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The Battle of Kharkov

WW II Eastern Front (12-27 May 1942)

Sidney E. Dean

The city of Kharkov in the Ukraine was taken by the Wehrmacht's Army Group South on 24 October 1941 as part of the drive on the Donets River, following the Soviet defeat around Kiev in September. Kharkov's position as a major transport hub and heavy industry center made it a strategic target. Its geographic location also predestined Kharkov as a jumping off point for further German offensives.

The German advance suffered setbacks during the winter of 1941/42. On 19 January 1942 the Red Army struck at Army Group South, concentrating on the area south of Kharkov, between the German Sixth and Seventeenth Armies. The Soviets achieved little result, except for creating a bulge between the two armies west of Izyum.

On 23 February, a lull set in along the entire German-Soviet Front while both sides prepared upcoming operations. In April, in accordance with planning for Operation BLAU (BLUE), Army Group South split into Army Groups "A" and "B". Army Group "A", under Field Marshal Wilhelm List, was to strike into the Caucasus while Army Group "B", under Field Marshal Fedor von Bock, covered this thrust with an offensive along the Don River to Stalingrad. The boundary between the new groups lay south of Kharkov. General Erich von Manstein's Eleventh Army opened a preliminary offensive in Crimea on 8 May.

Meanwhile, Marshal Semion Timoshenko, the commander of the Southwestern Front (army group), massed forces at Izyum and at St. Salchow-Voltchansk, southeast and northeast of Kharkov, respectively, in preparation for a pincer attack to retake the city and then drive to the Dnieper River some 100 miles to the West.

The battle of Kharkov can be divided into three phases:

12-16 May: Soviet attack

17-22 May: German counterattack

23-27 May: Destruction of Soviet forces

Soviet-era map of the tactical situation on 11 May 1942.



Phase One: 12-16 May

On 12 May, after a massive artillery preparation, Timoshenko launched the assault with twenty-three infantry divisions, five armored divisions, and twelve cavalry divisions, plus an additional eight armored brigades and a motorized brigade. The main thrust with the bulk of the armor and cavalry was in the southeast.

On 13 May, the assault broke through the initial German defenses and reached Kharkov, forcing the remaining intact German perimeter units to withdraw

Kharkov, cont. from p. 2

to the city to prevent being cut off. Soviet cavalry units then branched off from the southern pincer to move westward against Krasnograd on 16 May. By that point, however, the Luftwaffe air strikes redirected from the Crimea had done much to blunt the Soviet drive.

Phase Two: 17-22 May

The Germans and their allies launched the counterattack on 17 May with a northward stroke at the rear of the southernmost Soviet elements. The thrust was spearheaded by the German First Panzer Army, driving from Slovyansk-Alexandrovka, followed by the Seventeenth and Sixth Armies attacking from the west and northwest. Within twenty-four hours the Axis armor thrust forty kilometers through the Soviet rear, driving to the Donets River. Timoshenko ceased offensive operations on 21 May in the face of encirclement, but he reacted too slowly. On 22 May, the Germans sealed the "cauldron," trapping three Soviet armies west of Izyum. On that same day, Soviet forces northeast of Kharkov withdrew over the Donets River to their pre-offensive positions, harassed by smaller-scale Axis attacks.

Phase Three: 23-27 May

Starting 23 May, the Axis forces systematically started tightening the ring. Repeated Russian attempts to break out and run for the Donets failed. Relief efforts by armor-supported infantry divisions from east of the Donets could not break the ring from the outside. As the circle tightened, the Red Army positions increasingly assumed the role of a shooting range for the Wehrmacht. The Luftwaffe took the opportunity to battle-test their new 30mm Mk-101 cannon mounted on the Henschel Hs-129 ground-attack aircraft. The cannon's tungsten-core shells accounted for a major portion of Russian tank losses at Kharkov.

On 26 May, the Germans split the cauldron. By 27 May the demoralized, disorganized Soviets were defeated, with only pockets of resistance remaining to be mopped up over the next few days. The Red Army lost twenty infantry divisions, seven cavalry divisions, and fourteen armored brigades. The Wehrmacht took 240,000 prisoners, 2,026 guns, and 1,249 tanks. The commanders of the Sixth and Fifty-seventh Soviet Armies numbered among the dead. The Wehrmacht lost no time in exploiting the victory, resuming offensive operations according to plan, capturing the areas around Volchansk and Izyum-Kupyansk in June

as preparation for Operation BLAU, which began 28 June.

Significance of the Battle for Kharkov

The impact of the May 1942 battle for Kharkov was far-reaching. The Soviet attack was intended as the first in a series of preliminary offensives which were to build up to a general Russian offensive. Success here would have paved the way for Soviet thrusts along the entire front. Even a localized Soviet victory, restricted to the southwest, would have hampered the German ability to launch Operation BLAU, for which Kharkov was a vital base. It also would have opened a path for cutting the German lines of communication in the southern sector.

The German victory bolstered Wehrmacht morale after the setbacks of the 1941/1942 winter operations and the failure to take Moscow the previous year. Germany retained the initiative for summer operations. The destruction of three armies weakened Soviet forces in the region by 30 percent, facilitating the subsequent German drive. The offensive also depleted Soviet supplies, and created a bulge for the Axis forces to exploit, easing their drive into the Don-Donets-Corridor.

Several factors contributed to the outcome of the battle. The Red Army had dispersed its forces along the entire front from Leningrad to south of Kharkov in expectation of launching a front-wide offensive. This weakened the Soviet striking power. Expecting a renewed German offensive to be launched against Moscow, the Soviets placed the greater part of their reserves in the central sector, too far away to support Timoshenko when he needed assistance. The Izyum bridgehead was not provided sufficient forces to make it a stable platform for offensive operations against a well-prepared enemy.

The Germans, planning to launch Operation BLAU in late June, were in a high state of readiness when the Soviet attack came. The 17 May counterattack by the First Panzer Army occurred quickly because such a thrust was already planned, as part of Operation FRIDERICUS, to destroy the Soviet salient at Izyum in preparation for Operation BLAU.

The May 1942 Battle of Kharkov demonstrated effective cooperation between Germans and their allies. In addition to German forces, von Bock had a Rumanian Corps and Italian, Hungarian, and Slovak units in defensive positions south of Kharkov. A Croatian regiment earned special citation for its part in the defense of Kharkov from the northeastern pincer. These Axis forces subsequently pressed eastwards with the Germans.

Aviation at the Start of the First World War

Alan Gropman

On the eve of World War I, no country was prepared for using aircraft or had even admitted they would make an effective weapon of war. Several had experimented with dropping bombs from aircraft, firing guns, and taking off and landing from aircraft carriers, but no country had designed or built aircraft specifically for war functions. Limited bombing operations had been carried out before 1914, but most thought that aircraft use was limited to reconnaissance or scouting missions. An October 1910 editorial in *Scientific American*, a respected publication, denigrated the airplane as a war weapon: "Outside of scouting duties, we are inclined to think that the field of usefulness of the aeroplane will be rather limited. Because of its small carrying capacity, and the necessity for its operating at great altitude, if it is to escape hostile fire, the amount of damage it will do by dropping explosives upon cities, forts, hostile camps, or bodies of troops in the field to say nothing of battleships at sea, will be so limited as to have no material effects on the issues of a campaign...."

But some effort was made to use aircraft for military purposes. Some of the earliest efforts took place in Italy. In April 1909, the newly formed Italian aviation club, Club Aviatori, brought Wilbur Wright to Italy to demonstrate his Military Flyer at the Centocelle military base near Rome. Before leaving Rome, Wilbur trained the naval officer who would become Italy's first pilot, Lieutenant Mario Calderara. In 1910, Italy set up its first military flying school at Centocelle.

During the next few years, Italy's military use of aviation increased. At the start of the Turko-Italian War in 1911, Italy mobilized its Italian Aviation Battalion and aircraft under the command of Captain Carlo Piazza, a well-known racing pilot, and sent them by steamship to Tripoli in Libya, then part of the Ottoman Empire. It sent two Blériot XIs, three Nieuport monoplanes, two Farman biplanes, and two Etrich Taube monoplanes. On October 23, 1911, Piazza made history's first reconnaissance flight near Benghazi in a Blériot XI. On November 1, Second Lieutenant Giolio Gavotti carried out the first aerial bombardment mission, dropping four bombs on two Turkish-held oases. In March 1912, Captain Piazza made the first photo-reconnaissance flight in history.

At the same time, other European countries had begun developing military aviation. The French army bought its first planes in 1910 and trained 60 pilots. It began to install armament in its reconnaissance craft in 1911. In Russia, Igor Sikorsky built the first "air giant," a four-engine plane that was the forerunner of the multiengine strategic

bombers of World War I. The French military began experimenting with aerial bombing in 1912, as did the British in 1913. Adolphe Pégoud in France also experimented with a hook-and-cable system for landing a plane on a ship at sea—following Eugene Ely in the United States who had successfully taken off and landed on the deck of a ship.

The United States had also experimented on a limited basis with military operations in aircraft. Glenn Curtiss experimented with the plane as a means of bombardment in June 1910 with his Golden Flyer. On August 20, 1910, at Sheepshead Bay racetrack near New York City, Lieutenant James Fickel fired the first shot from an airplane – a rifle at a target from an altitude of 100 feet (30 meters) with Glenn Curtiss piloting. On November 14, 1910, Eugene Ely made the first takeoff from a warship, the cruiser Birmingham, anchored near Hampton Roads, Virginia, in the Curtiss Hudson Flyer. On January 18, 1911, he made the first carrier landing onto a 125-foot (38-meter) platform on the warship Pennsylvania, anchored in San Francisco Bay. In 1912, an Army officer, Captain C.D. Chandler, fired a 750-round-per-minute, air-cooled recoilless machine gun successfully from a Wright B flyer over College Park, Maryland, near Washington, D.C. But, in spite of these achievements, no country had developed an air attack or bomber by this time.

Some countries had also formed small "air forces" that were connected to their other military operations. Great Britain formed the Royal Flying Corps on April 13, 1912. In June 1914, the Naval Wing of this formation was removed to form the basis of the Royal Naval Air Service. The United States also established the Aeronautical Division of the U.S. Army Signal Corps in 1907 and created the Aviation Section of the Signal Corps in July 1914.

The U.S. government generally lagged behind its European counterparts in these efforts and was much later in supporting aviation than Europe had been. Back in 1890, the French had ordered an aircraft from the aviator Clement Ader and had appropriated \$100,000 for that purpose, even though the aircraft he developed never flew in a controlled flight. But the Wright brothers, who had developed and demonstrated a fully controllable aircraft in 1903 that could take off, land, bank, turn, climb, and descend, did so with their own funds. Not until 1909 did the Signal Corps purchase an aircraft for military purposes. The U.S. Navy purchased its first plane, a derivative of the Curtiss Golden Flyer, in July 1911.

On March 31, 1911, Congress first appropriated funds for military aviation, \$125,000. The U.S. Signal Corps

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immediately ordered five new airplanes. Two of these – a Curtiss Type IV Model D “Military,” and a Wright Model B – were accepted at Fort Sam Houston on April 27, 1911. With these new planes, flight training of volunteers began. Lieutenant G.E.M. Kelly was among the first group of twenty-one. On May 10, 1911, during a landing attempt at Fort Sam Houston using a Curtiss Type IV Model D, Kelly crashed into the ground. He was first man to lose his life while piloting an airplane.

Countries that considered themselves more vulnerable to attack tried harder to develop their military aircraft than more isolated countries such as the United States. Thus, the countries of Europe had more pilots, more aircraft, and outspent the United States on military aviation. In 1910, the United States had only 18 licensed pilots and 193 in 1912. But in much less populous France, there were 339 licensed pilots in 1910 and 968 in 1912. Both Germany and Great Britain had many more pilots than the United States. In 1912, the militaries in France, Germany, Russia, Great Britain, and Italy had more aircraft than the United States (France had 25 times as many). In 1913, France spent more than 60 times the aviation budget of the United States, Russia and Germany 40 times, and Great Britain 24 times as much. But even so, no country had any aircraft that were specifically designed for combat. None were equipped to drop bombs or had any type of gun, let alone a machine gun.

Aircraft and Trained Pilots in 1914

Country	Aircraft	Trained Pilots*
France	260	171
Russia	100	28
Germany	46	52
Great Britain	29	88
Italy	26	89
Japan	14	8
United States	8	14

Source: Holley, Ideas and Weapons, p. 29.

*There were also many untrained aviators flying by 1914. The total number approximated 2,000.

Why did the United States trail so far behind the rest of the industrial world? One reason was its feeling of invulnerability. A second was the official military doctrine that was in place in 1914 and which remained until 1923. Military doctrine defines the roles, missions, and equipment of an armed service. If the doctrine doesn't state that aircraft are to be used for bombing, fighting, and other military purposes, then aircraft with military capabilities will not be constructed. The U.S. military doctrine, as expressed in a 1914 Field Service Regulation, did not mention bombing, strafing, or air-to-air fighting. The only military aircraft missions mentioned were strategic and tactical reconnaissance. One other factor that hindered the private development of aviation in the United States was the often-prohibitive amount of money that had to be paid to the Wright brothers for use of their patented technology.

In general, military leaders, technologists, government officials – even airplane inventors – displayed a lack of imagination. Military aircraft development was retarded because civilian and military leaders, by and large, could not conceive of aircraft as a war machine, not because airplanes could not perform war missions. Not until World War I actually began did the countries of Europe begin to seriously increase production of military aircraft. And not until even later did the United States join the effort.



The Blériot XI was used to make the first reconnaissance flight near Benghazi in the Ottoman Empire on October 23, 1911.



In 1912 the Wright Model B was used to demonstrate the first use of a machine gun from a plane.



When the U.S. Congress made its first appropriation for military aviation (\$125,000), one plane that was ordered was the Curtiss Type IV Model D.

All images courtesy US Air Force.

Major Raoul Lufbery (World War I)

Vital Statistics:

1) Life

Full Name: Gervais Raoul Lufbery
 Born: March 14, 1885 in Chamalieres, France
 Died: May 19, 1918 in Maron, France

2) Units

French Air Service: VB 106, N124 "Escadrille Lafayette"

United States Army Air Service: 94th Aero Pursuit Squadron

3) Aircraft Flown:

Voison Type 3
 Nieuport N.11
 Nieuport N.17
 Nieuport N.28
 Spad S.VII

Major Achievements:

Raoul Lufbery served as a combat pilot in both the French Air Service and the United States Army Air Service during World War I. He became the most highly decorated Ace of the Escadrille Lafayette, with 17 confirmed kills.

Early Life:

Raoul Lufbery was born in France to an American father and a French mother. The father returned to the US alone when Raoul was six. The boy was raised by his grandmother in Clermont_Ferrand. At age 19 Lufbery quit his job in a French chocolate factory and moved to Connecticut for two years, but never met his father.

A restless young man, Lufbery drifted for several years, living briefly in Cuba, New Orleans, and San Francisco, working his way as a baker and waiter. Enlisting in the US Army, he served during the Philippine Insurrection, earning US citizenship.

Leaving the Army, he became the mechanic for Marc Pourpe, a barnstorming French aviator on a world tour. They returned to France just as World War I began.



RAOUL LUFBERY

Artist: Judith Manzelman
 Air Force Art Collection

Join's French Air Service:

Pourpe joined the French Air Service as a pilot. Lufbery, a crack marksman, enlisted in the Foreign Legion, but at Pourpe's request was transferred to the air service as a mechanic.

After Pourpe crashed to his death in December 1914, Lufbery applied for pilot training. He was initially assigned as a bomber pilot with Escadrille VB 106, but soon transferred to fighter aircraft.

He joined Squadron N.124, the Escadrille Lafayette, on May 24, 1916. This was a French Air Service unit manned by volunteer American pilots. Lufbery was assigned a French-made single-seat, double-decker Nieuport N.28 fighter.

Decorated Fighter Pilot:

Lufbery achieved his first two kills on July 30, 1916 over Verdun. By October 12 he had shot down his fifth enemy, becoming an Ace and his squadron's best pilot. He went on to shoot down a total of 16 German planes by February 18, 1917. On that day, the Escadrille Lafayette was transferred from the French to the American Air Service.

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75th Ranger Regiment:

In Jan. 1974, Gen. Creighton Abrams, Army Chief of Staff, directed the formation of a Ranger battalion. The 1st Battalion (Ranger), 75th Infantry, was activated and parachuted into Fort Stewart, Ga. on July 1, 1974. The 2nd Battalion (Ranger), 75th Infantry followed with activation on Oct. 1, 1974. The 3rd Battalion, 75th Infantry (Ranger), and Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 75th Infantry (Ranger), received their colors on Oct. 3, 1984, at Fort Benning, Ga. The 75th Ranger Regiment was designated in Feb. 1986.

Early Missions of the 75th Ranger Regiment:

The modern Ranger battalions were first called upon in 1980. Elements of 1st Battalion, 75th Infantry (Ranger) participated in the Iranian hostage rescue attempts.

In Oct. 1983, 1st and 2nd (-) Ranger Battalions spearheaded Operation Urgent Fury by conducting a daring low-level parachute assault to seize Point Salines Airfield on the island of Grenada and rescue

Lufbery, cont. from p. 6

Join's US Army Air Service:

Lufbery was promptly promoted to Major. Because of his expertise, he was assigned to write training manuals for the inexperienced pilots of the American Air Service. Lufbery languished as a staff officer. In early 1918 he was assigned as an instructor pilot with the newly formed 94th Aero Pursuit Squadron.

He went on to down one more German aircraft, for a total of 17 career kills.

Killed in Action:

On May 19, 1918, he took off from his aerodrome at Toul in pursuit of a German two-seater Albatross bi-plane. During the ensuing battle, Lufbery's machine gun jammed. His Nieuport N.28 was crippled by enemy fire. As his aircraft pitched Lufbery was thrown from the cockpit at 200 feet altitude. He was impaled on a picket fence in the village of Maron, dying instantly.

Decorations:

Médaille Militaire
Croix de Guerre
Légion d'Honneur
English Military Cross

American citizens at True Blue Medical Campus.

Action in Panama, the Middle East, and Somalia:

The entire 75th Ranger Regiment participated in Operation Just Cause. Rangers spearheaded the action by conducting two important operations. Simultaneous parachute assaults were conducted onto Torrijos/Tocumen International Airport, Rio Hato Airfield and General Manuel Noriega's beach house, to neutralize Panamanian Defense Forces. The Rangers captured 1,014 Enemy Prisoners of War (EPW), and over 18,000 arms of various types.

Elements of Company B, and 1st Platoon Company A, 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment deployed to Saudi Arabia from February 12, 1991 to April 15, 1991, in support of Operation Desert Storm.

In August 1993, elements of 3rd Battalion, and 75th Ranger Regiment, deployed to Somalia to assist United Nations forces in bringing order to a desperately chaotic and starving nation. On October 3, 1993, the Rangers conducted a daring daylight raid with 1st SFOD. For nearly 18 hours, the Rangers delivered devastating firepower, killing an estimated 600 Somalis in what many have called the fiercest ground combat since Vietnam.

Rangers for the 21st Century:

On 24 November 2000 the 75th Ranger Regiment deployed Regimental Reconnaissance Detachment (RRD) Team 2 and a command and control element to Kosovo in support of TF Falcon.

After the events of September 11, 2001, Rangers were called upon to lead the way in the Global War on Terrorism. On 19 October 2001, 3rd Battalion and 75th Ranger Regiment spearheaded ground forces by conducting an airborne assault to seize Objective Rhino in Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. On 28 March 2003, 3rd Battalion employed the first airborne assault in Iraq to seize Objective Serpent in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Due to the changing nature of warfare and the need for an agile and sustainable Ranger Force, The Regimental Special Troops Battalion (RSTB) was activated 17 July 2006. The RSTB conducts sustainment, intelligence, reconnaissance and maintenance missions which were previously accomplished by small detachments assigned to the Regimental headquarters and then attached within each of the three Ranger battalions. The activation of the RSTB signifies a major waypoint in the transformation of the Ranger Force from a unit designed for short term "contingency missions" to continuous combat operations without loss in lethality or flexibility.

Background data courtesy US Army.

US Army Rangers

America's First Rangers:

Ranger history predates the Revolutionary War. In the mid 1700's, Capt. Benjamin Church and Maj. Robert Rogers both formed Ranger units to fight during the King Phillips War and the French and Indian War. Maj. Robert Rogers wrote the 19 standing orders that are still in use today.

The Continental Congress formed eight companies of expert riflemen in 1775 to fight in the Revolutionary War. In 1777, this force of hardy frontiersmen commanded by Dan Morgan was known as The Corps of Rangers. Francis Marion, "The Swamp Fox", organized another famous Revolutionary War Ranger element known as Marion's Partisans.



Maj. Robert Rogers



Col. William Darby

Images Courtesy US Army

Rangers in the Nineteenth Century:

During the War of 1812, companies of United States Rangers were raised from among the frontier settlers as part of the regular army. Throughout the war, they patrolled the frontier from Ohio to Western Ill. on horseback and by boat. They participated in many skirmishes and battles with the British and their Indian allies. Many famous men belonged to Ranger units during the 18th and 19th centuries to include Daniel Boone and Abraham Lincoln.

The Civil War included Rangers such as John Singleton Mosby, the most famous Confederate Ranger during the Civil War. The Army did not maintain rangers after the Civil War.

Rangers in World War II:

For World War II the United States Army, using British Commando standards, activated six Ranger infantry battalions.

Maj. (later Brigadier General) William O. Darby organized and activated the 1st Ranger Battalion on June 19, 1942, at Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland. The

1st Ranger Battalion participated in the North African landing at Arzeu, Algeria, the Tunisian Battles, and the critical Battle of El Guettar.

The 3rd and 4th Ranger Battalions were activated and trained by Col. Darby in Africa near the end of the Tunisian Campaign. The 1st, 3rd, and 4th Battalions formed the Ranger Force.

Rangers on D-Day:

The 2nd and 5th Ranger Battalions participated in the June 6, 1944, D-Day landings at Omaha Beach, Normandy. It was during the bitter fighting along the beaches that the Rangers gained their motto, "Rangers, lead the way!" They conducted daring missions to include scaling the cliffs of Pointe Du Hoc, overlooking Omaha Beach, to destroy German gun emplacements trained on the beachhead.

WW II Rangers in Asia:

The 6th Ranger Battalion operated in the Philippines and formed the rescue force that liberated American Prisoners Of War from a Japanese POW camp at Cabanatuan in Jan. 1945. The 6th Battalion destroyed the Japanese POW camp and evacuated more than 500 prisoners.

The 75th Infantry Regiment was first organized in the China-Burma-India Theater on Oct. 3, 1943 as Task Force Galahad. It was during the campaigns in the China-Burma-India Theater that the regiment became known as Merrill's Marauders after its commander, Maj. Gen. Frank D. Merrill. The Ranger Battalions were deactivated at the close of WWII.

Rangers in the Korean War:

The outbreak of hostilities in Korea in June 1950 again signaled the need for Rangers. Fifteen Ranger Companies were formed during the Korean War. The Rangers went to battle throughout the winter of 1950 and the spring of 1951. They were nomadic warriors, attached first to one regiment and then to another. They performed "out front" work -- scouting, patrolling, raids, ambushes, spearheading assaults, and as counterattack forces to regain lost positions.

Rangers in the Vietnam War:

Rangers were again called to serve their country during the Vietnam War. The 75th Infantry was reorganized once more on Jan. 1, 1969, as a parent regiment under the Combat Arms Regimental System. Fifteen separate Ranger companies were formed from this reorganization. Thirteen served proudly in Vietnam until inactivation on Aug. 15, 1972.

[Rangers, cont. p. 7](#)

James C. McNaughton
*Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the
 Military Intelligence Service During WWII*

Reviewed by John J. Kruzel

A group of Japanese-Americans who served as interpreters and interrogators helped America “fight smart” during World War II, says James C. McNaughton, command historian for U.S. European Command (EUCOM) in Stuttgart, Germany.

His new 514-page book, “Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service During WWII,” by, is the culmination of two senators’ efforts.

Both of Hawaii’s U.S. senators - Daniel K. Akaka and fellow World War II veteran Daniel K. Inouye - championed the Army-endorsed project to recognize the roughly 6,000 Nisei linguists who served and the Military Intelligence Service that trained them.

McNaughton said his book sheds light on what he called an “undiscovered little niche” of history. “I was pretty familiar with the official historical literature of the Second World War, and there was virtually no mention of them,” McNaughton said during an interview. “Once I got to meet some of these veterans and started doing oral history interviews, (I realized) they’re great guys with wonderful stories.”

When the U.S. military began conscripting young men for armed service, McNaughton explained, the Army drafted several thousand Japanese-American men, “so when the war broke out, the Army had a pool of potential linguists.”

“In 1943, the Army decided to organize a segregated infantry unit called the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and then called for volunteers,” he said. “Most people who know about Japanese-American history know about that, but what they don’t know is that a quarter of those volunteers were siphoned off into the language training route.”

This select group of Japanese-Americans learned to interrogate prisoners, intercept messages, translate captured documents and infiltrate enemy lines at the Military Intelligence Service’s Language School near San Francisco.

McNaughton’s favorite anecdote concerns a begrudging MIS graduate who tried to avoid linguistic training.

“Sgt. Hoichi Kubo was a student at the University of Hawaii when the war broke out, and he got drafted and wanted to go with the 442nd because he wanted to

fight,” McNaughton said. “His (Japanese) language skills were good enough that the Army pulled him out.

“He told me that he deliberately put down the wrong answer on every single question during the screening exam, but the interviewers knew he was faking it and took him (to MIS) anyway,” McNaughton said. “He was really mad about that.”

Kubo served four tours in Japan as a military linguist and remained there to help rebuild the country after the war ended.

One day, Kubo’s diplomatic skills were tested when he discovered about 100 civilians being held hostage in a cave by four Japanese soldiers who refused to surrender, McNaughton said.

“Kubo took a .45 (caliber) pistol, tucked it into the back of his belt, stuffed some K rations in his pockets, climbed down alone into that cave and talked to the Japanese soldiers,” he said. “He explained to them, ‘If you want to die for the emperor, that’s your business. But these women and children have no reason to die for the emperor; let them go.’”

After an hour talking with the desperate soldiers, Kubo negotiated the prisoners’ release.

“One by one, the civilians crawled out of the cave,” McNaughton said. “For that, (Kubo) was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, not for an act of valor on the battlefield, but for an act of valor after the battle.”

Nisei linguists, McNaughton said, were the Defense Department’s “first experiment” in training and using military linguists during a major conflict and the ensuing occupation.

Though their efforts in World War II have gone largely undocumented, he said, Nisei linguists played a major role. Twenty of them earned the Silver Star.

“Every battle or campaign they talked about, they would say, ‘Oh yeah, we translated this document, we interrogated this prisoner, and we told the regimental commander or division commander there’s going to be an attack tomorrow night,’” he said.

James McNaughton

Nisei Linguists: Japanese Americans in the Military Intelligence Service During WWII

Publisher: Department of the Army (2007).

530 pp. (paper). ISBN 0160729572. \$ 29 at Amazon.com.

The Battle of Issus (333 BC)

In 334 BC, Alexander the Great launched his invasion of the Persian Empire, which stretched from northwestern India to Egypt and modern-day Turkey. Alexander routed a Persian force at Granicus, just south of the Hellespont. He quickly took the coastal cities along the Mediterranean, then marched into central Anatolia.

By November of 333 Alexander reached the coastal city of Issus, located east of modern-day Adana and northwest of Aleppo. He knew Persian King Darius III was leading a large army to this region. Darius planned to link up with the Persian Mediterranean fleet and cut Alexander's supply lines.

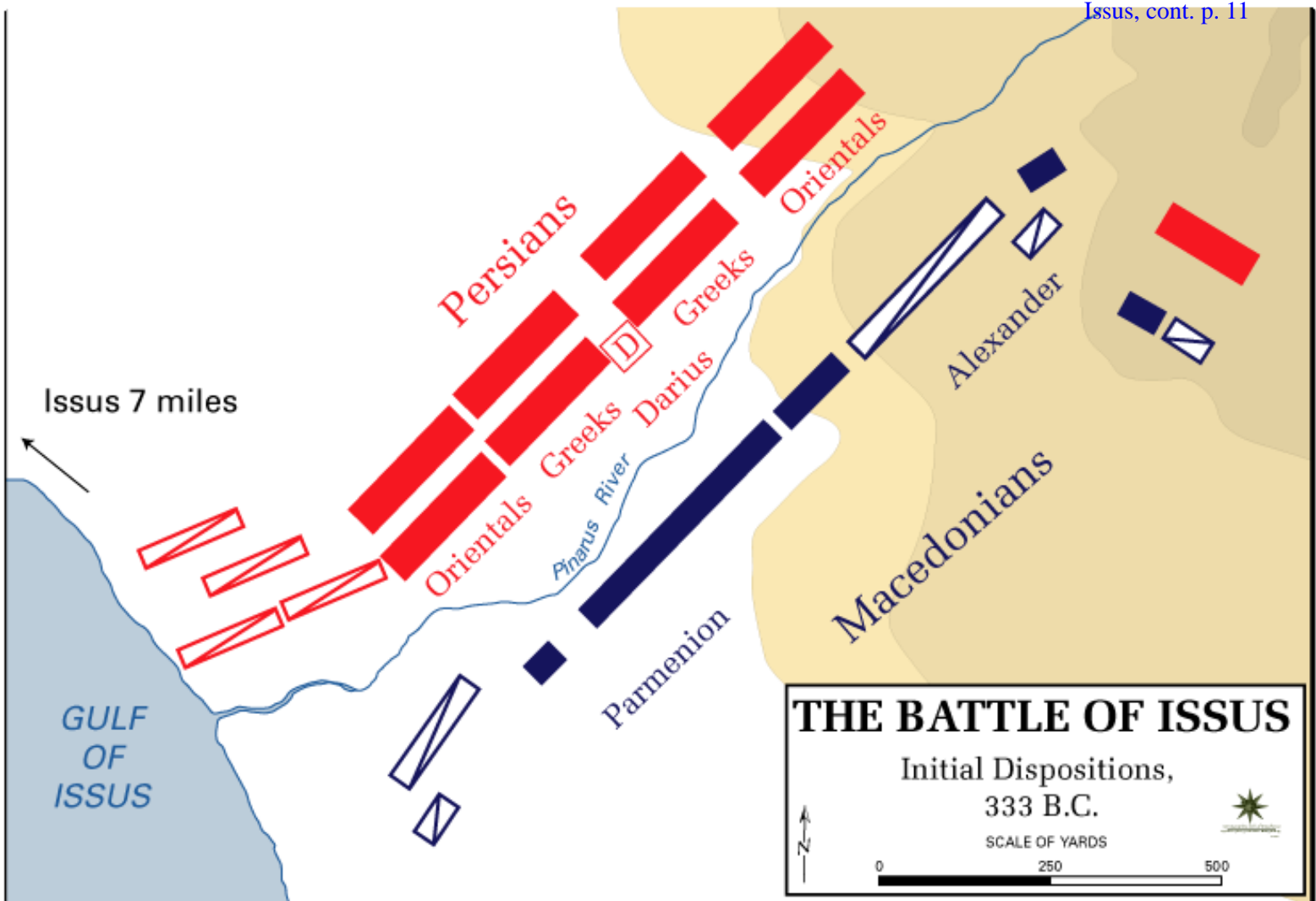
A large number of Alexander's men became sick at this time. Alexander left them in Issus and marched into Syria, searching for Darius. The Persians outflanked Alexander and took Issus, massacring the Macedonian contingent there.

Battle Lines

As Alexander hurried back to Issus, Darius took up positions north of the dry bed of the Pinarus River. To the East, on Darius' left flank, rose the Amanus Mountains. To the West, Darius anchored his right flank on the Mediterranean (Gulf of Issus). Except for the even ground near the coast, the 1.5 mile long battle line stood in uneven brush-covered terrain favorable to defensive operations.

The Persian force outnumbered the Macedonians by more than two-to-one. Darius had 11,000 heavy cavalry, 20,000-29,000 heavy infantry (many of them Greek mercenary Hoplites), and 63,000 light infantry. Alexander fielded 5,850-7,050 cavalry, 22,000 Hoplites, and 13,000-14,000 Peltast light infantry.

Darius placed his cavalry on his right flank. He placed the Hoplite phalanx in the center and the



Issus, cont. from p. 10

Persian infantry phalanx on the left of his line. Darius then sent light infantry into the Mountains to outflank Alexander's line.

Alexander kept his elite Macedonian cavalry force on his own right or eastern wing. He deployed a smaller contingent of Greek cavalry and some light forces on the left, facing Darius' horsemen. He placed his heavy Macedonian infantry phalanx in the center.

Battle is Joined

The battle opened when Alexander sent part of his light force into the mountains to counter the Persian flanking attempt. The Macedonian skirmishers pushed the Persians back.

His flank secure, Alexander advanced his main force. The cavalry and the right wing of the phalanx managed to cross the riverbed and engage the Persian phalanx.

A Macedonian cavalry charge broke through the Persian phalanx, splitting Darius' heavy infantry. The Macedonian skirmishers who had secured the mountains fell upon the isolated Persian left wing.

Alexander, wounded in the thigh by an arrow, led

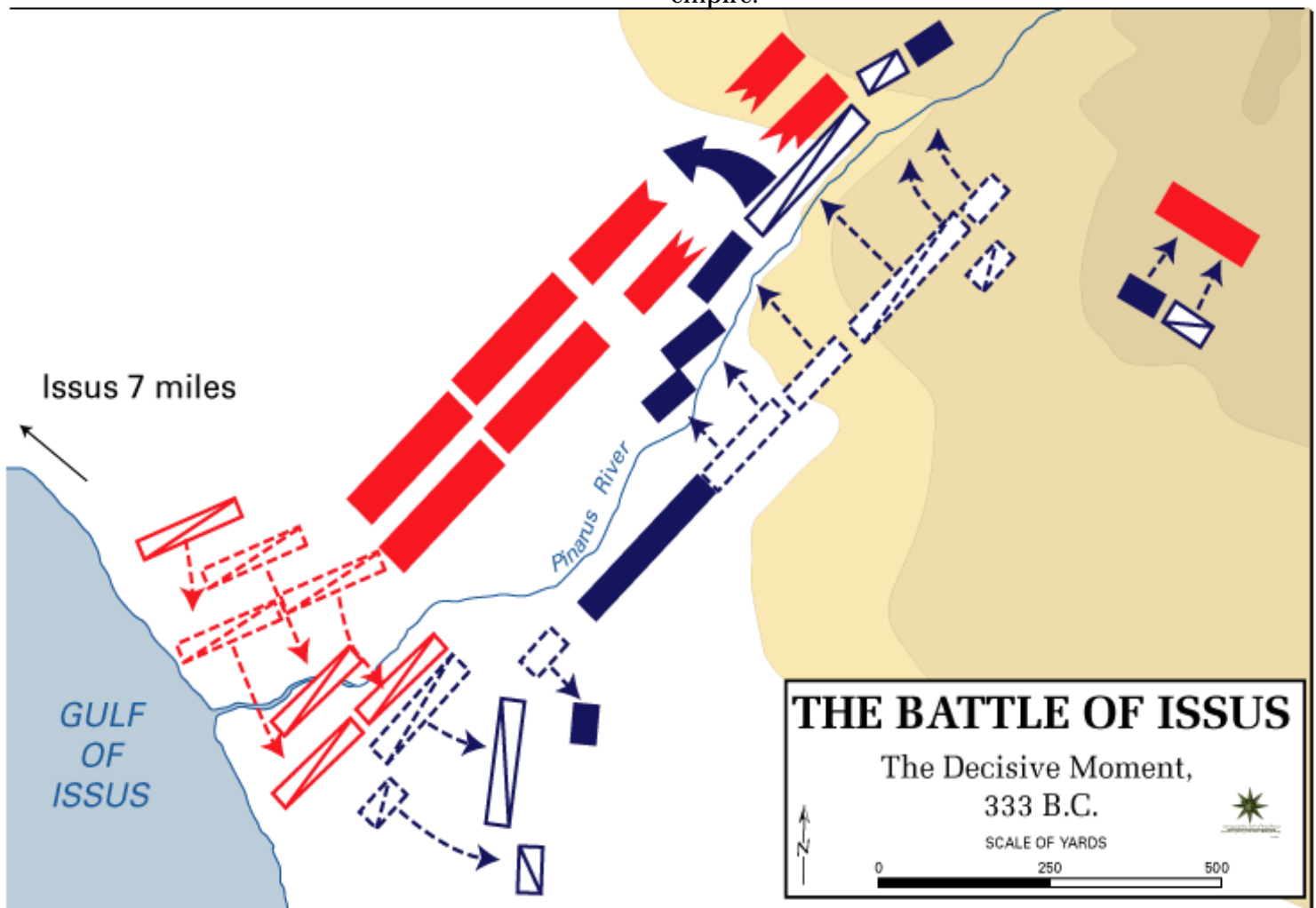
his heavy cavalry in a direct assault on Darius' personal guard. The bloodiest part of the battle ensued, with the Macedonian's relentlessly pressing to reach the chariot carrying Darius himself. Panicking, the Persian king fled the battlefield.

Meanwhile, on the western edge of the battlefield, the Persian heavy cavalry had crossed the Pinarus, pushing back the Macedonian cavalry on Alexander's left flank. Alexander dispatched his reserve of Peltasts. With slings and javelins they checked the Persian cavalry's advance.

Macedonian Victory

As word of Darius' flight spreads, the left and right wings of the Persian line collapsed into wild retreat. The elite phalanx at the Persian line's center went down fighting, caught between the Macedonian phalanx in front and Alexander's cavalry in the rear.

Alexander resisted the temptation to pursue Darius and march on the Persian capital. Thinking strategically, he consolidated his gains and secured his supply lines. Only then did he systematically continue his planned campaign to conquer the entire Persian empire.





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