



Official Newsletter of the Michigan Company of Military Historians & Collectors

**July 11, 2016**

*"I don't do quagmires."* Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, July 23, 2003.

*"If we have exact information of our enemy's dispositions, we should beat him every time."*

Frederick the Great, **Instructions to His Generals**, 1747.

*"America's failure during WWII to coordinate its political with its military strategy was one of the main causes of the Cold War, which it also conducted, in large part, with little regard for diplomacy and which ended with something less than triumph."* Gordon Craig, historian.

*"We often give our enemies the means to our own destruction."* Aesop

*"...colleges and universities will find themselves converted into intellectual hobo jungles. And veterans unable to get work and equally unable to resist putting pressures on colleges and universities will find themselves educational hoboies."* University of Chicago President Robert Maynard Hutchins commenting on the newly enacted G.I. Bill, June 22, 1945

*"Federal spending is not always wasteful, and taxes can be the agent of civilization."*

Acting Chief Justice of the United States Oliver Wendell Holmes, January 23, 1930

Our July speaker. will be Captain Bob Bender, USN (ret) Active duty as pilot and Naval officer from 1959 to 1964, Commanding Officer of a Naval Aviation Squadron, and staff officer at NATO Headquarters in Brussels for 8 years. He retired in 1990.

**MEETINGS** take place the second Monday of every month at the **Riverfront Hotel Grand Rapids** 270 Ann St NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504 (616) 363-9001. Socializing begins at 6:00 (1800 hrs), dinner at 7:00 (1900 hrs), business meeting 7:15 (1915 hrs), and program at 8:00 (2000 hrs).

GENERAL STAFF  
OFFICERS OF THE  
COMPANY

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- Judge Advocate - Jay Stone
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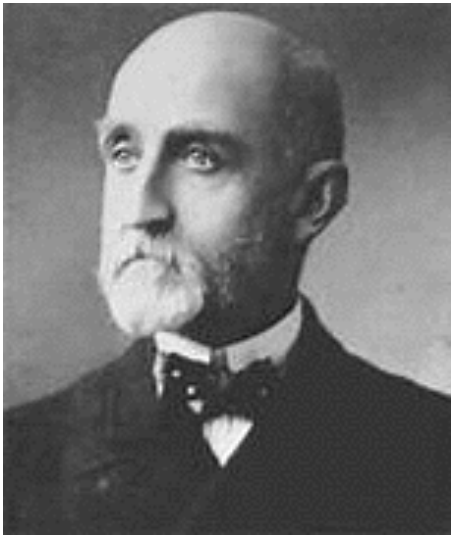
**Company Notes**

- ◆ **Brian is well on his way to reaching the Arctic Ocean.**
- ◆ **The Orders and Medals Society of America is holding it's annual convention in Grand Rapids next year. For more info their website is [www.omsa.org](http://www.omsa.org)**

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# Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914)

Sometimes a nation's military leaders will follow a strategy and theory of warfare that had served its purpose but in a changing environment becomes detrimental for continued success. One such strategist was the 19th century naval historian Alfred Thayer Mahan. Born in 1840, he was an 1859 Naval Academy graduate, second in his class. He fought in the Civil War on wooden sailing ships. While president of the US Naval War College he wrote **The Influence of Sea Power Upon History: 1660–1783** in 1890 and **The Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire, 1793–1812** in 1892. His views gained widespread acceptance throughout the world. He described the sea as a “great highway” and “wide common” with “well-worn trade routes” over which men pass in all directions. He identified several narrow passages or strategic “chokepoints,” the control of which contributed to Great Britain's command of the seas. He listed six fundamental elements of sea power: geographical position, physical conformation, extent of territory, size of population, character of the people, and character of government. Based largely on those factors, Mahan envisioned the United States as the geopolitical successor to the British Empire. Mahan stressed the interdependence of the military and commercial control of the sea and asserted that the control of seaborne commerce can determine the outcome of wars.



Appearing at a time when Japan and the nations of Europe were engaged in a fiercely competitive arms race, Mahan's work had a singularly profound influence on politics worldwide. In the United States, Mahan's theories found a particularly receptive audience in Presidents William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt. His work bolstered the case for rapid expansion and reconfiguration of the U.S. Navy. Small cruisers were replaced with massive battleships with a concomitant change in tactics; as expansion continued overseas (to the Philippines, Hawaii and other Pacific islands, and the Caribbean). This allowed the creation bases at which U.S. ships could refuel and protect commerce; and even promoted the construction of the Panama Canal, which facilitated the movement of fleets and freight. Mahan's

work influenced governments in other countries as well, leading to naval buildups in England, Germany, and Japan in particular.

Mahan's books rapidly circled the globe. Within a year of publications, they were translated into French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, and Japanese, among other languages. The First Lord of the British Admiralty read Mahan's book and gave a copy to the king of England, who read it and in turn ordered every officer in the Royal Navy to read it as well. Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany “devoured” the work, as he later recalled, and ordered a copy to be placed in every wardroom of every ship in the German fleet. Further to the east, the tsar of Russia read Mahan's work and sent copies to every admiral and captain in his Imperial Navy. Mahan's book was read and studied in the wardrooms and war colleges and in the chancelleries and foreign ministries of France, Italy, Austro-Hungary, Sweden, Greece, Turkey, and many other nations. The Japanese modeled their entire naval strategy and order of battle upon the theories of Mahan. By 1905, these newly converted and ardent adherents of the American Navy captain from Newport were able to establish in the northwest Pacific the maritime supremacy of the Rising Sun after its defeat (their utter annihilation, really) of the Russian fleet at Tsushima.

Mahan's name became a household word in the German navy, as Kaiser Wilhelm II ordered his officers to read Mahan. Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz (1849–1930) used Mahan's reputation to finance a powerful surface fleet. Tirpitz, an intense navalist who believed ardently in Mahan's dictum that whatever power rules the sea also ruled the world had **The Influence of Sea Power Upon History** translated into German in 1898 and had 8,000 copies handed out for free as a way of pressuring the Reichstag to vote for the First Navy Bill. Tirpitz used Mahan not only as a way of winning German public opinion over to navalism, but as his guide to his strategic thinking. Mahan was against *guerre-de-course* (a strategy of naval warfare that calls for a navy to attack the merchant shipping of an enemy with the goal of cutting off supplies and causing economic damage). Throughout the 19th century this approach was generally conducted by navies along with privately financed ships known as privateers; Instead he embraced Mahan's ideal of a decisive battle of annihilation between two fleets as the way to win Germany command of the seas. Tirpitz always planned for the High Sea Fleet to win the *Entscheidungsschlacht* (battle of annihilation) against the British Royal Navy somewhere in "the waters between Helgoland and the Thames" to win the Reich "world power status", a strategy that he based upon his reading of **The Influence of Sea Power Upon History**. The Japanese persisted in maintaining this attitude up to the conclusion of WWII when they no longer had any capital ships to initiate the final, great battle.

Sea power supported the new colonialism which Europe and Japan were imposing on Africa and Asia. Given the very rapid technological changes underway in propulsion (from coal to oil, from reciprocating engines to steam turbines), ordnance (with better fire directors, and new high explosives) and armor (hardened steel), the emergence of new craft such as destroyers and the development of radio, Mahan's emphasis on the capital ship and the command of the sea came at an opportune moment. In the context of his time, Mahan backed a revival of Manifest Destiny through overseas imperialism. He held that sea power would require the United States to acquire defensive bases in the Caribbean and Pacific as well as take possession of Hawaii. This came at the time when the United States launched a major shipbuilding program to move the United States to the third place amongst worldwide naval powers by 1900. Mahan desired an American battleship navy to deter or destroy rival fleets; and a network of naval bases capable of providing fuel and supplies for the enlarged navy, and maintaining open lines of communications between the United States and its new markets.

In 1890 Mahan prepared a secret contingency plan in case war should break out between Britain and the United States. Mahan concluded that the British would attempt to blockade the eastern ports, so the American Navy should be concentrated in one of these ports, preferably New York with its two widely separated exits, while torpedo boats should defend the other harbors. This concentration of the U.S. fleet would force the British to tie down such a large proportion of their navy to watch the New York exits that the other American ports would be relatively safe. Detached American cruisers should wage "constant offensive action" against the enemy's exposed positions, and if the British were to weaken their blockade force off New York to attack another American port, the concentrated U.S. fleet should seize the opportunity to escort an invasion fleet to capture the British coaling ports in Nova Scotia, thereby seriously weakening the British ability to engage in naval operations off the American coast. This contingency plan is a clear example of the application of Mahan's principles of naval war.

Ideologically, the United States Navy initially opposed replacing its sailing ships with steam-powered ships after the Civil War. The naval battle at Hampton Roads evidently was not a convincing enough battle to demonstrate the vulnerability of wooden sailing ships. Mahan argued that only a fleet of armored battleships would be decisive in a modern war. According to the decisive-battle doctrine, a fleet must not be divided; Mahan's work encouraged technological improvement in convincing opponents that naval knowledge and strategy remained necessary, but that domination of the seas dictated the necessity of the speed and predictability of the steam engine. Mahan argued that radical

technological change does not eliminate uncertainty from the conduct of war, and therefore a rigorous study of history should be the basis of naval officer's education. Unfortunately his theories would in time proved detrimental to the advancement of naval warfare theory.

His beliefs—written before the airplane and submarine became factors in warfare against shipping (he died in 1914)—delayed the introduction of convoys as a defense against German U-boats in World War I. By the 1930s the U.S. Navy was building long-range submarines to raid Japanese shipping, but the Japanese, still tied to Mahan, designed their submarines as ancillaries to the fleet and failed to attack American supply lines in the Pacific in World War II. Although Mahan cannot shoulder the blame entirely, the U.S. Navy was filled with Mahan supporters and advocates. The battleship was the queen of the sea and the Big Gun Navy would not be denied their true place in history. These battleship advocates were so powerful that millions of dollars were spent to upgrade three WWII battleships in the mid-1980's! Entrenched traditionalists who could not envision that technological advances required a change in the ways to prosecute any future conflict were oblivious even when confronted with irrefutable evidence.

An Army pilot named Colonel Billy Mitchell infuriated the War and Navy Departments when he accused them of being insufficiently farsighted regarding airpower and aircraft carriers. Mitchell believed that the use of floating bases was necessary to defend the nation against naval threats. He believed that the building of dreadnoughts was taking precious defense dollars away from military aviation. He was convinced that a force of anti-shipping airplanes could defend a coastline with more economy than a combination of coastal guns and naval vessels. A thousand bombers could be built at the same cost as one battleship, and could sink that battleship. Mitchell infuriated the Navy by claiming he could sink ships "under war conditions", and boasted he could prove it if he were permitted to bomb captured German battleships, which were deemed unsinkable. On July 21, 1921 Mitchell sunk the *Ostfriesland*. Three near misses landed close enough to rip hull plates which cause the ship to roll over and sink. The results were downplayed in public by General of the Armies John J. Pershing who hoped to smooth Army/Navy relations. The efficacy of the tests remain in debate to this day, but only by the still blind and brain-dead Big Gun Advocates.

But Mahan's beliefs caused the greatest damage in the Pacific theater of WWII for both Japan and the United States. Although the American torpedo was ineffective until late 1943, the tactics used by the submarine force advocated searching out Japanese warships as primary targets and relegating transports to secondary opportunities. When the torpedo problems were finally identified and fixed only then did the Navy finally realize that transports were the lifeblood of the Japanese war effort and they should be the focus of all her efforts. Evidently the success and near fatal starvation of England in the European Theater of Operations was a lesson not passed on to the U.S. Navy's Pacific brethren. While the Navy was denying any torpedo problems a number of subs were sent out on mine-laying missions. This was not the sort of activity submarine officers wanted to undertake. Mine-laying subs could not tie a broom to their mast and return to base with crowds cheering successful hits by a mine. There was no glory to be had. Post war analysis would show that the most effective method of attacking Japan was to cut off her supply of raw materials. If the Pacific war had been fought more strategically and not tactically, the conflict would have proceeded with different results. The mine-laying operation returned dividends that far exceeded the risks and exposure encountered by attack subs.

The Japanese Navy also suffered employing Mahan's dictums in trying to set up that one battle that would supposedly determine supremacy of the seas. Her Big Gun Admirals were just as obstinate and close-minded as some of her American counterparts. The Japanese torpedo, the Long Lance, was the one weapon, that if used appropriately at Midway could have made a difference. Alas, the value of the Long Lance armed submarine was never realized or utilized by the INJ.

# The Story of "Bad Angel"

In 1942, the United States needed pilots for its war planes lots of war planes; lots of pilots. Lt. Louis Curdes was one. When he was 22 years old, he graduated flight training school and was shipped off to the Mediterranean to fight Nazis in the air over Southern Europe. He arrived at his 82nd Fighter Group, 95th Fighter Squadron in April 1943 and was assigned a P-38 Lightning. Ten days later he shot down three German Messerschmitt Bf-109 fighters. A few weeks later, he downed two more German Bf-109's. In less than a month of combat, Louis was an Ace.

During the next three months, Louis shot down an Italian Mc.202 fighter and two more Messerschmitts before his luck ran out. A German fighter shot down his plane on August 27, 1943 over Salerno, Italy. Captured by the Italians, he was sent to a POW camp near Rome. No doubt this is where he thought he would spend the remaining years of the war. It wasn't to be. A few days later, the Italians surrendered. Louis and a few other pilots escaped before the Nazis could take control of the camp.

One might think that such harrowing experiences would have taken the fight out of Louis, yet he volunteered for another combat tour. This time, Uncle Sam sent him to the Philippines where he flew P-51 Mustangs. Soon after arriving in the Pacific Theater, Louis downed a Mitsubishi reconnaissance plane near Formosa. Now he was one of only three Americans to have kills against all three Axis Powers: Germany, Italy, and Japan. Up until this point, young Lt. Curdes combat career had been stellar. His story was about to take a twist so bizarre that it seems like the fictional creation of a Hollywood screenwriter. While attacking the Japanese-held island of Bataan, one of Louis wingmen was shot down. The pilot ditched in the ocean. Circling overhead, Louis could see that his wingman had survived, so he stayed in the area to guide a rescue plane and protect the downed pilot. It wasn't long before he noticed another, larger airplane, wheels down, preparing to land at the Japanese-held airfield on Bataan. He moved in to investigate. Much to his surprise the approaching plane was a Douglas C-47 transport with American markings. He tried to make radio contact, but without success. He maneuvered his Mustang in front of the big transport several times trying to wave it off. The C-47 kept head to its landing target. Apparently the C-47 crew didn't realize they were about to land on a Japanese held island, and soon would be captives.

Lt. Curdes read the daily newspaper accounts of the war, including the viciousness of the Japanese soldiers toward their captives. He knew that whoever was in that American C-47 would be, upon landing, either dead or wish they were. But what could he do? Audaciously, he lined up his P-51 directly behind the transport, carefully sighted one of his .50 caliber machine guns and knocked out one of its two engines. Still the C-47 continued on toward the Bataan airfield. Curdes shifted his aim slightly and knocked out the remaining engine, leaving the baffled pilot no choice but to ditch in the ocean.

The big plane came down in one piece within about 50 yards from his bobbing wingman. At this point, nightfall and low fuel forced Louis to return to base. The next morning, Louis flew cover for a rescuing PBY that picked up the downed Mustang pilot and 12 passengers and crew, including two female nurses, from the C-47. All survived, and later, Lt. Curdes would end up marrying one of these nurses.

For shooting down an unarmed American transport plane, Lt. Louis Curdes was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Thereafter, on the fuselage of his P-51 "Bad Angel", he proudly displayed the symbols of his kills: seven German, one Italian, one Japanese and one American flag. The plane can be seen at the Pima, AZ Air And Space Museum.

*Thanks to Jim McCloughan for sending the Cannon Report this article.*

# Ultra and Magic

Virtually everyone familiar with the history of WWII understands the meaning of the word Magic, the top-secret code name for America's breaking of the Japanese diplomatic Purple ciphers and Ultra, the cracking of the German military code. In "Marching Orders", by Bruce Lee, the author shows for the first time the wealth of information revealed by these incredible decryptions that flowed daily across the desk of Chief of Staff George C. Marshall throughout the war. Lee and his team of researchers read over 1.5 million pages of U.S. Army records that had been reduced to what was referred to as Magic Diplomatic Summaries. 14,000 of these summaries were then used as an overlay on the chronology of WWII to show how they effected American strategy (a number of the summaries have yet to be declassified).

As Lee writes "the Magic Summaries allowed General Marshall to refuse the urgent pleas of Prime Minister Churchill that British-American troops should capture Berlin ahead of the Russians. (I used to agree with Churchill on this point.) But as my research proves, Marshall and his staff foresaw Churchill's proposal forcing American troops into potentially bloody clashes with the Russians for no valid reason. This is not widely known, but I am convinced that this is one reason that Marshall ordered Eisenhower to halt his final attack through Germany on the banks of the river Elbe—and not to advance on Berlin—in March, 1945, before Eisenhower began the assault from the Rhine River. More important to Marshall, as the Magic Summaries reveal, was ending the war in the Pacific quickly and preventing a last-minute alliance between Russia and Japan." What is also not widely known is that American ships sent military aid to Russia through the Pacific port of Vladivostok. In 1940 the Japanese and Russians had signed a Neutrality Agreement that allowed such shipments to proceed without interference. In further readings of the Magic Summaries one also sees that the Japanese failed to tell the Germans that Siberian troops were being transferred to the Eastern Front even when the Germans asked if they had any knowledge of such movement.

Lee continues: "...throughout the entire war the Magic Summaries gave the Allies vital knowledge from Hitler's own lips about his decisions to attack or defend in Africa, Russia, Italy, France and Germany. This allowed the English and Americans to coordinate the timing of their invasions and offensives with those of the Russians on the Eastern Front. The Summaries revealed Japan's hatred for Great Britain: Tokyo urged Germany to give up fighting Russia and use poison gas to subdue England. Tokyo also wanted to join hands with Germany in the Middle East so they could divide the world between them, which made the battle for Stalingrad more crucial for the Allies than previously acknowledged. Tokyo also tried to play the so-called race card in South America, Central America, and Mexico in her attempts to influence these governments, and this created a relatively unknown and unstudied series of clandestine diplomatic battles between the the Allies and the Axis in those countries."

The Japanese Foreign Office was well served by Baron Oshima, their very astute ambassador to Germany. His constant cables to Tokyo summarizing his many meetings with German military and governmental leaders provide the basis for much of the Allied intelligence. Fourteen other neutral nations also had their diplomatic ciphers decoded and read by the Allies so that much that was revealed by reading Oshima's cables was verified by other communications. This breaking of the Purple Code was so important and secret that when Marshall found out that the OSS was going to surreptitiously attempt to enter a Japanese Embassy in Spain or Portugal, Marshall ordered General Donovan to remove his entire cadre of secret agents from the Iberian Peninsula and never make any attempt to enter any foreign embassy. Too much time and talent had been expended to read the Purple Code and if there was any hint that the Japanese believed it was being read, any resultant change would have put the cryptologists back to square one.

Two items this editor found interesting was that Oshima reported everything back to Tokyo. The Baron was impressed by the amount and type of damage done by the Allied bombing attacks and their effect on the civilian population. In touring Hamburg he reported on the number and kinds of destruction he observed and how the robustness of stone and brick buildings just made for bigger piles of rubble to clear and negotiate around. He predicted that if Tokyo was ever bombed the damage to their mainly paper and wood structures would be devastating and fire storms would most likely ensue. As an aside he said that damage by British night-time bombing was practically negligible. Most of their bombs fell ineffectively in the countryside. American day-light bombing was much more effective and made more so when Oshima reported as to what had been destroyed and then what the Germans were doing to repair any damage and resume production. When production sites were moved the Allies know their precise location.

The invasion of Japan's home islands was of great concern to the Americans. Prior to the battle for Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945 the Americans were all aware of the tenacity of the Japanese soldier. Fighting for the tiny atoll of Tarawa, the Marines suffered 3,500 casualties to inflict 5,000 on the defending Japanese. Next came the Kwajalein atoll where the Japanese endured 8,000 casualties to 1,800 for the Americans. After that was Eniwetok, where the Japanese fought to the last man, losing 3,500 soldiers to 1,200 Americans. American leadership then decided to bypass some of those island fortresses and concentrate on islands that had airfields from which to bomb Japan proper. On Iwo Jima, America suffered 6,821 KIA, 19,217 WIA, one escort carrier sunk and one severely damaged. The Japanese lost over 18,375 dead or missing, 216 taken prisoner, and more importantly, after the main fighting stopped on March 16, there were about 3,000 Japanese soldiers in hiding. They would reappear, some to surrender but most to continue fighting and inflict more casualties.

The battle for Okinawa was the harbinger of what to expect once the U.S. reached the home islands. The invasion began on April 1 and concluded on June 22, 1945. On April 12th FDR died and Truman became President. The battle in Europe had been over for more than a month. The loss ratio on Okinawa was 1.5 to 1, for every 1.5 Americans killed or wounded, one Japanese soldier suffered the same fate. In addition, we suffered 12 destroyers sunk, 15 amphibious ships sunk, 9 other ships sunk, 386 ships damaged, and 768 planes lost. There were also 26,000 casualties classified as psychiatric. Civilian losses were estimated as high as 150,000 or 50% of the non-military population. Marshall and Admiral King did not want to invade the home islands, defended by 100 million suicidal human "bullets of flesh." They knew well the resolve of the Japanese soldier, sailor and airman. The projections for the invasion were at a five to one ratio or one million American dead or wounded and a staggering civilian lost on a population that had little or no choice in the matter.

Another factor that many who say that the atomic bombs were unnecessary was the fact that the Magic intercepts disclosed Japanese intentions to execute all Allied prisoners of war if the home islands were invaded. The Allies had 300,000 soldiers interned on Malaysia and 100,000 at various camps throughout home islands. When Truman was presented with the alternative of invasion or destroying Japanese cities, one at a time, until a surrender was achieved, there really was no choice. If the American people and Congress knew that Truman had the bomb but chose invasion instead, he would have been impeached. The immediate loss of 160,000 Japanese lives on Hiroshima and Nagasaki pales in comparison with the immediate loss of our POWs, the civilian losses anticipated with Curtis Lemay's continuing firebombing of Japanese cities, and the carnage expected when the Marines landed. In anticipation of the upcoming battle losses the U.S. Army started making Purple Heart Medals. So many were struck before the surrender that production did not resume until the 1980's.

The Magic Summaries more importantly revealed that the Emperor of Japan was personally involved and committed to seeking a new order in Asia based on a military/economic alliance with

Russia. The Emperor also wanted peace. But the Emperor—as represented by the Army and the Navy—also refused to accept unconditional surrender and the relinquishment of his feudal power. The continuing Summaries read like a macabre study of national insanity. Tokyo cooks up foreign policy, but is afraid to put it into writing. Every statement made by Foreign Minister Togo bears the stain of deceit and mendacity. Toothless in the American government who know Japan well, it is obvious that the Japanese military control the Emperor, the government, and are determined to fight to the end. The pigheadedness, incompetence and stupidity born of arrogance that the Japanese military display at this critical moment in history, and their willingness to sacrifice the lives of untold millions of their own people, lead the men reading these intercepts to only one conclusion: the atomic bomb must be used. As proven by the Magic Summaries, if blame for the unleashing nuclear warfare is to be apportioned, the Japanese military must bear the full burden of responsibility of the event, and worse, making Japanese civilians the tragic victims of their hubris. All Truman had to do was convince one man, the Emperor, to say ‘uncle.’ He finally say the futility of maintaining his conceit and agreed to a surrender.

After the surrender there began an immediate attempt by the Japanese Foreign Office to plead that the atomic bombs were unnecessary and much disinformation was spread to try and discredit the United States. Purple transmissions were still being intercepted and the maneuvering by both the Japanese military and diplomatic corp were stymied immediately if they jeopardized the peace process. The Allies never revealed that messages were being intercepted and they continued to read transmissions of many countries well into the 20th century. To this day, the Japanese people still are not taught about the country’s complete involvement in WWII. German school children know the true story of the Second World War, most Japanese are still clueless about the atrocities committed in their recent past.

“Marching Orders” is a book for anyone who desires a definitive history of WWII. There are many Magic Summaries that have yet to be released because they are still considered classified. Bruce Lee believes that a number of U.S. Army personnel will be embarrassed and discredited when their actions are uncovered when they were given information that they either ignored or refused to believe as accurate. The Japanese military was not the only force with a few commanders full of conceit and hubris.

## **Knights and Their Suits of Armor**

Looking at a suit of armor, it’s easy to imagine that walking around in the thing, much less swinging a broadsword, is difficult. There are legends that some suits of armor were so heavy that if a knight fell face down in a puddle he would drown. Movies and books often show knights in armor being hoisted onto their horses by a special crane for jousting tournaments, though there is little to no evidence for the practice.

Rather, while suits of armor did add extra weight, research by medievalist Daniel Jaquet at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science shows that some knights were downright spry in their armor. For a paper in the journal *Historical Methods*, Jaquet dressed a volunteer in replica armor made from the same materials and in the same manner as medieval armor. The team then recorded the subject walking and running on a treadmill, analyzing his gait and range of motion using 3-D kinematics. What they found is that while the armor did add weight and increased energy use, the wearer retained most of his range of motion.





To show off just how wearable the suit of armor could be, the researchers created their own video. In a post on Medievalists.net, Jacquet writes that they put their research subject through the workout of early 15th French knight Jean le Maingre, known as Boucicaut. An accomplished battlefield combatant, he was also known as the most physically fit knight of his age. That's because he followed a strict workout regimen, which is included in an account of his deeds.

To test the suit of armor, Jacquet's subject followed Boucicaut's routine, running and walking along trails and through the city in the armor and jumping onto a pommel horse to simulate jumping on a horse. He also chopped a pile of wood with an axe and climbed the underside of a ladder monkey bar-style. In an attempt to recreate Boucicaut's scaling of towers in his armor, the modern knight climbed at an indoor rock-climbing gym. He also performs somersaults and cartwheels and danced a little.

The armor does not seem to hinder his movement. "The relatively impressive added load is comparable to the one imposed on modern soldiers with bullet proof vest and full gear, or to the one imposed on the fireman with his oxygen bottles," writes Jacquet. "Therefore, the trained body of the wearer adapts to such a heavy load and is able to achieve top physical performances, but limited by the added load."

A study conducted at Leeds University several years ago showed that subjects on a treadmill dressed in armor similar to what would have been worn by 15th century London Sheriff William Martyn did need to exert more energy, as Jennifer Oullette at Gizmodo reports. Indeed, they used 1.9 times as much energy while running and 2.3 times as much while walking, according to the study. The findings, not surprising, do illustrate just how physically fit knights needed to be to perform well in armor. Jacquet writes that he hopes to repeat the study using different varieties of armor and also investigate some of the layers beneath the armor that could limit range of motion.

# EVEN REPRISAL FOR TORTURE IS POLITICAL

He was a wild Methodist boy from East Texas. John H. Oliphint II enlisted in the Army Air Force right after the attack on Pearl Harbor. He was 20 years old when the invasion of Normandy started on 6 June 1944. Prior to 8 June 1944, when he was shot down in German occupied France, he had already flown over 60 combat missions and destroyed two German aircraft. Oliphint had killed a lot of German military prior to D-Day to include finding the finger of a German pilot stuck on the wing of his aircraft after the German fighter exploded in close proximity to Oliphint's P-51 Mustang fighter plane, the *Mad Rebel*.

He was lucky to have survived his D-Day plus-2 crash. He suffered multiple broken bones, a smashed-up face and pieces of shrapnel in his body. This included a large piece of metal stuck in the top of his skull. The Germans needed information on how the air-war part of D-Day was to play out and now they had Oliphint in their hands. He was denied medical treatment. He was interrogated by a German Air Force officer who implied that if he did not get the required information, Oliphint would be turned over to the Gestapo for more intense questioning.

The Gestapo did take over and questioning turned into torture. He was beaten and, at one point, the Gestapo agent brought his fist down hard onto the top of Oliphint's head, only to severely cut his hand on the large piece of metal sticking out of the young fighter pilot's head. The symbol for John Oliphint's Scottish Clan was the Unicorn. The Unicorn was also the symbol for Oliphint's unit, the 359th Fighter Group. This Unicorn like piece of metal sticking out of his head injured his Gestapo torturer and caused the suspension of the painful torture for half a day. The torture was continued and a rope was tied around his private area. Oliphint was literally pulled up and off his bed by the Gestapo using this form of torture.

1st Lieutenant John Oliphint was able to survive his torturers and escape with the help of a Dutch and Russian POW. He killed two of his German guards and slit the throat of the German doctor who had refused him critical medical care. He was recaptured in a railway station, but played a disfigured, mentally challenged fool to the German soldier who captured him. After lulling the soldier into approaching, Oliphint stuck a bayonet into the man's heart. He was able to make contact with the French underground and spent two months on the ground in his broken physical condition, traveling the countryside and collecting desperately needed intelligence. When Oliphint heard that a Gestapo Colonel had killed a French woman's baby during an interrogation and used the rope torture on her breast until it ruptured, he tracked down the Colonel and killed him. He let the man's driver live so he could return to the Germans and advise them that Oliphint was prepared to continue his personal war on the Gestapo. He was eventually flown out of France. His best friend, a fellow fighter pilot and lawyer in civilian life, warned him not to tell the US Army specifics about what he had done and the Germans he had killed on the ground in France. It was war, but no one was sure what would happen if the Germans complained about Oliphint killing their people. He might be tried and punished by his own Army

I called and spoke to now Major John Oliphint II, USAF Retired, after I read his book "*The Mad Rebel- A Youth at War*". Sadly, his health prevented a long conversation. His wife advised me that the writing of the book was a catharsis for Oliphint. The Army did not let him tell his story in 1944, so he finally put it down in a book in 1988. Christmas of 1944 found John Oliphint II healing, later to return to flying and serve his country in the next war. His grandson John Oliphint IV, an Air Force Academy graduate, is currently in pilot training. Fly, fight and win! To the enemy, beware of Mad Rebels and unicorns. *Written By Major Van Harl, USAF Ret.*