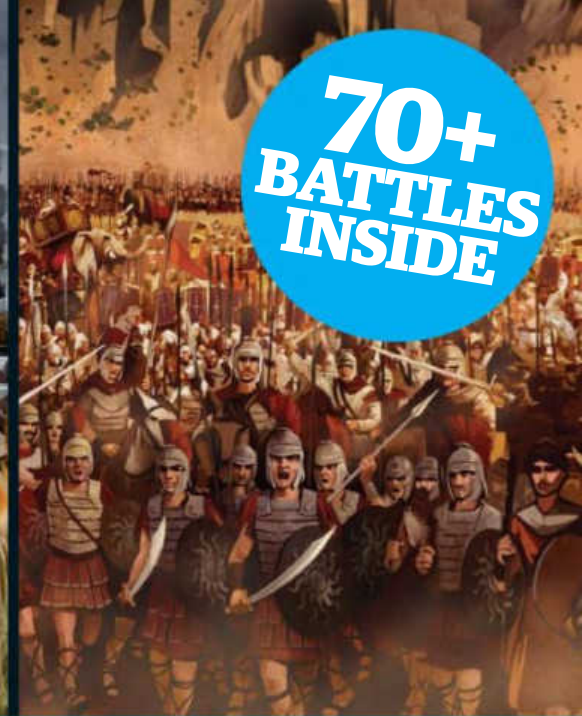
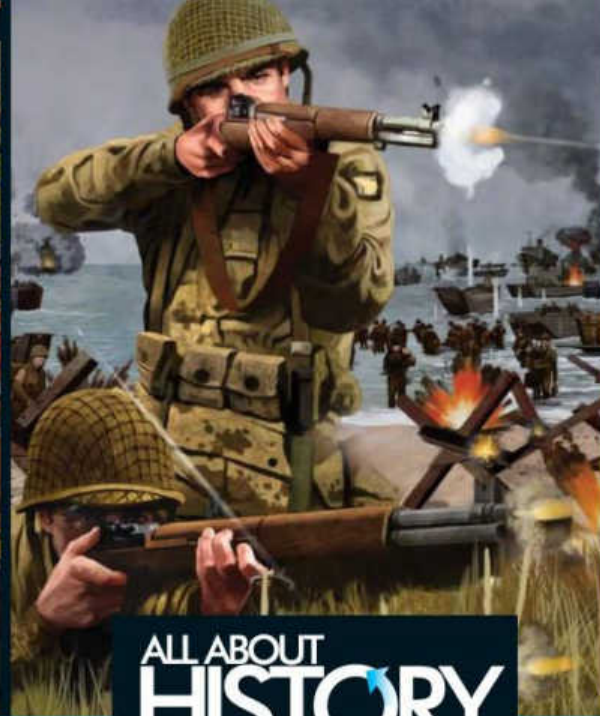


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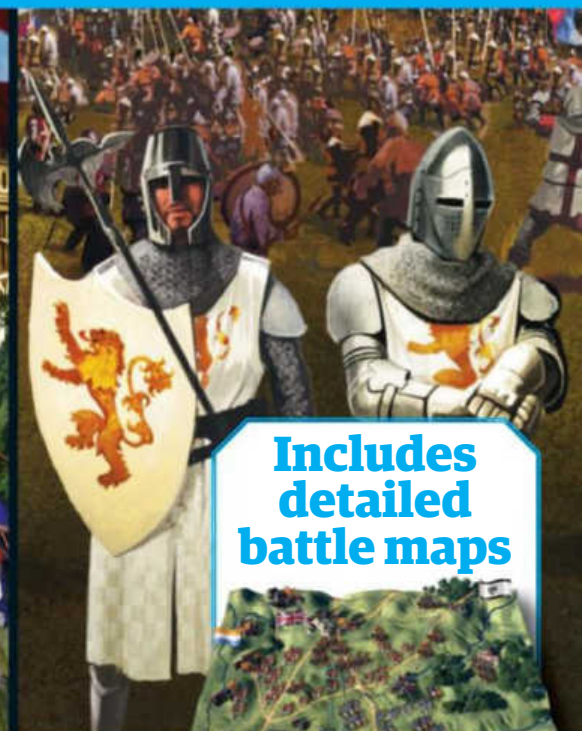


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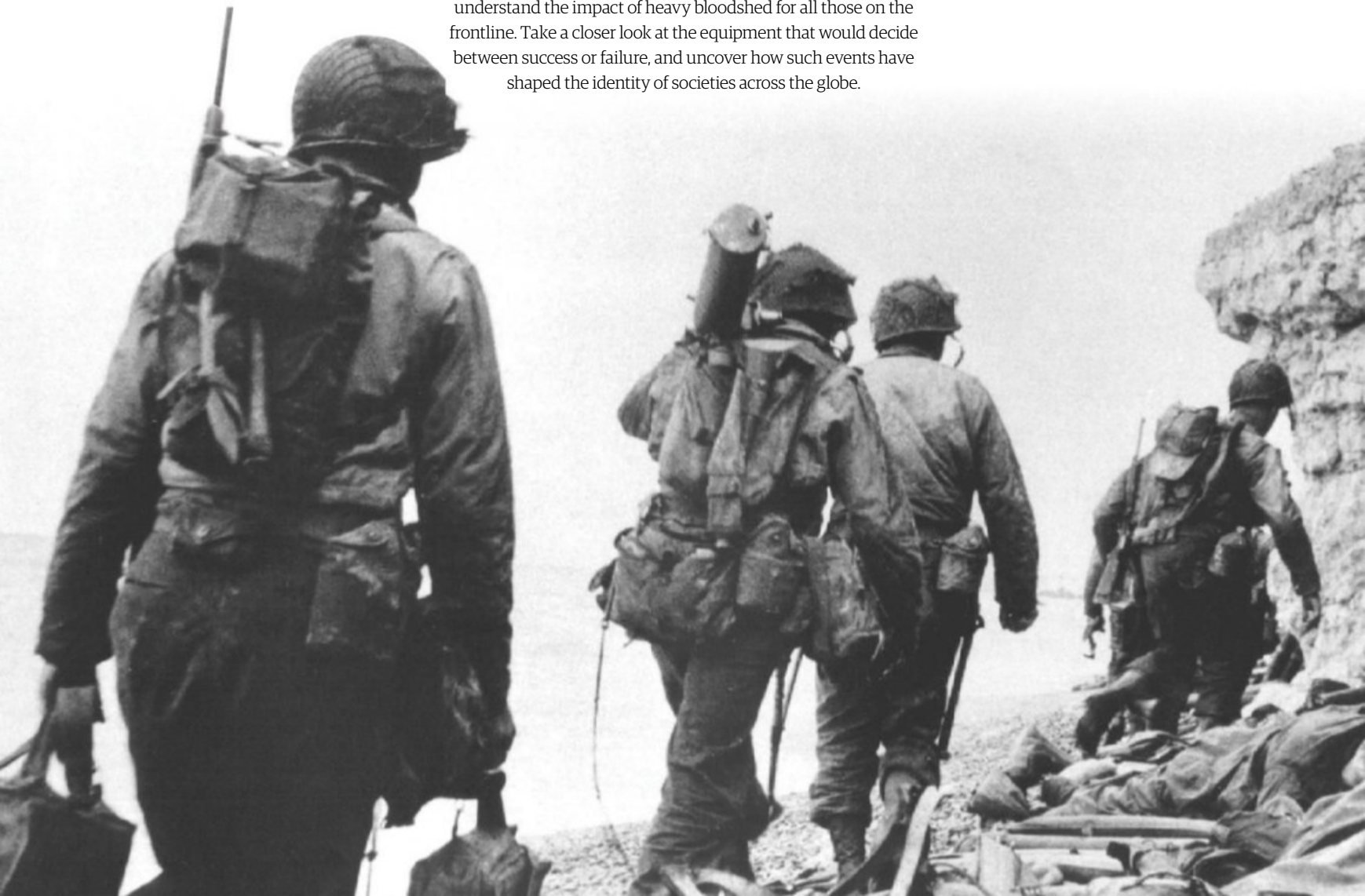


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33 Richmond Hill  
Bournemouth  
Dorset BH2 6EZ  
☎ +44 (0) 1202 586200  
Website: [www.imagine-publishing.co.uk](http://www.imagine-publishing.co.uk)

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**Printed by**  
William Gibbons, 26 Planetary Road, Willenhall, West Midlands, WV13 3XT

**Distributed in the UK, Eire & the Rest of the World by**  
Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London, E14 5HU  
Tel 0203 787 8060 [www.marketforce.co.uk](http://www.marketforce.co.uk)

**Distributed in Australia by**  
Gordon & Gotch Australia Pty Ltd, 26 Rodborough Road, Frenchs Forest, NSW, 2086 Australia  
Tel +61 2 9972 8800 [www.gordongotch.com.au](http://www.gordongotch.com.au)

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All About History Book of Greatest Battles Second Edition © 2016 Imagine Publishing Ltd

ISBN 978 1785 463 143

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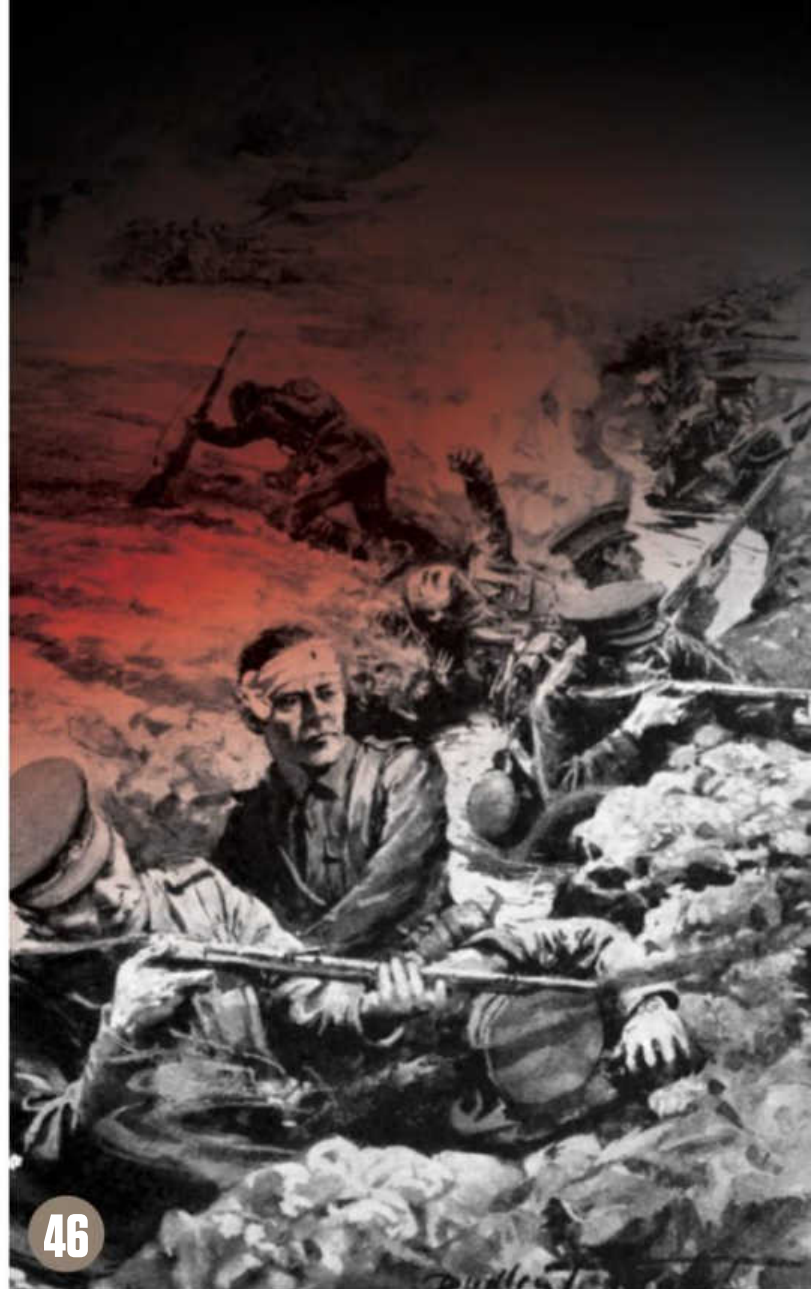
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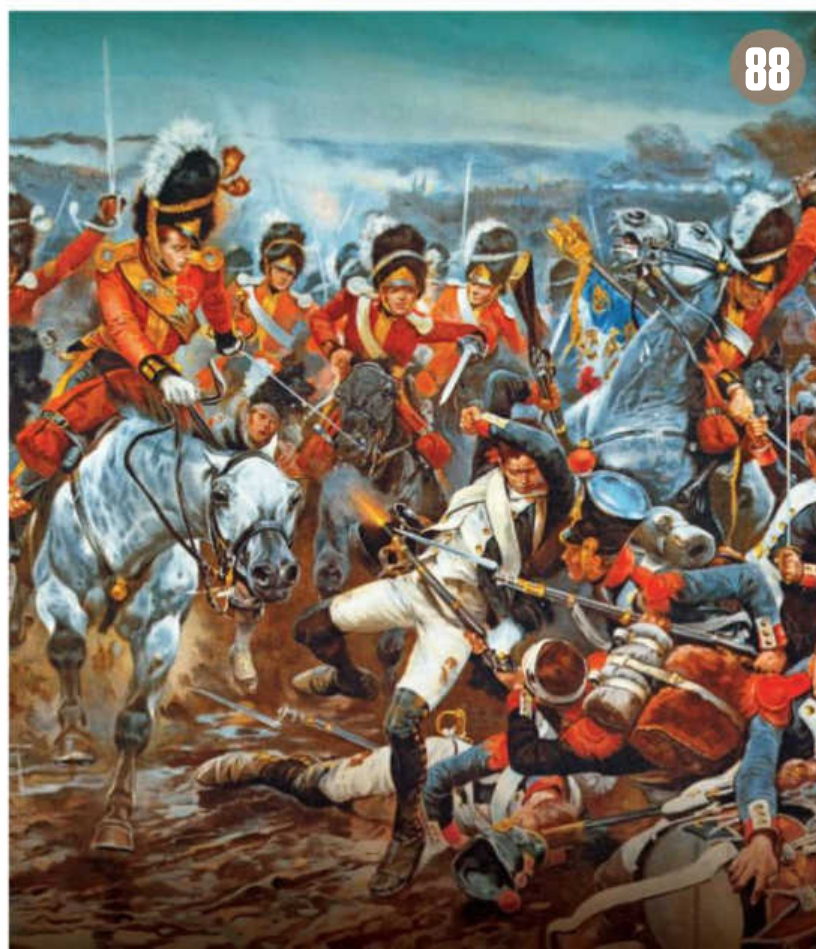
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# 10 OF HISTORY'S BLOODIEST BATTLES

Discover the death and destruction of warfare, from bitter ancient feuds to the modern world's bloodiest conflicts



Alexander crashes his cavalry into the Persian horsemen



**B**e it for feuds, gold, honour or to set men free, warfare has survived as the single most enduring human endeavour in history. While intellectual advancement has cured disease, built vast metropolises and created a truly globalised world, the pursuit of war has not diminished nor has its lethality to the men and women compelled to fight them. Relentless warfare fought by opposing states has created an ever more urgent drive to harness doctrine and technology to create dominance on the battlefield; be it Rome's heavy infantry cutting through barbarian hordes, the mounted knight running down hapless medieval infantry, siege engines levelling Renaissance cities or highly disciplined musket-armed infantry wiping out Napoleonic armies.

In the modern age, the ability to utilise sophisticated technology to simultaneously conquer the land, sea and sky has given militaries unparalleled dominance on the battlefield. Of course, technology and doctrine alone does not

win conflicts, as the Swiss military writer Antoine-Henri Jomini wrote: "The superiority of armament may increase the chances of success in war, but it does not of itself win battles." The increasing use of technology has created the need for better trained, better motivated troops, the hapless conscript fighting for his lord has been replaced with the fit seasoned professional willing and able to fight and keep fighting until the end.

Warfare has also captured the imagination of learned individuals who have studied the 'art' of waging war, developing endless volumes of text on how to inflict the maximum amount of destruction on the enemy while limiting friendly losses to an acceptable minimum. These men, be they philosophers, poets, politicians and psychopaths, have all been driven either by the promise and adventure of glorious warfare or by a patriotic need to defend their homeland. The words of Sun Tzu, Machiavelli, Clausewitz, Liddel Hart and many others have taught and inspired generals to

victory and they have also acted as a benchmark on how war should be practised, even to this day. Throughout all of these developments have been the war leaders themselves, the men who have commanded the battlefield and led men to eternal glory or disgraceful defeat using the finest weaponry their nations can muster. Despite the progress of industry and technology in creating ever more sophisticated weapons there has never been an advancement that has stopped one simple truth; that in war humans kill and are killed.

Here, ten of history's bloodiest battles are presented to show this undeniable truth. Each section has a summary at the bottom in which casualties are the closest approximations available and include those that have been killed as well as wounded. Some of the battles featured have been fought for greed, ambition or the desire for conquest. All of them have been remembered for the destruction and devastating loss of life that they caused.

# BATTLE OF ISSUS

Alexander the Great's stunning victories throughout the 3rd century BCE united an empire that stretched from the deserts of Egypt to the frontiers of India. Originating from Macedonia in northern Greece, Alexander's ambition to build his father's empire into a world-leading power plunged the whole of the eastern Mediterranean and Persia into unrelenting warfare. The Battle of Issus started his great campaign in the east, defeating the Persians in the open field and opening up the endless landmass of Persia for Alexander and his vast army. It was a battle noted for its savagery; Alexander was an uncompromising war leader who would accept nothing less than total victory when his armies were in the field.

His victory stemmed from his use of terrain, his well-trained and equipped hoplites and the poorly disciplined Persian hordes that were assembled against him. Alexander lined his hoplites in the

## 333 BCE

centre, facing the enemy across a river while positioning his cavalry on his two flanks. Darius, the Persian leader, assumed that Alexander's flanks were his weakest point and launched a full-scale cavalry assault on the left wing. Alexander ordered his cavalry positioned on his left to hold their ground while his hoplites and the Persian infantry slogged it out in the centre. Both the hoplites and the cavalry managed to hold the Persians back, creating a dangerous stalemate.

Alexander then saw that his best chance for victory was a cavalry charge on the Persian right and crashed his cavalry into the Persian cavalry on his side, breaking their line and forcing Darius to break and run. Rather than pursue, Alexander wheeled his cavalry round and charged again into the backs of the Persian infantry. Spears and shields broke under Alexander's onslaught and the invincible armies of Persia were trampled into the

dirt by the weight of his cavalry and the shields of his hoplites. With the central position lost, Darius sounded a retreat and was cut down, spreading panic through the Persian ranks. As the Persians fled, Alexander rallied his cavalry one last time and pursued the Persians until dusk, butchering them as they fled.

### COMBATANTS

Macedon Vs the Achaemenid Empire

### CASUALTIES

Macedon: 7000

Achaemenid Empire: 20,000

### LEGACY

Alexander marched into Persia and brought about the collapse of the Persian empire. He also married into the Persian royal family, cementing his hold in the Middle East.



# BATTLE OF MALPLAQUET

11 SEPTEMBER 1709

The Battle of Malplaquet was fought to the thunderous sound of cannon and the crescendo of musket fire. An alliance of countries, which included Great Britain, Prussia, Austria and the United Provinces (the Dutch Republic), went to war to secure Europe from encroaching French control of Spain and her vast overseas empire. The battle that formed part of the War of Spanish Succession represented one of the bloodiest clashes of the whole campaign. It was also the most lethal engagement fought that century. The body count of the alliance forces and French forces numbered into the tens of thousands as gunpowder, cannon fire and heavy horse turned Malplaquet field into a bloody slaughterhouse.

The French allowed the alliance forces to come on to them, giving them the advantage of defence, cutting down the Austrian and Dutch troops that were trying to flank them. In the end, the French positions on the flanks were overwhelmed but not after thousands of alliance men lay dead through

the intense barrage of firepower that confronted them. The British then smashed the French centre affecting a rout, allowing British cavalry to storm in and mop up the survivors. Despite the alliance carrying the day the casualties sustained by their troops meant that they could not go after the fleeing French forces; there simply weren't enough men to action a proper pursuit. This allowed the French to live to fight another day.

## COMBATANTS

Great Britain, Austria, United Provinces, Prussia **Vs** France and Bavaria

## CASUALTIES

The alliance: 21,000

France and Bavaria: 11,000

## LEGACY

Malplaquet saw the use of musket on a large scale, convincing commanders it was easier to hold positions than it was to attack.

The British charge into the French centre



# BATTLE OF TOWTON 29 MARCH 1461



Known as the bloodiest battle ever fought on English soil, this was one of the climactic engagements of the War of the Roses. Fought in the freezing fields of Yorkshire it pitted the House of York, who had captured the king and forced him to accept their dominance over the throne, against the House of Lancaster.

The Yorkists were outnumbered but their leader, Lord Fauconberg, ordered them to take advantage of the strong winds blowing towards the Lancastrians and use arrows to thin out their numbers. This had a devastating effect on Lancastrian moral, since their arrows could not reach the Yorkists because they were firing upwind.

The battle then descended into brutal hand-to-hand combat which lasted hours, staining the falling snow blood red. By its end, thirty thousand men lay dead on the cold Yorkshire field.

## COMBATANTS

House of York **Vs** House of Lancaster

## CASUALTIES

House of York: 10,000

House of Lancaster: 20,000

## LEGACY

With the Lancastrians defeated, the Yorkist control of the throne was secured with Edward being made king in June 1461. He was the first Yorkist king of England.

“The battle then descended into brutal hand-to-hand combat which lasted hours, staining the falling snow blood red”

# SIEGE OF BAGHDAD

29 JANUARY - 10 FEBRUARY 1258

By 1258 the Mongol horde had swept from China through Persia and was threatening the Middle Eastern kingdoms of the Islamic caliphates. Behind them was a trail of destruction, slavery and horrifying stories of unbeatable mounted warriors on small warhorses laying waste to civilisation wherever they saw it. Baghdad sitting as a golden oasis in the middle of the Arabian desert was too much of a tempting target for the Mongol ruler Hulagu Khan to pass up. Assembling the largest Mongol horde ever committed to the field in one place, nearly one hundred and fifty thousand men, Hulagu raced to Baghdad and laid siege to it. The Mongols choked off the city's supplies and then began building siege engines to destroy the walls.

Baghdad's ruler, Al-Mustai'sim was convinced that the Arab world would not suffer the ignobility of his great Islamic capital falling to the barbarians, but he overestimated his standing in foreign affairs and was left to face the horde alone. As the situation became desperate, he sent out cavalry to confront the Mongols, underestimating how adaptable and resilient they were when confronting enemy cavalry. The Mongols had laid a trap, flooding a ditch and so trapping their enemy between the water and the horde and they butchered the defenders to a man before continuing the siege, destroying defensive walls and taking the outskirts of the city. While the

defenders fought valiantly there simply wasn't enough of them to stop the horde's wave attacks.

Eventually, Al-Mustai'sim tried to offer terms to the Khan but his offers were refused, the city was sacked and its population was raped and murdered. The level of devastation the Mongols brought was horrifying; some estimates have put the number of civilians killed between two and eight hundred thousand. Thousands of civilians were run down and killed as they fled - there was no quarter from Hulagu's men. Before the Mongols, Baghdad was a centre of learning and culture, its grand library the envy of the Western world. Now the city lay in ruins, its streets choked with corpses and Al-Mustai'sim's people dead or enslaved. The Mongols marched away, leaving nothing but charred ruins.

### COMBATANTS

The Mongol Empire Vs Abbasid Caliphate

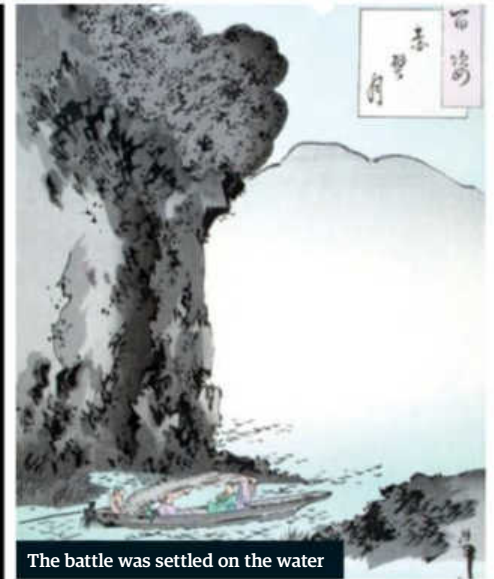
### CASUALTIES

The Mongol Empire: minimal  
Abbasid Caliphate: 50,000 soldiers and up to 800,000 civilians

### LEGACY

The Mongols secured the whole Arabian desert after the siege but were eventually forced to retreat east after in-fighting.

An ancient depiction of the siege with the Mongols positioned around the walls building siege engines



The battle was settled on the water

# BATTLE OF RED CLIFFS

201 CE

In this epic battle that went down in Chinese folk history as the story of few standing against many, two warring Chinese factions faced off against each other to decide the fate of a country. The allied forces of the southern warlords Liu Bei and Sun Quan stood against the numerically superior forces of northern plains warlord Cao Cao who wished to unite the empire under his tyrannical rule.

Bei and Quan knew they would have no chance against Cao Cao in a fair fight and that cunning was required. They initiated battle across the Yangtze river where Cao Cao's fledgling navy was vulnerable. After a small skirmish Bei and Quan pretended to surrender, sending capital ships down the river to negotiate terms. However, instead of a peace offering, Cao Cho's entire fleet was destroyed as the ships turned out to be skiffs loaded with flaming kindle. As thousands of his soldiers and sailors burned to death, Cao Cho was forced to retreat, handing victory to the southern warlords.

### COMBATANTS

Liu Bei and Sun Quan's army combined Vs Cao Cao's army

### CASUALTIES

No firm estimates but the battle involved nearly a million men with thousands of deaths on both sides

### LEGACY

Red Cliff ensured that China would not become a single nation under one ruler.

# BATTLE OF LEIPZIG

16-19 OCTOBER 1813

With over six hundred thousand troops involved, the Battle of Leipzig was the biggest engagement of manpower committed to a battle before World War I. It was fought for pride and empires, as Napoleon Bonaparte plunged Europe into total war to build his dynasty in the Germanic hinterland. Against him stood a collection of nations determined to resist his dictatorial will, including Prussia, Sweden, Russia and Austria in a grand coalition.

They met in the fields surrounding Leipzig for an epic showdown that killed over a hundred thousand men. Napoleon's plan was simple: destroy the huge army the Coalition had assembled piecemeal, as he had done in previous campaigns through the unity of his Grande Armée. On the first day this appeared to be working, two bloody engagements against Austrian and Prussian troops resulted in Napoleon commanding the small town of Leipzig and much of the surrounding

countryside. However, Napoleon failed to follow up on these victories and allowed the two armies to regroup and receive reinforcements from the other armies of the Coalition nations. On 18 October the largest engagement ever fought in the 19th century took place.

Napoleon had retreated back to Leipzig and was determined to hold at all costs, but the French troops were now trapped and being hammered by endless Coalition infantry assaults. The only way out was to fight to a bridge leading westward to the safety of France. Seeing his men being slaughtered through the sheer weight of the Coalition's numbers, Napoleon ordered a strategic retreat to the bridge which was now being threatened by the Coalition's advance. In the ensuing panic a frightened French corporal blew the bridge up after he thought the Coalition was going to take it, just as the French soldiers were retreating over it. The

explosion flew hundreds of hapless soldiers into the air and stranded thousands more in Leipzig. In the ensuing chaos, Napoleon made it to the western bank to safety and stayed long enough to watch his army completely disintegrate around him. It was the first time in his career that another army had inflicted such a defeat on him in the field.

## COMBATANTS

French Grande Armée Vs The Coalition army

## CASUALTIES

French Grande Armée: 60,000

The Coalition: 54,000

## LEGACY

The Coalition was able to maintain the independence of the German region of the Rhine. Napoleon was forced back to France and eventually abdicated a year later.

“Napoleon had retreated back to Leipzig and was determined to hold at all costs, but the French troops were now trapped”



Prussian cavalry charge at the battle of Leipzig

# BATTLE OF SALSU 612 CE

The Battle of Salsu holds the grisly reputation as being one of the most lethal open-field battles in military history. Fought by the Korean kingdom of Goguryeo against the invading armies of imperial China, the battle killed over three hundred thousand men within hours of commencing on the Korean northern plains. In 612 CE, Imperial China under the Sui dynasty was bent on expansion to secure its hold on domestic politics. It saw the small kingdoms of Korea as a perfect area for conquest, as the Koreans were traditionally seen as weaker in both military and political aspects by the Chinese.

Over a million Chinese soldiers marched into Korea to conquer its people and destroy the Goguryeo kingdom in the north of the country in one of the largest land invasions ever attempted by imperial China. The Koreans were not prepared to accept subjection to Chinese ambitions and fought an effective guerrilla war against the advance.

The Chinese were constantly harassed by the retreating Koreans, who wore down their huge army, diminishing its moral and frustrating Chinese efforts to secure the Korean countryside. The Chinese eventually reached a shallow river north of Pyongyang where the Koreans had stopped running and stood to face their invaders.

Korean General Euji Mundeok knew he had no chance of winning a set piece battle against the invaders, so he harnessed the power of nature. The river the Chinese were crossing was dammed upstream, which meant the water was shallow, so Euji opened the dam just as the Chinese were in the middle of fording the river, creating a huge wave of water that rushed down the valley. The water moved so quickly that the Chinese had no chance to react - the whole area flooded, drowning the Chinese warriors in their bulky armour. What was left of the army struggled to recover itself

before a huge Korean cavalry attack swept down on top of them, running down the hapless survivors. The Chinese had to retreat so quickly that many of the soldiers could not outrun the bloodthirsty Koreans, creating a trail of blood and death all the way back to the Chinese-Korean border at the Liadong Peninsula.

## COMBATANTS

The Korean kingdom of Goguryeo Vs Imperial China

## CASUALTIES

Korean Kingdom of Goguryeo: minimal  
Imperial China: 300,300

## LEGACY

The Sui dynasty fell in decline through loss of manpower and was eventually replaced by the Tang. Goguryeo was left in peace.



# BATTLE OF THE SOMME

1 JULY - 18 NOVEMBER 1916

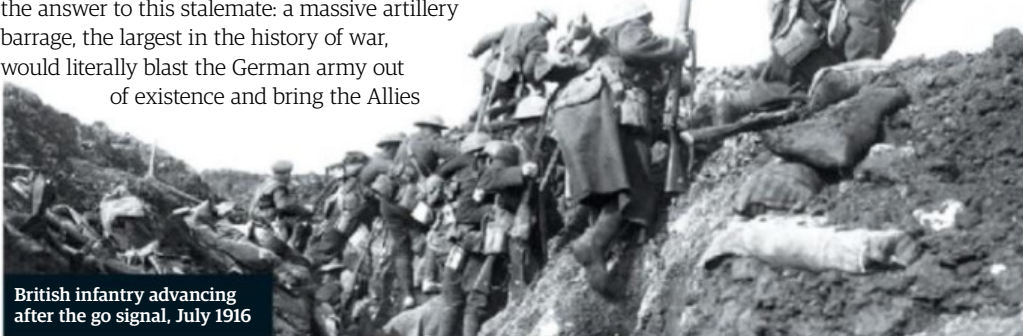
In terms of body count, the Battle of the Somme represents one of the bloodiest slaughters in military history. The number of troops involved in the battle was staggering and so was the number of casualties. By July 1916, World War I had been grinding on for nearly two years without a breakthrough for either side. Trenches had zipped up the fronts of the Allied and Central Powers' armies with a treacherous no-man's-land in the middle where both sides fought to create progress.

Sir Douglas Haig, supreme commander of the British Army in the battle, was convinced he had the answer to this stalemate: a massive artillery barrage, the largest in the history of war, would literally blast the German army out of existence and bring the Allies

an easy victory. Then all the Allied forces would have to do was stroll through no-man's-land and continue on to the destruction of the entire German military. His war-winning strategy was ambitious bordering on fanciful. There was little chance British artillery could lift all of the barb wire defending the German positions or clear all the German machine gun nests. On the first day of

the battle alone, the Allies lost seventy thousand men, killed and wounded for little or no tangible gains. Most of these casualties were sustained when Allied troops were 'strolling' through no-man's-land, only to be unceremoniously cut down by German machine-gun fire or blown to bits with artillery shells.

While the attrition successfully wore down the Germans and eventually restricted their ability to wage war on other fronts, the massive and extensive battle still ended in a stalemate after nearly a million men had been killed.



British infantry advancing after the go signal, July 1916

## COMBATANTS

British Empire and France Vs German Empire

## CASUALTIES

British Empire and France: 623,907

German Empire: 400,000-500,000

## LEGACY

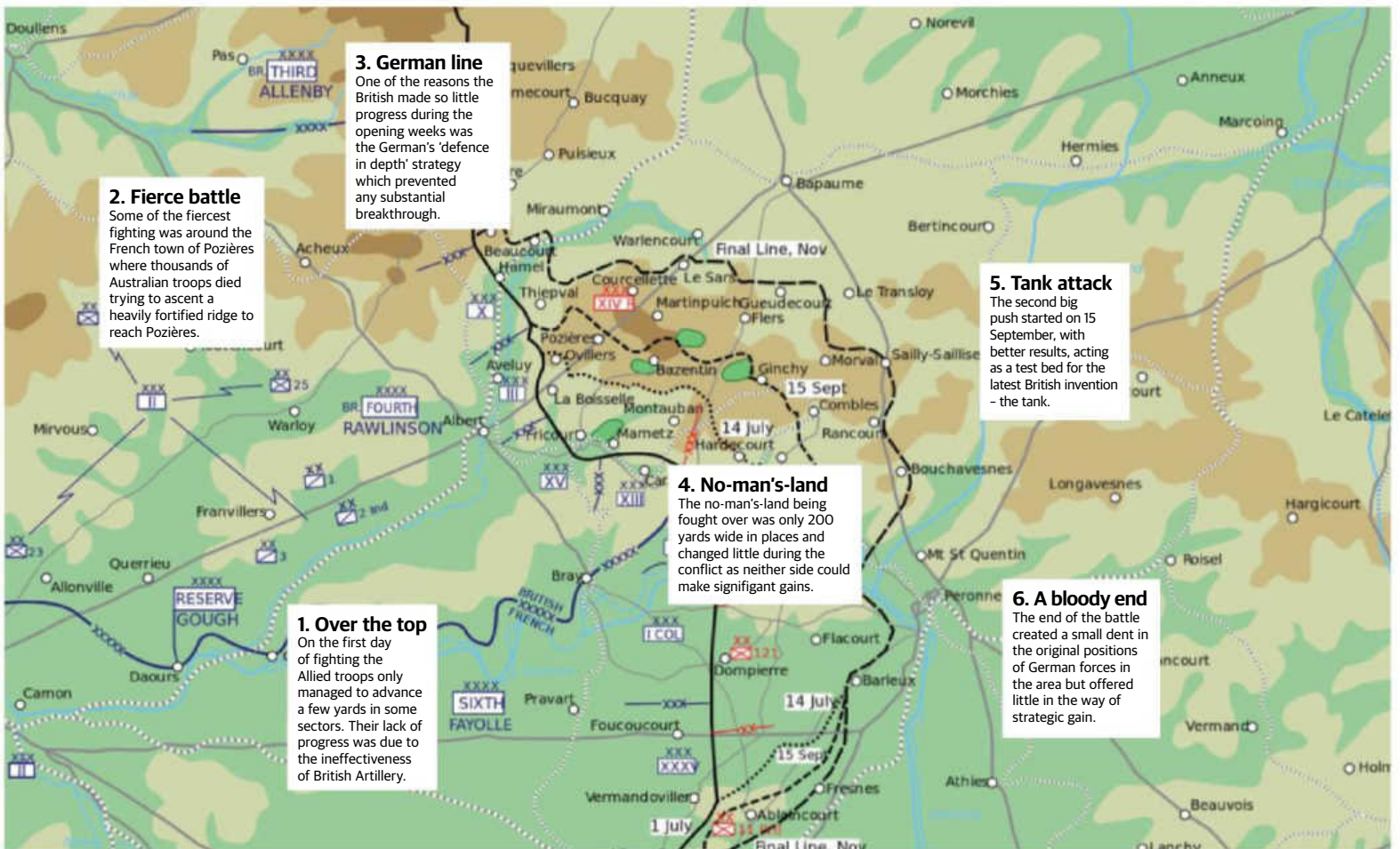
The tragedy of the Somme was that Haig learned the wrong lessons and became convinced the strategy of attrition was a successful one.



New Zealand infantry resting in a forward trench, September 1916



British machine gun team ready for the enemy



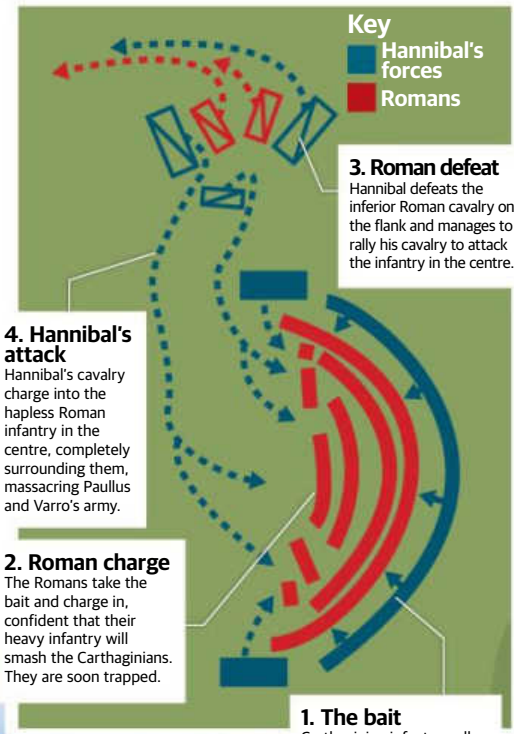
# BATTLE OF CANNAE 216 BCE

Cannae went down in history as the worst defeat ever experienced by the Roman republic and its war machine. Roman commanders Lucius Paullus and Gaius Varro were out-smarted and outmanoeuvred by Hannibal of Carthage who used the terrain, the strengths of his Carthaginian troops and the weather to turn the Apulian plain into a killing ground.

In 216 BCE Hannibal - considered by many to be one of the greatest ever military tactician - had crossed the Alps and conquered large parts of Italy and many of the Roman cities within the peninsula had defected to his side to the extent that his armies were threatening Rome itself. The Roman republic decided that enough was enough; Hannibal would have to be confronted. Paullus and Varro were elected to lead an army to defeat him and restore the honour of Rome. Varro was ambitious, overconfident and anxious to defeat Hannibal and claim victory for himself at the expense of his co-commander. When he met Hannibal's army at Cannae he had nearly forty thousand men behind him and saw no reason to wait and allow Hannibal to slip through his fingers.

Varro lined up his men in a deep formation of heavy infantry designed to smash the Carthaginians and drown them in the Aufidus River that was behind Hannibal's army. However, in his haste for a quick victory he left his flanks dangerously exposed to envelopment and Hannibal seized this opportunity. He quickly attacked the Roman flanks with his better-trained cavalry and told his infantry in the centre to pull back slowly, baiting the Roman infantry to march forward exposing their flanks. As the Romans marched further into the enclosing semicircle Hannibal's men surrounded them and hacked the Romans to pieces. The Romans were hemmed in so tightly they could not bring their heavy shields up to properly defend themselves and they were slaughtered. Some did escape, literally having to cut their way through the Carthaginian horde that had them surrounded. However, most died huddled together in Hannibal's trap, as the ancient Greek scholar Polybius wrote: "As their outer ranks were continually cut down, and the survivors forced to pull back and huddle together, they were finally all killed where they stood."

"The Romans were hemmed in so tightly they could not bring their heavy shields up to properly defend themselves"

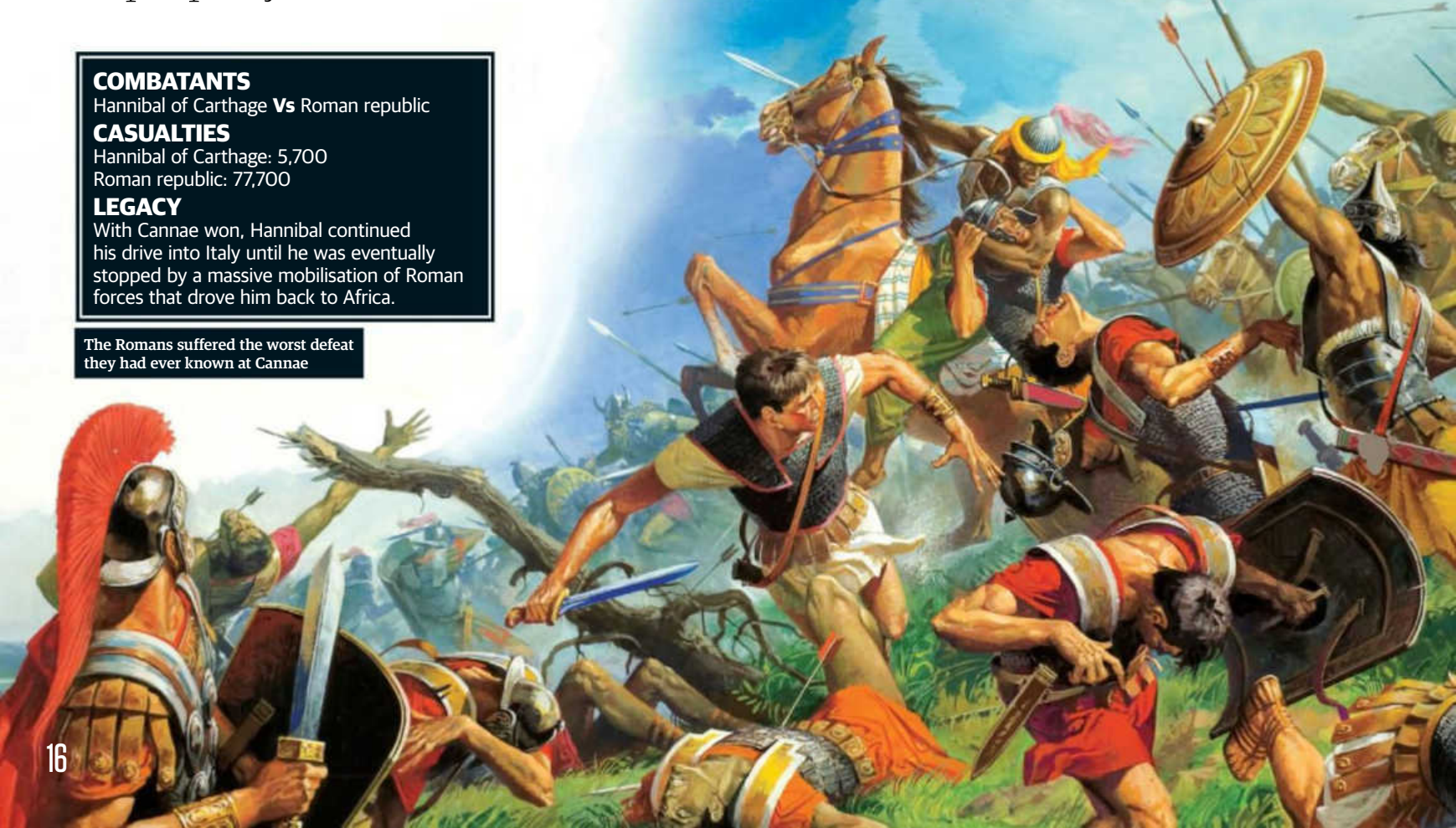


**COMBATANTS**  
 Hannibal of Carthage **Vs** Roman republic

**CASUALTIES**  
 Hannibal of Carthage: 5,700  
 Roman republic: 77,700

**LEGACY**  
 With Cannae won, Hannibal continued his drive into Italy until he was eventually stopped by a massive mobilisation of Roman forces that drove him back to Africa.

The Romans suffered the worst defeat they had ever known at Cannae





# BATTLE OF STALINGRAD

23 AUGUST 1942 - 2 FEBRUARY 1943

In the grim concrete nightmare of Stalingrad a titanic clash of mechanised military might unfolded, engulfing the city and the whole of southern Russia in a cloud of ash and smoke. It was a battle that decided the fate of the Soviet Union and the future of Hitler's lebensraum in western Russia. Hitler's obsession with taking Stalingrad in the southern Volga defied strategic sense; the city bore little strategic value other than a tractor factory and the name of his greatest adversary - Stalin. Regardless of this he insisted the city was taken, to weaken the moral of the Soviets and presumably end the war on the Eastern Front for good.

The Soviets were in disarray for much of the struggle and at one point only controlled a narrow edge of the city centre with their backs to the Volga river - Nazi victory seemed certain. However, time was on the Red Army's side with German supply lines stretched to the limit and cold weather cutting them off from re-supply. Stalin had also brought up another weapon; his best field commander, General Georgi Zhukov. Hard-drinking and foul-mouthed, Zhukov was the type of bullish uncompromising

leader that the Red Army needed to defeat the fascist invader. By November 1942, Zhukov had put a plan in motion to relieve Soviet troops in Stalingrad and encircle the German sixth army. Codenamed Operation Uranus, the Soviets smashed through the German lines at their weakest, where Romanian troops were stationed, and effectively encircled the German troops around Stalingrad, cutting them off from the rest of the German army in Russia and making them vulnerable.

The Red Army in the city was told to hold on at all costs and create a living hell for the Germans. This was achieved through endless sniper attacks, booby traps and constant attrition charges on German lines. As one German NCO put it: "Factory walls, assembly lines, the superstructures collapse under the storm of bombs ... but the enemy simply reappears and utilises these newly created ruins to fortify his positions." General Paulus, the commander of the sixth army, radioed back to Germany to try and convince Hitler to allow him to pull back but the Fuehrer would not hear of it. Paulus was told to hold his position or die trying.

By February 1943, with most of his army either starving, suffering from late stage frostbite or dead, Paulus surrendered to the Red Army that had completely surrounded him. In Berlin, a mass rally was held to commemorate the heroic sacrifice of the sixth army - the fact that they surrendered was not broadcast in Germany. Stalingrad had been reduced to a tangled carpet of smouldering metal and concrete. In the words of one German officer just before the ceasefire: "Animals flee this hell ... only men endure."

## COMBATANTS

The Axis (Germany, Romania, Italy, Hungary, Croatia) Vs the Soviet Union

## CASUALTIES

The Axis: 850,000

Soviet Union: Approx. 1,150,000

## LEGACY

The German army went into decline on the Eastern Front after Stalingrad, allowing the Soviets to take the offence.

Intense house-by-house fighting made up the majority of the engagements within Stalingrad



A picture of a well-fed Soviet soldier capturing a frostbitten German combatant



After months of fighting, Stalingrad is finally liberated. The red banner flies over what's left of its square



### Red rivers

Surrounded by a fresh and savage defending force, even the famous Persian Immortals could not resist the Greeks, and soon the rout transformed into slaughter, with thousands upon thousands of the Persian soldiers cut down. Reports indicate that tributaries and nearby ocean waters turned red with blood and many Persian troops who attempted to flee inland fell into nearby swamps and drowned. By the battle's end, 6,400 of the Persian army lay dead and seven of their ships had been destroyed or captured.

### Greek charge

Accounts of the battle indicate that a key opening moment in its outcome was a high-speed and totally unexpected charge by the Greek forces. Prior to Marathon, the Persian forces had become accustomed to repelling forces with long-range weaponry, with thousands of bowmen picking Greek soldiers off from afar. At Marathon that was not possible and driven by hatred for the invading enemy, the Greeks charged hundreds of metres until they collided with the Persian front line with brutal force.

### Athenian might

Athens was the most powerful city-state in Greece during the first Persian invasion of Greece and at Marathon that showed, with 10,000 professional, well-equipped and trained Athenian hoplites joining with 1,000 Plataeans to repel the much larger invading force. Meeting the Persian troops in a bay near the town of Marathon, the outnumbered Greeks overwhelmed the enemy forces with a mixture of tactical prowess and patriotic fighting verve, driving them from the mainland and ending their invasion.

# BATTLE OF MARATHON

MARATHON, GREECE SEPTEMBER 490 BCE

Long before those 300 Spartans held Persian king Xerxes I at the Hot Gates, another battle between Greece and Persia saw the Greeks withstanding the greatest military force the Earth had ever seen and consequently helped secure a democracy in its fledgling years. After all, Xerxes' burning desire to subjugate Greece was bestowed upon him by his father Darius I whose troops, starting in 492 BCE, began making their way to the Greek mainland while besieging any Greek islands and cities their massive fleet came across.

The Persian fleet dispatched by Darius I was colossal. According to Herodotus, the Persian invasion force consisted of 600 triremes, which could hold a fighting force numbering between 25,000 and 100,000 men. The Greeks had never seen this scale of force before and, as news broke of its various scalps on its way to the mainland - including the crushing of the Ionian revolt in Asia Minor - fear and concern grew. If the might of Persia came knocking on the doors of Athens, the voice of the people's ideology they were currently cultivating would be eradicated; the dream of democracy crushed under Darius' foot.

By 490 BCE, the invaders - led by admiral Datis and Darius' own brother Artaphernes - had brought the Greek Cyclades islands under Persian control, besieged and sacked the city of Eretria and were now headed for Athens itself. Darius had long wanted to punish Athens for aiding the Ionian revolt and generally resisting Persia's expansion into the West, so taking down Athens would be the feather in the proverbial hat. Buoyed by his resounding victory at Eretria, Datis made a beeline for the Greek capital.

Datis chose the bay of Marathon to land his invading force. It was near the small town of Marathon and lay roughly 40 kilometres (25 miles) from the Athens. In response, the Athenians quickly dispatched their most experienced general, Miltiades,

along with 10,000 soldiers. The Greek strategy was to block the Persian army at Marathon and prevent their ingress. Meanwhile, help from Sparta would be sent for, with the larger Persian army checked until the Spartans and Athenians could unite and eradicate the invading force.

Arriving at Marathon, Miltiades quickly put the Greek plan in action, blocking off the exits and bracing for a Persian attack. For five days that attack didn't come, and while this puzzled Miltiades and his generals, they were unconcerned as each day that passed brought the Spartan support troops closer. The reason Datis delayed his attack is not documented in historical sources, but it is believed that indecision regarding how the Persians' deadly cavalry should be used was a primary factor.

What is clear is that little of the Persian cavalry was deployed at Marathon and, on the fifth day of stalemate, something gave. Whether Miltiades realised that without cavalry the Persians were vulnerable to a direct charge and decided to move against them, or that Datis grew impatient and pressed the offensive is not known. But on the fifth day the Greeks charged down the Persian enemy in a massive shock assault, breaking their weak flanks and enveloping their centre. Indeed, despite being outnumbered two to one, the Greeks secured a decisive victory.

The fallout from Marathon was huge. The Persians, who the Greeks expected to make a resurgent attack on Athens, were so badly broken by the battle that instead they were forced to return straight back to Persia, angering King Darius I greatly and setting in train the second Persian invasion of Greece, undertaken by Xerxes after Darius' death. By contrast, the victory at Marathon was a defining moment for the young Athenian democracy, kick-starting a golden age for the city that would last almost 300 years.

### Persians outflanked

The second key part of the battle was the Greek leader Miltiades' decision to arrange the Greek troops with reinforced flanks in an ox-horn arrangement. This, after the initial surprising charge, drew the Persians' best troops towards the centre of the Greek lines, allowing them to be enveloped once the Persian flanks broke. The enlarged Athenian wings soon routed the inferior Persian levies on the flanks and surrounded the Persian centre.

## Persia

TROOPS 25,000

CAVALRY 1,000

LOSSES 6,400

### KEY LEADER

#### DATIS

The Median admiral who led the first campaign of the Persian Wars. While he had some battle experience, he misjudged his battle tactics at Marathon, playing into the strengths of his enemy. It is unknown whether Datis survived Marathon or not.

#### Strength:

Personally commanded the elite Persian Immortal troops.

#### Weakness:

Overly confident; one-note tactician.



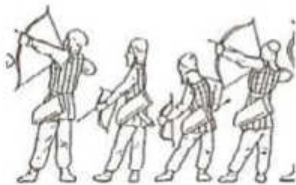
### KEY UNIT

#### PERSIAN IMMORTAL

The elite fighting force of the Achaemenid Empire. Lightly armoured, their agility and razor-sharp swords and daggers made them fearsome foes. They could supposedly not be beaten in battle.

**Strength:** Elite fighters; excelled in both long and short-range combat.

**Weakness:** Not actually immortal.



### SECONDARY UNIT

#### ARCHER

Darius' missile troops were the best archers in the world. They frequently racked up many kills at long-range. The Greeks' bronze breastplates and large shields caused them more problems, however.

**Strength:** Capable of picking off enemy troops from afar.

**Weakness:** Poor armour; little short-range combat ability.

## 01 BATTLE LINES DRAWN

The last battle of the first Persian invasion of Greece began with the two armies closing to a distance of 1,500 metres (4,900 feet), the Greek forces arranged in a defensive formation pinning the Persian army against the coast. If the Persians managed to get around, then Athens and all of Greece was theirs for the taking.

## 02 Stacking the flanks

The Greek army consisted primarily of hoplites who, while well-trained and equipped, were vulnerable to cavalry, whose agility and speed led to them being easily outflanked in the open, so Miltiades stacked his forces' flanks. Persian cavalry was some of the best in the world, with their horses world-renowned for their speed. It must have been a surprise for the Greeks to see that the invading Persian force at Marathon had almost no cavalry, instead mostly made up from archers and Persian Immortals, the supposedly indestructible elite fighters.

## 03 "At them!"

Despite outnumbering the Greek soldiers two to one, Persian force seemed hesitant, refusing to initiate battle, probably as they had little experience in fighting Greek hoplites up close. Miltiades took advantage of this and with one simple order: "At them", he unleashed a massive Greek charge. According to Herodotus, the Greek troops charged at the Persians while shouting their famous war cry: "Eleleu! Eleleu!"

## 04 A rain of arrows unleashed

Upon the instigation of the charge Datis immediately ordered his archers to fire upon the advancing horde, who appeared to be on a suicide mission. Upon his order, a huge barrage of missiles were unleashed that rained down upon the advancing Greeks. However, due to the speed at which the Greeks were advancing, the inability of the Persians to retreat backwards to gain a better firing position and the sturdy armour and shields carried by their enemy, the casualties were few.

## 05 Brutal first impact

The impact of the Greek charge was devastating. The Athenian hoplites had honed their battle prowess against other Greeks who fought in phalanxes, with large shields and bronze armour. However, the Persians - especially their archers - merely wore cloth and quilted jerkins and when Miltiades and his men connected, there was nothing but the sound of metal crashing into flesh and bone. The Persians troops were completely unprepared for such an assault and the initial shock left their battle line in tatters.

## 06 A bronze wave

The bronze wave of Athenian breastplates pushed forwards. Datis redistributed his best fighters, the feared Persian Immortals, to shore it up. For a little while, this succeeded, checking Miltiades in his continuous advance toward the moored Persian fleet.



## 10 Persian fleet flees

After capturing seven Persian ships, the Greeks had their victory, watching the tattered remnants of the invading force sail away into the Aegean Sea. The body count told a tale of one of the most crushing victories the Greeks had ever scored. 6,400 dead Persians were counted lying on the battlefield, while only 203 Greeks had perished. But Miltiades had no time to bury the dead and immediately ordered his troops to begin their march back to the undefended Athens in case of a reprisal. No attack came, though; the first Persian invasion of Greece had ended.

## 09 Drowned in the swamps

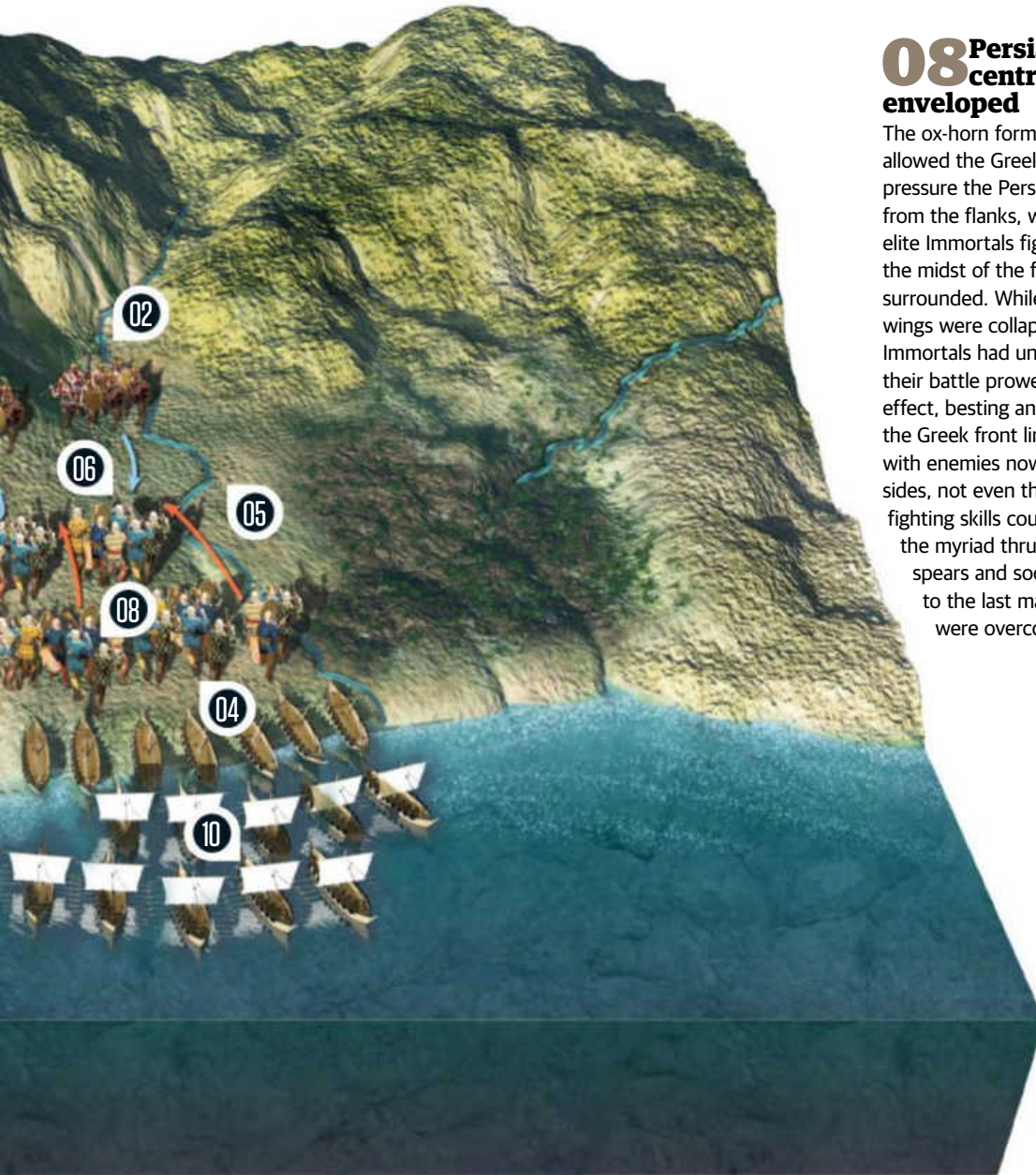
Upon the collapse of the Persian centre, the remaining Persian troops began to flee. Most fled to their moored ships and were chased and harassed by the Greeks, with many of them cut down as they retreated. Others, who had been cut off from making a dash for the vessels, fled inland and - unfamiliar with the local terrain - fell into a series of nearby swamps and drowned. Whether Datis died on the battlefield at Marathon, fled back to Persia or drowned is unknown to this day.

## 08 Persian centre enveloped

The ox-horn formation allowed the Greek wings to pressure the Persian centre from the flanks, with the elite Immortals fighting in the midst of the fray soon surrounded. While the Persian wings were collapsing, the Immortals had unleashed their battle prowess to deadly effect, besting and checking the Greek front line. However, with enemies now on all sides, not even their insane fighting skills could withstand the myriad thrusts of Greek spears and soon, fighting to the last man, they were overcome.

## 07 PERSIAN WINGS ROUTED

With Datis' best fighters now holding up the remains of the Persian centre, their wings were poorly protected. Miltiades, who had stocked his wings in defence of the Athenians being out-flanked, took advantage.



<b>Greece</b>	
TROOPS	10,000
CAVALRY	UNKNOWN
LOSSES	203



## LEADER

### MILTIADES

A renowned Olympic chariot racer. His aggressive tactics at Marathon won the battle, but his temperament and high opinion of himself would lead to his downfall, with political rivals in Athens charging him with treason. He died in prison.

**Strength:** Tactical leader with great war experience.

**Weakness:** High self-esteem could lead to rashness on the field.

## KEY UNIT

### ATHENIAN HOPLITE

Citizen soldiers renowned for their professionalism, Greek hoplites fought with spear and shield. Their primary battle tactic was facing the enemy in formations such as the phalanx.

**Strength:** Well-trained and equipped; excelled in close-quarter combat.

**Weakness:** Few in numbers compared to enemy forces.



## SECONDARY UNIT

### SLAVE

Convicts were often offered military service as a way to escape prison, with many taking up the offer and joining the hoplites. However, they usually died before achieving this.

**Strength:** Driven by freedom, granted by successful military service.

**Weakness:** Ill-disciplined; equipped with basic weaponry.

## Bound by tradition

So why did only 300 Spartans march to meet the Persians? Why didn't Sparta react with a full-strength army? The answer lies in the festival of Carneia, a religious and cultural annual Spartan celebration that forbade fielding an army against an enemy.

## Gathering Greek allies

Don't let Frank Miller's comic *300*, or Zack Snyder's film of the same name fool you - although 300 Spartans did defend the pass at Thermopylae, they weren't alone. In fact, they were joined by about 7,000 more men from places like Thespieae, Thebes, Mycenae and Corinth.

## Prophecies and planning

Before leaving Sparta, King Leonidas consulted an oracle, who foresaw his death at Thermopylae. Resigned to his fate but refusing to cower in the face of such destiny, the king chose 300 men from the royal bodyguard who had sons to carry on their bloodlines in their stead.

## Dressed for war

In reality, the Spartans that met the Persian armies at Thermopylae weren't bare chested or wearing capes - they would have been clad in traditional armour plating and plumed helmets. In fact, up close, Spartan armour was almost indistinguishable from other Greek battle plate.

# BATTLE OF THERMOPYLAE

THERMOPYLAE, GREECE 480 BCE

## Might in sheer numbers

While the account of Greek historian Herodotus places the forces at Xerxes I's command at more than 2.5 million men, that figure was more likely to have been in the region of 70-300,000. This army was drawn from all across the empire and included his elite warrior sect, the Immortals.

Immortalised on stage, screen and the pages of literature and sequential art, the battle between 300 war-hardened Spartans and the armies of the entire Persian Empire has rightfully become the stuff of legend. The fact that such a confrontation can be called a 'battle' considering the sheer one-sided nature of the participants gives you some idea just how brutally efficient the warriors of Greece truly were. The Battle of Thermopylae was one of many skirmishes of the Greco-Persian Wars, a series of conflicts that raged between the Achaemenid Empire of Persia and the free city-states of Greece between 499 BCE and 449 BCE.

The Persian Empire had risen around the mid-6th century BCE and expanded exponentially across Asia, Europe and the Mediterranean; eventually its eyes fell on the fragmented states of Greece. Established by Cyrus the Great in 550 BCE, the Achaemenid Empire (also known as the First Persian Empire) became the largest imperial domain of the ancient world thanks to its impressive armies that swelled with every new territory conquered.

For the Persians, Greece remained a distant principality of little consideration, but a political misunderstanding between the two would set the stage for war and invasion. The Persian monarch, King Darius, demanded gifts of water and earth from every known land as symbols of their obedience and would send emissaries across the Persian Empire and beyond to collect them. One such emissary was met by the Greeks, and believing the man had come to organise an alliance with Persia, he was duly sent back to his masters with a suitable offering in tow.

When news of the Greek pledge reached the Athenian Assembly - the governmental construct that oversaw the running of Athenian society - it immediately distanced itself from the offering, keen to preserve its status of independence. Upon hearing of the foreign principality's refusal to recognise his sovereignty, the Persian monarch dispatched a fleet to bring the rebels to heel.

The campaign proved a disaster for Darius when his armies were defeated by the Greeks at the Battle of Marathon in 490 BCE, and when the king died four years later, it fell to his son Xerxes to continue the campaign. Xerxes I spent four years amassing a grand army powerful enough to subdue all Greece and the defiant Athenians.

The Athenians knew the might of the Persian war hammer would strike, so in 482 BCE, a plan was put in place to build a huge fleet of ships to tackle the Persian sea offensive. However, Athens realised it could not fight on both sea *and* land, and sought an alliance of sorts with one of the other Greek states that had rejected Persian advances - Sparta. The Spartans were a hardy breed, born fighters who trained from childhood to kill with brutal efficiency. Despite the cultural and political differences between the two peoples, they agreed a coalition with Athens.

The alliance soon learned that Xerxes I's mighty army, believed to have been between 70,000 and 300,000-strong, would pass through the narrow southern pass of Thermopylae. A plan was devised to funnel the Persians in that pass and use the brutal ground tactics of the Greeks to weather the storm and drive the invaders out of Greece.



## Greek city-states

**TROOPS** 7,000

**CAVALRY** 0



### KING LEONIDAS I

#### LEADER

Plutarch tells us that the fearsome Spartan leader uttered the iconic phrase, "Tonight, we dine in Hell!" at the battle.

**Strengths** Superior infantry tactics and training; use of the Phalanx.

**Weakness** Sparta was forbidden from going to battle during Carneia, so could only send 300 men.



### THESPIAN ARMY

#### UNIT

King Demophilus of Thespieae brought 700 of his men to support the Spartans at Thermopylae.

**Strengths** Strong allies with the state of Sparta, Thesopian men worked well with the Spartans.

**Weakness** Demophilus, like Leonidas, fought with his men at Thermopylae, so was vulnerable from the start.



### THE PHALANX

#### KEY WEAPON

This battle tactic (later mirrored by the Romans) saw the Greeks create an impenetrable 'box' of overlapped shields and spears.

**Strengths** Being protected against archer volleys enabled Spartans to push infantry and cavalry back.

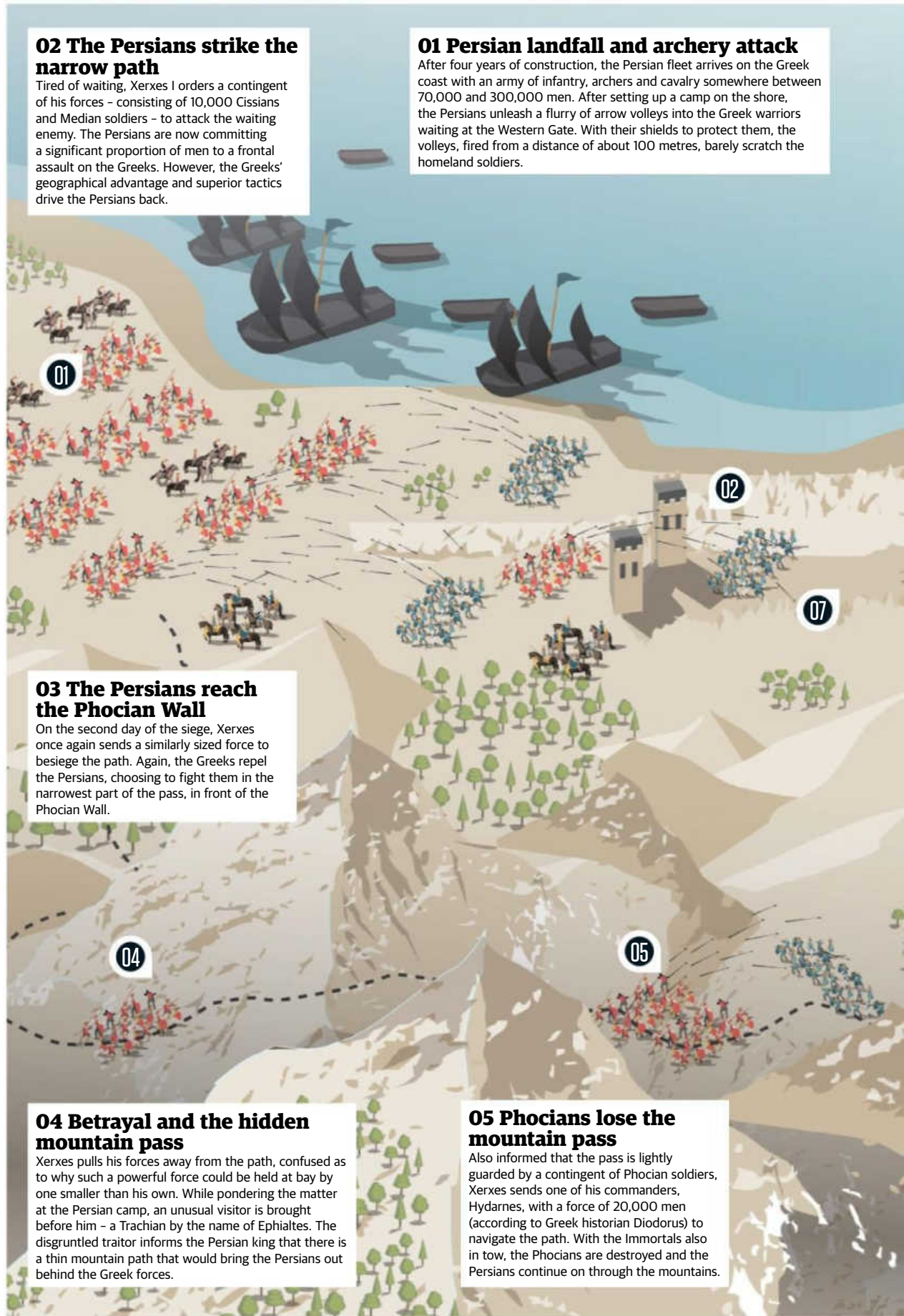
**Weakness** Could be slow moving, allowing cavalry to circle and attack.

### 02 The Persians strike the narrow path

Tired of waiting, Xerxes I orders a contingent of his forces – consisting of 10,000 Cissians and Median soldiers – to attack the waiting enemy. The Persians are now committing a significant proportion of men to a frontal assault on the Greeks. However, the Greeks' geographical advantage and superior tactics drive the Persians back.

### 01 Persian landfall and archery attack

After four years of construction, the Persian fleet arrives on the Greek coast with an army of infantry, archers and cavalry somewhere between 70,000 and 300,000 men. After setting up a camp on the shore, the Persians unleash a flurry of arrow volleys into the Greek warriors waiting at the Western Gate. With their shields to protect them, the volleys, fired from a distance of about 100 metres, barely scratch the homeland soldiers.



### 03 The Persians reach the Phocian Wall

On the second day of the siege, Xerxes once again sends a similarly sized force to besiege the path. Again, the Greeks repel the Persians, choosing to fight them in the narrowest part of the pass, in front of the Phocian Wall.

### 04 Betrayal and the hidden mountain pass

Xerxes pulls his forces away from the path, confused as to why such a powerful force could be held at bay by one smaller than his own. While pondering the matter at the Persian camp, an unusual visitor is brought before him – a Thracian by the name of Ephialtes. The disgruntled traitor informs the Persian king that there is a thin mountain path that would bring the Persians out behind the Greek forces.

### 05 Phocians lose the mountain pass

Also informed that the pass is lightly guarded by a contingent of Phocian soldiers, Xerxes sends one of his commanders, Hydarnes, with a force of 20,000 men (according to Greek historian Diodorus) to navigate the path. With the Immortals also in tow, the Phocians are destroyed and the Persians continue on through the mountains.



## 10 The Persians invade Greece

With the initial Greek resistance crushed, Xerxes's Persian forces swarm into Greece by land and raze almost every city and town they pass through on their way to Athens. The city itself is evacuated and the bulk of the Athenian people and its armies hold up at the isthmus of Corinth. The Greeks then concoct a plan to lure the Persians into the straits of Salamis, which, along with help from the elements, sees most of Xerxes's fleets destroyed. Coupled with a Greek land victory at Plataea less than a year later, it effectively ends the invasion.

## 09 Retreat to Kolonos Hill

Xerxes's forces destroy the Phocian Wall, forcing the Greeks to continue fighting off the Persians past the Eastern Gate and out towards the other side of the narrow path. The Immortals now appear from the mountain path, which forces the remaining Greek forces to withdraw to the top of the nearby Kolonos Hill. The Persians then hammer the Greeks with wave after wave of arrows. They are butchered down to the last man.

## 08 King Leonidas falls in battle

This attack on the Greek position is the most savage of the Persian siege, and with more forces added over time and the threat of the Immortals arriving behind them at any moment, the Greek advantage begins to wear down. Volleys of arrows strike the Greek position as the fighting intensifies. King Leonidas, who was leading his men from the front, is killed in the assault. The Greeks are able to recover his body, but Xerxes senses victory and the Persians push on.

## 07 The Persians strike again

Xerxes doesn't strike immediately on the third day of the siege, delaying his action to give the Immortals time to outflank the Greeks. As the morning grows brighter, he sends 10,000 infantry and cavalry to strike the Phocian Wall again. This time the Greeks meet them in a wider section of the path, presumably to increase the killing.

## 06 The Greek council of war

News of the pass becoming compromised soon reaches the Greeks, and all the commanders, including Spartan ruler King Leonidas I, meet to discuss the ramifications. Some withdraw, while others remain to stave off the Persian onslaught.

## Achaemenid Empire of Persia

**TROOPS** 70-300,000

**CAVALRY** 14-60,000



## XERXES I OF PERSIA

### LEADER

Xerxes's fevered army building was the result of a prophetic dream urging him to go to war with the defiant Greeks.

**Strengths** Sheer numbers, his use of cavalry and the variety of troops - including the Immortals.

**Weakness** Narrow pass at Thermopylae made it difficult for such a large army to progress.



## THE IMMORTALS

### UNIT

The Immortals were Xerxes's elite bodyguards and were skilled in close-quarters combat and archery.

**Strengths** According to Herodotus, the Immortals were always 10,000 strong in number.

**Weakness** Fought wrapped only in cloth (they didn't wear any armour) and used wicker shields.

## COMPOSITE BOW

### KEY WEAPON

A popular ranged weapon, it was one of a number of bows used by the Persians.

**Strengths** Could be crafted to yield greater strength and distance for its user.

**Weakness** Sensitive to moisture, so could fall apart and lose its power in rain.



**A reluctant enemy**

Still feeling the sting of his defeat at Issus, Darius was desperate to avoid confrontation with Alexander again and sent repeated offers to cease his invasion of Persia, including offering half his empire. But Alexander refused, and the moment Darius saw the Macedonian king had broken through his front line he fled the scene of the battle.

**The mighty war elephant**

The battle marked the first confrontation between Europeans and Persian war elephants. Alexander was so impressed by the powerful beasts that he took the 15 elephants into his own army. From then on Alexander continued to increase the number of war elephants in his force.

**Alexander's strategy**

The battle is thought to have been won by Alexander's military genius and a dangerous manoeuvre that required almost perfect timing in the chaos on the field. Darius was hesitant to fight the Macedonian king after he had defeated him at Issus, but his hand was forced and history repeated itself.

### Quantity vs quality

Although Darius' army boasted massive numbers, Alexander's forces were well trained and equipped. The majority of Darius' forces were lightly armed and poorly armoured and only the hoplites and Immortals could hope to face up to Alexander's mighty warriors.

# BATTLE OF GAUGAMELA

ASSYRIA 1 OCTOBER 331 BCE

After soundly defeating the Persians at Issus in 333 BCE, Alexander the Great's conquests led him to the Mediterranean coast, Egypt and Syria. As he conquered his way around the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea, Alexander once again turned his sights to toppling his primary enemy, the mighty Persian Empire. However Darius III, king of Persia, had not been idle for the last two years; he had recruited men from all around his empire to form an army big enough to halt once and for all the might of the unconquered king.

Despite commanding a large force Darius, having felt the sting of Alexander's army once before, was eager to avoid conflict and he offered to cede half the Persian Empire to Alexander to halt his invasion. Despite the protests of his generals, Alexander flatly refused the offer. With no options left, Darius prepared his forces for battle. Sources differ in regard to the number of men at Darius' disposal, ranging from 50,000 to ancient estimates of one million, but it is clear that the Persian king's forces greatly outnumbered Alexander's and this, he decided, would be his strength.

Darius chose a flat, open, treeless plain, thereby avoiding the problem he suffered at Issus where the narrow battlefield limited the deployment of his large forces. With 200 scythed chariots and 15 war elephants at his command a flat terrain was paramount, and so he sent his soldiers to flatten the earth. In the dry autumn heat, the field was a vast expanse of flat empty earth with no hills, trees or rivers to use as cover.

Alexander had already taken several Persian cavalrymen prisoner and learned of Darius' location and tactics. He marched his army to roughly 11 kilometres (seven miles) away from the Persians

and set up camp for the night. On the eve of the battle, Alexander was urged by his generals to take advantage of the sleeping Persian forces with a surprise attack in the dead of night. Alexander, ever confident, proclaimed he would not steal his victory and instead commanded his army to rest all night. This was not so for Darius' forces, however, as they were awake, armed and ready to meet the 'surprise' attack that never came.

With his men well rested, Alexander led his forces toward the Persians on the morning of 1 October. Across the flat plain, the imposing Persian army could be seen in all their majesty, the gleaming scythed chariots before them, the massive numbers of cavalry reaching back as far as the eye could see, and in the centre, Darius himself, surrounded by the fabled Immortals and 15 mighty war elephants. But Alexander's troops, although fewer in numbers than the Persians, were elite fighters led by a man who was still unbeaten on the battlefield. Utilising a unique strategy, Alexander's forces were able to create a gap in the enemy line and launch a devastating attack into the weakened Persian centre. When Darius realised what had happened, he broke away from the battle and fled for his life.

Alexander aimed to capture Darius, but this was denied him when Darius was unexpectedly killed by his own commander and cousin, Bessus, who coveted his seat of power. The death marked the end of the Persian Empire and crowned Alexander as the King of Kings. His empire continued to expand until his death eight years later. To this day, Alexander the Great remains the measure of which other military leaders compare themselves, and his success at the Battle of Gaugamela is heralded as one of his finest victories.



## Macedonia

TROOPS 40,000

CAVALRY 7,000

LOSSES 1,100



## ALEXANDER THE GREAT

### LEADER

King of Macedon, Alexander built one of the largest empires of the world through his military prowess.

**Strength** Supreme commander with unparalleled military genius.

**Weakness** Overconfidence and competitive nature could lead to reckless actions.



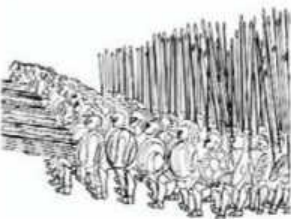
## THESSALIAN CAVALRY

### KEY UNIT

Considered the finest cavalry in all of Greece, they wielded spears and javelins alike.

**Strengths** Efficient at quick manoeuvres while maintaining deadly speed.

**Weakness** A history of rebellion puts their allegiance into doubt.



## SARISSA

### KEY WEAPON

A 6m (19.5ft)-long wooden pike with a sharp iron head.

**Strengths** A great asset against shorter weapons, creating a wall of pikes for the enemy to overcome.

**Weakness** A heavy useless hindrance outside of the rigid phalanx formation.

## 01 The right advance

Alexander stations himself with his cavalry to the right with his general, Parmenion, on the left. Alexander begins the battle with the swift and sudden advance of his men. As the right side of his formation marches forward they move to the right. Alexander aims to draw the Persian army toward them and create a gap in their formation; Darius takes the bait and sends his cavalry toward the advancing army.

## 02 The charge of chariots

As Alexander continues his march, Darius sends his scythed chariots and war elephants rushing forward in a bold show of power. The mighty chariots storm toward the Macedonian light infantry, but are quickly halted by a rain of javelins. To the few chariots that do make it through, the Macedonians respond by simply creating gaps in their lines which the chariots pass through harmlessly, only to then be attacked and destroyed by the cavalry.

## 03 Persians fight back

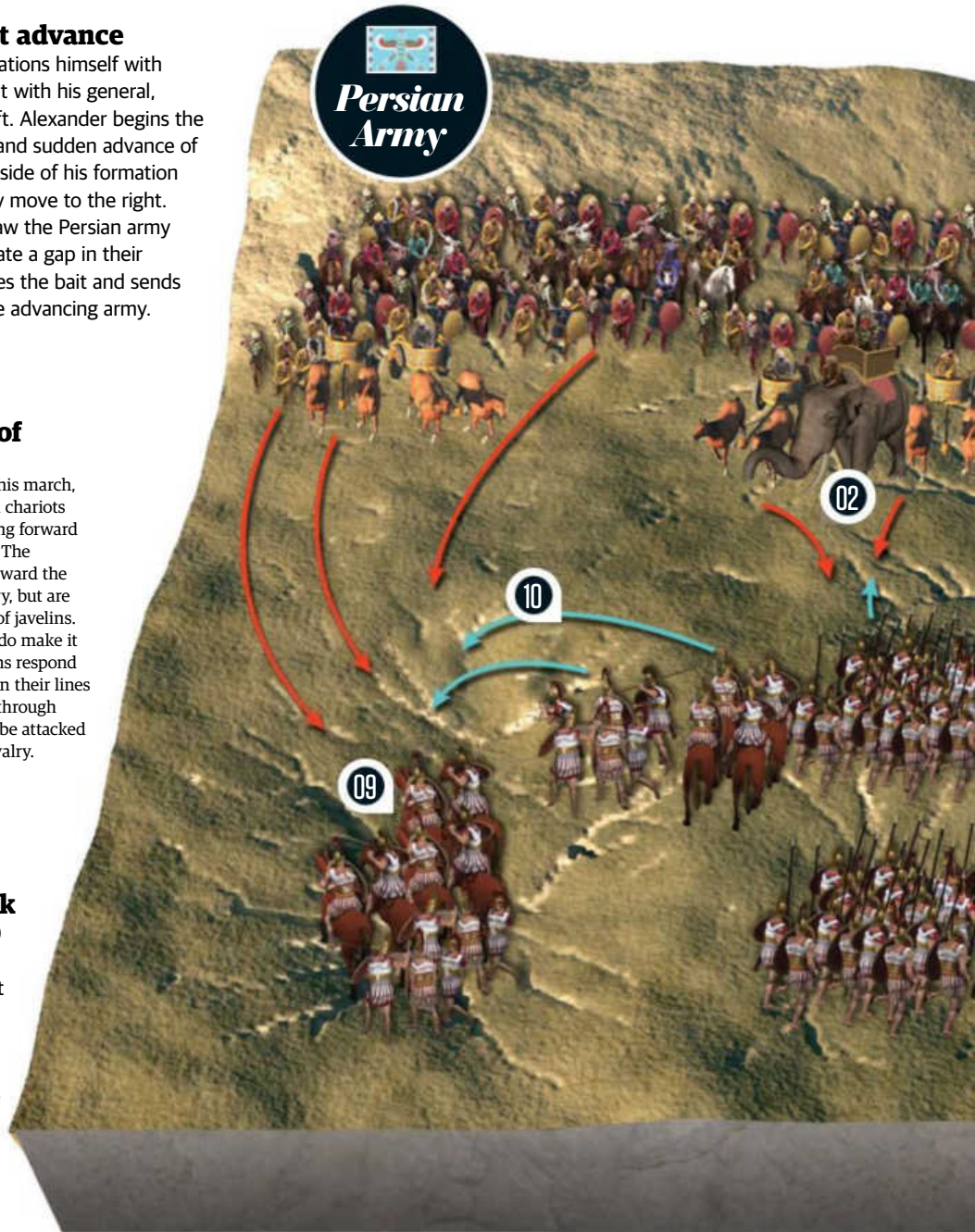
Alexander sends 400 riders to counter-attack the Persian left wing, but they are overwhelmed by the massive numbers of Darius' forces and are driven back.

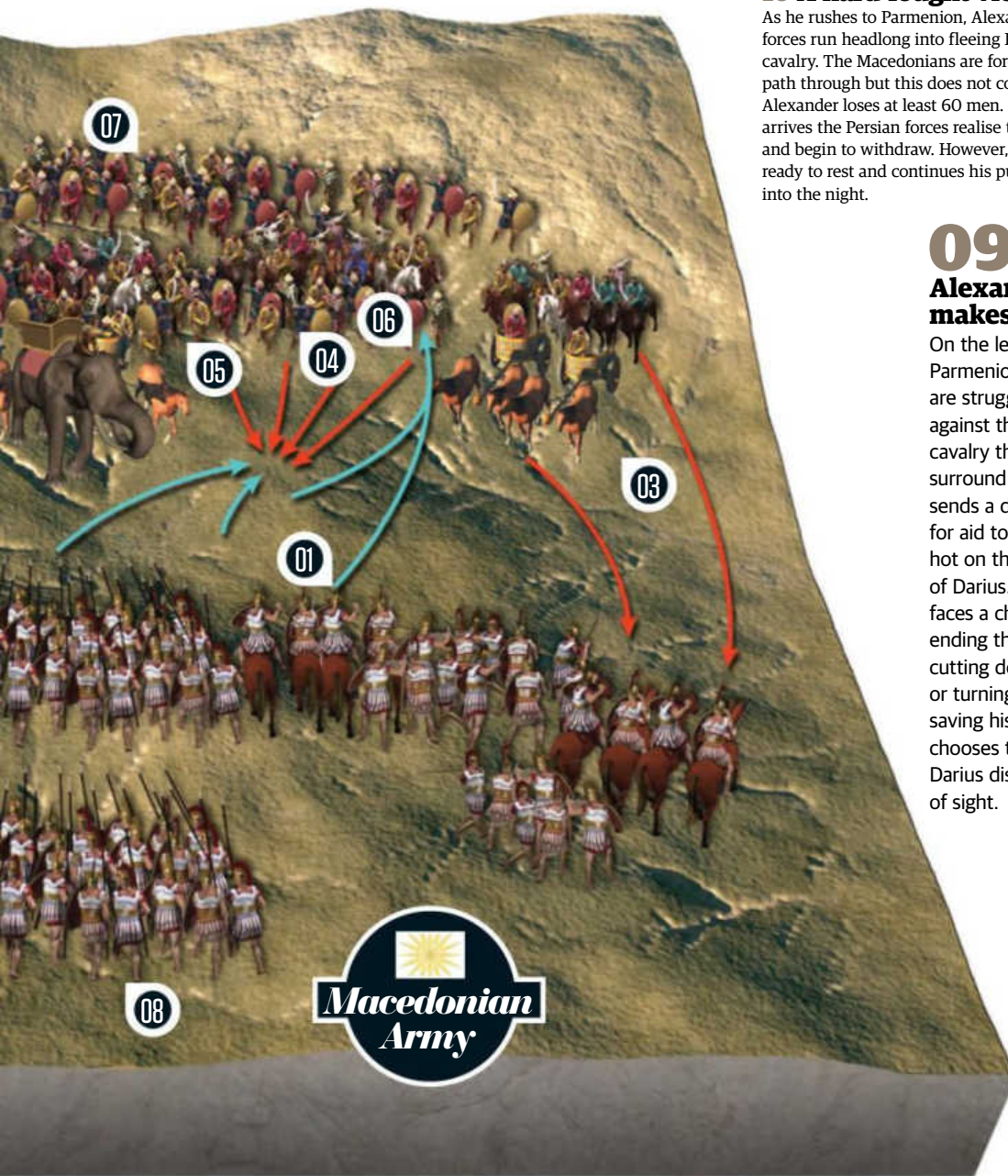
## 04 Darius takes his chance

Sensing an opportunity, Darius drives his cavalry forward and they furiously ride to reach Alexander and put a halt to his advance on the right. However, Alexander sends a larger counter-attack against the Persians. A bloody and ferocious battle occurs between Alexander's outnumbered forces and the Persian left. After the deaths of many men on both sides, the Macedonian forces drive the Persians back.

## 05 Unstoppable wave

Witnessing Alexander's rapidly approaching forces, Bessus, Darius' commander on the left, sends the remainder of his cavalry into the fray. Alexander's army storms into Bessus' cavalry, and after another blood-ridden bout of fierce fighting, Bessus' forces retreat back as well.





## 10 A hard-fought victory

As he rushes to Parmenion, Alexander and his forces run headlong into fleeing Persian and Indian cavalry. The Macedonians are forced to hack a path through but this does not come easily, and Alexander loses at least 60 men. When he finally arrives the Persian forces realise that they have lost and begin to withdraw. However, Alexander is not ready to rest and continues his pursuit of Darius into the night.

## 09 Alexander makes a choice

On the left flank, Parmenion's forces are struggling to hold against the Persian cavalry that now surround them. He sends a desperate plea for aid to Alexander, hot on the pursuit of Darius. Alexander faces a choice of either ending the war by cutting down his foe - or turning around and saving his army. He chooses the latter and Darius disappears out of sight.

## 06 Alexander leads the charge

The concentration of Persian forces on the right has created exactly what Alexander had hoped for - a gap in the centre of Darius' formation. Alexander assembles his forces into a gigantic wedge, himself at the tip, wheels his entire squadron left amid the mayhem of the battle, then charges into the weakened Persian centre.

## 08 The Persians break through

The battle is far from over though. The advance has left a gap in the Macedonian front line and swarms of Persians break through. Unaware of their leader's desertion, they ride to Alexander's camp, ransacking it and freeing prisoners.

## 07 Darius flees

The surprise attack tears into Darius' forces and his royal guard are swiftly struck down. Realising that all is lost, Darius immediately turns and flees from the killing field.



## Persia

TROOPS 50-100,000

CAVALRY 13-42,000

LOSSES 40,000+



## DARIUS III

### LEADER

The king of Persia, Darius III was fiercely independent and thwarted several attempts to poison him.  
**Strengths** A massive army that outnumbered the opposition.  
**Weakness** Lack of skills and experience in battle without any striking talents to inspire his troops.



## WAR ELEPHANTS

### KEY UNIT

Mighty beasts used to charge at the enemy and trample them to death, as well as providing an element of pure fear.  
**Strengths** Ability to turn the tide of battle with chaos and terror.  
**Weakness** Unreliable and notoriously difficult to control.



## SCYTHED CHARIOT

### KEY WEAPON

A war chariot with 1m (3.3ft)-long blades mounted on each wheel, pulled by a team of four horses.  
**Strengths** Ability to plough through lines of infantry and cut into the Macedonian phalanx formation.  
**Weakness** Open flat land was essential for successful use.

## The great commander

Mark Antony made his name with his string of victories commanding Julius Caesar's armies, but he was yet to prove his skill in fighting at sea. Octavian knew this and refused to engage Antony directly on land. As Antony's isolated army grew tired and hungry he had no choice but to take the fight to the water.

## The long-awaited battle

The war against Antony was expected by Octavian, as he had been preparing for the eventual conflict many years prior. He had already annexed Dalmatia, which gave him access to a road linking Italy and Gaul to the Balkans, and his general had captured Methone, one of Antony's allied towns, which was located in the southwest corner of the Peloponnese in southern Greece.

## Speedy strategy

Octavian's general Aquilla took advantage of Antony's slow and heavy fleet by utilising the quick manoeuvrability of his own ships. Three or four of his smaller vessels moved toward the large galleys, barraging them in quick attacks. When Antony's crews tried to respond Octavian's men would quickly row away.

**A secret plan**

The ancient historian Dio Cassius argues that Antony didn't want to fight at Actium and the main plan was to escape to Egypt with his lover Cleopatra. Either way, his abandonment of his men cost him not only his reputation but also the war and ultimately his life.

# BATTLE OF ACTIUM

IONIAN SEA 2 SEPTEMBER 31 BCE

The year was 44 BCE and Julius Caesar was dead. The great Roman leader had been slaughtered on the Senate floor by a number of assassins, including his old allies Brutus and Cassius, and his nation was plunged into a brutal and violent civil war. In this power vacuum three men came together and formed a ruling force known as the Second Triumvirate - Octavian, Caesar's adopted son and legal heir ruled the west, Mark Antony, the beloved general ruled the east and Lepidus, a close ally of Caesar's, oversaw North Africa. After crushing the assassins and the rumblings of those who wished a return to the ways of the old Republic, peace finally seemed to have been restored in Rome.

Not everything was as it seemed, though. Under the surface unrest was bubbling between Octavian and general Mark Antony. Keen to avoid war, Octavian had his sister Octavia married to Antony, but even that could not keep him away from his dangerous mistress. Mysterious and seductive, Antony had fallen completely under the charm of Cleopatra of Egypt, just as Caesar had done before him. Knowing full well of the rift it would cause, Antony moved to Egypt to live with his lover, abandoning his wife and with it the allegiance of the Roman public.

As Antony spent his days with the pharaoh and the children she had borne him, his reputation in Rome was crumbling. Convinced Antony vied to be the sole ruler of Rome, Octavian and his propagandists ran a smear campaign against his name, claiming he had broken Roman law by marrying the foreign woman. Antony was not helped by his own military disaster in the Parthian War, where his Roman forces were crushed by the Parthians. But it was his quest to elevate Caesarion,

Cleopatra and Caesar's son, as the true heir of Caesar with the title 'King of kings' that was the last straw for Octavian. The named heir of Caesar declared war against Cleopatra and with her, the disgraced Mark Antony.

Although a host of Octavian's enemies hurried to Antony's side, Caesar's adopted son enlisted the aid of his close friend and brilliant general Agrippa. Under Agrippa's command, Octavian enjoyed a host of early successes and managed to disrupt Antony's supply lines in the Gulf of Ambracia near Actium. Suffering from a lack of supplies and the pressure of a queen eager to return to Egypt, Antony began to plan for battle and finally emerged from Actium harbour on 2 September 31 BCE.

What proceeded was an equally matched battle at sea where neither side was able to grasp an advantage. As the two forces clashed, Cleopatra made a sudden about turn and commanded her forces to retreat and return to Egypt. Confused and panicked, Antony followed his lover and doomed the remainder of his fleet.

It was a year after this devastating defeat when Octavian's forces finally crushed Antony's in Alexandria. After receiving news that Cleopatra was dead, Antony fell upon his own sword. Cleopatra was very much alive, though, and she tried to appeal to Octavian, but her seductress' powers finally failed her. Faced with being paraded through the streets as Octavian's captive, she took her own life. Octavian executed Caesarion and established himself as the first Roman emperor, taking on the name Augustus. Augustus would come to rule a developing, peaceful and prosperous Roman Empire until his death in 14 CE, then aged 75. The long and glorious age of Roman emperors had begun with a sea battle at Actium.

## Octavian

**GALLEYS** 250

**INFANTRY** 16,000

**ARCHERS** 3,000



### OCTAVIAN

#### LEADER

Julius Caesar's adopted son and heir, Octavian became known as Augustus after founding the Roman Empire as the first emperor.

**Strength** Wise enough to give military command to Marcus Agrippa.

**Weakness** An average general with wavering public support.



### LIBURNIAN FLEET

#### KEY UNIT

A type of light galley that allowed the crew to rain down arrows and stones on their enemy.

**Strength** Easy to manoeuvre and take advantage of any mistakes.

**Weakness** Lack of strength makes it vulnerable to ramming attacks from larger ships.



### PLUMBATA

#### KEY WEAPON

Heavy and sharp lead-weighted darts crafted from iron with double the range of a full-sized arrow.

**Strength** The extended range makes it capable of wounding and even killing men from a great distance.

**Weakness** The plumbata requires a great amount of skill and training to fire successfully.

## 01 A BAD START

In a cruel twist of fate, Antony's forces suffer from a vicious malaria outbreak while they wait for Octavian's fleet. As a result, many of his massive ships are undermanned. Antony sets fire to the ships he can't man and clusters the remainder together tightly in anticipation.

## 02 A fatal betrayal

After discovering Antony's battle plans from his defected general, Quintus Dellius, Octavian stays out of the ramming range of Antony's massive ships. Because of this, Antony is unable to carry out his strategy to stay within the protection of the shore. As the morning of 2 September reveals a clear and calm day Antony has no choice but to move away from his position and engage the enemy directly.

## 03 OCTAVIAN MAKES HIS MOVE

Octavian orders his fleet into formation before the gulf. As Antony's large, intimidating ships draw close, Octavian's famed general Agrippa suddenly extends his left wing in an effort to row around Antony's advancing right flank.

## 10 The final few

Not all of Antony's ships follow him in retreat, but losing so many ships in a single blow dooms the remaining vessels. They fight long into the night, but the calm weather quickly turns foul and a violent gale batters the galleys. Unable to fight any longer, Antony's remaining fleet surrenders and most of the 300 ships taken by Octavian meet a fiery end.



## 04 The forces meet

Lucius Policola, leading Antony's right wing, moves outward to meet Agrippa's advancing forces. As a result his formation detaches from Antony's centre and a gap is formed. Antony's troops are inexperienced and this manoeuvre throws the entire centre fleet into confusion.



## 09 The beaten commander

Clear of any danger, the heavy wooden towers are thrown from Antony's ships and he is finally able to catch up with Cleopatra's fleeing ships. Cleopatra allows him to board her royal galley but Antony cannot bring himself to face his lover. He walks to the bow of the ship and holds his head in his hands for many hours, unable to utter a word to anyone.

## Antony's fleet



## 08 ANTONY FLEES

Having missed Cleopatra's signal, Antony watches from his ship, stunned by his lover's abrupt departure. The panic and confusion spreads quickly to his lines and disorder reigns supreme. Antony quickly sets off in pursuit of Cleopatra and sails hastily unfurl as 40 ships hurry to follow their fleeing leader.

## 07 The queen retreats

Observing the battle's progress from the rear of Antony's forces, Cleopatra's anxieties grow. Finally deciding she has seen enough, she gives the signal to retreat to open sea. The 60 Egyptian ships sail away on a convenient breeze from the battle.

## 06 THE BATTLE ESCALATES

As both forces are unable to ram one another because of the close proximity, the naval battle transforms into a land battle at sea, with men equipped with shields, spears and arrows attempting to board their opponent's ships. The two sides attack and retreat over many hours, with no advantage falling to either, and heavy fatigue descends over both sides. From Antony's decks burning missiles cascade down and cover the ships in a blanket of thick black smoke.

## 05 Battle of the centres

With Antony's centre exposed and in disarray, Lucius Arruntius, who commands Octavian's centre, sends his ships forward at full speed, straight into the enemy centre. A major battle erupts.

## Mark Antony

GALLEYS 290

INFANTRY 20,000

ARCHERS 2,000



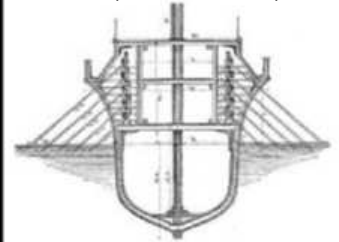
## MARK ANTONY

### LEADER

Famed politician and general, his affair with Cleopatra strained his relationship with Rome.

**Strength** A vast fleet and strong support from the powerful Roman consuls in the Senate.

**Weakness** Distracted by his relationship with his lover Cleopatra.



## QUINQUEREME FLEET

### KEY UNIT

Gigantic, intimidating galleys that featured huge rams and could be very heavy.

**Strength** Armoured bronze plates ideal for ramming.

**Weakness** Slow and hard to manoeuvre, small failures could prove disastrous.



## BALLISTA

### KEY WEAPON

Huge towers built onto the decks of ships, which catapulted missiles at the enemy.

**Strengths** Shot with massive force, devastating if on target.

**Weakness** A miss caused massive delays and left the men on board extremely vulnerable.

### Strong cavalry

Unlike the Anglo-Saxons, the Normans were horse masters who brought numerous cavalry units into battle. Noble knights were trained from an early age in horsemanship and use of the lance, a spear-like weapon that could be used both in hand-to-hand and ranged combat. These cavalry units were therefore well trained and well equipped and, at the Battle of Hastings, proved pivotal to victory.

### Strong infantry

The Anglo-Saxon force led by King Harold consisted of a large body of infantry and archers, with very few cavalry units. This was partially due to Harold's depleted force after the Battle of Stamford Bridge, but also because this is how Harold's army was set up to fight, with ranks of infantry relying on fierce melee combat rather than complex manoeuvring tactics to win.

### King Harold

King Harold had been ruler of England since 6 January 1066, taking the crown after the death of Edward the Confessor. Prior to the Battle of Hastings Harold had already had to defend his crown by repelling a large invading force led by Harald Hardrada of Norway, defeating them at Stamford Bridge. Directly after Harold marched his army all the way to Hastings - a decision that would cost him not just his crown but also his life.





**Rain of death**

The one thing the Anglo-Saxons did bring to the battle was their elite longbowmen. These archers, who were considered the best in the world for centuries, bombarded any advance made by the Norman-French cavalry and infantry, bringing down a rain of arrows from a relatively safe, elevated position behind the Anglo-Saxon shield wall.

# BATTLE OF HASTINGS

HASTINGS, ENGLAND 14 OCTOBER 1066

One of the most influential conflicts in British history, the Battle of Hastings was a cataclysmic culmination of a war of succession, with three potential heirs to the English throne duking it out for control of the island nation. At the start of the war there were three competing for the throne, which Edward the Confessor had held till his death. These were Edward's cousin, Duke William of Normandy; Harold Godwinson, the most powerful man in England; and the Norwegian Harald Hardrada, who was king of Norway and distantly related. These three rivals were soon reduced to two however, with Harold Godwinson defeating Harald Hardrada at the Battle of Stamford Bridge in Yorkshire, England, on 25 September 1066.

This defeat left just Duke William of Normandy and Harold Godwinson to battle it out for the title of king; in fact, Godwinson took the title prematurely after Stamford Bridge, believing that Edward had promised him the throne before his death, despite his closer familial relation to William. This angered the French duke immensely and, after gaining support from the Vatican, he assembled a vast army consisting of men from Normandy, Flanders, Brittany and France (ie Paris).

Just days after the Battle of Stamford Bridge, William set sail for England and, landing on the south coast, began moving towards London. Harold soon got wind of the invasion and, reassembling his remaining army, marched south at great speed to intercept William. The two armies met on Senlac Hill about ten kilometres (six miles) north-west of the town of Hastings in Sussex.

Harold approached the battle three weeks after the Battle of Stamford Bridge with a depleted and tired force (they had marched all the way back

from Yorkshire), while in contrast the Norman-French forces were fresh and greater in number. As can be seen in the detailed battlemap and run-through of the key events overleaf, it was an incredibly bloody affair and one in which we all know William came out on top, subsequently taking the English throne.

Many reasons have been put forward by military historians for Harold's defeat, but most agree on three pivotal points. Firstly, he was too keen to engage the threat of William, marching an exhausted army all the way from northern England at great speed to fight. Secondly, despite stopping by in London en route to face William, he failed to appreciate the city's defensive capabilities and didn't hole up there - a move that would have swung the odds much more in his favour. And finally, after taking up an advantageous position on the battlefield (atop Senlac Hill) he failed to maintain discipline within his troops, which meant the lines were broken easily by a little deception.

Unlike the results of many other succession wars, this outcome radically altered the way England developed. Once William had succeeded Harold, the Norman Conquest of the country began proper - a process that would see the vast majority of the ruling classes displaced as well as a complete overhaul of the country's administrative structure - the *Domesday Book* is great evidence of this.

The Anglo-Saxon language was also phased out in favour of French, trading and diplomatic ties with mainland Europe strengthened, new stone castles, cathedrals and civic buildings were built all over the country and England became a new financial powerhouse in Europe. Indeed, modern England - and Britain in general - was hugely shaped by the Norman takeover.



## Anglo-Saxon

TROOPS 7,000

CAVALRY UNKNOWN

CANNONS 0



### KING HAROLD II

#### LEADER

Prior to becoming king of England, Harold was a powerful nobleman and earl of several counties including East Anglia and Wessex. He accrued power through a number of successful military campaigns.

**Strengths** A battle-hardened warrior-king with a strong army and plenty of combat experience.

**Weaknesses** Overly confident after Stamford Bridge; few tactics.



### Longbowmen

#### IMPORTANT UNIT

Excellent shots and fast on their feet, longbowmen specialised in bombarding enemies with arrows.

**Strengths** The most well-trained and accurate archers in the world.

**Weakness** Like all archers, they are fairly vulnerable up close in hand-to-hand fighting.



### Longbow

#### KEY WEAPON

A fearsome weapon that took out many Norman soldiers early on. It was the sniper rifle of its day.

**Strengths** Amazing range and stopping power compared to standard bows.

**Weaknesses** Required great upper body strength and lots of practice.

### 01 Senlac Hill

The battle commenced with King Harold arranging his army on Senlac Hill, an elevated position close to Hastings. A mix of infantry and archers was laid out with the foot soldiers forming a vast, defensive shield wall from which Harold intended to repel any Norman-French advance.

### 02 Opening Barrage

William laid out his forces a little way from the hill and ordered his archers to fire. His lower elevation and the size of the Anglo-Saxon shield wall meant little damage was caused.

### 03 The wall holds

After witnessing the ineffectiveness of his archers, William ordered his archers to rejoin his infantry units and charge the enemy as one force. As the Norman infantry approached the hill, English archers unleashed many volleys to great effect. When they reached the shield wall, fierce hand-to-hand combat ensued.

### 04 William not dead

With the Norman-French infantry now engaged with the Anglo-Saxons, William ordered some of his cavalry units to bolster them from the rear, but after over an hour of fighting the shield wall remained intact. Disastrously for William, the left flank of his forces was broken by the Anglo-Saxons. At the same time, a rumour spread that William had been killed. To quash this the Duke removed his helmet and raced across the battlefield to intercept the Anglo-Saxons.

### 05 Cut Off

Believing to have critically broken the Norman-French line, the group of Anglo-Saxon infantry that broke the Norman-French left flank pursued the retreating men down the hill. While they killed more men, they left themselves exposed and cut off - a fatal mistake.

### 10 Anglo-Saxons Flee

The news quickly travels that Harold has been killed and the Anglo-Saxon army began to disintegrate. William's forces pursued them, while William was named victor.



### 06 Feigned flight

Around 1pm, the Anglo-Saxon shield wall still held. William ordered his forces to retreat and regroup. After a brief hiatus William decided to switch tactics, employing his cavalry to initiate a series of feigned flight assaults.

## 09 King Harold killed

William's play was a success and in the early evening the Anglo-Saxon shield wall finally broke. A period of intense, desperate fighting began on the hill, with many troops falling on both sides. There was little to no positional discipline now. Around 6pm Harold's personal standard was attacked and the English king, who had already been injured, was killed.



## 07 Shield wall breaks

The tactic worked, drawing Anglo-Saxons out of the shield wall and down the hill. This forced the wall to contract, reducing its width and finally exposed Harold and his few elite cavalry units. The portion of the Anglo-Saxon shield wall that had pursued the Norman-French cavalry was surrounded and killed.

## 08 HAROLD'S INFANTRY OUTFLANKED

The contracting shield wall made outflanking Harold easier. William instructed his remaining cavalry to attack the wall on both sides.



## Norman-French

TROOPS 10,000

CAVALRY UNKNOWN

CANNONS 0



## DUKE WILLIAM II

LEADER

A physically strong leader who was well known for his excellent riding skills, Duke William was a solid all-round leader. His ability to alter his tactics on the fly and improvise when things were not going his way was crucial to this huge victory.

**Strengths** A physically impressive leader with excellent horsemanship.

**Weakness** Relatively inexperienced when it came to battle.



## CAVALRY

IMPORTANT UNIT

Fast, agile and - in the Normans' case - incredibly well trained, the cavalry arguably won this battle.

**Strengths** A unit with excellent manoeuvrability and speed.

**Weakness** Vulnerable to spear/pike-wielding infantry as well as flanking archer fire.

## LONGSPEAR

KEY WEAPON

An ancient weapon that was great for melee combat as well as short-ranged potential via throwing.

**Strengths** A versatile weapon that can be used in both hand-to-hand combat or as a missile.

**Weakness** Required years of training to use effectively.

“He cut the men down in a flash, incensed that the English would dare tell him what to do in his own country”

**WILLIAM WALLACE**  
Scottish, 1270-1305

**Brief Bio**

Little is known about Wallace's early years, but it is thought he was an educated man and a son of a county knight. But his growing anger at the takeover of Scotland by the English is in no doubt. The humiliating defeat of the Scots at the Battle of Dunbar, which effectively gave Edward I complete control over Scotland, together with personal vendettas, led to him jointly leading an army to bloody victory in the Battle of Stirling Bridge. He would later assume the title of Guardian of the Kingdom of Scotland.

# BATTLE OF STIRLING BRIDGE

STIRLING, SCOTLAND 11 SEPTEMBER 1297

**W**illiam Wallace strode confidently among his troops. Thousands of men were lined up on high ground close to the Augustinian monastery of Cambuskenneth Abbey near Stirling.

They stood still, looking down at the English army that had gathered not a mile away, studying them carefully. Every so often there would be a rousing cheer and a defiant chant. Wallace would give them sparks of energy, explain what he expected of them and get them excited. This would be their moment of glory, he told them. This was a chance to help bring Scotland back into the hands of the Scots.

It was just before dawn on 11 September 1297. Despite a slight breeze and a morning chill, things were about to warm up considerably. Only a few days earlier the Scottish force had been laying siege to Dundee Castle, which the English held thanks to their victory at Dunbar the previous year. However, when news reached Wallace that the English army was heading to Scotland on the order of English King Edward I, Wallace called off the siege and led his men south where they were to meet their oldest and fiercest enemy.

The English didn't have the element of surprise, but they looked impressive enough. Wallace watched them as they gathered south of the river, noting the many English banners fluttering in the breeze. The knights were sitting on the backs of

large warhorses in their full regalia. His own troops were mostly infantry armed with long spears and they looked decidedly less professional. On paper, the English were the stronger side. Led by John de Warenne, Earl of Surrey, and Hugh de Cressingham, the English treasurer of Scotland, they were well versed in battle, a fighting machine that had recently crushed the Welsh in battle.

The Scots were far less experienced, raised on the basis of Scottish service and effectively men from the horseless classes forming a common army. The English thought them to be of lesser class, disorganised and weak, but they had one thing in spades: righteous anger. Handled well, Wallace believed they could win any battle and, as an experienced guerrilla campaigner, he hadn't come to face the English unprepared.

But who was William Wallace and how did he come to jointly command an army against the English? Some of our knowledge of the man comes from the writings of a storyteller called Blind Harry. He tells of a landowner's son who was educated, able to read and write in Latin and French and who was training to become a priest. Around the end of the 14th century, Walter Bower described Wallace as, "a tall man with the body of a giant, cheerful in appearance with agreeable features, broad-shouldered and big-boned [...] pleasing in appearance but with a wild look, broad in the hips,



## Weapons used to inflict death and destruction

### Bow and arrow

Although the Iron Age had made swords cheap, the bow was popular for its accuracy and range. The Welsh had proved themselves adept at using them but the user needed space to operate. As it proved at the Battle of Stirling Bridge, the cramped conditions north of the river and the aggressive nature of the Scots' attack gave little opportunity to use them, but they could be devastating when used.



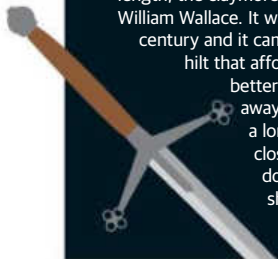
### Battle-axe

The battle-axe was designed for one-handed combat, although some required the use of two hands. Although they were not as popular in the 13th century, they were nonetheless used. They would struggle to hack through steel-plate armour, but their weight and sharpness would make light work of most enemies. The Scots would also have had axes and indeed used them to great effect on the English troops they felled in Stirling.



### Claymore

Measuring up to 152 centimetres (60 inches) in length, the claymore was a sword favoured by William Wallace. It was first used in the 13th century and it came with a twisted wooden hilt that afforded a good grip. It was better if the enemy was further away due to its size, but it had a long ricasso so, if an enemy got close, the user could grip further down the sword and stab at shorter range.



### Dirk

A long thrusting dagger, the dirk was used by officers in the Scottish Highland regiments and it was prominent in the 13th century. It is thought William Heselrig, the English sheriff or Lanark, was killed by a dirk and that Wallace killed the leader of a group of English youths using one when he was 19. The dirk would double up as a utility tool and it was worn on a Scotsman's kilt.



### ROBERT THE BRUCE Scottish, 1274-1329

#### Brief Bio

Bruce was the son of Robert Bruce, Earl of Carrick. He objected to Edward I's choice of John Balliol as King of Scotland, so when Edward led an invasion north of the border, resulting in Balliol being forced to abdicate, he was broadly in support. Bruce then switched allegiance to William Wallace's uprising against English rule and when Wallace was eventually defeated, Bruce became a Guardian of Scotland in 1298 and later went on to successfully stake his claim to the Scottish throne.



The Battle of Stirling Bridge resulted in a great victory for the Scottish

### JOHN DE WARENNE English, 1231-1304

#### Brief Bio

The 6th Earl of Surrey was a military commander during Edward I's reign. He led the English to victory in the Battle of Dunbar in 1296. Appointed warden of the kingdom and land of Scotland, he returned to England but headed back north to fight against Wallace. Although defeated, he did win at Falkirk in 1298, but then the power of the English army was so great that this was expected.

with strong arms and legs, a most spirited fighting-man, with all his limbs very strong and firm."

Sparked by the appointment of John Balliol as King of the Scots in 1292 on the choosing of King Edward I of England, Scotland had effectively come to be ruled by England, ending 100 years of relative peace between the two countries. Balliol had eventually attempted to rebel against this control, siding Scotland with France when Edward wanted to go to war with the French. Balliol made an unsuccessful attempt at attacking Cumberland that saw the English sack Berwick in retaliation. In the middle of all of this carnage, Wallace's anger was growing more and more intense.

Legend has it that a flash point occurred when he was approached by a group of English soldiers demanding the fish he had caught from a local Scottish river. Wallace offered them half in an attempt at appeasement, but the soldiers refused the offer and the rage in this great bear of a man boiled over. He cut the men down in a flash, incensed that the English would dare tell him what to do in his own country.

The biggest turning point, though, and the one which had led to Wallace jointly leading an army with Andrew Moray, came in the summer of 1297. Wallace and his men were in Lanark





## A nation divided

A selection of Scotland's most important clans

### Cumming



**Most notable figure** John III Comyn, Lord of Badenoch was Guardian of Scotland between 1296 and 1306. With his father and cousin, he attacked Carlisle, which Robert Bruce was defending for King Edward I.

**How powerful was the clan?** As the most powerful clan in Scotland in the 13th century, they had influence over politics and played a big role in the Wars of Scottish Independence.

### Donald



**Most notable figure** Aonghas Óg of Islay fought for Robert the Bruce at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314, which helped the Donald clan to cement its strong and enviable position in Scotland.

**How powerful was the clan?** Clan Donald was one of the largest clans and King Robert the Bruce often held it close to the right wing of the Scottish army when engaged in battle.

### Douglas



**Most notable figure** Sir William Douglas

the Hardy joined William Wallace and fought for Scottish independence. He had earlier refused to accept the claim of Edward I.

**How powerful was the clan?** In the Late Middle Ages, the Douglas clan was a powerful influence in lowland Scotland. Their original seat was Douglas Castle in Lanarkshire.



and became involved in a skirmish with English soldiers. Although Wallace maimed one of them, they decided to flee. Some historians believe that when the English sheriff of Lanark William Heselrig found out, he sought revenge on Wallace's wife, Mirren Braidfute, ordering her to be raped and executed. Wallace is said to have visited Heselrig late at night and split his skull in half. By killing one of Scotland's most high-profile rulers, Wallace became viewed as a courageous man who wasn't afraid to fight.

These actions eventually led the son of a county knight to become the figurehead of a nation's battle for independence, waiting with his army on a hill in the cold Scottish autumn of 1297 for battle. Full of ambition and bristling with built-up hate, his forces were boosted when Andrew De Moray and his troops joined him. De Moray was an esquire who had led a rebellion against the English in the highlands and northeast Scotland. De Moray had captured a number of Scottish towns, including Elgin and Inverness, and together they formulated a plan. They would wait, patiently

"Wallace would not order his men to charge until an ideal number of the English had crossed"

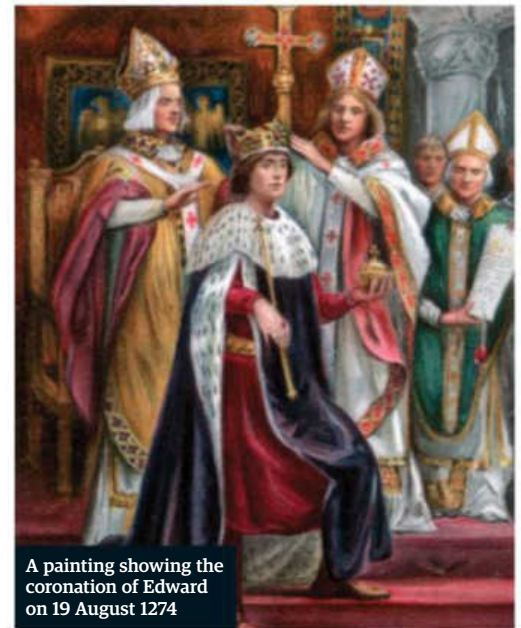
sit out the English manoeuvres and then strike when the moment was right.

The River Forth separated the two armies and it flowed fast, widening to the east and becoming very marshy to the west. If the English were going to make any headway in their battle against the Scots then they simply had to cross it.

Swimming wasn't an option - it was far too dangerous a proposition given the equipment and armour the troops were carrying. The best way, the consensus suggested, was to use a narrow, wooden bridge close by.

The Earl of Surrey was not convinced. Stirling Bridge would only allow men to cross in small numbers and it was wide enough for just two horses walking side-by-side. Once they made it across this bridge they would then be in boggy conditions with the Scots on high ground.

Realising the situation wasn't favourable, Surrey agreed to mediate a truce and so sent Malcolm Earl of Lennox and his relative James Stewart. They came back empty-handed - Wallace believed the advantage was with the Scottish and he was there



A painting showing the coronation of Edward on 19 August 1274



## English

TROOPS 13,000

CAVALRY 750

LOSSES 6,000

## JOHN DE WARENNE

### LEADER

The 6th Earl of Surrey had defeated the Scots a year earlier in the Battle of Dunbar and he was accompanied in leading the army by Hugh de Cressingham, treasurer of the English administration in Scotland.

**Strengths** Had fought in many battles, including Edward I's Welsh campaigns during which Wales was captured.

**Weaknesses** Known for switching sides, he wasn't the most loyal of men.



## KNIGHTS

### KEY UNIT

Sitting atop their warhorses in full regalia, the knights were well trained, experienced, ruthless and accustomed to winning.

**Strengths** Honour and chivalry was important to the knights, themselves professional heavy cavalry soldiers.

**Weaknesses** In the case of the Battle of Stirling Bridge, the horses made them cumbersome fighters and made crossing the bridge more difficult.

## SWORD

### KEY WEAPON

The Iron Age had made swords cheaper and changed the way they were made, but they were still a symbol of status and carried by the knights as a sign of their superiority over others.

**Strengths** Swords proved ideal for cutting, and to get through armour plating or leather, they also came in handy for thrusting.

**Weaknesses** They were more ideal for close-up fighting. The longbows of the Welsh bowmen were more effective for range.

### 1 South of the river

The English army, some 13,000-strong and numbering some of the country's fiercest fighters, marched to the southern banks of the River Forth close to Stirling Castle in early-September 1297. They were led by the 6th Earl of Surrey, John de Warenne, as well as Hugh de Cressingham, treasurer of the English administration in Scotland.

### 2 North of the river

Having caught wind of the advancing army, William Wallace and Andrew de Moray, who had led the rising in northern Scotland earlier that summer, assembled 8,000 men. The Scots arrived first, so they were able to assess the lay of the land and take an advantageous position.

### 3 Abbey Craig

Wallace and De Moray asked their Scottish army to take up a position to the north of the river on a large rocky hill called Abbey Craig. It gave them a commanding view of the area - which by this point included the large English army around 1.6km (1mi) away.

### 4 Stirling Bridge

The River Forth was not an easy stretch of water to cross. It cuts across Scotland, flowing east, and it is very deep. A narrow, wooden bridge at Stirling was an enticing crossing point. It certainly beat swimming across which, given the armour of the English, would have been incredibly difficult.

### 5 Kildean Ford

Before the English attempted to cross Stirling Bridge, Sir Richard Lundie, who had switched sides from the Scots to the English, suggested they cross at Kildean Ford further along the river. De Cressingham, mindful of the expense and wanting a quicker crossing, refused.

to fight, not talk. The situation for the English was far from ideal, but De Cressingham still argued they should push on and convinced Surrey. At the break of dawn on 11 September, the English and Welsh infantry began to cross the bridge. Wallace saw this and spoke to his troops again, ensuring they were ready for a brutal confrontation.

The Scottish troops would meet the English head-on through the middle. De Moray's soldiers would go down the flanks. For now, though, it was a game of patience - Wallace would not order his men to charge until an ideal number of the English had crossed.

While all this went on Surrey was - incredibly - sound asleep in his tent. By the time he finally awoke, hundreds of troops had made their way

across. In farcical scenes, Wallace watched bemused as Surrey ordered the troops back over the bridge to the south of the river once more. It showed a dismissive attitude to the Scots - it meant Surrey cared little about the embarrassing, disorganised appearance this would display to the opposition. The English, his actions said, would win no matter what time he ordered his troops over.

As Wallace stood on high ground, able to see everything around him, he could see the trap that the English would be walking into and knew they were overconfident. Once they got over the river, they would have to gather on a confined narrow loop. The English soldiers would be naturally surrounded on three sides by water and the only possible ways out of that were either into the river,





## 6 Aborted attempt

On the morning of 11 September 1297, the English decided to cross Stirling Bridge. However, Surrey overslept, so even though it had taken a long time for the English and Welsh archers to cross, they were ordered back. The Scots watched in disbelief as the soldiers went back south.

## 7 English make a move

Crossing at Kildean Ford would have been easier - it was wider and would have allowed an easier passage. They would also have cut the Scots off from the rear. Lundie said Stirling Bridge - which could hold two horsemen side-by-side, was a dangerous and slow way to cross but the English crossed anyway. They gathered in the loop of the River Forth.

## 8 Scots charge down

Having patiently waited for sufficient numbers to cross, Wallace and De Moray ordered their spearman down Abbey Craig to meet the English army. The English were trapped in the loop, their only way to escape being back over the river. There was no way they could retreat fast enough.

## 9 Death in the river

As foot soldiers were being slaughtered and mountain knights found their horses were getting stuck in muddy ground, mayhem ensued. The English were either cut down or drowned in the river. Some English knights got back over the bridge and some others swam to safety. Surrey ordered the bridge be set alight to save the army that had yet to cross.

## 10 Wounded men and spirit

De Moray was badly injured in the battle, Cressingham was captured and flayed alive and Surrey retreated and galloped away. Wallace had achieved a great victory. A total of 5,000 English infantry and 100 knights had been killed in what amounted to an embarrassment for Edward I.



## Scottish

TROOPS 8,000

CAVALRY 35

LOSSES UNKNOWN

## WILLIAM WALLACE

### LEADER

Wallace's stature as a fearless leader rose following his slaying of the English sheriff of Lanark, William Heselrig. Men joined him, striking at Scone, Ancrum and Dundee. He proved to be a good, tactical thinker.

**Strengths** Unafraid to get stuck in, his beliefs and desire for a free Scotland motivated his army.

**Weaknesses** Lack of true nobility meant he wasn't universally accepted.



## SPEARMAN

### KEY UNIT

With the majority of the Scots nobles under lock and key in England, Wallace's army was made up of men from lower society, but they were strong and willing.

**Strengths** Although seen as peasant amateur fighters, they nevertheless fought well as a unit thanks to the army's tactics.

**Weaknesses** When up against better-organised opposition, as proved at Falkirk, they were left wanting.

## LONG SPEARS

### KEY WEAPON

Although the Scots used axes and knives, their 3.7m (12ft) long spears caused the most damage. It was a spear that killed Hugh Cressingham, piercing his armour.

**Strengths** The length of the spears provided extra distance between the soldier and his victim.

**Weaknesses** They were very unwieldy whenever they had to be used in close-quarters fighting.



## KING EDWARD I

English, 1239-1307

### Brief Bio

Son of Henry III, King Edward I had a burning desire to expand his empire and was a warring king, albeit one well established and highly regarded by his peers. Having invaded Wales in 1277, eventually taking over in 1301, he had his eyes on France and Scotland. To fund his battles, he raised money through ever-increasing taxation and grew an army that was greatly feared in the process.

back across the bridge or through any advancing Scots line. Surrey was aware of the danger but De Cressingham and others were insistent. A Council of War was called and, finally, Surrey decided he was ready to attack. The troops were sent back over the bridge and Wallace readied his spearmen who were arranged in groups, each with a specific instruction for the upcoming battle.

The Scottish spearmen made up the bulk of Wallace's army - they were the Scots' answer to the English cavalry. With their 3.7-metre (12-foot) long sharp poles, the spears were a deadly alternative. Held aloft and at full charge, they would have caused many a rivals' mouth to gape open in fearful anticipation. For a second time, though, there was a delay in action as Surrey decided that

he should approach Wallace. Recalling his troops, he sent two Dominican friars to see the Scotsman but Wallace's reply was crystal clear: "Tell your commander that we are not here to make peace but to do battle, defend ourselves and liberate our kingdom. Let them come on, and we shall prove this in their very beards."

The English were again having doubts and an alternative crossing was pointed out: a ford further along the river that would not only be quicker to cross but would also allow the English to get behind the Scots. De Cressingham ruled this out, though. He was worried that it would take too long to move the soldiers again and that this would incur extra costs for the English king. There was no persuading him otherwise.

## Three reasons for war

### Death of King Alexander III

Keen to see his second wife on 18 March 1286, the King of Scots Alexander III travelled on horseback from Edinburgh Castle to the royal palace of Kinghorn in Fife. Although he had been warned about the treacherous weather, the king fell from his horse along the way and died, aged 44. Since his three children, Margaret, Alexander and David, were also dead, it left his three-year-old granddaughter Margaret as the sole heir. However, there was a desire by the Scots to be ruled by a king rather than a queen, which prompted a call for King Edward I of England to intervene.



Alexander III was warned not to travel to Fife on the night he died

### Greater English control

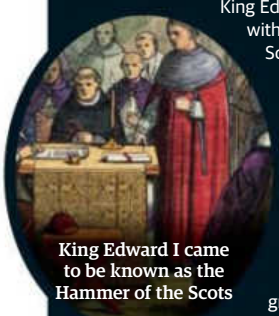
Edward I was asked to help pick a new king for Scotland. He suggested Margaret marry his eldest son, six-year-old Prince Edward, but before this could take place - a move that would have made Prince Edward king - Margaret fell ill and died in 1290. She had not been crowned at this point. Edward I agreed to judge who should be crowned next but, in the process, tightened his grip on Scotland and began to seize assets. He picked nobleman John Balliol as king but it became clear Edward I planned to use him as a puppet.



John Balliol is picked as king of Scotland by Edward I, king of England

### French-Scottish treaty

King Edward I wanted to go to war with France and he insisted the Scots join him in the battle but in 1295 John Balliol and Philip IV of France signed a treaty instead. If England invaded either Scotland or France, the other agreed to invade England. Edward I saw his grip loosening and in 1296 sent troops to the Scottish border. Balliol's decision to sack Cumberland was met with great force in the then-Scottish town of Berwick, leading to Balliol's defeat and subsequent dethroning. The English army continued to move north to Dunbar where a battle took place. The War of Independence was on.



King Edward I came to be known as the Hammer of the Scots



A depiction of King Edward I leading an attack against the Scottish

## Scotland's long journey to Stirling Bridge

122

#### Hadrian's Wall

As Roman Emperor Hadrian rules Britain, he decides to build a defence wall to help prevent an invasion from the north. With locally sourced materials, the wall reaches a length of 117.5km (73mi). **122 CE**

#### Western independence

There are two Gaelic kingdoms called Dairada, one in Ireland and one in western Scotland. They are dependent on each other but King Aidan secures Scottish independence for Argyllshire. **575**



#### Capture of Edinburgh

The Kingdom of Northumbria, formed in 604, decides to capture Edinburgh from Gododdin, a kingdom in the northeast of Britannia. It keeps it for three centuries. **638**

#### Burning of Iona

Iona, a small island in the Inner Hebrides on the western coast of Scotland, is set alight by the Vikings which had been raiding and trading around the world from the 8th century. **802**

#### Scottish king

Kenneth MacAlpin I is crowned king and begins the House of Alpin. The crown will alternate between two descendant branches of MacAlpin. **842**

## Essential Wallace figures

# 1,600

In 1296, this number of Scotland's leading nobles swore loyalty to Edward I. Wallace did not.

# 1300

The year the king of France wrote to his envoys in Rome demanding that they should help Wallace, leading some to believe he had personally visited the French king.

# 5

The amount of places parts of his dead body were displayed - his head was placed on London Bridge and his limbs were put on show in Perth, Stirling, Berwick and Newcastle.

Wallace was first named in English chronicles in this year, following the murder of the English sheriff of Lanark.

# 1297

# 715

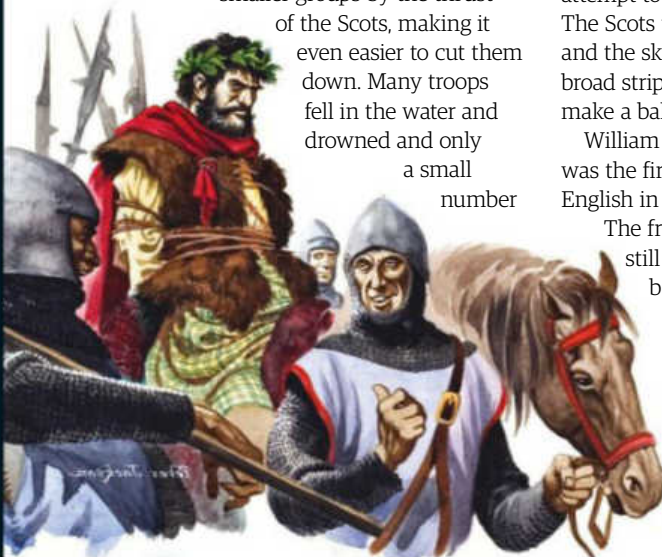
The number of villages in the north of England that were burnt by Wallace and his men following their victory at Stirling Bridge.

The English troops crossed the bridge once again and Wallace knew this time they wouldn't turn back - the battle was now imminent. He urged patience to his men, commanding his troops crouched on the hillside, eager to get going, to rein in their blood lust just until enough Englishmen had crossed. Eventually, as the hours ticked by, around 5,400 English and Welsh infantry as well as some cavalry had made their way across the river. Before they could even begin to advance forward in order, though, Wallace gave the word.

The Scots' spearmen charged from their advantageous position on the lower slopes of the Ochil Hills, down toward the unprepared English cavalry. One Scottish group went toward the bridge, cutting it off and preventing more English from crossing. Surrey's hope that his bowmen would be able to take their positions was destroyed since they had yet to get over the bridge. The Scots were nullifying them. Another group of Scots went down the other wing and a large group went into the middle. As the horses were skewered and the knights fell to the ground, the blood began to mix with the cold and clear water in the Scottish river.

The English were cut to pieces as the Scots raged forward, pushing their rivals back toward the river. The English troops were separated into much smaller groups by the thrust

of the Scots, making it even easier to cut them down. Many troops fell in the water and drowned and only a small number



"The English were cut to pieces as the Scots raged forward, pushing their rivals back toward the river"

managed to swim successfully back to the other side. Sir Marmaduke Tweng was the only knight to escape with his life. Amid the carnage, De Moray, who had been commanding the northern Scots, was seriously wounded, but Wallace was getting stuck in, urging his troops to continue pressing on. It caused panic among the English, who had thought the battle would be nothing more than a formality. Unused to what they saw as savagery by an inferior, untrained army, they were trying to retreat as best they could but soon found themselves completely and utterly surrounded. Surrey, who had not crossed the

bridge, was aghast. He ordered the rest of his men, some 5,000 more, to retreat. The bridge was set on fire to prevent the Scots from getting across and inflicting further damage. The battle continued for not much longer than an hour, with screams, shouts, and the clash of metal piercing through the air, the looming presence of Stirling Castle behind them as a reminder that a natural fortress could be just as impenetrable as a man-made one. The remaining Englishmen took flight to Berwick with those who were lagging behind captured or killed.

Surrey escaped unharmed, but the same couldn't be said of his reputation. De Cressingham had been one of the first to cross north and he fell during his attempt to escape, cut through by a Lochaber axe. The Scots took his body away where it was flayed and the skin cut into small pieces. Wallace took a broad strip of De Cressingham's skin and used it to make a baldric for his sword.

William Wallace had secured a great victory. It was the first time the Scottish had defeated the English in a significant battle since the Dark Ages.

The freedom for which Wallace strived was still a long way off, though, and there would be more battles and challenges to come. As he stood there, exhausted and triumphant on the battlefield, he pushed thoughts of the future out of his mind. For now, he would savour the taste of a victory that once more made a nation dream - and perhaps even believe - that it could achieve freedom once again.

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**Feudal system introduced**  
David I becomes king and rules until 1153. His reign is referred to as the Davidian Revolution because he founds burghs, monasteries, feudalism and the Normanisation of the Scottish government.  
**1124**

**Allegiance to England**  
The Treaty of Falaise is signed by the captive Scottish King William I and King Henry II. It states that Scotland will now be subordinate to the English crown.  
**1174**

**Treaty of York**  
Alexander II of Scotland and Henry II of England set new boundaries for Scotland. Scotland ceases claiming hereditary rights to Northumberland, Cumberland and Westmorland.  
**1237**

**Treaty of Perth**  
An agreement between Scotland and Norway ends conflict and recognises Scottish sovereignty over the Hebrides and the Isle of Man. Norway is given sovereignty over Shetland and Orkney.  
**1266**



**Claims of independence**  
The Scottish Wars of Independence are sparked thanks to numerous factors, not least the granting of the Scottish throne to John Balliol. It leads to the rise of William Wallace.  
**1292**

1292

# 10 WORST GENERALS



Whether unlucky, overzealous or just downright useless, some men have proved that not everyone is cut out for command

As trench warfare took hold in WWI, generals from across the Allied nations found themselves outdated

A general in any army is under a lot of pressure with the burden of organising, motivating and leading company upon company of men. However, many leaders across the years have been guilty of blunders that have cost them their honour, the lives of their men, and even worse.

Some simply didn't have luck on their side on the day, while others owe their failure to repeated mistakes or an awful approach to command.

Of course, this type of haplessness of generals isn't just a modern occurrence and the ancient world is littered with examples of brutal, petulant and inept leaders. However, in a wholly new type of global warfare, such individuals struggled en masse to adapt to the rigour of mechanised conflict. With increasingly devastating machines of war at their disposal, the mistakes made by each world war general would go on to have more disastrous consequences than ever before.

## ROBERT GEORGES NIVELLE

FRENCH THIRD REPUBLIC

### SECOND BATTLE OF THE AISNE, 1917

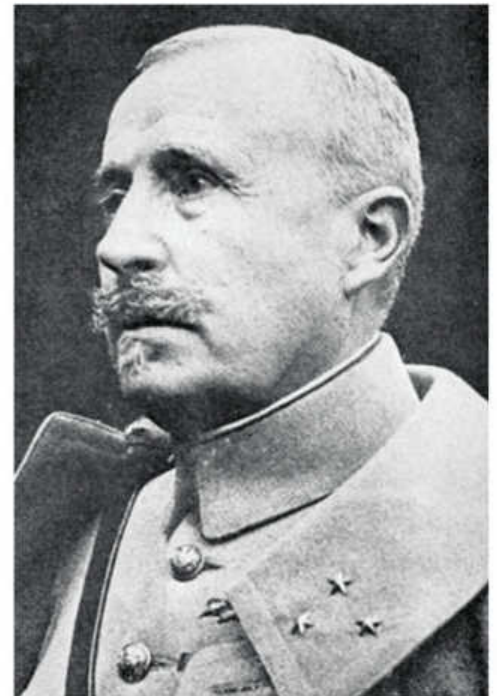
INITIALLY A VERY SUCCESSFUL GENERAL, NIVELLE'S WINNING STREAK CAME TO AN ABRUPT END AS HE BECAME OVER-CONFIDENT IN HIS ABILITIES

Before a series of blunders that cost many French and British lives, Nivelle's stock could have not been higher. The hero of Verdun, his command of the French Third Corps in 1915 allowed the Armée de Terre to launch counterattacks on German positions.

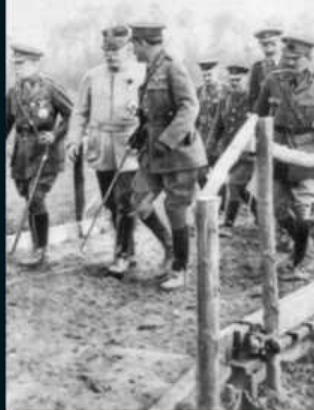
His success saw him promoted to succeed Joseph Joffre as the commander-in-chief, but this was as good as it got for Nivelle. With full British backing, his tactic of full-frontal assaults was used once again, but the Germans had got wise to this strategy and his troops suffered 120,000 casualties at the hands of the German MG 08 machine guns.

Nivelle was reckless and stubborn, convinced beyond measure that his tactic would work flawlessly once again. However, his victory was not forthcoming, as widespread mutinies followed further mass losses of life.

The Imperial German Army had seized on the French tactical plan and knew exactly what was coming for them. The whole catastrophe was enough for the army hierarchy, who soon found a replacement for Nivelle with Philippe Pétain on 15 May 1917. Fallen from grace, the general was later banished to North Africa, never to return to the Western Front again. He finally retired from military life in 1921.



Since the war, Field Marshal Douglas Haig has been blamed for the poor leadership of the British soldiers on the Western Front



### LAMBS TO THE SLAUGHTER WERE TROOPS REALLY LIONS LED BY DONKEYS?

One of the enduring points of discussion of the Great War was the treatment of the men at the front by the generals back home. The popular view of 'donkeys' was first put forward by historian Alan Clark and told of the uncaring commanders leading the infantry to mass graves on the Western Front, but how true is this? It is fact that an unprecedented number of men died in the war (1.3 million French and 908,000 British were killed) but this was more down to the nature of the war rather than the attitude of the military leadership. The first war of its kind, the new tactics with machine guns and armoured divisions ushered out the use of infantry and cavalry charges, but this was learned the hard way. Mass conscription also meant that many poorly trained soldiers found their way to the frontline in a scale of warfare that had never been seen before. The notion of generals behind the lines far from the heat of battle is only partly true, as many died on the frontline with their men. Overall, military incompetence did play a part in the massacre on the Western Front, but revisionist history has proved that the learning curve of a new warfare was just as big a factor.



The Parthian horse archers were devastating against the Romans at Carrhae, but their impact was enhanced by Crassus's recklessness



## 2 MARCUS CRASSUS

ROMAN REPUBLIC

### CARRHAE, 53 BCE WITH UNBELIEVABLE WEALTH, AN UNNERVING DESIRE FOR POWER AND A BLOODTHIRSTY STREAK, THIS ROMAN GENERAL WAS HIS OWN WORST ENEMY

Born into one of Rome's richest families, Marcus Crassus desired power as well as denarii. Using his vast wealth he built up his own force that defeated Spartacus and his slave army in 72 BCE in the Third Servile War. He then joined forces with both Caesar and Pompey, becoming the governor of Syria.

His recklessness and desire for war led him into an unsuccessful campaign that culminated in the Battle

of Carrhae. Drawn away from his coastal supply train and into the deserts of Mesopotamia, his army was away from its safe haven, but Crassus ignorantly pressed on nonetheless. Despite having superior numbers, his legions were both outthought and outfought by Parthian horse archers.

Having not studied Parthian tactics, the Roman cavalry was drawn out by the mounted archers, leaving their infantry exposed, and they were quickly encircled and massacred. Even though they were in the standard Roman defensive square position, volley after volley of arrows pierced the Roman armour and 20,000 were killed in the catastrophic, ego-driven conflict. Crassus's death shortly after led to civil war in the Republic and rumours persist that when he was killed, molten gold was poured into his mouth as a final allusion to his greed.

### FACING SPARTACUS AND THE DECIMATION

Spartacus and his army of slaves and gladiators had tormented the Roman Republic for well over a year, and his forces had swelled up to 30,000 men. Tasked with crushing the uprising, Crassus was determined for it to be he who stopped the mighty Spartacus. After his legate, Mummius, was defeated against the slaves in battle, Crassus disciplined his troops with the ancient punishment of decimation. This was the process of killing every tenth man in the army and more than 500 legionaries bore the brunt of this brutal action. The rebellion was defeated before it could make its way to Sicily and, as a punishment, 6,000 slaves were crucified along the Appian Road. Both of these instances prove that Crassus was as heartless as he was incompetent.



The crucifixion of the slaves was a show of intent from a shocked and vengeful Rome





## 4 ANTONIA LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA

MEXICO

### THE ALAMO, 1836

THE 'NAPOLEON OF THE WEST' WAS UNDOUBTEDLY A TALENTED GENERAL, BUT HIS DESIRE FOR PERSONAL GAIN OFTEN CLOUDED HIS JUDGEMENT – ON AND OFF THE BATTLEFIELD

Already a hero in Mexico by the time of the 1835-36 Texas Revolution, Santa Anna's stock fell after his poor handling of the Battle of the Alamo during 13 bloody days in February and March 1836. Facing off against more than 100 rebels, the Mexican forces were delayed by the dogged defence of the Texans in a small compound known as 'the Alamo'. Despite having superior numbers and cannons that could reduce the area to rubble, Santa Anna made a hash of the attack and floundered against a defence that included the



American heroes Davy Crockett, James Bowie and William B Travis.

It took three waves of attacks to break through and 600 out of 2,000 Mexicans perished against the small Texan force. The Alamo is best remembered worldwide as a backs-to-the-wall heroic act, but it is only this way because of Santa Anna's over-confidence in the 13-day siege. The Mexicans would embarrassingly lose the

war at the decisive Battle of San Jacinto. Away from the battle, Santa Anna was known as the 'Napoleon of the West' and is seen as one of the key instigators of Mexico's era of turmoil. Historians remain divided over his legacy.

## 3 PAVEL GRACHEV

SOVIET UNION



### CHECHEN WAR, 1994

WITH A PROMISE TO STOP A REBELLION AT ANY COST, GRACHEV'S RAGE SAW THOUSANDS KILLED

Named a 'hero of the Soviet Union' in 1988 after his service in the Afghan War, Grachev had been the leader of the Russian Federation's airborne troops since 1990. After the outbreak of war in 1994, he was tasked with leading the initial advances into Chechnya. The future defence minister was adamant that the Chechen separatist forces must be crushed and he promised to use whatever force necessary in a 'bloodless blitzkrieg'. Confident his men would only need a couple of days to take the capital of the Chechen Republic, Grozny, his offensive faltered as his tanks were ambushed in the city's narrow streets. This enraged the Russian and his response was to carpet bomb the city, killing thousands in what was to be known as the 'Storm of Grozny'.

### SANTA ANNA AND HIS MEXICAN HOMELAND

Antonio López de Santa Anna Pérez de Lebrón was selfish and greedy in his military career. The vast majority of his military operations were for personal gain and he changed alliances frequently for his own desires. For instance, in 1821 he supported the drive for Mexican independence but turned against its leader, Agustín de Iturbide, just a few years later. The same happened again to President Vicente Guerrero, who Santa Anna

helped rise to power but then also plotted his downfall. Perhaps the general's finest moment was when he fought against a resurgent Spain, who tried to retake Mexico in 1829. His efforts were rewarded with the country's presidency in 1833 and the nickname 'the Hero of Tampico'. His new centralised state then moved against the Texans in the north and the defeat set the wheels in motion for his downfall and the turmoil in a split Mexico.



The Battle of San Jacinto was the decisive conflict of the Texas Revolution and initiated a downward spiral for Santa Anna

# 5 ALEXANDER SAMSONOV

RUSSIAN EMPIRE

## TANNENBERG, 1914

PERSONAL RIVALRIES AND CONFLICTS WITH COLLEAGUES CLOUDED THIS GENERAL'S JUDGEMENT AND LED HIM AND HIS ARMY TO FAILURE



A veteran of the Russo-Turkish War and the Russo-Japanese War, Alexander Samsonov is best remembered for his leadership in World War I. Initially a cavalry officer, the Russian general found himself in command of

the Russian Second Army by 1914. Tasked with invading East Prussia, the Battle of Tannenberg would be Samsonov's first real test and also his defining moment as a military leader.

After falling out with the commander of the First Army, Paul von Rennenkampf, and continued poor communications with the headquarters of Stavka, the general found his forces surrounded by the German Eighth Army, led by Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff. The two Russian officers had already fallen out once before in the Battle of Mukden

in 1905, so it was a poor decision by the hierarchy to pair the two once again.

Samsonov's catastrophic blunder came when his army took five days longer to mobilise than his ally, resulting in a gap forming between the two armies. Now playing catch up, Samsonov's forces were stretched, and he paid next to no attention to the protection of his army's rear. The communication breakdown, interception of messages by the Germans and a lack of supplies put the Second Army in disarray, resulting in a rarity in warfare - the near complete destruction of an army, totalling 150,000 deaths and prisoners.

The debacle was so bad that the disgraced Samsonov committed suicide at the end of the battle rather than face the consequences of capture by the Germans or punishment back in Moscow. The Battle of Tannenberg was Russia's worst defeat in World War I and the news was initially kept from the British public - it was that bad.

### THE EASTERN FRONT

A phrase usually associated with World War II, it was also an important tactical front during the Great War. Russia had an army of almost six million - the largest in the world at the time - and its full might was launched at the Germans in 1914. Even though they had by far and away the most manpower, poor leadership from the likes of Samsonov and an archaic communication system caused the Russian Imperial Army to stumble. Ignoring Austria-Hungary, the Russians headed straight for Germany but were let down by their poor strategy and almost three million men were killed or wounded after Tannenberg and Lodz. Unrest continued and with revolution on the horizon, all momentum was lost after the failed Kerenski Offensive a few months before October 1917.



In total, 15 million men served Russia in World War I with nearly two million killed, 2.8 million wounded and 2.4 million taken prisoner



# 6 MAURICE GAMELIN

FRENCH THIRD REPUBLIC

## BATTLE OF FRANCE, 1940

DESPITE HIS EXPERIENCE IN THE GREAT WAR, THIS FRENCH GENERAL WAS ALL AT SEA ONCE THE GERMAN PANZERS ROLLED OVER THE FRENCH BORDER

A veteran of World War I, President of the Supreme War Council Maurice Gamelin had more experience than most when the threat of the Third Reich appeared on France's radar. Although a widely respected military mind, his mistakes cost his home country dearly.

A strong supporter of the flawed Maginot Line, he believed that France had the best army in the world and, like many in the French military, never considered the blitzkrieg that would roar through the Ardennes in 1940. With troops to the north and south, the advance scythed the British and French armies in two. Gamelin was still stuck in his World War I ways, seeing the tank as an accompaniment to the infantry and nothing else.

His flaws and failure to anticipate or even react to the Wehrmacht's moves have been well

documented by historians since 1940. He had poor leadership skills and often hesitated to act when big calls were required, only to then order a flurry of decisions that confused his officers. Many don't understand how he failed to see the danger after the invasion of Poland in the Phoney War. Gamelin had plenty of opportunities to launch pre-emptive attacks on the Germans but his ultra-defensive mantra went against the idea of strategic bombing or any sort of land offensive.

His obsolete ways are also believed to have led to the quote: "There is no such thing as the aerial battle," words he had to swallow when the Luftwaffe proved fundamental to the success of blitzkrieg. The hapless Gamelin was removed from his post on 18 May 1940, but the damage had already been done.

"Although a widely respected military mind, his mistakes cost his home country dearly"

### WAS GAMELIN JUST MISUNDERSTOOD?

Prior to the calamity of World War II, Maurice Gamelin presses a good case for being quite an astute general and perhaps one of the best France ever had. Born in Paris in 1872, he began his career as an officer and assistant to General Joseph Joffre in North Africa. Gamelin rose through the ranks and was a lieutenant colonel by the outbreak of World War I. He would be instrumental in the victory at the First Battle of the Marne and led with distinction in Alsace and at the Somme. By the end of the war he had reached the rank of chief of staff of army reserve and his career went from strength to strength as he led French expeditions in Brazil and the Middle East. By the time of World War II, only Joffre had ever had more power in the French military.

A French infantry charge from the First Battle of the Marne, where Gamelin showcased his military intelligence



Soldiers stand at the Maginot Line, of which Gamelin was a strong supporter, to his detriment



## **7** LUIGI CADORNA

**KINGDOM OF ITALY**

# CAPORETTO / 12TH BATTLE OF THE ISONZO, 1917

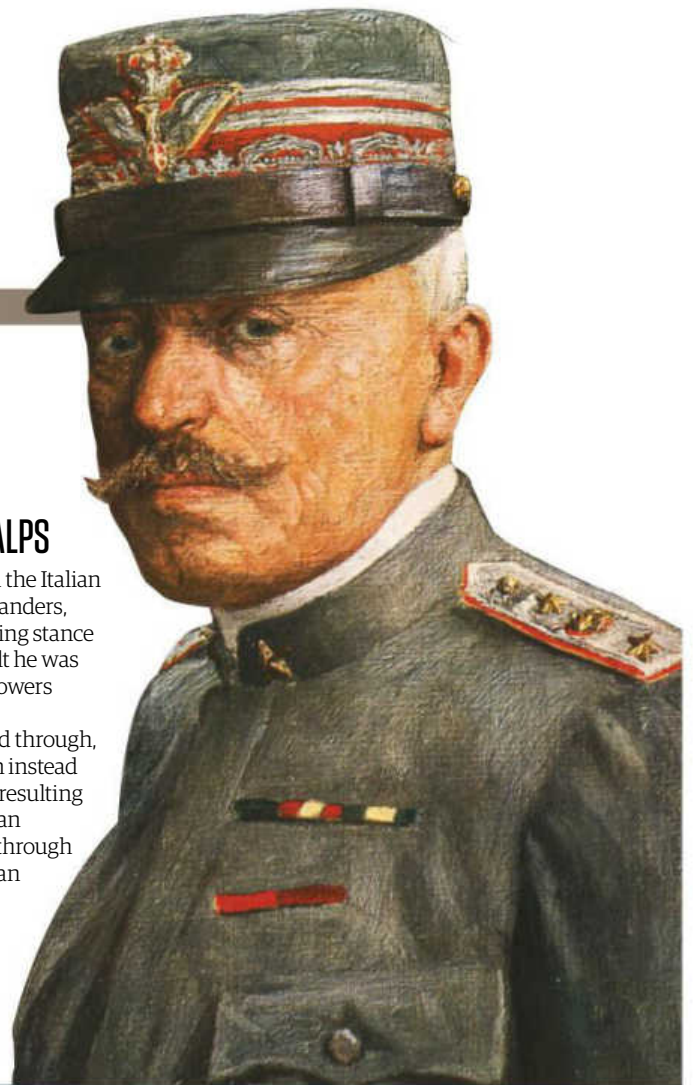
**POOR DECISION MAKING HINDERED CADORNA'S ATTEMPT TO DEFEND THE ALPS**

Luigi Cadorna had risen through the ranks to become Italy's chief of staff at the outbreak of World War I. Commanding the Italian border with Austria-Hungary to the north, he massed his army in the region of Trentino to form a defensive wall against the threat from the Alps.

Initially, Cardona had some successes, but whenever the battle was going against him, he dealt with his men in the most ruthless fashion. He ordered the execution of more than 750 men and purged his fellow commanders, dismissing some 217 officers. The defeat at Caporetto was Cadorna's worst moment as the Austrians, assisted

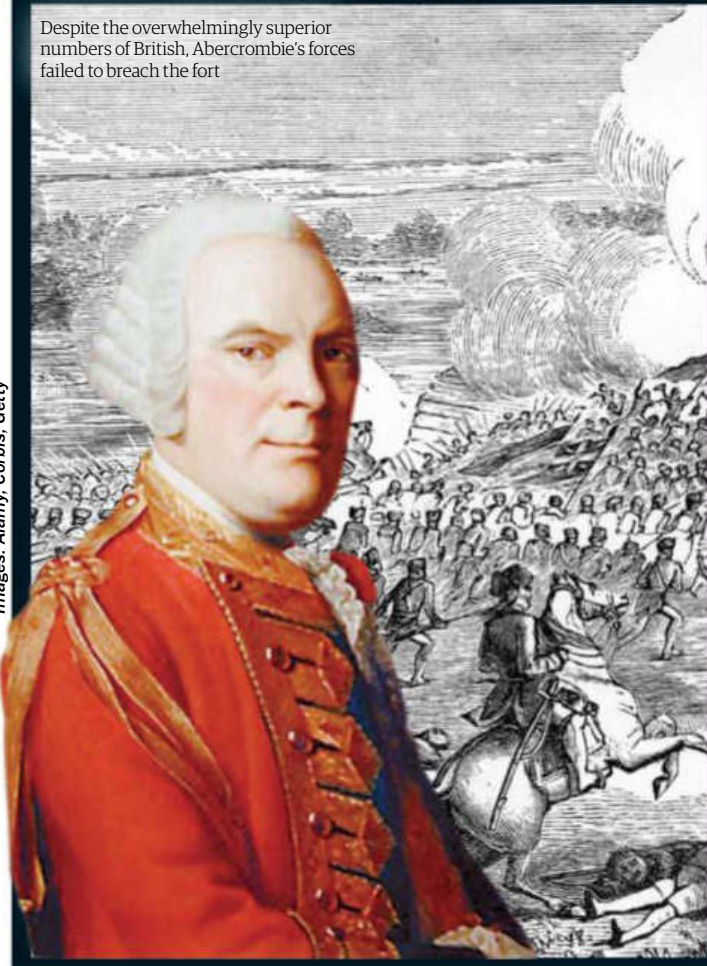
by their German allies, broke through the Italian ranks. Going against the other commanders, Cadorna decided to employ an attacking stance rather than a defensive line. As a result he was taken by surprise when the Central Powers stormed through.

With his armies completely scythed through, Cadorna made another mistake when instead of withdrawing, he stood his ground, resulting in devastating losses of 300,000 Italian casualties. For his poor performance through misjudgment and hesitation, the Italian general was dismissed.



“He ordered the execution of more than 750 men”

Despite the overwhelmingly superior numbers of British, Abercrombie's forces failed to breach the fort



Images: Alamy, Corbis, Getty

## **8** JAMES ABERCROMBIE

**BRITISH EMPIRE**

# CARILLON, 1758

**PUTTING HIS FAITH IN INFANTRY, THIS BRITISH GENERAL FOOLISHLY ATTACKED A FORTIFIED POSITION WITHOUT THE HELP OF ARTILLERY**

Born in an era of peace in the empire, Abercrombie was first interested in politics but moved towards military matters after a period as lieutenant governor of Stirling Castle. The moment that he is remembered for came in the Seven Years' War, serving as commander-in-chief of the British Army and leading the Third Corps into Canada to engage the French.

Instantly unhappy with what he saw as ill-disciplined provincial troops and insufficient artillery, many of his early advances were orchestrated by his enthusiastic second-in-command, Lord Howe. Five kilometres (three miles) south of Fort Carillon, the advance ground to a halt in a dense forest. Howe was then killed in a skirmish attack, giving Abercrombie full control. Entrenched a short distance from the fort, the politician-made-general sat down with

his engineers and planned out what their next move was to be.

Taking the advice of his men, Abercrombie ordered an immediate head-on assault on the stronghold - a disastrous move. The siege was ineffectual and got nowhere near breaching Carillon. Strangely, only infantry made the attack on the fort with the British not using their artillery, which would have surely given them a fighting chance. After four hours of bloodshed, a retreat was called with 1,944 British dead or missing. Falling back southwest to Lake George, the disheartened and low-in-confidence Abercrombie refused to make another decision before hearing from his superior, General Amherst. His incompetence didn't go unnoticed and he was recalled in September of that year. He never saw active service again and lived out his last years haunted by his failure.

## 9 GEORGE BRINTON McCLELLAN

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA / UNION

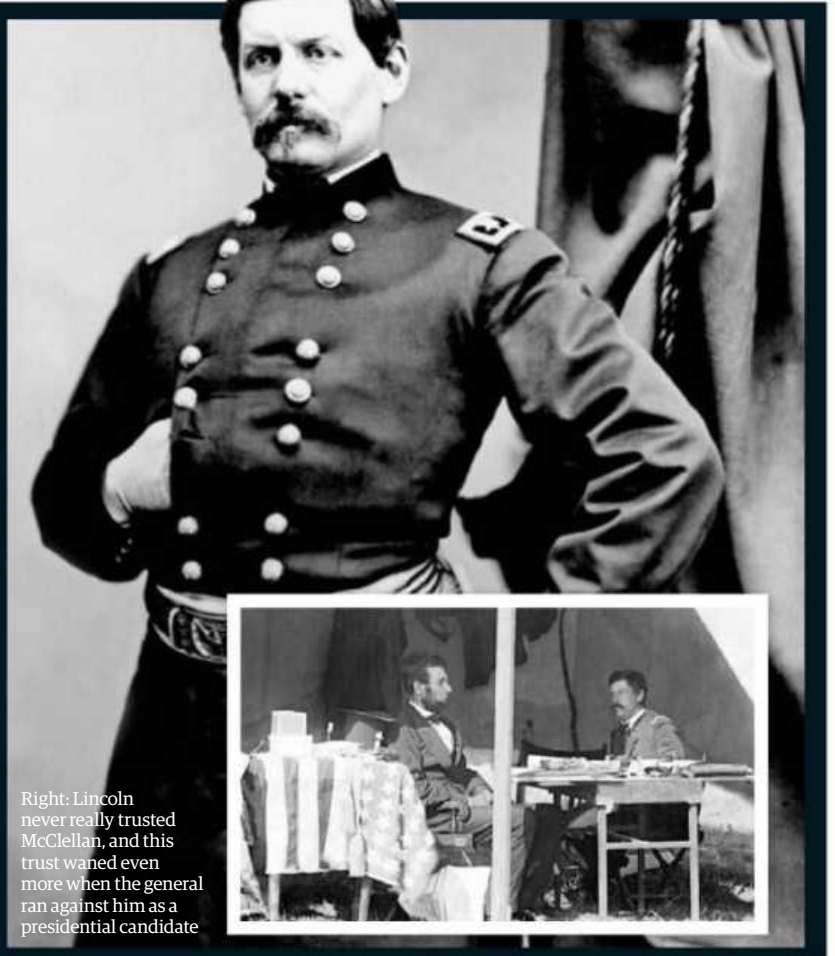
### ANTIETAM, 1862

DISTRUSTED BY ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND OTHER UNION LEADERS, McCLELLAN WAS A HESITANT UNDERACHIEVER

Rather than being particularly pompous or incompetent, McClellan had a trademark caution that prevented him from achieving many decisive victories. His inability to conclusively crush the Confederate forces in battle led to frequent visits from President Lincoln, who was ever frustrated at the slow movement of McClellan's men. The best example of this restrained style was at Antietam, the bloodiest day of the American Civil War.

The fragmented Union attacks failed to dislodge Robert E Lee's forces despite the north outnumbering the southerners, who were trapped with their backs to the Potomac River. A concentrated attack would almost have definitely knocked out Lee's forces with minimal losses to the Union. It eventually got too much for the president in November 1862, as the cautious McClellan was relieved of his duty.

"Lincoln was ever frustrated at the slow movement of McClellan's men"



Right: Lincoln never really trusted McClellan, and this trust waned even more when the general ran against him as a presidential candidate

## 10 WILLIAM WINDER

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

### BATTLE OF BLADENSBURG, 1814 THE GENERAL WHOSE POOR DECISIONS ALLOWED THE US CAPITAL CITY TO BE RANSACKED BY THE VENGEFUL BRITISH

Unlucky and unskilled as a leader, William Winder is considered one of the worst American generals of all time. After several mistakes at the Battle of Frenchman's Creek, the Brigadier General faced off against the British at Bladensburg.

With 5,000 men he outnumbered his opponents, but, due to a lack of coordination in the ranks, the British routed the Americans. It was later discovered

that Winder had ordered his best-trained troops to guard supply depots rather than fight.

Angered by this decision, the soldiers marched to the battlefield anyway, only to find that Winder had already ordered a hasty and confused retreat, leaving Washington wide open to attack. This would be forever known as the 'Bladensburg Races' and the general would go through court martial proceedings as a result.



After Winder's loss, the British marched to Washington DC and did not hold back in their burning of the White House and other major buildings

## *Greatest Battles*

### **Front line**

The English front line consisted mainly of dismounted knights and men-at-arms. Out of shot, archers were posited either side, hiding in the woods that bordered the battlefield.

### **King Henry**

Unlike the French king, Henry personally led his troops into battle. He was a king first and foremost but never stopped being a warrior - even on his deathbed he insisted on being carried to the next siege.

### **Crown**

Unlike his father, who used decoys at the Battle of Shrewsbury years earlier, Henry's affixing of a crown on top of his helmet made sure he stood out. The crown was damaged in the battle after he took an axe blow to the head.

**Prayer**

While lined up for battle, Henry led his troops in prayer, asking for God to grant them victory against the French forces.

# BATTLE OF AGINCOURT

AGINCOURT, FRANCE 25 OCTOBER 1415

While his father, Henry IV, had been preoccupied with consolidating - and in the process effectively legitimising - his rule, his son, King Henry V of England, saw the opportunity to expand the British Empire by taking back lands he believed rightfully belonged to him, starting with France.

In 1415, he proposed to marry Catherine, the daughter of the French king Charles VI, in addition to audaciously demanding the handover of the Plantagenet lands of Normandy and Anjou as his dowry. Unsurprisingly, Charles refused this offer from the upstart young king, with one account claiming that he sent the young Henry a case of tennis balls - the upshot being that his time would be better spent playing games than attempting to invade France.

Unperturbed by Charles' taunting, Henry set sail for France, determined to capture the throne for himself. As well as the prospect of regaining the lost lands of his ancestors, success abroad would have the effect of galvanising support back home, and in the process focus attention away from his cousins' royal ambitions.

His success was almost instant. Immediately upon landing, he captured the port of Harfleur, although while on the way to the port of Calais, he found his path blocked by an army that substantially outnumbered his own. Faced with this much-larger French army, he put his superior tactical acumen to good use, decimating the French forces via the use of vast quantities of longbow archers to devastating effect. Between 7,500 and 10,000 French soldiers are estimated to have been killed according to various accounts,

with about 1,500 noblemen taken prisoner, while the English forces' casualties are numbered at around 112, with high-ranking noblemen like the Duke of York and the Earl of Suffolk being counted among the dead. Even more French prisoners were originally taken, but in a show of calculated - but arguably justifiable - ruthlessness, Henry had ordered many of them to be put to death in order to avoid the possibility of them linking up with the remnants of the French forces in order to carry out a retaliatory attack.

Proving that this decisive victory was no fluke, Henry followed up this stunning victory with the conquest of Normandy - a campaign that lasted for three years. By June 1419, Henry controlled most of Normandy. Agincourt had not only been a military triumph; it had been a moral victory too, galvanising the English both abroad and at home.

Facing defeat, Charles agreed to the Treaty of Troyes, which formally recognised Henry as the heir to the French throne - at the expense of his own son - and finally allowed Henry to marry Catherine. Flushed with success, in February 1421 he returned to England for the first time in three and a half years, arriving in his homeland as a conquering hero.

His successful conquest of much of his country's hated enemy had made him extremely popular back home, and the Battle of Agincourt in particular would forever serve as a poignant example of his strength, tactical skill and ingenuity in battle - yet another example of the plucky underdog spirit and ability to triumph against the odds that future British forces would demonstrate in the future.

# Greatest Battles



## English

TROOPS 6,000-9,000

LONGBOWMEN 5,000

KNIGHTS 1,000



### KING HENRY V

#### LEADER

King Henry was a skilled battle commander, leading his troops into battle and fighting alongside them.

**Strengths** Brave and experienced military leader.

**Weaknesses** His forces were numerically inferior to those of the French.



### LONGBOWMAN

#### KEY UNIT

The effectiveness of the English longbowmen played a massive part in the success of the battle.

**Strengths** Long range and difficult to attack.

**Weaknesses** Relatively poorly armoured and vulnerable if attacked.



### LONGBOW

#### KEY WEAPON

The longbow's six arrows per minute could wound at 360m (1,200ft), kill at 180m (600ft) and even penetrate armour at 90m (300ft).

**Strengths** Accurate and destructive in large numbers.

**Weaknesses** Finite number of arrows available to them.

## 01 Camping for the night

On 24 October, about 48 kilometres (30 miles) from Calais in the town of Frévent, English scouts reported an immense French army blocking the road ahead. Seeing that they could not pass without meeting them in battle, Henry ordered his forces to camp there for the night.

## 02 Taking their positions

The English positioned themselves across the road to Calais in three groups of knights and men-at-arms: the right side led by Lord Camoys, the left by Sir Thomas Erpingham and the Duke of York in the centre. The French had the Constable of France leading the first line, the Dukes of Bar and d'Alençon the second and the Counts of Merle and Falconberg in charge of the third.

## 03 Forward banners

Bored of waiting for the French to begin the attack, Henry ordered his troops to advance. Once within range of the French archers, the English troops halted, the divisions closed and the archers set a series of pointed stakes in the ground, forming a fence. Within the woods surrounding the two armies, Henry directed groups of archers and men-at-arms to move through the trees to get closer to the French.

## 04 Arrows away

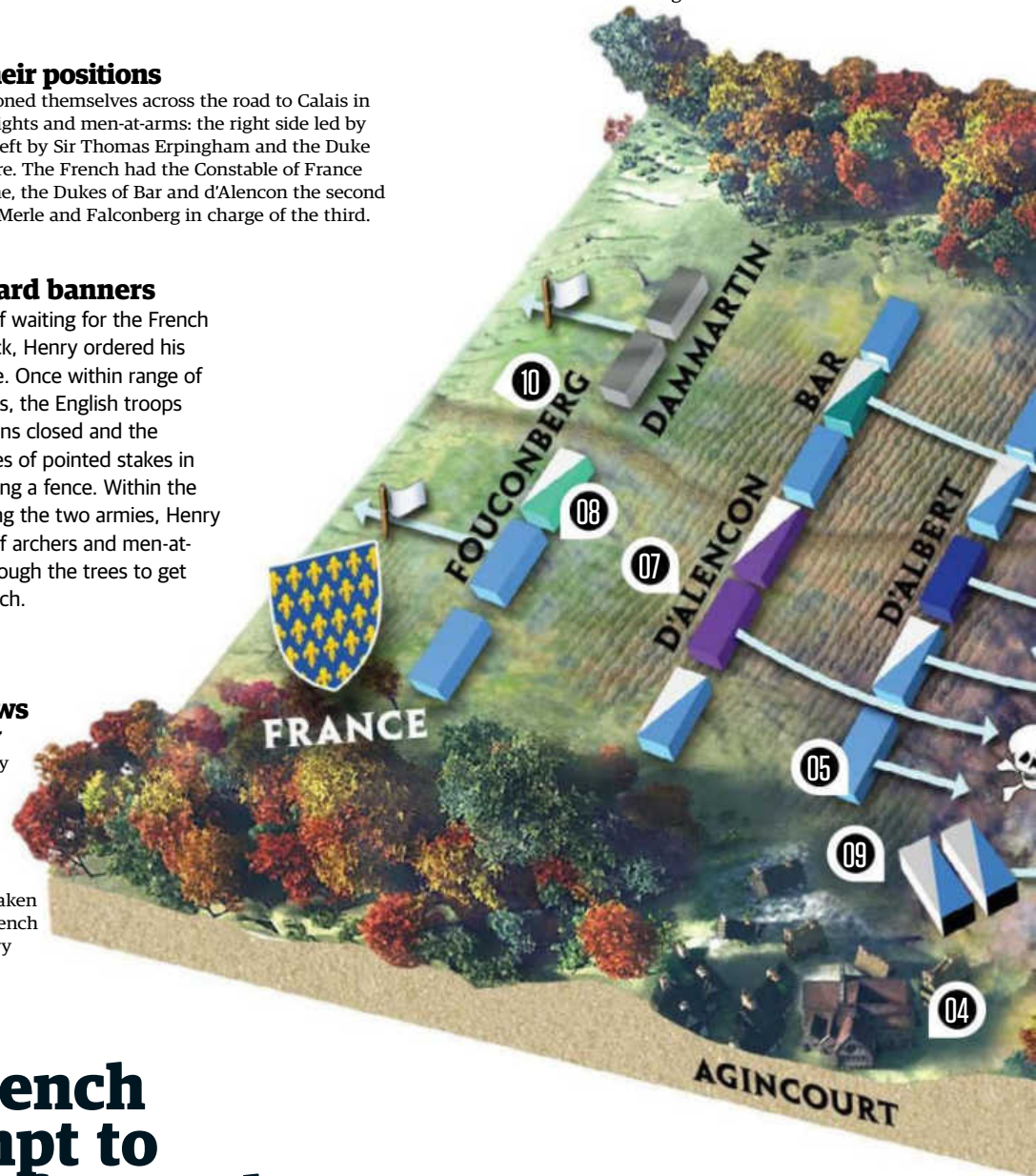
Shortly after, Henry gave the order for his archers to shoot the French, who were massed together in a big, unwieldy group. Taken by surprise, the French forces incurred very heavy casualties.

## 05 French attempt to move forward

After the shock of this assault, the French forces tried to advance in order to take the battle to the English. However, having already suffered massive casualties, they were impeded by the dead and dying horses and men already shot down in front of them. Reduced to walking pace, they were easily picked off by the English archers concealed in the woodlands on the flanks.

## 10 French camp ransacked

With the battle over and any local resistance crushed, the English troops ransacked the largely abandoned French camp, having secured a victory that would live on in legend.



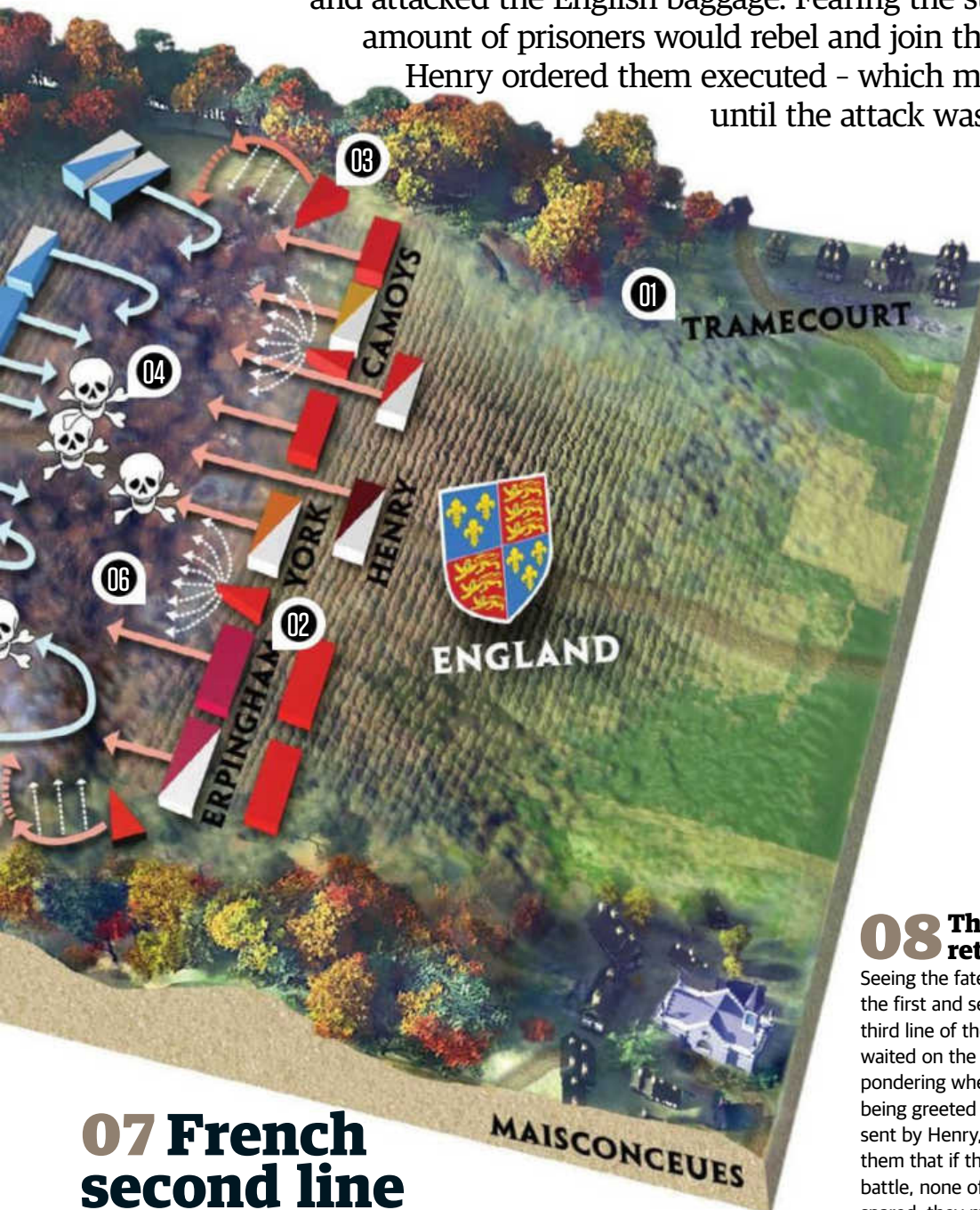
## 06 Archers join the fray and flanks

With the battle continuing along the fence of stakes, the English archers abandoned their positions and joined the knights in fighting against the French cavalry forces - most of which had been forced to dismount - which were reinforced by soldiers attacking on the flanks.



## 09 Local French force attacks baggage

Although the main battle was over, it threatened to reignite when a local French force circumvented the forest and attacked the English baggage. Fearing the substantial amount of prisoners would rebel and join this assault, Henry ordered them executed - which many were, until the attack was repelled.



## 07 French second line moves forward

The French second line, led by D'Alencon, moved forward in earnest to assist the beleaguered first line, but was overwhelmed in a similar fashion. Seeing the futility in continuing, he attempted to surrender to Henry, but was killed before he could reach the king.

## 08 Third line retreats

Seeing the fate that had met the first and second waves, the third line of the French forces waited on the edge of the field, pondering whether to join. After being greeted by a messenger sent by Henry, who informed them that if they joined the battle, none of them would be spared, they made their decision. Unsurprisingly, considering their options, they left the battlefield.



France

TROOPS 36,000

CAVALRY 1,200

KNIGHTS 8,800



### CHARLES D'ALBRET

LEADER

The former Constable of France co-commanded the French army alongside Jean le Maingre.

**Strengths** Experienced soldier.

**Weaknesses** Low social rank, so orders were ignored by noblemen.



### KNIGHTS

KEY UNIT

Much of the French forces consisted of heavy infantry, making them tough adversaries in open combat.

**Strengths** Heavily armoured and effective at hand-to-hand fighting.

**Weaknesses** Slow, cumbersome and easy to pick off by archers.



### HORSES

KEY WEAPON

Large numbers of knights on horseback often presented a fearful sight for their opponents.

**Strengths** Fast and powerful opponents in battle.

**Weaknesses** Cramped and boggy locations made them useless.

# BATTLE OF BOSWORTH

BOSWORTH, ENGLAND 22 AUGUST 1485

The morning, summer sun was still low in the sky as archers, billmen, swordsmen and knights formed into ranks, the anxious whinnying of their horses mingling with the clatter of armour and arms. The year was 1485, and on this day, 22 August, the future of the British Isles would be decided forever; decided with the blood of a thousand or more English, Welsh and French lives.

Casting his eye over the scene, and the opposing force come to meet him, Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, could see the standard of his rival fluttering in the wind - the white boar of Richard Plantagenet, one of the last remaining sons of York, who stands not just between him and the route to London, but crucially the English throne. Peering purposefully across the spacious divide separating the two armies, Richard in turn was able to spot Henry's standard - the red dragon of Wales. If he could win the day, he would secure his legitimacy as king and send a message to any other pretenders and traitors.

The hatred between Richard's family and their rival for the crown of England, the House of Lancaster, has been raging on and off the battlefield for decades in the bitter civil struggles known as the Cousins' War. Tearing the country in two, the previous battles of St Albans, Towton, Barnet, Tewkesbury and others had seen horrific slaughter, but had not bought a lasting peace and a decisive end to the struggle. The Wars of the Roses, as we

know them today, would come to a final end on the field of Bosworth.

After the death of Richard's older brother, the Yorkist king Edward IV, and then the untimely and mysterious passing of his 13 year old nephew after just two-month-long reign, Edward V, the political cogs of the English nobility sprung into action again after some 12 years of relative peace. With Richard taking the throne for himself in 1483, there were many who questioned their own loyalty. The chief of those rising up against Richard's usurpation was Henry Stafford, the Duke of Buckingham, who led a rebellion against the new king. Meanwhile the Lancastrian would-be heir to the throne, Henry Tudor, had sat exiled in France, under the protection of Francis II Duke of Brittany, for 14 years. His passage across the channel to join up with the rebels was hampered by storms and he was forced to return to Brittany, while the uprising in his name was crushed and the Duke of Buckingham beheaded.

Two years later, Henry made the journey to take the throne once again, this time successfully landing in his native Wales, in Milford Haven. He quickly managed to drum up substantial support for his claim and his army, bringing with him a few English knights and a host of Welsh fighters sympathetic to his cause. In addition, he had brought around 1,500 French mercenaries, courtesy of his French host who was keen to influence events over the channel. However, the king would





Richard crashes into Henry's standard-bearer, William Brandon, slaying him

## Greatest Battles

still be able to call upon far more noble houses and their levies to line up against him.

Just over 100 miles from London, Bosworth Field lies between the hamlet of Shenton and the village of Sutton Cheney. Arriving first to cut off Henry's advance towards the capital, Richard chose to camp close to Ambion Hill, giving him a commanding view of the southern approach, where he knew his artillery could be brought to fire down on the enemy. At the bottom of the hill lay a large expanse of boggy marshland, which it would be difficult for the Lancastrian infantry and cavalry to cross. His army would be split into three separate sections, or 'battles'; the main force, or vanguard, under the command of the Earl of Norfolk was positioned on the right flank, Richard would command a smaller force mainly consisting of his household cavalry slightly to the rear and centre, while the Earl of Northumberland commanded his own men on the left flank.

Henry's force had spent the night further to the south-west, at White Moors. Myth and fiction recalls that Richard spent a sleepless night hampered by nightmares, but whether this is true or not, the king's forces would have been well prepared for the rebels marching from the south. The king himself was a worthy soldier, the veteran of several battles and rebellions during the long war. Henry, on the other hand, had never seen battle, and had spent much of his adult life cooped up in France. For this reason, much of the strategic decisions, as well as direct control of the army was given to the Duke of Oxford, one of Henry's allies and a fierce enemy of the Yorkists.

However, there was one other major factor that had the capacity to tip the coming collision of steel in either direction - the Stanley family. Seemingly staunch supporters of Richard's cause even before he took the throne, both Sir William and Lord Thomas Stanley, the first Earl of Derby, had been rewarded well for their loyalty to the crown. William was made the Chief Justice of North Wales, while Thomas was made Constable of England, both powerful positions. Ominously for Richard's cause, however, Thomas Stanley was married to Henry Tudor's mother, Margaret Beaufort, who was a key conspirator in bringing her son to England and to the throne. On the day of the battle, both Stanley brothers had arrived, each with a contingent of men, and each with a mind to choose the victor for himself.

As with many of the clashes of the period, kings and commanders very often lead from the front, embroiling themselves in the thick of the fight to bolster the resolve of their men, as well as to crush the will of the enemy. The clash at Bosworth



Spotting Henry Tudor's bodyguard exposed behind his lines, Richard reaches for his lance and prepares to charge



Bosworth Battlefield as it looks today



"The king himself was a worthy soldier, the veteran of several battles and rebellions during the long war. Henry, on the other hand, had never seen battle"

# Battle of Bosworth



Field was a test for the mettle of not only the ordinary soldiers, but also the ability of their noble commanders to lead and fight.

## Fire from the hill

Rendezvousing close to Watling Street, Henry's army began the march along the Roman Road towards Richard's position, with the Stanley force following from the south-east still uncommitted to the fight. Suddenly, with his men around 1,000 yards from the king's position, the hilltop ahead erupted with canon fire as the royal artillery let off a volley at the rebels. With his battle line spread wide to envelop the advancing troops, Richard wanted his guns to soften up the rebel infantry before encasing them in a swift flanking move. Sensing the danger attacking this position head-on could pose, Oxford decided to wheel his forces around and turned to the king's right flank, the vanguard, commanded by the Earl of Norfolk. By keeping the substantial marshland on his right, Oxford knew he was relatively protected from any flanking move from Northumberland or the king, and he even had an opportunity to send Richard's force into disarray.

Seeing the rebel units emerge in the distance, and his guns open up on them, Richard remained as confident as ever. Not only did it soon become apparent that the enemy had no artillery to answer with, but with Stanley still uncommitted there were also far fewer of the rebels. The men on the hill, a majority of whom were English, not only saw the opposing force as traitorous rebels, but invading foreigners. With an army of French and Welsh coming to wipe them out, English honour, as well as the English throne, was at stake. Richard ordered Norfolk to attack.

As the rebels drew within range, the archers at the front of Norfolk's vanguard drew their bows and



Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre's model diorama



## Yorkists

**TROOPS 10-15,000**

**CAVALRY 1,500**

**LOSSES 1,000**

### LEADERS

**KING RICHARD III, EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND, EARL OF NORFOLK**

### GAME CHANGERS

Richard's abilities as a commander and a soldier far outweighed Henry's, his age and experience were vastly greater than his rivals, and his unit of artillery would be able to pummel the enemy without any real strength.



## Lancastrians

**TROOPS 5,000**

**CAVALRY C.200**

**LOSSES 100**

### LEADERS

**HENRY TUDOR EARL OF RICHMOND, DUKE OF OXFORD**

### GAME CHANGERS

The Duke of Oxford's military experience and intuition were crucial to Henry Tudor's army, plus unlike Richard his entire force was committed to him and his cause. Sir William Stanley, Henry's step-father's brother, had already changed sides to become a support of the Lancastrian effort.



## The Stanleys

**TROOPS 5-8,000**

**CAVALRY UNKNOWN**

**LOSSES UNKNOWN**

### LEADERS

**BARON THOMAS STANLEY, EARL OF DERBY; SIR WILLIAM STANLEY, CHIEF JUSTICE OF NORTH WALES**

### GAME CHANGERS

Positioned separately from the other two armies, the Stanley family were perfectly placed to strike whom and when they chose.

unleashed a hail of arrows into the enemy infantry. Often the staple of 15th-century English armies, the bow was a deadly effective weapon, used to win the fight before a bloody hand-to-hand melee could even begin. While Norfolk's bows had the advantage of the high ground to rely on, Henry's Welsh recruits also had longbows with them, giving the royal force a volley or two of raining death before the meatgrinder of medieval metal could whirl into action. With shrieks of French, bellows of Welsh and shouts of English filling the air in an almighty roar, the two sides clattered into each other.

The late-medieval melee was a messy affair, with commoner and noblemen alike in the thick of it together. Billmen, with their long, heavy poleaxes, roamed the field in search of armoured targets, mounted or not, to knock to the floor and dispatch. The hooked blades they wielded were ideal for catching on suits of steel, unbalancing the wearer and bringing them down. The unfortunate victim could then usually live long enough to see his attacker looting anything of value, before quickly moving on.

Charging into the fight on either side, Norfolk's vanguard cavalry would have had a crushing initial impact on the enemy, likely clashing with the opposing cavalry deployed to meet them. Once they entered into the thick of the fighting, however, mounted knights became giant armoured targets for any manner or billmen, archer, or rival knight to claim as a prize. Initially rattled by Norfolk's charge, Oxford's men soon were able to form into a wedge formation, gathering together to weather the Yorkist attacks.

### The king gambles

Then disaster struck for Richard. Despite his advanced years (he was at least 60 at the time - a considerable age for medieval combat), the Duke of Norfolk had been fighting in the thick of the melee in the royal vanguard alongside his son, the Earl of Surrey. Leading Henry's own vanguard, the Earl of Oxford sought Norfolk out in the field for single combat and knocked the duke's helmet from his head in a flurry of blows. Either by extreme misfortune or a carefully-placed shot, Norfolk was then fatally wounded by an arrow to the face, dying almost instantly. His son, Surrey, was also wounded in the fray and taken by Henry's men.

With Richard's advantage of the hill compromised by Oxford's manoeuvre, and his guns now out of position to prove effective, the situation was looking far less favourable. The fighting begun on his right flank had undermined his broad line,

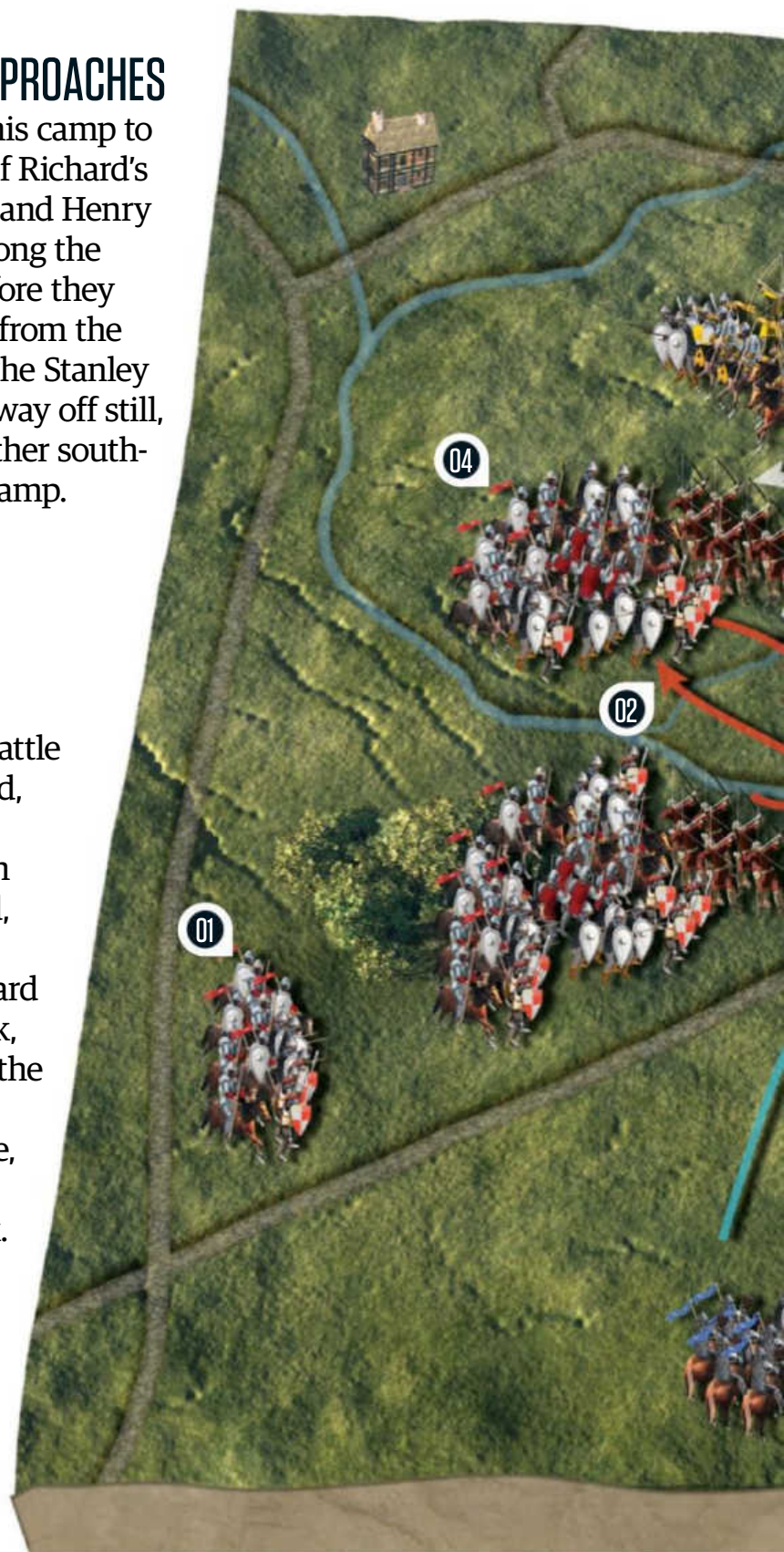
"With shrieks of French, bellows of Welsh and shouts of English filling the air in an almighty roar, the two sides clattered into each other"

## 01 HENRY APPROACHES

Marching from his camp to the south-west of Richard's position, Oxford and Henry lead the army along the Roman road, before they come under fire from the king's artillery. The Stanley forces are some way off still, approaching further south-east from their camp.

## 02 OXFORD MANOEUVRES

With Richard's battle line now revealed, Oxford decides to wheel his men back and around, moving towards Richard's vanguard on his right flank, commanded by the Duke of Norfolk. Seeing this move, Richard orders Norfolk to attack.



## 03 The melee begins

Charging from its advantage on the hill, Norfolk's vanguard initially causes Oxford's troops to falter. The rebel force soon gathers itself into a wedge formation, banding together to weather the onslaught from the king's archers and knights. Henry remains with his small bodyguard force, to the rear of the fighting.



**06 Stanley commits**  
Seeing Richard isolated from his main army, William Stanley charges his force in on Henry's side. The king is now completely cut off from his bodyguard and is forced to fight for his life. He is cut down and killed in the marshland, after his horse becomes bogged down and unable to move.

**05 Richard charges**  
Spotting Henry's standard behind his lines, moving towards the Stanley forces, he sees an opportunity to kill his enemy and end the battle quickly. He charges with his household cavalry, killing Henry's standard-bearer. However, the young usurper's bodyguards swiftly move between Richard and their lord, keeping him from harm.

### 04 NORFOLK IS SLAIN

With his helmet smashed away from his head by the Earl of Oxford, the Duke of Norfolk is fatally wounded by an arrow. News of his death disheartens the Yorkist force, as well as the king, the duke's patron.

## Greatest Battles

and the marshland to the front of his position prevented any flanking by his own force. Worse, whether through treachery or a breakdown in communication, the Earl of Northumberland had failed to respond to earlier commands for his men to join the fight. Worse still, the Stanley army still sat uncommitted between the two forces, threatening each with its interference. Now with Norfolk gone, the battle was slipping out of Richard's grasp.

At this point, it's possible that several of the king's close allies began to turn on him. One account derives from a Spanish adventurer, Juan de Salazar, who was fighting by Richard's side at Bosworth. Seeing several of Richard's units turn their backs to the enemy, he warned the king to "take steps to put your person in safety". In reply, Richard retorted: "Salazar, God forbid I yield one step. This day I will die as a king or win." Certainly, from what we know next, Richard was a seasoned and daring soldier, with no intention of yielding.

In an attempt to force the Stanleys into the fight, Henry had set off towards their force to personally bring them into the battle. Spotting the red dragon standard move off from the rear of the fighting, Richard spurred on his horse and called his household cavalry to charge. Determined to take the fight to the usurper, he was resolved to end the battle and the rebellion with one devastating attack to kill Henry Tudor.

Taken by surprise, Henry's small bodyguard unit had to rush to place themselves between Richard's onslaught and their leader. Though the battle-hardened Plantagenet managed to cut down



After the battle, Thomas Stanley personally presented Henry with crown from the fallen Richard's head





King Richard's Well is where Richard III is reputed to have drunk before the Battle of Bosworth; the present cairn was restored in 1964

“William Stanley, the new king's saviour in the battle, would be executed in 1495 for treason, having conspired to support yet another usurper to the throne”

his foe's standard-bearer, William Brandon, who had been holding aloft Henry's red dragon sigil all morning, he could not reach the young Tudor.

It was at this crucial moment, with the personal guard of both Tudor and Plantagenet embroiled in hand-to-hand fighting, that Sir William Stanley, the younger brother, committed his men - on Henry's side. As the fresh troops rushed into the fray, Richard must have known his cause was lost. Soon he became cut off from his bodyguard and his horse became stuck in the marshland as he tried to escape the charging Stanley troops. The king stood alone.

### **The last Plantagenet falls**

Modern scans of Richard's recently-recovered remains have indicated the king was wounded at least 11 times, twice fatally in the head, by the tip of a blade, or the thrust of a poleaxe. Surrounded by enemies, but still fighting to his last, he was left fending off attacks from any and every angle, before one put him down flat in the wet marsh, never to get up again. The crown circlet placed over his helmet, which was likely smashed away from his head prior to his fatal wound, was later retrieved and taken to Henry by none other than Lord Thomas Stanley - who placed the crown on Henry's head.

After the battle, Richard's corpse was stripped naked, slumped onto a horse, and led triumphantly into Leicester by Henry and his men. On its journey, exposed to the victorious Tudor army, Richard's body received further humiliation, including one stabbing wound to his buttock. Once in Leicester, the dead king was kept on display - possibly mourned as well as gloated over - and witnessed so that the message would spread through Europe that Richard III was dead.

Henry VII would have to fight for his crown several more times during his reign, and stave off insurrections even from his closest allies at the Battle of Bosworth. William Stanley, the new king's saviour in the battle, would be executed in 1495 for treason, having conspired to support yet another usurper to the throne.

When the body of the last Plantagenet king was initially put to rest, he was squeezed into a grave too small for him and without a coffin, it being dug hastily by Franciscan friars, and was left with no significant marker or epitaph. It was lost for the next 500 years, before being uncovered beneath a carpark in Leicester in 2013. In 2015 it was reinterred in a tomb in Leicester Cathedral, after holy Catholic mass was held to pray for the dead king's soul, as well as all those who lost their lives at Bosworth Field.

# BATTLE OF SEKIGAHARA

SEKIGAHARA, JAPAN 21 OCTOBER 1600

**B**y the end of the 16th century, Oda Nobunaga had changed Japan forever. The samurai warlord had conquered his way across the country, taking control of the fractured military fiefdoms one by one. Slowly but surely Nobunaga's bloody campaign led to the unification of a third of Japan, forming a mighty land far removed from the warring states that had existed before it. However, a swift and shocking end was put to this unification when his own samurai general, Akechi Mitsuhide betrayed him and the warlord was forced to commit ritual suicide, or seppuku.

However, Mitsuhide would not rule for long. Nobunaga's loyal vassal, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, vowed to avenge his master and faced the usurper in battle - forcing him to flee just two hours after the fighting began at Yamazaki. Mitsuhide's reign as shogun had lasted only 13 days. The man who had defeated him, Toyotomi, came from only humble beginnings. Not the son of a samurai or a daimyo, (a feudal lord), he was peasant-born and was given no surname at birth. Nevertheless, Toyotomi was fiercely loyal to his master and continued the work of unifying the warring states of the country. He steadily consolidated power until his death in 1598, leaving his clan to take control of the ever-growing and powerful Japanese nation.

Many didn't like the idea of being ruled by a previously peasant clan, and Toyotomi's failed invasions of Korea also cast doubts over its power. With the ruling clan's right to reign in doubt, a huge power vacuum formed in the Japanese government,

and one man in particular was very keen to fill it. Tokugawa Ieyasu, unlike Toyotomi, had a privileged background and was born to rule. His father had been a daimyo and his mother the daughter of a samurai lord - noble blood pulsed through his veins. He had been surrounded by war and death since the day he was born and he believed with every fibre of his being that he was the right person to rule the united land. He had caused unrest previously by pledging his allegiance to Oda Nobunaga, the heir of Oda Nobunaga opposed to Toyotomi, and he decided to rise up against the same family once more. For two years he plotted, schemed and persuaded various daimyo to side with him against the Toyotomi clan. With perfect timing for Tokugawa, the oldest and most respected of the Toyotomi regents died, so the ambitious lord made his move. He took over Osaka castle, the residence of the young Hideyori, son of Toyotomi, in a brutal and obvious snatch for power.

Ishida Mitsunari stood as the main opposition to Tokugawa's aggression. This powerful daimyo had a long history with Toyotomi; as well as fighting side by side with the ruler, he was also a top administrator of the regime. A man of rigid character with a calculating brain, Mitsunari had trouble maintaining relationships with men whose power he needed.

He immediately recognised Tokugawa as a threat to the Toyotomi rule, so headed an unsuccessful plot to have him assassinated. While provincial regents built up their military forces amid flying accusations of betrayal, outraged condemnations of clans and families attacking one another, Tokugawa finally summoned together all his supporters into



*Battle of Sekigahara*



The western samurai Otani led his forces through the battle despite being blind and crippled



finally summoned together all his supporters into a powerful force. Mitsunari also took advantage of the chaos, bringing together all those loyal to the Toyotomi clan.

## The two armies assemble

Tokugawa wasn't the only one with powerful friends. While his rival was distracted hunting down a wayward clan that had taken up arms, Mitsunari gathered a group of powerful samurai and government figures, including Otani Yoshitsugu and Mori Terumoto. The force he brought together became the western army to counter Tokugawa's eastern army. Terumoto took the near-abandoned Osaka castle as his base, but when Tokugawa learned of his enemy's movements he split his forces, sending several daimyo to engage the main western army while he marched towards Osaka.

Both armies were now marching towards Gifu castle, where the roads to Osaka converged. Mitsunari intended to take the castle and use it as a staging area for his planned takeover of Kyoto. However, his enemy got there first, and the general was forced to retreat south against a violent storm.

Wet, cold, tired and with uselessly damp gunpowder, Mitsunari and his men halted at the town of Sekigahara, expecting the eastern army to attack at any time. He arranged his men in a defensive position with two streams either side of them. On 20 October, Tokugawa finally learned of the disposition of his enemy's troops after his advanced guard accidentally stumbled right upon the waiting army in thick fog. Both sides panicked and withdrew before any action was taken, but battle was now inevitable.

To many it seemed that Tokugawa's army was completely outmatched. Mitsunari's western army numbered some 120,000 men, over 40,000 more than the eastern opposition. Mitsunari also held all the tactical advantages: he had men positioned high on the hills around the terrain, and his own army was placed between two rivers. But Tokugawa

“Wet, cold, tired and with uselessly damp gunpowder, Mitsunari and his men halted at the town of Sekigahara, expecting the eastern army to attack”

was no fool, and had managed to sneak in a supply of arquebuses - powerful muzzle-loading firearms that could easily turn the tide of battle against a sword-equipped foe. Perhaps most importantly, his scheming had taken root among the ranks of the western army, as he had promised swaths of land to the daimyo that would change sides during the battle. First he needed to demonstrate that his was the winning cause.

## The eastern army attacks

As soon as the heavy mist masking the field lifted, Tokugawa's vanguard, led by Fukushima Masanori, charged north, following the Fuji river. They crashed into the western army's defensive line positioned in the right-centre, where persistent rain had softened the ground into a muddy, sludgy mess. The organised lines quickly descended into chaos and the fighting became brutal, with men desperately tearing into one another, but neither side gained an advantage in the sudden desperate madness.

Tokugawa, witnessing Fukushima's attack failing to make any ground, commanded his right and his centre to charge the enemy's left, hoping that sheer numbers would overwhelm and Fukushima would finally be able to break through. The large number of samurai streaming across the field caught Mitsunari's attention, causing him to turn his as yet unscathed centre force. This simple command began to show the cracks in not only Mitsunari's army, but also his own leadership. Shimazu Yoshihiro, in control of the centre, flat out refused to ride to the aid of the

right flank, and the powerful daimyo proclaimed he would only listen to respected commanders. Mitsunari's stubborn centre remained firmly in place, and he could only watch as Tokugawa's attack sliced through his men.

With Mitsunari's centre refusing to move, Masanori's attack finally gained ground, but this only served to put them in more danger. As the eastern force advanced along the Fuji river, Otani Yoshitsugu, one of the few powerful samurai who Mitsunari had somehow managed to convince to defect to his side, stood positioned across the river. His forces were able to pounce on the advancing eastern army, slowing Fukushima's attack once more.

## The splintered western shield

Also positioned across the Fuji river, on Mount Matsuo, Kobayakawa Hideaki, began by fighting for the western alliance. However, Tokugawa had courted the general before the battle and Kobayakawa had secretly promised he would defect to fight with the eastern army when the time was right. With Yoshitsugu's surprise forces just past him, the time was ideal for Kobayakawa to act - but he hesitated. With Mitsunari sending frantic signals for Kobayakawa to aid Yoshitsugu, and Tokugawa aware that his entire cause could hang on whether Kobayakawa moved, the general froze. Not a man known for patience, Tokugawa decided to take action. He commanded his men to fire their arquebuses at Kobayakawa's position, forcing him to make a choice. As the shots rained down on Mount



the hill into the fray. Kobayakawa's soldiers ignored Masanori and directed their attack at the western leader, Yoshitsugu. Kobayakawa, although it had taken some persuasion, held firm on his promise and betrayed his western allies.

However, Yoshitsugu and Mitsunari already suspected Kobayakawa's potential betrayal long before the battle, so prepared for his defection. Kobayakawa's force of 15,000 men crashed into Yoshitsugu's sturdy forces, who had turned to face the turncoats head on and fought them back bravely with their fresh, dry gunpowder. Although this rendered Kobayakawa's charge largely ineffective, Yoshitsugu came under immense and growing pressure. With these extra opponents on the field, under the command of several mighty samurai, there was no denying the fact that he was completely outnumbered.

Seeing Yoshitsugu barely holding out against such odds, one-by-one four western generals and their troops switched sides and swarmed upon the exposed Yoshitsugu forces from all sides. The effect was decisive - the inflated eastern forces overwhelmed the western defenders on the left flank. Seeing this, and that defeat was inevitable, Yoshitsugu took the only decision that honour left him and opened his stomach with his own sword to end his life.

## Fukushima's unending charge

With Yoshitsugu's defeat, his forces quickly retreated from the field and left the western army's right flank free for the taking. Fukushima and Kobayakawa, now united in one huge, powerful force, thundered towards the right flank and destroyed it. At this point the eastern samurai outnumbered what remained of the loyal western force and their attack was swift and brutal.

They continued the attack and advanced on the western centre. Mitsunari, his confidence shattered by the multitudes of betrayals, realised that with

## Helmet

Known as a kabuto, this helmet comprises forged plates riveted together. The crescent moon helmet was famously worn by the warrior Date Masamune.

## Mask

Samurai would often wear a variety of memo face masks to help support the heavy helmet, while the fearsome designs played a vital psychological role.

## Dou

Made from a series of steel plates linked together by leather thongs. This body armour would be covered with lacquer that would make it weather proof.

his shield decimated, defeat was imminent. With the same calculated intelligence that prompted the formation of his army, he ordered the retreat and fled up the northern hill slopes, hoping to find shelter in Mount Ibuki, the highest mountain of the region. The western army followed his lead, scattering and fleeing into the mountains. Although some managed to escape unscathed, Tokugawa's forces chased, captured and triumphantly killed many of the fleeing commanders.

Tokugawa's eastern army had won, but later into the day forces absent from the battle finally began to arrive at Sekigahara. His own son, Hidetada, faced his father's wrath when he arrived late with over 38,000 men - a force that could have won him the battle far

## Opposing forces

### Eastern Army

#### LEADER

Tokugawa Ieyasu

STRENGTH Approx 88,890

#### GAME CHANGERS

Arquebus: an early muzzle-loaded matchlock firearm considered dishonorable by many samurai.

### Western Army

#### LEADERS

Ishida Mitsunari, Mori

Terumoto

STRENGTH Approx 81,890

#### GAME CHANGERS

Strategic advantage and a greater number of troops stationed at key points.



# Greatest Battles

quicker and cleaner. Hidetada had been distracted attempting to capture another castle, Ueda, against his father's own orders. Even some of Mitsunari's men had been held up - 15,000 troops slowed down by another conflict along the way. Had some of these troops arrived quicker, the result, and Japan's future, may have ended up very different.

## The future of Japan

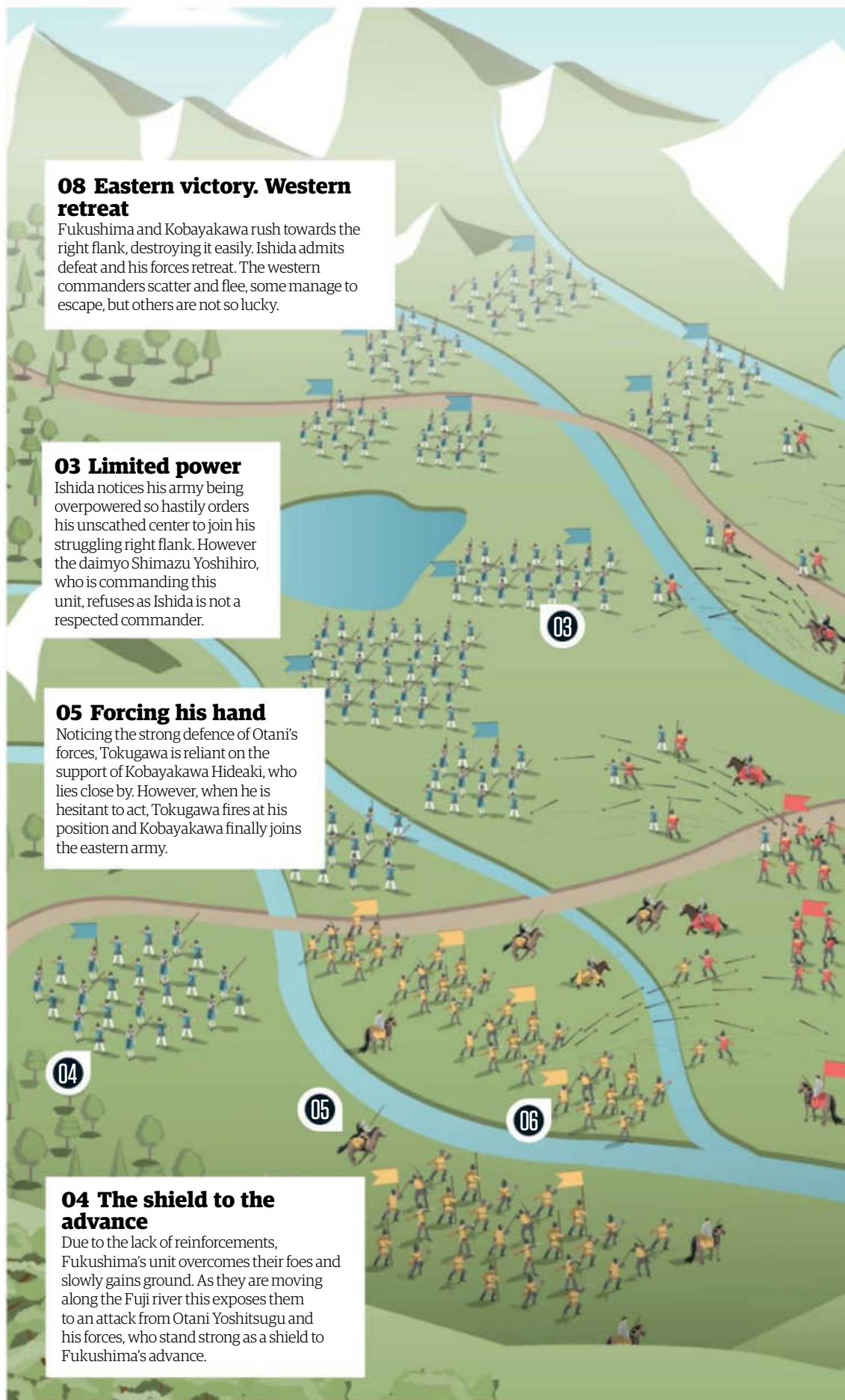
Mitsunari's escape didn't last for long. Villagers loyal to the now all-powerful Tokugawa caught the fleeing samurai and handed him over to his enemies, who beheaded him in Kyoto along with several other powerful western daimyo. Tokugawa had to be sure his rule wouldn't be challenged by any other powerful men with dubious allegiances. As an example to others, Mitsunari's head was placed on a stand for all to see - a strong warning to anyone who dared rise up against the new shogun.

Tokugawa was true to his word, after the battle he redistributed the lands to those who had fought by his side and who came true on their vows to change sides. Those who fought against him paid dearly. Toyotomi territories fell into his hands and pockets of Toyotomi support quickly faded after the public executions of the western leaders.

Three years after the Battle of Sekigahara, Emperor Go-Yozei appointed Tokugawa as shogun of Japan, and the battle soon became celebrated as one of the most important victories in the nation's history. At 60 years old, Tokugawa managed to outlive and rise above all of the powerful men of his generation in every possible way. Aware that his years left on earth were few, he began to concentrate on strengthening his shogunate and eliminating the last remaining Toyotomi clan members in one final clash at Osaka castle.

With nobody around with enough power to challenge his rule, Tokugawa ensured his ancestors would rule the country for another 250 years. Although it emerged through bloody means, the Edo period under the shogunate is remembered as the last period of traditional Japan, before the aggressive westernisation of the 19th century. The Mori, Shimazu and Chosokabe clans maintained their contempt for the Tokugawa family; it was so strong that it would go on to be passed down to their descendants. They would eventually rise together to bring down not only the Tokugawa dynasty, but also a way of life that had endured for centuries.

"At 60 years old, Tokugawa managed to outlive and rise above all of the powerful men of his generation"



### 08 Eastern victory. Western retreat

Fukushima and Kobayakawa rush towards the right flank, destroying it easily. Ishida admits defeat and his forces retreat. The western commanders scatter and flee, some manage to escape, but others are not so lucky.

### 03 Limited power

Ishida notices his army being overpowered so hastily orders his unscathed center to join his struggling right flank. However the daimyo Shimazu Yoshihiro, who is commanding this unit, refuses as Ishida is not a respected commander.

### 05 Forcing his hand

Noticing the strong defence of Otani's forces, Tokugawa is reliant on the support of Kobayakawa Hideaki, who lies close by. However, when he is hesitant to act, Tokugawa fires at his position and Kobayakawa finally joins the eastern army.

04

### 04 The shield to the advance

Due to the lack of reinforcements, Fukushima's unit overcomes their foes and slowly gains ground. As they are moving along the Fuji river this exposes them to an attack from Otani Yoshitsugu and his forces, who stand strong as a shield to Fukushima's advance.

05

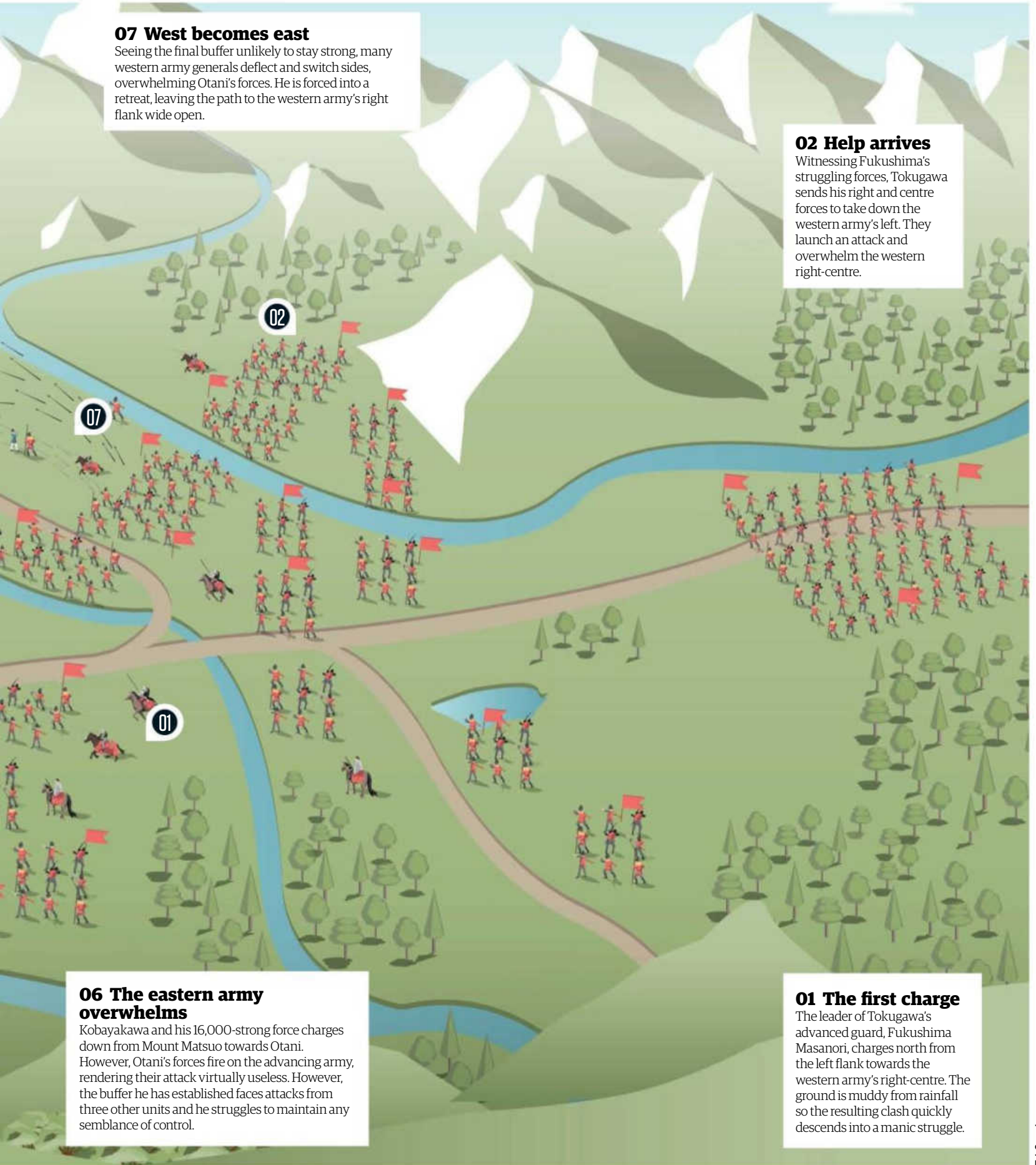
06

## 07 West becomes east

Seeing the final buffer unlikely to stay strong, many western army generals defect and switch sides, overwhelming Otani's forces. He is forced into a retreat, leaving the path to the western army's right flank wide open.

## 02 Help arrives

Witnessing Fukushima's struggling forces, Tokugawa sends his right and centre forces to take down the western army's left. They launch an attack and overwhelm the western right-centre.



## 06 The eastern army overwhelms

Kobayakawa and his 16,000-strong force charges down from Mount Matsuo towards Otani. However, Otani's forces fire on the advancing army, rendering their attack virtually useless. However, the buffer he has established faces attacks from three other units and he struggles to maintain any semblance of control.

## 01 The first charge

The leader of Tokugawa's advanced guard, Fukushima Masanori, charges north from the left flank towards the western army's right-centre. The ground is muddy from rainfall so the resulting clash quickly descends into a manic struggle.

## The war rages on

Prior to Naseby, the war between the Royalists and the Parliamentarians had been raging for three years. With neither side ever quite taking complete control of the conflict, there needed to be an encounter that decided the war before both sides ran out of steam. Naseby would be that battle.

## Get in line!

Both sides took different approaches to battle formations. The Royal Army incorporated three lines of musketeers in the centre with cavalry on the flanks. The Parliamentarians had two lines rather than three with musketeers out at the front.



## Cavaliers

Lacking the discipline of their adversaries, the Royalist cavalry often attacked individual targets rather than staying in rank. Although they were fighting a Parliamentarian army, about half of the MPs fought for the king. In contrast to the Roundheads, they would often wear fancy clothes with long hair and beards.

## Lobster pots

Nicknamed 'lobster pots' or 'ironsides', the soldiers of the New Model Army were recognisable due to their metal helmets. They would traditionally cut their hair very short and wear plain clothes as well as a cuirass breastplate.



# THE BATTLE OF NASEBY

VILLAGE OF NASEBY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
SATURDAY 14 JUNE 1645



## **Fairfax's tactics**

The New Model Army based its strategy around its lightly armed cavalry. Their attacks were built on speed and surprise and would aim for the flanks to avoid and outmanoeuvre the strong centre of the Royal Army.

Naseby may only be a tiny English village in the Midlands, but on the morning of 14 June, it played host to a pivotal battle in the English Civil War. The bloody nationwide conflict had been drawn out for more than three years, with neither side managing to assert any clear authority. The Parliamentary forces were now more determined than ever to finally bring down the Royalist cause, and on this day, the New Model Army, a modernised professional fighting force, would prove its supremacy.

The Roundheads' influential leader, Oliver Cromwell, was present but would not be leading his forces, so the task fell to the talented commander Thomas Fairfax. The Royalist army would be led by the king, Charles I, and supported by his loyal band of subjects.

As the clock ticked past 9am, battle began on the misty open fields of Northamptonshire. Overlooking the village from a ridge, the 12 regiments of the New Model Army made the first move and marched into Naseby. The opposing armies now lined up face to face, with the cavalry regiments on the flanks and the infantry occupying the centre ground. The Royalists had a German commander in their ranks, and it was Prince Rupert of the Rhine who began proceedings with a rapid cavalry charge through the fog after he spotted enemy dragoon movement on the battlefield's western edge. The charge crashed into the Roundhead ranks, sweeping aside the stunned Parliamentary horsemen, but instead of attacking the now exposed infantry, they pressed on to assault a baggage wagon in the centre of

Naseby. Next came Charles's infantry and remaining mounted units, who engaged in a full frontal assault on the reeling Parliamentarians. The sheer ferocity of the attack drove the Roundheads back but could not maintain its momentum, and the Royalists failed to strike a crippling blow as the Parliamentarians slowly but surely began to regroup.

Rupert's decision to concentrate on the baggage train was a timely reprieve for Fairfax, who responded by directing his mounted troops, led by Cromwell, to attack the opposing flank. This attack became a key part of the battle. Sir Marmaduke Langdale's Royalist troops wilted in the face of the rapid cavalry attack and the Royalist infantry were sucked into a perfectly executed pincer movement before completely breaking. If Langdale's flank had held out, the Royalists could have potentially recovered, but it wasn't to be. Charles and his forces were now wide open to attack left, right and centre. Surrender was not far away.

Prince Rupert returned from the baggage train soon after but was now too late to bail out his allies. As the dust settled, it became clear that the Royalists had lost the battle and more than 1,000 men had died in only three hours of fighting. In contrast, the ruthless New Model Army only recorded casualties of about 200 men. Many of the king's best officers lay dead and his artillery abandoned as the remaining Royalists fled the scene. The battle was a hammerblow to the king, and within a year, the final pockets of royal resistance were taken care of. Cromwell was now the undisputed leader of his country and the age of the Lord Protectors was begun.



## The Royal Army

**INFANTRY** 6,000

**CAVALRY** 5,500



### KING CHARLES I

#### LEADER

Dismissive of parliament's role in governing the country, Charles preferred absolute rule, which led to tension and eventually civil war.

**Strengths** Unshakable belief in his God-given right to rule.

**Weakness** Declining support base due to his actions while in power.



### CAVALIER

#### KEY UNIT

The iconic mounted units were key to Charles's military strength.

**Strengths** Experience of a long and hard civil war.

**Weakness** Position was based on status, not fighting ability.



### MATCHLOCK

#### KEY WEAPON

A type of musket, it was wielded by both the cavalry and infantry.

**Strengths** Power and range of shot.

**Weakness** Slow reload time and poor aim.

### 01 The road to Naseby

June 1645 and the civil war is reaching fever pitch. King Charles is persuaded to march from his stronghold in Oxford to relieve Chester, which is being besieged by Parliamentarian forces. Away from the siege, the main crux of Oliver Cromwell's New Model Army is assembling and evading any confrontation as it moves north. This delay allows it to reach maximum strength on the road to Naseby.

### 02 Leaving the ridge

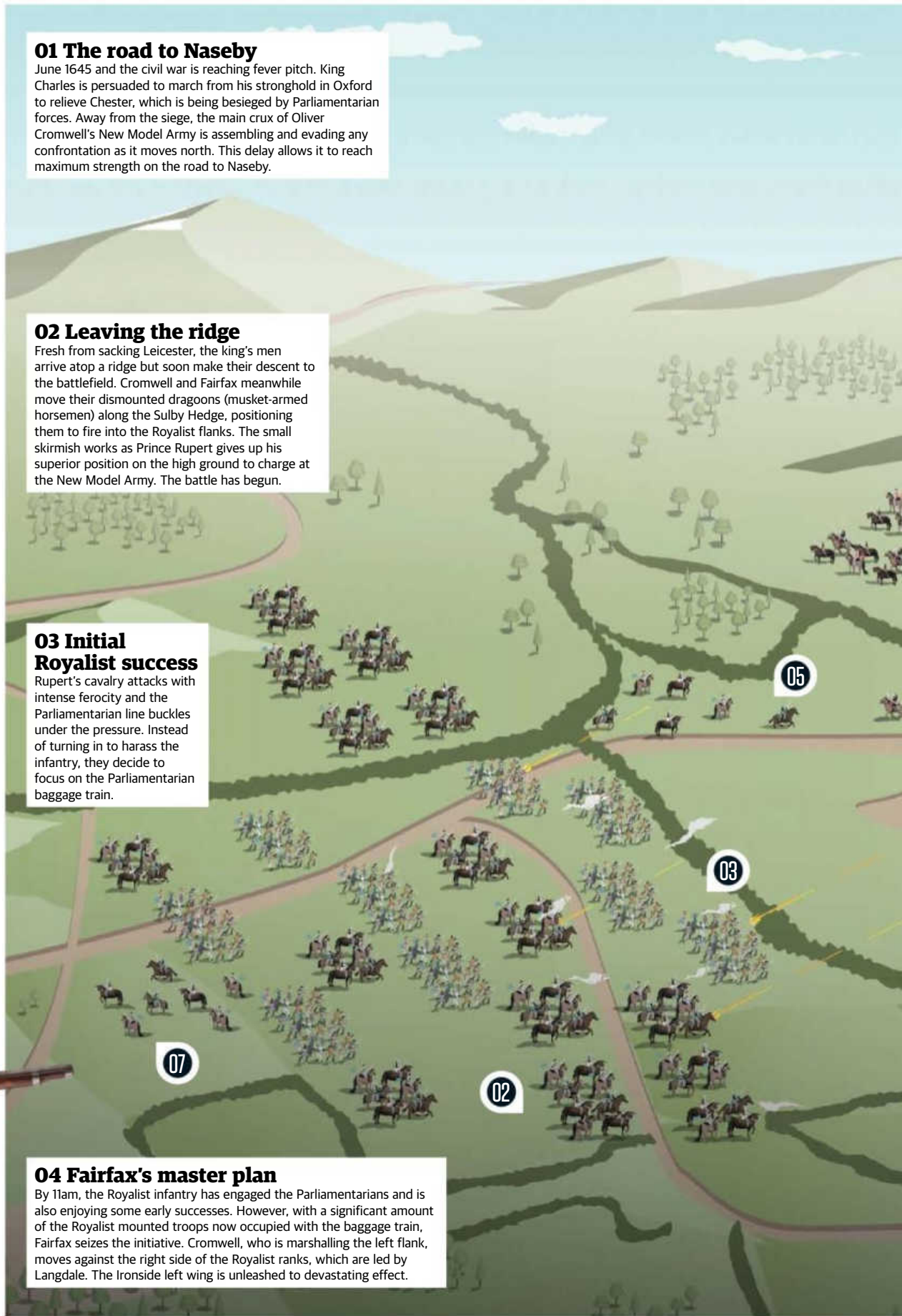
Fresh from sacking Leicester, the king's men arrive atop a ridge but soon make their descent to the battlefield. Cromwell and Fairfax meanwhile move their dismounted dragoons (musket-armed horsemen) along the Sulby Hedge, positioning them to fire into the Royalist flanks. The small skirmish works as Prince Rupert gives up his superior position on the high ground to charge at the New Model Army. The battle has begun.

### 03 Initial Royalist success

Rupert's cavalry attacks with intense ferocity and the Parliamentarian line buckles under the pressure. Instead of turning in to harass the infantry, they decide to focus on the Parliamentarian baggage train.

### 04 Fairfax's master plan

By 11am, the Royalist infantry has engaged the Parliamentarians and is also enjoying some early successes. However, with a significant amount of the Royalist mounted troops now occupied with the baggage train, Fairfax seizes the initiative. Cromwell, who is marshalling the left flank, moves against the right side of the Royalist ranks, which are led by Langdale. The Ironside left wing is unleashed to devastating effect.





## New Model Army

INFANTRY 7,000

CAVALRY 8,000



### SIR THOMAS FAIRFAX

#### LEADER

Appointed captain general of the New Model Army in 1645, Fairfax ranked above Cromwell due to the rule of Self-denying Ordinance.

**Strengths** Long career in the Parliamentary Northern Army.

**Weakness** Naseby would be his first major engagement as captain general.



### ROUNDHEAD DRAGOON

#### KEY UNIT

Led by Colonel John Okey, the dragoon units numbered at more than 1,000 strong.

**Strengths** Armour could deflect pistol fire and sword strokes.

**Weakness** Vulnerable to mounted cavalier attacks.



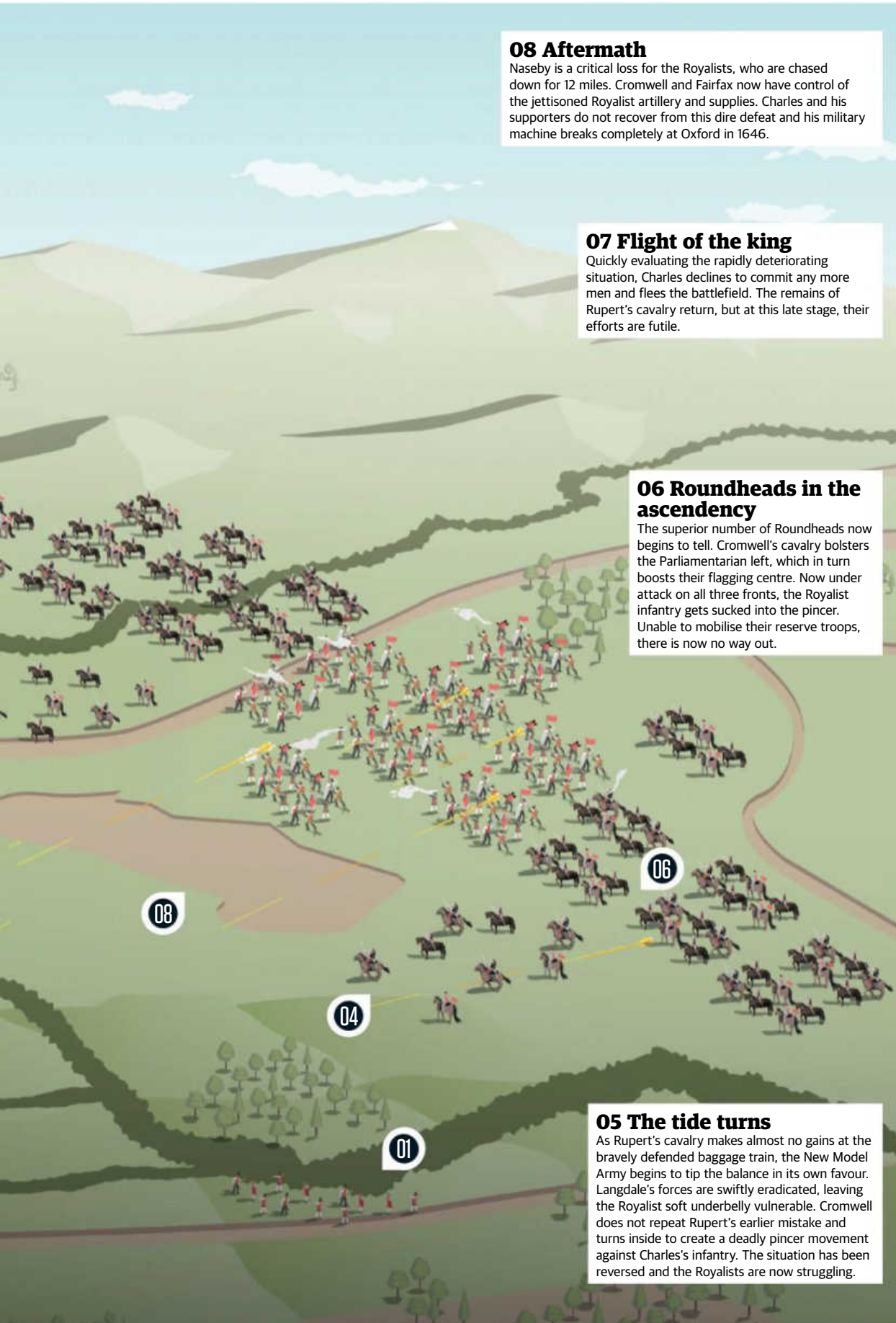
### SABRE

#### KEY WEAPON

Firearms were often slow and inaccurate so cold steel still had a big part to play in the battles of the civil war.

**Strengths** Unmatched weapon at close quarters.

**Weakness** No defence against ranged attacks.



### 08 Aftermath

Naseby is a critical loss for the Royalists, who are chased down for 12 miles. Cromwell and Fairfax now have control of the jettisoned Royalist artillery and supplies. Charles and his supporters do not recover from this dire defeat and his military machine breaks completely at Oxford in 1646.

### 07 Flight of the king

Quickly evaluating the rapidly deteriorating situation, Charles declines to commit any more men and flees the battlefield. The remains of Rupert's cavalry return, but at this late stage, their efforts are futile.

### 06 Roundheads in the ascendency

The superior number of Roundheads now begins to tell. Cromwell's cavalry bolsters the Parliamentary left, which in turn boosts their flagging centre. Now under attack on all three fronts, the Royalist infantry gets sucked into the pincer. Unable to mobilise their reserve troops, there is now no way out.

### 05 The tide turns

As Rupert's cavalry makes almost no gains at the bravely defended baggage train, the New Model Army begins to tip the balance in its own favour. Langdale's forces are swiftly eradicated, leaving the Royalist soft underbelly vulnerable. Cromwell does not repeat Rupert's earlier mistake and turns inside to create a deadly pincer movement against Charles's infantry. The situation has been reversed and the Royalists are now struggling.

## England expects

Nelson's flagship *Victory* signalled the now-famous message to the British fleet - "England expects that every man will do his duty" - prior to the battle. This used a 'telegraph' system whereby each ship passed the message on to the next in the line, communicating it to the entire fleet.

## Taking out the mast

In the close-quarters fighting at Trafalgar, gun crews on opposing ships simply blasted one another to the point where each was almost entirely wrecked. Taking out the masts of an enemy ship was the best way of crippling its ability to manoeuvre - in effect taking it out of the battle.

## Full broadside

The most devastating tactic of any ship of the line was to hammer an enemy vessel with all of its available guns on either the port or starboard side. A well-timed broadside could often change the course of a battle, spelling disaster for the opposing ship and its crew.



# BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

OFF THE COAST OF TRAFALGAR,  
SOUTH-WEST SPAIN 21 OCTOBER 1805

In 1805, Britain was on the brink of invasion by the emperor of France, Napoleon Bonaparte. The Grande Armée, which was gathered in north France, only needed a fleet of ships to carry it across the English Channel and Great Britain would surely fall. That fleet, under the command of Admiral Villeneuve, had given Nelson the chase across the Atlantic Ocean and back as it gathered ships for the intended invasion. Known as the Combined Fleet of Spanish and French ships, it numbered more than enough vessels to ferry the French army securely to England. But first it had to reach France to collect them.

The British Royal Navy was tasked with locating and intercepting the Combined Fleet to stop any chance of it reaching the Grande Armée. Spies in France and Spain had provided ample intelligence regarding Napoleon's plan, as well as the movements of the allied fleet. In September 1805, Villeneuve's ships sat in Cádiz harbour, with Nelson's fleet waiting more than 50 miles offshore. A line of signal ships monitored Cádiz, eagerly waiting for Villeneuve to make a move.

Already a hero back home and among his peers, Nelson had served more than 34 years in the Royal Navy and had put his body on the line for king and

country time and again, quite literally. The admiral lost his arm in 1797 while attempting to take Santa Cruz de Tenerife, and also lost his right eye during fighting there.

As the British force approached the south coast of Spain, it anchored further out to sea to conceal its presence from the Combined Fleet, which was still in the harbour. Small frigates were posted closer to land to monitor the coast for any movement of the enemy along the route around the peninsula. At all costs, Nelson wanted to prevent Villeneuve from escaping either north towards the Bay of Biscay and from there to France, or east towards the Gibraltar Strait and from there to the Mediterranean.

The French admiral, meanwhile, was being put under pressure from his emperor back home. His delay in leaving Spain and sailing for France had caused unease among his staff, and outright resentment from Napoleon, who called him a coward. Worse, Villeneuve had been fed false information about the British fleet and was still unaware that Nelson had arrived off the coast of Spain. Had the Frenchman known that the foremost admiral of the time was tracking his fleet, he may well have avoided the catastrophe he was about to sail right into.

## **Carnage at sea**

Although several French and Spanish ships were lost and taken in the battle, not one British ship surrendered at Trafalgar. The French ship *Redoubtable* became completely surrounded and lost all of her masts during the fighting, eventually forcing the crew to surrender.



## British Fleet

SHIPS 27

GUNS 2,148



### HORATIO NELSON

LEADER

The formidable British admiral was among the most feared and respected naval commanders of his time.

**Strengths** An unrivalled ability to out-think his enemy tactically.

**Weakness** His unorthodox methods carried great risk.



### HMS VICTORY

KEY VESSEL

Nelson's famous first-rate flagship.

**Strengths** 104 guns over three gun decks.

**Weakness** A huge frame made manoeuvring more difficult.



### 24-POUND GUN

KEY WEAPON

A hulking cannon capable of immense destruction.

**Strengths** Able to easily penetrate thick hulls.

**Weakness** Weighing three tons, it was far harder to handle for the gun crew.

#### 01 The British fleet approaches

At 6.30am, the crew of the British ships beat to quarters, preparing the gun decks for battle. As the formation approaches the Combined Fleet, between 11am and noon, Nelson sends out a signal to the entire fleet: "England expects that every man will do his duty." Approaching from the west, with a light wind behind them, the two British Squadrons Windward and Leeward each attack a separate section of enemy ships. They have to endure heavy fire from the enemy without replying as they sail straight into the side of the Combined Fleet's line.

#### 03 The Leeward squadron attacks

Following their flagship, the ships of the Leeward squadron fan out to assist when Collingwood comes under extreme pressure. The Royal Sovereign manoeuvres within the Combined Fleet, firing both broadsides relentlessly.

#### 04 Nelson engages

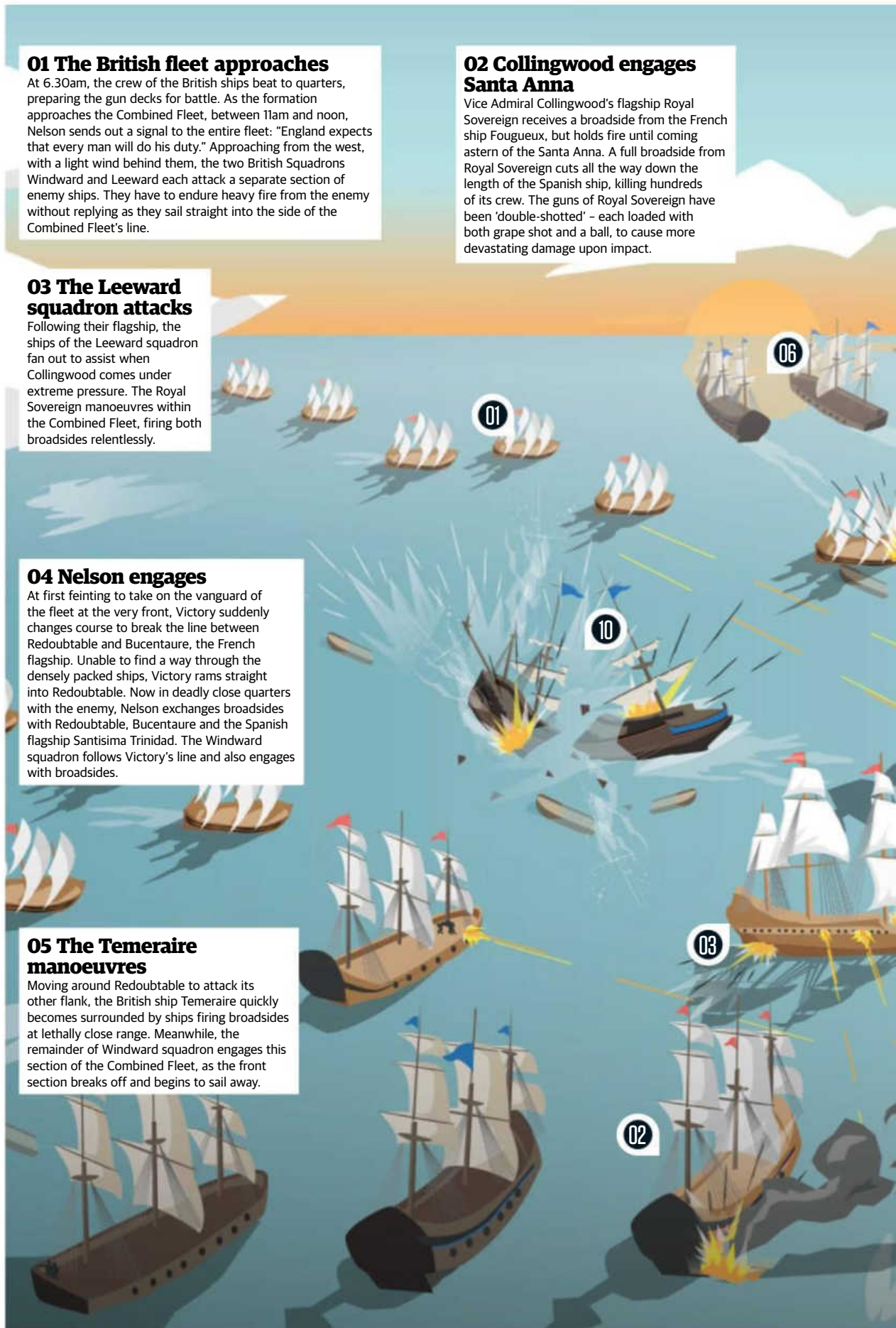
At first feinting to take on the vanguard of the fleet at the very front, Victory suddenly changes course to break the line between Redoubtable and Bucentaure, the French flagship. Unable to find a way through the densely packed ships, Victory rams straight into Redoubtable. Now in deadly close quarters with the enemy, Nelson exchanges broadsides with Redoubtable, Bucentaure and the Spanish flagship Santissima Trinidad. The Windward squadron follows Victory's line and also engages with broadsides.

#### 05 The Temeraire manoeuvres

Moving around Redoubtable to attack its other flank, the British ship Temeraire quickly becomes surrounded by ships firing broadsides at lethally close range. Meanwhile, the remainder of Windward squadron engages this section of the Combined Fleet, as the front section breaks off and begins to sail away.

#### 02 Collingwood engages Santa Anna

Vice Admiral Collingwood's flagship Royal Sovereign receives a broadside from the French ship Fougueux, but holds fire until coming astern of the Santa Anna. A full broadside from Royal Sovereign cuts all the way down the length of the Spanish ship, killing hundreds of its crew. The guns of Royal Sovereign have been 'double-shotted' - each loaded with both grape shot and a ball, to cause more devastating damage upon impact.





## Combined Fleet

SHIPS 33

GUNS 2,630



### PIERRE-CHARLES VILLENEUVE

LEADER

The French admiral's cautious nature had been accused of cowardice by none other than Napoleon.

**Strengths** A numerically stronger fleet at his disposal.

**Weakness** Indecision and a poorly co-ordinated command structure.



### SANTISSIMA TRINIDAD

KEY VESSEL

The largest ship in the battle, this hulking first-rate vessel had four gun decks.

**Strengths** Overwhelming firepower from its 140 guns.

**Weakness** Slow and unresponsive in light winds.



### CHAIN SHOT

KEY WEAPON

A highly destructive ammunition ideal for taking out the masts and rigging of ships.

**Strengths** Could cripple an enemy ship by bringing down its mast.

**Weakness** Only effective when fired at close range.

### 10 Nelson dies

Between 4.15 and 4.30pm, Hardy goes below deck to visit Nelson and inform him of the victory. Nelson replies: "Thank God, I have done my duty," before finally succumbing to his wound. The French ship Achilles, heavily damaged during the fighting, blows up at about 5.30pm, dramatically signalling the end of the battle.

### 09 The French counter-attack

Returning belatedly to the battle, the French lead squadron threatens to break the British attack, but a group from the Windward squadron forms up in line to divert them. The relentless broadsides smash the French ships and they are forced to change course away from the thick of the battle.

### 08 Nelson is shot

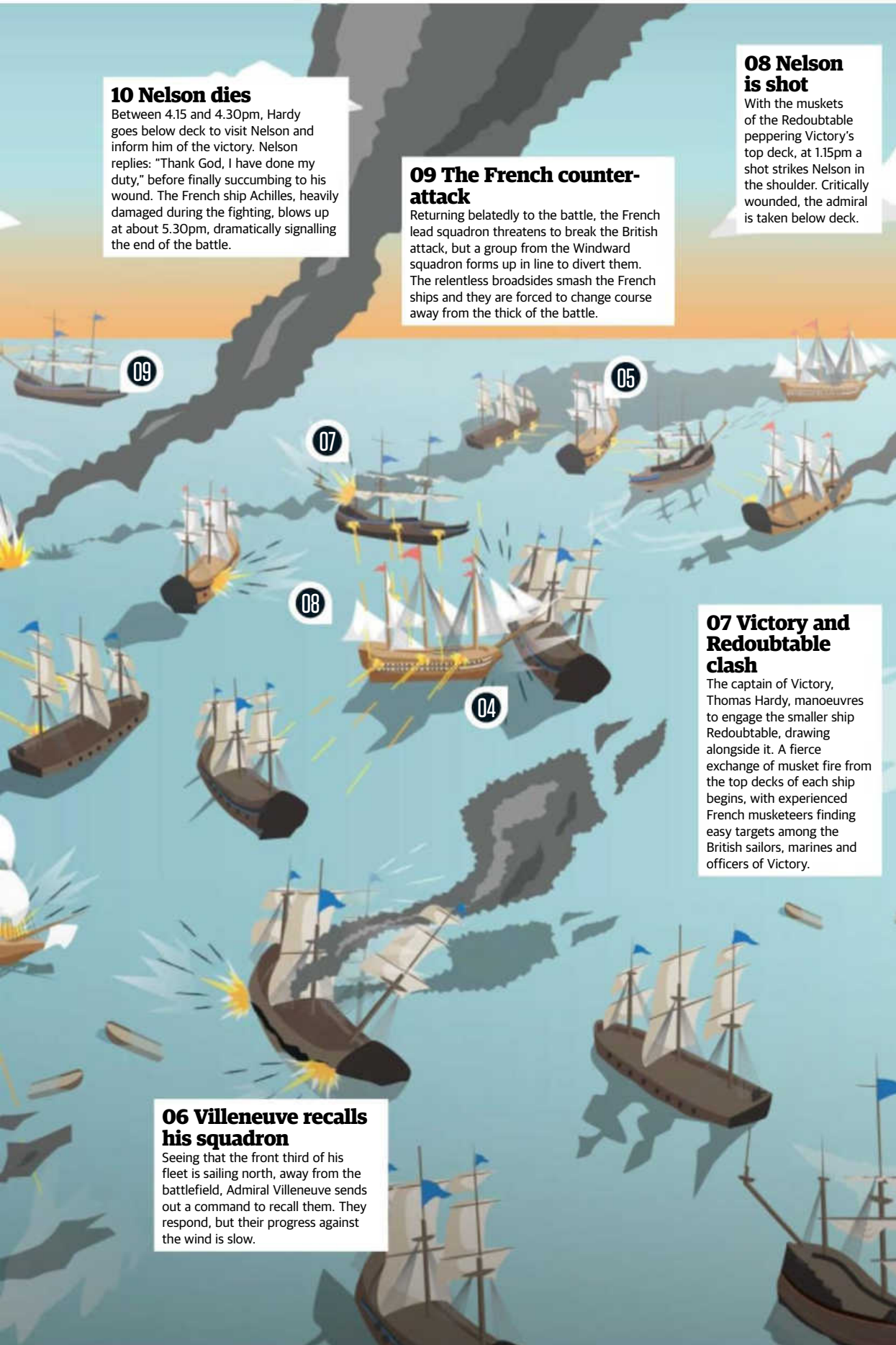
With the muskets of the Redoubtable peppering Victory's top deck, at 1.15pm a shot strikes Nelson in the shoulder. Critically wounded, the admiral is taken below deck.

### 07 Victory and Redoubtable clash

The captain of Victory, Thomas Hardy, manoeuvres to engage the smaller ship Redoubtable, drawing alongside it. A fierce exchange of musket fire from the top decks of each ship begins, with experienced French musketeers finding easy targets among the British sailors, marines and officers of Victory.

### 06 Villeneuve recalls his squadron

Seeing that the front third of his fleet is sailing north, away from the battlefield, Admiral Villeneuve sends out a command to recall them. They respond, but their progress against the wind is slow.





Austerlitz was a significant battle that marked the end of the Third Coalition and the demise of the Holy Roman Empire





# BATTLE OF AUSTERLITZ

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AUSTERLITZ, MORAVIA 2 DECEMBER 1805

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Ever since the turn of the 19th century, Western Europe had been a battleground. The Empires of old had been struggling against a reinvigorated First French Republic, and by 1803 a Third Coalition had been created to oppose Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte. Originally, the French had wanted to invade Britain, but their loss to the Royal Navy at Trafalgar and the subsequent Treaty of Amiens meant Napoleon began to cast his eyes eastwards. Having already secured Spain as an ally, the two powers that stood in the way were the Habsburg Monarchy and what remained of an ailing Holy Roman Empire, plus the mighty Russian Empire. Led by Francis II and Tsar Alexander respectively, the war would now be fought between three emperors.

Napoleon was a shrewd tactician, with the loyal and resolute Grande Armée at his disposal. His strategic nous was evident as soon as the war began in September 1805, as French troops scored victories against the Austrian army at Ulm and Munich. There was seemingly no stopping the Grande Armée, which had crossed the Rhine and emphatically swept across the continent. This was followed by the quick capture of Vienna in November of that year. Vienna was the capital and centre of the Habsburg Empire, and its swift occupation shocked the major powers. There had to be a response, and it came near the town of Austerlitz in the kingdom of Moravia (now the

Czech Republic). Would Napoleon be an unbeatable force, or would the old armies of the opposing European kingdoms prove too strong?

## **The battle plan**

The battle took place atop the Pratzen Heights. It was a foggy morning, as vast regiments from three armies amassed and awaited orders from above. The Russians stood in the winter cold, confident that the excellent artillery within its ranks would dismantle the French regiments. The Austrian cavalry, armed with their cold steel, were considered among the best mounted troops in the world. In total, the allied coalition numbered 85,000 Russians and Austrians.

The generals were confident of stopping the French advance, and had outlined a plan devised by Austrian Chief of Staff General Weyrother. The strategy was designed to target the French right flank in an attempt to force them southwards and open up a path to retake Vienna. Russian General von Buxhoevden, who would be joined on the opposite side by General Bagration, would lead this advance. The centre would be held in reserve to keep the flanks steady. In charge of all the allied operations was Field Marshal Mihhail Kutuzov, but he was soon brushed aside in favour of the direct leadership of Tsar Alexander I, who was hungry for an all-out assault that would finally crush the Grande Armée.

# Greatest Battles

The Austrians and Kutuzov were willing to wait and force Napoleon's hand, but Alexander was far too reckless to even consider this approach. The Emperor would rather listen to his own desires than the Commander-in-Chief and besides, the Austrians were not to be trusted after their capitulation in battle at Ulm a few months prior.

Napoleon, meanwhile, had a strategy of his own. After having failed to prevent the two Russian armies linking up, Austerlitz now became the location of the French Army's stand. The right side of his forces, which the coalition saw as a potential fragile point, was falsely weakened by the Emperor to draw the allied troops in. If General Legrand's IV Corps could hold the Russians and Austrians here, the soft underbelly in the centre of the coalition was there for the taking. Napoleon, a self-made general, even rode with his troops into the heat of battle - a very different approach to the old-style Austrian and Russian emperors. The French numbered 73,000, as they lacked the VIII Corps that remained posted in Vienna, the II Corps who were watching the Alps and the VI Corps stationed in Carinthia. Shrewdly, Napoleon sent his aide, Anne Jean Marie René Savary, to negotiate an armistice and in doing so, deceived the Allies into thinking that the French lacked confidence. While this was happening, his soldiers organised and equipped themselves.

Napoleon based his army on organisation and professionalism, and his popularity was at an all-time high with the French troops, who were at the peak of their morale, this battle being on the anniversary of the emperor's coronation. This boosted the Grande Armée, which was on the point of exhaustion after a long campaign through central Europe.

The Third Coalition was aware of the French fatigue, but had problems of its own. The allied force was 70 per cent Russian and 30 per cent Austrian, so many of the orders given out had to be translated back and forth between two languages, which made it difficult to undertake a complex strategy. However, they were pinning their hopes on reinforcements from both Archduke Ferdinand Karl Joseph to the north-west and Archdukes Charles and John from Italy to the south. This was enhanced further by 4,000 Austrians and 12,000

Napoleon's artillery divisions favoured light cannons and howitzers that were part of the Gribeauval or Year XI artillery system



The French forces were impeccably organised and committed to their emperor and the glory of the First French Republic

Russians already on their way to the battlefield, and would arrive in the next few days. If the battle could be delayed just a bit, then the coalition's numbers would increase dramatically. However, this way of thinking was never on Alexander's mind; he would defeat Napoleon there and then.

## The battle begins

Overnight the weather had remained foggy, which hid the French deployment. Just before 7am on 2 December, the allies spied what looked like a panicked retreat by the French from the Pratzen Heights. In line with their initial strategy, 40,000 Russian troops moved south towards Napoleon's right wing that had just hurried from the heights.

Over the ridge, 10,500 French lay in wait, and fighting began across

the Goldbach stream near the village of Telnitz. The Goldbach would act as the dividing line between the opposing forces. The Russians and Austrians held the ascendancy in the battle's initial exchanges, and their strategy was going to plan, but their progress was checked in the village, where the late arrival of the French III Corps had swung the pendulum back in Napoleon's favour.

The French Emperor's original plan had been scuppered by the enemy not moving their entire force from the centre, but being a tactical genius, he had other ways of turning events to his favour. Led by General Davout, 4,300 men had been summoned by Napoleon to march 110km (68 miles) from Vienna to bolster the French forces. In one of history's closest shaves, they managed to complete their march in 48 hours and arrive just in time to strengthen the right flank, which was buckling

“Napoleon rode with troops into the heat of battle, a different approach from the old-style emperors”

“There was seemingly no stopping the Grande Armée, who had crossed the Rhine and emphatically swept across the continent”



under the allied onslaught. In the shadow of the old fortress at Sokolnitz, the occupation of the heights changed hands frequently, but eventually Davout's men managed to end the stalemate and turn the tide to smash through the allied ranks. Despite a short rally from the Austrian O'Reilly light cavalry, the coalition troops began to flee. The battle had been turned on its head, and nearly all the allied advances had now been checked.

With the battle of the heights over, the conflict turned to the left and centre sides of the battlefield. An initial cavalry charge on the left flank saw horses from both sides slam into one another, while in the centre the Russian Imperial Guard launched into the French battalions as the coalition rallied. 3,000 grenadiers broke the first French line, and were only stopped after a timely artillery barrage. The imperial guard regrouped to allow their artillery to exact revenge and bombard the French, who had formed defensive squares on the battlefield. The coalition cavalry then struck the weakened squares and captured their only trophy from Austerlitz, the French Fourth Line's Eagle.

Napoleon, seeing the fight for the centre ground becoming a losing battle, sent his own imperial

guard into the fray, with emphatic results. Scattered after their initial success, the Russian Imperial Guard did not maintain their line, and were easily picked off by the French counter-attack, boosted by the I Corps. This hammer blow crumbled the



**ARTILLERY 139**  
**TROOPS 67,000**  
**LOSSES C.7,500**

**LEADERS**  
**NAPOLEON I,**  
**CLAUDE LEGRAND,**  
**LOUIS ALEXANDRE**  
**BERTHIER**

**GAME CHANGERS**  
The Grande Armée was battle-hardened, organised and willing to die for the emperor on the anniversary of his coronation.

**REGIMENTS**  
Imperial Guard, I Corps, III Corps, IV Corps, V Corps, Heavy cavalry and dragoon reserves.

**ARTILLERY 278**  
**TROOPS 73,000**  
**LOSSES C.1,500**

**LEADERS**  
**ALEXANDER I,**  
**FRANCIS II,**  
**MIKHAIL KUTUSOV**

**GAME CHANGERS**  
The power of the Russian artillery was vastly superior to anything that the French could muster.

**REGIMENTS**  
Imperial Guard, 2x Advance Guard, First Column, Second Column, Third Column, Fourth Column (All Russian), 3rd Austrian Infantry Brigade, Fifth Column (Austrian).

# Greatest Battles

allied centre, and the battle for the left flank was still raging. The allied formation was split into two, and lacked a core. The French Divisions could now outmanoeuvre the scattered Russians and Austrians and attack them from all sides.

As the battle raged into the afternoon, young French General Lannes went on the offensive to the north of the battle in an attempt to strike down the Austrian divisions led by General Bagration. He almost succeeded, but was foiled after a battery of Austrian artillery made a timely intervention. The Austrians were still pegged back, but were not cut off from the rest of their force as Lannes had hoped. As Tsar Alexander took stock and analysed what had happened, he realised that the coalition high command had been torn from the main army, and unable to direct the battle effectively. Napoleon had the upper hand.

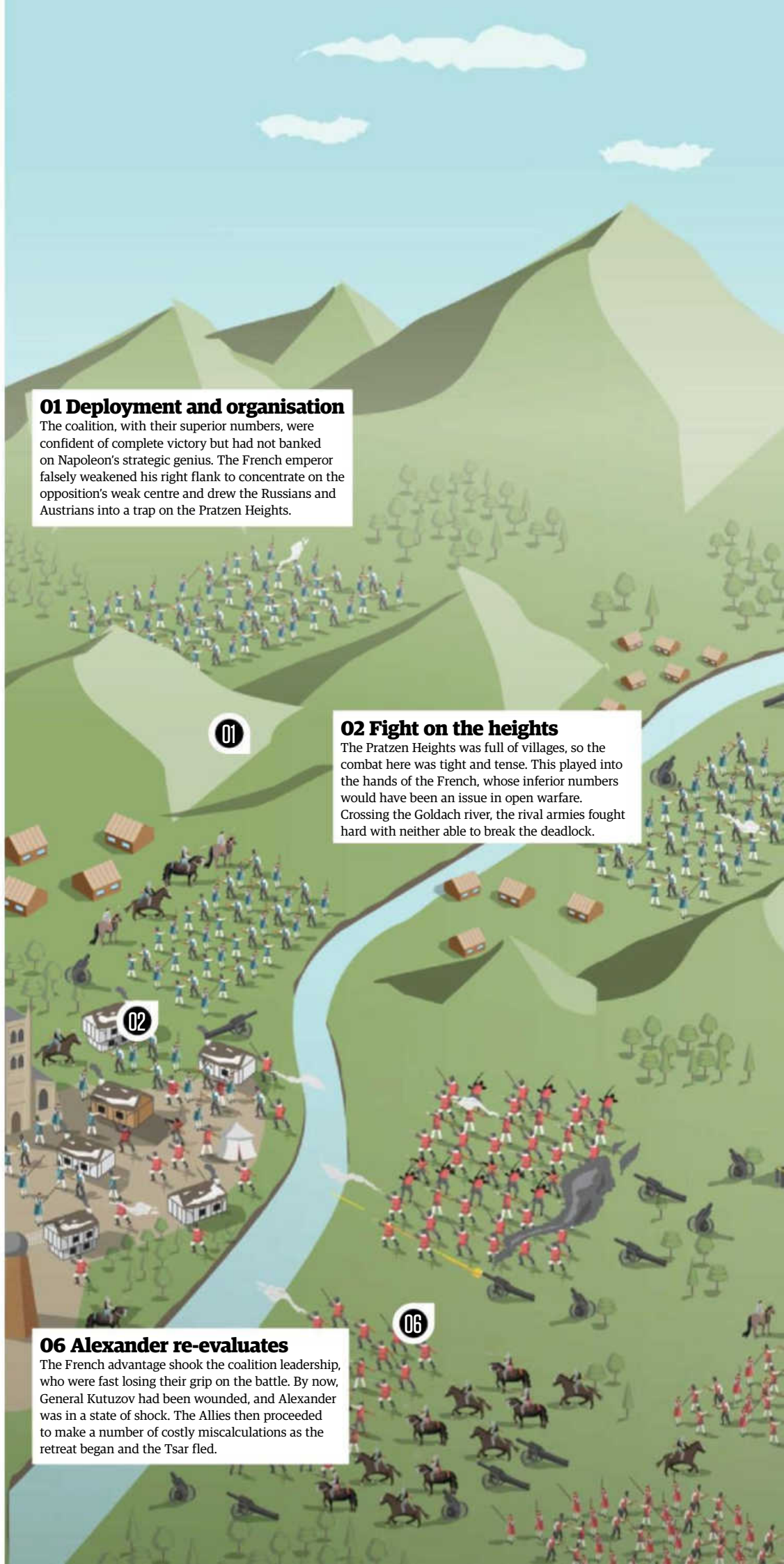
## Return to the Heights

Back on the right flank, ferocious man-to-man fighting meant the French had now occupied the heights, but were unable to press home their advantage as the coalition armies fought back bravely. Both sides were wielding primitive firearms, with the most popular being the .69 calibre smoothbore musket. This weapon was inaccurate and quite ineffective, with many shots not hitting the target sometimes resulting in friendly fire. This meant much of the battle saw fierce hand-to-hand fighting.

Using both bayonets and sabres, Austerlitz was a ferocious battle, with neither side holding back. The close-quarter fighting was backed up by artillery barrages from both sides. Although the allies had many more guns at their disposal, the organisation of the French troops meant their shots were more effective and frequent. This lack of cohesion in the coalition also meant that the powerful Austrian cavalry could not be utilised effectively, and was often found too far to the rear to do any lasting damage to the French lines. In the latter stages of the battle, the Tsar saw that victory was becoming more and more unlikely, so fled the field. It was also at this time that allied General Kutuzov received a wound and had to be treated in the safety of a reserve unit. The coalition was now leaderless, and unable to co-ordinate effective attacks. An unsupported Russian Uhlan attack on the north flank that suffered 400 casualties demonstrated this.

Behind the Russian and Austrian regiments lay a number of frozen ponds known as the Satschan Mere. As the French piled forward, the allies had no option but to flee across the ice. Saddled with heavy artillery and the remaining horses, the winter lake could not hold the weight, and as the French drew near, many fell into the freezing water and became the victim of the sub-zero temperatures. The remainder of the troops were bombarded by artillery or taken prisoner as soon as they reached the lake's shores.

Contemporary accounts have claimed that the number of allied deaths in the Satschan Mere were



### 01 Deployment and organisation

The coalition, with their superior numbers, were confident of complete victory but had not banked on Napoleon's strategic genius. The French emperor falsely weakened his right flank to concentrate on the opposition's weak centre and drew the Russians and Austrians into a trap on the Pratzen Heights.

01

### 02 Fight on the heights

The Pratzen Heights was full of villages, so the combat here was tight and tense. This played into the hands of the French, whose inferior numbers would have been an issue in open warfare. Crossing the Goldach river, the rival armies fought hard with neither able to break the deadlock.

02

06

### 06 Alexander re-evaluates

The French advantage shook the coalition leadership, who were fast losing their grip on the battle. By now, General Kutuzov had been wounded, and Alexander was in a state of shock. The Allies then proceeded to make a number of costly miscalculations as the retreat began and the Tsar fled.

## 04 Battle of the Imperial Guards

The coalition centre was not as weak as Napoleon had planned. The Russian Imperial Guard made initial gains against its French equivalent, but was pegged back after an artillery barrage. The Russians responded with a bombardment of their own, resulting in their greatest successes in the battle.

## 03 Cavalry clash on the left flank

On the opposite flank, cavalry from both sides went into battle with the French mamelukes and Grenadiers up against the Russian Uhlans and Austrian Hussars. On the northern edge of the battlefield, French General Lannes unleashed an attack on General Bagration in an attempt to cut him off from the main battle.

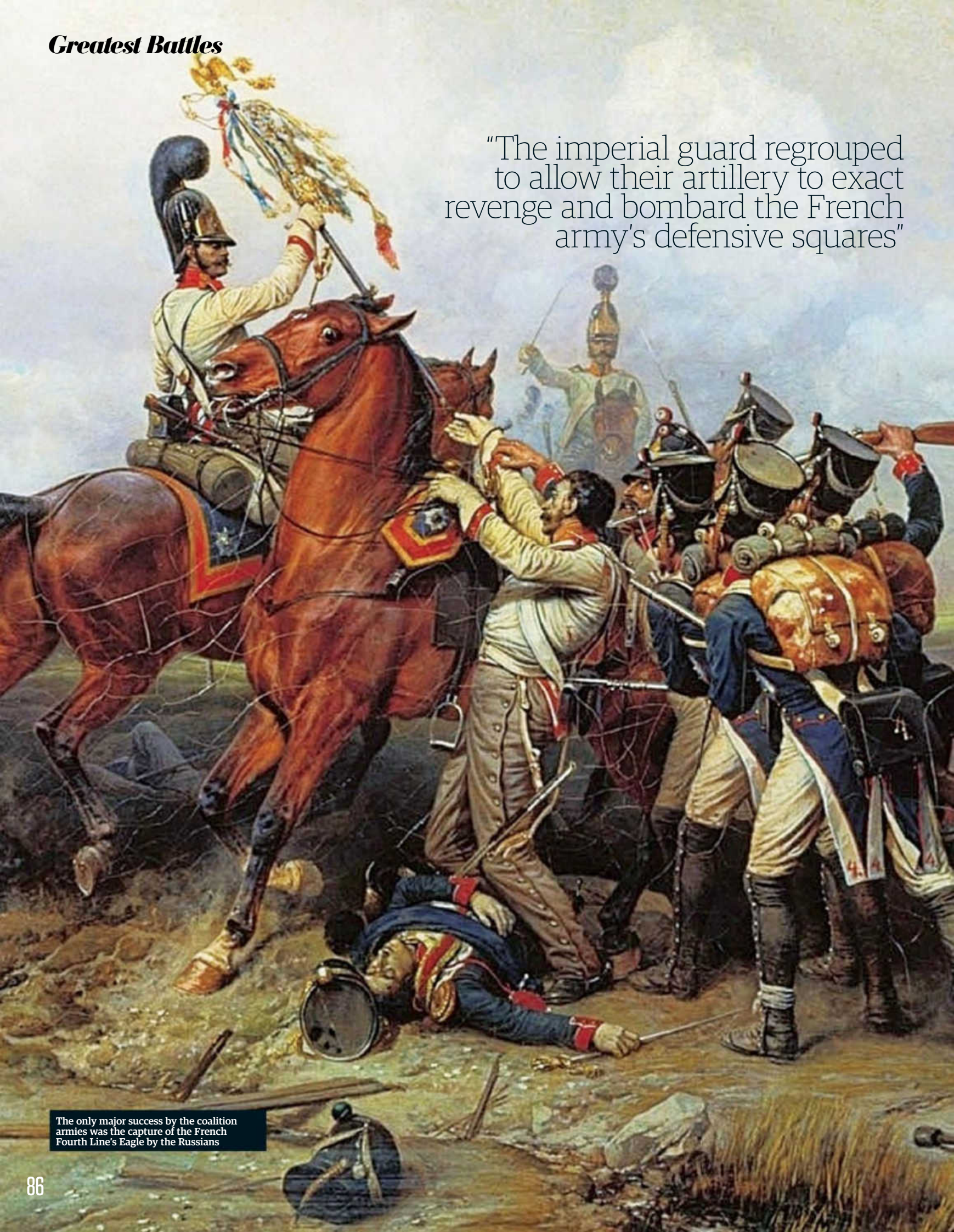
## 05 French breakthrough

The success was short-lived as the French numbers were boosted by the arrival of the I Corps. The Russian Imperial Guard was first pushed back and then routed as the French swarmed forward in a devastating counterattack.

## 07 Retreat to the ice

Now in full retreat, the coalition departed the battle rapidly to avoid more losses on the battlefield. Behind them lay a series of frozen ponds. In the heat of battle, many of the fleeing soldiers drowned in the icy waters as they tried to cross, while the rest were rounded up and taken prisoner.

“The imperial guard regrouped to allow their artillery to exact revenge and bombard the French army’s defensive squares”



The only major success by the coalition armies was the capture of the French Fourth Line's Eagle by the Russians

greatly exaggerated, but nonetheless, the coalition divisions were scattered and leaderless, and defeat was now almost inevitable. 11,000 Russians and 4,000 Austrians lay dead in the mud as a victorious Grande Armée mopped up the remaining coalition soldiers on the battlefield. 12,000 soldiers were captured, and the French helped themselves to 180 cannons from the Russian artillery. The weary French could now rest as the Russians retreated back to their homeland and the Austrians surrendered to their French enemy.

## The aftermath

Napoleon may not have defeated his adversaries as comprehensively as he would have liked, but he out-thought and out-fought both the Austrians and Russians. His triumph was so great that many see the victory as when the Emperor began to lose touch with reality and began to concoct more ambitious ideas for his own Napoleonic Europe.

On the evening of 2 December, Johann I Joseph, Prince of Liechtenstein, rode into the French encampment to negotiate a peace agreement. The hierarchy of the Grande Armée agreed, and Napoleon and Francis met two days later. After extended discussions, the result was the Peace of Pressburg. The treaty was a necessity for Austria, who had seen their lands taken and army in ruins, but the agreement greatly benefitted the First French Republic. France now had Trieste and Dalmatia under its rule, as well as a vast area east of the Rhine that bordered Bavarian and Prussian lands. Napoleon was keen to appease Prussia, so they did not enter into a conflict with the French. As a result, he allowed his defeated foe free reign over Hanover.

The Austrians fared much worse than any other nation, and were forced to pay 40 million Francs in reparations. Most significantly, the Holy Roman Empire dissolved after 1,000 years as a



Napoleon meets Francis II following the Battle of Austerlitz

kingdom. The victory of a republican army against a monarchical one was an important turning point in warfare.

In the Russian Army, aristocrats still held the top roles and order was maintained by regular beatings. This meant the officers were often poorly trained, especially in comparison to the Grande Armée, who were well drilled by Napoleon and could easily adapt to new strategies and tactics. There were even reports that Russian general Friedrich Wilhelm Buxhowden was drunk during the battle.

With the destruction of the Third Coalition, the political and military structures and attitudes of old had been eradicated.

The picture of post-Austerlitz Europe was a bleak one for all, bar Napoleon. The Third Coalition was in ruins, and with the Russians out of the picture, only Britain remained in the way of a confident and powerful French Emperor. The peace was not to last, however, and when the Prussians became more and more sceptical of the French in 1806, Europe was on the road to war once again.



Russians retreat across the frozen lake Satschan, but Napoleon's cannons shatter the ice and many are drowned

# BATTLE OF WATERLOO

WATERLOO, BELGIUM 18 JUNE 1815

**T**he bloody culmination of the Waterloo Campaign, the Battle of Waterloo was one of the most explosive of the 19th century, with a British-led allied army under the command of Arthur Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington, defeating a French army under the command of Napoleon Bonaparte and ending the latter's 100-day reign as emperor of France.

The war had begun after Napoleon I returned from exile on Elba (an island off Tuscany) to Paris on 20 March 1815. This set into motion a chain of events that would see Napoleon reclaim his position as emperor, the Congress of Vienna declare him an outlaw and the Seventh Coalition pledge to field a large army to bring his rule to an end.

With hundreds of thousands of soldiers drafted to take Napoleon down, it was only a matter of time before blood was spilt - something that occurred two days prior to Waterloo when Napoleon struck at the Prussian army before it could join up with Wellington's on 16 June.

The French ruler did this by splitting his army into three groups, with two dedicated to the Prussians. The following exchange was the Battle of Ligny and saw Napoleon defeat the Prussians by causing their centre to collapse under repeated French assaults. While the Prussians lost men, they were not routed however and - as we shall see - were disastrously left to retreat uninterrupted, with only a cursory French force giving chase.

On the same day as the Battle of Ligny, Napoleon's army's remaining left flank had been engaged with some of Wellington's forces at Quatre Bras, where they had attempted unsuccessfully to overrun the Prince of Orange's position. With

the Prussians apparently defeated, Napoleon turned his attention on Quatre Bras, reaching the area the following day. By this point, however, Quatre Bras had been abandoned by both sides; Wellington could not hold it without the Prussians. After catching up with his left flank commander, Marshal Michel Ney, who was pursuing a retreating Wellington towards Waterloo, Napoleon ordered his right flank commander, Marshal Emmanuel de Grouchy, to see off the Prussians more definitively.

By this time, with Napoleon issuing the order late on the afternoon of 17 June, the Prussians had already made significant ground and regrouped at the town of Wavre - a position from which they could easily rejoin Wellington at Waterloo - and Marshal Grouchy was unsuccessful in catching them. Despite eventually defeating a solitary Prussian Corps at Wavre on 18 June, by this time the Battle of Waterloo was in full swing and Grouchy was unable to take part.

After Napoleon had issued the order to Marshal Grouchy he continued to hunt down Wellington with his remaining forces before making camp south-west of Wellington's position at Waterloo. The scene was now set for the Battle of Waterloo the next day (18 June), which resulted in a famous victory for the Duke of Wellington and a final defeat for Emperor Napoleon.

As a consequence of Napoleon's loss at Waterloo, the French monarchy was restored, with King Louis XVIII regaining the throne on 8 July 1815, while the emperor himself was banished to the volcanic island of Saint Helena in the Atlantic Ocean. Napoleon would live on Saint Helena for a further six years, before passing away in May 1821.

## **Napoleon's bodyguard**

Protecting Napoleon during the battle were his Old Guard - elite veterans of the Imperial Guard that he handpicked based on their combat experience. One of the most common traits was above average height, meaning that they towered over many other units on the battlefield.





## Scots Greys

The charge of the Royal Scots Greys at Waterloo became symbolic of the courage demonstrated by Coalition forces in the face of the might of Napoleon's army. Their charge famously repelled a key French advance, caused the complete destruction of a large French infantry column and led to the capture of Napoleon's 45th Regiment of the Line's eagle standard.

## Seventh Coalition

While the primary antagonists of the Battle of Waterloo were the UK and France, a host of other nations played a part, joining with the British to form a coalition against the new emperor of France. These included the Netherlands, Hanover, Nassau, Bavaria and Prussia - the latter contributing most significantly.

## Heavy losses

While Waterloo was not a medieval meat-grinder of a battle, with tactics very firmly on display, it still had a huge casualty list. Of Napoleon's 72,000 troops, around 25,000 were killed outright or wounded, 8,000 were taken prisoner and 15,000 went missing. The total for Wellington and his allies' soldiers killed, wounded or missing came to around 24,000.



## Seventh Coalition

TROOPS 118,000

CAVALRY 11,000

CANNONS 150



### DUKE OF WELLINGTON

#### LEADER

Rising to prominence in the Napoleonic Wars, Arthur Wellesley remained commander-in-chief of the British Army until his death in 1852.

**Strengths** Very confident and energetic leader.

**Weakness** Not the most tactically astute of generals.



### INFANTRY

#### IMPORTANT UNIT

Among the best on the planet, the infantry dug in deep at Waterloo to deny many French cavalry charges.

**Strength** Versatile troops that could fight at close range.

**Weaknesses** Easily outflanked by cavalry and vulnerable to cannons.



### CANNON

#### KEY WEAPON

Very destructive, the Coalition's artillery helped slow the French forces and break up their lines.

**Strengths** Cannons had excellent range and could do a lot of damage.

**Weaknesses** Needed supporting troops for protection as fairly fragile under fire and few in number.

## 01 First foray

Between 10 and 11.30am on 18 June the Battle of Waterloo began with a French attack on a Coalition position at Hougomont, a large farmhouse that served as a tactical outpost. This fighting was low key at first with few troops from each side engaged, but by the early afternoon it had become a bloody epicentre for much of the fighting, with the Coalition forces holding out against numerous French assaults.

## 02 GRANDE BATTERIE

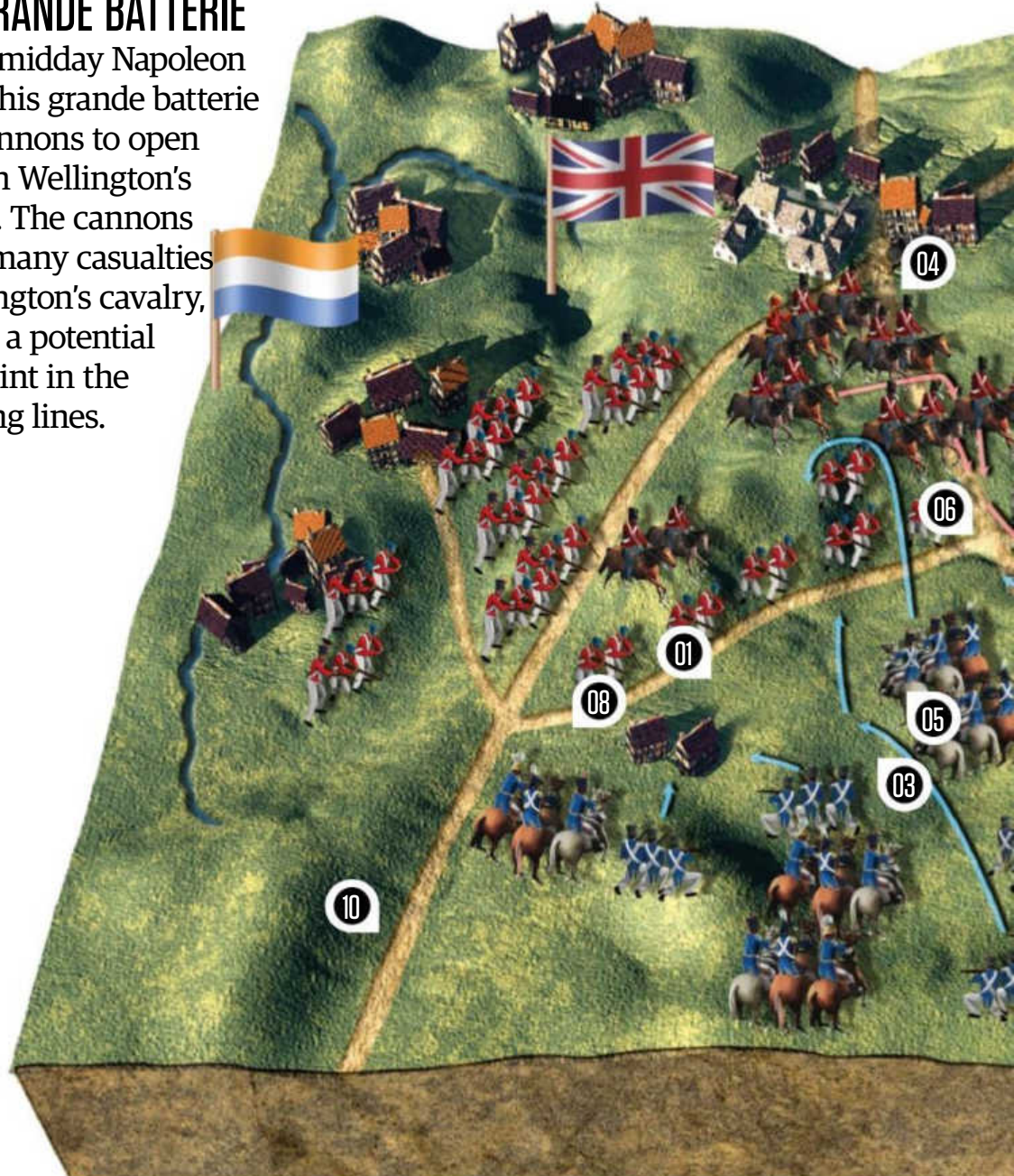
Around midday Napoleon ordered his grande batterie of 80 cannons to open fire upon Wellington's position. The cannons caused many casualties in Wellington's cavalry, opening a potential weak point in the defending lines.

## 03 French infantry attack

After the Coalition's lines had been weakened, Napoleon began his attack proper, with numerous infantry corps advancing. The initial fighting went the way of the French, with the left's infantry pressing Wellington's forces back. However, just when it looked like Napoleon would make a decisive break, he was informed that Prussian troops were fast approaching. He tried to send word to Marshal Grouchy to engage with them, but his commander was in Wavre.

## 10 French army retreats

With the French left, right and centre now disintegrating, the only cohesive force left available to Napoleon were two battalions of his Old Guard. Despite hoping to rally his remaining troops behind them, the strength of the Coalition's forces left this untenable, and all Napoleon could do was order a retreat. His exit was covered by the Old Guard, many of whom died holding back the Coalition's advance.

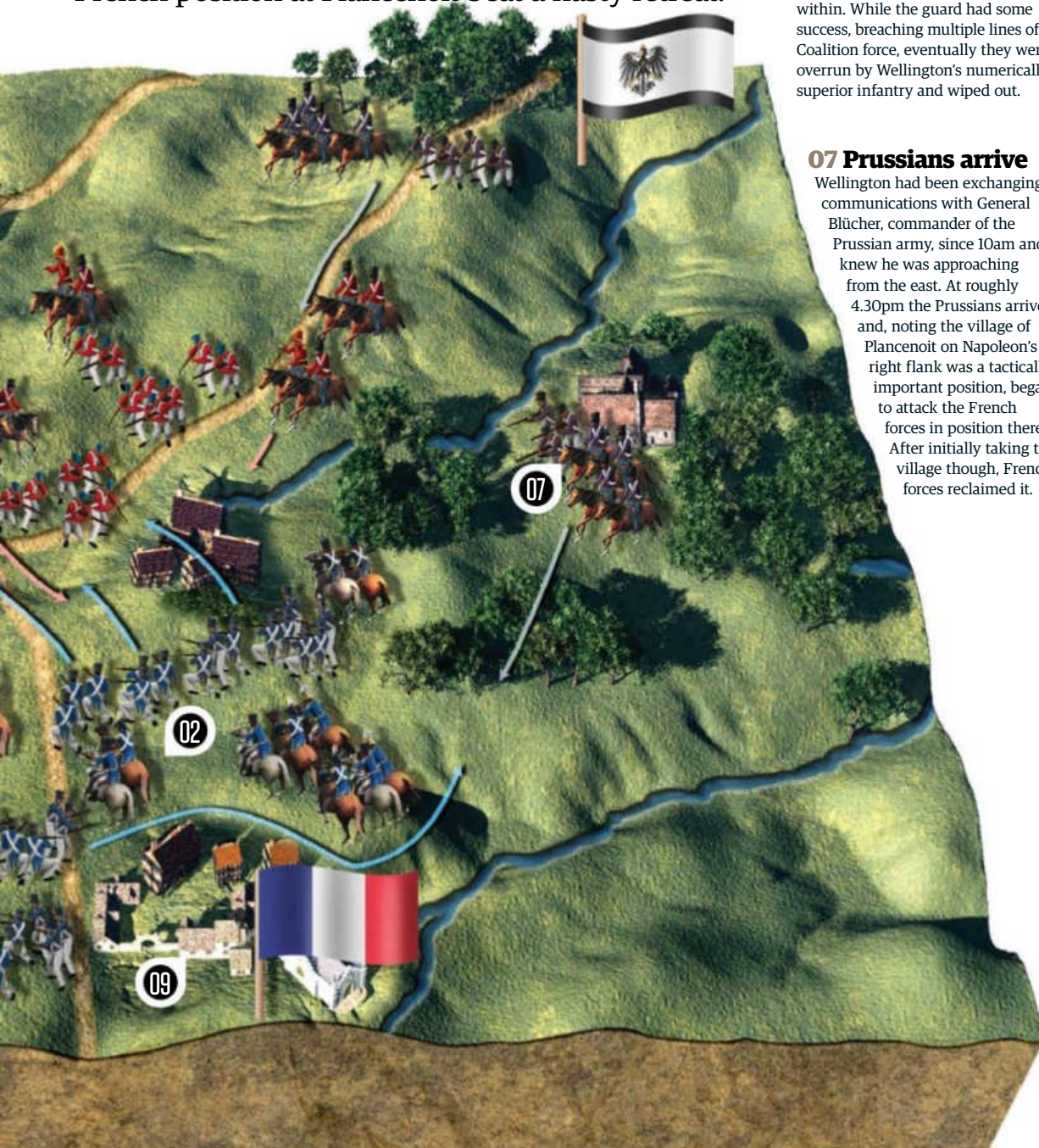


## 04 British heavy cavalry attack

Seeing their infantry was about to buckle, Wellington's First and Second Brigade of heavy cavalry charged and smashed into the French infantry. By the time they reached the bottom of the hill, they had completely halted the infantry's advance. In doing so, however, they had left themselves exposed and without backup.

## 09 PLANGENOIT RECAPTURED

The Prussian army retook Plancenoit and targeted Napoleon's right flank, giving Wellington the upper hand. The Old Guard who had been supporting the French position at Plancenoit beat a hasty retreat.



## 08 Imperial Guard attacks Wellington

With his forces temporarily holding off the Prussians at Plancenoit, Napoleon went on one last major offensive. He sent the supposedly undefeatable Imperial Guard into Wellington's army's centre in an attempt to break through and attack his flanks from within. While the guard had some success, breaching multiple lines of the Coalition force, eventually they were overrun by Wellington's numerically superior infantry and wiped out.

## 07 Prussians arrive

Wellington had been exchanging communications with General Blücher, commander of the Prussian army, since 10am and knew he was approaching from the east. At roughly 4.30pm the Prussians arrived and, noting the village of Plancenoit on Napoleon's right flank was a tactically important position, began to attack the French forces in position there. After initially taking the village though, French forces reclaimed it.

## 05 Napoleon counters

With the Coalition's heavy cavalry now facing squares of French infantry to the front and with no support, Napoleon ordered a counterattack, dispatching his cuirassier and lancer regiments from his own cavalry division. A massive central battle ensued, with cavalry, infantry and artillery all involved. While Napoleon's cavalry regiments took out much of the Coalition's heavy cavalry, they could not wipe them out. Napoleon also dispatched troops to intercept the Prussians.

## 06 Stalemate

At the heart of the battle, Coalition and French squares then undertook a series of back-and-forth exchanges. All the while cannon and musket fire continued to rain down from all sides and, aside from one more combined arms assault by the French on the centre-right of Wellington's lines, a general mêlée ensued, with each side seeing their numbers steadily chipped away.



TROOPS 72,000

CAVALRY 14,000

CANNONS 250



## NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

### LEADER

Emperor Bonaparte became famous for his tactical genius, enabling him to take over much of central Europe. **Strengths** A savvy strategist with plenty of battle experience. **Weaknesses** Erratic; he took a detached approach to fighting.



## CAVALRY

### IMPORTANT UNIT

French light cavalry was considered the best of its kind in the world and played a large part in holding off the Coalition's heavy cavalry charges. **Strength** Fast, agile units capable of easily outflanking the enemy. **Weakness** Direct cavalry charges rely on surprise to be most effective.



## MUSKET

### KEY WEAPON

The musket was wielded by Napoleon's Old Guard with deadly accuracy, picking off large numbers of Coalition soldiers at Waterloo. **Strength** Excellent medium-range stopping power. **Weaknesses** Slow to reload and also poor in hand-to-hand combat.

**Cavalry**

Good use of cavalry by Simón Bolívar and poor use of cavalry by his Spanish opposite, José Maria Barreiro, was arguably crucial in the Battle of Boyacá's outcome. Bolívar's cavalry remained free throughout the engagement, while Barreiro's was largely pinned down and trapped.

**Weapons**

Despite holding a numerical advantage over the Spanish forces, Bolívar's rebel army was, in general, nowhere near as well trained nor as well armed as that of the Spanish. Bolívar's good tactical use of his large musket-wielding infantry units, however, compensated for this.



### Leader

A charismatic and experienced general, Bolívar was successful at Boyacá - and indeed throughout his campaign against the Spanish - as he successfully unified various independent forces from Colombia and Venezuela to rise up against the controlling foreign regime.

# BATTLE OF BOYACÁ

BOYACÁ, NEW GRANADA (MODERN-DAY COLOMBIA) 7 AUGUST 1819

The Battle of Boyacá was a key clash in the wars for Latin American independence. The fight was between a rebel army under the command of General Simón Bolívar and a Spanish-led army under the command of Colonel José María Barreiro. Today the battle is considered the turning point in the eventual separation of much of northern South America from rule by the Spanish monarchy, with Bolívar's actions paving the way for eventual independence for modern-day Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, as well as the creation of Bolivia.

The battle occurred around 93 miles northeast of the city of Bogotá, on the road from the town of Tunja. Bolívar had advanced into Colombia undetected via passing over the Andes Mountains with his army from Venezuela between May and July 1819. After surprising Spanish-led royalist forces with a series of battles prior to Boyacá, they now advanced in the open towards the city, which offered both little resistance in military might and also a perfect base for his liberation of the region.

Bolívar knew this and so did the younger Barreiro, who - as you'll see from our battle map events guide - attempted to cut off the leader's advance. Barreiro, despite being inexperienced, commanded a largely well-trained army, and as such was not perturbed by Bolívar's prior battles, believing he could end the rebel's advancement once and for all. Both armies marched with great speed towards Bogotá, each attempting to gain the upper hand through speed.

Despite gaining ground on Bolívar, Barreiro would eventually lose the Battle of Boyacá through a mixture of tactical errors and underestimation

of Bolívar and his independent, rebel forces. By separating his forces into two groups, he made it easy for Bolívar to divide and conquer his troops - and with comparatively little bloodshed. Indeed, the scale of Bolívar's victory at Boyacá is no better emphasised than in the number of lost troops, with just 13 casualties on the republican side and only 100 on Barreiro's.

This was no meat grinder, and this was mainly testament to Bolívar's tactical prowess. By exploiting key parts of his forces, such as the British Legion, as well as using tactical positioning at the flanks of Barreiro's forces, Bolívar finally secured his most desired independence from the enemy by hardly spilling any of their blood at all.

While few of the Spanish-led force were killed, on 7 August 1819 a number of prisoners were taken. Of those - including Barreiro - 39 were executed under Bolívar's orders, with the executions taking place in the newly liberated city of Bogotá.

As news spread of Barreiro's defeat and execution, royalist leaders throughout the region such as Venezuela's General Pablo Morillo soon realised that the Spanish control of South America was on a knife-edge. The leaders quickly sent word to the Spanish mainland that more soldiers were needed imminently to stem the rebel uprising. However, despite a few more small batches of reinforcements emerging, no major backup arrived. This led to one last final, desperate showdown between the Spanish-led forces and those of Simón Bolívar two years later in 1821, which, as with the Battle of Boyacá, ended with a victorious Bolívar. From that point on, the Spanish no longer controlled South America.

### Rebels

Bolívar's army was constructed from rebels drawn from a variety of South American nations under Spanish control. These men had previously been engaging the Spanish sporadically under command of a series of warlords, however to limited success.



## New Granada

TROOPS 3,400

CAVALRY 100

CANNONS 0



### SIMÓN BOLÍVAR

COMMANDER IN CHIEF

A native to Venezuela, Bolívar was both a military and political leader. He was a key player in Latin America's independence from the Spanish Empire.

**Strengths** Popular, brave and unifying leader with extensive military experience.

**Weakness** Power-hungry and a dictator in later life.



### BRITISH LEGION

IMPORTANT UNIT

A well-trained group of veteran and mercenary soldiers, the British Legion were pivotal at Boyacá, taking out Barreiro's artillery and pinning down his flanking cavalry.

**Strength** Veteran soldiers who volunteered to fight.

**Weakness** Not native to South America and mercenaries.



### MUSKET

KEY WEAPON

Bolívar's forces were not well outfitted with advanced weaponry, relying on numbers and surprise attacks to gain the upper hand. Musket-wielding infantry, however, played a key part in forcing a Spanish surrender.

**Strength** Cheap and easily accessible even to rebel forces.

**Weakness** Inaccurate at distance and slow to reload.

## 01 The race begins

After clashing on 25 July at the Battle of Vargas – a clash that ended in a draw – Bolívar plots a direct course for Bogotá as it will give him a tactical advantage over Barreiro and the Spanish royalist forces. He arrives in Tunja, northeast of Bogotá and takes the town with ease. Barreiro hears of Bolívar's capture of Tunja and realising Bolívar's intended destination, makes haste towards the city.

## 02 Barreiro reaches the river

In advance of Bolívar, Barreiro reaches the Boyacá River and decides that it would be a good place to both intercept Bolívar's forces and refresh his march-weary troops. Halting roughly half a mile from the river's crossing, Barreiro orders his most experienced troops, an elite vanguard of 1,000 infantry and cavalry to cross the bridge and take-up advantageous positions on the other side, while his remaining army rests.

## 03 Spanish vanguard advances

Barreiro orders the Spanish vanguard to advance down the valley, over the bridge and up to high ground where they take-up defensive positions. Little does Barreiro know that Bolívar is closer to his position than he could have realised, with an advanced scouting party witnessing the Spanish vanguard's crossing of the Tiatinos. The scouting heads to Bolívar's north-north-easterly position.

## 04 Bolívar splits his force

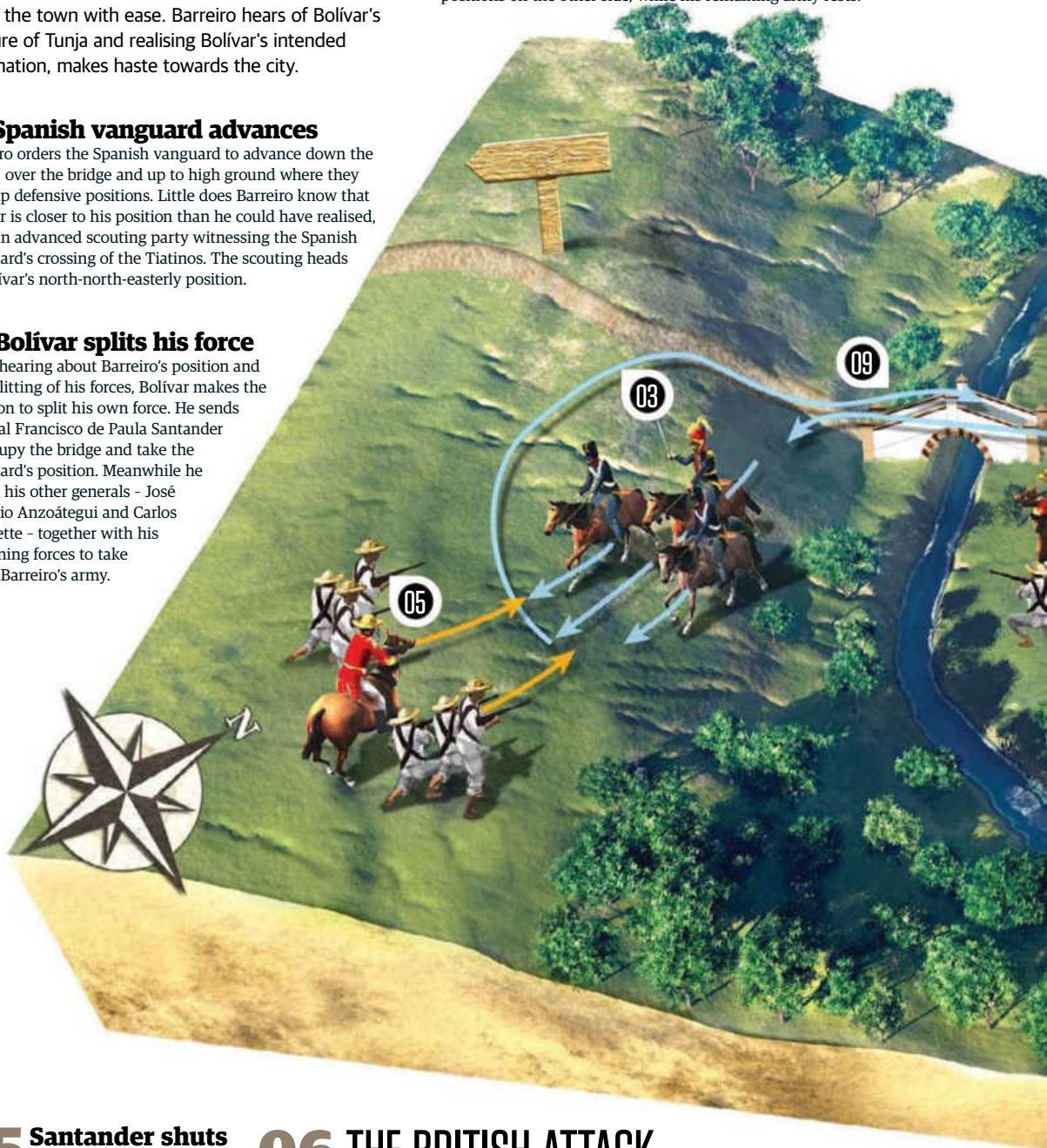
Upon hearing about Barreiro's position and the splitting of his forces, Bolívar makes the decision to split his own force. He sends General Francisco de Paula Santander to occupy the bridge and take the vanguard's position. Meanwhile he orders his other generals – José Antonio Anzoátegui and Carlos Soublette – together with his remaining forces to take down Barreiro's army.

## 05 Santander shuts down the bridge

On these orders from Bolívar, Santander takes his troops and charges the bridge. The vanguard see them coming yet are not expecting the attack so soon, and the area around the bridge quickly descends into chaos. The vanguard hold better positions than Santander's troops but cannot make any headway and become locked down on the Bogotá-side of the river.

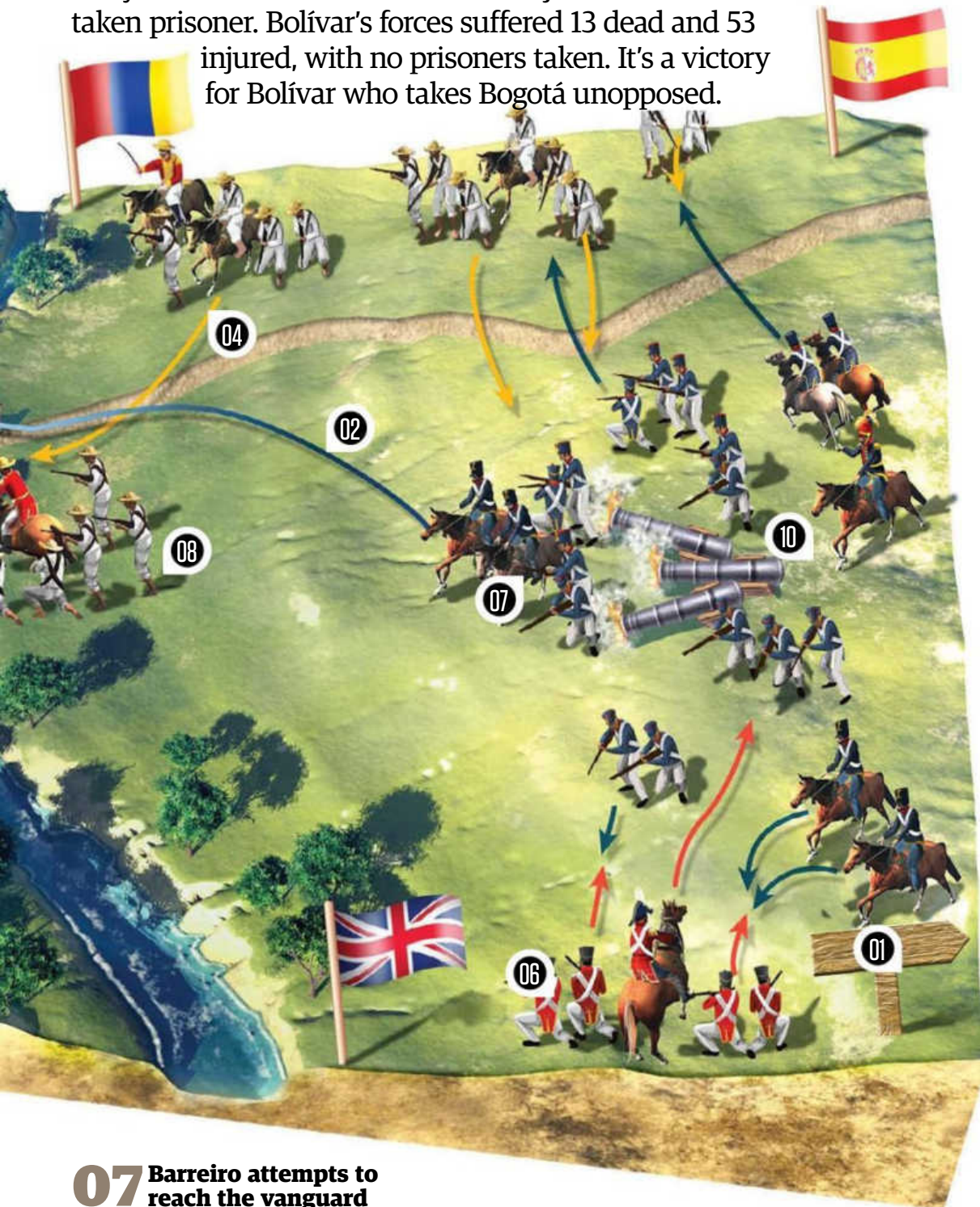
## 06 THE BRITISH ATTACK

Barreiro's main army now has around 1,800 troops, split between infantry and cavalry units, plus three cannons. Suddenly aware that Bolívar is attacking, Barreiro attempts to marshal his disorientated forces and position them for the assault. Before he gets the chance, however, the British Legions fighting under Bolívar and led by Commander Arthur Sandes, charge and engage Barreiro's artillery units.



## 10 BARREIRO CAPTURED AND CONCLUSION

Now surrounded, Barreiro surrenders to Bolívar. Barreiro's army suffered over 100 deaths, 150 injuries and 1,600 taken prisoner. Bolívar's forces suffered 13 dead and 53 injured, with no prisoners taken. It's a victory for Bolívar who takes Bogotá unopposed.



### 07 Barreiro attempts to reach the vanguard

With his cannons taken out and his army in disarray, Barreiro attempts to move forward to rendezvous with the elite vanguard who, unknown to him, are still pinned down by Santander on the other side of the river. Collecting what little of his forces were not occupied, he attempts to navigate the unfolding chaos.

### 08 Anzoátegui cuts off the main force

Barreiro's progress is short-lived as General Anzoátegui swings his forces around and creates a barrier between the Spanish General and the bridge over the Boyacá River, effectively trapping him and his remaining forces from three different sides. Many of the Spanish-led main force proceed to retreat or surrender.

### 09 Vanguard advances then retreats

The Spanish vanguard push to the river and drive back Bolívar's forces, but it's too late. The troops must leave their leader Colonel Juan Taira stranded on the Boyacá bridge. Taira and the vanguard are taken prisoner.



**Spain**

**TROOPS 2,800**

**CAVALRY 160**

**CANNONS 3**



### JOSÉ MARIA BARREIRO

**COMMANDER IN CHIEF**

José Barreiro was an academically well-trained military commander who, prior to arriving in South America, had been stationed in Seville, Spain.

**Strengths** Young and brave officer who was academically gifted.

**Weakness** Overconfident and lacked military experience.



### DRAGOON

**IMPORTANT UNIT**

The Spanish dragoons brought mobility and speed to the battlefield. These could have been pivotal to a Spanish victory had they been used differently.

**Strength** Fast, well-trained mounted infantry with muskets.

**Weakness** Easy to break formation, and poor defensively.



### ARTILLERY CANNON

**KEY WEAPON**

The better-equipped force, the Spanish had a brace of artillery cannons. These were deadly in open clashes to infantry and cavalry alike.

**Strength** Immensely damaging to both men and buildings.

**Weakness** Expensive, and requiring expert handling in order to operate effectively.

## Heat of the day

All three days of the battle were fought in incredibly hot weather, during the height of the Pennsylvanian summer. This meant both sides were suffering and struggling to maintain composure in these difficult conditions, making water as precious as ammo to many soldiers.

## Desperate defence

On more than one occasion during the battle, the Union line was tested to its limits. With Confederate attacks springing up at various points in great numbers, General Meade was forced to rapidly reorganise battalions across the field.

## Absent cavalry

Though they engaged on the first day of the battle, much of the cavalry on either side was occupied away from Gettysburg. This changed the dynamic of the battle significantly, as General Lee's scout reports on the Union movements were proven incorrect, which affected his decision.



# BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG

PENNSYLVANIA, USA 1-3 JULY 1863

## **Bloodiest battle**

Gettysburg saw the highest number of casualties of the Civil War, with more than 51,000 killed, missing, captured or wounded during the three-day slaughter. It spelled the turning point in the war, and Abraham Lincoln gave his famous address from the site of the battle four months later.

At noon on 2 July 1863, the heat of the summer day had already sapped the energy from every man - Union or Confederate - unable to find a piece of shade. Nearby, the deserted town of Gettysburg lay eerily quiet after the desperate fighting of the previous day, as the Union men had beat a hasty retreat through its streets and into the hills. General George Meade had steadied his men, forming up a tight defence that he now hoped would be enough to block his enemy's path to Washington DC, the political heart of the United States. As shots were heard breaking out towards the Union's left flank, he realised that the attack had begun, but couldn't have any idea just how bloody the day would prove to be.

During the previous month, Robert E Lee, the Confederate's finest commander and arguably the greatest general of the American Civil War, had taken his Army of Northern Virginia, more than 72,000 men, to the north. Penetrating deep into Union territory, he predicted, would boost support for those calling for a peace deal to be brokered between the North and the South. A victory in this invasion so deep into the North would also put great pressure on President Lincoln, and could even allow Lee to march on Washington DC itself.

The relatively small town of Gettysburg, southern Pennsylvania, was only significant in that it saw the convergence of several key roads leading to the south, the north and elsewhere, from where Lee saw an opportunity to spread his army. Major General Joseph Hooker, commanding the Army of the Potomac, had shadowed Lee in his march north, following the rebel army to engage and

destroy it. Three days before the battle, however, he was relieved of his command and General Meade was put in his place. The new general's sudden rise through the ranks earned him widespread mistrust among his officers, who questioned his ability to lead them effectively.

The two armies met at Gettysburg on 1 July, with troops engaging at first in light skirmishes that soon escalated into a pitched battle, as limited Union regiments defended their line against advancing Confederates. With General Meade not yet on the field, Union officers took the initiative to control the defence of Gettysburg, but disaster struck when the senior officer, Major General John F Reynolds, was struck down by a sharpshooter's bullet.

Though they defended bravely, and delayed Lee's troops as much as they could, the Union soldiers were forced to run for their lives through Gettysburg's streets and up into the hills to the south, where a defensive line of artillery had been established. As more reinforcements arrived during the late afternoon and during the night, the position on the high ground was fortified further and the Union generals could only wait to see what General Lee would do the next day.

With Gettysburg surrounded and taken on the first day, albeit with the lives of more men than he would have cared to give, General Lee was now as confident as he usually was of victory. He planned to outflank the Union position, killing its superior position on the high ground and forcing Meade to retreat from the field. The next two days would decide the fate of the United States, and would cost the lives of thousands of Americans.



## Union Army of the Potomac

TROOPS 95,000



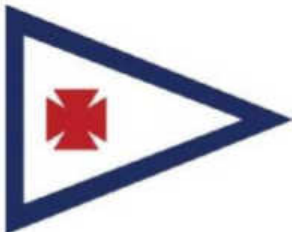
### GENERAL GEORGE GORDON MEADE

#### LEADER

Meade was appointed general of the army just days before the battle.

**Strengths** Was able to make full use of his subordinates' skills.

**Weakness** Without the full backing of his troops, he failed to control many of his officers.



### 5TH CORPS

#### KEY UNIT

The stalwart defenders of Little Round Top.

**Strengths** Drawn mainly from Lincoln's second call for volunteers, these will die for the Union cause.

**Weakness** Under-supplied and with stretched lines, they faced greater difficulties than just the enemy.

### SPRINGFIELD MODEL 1861

#### KEY WEAPON

The most commonly used rifled musket of the Civil War.

**Strengths** Long range, along with fairly good accuracy.

**Weakness** A slight arcing in the bullet's trajectory proved problematic when used by novices.



### 01 Forming the defensive line

After the retreat from Gettysburg on 1 July, General Meade forms his troops into the shape of an inverted fish hook - with the curve facing north in the direction of the town and a long straight line facing the Confederates to the west. With the high ground and with each unit close enough to support one another, Meade is confident his Federal troops can hold off any attacks.

### 02 SICKLES MOVES TO ATTACK

Major General Daniel Sickles moves his Third Corps, which holds the Union's left flank, to higher ground towards the west to an area known as Devil's Den, giving his artillery a better position. General Meade sends in his Fifth Corps to support Sickles.

### 03 Lee orders the first attack

With the bulk of his forces along Seminary Ridge, parallel to the Union's fish hook, General Lee orders Lieutenant General Longstreet to attack the enemy's left flank, General Ambrose Hill is to attack the centre, while General Richard Ewell threatens the enemy's right. Lee plans for his forces to roll up on the Union left, flanking them entirely.

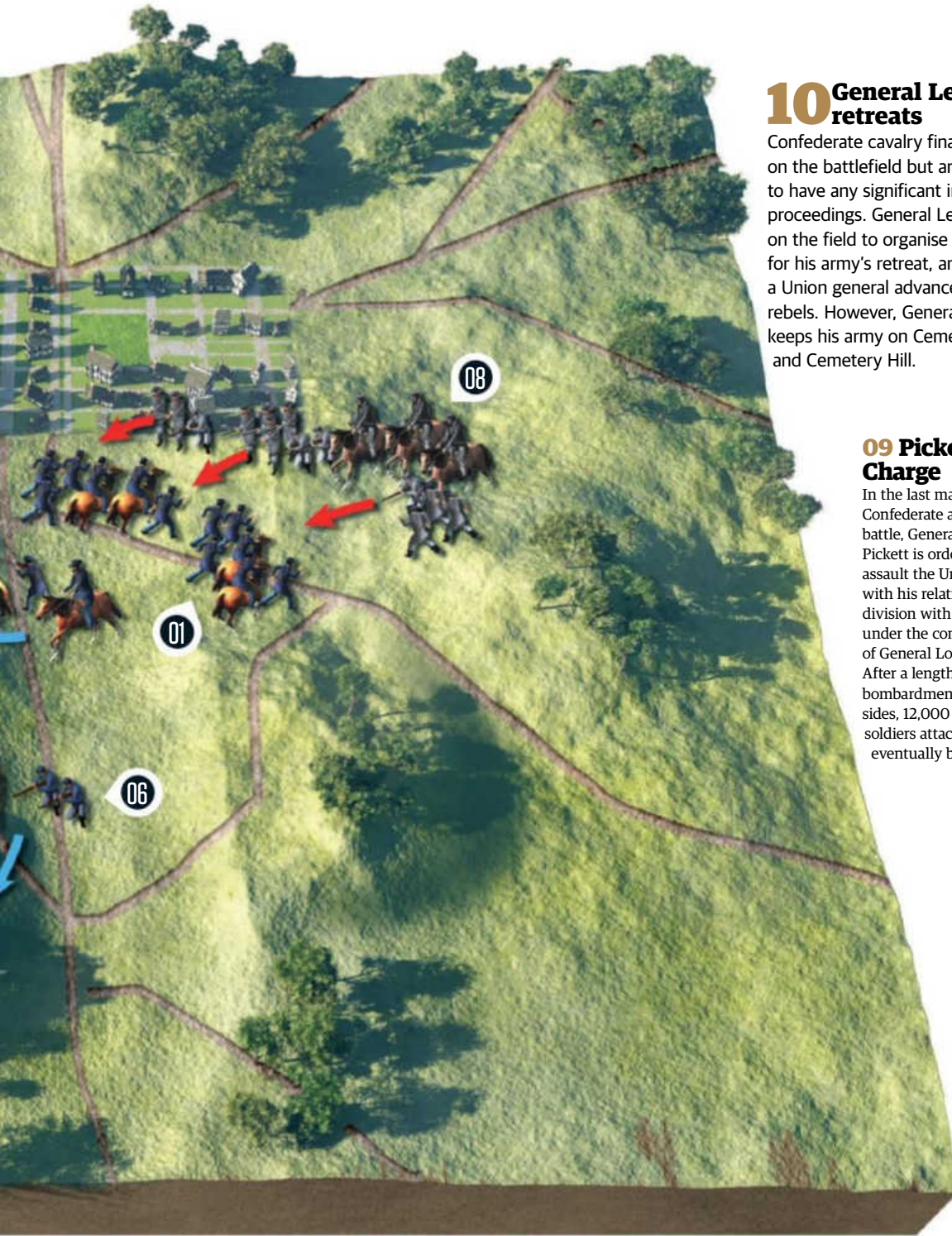
### 04 Longstreet advances

Moving towards the Union's left flank, Longstreet's men encounter the Union Third Corps at the Devil's Den, a deadly position perfect for sharpshooting. Texas and Alabama regiments move towards Little Round Top to flank the Den.

### 05 BITTER FIGHTING IN THE DEN

The Devil's Den changes hands several times, with neither side able to hold it for long before being forced to retreat. About 1,800 casualties result from the fighting here. Further to the right of the Confederate attack, Alabama and Texas regiments begin assaulting Little Round Top, but encounter elements of the Fifth Corps General Meade has sent to support Sickles.





## 06 BATTLE FOR LITTLE ROUND TOP

With ammunition running low and having taken heavy casualties, Colonel Joshua Chamberlain orders his men to fix bayonets and charge the Confederate troops. The attack routs the attacking rebels.

## 07 The end of the second day

Sickles's Third Corps is pressed hard by the Confederate attacks, with the Wheatfield and Devil's Den finally falling into enemy hands. Sickles is wounded by a cannonball to the leg as his men retreat to Cemetery Ridge, where they hold. A huge gap in the Union centre emerges after the Third Corps retreats, so the line is hastily reorganised to prevent the army being split in two.

## 08 The armies regroup

As night falls on 2 July, there are more than 14,000 casualties of the battlefield. The Union now holds a defensive line along Cemetery Ridge, Cemetery Hill and south to Little Round Top. In the evening, Confederate attacks on the right Union flank are barely repulsed, as the defences are under-strength from supporting Sickles' position in the day. The next day, more attacks on Culp's Hill and around Spangler's Spring on the Union right flank are repulsed.

## 10 General Lee retreats

Confederate cavalry finally arrive on the battlefield but are too late to have any significant impact on proceedings. General Lee remains on the field to organise a rearguard for his army's retreat, anticipating a Union general advance on the rebels. However, General Meade keeps his army on Cemetery Ridge and Cemetery Hill.

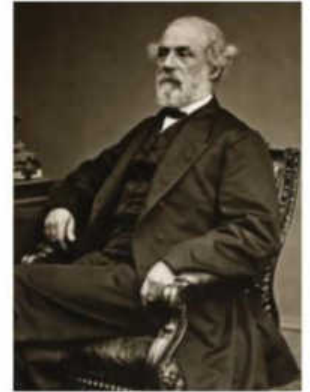
## 09 Pickett's Charge

In the last major Confederate attack of the battle, General George Pickett is ordered to assault the Union centre with his relatively fresh division with others under the command of General Longstreet. After a lengthy artillery bombardment from both sides, 12,000 Confederate soldiers attack, but are eventually broken.



## Confederate Army of Northern Virginia

TROOPS 72,000



## GENERAL ROBERT E LEE

### LEADER

One of the finest leaders of the Civil War and a seasoned soldier.

**Strengths** Substantially experienced in battle.

**Weakness** Lacked a thorough reconnaissance of the battlefield.



## CONFEDERATE SHARPSHOOTERS

### KEY UNIT

The elite marksmen of the Civil War.

**Strengths** Precise shooting could take out enemy officers with ease.

**Weakness** Didn't have the numbers of rank-and-file troops.

## WHITWORTH RIFLE

### KEY WEAPON

Arguably the world's first sniper rifle, manufactured in Britain.

**Strengths** Incredibly long range, could hit targets from up to one mile away.

**Weakness** Far less effective in the hands of a raw recruit.



# SPAIN

## THE RISE AND FALL OF A SUPERPOWER IN 10 BATTLES

From the Moorish invasions to the cruelty of the Civil War, uncover the key battles that shaped Spanish history



**D**uring the decline of the Roman Empire in the West, the Iberian Peninsula yielded to the Visigoth invasions, which saw the founding of a Christian kingdom. During the reign of King Roderic in the 8th century, however, Muslims from the Umayyad Caliphate swept across the land to establish a Moorish hegemony in the wake of their victory at The Battle of Guadalete (711). The Christian kingdoms fought back, however, and scored one of their greatest victories at The Battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212). Once King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella had laid the foundations for a united Spain in the wake of The Battle of Toro (1476), they completed the Reconquista and drove the Moors from Spain.

Under their leadership, overseas expansion began and, with the crushing of the Aztecs at The Siege of Tenochtitlan (1521), the Spanish Empire in the New World took root. Affluence and influence saw Spain emerge as a European superpower under the

Habsburg dynasty, leading the Holy League against the Turks at The Battle of Lepanto (1571) before its maritime decline set in with the defeat of The Spanish Armada (1588). Spanish land forces then suffered their first major defeat in almost a century at The Battle of Rocroi (1643).

The death of Charles II saw the end of the Habsburg dynasty in Spain and the Wars of the Spanish Succession saw Philip V emerge as the peninsula's first Bourbon monarch, fighting in conflicts such as The Battle of Villaviciosa (1710). Spanish power was on the wane, however, and a loss of control in South America was confirmed following The Battle of Ayacucho (1824). Spain fought in many European wars during the last few hundred years and the country still bears the scars of its Civil War and brutal battles like The Ebro Offensive (1938). These ten battles, while by no means definitive, all shaped España into the country we know today.

# 19 JULY 711

## 1 THE BATTLE OF GUADALETE

THE CHRISTIAN VISIGOTHS ARE ROUTED AND MOORISH HEGEMONY BEGINS

Though the exact location of this battle remains a matter of conjecture, historians believe it unfolded near the Guadalete River in the south of the Iberian Peninsula. A Muslim force from the Umayyad Caliphate, believed to number between 7,000-10,000 and led by Tariq ibn-Ziyad, crossed from North Africa to conquer the Iberian kingdom of the Visigoths, ruled by the newly acclaimed King Roderic.

As Tariq's men landed, one chronicler claims that he burned his ships, demanding that his men conquer the Christian kingdom or else die trying. At the time, Roderic was on a campaign against the Basques in the north, though he soon began the long march southward, levying troops from his kingdom as he went. The chroniclers vastly exaggerate his numbers, claiming his force outnumbered the invaders' by ten to one. Other estimates have placed his force at around 30,000.

Whatever the truth of the matter may be, only a small portion of Roderic's troops were battle-hardened warriors and a number of sources record the ill-will with which he was regarded by some of his noblemen and their retainers. Indeed, it has been said that one of Roderic's cavalry wings deliberately stood aside, allowing Tariq's cavalry to rout the Visigoth infantry. Roderic's army was slaughtered and it is believed that the king, too, died that day. His defeat left the Iberian Peninsula at the mercy of the invaders who swept across the land and established a Moorish hegemony that would last for seven centuries.

The Battle of Guadalete saw the Christians all but completely driven from the peninsula



## THE CHRISTIAN ADVANCE

"Never in Spain was there such a war," wrote the Leonese cleric Lucas de Tuy. Certainly, victory at Las Navas de Tolosa, while not decisive, greatly helped the Christian cause and broke the back of the Almohad Empire. The caliph died shortly after the battle and a minor took the throne. In the decades that followed, the Christians took the initiative and the Muslims were no longer able to launch large-scale campaigns against their enemies in the north. The victory at Las Navas de Tolosa opened up the Almohad heartland, and the knights of the military orders drove the Christian onslaught ever onwards, ensuring that Iberia would become a Christian land.

Alfonso VIII of Castile unites the Christian kingdoms of Iberia



## 2 THE BATTLE OF LAS NAVAS DE TOLOSA

THE CHRISTIAN KINGDOMS OF IBERIA UNITE IN A BID TO BREAK MOORISH POWER

The might of all the Iberian kingdoms, save León, came together in a bid to topple the Muslim Almohad caliphate, which held sway over the south of the Iberian Peninsula. They marched out with up to 14,000 men under the command of Alfonso VIII of Castile. The military orders were there in numbers - Hospitallers, Templars and the Knights of both Calatrava and Santiago, the master of the latter riding at the head of the army.

The caliph, Muhammad III ibn-Yakub, is said to have had a force numbering 460,000, although modern estimates place this number closer to 30,000. His was certainly the larger army of the two and he took up a formidable position at Las Navas de Tolosa, which could only be approached via a narrow mountain path. The caliph hoped to ambush the Christians, but they forced the pass on the night of 15 July and reached favourable ground, suitable for their heavy cavalry. In spite of this success, the battle started badly for them.



### DEFINING LEADER SANCHO VII OF NAVARRE

Sancho VII, King of Navarre, was a towering leader, physically and metaphorically. He is said to have stood at over seven feet tall, earning the sobriquet 'the strong' and his command over the Christian right wing at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa proved decisive. His men are said to have cut down the caliph's fabled chained bodyguard, hence the inclusion of the chains on the blazon of Navarre in the aftermath of the battle.

# 16 JULY 1212

The Christians' cavalry charges were repeatedly beaten back and when the master of the Knights of Santiago was slain, Alfonso began to waiver. The military orders fared poorly, with the Templars suffering in the face of terrible numbers being slaughtered and the leader of the Calatrava being cut down. The Muslim caliph is said to have directed operations from his pavilion, scimitar in one hand, Koran in the other, his tent surrounded by a bodyguard of slave warriors all chained together.

It was King Sancho VII of Navarre who saved the Christian cause, finally succeeding with a devastating cavalry charge that broke the Muslim line. Sancho's sally carried through to the caliph's tent where he cut down the legendary guard. The Almohad Caliphate never fully recovered.

## 4 THE SIEGE OF TENOCHTITLAN

SIEGE, SACRIFICE AND SLAUGHTER BRING MEXICO INTO THE FOLD

The fight for Tenochtitlan (modern-day Mexico City), which sat upon the lake of Texcoco, saw the conquistador Hernán Cortés bid to topple the main bastion of the Aztec Empire. It was a long and brutal affair. When he launched his assault on the city, Cortés commanded 86 cavalry, 118 crossbowmen and musketeers, and around 700 infantry armed with swords and pikes. He'd also built up a large force of Tlaxcalans, denizens of a nearby warrior state who had never submitted to Aztec control. He had also built 13 small ships, or brigantines, with which he soon took control of the lake.

The assault on the city began with the severing of the city's fresh water supply before the Spaniards and their allies launched their land attack along the three causeways that ran across the lake to the city. At the same time, Cortés' brigantines sailed against the canoes trying to bring fresh supplies into the city. On this first day, they captured the great temple pyramid but were unable to hold it and were pushed back. This back and forth continued for months, and whenever Spaniards were captured, they were sacrificed to the Aztec gods in a grisly spectacle clearly audible from their camp.

Eventually, though, starvation and pestilence took their toll on the defenders, and on 13 August a number of canoes made a bid for freedom. One conspicuous vessel was captured and was found to contain the Aztec chief, Guatemoc (heir to the mighty Montezuma who had perished in the previous year). With Guatemoc's capture the siege was over and Cortés either ordered, or allowed, the evacuation of the city. The jewel of the Aztec Empire, though greatly diminished by war, was now in Spanish hands.

### DEFINING LEADER HERNÁN CORTÉS

Hernán Cortés was born in 1485 in Medellín, western Spain, and though initially a student of law he left to make his fortune in the Americas. In 1504 he sailed to the Dominican Republic before aiding Diego Velázquez in his conquest of Cuba. It was here he founded his reputation for courage and daring, attracting his band of adventurers who would conquer the Aztec Empire.



### A NEW EMPIRE RISES

With the taking of Tenochtitlan, Hernán Cortés and a few courageous followers had overthrown a mighty empire and the rulers of the surrounding regions – not only those who were tributaries of the Aztecs – paid their respects. Where these were not forthcoming, Cortés turned to military force as against the unruly region of Panuco, to whom he soon marched, burning 400 of their chiefs in public. In 1523 Cortés was named governor and captain general of New Spain and his great successes inspired the likes of Francisco Pizarro in Peru, who conquered the Incas, and marked the way for the claiming of a continent.



Hernán Cortés besieges the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan



## 3 THE BATTLE OF TORO

The struggle for the Portuguese standard

A MILITARY STALEMATE PRECIPITATES THE BIRTH OF A UNITED SPAIN

This key engagement in the War of the Castilian Succession saw the troops of Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon take on the forces mustered by Afonso V of Portugal, who hoped to extend his own dynastic rights and take control of Castile. The armies came together first at the siege of Zamora, though they met in a much bloodier engagement out in the open near the city of Toro.

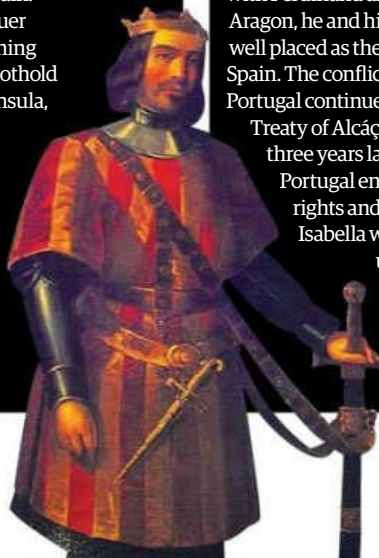
Both sides are thought to have numbered up to 8,000 men, around a third of whom were cavalry. The king of Portugal led his centre, with the archbishop of Toledo on his right and his own son John, known as the Perfect Prince, controlling the harquebusiers and the cream of the cavalry on the left. Ferdinand, meanwhile, controlled his centre, in direct opposition to his rival, with the duke of Alba on his left, and six different divisions under different commanders on his right.

It was on Ferdinand's right that the battle started as the Castilians' right wing advanced against Prince John, but the Portuguese elite mounted troops were too powerful and soon routed Ferdinand's flank from the battlefield. In the meantime, Ferdinand closed with Afonso in the centre and during furious combat the Portuguese standard was ripped to shreds as men tussled to take it. It is said that the standard bearer lost both arms and held on to the ragged emblem with his teeth until he was cut down.

After three hours of fighting, Ferdinand's men finally held sway in the centre and Alba proved victorious on the right. Prince John of Portugal, however, won the day on his father's left and the battle finished with no definitive victor.

### DEFINING LEADER FERDINAND OF ARAGON

Few figures loom as large in Spanish history as Ferdinand II of Aragon. In the wake of Toro he was able to cement his and his wife Isabella's position as rulers of a confederation of kingdoms that was the institutional basis for modern Spain. He went on to conquer Granada, extinguishing the final Moorish foothold on the Iberian Peninsula, and supported Christopher Columbus' voyages of exploration across the Atlantic, which precipitated the Spanish conquest of the Aztec and Inca empires.



### SPAIN IS BORN

Though the Battle of Toro proved inconclusive, it was eulogised as a great victory by both sides. Ferdinand and Isabella, however, are widely seen to have won the propaganda war and it proved a political victory. Isabella claimed the throne of Castile and with Ferdinand already the heir to Aragon, he and his queen were now well placed as the rulers of a united Spain. The conflict with Afonso V and Portugal continued until the peace

Treaty of Alcáçovas a little over three years later, which granted Portugal enormous maritime rights and a cash settlement. Isabella was recognised as the uncontested Queen of Castile, though she renounced any claim to the throne of Portugal.



The Battle of Lepanto saw European, and so Spanish dominance in the Mediterranean

# 5 THE BATTLE OF LEPANTO

## 7 OCTOBER 1571

THE HOLY LEAGUE REPELS THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN A MEDITERRANEAN BLOOD BATH

Widely touted as the last maritime engagement fought in the Mediterranean between galleys, Lepanto saw a coalition of Catholic maritime powers take on the Ottoman Empire at a time when the latter was thought to possess the greatest navy in the world. The battle was precipitated by Sultan Selim II's invasion of Cyprus in 1570, forcing the Venetians into an alliance with Pope Pius V and Philip II of Spain. The latter sent his half brother, Don John of Austria, at the head of an allied fleet of more than 200 galleys to intercept the Turks in the Gulf of Patras, near Lepanto (Návpaktos), Greece.

The Holy League galleys advanced against the Ottoman fleet in four squadrons, the left commanded by the Venetian Agostino Barbarigo, the centre by Don John and the right by the Genoese Giovanni Andrea Doria. The reserve was commanded by Spain's Álvaro de Bazán, 1st Marquis of Santa Cruz. Fighting for the Holy League that day was future *Don Quixote* author Miguel Cervantes who lost the use of his left hand during the battle.

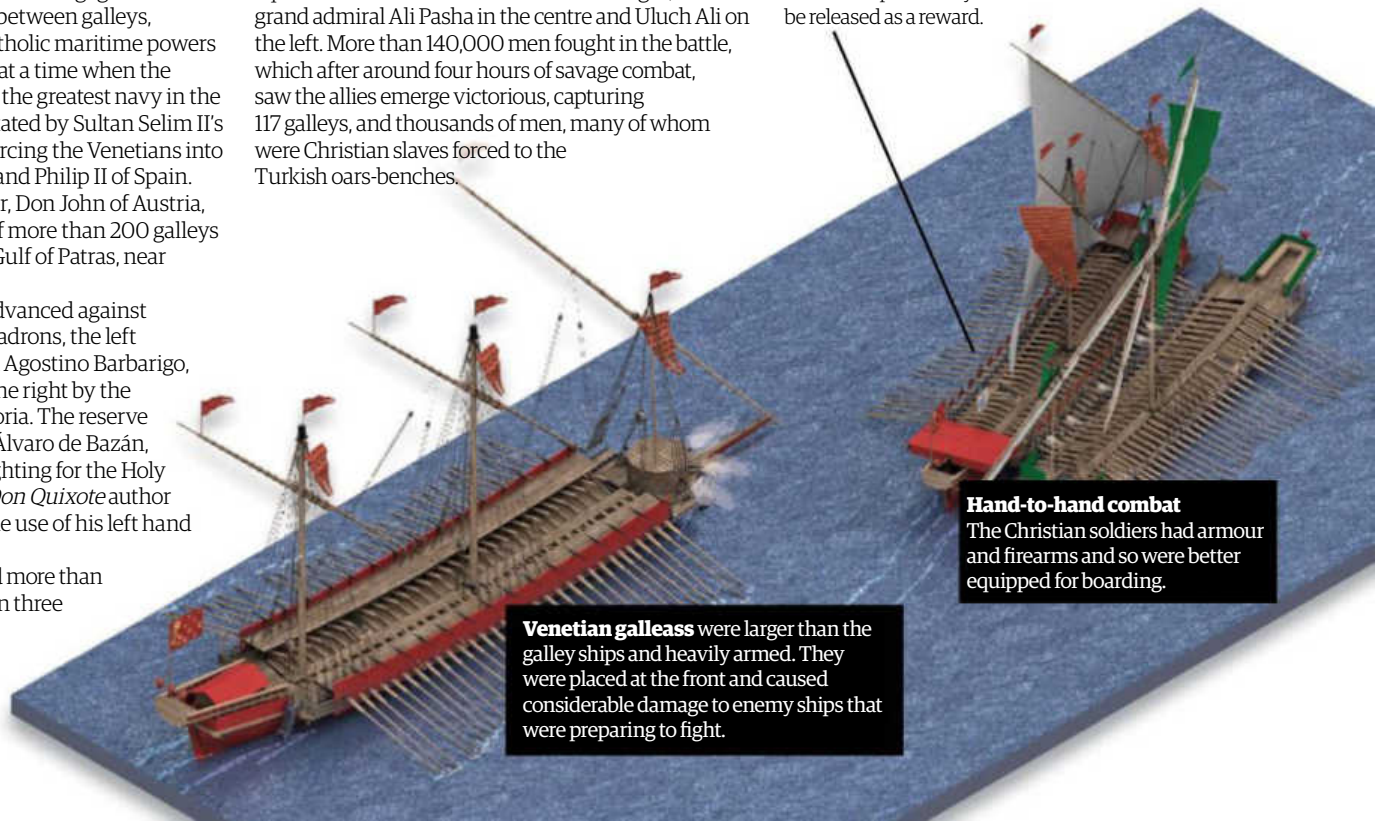
The Ottoman fleet included more than 250 ships and was drawn up in three

squadrons with Mehmed Sirocco on the right, the grand admiral Ali Pasha in the centre and Uluch Ali on the left. More than 140,000 men fought in the battle, which after around four hours of savage combat, saw the allies emerge victorious, capturing 117 galleys, and thousands of men, many of whom were Christian slaves forced to the Turkish oars-benches.



Battle of Lepanto

**Oarsmen** were usually slaves or convicts and were shackled to the ship. If they were triumphant they could be released as a reward.



**Hand-to-hand combat**  
The Christian soldiers had armour and firearms and so were better equipped for boarding.

**Venetian galleass** were larger than the galley ships and heavily armed. They were placed at the front and caused considerable damage to enemy ships that were preparing to fight.



## THE TURKS DEFEATED

LEPANTO ENSURES SPAIN'S POSITION AS THE MEDITERRANEAN'S PRE-EMINENT CATHOLIC SUPERPOWER

Though sometimes regarded as of limited strategic importance, with Venice surrendering Cyprus to the Turks two years later, the Battle of Lepanto gave European morale an almighty boost and severely damaged the 'invincible' reputation of the Ottoman navy, which had not lost a notable battle since the previous century. Cervantes described Lepanto as, "The highest and most memorable occasion that past and future

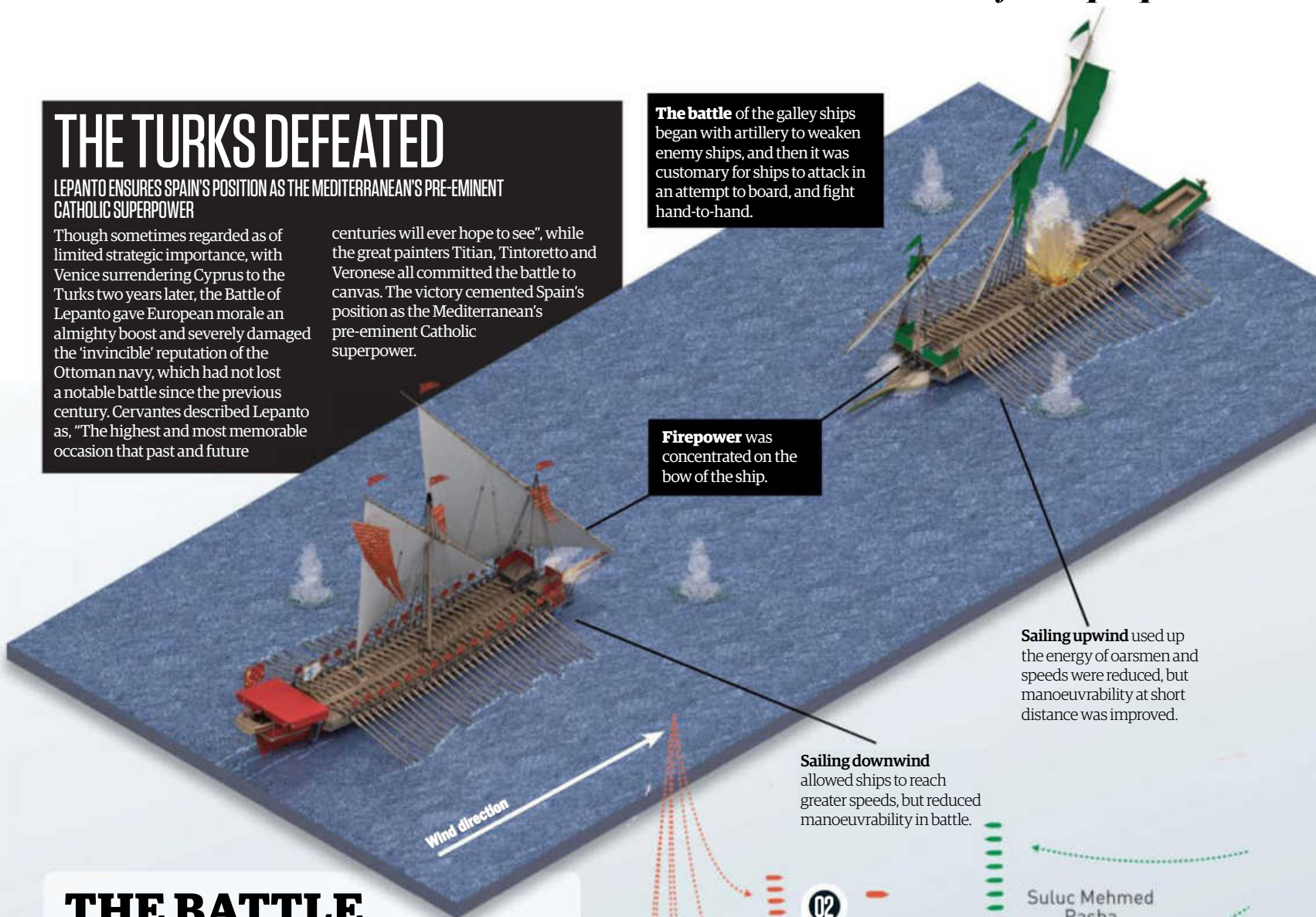
centuries will ever hope to see", while the great painters Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese all committed the battle to canvas. The victory cemented Spain's position as the Mediterranean's pre-eminent Catholic superpower.

**The battle** of the galley ships began with artillery to weaken enemy ships, and then it was customary for ships to attack in an attempt to board, and fight hand-to-hand.

**Firepower** was concentrated on the bow of the ship.

**Sailing upwind** used up the energy of oarsmen and speeds were reduced, but manoeuvrability at short distance was improved.

**Sailing downwind** allowed ships to reach greater speeds, but reduced manoeuvrability in battle.



## THE BATTLE

### 01 Fighting in the south

As the fleets draw near, Doria thinks that the Turkish right outflanks his own and sails his contingent further south. Ali, meanwhile, sees the gap open up in the Holy League lines and bids to break through. Doria responds and the galleys engage.

### 02 The northern front

To the north, Sirocco turns the Holy League's left flank and an arrow kills their commander, Barbarigo. The return of a galleass - a large merchant ship transformed into a warship - helps rally the Venetian line, which holds off the Turks.

### 03 Santa Cruz weighs in

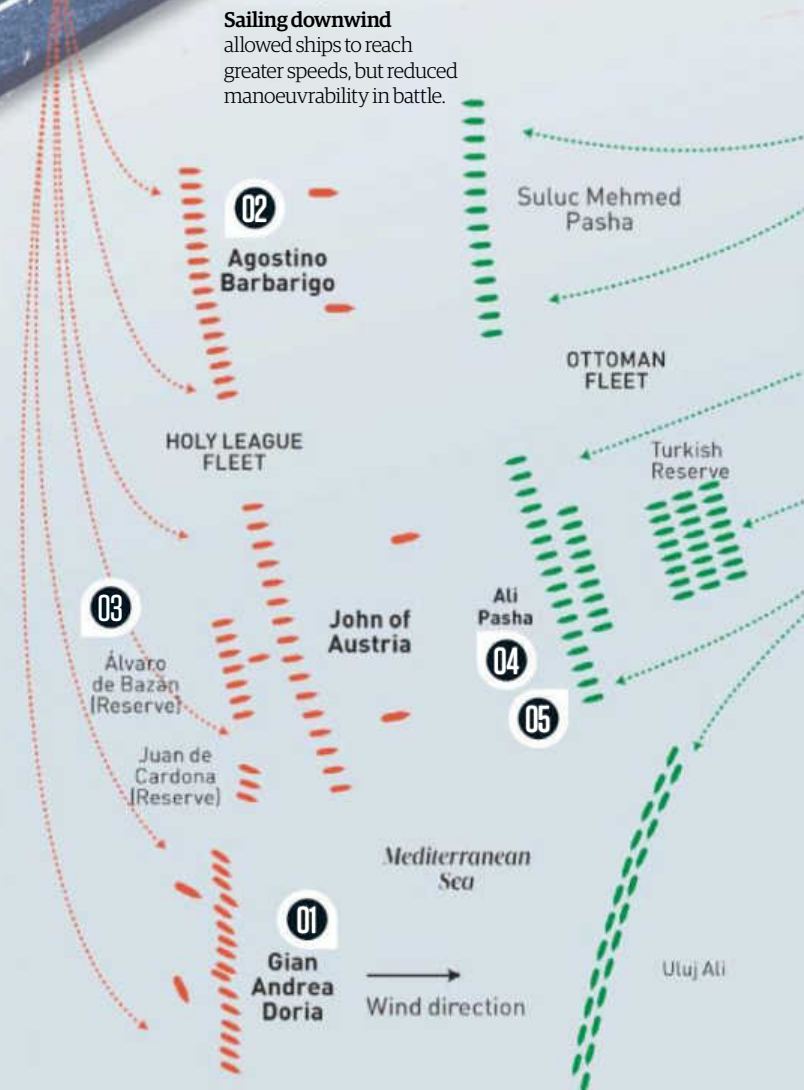
With fierce fighting in the centre and to the south, the Christian reserve under the Marquis of Santa Cruz, Álvaro de Bazán, enters the fray and Ali is forced to flee with a sizeable portion of the Turkish fleet.

### 04 Death of Ali Pasha

The two flagships locate each other and a struggle breaks out between John's 'Real' and Pasha's 'Sultana'. The Spanish troops are twice repelled but reinforcements from other vessels, including Álvaro de Bazán's galley, turn the tide. Contrary to John's wishes, Ali Pasha is beheaded and his head displayed on a pike.

### 05 The Ottomans are defeated

Seeing their commander's head being displayed on a pike has a crushing impact on Ottoman morale in the centre and the battle begins to turn against them. Some Turkish soldiers keep fighting and it is said that when their missiles run out, they begin throwing fruit at their Christian rivals.



# 6 THE SPANISH ARMADA

A FAILED INVASION OF ENGLAND MARKS A TURNING POINT IN SPANISH IMPERIAL AMBITION

MAY - JULY 1588

With tensions between Spain and England at boiling point, King Phillip II sent his mighty armada to invade his Protestant foe. It was an armada of 130 ships rounding Brittany and sailing into the English channel on 19 July, the day when the English first sighted their Spanish adversaries and when the fleet captains supposedly finished their game of bowls before boarding their vessels. The Spanish ships were predominantly heavy galleys, designed for close quarter action and the launching of boarding parties, while the English ships were lighter vessels armed with longer-range cannons.

Under Moon-bright skies the fleets engaged and the English guns gave them the advantage, though this was not pressed home and the Spanish sailed towards the Isle of Wight in a bid to establish a command base. Constant English harassment, however, forced the Spaniards onwards and they headed towards Calais where they hoped to receive reinforcements. It was here the English launched a cunning manoeuvre, setting eight of their own ships alight on 29 July and letting the wind carry them into the midst of the Spanish fleet. Though no vessels were damaged directly by the firestorm, many Spanish ships collided with one another and the fleet lost its shape.

Unable to receive reinforcements and low on ammunition, the Spaniards headed for home round the north of Scotland, where the weather caused terrible damage. Less than half of the original fleet managed to make it home, while the English lost not a single vessel. The failure of Philip's armada ceded naval supremacy to the English and this event signalled the beginning of Spain's decline as a major maritime power.

# 7 THE BATTLE OF ROCROI

DEFEAT FOR THE HABSBURG EMPIRE DISPELS THE MYTH OF SPANISH INVINCIBILITY

With the bloody Thirty Years' War - the great Franco-Habsburg struggle for European supremacy - moving towards its end point, a 27,000-strong Spanish army led by General Francisco de Melo invaded northern France and laid siege to the small fortress of Rocroi, north of Reims. The French moved quickly before the Spaniards could be reinforced, sending forth a force of 23,000 under the command of the Duc de d'Enghien. The Spanish army, comprising battalions from German and Italian allies, fought in its traditional square formation, the tercio, which had hitherto dominated the European battlefield.

Initially, the Spaniards gained the upper hand, their German cavalry on the right flank routing the opposing French horsemen, while the mighty tercios pushed hard against the French centre. On the left,

however, d'Enghien enjoyed more success, battering the Spanish cavalry and sending them fleeing while closing in on the rear of the Spanish centre and dissipating the German and Italian infantry. The elite Spanish tercios were left to continue the fight alone and though they repulsed at least four French cavalry charges, a constant bombardment from French artillery finally forced their capitulation.

Such was their bravery, it is reported that, much like a defeated siege garrison, the Spanish were permitted to depart the field with their colours and weapons intact. Rocroi proved a turning point, however, marking the first defeat suffered by a Spanish force on the battlefield in almost a century and signalling the beginning of the end for the previously indefatigable tercio.



# 8 THE BATTLE OF VILLAVICIOSA

## PHILIP V EMERGES AS SPAIN'S FIRST BOURBON MONARCH

The Wars of the Spanish Succession saw a European alliance win a series of great victories over France's Louis XIV, including Blenheim and Malplaquet, limiting his ambitions for a Bourbon Empire that would replace the Habsburgs as Europe's major superpower. The one region that the allies faltered

was in Spain itself, where Louis had proclaimed his grandson (and the named successor of Charles II, Spain's last Habsburg monarch) as King Philip V.

Philip's position was solidified in the peninsula following the Battle of Villaviciosa where his 20,000-strong force engaged an army of around

14,000, which battled for Habsburg Spain and the allied forces of Britain, Austria, Portugal and the Dutch Republic. Philip himself fought on his right wing, emerging victorious over the allied left, which was cut to pieces. Though the Bourbon centre floundered, the Bourbon left - led by the Count of Aguilar's celebrated cavalry and dragoons - fought furiously and scored a number of successes.

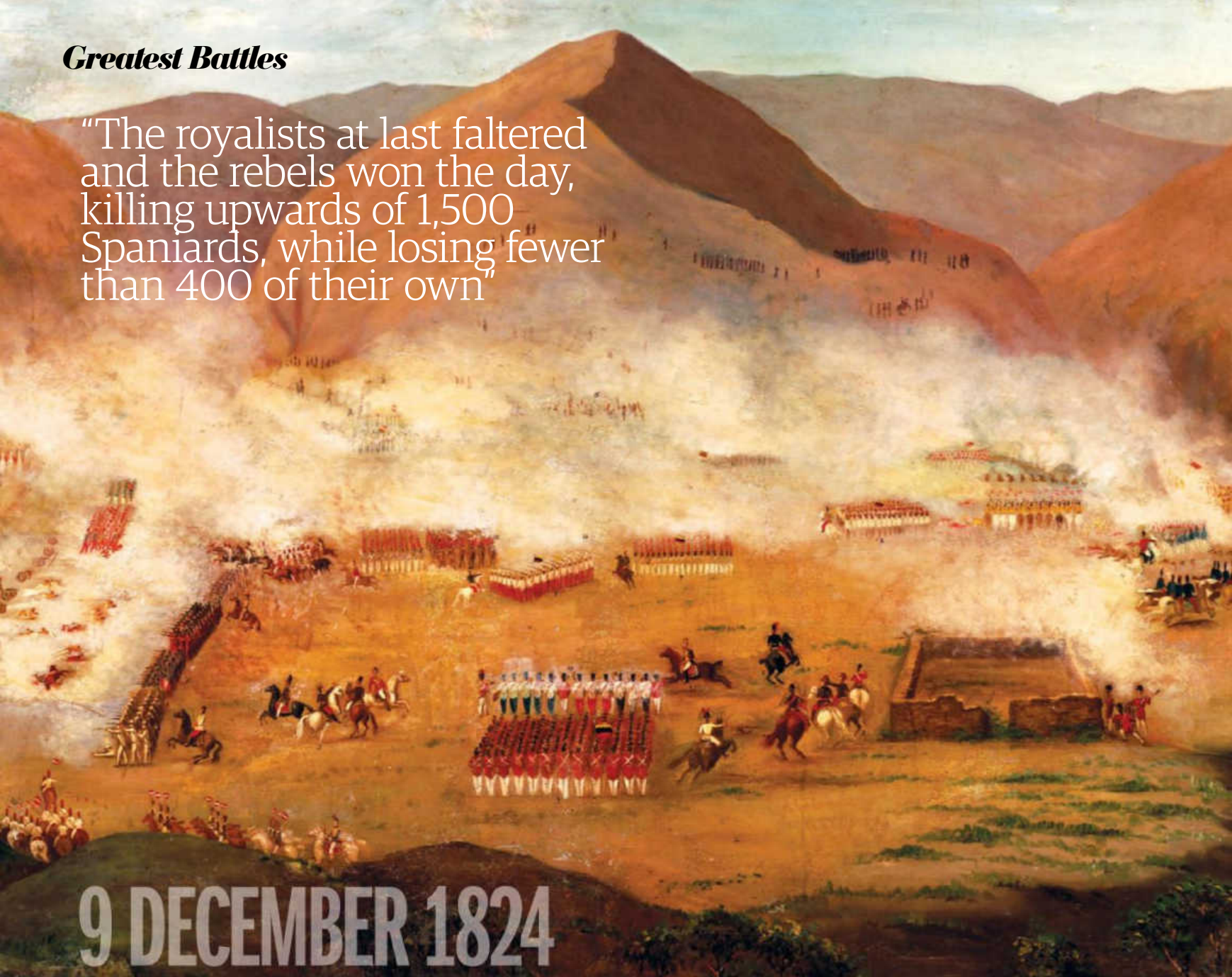
Though no obvious victor emerged to take control of the battlefield, the allies' retreat is widely perceived to have cemented Philip's control over Spain where he reigned as the first Bourbon monarch. However, the treaties signed during the Peace of Utrecht (1713-1714) severely hampered Spanish power in favour of Britain, though Philip V fought hard to re-establish Spanish pre-eminence.

“Philip himself fought on his right wing, emerging victorious over the allied left, which was cut to pieces”

The Duke of Vendôme (left) presents the standards to Philip V of Spain



"The royalists at last faltered and the rebels won the day, killing upwards of 1,500 Spaniards, while losing fewer than 400 of their own"



# 9 DECEMBER 1824

## 9 THE BATTLE OF AYACUCHO

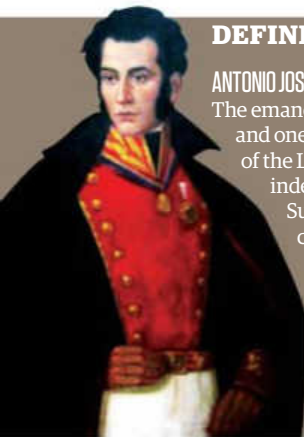
A HIGH-ALTITUDE SCRAP MARKS THE END OF AN EMPIRE

The battle of Ayacucho was fought on a narrow plateau high in the Andes mountains, as the separatist forces of Simón Bolívar battled for Latin America's independence from Spain.

### DEFINING LEADER

#### ANTONIO JOSÉ DE SUCRE

The emancipator of Peru and Ecuador, and one of the most respected leaders of the Latin American wars for independence, Antonio José de Sucre served as Simón Bolívar's chief lieutenant and fought in great victories at the Pichincha (May, 1822), Junín (August 1824) and then the decisive Ayacucho. He went on to become the first constitutionally elected leader of Bolivia.



Though there is much debate about the size of the armies at Ayacucho, many historians believe that the Peruvian revolutionary forces stood at around 6,000. They comprised men from all across the continent, and were led by Bolívar's lieutenant, Antonio José de Sucre. The royalists, meanwhile, might have numbered in the region of 9,000 men (though many of these were unmotivated conscripts) and boasted a much stronger artillery contingent.

The royalists took the initiative on the western flank with their superior firepower, though Sucre bolstered that wing with members of his reserve before he was able to strike a decisive blow. The Spanish general, Canterac, ordered his centre to move down the hill to engage, and the rocky ground saw them break formation and extend their line.

Sucre then ordered his cavalry, commanded by the English mercenary William Miller, to charge the disorganised Spaniards while his infantry on the right flank redoubled their efforts against the wavering Spanish left. The royalists at last faltered and the rebels

### THE END OF EMPIRE

The Spanish had been losing control in the continent since 1819 and had King Ferdinand VII made concessions he may have stemmed the Wars for Independence, but he wanted to reassert his rights over the continent after his restoration. The rebels won a series of victories leading up to Ayacucho, which destroyed the last remaining organised Spanish force in South America. The battle precipitated the birth of an independent Peru and paved the way for the founding of Bolivia. Vival, defeat at Ayacucho brought about the end of Spanish colonial rule in South America.



Simón Bolívar led the rebels in the War of Independence

won the day, killing upwards of 1,500 Spaniards, while losing fewer than 400 of their own.

## 10 THE EBRO OFFENSIVE

THE LARGEST BATTLE OF THE CIVIL WAR SEES THE EXTINCTION OF REPUBLICAN HOPES

In the summer of 1938, the Republican cause was stuttering in the face of General Franco's Nationalist onslaught, which was edging towards Valencia and Madrid. In a bid to stem the Nationalist advance, the Republicans launched a surprise offensive across the River Ebro with around 80,000 troops, including several international brigades, such as the British Battalion.

Catching the Nationalists off guard, the Republicans enjoyed early success, battering Franco's 50th Division of the Moroccan Army, and moving towards the strategically important town of Gandesa. Franco responded, however, by mobilising major reinforcements from across Spain. He enjoyed air support from the German Condor Legion, whose bombers stymied Republican supply efforts by destroying bridges and roads.

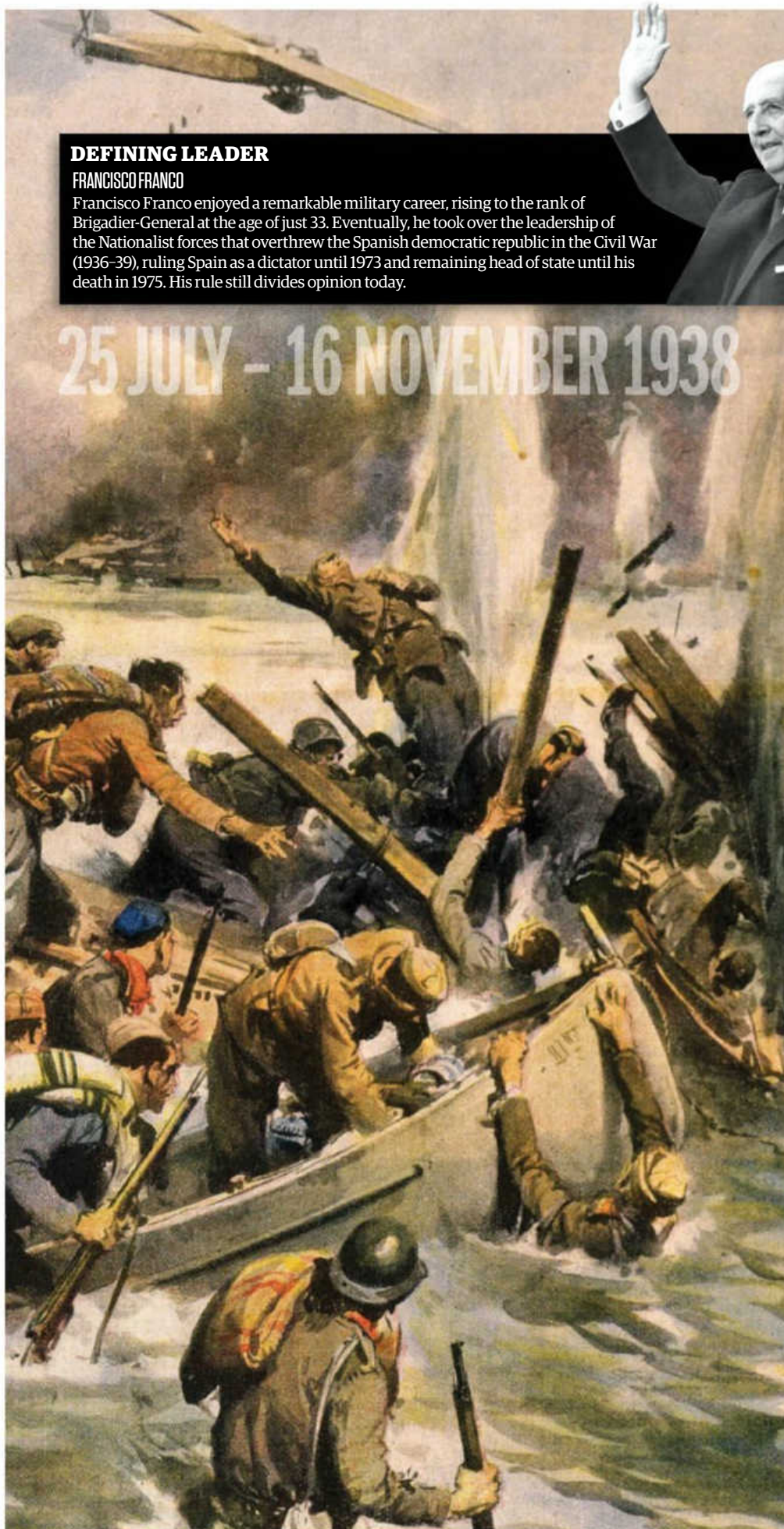
A war of attrition ensued, with Franco's airforce and superior artillery and tank forces halting the Republican advance and pinning them down. Foolishly, the under-supplied and weaker-armed Republicans elected to hold their ground, suffering terrible casualties that their inferior resources could not sustain. Threatening to shoot any troops who sought to withdraw, the Republicans grimly hung on and saw their army gradually obliterated.

Franco then ordered a series of counter-offensives during August, while in late September the League of Nations in Geneva announced that the International Brigades would be withdrawn from Spain. This was a major boost for Franco, whose troops eventually forced the Republicans back across the Ebro. By 18 November, the battle was over. The Republican forces were exhausted and the Nationalists were once again in command of the Ebro region, leaving Catalonia vulnerable to Franco's final assault.

### THE NATIONALISTS TRIUMPHANT

Though both sides suffered enormous casualties - with some estimates placing the number at well over 100,000 men - the weaker Republican forces could not replenish their material or manpower losses (reckoned by some historians at up to 30,000 dead), while the Nationalists were rearmed by the German government and were able to launch their decisive offensive against Catalonia. The battle for the Ebro did perhaps extend the war, but the expenditure in lives and munitions ultimately cost the Republicans dearly. By the spring of 1939, Madrid fell to the Nationalists, ushering in Franco's 36-year dictatorship.

Poble Vell de Corbera d'Ebre - a town completely destroyed during the war



### DEFINING LEADER

#### FRANCISCO FRANCO

Francisco Franco enjoyed a remarkable military career, rising to the rank of Brigadier-General at the age of just 33. Eventually, he took over the leadership of the Nationalist forces that overthrew the Spanish democratic republic in the Civil War (1936-39), ruling Spain as a dictator until 1973 and remaining head of state until his death in 1975. His rule still divides opinion today.

## "Bleed France white"

The German Chief of Staff Erich von Falkenhayn was convinced that an attack on Verdun would be the catalyst for German victory. He assured the Supreme Army Command that a victory would be a hammer blow to France and a subsequent submarine blockade would then force Britain into submission.

## Strategic and symbolic importance

Verdun had been a symbolic centre for the French military since the 1870-71 Franco-Prussian War, and its sentimental value meant it would not go down without a fight. It was strategically important as well, as its location and underground forts threatened German lines of communication.

## German tactics

The main strategy employed was a war of attrition, with intense artillery bombardments followed by infantry advances. It was hoped that this would draw the French out of their fortifications into the clutches of the waiting Imperial German Army.

## Urban damage

After the battle, the villages of Beaumont, Bezonvaux, Cumières, Douaumont, Fleury, Haumont, Louvemont, Ornes and Vaux were all completely destroyed. It is believed that the French field artillery at Verdun fired more than 10 million rounds in the entirety of the battle.

## German fallout

The German failure to succeed at Verdun was the final nail in von Falkenhayn's coffin. He was stripped of his position and replaced by Paul von Hindenburg, who would become a key figure in German politics up until his death in 1934.

### Britain's weapons

Von Falkenhayn was of the opinion that Britain had no great army of its own and was simply using France, Russia and Italy as its armies. With France seen as the greatest threat of the three, he convinced the kaiser that 'Operation Judgement' would turn the tide of the war.

# BATTLE OF VERDUN

VERDUN, FRANCE

21 FEBRUARY – 20 DECEMBER 1916

One of the costliest battles in one of history's most devastating wars, Verdun was nothing more than a bloodbath. On Christmas Day 1915, German Chief of Staff Erich von Falkenhayn wrote to Kaiser Wilhelm II expressing his firm belief that the Western - not the Eastern - Front was where ultimate victory lay. He argued that Britain was the senior partner in the Entente and an attack on Verdun and its surrounding fortifications would "Bleed France white". With the French out of the war, the Germans would be able to embark on a campaign of unrestricted submarine warfare against Britain. Von Falkenhayn rolled the dice first and amassed artillery in a 9.5 kilometre line east of the forts, and the preliminary bombardment of Verdun began on 21 February 1916.

Verdun was poorly prepared for the barrage sent by the German guns. The trenches were incomplete and the area was low on ammunition and manpower. French Commander in Chief Joseph Joffre hastily arranged extra battalions to be sent to aid the French Second Army, which only numbered 200,000 men. As the 1,400 German guns fell silent, 1 million troops advanced forward. At the end of the first day of fierce fighting, von Falkenhayn had not pressed ahead as much as he had planned, only managing to capture the frontline trenches. The momentum was stunted further when the infantry were withdrawn for another artillery barrage, after scouting reports decreed that the forts were still too strong for an infantry assault. On 24 February, the

French second line of trenches was overrun as well, but the forts still held firm. For now.

French reinforcements arrived under the leadership of General Philippe Pétain and bolstered positions on the banks of the River Meuse. The Germans managed to occupy Fort Douaumont but, after a series of successes, the battle began to stagnate. Between 26-29 February, 500,000 troops assaulted the village of Douaumont, but it held firm. Throughout March, the Germans, who were using flamethrowers in large numbers for the first time, made a series of gains, intent on preventing the Allies from amassing troops elsewhere for another potential battle in Picardy. By the summer months, German attacks were still coming thick and fast, and as they reached the Belleville Heights on the doorstep of Verdun, up to 75 per cent of the French Army had seen action in this one battle. Many forts had fallen by July, and as the French prepared to call it quits, well-timed attacks by the British on the banks of the river Somme to the north west and the Russian Brusilov Offensive in the east took place. Now fighting on too many fronts, the German Imperial Army found itself overstretched and unable to maintain the momentum. The futility of war had been demonstrated with 550,000 French and 434,000 German casualties for little to no strategic gain for either side. Fighting raged on until December, but the Battle of Verdun, the longest single battle of the war, was over and the Battle of the Somme had now superseded it in both casualties and overall futility.

### French fallout

The victory at Verdun was the making of Philippe Pétain, who was awarded the role of commander in chief and became a national hero. His popularity would later plummet during World War II when his Vichy regime collaborated with Nazi Germany.



## French Third Republic

TROOPS 1,140,000

DIVISIONS 75-85

ARTILLERY 632 FIELD AND HEAVY GUNS



### JOSEPH JOFFRE

LEADER

Known as 'Papa Joffre', the commander in chief of the French forces had served since the days of the Franco-Prussian War.

**Strengths** General calmness and refusal to admit defeat.

**Weakness** Failing to prepare correctly for Verdun.



### CANON DE 155 C M1915

KEY UNIT

A heavy field howitzer that was an upgrade on the M1917 and lasted past the end of the war.

**Strengths** New technology allowed a maximum range of 11 kilometres.

**Weakness** Manoeuvrability. Up to eight horses were required to pull it.



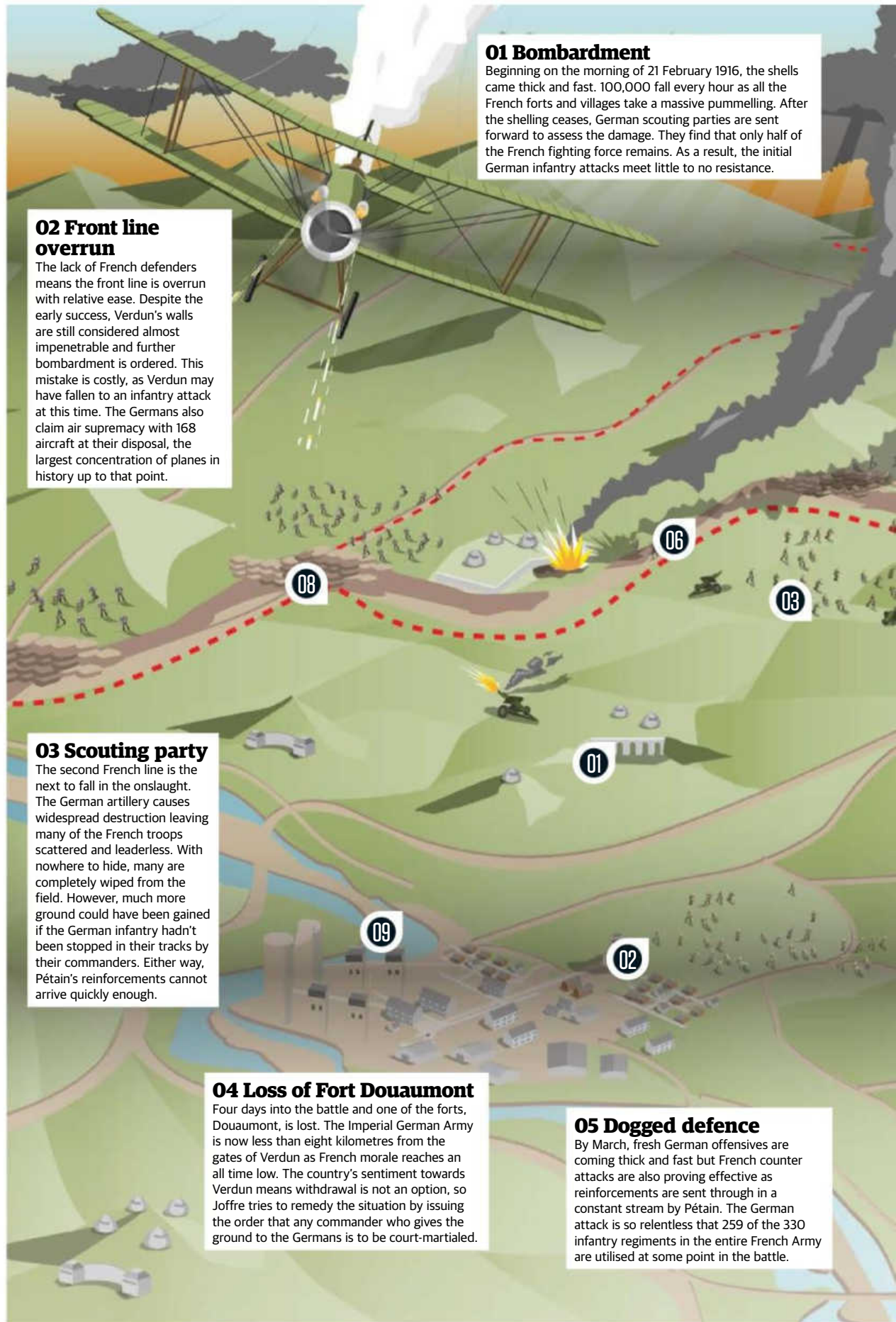
### HOTCHKISS M1914

KEY WEAPON

A gas-operated, air-cooled, fully automatic belt-fed bullet spitter that could fire up to 600 rounds a minute.

**Strengths** Took down German flamethrower companies before they got close.

**Weakness** Incredibly heavy and only held 30 cartridges.



#### 01 Bombardment

Beginning on the morning of 21 February 1916, the shells came thick and fast. 100,000 fall every hour as all the French forts and villages take a massive pummelling. After the shelling ceases, German scouting parties are sent forward to assess the damage. They find that only half of the French fighting force remains. As a result, the initial German infantry attacks meet little to no resistance.

#### 02 Front line overrun

The lack of French defenders means the front line is overrun with relative ease. Despite the early success, Verdun's walls are still considered almost impenetrable and further bombardment is ordered. This mistake is costly, as Verdun may have fallen to an infantry attack at this time. The Germans also claim air supremacy with 168 aircraft at their disposal, the largest concentration of planes in history up to that point.

#### 03 Scouting party

The second French line is the next to fall in the onslaught. The German artillery causes widespread destruction leaving many of the French troops scattered and leaderless. With nowhere to hide, many are completely wiped from the field. However, much more ground could have been gained if the German infantry hadn't been stopped in their tracks by their commanders. Either way, Pétain's reinforcements cannot arrive quickly enough.

#### 04 Loss of Fort Douaumont

Four days into the battle and one of the forts, Douaumont, is lost. The Imperial German Army is now less than eight kilometres from the gates of Verdun as French morale reaches an all time low. The country's sentiment towards Verdun means withdrawal is not an option, so Joffre tries to remedy the situation by issuing the order that any commander who gives the ground to the Germans is to be court-martialed.

#### 05 Dogged defence

By March, fresh German offensives are coming thick and fast but French counter attacks are also proving effective as reinforcements are sent through in a constant stream by Pétain. The German attack is so relentless that 259 of the 330 infantry regiments in the entire French Army are utilised at some point in the battle.





## German Empire

TROOPS 1,250,000

DIVISIONS 50

ARTILLERY 1,200 HEAVY AND SUPER HEAVY GUNS



### ERICH VON FALKENHAYN

LEADER

The chief of staff for the German Imperial Army, Verdun would turn out to be von Falkenhayn's swan song on the Western Front

**Strengths** Experience of conflict all over the world.

**Weakness** Belief that an offensive on Verdun was the only solution.



### BIG BERTHA

KEY UNIT

The largest and most powerful mobile artillery pieces on both sides during the battle.

**Strengths** Huge 419mm shells could level cities.

**Weakness** Could not penetrate the reinforced concrete forts.

### PHOSGENE GAS

KEY WEAPON

An alternative to chlorine gas that could affect soldiers up to 48 hours after inhalation.

**Strengths** Caused soldiers to cough less so more of the gas was inhaled.

**Weakness** Less deadly than chlorine gas.

### 10 Counteroffensive

Mangin's attacks last until December 1916 and are a resounding success as 11,000 German prisoners and 115 heavy guns are captured. Hindenburg sees no point in continuing and calls off the offensive.

### 09 Full-frontal assault

The dual initiation of the Battle of the Somme and the Brusilov Offensive cripples the Germans. 15 divisions are withdrawn, and without this backup, further attacks by von Falkenhayn are all but pointless. Charles Mangin, the newly installed French commander, takes the fight back to the Germans and reclaims lost ground.

### 08 Gas! Gas! Gas!

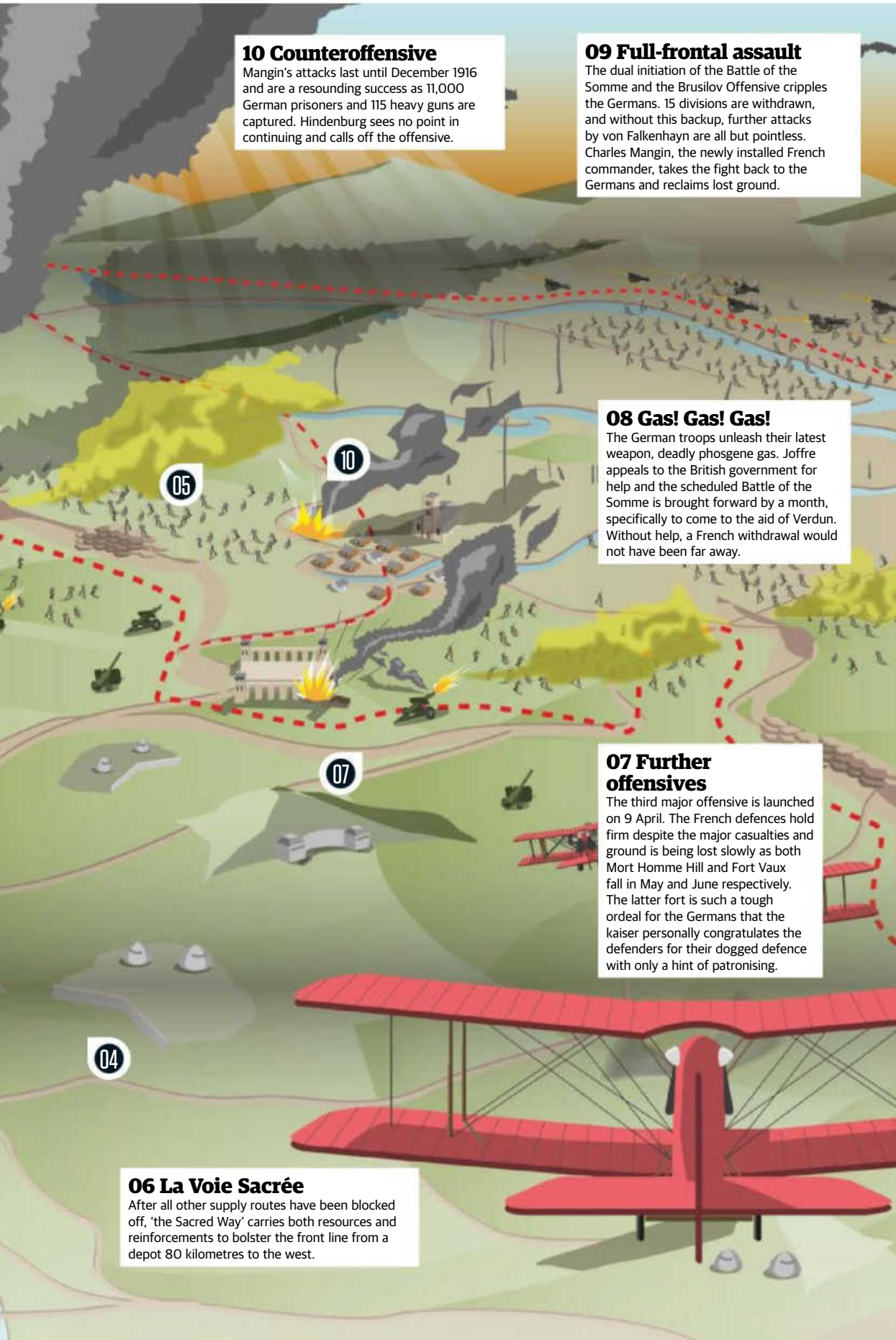
The German troops unleash their latest weapon, deadly phosgene gas. Joffre appeals to the British government for help and the scheduled Battle of the Somme is brought forward by a month, specifically to come to the aid of Verdun. Without help, a French withdrawal would not have been far away.

### 07 Further offensives

The third major offensive is launched on 9 April. The French defences hold firm despite the major casualties and ground is being lost slowly as both Mort Homme Hill and Fort Vaux fall in May and June respectively. The latter fort is such a tough ordeal for the Germans that the kaiser personally congratulates the defenders for their dogged defence with only a hint of patronising.

### 06 La Voie Sacrée

After all other supply routes have been blocked off, 'the Sacred Way' carries both resources and reinforcements to bolster the front line from a depot 80 kilometres to the west.



# BATTLE OF THE SOMME

NORTHERN FRANCE 1 JULY – 18 NOVEMBER 1916

**M**orning on another warm summer's day in Northern France's frontline was suddenly interrupted by a surge of explosions that seemed to make the very air pulsate.

Detonations of explosives planted deep beneath the earth were the signal that the attack on the German lines was to begin. With shrill whistle blasts all along the line, the British and French troops headed out into no man's land, and the Somme offensive began.

Initially planned solely as a French attack, the Somme offensive was months in the making, and was intended to be Field Marshal Douglas Haig's decisive blow to the German lines. Haig's aim was to force a rapid and devastating advance on the German lines, breaking through the deadlock of the trenches and splitting the enemy's front irreconcilably in two. Not only was it thought that this would disorganise the German troops, but it could also draw away crucial enemy troops from the French battling a German offensive in nearby Verdun.

Haig devised his plans for the attack alongside General Sir Henry Rawlinson, who commanded the Fourth Army, which would form the bulk of the attack. Both men knew that the German defences would be well built up, so the miles of barbed wire, trench networks and bunker defences would be dealt with during an eight-day-long bombardment. It was thought this would be enough to cut the impassable wire, destroy the trench defences and crucially demoralise, if not completely obliterate, the German troops.

However, the German general Erich von Falkenhayn had made his order clear: not one foot of ground should be lost. This coupled with the

substantial underground fortifications prepared over the preceding two years, using the chalky earth of the Somme region to burrow natural bunkers into the ground, meant the Germans were more than ready for the British. In fact, despite over a million shells rained down across no man's land for eight days, many of them failed to even detonate.

When British and French troops ventured out towards the German lines on around 7.30am on 1 July, not only were the Germans waiting for them with machine guns ready, but miles and miles of wire still sat stuck in the mud in front of them. What was intended as a swift breakthrough and a swift victory quickly turned into a battle of attrition. Over 20,000 British were killed on the first day, with many more wounded.

Over the following four months the men of the British and German Empires slogged it out doggedly. Every slight British gain was paid for with the lives of thousands, while even the first introduction of tanks to the battlefield in September was not enough to secure a firm and resounding victory. By mid-November the last gasp of the British offensive resulted in the taking of Beaumont Hamel towards the left-wing of the line - it had been one of Haig's first-day objectives.

With over 1,000,000 casualties from all sides, the Somme was a truly horrific loss to both sides, with only minimal successes. The objective of drawing German forces from the attack at Verdun had been achieved, but the essential and decisive breakthrough demanded by Haig had been a total failure. With December approaching, both sides were left with the winter to count their losses and dwell on one of the bloodiest and traumatic campaigns ever seen.





## **Walking pace**

Soldiers were ordered to maintain a slow but steady pace, rather than a sprint and a charge, while attacking across no man's land. With heavy trenching tools in their packs, added to the need for a cohesive co-ordinated attack across miles of battlefield, the walking pace was deemed most effective.

## **Bayonets fixed**

If any Germans remained to oppose the British troops, it was anticipated that much of the fighting would be up-close and personal in the enemy trenches. The bayonet was brutal stabbing weapon perfect for hand-to-hand combat.

## **Barbed reception**

Despite a mass bombardment over the eight days preceding the battle, the advancing troops found that much of the barbed wire protecting the enemy lines still in tact. This meant British and French troops had to cut their way through to the enemy, while under heavy fire, but many became trapped in the coils of biting metal.



## British Empire

**TROOPS FOURTH  
ARMY, C.300,000  
ARTILLERY C.1,800  
TANKS C.22  
(WORKING)**



### DOUGLAS HAIG

#### LEADER

The dogged field marshal had a plan for the Somme, and was determined to see it through.

**Strengths** His incorporation of new technology, as well as his formidable experience.

**Weakness** Persistence with clearly failing tactics, resulting in huge casualties.



### MARK I TANK

#### KEY UNIT

These 'land ships' were a new a terrifying weapon on the battlefield.

**Strengths** Armour was impenetrable to normal gunfire, good for allied morale.

**Weakness** Slow, unreliable and impossible to manoeuvre flexibly.



### 18-POUND ARTILLERY

#### KEY WEAPON

The workhorse of the British bombardment.

**Strengths** Very good range and precise accuracy.

**Weakness** Many of the shells fired did not detonate.

## 01 Heavy bombardment

In order to cut the barbed wire around the defences, as well as destroy trenches and crush German morale, British and French artillery pummelled the enemy lines for eight days leading up to the day of the main offensive. Over 1,800 howitzers, field guns, trench mortars and heavy guns take part in this huge bombardment, however, unknown to the generals, much of the enemy wire remains in tact and the Germans simply wait underground for the bombing to cease.

## 02 Hawthorn Redoubt detonates

At around 7.30am on 1 July, the main attack is begun with a series of mine detonations beneath the German lines. The largest of these is under the Hawthorn Redoubt, a German fortification, which is triggered ten minutes earlier than the rest. The 18 tonnes of explosive creates a crater 30 metres deep.

## 03 The advance begins

The British troops advance out of the trenches, carrying with them their rifles, boards to cross the German trenches, and heavy trenching tools. The Germans emerge from their bunkers and open up their machine guns on the advancing troops. The British attack is stalled, while to the south the French advance is more successful. With their bombardment beginning mere hours before the attack, the Germans are less prepared for the French sector's attack.

## 04 Tragic slaughter

The British army suffers 58,000 casualties during the first day of the battle, for the most part cut down by the well-prepared German machine guns. Few gains are made on this day, but the French 6th Army manages to take some of its first objectives, having been more successful in its opening advance.

## 05 GERMAN TRENCHES TAKEN

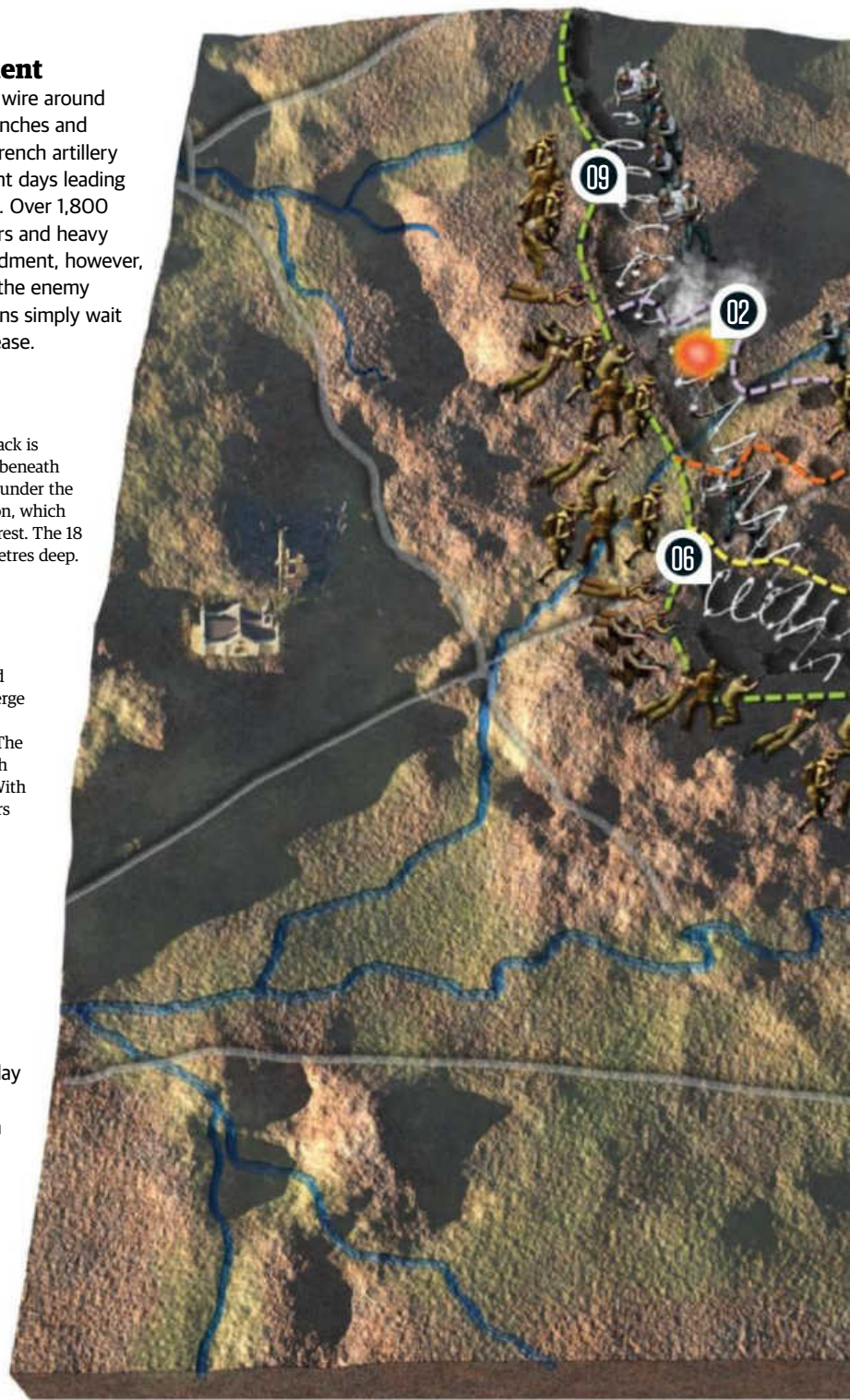
The first line of enemy trenches are taken by General Rawlinson's Fourth Army on 11 July, however German reinforcements are soon on their way from the nearby Verdun front.

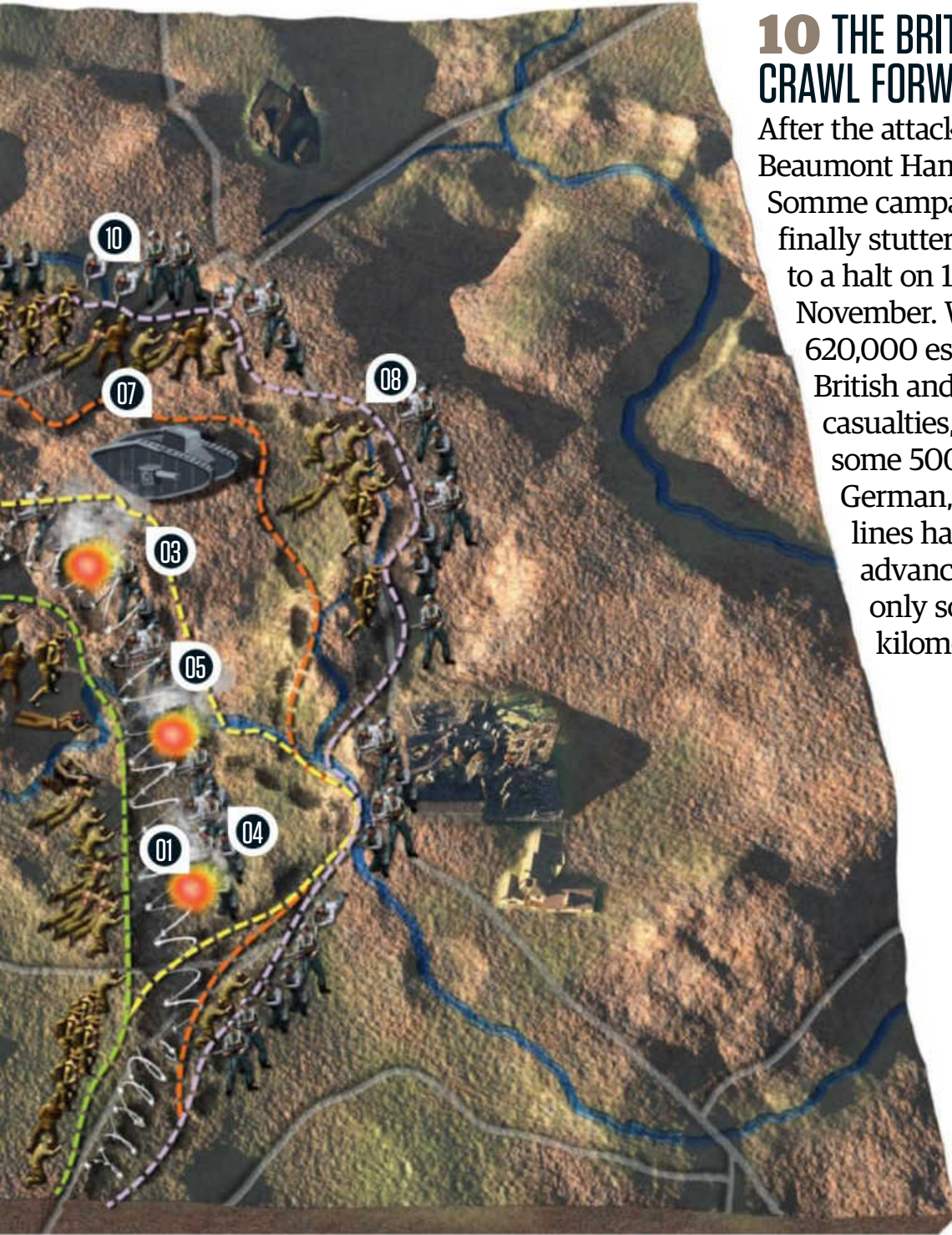
## 06 Slow progress

The tough German commander Max von Gallwitz put in command of the German frontline defence on the 19 July and the re-organised German army is able to hamper and British gains with counterattacks. Pozieres is taken by two Australian divisions on 23 July and by the end of the month the line has advanced, but few of the primary objectives have yet been taken.

## 07 Tank offensive

Tanks are used for the first time in the Great War, during an attack on German lines spanning 12km on 15 September, at Flers-Courcelette. Only around 50 'land battleships' are available for use, several break down before even reaching the front line, leaving just 22 to rumble towards the German positions during this fresh push. Though many German infantry are rattled by the sight of the tanks, the overall attack begins to falter and is halted on 22 September, with limited territorial gains.





## 08 THE BRITISH CRAWL FORWARD

Over the next month attacks at Morval, Thiepval Ridge, Ancre Heights and others achieve small gains into October, paying for each trench and each advance with heavy casualties on both sides. The French likewise advance their lines in the south.

## 10 THE BRITISH CRAWL FORWARD

After the attack at Beaumont Hamel, the Somme campaign finally stutters to a halt on 18 November. With 620,000 estimated British and French casualties, and some 500,000 German, the lines have advanced only some 12 kilometres.

## 09 Final attack

With winter fast approaching, which would spell the end of any effective attacks, the last offensive effort of the Somme campaign sees the British advance on Beaumont Hamel, near the Ancre river. Beginning with artillery bombardments, the British Fifth Army attacked on 13 November. In some areas the attack was a great success, with many German prisoners taken, but the poor conditions soon took their toll on the British, and the attack was halted only with some of the initial objectives taken.



## German Empire

TROOPS 9 DIVISIONS, TOTALLING C.90,000



## GENERAL ERICH VON FALKENHAYN

### LEADER

A seasoned soldier and politician with a mind for defence.

**Strengths** His preparations in building solid defences at the Somme battlefield.

**Weakness** A determination to not concede any ground resulted in heavy German losses.



## MACHINE GUN TEAMS

### KEY UNIT

Sending a deadly hail of bullets across the battlefield in very quick succession.

**Strengths** Devastating to the opposing infantry.

**Weakness** Hard to redeploy, would overheat with use.



## GEWEHR 98 CARBINE

### KEY WEAPON

The staple weapon of the German army, ideal for trench warfare of the World War.

**Strengths** A five-round clip and accurate up to 2,000 metres.

**Weakness** Long build of the barrel was unsuitable for close-quarters shooting.



# BATTLE OF CAMBRAI

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CAMBRAI, NORTHERN FRANCE NOVEMBER 1917

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**B**y 1917 the British Army's notions of war had changed entirely. Any romantic ideals of the glory of combat and the open battlefield had been trampled and drowned in the blood-drenched, rain-slicked mud and barbed wire of the trenches of the Somme. Men fought and died for yards that felt like inches. Three years of almost imperceptible movement in the fields of France had pulled the wool from British commanders' eyes.

With change so desperately needed, it's not surprising that the plan of attack at Cambrai was the product of ideas from three groups. British preliminary bombardment meant German forces were always alerted to the fact an attack was imminent, enabling a tactical retreat before a counter-attack. In August 1917, artillery commander Brigadier General Henry Hugh Tudor proposed 'silent registration' of guns, bringing the artillery to the battlefield without alerting the enemy. This process would be greatly assisted by the use of the No.106 instantaneous fuses, which meant that shells would detonate immediately on impact.

Meanwhile, the Tank Corps' Brigadier General Hugh Elles and Lieutenant Colonel John Fuller were desperate for a chance to show their machines' worth. Fuller was convinced they would

be capable of conducting lightning raids to smash resistance and drive the British line forward. This dovetailed neatly with Tudor's plan, as General Julian Byng, head of the Third Army, recognised. Byng turned his eye to Cambrai, a quiet area that was used by the Germans as supply point. While it was very well defended with the deep trenches of the Hindenburg Line and barbed wire, an attack would certainly be unexpected despite the area's strategic value.

With six infantry divisions, five cavalry divisions and nine tank battalions, more than 1,000 guns were mustered for the attack. There would be a front of around 10,000 yards, covered by the III and IV Corps of the Third Army, which would be widened as the attack progressed. The III Corps had to break the Masnières-Beaurevoir line, enabling the cavalry to circle around Cambrai and cut it off from reinforcements before 48 hours had passed. Obviously, secrecy was paramount.

The Mark IV tanks were divided into "male" and "female" groups, with the former having four Lewis guns and two six-pounder Hotchkiss naval guns. The latter were each fitted with six Lewis guns. Without the naval guns, the "female" tanks were lighter, at 26 tons, while the "males" weighed 28.

British soldiers photographed during the battle. The photo's original caption reads: "Down in a shell crater, we fought like Kilkenny cats"



Field Marshal Douglas Haig was the most senior British commander during WWI



General Julian Byng, commander of the British Third Army, pictured in April 1917

The crews also noticed that while the males had a door at the back, the female tanks had doors closer to the ground that were harder to get out of in an emergency. Eight men shared the single space with the engine, while the machine was only capable of reaching a speed of 3.7mph, and more typically around 1mph over bad terrain.

The tanks would lead, providing cover for the infantry as they crushed the barbed wire effortlessly under their tracks. As for navigating the trenches, each tank carried a fascine - a bundle of wood and branches, which would be deposited into the trench in order to fill it, so that the vehicle could drive over it. Meanwhile, a grapnel was fitted to some of the tanks to enable them to drag away the crumpled wire as they went, so that the path was clear for the advancing cavalry.

Several things needed to go very right in order for this so-called "clockwork" battle to work. Haig had fallen victim to overreaching in previous campaigns and he was determined that the

Cambrai offensive have limited objectives and stick to its time frame. Minimising losses was crucial - even more so when he was forced to send two divisions to support the Italian front. Co-operation and communication between the divisions was also vital, as the battle's events would prove.

### The battle rumbles to life

The attack began at 6.20am on 20 November as the artillery began shelling. With this stunning overture, the tanks advanced into the fog. The gentle incline made things very easy for the drivers, while the infantry marvelled at the ease with which the tanks rolled over the hazardous barbed wire as they followed them into battle, as did the men inside.

The initial advance seemed to be going impossibly well. The "clockwork battle" was living up to its name as the Germans were taken completely by surprise by this sudden, shocking attack. The British artillery kept up a devastating

rate of fire, as much as possible given the two-rounds-per-minute rule to avoid overheating. The advance was also supported by the Royal Flying Corps, whose targets were on the ground rather than in the air. As the pilots braved machine-gun fire to drop their payloads, the weather worked against them. An Australian squadron pushed through punishingly thick fog at Havrincourt, barely able to see one another, let alone their targets. If their planes went down, they had to fight their way back to their lines, as Lieutenant Harry Taylor was forced to do, picking up the weapon of a fallen man and setting out to find support.

This isn't to say there was no resistance. A myth sprung up as the days went on about a German gunner who held the enemy at bay entirely by himself. That myth does a disservice to the determination and skill of the men who suddenly found themselves on the back foot. Some of the troops stationed near Cambrai had come from the Russian front and had never seen a tank before. It's impossible to know what these soldiers thought as the metal leviathans rolled towards them, but they fell back on their training, resisting where possible before making a tactical retreat.

Before long, communication began to prove an issue. When the tanks worked in tandem with the infantry, such as through Havrincourt and Graincourt, things went very smoothly. Elsewhere,

"With six infantry divisions, five cavalry divisions and nine tank battalions, more than 1,000 guns were mustered for the attack"





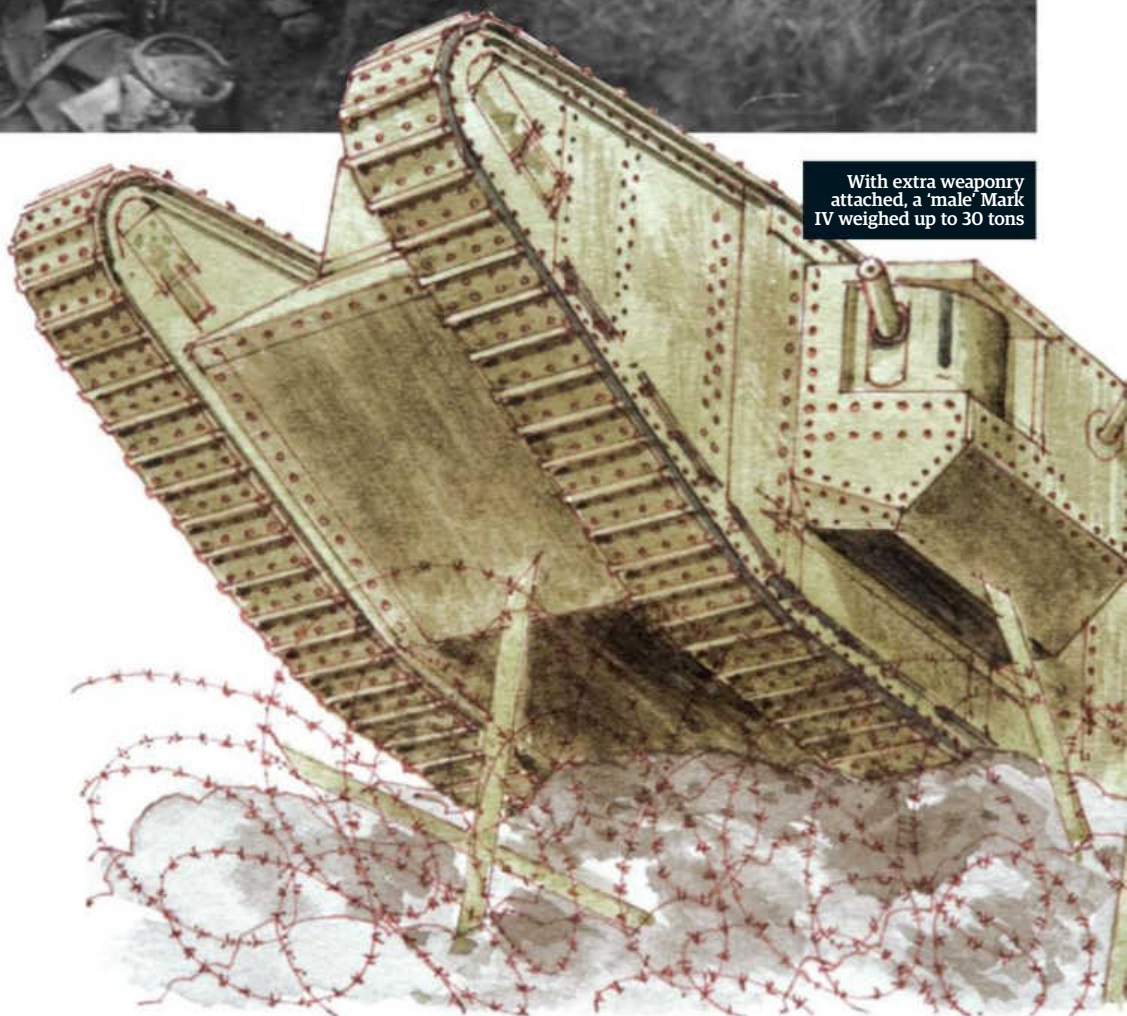
Men from the 11th Leicester Regiment in a captured enemy trench at Ribecourt

infantrymen were forced to bang on the door of the tanks to get their attention, while confusion over objectives led to groups of infantry being forced to take key positions without artillery support. However, sitting in these slow-moving targets had its own terrors. They drew the bulk of enemy fire and if the engine gave out, whether due to attack, or even a fire, the tank became a sitting duck. Once engaged in combat, the inside of the tank would become incredibly hot as the guns began to fire and the sound of their doing so was deafening. Visibility was shockingly poor, while the fact that most tanks had to stop in order to turn meant that they were a popular target on the battlefield.

Nevertheless, the speed with which they were taking ground was intoxicating; each trench taken and each line of wire cleared was another step towards the objective and morale had rarely been higher. As the tanks moved further away from their lines of reinforcement, establishing a clear road and lines of communication back became crucial. However, the supply mules proved nearly useless in the tangle of mud and wire, while the narrow roads quickly became clogged with traffic back and forth, ferrying wounded and prisoners.

### **The Third Army consolidates**

Despite the ground gained, the first day ended with some major concerns. While crossing trenches



With extra weaponry attached, a 'male' Mark IV weighed up to 30 tons

# Greatest Battles

had proved easy enough for the tanks, moving past the St Quentin Canal was another matter indeed. A crucial bridge at Masnières had been crushed by a tank that had attempted to cross the canal, stopping the planned infantry advance, while another had been mined. The cavalry was delayed by the clogged roads, while a lack of communication frequently meant they were stranded or forced to retreat. A lone squadron of Canadian cavalry realised it was the only unit to make it across the canal at Masnières and was forced to find its way back around and across.

Meanwhile, the key village of Flesquières had not been captured after the advancing tank divisions became separated from the infantry of the 51st (Highland) Division. With no infantry support, the tanks were target practice for the gunners at Flesquières ridge and suffered huge losses. Messengers from the battlefield, some of whom walked the two miles on foot, struggled to convince their commanders that Flesquières had not yet been captured. Crucially, Major General George Montague Harper refused to commit any of the troops held in reserve to take the objective.

The second day required consolidation and advancement. Masnières was taken in the morning, but as a salient it was open to a punishing amount of shell and machine-gun fire, and the German air force soon reappeared to make life very difficult for the British troops. Meanwhile, the tanks had used all their improvised wooden fascine bridges on the first day, which made crossing the trenches difficult, and the infantry were reluctant to advance without them.

Things looked much better for the IV Corps, which advanced on Flesquières dreading the prospect of a prepared German resistance, only to find it had been abandoned. In contrast, while the cavalry helped take Cantaing, it struggled to work in tandem with the tanks as planned. Similarly, as the tanks moved into villages, it became clear they were not prepared for street fighting. With no



**British**

**INFANTRY**  
**6 CORPS**  
**LOSSES C.44,000**

**LEADERS**  
**FIELD MARSHAL DOUGLAS HAIG, GENERAL JULIAN BYNG**

**GAME CHANGERS**  
378 fighting tanks that enabled the British to move forward at an incredible rate on the first day of fighting

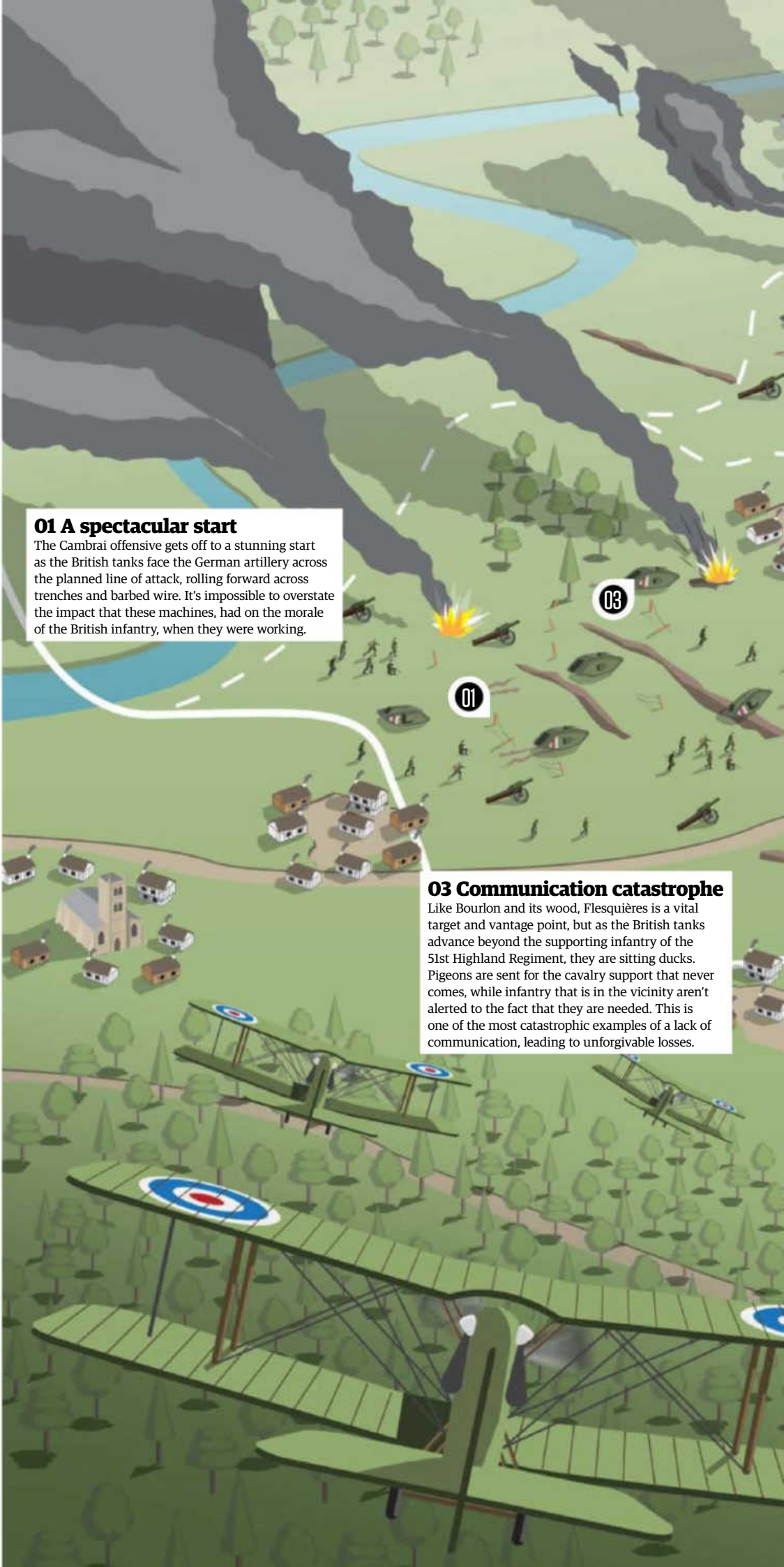


**German**

**INFANTRY**  
**1 CORPS**  
**LOSSES C.46,000**

**LEADERS**  
**GENERAL GEORG VONDER MARWITZ, RUPPRECHT OF BAVARIA**

**GAME CHANGERS**  
The air force led by Baron Von Richtofen that arrived on the 23 November to combat the RFC.



### 01 A spectacular start

The Cambrai offensive gets off to a stunning start as the British tanks face the German artillery across the planned line of attack, rolling forward across trenches and barbed wire. It's impossible to overstate the impact that these machines, had on the morale of the British infantry, when they were working.

01

03

### 03 Communication catastrophe

Like Bourlon and its wood, Flesquières is a vital target and vantage point, but as the British tanks advance beyond the supporting infantry of the 51st Highland Regiment, they are sitting ducks. Pigeons are sent for the cavalry support that never comes, while infantry that is in the vicinity aren't alerted to the fact that they are needed. This is one of the most catastrophic examples of a lack of communication, leading to unforgivable losses.

## 04 Resistance at Bourlon

Some of the most brutal and devastating fighting breaks out in Bourlon Wood. Capturing it is crucial for the British as it's an excellent vantage point for German firepower. Once British forces enter the trees, the infantry are on their own and some wounded men will wait days to be rescued. Facing fierce resistance from German infantry, not to mention shelling and aircraft fire, Bourlon Wood continues to be fiercely contested at a terrible cost.

04

05

## 05 Importance of Fontaine

Few locations exchange hands as often as the small village of Fontaine. It's strategically important but painfully open to attack, as the British learn shortly after taking it. By the 26 November, the Grenadier Guards manage to take Fontaine despite incredible losses, but the lack of support means they're forced to retreat not long after their victory.

02

## 02 Transport difficulties

If the British forces are to circle around from the South, it is crucial to cross the St Quentin canal at Masnières. This initiative fails spectacularly when bridges are either mined by the Germans or collapse under the weight of the tanks. All supplies and reinforcements now have to come by road, which quickly becomes choked.

06

## 06 Speed at Gouzeaucourt

The German counterattack on 30 November takes place all across the line, but the speed with which they strike Gouzeaucourt seems staggering. British troops fall back and take shelter in a nearby quarry, but soon realise that they have given themselves no cover, with only one option remaining. The number of British prisoners taken is incredibly high.



machine gun on the top of the tank (it would be introduced in 1918), they were horribly vulnerable to fire from second-storey windows. Still, Fontaine was secured despite heavy losses, leaving Bourlon and its dense wood as the next target.

The offensive was on a knife edge without enough men to consolidate these gains. Fontaine was incredibly vulnerable, but was refused any artillery support and destroyed bridges made moving supplies incredibly difficult. Meanwhile, the German vantage points of Bourlon and Bourlon Wood posed a serious threat to the British. After a last-ditch effort ordered by Byng to push through, the order came to halt and dig in.

When Haig learned of the attack's successes and failures, he decided to junk the 48-hour time limit and continue the advance. He toured the battlefield, congratulating the men and helping to spread the myth of the lone German gunner at the Flesquières ridge, as that was surely a better explanation for the number of ruined British machines on the battlefield than the alternative. During this apparent lull on 22 November, German forces rushed Fontaine and retook it. Resistance was growing, and as the British dug in for the night in

**"Running from tree to tree, with the noise of ceaseless gun fire, a huge number of soldiers were lost"**

the miserable November cold they knew that their momentum was dripping away. Haig stressed to Byng that Bourlon and Fontaine must be captured by the end of 23 November.

### **Bitter fighting at Bourlon Wood**

The fresh offensive was major, with 400 guns and 92 tanks, while the 40th Bantam Division was dispatched in order to relieve some of the exhausted men at the front. The tanks met with fierce resistance in Fontaine, and were forced to withdraw to the disapproval of Tanks Corps intelligence officer Captain Elliot Hotblack, who saw the devastating effect their retreat had on the infantry's morale. Further down the line, German infantry made life hell for the tanks, finding the machine gunners' blind spots and throwing hand grenades inside, leaving the British soldiers trapped and burning.

Having reached Bourlon Wood with the help of the tanks, fighting through the thick wood was now the infantry's job alone. It was here that some of the most-intense and gruesome combat was seen. Running from tree to tree, with an unimaginable noise of ceaseless gun and artillery fire, a huge number of British soldiers were lost in Bourlon Wood.

When the German forces were finally pushed out, they started shelling it. Meanwhile, both Bourlon and Fontaine remained in German hands despite attempts in the afternoon, but the casualties on both sides were horrific. As night fell, troops were sent to support the men in Bourlon Wood as counter attacks from the Germans continued well into the night. Haig told Byng that Bourlon ridge simply must be taken, so the Guard division was summoned to support and relieve the depleted forces.

German officers pose with a captured British tank in Cambrai. Hundreds of stranded or abandoned British machines were captured during the offensive



Tommies look on as British artillery arrives at Cambrai in December, 1917



Manfred von Richthofen, known as 'The Red Baron', played a pivotal role from the air at Cambrai

Throughout 24 November, shelling and counterattacks continued on Bourlon Wood. Poor weather made it difficult for any RFC pilots to take to the skies and challenge the forces of the recently arrived Manfred von Richthofen, the Red Baron, whose planes rained fire on the wood. German efforts to grind down the soldiers in the wood continued throughout the day. Counterattack met counterattack, and 25 November saw further terrible lapses in communication and bloody skirmishes. Battalions without tank support were mown down by machine-gun fire at Bourlon, while an entire cavalry regiment ordered to wait within sight of the German artillery was shelled. A furious Haig ordered the capture of Bourlon and Fontaine by the 27 November, as German forces continued to push at the exhausted British throughout the night.

A planned attack on 26 November was the cause of fierce argument between Major General Braithwaite, who bemoaned the lack of support and fresh troops, and Byng, who had his instructions from Haig. The attack went ahead, as Fontaine was taken at tremendous cost and targets in Bourlon Wood were reached. However, there was no time before counterattacks drove the British forces back.

## The German offensive

While skirmishes wore both sides down, the time had come for the major German counter-offensive after reinforcements had been arriving since the second day of the attack.

Planned by Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, and widened by his superior General Erich Ludendorff, it was the first offensive planned against the British since 1915. Gas was fired into the wood two days before the attack, and at 6am on 30 November the assault began. Despite the warnings of some key officers, the British troops were simply not prepared for the assault at Gouzeaucourt, as German soldiers swarmed the British line and amassed prisoners. This was the first instance of the German stormtroop tactics, as the first wave of soldiers went around targets and cut them off as the further troops arrived.

As British soldiers realised what was happening, across all their lines, attempts were made to regroup and stand their ground as startled officers threw down their shaving kits and looked for their weapons. While German forces broke through in some places and were held up in others, communication broke down once again.

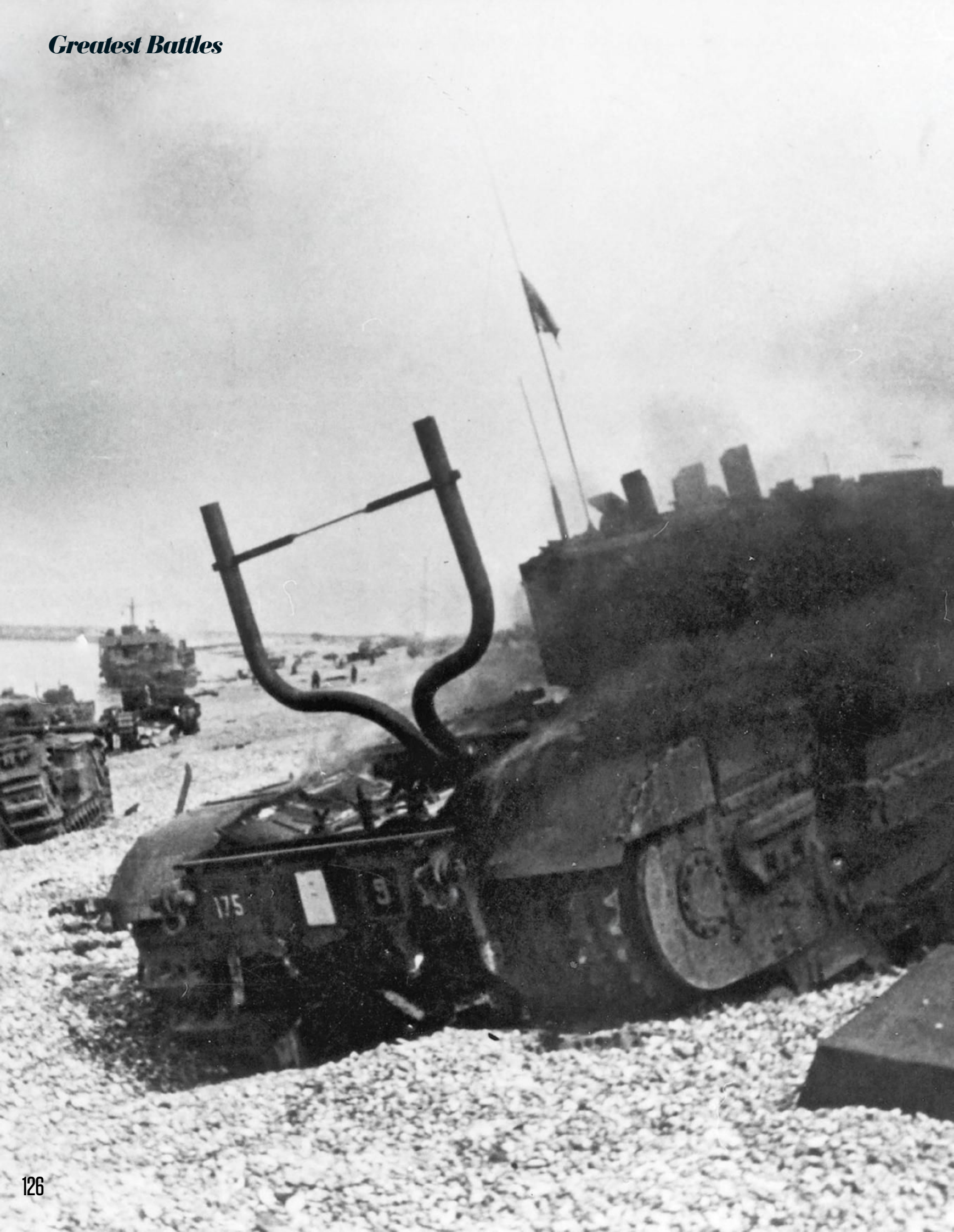
There was simply no plan in place for this kind of counterattack, meaning that any attempts to fight back and reclaim ground were made on the hoof.

Much as the Germans had offered fierce resistance, so too now did the British. At Les Rues Vertes, the inspired and determined defensive tactics of Captain Robert Gee meant that their position and the brigade's ammunition dumps were held. He set up a Lewis gun, organised bombing raids against the attackers, killed two Germans who had infiltrated his position and killed the guards, before charging a German machine-gun post with his two pistols. While seeking medical attention he was forced to jump into a canal and swim to safety. His actions earned him the Victoria Cross.

As reinforcements arrived, the Guards Brigade retook Gouzeaucourt, while the forces in Bourlon Wood held determinedly to their positions. The conflict turned into a series of costly but unproductive skirmishes. As the days passed and the casualties mounted, Haig finally realised the necessity to fall back and form a line for the winter. He ordered a retreat on 3 December and by 7 December the lines had settled down, with both sides having made both considerable gains and significant losses in territory.

The British casualties numbered 44,207 killed, wounded or missing. The number of German losses has proved harder to calculate, with estimates ranging between 41,000 and 53,300. The battle has proven to be one of the most fertile grounds from which myths surrounding the First World War to develop. But speculation and stories aside, what is clear is that crucial lessons were learned in how important communication and co-operation between different divisions was.

A lack of support in reserve, a lack of communication, and that terrible desire to overreach led to the attack's ultimate failure. While it may have been the first large-scale tank offensive in the war, this landmark came at a terrible cost to both sides.



# DIEPPE RAID

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DIEPPE, FRANCE 19 AUGUST 1942

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Summer 1942 and World War II is looking grim for the Allies. A Nazi invasion of Britain may no longer be a possibility but the progress of the Wehrmacht deep into Soviet territory on the Eastern Front and the mobilisation of the Japanese in the Pacific reveals an Axis-dominated world. As the Red Army retreats further, a siege on Stalingrad is just months away. Bolstering the German resolve, Reich minister of propaganda Joseph Goebbels has just launched the *Festung Europa* (Fortress Europe) propaganda material, aimed at keeping mainland Europe in the hands of the Third Reich. With Stalin calling for aid from the West, now was the time for the British to put the ghosts of Dunkirk to rest and return to the continent with a decisive hammer blow against the Nazis.

The northwest boundary of the Third Reich was considered the weakest and the best place to strike. The Allied generals were right to believe this, as the best Wehrmacht divisions were engaging the Red Army on the Eastern Front. The Axis forces defending the Normandy coastline were made up of new, fresh-faced recruits who weren't ready to join the brutality of Germany's Operation Barbarossa in the east. With only foreign conscripts

to boost the ranks of the German 302nd Static Infantry Division, Dieppe was one of the weakest areas of the Reich. The coastal town was seen as an ideal location for the Allies to establish a foothold in occupied France and was chosen for the first amphibious assaults. This plan had been in the making since 1940 and was simple: vanquish the defenders, establish a perimeter, destroy the port and then withdraw. The aim was not to create a lasting beachhead - the raid of Dieppe would be a shock event opening up France's western coast for future attacks, a plan that would eventually morph into Operation Overlord. Tactics and strategies were repeatedly practised by commandos in the UK as preparation for the largest combined operation of the war gathered pace. The operation was to include many Canadians from the country's 2nd Infantry Division, who were embarking on what would be one of Canada's major contributions to the Allied war effort. Both the British and Canadian governments were keen for the troops from the New World to gain battle experience and Dieppe was seen as an ideal opportunity. By 1942, Canada had a full commitment to the Allies after previously contributing an all-volunteer formation. Major General Roberts took the reins

of the Canadian battalions in late 1941 and based his leadership on a fresh impetus of training and performance to bring the recruits up to scratch. The new training programmes were based on the Isle of Wight and were an undoubted success, boosting both morale and fighting ability in the lead up to Dieppe. The population back in Canada were excited to hear that their boys were in the thick of the action in Europe at last.

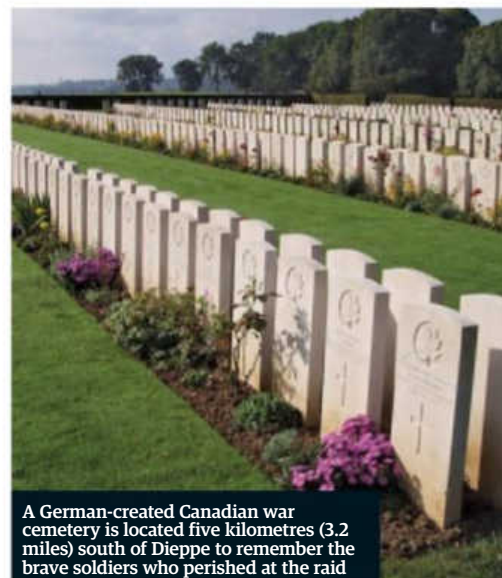
## Opening a new Western Front

The idea was good but the prospect was daunting. France had been occupied for a long period and the Wehrmacht were deeply rooted in fortifications across the Channel. Cover for the raid could be provided by the RAF, but the Luftwaffe were still a threat to any offensive. The initial plan was known as Operation Rutter and was the brainchild of the Combined Operations HQ, with input from General Montgomery and the prime minister himself, Winston Churchill. The bulk of the assault would be led by British parachute units, who would distract German batteries on the headlands while the full force of the Navy and Army moved in. The attack was rigorously rehearsed and eventually satisfied Montgomery enough for him to give it the green light for 4 July. However, after continuous bad weather and repeated postponements, the operation was scrapped and its codename changed to Operation Jubilee. Montgomery was summoned to North Africa and the raid at Dieppe would now be orchestrated by Lord Louis Mountbatten, the chief of combined operations, and would take place

on 19 August, the final day that tides would suit the British troops.

The change wasn't just in name - the whole nature of the raid was altered. Air bombardment would be minimal so the port could be used by the British in the future and was reduced to priority targets only; destroyers were preferred over battleships to bombard the shoreline with support fire. The parachute operation was cancelled and instead the commandos would arrive by gunboat after the main force had assaulted the mainland. The Allied forces would depart from five ports between Southampton and Newhaven on England's south coast. The commandos would attack first in the early hours followed by engineers and demolition parties, who would take down telephone lines, railway tracks and power stations. Specialised enemy equipment and Wehrmacht plans were also sought after, especially in the radar site in nearby Pourville.

Operation Jubilee looked good on paper but, in reality, the Germans were more prepared than many in the British military and political hierarchy had assumed that they were. The intelligence on the German positions was average at best and, almost unbelievably, there were even reports that the suitability of the beaches for mechanised divisions was judged by old holiday photos. Worse still, French double agents had alerted the Wehrmacht generals to the British plans for Dieppe, so beach exits were blocked by barbed wire and concrete walls with pillboxes, and roadblocks were erected along the shoreline. Worse still, four



alert and briefed German regiments lay waiting for the Allies.

## The raid begins

As the Allied forces approached the coast at 3am on 19 August, the 4,963 Canadian troops may have allowed themselves to dwell on the somewhat meaningful coincidence that Dieppe was the port that the first French settlers departed from for New France in 1632. But the opportunity for reverie was soon over; the operation was now in full flow and would be divided into two phases. Firstly, assault troops would strike artillery positions at Berneval and Varengeville at daybreak. This would be followed by an all out assault on the harbour, making up the second phase. The operation was so large that regular troops were called in to supplement the commandos. Minimal air cover was sanctioned to maintain secrecy but more than 60 fighter squadrons were ready to be deployed if the operation went south. The British and Canadians would also be joined by 50 US Rangers, the first Americans to fight in German-occupied Europe during the war.

Before the first Allied troops reached dry land, the British convoy had already hit trouble. A small band of German ships had found the Royal Navy and opened fire. The resistance was beaten off but the battle had awoken the Germans in Dieppe who, unknown to the British, were already manning their positions. The element of surprise had already been lost and the now-late landing craft had a tough battle getting to the shore with MG 34 bullets raining down from the pillboxes. Without the element of surprise or the cover of darkness, the attack on the beaches was going to be tougher than had been foreseen. Even second-rate Wehrmacht troops could man a machine gun and fire on scattered and ill-commanded Allied troops. The main assault on the central beaches was led by the No.3 Commando Regiment, which was bogged down from the start with only 18 men arriving in the planned location. They were quickly

## The Daimler Dingo



### Armour

The armour was originally thin but was strengthened to sloped 30mm (1.18in) panels in later models to protect the vehicle against most firearms.

### Role

A two-man vehicle, the Dingo was used for reconnaissance and as a speedy transport for officers and commanders across the beach.

### Off-road

As adept off road as it was on, the Dingo could reach speeds of 88km/h (55mph). More than 6,000 were made in the duration of the war.

### Capture

Dingo's were just one of the Allied vehicles captured at Dieppe as the fleeing troops left behind Churchill tanks, equipment and weapons.





As well as prisoners of war, the occupying German forces also gained tanks and much more Allied equipment

overwhelmed by repeated fire from the cliffs and were forced to go on the defensive. 20 commandos managed to get 180 metres (590 feet) from the German battery and greatly aided the landing process, using their sniper rifles to stop the guns being aimed on the landing ships bringing more troops onto the beach.

The regiments further up the coast weren't faring much better. At Puys, an extremely narrow

and steep beach secured by a heavily wired seawall had pinned down the disorganised Royal Regiment of Canada and they were forced to surrender after the loss of 200 men. Evacuation proved impossible with the sheer amount of German fire and for the Canadians, this was to remain the largest loss of life in one day they endured for the entire war.

Down the coast at Pourville, the Canadian Forces' South Saskatchewan Regiment and Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders had been more successful, crossing the only bridge over the River Scie (after landing on the wrong side) and making inroads into the mainland. They were forced to withdraw, however, just before they reached their objective, a German-held airfield. The No 4 Commando Regiment fared the best, landing as planned and destroying a strong Wehrmacht battery of six 15-centimetre guns at Varengeville before extracting safely and efficiently by 7.30am. By the end of the raid, they were the only unit to complete all of their objectives.



Armed with MG 32s and Stielhandgranate, the Wehrmacht soldiers were ideally positioned to defend against the raiding Allies



## Allies

**TROOPS 6,106**  
**LOSSES 4,384**

### LEADERS

**LORD LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN, MAJOR GENERAL JOHN HAMILTON ROBERTS**

### GAME CHANGERS

The newly minted British commandos had been well drilled while the Canadian regiments were eager to taste battle and made up the majority of the forces.



## Germans

**TROOPS 1,500**  
**LOSSES 591**

### LEADERS

**FIELD MARSHAL GERD VON RUNDSTEDT, LT GENERAL KONRAD HAASE**

### GAME CHANGERS

Dieppe had been under German command for two years, had natural defences and a Wehrmacht keen to defend 'Fortress Europe'. Infantry's tenacious defence.

## Renewed assault

The initial attacks had mostly faltered but there was still hope for the operation to succeed as the main central assault got underway at about 5.20am. Led by the 14th Army Tank Battalion (Calgary Regiment), the Essex Scottish Regiment and the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, a number of new Churchill tanks were unleashed on the beaches with the aim of taking down the German resistance by demolishing walls and obliterating defensive positions. Unfortunately for the British, only 27 of the 58 tanks made it ashore and when they arrived, were grossly underprepared for what awaited them. Rather embarrassingly, many of the Churchills became stuck on the beach as the loose shingle wreaked havoc with the tank's tracks. The mechanical monsters were now sitting helplessly under the machine guns and were picked off one by one. For the 15 tanks that made it through the shingle, there was no respite. Heavily damaged from the machine gun crossfire, the tanks were unable to traverse the concrete roadblocks set up to repel them. The biggest losers in this debacle were the overworked Canadian engineers, who, in their attempts to repair the tracks, were gunned down by the machine guns. 31 Royal Engineers died in total. Whatever hope the Churchills had of making it further died too with the ineffective supporting fire from the offshore destroyers.

Not all of the conflict was on the beaches. Some platoons made it to the town centre where they engaged in vicious street-to-street fighting and managed to clear a heavily defended former casino acting as a centre of Nazi activity in the area. The leaders of the operation were not able to act appropriately due to the smokescreen obscuring their view of the battlefield and a lack of intelligence coming back from the beaches. All they had to go on was fragments of radio messages intermittently returning to the destroyers'

"Now was the time for the British forces to put the ghosts of Dunkirk to rest for good and return to the continent with a decisive hammer blow against the Nazis"



### 01 Arrival

252 Allied ships arrive on the seas off the port of Dieppe under the cover of nightfall shortly before 3am. They sail in near silence behind minesweepers that clear the way to France. Troops are deployed at five different points over a 16 kilometre (10 mile) stretch of beach.

### 03 Landing

The troops land on a beach surrounded by high chalk cliffs. The commandos lay siege to the German artillery positions and keep them pinned down but are unable to take the beach.

## 02 Surprise attack

A few ships don't make it all the way to France as a German convoy arrives and causes havoc within the British fleet. Fewer ships arrive than originally planned as the operation gets off to a faltering start. The Axis troops in Dieppe are alerted.

02

## 04 Unplanned retreat

Canadian and Scottish forces land on the west coast at Puits while another Canadian force drops down at Pourville to the east. After brutal fighting, the unorganised waves of troops are beaten back and request extraction.

04

## 05 Failed evacuation

Under immense German fire, the rescue craft are unable to access the beaches and the forces at Puits are either killed or captured while trying to retreat.

05

## 07 Trapped on the beaches

The majority of the tanks are held up by an anti-tank wall and thick shingle and prove mostly ineffective. Roberts, viewing the action from the HMS Calpe, orders a complete withdrawal at 10.50am.

07

## 06 Armoured reinforcement

At about 5am, Allied progress is in danger of stalling but the infantry's armoured support finally arrives in the shape of 27 Churchill tanks, which motor inland.

06

## 08 Failure

The retreat is finally complete by 2pm but not without a great loss of Allied life. The last few tanks provide covering fire for the remaining troops as they scramble onto the rescue ships. The raid had failed but the Allies would return two years later in Operation Neptune.

08



communications. One of these messages led to an unplanned move as Roberts changed tactics, ordering the reserve Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal to enter the fray. The hastily arranged action was now changed to moving through the town and attacking the east headland battery of German positions. The rushed brief, naturally, caused confusion in the ranks and the reinforcements had next to no effect on the outcome of the raid. A withdrawal of the Allied regiments was ordered as the clock struck 11am.

### Cutting losses

The evacuation lasted for three hours as the Royal Navy struggled to withdraw its troops while under attack from the relentless Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe. Unable to move, the remaining operational Churchill tanks provided covering fire for the retreating soldiers as the infantry withdrew. After their job was done, the crews were pulled from their tanks by the Germans and

“The landing craft had a tough battle getting to the shore with MG 34 bullets raining down from the pillboxes”

taken prisoner. Even the four destroyers, Calpe, Fernie, Berkeley and Albrighton, failed to keep the Germans at bay, their four-inch guns weaker than the onslaught coming from the land. Despite their best efforts, in nine hours a total of 3,367 Canadians were killed, wounded or taken prisoner along with 275 British commandos. Overall, 4,384 were killed or wounded - 73 per cent of the force. One destroyer was lost (HMS Berkeley) and 550 perished in the ranks of the Royal Navy. The RAF had 106 aircraft downed to the Luftwaffe's 48. The planes lost by the RAF were the most lost in one day during the whole war. The death toll for the Germans was much lower at 591; they also claimed

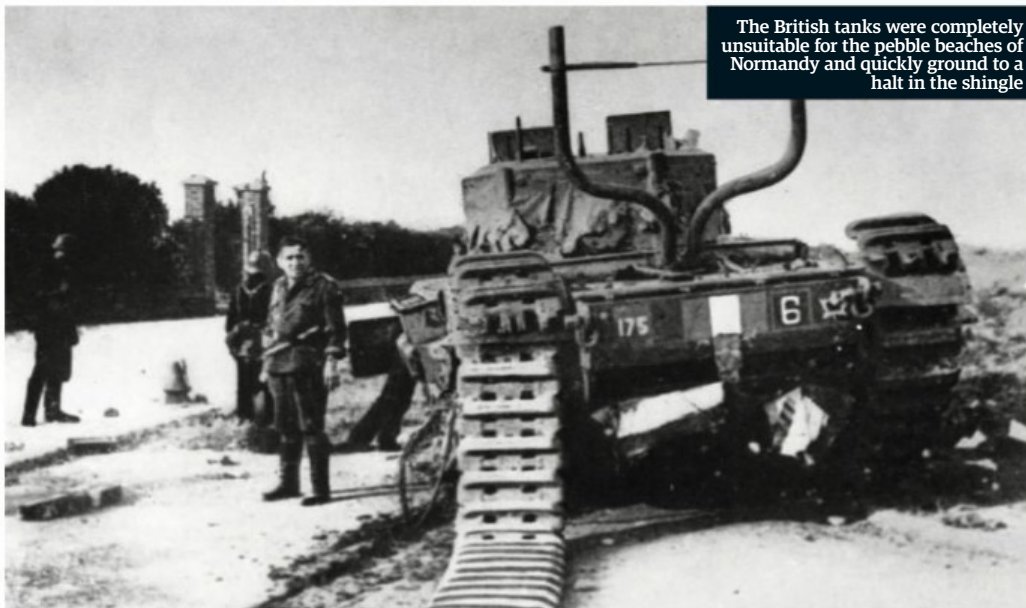
all of the Allied equipment left on the beaches. Luckily, the Axis soldiers held their positions and did not pursue the convoy into the Channel. Tragically, the injured left on the beach after the evacuation were captured or left to wash away with the dead in the rising tide.

Two Victoria Crosses were given to the Canadians on the day. Honorary Captain JW Foote of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry received a medal for his care of the wounded troops strewn across the beaches while Lieutenant Colonel CCI Merritt was awarded his honours for bravely leading his men over the Pourville Bridge. Both were taken prisoner.

The amount of POWs was staggering with more than 2,000 captured and sent to Nazi prisoner of war camps



The British tanks were completely unsuitable for the pebble beaches of Normandy and quickly ground to a halt in the shingle



A member of the Wehrmacht's Medical Corps gives a wounded British soldier first aid

## A costly but necessary failure

After the dust had settled, the debrief back at HQ revealed what had gone wrong. A combination of poor planning and leadership, not helped by some terrible luck, had doomed Operation Jubilee to failure. The debacle made headlines around the world and the Canadian public were shocked at the failure and the loss of life by their countrymen in the 2nd Infantry Division. The Canadians who didn't perish were sent to the Stalag VIII prisoner of war camp in Poland for the remainder of the war. The conditions here were miserable, with prisoners' hands shackled together and awful treatment from the guards. Even when the war was over, the former prisoners were forced to march west, living off the land, to get beyond the oncoming Iron Curtain. The failure at Dieppe had a longer lasting effect than many knew. At HQ, Mountbatten received the lion's share of the criticism, many seeing his lack of preparation

as the reason for the mission's failure. The true blame lay at the feet of the chiefs of staff of all three forces who had acted flippantly to push the landings forward. The most experienced leaders,

"The debacle made headlines around the world and the Canadian public back home were shocked at the failure and the loss of life by their countrymen"

such as Montgomery and General Sir Alan Brooke, were preoccupied with the North African theatre and it seemed as if the planning for Dieppe was undercooked, especially as it was left in the hands of the relatively inexperienced Mountbatten. Many were also perplexed at to why the Canadian commanders, whose men were such a huge part of the operation, were not involved in the planning procedure for either Rutter or Jubilee. More than 1,000 Canadian and British soldiers lay dead on the French coast, but the Allied hierarchy would not make this same mistake again. The need for more air support was recognised, specialised landing craft were developed, naval gunfire was upped and intelligence and planning became stricter than ever before. They also planned for better communication and more flexibility in future operations. Essentially, a Plan B was a must. The failure of the Dieppe Raid was a lesson that had to be learned, and when D-Day was unleashed on Normandy on 6 June 1944, there would be no defeat.





# D-DAY LANDINGS

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NORMANDY, FRANCE 6 JUNE 1944

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**A**t approximately 6.30am he fell heavily, his pack lurching forward and with it his shoulders as the murky grey water hit him like a wall. He stumbled, the press of bodies behind him caring little for his lack of balance - only for their orders and whistling of bullets overhead, the steady crunch of artillery and the rattle of machine guns from the horizon where the sand became hillside. A hand took his shoulder roughly, scooping him up and pushing him forward in one smooth motion. He didn't hear what was being shouted, but he understood the message. If he didn't keep going, he would die here.

Five hours and 12 minutes before the 8th Infantry Regiment crashed from their landing craft and onto Utah Beach and a soldier lurched into murky grey waters, another military man exhaled steadily to bury his nerves. Wind rushed through the open hatch of the transport plane as it lurched drunkenly like a child's kite in a gale, tracer fire lighting up the sky around them as the German guns came alive. In the gloom, men smoked in silence - some prayed. The order was given and the red light flicked on, as one they came to their feet - cigarettes extinguished and prayers incomplete. He jumped and France rushed up to meet him.

That same night, perhaps 30 or 40 minutes before the Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne leaped from their planes into the darkness of Normandy, British prime minister Winston Churchill turned from the window. He was late

to bed by habit, but to his wife, Clementine, he looked restless. His features softened momentarily from the patrician scowl of a thousand newsreels, but you'd have to know him as she did to notice. "Do you realise", he said suddenly, taking the cigar from his lips, "that by the time you wake up in the morning, 20,000 men may have been killed?"

Churchill's fears of a catastrophic death toll awaiting the Allies and the fact that US troops were first onto the beaches and first from the planes was linked. From back when the US had joined the war in December 1941, Churchill had been deferring Roosevelt's steadily more forceful pleas to take the war to France - instead they concentrated on efforts in North Africa and Italy. To Churchill's mind, Italy was the 'soft underbelly' of the Axis, but to the US, they were simply protecting Britain's vulnerable colonies.

If Churchill was haunted by the losses the British suffered in WWI, then his fears manoeuvred him toward a similar strategic conceit. Like his bloody Turkish beachhead at Gallipoli, Italy was a tougher nut to crack and the 'soft underbelly' had turned into a gruelling crawl up the mountainous peninsula. Stalin too was adding pressure to open a second front and to divide German forces from the epic slaughter going on in the frozen east.

Britain, its Commonwealth and its empire might have 'stood alone' in defence of Western democracy for the first two years of the war, but now they looked to be sidelined. Domestic US politics

# THE LANDINGS

## THE DEPLOYMENT OF ALLIED TROOPS ON 6 JUNE, D-DAY

**Commander in Chief Air Force:**  
Air Chief Marshall Trafford Leigh-Mallory

**1ST US ARMY**

**Commander:** General Omar Bradley

**VII CORPS**

**Commander:** Major General J.L. Collins

**V CORPS**

**Commander:** Major General Leonard T. Gerow

**4th Infantry Division 'Ivy'**

**Commander:** Major General Raymond Barton  
**Objective:** First troops onto Utah Beach.

**9th Infantry Division 'Old Reliables'**

**Commander:** Major General Manton S. Eddy  
**Objective:** Take and hold Utah Beach.

**79th Infantry Division 'Cross of Lorraine'**

**Commander:** Major General Ira T. Wyche  
**Objective:** Take and hold Utah Beach.

**90th Infantry Division 'Tough Ombres'**

**Commander:** Brig-General Jay W. MacKelvie  
**Objective:** Take and hold Utah Beach.

**30 Commando Assault Unit 'Red Indians' (British)**

**Commander:** Captain G. Pike  
**Objective:** Take radar station at Douvres-la-Delivrande.

**70th Tank Battalion 'Thunderbolts'**

**Commander:** Lt-Colonel John C. Welborn  
**Objective:** Support landing at Utah Beach.

**237th Combat Engineer Battalion**

**Commander:** Major Herschel E. Linn  
**Objective:** Clear mines and obstacles at Utah Beach.

**299th Combat Engineer Battalion**

**Commander:** Colonel Milton Jewett  
**Objective:** Clear mines and obstacles at Utah Beach.

**1st Infantry Division 'The Big Red One'**

**Commander:** Major General Clarence Huebner  
**Objective:** Take and hold Omaha Beach.

**29th Infantry Division 'Blue And Gray'**

**Commander:** Major General Charles Gebhardt  
**Objective:** Take and hold Omaha Beach.

**Ranger assault group**

**Commander:** Lieutenant Colonel James Earl Rudder

**2nd Ranger Battalion**

**Commander:** Lieutenant Colonel James Earl Rudder  
**Objective:** Capture battery at Pointe du Hoc.

**5th Ranger Battalion**

**Commander:** Lieutenant Colonel Max Schneider  
**Objective:** Capture battery at Pointe du Hoc.

**Pointe du Hoc**

**743rd Tank Battalion**

**Commander:** Lieutenant Colonel John S. Upham  
**Objective:** Support landing at Omaha Beach.

**Utah**

**Omaha**

**Speciality Key**

- Combat engineers**
- Covert intelligence gathering**
- Amphibious medium tank**
- Light infantry, versatile and reliable**
- Air assault, light infantry**
- Special forces trained for coastal assault**
- Infantry, special forces**
- Infantry, Fast tank**
- Mine clearance, bridging and transport**

US troops look to the shore as their landing craft approaches Omaha Beach



**INLAND**

**82nd Airborne Division 'All American Division'**

**Commander:** Major General Matthew Ridgway  
**Objective:** Secure left flank and rear of VI Corps.

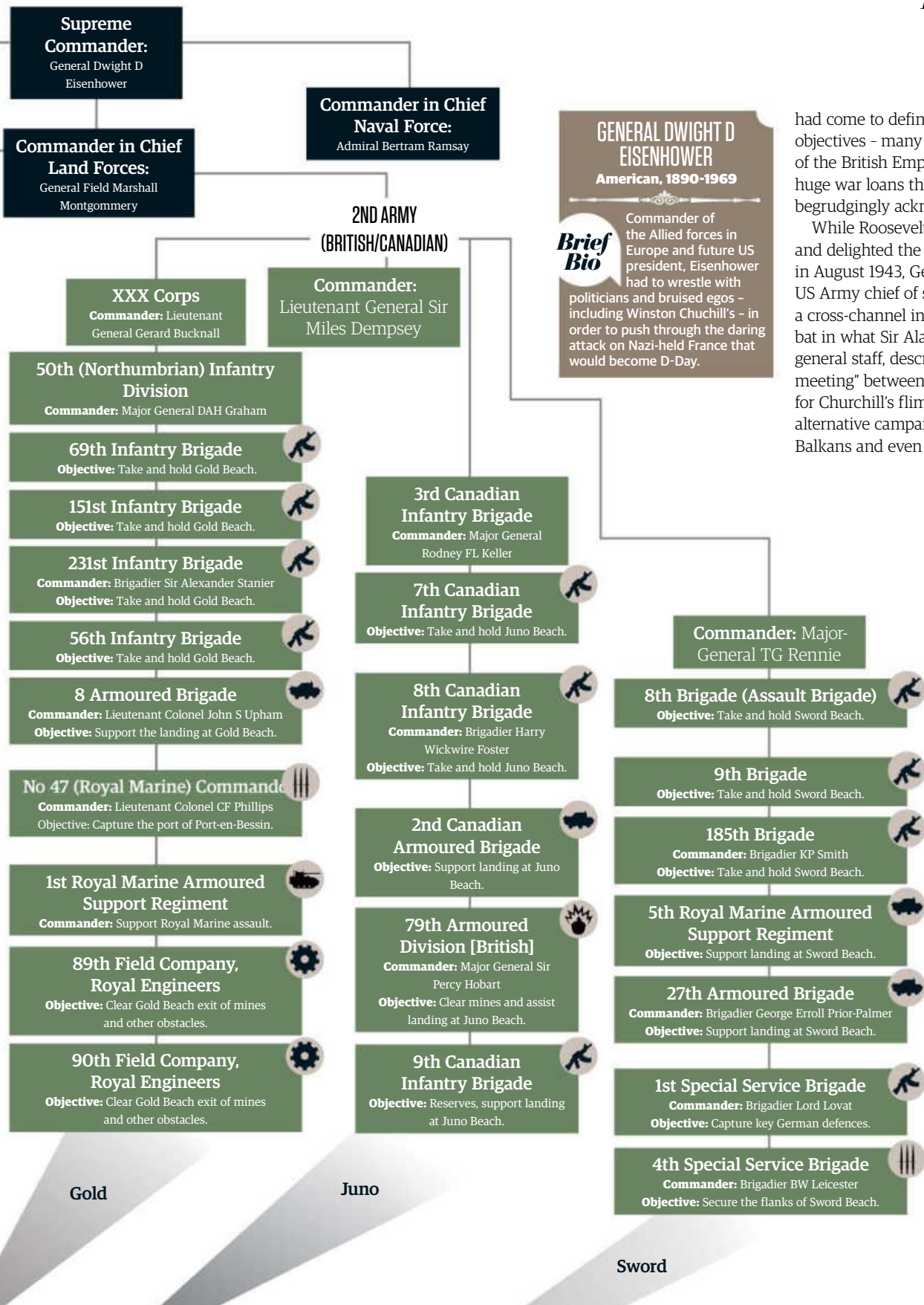
**101st Airborne Division 'Screaming Eagles'**

**Commander:** Major General Maxwell D. Taylor  
**Objective:** Secure left flank and rear of VI Corps.



US Army Rangers at the cliffs of Pointe du Hoc





**GENERAL DWIGHT D EISENHOWER**  
 American, 1890-1969

**Brief Bio**  
 Commander of the Allied forces in Europe and future US president, Eisenhower had to wrestle with politicians and bruised egos - including Winston Churchill's - in order to push through the daring attack on Nazi-held France that would become D-Day.

had come to define not just the war's long-term objectives - many of which, like the decolonisation of the British Empire and full repayment for the huge war loans the UK had incurred, Churchill begrudgingly acknowledged - but battlefield tactics.

While Roosevelt and Churchill made speeches and delighted the crowds at the Quebec Conference in August 1943, General George C Marshall, the US Army chief of staff and leading evangelist for a cross-channel invasion of France, went up to bat in what Sir Alan Brooke, chief of the imperial general staff, described in his diaries as a "painful meeting" between the Allies' top brass. His patience for Churchill's flimflam - the PM had suggested alternative campaigns in the Greek islands, the Balkans and even Norway - long since worn out, Marshall threw down an ultimatum: either Britain support a full-tilt invasion of France, or the US would drop the 'Germany First' strategy and concentrate all of its effort on defeating the Japanese in the Pacific. Under great secrecy, 1 May 1944 - later changed to 5 June - was nominated as the date in which Operation Overlord would begin. Normandy was chosen as the location over Brittany or the Cotentin Peninsula - both of which would make them vulnerable to encirclement - and the Pas de Calais, which though the shortest distance between Britain and France, was the most heavily fortified. US General Dwight D Eisenhower was appointed commander of Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) - effectively all Allied forces in Europe - while British General Bernard Montgomery was named commander of the 21st Army Group, comprising all of 39 divisions taking part in the initial invasion.

D-Day would be the single largest amphibious military operation in the history of warfare, with its three original landing zones having been expanded to five. First the

"D-Day would be the single largest amphibious military operation in the history of warfare"

# Greatest Battles

Americans in Utah and Omaha, then an hour later the British and Canadians in Gold, Juno and Sword, covering an 80-kilometre (50-mile) stretch of the French coastline. The landing of 150,000 troops by sea, supported by naval bombardment, would be preceded by various daring parachute and glider drops further inland. Dropped from the skies above Normandy, 30,000 men of the US 82nd and 101st Airborne along with Canadian and British units of the 6th Airborne Division would be tasked with important tasks such as securing key bridges and crossroads, establishing useful river crossings and taking out artillery batteries.

As their planning efforts intensified, Churchill found himself unable to make direct contact with the US president that he'd once written to so fondly as "your American cousin" and instead was fobbed off with the prickly marshal, the architect of the strategy that was causing the PM such anxiety in the first place. "Struck by how very tired and worn out the Prime Minister looks now", wrote Jock Colville, his private secretary.

"Hitler and his generals remained convinced that an assault was most likely to come from Calais, where they concentrated their heavy defences"

Converted Cunard liners began to disgorge their cargo - both men and the equipment they would need - in preparation, turning the South of England into a vast khaki patchwork of army camps. Between January and June 1944, 700,000 US troops had arrived in Britain, adding to a total of around 2.88 million soldiers billeted around the country. Around 5 per cent of this number would take part in D-Day - the rest would be needed for the campaigns that followed.

When the first US troops arrived in North Africa in November 1942, they were raw. Fresh from basic training and flush with confidence, their

learning curve had been steep and costly, but the generals that prepared for D-Day had experienced amphibious landings in Sicily and Italy - albeit not on this scale - and held no illusions about the strength of German defences. Nonetheless, training was thorough and the first large-scale exercise not only revealed systemic weaknesses in the Allied forces, but was a catastrophe on such a scale that D-Day was very nearly called off all together.

Slapton Sands in Devon had been chosen for its resemblance to Utah Beach, and on 22 April 1944, 30,000 troops, plus tanks and landing craft, prepared to take the sand from its defenders,



## Allied troops

The heaviest fighting during D-Day is on Omaha beach as the German defences there remain undamaged from air attacks. An estimated 2,400 US soldiers die in the process of taking the beach.

## Teller mines

Mounted on stakes and ingeniously angled seaward toward the invaders, anti-vehicle Teller Mines can be triggered in high tide by landing craft. An anti-tampering device that can trigger the five kilograms of TNT if interfered with - enough to take the track off a tank.

## Higgins boats

Flat-bottomed Higgins boats, or LCVs (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel) carry light vehicles or up to 100 men into the shallow water before lowering their ramps, their two .30-calibre machine guns blasting covering fire as the infantry disembark. Once the beach is secure, prefab Mulberry harbours will be assembled by engineers and larger LST (Landing Ship, Tank) will follow with heavier vehicles and equipment.

## Hedgehogs

Jagged balls of crossed rails make landing at high tide impossible lest the landing craft get snagged and tear a hole in the hull and slow down tanks. First used on the Czechoslovak border to deter German tanks, they're sometimes called 'Czech Hedgehogs'.

played by the Royal Navy. For the first few days the emphasis was on embarkation, as officers corralled their charges in and out of transport boats, then on 28 April the first full assault began.

Eisenhower had ordered that live ammunition be used in order to get the troops familiar with the sights and sounds of bombardment, and so the HMS Hawkins was due to shell the beach prior to landing. With some of the boats held up, the admiral in charge of the exercise decided to push everything back by 60 minutes, but somehow the information wasn't relayed to all of the landing craft, so hapless soldiers began to storm the beach right under the Hawkins' booming guns, leading to the deaths of 308 men.

Worse was to follow. That night, a fleet of bulky LST ('Landing Ship, Tank') ships escorted by the HMS Azalea had set

### Machine-gun nest

Connected to the bunkers and pillboxes by trenches, machine-gun nests guard the trails off the beach, pinning down the attackers from their superior position with suppressing fire from the infamous MG42. Though vulnerable to bombardment by the Allies, only changing the ammo belt will afford the Allied infantry vital seconds with which to launch an attack.

### Artillery casement

Safely encased in thick concrete, German artillery positions shell Allied ships approaching the beach. Taking them out prior to landing is a crucial part of the early bombardment from sea or air, as not even light tanks have the firepower to dent their shell. Infantry have to take out casements the hard way, getting under the guns to lob grenades into the closely packed rooms or storming the connecting trenches.

### Land mines

Land mines can be buried and triggered by tripwires. S-mines, or 'Bouncing Betties', propel themselves around 60-120cm (2-4ft) upward.

### Barbed wire

Used in vast quantities along seawalls to deny the attackers cover, coils of vicious barbed wire can slow the Allies down as they carefully cut it or flatten it to cross - simple things made more difficult by the hail of machine-gun fire. Loose coils of wire are more difficult to cross as they snare the unwary.

### Seawall

The 3m (9.8ft) concrete seawall is as much protection against coastal erosion and unseasonably high tides as it is Allied assault, but it can make exiting the beach difficult for infantry and impossible for vehicles. However, it does provide the attackers with rare shelter from the German guns.

### FIELD MARSHAL BERNARD MONTGOMERY British, 1887-1976

#### Brief Bio

Commander of Allied ground forces during Operation Overlord, it was Rommel's rival, Field Marshal Montgomery, who put Eisenhower's plans for D-Day into action. He was heavily criticised by American generals for his failure to capture Caen, the largest city in Normandy.



off from Plymouth to Slapton Sands to simulate a channel crossing.

Like ducks, the HMS Azalea led the eight landing craft in single-file across Lyme Bay, when out of the darkness vicious German E-boats - souped-up fast attack craft that prowled the English Channel - opened fire with their torpedoes. Out on a routine patrol, they had been lured toward Lyme Bay by the unusually high British radio traffic. Unwilling to expose just how well defended the bay was and risk the Nazis finding out why it was so closely guarded, the shore batteries remained silent while the HMS Azalea tried to fight them off alone, leading to two landing craft being sunk while two were severely damaged. Unaware of the dangers - the HMS Azalea's crew had no idea the US officers on the LSTs were on a different radio frequency - they were ill-prepared, lifeboats were slow to launch and panicked soldiers put their life jackets on incorrectly, the weight of their packs flipping many over in the water where they drowned face down.

Records show that 198 sailors and 551 soldiers died, but until the bodies could be recovered there were serious fears that officers with intimate knowledge of D-Day had been captured and would divulge the whole plan under the harsh glare of the German interrogation lamps. Operation Overlord hadn't been fatally compromised though,

“He went from group to group and shook hands with as many men as he could. He spoke a few words to every man as he shook his hand”



General Eisenhower talks to paratroopers in England before D-Day



## FIELD MARSHAL ERWIN ROMMEL

German, 1891-1944

### Brief Bio

Legendary 'Desert Fox' and mastermind of German victories in North Africa, Rommel oversaw the laying of millions of mines and thousands of tank traps. Almost alone among the German high command, Rommel was convinced the Allies would land at Normandy.

### Two types of men

Joseph Argenzio, who took part in D-Day remembers: "Colonel Taylor, our Regimental Commander, came in and started yelling, 'There's only two kinds of men on this beach, those who are dead and those who are gonna die, so let's get the hell out of here.' The engineers blew the barbed wire and we started up, coming up toward the top of the block hole, fighting our way up."

as the officers kept quiet and radio codes were standardised as a result.

Though Hitler and his generals remained convinced that an assault was most likely to come from Calais, where they had concentrated their heavy defences, the 'Desert Fox', Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, who had been sent to France in early 1944 to beef up the defences, saw the vulnerability of Normandy. To the alarm of Allied military planners, who had put together an

## FOOLING HITLER

Operation Bodyguard was the umbrella term for an elaborate, multi-pronged deception campaign that involved all branches of the armed forces and risked MI5's most valuable double agents.

Inflatable tanks and planes in the Kent fields fooled German reconnaissance planes into thinking that Allies would dash across the channel to Calais, as well as bombing raids to soften up a target that would never be hit, while a network of 'trusted' German agents secretly working for British intelligence kept up a misleading flow of information. Intelligence from double agents highlighted a planned invasion of the French Bay of Biscay, another fake army and convenient radio intercepts in Egypt teased a planned invasion via Crete and the Balkans. Right up to D-Day itself Hitler and much of the German high command believed Normandy was a diversion - helped by an air-drop of dummies over fields around Calais. Sacks stuffed with straw and packages to simulate the sound of gunfire held divisions of Nazi troops on high alert, north of the real invasion.





## FIELD MARSHAL GERD VON RUNDSTEDT German, 1875-1953

### Brief Bio

Commander of the defence of Belgium and France he expected an Allied invasion to come from Calais and withheld armoured units from the coast. Seen largely as a mere figurehead by Hitler, his command structure was fractured.

amazingly detailed mosaic of aerial photographs, coupled with intercepted traffic from Bletchley Park's crack codebreakers, and information on the ground from the French Resistance - the most recent images showed that holes were been dug in fields that had been nominated for glider landings. These holes would be filled with stakes and they'd be wired up to mines, turning the whole landing area into a web of explosive death that would ignite as soon as one wheel touched down, thanks to Rommel's military know-how.

More mines and barbed wire were laid on the beaches, trenches were dug and low-lying fields were flooded to prevent aircraft landing. It was clear that the window for a successful operation was not only closing quickly, but might have already slammed shut. The weather too turned against the Allies and they were forced to hold off, on the advice of the RAF's meteorological experts,

for 6 June, where the full moon would give pilots maximum visibility and the low tide would allow the Allies to land their troops well away from Rommel's new killing ground. If they didn't take this shot, the next available opportunity would be weeks away, but with a storm on the horizon and the growing German preparedness, it could be much too late.

Meanwhile in occupied France, German meteorologists had also foreseen a storm, but were so confident that it would hit the French coast much earlier that Rommel returned to Germany for his wife's birthday and to meet with Hitler to plead for more tanks. The Führer believed strongly in the doctrine of 'defence in depth' - holding back his army's strongest units further inland to mount a counterattack, while Rommel and a handful of others believed that the best course of action was to drive their enemy back from the coastline. The

### Firepower

There was a whole host of different weapons used by the Allies and the defenders alike on D-Day, such as the rifle pictured. Anti-tank weapons, flamethrowers, grenades, shotguns and machine guns were also used on the beaches.

## GERMAN DEFENCES



### Fortress

**Weapons:** Connected to smaller pillboxes by trenches or concrete tunnels, they could boast a huge array of artillery and machine guns, as well as firing positions for infantry.  
**Strength:** Fortified networks of concrete and steel, they were impervious to tank and light artillery. Often manned by the Waffen SS rather than regular Wehrmacht soldiers, defenders would often fight to the last man.  
**Weakness:** Being positioned to defend French ports left them exposed.



### Pillbox

**Weapons:** Most often used for machine guns, but they could also be designed for anti-tank guns or mortars, while firing slots existed for infantry riflemen.  
**Strength:** Encased in concrete and steel, they were the infantry's worst nightmare - impervious to small artillery and tank fire.  
**Weakness:** Confined spaces made them vulnerable to flame throwers, satchel charges and grenades lobbed through the firing slots.



### Minefield

**Weapons:** Usually mixed anti-tank 'T-mines' and anti-personnel 'S-mines' (also known as the 'Bouncing Betty', they would shoot into the air, spraying shrapnel), many attached to tripwires or concrete anti-tank barriers.  
**Strength:** Aside from the sheer devastation caused, the threat of mines could slow advance and leave attackers demoralised.  
**Weakness:** The shifting sands could often move or bury mines even deeper, and they couldn't be relied upon to detonate.

## D-DATA

300  
planes bombed the coast of Normandy

5,000  
ships transporting soldiers

150,000 MEN

6

13,000  
paratroopers

20,000  
tons of supplies dropped daily

50,000  
tons of gasoline in first month

30,000  
parachute regiments  
vehicles used in the operation

800  
transport planes

10,000  
German losses on 6 June

448,000  
tons of ammunition

Desert Fox knew from his campaigns in North Africa and Italy that once the Allies gained a toehold, their victory was almost certain.

Feverish preparation and anxiety dominated the morning of 5 June 1944. On airfields across England men painted out the markings on transport planes, while over the choppy English Channel, Royal Navy mine-sweepers frantically cleared the path. At 10pm, while the paratroopers of the 101st Airborne sat waiting by their planes at Greenham Common airfield, Eisenhower paid an impromptu visit. "They looked so young and brave", recalled his driver Kay Summersby. "I stood by the car and watched as the general walked among them... He went from group to group and shook hands with as many men as he could. He spoke a few words to every man as he shook his hand and wished him success." He later confessed "it's very hard to look a soldier in the eye when you fear that you are sending him to his death."

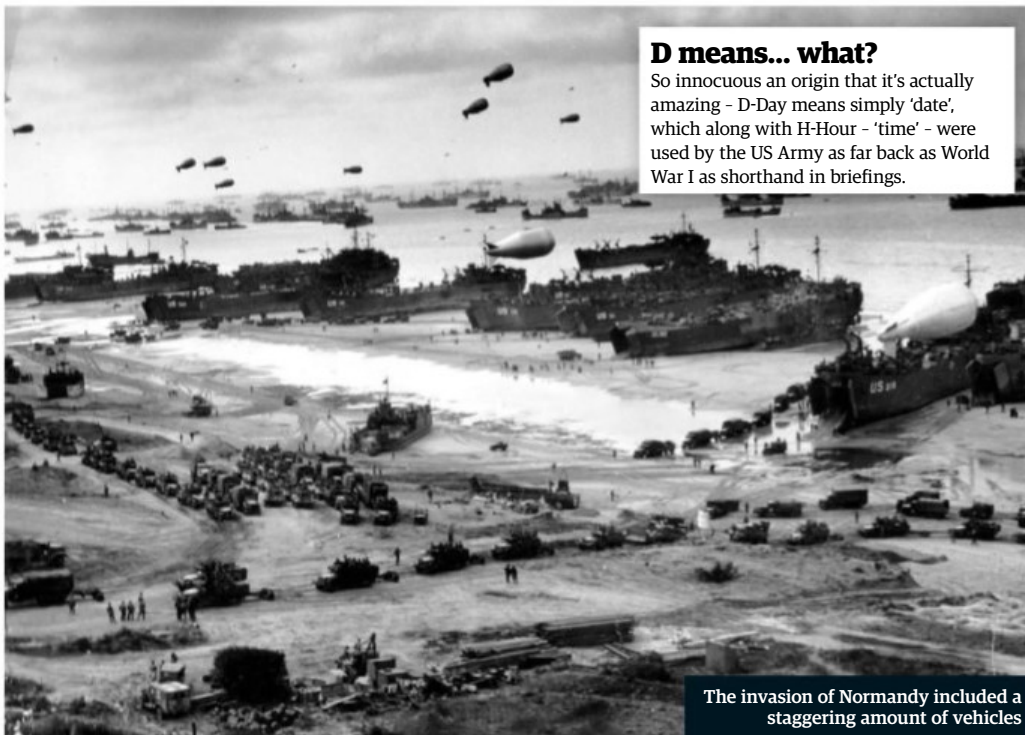
While Eisenhower dashed from runway to runway, Sir Alan Brooke put his fears in his diary, that "it may well be the most ghastly disaster of the whole war. I wish to God it were safely over."

Somewhere around 6am, rifles barked death in the grey light as the men of the 101st Airborne battled on through the morning. With his comrades scattered across the fields, he had joined an ad hoc unit, full of men he barely recognised - every few minutes, rustling in the undergrowth would precede an urgent whisper of "Flash!" and the reply, "Thunder!", and more paratroopers would join their band. It didn't matter that the officer leading them wasn't his or that he'd twisted his ankle in the drop, they had secured their objective. The beach exits were safe and the army landing at Utah could concentrate on the enemy in front of them, not the enemy around the corner.

The soldier hadn't noticed the water turn to sand as the 8th Infantry collided with Utah Beach, but he knew when to stop running. His lungs raw and his breathing heavy, he crouched at the foot of the incline - with the machine-gun nests silenced it was a sanctuary. Bodies floated in the water or lay face down in the sand behind him, but already units were forming as officers barked orders, checking their weapons and moving them on up and over the sand. Some lit cigarettes, others joked with nervous relief. There were other battles to fight. He exhaled slowly, hefted his pack and started moving forward.

Hours later and a world away, Winston Churchill stepped up to the dispatch box, the Commons roaring in approval. His features softened, a slight smile dancing at the corner of his mouth. Away from the behind-the-scenes tussles for control, of the set-backs and the catastrophes, and of the gut-wrenching dread of the night before, this old warhorse was finally back on the battlefield. "I have also to announce to the House", he rumbled, growing with every vowel, "that during the night and the early hours of this morning the first of the series of landings in force upon the European continent has taken place..."

## 15 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT D-DAY



**D means... what?**  
So innocuous an origin that it's actually amazing - D-Day means simply 'date', which along with H-Hour - 'time' - were used by the US Army as far back as World War I as shorthand in briefings.

The invasion of Normandy included a staggering amount of vehicles



**Drone warfare**  
The Germans fielded remote-control Goliath mini-tanks better known as 'beetles.' Small, tracked and laden with high explosives, they were steered by a joystick into tanks and tightly packed infantry. They were of limited effect.

British soldiers inspect three captured 'beetles'



**Friends in the air**  
Although most concerned with the Pacific War in 1944, the Royal Australian Air Force and Royal New Zealand Air Force provided air support for the D-Day landings.

An Australian Spitfire at RAF Redhill in Surrey, returned from a raid over Northern France



**The other allies**  
One regiment of Free French and one of Polish Armed Forces In The West took part in the Battle of Normandy.

A Russian Cossack volunteer in German Army uniform, not unlike those who fought at Normandy

**The other axis**  
German troops weren't alone in defending Normandy on D-Day either. The Wehrmacht's 709th and 243rd Static Infantry Division was comprised of former Soviet POWs, as well as conscripts and volunteers from Poland and Georgia.

Members of a Polish tank regiment scan the horizon

## D-day wasn't the end

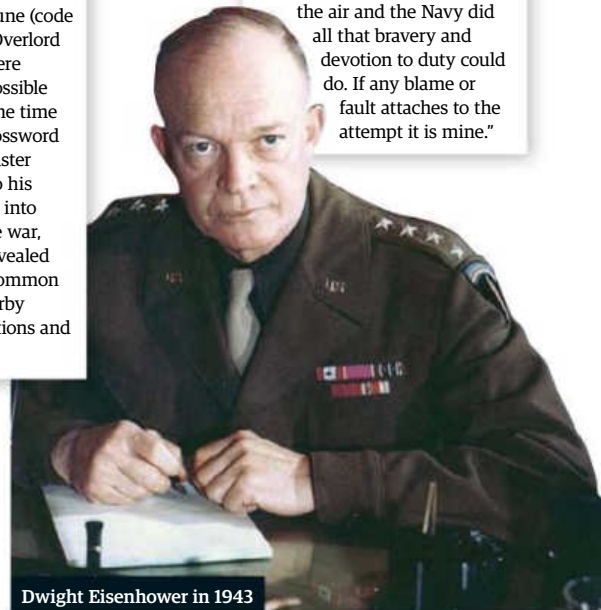
After D-Day, the Battle of Normandy lasted another two months, with Paris finally falling to the Allies in August 1944. Operation Overlord wasn't just confined to the beaches, it was the plan for the complete liberation of France.

## Crossword conspiracy?

A series of Daily Telegraph crossword answers - Juno, Sword, Gold, Omaha, Mulberry (code for the prefab harbours), Neptune (code for the naval assault) and Overlord - in the run-up to D-Day were investigated by MI5 as a possible security leak. Believed at the time to be a coincidence, the crossword was compiled by a headmaster who would invite boys into his study to write down words into the grid. Speaking after the war, two of his former pupils revealed that the codewords were common knowledge around the nearby army camp - only the locations and timings were unknown.

## Eisenhower prepares for failure

Eisenhower had prepared a speech that he would give along with his resignation if D-Day failed: "The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt it is mine."



Dwight Eisenhower in 1943

## One man could have ruined it all

One of MI5's double agents involved in the Operation Bodyguard deception knew the whole thing was a ruse. On 29 April 1944, the German-born Johnny Jebson - codename Artist - was kidnapped from Portugal and taken to Berlin where he was tortured in the Gestapo headquarters, before being sent to a concentration camp (his arrival was registered along with his broken ribs), from where he simply disappeared. He took the secret of D-Day to his grave.

Free French tanks lead the Allies through the Arc du Triomphe on 26 August 1944

A German U-boat earlier in WWII



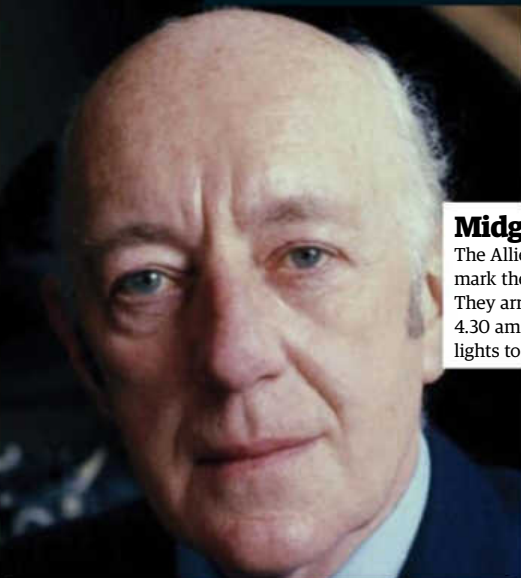
## Hitler's kamikaze U-boats

As D-Day began, Hitler ordered U-Boat captains to proceed to Normandy and fire their torpedoes before ramming into Allied battleships. No U-Boats were close enough to carry out this suicide mission.



A member of the French resistance with a US soldier in 1944

Sir Alec Guinness, pictured in 1973



## Famous faces on the beaches

*The Catcher In The Rye* author JD Salinger fought at D-Day in the US Signal Corps; *Star Wars* and *The Bridge On The River Kwai* actor Alec Guinness was a seaman on a D-Day landing craft; while *Star Trek* actor James Doohan was an officer in the Canadian Army and was among the first to storm Juno Beach.

## Sending the prisoners to Texas

From D-Day through to the Battle of Normandy, the US Army sent 30,000 prisoners a month to POW camps in Texas - the largest concentration of German POWs in the US.

## Midget subs led the way

The Allies used two X-class four-man submarines to mark the outer limits of Sword and Juno Beaches. They arrived on 4 June and stayed submerged until 4.30 am on D-Day, where they used masts with lights to guide the British vessels in.

## The french resistance went all out

In the run-up to D-Day the French Resistance delivered 3,000 written reports and 700 radio reports on German defences in Normandy, and the night before D-Day they launched an attack, cutting phone lines, blowing up ammo dumps, assassinating senior Nazi officers and disabling German trains. As a result, German reinforcements were held up.



US troops disembark from a Higgins boat

## From the bayou to the beaches

The flat-bottomed landing crafts used in D-Day were invented by New Orleans businessman Andrew Higgins for navigating the Louisiana swamps. Eisenhower described him as "the man who won the war for us", and even Hitler dubbed him the "new Noah."

## Major Robert Henry Cain's Victoria Cross



**Why did he win it?**  
Major Cain was awarded the Victoria Cross for his part in the Battle of Arnhem, where he commanded the 2nd South Staffordshire regiment. He personally disabled and destroyed several German tanks.

**Where was the battle?**  
Oosterbeek, near Arnhem, The Netherlands.

**When did it take place?**  
17-26 September 1944.

**When was he awarded the Victoria Cross?**  
6 December 1944.

**What was the popular reaction?**  
Although Operation Market Garden had been a total disaster, those who managed to escape the battlefield returned to a hero's welcome. Major Cain was the only surviving recipient of the five Victoria Crosses that were awarded after the brutal battle.




This photo was taken in April 1945 in Arnhem, the same city that had been the site of Major Cain's heroism



# BATTLE OF ARNHEM

ARNHEM, HOLLAND 17-26 SEPTEMBER 1944



**H**ushed voices and the clattering of kit echoes around the old church at Oosterbeek, as the morning light filters in and rouses the British troops. One officer, Major Richard 'Dickie' Lonsdale, makes his way through the pews, lined with sleeping soldiers, toward the pulpit. Some look up, noticing his arm in a sling and the bloodied bandage around his head. Casting his eye over the beleaguered and unlikely congregation, already bloodied and worn down from four days of fighting in enemy territory, Lonsdale draws a breath and pauses as he musters up what words of encouragement he can.

Major Robert Cain, of the 2nd South Staffordshire regiment, was among Lonsdale's men that day, huddled in the church just east of the Dutch town of Arnhem. The 35-year old veteran knew more than most just what was coming their way, and had more reason than most to want revenge. Operation Market Garden, the British and Polish-led advance into German-occupied Holland, was a disaster on the brink of failure. Cain's regiment had been among those to see the worst of the fighting.

The plan had been to pull off one of the largest ever aerial assaults, capture key bridges on the Rhine and return home for tea and medals. The 2nd Army, as well as Polish brigades, would then move up from the south to support the positions. However, the British paratroopers and other infantry had dropped into the heart of two German Panzer divisions. What was supposed to be a surprise attack turned into a massacre.

After joining the 2nd battalion in 1942, Cain saw action during the invasion of Sicily, in what would be the campaign to drive the Nazis from Italy. As well as amphibious landings, a number of British and US troops were dropped in by parachute and glider, but poor weather and landing issues with fragile gliders presented peril before the troops even saw the enemy. Similar problems now

hampered the British over Holland. After his glider malfunctioned on Sunday 17 September, as part of the first lift to Arnhem, Cain joined the second lift the next day, but was delayed further by fog. This lost crucial time in an attack that was, by this point, no longer a surprise.

Once safely landed and organised, the 2nd South Staffordshire advanced through the city of Arnhem. However, the men soon found themselves surrounded by well-prepared German defences. Enemy marksmen seemingly picked off soldiers at will, while self-propelled guns and tanks blocked the route ahead and ceaseless shelling continued. Soon the streets were littered with dead soldiers, caught with nowhere to take cover. Among the chaos, the battalion's commander was taken prisoner, with hundreds of his men. Major Cain was barely able to escape with one company, totalling just 100 men. Running out of supplies, the British were forced to retreat to the village of Oosterbeek, where a defensive n-shaped perimeter was being formed by surviving units.

Command over the eastern sector's defence fell to Major Lonsdale, fully aware of the importance of the line holding. His force was all that would stop the Germans from cutting the Allied army off from the Rhine, driving a wedge between them and any hope of escape. Now the men gathered in the little Dutch church shoulder their weapons, snatch final drags of their cigarettes and turn to face the pulpit. "You know as well as I do there are a lot of bloody Germans coming at us," Lonsdale declares bluntly. "We must fight for our lives and stick together. We've fought the Germans before. They weren't good enough for us then, and they're bloody well not good enough for us now. They're up against the finest soldiers in the world [...] Make certain you dig in well and that your weapons and ammo are in good order. We are getting short of ammo, so when you shoot, you shoot to kill. Good luck to you all."

## Praise for a hero

"How many more young men, how many more teenage soldiers might have died had he not fought so ferociously?"

**Jeremy Clarkson, TV presenter and Major Cain's son-in-law**

"I thought, he must be a very brave man to be knocked out and return to take up the same position, and still hit tanks. But he was still firing when we left"

**Richard Long, Glider Pilot Regiment, witnessing Major Cain's return to the field**

### The aftermath

After nearly six days of successfully defending attacks, the Allied perimeter at Oosterbeek finally retreated across the Rhine on Monday 25 September. Over 101 German artillery pieces had pummelled the British lines, devastating the area so terribly that it became nicknamed Der Hexenkessel - the Witch's Cauldron - by German soldiers. On the march back to friendly territory, the major even found the time to shave, in order to look more like an officer. After the war, Cain returned to his native Isle of Man and his job in the oil industry. He never talked about his Victoria Cross, and his family only learnt of its existence as they sorted through his belongings after his death in 1974. Operation Market Garden stands as among the last and worst major defeats of the British Army. With the launch of the largest aerial assault ever known, commanders had been hopeful of bringing an early end to the war, but the operation was a failure and only 2,700 soldiers out of the original 10,600 who set out to Holland returned home alive.

### 01 Digging in around the perimeter

Major Cain and the remaining troops of the 2nd South Staffordshire regiment are positioned on the southeast corner of the British perimeter, under Major Lonsdale's command. Their sector is closest to the Rhine, facing the direction of Arnhem in the east, from where the army has been retreating. Until the previous day, soldiers from the 1st Airborne Division had still been fighting to hold the bridge at Arnhem,

but their defeat means the full force of the German Panzer divisions will be directed at them. Wehrmacht troops and armour are bearing down on the British, and their efforts will be focused on the Lonsdale force. Major Cain and his men are positioned to the north of Oosterbeek's church, in trenches that cover open waste ground, as well as the roads to the east, which the Germans are sure to come down.

### 02 Contact with the enemy

As Germans are spotted heading down the eastern road, Major Cain positions himself with a PIAT (projecting infantry anti-tank) gun, with Lieutenant Ian Meilke firing from the roof of a nearby house. He loads and fires at the first tank, but the blast leaves no damage. Alerted to the threat from Cain's PIAT, the German gunner turns his tank's 88mm barrel on the major. The blast from the shell obliterates the chimney Lieutenant Meilke is behind, killing him instantly and covering Cain in a curtain of falling debris. Cain waits in his position, continuing to fire on the tank until he is forced to take a new position out of the gun's sights. Not one of his shots penetrates the Tiger's 10cm (4in)-thick hull.

### 04 Major Cain is wounded

With another tank advancing down the road Cain takes up position behind the corner of a building. As he jumps out from cover and pulls the trigger, his PIAT's bomb misfires and detonates just feet in front of him, blowing him back. Seeing the blast, his men fear the worst and rush to his side. The explosion has completely blinded Cain, blackening

his face, which is covered in tiny shrapnel shards from the blast, but he is alive. Shouting "like a hooligan" for someone to man the PIAT, Cain's men drag him from the field to be treated for his wounds. The tank is disabled with PIAT fire, before one of the 75mm guns from the 1st Light Regiment is brought forward to blow it apart completely.



## 03 Taking out the tanks

Repositioning to a nearby shed, Cain waits until the tank is less than 45m (150ft) away, then fires his PIAT. The shot explodes underneath the tank, but is ineffective and the German gunner turns his sights on the little shed. Seeing the turret's movement, Cain has just seconds to gather his weapon and flee the shed before it's blown to pieces. Sprinting through machine-gun

fire back to the cover of a building, he lies prone, reloads his PIAT and fires at the tank two more times. This time his shots disable the metal beast by blowing off one of its tracks. Though this prevents it from moving down the road, the turret still blasts the British position with its fire. The tank's crew bail out and attempt to attack on foot, but are gunned down by Cain's men.

Paratroopers under artillery fire in Arnhem in 1944



British paratroopers in Oosterbeek, from the same squads Major Cain was a part of



05

## 05 The German attack falters

While being treated for his wounds Cain refuses morphia, which is in short supply. After about 30 minutes, with his sight returned, he decides to discharge himself. Finding blood rushing down his head, from burst eardrums as a result of the heavy blasts, he stuffs makeshift bandages into his ears before heading back to his sector. He directs more counter-attacks against the Germans with another PIAT. Wherever a tank is spotted, Cain rushes there, PIAT in hand, to disable it and his sector remains secure at the end of the day. The German attacks eventually begin to concentrate elsewhere in the perimeter. Eyewitnesses claim Cain disabled or destroyed three tanks by the end of the day, and as many as seven by the end of the operation.

## The Victoria Cross

### What is it?

The Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest military honour awarded to citizens in the Commonwealth and previously the British Empire. It is awarded for valour in the face of the enemy and can be given to anyone under military command.

### Why and when was it introduced?

The award was introduced in 1856 by Queen Victoria to recognise bravery during the Crimean War (1853-1856), as there was no standardised system for recognising gallantry regardless of length of service or rank.

### What does the medal look like?

The inscription on the VC is 'for valour' after Queen Victoria turned down the initial suggestion of 'For the brave', stating that all of her soldiers were brave.

### How often has it been awarded?

Since its introduction the VC has been awarded 1,358 times, but only 14 times since the end of WWII.

# BATTLE OF KURSK

THE KURSK SALIENT, SOVIET UNION 5-13 JULY, 1943

The last major German offensive on the Eastern Front, 1943's Operation Citadel saw Hitler launch a colossal attack on the Kursk salient, or bulge. It was a move that he believed would provide a victory so bright it would "shine like a beacon around the world." This was a battle of the elite, with both German and Soviet armies near their apex in terms of skill and weaponry, hardened by two years of unrelenting warfare.

The Germans, though depleted in manpower, were, for the first time since the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, fielding qualitative superiority in terms of armour with the formidable Tiger I tanks and new Panthers. These outstripped the Soviet T-34 Model 43s, which had in the intervening years, with their sloped armour and 76.2mm gun, proved masters of the battlefield.

The Red Army, meanwhile, was a very different beast from that which had faced the German invasion during Operation Barbarossa two years earlier. At the beginning of 1943, more than 16 million men were under arms, supported by a vast number of artillery pieces. Stalin claimed that "artillery is the god of war," and by 1943, the Red Army boasted the largest and most effective artillery divisions in the world. It also had somewhere approaching 10,000 tanks.

At Kursk, these two heavily mechanised forces came together in an enclosed theatre of operations, like two mighty pugilists meeting for a final championship bout. The result was a watershed. "Stalingrad was the end of the beginning," said Winston Churchill, "but the Battle of Kursk was the beginning of the end."

The German plan was to launch a double envelopment against the Kursk salient using Army Group Centre in the north, specifically Colonel-General Model's Ninth Army, while Army Group South battered the southern section with Army Detachment Kempf and Colonel-General Hoth's formidable

Fourth Panzer Army. This was an awe-inspiring demonstration of German strength, with 2,700 tanks and assault guns taking to the field.

For Stalin and his senior army commanders, Marshals Zhukov and Vasilevsky, the plan was to launch a massive offensive by first wearing down the mobile German forces in a battle-slog around the Kursk sector. They would use three Fronts (the Soviet equivalent of an Army Group) - Central Front, Voronezh Front and the reserve Steppe Front - to grind down German mechanised forces and thereby leave their territories vulnerable to huge counter offensives.

In his bid to snare the German armour, Stalin ordered the transformation of the region into what historian and Kursk expert Dennis E. Showalter believes to be "the most formidable large-scale defensive system in the history of warfare": a triple-ringed matrix absorbing almost 1 million men, 20,000 guns and mortars, 300 rocket launchers and 3,300 tanks. Russian engineers uncoiled more than 500 miles of barbed wire and lay almost 650,000 mines. The Germans' only chance, says Showalter, was the might of the steel-headed sledgehammer they eventually swung in July.

That blow came on 5 July, after several days of preliminaries involving the German and Soviet air forces and the roar of countless heavy guns. Tank armadas were suddenly on the move, with the Germans committing squadrons of 100 and in some cases 200 machines or more, with a score of Tiger Is and Ferdinand assault guns in the vanguard. Groups of 50 or so medium tanks came next and then floods of infantry, protected by this armoured screen, moved in behind.

These German armoured wedges were known as 'Panzerkeil' and, according to the late historian Alan Clark, amount to a rejection of the traditional principles of the panzer army. In fact, the German high command was using similar tactics to those employed



“This was a battle of the elite,  
with both German and Russian  
armies near their apex in terms  
of skill and weaponry”



Soviet T-34s roll into  
battle at Kursk with  
infantry in support

## *Greatest Battles*

Soviet soldiers wait as a  
T-34 crosses a trench

"In fact, the German high command was using similar tactics to those employed by Montgomery at El Alamein"



by Montgomery at El Alamein, with the difference here that the defenders' armour was at numerical parity with the attackers', or was indeed greater, and their defensive organisation meant that many of their tanks were held in reserve. This proved decisive during the mighty clash at Prokhorovka.

As 5 July unfolded, Colonel-General Model in the north committed more than 500 armoured vehicles from his Ninth Army to the attack in a series of staggered bursts, but so violent was the Soviet resistance that about half of these were out of action by the day's end. Part of the problem stemmed from the committing of both battalions of the Porsche-built Ferdinands to the attack. These formidable machines, also known as 'elephants', were designed for tank-busting and the destruction of large anti-tank guns. Their 200mm-thick armour provided them with ample protection from static gun positions. Their enormous 88mm cannons, meanwhile, picked off Russian T-34s before they even had chance to come within range.

However, the Ferdinands became separated from the lighter tanks and infantry they needed for close-range support. With their static hulls and lack of machine guns, they proved sitting ducks for Soviet infantry units, who boarded them while they were on the move and squirted flamethrowers over the engine

ventilation slats. The Ferdinands, however, ploughed through the first line of Soviet defences, allowing the infantry to eventually follow them into the breach, but more than half of these beasts of war were lost.

The morning of 5 July also saw the Fourth Panzer Army launch its main offensive thrust in the south, moving along a 30-mile front. According to Kursk expert Mark Healey, 700 tanks and assault guns smashed their huge metal fist into the face of the Soviet Sixth Guards Army on the Voronezh Front, but the Russian defences were so tightly entrenched that the German attack stalled. Eventually, the Luftwaffe's aerial superiority began to take effect and the Fourth Panzer managed to split the Sixth Guards Army in two.

The fighting in both the north and south of the salient was ferocious, and within 12 hours both sides were feeding the fires that raged across the battle for Kursk. Swathes of ground-attack aircraft strafed the battlefields. The armour continued to mass and move "on a scale unlike anything seen elsewhere in the war," according to the eminent historian John Erickson.

The Soviet tank armies responded to the German assault by moving up into their primary defensive positions and somewhere approaching 7,000 tanks were steadily drawn into this immense clash of steel, leaving an ever-growing number of dying hulls smoking on the battlefields. A Russian communique

claimed that on the first day of battle, 586 German panzers were destroyed or disabled.

The second day of Citadel, 6 July, was heavily overcast and rain hampered both sides throughout. Along the northern sections of the Kursk salient, the Soviets launched a dawn counterattack with General Rokossovsky's Central Front enjoying temporary success, until a force of 250 panzers with infantry moving in its wake halted them in their tracks. Throughout the day, Central Front and the Ninth Army were locked in perpetual struggle.

The German offensive rolled on, with Model aiming for the village of Olkhovatka as a prime strategic objective. This high ground provided control over the eastern, southern and western section of his field of operations. The Soviets had already identified this region as strategically vital, and in the weeks running up to Citadel's launch, had transformed it into one of the strongest sections of the defensive belt. The German Panzerkeil, with the Tigers to the fore, thrust ahead, and by noon on 6 July the Germans had no fewer than 1,000 tanks committed to a six-mile front between the villages of Soborovka and Ponyri.

The Russian defences again proved too strong. Time and time again, Model's Panzer Corps ran into trouble. Unperturbed, he tried again on 7 and 8 July, redeploying huge swathes of aircraft in a



"They proved sitting ducks for Soviet infantry units, who boarded them while they were on the move"

German heavy armour crosses a Soviet defensive ditch near Belgorod

bid to penetrate the Soviet resistance. The Soviets were just too well dug in, however, and the German attack ground to a halt once more. "The wrack of shattered panzers marking Ninth Army's advance," writes Healey, bear "mute testament to fact that the momentum of Model's offensive was already beginning to decay."

Meanwhile, along the southern stretch of the Kursk salient, the second day of Citadel's operations looked promising for the Germans. The elite section of Hoth's Fourth Panzer Army, II SS Panzer Corps, had already bitten into the first line of Soviet defence and looked set to devour the second line on the morning of 6 July.

General Vatutin, commanding the Voronezh Front, suggested an immediate counterattack, but was swiftly deflected by a senior officer who highlighted the destruction caused by the Tigers' and Panthers' large turret guns with their far superior range. Digging in their T-34s and preparing a wall of defensive fire would serve them better, he argued.

Still, with help from the Luftwaffe, the German armour rammed through the Russian defence and by the end of 6 July, the SS Panzer Corps was wreaking havoc amid the second Soviet defensive line. The following day was cold and the two sides fought in the descending mist, with the Germans pushing steadily on towards the small town of Oboyan, which defended Kursk from the south.

Early in the morning on 7 July, 400 panzers supported by armoured infantry and airpower crashed onto the First Tank Army of the Voronezh Front, which wavered under the onslaught. By 10 July, members of Hoth's XLVIII Panzer Corps seized Hill 244.8, which stood as the most northerly point taken by the Germans in their bid to reach Kursk. SS Panzer Corps, meanwhile, fought a path through the Soviet defensive line and regrouped to direct a major assault against Prokhorovka, which, if successful, looked set to smash Soviet resistance in the south.

Back on the northern face of the salient, Model continued his bid to take the village of Ponyri and fierce hand-to-hand fighting erupted, earning Ponyri the name of 'Stalingrad of the Kursk'. The two sides fought to a bitter standstill. On the night of 10 July, Model committed his last reserves to the fray, and although by 12 July his divisions held most of the village, the Russian defence was too robust and the Ninth Army couldn't effect a full breakthrough. When the Germans received intelligence suggesting a major Soviet offensive was set to launch against the Orel bulge, Army Group Centre pulled sections of the Ninth Army away from the action and Model's attack halted.

Come the night of 11 July, and although the Germans were eroding the Soviet position in the south, Stalin and his generals couldn't fail to feel confident. Model's position, hemmed in at Ponyri, left

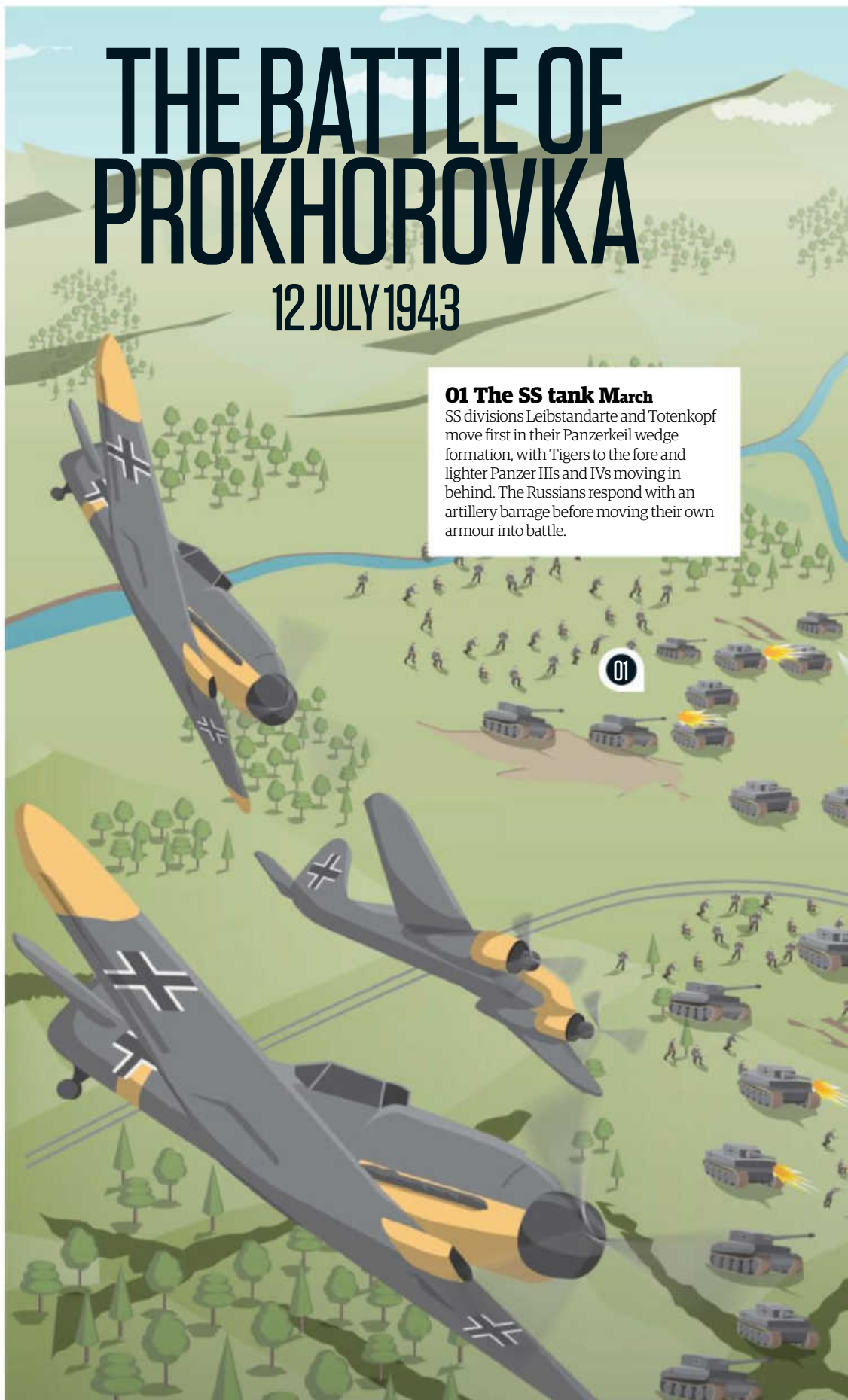
"Model continued his bid to take the village of Ponyri and fierce hand-to-hand fighting erupted"

# THE BATTLE OF PROKHOROVKA

## 12 JULY 1943

### 01 The SS tank March

SS divisions Leibstandarte and Totenkopf move first in their Panzerkeil wedge formation, with Tigers to the fore and lighter Panzer IIIs and IVs moving in behind. The Russians respond with an artillery barrage before moving their own armour into battle.





## 03 The iron fists clash

Both Leibstandarte and Totenkopf are drawn into close-quarters combat, and confusion reigns. Individual tank battles are the order of the day and hundreds of tanks are disabled by direct hits to the weaker side armour. It is said that some burning T-34s ram their German adversaries.

## 04 Soviet flank attacks

Several corps from the Fifth Guards Army engage Totenkopf's left flank. Though seen as a tank battle, infantry units fight ferociously at Prokhorovka, with Russian anti-tank rifles in particular used to maximum effect. Preventing Totenkopf from commanding the position north of Prokhorovka is vital to halting the German advance.

## 02 The Soviet armour engages

The Soviet Fifth Guards Tank Army moves out to counter the German advance as quickly as possible, bidding to get into close combat and therefore minimise the efficacy of the Germans' longer-range guns. The Luftwaffe continues its support, outfighting the Soviets in the air.

## 05 The southern edge

South of Prokhorovka, a tough corps from the Fifth Guards Tank Army engages the SS Das Reich division, forcing the Germans to adopt a mostly defensive position on the right flank. The Soviets are keen to ensure that potential support arriving in the form of the approaching III Panzer Corps does not reach the field.



them free to move their armoured reserve, the Fifth Guards Tank Army of the Steppe Front, against Hoth's divisions in the salient's southern section.

With Stalin realising that a final battle was set to unfold, the Fifth Guards Tank Army was placed under the command of General Vatutin on the Voronezh Front, which was a move that led to what is widely regarded as Kursk's defining moment - the mighty tank battle at Prokhorovka.

"All the elements of myth were at hand," Showalter says of this imminent clash of armour. "Prokhorovka offered a head-on, stand-up grapple between the elite troops of the world's best armies on a three-mile front under conditions that left no room for fancy manoeuvres or for air and artillery to make much of a significant difference."

The German II SS Panzer Corps, incorporating the panzer grenadier- divisions 'Leibstandarte', 'Das

Reich' and 'Totenkopf', was pitted against the Fifth Guards Tank Army. These elite troops met as both went on the attack, "an encounter battle in the literal sense, suggesting predators in rut." Other Soviet units also took to the field, including divisions of the Fifth Guards Army, as well as sections of the First Tank Army and Sixth Guards Army.

Colonel-General Hoth of the German Fourth Panzer Army, his armour having penetrated the Russian defensive line, was keen to push on before "a defensive scab could form over the thin membrane exposed in the remaining Russian defences," as Clark writes,

At the same time, divisions from the III Panzer Corps, part of Army Detachment Kempf, were moving northward in order to join II SS Panzer Corps, provoking the Soviets to engage Hoth's forces post-haste. Aware that the German Tigers and Panthers had a longer range than their T-34s, the Soviets bid to move into close combat.

They grossly overestimated the quality of German tanks on this battlefield, according to Kursk historian Lloyd Clark, who claims that the Germans fielded no Panthers or Ferdinands at Prokhorovka, and that II SS Panzer Corps had just 15 Tigers - ten with Totenkopf, four with Leibstandarte and just a solitary giant with Das Reich. Other historians disagree.

Whatever the truth, Leibstandarte, Das Reich and Totenkopf moved in to attack and the great Battle of Prokhorovka began beneath leaden skies, warm and

**Above:** Soviet artillery took a heavy toll on German armour at the Battle of Kursk

humid, which unleashed rain and peels of thunder as the day wore on. The Germans fielded approximately 600 tanks and assault guns, the Russians 900 (though only about a third of these were T-34s). Hostilities erupted early on 12 July and the inferno blazed all day. The Luftwaffe flew sorties overhead, and the Germans maintained air superiority throughout the battle, though this counted for little in the end.

SS divisions Leibstandarte and Totenkopf moved first in wedge formation, their Tigers in the vanguard, stopping to unload their mighty 88mm shells before moving onward. At about 0830, the Soviet lines unleashed a 15-minute artillery barrage before the Fifth Guards Tank Army rolled towards the tide of panzers, bidding to get into close-quarters combat.

Before long, scores of tanks were churning up the battlefield in individual engagements. Up close, the tanks' thinner side armour was more easily penetrated. Thick smoke from the blazing hulls drifted across the battlefield, making gunnery all the more troublesome. The SS Panzer Corps maintained the pressure throughout the day and the Germans tried desperately to bring III Panzer Corps from Army Detachment Kempf into play. If these machines could enter the battle, it may well have turned the advantage firmly in the Germans' favour. III Panzer, however, couldn't break through in time and the SS had to fight

"They grossly overestimated the quality of German tanks on this battlefield"

for Prokhorovka with no further ground support. Historians talk of a last surge by Leibstandarte and Das Reich aimed at breaking the Soviet lines on the battlefield's western edge, but Fifth Guards Tank Army's Lieutenant-General Rotmistrov engaged his final reserves and the tanks clashed head-on once more, darkening the sky with smoke and dust. The fierce fighting continued well into the night but the Soviets had done their job - they had stopped the German advance.

Estimates suggest that half of the Fifth Guards Tank Army's machines were destroyed. "The Waffen SS won a tactical victory on 12 July," writes Showalter. "Prokhorovka was not a Tiger graveyard but a T-34

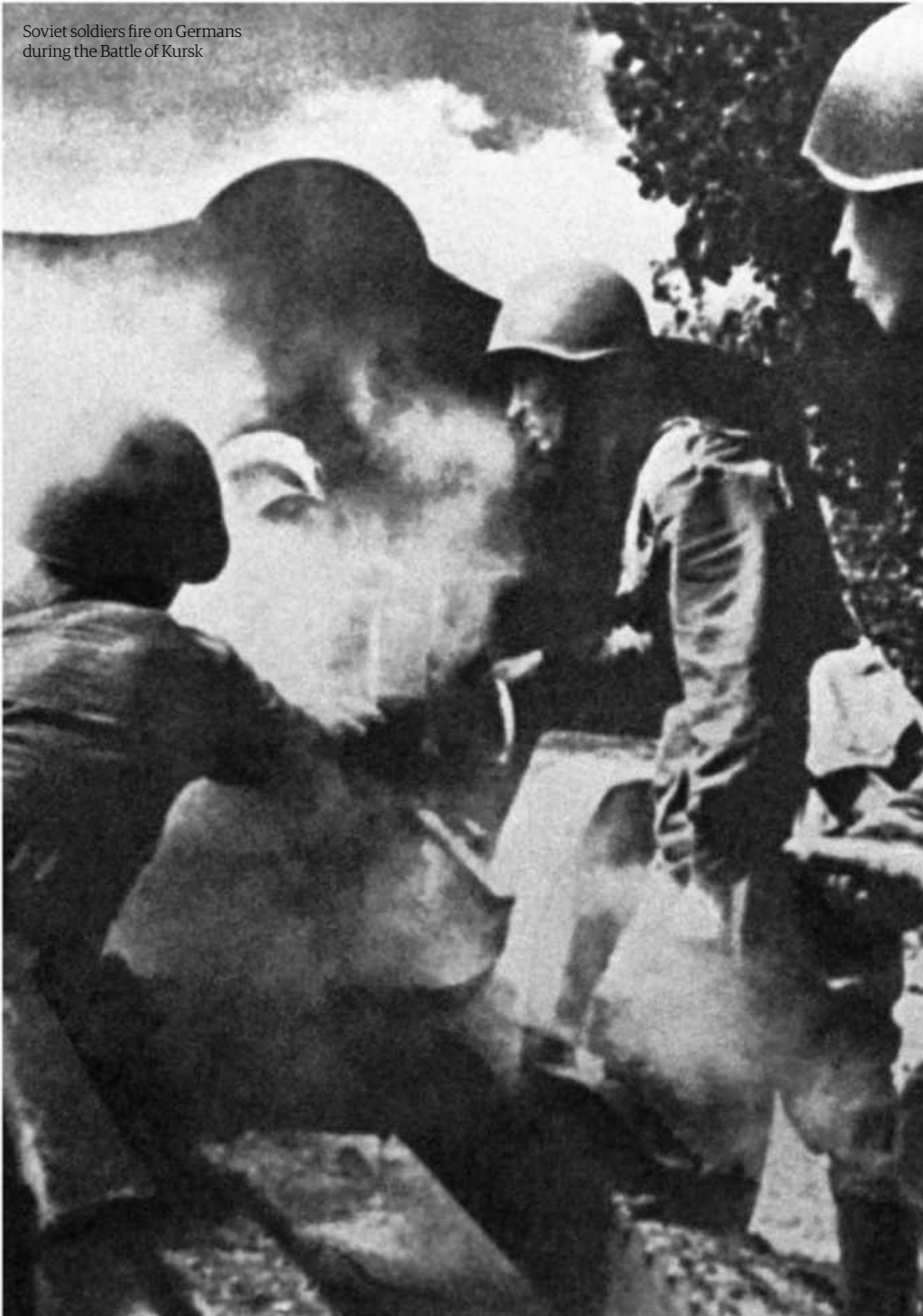
"Thick smoke from the blazing hulls drifted across the battlefield, making gunnery all the more troublesome"

junkyard. Operationally, however, the palm rests with the Red Army." Prokhorovka bled the German military machine dry. About 300 panzers lay abandoned on the battlefield, and though some may have been salvaged, the field remained in Soviet hands.

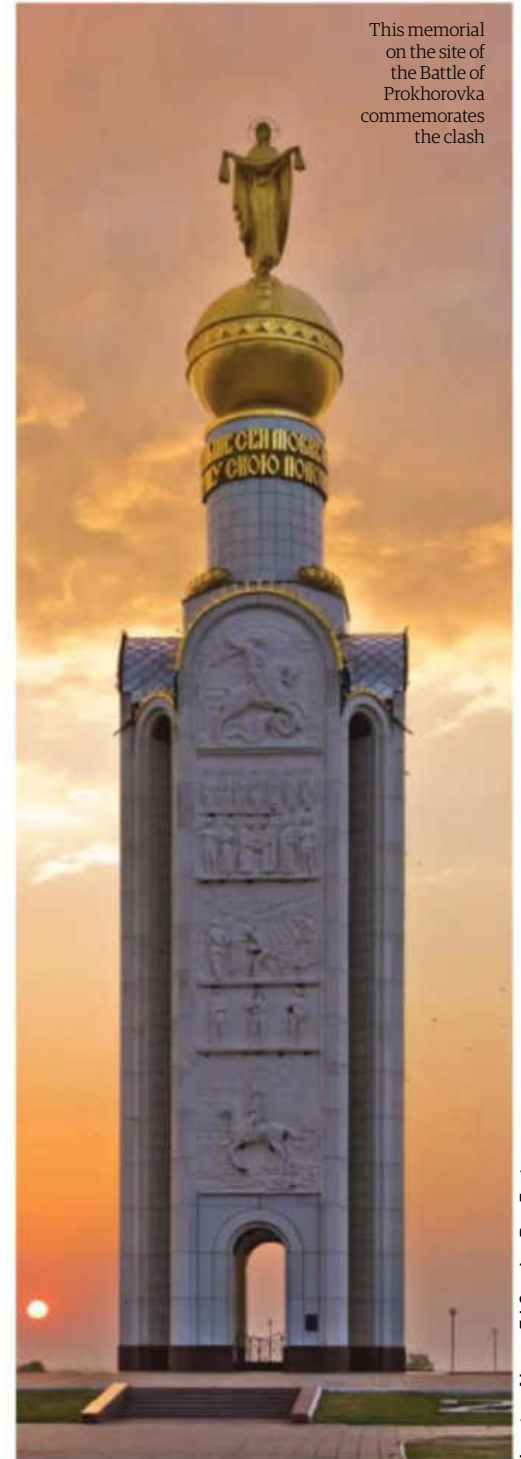
Between 13-15 July, SS Panzer Corps continued to make sorties against the Russian defences but

in reality it was all over. Hitler called off Operation Citadel on 13 July as the Russians launched a massive offensive, Operation Kutuzov, aimed at Army Group Centre along the Orel salient. The Battle of Kursk ceded the initiative to the Red Army, which then rolled on towards Berlin. For Hitler and the Wehrmacht, defeat was edging ever closer.

Soviet soldiers fire on Germans during the Battle of Kursk



This memorial on the site of the Battle of Prokhorovka commemorates the clash



Images: Alamy, Ed Crooks, Rex Features



Major Crandall flew Huey helicopters in the Vietnam War like these ones pictured

## Major Bruce P Crandall



### Why did he win it?

In command of 16 unarmed Huey helicopters airlifting the 1/7 CAV into battle, Crandall placed himself in personal danger by continuing into the

battlefield to airlift the wounded out and resupply the troops with ammunition. He rescued over 70 wounded soldiers in a total of 14 return trips.

### Where was the battle?

The Ia Drang Valley is found east of the Chu Pong Massif mountain range in central Vietnam.

### When did it take place?

On 14 November 1965.

### When was he awarded the Medal of Honor?

Though initially awarded with the Distinguished Flying Cross, this was subsequently upgraded to the Medal of Honor, which he was invested with on 26 February 2007.

### What was the popular reaction?

The Battle of Ia Drang remains one of the bloodiest encounters of the Vietnam War, with numerous tales of gallantry, sacrifice and horror. In 2001, Crandall was an aviation consultant on the film *We Were Soldiers*, starring Mel Gibson, which recounts the events of the battle.

# BATTLE OF IA DRANG

## CENTRAL HIGHLANDS, VIETNAM 14 NOVEMBER 1965

**T**hick smoke chokes the horizon, rising from the sea of green jungle speeding past below. Explosions flash up as ordinance shells pummel the landscape, heralding the arrival of the US forces. Leading his squadron of 16 unarmed Huey aircraft toward the target of the artillery, the area surrounding landing zone (LZ) X-Ray, Major Bruce Crandall gives the order to drop altitude to just above the treetops. The passengers of the Hueys are the men of the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment (1/7 CAV). They are here to confront the enemy on their own doorstep. Though they know this won't be easy, neither they, Major Crandall, nor the operation's commanding officer Lt Col Harold Moore know just what horrors await them in the Ia Drang Valley.

The enemy is the People's Army of Vietnam (PAVN), who are in familiar terrain, safe in the bosom of the Chu Pong Massif mountains and the thick expanse of jungle. Just like the men of 1/7 CAV, they are keen to fight. The north-Vietnamese commanders, hearing of the aggressive US deployment, have been eager to test their enemy's strength on the battlefield and overcome the latest tactic of their new foe: the aerial assault. Major Crandall has been practising and developing this method of combat with the 11th Air Assault Division, utilising quick deployment and evacuation of troops in and around battlefields. He will put his methods to the test in one of the most extreme combat environments in the Vietnam War.

Known by his call sign 'Ancient Serpent 6' or 'Snake', Major Crandall is already a respected leader, at ease in fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters alike. He will soon have to call upon all his experience and skill to keep the men now leaping out of his landed Huey alive. As he lifts into the air for the

first time that day, he watches as B Company spreads out across the clearing of LZ X-Ray, along with Lt Col Moore, securing the position and searching for the enemy. As the hum of Major Crandall's squadron grows fainter into the distance and he returns to base to collect the next batch of 1/7 CAV, there's a threatening stillness in the air.

Though intelligence has estimated some 250 or so PAVN troops are operating in the area close to LZ X-Ray, in reality a number close to seven times that is now stalking through the jungle toward the Americans. As Major Crandall returns with more troops from the Plei Me base some 30 minutes later, the battle has already begun. As he sets his passengers down, they ready their M16s and rush in the direction of the gunfire. With each return trip the fighting has intensified.

It's not long before the officers on the ground and Major Crandall realise the odds they are facing. This is made even clearer as bullets begin to ricochet off the unarmed Hueys, which are by now in range of PAVN guns, tempting targets as they descend into the clearing. If one of the transports were to go down, it would be a huge blow not just to the battalion's strength but also to the men's morale. As he lifts away from the battlefield once more, his craft dented by shots but not badly damaged, he makes a bold yet uncompromising decision. He knows that at the rate the battle is raging, ammunition and supplies will quickly begin to run dry, leaving the battalion defenceless against overwhelming odds. Determined to act as the troops' lifeline, he sets his own mission to resupply and support the ongoing fight in the Ia Drang Valley. With bullets swarming his helicopter on each journey, Major Crandall knows every trip into the Valley of Death may well be his last.

# Praise for a hero

“There was never a consideration that we would not go into those landing zones. They were my people down there and they trusted in me to come and get them”

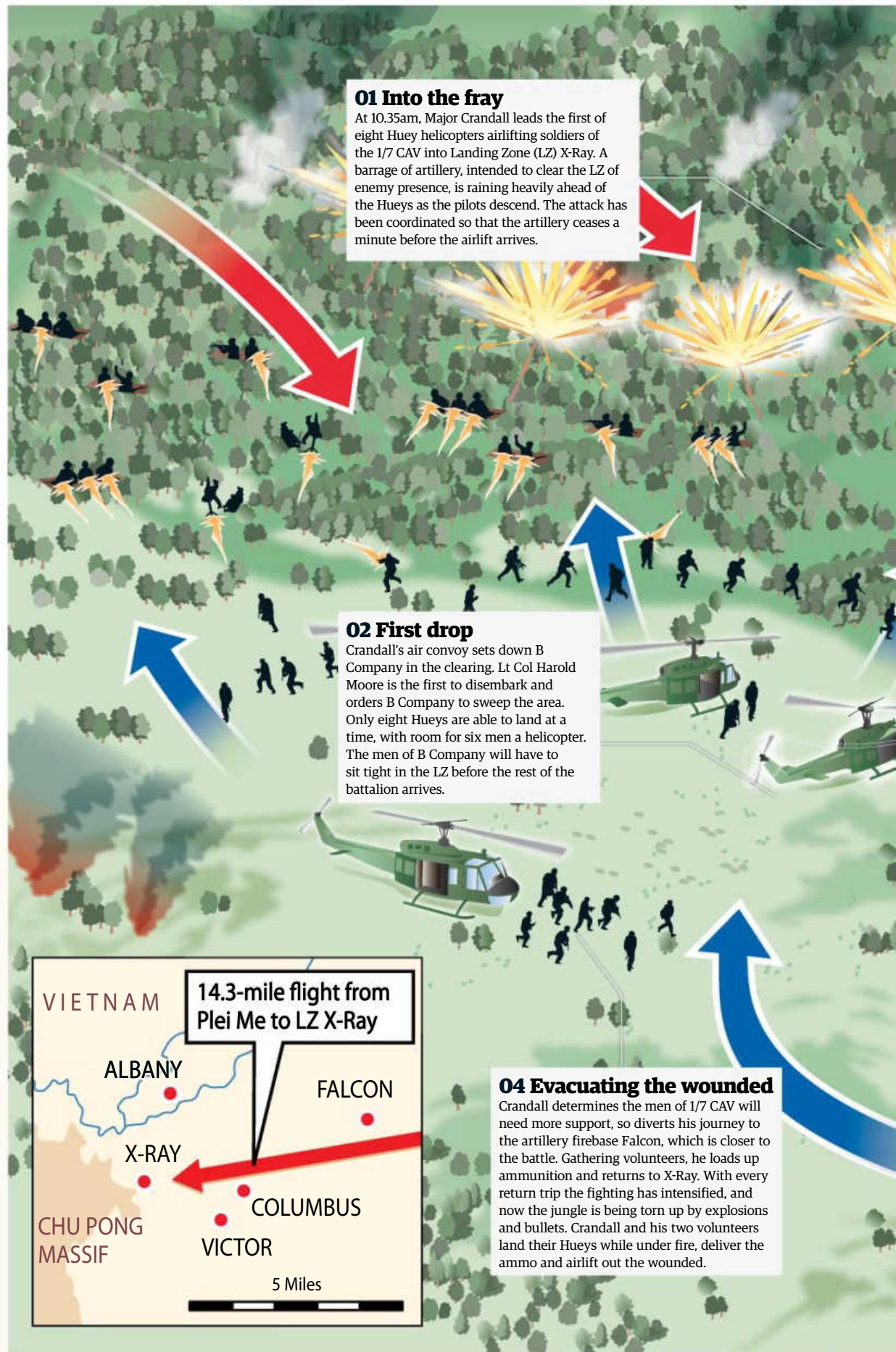
**Lt Col Bruce Crandall**

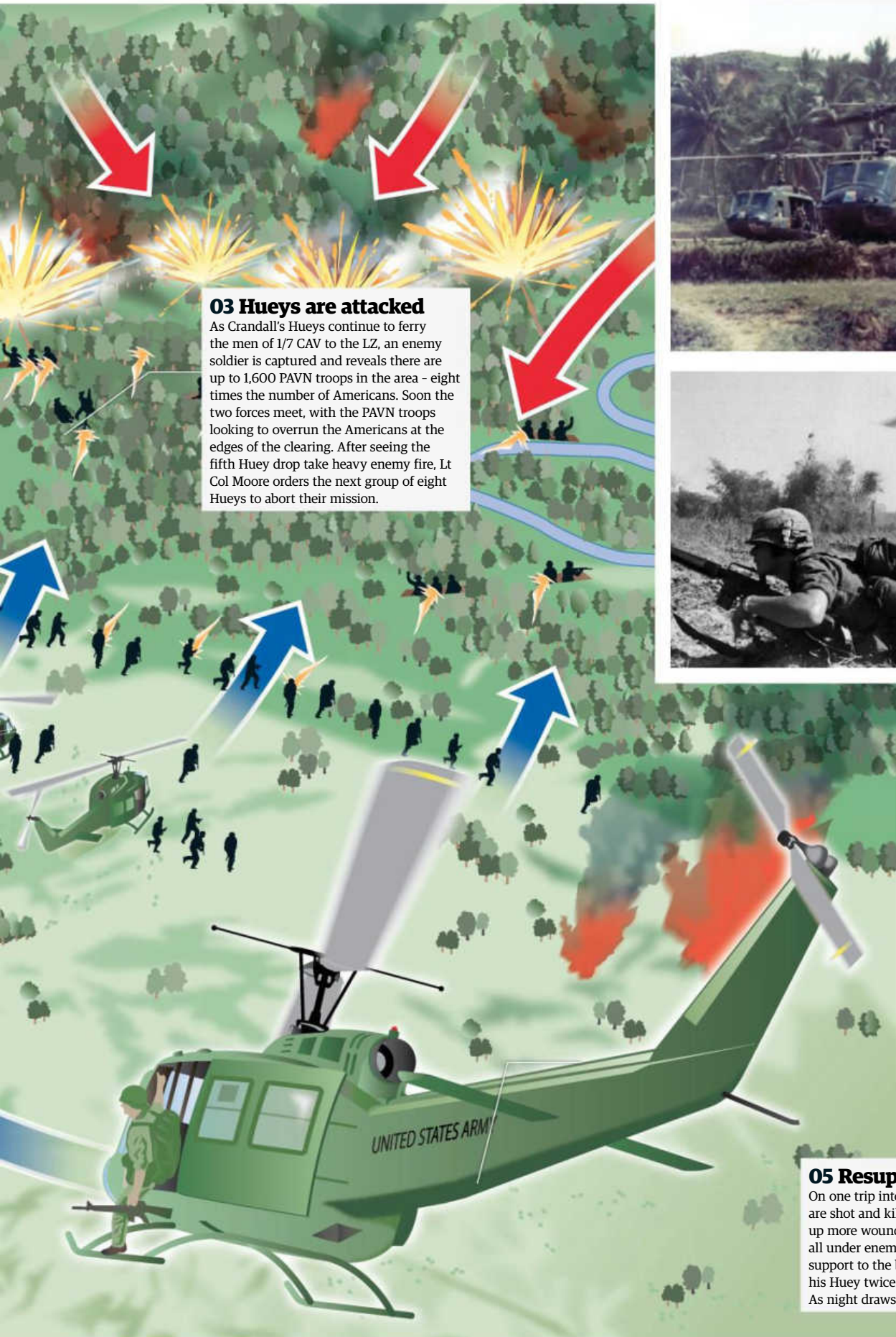
“Major Crandall’s daring acts of bravery and courage in the face of an overwhelming and determined enemy are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service”

**Official Medal of Honor Citation**

## The aftermath

By the end of the first day of fighting, 1/7 CAV had lost around 110 men, nearly a quarter of its strength. However, the Battle of Ia Drang stretched on for another two days, across several different landing zones. At one point, during the second day of the intensely violent engagement, the commanding officer for the US forces called for ‘Broken Arrow’, which is the code word indicating a US battalion is in real danger of being overrun. This code word brought every available fighter jet to the area, to deploy their bombs on the enemy, who were overwhelmed by the sheer fire power. Despite that, it still took a whole day to secure victory. Major Crandall went on to fly many more operations in Vietnam, continuing to distinguish himself as a daring and formidable pilot. During his second tour to Vietnam, Crandall’s helicopter was downed during a rescue attempt. Though he survived the crash, Major Crandall broke his back and was forced into administrative roles away from the front line for the remainder of his military career.





### 03 Hueys are attacked

As Crandall's Hueys continue to ferry the men of 1/7 CAV to the LZ, an enemy soldier is captured and reveals there are up to 1,600 PAVN troops in the area - eight times the number of Americans. Soon the two forces meet, with the PAVN troops looking to overrun the Americans at the edges of the clearing. After seeing the fifth Huey drop take heavy enemy fire, Lt Col Moore orders the next group of eight Hueys to abort their mission.



Crandall's squadron of helicopters about to take off, circa 1966



Bruce Crandall's Huey helicopter in action in Vietnam

"As he lifts away from the battlefield once more, his craft dented by shots but not badly damaged, he makes a bold decision"

### 05 Resupplying the battalion

On one trip into the LZ, three men in Crandall's Huey are shot and killed as it lands, but he continues to load up more wounded. He makes over 14 journeys, almost all under enemy fire, in his personal mission to provide support to the beleaguered 1/7 CAV. He is forced to replace his Huey twice, such is the damage caused by enemy fire. As night draws in he finally retires from the battlefield.



## Herbert 'H' Jones' VC

### Why did he win it?

He charged alone against an enemy machine-gun nest that was pinning down British soldiers and halting their progress.

### Where was the battle?

The British troops were advancing across a thin narrow strip of land on the east portion of the Falkland Islands in the South Atlantic. The Battle of Goose Green was the first major land conflict of the Falklands War between Great Britain and Argentine forces.

### When did it take place?

28 May 1982.

### When was he awarded the VC?

He was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross in October 1982.

### What was the popular reaction?

Though he is among the best-known decorated servicemen of the Falklands War, and was widely mourned in the UK at the time, many have since questioned Jones' decision to leave his men without their leader.





# BATTLE OF GOOSE GREEN

FALKLAND ISLANDS 28-29 MAY 1982

As the smallest glows of dawn begin to bleed through the clouds, the men of 2nd Battalion, The Parachute Regiment (2 Para), pick their way south across the barren terrain in the gloom. The British paratroopers are over eight hours into their operation - a large-scale raid to capture Goose Green and secure the nearby airfield - but this cold May morning is just the beginning of a long and bloody day. Commanding officer of the battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert 'H' Jones, is confident that sustained attacking momentum is essential to achieve unquestionable victory over the Argentine defenders, but this plan will soon be thrown into disarray.

Lt Col Jones was aware of the importance of the mission. Nearly two months earlier Argentine forces had swept onto the Falkland Islands, seizing the capital of Port Stanley and control of the entire archipelago. The British Parliament was swift to respond and soon a task force was en route to the island. It was down to the experienced battalion commander to make sure that this, the first major land battle of the Falklands War, was a victory.

Graduating from Sandhurst some 22 years previous, Jones had served all over the world during his career and was even awarded an OBE (Order of the British Empire) for services in Rhodesia. While his reputation preceded him, but his command style was far from conventional. Described as a charismatic, stubborn and at times a fiery character, Jones expected much of the men under his command, but was always eager to lead from the front and set the example.

As 2 Para continued to advance toward the enemy, the heavy weight of expectation was felt by all soldiers and officers. Though all four companies (A, B, C and D) of the battalion had so far encountered little resistance as they made their way down the isthmus during the night, they were now dispersed in the dark and had little idea

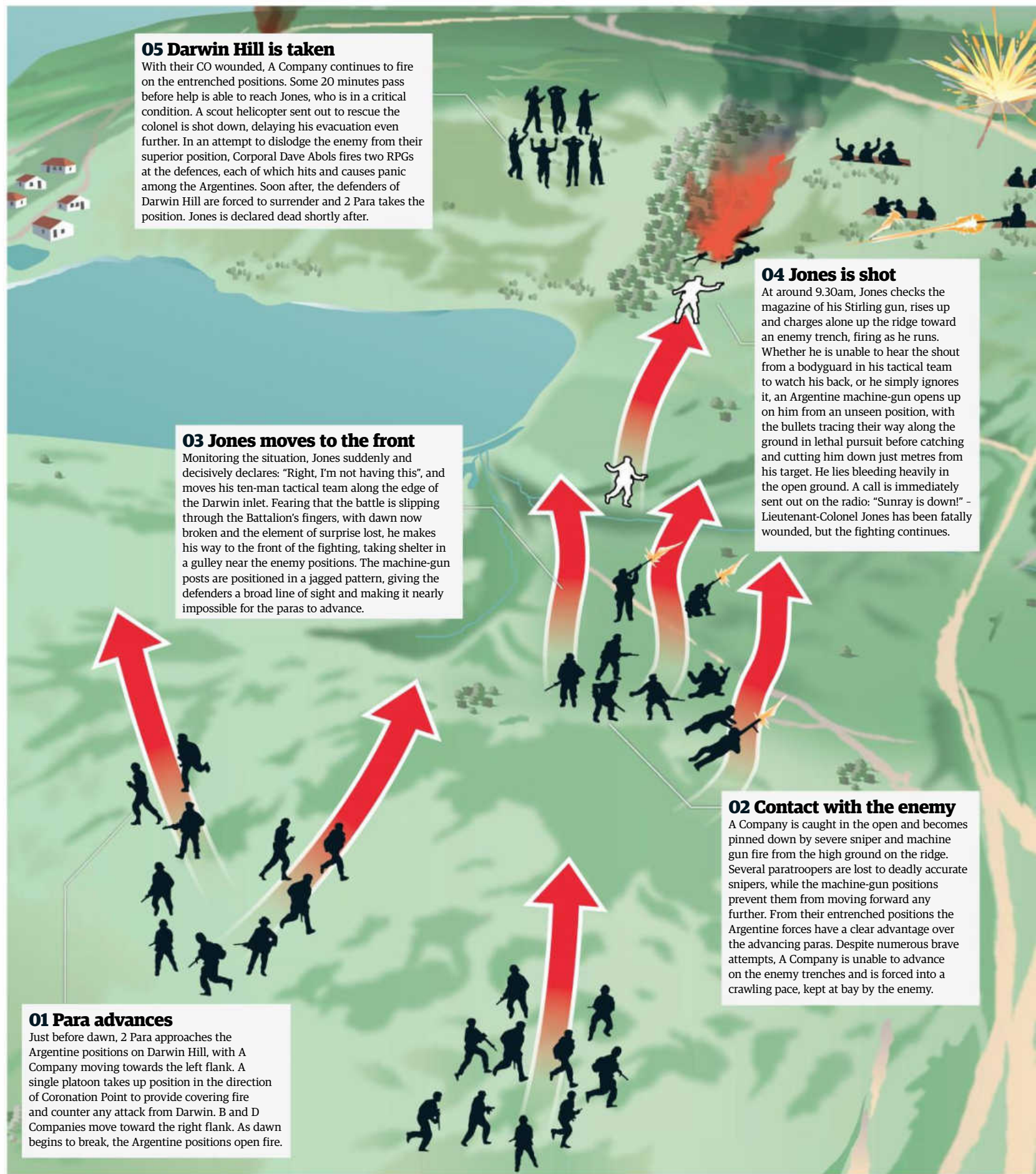
of one another's exact location. Worse still, the nearby HMS Arrow would be forced away from the coastline and into safer waters before daylight, removing any chance of fire support from the sea and neither Jones nor the men of 2 Para knew they faced a far larger Argentine force than previously thought, who were entrenched and waiting for them as the dawn rose, their sights fixed north toward the direction of the night's firefights.

As A Company makes its way around Darwin Bay, on the battalion's left flank, the daylight reveals the foreboding sight of Darwin Hill rising to some 30 metres (100 feet) above its namesake settlement. Soon after, gunfire begins rattling from the enemy positions entrenched on the hill, halting the entire company's progress, the Argentinean forces using the tactical advantage of the rising slopes to keep the British troops pinned down. As the grim greys and browns of the battlefield violently spatter upward under artillery shells, mortar rounds and grenades, the panicked calls of the wounded mingle with urgent shouted commands from the officers.

Seeing the attack continue to falter, Jones moves his tactical HQ, comprising of ten or so men, to the thick of the fighting to take the battle by the scruff of the neck. Moving up to A Company, he shelters alongside Darwin Bay to observe the terrain, then further forward right up to within metres of the Argentine trenches.

Though the day would see many acts of bravery, what happened next stands above them all for its sheer daring. Spotting an enemy position that was pinning down his men, Jones made an inexplicable decision that would shock everyone involved, but was typical of his uncompromising approach to leadership. With the rattle of machine-gun fire still clattering through the air, the CO fixed his sights ahead, checked his magazine and charged alone across the dark slope toward the enemy trench.

Steel helmets abandoned by Argentine armed forces who surrendered at Goose Green to British Falklands Task Force troops



### 05 Darwin Hill is taken

With their CO wounded, A Company continues to fire on the entrenched positions. Some 20 minutes pass before help is able to reach Jones, who is in a critical condition. A scout helicopter sent out to rescue the colonel is shot down, delaying his evacuation even further. In an attempt to dislodge the enemy from their superior position, Corporal Dave Abols fires two RPGs at the defences, each of which hits and causes panic among the Argentines. Soon after, the defenders of Darwin Hill are forced to surrender and 2 Para takes the position. Jones is declared dead shortly after.

### 04 Jones is shot

At around 9.30am, Jones checks the magazine of his Stirling gun, rises up and charges alone up the ridge toward an enemy trench, firing as he runs. Whether he is unable to hear the shout from a bodyguard in his tactical team to watch his back, or he simply ignores it, an Argentine machine-gun opens up on him from an unseen position, with the bullets tracing their way along the ground in lethal pursuit before catching and cutting him down just metres from his target. He lies bleeding heavily in the open ground. A call is immediately sent out on the radio: "Sunray is down!" - Lieutenant-Colonel Jones has been fatally wounded, but the fighting continues.

### 03 Jones moves to the front

Monitoring the situation, Jones suddenly and decisively declares: "Right, I'm not having this", and moves his ten-man tactical team along the edge of the Darwin inlet. Fearing that the battle is slipping through the Battalion's fingers, with dawn now broken and the element of surprise lost, he makes his way to the front of the fighting, taking shelter in a gully near the enemy positions. The machine-gun posts are positioned in a jagged pattern, giving the defenders a broad line of sight and making it nearly impossible for the paras to advance.

### 02 Contact with the enemy

A Company is caught in the open and becomes pinned down by severe sniper and machine gun fire from the high ground on the ridge. Several paratroopers are lost to deadly accurate snipers, while the machine-gun positions prevent them from moving forward any further. From their entrenched positions the Argentine forces have a clear advantage over the advancing paras. Despite numerous brave attempts, A Company is unable to advance on the enemy trenches and is forced into a crawling pace, kept at bay by the enemy.

### 01 Para advances

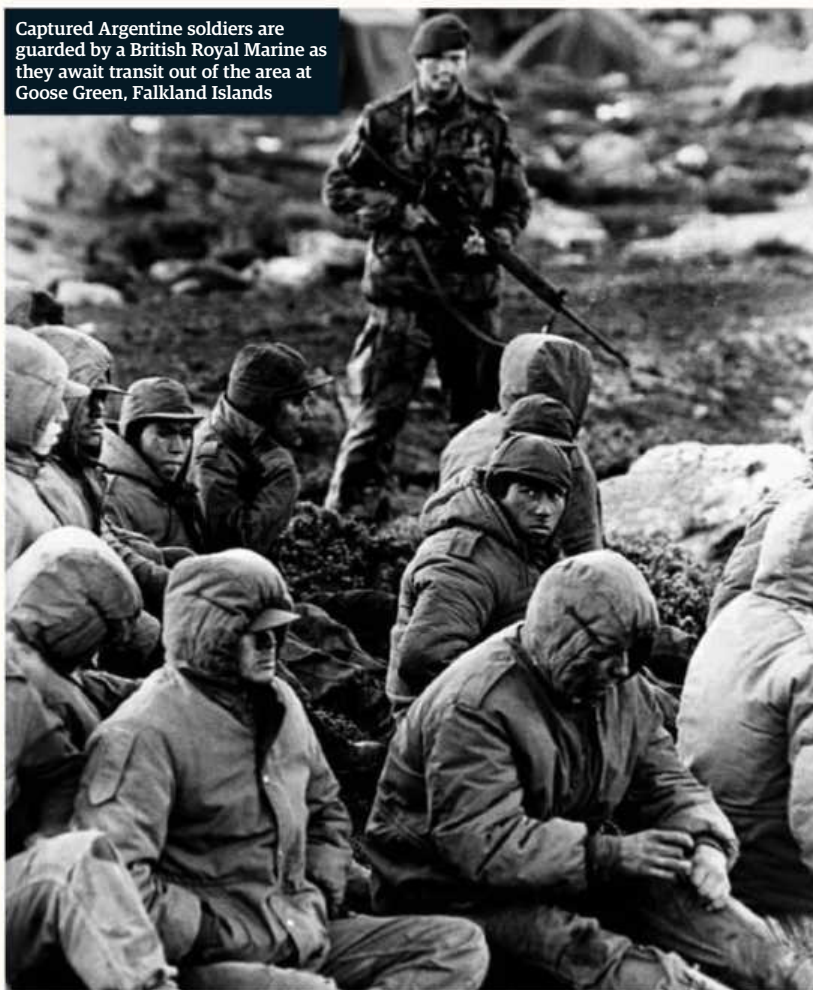
Just before dawn, 2 Para approaches the Argentine positions on Darwin Hill, with A Company moving towards the left flank. A single platoon takes up position in the direction of Coronation Point to provide covering fire and counter any attack from Darwin. B and D Companies move toward the right flank. As dawn begins to break, the Argentine positions open fire.

### Praise for a hero

"I believe in what H did, and I think he was very brave... If you are a leader of men, that's where you are: at the front" *Sara Jones, widow of Lt Col Jones*

"His intense commitment and profound sense of duty was likely to demand and secure the ultimate sacrifice" *John Wilsey, friend and biographer*

Captured Argentine soldiers are guarded by a British Royal Marine as they await transit out of the area at Goose Green, Falkland Islands



### The aftermath

Lieutenant-Colonel Jones was just one of 17 British and nearly 50 Argentine soldiers killed at the Battle of Goose Green. The first major land battle of the war had been brutal, but was heralded as a great success back in Britain. Over 900 Argentine POWs had been taken, the crucial airfield was secured and the civilian population of Goose Green liberated. Jones's body was buried in a battlefield grave nearby, before being transferred to the permanent military cemetery on the island, where it rests today. A memorial in tribute to him and the men of 2 Para now stands where the battle took place. The Falklands War would continue for another month, with the bitter fighting seeing scores more British and Argentine casualties until the occupying force garrisoned in Port Stanley finally surrendered on 14 June 1982.

# 25

# GREATEST LAST STANDS



A depiction of Custer's infamous last stand on the ridge - later known as Custer Ridge

Take a look back through military history to discover some of the most courageous final stands

In the heat of battle, the last stand is perhaps the ultimate act of heroism, or sheer desperation. Whether it's determination to preserve honour, or to defend the lives of others, taking that defiant stand against the odds - often facing death - is the stuff that legends of warfare are truly made of. Those who have made gallant last efforts to hold a position and continue the fight against the odds have done so with immense bravery, the likes of which is rare and worthy of a place in history.

To remind us of some of these inspirational acts, here are some of the greatest - from the ancient battles between Greeks and Persians, to the Battle of Waterloo and into the 20th century.



# BATTLE OF LITTLE BIGHORN

25-26 JUNE, 1876

GENERAL CUSTER'S CAVALRY ARE OVERPOWERED BY THE COMBINED FORCES OF INDIAN TRIBES, LEADING TO ONE OF THE US MILITARY'S MOST NOTORIOUS DEFEATS

Fought between the 7th Regiment of the US Cavalry and the Lakota Sioux, Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, the Battle of the Little Bighorn was part of a campaign to force Native Americans into reservations during the Great Sioux War.

In 1868 many Lakota leaders agreed to the Fort Laramie Treaty, agreeing to give up the nomadic life that often brought them into conflict with other tribes and US settlers. But some leaders, including Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, rejected the reservation system - leading to the government to hand matters over to the military.

General Philip Sheridan, commander of the Military Division of Southwest Missouri, devised a strategy to find and to engage the Lakota and Cheyenne, now considered hostile, hoping to force them back to the Great Sioux Reservation. Three forces of men numbering just under 2,500 were sent out to assist - this included the 7th Cavalry of Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer.

But it was harder than planned - communication between the three forces was problematic. Even worse, it was difficult to find the nomadic Indians, determine how long their villages would settle for, or in which direction they could travel next. At the time of the battle, the tribes had come together at a village in south-central Montana, strengthening their numbers considerably.

On 22 June, Custer and his 7th Cavalry split from the main force to approach the tribes from the east and south, preventing them from scattering. General Alfred Terry and Colonel John Gibbon, with their infantry and cavalry, would act as a blockade from the north.

Custer marched through the night and on the morning of 25 June, they positioned near the Wolf Mountains about 12 miles distant from the Native

## AGAINST THE ODDS

**Number of defenders:** 600 approx

**Number of attackers:** 1,800 approx

**Attacking advantage:** Greater numbers, skilled warriors, wide array of weaponry.

**Defending disadvantage:** Poor communication, divided numbers, unplanned charge into battle.

American encampment along the Little Bighorn River. Custer initially planned to hide and launch an attack at dawn, but believing they had already been detected, he ordered an immediate advance. There was around 8,000 Native Americans in total, 1,800 of which were warriors in the village.

Custer quartered the regiment, commanding a force of 210 men. Another group, led by Major Marcus Reno, was quickly forced to withdraw after being overpowered by Cheyenne and Sioux warriors and suffering heavy casualties. As they retreated on horseback, the warriors galloped alongside, pulling them off and shooting them.

Custer's men entered the village from the other side, but great numbers of Cheyenne and Sioux turned back and charged into them, forcing Custer back to a long high ridge.

The Oglala Sioux, under the command of Crazy Horse, doubled back and enveloped Custer's men, hammering them with arrows and gunfire. As the enemy closed in, Custer ordered his men to shoot their horses and stack the carcasses to form a wall, but this proved to be inadequate protection. Within an hour they were all dead.

General George A. Custer photographed in his Brigadier General uniform in 1863, 13 years before his death at Little Bighorn



## The Aftermath

One of the biggest disasters in American military history was an iconic but brutal victory for the Native Americans

The next day the combined forces of Terry and Gibbon arrived to relieve what remained of the 7th Cavalry. The bodies of Custer's men were found mostly naked and mutilated. Inexplicably, Custer's body was not scalped or mutilated, though likely because the warriors didn't know who he was. The Indian encampment broke up, with many of the number returning to reservations, sensing there would be significant backlash to the defeat and that their traditional way of life was largely over. What remained of the hostile Native American forces was defeated as the Great Sioux War ended in May the following year.



## MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE SEPTEMBER, 1918

FAMED FOR HIS SKILLS AT SHOOTING DOWN ENEMY OBSERVATION BALLOONS AND FIGHTER PLANES, LT. LUKE WAS ONE OF THE US ARMY'S TOP PILOTS – AND APPARENTLY FEARLESS

Arizona native Lt. Frank Luke, Jr (1897-1918) was one of the USA's top airmen during the First World War. In the three weeks leading up to his death, he was credited with shooting down 14 German observation balloons and four fighter planes - a record that was not beaten in the four-year war. He was also well known for disobeying orders and taking to the skies alone, which earned him a reputation among his fellow servicemen.

His final flight came in the first phase of the Allies' Meuse-Argonne Offensive on the Western Front. Lt. Luke took to the skies alone, heading behind enemy lines in the vicinity of Dun-sur-Meuse, north-east France. He was chased by eight aircraft and faced heavy ground fire, but still destroyed three observation balloons. He was hit in the chest by a machine gun while circling low to the ground and was forced to land his SPAD XIII biplane in a field near the village of Murvaux. On his way down, he strafed six German soldiers.

Despite his serious injury, Luke managed to scramble from his plane and attempted an escape,

but collapsed after just 200 yards. Defiant to the very end, he pulled out his revolver and fired at the German soldiers who had finally found and surrounded him. He then died from his gunshot wound to the chest.

He was the first airman to be ever awarded the Medal of Honor, and is remembered as one of the US Air Force's most-daring and dynamic pilots.



Lt. Frank Luke stands with the wreckage of one of his planes destroyed on a successful daredevil mission to bring down enemy balloons and aircraft



### AGAINST THE ODDS

**Number of defenders:** One

**Number of attackers:** Hundreds

**Attacking advantage:** After crash-landing in France, Lt. Luke was entirely alone with no back-up.

**Defending disadvantage:** Fatally wounded, six miles behind enemy lines, no the fighter ace had no automatic firepower

# SWISS GUARDSMEN FIGHT TO THE LAST

6 MAY, 1527

NUMBERS: ROMAN MILITIA: 20,000 SWISS GUARD: 500

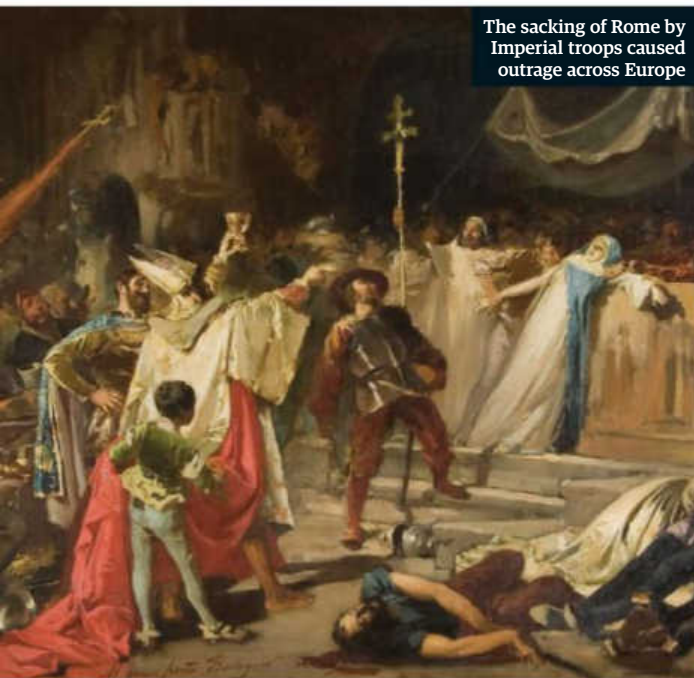
After defeating French invaders, Roman soldiers were incensed that Emperor Charles V couldn't pay them their wages. They mutinied in the thousands and headed to Rome to pillage its treasures and to murder Pope Clement VII.

As the mutineers ransacked the city, the Swiss Guards fought back, despite being significantly outnumbered. Down to just 183 men, the Guard formed a defensive square on the steps of St. Peter's Basilica, fighting off the mutinous soldiers. What followed was essentially a massacre, as the Imperial troops cut through the few but defiant Swiss Guards.

While the guards' efforts to hold the soldiers off long enough for the Pope to escape were successful, up to 12,000 people in Rome were killed. The event would mark the end of the Roman Renaissance, and irreparably damage the relationship between the Emperor and Catholic Church.



The sacking of Rome by Imperial troops caused outrage across Europe



## BATTLE OF KARBALA 10 OCTOBER, 680CE

In a battle that took place in what is now Iraq, the Umayyad caliph Yazid's army of thousands clashed with the grandson of Muhammad, Hussein Ibn Ali, and his followers - numbering just 70. All were killed while making their stand.

## BATTLE OF KOROMO RIVER 15 JUNE, 1189

Stood alone on the drawbridge of Koromogawa no tate, the warrior monk Saito Musashibo Benkei held back an entire army. Inside the castle, his lord had retreated to commit seppuku, having been defeated in a conflict with his own brother. Benkei killed over 300 men before he eventually died standing, riddled with arrows.



## PASIR PANJANG 13 FEBRUARY, 1942

In a combined Allied effort, 1,400 Malay, British and Australian soldiers battled 13,000 Japanese troops to save Singapore. In the dying hours, Malay Lieutenant Adnan Bin Saidi led a 42-man platoon against thousands. He was tortured and executed for causing unexpectedly high numbers of Japanese casualties.



## BATTLE OF CAMERON 30 APRIL, 1863

NUMBERS: MEXICO: 2,500 (APPROX) FOREIGN LEGION: 65

During the Siege of Puebla, Mexico, in 1863, France sent a shipment of supplies to Veracruz under the protection of the 3rd company of the Foreign Regiment. The company, whose mission was an effort to support Napoleon III's campaign, would become the foundation of the Legion's unofficial, and somewhat morbid, motto: "The Legion dies, it does not surrender".

When Captain Jean Danjou and his company were ambushed by a Mexican force, the French troops retreated to a nearby hacienda, beginning

a siege that would last over ten hours. The legionnaires stood with their backs to the wall, fighting until only five of them remained.

The men fixed bayonets to their weapons and charged, shouting "Vive l'France!" The last two were overpowered, but they negotiated their surrender to keep their regimental colours and weapons, carrying their dead, and having their wounded lieutenant treated. The French Foreign Legion continues to celebrate the gallant effort each year on 30 April, known as Camerone Day.



## BATTLE OF HASTINGS

14 OCTOBER, 1066

After William the Conqueror feigned a retreat, King Harold's infantry followed and were ambushed in the open field. Harold and his housecarl bodyguards stood fast on the ridge, awaiting William's final charge. Harold was killed with an arrow to the eye and the Saxon forces retreated. The housecarls surrounded the king's body and fought to their death.



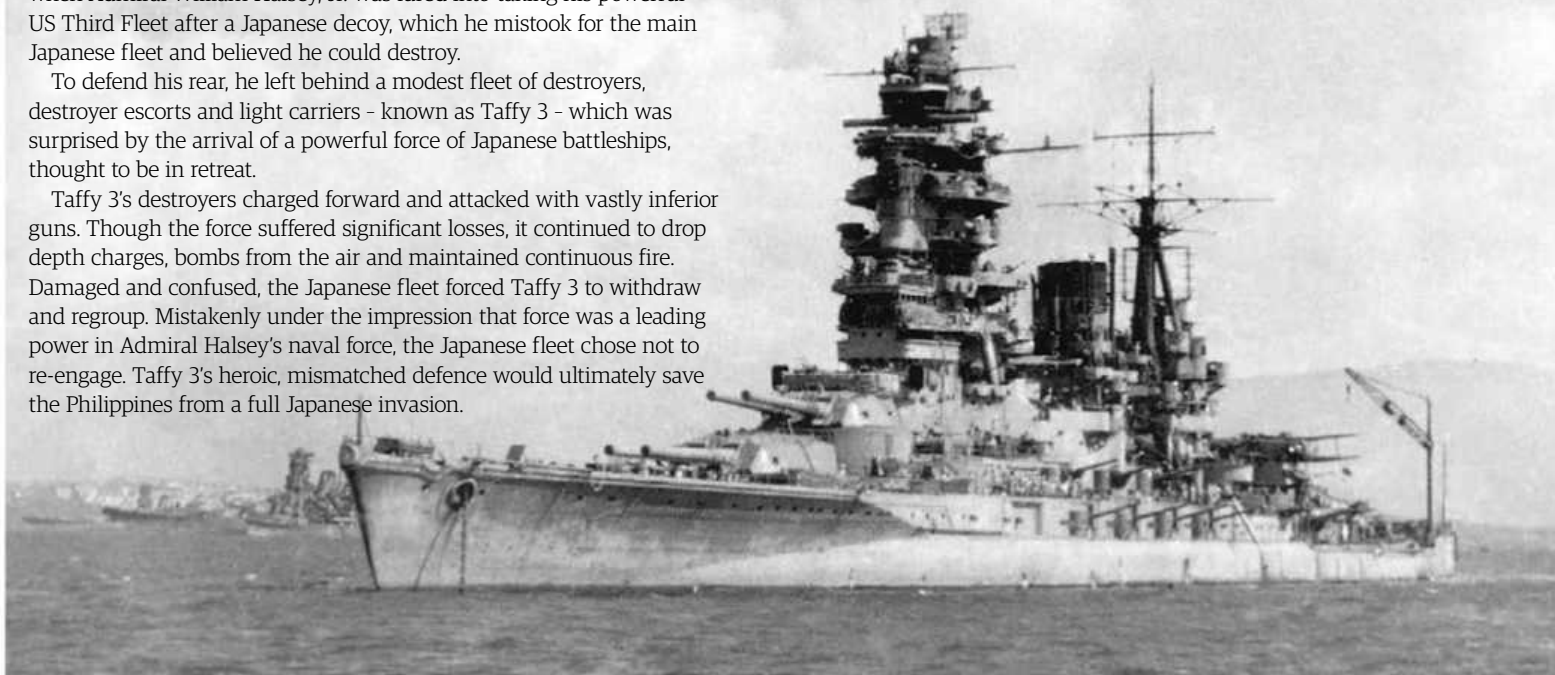
## BATTLE OFF SAMAR 25 OCTOBER, 1944

NUMBERS: JAPAN: 4 BATTLESHIPS, 6 HEAVY CRUISERS, 2 LIGHT CRUISERS, 11 DESTROYERS, KAMIKAZE US: 6 ESCORT CARRIERS, 3 DESTROYERS, 4 DESTROYER ESCORTS, AIRCRAFT

Known as one of naval history's greatest mismatches, the battle began when Admiral William Halsey, Jr. was lured into taking his powerful US Third Fleet after a Japanese decoy, which he mistook for the main Japanese fleet and believed he could destroy.

To defend his rear, he left behind a modest fleet of destroyers, destroyer escorts and light carriers - known as Taffy 3 - which was surprised by the arrival of a powerful force of Japanese battleships, thought to be in retreat.

Taffy 3's destroyers charged forward and attacked with vastly inferior guns. Though the force suffered significant losses, it continued to drop depth charges, bombs from the air and maintained continuous fire. Damaged and confused, the Japanese fleet forced Taffy 3 to withdraw and regroup. Mistakenly under the impression that force was a leading power in Admiral Halsey's naval force, the Japanese fleet chose not to re-engage. Taffy 3's heroic, mismatched defence would ultimately save the Philippines from a full Japanese invasion.





# BATTLE OF ARNHEM

17-26 SEPTEMBER, 1944

SURROUNDED AND WITH LITTLE FIREPOWER, A SMALL BAND OF PARATROOPERS OVERCOME THE ODDS FOR FOUR BLOODY DAYS

After charging through France and Belgium in the summer, one last natural barrier stood between the Allied troops and Germany - the River Rhine. From the Allies' need to conquer this barrier came Operation Market Garden.

Masterminded by General Bernard Montgomery, commander of the British forces in Europe, Market Garden was one of the boldest plans of the Second World War. 30,000 British and American airborne troops were to be flown behind enemy lines to capture the eight bridges across a network of canals and rivers on the border of Holland and Germany. At the same time, British tanks and infantry planned to push up a narrow road from the Allied front to these key bridges. They would relieve the airborne troops and cross the bridges.

The troops set to make the drop were from the First Allied Airborne Army, which included one British and two American divisions. They would drop into the towns of Eindhoven, Nijmegen and Arnhem to take the bridges, which would give them an advantage.

But there were problems; unknown to Allied intelligence, two SS Panzer divisions were stationed around Arnhem, with many tanks and vehicles; also, the Allies had too few aircraft to deliver all their troops at once. They would be dropped over three days, at a site seven miles away to avoid anti-aircraft guns, therefore losing the element of surprise. Though the drop was successful, the journey to Arnhem was much more problematic.

As Allied troops collected up their equipment and headed towards Arnhem, Wehrmacht forces were quick to regroup and organise their efforts against the airborne troops. The German infantry was determined, and made a defensive perimeter

near-impenetrable for many of the Allied battalions. Adding to the problems, the Allies quickly discovered their radios weren't working, which broke down all communication and the ability to co-ordinate the attack. The XXX Corps, which had been following the Allied aircraft from the ground, had made slow progress and not reached any of the bridges to offer support.

Despite German resistance, some American forces reached their designated bridges only to find they'd been destroyed. One British battalion - just over 700 men led by Lieutenant Colonel John Frost - made it through to Arnhem bridge, and by evening captured the northern end. However, their numbers were relatively small and they were only lightly armed. Soon they found they were cut off from the rest of their division and were surrounded by the 9th SS Panzer division.

As American forces spent the next few days trying to reach their British allies at Arnhem bridge, they suffered huge losses. Despite this, British paratroopers held their position at the north end of the bridge for four days, short on basic supplies, massively outnumbered and still awaiting delayed reinforcements. The paratroopers surprised German forces with their continued counterattacks and despite the merciless artillery



Aerial view of the bridge over the Neder Rijn, Arnhem - British troops and destroyed German armoured vehicles are visible at the north end of the bridge

fire they refused to give up their position. By the time the Americans took the Nijmegen bridge, it was too late for the paratroopers - the enemy had moved tanks into the town, demolishing the houses in which the British were fighting. With limited anti-tank weapons, no food and most crucially little ammunition, it was only a matter of time before the British would capitulate.

On the fourth day, the paratroopers were overpowered. Those who weren't wounded or captured had little choice but to withdraw, retreating to the village of Oosterbeek, where a small pocket of British troops were holding out. The Allied troops had overstretched their efforts, earning the event the moniker of "a bridge too far".

## The Aftermath

The British paratroopers' efforts are a remarkable event in what was an overall disaster

Of the 10,000 men who landed at Arnhem, 1,400 would be killed and over 6,000 captured. Just a couple of thousand paratroopers would escape, safely crossing to the south bank of the Rhine in small rubber boats. Though a valiant effort from the airborne troops, it was a dark time for the British army and would halt the progress of the Allied campaign. General Montgomery had intended to end the war by December 1944 on the back of Market Garden, but instead it would be four months before the Allies successfully crossed the Rhine, with the war raging on until September 1945.

Four British paratroopers moving through a destroyed house in Oosterbeek where they retreated after being driven out of Arnhem



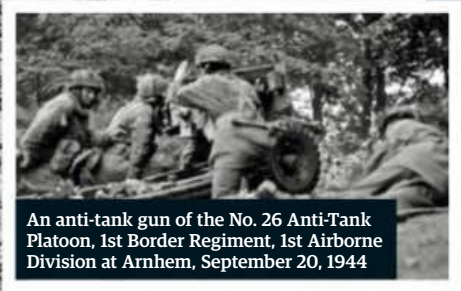
## AGAINST THE ODDS

**Number of defenders:** 745

**Number of attackers:** 8,000 approx

**Attacking advantage:** Reinforced defensive lines, superior firepower and vehicles, much greater numbers.

**Defending disadvantage:** Cut off from other divisions, poor communication equipment, insufficient supplies and a poor supply of ammunition.



An anti-tank gun of the No. 26 Anti-Tank Platoon, 1st Border Regiment, 1st Airborne Division at Arnhem, September 20, 1944

## BATTLE OF WIZNA

7-10 SEPTEMBER 1939

In a phenomenal show of resistance to the Nazi invasion, 720 recent Polish conscripts battled to defend the village of Wizna. It had been fortified before the war, but was put to the test when 42,200 Germans brought in tanks and artillery. Though outnumbered by 60 to 1, the Poles held Wizna for three days.

## BATTLE OF SAIPAN

15 JUNE-9 JULY 1944

NUMBERS: JAPANESE: 5,000 (APPROX) USA: ONE

The Battle of Saipan was fought between thousands for a whole month, as the USA and Japan battled to occupy islands in the Pacific. However, it's the heroic actions of one 28-year-old private, Thomas Baker, that are remembered as one of the US Army's greatest last stands.

On expedition to retake the island of Mariana, Pvt. Baker's company was attacked by 5,000 Japanese troops. Though overpowered, Baker held the line - taking out many soldiers single-handedly, breaking his own rifle by using it as a club and at one point charging 100 yards ahead of his unit with a bazooka to destroy a Japanese emplacement. In the closing moments of the Japanese assault, as the company was surrounded, Baker became seriously wounded.

Though he had been dragged from battle, Baker insisted on being propped against a tree in a sitting position, where he was left with his service pistol and eight rounds of ammunition.

This is where his body was found some time later, in the same position, but with the gun empty and eight dead Japanese soldiers around him. He was posthumously promoted to Sergeant and awarded the prestigious Medal of Honor.



## TEXAS DEFENDS THE ALAMO MISSION

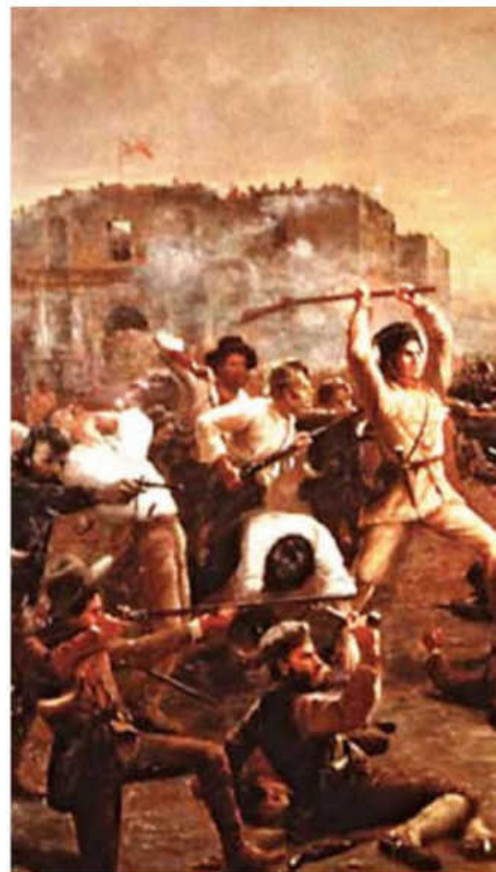
23 FEB-6 MAR, 1836

NUMBERS: MEXICO: 2,000 (APPROX) TEXAS: 189 (APPROX)

In the final days of the Texas Revolution - a territorial conflict between the Mexican government and Texas colonists - poorly armed Texan rebels defended the old Spanish mission from one of Mexico's finest generals, Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna. Driven out in the months before, the Mexican troops had returned to reclaim Texas, but the hopelessly outnumbered Texans, including frontiersman David Crockett and James Bowie, fought back, beginning a siege that lasted 13 days.

On the final day, Santa Anna launched a surprise pre-dawn attack - a full assault on the mission that forced the Texan defenders to retreat as they were overpowered by the Mexican cavalry. The last of the Texans to die were 11 men manning a cannon in the chapel, bayoneted to death as Mexican soldiers broke through the doors.

It was a hugely significant event in Texan history, as the Republic of Texas was declared an independent nation during the time of the siege, leading to its eventual annexation into the United States of America. The Battle of the Alamo is symbolic of unshakable Texan pride in the face of adversity.



## THE 101ST AIRBORNE HOLDS BASTOGNE 20-27 DECEMBER, 1944

JUST DAYS AFTER THE EXHAUSTED AND ILL-EQUIPPED 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION ARRIVED IN BASTOGNE, IT BECAME SURROUNDED - FIGHTING TO DEFEND THE TOWN'S ALL-IMPORTANT CROSSROADS

Following the Normandy Invasion, the German Wehrmacht had lost the harbour at Antwerp - to re-take it, Hitler initiated the Battle of the Bulge, part of which included his forces seizing control of the Belgian town of Bastogne. Numerous important roads passed through the town, making it of strategic importance to both sides.

The 101st Airborne arrived in Bastogne on 18 December and two days later, German forces mounted a surprise attack through the Ardennes mountains; they surrounded the town and on 20

December commenced artillery fire. The following day, all roadways into Bastogne were cut off.

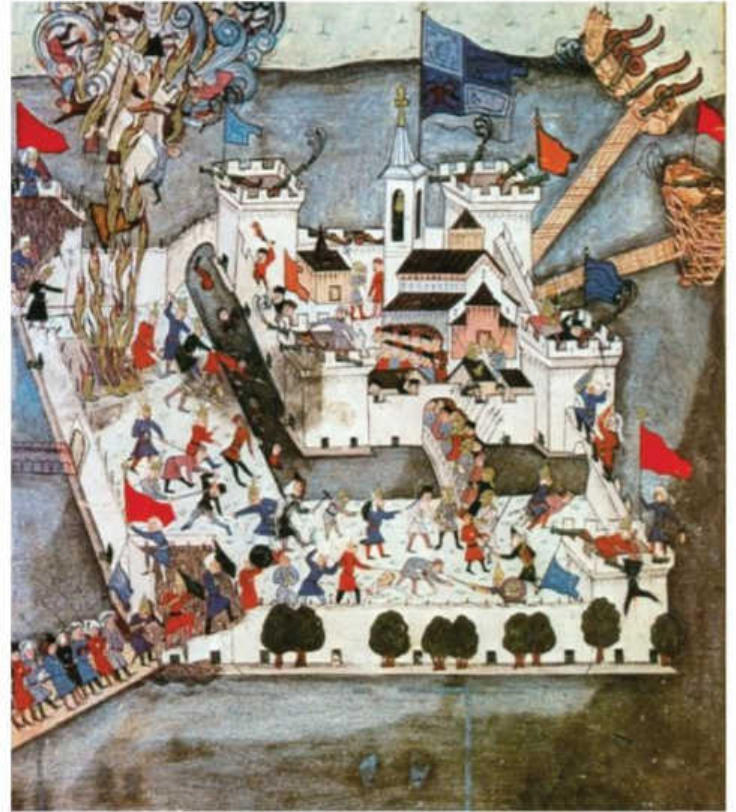
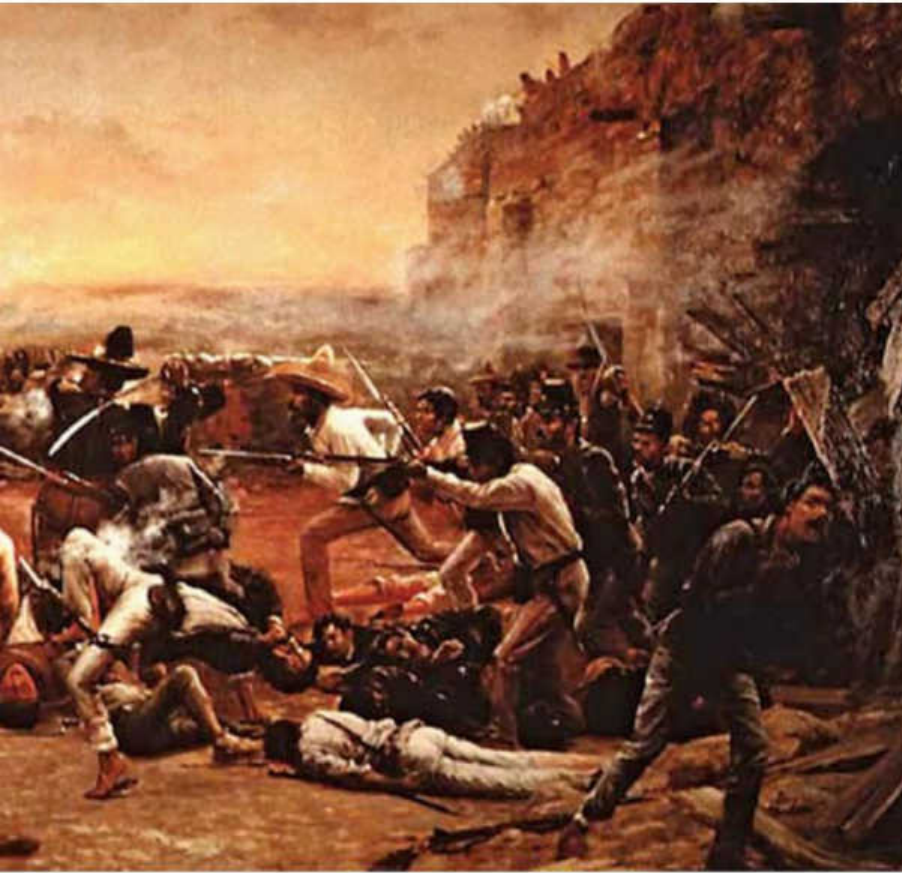
The enemy also dropped bombs on the town, but the 101st stood fast and refused to concede its lines. On 22 December, German commander Lt. Gen. Heinrich Freiherr von Luttwitz sent in two surrendering soldiers with a note demanding the Americans' surrender, to which Brig. Gen. Anthony McAuliffe famously exclaimed: "Nuts!"

The weather cleared and supplies could be airlifted to the US troops. Mistakes by the German attackers also helped the American survival - troops were moved towards the town of Meuse, weakening the circle and helping the 101st hold the crossroads. After seven days of fighting, parts of General Patton's Third Army arrived, breaking the German encirclement and ending the siege.

The successfully defended siege proved a defining victory for the US and turned the tide not just in the Battle of the Bulge, but the whole war. From here, Allied forces advanced, marking the beginning of the end for Nazi Germany.

German soldiers who attempted to storm the 101st Airborne in Bastogne lie dead on the ground after being cut down by machine gun fire





## SIEGE OF SZIGETVÁR

5 AUG-7 SEPT, 1666

As Ottoman Emperor Suleiman the Magnificent pushed into Hungary, he met Count Nikola Zrinski, whose 2,500 men held an army of 100,000 off the Szigetvár fortress for a month. Before his death, Zrinski booby-trapped the fortress with explosives, killing thousands of Ottoman soldiers as they eventually stormed the building.

### AGAINST THE ODDS

**Number of defenders:** 12,000 approx

**Number of attackers:** 54,000 approx

**Attacking advantage:** Much larger numbers encircling the 101st Airborne, with superior equipment and access to supplies.

**Defending disadvantage:** Lack of sufficient winter clothing, no supplies due to weather, exhaustion from prior combat in Holland.

## BATTLE OF SHIROYAMA

24 SEPTEMBER, 1877

In the final battle of the Satsuma Rebellion - in which samurai revolted against the new imperialist government - Saigo Takamori and his 300 samurai were surrounded by 30,000 armed imperial troops. The samurai fought with their bows and katanas, but eventually succumbed to an artillery bombardment. The samurai all perished, ending the rebellion.



Soldiers of the US 101st Division march out of Bastogne in the snow during or just after the siege

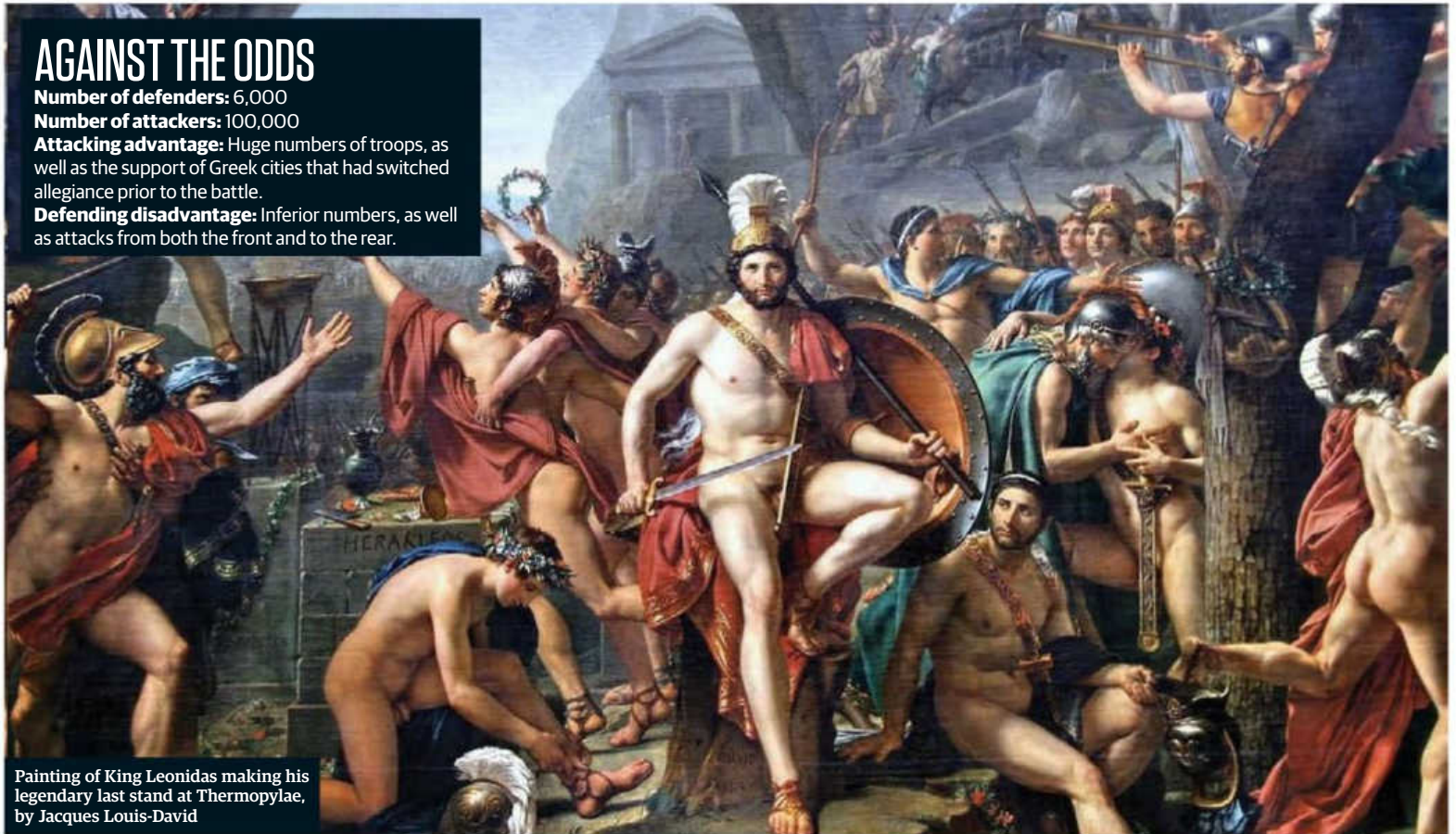
## AGAINST THE ODDS

**Number of defenders:** 6,000

**Number of attackers:** 100,000

**Attacking advantage:** Huge numbers of troops, as well as the support of Greek cities that had switched allegiance prior to the battle.

**Defending disadvantage:** Inferior numbers, as well as attacks from both the front and to the rear.



Painting of King Leonidas making his legendary last stand at Thermopylae, by Jacques-Louis-David

## BATTLE OF THERMOPYLAE 480BCE

AS THE GREEKS WENT TO WAR WITH THE INVADING PERSIANS, SPARTAN KING LEONIDAS LED A SMALL ARMY TO NEAR VICTORY

The Persian king Xerxes' invasion of Greece in 480BCE forced the cities to unite in battle. With Spartan king Leonidas leading the charge, they made the decision to defend a narrow pass between the mountains and the sea, called Thermopylae.

The Persians arrived at the pass, but several days went by without battle. When a scout was sent to find out the Greek position, he returned to say the Spartans were combing their hair and exercising. King Xerxes was warned - they were preparing for war. Finally, the Persians launched the attack.

The Greek army defended the pass from behind a wall blocking the path, from behind which it successfully fended off wave after wave of attacking Persians. In the narrow space, the Persian horde couldn't utilise its greater numbers and the Greeks' longer spears proved highly efficient. Occasionally the

Greeks feigned retreat, only to turn and overpower the Persians who had been tricked into pursuit.

After two days, a Greek traitor revealed a pathway leading behind Leonidas' men, enabling the Persians to execute a sneak attack. The Spartan warriors among the Greek forces refused to flee despite this disadvantage, and chose to fight on. Eventually, they withdrew to a nearby hillock and battled with what strength they had left. Before long the sheer number of Persian soldiers became too great and volleys of arrows overwhelmed the Spartans.

The Persian army went on to march into central Greece, causing havoc and destruction and conquering most of the country. However, Leonidas and his men became martyrs, boosting the Greeks' morale in their efforts to repel Xerxes' invading forces - eventually expelling them the next year.

## DEFENSE OF BREST FORTRESS 22-29 JUNE, 1941

NUMBERS: SOVIET: 9,000 (APPROX) AXIS: 20,000 (APPROX)

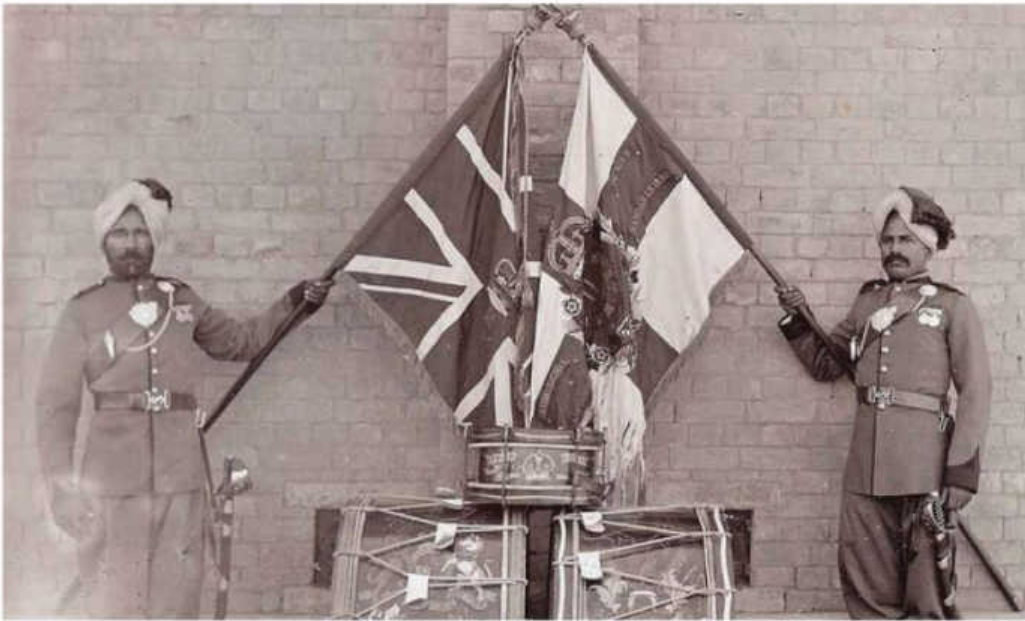
In one of the first battles of the pivotal Operation Barbarossa, Soviet troops and civilians made one of the Second World War's most defining and courageous last stands.

Launching a surprise attack of Brest Fortress, in Belarus on the Russian-Polish border, Axis forces initiated their first major battle with Soviet forces. In addition to the 9,000 Soviet soldiers, border guards and NKVD operatives inside the fortress, there were 300 family members of the soldiers - who helped by reloading guns, providing food and even fighting.

As the battle raged for seven days, the Soviets developed defensive encampments in the fortress that held back the Germans, who suffered heavy casualties - over 1,000 dead or wounded.

The fortress finally fell on 29 June. The Soviet forces lost 2,000 men and nearly 7,000 captured, but the fortress remained a symbol of Soviet strength. The battle itself, meanwhile, was a precursor to the Nazis' struggle in trying to take the USSR.





## BATTLE OF SARAGARHI

12 SEPTEMBER, 1897

NUMBERS: PASHTUNS: 10,000 SIKHS: 21

The British struggled to hold India, and it often proved too big for British government to control. In 1897 it faced one of its biggest challenges yet - an attack at the North-West Frontier Province, part of British India and today part of Pakistan. The area was occupied by the tribal Pashtuns, who had rejected British rule.

In September 1897, Pashtuns launched an attack, charging the signalling post in Saragarhi to cut off communication between British forts.

The post was defended by a small band of Sikhs, just 21 individuals from the 36th Sikh Regiment, who all chose to fight to the death, using up all of their ammunition before taking on the attackers in hand-to-hand combat. They killed nearly 600 Pashtuns before eventually being overpowered.

The Pashtun rising was crushed two days later under heavy artillery fire. The 36th Sikh Regiment continues to commemorate the battle every year on 12 September.

## SIEGE OF JADOTVILLE

SEPTEMBER, 1961

NUMBERS: CONGOLESE: 5,000 IRISH: 150

On a United Nations peacekeeping mission during the Katanga conflict in the Congo, a company of Irish support troops was deployed to the city of Jadotville, arriving without support staff or adequate supplies.

On a Sunday morning, while the mostly Catholic troops were attending mass, a band of mercenaries and local tribesmen loyal to Katangese Prime Minister Moïse Tshombe attacked the UN troops' outpost.



The attackers came with aircraft and mortar support, while the Irish had light anti-personnel weapons and antiquated Vickers machine guns. The besieged troops famously reported: "We will hold out until our last bullet is spent. Could do with some whiskey."

The Katangese attacked in waves of 600, but the Irish response was effective and precise, concentrating its fire on Katangese machine gun and mortar posts.

Under the bombardment, the Irish held out for six days, killing 300 of the attackers and wounding up to 1,000 more, before being forced to surrender when they exhausted their ammunition. It was the only time since the creation of the Irish state that its troops had been in combat with another nation.

## BATTLE OF THE IMJIN RIVER

22-25 APRIL, 1951

A year into the Korean War, 10,000 Chinese troops attacked a small UN defensive line. The isolated Gloucestershire Regiment - just 650 men, immortalised as "the Glorious Glosters" - took the worst of it. They withdrew and reformed on a nearby hill, where they stood and fought for 24 hours, until being ordered to retreat. Of the 650, only 40 escaped.

A squad of the 3rd Ranger Co., 3rd Infantry Division, moves out of assembly area to probe Chinese Communist territory north of the Imjin River, Korea. 17 April 1951



## THE OLD GUARD AT WATERLOO

18 JUNE, 1815

As the British pushed back Napoleon's Imperial Guards, charging forward with bayonets fixed, it looked certain that the French were defeated. All that remained was the Old Guard, which had been waiting in reserve. They stood their ground, until relentless attacks eventually left none alive.



The Battle of Rorke's Drift as painted by Alphonse de Neuville in 1880. The public's image of the battle would be shaped by the film *Zulu* (1964)



## BATTLE OF RORKE'S DRIFT 22-23 JANUARY, 1879

A SMALL BRITISH POST IS CHARGED BY THOUSANDS OF ZULU WARRIORS – LEADING TO ONE OF THE BRITISH MILITARY'S MOST CELEBRATED VICTORIES

Intent on establishing a colony, British forces invaded Zululand and sought out the army of Zulu king Cetshwayo. Underestimating the Zulus' fighting abilities, the British divided and suffered a surprise attack at Isandlwana, losing almost 1,700 men. Then the Zulu Army proceeded across the Buffalo River to Rorke's Drift, where the British had already established a depot and hospital.

Using bags of maize, canned food, and biscuit boxes as makeshift barricades, the British soldiers at Rorke's Drift – which famously included Colonel John Chard, Major Gonville Bromhead, and Corporal William Allen – held back the Zulus with their gunfire. Any enemy warrior that managed to climb the barricades was repelled with bayonets. British soldiers too wounded to fight – including those who had made it back from Isandlwana – helped reload the guns and distribute ammunition. Some Zulus eventually broke into the hospital and speared the patients within, though they

were eventually fought off and the surviving patients rescued.

After 12 hours of fighting the Zulus eventually retreated, leaving behind 400 dead. But the British soldiers were by this point low on ammunition – if the Zulus were to mount another attack, it was likely they would break through.

The last stand was held up as a definitive act of British heroism and a welcome means

of boosting public morale in the face of the Isandlwana massacre. The survivors of Rorke's Drift were awarded 11 Victoria Crosses and five Distinguished Conduct Medal. Zululand was declared a British territory the following year. The battle became a popular story in British military history and a powerful example of how a courageous last stand on the battlefield can overshadow other losses.

### AGAINST THE ODDS

**Number of defenders:** 139

**Number of attackers:** 4,000

**Attacking advantage:** Superior numbers, high ground, knowledge of the terrain.

**Defending disadvantage:** Defenders weren't the soldiering elite, mostly made up from cooks, engineers, and supply clerks.



British survivors standing on the battlefield at Rorke's Drift

# BATTLE OF STAMFORD BRIDGE 25 SEPTEMBER, 1066

THREE WEEKS BEFORE THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS, KING HAROLD DEFEATED ANOTHER INVASION – THOUGH HE WAS NEARLY HALTED BY JUST ONE VIKING WARRIOR



Arbo: Battle of Stamford Bridge by Peter Nicolai Arbo (1870). Notice the arrow to the Viking King Hardrada's throat in the centre of the battle

## AGAINST THE ODDS

**Number of defenders:** An army of 6,000 approx – whittled down to just one

**Number of attackers:** Between 10,000-12,000 men

**Attacking advantage:** Harold's army took the Viking invaders by surprise with greater numbers, mostly mounted on horseback.

**Defending disadvantage:** The Vikings had removed protective clothing in the heat and are thought to have divided, thus weakening their ranks.

The Viking King Harald Hardrada, challenger to the English throne, had landed in Yorkshire accompanied by the English King Harold's brother, Earl Tostig. The Vikings defeated Morcar, Earl of Northumberland and Edwin, Earl of Mercia in a battle, before receiving the surrender of York.

Of course the other infamous claimant to the throne, William of Normandy, maintained Edward the Confessor had promised him the

English throne before his death. Aware of the Viking invasion, William decided to delay his own invasion until Harold was at his most vulnerable, dealing with Hardrada in the North.

King Harold was in a difficult position – he anticipated the arrival of William in the south any day. Would he travel north to deal with the Vikings, or stay where he was to await William's attack? Harold chose to march north, hoping to defeat Hardrada and the Vikings before returning south in time to meet William.

Hardrada travelled to Stamford Bridge, where he had agreed to exchange hostages. Expecting Harold to remain in the south under the threat of Norman invasion, the Viking king left a third of his troops and armour at his base camp at Riccall on the River Ouse.

Harold's army, most likely mounted troops, reached York on the morning of September 25. Reinforced by what remained of Morcar's and Edwin's forces, he marched to Stamford Bridge, taking Hardrada completely by surprise.

Harold's army charged towards the Vikings, devastating them immediately. Those who weren't killed immediately struggled to pull their armour on and make a defensive line. They managed to form a circle to hold back the English, but the ambush had already laid waste to many of their number – deciding the outcome of the bloody battle long before it was finished.

The advance of Harold's army was delayed by the need to pass through the narrow chokepoint of the bridge. Blocking the way was one lone Viking, an anonymous warrior who stood wielding a great axe. Harold's troops tried to cross, but the

lone Viking cut down every one who challenged him. He held this position for over an hour, single-handedly killing up to 40 English soldiers.

Unable to defeat him face-to-face, Harold's men had to come up with an alternative means of chopping down the warrior. One of the English soldiers floated a barrel in the river below, paddling under the bridge. From this position he thrust a spear through the wooden slats of the bridge, stabbing the Viking in the groin and mortally wounding him.

Finally, the English soldiers could advance. They found the Norse army formed into a shield wall, leading to brutal hand-to-hand combat that lasted for hours. But it was already too late for the Vikings: Harald Hardrada was killed with an arrow to the throat and the treacherous Earl Tostig slain on the battlefield. It was to be a victory for the English.

## WAKE ISLAND

8-23 DECEMBER, 1941

The day after Pearl Harbor, the Pacific outpost of Wake Island was attacked by around 30 Japanese aircraft. But a small combined force of US marines, sailors and civilians fended off the Japanese's first landing attempt, sinking two destroyers and damaging a cruiser. The Japanese succeeded in taking the island on 23 December, but lost up to 1,000 men.



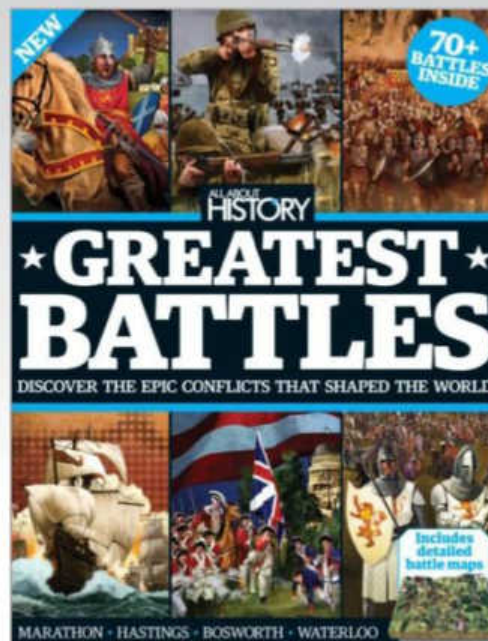
## The Aftermath

Despite the lone Viking's efforts, the battle was a decisive victory FOR Harold

The lone Viking's last stand was seemingly Harold's biggest obstacle in the battle. Overall the victory proved Harold to be an able commander, while his troops – particularly the housecarls – proved themselves highly skilled. The victory at Stamford Bridge will forever be linked to Harold's defeat at the Battle of Hastings, which took place less than three weeks later. Had Harold not been forced to leave William's landing in the south unopposed, later facing him with an army that had suffered losses and was stricken by fatigue, then the outcome could have been very different.

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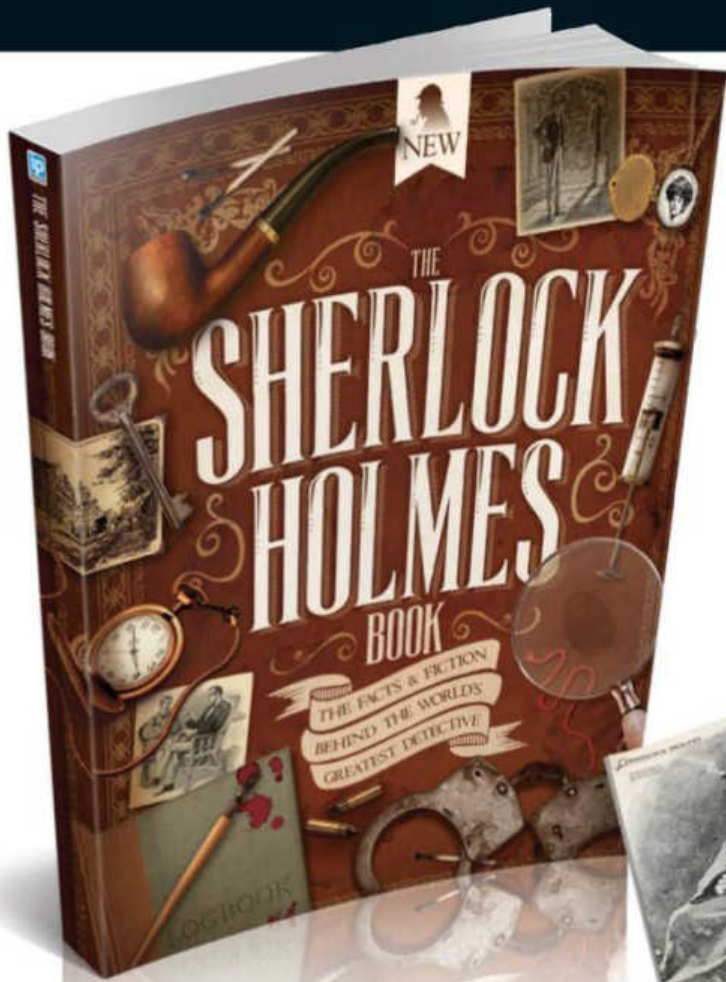
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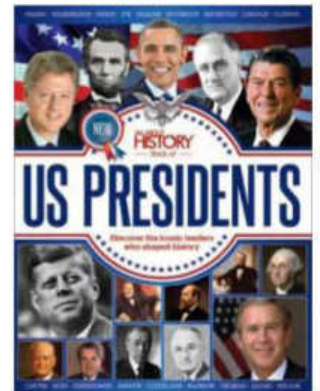
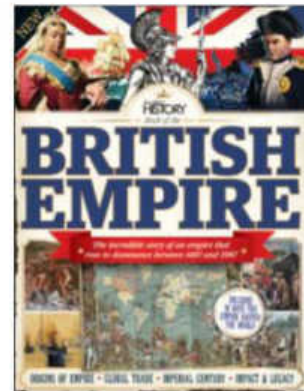


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