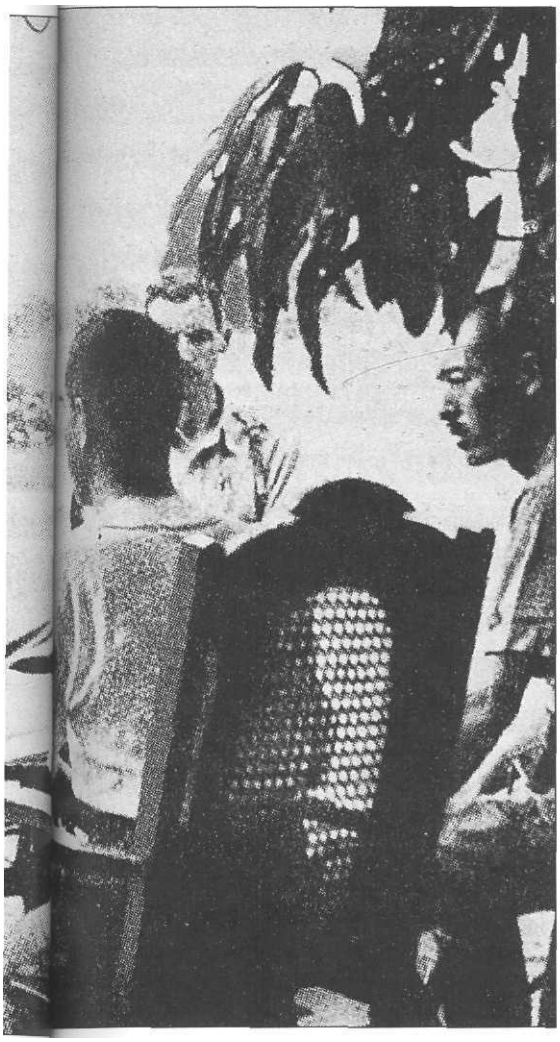
KING OF BATAAN

Bataan. The very word is hollow, sorrowful, distant, like a dim echo of Roland's horn that the king heard afar, and, hearing it, knew his paladins were slain. It was a modern Roncesvalles or Thermopylae, where brave men held back the hosts of darkness till they were overcome at last. But at Bataan there was no pointless slaughter at the end. When their commander was satisfied that nothing more his men could do would make any difference, he did not ask them to go on and be butchered. On the seventy-seventh anniversary of Appomattox, defying orders and expecting to be court-martialed for what he did, he surrendered more men than have ever been yielded up by any other American general. No soldier in our history has shown more moral courage, yet he is all but unknown.

Born in Atlanta in 1884, Edward Postell King, Jr., grew up wanting to be a soldier. Any boy in that time and place was reared on tales of the Lost Cause—of ragged and starving men fighting to the bitter end, giving up only when they could go no farther, overcome but unvanquished—and Ned was grandson and nephew of Confederate officers. However, the family wanted him to be a lawyer, so he took his law degree at the University of Georgia and went to work for his uncle, the founder of the great Atlanta firm of King & Spalding. But Ned King was no more meant to spend his life hunched over deed books than had been another law clerk turned artilleryman, Winfield Scott, a century earlier; after a few unsatisfactory years at the bar, in 1908 he secured a commission in the regular army.

He had a brilliant career. In the Great War, he earned a precocious Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) as principal assistant to the chief of field artillery. In the slow interwar days, he had the usual assignments of a recognized comer: Leavenworth as student and as instructor, both the army and the naval war colleges, the War Department, all interspersed with troop duty. In the late 1930s, as a colonel, he was director of the War Plans Section of the Army War College; and in 1940 he became a brigadier general.

King was short and stout, with a full head of reddish brown hair and a generous mustache. He was a well-read man; a graceful writer; a religious man who took his Christianity seriously; a man of scrupulous courtesy toward fellow officers and enlisted men alike; an officer whose men were ever in his mind; but withal a robust fellow with a quick hearty



ALL ILLUSTRATIONS EXCEPT WHERE NOTED: NATIONAL ARCHIVES, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Flanked by aides, Maj. Gen. Edward P. King, Jr. (center), discusses terms with a Japanese staff colonel. In order to prevent "the greatest slaughter in history," King surrendered his troops on April 9, 1942.

laugh, a sly sense of humor, and a merry twinkle in his gray eyes. Men respected him and liked to work for and with him. "A brave and gallant soldier and a perfect gentleman," said his friend and boss, General Jonathan M. Wainwright.

As one of the army's top planners, a master of artillery, and an officer with experience at the highest level in the raising of the great citizen army of 1918, Ned King might well have been one of the major figures of World War II. But fate did not turn that way. Perhaps in recognition of King's 1917-18 training experience, his first assignment as a general officer was to the Philippines, where General Douglas A. MacArthur was organizing the new Philippine Army. When war broke out in December 1941, King was MacArthur's second-ranking ground officer, after Major General "Skinny" Wainwright.

American strategists had always known that the Philippines could not be effectively defended, and for decades the plan in case of attack had been to withdraw to Bataan, a peninsula on the west side of Manila Bay, and to hold out there and on Corregidor and the other fortified islands at the entrance to the bay, denying the Japanese fleet the use of Manila for as long as possible. MacArthur persuaded Washington to scrap those years of planning and authorize him to try to defeat the Japanese on the landing beaches with his half-trained forces. Predictably, many of his raw Filipino troops fled before General Masaharu Homma's ruthless veterans of the war in China; moreover, despite ample warning, his air force had been destroyed on the ground at the outset. Reverting hastily to the traditional plan, MacArthur managed to withdraw his force (accompanied by unexpected thousands of civilian refugees) safely into Bataan in early January 1942.

The battle has become part of the American mythology of nobility in defeat—but the man who bravely shouldered the blame for the surrender has been all but forgotten.

by Thaddeus Holt

Bataan is a rounded peninsula twelve to fourteen miles wide at the main defensive line (called the Orion-Bagac line), and from that line to the end of the peninsula is about the same distance: a roughly circular area of some 200 square miles, or somewhat larger than Brooklyn and Queens together. It is mountainous, with peaks that rise more than 4,000 feet around the crater of a huge ancient volcano at the center. Except for a strip of open sugarcane fields along the east coast, in 1942 it was covered with a dense hardwood jungle notable for its many enormous thorns. Apart from a network of trails that the engineers had cut through the jungle, its only highway was the East Road, running down the east coast to the village of Cabcaben on the southeastern corner of the peninsula. From Cabcaben the road continued across a wooded shoulder of the mountains and back down to the little port of Mariveles at the south end, opposite Corregidor. There it became the West Road, running through jungle and mountains up the western side of the peninsula to the west end of the Orion-Bagac line. The nerve center of the defense was in the area called Little Baguio, where the East Road crested the high ground between Cabcaben and Mariveles. Here were the flimsy headquarters buildings, the main ordnance and engineer depots, and a cluster of open-air structures where the sick and wounded were treated, known collectively as General Hospital no. 1. (There was also a no. 2, on the East Road close to Cabcaben.)

The army was "Filamerican": some 66,000 Filipinos and 12,000 Americans, as of the onset of the last battle. Most of the rank and file were Filipinos: seven small divisions of the new Philippine Army, with American and a few Filipino senior officers, Filipino junior officers, and American advisers; the Philippine Scouts, crack professional regiments with American officers and Filipino enlisted men; the Philippine Constabulary, likewise American-officered but a gendarmerie rather than a military force. The only wholly American outfits were the 31st Infantry Regiment; the grounded airmen, now recycled as infantry; and various specialized units, such as a small

tank force and two antiaircraft battalions of the New Mexico National Guard. The army was organized into two small corps: I Corps on the left, under Wainwright, and II Corps on the right, under Major General George M. Parker. Skinny Wainwright was an old-time cavalryman who went where the action was. Parker, in poor health, was less energetic and seldom visited the front.

Initially the army occupied the Abucay-Mauban line, an advanced position some eight to ten miles forward of the Orion-Bagac line. Here the Philippine Army troops began to fight well, showing that the disastrous performance of many units at the start of the war had simply reflected lack of training at all levels. (As King always emphasized in his orientation lecture to newly arrived officers—and as was abundantly proved by the brilliant performance of the Philippine Scouts throughout the campaign—the Filipinos were brave and hardy fighters, superb soldiers when properly trained and led.) Between January 7 and January 26, 1942, the Japanese pushed the defenders back to the Orion-Bagac line. Some Filipino units still crumbled under pressure, but their performance was sharply better, and the attackers took severe losses. After that, Homma received a succession of unpleasant surprises as the skill and confidence of the Philippine Army increased. When he tried to emulate a successful tactic of his colleague Tomoyuki Yamashita in Malaya, by landing forces on the coast far behind I Corps's front, the defenders wiped them out in what was called the Battle of the Points. When he tried to break through on the II Corps front, the defenders threw him back in the Battle of Trail 2. He attacked on Wainwright's front, and some of his forces broke through; but they were quickly surrounded and methodically liquidated in the Pocket Fights. By mid-February, the Philippine Army had become, in one American officer's words, "battle-hardened, vicious, disease-ridden, jungle-fighting experts."

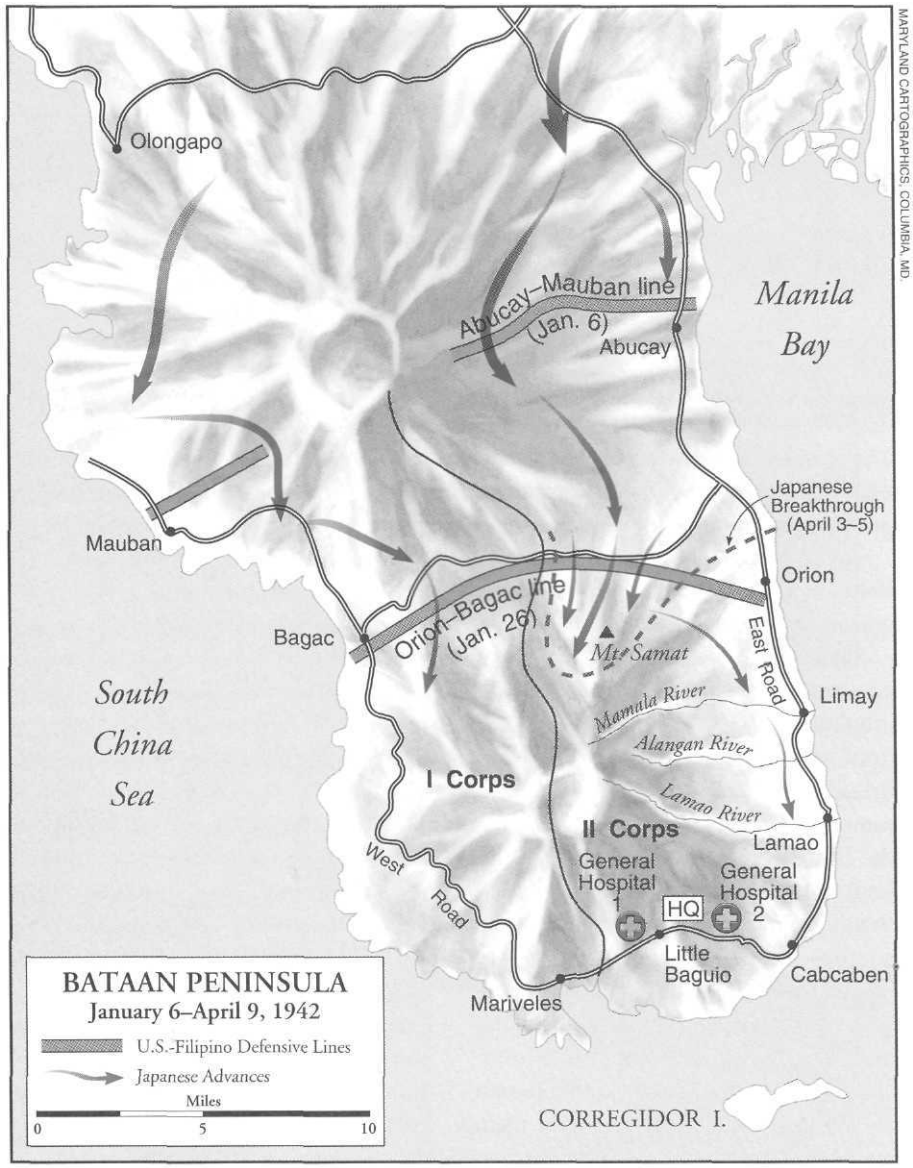
Homma's army was now in bad shape. A counterattack could have retaken Manila from him, he said later. Nowhere else had the tide of Japanese conquest met this kind of resistance, and he was behind schedule and getting pointed questions from Tokyo. Humiliated, he retired to lick his wounds, call on imperial headquarters for reinforcements, and plan another offensive while starvation and disease did their work among the defenders.

Starvation and disease were his key weapons. For in reality, Bataan was not a campaign but a siege. The defenders were on half rations from the beginning, because MacArthur had left behind enormous stocks of food that he should have moved into Bataan long before the retreat. Soon the ration was less than half. They ate the cavalry horses. They ate carabao and mule. They ate monkey. They ate dog, iguana, and snake. As February and March wore on, the men grew thinner, weaker, sicker. They knew that the final Japanese onslaught was just a matter of time. They realized MacArthur's assurances that help was on the way were lies. When they heard a Roosevelt "fireside chat" on the radio in February—he talked about Europe and barely mentioned them—they knew they had been written off. The "Battling Bastards," they called themselves: "No mama, no papa, no Uncle Sam / And nobody gives a damn." But they held on.

Major General King—he got his second star soon after the war began—was MacArthur's chief of artillery. In any combined-arms ground unit of division size or greater, the chief of artillery is the most important officer after the commander, and on Bataan that was assuredly true of King. Before the war he had ensured that his officers were familiar with the terrain. He supervised emplacement and fire patterns, juggled the ammunition supply, reorganized units. He devised schemes to make the Japanese believe the defenders had more guns than they did—including an old Filipino ruse, firing black-powder charges from bamboo tubes. The artillery was crucial in slowing down the enemy at the Abucay-Mauban line, and it received a letter of commendation from MacArthur for that work. In the Battle of the Points, King ingeniously used the terrifying power of the huge Corregidor harbor-defense mortars in an infantry-support role. The Japanese recognized King's artillery as their most formidable opponent. In a 1943 interview Homma told the Tokyo newspaper *Mainichi*, "By far the greatest number of our wounded were hit by shrapnel, testifying to the fierceness of the enemy bombardment." Another Japanese general said the defenders' artillery "was so accurate and powerful that the Japanese Army feared this most."

MacArthur conducts an inspection tour, Jan. 10, 1942, during his one visit to Bataan. He stayed on Corregidor and, under presidential orders, went to Australia in March.

In January 1942, the Japanese pushed the Bataan defenders 8 to 10 miles back from their initial position, the Abucay-Mauban line, to the Orion-Bagac line. I Corps, in the western part of the peninsula, and II Corps, on the eastern side, held out until the final enemy offensive, on April 3-9. King's surrender took place near Lamao.



In his tunnel headquarters deep inside "the Rock," as Corregidor was called, MacArthur seems to have gone into a blue funk after his initial failures. Incredibly, only once did he visit Bataan. His friend President Manuel Quezon of the Philippines proposed that the islands be neutralized, with both American and Japanese forces to withdraw, and MacArthur passed this idea on to Washington with apparent approval. On February 9, a shocked Roosevelt issued a direct order to MacArthur: The Americans in the Philippines must fight to the end.

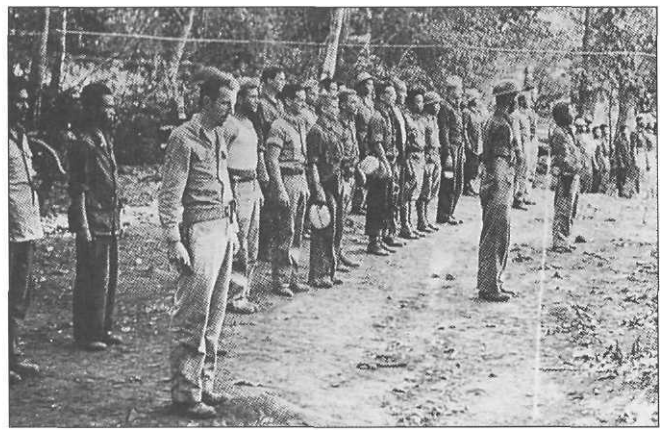
In early March, at Roosevelt's direction, MacArthur escaped to Australia. He reorganized the forces in the Philippines into four separate units, each reporting directly to him in Australia through a chief of staff left on Corregidor. The troops on Bataan became "Luzon Force." Wainwright was moved up to command it, with King as his artillery officer. At I Corps, Wainwright's place was taken by tough, hard-swearing Major General Albert Jones, an old friend of King's. (In line with some long-forgotten joke, King always called him "Hones," pronounced "Ho-ness," supposedly a Spanish pronunciation of Jones.) Before leaving, MacArthur awarded King his second DSM for his brilliant performance, and his parting advice to Wainwright was that the artillery was "the best arm you have."

Washington changed MacArthur's command structure and put Wainwright in command of all forces in the islands, giving him a third star. From Australia, MacArthur radioed Roosevelt's no-surrender order to Wainwright, with the injunction that "the foregoing instructions from the President remain unchanged." On March 21, Wainwright moved to MacArthur's old headquarters on Corregidor and gave King, as next senior general, command of Luzon Force.

By then the men on Bataan were walking skeletons. Beriberi and scurvy had set in. Dysentery and hookworm were rampant. About 75 to 80 percent of the frontline soldiers had malaria—1,000 men a day were entering the two overcrowded field hospitals—and the quinine supply was running out. One-fourth of the men were barefoot, and at least 90 percent of their clothing was unserviceable by normal standards.

Thirteen days after King took over, on Good Friday, April 3, Homma's final offensive opened with a fierce onslaught on the left of Parker's II Corps. Dazed by an overwhelming artillery and air bombardment, the sick, hungry men broke and the front gave way. King sent in reserve units, but the next day Parker's line broke again. King committed more reserves, but on April 5, Easter Sunday, the Japanese overran the key position of Mount Samat, overlooking the lines of both I and II Corps. Wainwright came over from Corregidor for the day while a counterattack was organized for the next morning. On April 6, as the counterattack was being launched, King asked his staff what percentage of the army was effective—which he defined as anyone who could carry his weapon for 100 yards without resting and still shoot. On that definition, said the staff, it's about 15 percent—in the units that are still cohesive, that is. When the counterattack ran headfirst into the attacking Japanese, it broke like a wave against the shore. The Japanese pushed on, and by nightfall on April 6 they had irrevocably split II Corps off

The army on Bataan was Filamerican, comprising some 66,000 Filipinos and 12,000 Americans. Here, a marine sergeant teaches Filipino soldiers how to operate a machine gun.



Weakened by starvation and disease, the men were walking skeletons; by April 6, only about 15 percent could carry their weapons for 100 yards without resting and still shoot.

from I Corps and were positioned to roll the former up into Manila Bay.

April 7 opened with another fierce bombardment, and II Corps began to disintegrate. Parker stayed far behind the front and played little further role, and Brigadier General Clifford Bluemel—in some people's view, "the meanest man in the United States Army" and a natural leader of the sort that believes his men should be more afraid of him than of the enemy—took charge of the II Corps front by default. Rifle in hand, he rounded up stragglers and formed a line along the Mamala River, some four miles south of the original line. But by nightfall even he had to conclude that his weary men, many of whom had not eaten for two days, could not hold there. He ordered an overnight withdrawal to the Alangan River, two and a half miles farther south.

That afternoon of April 7, King sent his chief of staff, Brigadier General Arnold Funk, across to the Rock to brief Wainwright. He told Funk not to mention the word "surrender." Funk got back at about 4:00 P.M. He had told Wainwright "that the II Corps had disintegrated, that there was nothing but confusion at the front lines, and due to the physical condition of the I Corps, the fall of Bataan was imminent." Wainwright, bound by his own orders, had ordered King through Funk to fight to the end. He also directed that Jones attack eastward to relieve II Corps. Impossible, said Jones, when King passed this order on. The men are too weak, and it would take eighteen hours to reposition them in any case. King, Wainwright, and Jones conferred by telephone, and finally Wainwright left it to King's judgment. That ended that. King told Jones to start a phased pullback to avoid being outflanked on the east.

Dawn of April 8 found a handful of confused and bone-tired men defending Bluemel's line at the Alangan. By late afternoon Bluemel had to order another fallback two miles to the next river, the Lamao. II Corps by now had utterly collapsed. The roads and trails were clogged with dazed, bewildered men, savaged by Japanese planes, thinking only of escape. Communications were breaking down, but such fragmentary information as King received pointed only one way. He called Corregidor: If you want any troops sent over to the Rock, get them tonight or it will be too late. Corregidor wanted the 45th Infantry, a veteran Philippine Scouts outfit from Jones's front. The mass rape at Nanking in 1937 was fresh in mind, and King wanted to send the hospital nurses over too. Initially at least, Corregidor said no. King determined to send them anyway.

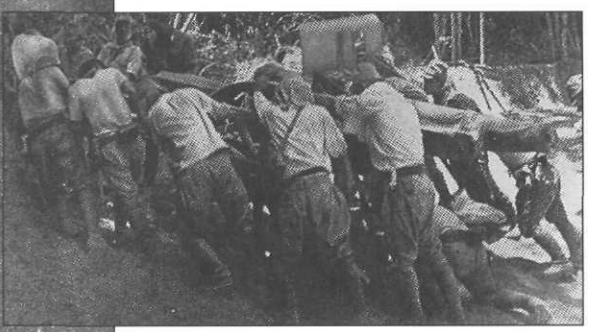
In this or a later conversation, King told Lieutenant Colonel Jesse Traywick, Wainwright's assistant operations officer, that the situation looked hopeless. Traywick relayed this to Wainwright, then told King, as he later recalled, that Wainwright replied: "Tell them not to surrender. We can't surrender. We've got orders from the President of the United States."

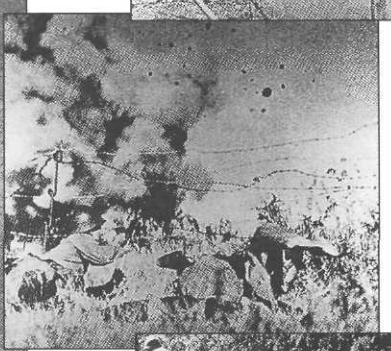
"I'll do my best to carry out my orders," replied King, his voice sounding "very upset" to Traywick. "But the break is so great that it looks hopeless. I'll keep in touch with you."

Obviously Wainwright was unwilling to take the responsibility of disobeying MacArthur and the president, even though he plainly knew as well as King did that only surrender could prevent a massacre of Luzon Force. So King shouldered the responsibility alone. For the rest of that terrible day and night, King and Wainwright played out a charade: Wainwright pretended not to know what King was doing, and King avoided putting him in the position of knowing until it was a fait accompli. It was as if both Nelson and his admiral were regarding each other with telescopes to their respective blind eyes.

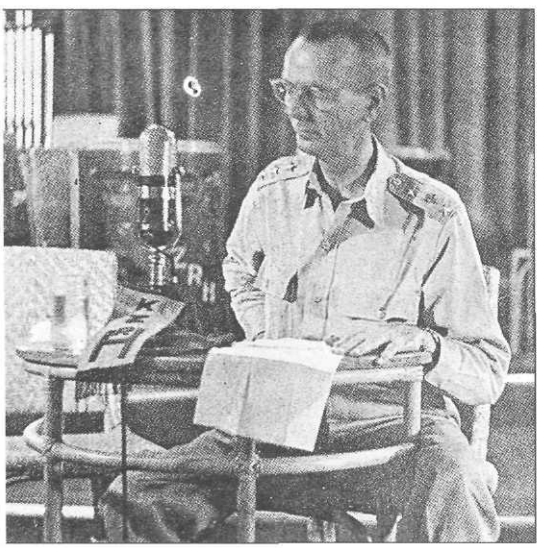
King's problem now was to hold the Japanese far enough back that they would not be firing into the hospitals, and long enough to get the nurses out and destroy the public property. (Under the laws of war, you can destroy your weapons, equipment, and other public property to keep them from falling into the enemy's hands right up to the moment of surrender, but not thereafter.) In midafternoon he called his senior commanders together and told them to prepare to destroy all their weapons and equipment, except motor transport and gasoline, when he gave the word.

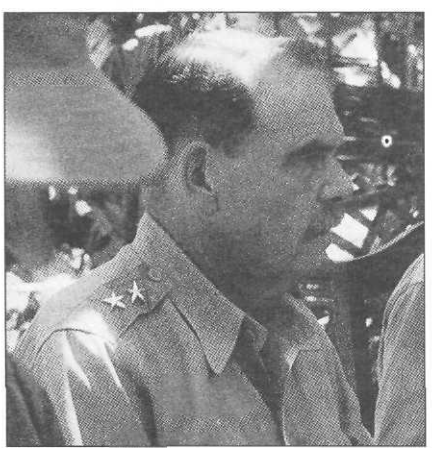
At about 6:00 P.M., King learned of Bluemel's situation on the Alangan. (By then Bluemel was falling back to the Lamao, which in turn he would soon conclude he could not hold.) King was now at the absolute bottom of his man-





Under the command of Gen. Masaharu Homma, the Japanese soldiers were unstoppable in their final offensive as they overran the key position of Mt. Samat on April 5 (large photograph at left) and, by the following night, split II Corps off from I Corps. The sick, hungry troops under King alternately retreated and tried to counterattack, but they were consistently forced to fall back as the Japanese artillery, tanks, and infantry advanced in a wave of tremendous strength (small photos above). II Corps disintegrated, and the front line was in mass confusion as the bewildered soldiers, under fire from Japanese planes, could think only of escape.





KING PAPERS

Homma comes ashore at Lingayen Gulf in northwestern Luzon (top), Dec. 24, 1941. Gen. "Skinny" Wainwright (center), who in March replaced MacArthur as commander of all forces in the Philippines, admired King but repeatedly urged him not to surrender Luzon Force. An exhausted King (bottorn) was photographed by his captors.

power barrel. The only combatants not yet thrown in were the antiaircraft gunners of the New Mexico National Guard who defended Little Baguio against Japanese planes. They were tough, brave men, many of them Navajos, Apaches, and other tribesmen, but they had no infantry training, were sick and hungry like everyone else, and had been at their guns for forty-eight hours already; some batteries had fought off as many as twenty dive-bomber attacks. No matter; there was nobody else. At 7:00 P.M., King told their commander, six-foot-six Colonel Charles G. Sage, who a short while before had been a newspaperman in Deming, New Mexico, to destroy their antiaircraft weapons, pick up rifles and bayonets, and go form a line at Cabcaben.

Later that night, there was an incident that approached black comedy. It had begun earlier in the week when MacArthur, from his comfortable office in Australia, radioed orders to Wainwright that would bear comparison with the zaniest emanations from the Berlin bunker three years later. They involved a complicated two-pronged attack by both corps to wrest Olongapo on the west coast from the Japanese, there either seizing supplies that would "rectify the situation" or breaking up into guerrilla units. ("The ones who planned this action and the person who issued this order must have been totally ignorant of the situation and the condition of the troops on Bataan," snorted Bluemel after the war. "It sounds like an order issued in a map problem, being solved in a comfortable room where food and cigarettes are plentiful") MacArthur had told Wainwright to order this operation when food ran out on Bataan. That night, on all Bataan, there was enough food left for one last half-ration issue to the troops. At about 10:30 P.M., Wainwright dutifully passed this order to King.

No doubt cursing inwardly, King called Jones. Hones, he asked, knowing full well the answer, have you got any troops that are capable of launching a counterattack? Of course Jones said no. So King took the responsibility of withholding the order.

At about 11:00 P.M., King sat down with Funk and Colonel James V. Collier, his assistant operations officer, for their final conference. Outside, in Collier's words, "The road, the one road around Bataan, was jammed with Philippine Army troops, arms thrown away. They were like a mass of sheep.... Thousands poured out of the jungle like small spring freshets pouring into creeks which in turn poured into a river."

King, Funk, and Collier went over the situation in exhaustive detail, turned it all over, thrashed it all out. They kept getting back to the same bottom line: Nothing that could be done would prevent the Japanese from being in Mariveles by nightfall on April 9. And that would be the end of Bataan and the death of the army.

That being the case, from now on those sick, half-naked, desperately hungry men would be dying for no purpose.

King's orders were unambiguous. He was to keep fighting. (The 75th Article of War: "Any officer . . . who, before the enemy, . . . shamefully abandons or delivers up ... any ... command which it is his duty to defend . . . shall suffer death or such other punishment as a court-martial may direct.")

Court-martial or no, Ned King was not going to let his men die without purpose. We will open negotiations with the Japanese, he told Funk and Collier.

King called in the two other general officers who were at Little Baguio—Parker of II Corps and Brigadier General James Weaver, commander of his small force of tanks—and told them that he was sending a flag across the lines at daylight. He would take this action on his own responsibility. He spoke of the potential massacre of the thousands of sick and wounded in the hospital; of the tens of thousands of civilian refugees, mostly women and children; of the fact that he was out of touch with the front; of the fact that "only 25 percent of our men are on their feet," and that at most he could not hold longer than one more day. As Weaver recalled it, King said further: "Corregidor has sent over a list of stuff they want us to send out. I want to send the nurses and they've refused that. I shall send them anyway. Is there anything else any of you can think of? My career is over."

"I never pitied a man so much," recalled Weaver. "I admire Ned King—a fine soldier—very studious. He looked at each of us." Is there any possibility of any help? Weaver asked. None whatsoever, said King; the Air Corps promised to send a strike from Mindanao, but it never arrived.

King called Jones to tell him of the decision, while Parker called Bluemel. Jones had been trying unsuccessfully to move out the troops Corregidor wanted.

"I hate to tell you this, Hones," said King, "but I'm surrendering at 6:00 A.M. They're shelling the hospital. Parker's gone. There's nothing else I can do. Put white flags all along your line. You'll have to destroy your artillery and machine guns and stand by for further orders."

"I don't see what else you can do," said Jones. "I'll spike the artillery, all right. But I'm going to hang on to my machine guns in case of sudden attack, just in case the Japs don't recognize the surrender."

"I'm giving you orders to destroy them," said King. "I don't give a damn what you do, these are your orders."

"Don't worry about me," said Jones. "I'll take care of it. At the last minute we can throw the bolts into the jungle."

"Use your judgment, Hones," said King. His voice was "hopeless—quavering," Jones recalled.

At that moment—it was 11:40 P.M.—an earthquake smote Bataan, shaking the mountains and trees to their roots, as if God himself were setting his seal on the death warrant of the army. ("Even the earth is shaken by our decision," said one of King's party.)

At midnight King's staff gathered around him. "Quietly, calmly, but tersely," as Collier recalled it, he said:

I did not ask you here to get your opinion or your advice. I do not want any of you saddled with any part of the responsibility for the ignominious decision I feel forced to make. I have not communicated with General Wainwright because I do not want him to be compelled to assume any part of the responsibility. I am sending forward a flag of truce at daybreak to ask for terms of surrender. I feel that further resistance could only uselessly waste human life. Already our hospital, which is filled to capacity and directly in the line of hostile approach, is within range of enemy light artillery. We have no means of organized resistance.

He did not have a white horse and a saber and someone to ride up and down the lines to rally the troops, he said wryly. There was just no way to continue the fight. "There was not a dry eye present," recorded Collier.

Colonel Everett Williams, King's chief of artillery, and Major Marshall Hurt of the operations staff volunteered (both were bachelors) for the ultradangerous job of trying to pass through the lines and make contact with the Japanese. King gave Williams a typed page of orders: Find the Japanese commander, present my compliments, ask for a time and place where he and I can meet. If he won't receive me, ask his terms for surrender. Ask for particular consideration of the large number of sick and wounded in the hospitals; of the fact that our force is disorganized and my staff and I can best pull it together for further movement to prison camp; of the fact that these sick, hungry men cannot move on foot and I have saved transportation for them; and of the vast number of civilian refugees who are unconnected with our forces. Leave at whatever time you think will get you to the front lines at daylight.

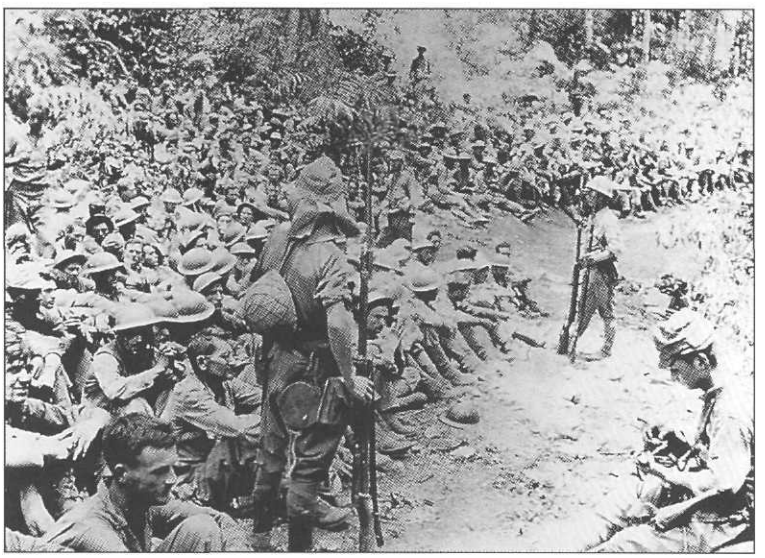
At 1:30 A.M. the order went out to begin destroying property. Now began a Gôtterdämmerung. The navy had already started the destruction: Soon its installations at Mariveles were lighting the sky with their flames, shore facilities were being blown up, ships being scuttled. Some ordnance officers had jumped the gun and started blowing up ammunition even as King, Funk, and Collier were conferring; now they began to set off all the ammunition. Tanks were wrecked, fieldpieces were ripped apart, some cannon were blown to bits by firing them double-loaded. It was "like the end of the world, fantastic, reverberating, reminded me of *Fantasia*, the Night on Bald Mountain, a night of Hell," recalled one of Sage's New Mexicans. The supreme moment was at 2:10 A.M., when the TNT warehouse and main ammunition dump at Little Baguio detonated with a string of stupendous blasts. The earth heaved, trees rocked in the ground, the sky was filled with multicolored pyrotechnics, masses of hot metal fragments rained down, one of the flimsy headquarters buildings was wholly blown away. One officer said to his foxhole mate that the explosions reminded him of something Sibelius might have composed.

With the big dump blown, it was safe to move about. Williams and Hurt set off in a reconnaissance car with a motorcycle escort, up the East Road against the current of the human flood.

At about 2:45 A.M., MacArthur's absurd Olongapo project raised its head again. Jones phoned to report that Brigadier General Lewis Beebe, Wainwright's chief of staff, had just called him to ask about it. When Jones had said he had received no orders, Beebe had told him he probably soon would.

That was disturbing. Did Wainwright mean to take direct command of I Corps with the surrender already under way? King called Wainwright. The connection was bad. Wainwright, hard of hearing, gave Beebe the phone. "I want a definite answer as to whether or not General Jones will be left in my command regardless of what action I may take," said King. After two or three minutes, the officers with King heard him say "You bet, Skinny; thank you very much," and he hung up. Corregidor could not agree to a surrender because of MacArthur's orders, he told them (and of course he had not asked for that), but there would be no interference with any element of his command. King went on to say, as one witness recalled, "that if he survived to return home he fully expected to be court-martialed, and he was certain that history would not deal kindly with the commander who would be remembered for having surrendered the largest force the United States had ever lost."

On through the night continued the orgy of destruction. The bus carrying



The Japanese forced King's troops (above) and the accompanying Filipino civilians on a brutal death march (right, above and below), during which some 650 Americans and 5,000 to 10,000 Filipinos collapsed and died or were killed. During the first few weeks in Camp O'Donnell, another 1,600 Americans and at least 15,000 Filipinos died. Barely a third of the Americans who surrendered in April 1942 would survive the next three years of imprisonment.

the nurses from General Hospital no. 1 took hours to push its way to Mariveles through the human swarm jamming the road, and one nurse later recalled that the sky was alight the whole time. (The nurses made it safely to Corregidor.) Finally, at about 6:00 A.M.—when, according to plan, Williams and Hurt would have crossed the line, white flags would be appearing, the die would be irrevocably cast, and Wainwright could truthfully tell MacArthur that he could do nothing to stop it—King put in a call to Wainwright. For some reason, Wainwright was not available.

"All right," said King, probably speaking to Beebe,

I'll talk to you. Tell General Wainwright for me that I have decided to surrender Bataan. The Japanese attack has broken the center of the line, they are pouring on all trails toward both the east and the west coasts and I have nothing to stop them. This decision is solely my own, no member of my staff nor of my command has helped me to arrive at this decision. In my opinion, if I do not surrender to the Japanese, Bataan will be known as the greatest slaughter in history.

Beebe reminded him of the order for the Olongapo attack.

"With what?" retorted King.

At the same time, Funk was giving the news to Lieutenant Colonel Traywick, who was the night duty officer. It was Traywick who actually broke the news to Wainwright. Traywick quickly called back to say that Wainwright said not to do it. It's too late, said Funk. There was no more communication between King and Corregidor.

Toward 9:00 A.M., Hurt reappeared at headquarters. After a hair-raising adventure, he and Williams had reached the commander of the Japanese force attacking down the East Road. The commander was to meet King near the village of Lamao. Williams had been kept behind as a token of good faith.

King said a prayer, and was ready to go. Hurt led the way with Collier in a jeep, followed by King and two aides in a second jeep. They flew white flags made from a bedsheet. King had put on his last clean uniform—like another general, seventy-seven years before.

When he was a nineteen-year-old amateur cannoneer dreaming of

Courageous Corregidor Mac

Many if not most of the Americans on Bataan despised General Douglas MacArthur for lying to them about help being on the way, and for leaving the comparative safety of Corregidor only once. They composed scurrilous verses impugning his bravery (unjustly—in two wars MacArthur often nonchalantly exposed himself to enemy fire; it was his moral courage that was defective). The best known of these was to the tune of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic": "Dugout Doug MacArthur lies a-trembling on the Rock . . . While his troops go starving on." Here is one less familiar, which Lieutenant Colonel Charles E.N. Howard shared with the army historians. (Quezon was Manuel Quezon, the president of the Philippines, who escaped with MacArthur on a PT boat.) Needless to say, the verses did not reach the official history:

"Corregidor Mac"
From out of his hole, four stories below,
Came courageous Corregidor Mac,
With a one five five to keep him alive,
And a howitzer strapped to his back.

I'll ride through Bataan, as fast as I can,
Rest assured I am practically back.
I'll feed them carabao steaks and rice paddy cakes,
And keep the potatoes for Mac.

I'll tell Franklin D. of all that I see,
And probably more to boot:
Of the skies being black when our bombers attack,
And any more bull I can shoot.

Get my Chris-Craft ready, for I'm a bit unsteady,
I've had a hard day on the line.
I want to get back to my underground shack,
Brother Quezon is waiting to dine.

—T.H.

being a soldier, Ned King had been one of the crew that fired the minute guns for the state funeral of John B. Gordon, Georgia's grand old man, Lee's last corps commander, "the Hero of Appomattox." As a youth he surely had heard at least once Gordon's oft-delivered, stirring lecture on "The Last Days of the Confederacy." Through King's mind now passed Lee's words on that other April 9, when Gordon had told him that he had "fought my corps to a frazzle": *Then there is nothing left to do but to go and see General Grant, and I would rather die a thousand deaths.*

Arrogant and truculent, the Japanese would not discuss terms. Homma would not even see King; he sent a staff colonel. Over and over King emphasized the needs of the men, their desperate condition, how numerous they were, how he had ordered his transportation saved and would undertake to carry them to any designated place. The Japanese would not even talk about it.

Will you not just assure me that my men will be well treated, King asked.

The Japanese colonel drew himself up and said loftily, "The Imperial Japanese Army are not barbarians."

It was the best King could do. He handed over his pistol.

By a supreme irony, Roosevelt rescinded his no-surrender order that very morning.

The Imperial Japanese Army are not barbarians.

Do not try to tell that to the survivors of Bataan.

King could not have known, of course, that the Japanese not only would refuse to let many of his men ride to prison in the vehicles he had so carefully ordered saved, but would harry them up the East Road, sick, skeletally thin, desperately hungry, gasping for water in the blazing Philippine sun, stumbling from beriberi, their ragged garments drenched in their own diarrhea—Japanese clubbing them, bayoneting them, beheading them—in a march of death that would kill some 650 Americans and 5,000 to 10,000 Filipinos. He could not have expected their first destination, Camp O'Donnell, with its loathsome open latrine trenches and one water spigot for thousands of men, where in a few weeks another 1,600 Americans and at least 15,000 Filipinos would die. He could not have expected the next three years, the freight cars and hell ships in which men suffocated, the coal mines where they slaved, the gratuitous beatings by sadistic guards. He could not have expected the deliberate starvation, sometimes only a spoonful of

Left with a permanent hip injury, King retired in late 1946 without any official acknowledgment of his contributions.

rice a day. He could not have known that barely a third of the Americans he surrendered on April 9, 1942, would ever see home again.

For some weeks, in the first dumbfounding shock of this barbarity, he wondered whether he had done the right thing. When Jones joined him after hiking part of the death march, he thought King had "no spirit—mentally sick." King soon recovered, and he and Jones did manage to ameliorate to some small extent the horror of Camp O'Donnell before they and other senior officers were sent to a separate camp. But throughout the first years of imprisonment, King had recurrent seizures of black depression.

After the war, King repeatedly apologized for not suffering in the same prison camps as his men—as if that had been within his control. He and his fellow senior officers certainly suffered. Wainwright soon joined him in prison, having yielded Corregidor and the rest of the forces in the Philippines less than a month after King's surrender. Eventually, generals and some colonels were moved to Formosa, later to Manchuria. They were systematically starved, harassed in innumerable ways both gross and petty, forced to labor in the fields, allowed negligible communication with the outside world. Both Wainwright and Jones were beaten. King never was, but he injured his hip in Manchuria, and for lack of proper medical attention it never healed properly.

Both King and Wainwright spent the war thinking they were despised back home. Moreover, King expected to be court-martialed for disobeying orders. Everybody else, officers and men, knew that what King had done was not only right but an act of supreme courage. "He was faced with a terrible situation and he made a brave and determined decision," said Wainwright after the war. "To my mind [King was] the hero of the show," said General Weaver. One of King's regimental officers wrote, "It is my honest opinion that there was no greater hero on Bataan than he." After they got home, Jones wrote to King: "The American people will probably never realize the service you performed at the surrender. It took a great man to steer a true course through the troubled sea of heroics and traditional emotions. Thousands of Bataan heroes owe their lives to you. The future attitude of the Filipinos to our Government largely will be based upon your humane and excellent estimate of that situation and your brave decision."

King's and Wainwright's worries, of course, proved unfounded. Atlanta gave her native son a hero's welcome after the Japanese surrender. But for the rest of the country, Wainwright alone was the symbol of the gallant defense of the Philippines. He stood behind MacArthur on the *Missouri.* He got the Medal of Honor, four stars and an army command to go with it, a ticker-tape parade up Broadway, receptions by the Senate and the House, and a book contract complete with ghostwriter. Almost nobody heard of King.

"My career is over," Weaver remembered King saying at that last meeting, and so it proved to be. King had taken care that no one else was tainted with his decision, and he did all he could to ensure that his people, from privates to Jones and Bluemel, got the medals and other recognition they deserved. But there was no recognition for King himself, the man who had fought skillfully to the end and then saved thousands of lives. Bataan and Corregidor joined the Alamo and Fort Sumter and the Little Big Horn in American legend, but somehow the adulation showered—and justly so—on Wainwright was allowed to substitute for recognition of them all. After a few wrap-up paperwork assignments, King retired in late 1946.

The blame for this shabby treatment—about which King never complained—lies squarely on Douglas MacArthur's shoulders. Jealous and ungenerous, for the rest of his days MacArthur sought to divert attention from his own performance in the Philippines by denigrating the men he had left behind. Right up through the publication of his memoirs on the eve of his death in 1964, he was still carping about the failure to carry out his crackpot Olongapo scheme. He barely mentioned King in his memoirs and praised him not at all. Wainwright's honors were contrary to MacArthur's wishes. George C. Marshall, army chief of staff, and Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson wanted Wainwright to have the Medal of Honor after the fall of Corregidor in 1942, but MacArthur snidely refused to recommend it. Even Wainwright's invitation to the ceremony on the *Missouri* was pressed on MacArthur by Washington.

When MacArthur came home in 1951 after Truman fired him, the War Department thoughtfully brought King to Washington and give him a ringside seat for MacArthur's address to Congress. King—who had sharply defended his old boss—went up to speak to MacArthur, but the latter affected not to know him. "There was no recognition in his eye," as King put it, and he had to introduce himself. "I believe he does not like to be reminded of Bataan," wrote King to Bluemel.

In retirement King lived in a small cottage on the Georgia coast, with summers in the North Carolina mountains. He devoted himself to innumerable volunteer causes, especially the Red Cross. (A friend told him once that people were imposing on him, getting him to do all this pro bono work. I'm living on a pension that they are paying for, King responded; I owe them something in return.) In some local demand as a speaker, he repeatedly sounded a few simple themes: Never again let the country fall into the unpreparedness that made Bataan possible. Do not forget the men who suffered for you. Do not forget the loyalty of the Filipinos. And do not trust the Japanese, and never believe their promises; in forty years they will be as great a threat as ever.

He died in 1958 and was buried in one of the loveliest spots in America, the shady, moss-grown churchyard of St. John's-in-the-Wilderness, in Flat Rock, North Carolina, near Carl Sandburg's home. On his stone are seven fitting words from St. Luke: *He that humbleth himselfshall be exalted.*

THADDEUS HOLT is a former deputy undersecretary of the army, a lawyer, and a writer on military subjects. He is a member of the *MHQ* advisory board.