

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The CRIMEAN WAR

by D.J. Pollin



When Great Britain and France joined Turkey in its war against Russia on March 28, 1854, public opinion in London was that the upcoming war would be a magnificent struggle of the most profound historic significance. The parallel most frequently drawn was to the Napoleonic Wars of fifty years before. Once again Britain was leading an alliance against the greatest land power in Europe which seemed bent on achieving dominance over the continent. And once again she was engaged in an ideological conflict which pitted her liberal constitutional principles against the principle of absolute despotism, this time embodied in the person of Tsar Nicholas I.

The forthcoming struggle was expected to be even greater than that with Napoleon. The Russian Empire was of an almost continental scope, which dwarfed that of Eighteenth Century France. It had swallowed Napoleon's army whole and destroyed it; its land and its armies, although armies of serfs to be sure, seemed limitless. The Russian armies had almost effortlessly stemmed the tide

of the revolutions of 1848, crushing the freedom of Hungary and offering to do the same for the king of Prussia in Germany. Nevertheless, Britain — still the commercial center of the world and mistress of its oceans, now transformed and strengthened by the industrial revolution — was confident she would prove equally formidable. She would bring to bear all of the modern technology of the Nineteenth Century to offset her numerical disadvantage. Her shells and steamships might make the war more bloody, but they would certainly end the conflict rapidly and decisively. Many feared, though, that the struggle between British technology and Russian mass would not be so easy and predicted that the nation would be sorely tried. A few evangelicals even saw the hand of Providence in the events and predicted that the war would turn out to be Armageddon. In the actual event, it turned out to be substantially less than that.

It was a war which is now almost forgotten. Instead of the short decisive contest which was expected, it turned into a two year

struggle which seemed at its conclusion to have decided nothing. Instead of entailing the far flung military campaigns originally envisioned, it was a war which seemed unable to get started after it had been declared and which, after it did get under way, quickly degenerated into a dreary 11-month siege of the city of Sevastopol. What had been touted as a struggle for the mastery of Europe reduced itself first to a single theatre and then to a single campaign. It became the Crimean War, and even that title was a bit of an exaggeration.

The brilliant show of arms that was expected also failed to materialize. The Crimean War became the most infamous example of military incompetence prior to World War I. The British army was squandered in senseless frontal assaults and decimated by disease and starvation which should have been avoided. The military reputation of Britain was thoroughly discredited. Russia fared even worse. Her army — widely regarded as an invincible juggernaut before the war — was shown to be utterly incapable of op-

posing an established European army in the field, even with numerical advantage. Before the war, the myth of Russian military power had made her seem the arbiter of Europe and senior partner of the Holy Alliance who could virtually dictate events east of the Rhine. After it, the revelation of her actual weakness made it impossible for her to pursue an independent foreign policy. The French Army of Napoleon III was the only force to make a halfway decent showing. Its success established a reputation which made it the most imitated army in the world until 1870. Because of the Crimean War, American troops called themselves Zoaves and wore a French style forage cap (kepi) during the Civil War five years later. Obviously France gained a certain amount of diplomatic leverage from her military success, but it is doubtful that even Napoleon III felt at the war's end that the results justified the cost.

Causes and Diplomatic Background

Perhaps one reason why the Crimean War accomplished so little was that none of the participants had very clear objectives in mind when they began. Even among contemporaries there was disagreement about the causes and responsibility for the war. Among the historians who followed there is much greater confusion.

At the time, Karl Marx claimed that the war was caused by competition between English and Russian capitalists to control the trade along the Danube. Benjamin Disraeli, the leader of the opposition in parliament, quipped that as far as he could determine Britain was going to war to defend the Ottoman Empire's sovereign right to mistreat its Orthodox Christian subjects. Historians have offered alternate interpretations that include such elements as Tsar Nicholas I's personal dislike of Napoleon III or the British ambassador at Constantinople's hatred for the Tsar. Queen Victoria tended to blame it on Lord Palmerston, her personal parliamentary bugbear; but she tended to blame *everything* on Palmerston. Most of these explanations are somewhat insufficient.

The Crimean War broke out at the height of one of the "Near Eastern crises" which plagued the Nineteenth Century like a recurrent bad dream. These crises, from the question of Greek independence in 1829 to the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand at Sarajevo in 1914, took different forms but retained an underlying similarity. They were all related to the increasing decay of the Ottoman Empire and the question of what would happen to its possessions when Turkey, "the sick man of Europe," finally died. As early as 1844, Tsar Nicholas had tried to work out an agreement with the British government for dividing the Turkish territories in the event of Ottoman collapse. Britain felt that such an agreement would be dangerously premature but did agree to consult Russia when and if such an occurrence seemed likely. Many British politicians feared that the Tsar was not above trying a little euthanasia if the "sick man" did not die according to his schedule. The events of 1852-54 did not allay their fears.

In 1852 the Near Eastern crisis cropped up in the guise of a dispute over the Holy Places (i.e., the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem) between France and Russia with Turkey in the middle. French Catholic monks wanted a set of keys to these churches, while the Greek Orthodox monks who had previously had exclusive stewardship were unwilling to share it. Napoleon III felt obligated to support the claims of the Gallic monks, partly to increase French prestige in Turkey and partly because the clergy constituted one of the few elements in French society which fully supported his regime and he could not afford to alienate them. He sent his ambassador to negotiate the matter aboard a 94-gun liner all the way through the Dardenelles straits, which were supposed to be closed to warships, in a thinly veiled threat to use force if necessary. The Turks capitulated. Tsar Nicholas, however, did not. He felt himself to be the protector of the Greek Orthodox church and regarded the proposed change in the status of the Holy Places to be an affront to Russian prestige. Moreover, the proposal threatened to undermine the Russian influence with the Sublime Porte (as the Turkish government was called), which had long been predominant. On March 2, 1853, Prince Menshikov, the Russian ambassador, demanded of Turkey not only that it restore the Holy Places to the Orthodox Church but also that it acknowledge a Russian protectorate over the Greek Orthodox citizens of the Ottoman Empire.

Stratford Canning, the British ambassador, arranged a settlement of the Holy Places issue, but the brazen demand for a Russian protectorate over Turkish citizens turned into a powder keg. Menshikov had raised the ante in an attempt to reassert Russian influence, but having done so publicly he could not afford to back down. When the Turks, their resolve strengthened by the approach of the French fleet, refused his demand, Menshikov broke off diplomatic relations and left Constantinople on May 21st. Ten days later, a Russian ultimatum arrived, giving the Porte eight days to conform or else. The British reaction on June 2nd was to order the Mediterranean fleet from Malta to take up a station just outside the straits. It was soon joined by the French fleet.

Although faced with a clear warning from Britain and France of how seriously they took the matter, Nicholas was not deterred. On July 2nd, the Russian army crossed the Pruth river into the Turkish Danubian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia (now part of Rumania) under provision of a treaty which gave Russia the right to intervene there to preserve order. Throughout the summer, frantic negotiations at Vienna failed to produce a solution as the Tsar refused to compromise his demand for a protectorate, and the Turks, confident of Anglo-French support, refused to accept it. On October 5, 1853, the Sultan, under enormous domestic pressure to end the Russian occupation of the Principalities, declared war on Russia.

Russia declared that she had no aggressive intentions but that she would defend her right to intervene in the Principalities. Fighting broke out north of the Danube when the Turkish army under the command of Omar Pasha occupied fortifications in Wallachia and the Russian army under Prince Gortchakov attempted to dislodge them. The French and British fleets sailed through the Dardenelles to Constantinople, and a protocol was issued that Russia should cease all naval activity in the Black Sea as an earnest sign of her intention to limit the war to the Principalities.

Russian assaults against the Turkish forts on the Danube were defeated at Oltenitza and Kalafat, but on November 30 a strong Russian naval squadron avenged these defeats by wiping out a much weaker Turkish naval squadron in the Turkish harbor of Sinope. This naval action guaranteed French and British involvement. They could not tolerate the annihilation of a Turkish force which was, by their protocol, under their protection. A note was sent to St. Petersburg to the effect that all Russian ships in the Black Sea should restrict themselves to Sevastopol and that failure to comply would be met with force. The Tsar responded by breaking off diplomatic relations with France and Britain in late February of 1854. France and Britain, now virtually allies, agreed to send troops to protect Turkey. On February 28, the first British troops departed for the East. The first French troops sailed from Marseilles on March 19th. An ultimatum was jointly issued: the two nations would go to war if Russia did not evacuate the Principalities by the end of April. The Tsar did not bother to reply.

It was not a war that anybody had wanted, but it was a war that no one was willing or able to avoid. Napoleon III was determined to reassert French influence in Europe to fulfill the Napoleonic myth on which his regime depended. This meant breaking up the Holy Alliance and weakening Russia. He would have preferred to achieve this without a war, but he was not averse to the conflict when it occurred. Tsar Nicholas saw the spectre of the spirit of the revolution and the Napoleonic wars behind the French diplomatic maneuvering. He was unwilling to see any nation, and especially France, undermining Russian influence in Turkey, and he expected the Holy Alliance to support him in opposing the French menace to the *status quo*. Austria and Prussia, however, did not see it quite the same way. They felt that they were being asked to go to war to defend purely Russian interests in Turkey and opted for neutrality. Nicholas also miscalculated in thinking that Lord Aberdeen would not let Britain go to war. Aberdeen did oppose the war, but he was governing a fragile coalition cabinet which threatened to break up over the issue. He did not dare to make his government stand against the wishes of public opinion, which was virulently Russophobic. Of all the parties involved, the Ottoman Empire was probably the most eager for the Crimean War, hoping it would reduce

Russia's domination of Turkey. The Sultan knew that Nicholas regarded his nation as a future Russian inheritance and may well have thought war with Russia inevitable. In that case it was better to fight by the side of France and Britain than alone.

After they were dispatched, the Allied armies seemed to have a very difficult time getting to the fighting. First they went to Gallipoli and dug in there. They expected that the Turks would be badly beaten, as they had been in most of their previous wars with Russia, and that the Allies would be needed to defend Constantinople. Late-arriving British contingents, finding Gallipoli full, set up a base at Scutari.

The Turkish army, however, did not collapse as their allies expected when the Russians, now under General Paskevich, attacked again. Paskevich, with an army of 30,000 to 50,000, besieged the city of Silistria and its garrison of 12,000. The siege began on April 14 and lasted until June 23rd. Repeated Russian assaults failed to overcome the active Turkish defense, led by British East India Company officers. The Allies at Gallipoli finally decided that the Turks were not going to break and that they ought to move into the Danubian Principalities to join them. Napoleon III's extreme dissatisfaction with his army's inaction hastened this decision-making process considerably. The Allies sailed to Varna on May 29. It was an extremely ill-chosen landing place, infamous among the natives as a fever area, and the Allied armies began to suffer from cholera soon after they arrived. The Allied armies remained at Varna until September, while the siege of Silistria raged no more than 70 miles away. They were so weakened by cholera, dysentery, and malaria during their stay that by August the Guards Brigade, the cream of the British army, could only march five miles a day and that only if their packs were carried for them!

Paskevich, faced with the threat of an Allied attack (he didn't know how sick they were) as well as Omar Pasha's reserve army of 70,000, refused to commit his whole force to the siege of Silistria. He advised the Tsar that the Russian position in the Principalities was rapidly becoming untenable. On June 8th he resigned, handing command back over to Gortchakov.

The Tsar refused all requests to withdraw from the Principalities and urged that the siege be waged more vigorously so that the Turks might be crushed before the Allied armies intervened. On June 3rd, however, a new threat appeared. The Austrian government, which was very unhappy about the idea of having the Russians as next door neighbors on the Danube, threatened to join the Allies if the Russians did not evacuate the Principalities. The Tsar tried compromising with them and offered to leave if the Austrians would keep out the Turks as well. This ploy failed, and the Russian armies found themselves working against the time limits imposed by both the rate of Austrian mobilization and the rate at which the Allies could reorganize after their move from Galli-

poli. In the event, the Austrians mobilized before the Allies could get moving.

Gortchakov made one last effort to storm Silistria on June 22nd. The degree of Russian desperation can be gauged from Gortchakov's Order of the Day, which informed the troops that their rations would be stopped if the city were not taken. This message apparently did not sufficiently raise the army's morale for, after an assault in which almost all of the Russian generals were seriously wounded, the city remained in Turkish hands. The Tsar ordered the army to withdraw from the Principalities, and it was back across the Pruth by the end of June, just one jump ahead of the Turks and, more importantly, the Austrians.

Where Do We Go From Here?

With the Russian withdrawal from Moldavia and Wallachia, the French and British armies at Varna were left in a very difficult position. The *causus belli* had been removed from the war before they could get into it! The Turks had reoccupied the Principalities without any visible French or British help, and all that seemed left for the expeditionary forces to do was return home looking sheepish. Such a conclusion to the war would have been an intolerable blow to the Aberdeen government, which had already been accused of being soft on Russia. It was equally disagreeable to Napoleon III who had his uncle's legacy of military prowess to fulfill. The London *Times* screamed that Russia must be punished for starting the war and called for the capture of Sevastopol.

With Austria and Prussia still neutral; there was little alternative to the *Times*' suggestion. British naval operations in the Baltic had revealed that the Russians were too strong in the north to be successfully opposed there, although a joint Anglo-French expedition had captured Aland Island by destroying the fortress of Bomarsund in August. The armies at Varna could not chase the Russians across the Pruth, because they had no means of establishing a long supply line overland. The British, as it later turned out, could not even manage a very short overland supply line. They were tied to their fleets. On June 28th, the order was sent to Lord Raglan, the British commander, to mount an invasion of the Crimea if he and St. Arnaud, the French commander, thought they could manage it. Although their armies were certainly not in fine battle-ready condition, to remain at Varna would merely prolong the pestilence and add military disgrace as well.

The sailing date was set for September 2nd, 1854, and embarkation began August 24th. The French, because of their superior organization, got off by the 5th; the British were delayed until the 7th. The fleets stopped in the middle of the Black Sea for a few days because Raglan and St. Arnaud had not decided on where they were going to land. They had sailed with so little knowledge of Crimean geography that no decision was possible until Lord Raglan personally sailed ahead to reconnoiter. He sailed up and down the coast, tipped his hat to the Russian offi-

cers who observed him passing Sevastopol, and decided that the invasion should be made at Calamita bay, 20 miles south of the port of Eupatoria.

On the evening of the 11th, the night before the landing was to take place, a squall scattered the convoy delaying the invasion for two days while the navies regrouped. Fortunately, the Russian fleet did not sortie out of Sevastopol to take advantage of this. If it had, the Crimean War might have ended right then and there.

Even more surprisingly, the Allies found no one waiting on the beach to oppose their landing. It was not because no one was expecting them. Rather, it was because Prince Menshikov, the Russian commander and former ambassador to Turkey, only had some 30,000 to 40,000 men to oppose the 60,000 Allied soldiers. The Russian juggernaut was outnumbered. This was because Field Marshall Paskevich was afraid that at any moment Austria would join the Allies, so he had released no troops to defend the Crimea from the army along the Pruth. The Tsar was also afraid that the Allies might attack in the Baltic, so many of the best Russian units were reserved in the north. The only troops that Menshikov could draw on were some 30,000 stationed around Odessa, and these would be released only after the Allies had landed. Menshikov preferred to let the Allied armies land and wait for these reinforcements.

Invasion of the Crimea

The Allies landed on the morning of September 14. Prophetically, it was the anniversary of Napoleon I's entry into the city of Moscow. The British army consisted of five infantry divisions of 5000 men each and two cavalry brigades (really supposed to be *one* cavalry division but since the Brigadier of the Light Brigade, Lord Cardigan, was not on speaking terms with the divisional commander, Lord Lucan, it usually functioned as two *highly* uncoordinated brigades). The French Army consisted of four infantry divisions and one cavalry division but was the larger of the two forces because its infantry divisions were twice the size of the British. They were accompanied by a Turkish brigade of 7000.

The French landed first, and each man came ashore fully equipped for the campaign. The British, on the other hand, left their tents and packs aboard ship and were proud of the fact that each man had three days' worth of food and a spare pair of socks! For the next three weeks of marching, while the French army slept in pup tents, the British had to bivouac in the open. Cholera broke out again in both armies, but the British suffered more. The difference was characteristic of the different amount of attention and expertise applied to the problem of logistics and supply by the two armies throughout that year.

The March to Sevastopol

The French army had sorted itself out and was ready to begin marching south toward Sevastopol by the 17th. They waited for the British for two days. By the evening of the 19th, the Allies had reached the

Bulganek river, where a minor artillery duel took place between British and Russian batteries. The highspirited light cavalry brigade prepared to charge the Cossack artillery escort but was restrained by Lord Raglan. He was painfully aware of his army's paucity of cavalry and had decided to "keep the cavalry in a handbox." Nevertheless, the Russians were driven off.

The following day, the Allied armies encountered the main Russian force, drawn up into defensive positions behind the Alma river, and the first battle of the campaign took place. The battle was characterized by stunning displays of bad generalship and non-generalship on all sides. It ended in an Allied victory only because of extraordinarily good morale of the British fighting man as compared with the Russian. Allied superiority in small arms and tactics also told, but these advantages were only marginal. They had the potential of being much more decisive but they were tools put into the hands of very clumsy generals. The Russians had the advantage of superior artillery and a much greater number of cavalry of which Menshikov made the worst possible use. The Allies lost 3000 men and the Russians 6000. The Russians withdrew in disorder to Sevastopol, and the Allies were too exhausted to pursue them.

The Allied armies remained on the field for the next two days while the British, who had no ambulances, tried to get their wounded back to the fleet. During this time, St. Arnaud and Lord Raglan met frequently to discuss what they should do next. Raglan was in favor of attacking the north side of Sevastopol as soon as possible. St. Arnaud, whose troops would carry the brunt of such an attack, demurred. Raglan could not insist and was unwilling to damage the alliance by acting independently. An alternate plan was devised according to which the two armies would march *around* the city to the east and take up positions south of it, which came to be known as "the flank march." The advantage that this plan offered over an immediate attack was that it would enable the armies to link up with the fleets again at Balaclava and Kamiesh harbors and establish a secure supply line. Its disadvantage was that it gave the Russian army time to recover from Alma and regroup. Raglan continued to press for his plan on the following days, but St. Arnaud died of stomach cancer in the midst of the march to Sevastopol, ending discussion with a profound finality.

Menshikov had decided to remove his army to Bakchiserai and Simpheropol to the northeast so that he could remain in communication with Odessa where his reinforcements and supplies would come from. He had decided quite rightly that a Russian army in the field would be able to give the Allies more trouble than a large Sevastopol garrison. He was also aware of the fact that Sevastopol was indefensible in its current stage of fortification. The Allies could have carried it as soon as they arrived. He did not want to lose his whole army in what might very well turn out to be a trap. He marched

out of Sevastopol, leaving behind 16,000 sailors, marines, and militia and one regular *battalion*.

Menshikov was marching northeast around the city at the same time that the Allies were marching around it to the southeast. The two armies marched past each other like sleepwalkers. They would have been completely oblivious to each other except that Lord Raglan, riding far ahead of the army by mistake, rode into the tail of Menshikov's wagontrain. This was quite a surprise to him because he thought that there was a British cavalry division between him and the enemy. (There had been but it took a wrong turn and got lost.) Raglan's appearance was no surprise to the Russians because they did not notice him. Raglan's waning confidence in his cavalry waned further.

The flank march was completed by September 27, but Balaclava harbor proved much too small for both armies to draw supply through. General Canrobert, the new French commander, offered Lord Raglan the choice of staying at Balaclava and holding the exposed eastern flank during the operations against the city or of relocating to Kamiesh harbor for his base of operations, essentially switching places with the French army. Raglan chose to remain at Balaclava which was a mistake on two counts. In the first place, the French army's bays of Kamiesh and Kazach were each larger than Balaclava, which was like a fjord a couple of miles long but less than half a mile wide. It was too small to give shelter to all of the British supply ships at one time, so many of them had to anchor outside the harbor while they waited to unload. In the second place, the decision to remain at Balaclava exposed the weaker British army to both the Sevastopol garrison and to the army that Menshikov had at Simpheropol.

The Siege Begins

The question of whether or not to storm the city arose again. Raglan again urged an immediate assault, but Canrobert refused just as St. Arnaud had. He was supported by the British commander of the Engineers, Sir John Burgoyne, who argued that it would be criminal not to make use of the large siege train which they had brought. He estimated that an assault against the city would cost the Allies at least 500 men. This "expert" advice prevailed; the first earthworks for the siege were dug on October 10th. In retrospect it would be abundantly clear that this was a dreadful misjudgment, a clear case of false economy. George Cathcart, commander of the British 4th Division, much more correctly estimated the difficulty involved. His opinion that "I could walk into it, with scarcely the loss of a man..." was substantially the same as that of the Russian generals inside the city when the Allies first showed up.

The Russians under Admiral Kornilov and Colonel Todleben did not leave Sevastopol in this weak condition for very long. They quickly had the entire population of the town working around the clock digging earthworks and stripping the fleet of its ar-

tillery to mount in the new redans and bastions. The Russians, having already scuttled blockships in the harbor entrance, were thus provided with a vast amount of naval artillery. Todleben hastened the speed of fortifying the city by using earthworks and trenches as the basis for his defensive network. Orthodox military doctrine in the Russian engineering corps at the time favored using stone masonry to construct fortifications *a la* Vauban in a very formal manner. However, operating according to these orthodox protocols would have delayed the completion of the city's defenses until April 1855. The defenders found it difficult to work the shaley soil of Sevastopol into walls and gun emplacements as the loose rock would not hold its shape very well. Since the use of earthworks was so unorthodox in the Russian army, there was a scarcity of entrenching tools. For both of these reasons, Todleben's achievement in readying the city for a siege between September 27th, when the Allied armies set up camp, and October 17th, the date of the first bombardment, is remarkable. The Allies were startled to find after they started digging their siegeworks on October 10th that they could not keep up with Todleben's efforts.

General Menshikov gradually regained his hope that the city might be able to hold out and was persuaded to send in reinforcements as his force received them from Odessa. By the first week in October, the city garrison had been increased to 38,000. Stripping the fleet and the forts facing the sea allowed Todleben to increase the number of guns mounted in his landward defenses from 172 to 341.

To break open Todleben's positions, the Allies only had 126 guns, 53 in the French batteries and 73 in the British. They scheduled their bombardment to commence on the morning of October 17, 1854 with simultaneous firing from both the siege batteries on land against the Russian bastions and from the fleets to be directed against the sea fortifications. Todleben anticipated their plans and opened fire first half an hour before the Allies were scheduled to begin. In the general exchange of fire that ensued, the British batteries managed to silence the guns of the redan which faced them, but the French did not fare so well. A Russian shell blew up one of their powder magazines and they ceased firing at 10:30. It is indicative of the degree of mistrust that existed between the Allies (as well as of the kind of mentality which characterized the Second Empire) that Canrobert tried to conceal what had happened. He sent a runner to Raglan to assure him that the French magazine had not blown up — that it was just a "new type of Russian shell." Raglan didn't fall for it. The British could have stormed the redan by themselves and probably taken it, but again they did not want to act alone. The naval artillery duel with the forts resulted in a lot of damage to the wooden ships and very little to the stone forts. It was not repeated. Overall, the engagement was an almost unmitigated Russian success marred only by the unfortunate

death of Admiral Kornilov. The Allies, who had expected to walk into the town at the end of one or two days bombardment, were in for a long siege. The initiative had shifted to the Russians.

Menshikov did not wait long to take advantage of it. The very next day he dispatched the 12th Division, under General Liprandi, to the village of Chorgun, and on October 25 this force attacked Balaclava. Despite some initial success on the part of the Russian infantry, the results of the battle were not at all what the Russian advantages in numbers and the element of surprise should have produced. Balaclava was not a clear-cut victory for either side, and the Russians were tempted to try another attack on the British flank, seeing how thinly they were spread trying to keep a force both on the flank and besieging the city.

Menshikov waited until November 5 and then, with his total force swollen to 120,000, he attacked the camp of the British 2nd Division near the ruins of Inkerman. Once again the Russians depended on sheer numbers and their excellent artillery to carry the day and did not display good generalship. The battle ended the Allied hope of resolving the siege before winter and caused several British generals to begin talking about the necessity of evacuating the peninsula. Its effect on the Russians was equally catastrophic, however. Menshikov never dared take a Russian army against the Allies in the open again.

Winter 1854-55

The siege continued throughout the winter. The French, having failed to get over the defenses of Sevastopol, tried to tunnel under them. At this, too, Todleben remained a jump ahead, and the French sappers inevitably ended up running into an opposing tunnel full of Russian soldiers. Characteristically, Todleben turned his position as defender around and began aggressively besieging the besiegers (from the inside as it were). For example, he would build new earthworks and trenches overnight that threatened the French batteries. The French were kept so busy clearing these new works that they could spare little effort in attacking the ones behind that defended the city. Instead of just waiting for the Allies to dig their way in to him, Todleben dug his way out to them, so that by the end of the winter the Allies had more fortifications to overcome than they had when it began. They literally lost ground.

The siege warfare became increasingly the province of the Russians and French as the winter wore on. The British found themselves facing a much more implacable enemy: disease. The British army suffered even more from cholera during the winter than they had at Varna. Because of a combination of factors, mostly involving their own incredible logistics failure (see the logistics module) and the weather, the British were completely unable to get enough food or shelter to the troops in the trenches. The British army spent the winter under canvas without winter clothing. The effects of exposure and malnu-

trition were so devastating that at the height of the crisis the army was losing men at a rate of 100 a day.

When these men fell sick with cholera (or when they were wounded in battle) they were sent to hospitals which might kill them even if their illness did not. The theatre base hospital at Scutari, for example, had nearly a 50% mortality rate. There were at least 4000 men crammed in there at any one time.

The death rate was appalling even for those days. But it was quite understandable, because the supply system for the hospitals was the very first one to break down. There were no beds at Scutari, no medicine, and very little food. The process of requisitioning these items was so convoluted that doctors spent all of their time signing forms and had none to spend treating cases. There was no sanitation, so even if one entered the hospital without cholera it was almost impossible to avoid contracting it. The supply situation was so bad that central base hospital for the British army did not even have bandages. In the middle of the country which was supplying the world with it, the British army hospitals ran out of opium.

Into this situation, Florence Nightingale arrived on November 5, 1854 with 37 volunteer nurses. She was authorized by Sidney Herbert, the Secretary for War, to operate throughout the military hospitals in Turkey, but nevertheless she had to fight a continual war with the army's senior doctor who saw his authority being undermined. He tried to obstruct her work by refusing to let her nurses in the wards, by refusing to issue her army rations on the grounds that she wasn't a soldier, etc. This kind of treatment from the leader of the medical community, added to the situation created by disease and lack of supplies, should have made her task of reforming the base hospital at Scutari impossible.

But before she returned to England, Florence Nightingale had reduced the mortality rate in the British army hospitals from 44% to 2%. When she got back, she was acknowledged as the nation's foremost expert in matters pertaining to hospitals and had so much prestige that she was consulted on virtually every governmental issue involving medicine for the next 30 years.

Florence Nightingale's miracle was possible because she went to Scutari with Sidney Herbert's authority to back her up when necessary and because she controlled the 30,000-pound fund that the *London Times* had raised for the relief of the army. She could cut through much of the red tape and, when necessary, could buy provisions and medicine outside of the impenetrable "normal channels" of the army commissariat. In the end, she was basically administering the entire hospital almost single-handed. It was because of her work as an efficient administrator rather than as a merciful nurse — "the lady with the lamp" — that she made such a difference. Unfortunately, no one came forth to do for the administration of the army's logistics in general what she had done in the hospital at Scutari.

The British army in the Crimea never recovered from the attrition of that winter. By the end of the war the British government was recruiting German and Swiss mercenaries as replacements. The British could no longer even cover their section of the front and when four more French divisions arrived, at the beginning of 1855 the British army gave up the whole right flank, operating henceforth only along a small sector in between the French army. The scandal over the incompetent system of supply and the high rate of attrition brought down the Aberdeen government at the end of January 1855. Lord Palmerston formed a new cabinet to the great disgust of the Queen who could find no one else. Menshikov, to the great disgust of the Tsar, did not attack the Allies during the winter and was only persuaded with great difficulty to make an attack, on January 17th, on a Turkish army which was occupying Eupatoria. The Russians were repulsed again.

Pelissier and the Final Days

By this time the Allies, especially Napoleon III, were weary of the war. He was bearing most of the burden of it and not getting any political advantage whatsoever. His hopes of getting a little glory on the cheap were fast vanishing. When Nicholas I died on March 2nd of influenza, negotiations were reopened with Russia in Vienna about ending the war. His successor Alexander II reached agreement with the Allies on all points except the Allied demand that the Russian fleet in the Black Sea be restricted to four ships.

As long as Sevastopol held out the Tsar had no reason to compromise on this point. And thanks to Todleben the 2nd bombardment of Sevastopol on April 9 was a failure. Napoleon, feeling more and more frustrated with the war, threatened to come to the Crimea and personally take command if victory was not forthcoming. At the same time he would not allow Canrobert to risk a major assault. Against Todleben the city could not be taken by bombardment alone. Canrobert, under pressure to accomplish the impossible, resigned on May 16th. General Pelissier, his replacement, decided to disobey Napoleon's directives and initiated a more aggressive policy. By this time the Vienna conference had ended in failure, so Napoleon had little alternative, if he wanted to end the war, but to let Pelissier do as he would and to grumble about the cost of it.

One of the first things Pelissier did was to send an expedition to Kertch on May 22, something that Canrobert had been forbidden to do earlier. The occupation of Kertch cut the last Russian supply line except overland (and seriously hindered that). Pelissier now began a systematic reduction of the defenses of Sevastopol. The Russians still had more guns than the Allies but they began to run low on ammunition. The British had by this time reorganized their supply system so that the superior Allied war capacity could be brought to bear. For example, by this time they had a railroad running up from Balaclava which was carrying hundreds of

tons of shells to the front daily. On June 6th Pelissier started the third bombardment of Sevastopol and successfully stormed the Mamelon and the White works, two of the new positions Todleben had aggressively put up that winter.

On June 17th after the fourth bombardment, the French and the British launched a general assault on the main works of Sevastopol. They were driven back with the heaviest losses yet sustained. Some British regiments returned with only two of their officers left. On the 28th Lord Raglan died of cholera believing that Sevastopol was impregnable. He was replaced by Sir James Simpson, a man of no outstanding ability. The British began talking about the possibility of spending another winter in the siege, and there was general agreement they should evacuate if the city did not fall before then.

Pelissier was certain that the next assault would be successful. He was not the only one. General Gortchakov, who had replaced Menshikov soon after the Tsar died, was of the same opinion. To forestall the next assault he decided to risk a battle in the field. On August 16th he attacked the French and their Sardinian allies (who had arrived in early May) with four divisions across the Tchernaya river. Initially the Russian column under Liprandi made progress, but General Read's advance against the Fedukine hills was a massacre and the arrival of reinforcements only increased the Russian casualty figures (see module). The Russians were forced to retreat with 8000 casualties.

The next day the Allies again bombarded the city, and Russians ran out of ammunition to return fire. On the 5th of September the Allies made another bombardment, the heaviest yet. It lasted three days and on the 8th the French attacked the Malakov tower and the British the Redan. The British attack failed, but the French one succeeded. The British had to charge over a much longer distance from their front trenches, and they were mowed down by Russian riflemen. However, the French capture of the Malakov was sufficient. Gortchakov decided that his position was untenable and evacuated the city during the night. For all intents and purposes the war was over.

Russia was too exhausted to take any more initiatives in the Crimea but for that matter so were the Allies. It was left to Austria to end the stalemate by threatening (as she had repeatedly before) to join the Allies and declare war on Russia. The Tsar accepted the Austrian ultimatum in January 1856. He agreed to the last provision that the Black Sea fleet be neutralized. The Treaty of Paris formally ended the war on April 27th, 1856.

A few years later no one could point to anything that had been achieved by the war, and it began to get a very bad reputation. Had it not been fought to its conclusion, however, it is doubtful that Napoleon's regime or Palmerston's ministry could have survived. Both nations had taken such heavy casualties that their governments had to win at least a nominal victory.

THE BATTLE OF THE ALMA: The First Test of Arms

Prince Menshikov awaited the Allies with a sense of confidence, his army firmly ensconced in the hills south of the Alma river, a defensive position which he believed to be invulnerable. With him were at least 33,000 men: 40 infantry battalions, 16 cavalry squadrons, and over 100 guns. He predicted that it would take the Allies three weeks to breach his position, at the very least. But he thought it far more likely that they would break themselves in the assault and retire. He invited a party of young ladies out from Sevastopol to have a picnic behind the Alma and watch.

His confidence was not unreasonable. The hills immediately south of the Alma leapt up sharply as high as 400 meters. They ran parallel to the river all the way from the village of Bourliuk to the sea, a few miles west, gradually giving way to cliffs. Batteries on the crests could fire freely on an enemy advancing down the Post Road, on the plain below, even before they reached the river. Assaulting troops would then have to ford the stream, scramble onto the eight foot-high southern bank, and march up the hills under fire. Or else they might cross the bridge at Bourliuk and enter the pass between Kourgane and Telegraph hills. But in either case, they would encounter the full weight of the Russian artillery.

Menshikov divided his army into three parts. The largest, some 13,000 men and the cavalry, he placed on Kourgane hill under the command of General Kvetinski, covering two redoubts. This was where he set up his headquarters in anticipation of the Allied attack. The second force, 10,000 strong, he stationed on the Post Road in the pass, under the command of General Gorchakov. The third division, under General Kiriakov, was stationed to the west around Telegraph hill (so named for the unfinished semaphore station on its crest). This was the weakest force, consisting of 10,000 men in units with the worst morale. No one was on their flank because Menshikov believed that the heights to the west of Telegraph hill were completely unscaleable, and he did not want to overextend his line. However, relying on French naval reconnaissance, St. Arnaud believed that the heights could be scaled and were undefended and he made his plans accordingly.

He proposed to Raglan, the British commander, that the French begin the battle with a dawn attack on the western flank, to be followed shortly by a British attack to envelop the eastern flank, while both British and French contingents pinned the Russian center. Lord Raglan, with an ambiguity which was to become

infamous, assured St. Arnaud that he could depend on "the vigorous cooperation of the British Army." It is doubtful that he had any intention of following the French plan.

On the next day, September 20th, when the French started moving, the British were still eating breakfast and breaking camp. The British had not held any divisional field exercises since Waterloo. And under the command of a man who had never independently commanded troops before, they assumed their column of march with ponderous slowness. Further, Raglan refused to march any faster than his ammunition carts, reflecting an exaggerated appreciation of the Duke of Wellington's concern for his reserve ammunition forty years before.

Thus the French had to wait in front of the Alma until the British took their place in line around 11:30. There was then a further delay as the British, already under fire, deployed from column into line. At 1:30, St. Arnaud rode across to Lord Raglan and was informed that Raglan planned a frontal assault, because he was afraid of the masses of Russian cavalry on the eastern flank. St. Arnaud, with what one might imagine as more than a little disgust, ordered his soldiers to carry out their attack as planned. The opportunity for collaboration between the two armies and all hope of achieving surprise had been lost.

The first test of arms between the Russian army and the nearly 70,000 men of the British and French armies began as General Boat's Brigade of the French 2nd Division scaled the cliffs by the mouth of the river (off the game-map) and D'Aute-marre's went up the trail at the village of Almatamac. Then Canrobert's 1st Division and Prince Napoleon's 3rd were ordered forward. At this point the French plan began to go awry. Canrobert's Division crossed the Alma virtually unopposed just as Boat's had, but Canrobert found that his artillery could not cross with him, so he sent it around to Almatamac. Since according to French military doctrine infantry could not advance without artillery support, he stopped as soon as he gained the heights, to await his batteries. The 3rd Division was in even worse straits. Its men were pinned by Russian artillery fire as soon as they reached the riverbank. If Menshikov had acted swiftly and counterattacked, the French might well have been forced to retreat, but instead his action was indecisive. He took the Moscow and Minsk regiments and marched east but, upon coming within sight of the French, he changed his mind and sent them back, wasting hours. Meanwhile Kiriakov used some artillery and two of the Taroutine battalions to keep Canrobert's men occupied.

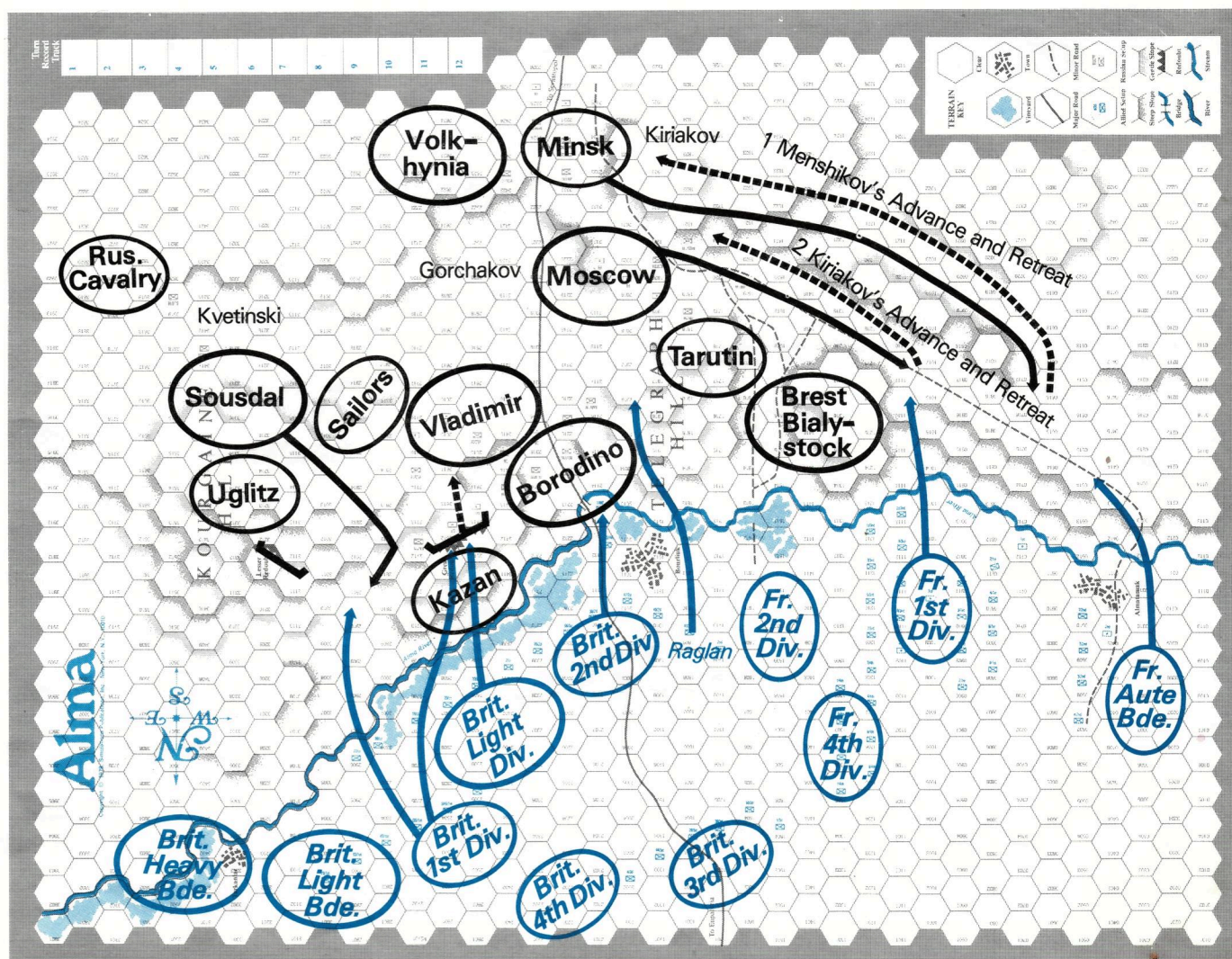
Lord Raglan, having left his men standing about under fire for over an hour, finally decided that the French attack had developed sufficiently and ordered his men to advance. The 2nd Division and the Light Division marched to the river, and the Light Division crossed it with great difficulty, having its formation broken up in the process. A thin line of disordered men began climbing Kourgane hill. The battalions comprising the 19th, 23rd, 33rd, and 95th Regiments (the 95th having been detached from its own division in the confusion) attacked into the teeth of the Russian guns in the Great Redoubt.

Simultaneously, just west of the redoubt, Colonel Yacy Lea's 7th Royal Fusilier Battalion took on the massed columns of two battalions of the Kazan regiment. The struggle between the Kazan and the 7th Fusiliers lasted about half an hour and exemplified the difference between Russian and British weapons and

tactics. Although the Russians outnumbered the British two to one, it was they who retreated after the prolonged fire-fight at less than a hundred meters. The Russians were handicapped by weapons and tactics of the Napoleonic era rendered obsolete by the Minie rifle. They were equipped with 1832 smoothbore muskets which were almost impossible to aim and hardly lethal at a hundred yards. Their situation was worsened by their dense columnar formation which permitted only the front ranks to fire. The British, on the other hand, were armed with the new Minie rifle which had a range of over a thousand yards. At the very short range at which it was being used, and against a dense formation, a single bullet could strike as many as seven men. The wound inflicted by the .70 calibre minieball was almost always incapacitating, even with a glancing blow. The thin British line formation enabled every man to fire and minimized British casualties.

The success of the 7th Royal Fusiliers enabled the center of the Light Division to reach the Great Redoubt without being flanked, although it suffered greatly from the redoubt's 14 guns. As the men of the Light Division approached the redoubt, they were surprised to see the Russians limbering up their guns and hauling them away. They were spared the effects of grapeshot at pointblank range, and took the redoubt without resistance. They had been saved by the legend of the Great Duke and by the Tsar himself, for the Tsar, hearing that Wellington never lost a gun, gave orders that the Russian army was on no account to risk losing one either!

The Russian response was to counterattack the redoubt with the Vladimir regiment. In this attack too, the confusion by the two armies' lack of battle experience had comic opera consequences. For some reason the British in the redoubt



decided that the approaching columns of the Vladimir regiment were French and abruptly ceased fire. The Russians, confused by this and suspecting a trap, stopped marching, confirming to the British their French identity. Thereupon a bugler blew the retreat and the Light Division retired to the river, giving up the redoubt again without a struggle.

The 2nd Division, not as lucky as the Light Division, was pinned immediately to the northern bank by Russian artillery fire. At about the same time that the Light Division was taking the Great Redoubt, Lord Raglan decided that he did not have a good enough view of the battle and decided to take up a new position on higher ground. Since the only higher ground was on the other side of the river, he and his staff crossed it just west of Bourliuk and took up a new position on Telegraph hill. From here they could see the British army's efforts to advance perfectly, because they were behind the Russian lines in the middle of the Russian army! After a while Raglan decided that he was in a perfect position for a British battery to fire from and sent back for one. When it arrived, he started firing on the Borodino regiment and the batteries which were holding up the 2nd Division's advance. The Russians, suddenly and inexplicably under fire from their flank, retreated and the 2nd Division advanced across the river and up the Post Road. Lord Raglan had achieved an unparalleled feat; he had turned the enemy's flank from the center.

Why the Russians did not simply capture him when he first crossed the river is a mystery. It was probably because none of the Russian generals — Menshikov, Gorchakov, Kiriakov, or Kvetinski — noticed him and gave the necessary order. The command structure of the Russian army was as rigid as the Empire itself. None of the battalion or regimental commanders, apparently, would act on their own, even to capture the unprotected commander of the enemy army! And all of the Russian generals were riding around somewhere else, mostly to no effect. Menshikov was just getting the Moscow and Minsk regiments back to where they started. He turned them over to Kiriakov who led them back again towards Canrobert's 1st Division. Upon arriving this time, the Russian troops attacked the French — unfortunately, just minutes after Canrobert's artillery had arrived. The attack was driven off. General Gorchakov, meanwhile, was not in his sector to see Raglan, because he had seen the British in the Great Redoubt in Kvetinski's sector. Unable to reach Menshikov, he rode over there shortly before Raglan crossed the river. He and Kvetinski then both led the Vladimir regiment in

its advance, both giving it the same orders, and each unaware of the other's presence!

The French, after breaking up Kiriakov's abortive attack, advanced up to the Telegraph station with their long awaited artillery support and stopped, their initiative spent. The only remaining Russian position untaken after this was the one on Kourgane hill. This force might still have administered a sharp defeat to the Light and 2nd Divisions and stabilized the Russian situation long enough for the western flank and center to have regrouped and possibly even counterattacked. Lord Raglan, from his glorious but inaccessible location, knew nothing about the British reverse on Kourgane hill, and since no one in the British army knew where *he* was, he couldn't very well be asked for orders about it. Luckily, General Airey, the Quartermaster General who was acting as Raglan's adjutant, recognized the danger. He rode over to the Duke of Cambridge who, although the youngest Lieutenant General in the British army (and incidentally Victoria's cousin), had never really commanded troops before. He explained to the Duke that his orders to "support" the Light Brigade meant that he was supposed to follow them and remedy the situation on Kourgane hill where they were cowering under fire on the south bank.

Belatedly the British 1st Division (the Guards Brigade and the Scots Highlanders) crossed the river. The Guards, marching through the remnants of the Light Division, attacked the Vladimir and Kazan regiments around the Great Redoubt. The Scots Highlanders attacked the Sousdal regiment, which had been drawn up in support of the Vladimir, between the Great and Lesser Redoubts. In both cases, the experience of the 7th Royal Fusiliers was repeated, and a final bayonet charge by the Guards advancing while firing (something the Russians had never seen before) sent the Russians scurrying up the Post Road towards Sevastopol in disorder.

The battle of Alma had been won at a cost of 5,000 Russian, 3,000 British, and 1,500 French casualties (although the British said that the French casualty lists were inflated with cholera victims). It was a battle which was won by the superiority of the rifle over the smoothbore and by the initiative of the British lower officers. The ranking Generals on both sides displayed an amazing paucity of military resources. The British army had shown itself able to barely function with the phenomena of disappearing Commanders in Chief and tactics whose ingenuity consisted of facing the enemy and marching forward. On the other hand, the Russian army had not functioned at all.

THE BATTLE OF BALACLAVA The Cavalry Battle

The only port in the Crimean peninsula through which British supplies were being landed was Balaclava and, with the bulk of the Allied forces engaged in the siege of Sevastopol, an attack against Balaclava was an obvious Russian move. Lord Raglan, the British commander, knew that a large Russian force was being assembled around Tchorgun, several miles from Balaclava. But when warned by a Turkish spy the day before the battle, Raglan did not divert troops from the siege; similar warnings had only resulted in British troops being marched to the plain and back to no effect. The spies had cried wolf too often.

On 25 October 1854, at 5:00 a.m., the Russian army under Lt. General Liprandi moved to attack Balaclava with 17 Russian battalions, 20 cavalry squadrons and 64 guns — some 18,000 to 20,000 men. Opposing them were three Turkish battalions with 12 field guns in four redoubts on the Causeway Heights and Canrobert's Hill. Behind, perhaps 3000 men lay between the Russians and the harbor: the British Cavalry Division, consisting of the Heavy and Light Brigades, two troops of horse artillery, one battery, the 93rd Highlanders, and a force of marines, two battalions and four batteries.

The Russians attacked simultaneously with four columns from the north and east. On their left, the Dnieper regiment occupied Kamara and laid down artillery support for the main attack by five battalions under General Semiakin on Canrobert's Hill. The Turks there put up half an hour's stiff resistance, taking 50% casualties before they broke. But in other redoubts, the defenders fled when Scuderi's Odessa and Levoutski's Ukraine regiments approached. By the time Raglan arrived, the Russians had taken Canrobert's Hill and were effortlessly seizing the other redoubts. They had strong contingents on their flanks at Kamara and on the Fedukine Heights, and the Russian cavalry, advancing into the north valley under General Ryjov, was threatening the village of Kadikoi and the British cavalry camp. Raglan ordered the 1st and 4th Divisions back from Sevastopol, but it would take at least several hours for them to arrive. The 4th Division had spent an unpleasant night in the trenches and George Brown, their commander, moved slowly, fearing a false alarm. Saint Arnaud, who was with Raglan on Sapouine Heights, ordered up two French brigades

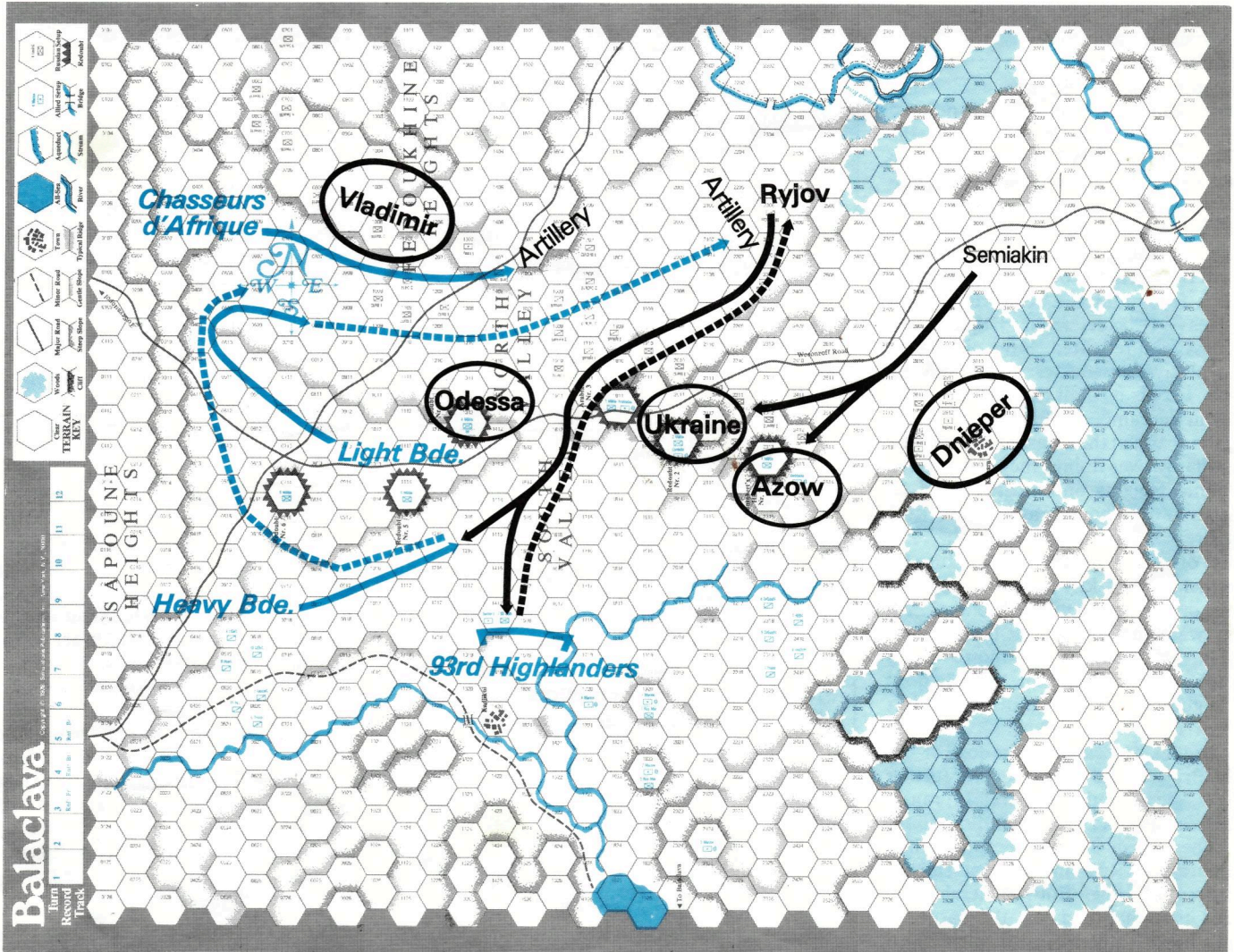
and his cavalry, the Chasseurs d'Afrique. Characteristically, they arrived before the British.

In the meantime, Lord Lucan, commanding the Cavalry Division, tried a feint against Scuderi's advance. When that did not work, the British troops withdrew to the west end of the Causeway Heights beyond range of the Russian guns. The Russian cavalry was moving slowly down the north valley, and Raglan ordered his cavalry to take up a flanking position on the Causeway. At this point, four Russian squadrons detached themselves from the main body and, galloping between redoubts three and four, attacked the 93rd on the hill north of Kadikoi.

The 93rd was supported by 100 convalescent soldiers, who had been sent to

Kadikoi to recuperate, and by those of the Turkish militia who had been rallied after their rout from the redoubts. When the four Russian squadrons suddenly appeared, the Turks fled again — all the way to Balaclava. The 93rd did not have time to form a square and so had to face the Russian attack in line, thus going down in history as "the thin red line at Balaclava." They fired at the Russians at 600 yards (considered long range, despite the fact that their rifles were effective at more than twice that distance). They delivered a second volley at 350 yards and another at 150 yards. The Russian squadrons retreated rather than press home the attack. They tried to outflank the 93rd, but their maneuvering was so unwieldy that the British were able to redeploy to face them.

Lucan, expecting another more forceful attack on the 93rd, sent the Heavy Brigade to support them. At the same time that the British were moving down the Causeway, the main body of Ryjov's cavalry was trotting around the Causeway into the south valley. The 600 men of the Heavy Brigade suddenly found themselves face to face with the more than 3,000 of Ryjov's columns, just a few hundred yards away. The Russian cavalry halted, perhaps reordering their formation to engulf them. At this point, James Scarlett, the Brigadier of the Heavies did something that should have become famous as the charge at Balaclava. Faced with an enemy five times as strong, who had the advantage of higher ground, *he charged them*. It was in many



ways insane, but it gave the British the advantage of cavalry in motion over cavalry at rest. After eight minutes, the Russians — incredibly — retreated. The Light Brigade, which could have turned their retreat into a rout, stood rooted to the ground on the Causeway, ignoring their opportunity to hit Ryjov's flank. Lord Cardigan had been ordered to the Causeway, and he was a man who would obey orders regardless of the consequences.

After the retreat of the Russian cavalry, there was a long pause in the battle while Raglan waited for the infantry divisions. He was spurred to action when he saw the Russian infantry in the redoubts carrying away his 12-pounders. Mindful of the Duke of Wellington's never-lost-a-gun myth, he ordered Lord Lucan to "advance rapidly to the front, follow the enemy, and try to prevent the enemy carrying away the guns." Unfortunately, he forgot that, although he could see perfectly from the Sapouine Heights, Lucan was down in the north valley and could not see the redoubts. Lucan asked Captain Lewis Nolan, the messenger, where he was to attack and Nolan, who was a bit of a hothead, lost his temper and pointed toward the Russians at the end of the valley. So the Cavalry Division rode down into a valley flanked on three sides with Russian artillery to attack the guns and cavalry at the end of it. Nolan, unfortunately, was killed in the process of trying to turn the Division toward the redoubts. After a few minutes, Lucan, riding with the Heavy Brigade, realized that it was madness, and retreated. But Lord Cardigan, always a stickler for following orders, led his men all the way down the valley in the famous "charge of the Light Brigade." When the Chasseurs d'Afrique saw what he was doing, they charged the Fedukine Heights and cleared them of Russian guns. Though, as a result, Russian fire was not as bad when the remnants of the Light Brigade returned, nonetheless they lost 247 men and 475 horses out of a force of 673. General Bosquet, watching the charge beside Lord Raglan, pronounced a most fitting epitaph: "C'est magnifique mais ce n'est pas la guerre." (It is magnificent but it is not war.)

Raglan, sickened by the loss of the Light Brigade, did not make any further attacks. Neither did General Liprandi, whose cavalry had also been disappointing. The British did not recapture their redoubts; the Russians did not cut the Allied supply line. Both Generals concluded that they had lost the battle. It would be difficult to say that either of them was wrong.

INKERMAN: The Soldiers' Battle

After the Battle of the Alma, the Allies chose to besiege Sevastopol rather than assault it. Their forces were deployed in an arc before the city, with the French on the south and the British on the east. However, the Allies had too few men to completely encircle the city, and the British right flank hung on thin air. This gap permitted the Russians to reinforce Sevastopol by land without serious opposition.

On October 26, the day after Balaklava, the Russians launched a probing attack (subsequently known as the Little Inkerman) on the British 2nd Division's position on Inkerman Ridge. The attack, repulsed without difficulty, emphasized the absence of fortifications and lack of manpower in this sector of the British defenses, but the British took no effective measures to correct these deficiencies. A few days after the probe, General De Lacy Evans, the 2nd Division's commander, was injured and replaced by General Pennefeather.

The British had built a two-gun battery on the Kitspur of Inkerman Ridge to reply to a Russian gun shelling the British positions from the Inkerman Ruins across the valley. These guns were withdrawn by November 4, and this Sandbag Battery, worthless as an infantry position, was abandoned. The Russians decided that a "spoiling attack" should be made to disrupt the French preparations for an assault on the Flagstaff Bastion. However, as reinforcements had brought Russian strength in the area to over 100,000 men, a bolder idea was conceived. The plan of attack was simple and straightforward. General Soimonov's army of 19,000 men would advance east from Sevastopol and meet General Paulov's army of 16,000 men advancing from the north on Shell Hill. At this point, General Dannenburg would assume command, and the combined force would sweep southwards. It would be supported by a sally from Sevastopol and General Gortschakov's army of 22,000 men from the east, both attempting to delay reinforcements to Inkerman Ridge. As General Dannenburg's forces moved south, General Gortschakov would press the attack and, hopefully, destroy the British army.

On November 5, General Soimonov's men marched out of Sevastopol at 2:00 a.m. into a rain that had been falling for the last 24 hours. Their movements were detected by the British outposts but were assumed to be the regular nightly traffic into and out of Sevastopol. Soimonov's forces made contact with the British pickets about 5:30, driving them back and establishing a Russian artillery position on Shell Hill. The rain had given way to a thick fog, and with Paulov's men unavailable, General Soimonov decided

to commence the attack by shelling the 2nd Division's camp on Home Ridge.

As the battle was joined, the fog created massive problems for both sides. Visibility was negligible, and the brushwood and uneven terrain on Inkerman Ridge prevented the use of organized formations. Small groups of men continually encountered similar opposing forces and fought their own private battles. Adding to the confusion created by the fog were the grey overcoats worn by both sides. Artillery action was reduced to counterbattery exchanges limited to firing at opposing gun flashes. Once engaged, units quickly became conglomerations as men from various companies or battalions reformed into company and battalion-sized groups.

The following is a rough outline of the events that occurred on Inkerman Ridge:

- General Codrington, commander of the 1st Brigade of the Light Division, one of the few British generals up and about at that hour of the morning, heard the initial combat and alerted General Brown, the Light Division's commander, who notified Lord Raglan.

- General Pennefeather decided to "feed the pickets" and fight forward of Home Ridge. This was probably the key decision of the battle. Had he adopted a "reverse slope" position, defending *behind* Home Ridge, the Russian artillery would have inflicted heavy losses, and the Russian infantry would have been able to freely deploy and encircle the division.

- 7:00 a.m. General Soimonov decided to attack in strength, unaware that General Paulov's troops were just reaching the Barrier. His attack failed and he was killed. Paulov's men occupied the Sandbag Battery and the British counterattacked to recover it, beginning a long series of bloody exchanges over the valueless piece of terrain.

- By 7:00 a.m. Lord Raglan had arrived on Home Ridge, decided not to interfere with General Pennefeather's actions and ordered the two 18-pounder artillery pieces to the front. Pennefeather was just beginning to receive reinforcements and also a clearer picture of the size of the Russian forces opposing him. General Bosquet, commanding the French Corps d'Observation, ordered reinforcements to the Windmill on his own initiative. (These troops initially refused to advance when they arrived.) On the road to the front, he encountered General Brown and General Cathcart, commander of the 4th Division, who told him they didn't need his help!

- 8:00 a.m. The fog had begun to lift, aiding the Russians in maneuvering but also permitting the Allies to make use of their superior firepower. General Cath-

cart was requested to fill a gap that had opened between the men of the Guards Brigade in the Sandbag Battery and the troops in the Barrier. He chose to execute a flanking attack on the Russian left, clearing the area of Russian forces. He was killed when the advancing British troops were fired upon by fresh Russian troops and the gains were lost.

•8:30 a.m. Dannenburg had 100 guns in battery on Shell Hill and decided to push for Home Ridge. His forces almost reached the 2nd Division's camp when they were repulsed by a handful of troops, including the two French battalions which had earlier refused to advance.

•10:00 a.m. The main French reinforcements had arrived, helping stabilize the situation. More importantly, the British 18-pounders and French heavy artillery had arrived on Home Ridge.

•1:00 p.m. Intense fighting continued until the British, with perhaps 750 men,

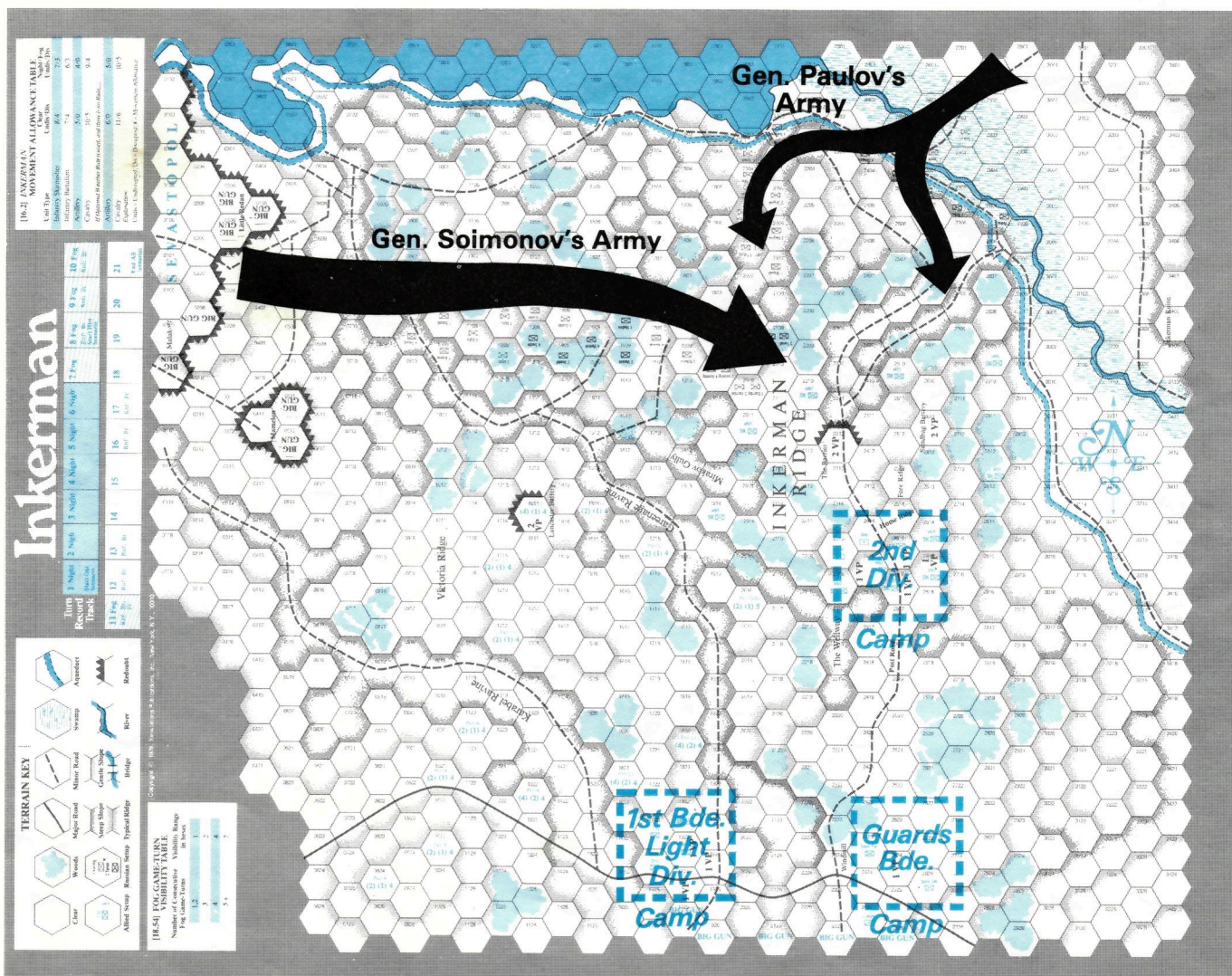
assaulted the Russian artillery on Shell Hill forcing it to withdraw. The nearest Russian soldiers (not being trained to fight without artillery support) also began to retreat, and General Dannenburg ordered a withdrawal, which was covered by fire from steamships in Sevastopol Harbor. General Gortschakov, whose display against the Allied right had no perceptible effect on the reinforcements sent to Inkerman Ridge, also retired without having contributed to the Russian attack.

The British were too tired to pursue and would not permit the French to do so alone, and the Russians retired from the field. Both sides won the battle in the sense that the British managed to keep from being destroyed while the Russians upset the siege time-table. Losses were 1500-2000 British, 1000-1500 French and 10-12,000 Russians (who could afford the losses better than the Allies).

The Russians missed their best chance to destroy the British army. General Dannenburg had proposed an alternate plan of assault in which General Soimonov's army would advance east along Victoria Ridge instead of Inkerman Ridge. This would have permitted the Russians to deploy their entire forces without trying to cram 35,000 men into an area a mile square and assault two weak divisions — 2nd and Light — at the same time. However, this plan was apparently rejected on the basis of the difficulties involved in coordinating the two wings of the army.

The real heroes of the battle were the individual British soldiers who, though tired (most of the men in the 2nd Division's camp had just come in from night duty) and wet (many British rifles would not fire until dried out) repulsed a vastly superior force with little or no aid other than their own morale.

Marty Goldberger



TCHERNAYA RIVER: The Battle of Tractir Bridge

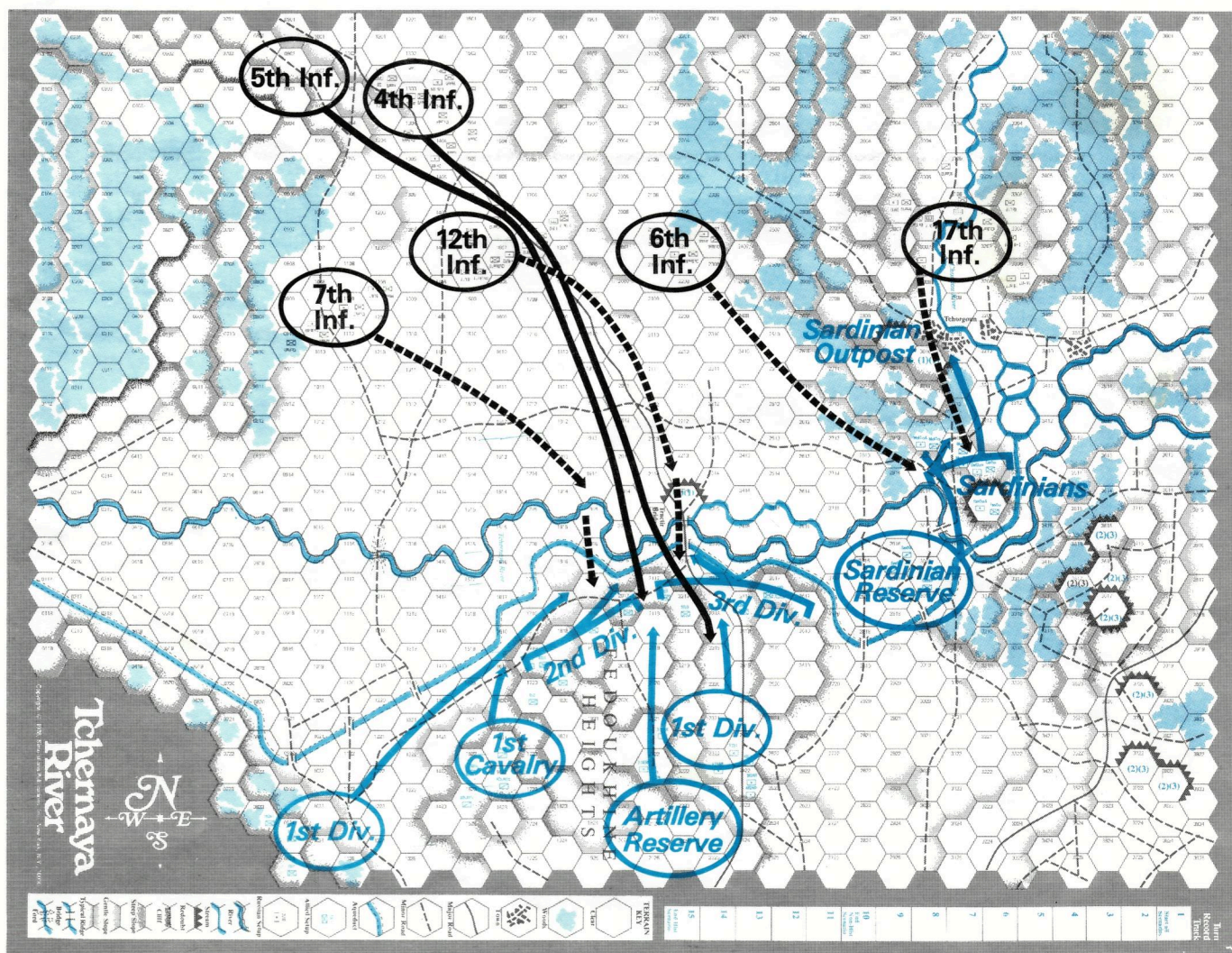
Early on the morning of August 15, 1855; the Russians made what was to be their last attempt to defeat the Allied armies in the field. The site of this battle was the valley of the Tchernaya River, in the shadow of the northern slopes of the Fedoukhine Heights. The Allies comprised three French divisions, commanded by General Herbillon, which were encamped on the Heights overlooking the river and formed the left flank and center of the Allied line, and five Sardinian brigades which formed the right flank of the Allied line. Four of the Sardinian brigades were deployed north of the Tchernaya River around a large solitary hillock, while the fifth was held in reserve just south of the river. All told, the Allied forces numbered just over 28,000 men.

Despite the small number of troops deployed on the Tchernaya line — compared with what the Russians were capable of deploying — the Allied commanders were confident that they would

be able to repel any attack. This confidence was due to the extremely defensive nature of the positions they occupied. In addition to being deployed on the Heights, with extremely steep slopes running down to the river, they also benefited from an aqueduct which ran between the river and the Heights. This aqueduct was nine to ten feet wide and several feet deep. Any enemy troops attempting to cross it would be exposed to the overlooking Heights. Along the entire length of both the aqueduct and the river there was only one major crossing. This was a set of two bridges in the center of the Allied lines, with the bridge over the river known as Tractir Bridge. The French had thrown up earthworks around the northern side of the bridge and had a company of troops defending it. The Russians, however, were aware of these obstacles and took several steps to counter them. The Russian army which was to attack the Allied positions was composed of six divisions numbering some 68,000 men. Several of these divisions were equipped

with ladders and small portable bridges to be used in crossing the aqueduct. The Russian generals hoped in this way to eliminate the problem of getting troops across the aqueduct.

The first indication of an actual attack against the Tchernaya line came to the Allies at daybreak on the morning of the 15th, when a patrol of French Chasseurs d'Afrique was ambushed by Russian troops and narrowly escaped with several men being captured. Soon afterwards, several companies which had been deployed across the river were attacked and forced to retreat, and the Sardinian brigades on the Allied right flank came under heavy artillery fire. The initial Russian assault was composed of the 7th and 12th Infantry Divisions, commanded by General Read, which attacked the French positions around Tractir Bridge, and the 6th and 17th Infantry Divisions under Lieutenant-General Liprandi, which attacked the Sardinian positions. In reserve were the 4th and 5th Infantry Divisions under Lieutenant-General Chepelew.



In the first rush against the Allied positions, the Russian troops crossed the river and aqueduct without even waiting for the portable bridges or ladders to be brought up. This first attempt to take the Allied positions was unsuccessful, however, for as soon as the Russians had crossed the aqueduct and began to scale the Heights, they came under the fire of the Sardinian artillery batteries deployed on the hillock and the French artillery batteries overlooking the bridge. The intensity of the fire forced the Russians to pull back across the river to regroup. As the troops were regrouping, the Russian reserve marched up to assault the Heights. The regrouped and reinforced troops now made a second attack. This proved more successful than the first, for the Russians crossed the river and took Tractir Bridge, forcing the French troops defending the center of the Allied line to retreat. Meanwhile, the Russian troops which had attacked the Sardinian positions had also regrouped and were making a second attempt to force the Sardinian brigades from their positions. This attack again managed to cross the river and to get part way up the slopes before being swept away by intense fire. As the Russians fled down the hill, the Sardinians continued to pour fire into them, causing extreme loss of life. The attack on the Allies' right flank was thus totally defeated.

Meanwhile, the attack on the French positions around Tractir Bridge was still underway, with the Russians continuing to have success against the French troops. However, just as it seemed that the Russians would carry the Allied positions overlooking the bridge, the French counterattacked. This counterattack was led by the 2nd Zouaves, which had pulled back in the face of the Russian assault against the bridge. Unknown to the Russians, it had only fallen back to join the main body of French troops and it was now at the head of these troops as they counterattacked. The Russians, who had reached the top of the slope leading up from the bridge and who were in the process of reforming their troops for a followup attack, were caught completely unawares. The French counterattack smashed the Russian troops, and the hail of French gunfire that pursued them down the slopes and back across the river destroyed any hope that the Russian generals may have had for another assault.

The Russians' last desperate attempt to defeat the Allied armies in the field had come to a bloody conclusion. The Allied armies had won an overwhelming victory against an enemy force twice their size and had suffered relatively few casualties in doing so. After the Russian defeat at Tchernaya River, it was only a matter of time before Sevastopol fell. *Steve Ross*

THE QUESTION OF LOGISTICS: How to Feed an Army

Second to the charge of the Light Brigade, the most vivid picture that many people have of the Crimean War is that of the British army, starving and sick, in the trenches of a sort of English Valley Forge, before Sevastopol in the winter of 1854-5. This situation arose mostly because the British army's logistical system had broken down. It was not because food, fuel, and ammunition were not available; after all, Britain was the most industrially productive nation in the world. It was simply that the commissariat and transport agencies of the British army could not get these things to the troops.

In some ways, this failure is not at all surprising, for the Crimean War imposed logistical burdens that had never before been faced. The front was farther away than that of any comparable war had ever been, in an area where supplies could not be obtained locally, either by purchase or forage. Not only was it a siege (and sieges are notorious consumers of supplies), but it was a siege waged throughout the winter. But all of these problems were ones that the French had faced as well, and they dealt with them successfully, even though they had a smaller merchant fleet with which to do it and a larger force to supply.

Efficient distribution of supplies is one of the hallmarks of military professionalism and experience. It was here that the tradition of a British army of inspired amateurs failed most miserably. The British army's administrative system had long been compartmentalized into independent agencies. Command of the army, for instance, was shared by several individuals: the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, who determined military policy; the Secretary at War, who was in charge of the army's finances; and the Commander in Chief of the Army. The rationale behind this division of responsibility was that it reduced the possibility of a military take-over of the government. The result, in terms of logistics, was that the C-in-C of the army by himself could not obtain supplies for the army.

The same compartmentalization existed throughout every level of the army. There were at least six agencies concerned with supplying the army, all uncoordinated. Supply for the artillery and engineers, for example, was handled by the Board of Ordnance, while the Admiralty supplied the Marine detachments. Logistics for the rest of the army was handled by the Adjutant General, who dealt with arms and clothing, and by the Quartermaster General, who was responsible for quartering and distribution of supplies, and by the commanders of each regiment, who were supposed to acquire rations and

fuel from contractors. They were supposed to be assisted in that task by the office of the commissariat, which was not part of the army hierarchy at all, but was responsible to the treasury. When the British army went to Turkey in 1854, only two officers of the commissariat accompanied them.

Nevertheless, it is not to be supposed that the supplies shipped out from England were insufficient. It was simply that no one kept track of what was sent out or where it ended up. The bottleneck occurred when the supplies reached the Crimea. There they had to wait to be unloaded in Balaclava harbor. The harbor was too small to accommodate all the ships that came in, and consequently sixteen of them were sunk in the hurricane of November 14, 1854 while anchored off Balaclava awaiting unloading. Down with these ships went all the army's winter clothing. After supplies were unloaded at Balaclava, they usually just sat there; for there was no way in the winter of 1854-5 to move them to the besieging army some six to eight miles away, except by hand.

The road from Balaclava had not been improved before the onset of winter because Lord Raglan believed he could not spare the troops from the line. In the slush of winter, the road became a bog almost impassible to carts and wagons — a case which is academic since the British had sailed from England without a wagon train. Mr. Filder, the chief commissariat officer, realized the importance of wagon transport and had gathered a number of wagons at Varna, but these had been left at Varna. In the Crimea, the British commandeered every wagon they could find, rounding up a mere 80. This left them with far too little transport. When they did not have enough wagons and/or pack animals to supply the soldiers, one of the first supplies they stopped hauling was forage for the animals, so that the horses starved before the men. Obviously, this was a vicious circle. Eventually, even the cavalry and artillery horses were pressed into this service, and died.

It took the working parties as long as 12 hours to make the journey from the siegeworks to Balaclava and back, and, needless to say, they could not carry all that the army needed. Even after the French volunteered to transport the British wounded back to Balaclava, and to haul ammunition to the British guns, the British army frequently went without food or fuel to cook it. The troops spent the winter under canvas because there was no way to carry their prefabricated wooden huts up from the harbor.

When this sorry state of affairs was reported in the London *Times* in late December of 1854, it aroused so much public indignation that, by January 26,

1855, J.A. Roebuck proposed a special parliamentary investigatory commission and accused the government of incompetence. Roebuck stated that of 54,000 men, only 14,000 remained in the British line, and only 5000 were combat ready. Even the opponents of Roebuck's measure, which was the equivalent to a vote of no confidence in the Aberdeen ministry, agreed that there were not more than 28,000 remaining. Roebuck's motion was passed by a majority of 157. It was one of the worst Parliamentary defeats ever suffered by a British government. The doomed Aberdeen ministry had already taken remedial steps, sending construction crews out to improve the road to Balaclava, and by the end of January of 1855 the Crimean railway had been built. At first, the railroad cars were drawn by horses and, where it was steep, by stationary steam engines; but later five locomotives were sent out. By the end of the war, the railway was hauling 240 tons of material a day. But the damage done to the army between November 1854 and January 1855, when men were dying at a rate of 60 to 100 per day, with others disabled, could not be made good.

Overall, the French did much better than the British in administering their logistics. They had a unified system of "intendance," which operated at the divisional level. They had built good roads from their harbor at Kamiesch, a better harbor than Balaclava, and efficiently saw that the troops were adequately provided, clothed, and housed. However, French administrative systems were stretched to the limit in the winter of 1854-5, and at one point there were only three days of provisions on hand for the army. General Canrobert personally kept track of the supply situation. Herein, perhaps, lay the difference between the French and British generals — the French were aware of the importance of logistics and took the initiative to see that what was supplied was distributed.

Although some of the Russian army had the shelter of the city, the logistics problem facing the Russians was at least as difficult as that facing the Allies. They had to supply a larger army on the borders of an enormous nation utterly devoid of the water or rail transport of the western allies. The Russians organized several supply trains with as many as 1,000 wagons in each. Even so, their organizations were often unable to cope with the task of supplying the army with the necessary food, forage, and ammunition. The Russian army probably suffered almost as much as the British during the Crimean War, or possibly even more. The Russian army, however, was able to replace its casualties more easily and, for the most part, maintained its force levels in the Crimea.

THE PROBLEM OF COMMAND: Sources of Military Incompetence

All the armies in the Crimean War had severe problems of command control. The Commanders in Chief often lost control over their subordinates; all too frequently their orders were not delivered or were misunderstood or simply disobeyed. But if the C-in-C's had reason to be dissatisfied with their brigadiers and colonels, these men in turn had as much or more reason to blame their superiors in turn.

Raglan, St. Arnaud, Canrobert, and Menshikov committed between them almost every military sin imaginable. They disappeared and got involved in minor actions without informing lower officers of their whereabouts in the middle of battles. They issued hopelessly vague orders, such as the one that sent the Light Brigade after "the guns" without specifying whose guns or which guns. Most importantly, the supreme commanders failed to react to obvious dangers, even when they were pointed out by others. Menshikov, for example, failed to improve the defenses of Sevastopol until after his defeat at Alma. Lord Raglan repeated that error at Balaclava and Inkerman, blithely ignoring the presence of a Russian army outside Sevastopol in a manner that horrified the French generals. In the final analysis, it must be noted that, with the exception of Todleben, all of the army commanders and many of the divisional and brigadier generals were eminently expend-

able, and when they were killed or replaced, the war effort didn't noticeably suffer.

A large measure of the problem can be laid to the fact that none of the armies involved had waged a European war since Napoleon. The Russian army had been used against Polish revolutionaries in 1831 and in Hungary in 1849, as well as against the Caucasian and Siberian tribesmen. It had succeeded with some difficulty in these campaigns, but had not faced a western army. When it did, it turned out that the infantry and cavalry were trained for the parade ground and not for fighting. Many of the Russian infantry had never fired live ammunition at a target. The Russian officer corps was made up of the sons of a frequently impoverished nobility; only 30% were graduates of gymnasia (high school), and many were almost illiterate.

Russian Commanders

Prince Alexandr Sergeevich Menshikov
(1787-1869)

Menshikov joined the army in 1809 and fought against Napoleon from 1812 to 1814. He became a Major General in 1816 and Governor of Finland in 1830. As special ambassador to Turkey in 1853, he delivered the ultimatum, so he was in large measure responsible for starting the war. He was an indifferent Commander in Chief of the armies in the Crimea from the outbreak of the war until he was relieved on March 2, 1855. Before he was

THE UNWANTED LESSONS OF THE FIRST MODERN WAR

The Crimean War marked the transition from Napoleonic warfare to that type which characterized the rest of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. This was the first war in which the technological innovations of the industrial revolution were turned to military use. The most important technological difference was that the Allies, especially the British, were armed with large numbers of rifled, rather than smoothbore, muskets. The Crimean War also witnessed the first use of landmines, rifled shell firing artillery, and ironclad warships. It saw the first military use of the steam engine, utilized to power ships and the Balaclava railroad. Electricity was used in warfare for the first time, to detonate explosives and — more importantly — to concoct the first military telegraph, which put the Allied field commanders in almost instantaneous communication with their home governments.

The application of modern technology began to change the nature of war not only qualitatively, but quantitatively as well. The scale and intensity of warfare

was greater than people had expected; soldiers fired an alarming quantity of bullets and shells, producing a correspondingly alarming number of casualties with alarmingly little result. The British and French concentrated some 600 guns at a time in attacking Sevastopol in what was said to be the largest siegetrain in history. The Russians used more than 1000 guns defending the city. The huge conscript armies of millions which appeared later during the American Civil War and swept away whole generations in World War I had not arrived yet, but the Crimean War did witness the concentration of more men in a smaller area than had previously been the case; hundreds of thousands of troops struggled, not over the fate of nations or even a whole province, but to control a single city. Napoleon III, upon seeing the casualty figures for the attack of just one bastion, was moved to lament that his uncle had written brilliant military history and changed the map of Europe with such losses. This was the first war to suggest that future victories would depend on logistics — that wars would be won in the factory rather than on the front. Characteristically, the war ended

replaced, he lost the battles of Alma, Balaclava, and Inkerman. Menshikov was an autocratic commander who did not usually accept the advice of his subordinates. He was not coolheaded in battle, and he consistently underrated the abilities of the Allied armies, treating them as if they were Russian.

Prince Mikhail Demetrevich Gorchakov (1793-1861)

Gorchakov joined the army in 1810. He became a general in 1830, and after participating in the Polish campaign of 1831, he was made the military governor of Warsaw, in 1846. In 1853, he was the commander of the Russian forces which invaded the Danubian provinces of Moldavia/Wallachia, and besieged Silistria in 1854. After he failed to take Silistria, he was made subordinate to Menshikov. The two men were of equal rank and were rivals for the Tsar's favor. Needless to say, they felt about as well disposed toward each other as either did toward Lord Raglan and Canrobert. Gorchakov took over command of the Russian armies in March of 1855, but his personal triumph was not accompanied with an equivalent military one.

Count Franz Edward Ivanovich Todleben

Todleben, a German from the Baltic provinces, joined the army engineers in 1836 at the age of eighteen. In 1854, as a member of Gorchakov's staff, he constructed the siegeworks of Silistria. He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel as a reward. Later, he brilliantly directed the

defense of Sevastopol, where he was wounded. Todleben was a genius at positioning earthworks and artillery, and it was largely due to his skill that the Russian guns were usually able to silence the Allied batteries. He waged a very vigorous defense, with frequent sorties and counterattacks, which disrupted Allied operations. He anticipated the Allied moves so well that his adversaries were convinced that a Russian spy was among them. Todleben was promoted to Lieutenant General for his defense of Sevastopol, and although he never commanded a field army, he is considered the originator of the idea of a fortress as an entrenched position rather than as a walled town. After the war, he became the chief of engineers and was promoted to full general. During the war of 1877 with Turkey, he was responsible for the siege works around the fortress of Plevna.

Lieutenant Leo Nicholaevich Tolstoi (1828-1910)

Although it is doubtful that Tolstoi, who was only a sublieutenant of artillery at the time, had much influence on the war, a good case can be made that it made quite an impression on him. His *Sevastopol Sketches* was one of his earliest works, and was as well received in Russia as William Russel's correspondence for the *London Times* was in Britain. The Crimean War may also have been instrumental in creating the vision of war which pervades *War and Peace*. His imagery of the confused misdirection and chaos of battle

could not be closer to the reality of the case.

The British Army

The British Army suffered from many of the same defects as the Russian. Its officers were drawn from those among the nobility and gentry who could afford the price of a commission. The British army had also concentrated on training for parades rather than on combat, and its officers often lacked a military education. Many officers were in the army for reasons of status, seeking to shine above other peers by "having" their own regiment. The officer corps that resulted from this amalgamation of the purchase system and high society made intelligent observers tremble. Lord Wolseley wrote of the British Generals, "Had they been private soldiers, I don't think any Colonel would have made them corporals."

Fitzroy James Henry Somerset, Baron of Raglan (1788-1855)

Commander of the British army until his death on June 28, 1855, Raglan served Wellington as ADC in the Peninsular Campaign and at Waterloo, where he lost his arm. Raglan's tact and natural preference for compromise made him an excellent adjutant and secretary for the Duke, but a dreadful commander in his own right. He was reluctant to discipline the unruly British generals or force them into a firm chain of command. He often acted on the majority opinion of his staff against better judgment. Always mindful

because Russia and France were exhausted financially and militarily, rather than because the fall of Sevastopol made the Russian surrender imperative. It was the first war of attrition.

That these things were bound to change the nature of war and make the Napoleonic system obsolete was perceived by some men even before the fighting started. Unfortunately, these men were not generals. The men who *were* generals failed to even vaguely appreciate what was about to happen to the art of war; and even more tragically, they did not appreciate the process as it gained momentum even after the Crimean War. Perhaps they are not to blame for having overlooked the changes, so many of which were merely hinted at in the Crimean campaign. The ironclads, for example, were really more in a class of self-propelled floating batteries than ocean-going vessels, and they were used against the Russian forts rather than the Russian fleet. From their performance, no one could have been expected to realize that they would shortly render every fleet in the world obsolete.

There were, however, some new things that the Crimean War should have made abundantly clear to everyone. The most important of these was the fact that armies in close formation could not attack troops armed with rifles, regardless of the attacker's numerical superiority. The Russians were defeated time and time again when their dense columns assaulted Allied riflemen. Previously, against smoothbore muskets, a column of attack could come within 150 yards before it came under significant fire, and since musketry was not usually able to break up attacking formations beyond 50-100 yards, the attacker could reasonably hope that his column would be able to carry out a bayonet charge. After the introduction of the rifle, this was a pretty forlorn hope.

Rifles immediately made smoothbore muskets obsolete, and they also greatly reduced the effectiveness of smoothbore artillery. The Russians had the finest artillery in Europe; indeed, it was the only arm in which their armies were superior to the Allies, but this superiority did them little good in open battle because the Minie rifle outranged their cannon. Russian batteries which

tried to engage the Allied troops sometimes had half their gun crews shot before they could return fire. Artillery had lost its place as the "Queen of Battle" of the Napoleonic era, and became a defensive arm that was only effective behind dug-in gun emplacements.

The effect of rifles on cavalry need hardly be mentioned. Cavalry had demonstrated an inability to break infantry squares forty years before the Crimean War at Waterloo. By the time of Balaclava, the infantry did not even need to change formation into squares. They had guns that were more than twice as accurate at twice the distance, and they were firing at the enormous target of both man and horse.

The lesson that close formations were deadly should have been learned by the end of the Crimean War, and yet armies proved incredibly loath to give them up. Ambrose Burnside would have to re-demonstrate the same lesson during the Civil War by allowing his army to be decimated in hopeless attacks against entrenched Confederates at the battle of Fredericksburg. And even as late as World War I, the British (who should

of his Napoleonic campaign, he had an unfortunate tendency to refer to the enemy as "the French."

**James Thomas Brudenell,
7th Earl of Cardigan (1797-1868)**

Brigadier of the Light Brigade, Brudenell was the epitome of everything that could go wrong with the British system of buying commissions for young nobles. He was undoubtedly one of the stupidest officers in the British army, and was qualified for a cavalry command by good horsemanship and little else. He was a martinet and a consistent embarrassment to the army for the severe punishments he meted out to his regiment for imaginary offenses. He fought a duel with one of his officers, for which he was tried for attempted murder. He would surely have been cashiered before the war except for his high social standing and the fact that he was old friends with Raglan. He was one of the few generals who did not stay with his troops during the winter of 1854, living instead on his yacht. He and Raglan managed to divide the responsibility for the charge of the Light Brigade so that he got the glory and Lord Lucan got the blame. The cardigan jacket came into fashion because it was supposed to be what he wore while leading the charge. His men called him "the noble yachtsman" and "the dangerous ass" (before the charge).

The French Army

The French fielded the best commanded and led army during the Crimean War. It had seen service extensively in Algeria since 1830 and, unlike with the Russian army, the lessons of combat had been taken to heart. In keeping with the Napoleonic tradition, French officers usually rose from the ranks or came from military families, but not by buying commissions or by virtue of nobility. Unfortunately, many of the best generals were not sent to the Crimea because they were not politically reliable to Louis Napoleon's regime.

**Armand Jacques Leroy Saint-Arnaud
(1798-1854)**

Saint Arnaud was a good example of the way French politics determined the French generals. He was an adventurer who left the army several times and tried his hand at acting, teaching, dancing, fencing, and pool sharking. He had an adequate record in Algeria, but would never have been made Minister of War or C-in-C of the French expeditionary force, except that he masterminded the *coup d'état* which kept Louis Napoleon in power in 1852. He was dying of cancer when he went on the expedition, but hoped to win the war before he died. Like Lord Raglan, he was really unsuited for command. He died of his illness on September 29, just after the battle of Alma.

Francois Certain Canrobert (1809-1895)

Like Saint-Arnaud, Canrobert had a good record of service in Algeria and was loyal to Napoleon during the coup. He served as Napoleon's aide before the war, and was sent to the Crimea as commander of the 1st Division. He was an able divisional commander but, as Saint-Arnaud's replacement, he was uncertain and unable to assume ultimate responsibility.

**Aimable Jean Jacques Pellisier,
Duc de Malakoff (1794-1864)**

Pellisier was the most able of the commanders of the French army in the Crimea, but at first he was not even sent there, as he had not participated in the *coup*. Instead, he was left fuming in Algeria. In February of 1855, he finally was sent to command the 1st Corps, and replaced Canrobert at the latter's recommendation. Pellisier was a crude, sharp-tongued man. He once got an omelette thrown in his face for insulting the waiter in his characteristic way. He did not shrink at the prospect of taking casualties, or of standing up to Napoleon when necessary. The apocryphal story describes his finally cutting the telegraph line to Paris to keep the Emperor from meddling. Like Ulysses Grant in many ways, he made up for his faults by simply being willing to take full responsibility for his command, and fighting vigorously. Also like Grant, he shined in comparison with his predecessors.

have known better) would send their troops over the top shoulder to shoulder, making them just so much machine gun fodder at the second battle of Ypres.

The early battles of the Crimean war did not demonstrate the defensive superiority provided by rifles (which the British had and the Russians didn't), combined with earthworks of the kind that Todleben devised and adequate artillery. By the time the Allies began seriously assaulting Sevastopol, however, the Russians had begun reworking their smoothbore into rifled muskets. These did not yield the effectiveness of the Minie rifle, but were a great improvement, nonetheless. They even discovered that using cylindrical rifle bullets in their smoothbores, as did the French, instead of balls, doubled the range. And they had bought all the rifles they could lay their hands on. These changes, combined with the Russian artillery and Todleben's earthworks, made the Allied assaults of 1855 bloody and often futile affairs. The private ranks learned, so that by 1855 veteran soldiers could not be made to advance in formation, but broke ranks and

took cover when they came under fire.

In addition to the new weapons, the greatest change that took place was in transportation and communication. The steamship could make the trip from England to Balaclava in twelve days, whereas under sail it might take three weeks. The Russians had not believed that an invasion of the Crimea was possible from such a distance before 1854, because they didn't appreciate the military implications of steamships. It was one of the reasons they had only 30,000 troops stationed in the Crimea. No one had foreseen the military use of the railroad before the war, and no one realized afterwards how utterly armies would be tied to rail lines and steam vessels for their supplies afterwards. It was concluded that the huge munitions expenditures of the war were a function of the siege rather than a harbinger of permanent change in the scale of war.

In many ways, the most important revolution in the future of warfare was not the change in the technology of transportation, but the revolution in communication which was made possible by the

invention of the electric telegraph. When the Crimean War began, the European telegraph network ended at Vienna. During the siege, however, submarine cables were laid, which extended communication right to the front.

The instantaneous communication provided by the telegraph was difficult for minds raised in the Eighteenth Century to deal with. The immediacy of virtually "speaking" from Paris or London to the Crimea gave messages much more urgency and impact than if they arrived two weeks old in a mail pouch. Thus, Lord Raglan was once awakened at two in the morning to read a cable that said, "We have received word that Captain Jarvis has been bitten by a centipede. How is he now?" And General Canrobert was transformed into a totally incompetent Commander in Chief by Napoleon III's incessant telegraphic orders. Until General Pellisier began disregarding it, the effect of the telegraph was to make it easier for armchair generals to rob the commanders at the front of their freedom of action — a problem that was to plague generals ever after.