern warship, and when the enemy was judged least likely to interrupt. Aboard the *USS North Carolina*, the ship's "Organization and Regulations" required that divine services be held each Sunday at 10 o'clock, unless otherwise ordered. The Officer of the Deck (OOD) was instructed to issue an announcement concerning church call 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the service. At the hour the service was scheduled to begin, the Signal gang was to hoist the church pennant. Leaving no stone unturned, the Chief Master-at-Arms was charged with maintaining quiet and proper decorum in the vicinity of the worship service throughout its duration.

On some ships, daily religious devotionals were worked into the ship's busy routine and broadcast over the ship's public address system. These very short services normally consisted of a prayer or two and a blessing. Though short, they provided added spiritual strength to the Christians aboard facing the uncertainties of war.

The religious services themselves were generally short, no more than a half hour to 45 minutes in length. The emphasis was on a sermon that was practical, devoid of theological language, and illustrated by things close to the hearts of the men. If available, the ship's band was on hand for the service in order that the blessings of music might enhance the worship experience. The singing of hymns was generally popular with crewmembers and strongly encouraged.

The favorite hymns throughout the Navy seem to have been old standbys such as "Onward Christian Soldiers," "God of Our Fathers," "The Old Rugged Cross," and, "Holy, Holy, Holy." Chaplain Kuhn observed, and rightly so, that "well sung, [hymns] inspire and encourage any congregation of Christian men [and women]." "Eternal Father, Strong To Save," the unofficial anthem of the Navy, was, by tradition, the last hymn sung at a service of worship.

In general, church was usually rigged on the main deck, weather permitting, or in the largest available compartment below decks. On the *USS North Carolina*, divine services were often held below decks in compartment B-217-L, where they are currently held during the ship's periodic living history weekends. Regardless of location, it was expected that everything within reason would be done to create an environment that was attractive and conducive to worship. According to Chaplain Kuhn, an "alter, cross, candlesticks, [and] alter hangings" were necessary and could be fashioned aboard ship if need be. He added that, "Much of the appeal of any divine service will come from the setting the chaplain provides."

Though most of the burden of the official duties of the chaplain fell squarely on his shoulders and his alone, most were blessed with the aid of what was termed a "chaplain's yeoman." This sailor, normally a petty officer, was invaluable in coordinating and supervising the myriad tasks associated with the worship services, assisting with administrative matters, helping to run the ship's library, and overseeing the issue and recovery of athletic and other recreational items. Without such an assistant, the job of the chaplain would have been made even more difficult than it already was.

So, the next time someone makes light of the value of a Navy ship's "Holy Joe," remind him of the all the valuable contributions made by these warriors who sailed into combat armed only with the grace of God and a copy of the Holy Bible.

# Colonel Thomas Lane Cathey

By Jean Ann Taylor  
Editor, Sophie Magazine

Colonel Tom Cathey, born in Waynesville, N.C., has walked a long, determined, and focused road. As a young boy he loved to be outside and spent as much time as possible hunting, fishing, and camping. He was also patriotic and knew he wanted to serve in the military when he was older. He enrolled in the ROTC while attending Western Carolina University and graduated as a Second Lieutenant with a degree in Industrial Technology in 1984. After college, he enrolled in the Army Reserve.

Colonel Cathey has worked in every officer position of battalion level and has served in engineering, civil affairs, and training divisions. He says, "The army builds confidence, integrity, and leadership skills in individuals which is also helpful in civilian life." His natural ease and confidence has contributed to a successful sales career at Vulcan Materials Company in Asheville, N.C.

When Tom learned he would be mobilized to Iraq, he was ready to serve his country. His biggest concerns were his family and making sure he had done everything he could to insure that the 43 soldiers he was responsible for were ready for war.

Tom was assigned as the Brigade Senior Advisor for a Military Transition Team (MiTT Team), a role where their small team served as combat advisors for the 4th Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division (4/1 IA). The Iraqi Brigade was initially assigned a battlespace in the Anbar Province and included the towns of Nassar Wa'Salam and Karmah. In January 2007, the Iraqi Brigade and MiTT Teams were relocated to Baghdad as part

of the "surge phase" of the Baghdad Security Plan. Baghdad was initially divided into nine separate brigade size battlespaces, and 4/1 IA secured an area bordering the east side of the Tigris River. The key terrain of the area included securing seven bridges that connected east and west Baghdad across the Tigris River, and several large pedestrian market places.

The dangerous mission required that they actually live with an Iraqi Infantry Unit. They would be separated from American forces by many miles. Each soldier was chosen for his special skills, experiences, and rank. They went through extensive training in infantry, life-saving skills, and the Iraqi culture. Tom and his unit left their loved ones, their jobs, their homes, their hobbies, and their entire American lifestyle for the uncertainties of Iraq on 28 April 2006. He says, "You leave everything you know about life for the unknown."

His unit ate, slept, and fought side-by-side with Iraqi soldiers everyday for a year. During this time, Colonel Cathey and his unit learned to appreciate the Iraqi customs and love the Iraqi people. Tom explains, "The year in Iraq was very exciting for me. I learned a lot about their culture and traditions. I enjoyed living with the Iraqis. The Iraqi General and I became great friends. The Iraqis have my respect because of what they have been through. They have all been touched by war, and they've all lost friends, family, or both."

He continues, "Arabs are very generous people. Every time you visit them, they offer something to you. Whether it's Chai or food, they want to give you something. I frequently ate dinner with the Iraqi officers, and I learned to never clean my plate. They see it as a sign that you didn't get enough to eat and will insist that you eat more. I learned to always leave some food on my plate! When they serve you a cup of Chai, they will fill it until it is almost spilling over because they are so generous. They also really appreciate what they have. Although most of their homes are war torn on the outside, the inside is spotless. They also respect their family. They stick together and take care of each



other. The Iraqi soldiers are making huge sacrifices so their children can live in a better place."

While serving in Iraq, Tom was involved in many dangerous missions. In fact, everyday held unknown threats. On one such day, he sustained a concussion when his vehicle was hit by an IED.

On April 10, 2007, he was involved in an eight-hour fight known as *The Battle of Al Fadhil*. Under Colonel Cathey's leadership, ten Iraqis' lives were spared. The ten IA were defending their positions with their last magazines and would soon be overrun. He says, "These men were in the brigade we lived and served with. Because of our love, loyalty, and commitment to each other, we were willing to risk our own lives to save them. This particular mission was a culmination of everything our core mission was about."

During the battle, Colonel Cathey, in the lead vehicle of the convoy, was hit with a grenade attack that took out two tires and the power steering. He continued on and located the squad of ten pinned-down Iraqi soldiers. His broken vehicle was used to defend against sniper fire and sporadic small arms fire. During the fight, a second grenade attack on his vehicle resulted in complete loss of transmission. Additional damage resulted in all four flat tires, damage to ECM, and bullet impact damage to two windows. Although his vehicle was unable to move under its own power, the team continued on with their mission and eliminated the threat of Anti Iraqi Forces (AIF) from entering the cordon until all friendly fire forces were accounted for and safely with their units.

Colonel Cathey states, "I would like to recognize my team for their bravery and courage. The result of this battle brought security to the area and paved the way for reconstruction efforts. Residents also began to work with the Iraqi Army resulting in six months of peace to the area." The official report of this fight states, "COL Cathey's ... fearless actions ... directly impacted

saving the lives of ten Iraqi comrades .... He exhibited uncommon heroism, valor, courage, and a common ethos among fighting men that no soldier will be left behind."

During Tom's tour in Iraq, along with many other awards, he was awarded two Bronze Star Medals, one of which included the distinguished "Valor" device. It was also in Iraq where he earned the rank of Colonel on 18 January 2007.

Tom came home on 15 June 2007 with a renewed appreciation of freedom. He says, "I appreciate the freedom of walking down a street without the dangers associated with war, drinking out of the water faucet, and electrical systems that work. Iraqis don't have these luxuries. It was a tough year, but it makes you realize if you can endure that, you can do anything. It makes you more confident that you can accomplish difficult things." Although Tom's unit served in two of the most hostile areas of Iraq (Anbar Province and Baghdad), all of his soldiers returned home to their families.

However, Tom gives full credit to the families here in the states as well: "The true heroes are the mothers who stay behind and keep things normal for the kids. My wife, Amy, had a harder job than I did. She had to worry about keeping the yard mowed, the gutters cleaned, the car, taking the kids to all of their activities, plus cook and pay the bills. She also had to make holidays special for our three sons while I was gone."

Tom went on to say, "Coming home was harder than I thought it would be. I thought I would jump back into a routine and pick up where I left off. After serving in Iraq for a full year, it's hard to go from the daily adrenalin rush of being unsure of upcoming threats and missions to your biggest threat being a paper cut at work. While in Iraq, I had to expect the unexpected and be ready to roll out of the gate at any minute. It's taking a while for me to get used to a quieter, calmer life."

Tom's present assignment is Chief of Internal Review. He plans to continue in his army career. While he would go back if he was assigned another tour, he is happy to be home. He says, "The best part of being home is being with my family and riding dirt bikes with my kids ... and not having to wear 50 pounds of ammo and body armor wherever I go! Asheville, N.C., is the prettiest place in the world as far as I'm concerned. I'm glad I had the honor of serving my country, but I wouldn't want to be anywhere else."

#### **NARRATIVE TO ACCOMPANY THE AWARD OF THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL TO COLONEL THOMAS L. CATHEY**

Colonel Thomas L. Cathey, United States Army, distinguished himself by exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service to the United States as the 4th Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division Military Transition Team Chief from 1 May 2006 through 13 June 2007 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

COL Cathey's calm but resolute leadership was ever present as he carried out his responsibilities for commanding and con-

trolling the transition team and advising the Iraqi leadership of an Infantry Brigade of 2500 soldiers. During combat patrols, COL Cathey distinguished himself by consistently placing himself in the lead or at the point of most likely enemy contact.

COL Cathey continuously demonstrated his strong tactical and technical knowledge and interpersonal skills, allowed the Iraqi Brigade to succeed. He quickly grasped the Iraqi military culture and understood the local politics; he used the culture's positive aspects to get the best performance from the 4th Brigade. He worked closely with the Brigade Commander to ensure the counterinsurgency (COIN) combat operations within the

Brigade's area of operation were a synchronized application of military, political and economic power, specifically in the key population centers of Kharma, Nasser Wa'Salaam, and Baghdad. COL Cathey advised his counterpart on how to conduct a comprehensive mission analysis and troop-to-task analysis to determine the type and size of force needed. He patiently worked with the Brigade Command on developing an Iraqi solution to a sniper operating from an adjacent unit's area. All this hard work paid off during

combined Iraqi Army and coalition cordon and search of the town of Khan Dari. The operation was not only successful in stopping insurgent sniper operations in the area; it was also a pivotal point in which the 4th Brigade Command and his staff took ownership of the military decision making process. From this point on the Brigade Staff routinely conducted comprehensive mission analysis. An example of his interpersonal and diplomatic skills was when he personally went out to the local town of Nasser Wa'Salaam to speak with a local Sheikh about a recent coalition raid that damaged some homes. His actions led directly to redressing grievances by locals and helped build civilian-military cooperation with the area of operations, evidence later by a recruiting drive in the city that exceeded everyone's expectations.

COL Cathey participated in over 175 combat patrols and operations. These operations consisted of responding to Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), medical casualty evacuation, combat patrols, logistic re-supply convoys, cordon and search operations, raids on High Value Individuals, and he was a vital member of the Brigade team's Quick Reaction Force. During these operations there were numerous incidents of Small Arms Fire, 7 IED attacks and 3 incidents of Indirect Fire. COL Cathey served in many different capacities while on these patrols. COL Cathey served as driver, vehicle commander and convoy commander.

COL Cathey's actions both in combat and in an advisory role, his personal leadership and technical and tactical ability provided sound and keen advice to soldiers, NCOs and officers of the 4th Brigade. His courage under fire and relentless offensive spirit in bringing the fight to the enemy contributed immensely to the tactical and operational success of this Brigade. His actions are in keeping with the finest traditions of military heroism and reflect distinct credit upon himself, 4th Brigade Military Transition Team, and the United States Army.



# The Tarboro Ironclad

By Henry Harris

History has passed down little information on the Confederate ironclad which was being built on the Tar River in Tarboro, N.C. Surely there is more to be discovered about this vessel than a couple of scant lines in history books. It is for the most part ignored in the local histories. What is known is that the contract for the ironclad, between Secretary of the Confederate Navy Stephen R. Mallory and constructors William F. Martin and Gilbert Elliott, was signed on September 17, 1862. Shortly thereafter timber was collected, and the work was begun. Martin and Elliott had also begun another ironclad under the same contract at Tillery's farm on the Roanoke River, because the work went on intermittently over the next few months. On July 20, 1863, the uncompleted Tarboro ironclad was burned on the stocks by General Potter's Union Cavalry raiders. The vessel was thought to be about half ready to launch.

Certainly there is more to learn about this Tarboro ironclad. Her sister ship, the *CSS Albemarle*, has been given an almost nail by nail detail of her construction. The accounts of her in battle are legendary during the Battle of Plymouth and later the Battle of Batchelor's Bay. Even her destruction by the gallant (if not foolhardy and extremely lucky) Lt. William B. Cushing, USN, is well documented.

The difference is the *Albemarle* was a smashing success for the Confederacy. The unnamed Tarboro ironclad was an unfinished failure. Even in eventual defeat, success is glorified, and failures forgotten.

A little background information is needed to begin to determine why an ironclad was even attempted at this location. Tarboro was small town, a regional trade center with a railroad spur nearby at head of navigation, on the Tar River.

North Carolina was a reluctant member of the Southern Confederacy. It was not a state full of rich plantation owners or "fire-eaters" for secession. It followed its conscience and sister Southern states rather late, in May of 1861—doubtless a fact not lost on the newly-formed Richmond government.

Having joined the Confederacy, North Carolina dutifully sent her men and what arms and equipment she could gather to the war zones, predominately Virginia. The new Confederate government with all its growing pains did not adequately redistribute troops and guns to adequately protect the state's vulnerable coast. When attempts were made, it was a classic case of too little too late.

August 28, 1861, marked the beginning of the end for Confederate coastal North Carolina. On that date Union naval forces under Flag Officer S. H. Stringham began the bombardment of Forts Hatteras and Clark at Hatteras Inlet. Later that day, Union troops under the command of General B. F. Butler landed.

The following day the forts surrendered. In February 1862 Roanoke Island was captured. This opened the entire sound region of North Carolina to the invading Yankees. The ensuing months saw the capture or occupation of key points of coastal North Carolina. One after another, New Bern, Washington, Edenton, Plymouth, Winton, and Beaufort fell to the Northern onslaught. The Richmond government now realized that Norfolk and the backdoor to Virginia were open.

The success of the ironclad *Virginia (Merrimack)* brought to the attention of the Confederate naval authorities the importance of being able to do a lot with a little. From this, a strategy was born to hold the Confederacy and retake that which was lost.

The strategic and commercial importance of eastern North Carolina now came into play in the thinking of the Confederate government. Coastal North Carolina must be recaptured, but how to do so without sorely depleting the needed troops in Virginia? The answer was to retake the sounds of North Carolina. Without

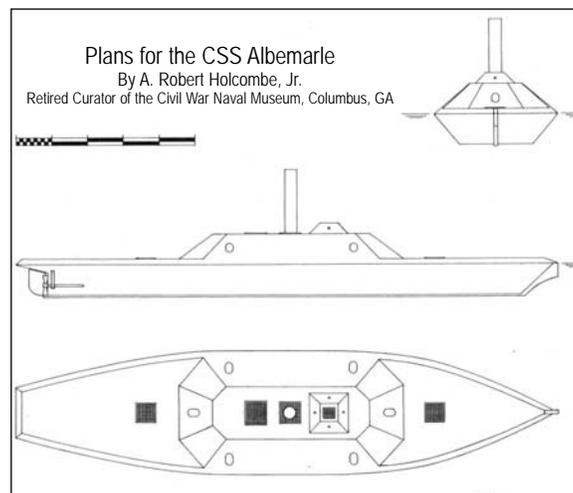
naval support, the Union occupation could not stand. A minimal number of Confederate troops could be used in a mop-up operation once the sounds were taken. Since North Carolina's inlets were so shallow, larger Union warships and ironclads could not be brought in. But Confederate ironclads built in the Norfolk area could come down into the sounds from the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal if they were built small enough.

This gave rise to plans for the "Dismal-Class" Confederate ironclad. These were so called because they could traverse the Dismal Swamp of

northeastern North Carolina and southeastern Virginia. They should not be confused with being able to use the Dismal Swamp Canal, as Union authorities believed, because the canal was too small. These armored vessels would have needed to be about 130 feet in length, and about 32 feet in width. They should not have drawn more than 6 or 7 feet of draft in the water. They were probably planned to be plated with between 2 and 3 inches of iron armor and carry two guns. Unfortunately, no plan or drawing of the "Dismal-Class" ironclad now exists.

Five to eight of these vessels were planned to be built in the Norfolk-Gosport area. How many were begun is unknown, but all plans came to naught when Norfolk was abandoned by the Confederate forces in early May 1862. All the "Dismal-Class" ironclads being built were destroyed by their builders; none was completed.

During the summer of 1862, after the repulse of Union General McClellan before Richmond, the Confederacy once more turned to the liberation of Eastern North Carolina. It was decided that vessels of the same sort could be built on the North Carolina rivers to replace the ones destroyed at Norfolk.



Since the vessels no longer need be constrained by the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal their design was slightly enlarged to about 152 feet by 40 feet, with an 8-foot draft.

These vessels would still mount two guns, but the armor had been increased to 4 inches, and a ram added. The vessel was designed by Chief Naval Constructor John L. Porter, CSN. Even though there were only two guns, bow and stern, they could both pivot to either side. This would enable the vessel to fire a 2-gun broadside. The vessel was originally designed to have 10 gun ports: one each pointing out of the bow and stern, two on each broadside, and two diagonal ports on both bow and stern. While the CSS Neuse, built at present day Seven Springs on the Neuse River, was apparently built with the 10 gun port arrangement, the CSS *Albemarle* eliminated the four diagonal gun ports and had only six gun ports. The intentions for the Tarboro vessel are unknown since construction would not have been far enough along to have had any gun ports cut.

Contracts for these vessels were given to Martin & Elliott on the Tar River, Ellis & Howard on the Neuse River, and again to Martin & Elliott on the Roanoke River.

The Tarboro location on the Tar River was an obvious choice. The Tar is one of the major rivers in eastern North Carolina flowing into the sounds. Tarboro was far enough from Union-occupied Washington to be relatively safe. While the Tar River is shallow, narrow, and winding below Tarboro, a vessel could make it down in times of high water. This disadvantage of low water would also protect the town from the Union Navy most of the time. There was a railroad spur close to Tarboro that connected with the Wilmington-Weldon Railroad in Rocky Mount. An added advantage was the nearby abundance of timber for building the vessel. Confederate Navy Yards were usually at or very near a source of timber. This would negate the need for transporting it. Plus there was a small ironworks in the town.

Thus begins the story of the Tarboro ironclad with the September 17, 1862, contract. A copy of this contract appears in Robert Elliott's 1994 book, *Ironclad of the Roanoke: Gilbert Elliott's Albemarle*. Robert Elliott's source is the "eport of Evidence Taken Before a Joint Committee of Both Houses of the Confederate Congress to Investigate the Affairs of the Navy Department," Richmond, VA, 1863.

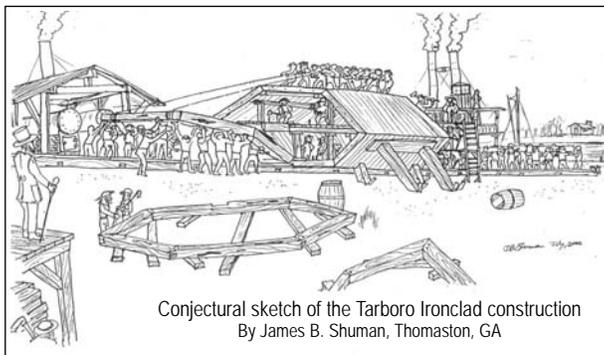
In summary the contract, signed by Martin & Elliott and Secretary Mallory, stated the completed hull (and casemate) of one ironclad would be delivered on March 1, 1863, at Tarboro, N.C. The vessel would be ready to receive engines, machinery, and armor plating. A price of \$40,000 was agreed upon, to be paid in increments of one-eighth parts as the vessel was completed to the satisfaction of the Navy Department. There was a provision that if the work was interrupted by the enemy, Martin & Elliott would receive payment for the work up to that time. The contract ended with the sentence, "It is further understood that one or more vessels will be built under terms of this contract at option of the Confederate States Navy."

The importance of this last sentence was that it opened the door for further ironclad construction by Martin & Elliott. This option would later be exercised at Tillery's farm and at Edwards

Ferry.

A Tarboro local, furniture-maker Francis Lewis Bond, noted in his "journal" about the beginning of the gunboat. "On the 24th (September) hands commenced getting timber for the construction of a gun boat on the opposite side of the river from the town." A copy of his journal or notebook is at the J. Y. Joyner Library at East Carolina University. Mr. Bond appears to be a very interesting person. His papers, although somewhat disjointed, make very interesting reading. Bond locates the construction site as probably between the Tar River bridge and the steamboat landing on the eastern edge of the town at Hendrick's Creek, on the current town of Princeville side.

During this time Gilbert Elliott was the principle constructor since the senior partner, William F. Martin, commanded a regiment in the Confederate Army. All their efforts, however, were not going into the Tarboro ironclad alone. In the Southern Historical Collection (SHC) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is a copy of a letter from Elliott to Secretary Mallory. It is dated October 10, 1862. It proposes that Martin & Elliott build an ironclad at Tillery's farm on the Roanoke River, seven miles below Halifax, with the



Conjectural sketch of the Tarboro Ironclad construction  
By James B. Shuman, Thomaston, GA

same terms under which they were working on the Tarboro vessel.

This is curious. Only three weeks into construction, and Martin & Elliott are proposing to build another vessel at another site. But the workmen, tools, necessary equipment, and materials are at hand. So it is a sound business decision (if they could pull it off).

At some point the Tarboro ironclad was put on hold. No reasons for this delay to the Tarboro vessel have been discovered. Most of Elliott's efforts were going toward the vessel on the Roanoke River. In his book Robert Elliott explains that an ironclad floating battery was built at Tillery's. This vessel was apparently never completed and is thought to have been set fire to and released at the end of the war, striking a torpedo and sinking near the town of Jamesville.

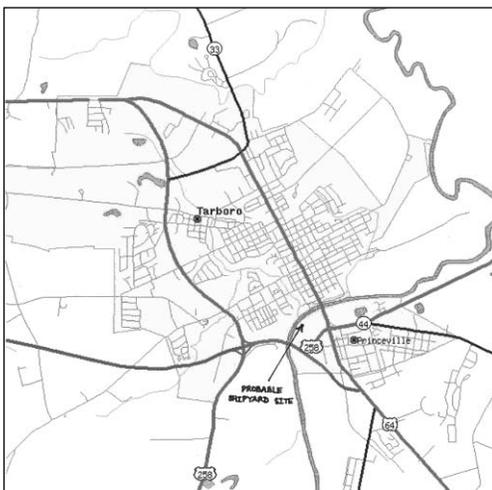
Matters became even more muddled when in March of 1863 Gilbert Elliott moved his operations to Edwards Ferry on the Roanoke River near Scotland Neck. It was at this site the famed CSS *Albemarle* was built.

Edwin Combs, in his M.A. Thesis at East Carolina University, "On Duty at Wilmington: The C.S. Navy on the Cape Fear River," 1996, research reveals that in late March 1863 the Confederate Navy took over construction efforts on the Tarboro vessel. It is unclear whether the navy was dissatisfied with Martin & Elliott's efforts, or if Martin & Elliott requested to be relieved of the contract. It is known that there was no penalty for not completing the vessel by the March 1, 1863, deadline. This was probably due to other naval projects on the Neuse and Cape Fear Rivers which caused inevitable construction delays.

From Robert Elliott's book and from reports in the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies (ORN) we learn that the Tarboro vessel was approximately half completed for launching. Gilbert Elliott was clamoring to have the third and fourth increment payments made to him. He was requesting them

from Secretary Mallory, area commander Lt. James W. Cooke, and the CSN commander for North Carolina, Capt. William F. Lynch.

Perhaps the best description of the ironclad comes from another Tarboro local. It is a “statement of Michael Cohen, a plumber and gas fitter by trade.” It is a Union report found in the ORN, Series I, Volume 9, pages 164 and 165, dated August 14, 1863. Cohen’s report stated, “The work on the gunboat at Tarboro was begun in September last (1862), continued one month, then stopped, and renewed only two weeks before General Potter destroyed it (July 20, 1863), at which time about 20 feet of its mid ship section had been put up in six parts of the frame; more of the frame in section was ready to put up. General Potter destroyed this and two unarmed river steamboats; one of iron, stern wheel, drawing 20 inches, fast and in good order called Governor Morehead, owned by Myers, ...; the other called the General Hill, old slow and stern wheel drawing 6 feet, and owned by Willard.”



This statement needs some explanation. The, “20 feet of the mid ship section put up in six parts,” refers that portion of the casemate and hull had been built. The Albemarle-class ironclad is considered a “diamond hull.” If one were to look at a cross-cut section amidships of the vessel or its plans it would appear to be a six-sided diamond shape. The flat roof and bottom would make up two of the six parts. The two slanted sides of the hull and the two slanted sides of the casemate would make up the other four parts. Hence the statement, “put up in six parts.”

Ironclad gunboat construction was not like ordinary boat or ship construction. Ordinarily a keel was laid, and the ribs would be attached with spaces between them, and be planked over. However for added strength, plus protection, and carrying the additional weight of armor, ironclad construction was different. Think of it as ribs being made out of 10 or 12 inch beams placed tightly together to form a solid hull. They are then heavily planked over both inside and out. This would be done for both the hull and casemate and would require some tricky framework in order to hold them together until they could all be connected.

Building an ironclad commenced by laying the keel, followed by putting on the bottom beams and planking, then beginning in the middle and working towards the ends placing the other five timbers to create the hull and casemate sides and casemate roof. Cohen is telling us that the hull base is complete. And 20 feet of the casemate has been built in the middle. Cohen did not mention anything about planking. Martin & Elliott had about reached the midpoint of their construction in preparation to launch the vessel.

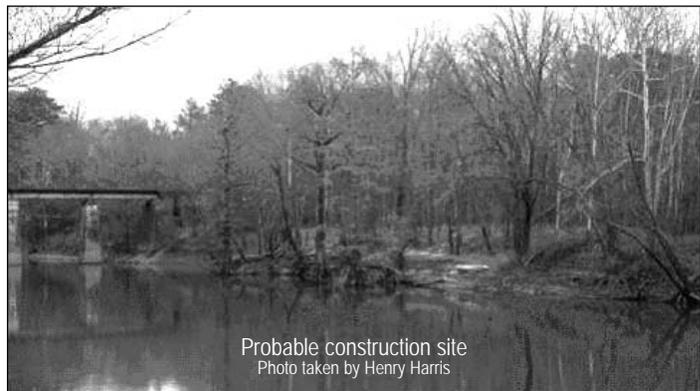
This would have been the vessel that the Yankee cavalry found on July 20, 1863. The Yankee raid came from Sparta, further down the Tar River. The ironclad was one of the last things

they came upon. This was part of General Potter’s Greenville-Tarboro-Rocky Mount raid whose ultimate goal was the destruction of the Wilmington Weldon Railroad bridge at Rocky Mount.

The raid was only partially successful. The bridge at Rocky Mount was partially destroyed, but the trains were up and running again within a few weeks. The Confederate Commissary Department took quite a beating. There were numerous stores destroyed in Tarboro and Rocky Mount, along with amount of both government and private destruction all along the route.

Little or nothing is known about the people involved in building the ironclad in Tarboro. Certainly there were ship’s carpenters and mechanics from William F. Martin’s shipbuilding business in Elizabeth City. This small group must have moved about from Elizabeth City, to the Norfolk area, to Tarboro, and ultimately Edwards Ferry. Doubtless there were also local carpenters, laborers, blacksmiths, and mechanics. There were most likely black laborers and skilled workers both slave and free, who participated. It is unknown whether there was any Confederate Navy presence on the site beyond periodic inspectors. Because of the nature of the contract being awarded to private individuals, there are no Confederate Navy records on this vessel. The Navy provided the materials that were agreed to and paid as different stages of construction were completed. There are no official payrolls or personnel lists. These records would have been the property of Martin & Elliott. If they survived the war their whereabouts are unknown.

It is interesting to imagine what might have happened if the Tarboro ironclad was completed and it was able to move down river in conjunction with the *CSS Albemarle* and the *CSS Neuse*.



With luck they could have gotten past the Union gunboats on the rivers, cleared the obstructions and retaken Plymouth, Washington, and New Bern. As the Albemarle nearly proved alone, the three ironclads together in the sounds would have swept the Union naval presence out. These ironclads probably couldn’t have gotten out of the inlets and definitely were not seaworthy if they had. But their potential accomplishments are fascinating to imagine.

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# Not for fame or reward...

by LTC (Ret.) Sion H. Harrington III

*“Not for fame or reward,  
Not for place or for rank,  
Not lured by ambition, or goaded by necessity,  
But in simple obedience to duty, as they understood it,  
These men sacrificed all, dared all ... and died.”*

These words are inscribed on the United Daughters of the Confederacy monument at Arlington National Cemetery that stands over the graves of 450 Confederate soldiers. The monument was designed by Richmond native and Virginia Military Institute graduate (1866) Sir Moses Jacob Ezekiel.

Three years after matriculating as the first Jewish cadet at Virginia Military Institute, Ezekiel participated in the famous Battle of New Market, charging Union artillery along with the rest of the VMI Cadet Battalion.

After the War Between the States, he returned to VMI to complete his studies and is said to have been encouraged by none other than General Robert E. Lee to become an artist. Ezekiel took Lee's advice and studied art in Italy.

Eventually making his permanent home there, Moses Ezekiel was a resident of Rome for 40 years, where he became quite famous. His work was so well regarded that he was knighted by Emperor William I of Germany and Kings Humbert I and Victor Emmanuel II of Italy as a tribute to his great craftsmanship as a sculptor.

Throughout his life, Sir Moses J. Ezekiel was an ardent American and unrepentant Confederate. It was his desire that upon his death he be carried home to the United States and buried among his fellow Confederates at Arlington National Cemetery. Death came to Sir Moses J. Ezekiel in 1917. In accordance with his wishes, he was returned to his native land and laid to rest at the foot of the memorial he had sculpted. The burial ceremony was conducted on March 31, 1921, at Arlington's amphitheater

and presided over by the U. S. Secretary of War John W. Weeks. His casket was draped with an American flag and flanked by six VMI cadets.

The simple epitaph inscribed on his grave marker reads:

“Moses J. Ezekiel Sergeant of Company C Battalion of Cadets of the Virginia Military Institute.”

Grave of Sir Moses J. Ezekiel beside the Confederate monument at Arlington National Cemetery he designed for the United Daughters of the Confederacy.



Cadet Moses J. Ezekiel, VMI (circa 1863-1865)



## ‘Diggers’ and ‘doughboys’

### *Australian and American troop interaction on the Western Front, 1918*

This article, by Dale Blair, is reprinted with permission from WARTIME, the official magazine of the Australian War Memorial Dr. Robert Nichols, Editor

{1} Last century Australia fought in four major wars: the First World War, the Second World War, Korea and Vietnam. A constant ally in those conflicts was the United States. For both nations, sizeable portions of their adult male populations participated in military operations. As a consequence, the perceptions of different generations of Australians and Americans toward one another have been shaped and transmitted within the extraordinary parameters of war.

{2} The First World War saw a largely positive interaction between Australian and American soldiers. Although thrown together for only a short time, the two forces left an indelible mark on each other. The fleeting nature of this marriage, and the

fact that the union occurred on neutral political and geographical ground, undoubtedly contributed to the goodwill exhibited by the respective armies. There were, however, other determinants at work that allowed for the bonding of the “diggers” and “doughboys.” Both nations celebrated a “frontier” tradition that advanced distinct and robust masculine traditions. Both had been British colonies, though the road to nationhood had followed quite different routes. Nevertheless, of vital importance to the relationship was a shared antipathy toward the British, one heightened by a respect forged in the fire of the front line during the latter part of 1918. It is the nature of those factors that this article strives to identify.

{3} The American declaration of war on 6 April 1917 arguably shifted the Great War's status from a European war to a World War. Nevertheless it would be 12 months before American mobilisation allowed sufficient numbers of U.S. soldiers to arrive in Europe and significantly bolster the Allied armies. Most Australians were thankful of the American decision to enter the war, as they saw it as an obvious source of relief for themselves. An Australian Imperial Force gunner stated the case plainly: "Of course as more Yanks come in then more Aussies should be able to get away." Above all, American manpower offered real hope for bringing the war to a decisive conclusion.

4} The first significant contacts between diggers and doughboys occurred in June of 1918. This came after the British commander-in-chief Douglas Haig made a request to his American counterpart, General John Pershing, for U.S. troops to be used in a defensive role in the event of an emergency. The American 27th and 33rd Divisions, and later the 30th, 78th, and 80th Divisions, were moved closer to the front near Amiens to fulfil that need if required. {2}

{5} It was among the soldiers of the 27th, 30th, and 33rd Divisions that the most enduring memories of Australian soldiers were felt. The fact that these represented only three of 43 U.S. divisions also meant that knowledge of the Australians was limited in the American experience. Conversely, the Australian view of Americans was more widespread. Five A.I.F. divisions represented the totality of the Australian presence on the Western Front, and thus the entire Australian force had some contact with the Americans.

{6} The training of American troops under British command was to follow a three-step process. This entailed the attachment of American platoons to larger formations, then companies, eventually in the placement of whole larger American formations in the front line with independent command authority. Because U.S. divisions were large, being nearly double the size of standard equivalent British formations, the attachment of American platoons to Australian battalions reflected a pragmatic breakdown of the larger-size American units to enable the men to "mix" more readily.

{7} The first significant action involving diggers and doughboys was the Australian attack on Hamel in July 1918. (4) In that operation Lieutenant-General Sir John Monash was planning to eradicate a German salient to improve his line for future moves near Amiens. The Fourth Army commander, General Sir Henry Rawlinson, offered Monash the use of the recently-arrived 65th Brigade of the 33rd U.S. Division. The incorporation in the Australian battle plan of ten companies of infantry, from the 131st and 132nd Regiments, was to prove a controversial one.

{8} The use of the doughboys hardly constituted the "emergency" to which Pershing had previously acquiesced. On learning of the projected deployment of American troops during a visit to the front, Pershing ordered their withdrawal on the basis that they were inadequately trained and that their use was contrary to the earlier agreement. Major General G. W. Read, commander of the American II Corps to which the allocated companies belonged, was advised to withdraw the doughboys. A day before the attack, six companies were withdrawn and the Australian plan adjusted to cover their loss. When it appeared that the remaining four companies would also be withdrawn, Monash objected strenuously and threatened to cancel the attack. He was unmoved

by Rawlinson's concern that he (Rawlinson) might be despatched to England if he proceeded in violation of Pershing's wishes. The preservation of the confidence in Australian and American troop relations, Monash argued, outweighed the fate of an Army commander. Ultimately, Haig accepted responsibility for the use of the four companies of doughboys, deeming the improvement of the position to be of more critical and immediate importance to future operations than Pershing's objection. (5)

{9} At Hamel the Americans were considered to have performed well. One Australian who observed a doughboy company in action noted: "If they showed a fault it was as always with first class fighting men until they get experience—the fault of excessive keenness, so that they suffered some casualties by pressing on into our barrage, but the 'Australians' are lavish in admiration of their 'dash'." (6) This elan, though born largely of ignorance and excessive enthusiasm, was fundamental to the maintenance of respect on the part of the Australians. The first signs of a friendly rivalry were evident, too, and Sapper William M. Telford remarked that its existence did "Fritz no good." (7)

{10} During the battle, American runners and stretcher-bearers were paired with Australians to assist in their training. The value of this pairing of experience with inexperience soon came to the fore as the commander of the 131st Infantry attested: "Considerable opposition was met near the western edge of Hamel where there were some dug-outs. A reserve platoon of Americans led by Lieutenant Symons worked around to the flank overlying the position. The lieutenant was wounded but his runner, the only Australian with the platoon, took charge and cleared up the situation." (8)

{11} Despite the close association of the diggers and doughboys in this phase, American ignorance of the Australians' distinct view of themselves was evident. Captain Will Lewis Judy noted that he thought this combined operation represented "the first time American troops fought side by side with their enemy of our own revolutionary days, the British." (9) Australians would have recoiled (and do) at such association. The lack of distinction between Australian and British had become a vexatious issue for the diggers late in the war. They had become intensely sensitive to the failure of British authorities to distinguish between Australian and British operations. (10) The main reason for this was that Australians had come to believe the British, generally, were not up to the Australian standard. They perceived Australian successes to be unheralded by such generic reportage.

{12} Antipathy toward the British, however, was something that both diggers and doughboys shared. As such it provided a powerful bonding agent. The Australian contempt for the British command and of the fighting qualities of the English was little concealed. A report by the Commanding General, 27th U.S. Division, distinguished between the attitudes of Australian officers and enlisted men toward their comrades-in-arms. The "diggers" were reported as manifesting an open and "intense criticism" that bordered on "bitterness" while the Australian officers were considered to have been more circumspect in registering their dissatisfaction, expressing it informally. (11)

{13} American relations with the British do not appear to have been as cordial as with the dominion forces. Robert E. Smith of the 120th Infantry thought "The British islanders were never very friendly or willing to try to get along." (12) Although he excluded the Scots from his assessment, he believed the

“British outlook on Americans was in conflict.”

(13) Private Leslie Charles White of the 129th Infantry recalled having “trouble with the British” and thought them neither friendly nor good soldiers. (14) It is possible that American perceptions of English soldierly qualities—which they had not had adequate opportunity of witnessing first hand—were influenced by contact with the Australians' contemptuous denigration of the Tommies.

{14} Pershing's lower echelon commanders and men also shared the contentious issue of American command independence that coloured his relations with the British. Private L. Wolf of the 129th Infantry wrote: “The English wanted to boss our command off the earth and so did the French—we got along with the other foreign countries.” (15) This view was confirmed by Sergeant Merritt C. Pratt, 131st Infantry, who remembered English NCOs trying to laud it over his men by insisting they salute British Sergeant-Majors which was not liked at all (mirroring the legendary disinclination of Australians toward such military protocol). Pratt was happier serving with the Australians whom he classed as the best fighters he had ever seen and who also “disliked the British soldier.” (16)

{15} For the diggers, the tension with the British was due in part to them being part of a fledgling nation trying to prove itself worthy within the family of the British Empire. The Americans, on the other hand, had already enjoyed nearly a century and a half of independence, won bloodily from the “mother country.” The doughboys' antipathy was partly historic. Sergeant Fred P. Jones, 108th Engineers, stated that the British “still remembered the Revolutionary War and if they didn't we reminded [them] of it.” (17) If this undertaking was widespread among American soldiers, one could well understand a certain coolness of attitude from the British.

{16} Relations between Americans and British were the subject of an extended treatment by Lieutenant Colonel Calvin H. Goddard of the U.S. Army War College. Many of the comments made by soldiers in the U.S. Army's World War One survey were borne out in Goddard's study. Goddard identified the relationship between the Americans and English as being relatively poor and lacking in generosity. Americans considered the English inferior in physique, initiative and morale—factors axiomatic to Australian perceptions. Regarding the comparative fighting qualities of the two forces, he conceded that the sub-standard drafts reinforcing the British armies and the exhaustion from years of combat had diminished the fighting capacity of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF). That aside, the BEF was still seen as possessing courage and tenacity. (18)

{17} Goddard believed the Americans rated the Australians highly and saw themselves as equals. A feature of the Australian method was identified as being the combination of caution and aggression that restricted casualties while at the same time gaining objectives “handsomely.” Some aspects of Australian behaviour, however, were repugnant to the Americans. The “systematic looting” of the American dead by the “diggers” was a case in point. Australian officers were said to have dismissed such incidents in a “light-hearted manner.” (19)

{18} That such looting occurred seems beyond doubt given the pragmatic admission of one Australian soldier:

Most of our men souvenired the Americans before they were buried and some got great hauls of money

(in French notes, of course) as most Americans were wealthy and had plenty of money on them. This was quite alright as we may as well have had the money and made use of it (which we did) instead of burying it with them. (20)

Yet, for the Americans, the lengths to which some Australians were prepared to go was nothing short of disgraceful. The commander of the 27th Division, Major General John F. O'Ryan, while full of approbation for the Australians, could not hide his revulsion at the knowledge that an Australian soldier had allegedly cut off a dead American officer's finger to acquire a ring. O'Ryan clearly did not doubt the veracity of the claim noting that the Australians were well known for moving “over the fields with gunny sacks seeking whatever was of value.” (21) It was suggested that ill feeling from such incidents was offset by the lavish praise the Australians directed at the Americans. (22)

{19} The Australians' capacity for self-sufficiency was a trait that was also observed to have crossed the lines of acceptable military efficacy. An example was offered by the commanding general of 60th U.S. Brigade. He noted that Australian artillery communications were “astonishingly efficient” in that they were still open when neighbouring lines had been cut. The reason, he ventured, lay in the fact that the Australians “would themselves cut anybody else's wire if necessary to keep up communications.” (23) Irrespective of whether such an unlikely act was true or whether the story was apocryphal, the American general's perceptions of Australians as ruthlessly opportunistic comrades in arms was manifest.

{20} The treatment of prisoners was also a contentious area. One criticism of some interest was that of Sergeant James V. Armfield, 105th Engineers, who voiced disapproval at the “treatment of prisoners by British non-coms [non-commissioned officers].” (24) He did not elaborate on the nature of that treatment but presumably it referred to acts that fell outside the guidelines of the Hague Convention and common decency. It was obvious though, that the Australians were passing on their own hardened attitudes in regard to military expediency to the inexperienced doughboys who had not yet adapted their civilian sensibilities to the fighting mores of the front line. According to Private Willard M. Newton of the 105th Engineer Train, he was able to glean from the Australians “lots of things that are important to a soldier who has not been in battle.” It was clear, too, that the impressionable doughboys were uncritically accepting of Australian claims of German “torture” and “extreme cruelty” toward their prisoners. (25) On such issues the Australians' veteran status gave added credibility as Newton noted, “We believe them, for they have been in this war long enough to know.” (26) The Australian advice was not to allow oneself to be captured or as, Newton implied, take prisoners: “They have no use for the Huns.” (27)

{21} It was in battle that Australian-American relations would be tested in the most extreme way. When it came to combat performance, the Australians had reached a high level of competence by the time the Americans arrived. The Americans on the other hand were an unproven quantity. The manner in which they proved themselves on the battlefield was critical to Australian assessments. It was during the attack on the Hindenburg line, in which the American II Corps comprising the 27th and 33rd U.S. Divisions was attached to Monash's Australian Corps, that size-

able numbers of both forces came in contact with the other.

{22} After the crucial assault against the St. Quentin Canal on 29 September 1918 and the breaking of the Hindenburg Line, Australians following up the initial attack remarked on the numerous American dead. Gunner A. G. MacKay, camped in a trench where a heap of thirty Yanks lay in front, thought the Americans had erred in sending unguarded prisoners to the rear. This was a common practice though it was believed, in this instance, that the prisoners simply reinforced German machine-gun and artillery positions that had been by-passed. (28) Another Australian artilleryman put the “lanes of American dead” down to their lack of strategy or initiative and to “bad fire discipline.” The Americans had gamely “rushed headlong at entrenched machine-guns” rather than employing tactics of fire and movement to outflank the enemy. (29) They had thus fallen prey to the German tactic of leaving gaps in the wire to entice inexperienced troops into the fields of fire concentrated there. (30) The perceived failure of the Americans to “mop up” was central to Australian criticisms of the American attack and permeates personal Australian accounts of the battle. (31) Allegedly, supporting Australians subsequently informed the Americans that it was pointless them sending back any more prisoners, as they would not be allowed to pass. (32)

{23} Australia’s official war historian, C. E. W. Bean, resisted such notions in his account. He concluded that the Americans had not rushed forward impetuously and that the chief resistance had not come from by-passed Germans or those sent rearward but from “supports and reserves attacking normally from the front.” (33) He believed that the Americans had been set too difficult a task for inexperienced troops. (34)

{24} To circumvent some of that inexperience, a special “Australian Mission” was organised to facilitate liaison between the American divisions attached to the Australian Corps during the Battle for the Hindenburg Line. Major General E. G. Sinclair-Maclagan headed the mission of two groups drawn from the 1st and 4th Australian divisions. Eighty-three officers and 127 NCOs participated in the Mission. One group under Brigadier General C. H. Brand was attached to the 27th Division; the other, under Brigadier General I. G. Mackay, went to the 30th Division. (35) At the outset it was stipulated that the duties of the Mission were to be entirely advisory and not executive. (36)

{25} The prime purpose of the Mission was to assist in the preparation for the attack of 29 September. Australian officers and NCOs supervised the taping of start lines and positioning of troops. The commander of the 54th U.S. Infantry Brigade, Brigadier General Palmer E. Pierce, was particularly thankful for the invaluable services and lessons the Australians provided in regard matters of supply, including the provision of hot meals to the men at the front. (37) The NCOs were recalled on the 28 September but the officers were to remain until after the attack.

{26} One task undertaken by the Australian intelligence officers was to supervise the production of contour maps to familiarise the officers and men with the ground over which the regiments had to attack. In the case of the 107th, these maps were never completed as the regiment was ordered forward and few of its personnel saw even the incomplete version. (38)

{27} Pre-battle advice and planning given by Lieutenant Hill, the Australian intelligence officer attached to the 107th Regiment, and his accompanying sergeants, seems to have been

valued. However, his recommendation that a battalion command post ought to be positioned a 1000 yards behind the company lines rather than between the first and second waves, as was thought appropriate by the enquiring Captain Egan, appears to have been quietly dismissed as unacceptable to American “machismo.” (39) Hill cut something of a dramatic figure as he hurried the Americans toward their jump-off line, the pegging of which he had supervised a few hours earlier. He had lost his tin-hat and had tied a handkerchief around his head—perhaps to give a theatrical brush to events as the handkerchief’s protective qualities were certainly dubious. (40)

{28} When the American attack began to go awry, the Australian officers assumed a central role in assessing and endeavouring to restore the situation. From the field messages of the II Corps, it is evident that the Australian officers were being relied on for advice. During the afternoon of 29 September, Lieutenant Colonel A. G. Salisbury was on hand to advise Colonel Boswell of likely outcomes during the absence of reports from 54th Brigade patrols sent out in the morning. Lieutenant Bowman of the 1st Battalion, AIF, was cited as having provided “valuable assistance” to the 115th U.S. Machine Gun Battalion, while an Australian surgical team under Major A. W. Holmes a Court gave assistance at the Americans’ main dressing station at Villers-Faucon. (41)

{29} Brigadier-General Iven Mackay, on learning of the failure of the 27th Division and of the disorganisation of the 30th Division (though it was largely successful in gaining its objectives), immediately went forward to assist. To Major General Edward M. Lewis, GOC 30th Division, he wrote down a series of instructions in regard to the reorganising and controlling of units and employment of staffs. He arranged for these instructions to be set in train in the rear echelons, and at divisional headquarters, and then personally went forward to the headquarters of the attacking 59th and 60th Brigades to instruct the commanders of those units. Later in the afternoon, Mackay accompanied General Lewis to Headquarters 5th Australian Division, to arrange details for the withdrawal of the Americans. (42)

{30} The extent of the 30th Division’s disorganisation was borne out in Major W. F. L. Hartigan’s report to G-3. Assembly points for stragglers were unknown, and stragglers in large numbers clogged the Division’s rear. Hartigan personally assembled and directed 500 strays back to the front. Men bringing in prisoners singly rather than in groups, men escorting wounded comrades, and others seeking attention for superficial injuries such as backs hurt from falling in shell-holes, all contributed to the congestion. Inhibiting the efficient management of the problem was a lack of training and initiative on the part of the American NCOs. Many did not have compasses--a reflection of the supply problems and shortages that afflicted the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) generally--and this caused the mist and smoke that limited visibility in the early phase of the battle to be doubly blinding. They exhibited a marked disinclination to join other units, or form new temporary squads to move the battle forward. This attitude also precluded any willingness to assume higher command responsibilities in the face of missing or disabled officers. The American advance was further compromised by a lack of understanding on the part of company officers and NCOs about their unit’s objectives and mission. (43) Many of the problems were the same as had afflicted the untested

Australians at Gallipoli, and were symptomatic of green troops and staffs in battle. That the 30th Division achieved its objectives in the face of such inexperience is perhaps testament to the men's exuberance and desire to succeed, as well as the exactness of the preparatory planning of Monash. Unlike the 27th Division, the 30th had not been compromised by having to commence its attack from behind the initial start line.

{31} At the 27th U.S. Division, Brigadier-General Brand recorded in detail the ramifications of that formation's operational rawness. After the battle, Brand provided some corrective notes to Major General O'Ryan about how the Americans could improve future performance. Among the twenty-six points outlined, the more salient criticisms were that the staff officers were too headquarters-bound, thus often allowing unreliable information to find its way to Brigade and Divisional headquarters; too much optimism clouded or blinded judgement; too many officers went forward in the first waves and became unnecessary casualties, thus contributing to a shortage of officers and loss of unit cohesion; and written communications from the field were poor, with too great a reliance on telephone communication and not enough runners. All these things, according to Brand, militated against providing a clear picture of the attack's progress. Combined with poor rear echelon organisation, they further impeded the ability of the Americans to react promptly. (44)

{32} The alleged exuberance of the doughboys might well have been due to their greenness and desire to perform well. Another possibility that has been suggested is that they were victims of an ambiguous doctrine from Pershing, who oscillated between planning for trench warfare and ascribing to the virtues of, and preference for, open warfare. As a consequence, fighting commanders entered the line with no clear conceptual understanding of their commander-in-chief's expectations. U.S. Army successes were subsequently won by the costly tactic of smothering German machine-guns with American flesh. (45)

{33} Nevertheless, the desire to engage with the Germans in open warfare was evident in the demeanour of the doughboys, according to a British officer who observed the training of the 27th Division. He thought the prospect of the fight rather than the immediate, even if seemingly menial, tasks of preparation was a source of distraction to the Americans:

The men are anxious for active operations rather than the work of trench warfare and have not realised the necessity for acquiring proficiency with the spade. (46)

Deficiencies were undoubtedly carried into battle. An American officer stated, in relation to the training of the 30th Division, that it was "very apparent that our men expose themselves unnecessarily and do not hug the folds of the ground or crawl as they should". (47)

{34} Along the St. Quentin Canal, while doctrinal factors might have contributed to the American losses, the 27th Division's assault was initially compromised by the earlier failure of the British III Corps to secure the German strong-points located at the Knoll, Gillemont Farm and Quennemont Farm. This was, as Bean termed it, "a serious complication". (48) In Monash's pre-battle planning it was expected that these positions would have been secured prior to the doughboys' arrival. When the Americans took over the line, an attempt was made by the

106th U.S. Regiment to clear the German outposts but this proved a singularly disastrous operation. The 108th pushed forward in the afternoon of 27 September to relieve the disorganised remnants of the 106th, a process that was not completed, owing to inexact knowledge of the 106th's position, until the early hours of 28 September. (49)

{35} With the ground still not taken by 29 September, the main attack was to proceed with the 27th Division left to clear the contested ground and make up the lost yardage as best as it could. Unfortunately, confusion over whether unsupported and wounded Americans still lay out in front prior to the main attack resulted in the supporting barrage remaining on its originally planned line rather than being brought back. As compensation, additional tanks were allocated to the 27th Division to help them fight their way forward. (50) Without adequate artillery support to suppress the unconquered outposts confronting the doughboys, the task set O'Ryan's men was an onerous one. (51)

{36} It was little wonder that the leading regiments of 27th Division, the 107th and 108th, struggled on 29 September to make up the ground and suffered excessive casualties as a result. Nevertheless, the displeasure of the Australians at the confusion ahead of their advance and the disorientation within the American command was being clearly communicated through II U.S. Army Corps headquarters. (52) The vicinity of Guoy, Le Catelet and Bony was, contrary to plan, swarming with Germans. A battalion of Americans supposed to be occupying the ground had not been heard from and was feared lost, seemingly confirming the statement of a captured German colonel that 700 American prisoners had been taken. (53)

{37} An Australian artillery officer accompanied a battalion of the 107th toward Guoy and returned at 5 p.m. to confirm the rough fighting and occupation of Le Catelet by the Germans. (54) The officer was Lieutenant W. O. Pasefield and he reported seeing the Americans undertake repeated bayonet charges and stated "I saw more fighting on this day than I have seen during my experiences." (55) It was probably this same officer who was reported as saying the 107th's fighting to have been the hardest he had seen during the war. (56)

{38} A consequence of the stiff fighting in front of the 27th Division's line of advance and on its right around Bellicourt, before the 30th Division, was the severe artillery barrages brought down by the Germans in support of their frontline troops. The Australian artillery and ambulance columns moving forward in accordance with the planned timetable were caught unawares by the hold up toward their front. As they descended into the valley before the German line they came under the view of artillery observers and the roads were deluged with shells. The result was mayhem with "horses and men ... running in all directions." (57) Stretcher-bearers were sent forward in the mid-afternoon and relay posts were established on the outskirts of Bellicourt, but due to the incessant shell-fire it was dusk before loading posts could be established to clear the mounting stretcher cases from the front. (58)

{39} Sergeant Merritt D. Cutler, of the 107th Regiment, thought the battle resembled a scene from Dante's Inferno. The sight of so many of his wounded comrades compelled him to seek assistance to remove the wounded and dying from the maelstrom. He came across a couple of Australians who were moving toward the front and he was, despite the reticence of one, able to gain

help and a stretcher from the other who replied: "Sure, Yank, I'll go; we're in this bloody thing together." (59)

{40} Although the failure of the 27th Division and, to a lesser extent, the confusion in the 30th Division were observed by the diggers first-hand, condemnation found little place in the personal letters and diaries of Australian soldiers who recorded the fighting along the St. Quentin Canal. While English failures were belittled and enshrined in ANZAC mythology, in this instance it was the unswerving gallantry of the Americans—as ill-advised as it might have been—that left the greatest impression on the Australians.

{41} If Australian attitudes were shaped by perceptions of American bravery and potential, American attitudes were similarly shaped by Australian efficiency and aggression. Colonel Spence of the 117th Infantry believed the division had been fortunate to have served with and received the co-operation of the British and Australians. He thought the Australians were "wonderfully aggressive fighters." (60)

{42} Post-war views of the Americans, especially those of the ageing veterans who participated in the U.S. Army's WWI Research project, were overwhelmingly positive in regard to the Australians. While many also spoke generically of good relations with the British, those of the 27th, 30th and 33rd Divisions often singled out the Australians and other Dominion troops as being outstanding. George Leonhardt, 105th Engineers, considered the Australians to be "real men." (61) Richard H. Brooks, a corporal in the 120th Infantry Regiment, wrote: "I thought more of the Australians and Canadians than I did the British. They would say 'Don't shoot, don't shoot' (fear of retaliation), but those Australians were OK." (62) Second Lt. Roby G. Yarborough, 120th Infantry, rated the Australians as "excellent" but believed the British to be "too cautious." (63) Henry Bacon McKay was another clearly not enamoured by His Majesty's forces: "We disliked and laughed at the British;" the Australians, in contrast, were "liked and admired." (64)

{43} There was, too, in the relationship between diggers and doughboys a degree of narcissism. Each saw something of themselves in the other. Lieutenant Kenneth Gow of the 107th Regiment was fond of the Aussies and described them as "more like ourselves than any of the other allies." (65) It was this recognition that possibly produced some of the empathy the Australians held for the Americans. Observing the doughboys'

greenness, an Australian sergeant noted, "Their enthusiasm is just great, but of course they are just as we were in early 1915." (66) Australians were keenly aware of the bloody lessons that lay before the Americans.

{44} Overall, a spontaneity characterised Australian and American relations that was absent in American and British relations. That is not to say that Americans and the British were incapable of shared views. Indeed, Australian discipline (or perceived lack of) was one point on which Americans and the British sometimes concurred. Private Charles D. Ebersole, 129th Infantry, thought the Australians "very good" and "very democratic," though "somewhat undisciplined." (67) In this regard the British professional view of what army discipline ought to be was akin to Pershing's preferred "West Point"-styled U.S. Army. American bureaucracy did not pass unnoticed as one Australian declared: "Their administration was top-heavy, and they ran a paper war at least three times ours." (68) Both American and British discipline and protocol jarred against the Australian soldiers' more casual outlook.

{45} To conclude, if a prevailing Australian view of the Americans is required, it is best encapsulated in the assessment of Lieutenant W. A. Carne:

At the very outset, the newcomers made no secret of their admiration of the Australians. Indeed, their outspoken regard ... was almost embarrassing. On the other hand, the 'diggers' were well disposed towards such a friendly lot of men, and the two parties got on splendidly together. But when it came to the business in hand, Company members were appalled at their ignorance and want of perception ... In spite of their extreme rawness, Company officers agreed that they would prove very staunch in action if well led ... The wide difference between the two parties made thoughtful Company members realise how very far they themselves had travelled since Gallipoli days, and what a vast amount of experience they took for granted, and looked for in troops in France. (69)

It was this reflection of themselves, along with the shared antipathy toward the British, and mutual recognition of bravery and performance on the battlefield, that allowed Australians to generously accept the Americans on the Western Front in 1918.

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# EDITOR'S TACK ROOM By Richard M. Ripley

The RECALL Fall 08 Issue wraps up the 2008 year with some very interesting articles. We continued with John Covach's Korean War Stories. This part includes his description of the 7th Infantry Division's preparations for its initial entry into the war and the move toward the invasion of Inchon. Note his description of the use of Koreans to fill the under strength division units. I wonder what ever happened to the Korean soldiers once the war ceased.

The story about Colonel Thomas Lane Cathey, written by Jean Ann Taylor, tells about Colonel Cathey's recent experiences in the Iraq War. Colonel Cathey was the Transition Team Chief of the Team assigned to give combat advise to the 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division. This is the first information I have received about working in combat with the Iraqi Army.



We were given permission to reprint the very interesting Dale Blair story, "Diggers and Doughboys, Interaction between Australian and American troops in World War I." The story includes information about the American 30th Division at the Bellicourt Offensive. At that time the 30th Division was operating with the Australians under British Command. The Australians and Americans liked each other. I was unable, because of space, to include the two pages of footnotes to the story. If you are interested in the footnotes let me know and I will send them to you.

Thank you to Henry Harris (The Tarboro Ironclad) and Sion Harrington III (The Naval Chaplain of WWII) for their interesting and well researched stories. Both are faithful RECALL writers and we look forward to their continued contributions.

I have been holding down the Editor's job since 1996. The thing that keeps me going are the writers, readers, and Barrie Davis. Without these, your Editor and RECALL would be dead in the water. Barrie with his amazing computer put my publication words into final form for the printers (NOTE: Typo and spelling errors are my fault, not his). Thank you Barrie for your good work.

We wish every one a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Have to say it now as it will be after Easter before I can say anything again. RIP, *Editor*.

## Contribute Articles to Recall

Readers are invited to submit material to *Recall*. In choosing material for publication, the editor of *Recall* will give preference to articles of unusual significance and transcripts or abstracts of difficult-to-locate records.

## Photos, Interviews Sought

In 1998, the N.C. Division of Archives and History began Phase III of its effort to better document the state's 20th century military experience. Previous phases have focused on the period from 1900 through the end of the Korean War. Though still actively collecting and preserving items from this era, the Archives is seeking to honor North Carolina veterans who served North Carolina and the nation from 1954 through the present.

In keeping with this state's long and proud military tradition, large numbers of North Carolinians served in the military forces of the United States both in time of war and in operations other than war, primarily in support of humanitarian efforts around the world.

If you have a photograph or photographs of a North Carolinian in uniform, consider making a donation to the Military Collection Project. The Archives also seeks to collect and preserve military related papers and memorabilia so that future students, researchers, historians, and others can better understand the nature of military service and sacrifice.

The Military History Collection Project also is engaged in an extensive oral history program. If you have items to share, please mail them to or contact: Sion Harrington III, Coordinator, Military Collection Project, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 109 East Jones Street, Raleigh, N.C. 27601-2807; or call 919-807-7314. E-mail: [sion.harrington@ncmail.net](mailto:sion.harrington@ncmail.net).

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