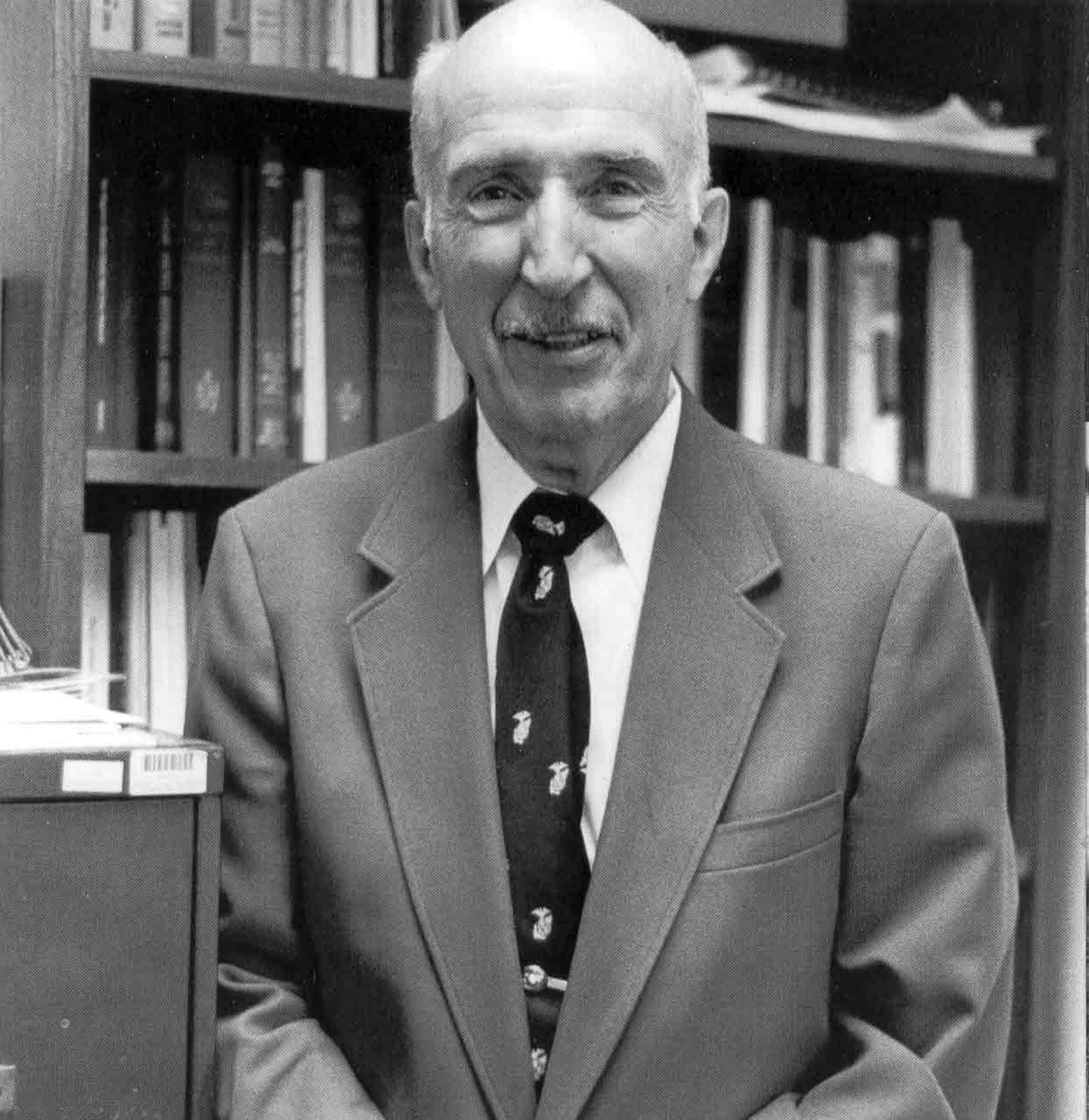
EDWIN COLE BEARSS

HISTORY'S PIED PIPER

A BIOGRAPHY BY JOHN C. WAUGH



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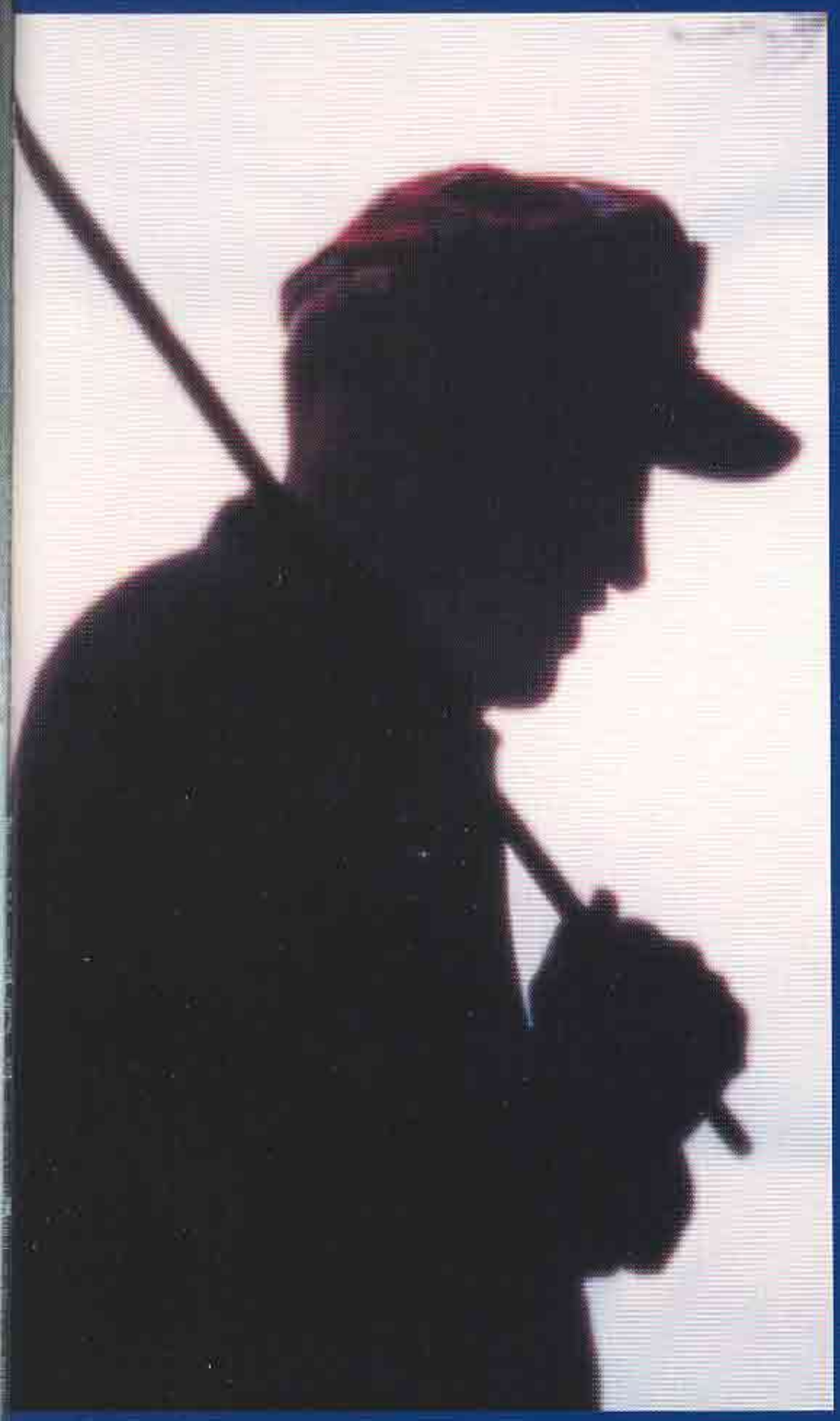

A CONCISE ILLUSTRATED BIOGRAPHY OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF AMERICA'S IMPRESARIO OF PUBLIC HISTORY

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About the Author

John C. Waugh carved out the first of three careers reporting the 20th century as a newspaper journalist—as staff correspondent and bureau chief of The Christian Science Monitor. Long a closet historian in love with the Civil War era, in 1989 he turned from that career in the 20th century to begin reporting the 19th. His first book, *The Class of 1846*, published in 1994, won the New York Civil War Round Table's Fletcher Pratt Award for the best nonfiction book about the Civil War for that year. He has since written four other nonfiction books, besides this one, all on that time in our past: *Reelecting Lincoln, Surviving the Confederacy*, *Sam Bell Maxey and the Confederate Indians*, and *Last Stand at Mobile*. The manuscript of a sixth book, about the Compromise of 1850, has been completed and is headed for publication.

Waugh's third career was in politics. He has served on the senior staffs of two national politicians, late governor and vice president Nelson Rockefeller of New York, a Republican, and U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, a Democrat.

He first met Ed Bearss in the 1980s and has counted him a valued friend ever since.

Foreword

I FIRST MET Ed Bearss in 1987. I'm sure he doesn't remember the occasion, despite his extraordinary memory, because my name would have meant nothing to him at the time and I was only one of a busload of people for whom he was giving a tour of First Manassas. My books were then relatively unknown outside academic circles, so I would have been just another member of the group that had come to Manassas as part of the Civil War Institute sponsored by Gettysburg College.

The next year, my *Battle Cry of Freedom* was published and, somewhat to my surprise, reached a large readership outside the halls of academe. Several months later I received a phone call from Ed Bearss. This call began a partnership and friendship that I cherish as one of the most meaningful I have known. Ed explained that Manassas National Battlefield faced a grave threat. Northern Virginia's largest developer, Til Hazel, had purchased 580 acres immediately adjacent to the battlefield park on which he proposed to build a huge shopping mall, a corporate park, and scores of houses—all on land where Robert E. Lee and Jeb Stuart had their headquarters during the Second Battle of Bull Run and where James Longstreet's corps had deployed for its devastating counterattack on the afternoon of August 30, 1862. Ed asked me if I would testify about this threat to the battlefield before Senator Dale Bumpers's subcommittee on national parks. I did so, and Senator Bumpers subsequently pushed through Congress a law that acquired this acreage for the park.

From that time onward, I worked with Ed on a number of battlefield preservation efforts. Bumpers had secured legislation and funding for creation of the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission. Ed and I were members of this Commission during its two years of life, from 1991 to 1993. We traveled to many Civil War battlefields, where Ed gave us his patented tours, and we held hearings in nearby cities. To Ed more than anyone else is due the credit for the detailed report the Commission submitted to Congress in 1993 documenting both the threats to scores of Civil War battlefields and the opportunities to forestall these threats by land acquisition, easements, and other means. The Commission report has become the Bible for preservation efforts by both the private sector and by the federal government, which finally began providing funds for land acquisition.

Some of my fondest memories are of the battlefield tours I have participated in with Ed—sometimes as an entranced listener and sometimes as a junior partner providing some sidebar commentaries to his play-by-play narration of the battles. As anyone who has been on a tour with Ed is aware, he knows everything—and I mean literally *everything*—about Civil War battles and about a great many other areas of history as well. In 1999, I went on a tour guided by Ed to Lewis and Clark sites in Montana and Idaho. In July 2003, I will be an avid follower on Ed's tour of the Normandy beaches and other European battlefields.

I will never forget one occasion that brought home to me Ed's polymath capabilities in dramatic fashion. In 1993, our Civil War Sites Commission held its final site visit in Wilmington, North Carolina. One day we visited Fort Fisher, where Ed not only brought

alive the battle there in 1865 but also described the hurricane that washed away part of the fort in the 1920s and the building of an airstrip during World War II that destroyed part of the remainder in such vivid detail that we were sure he had actually been there on all three occasions. Next day, as our bus rolled out of Wilmington for a tour of the Bentonville battlefield, we passed the battleship *USS North Carolina* tied up in the Cape Fear River. For the next twenty minutes Ed described in his inimitable manner all the actions in which this ship had taken part during World War II, her battle stars and where she earned them, and what she had done after the war before coming home to become a museum. As he finished this dramatic narration, we passed the Moore's Creek National Battlefield. Without missing a beat, Ed shifted from 1944 to 1776 and told us the story of that Patriot victory over the Loyalists.

Ed Bearss is *sui generis*. They broke the mold after he was created. John Waugh has written a wonderful biography that sparkles with life just as Ed's tours sparkle. Everyone who has been on one of Ed's tours, and everyone who has heard Ed speak or watched him on television, will want to read this book.

—James M. McPherson

1 Growing Up Under The Big Sky

Touring at an early age—little Ed on his tricycle making the rounds on the ranch in Montana.

EDWIN COLE BEARSS has a vacuum cleaner memory celebrated for sucking up everything, and forgetting nothing, about the past. That extraordinary memory kicked in for the first time on a very warm end-of-summer day in the third year of his life in the middle of his native Montana. He remembers the day, as he tends to remember almost everything he comes to know—in shadowless detail.

"It was the day my brother was born, September 4, 1926," he remembers. "I was three years and three months old. My father and I left the ranch—the car was a Studebaker—the nearest neighbor two and a half miles, the nearest gravel road six miles, the nearest paved road forty miles."

Omar Bearss, Ed's father, the Marine who read to his boys about war.

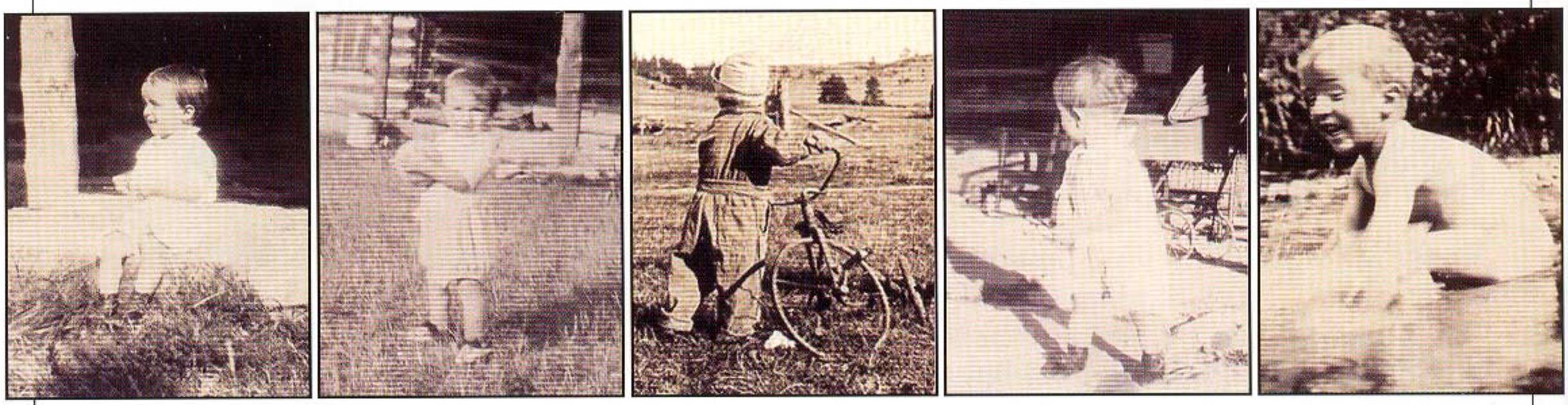
They were bound for Billings ninety miles to the west, the nearest town where you could go to be born. Billings was where his mother had gone a few days earlier, where Ed himself had been born, and where this second blessed event in the Bearss family was to take place.

Halfway to Hardin, Ed remembers, about a quarter of the way to Billings, "we have a flat tire—in front of the local moonshiner Bob Conway's house on Conway Hill. He is running off a new batch of moonshine, and he said, 'Wait 'til I am through here and I'll help fix that flat.'" Ed's father had neither a jack to lift the car nor the patches to patch the tire. Conway meanwhile was being a good host, Ed remembers—"he insisted on giving me some chokecherry wine."

It took all the rest of the day to reach Billings. They arrived to find that the little brother, Robert, who would be called Pat, had already arrived. "My mother was very upset," Ed remembers, "because it was a very hot day and my father had me dressed in a very hot coat—and we were late." And that is the first day that the highly mnemonic Ed Bearss can distinctly remember. Apparently, he arrived in Billings sober.

Virginia Morse Bearss, Ed's mother, the loving disciplinarian in the family.

The two Bearss boys were the latest exhibits in a family genealogy that snaked back in American history to the Mayflower on their mother's side and to 1636 on their father's side—the year the first Bearss arrived in Barnstable, Massachusetts, from England. The ancestors on both sides tended to possess qualities of concrete reinforced by rods of steel. There was a great-grandmother on their mother's side who ran a station on the underground railroad in Iowa. Their



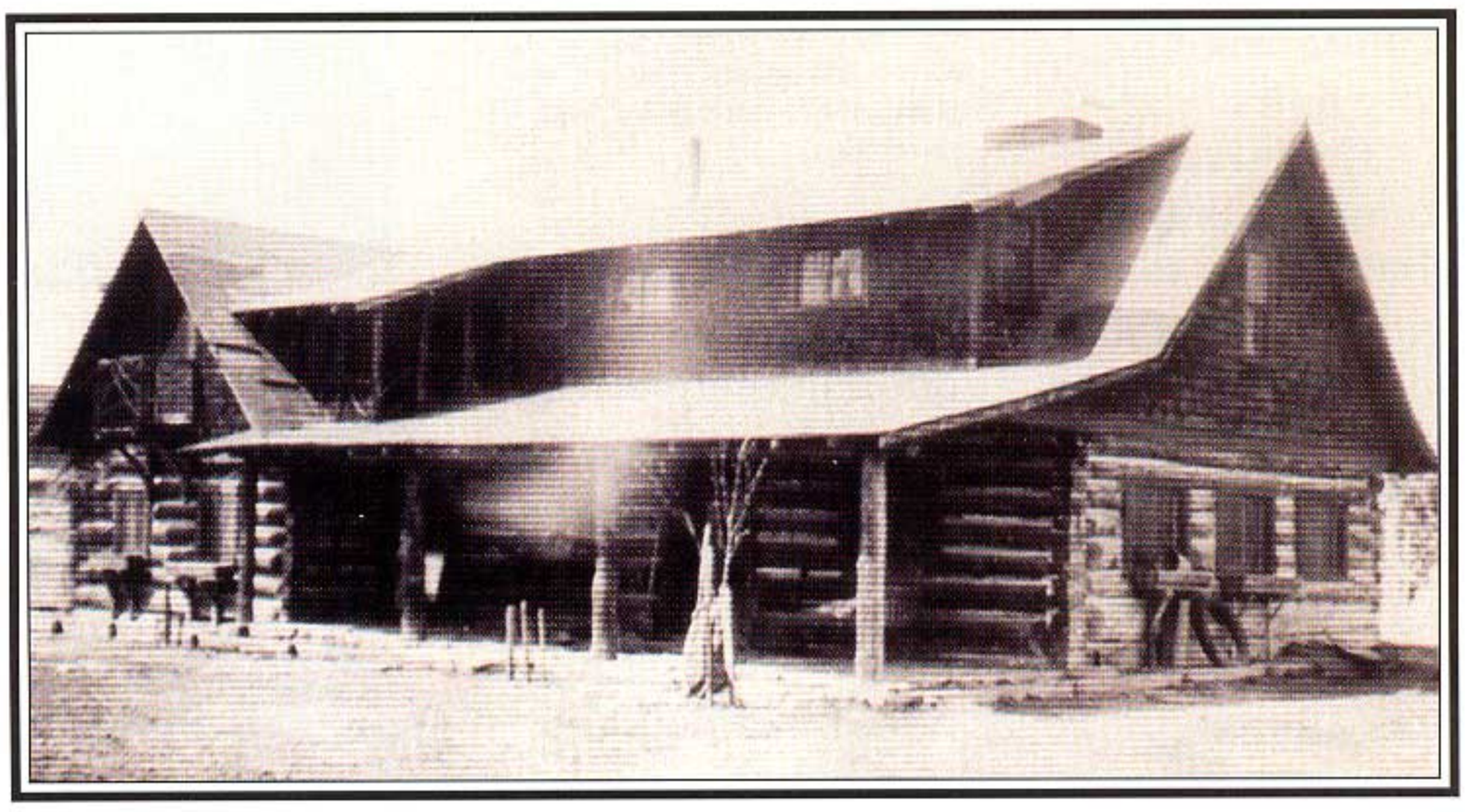
Ed shows his versatility in his little boy years—on the porch, with a ball, out in the yard with his tricycle (perhaps looking for rattlesnake holes), showing off his haircut, and frolicking in the fishing stream.

grandmother on that same side, named Sara, was superintendent of schools for Yellowstone County, one of the first women in Montana to get her master's degree and hold a public office. She was later executive chairman of the Montana Tuberculosis Association.

THE FAMILY LINE on his father's side also ran to steel—and to fame. One of Ed's third cousins was a legendary American military hero, a hard fighting, heavily decorated U.S. Marine colonel named Hiram, who was a recipient of the Medal of Honor for extraordinary heroism in the Philippine Insurrection in the Spanish-American War. The American songwriting icon, Cole Porter, was another of Ed's third cousins. The grandfather on Ed's father's side was a man of wealth and influence in the Midwest, a member of the Chicago Board of Trade and an intimate of the legendary baseball commissioner, Kennesaw Mountain Landis, and the equally legendary circus impresarios, Ben Wallace and Jerry Mugivan.

Omar Bearss, Ed's father, was a man of military bent. He had attended the Culver Military Academy in his native Indiana in his youth, where, as a member of its elite Black Horse Troop, he rode in the inaugural parade of President Woodrow Wilson in 1913. Like Hiram, Omar had been a marine officer in World War I, commissioned in 1918 at the Marine Officers Candidate School in Quantico. He had earlier served in Haiti as an enlisted man. The Marines permanently colored Omar's preferences, to the point that when he read to the boys in their young years it was never from children's books, but from books about war—the Marines, World War I, and occasionally the American Civil War. It was a quirk that would permanently color little Ed's preferences as well.

Omar loved sports. He had played first base for the Quantico Marines at officer's candidate



The ranch house near Sarpy, Montana.

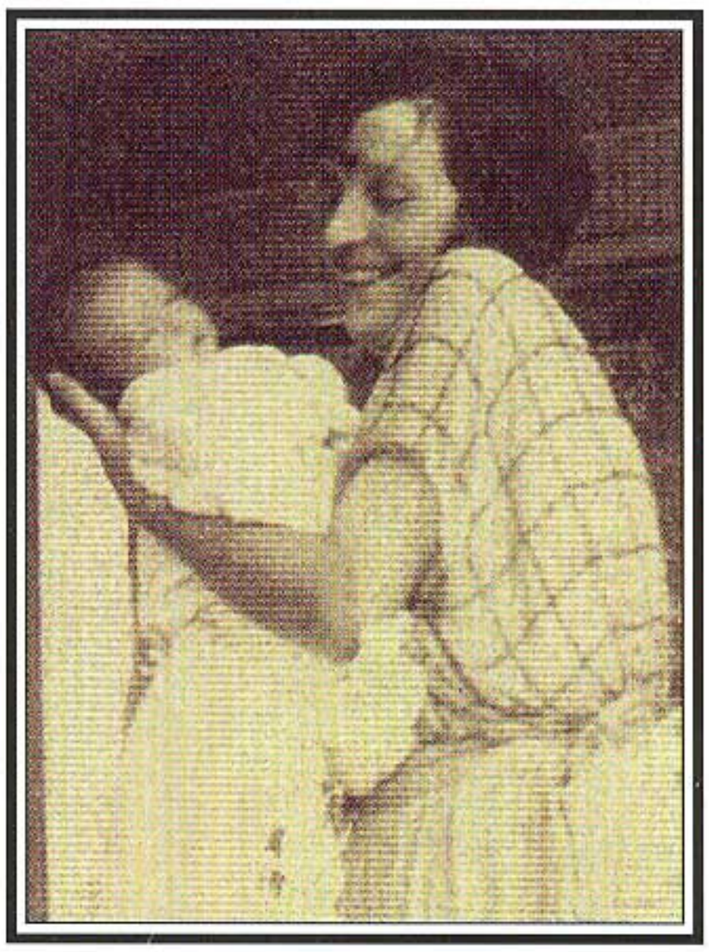
school, and he would do his best to make ball players of Ed and Pat, persevering in the process to turn them into left-handed hitters. He threw as hard as he could to them so they would learn to hit a fast ball, parking a wheelbarrow behind them at the plate so if they stepped back from his heat, they would fall over it. Regrettably, he was not able to make a ballplayer of either one of them.

He rigged a half-mile long aerial on the ranch to pull down sports broadcasts from radio stations WHO in Des Moines and WGN in Chicago. If there was an important sports broadcast on the air, he would adjourn from the chores to listen to it through the everpresent static. Ed learned to love to listen too, and soon became aware of a play-by-play announcer at WHO named Dutch Reagan, who did simulated broadcasts of baseball games in the mid-1930s before he went to Hollywood, took a screen test, became a famous actor, and then president of the United States.

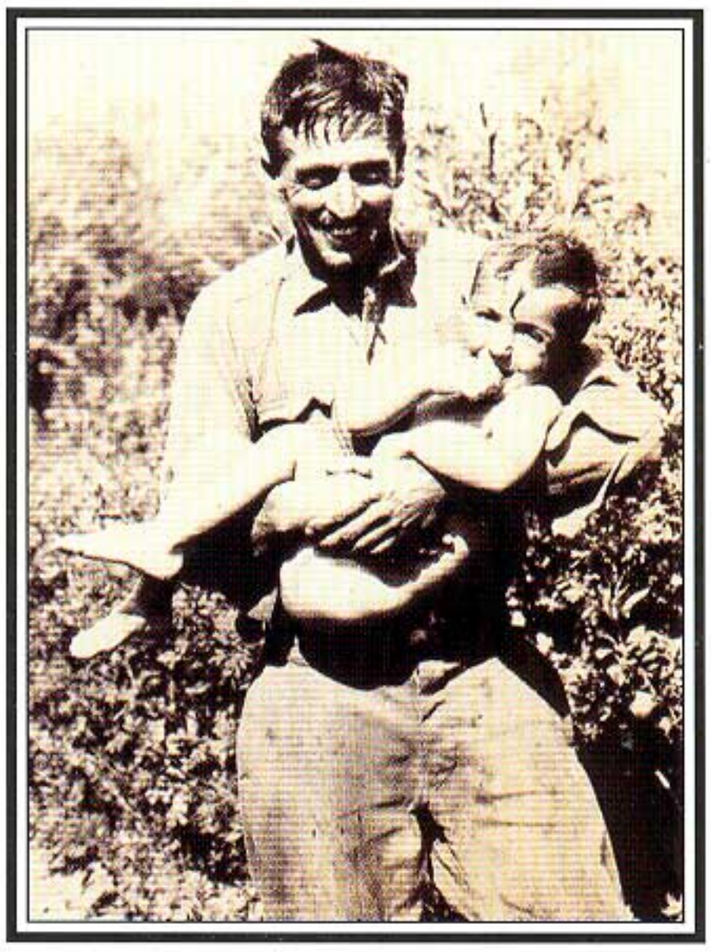
Ed's mother, Virginia, was as bright, forceful, and as given to leadership, despite gender, that her mother, Sara, was. In 1952, she went to the Republican National Convention as an alternate delegate pledged to Robert Taft. As Ed and Pat were growing up she was the disciplinarian in the family and did not believe in sparing the rod. She was a deceptively strong five feet five inches tall, matronly of figure and authoritarian in manner. She would become the most important person in Ed's life.

Virginia's mother had come to Montana in 1893 or 1894 to teach on the Crow Indian Reservation and had met and married Ed's maternal grandfather, whom she divorced in 1907 or 1908, and whom Ed would never know. Born in 1901, Virginia was the fruit of this truncated union, and by the end of World War I, she was a bright young woman about to enter the University of Montana. On a spring break in Billings, she met Omar Bearss, the ex-Marine, and they were married in 1922 at the end of her junior year.

Omar's father, Ed's grandfather, Edwin



Ed as a baby in the arms of his mother.



Ed's father carrying little Ed naked from a Montana fishing stream.

Cowgill Bearss, had wanted to buy a ranch somewhere in the West. He had asked well-traveled friends, including Mugivan and others associated with the Hagenback-Wallace circus, which wintered in Bearss's home town of Peru in Indiana, where he should look. They recommended Montana where the sky was big and ranch land was rich and plentiful. The grandfather took their advice, and in 1920 bought the 10,000-acre ranch in the shadow of the Rosebud Mountains, a day's cavalry ride from the Little Bighorn Battlefield, a day's slow Studebaker ride from Billings. And he had set up Omar to run it.

It was to the ranch that Omar took his new bride, snatched from the University of

THE MNEMONIC KID

IT TAKES A memory to win statewide contests in history and current events and geography. And Ed Bearss won them, with a memory that seemed surreal, even then. It was a weapon in his intellectual arsenal that would amaze people for the rest of his life.

Where did it come from? Clearly it makes a strong argument for the power of genetics. Ed's father, Omar, had such a memory. Ed remembers that his father could read all the major league batting averages and recite them back with total recall. And he could remember them all the way to 1904.

Ed downpeddles this memory that he inherited and that astonishes everybody else, and that he apparently has passed down to his daughter, Sara, and to his grandson, Andy. "I have a powerful memory," he confesses, "but not a photographic one. I am good with maps. When I look at a map I can remember everything that is important on it. But I can't scan a poem and quote it back to you." This total recall talent with maps extends as well to the minutiae of history. His storehouse of facts and anecdotes from the past is prodigious—indeed virtually unequaled.

It seems to boil down to this: "Anything I am interested in I never forget."

Legions of history lovers who have traveled with him, all of his associates through his long and fruitful career, can bear testimony to that understatement.

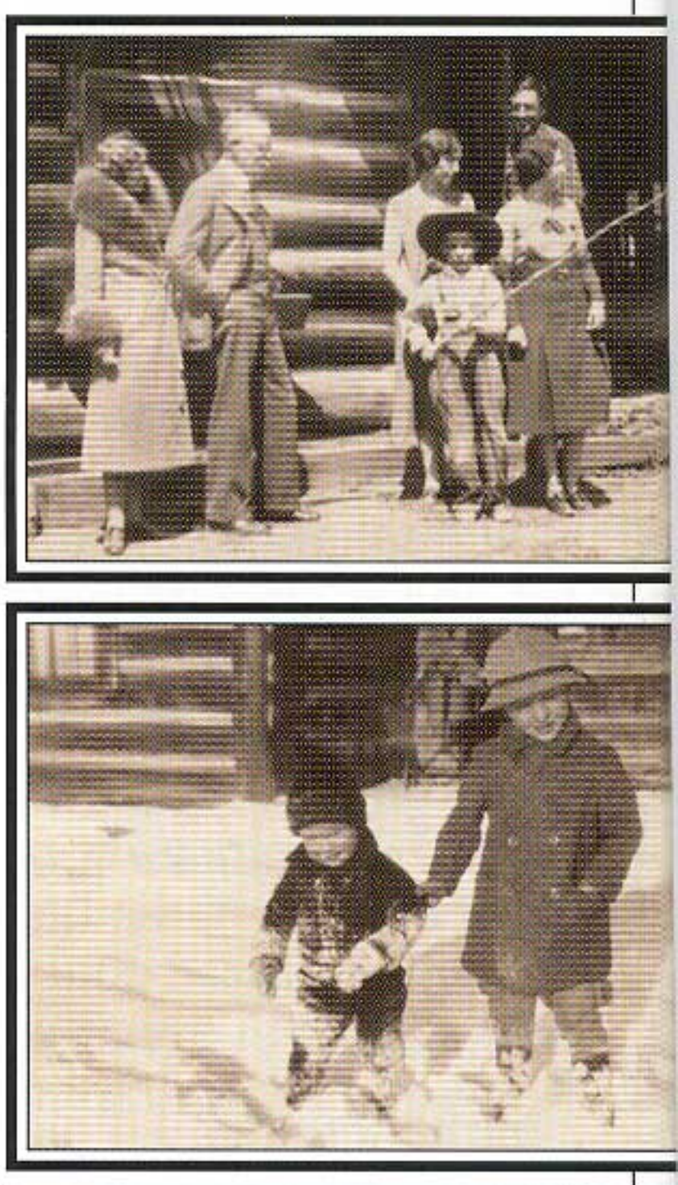
It is a memory few have and many would die for.

Montana, and it was there young Edwin Cole Bearss, born in Billings on June 26, 1923, would be raised.

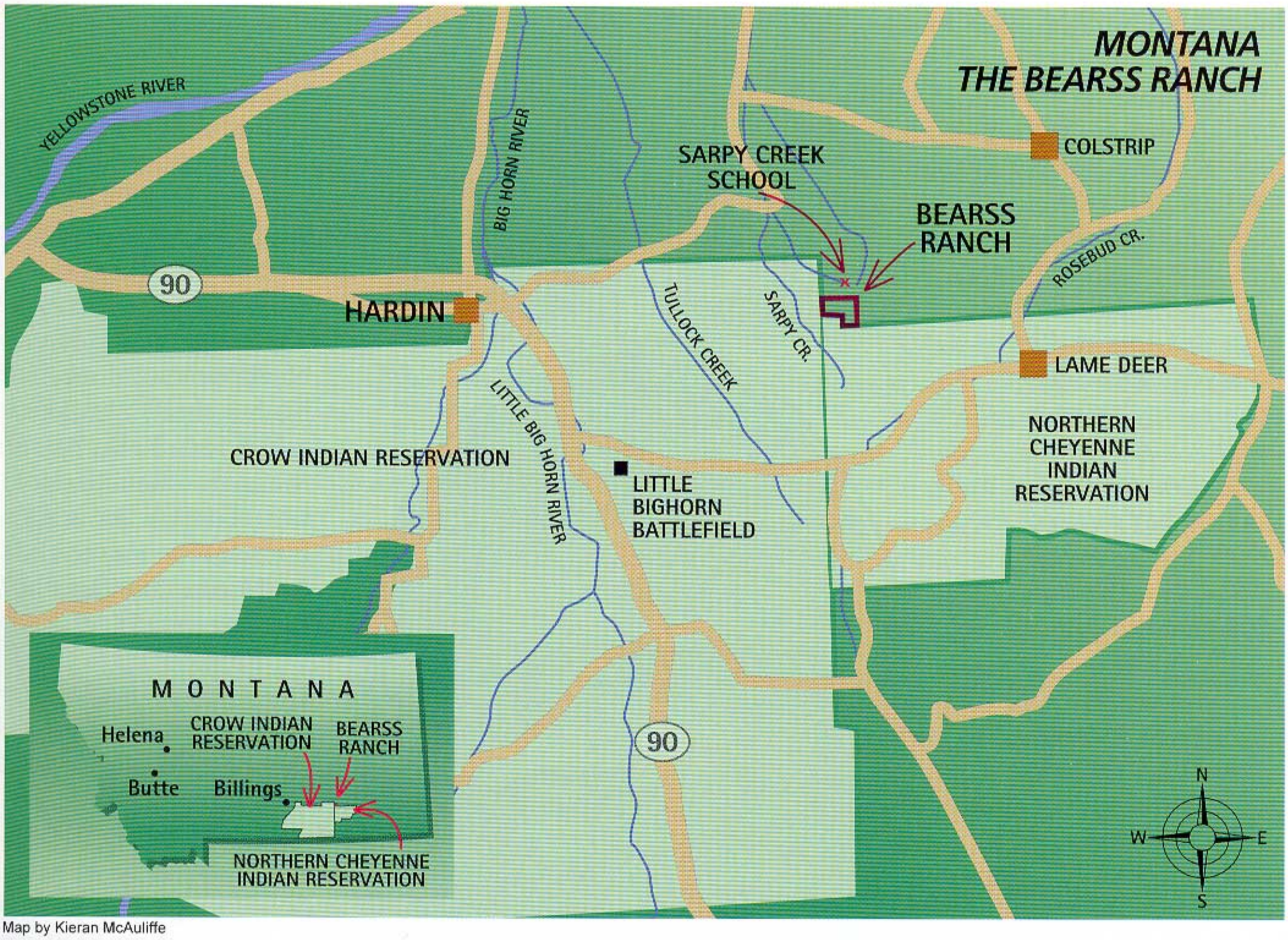
THE RANCH—the B bar S—was on Sarpy Creek, forty miles east of Hardin and fifty miles south of Hysham, in a corner in Montana between the Cheyenne and Crow Indian reservations. Its big six-bedroom ranch house and its two bunkhouses and pump house dominated the 10,000 acres, and there were generally a half dozen ranch hands on the place. The nearest post office was Sarpy, six miles away. The roads around were dirt, the bathrooms were outhouses, and there was no electricity or telephones. The nearest neighbor was a fast half hour walk down the creek.

At first, the family set out to raise draft horses to pull farm equipment. But tractors were just coming in, and draft horses were on the way out. So they switched to cattle—herding up to a thousand head at one time. And on two occasions they ran bands of sheep on the land—about 2,000 head.

Young Ed found himself in frequent need of his mother's stern oversight. When he was very little, he went often out on the prairie pulling



Growing up on the ranch—little Ed goes fishing, plays in the Montana snow, and rides horseback with his brother, Pat.



Map by Kieran McAuliffe

Montana—Ed Bearss's boyhood domain. The ranch was in a nook between the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Indian reservations, six miles from the nearest school in Sarpy, some 35 miles from the Little Bighorn Battlefield, 40 miles from Hardin, 90 from Billings.

his little red wagon behind him, and when his mother wanted to know where he was, she climbed the windmill for a panoramic view. Often as not she saw him out on the prairie looking down rattlesnake holes.

His whippings tended to be dramatic and generally administered by his mother. "The most famous one," he remembers, "was when I was thirteen. I had gotten a .22 rifle for my birthday. A repeater. My brother and I took turns washing the dishes then, and it was my night to wash. I decided to go out shooting with my new gun instead."

His mother saw that the miscreant wasn't on duty in the kitchen and demanded of Pat, who was presumably standing by with a drying towel, "Where's your brother?"

"Up on the hill there," Pat said.

"She sees me about half a mile off," Ed remembers, "and gets on the horse, Moonshine. I see her coming, twirling a rope which she was very good at, and I decided I had to get out of there. I took off running down the fence row, not thinking to throw myself down and roll under the fence. Dumb. She caught up to me, and began popping me with the rope, and that was the most famous and unique spanking I ever got."

But perhaps not his most painful. That might belong to the only whipping he remembers his father ever giving him. Equipment on the ranch tended to wear out eventually and become junk, giving way to new and bigger rigs. When Ed was about nine or ten years old,

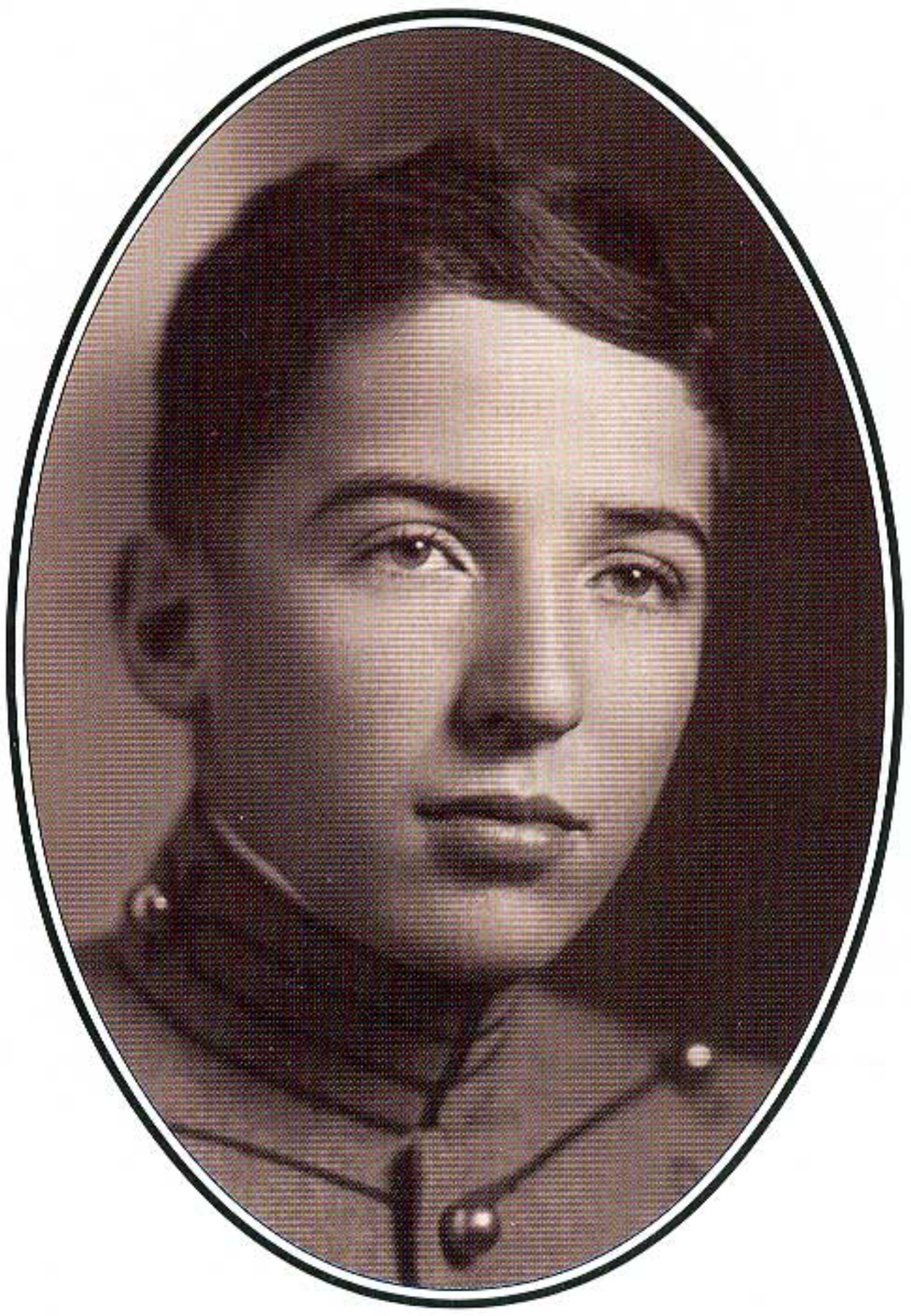
he and his brother and a neighbor boy one day were taking particular pleasure in pushing the junk equipment over a cliff and hearing it crash below. Soon they had pushed all the junk machinery over the side. But there was the new hay mower still sitting there. So they pushed it over, too, and it made, Ed remembers, "one hell of a crash. Very gratifying."

What happened that evening over the dinner table was anything but gratifying. Little Pat, recounting the day's activity, innocently mentioned the demise of the new hay mower. Omar leaped from the table, Ed remembers, "and what a whipping I got!"

SOME OF THE most interesting and bizarre moments in Ed's youth had to do with cars. In 1936, the day, he remembers, of the first Max Schmeling-Joe Louis heavyweight prize fight, they were on their way to Hardin when they crashed head-on into another car. Ed, twelve years old and sitting in the front seat, was hurled through the windshield and knocked unconscious. He was out for two days with a concussion, and it was feared for a time that he would not live.

There was the day he bought his first car, red with a Standard Oil Company logo painted on its side, for which he paid $45. A couple of miles from home one day it broke down. Some friends, three sheets to the wind, came up, saw it sitting there and shoved it into the creek. Ed was gratified to find, on a trip home almost sixty years later, that it was still sitting there in the creek bed.

Ed was black-haired, curly, and shy in his youth—unlike today on all three counts—and not very comfortable with girls. Pat recalls the time in high school that Ed had bought the car with money he earned pumping gas. So his buddies, knowing his shyness with the opposite sex, challenged the car's new owner to ask a girl to go out in it. Never one to retreat from a challenge, Ed asked Jean Kelly, one of the high school beauties. He took her out, but made her sit in the back seat. One can't be too careful with girls.

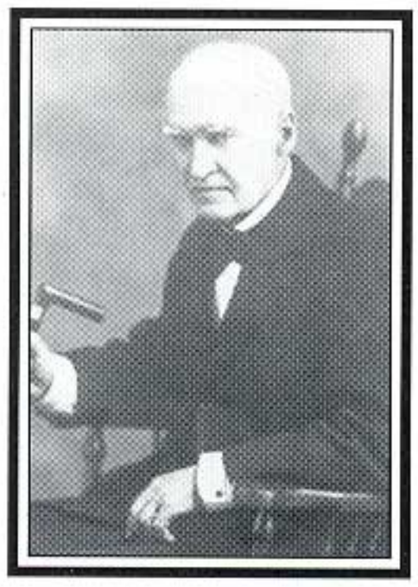


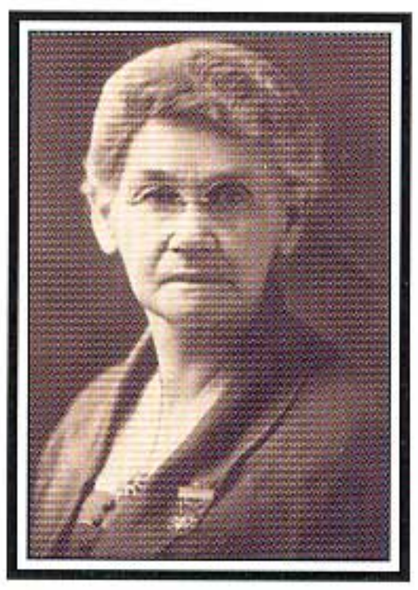
Ed as a cadet in his first two years of high school at St. Johns Military Academy, already winning medals for his knowledge of world and modern history.

Ed grew up in the Depression, picking up odd jobs in the summers between school semesters. He built fences on the ranch and was paid ten cents for every post he positioned, earning himself about $2 a day. He worked in the Agriculture Adjustment Act's soil conservation program, and many of his friends were in the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Boys four or five years older than he went into the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

There were summers, however, when he was younger, beginning about age six, when he traveled with his grandmother Sara, to conventions and on business trips around the Indian reservations for the Tuberculosis Association. He loved his grandmother and when she caught pneumonia and died on the ranch in 1934, he was devastated.

WHEN ED reached school age, their isolation dictated his matriculation. "We lived in the country," he remembers, "and the nearest school was the one-roomer in Sarpy six miles from the house. There was no school bus service and my mother did not think it was a good idea for her first grader to be riding those six miles on horseback alone every day. So she sent me to Helena to the Deaconess School for the first grade. My grandmother lived there, so I spent the weekends with her."





Two forebearers from Civil War days—Ed's paternal great-grandfather Robert Patterson Effinger, a friend of William Tecumseh Sherman and Sherman's brothers-in-law, Hugh and Tom Ewing, and maternal great-grandmother Eliza Ault Morse, who saw federal gunboats shell Natchez.

Ed detested the school. They made him take naps every day, a practice entirely against his kinetic nature. "I hate naps," he says. "I have never willingly taken a nap since, and I still carry that scar. I have a phobia against anybody who takes a nap. Everybody knows I never sleep on a bus and if anybody else does on one of my tours"—very unlikely considering the consequences—"I like to point it out."

At the end of his first school year, his folks knew he didn't like Deaconess and sent him instead to Hardin, the nearest town that had a school. There he passed the second, third, and fourth grades, boarding with a family named the McAllisters, who became closer to him in those years than his parents.

When Ed was ready for the fifth grade, Pat was ready to start first grade, and the family moved for a time to Billings so they wouldn't have to board both boys. There Ed attended McKinley grade school, where his mother had also gone and whose principal his grandmother had hired when she was superintendent of schools. Midway through the sixth grade, however, the family moved back to the ranch. Ed and Pat were old enough now to ride the six miles together on horseback to the school in Sarpy where grades one through eight were taught in the same room. "We rode there and back in all kinds of weather," Pat recalls. "Only one time did the weather keep us home, when it got down to 57 degrees below zero."

"There were sixteen kids in that one room school house," Ed remembers, "and, in those days, the teachers were almost always young women, who boarded in a second room attached to the school room." One of their young women teachers was appropriately named Montana Jones. Because they played baseball every day and there were only sixteen kids, first to eight grades, everybody had to play, including Montana. The Bearss boys were always in a terrible hurry to finish up at school and get home in the evenings, Ed remembers, "because I didn't want to miss my favorite radio programs, 'Little Orphan Annie,' 'Tom Mix,' and 'Jack Armstrong—All-American Boy.'"

In these formative years, Ed's essential character was shaping. It was seen that he had a unique memory for detail, that he loved hearing and reading about war, and that he was hyperactive, always needing something to occupy his body and his mind. It was also obvious that he had a trumpet for a voice. His professional ambitions made wide swings of preference. For a time—through the first to the fifth grades—he wanted to be a locomotive engineer after an uncle who was an engineer on the Wabash line. Then his budding interest in Greek and Roman history, stirred by the McAllisters, made him want to be an archeologist. Then there was an explorer phase. "Never anything pedestrian," he says. "I never wanted to be a cowboy or a salesman, a clerk or a civil engineer, or anything like that."

After the eighth grade, the one-room schoolhouse in Sarpy, which took him only that far, gave out for Ed. "They decided I

needed some discipline," he says. "So they sent me out of the eighth grade to St. Johns Military Academy in Delafield, Wisconsin, for my freshman and sophomore years of high school—from 1937 to 1939. It was a tough school that taught good study habits. I liked it. It had a good history department and they gave medals, and I won the one for the best student in both world and modern history."

That was not surprising. For some time—since he was ten years old—Ed had known he loved history. The McAllisters had urged him to read ancient history. And, by the seventh grade, he had taken an interest in current history and began following breaking world events. All of Omar's reading aloud to them about war had stuck with Ed. Mail was delivered twice a week to the ranch, and the Chicago *Tribune* generally came two or three issues at a time. With its help, Ed had first followed the Italian Invasion of Ethiopia in October 1935. He put maps on the wall to chart the war's progress. The Spanish Civil War erupted in July 1936 and then the Japanese invasion of China in 1937. He charted the ebb and flow of both of those historic events with arrows and flags, moving the armies every day. When Hitler invaded Poland in September 1939, another major military benchmark, he cleared his maps and shifted his intent gaze to the war in Europe, moving the armies, changing the flags and arrows on

Riding with Jeb Stuart

THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR, which he was to master in such spectacular detail, first entered Ed Bearss's consciousness when he was in the sixth grade in Billings, Montana.

On a shelf in the house his folks had rented for a year while he and his brother attended school, he found Francis Miller's *The Photographic History of the Civil War* and its pictures, particularly of dead soldiers, made a profound impression on his young mind. In the winter of Ed's seventh grade year, his father, who had long been reading books to his two boys about war—but mostly about the Marines and World War I—threw in a biography of the Confederate cavalry commander, J.E.B. Stuart, by John Thomason.

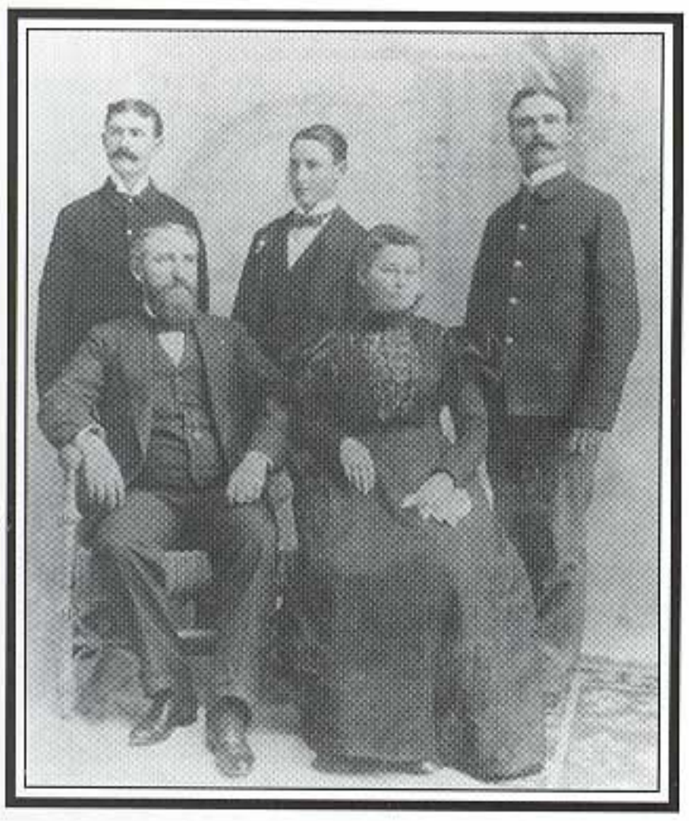
Ed was transfixed. His love of history wasn't new. He had been avidly into other eras of the past before that, mainly World War I and Greek and Roman history.

But this was an entirely new war, an entirely new epoch, an entirely new story to take an interest in. First, there had been that photographic history on the shelf at the Billings house and now here was Jeb Stuart, that quintessential Confederate cavalier in that quintessential war of brothers. Henceforth he would be Stuart in every game of war the boys played together. And he named cattle on the ranch after things he had come to know about the Civil War. His favorite milk cow was Antietam. Stray cats, numbering in the double figures on the ranch, were named for Civil War generals.

His folks began giving him books he could read himself and he read them in the summertime after chores—Robert Selph Henry's *The Story of the Confederacy*, Lloyd Lewis's *Sherman: Fighting Prophet*, Howard Swiggert's *Rebel Raider: A Life of John Hunt Morgan*, and William E. Woodward's *Meet General Grant.*

Multitudes of Civil War generals would in time parade in living color across his imagination and win firm footing in his extraordinary memory.

But Jeb Stuart got there first.



Faces from the family scrapbook—front row: Ed's maternal great-grandfather, William Morse, and great-grandmother, Eliza Ault Morse. Back row, left to right, great-uncles Frank and Earl Morse, and maternal grandfather Will Morse.

the weekends when he was home from school.

He came to know every province in Spain by heart and could bat them off as fast as he could states of the Union. And he could do states in the Union, he thought, faster than anybody except somebody who could do it alphabetically. Ed was spectacular in geography. So was Pat. The two of them shared a stamp collection as kids—"a terrific way to learn geography," Pat says. In the seventh grade, Ed scored the highest on a geography test of anybody in the state—ever—up to that time. When Pat took it a few years later he scored even higher.

The two boys were not alike in many ways—Pat leaned toward mathematics and business and was something of a card sharp. But Ed, not sharing those interests, was way ahead of him in the liberal arts. Pat liked ranching and the cowboy life; Ed would rather read. But they were alike in knowing where things were in the world. Ed could rattle off the names of the states without a hitch. But he did it geographically, not alphabetically, starting with Maine and then bounding in warp time state after state around the country.

In 1939, the economy hadn't improved for the Bearsses. The Depression was still cutting deep. So Ed was brought home from St. Johns and enrolled in Hardin High School for his junior and senior years. In his junior year, he boarded with the McAllisters again. The next year, he moved out into a rooming house with other students, where he could have more freedom, have more fun, and get in more trouble.

He had been rather shy, retiring, and reticent at St. Johns. "I became somewhat of a rough customer midway in my junior year through my senior year at Hardin. In my senior year, I bought my first beer across the bar and got drunk for the first time, arguably the drunkest I've ever been."

He was big for his age for that time—about 175 pounds—and though he played football and basketball, he was only an average player. Where he excelled was in the history classroom. In that pursuit, he continued to prove himself an exceptional heavyweight fortified with an unreal memory for detail. Donald Farris, his history and economics teacher at Hardin, lived for entering his students in contests for best student in the state in his two subjects and fielding a winner. He finally found his winner in Ed Bearss, who won it in current events in his junior year and in history in his senior year.

Ed graduated from Hardin High in May 1941. Trouble was in the air. Germany invaded the Soviet Union five weeks after his graduation, and the war in Europe that he had been plotting on his wall maps might be just around the corner for the United States. In his history classroom, Donald Farris had warned them that what was happening in Europe was likely to affect them all here in this country. Ed knew if there was to be a war he wanted in it as soon as it came. But he also wanted to see some of those states so ready in his memory.

So he set out hitchhiking across the country. From Montana, he hitched through Texas and across the South to Washington, DC. In the Shenandoah Valley, he stood for the first time on a Civil War battlefield, along the roadside at New Market, and in Washington, he lingered briefly on the Manassas battlefield. It was then on to New York City and Canada. As winter approached, he was back in the States and flat broke. So he wired home for money and caught a bus to Montana, back to whatever the future was about to present.

Hellfire on Suicide Creek

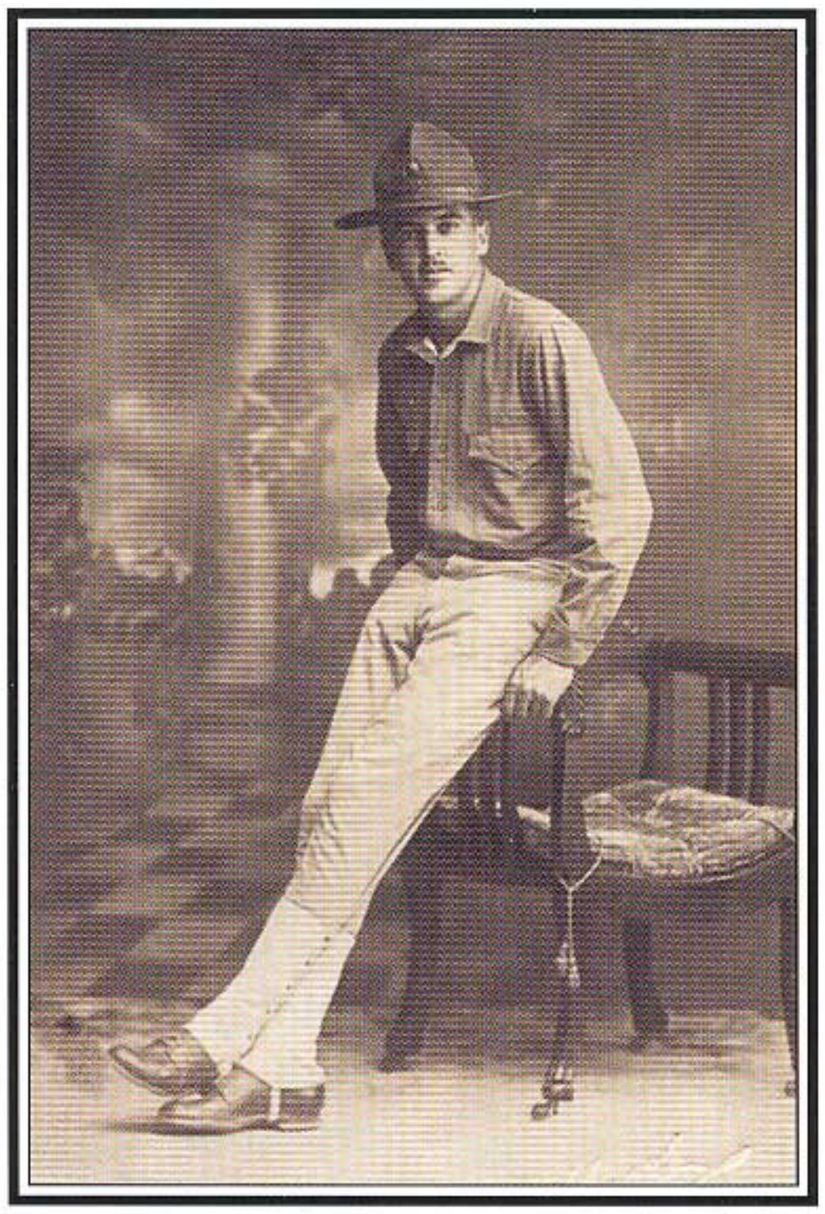
Cousin Hiram (Hiking Hiram) Bearss, Medal of Honor recipient, perhaps the most decorated Marine of his era.

DECEMBER 7, 1941, was one of those brisk Montana winter Sundays that young Ed Bearss looked forward to. The Chicago Bears were playing the Chicago Cardinals and the game was sputtering in through the static on the makeshift aerial line at the ranch. Ed, an irredeemable Bears fan, was pulling for his team. At halftime, the Bears were behind when the announcer broke in with more bad news. Japanese aircraft, the announcer said, were bombing Pearl Harbor.

"At first, we didn't believe it," Ed remembers. "We thought it was a hoax, like Orson Welles's famed 'War of the Worlds' broadcast in 1938-39 that scared everybody. But in the second half, the broadcast was periodically interrupted for updates, and we were finally convinced it was for real."

The Bears went on to make a comeback and win the football game. But the country was at war.

Ed's immediate angry resolve was to "join the Marines and get back at the Japs." The resolve cemented when President Franklin Roosevelt's voice came quivering down the aerial line with his "Day of Infamy" speech and the call for a declaration of war. That evening, Ed told his folks he intended to enlist, but since he was only eighteen, still under draft age, he needed their consent.



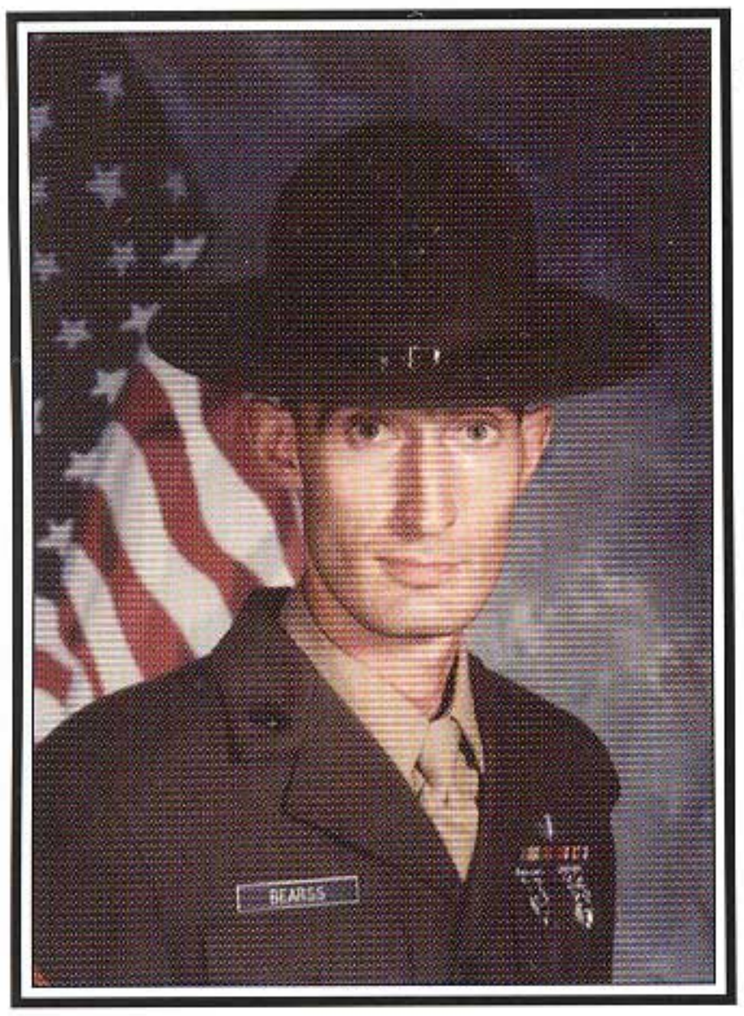
Omar Bearss, Ed's father, a young Marine enlisted man in Haiti before attending officer candidate school in World War I.

In Ed's mind, there was no place for him in this war but the Marine Corps and on the front lines. Family tradition demanded it. His father had been a Marine—he had never let his two boys forget that fact. And there was Cousin Hiram.

HIRAM—the family called him Mike, the Marines called him "Hiking Hiram"—was reason enough. He had been a Marine through and through, a legend, the bravest of the brave. He had entered the Marines at the time of the Spanish-American War as a first lieutenant, left the Corps briefly, but then returned as a captain. He had been awarded that Medal of Honor for extraordinary heroism in the Philippine Insurrection, and it had been presented to him by President Franklin Roosevelt in a White House ceremony in 1934. And there were those two Distinguished Service Crosses and honors from both the French and Italian

Opposite page: the proud corporal of a proud tradition—Ed in his Marine uniform.

governments in World War I that Hiram had won. He was perhaps the most decorated Marine of his era.



Two who carried on the Marine tradition—Ed Bearss, Jr. (Cole), Ed's son, and Jenny Bearss, Ed's youngest daughter.

Hiram had been one of the few marine colonels to command both U.S. Navy and U.S. Army units in World War I, and had retired as a brigadier general in 1919 after an exploding shell injured his spine in the Meuse-Argonne Campaign. Back home in Indiana, he had been active in politics and had continued his heroics, one day facing down a gang of Ku Klux Klaners trying to make trouble. In 1944, the U.S. Navy was to commission a Fletcher Class destroyer named for him. Ed had met Hiram one time, when he was ten years old, before the hero died in a car wreck in 1938 while with a woman who was not his wife. Hiram was a hard case, Ed says, "whom you probably wouldn't want to emulate too much in your personal life."

But this was war, and to emulate him in his military life was now Ed's unquenchable desire.

Ed's parents said they would sign his enlistment papers and let him go to meet his natural destiny, but not unless he agreed to stay on and look after the ranch until after they returned from a planned extended vacation to New Orleans. They would be gone about two months. When they returned, he could then go to the war. "They held me more or less hostage," Ed says.

But before his parents would return, cold fate intervened. On New Year's Day, before they left, Ed was in front of the radio again, this time listening to the Rose Bowl game, played that year in Durham, North Carolina.

It was a deep-winter Montana day. There was a foot and a half of snow on the ground under a heavy crust, drifting to six feet. One of the cows, about to calve, had gotten out and wandered off, and Ed was sent to chase her down and bring her back. Thinking she would probably be but half an hour out, a quarter of a mile down the road at most, he skipped saddling a horse and set out after her on foot. After two-and-a-half miles, wading through the crusted snow, he finally caught up to her. But he had also frozen his shins, which quickly turned into a severe skin infection in both ankles. By the time his mother and father returned from their vacation in early March, he was still medically unready for the Marines. Going to war would have to be put off until April.

THE MADDENING delay to fields of glory finally ended on April 28, 1942. With his signed papers in his hand and accompanied by his high school friend, Marvin Turner, Ed enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. The two of them went first to Billings, to the enlistment substation, took a few fundamental

tests and were ordered to return in a week. At week's end, Ed's mother and father, his brother, Pat, and a friend went to Billings to see them off. Ed remembers that his mother worried for him and wept as his train pulled away. His father, the old Marine, however, said it would make a man of him.

At Butte, their next stop on the way to the war, they were sworn in—Ed, Marvin, and four others—and put on a train to San Diego, California. There was now no pulling out, no looking back. After the swearing in they belonged irreversibly to the Marine Corps.

At the San Diego Marine Corps Recruit Depot, they were assigned to platoons, sixty-five victims to a platoon, for seven weeks of boot camp, cut down from twelve weeks for the sake of immediacy following the attack on Pearl Harbor. They spent the first three weeks, Ed remembers, on the drill field being screamed at, by way, Ed explains, "of taking you down to the dregs of your soul then building you up to believe that you, with your fellow Marines, can do anything." The second three weeks were spent on the rifle range, learning to kill with marksman-like efficiency. Then it was back to the Depot for one week.

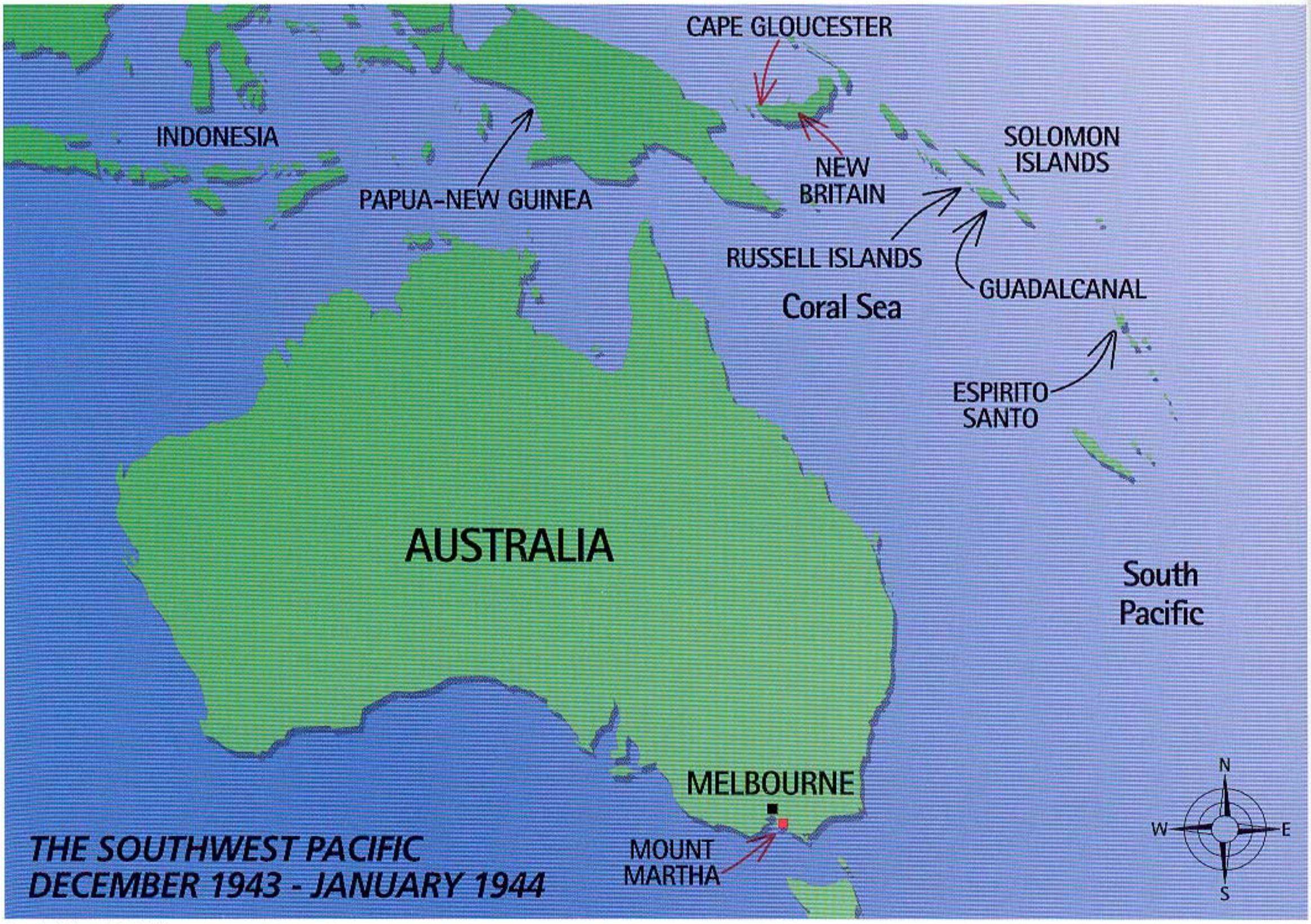
"Three important things happened during those seven weeks," Ed says. "First, there had been the battle of the Coral Sea. We stopped the Japs there, but really didn't win it. Before the battle of the Coral Sea, the Japanese had been running wild in the Pacific, having their way." Ed knew that because he had been moving the fleets on the maps every day when he was at home. "Second, Corregidor surrendered. Third, there was the battle of Midway, which we did win, but didn't really understand what it meant at the time. The general feeling at boot camp was that the war might be over before we could get into it." It was a sentiment Ed would later understand, when the Civil War became second nature to him, that was common to every raw, young, passionate soldier in every war there had ever been.

After boot camp, Ed could have gone to school. But he wanted no part of that. He wanted action. Two elite Marine Raider battalions were being formed, and he wanted in one of them. But the opportunity wasn't open to him then, and he was assigned instead to the Twenty-second Marines, a new regiment just constituted. And for the next four weeks they hiked and drew equipment, readying themselves for deployment overseas. On July 19, they boarded transports, and Ed took passage to the Pacific on the *S.S. Luraline*, a former luxury liner. Ten days later, they stopped briefly in Pago Pago harbor in American Samoa, on the cusp of the war in the Pacific theater.

Very soon they moved on to British Samoa, replacing the Seventh Marines who had been garrisoning that island, but were now headed for the hellhole at Guadalcanal. Ed would have preferred to go with them, for the Twenty-second looked to be stranded in British Samoa for a long time. Then good news came in September. Ed learned that a third Raider battalion was being organized in the Samoas. "I could hardly wait to get my name on that list," Ed says. "I had wanted to be a Raider since I heard of them in boot camp. And I wanted out of the chicken-shit Twenty-second."

The candidates were closely screened. "We had interviews and were asked questions. How far can you walk? How far can you swim? Could you kill a man with a knife? Could you strangle him? They gave brownie points for all those who had outdoor backgrounds. I answered every question in such a way as to get me into that outfit. And I made it."

THERE HE WAS, nineteen years old, little more than a year out of high school, less than a year in the Marines, and in one of its crack outfits. His fellow Raiders ranged in age from sixteen to twenty-seven, and it was distinguished for a spirited camaraderie. There was even a celebrity of sorts among them—Punchy Wright, who had been a sparring partner and punching bag for world



Map by Kieran McAuliffe

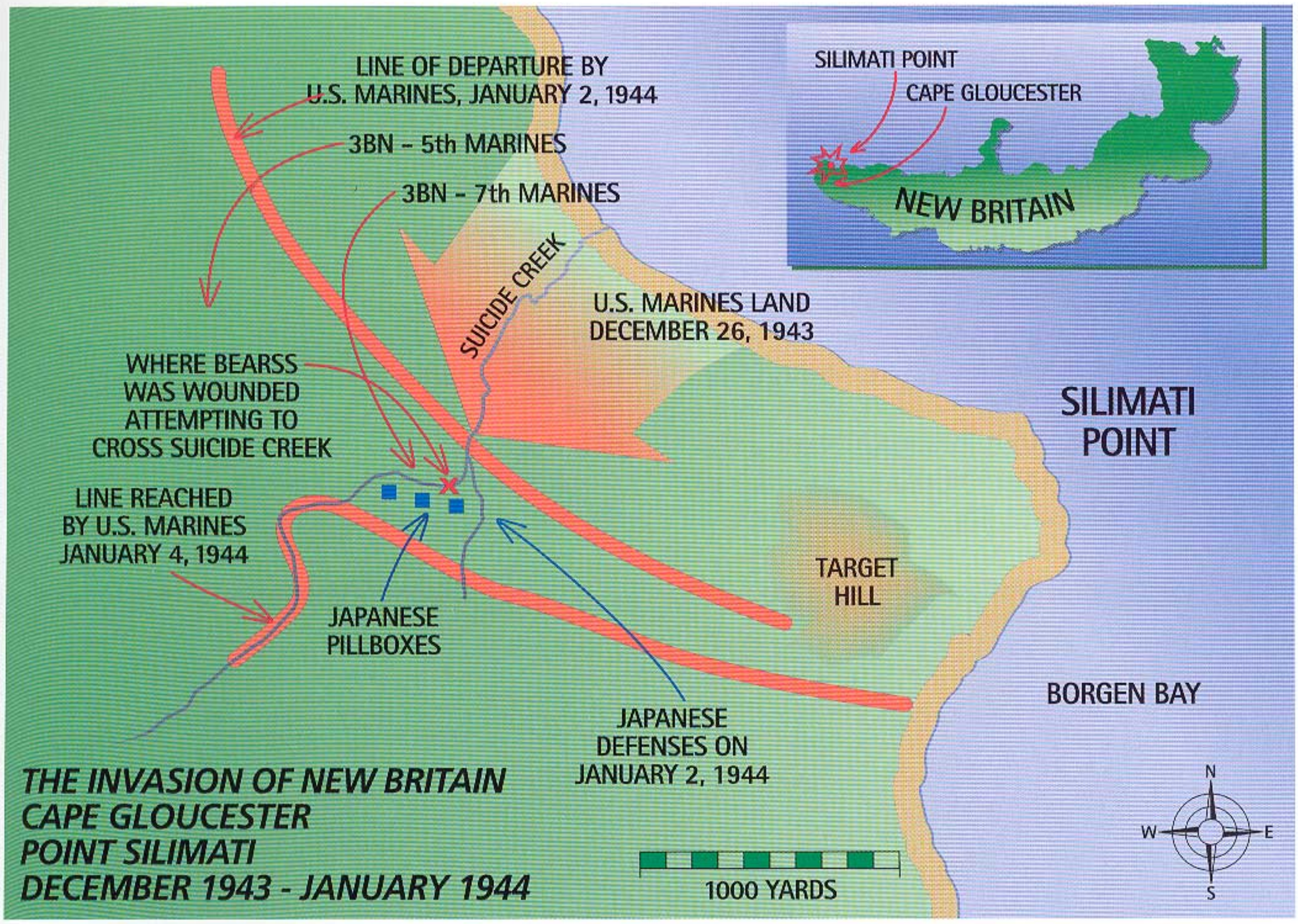
The Pacific theater where Ed fought as a Marine in World War II. It shows where he was in 1942 to 1944, from New Guinea, to New Britain and Cape Gloucester, the Russell Islands, Guadalcanal, Espirito Santo, and Mount Martha near Melbourne, Australia.

heavyweight contender Buddy Baer.

They were put through a pitilessly rugged program, "in retrospect," Ed confesses, "probably a little too rugged. The lieutenants of the companies had competitions to see whose boys could hike the farthest in the shortest time. And if you couldn't do it, they would either wash you out or pile on more exercises."

In late December, as 1942 was passing into 1943, the Raider battalion was ticketed for American Samoa and put on the liberty ship *Oliver Wendell Holmes,* named for a man from the American past whom Ed Bearss would come to know well. Punchy Wright was missing and "four sheets to the wind," and had to be rowed out to the waiting ship in a native boat. Since they all had to climb aboard on cargo nets, Punchy nearly drowned. By then, the entire ship was drunk and on its way to American Samoa and then, doubtless, to the long-awaited combat.

In late January, the Raiders embarked on the *American Legion*, a World War I transport bound for Espirito Santo. By then, the tide had turned in favor of the Marines at Guadalcanal, which Ed says had been "war to the knife and knife to the hilt." The Japanese, beaten in that notorious bloodbath, were evacuating. The Raiders were deployed to seize the Russell Islands, a shuttle point for Japanese barges resupplying Guadalcanal, where some 500 Japanese were reportedly still dug in and holding out. But when the Raiders landed, expecting the worst, they found the Japanese



Map by Kieran McAuliffe

Suicide Creek on New Britain near Cape Gloucester where Ed's platoon on January 2, 1944, ran into a nest of Japanese machine guns and he was desperately wounded.

gone. "Good thing," Ed confesses, "or I would probably be dead."

They fell under fire from Japanese Zeros for the first time on the Russell Islands, remembered today as the site near where future president John F. Kennedy's PT boat was sunk. A game of Hearts was in progress when the Zeros began strafing, and Ed remembers, "It broke up faster than any card game I've ever seen." From the Russell Islands, the Raiders were sent to Guadalcanal for a week, then back to the New Hebrides.

In the New Hebrides, the Raiders were attacked by an entirely different kind of enemy—filariasis, which the natives called "moo, moo," the first stage of elephantitis. Malaria and yellow jaundice were also making the rounds. Ed escaped filariasis, but came down with malaria and was sent to New Zealand to recuperate. He was there six weeks.

He didn't return to the Raiders, but was reassigned instead to the First Marine Division's Seventh Regiment, fresh from Guadalcanal and, in mid-1943, based at Mt. Martha, some forty-five miles southeast of Melbourne, Australia. There, in September, Ed was sent to scout-sniper's school, a two-week course in which "they ran us every morning until you wanted to puke and put us through sneaking-up exercises."

At the end of September, the First Marine Division embarked for New Guinea, the staging ground for a planned assault on New Britain to seize Cape Gloucester. The First

Division was to spearhead the assault. The night before the landing—Christmas night—it was with those men as it always is with men about to go into battle the next day—steeling themselves to die. The movie of the evening was "Yankee Doodle Dandy," with James Cagney, "the last movie," Ed says, "that many of the men were ever going to see. And we got fed steak and eggs early the next morning. When you are going to make a landing, you get steak and eggs—like before an execution."

AS DAWN WAS breaking, Navy cruisers began shelling the mainland, and the Marines landed in Higgins boats, small landing craft, under a storm of supporting fire. The shoreline was devastated, trees down everywhere. Despite strafing fire from Japanese aircraft, the Marines established a perimeter a mile and a half from the beach and dug in with foxholes and barbed wire. The next day, the Japanese counterattacked, screaming epithets they had perhaps been taught would cut to the quick of Yankee sensibilities—curses of the worst sort. "To hell with Babe Ruth! To hell with Eleanor Roosevelt!" they shouted. (Not precise quotes, but close enough to pass polite society.)

The objective after landing was to capture the airfield and wipe out Japanese troops

How His Buddies Saw Him

ED'S LAST NAME was pronounced "Bears" in the Marine Corps, not "Bars," as it is today. By whatever pronunciation, he won an early reputation among his fellow Marines for his precocious knowledge of things they knew little about.

Edward Cupido, from Pittsburgh, with Ed in the Raiders and now retired and living in Piñon Hills, California, remembers this about him, remembers it vividly. "I was amazed with his knowledge," Cupido says. "He knew all the battleships of the Japanese and German navies by heart. Where did a kid of his age get to know all that? He impressed me to no end. He seemed to know what was going on everywhere. In any conversation with him, he knew all about the subject. I couldn't believe how smart he was for his age."

Harold (Mac) McKenzie, a Marine corporal who Ed would meet later in 1943 and who would become a close lifelong friend, remembers that about Ed as well. He remembers him as a quiet, somewhat shy young man then, who carried a World Book of Knowledge around with him, "and not much else," and bested everybody in memory games. Ed admits that is how he won spending money. One day, early in their acquaintance, McKenzie, now retired and living in Austin, Texas, claimed that Massachusetts, his home state, had more colleges than any other in the Union. Ed said, "You want to make a bet on that?" After he asked if that included junior colleges, and McKenzie said, "Sure I guess," Ed said, "In that case Texas has more colleges than Massachusetts." "You are out of your mind," McKenzie said. "We then settled on the bet—$5—and he wiped my plate clean."

These two comrades in arms, McKenzie and Cupido, remember him for more than just his memory, however. McKenzie, who says the war is still vivid in his own memory—"as if it was yesterday"—remembers a night in late 1943 on New Britain when they were on an extended patrol, before the hellfire on Suicide Creek. Ed, feeling a little grubby at the end of three

defending Cape Gloucester. When the airfield was secured and as the new year 1944 dawned, the Marines prepared to drive eastward to seize Borgan Bay.

In the early morning of January 2, 1944, a day etched forever and in vivid detail in Ed Bearss's prodigious memory, his platoon crept forward into the jungle. Ed was on the point—in the advance.

He picks up the narrative: "After pushing about half a mile through dense jungle, we approached a stream perpendicular to our line of march and began to cross. On the other side, I saw men, not ours, about thirty to thirty-five yards away. They were not wearing our helmets. So I opened fire with my rifle. Other firing opened to our left and right, then all hell broke loose. A nest of Japanese machine guns dug into pillboxes on the opposite bank opened on us.

"The man next to me was shot through both hands and wrists. Screaming, "I'm ruined for life!" he took off running. Another Marine coming up was hit and others were falling. All of this was happening faster than I can talk.

"I was on my knees when the first bullet struck. It hit me in my left arm just below the elbow, and the arm went numb. It felt like being hit with a sledge hammer. It jerked me sideways and then I was hit again, another

days, crawled over from his own foxhole and said, "Mac, I need to borrow your toothbrush."

"Why you S.O.B.," McKenzie said, "you came all this way and the only thing you had in your damn pack were your grenades, some extra ammo, and your World Book of Knowledge. I love you Ed, but not that much. I'll give you some toothpaste, but I'm not giving you my toothbrush."

McKenzie also remembers the night Ed was leading a company patrol for the first time in exercises in New Guinea. "He led it out into the jungle and around and found after a time that he had led it in a complete circle back into camp instead of where he was supposed to lead it. We never let him hear the end of that." It was probably the first and one of the few times in his life that Ed, a master of terrain, would ever misread the ground. "The most humiliating day in my life," he confesses. When, years later, he came to Austin to speak to its Civil War Round Table, McKenzie was there to present him with a toothbrush, a compass "so he could find his way," and a pair of boxing gloves. The last item was to commemorate the boxing match between the two in the Marines, which Ed won. "We went three rounds and I could never deliver a big blow," McKenzie explains. "I rope-a-doped him and beat him," Ed says.

Ed Cupido remembers the day on maneuvers in the waters off Espirito Santo in the New Hebrides that a rubber raft being towed by a Higgins boat capsized. Ed, carrying a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) weighing about twenty pounds, and twelve magazines of ammo, each with twenty rounds weighing about fifteen pounds, plus his other gear, was thrown into the water and began instantly to sink. Ed's BAR had had an earlier career aboard the cruiser *USS Helena*, named for the capital of Montana. The cruiser's name had been cut into its butt stock, and Ed was proud of that gun and didn't want to lose it. But it was a Hobson's Choice. If he held on to it in the water, he would surely drown. "We kept shouting, 'Ed, let go of it.' Cupido remembers, "but he wouldn't, and kept sinking with it until all we could see of him was the top of his head in the water." Feeling himself going "down, down, down," Ed finally let go of the gun and was pulled out, "or I wouldn't be here today."

sledgehammer blow to my right shoulder. I fell, both arms shattered, and my helmet slipped down over my eyes. I couldn't see. But there were now dead men lying all around me.

"It seemed a long time that I lay there, in fierce pain, pinned down by Japanese fire. The Japanese controlled the firefight and anything that moved was an instant target. They were now shooting at wounded men, and I shouted some epithets at them. As I lay there bleeding I noticed it growing dark, although it was only about noon. Unable to stand it any longer and afraid of bleeding to death, I decided to risk getting up; the Japanese gun just in front of me was firing off to the right. As I wriggled around trying to rise, another bullet grazed my butt and another hit my foot. I quit moving. Peering under my helmet to my right, I saw Private Floyd Martin hunkered down behind a log.

"'Martin,' I said, 'can you get my helmet out of my eyes? I can't see.' Martin said, 'I'm afraid I can't do it, but I'll see if I can reach you with my rifle.' He reached over with the barrel end of his rifle and tipped my helmet back on my head. I could now see. I lay there, it must have been for another hour, afraid I was dying. When I saw the Japs were firing off to the left—I could follow the line of fire from the tracers—I started to make a move again.

"They saw me but couldn't get their gun depressed fast enough before, without the use of either arm, I went over the lip of a knoll and slid down the other side, ending up on my back with my shoulders toward the rear of our own line. I still don't know how I did it. If that ground had been level, I would be dead. I realized then how important terrain was in a battle.

"I could see the tracers screaming about an inch above me. After about five or ten minutes a lieutenant, Thomas J. O'Leary, a New York Irishman, commander of the weapons platoon, and a corpsman named Hartman crawled to me on their stomachs—anybody who stood in that hail of fire was a dead man. Hartman gave me a shot of morphine and O'Leary said, 'We can't stand up, we have to stay on our bellies and use our toes to pull you out.' He asked if I could bear being dragged. I said, 'Yes! Anything to get me out of here!' They pulled me by my utility jacket about twenty or thirty yards until they could safely get on their knees. Then they dragged me fifty more yards to where stretcher bearers could come up and carry me to the battalion aid station some 300 yards in the rear.

"Another Marine coming up was hit and others were falling. There were now dead men lying all around me. It had not been a good day for our platoon. Man after man had been killed or wounded. It had been a hellhole. We called it Suicide Creek."

"It had not been a good day for our platoon. Man after man had been killed or wounded. It had been a hellhole. We called it Suicide Creek."

AT THE AID STATION in the rear, the scene was like from the movies. Rifles were stabbed into the ground by their bayonets and plasma hung from the butts. A corpsman lit a cigarette for Ed, who spit it out, protesting, "I don't smoke." They inspected his arm wounds and asked if he was hit anywhere else, "Yes! In the foot," he said.

From there, Ed was carried to the regimental hospital farther to the rear, where medics stopped his bleeding, cleaned his wounds, put splints on his arms, and bandaged his foot and his butt.

"Hungry?" a corpsman asked. "It was midafternoon, I hadn't yet gone into shock, and I was hungry as hell." The corpsman brought over a gallon of tomato juice, opened it up and held it for Ed to drink. "When about half of it went down," Ed says, "it all came back up—all over the good Samaritan." Then Ed went into

shock and remembers very little of what happened over the next three days.

A Navy Landing Ship Tank (LST) picked up about 300 of the wounded and evacuated them to New Guinea. For a day and a half, they were in the hold, and the stench was horrible. The men hadn't had their bandages changed the whole trip, Ed remembers, and "nothing stinks like blood." Now far out of harm's way, he was zippered up in a plaster of Paris cast, and for the next eight months, would "look like the mummy's curse." He was soon put on a U.S. Army transport back to the United States. This time the wounded rode in cabins—far more pleasurable venues than an LST hold—with a bevy of Australian war brides headed for husbands in America to keep them company.

Back in the States, Ed was first in a hospital on Mare Island, in California, then sent to the naval hospital in San Diego. There were two wonderful things about San Diego. First, he was reunited there with his family. His father had reentered the Marines as a captain and was stationed in San Diego. His mother and his brother were there, too. Pat had suffered an arm-crushing fall from the horse on one of his rides to school in Sarpy. Although he would try twice to enlist, he would be rejected for service. The other wonderful thing at San Diego was an outstanding hospital library. There, Ed read Douglas Southall Freeman's books about Robert E. Lee and his lieutenants and got reconnected with the Civil War.

He was in the hospital on VJ-Day when the Japanese surrendered after the second atomic bomb fell on Nagasaki. "The news came in over the radio the day after I had been to surgery," Ed says, "and I remember how disappointed I was I couldn't go out on the town and get drunk."

If it was all over for the Japanese, it was also nearly all over for Ed Bearss. After twenty-six months in Navy hospitals recuperating from his terrible wounds, he was honorably discharged on March 15, 1946, as a corporal.

With the Marines and the war behind him, he headed home to Montana.

The Marines: Life's Defining Experience

ED BEARSS, the man who was to become a great captain of public history, was discharged from the Marine Corps as a corporal.

He has since, in his unmatched career, taken many general officers to the battlefields of the Civil War and taught them what happened there and why. And they have all saluted the ex-corporal. Marine Lieutenant General Paul K. Van Riper wrote Ed after one such tour for him and his senior staff and said, "You are a great American." U.S. senators, congressmen, and cabinet officers, whom he has also taken to the battlefields of the past, have echoed the opinion.

Ed calls his Marine Corps experience "the defining moments of my life. I spent four years in the Marine Corps, and everything I have been since then and every success, I owe to the Marine Corps. It took a boy and made him a man." His father had been right about that. Ed today believes that if he had not been wounded, he probably would have stayed in the Marines.

Instead he came out, believing with Stonewall Jackson that, "You could be whatever you resolved to be," that "if you will yourself to do something, you can do it."

He has practiced and proved those maxims, learned from the Civil War and from the Marine Corps, in his life's calling.

THE SERVICE RECORD

CHRONOLOGY OF key dates, assignments, and hospitalizations of Ed Bearss's Marine Corps service, from enlistment to discharge:

♦April 28, 1942 — Enlisted and sworn in at Butte, Montana.

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♦April 30, 1942 — Arrived at the U.S. Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, California, and assigned to Boot Camp Platoon 369. Drill instructors: Corporals Jack, Christman, and Avis.

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♦June 20, 1942 —At end of the seven-week boot camp, assigned to Company E, 22nd Marines, Captain Robert Felker, commanding. Platoon Leader 2nd Lt. Owen T. Stebbins, Platoon Sergeant Perry Muller, Squad Leader William R. Keeney.

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♦August 7, 1942 — Transferred to Company C, 22nd Marines, Captain Arnett, commanding. Platoon Leader 1st Lt. Will L. Walton, Platoon Sergeant Kenneth F. Boche, Squad Leader Peter Paul Rondeau.

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♦September 20, 1942 — Transferred to Company C, 3rd Raider Battalion. Company Commander Captain Thomas R. Shepard, Platoon Leaders 2nd Lt. William H. Zepp, 2nd Lt. Francis O. Cunningham, 2nd Lt. Martin J. Sexton. Platoon Sergeants Francis Kent, Charles H. Cramer, and John F. Fernandez. Squad Leaders Corporals Paul Ewing and Frank Rex Hoffman.

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♦April 23, 1943 — Transferred to U.S.N.B. Hospital 3 for hospitalization and treatment for malaria and yellow jaundice.

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♦July 14, 1943 — Joined Company L, 7th Marines, Captain William Moran, commanding, 1st Marine Division, then stationed at Mt. Martha, Victoria, Australia, and assigned to the 2nd Platoon. Platoon leaders successively, 2nd Lt. William Campbell and 2nd Lt. Arthur (A.B.) Gardner, Platoon Sergeant John C. Buckley, Squad Leader Corporal Philip E. Kennedy.

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♦January 2, 1944 — Wounded in action at Suicide Creek, Cape Gloucester, New Britain.

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♦January 5, 1944 — Evacuated by LST to U.S. Army 362nd Station Hospital, Oro Bay, New Guinea.

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♦January 6-April 15, 1944 — A patient, successively, in U.S. Army hospital at Port Morseby, New Guinea, and U.S. Army 42nd General Hospital and U.S. Navy MOB10 in Brisbane, Australia.

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♦May 2, 1944-March 1, 1945 — A patient, successively, at the U.S. Naval Hospital, Mare Island, California; U.S. Naval Hospital, San Diego; and U.S. Naval Convalescent Hospital, Arrowhead Springs, California.

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♦March 1-7, 1946 — Being processed for discharge at Terminal Island, San Pedro, California.

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♦March 15, 1946 —Discharged at the U.S. Marine Corps Base, San Diego, California.

The young National Park historian: Ed in 1958—his Vicksburg years.

3 Making of a Civil War Polymath

THINGS WERE NO longer the same for the Bearsses in Montana. While Ed and his father were in the Marines, while his mother and brother were in San Diego, the grandfather had sold the ranch. The old man had grown older and it was wartime and there was nobody to look after it.

The family settled for a short time in Billings, but in the spring of 1946, they began to run a bed and breakfast near Cooke City, Montana, about a half mile from the entrance to Yellowstone Park. It was a family enterprise. "We all worked," Pat remembers. Ed's mother and father operated the place, Pat did odd jobs, and Ed was the fisherman. Every guest was served trout for breakfast and Ed's job was to catch it. For his angling he got free room and board, and for beer money he tapped into the federal government's 52/20 program for returned war veterans. The government would pay each man $20 a month for 52 months until he found a job or went to school.

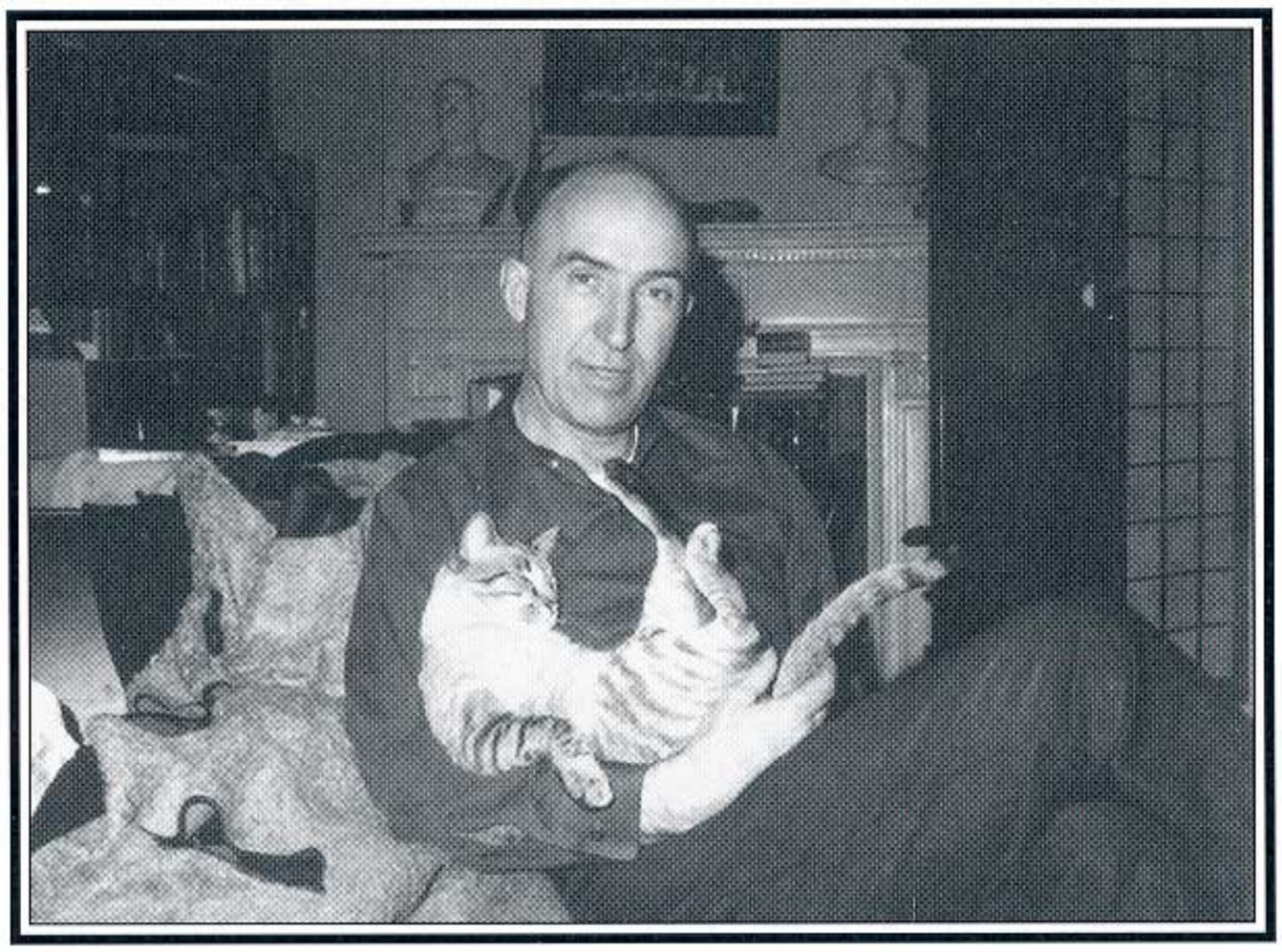
Ed had in mind going to school. School was where history lived; it was where the facts were. The following spring Ed's father and mother moved back to Peru, Indiana, the headwaters of the Bearss family, and Ed turned toward Washington, DC.

Harold McKenzie, his old Marine buddy, had reentered the picture. McKenzie had had a year of college before enlisting in the Marines. He was now married, but he wanted to go back to school and finish his education. He had a mind to go to Georgetown University in Washington, noted for its strong foreign service program. Ed had heard of Georgetown in the Marines, from one of his company commanders, Captain Joe McFadden, who had gone there before the war. At San Diego, where Ed and McKenzie had been reunited in late 1944, they talked about going to Georgetown together after they got out to study for the foreign service.

Ed had always liked Washington. He had visited there on a spring vacation field trip when he was a cadet at St. Johns in 1938. He had loved the Smithsonian Institution in particular. On the last day of the field trip, when the cadets could do whatever they wanted, Ed had spent the entire day at the Smithsonian. He had visited Washington again in 1941 in his hitchhiking trip around the country.

He didn't want to go to the University of Montana or Montana State. They were overcrowded, and he would have to live in barracks. He had had his fill of barracks in the Marines. He didn't want any more of it. He understood the foreign service curriculum at Georgetown had a lot of history and liberal arts in it with excellent teachers, the subjects he was particularly good at. He could go under Public Law 16, a program for veterans discharged for disability. It gave better benefits than the GI Bill.

So he and McKenzie went to Georgetown and enrolled in the foreign service program. McKenzie started in April 1946. Ed followed in the fall and graduated with a bachelor of science degree in 1949. McKenzie went to work in the State Department for a time, then drifted into a career in sales, a calling having little to do with foreign service. Ed was unemployed for a time, then a job opened up at the Naval Hydrographic Office for a geographer,



Partial to cats—there were twenty-eight of them on the ranch in Montana. Here, Ed holds a cat called Killer, adopted by his children in Vicksburg.

another subject he was particularly good at.

He got the job and started to work. He now had a car, so he began visiting Civil War battlefields around Washington in his spare time. He hadn't read extensively on the subject since his days in the hospital in San Diego, but he was drawn to the battlefields as iron filings are drawn to a magnet. As it turned out, battlefield visiting was pretty much a solo business for him. "My friends weren't that much interested," he says. "When we went to Antietam for the first time, they wanted to leave after the first hour." By then Ed had scarcely gotten well into it.

ED LIKED HIS JOB at the hydrographic office at first. He was responsible for the names on all charts issued by the Navy and for editing and compiling target maps in the event of war with the Soviet Union, including mapping Indochina and Vietnam. He also edited maps and charts to insure compliance with policies. But by 1953, the work was beginning to "wear thin." Besides, he wanted to get out of Washington. "The crowd I was running with spent too much time on the fast track of life. I was spending too many evenings closing the bar at night."

He decided, after nearly three years on the job, to quit and go back to school. His folks were now living in Indiana. He could go to graduate school at the University of Indiana as a resident, tuition free—his Public Law 16 benefits had run out—and get his master's and perhaps his doctorate degree in history, perhaps become a teacher. Indiana had an excellent history program.

So he went to Indiana, studied for his master's, wrote his thesis on Confederate General Patrick Cleburne, the famed "Stonewall of the West," and graduated in 1955. He was working on his doctorate when he ran short of funds and quit to return to the job market with his new-won degree and historical expertise. He went to work in the Office of the Chief of Military History back in Washington.

But Ed found that the exciting work in the history office had already been done. "I was writing replies to enquiries, writing about laundry units, various things in the quartermaster corps," he says, "and drinking too much again." That job also soon wore thin.

Ed had had a mind-bending, life-changing experience—"the most important day of my career"—when he visited the Civil War battlefield at Shiloh while researching Patrick Cleburne for his master's thesis. In his visits to the battlefields around Washington he had "realized you can't describe a battlefield unless you walk it. I realized that at Gettysburg when I went there after I got a car. The ground over Pickett's Charge was not at all how I had visualized it from my reading." So he resolved to visit battlefields associated with Cleburne before writing his thesis. In July 1954, he went to the National Battlefield Park at Shiloh to see what that ground in that battle where Cleburne had fought was really like.

The park historian at Shiloh was Charles E. (Pete) Shedd, a droll, skilled interpreter of what had happened there. Shedd took Ed out

on the battlefield, and for six hours, they walked the ground. "That six hour ramble through the woods and fields of bloody Shiloh," Ed says, "enriched by Pete's insights, changed my understanding of the events of that late afternoon ninety-two years before." Moreover, and even more important, "Pete's interpretive skills and electrifying personality made a lasting impression on me. I became interested in a Park Service career." Never enthusiastic about becoming a teacher, he had seen what he wanted to be, an interpreter of the past like Shedd. He had caught a glimpse of his true calling.

He didn't follow up immediately. He had gone instead after he left Indiana to the Office of the Chief of Military History. But the idea of a Park Service career hadn't left him. In June 1955, his mother and great-aunt came to Washington to visit. They wanted to see Williamsburg, Virginia, and on the way there, the three of them stopped at the George Washington Birthplace National Memorial. Ed talked to the superintendent there, told him of his visit with Pete Shedd, and asked him, "How do you get in the Park Service?" The superintendent said, "If you're interested in being a park historian, why don't you go talk to the regional office people in Richmond?"

A COUPLE OF weeks later, Ed took a day's leave and drove to Richmond and talked with the regional historian there and the regional chief of interpretation. They told him that if he was interested, there was a vacancy for a park historian at the National Battlefield Park in Vicksburg, Mississippi. The job was encumbered. The regular historian was on leave on active duty in the Air Force and would be for another year. The job might be a temporary one—only a year's assignment. But the incumbent historian might or might not come back. If he didn't, the job could be Ed's permanently. Ed preferred the eastern battles and campaigns of the war, but here was an opportunity, an opening, "to get myself into the kind of public history that interested me—interpreting battlefields and doing research instead of just writing letters." He was very interested.

Then he came down with a perforated ulcer, forcing a short delay. But when he recovered he resigned his job, loaded everything he owned into his car, and drove to Vicksburg, arriving on September 28, 1955. His life's work was about to begin.

The elements of the job that immediately riveted the attention of this new National Park historian at Vicksburg were research and interpretation. He soon saw research as "the foundation upon which all other activities are built," and that it required hard work. Park historians then did their research on top of their interpretive and other duties. But in Ed's mind, research was absolutely central. "The best interpreter," he believed, "was a person with a vast store of knowledge of sites, related sites, and historic themes—and a burning desire to share this information with the visitor." Ed would anchor his professional life on those concepts.

HIS FIRST JOB at Vicksburg as a park historian was mainly interpretation and tours. He began lapping up knowledge of the Vicksburg campaign with all the absorbing powers of a sponge. He immersed himself in the war in the West and the Union and Confederate leadership. He began expanding his horizons, visiting other nearby sites on his own.

He soon learned how to present the past in a way worthy of Pete Shedd. He was invited to give a talk at a Lion's Club in the summer of 1956. He had been at Vicksburg only nine or ten months. "I wrote out a nice speech on Champion Hill and started reading it to the audience. About a third of the way through, people started to leave to go to the bathroom, and they were not coming back. I decided then, 'Bearss, you have a good memory. Use it. Why read to them? You could just as well pass the speech out and let them read it for themselves.' I have never given a written speech since." He started picking up mannerisms and

presentation techniques from people he admired who did it well—the Pete Shedds of the world. Two or three of the teachers in his college years had impressed him. He adopted some of their methods.

AFTER THREE YEARS as park historian at Vicksburg, he was promoted in 1958 to regional historian, with roving assignments throughout the Southeast Region, but working out of Vicksburg. He also researched parks outside the region at the request of other regional directors, familiarizing himself first with the literature and then tirelessly walking the ground. He never declined an assignment. The wife that would soon enter his life would say that, if he was a woman, he would be pregnant all the time. "I never said no, unless there was a conflict," Ed admits. "I slept at home maybe 100 nights a year. I was on the road 270 to 280 nights." He became intimately familiar with all the Civil War parks in the country except two—Gettysburg and Manassas. His intimate knowledge of those battlefields would come later.

Ed leads one of his early Vicksburg tours.

By the time the National Park Service began gearing up for the centennial of the Civil War, it was apparent to its leadership that this historian working out of Vicksburg knew more about the Civil War than anybody in the Park Service—by far. It was also noticed that he was a workaholic who could work with little or no supervision. Ed confesses it was all true. "Working as a regional historian," he says, "left me with more knowledge in my head about these sites collectively than anybody. There were some who knew more about some individual parks than I, but nobody knew all of them as I did."

Something else began to happen. As new Civil War parks were being planned, Ed became the point man to do the research, walk the ground, draw the boundaries, do the historical research that would dictate their very nature and their place in the national memory. When the time came to lay out the battlefield park at Pea Ridge, Ed was immediately put on the team called in to do it. He knew more about the battle than anybody in the Service. The same for Wilson's Creek and others. He began building a repertoire of studies of historical sites that would be unmatched by any other historian in the history of the Park Service.

Harry Pfanz, the distinguished former Chief Historian of the National Park Service and authority on the battle of Gettysburg, began his career with Ed in the Office of the Chief of Military History. They left for the Park Service at the same time, Ed bound for Vicksburg, Pfanz for Gettysburg. Pfanz says, "When I first knew him, he was a quiet, unobtrusive fellow. He kept a low profile in those first ten years, doing research." It is clear that the Bearss the world now knows was incubating. A spectacular hatching would one day be forthcoming.

4 MARGIE: MEETING HIS MATCH

A history power couple—the young Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Cole Bearss.

MARGIE RIDDLE, a schoolteacher from Brandon, Mississippi, east of Jackson, was on the trail of Union general William Tecumseh Sherman.

In early 1864, Sherman had marched from Vicksburg through middle Mississippi to seize Meridian on the state's eastern edge and break up the Confederate railroads. On his way, he devastated the countryside, destroying resources, ripping up rails, partially burning Margie's hometown. This Meridian expedition was the first time the South had felt the sting of Sherman's scorched earth, total war policy. Yet it was little remembered, and Margie had a mind to write something about it.

She sent letters to all of the historic parks in the region asking if they had original material, and the only answer had come from Vicksburg, from the relatively new park historian there, a rookie named Bearss. He wrote her that there were a couple of diaries and journals in the unpublished park files. So in July 1957, she drove the fifty or so miles to Vicksburg with a friend to see what he had.

It was Ed's day off, but he was in the building doing research. Ed remembers, "I got a call from the secretary that a lady was here with a friend interested in material about Sherman's Meridian expedition. I couldn't figure out why a Southern girl was interested in Sherman. But I went out and pulled the diaries and journals for her."

Margie was impressed with the journals and the maps—"they were wonderful," she says. She was much less impressed with Ed. "He hadn't shaved, he looked terrible," she remembers.

However, he was impressed with her. While her eye was fixed on Sherman, Ed's was fixed on her. He was, as Shakespeare wrote in *Love's Labor's Lost*, pleasing his eye by fixing it upon a fairer eye. Margie hadn't noticed, but her friend had. As they were leaving, the friend said, "He sure was looking at you."

MARGIE WAS indeed something to look at, an eye-filling melding of beauty and brains. Besides, she was stuck on the Civil War. She had been born on a farm in Mississippi in 1925 to a father, Ralph Riddle, also stuck on the war, whose grandfather had fought in the Ninth Alabama. "Daddy would take me out and show me springs were the soldiers drank, where Sherman's Yankees filled their canteens," Margie remembers. "He knew all those places and he took me there and I loved it."

Margie's mother had come down from Illinois and married her father when she was only eighteen, and they raised Margie, their only child, on the farm, "where we grew everything we ate. It was in the Depression and we were very poor." Her father ran a sawmill in Brandon and on Saturdays ground corn for anybody needing it. Margie remembers him as "the most generous man I ever knew." Growing up poor she loved books, but the town library had burned, and for a time she had only the Bible and her mother's old twelfth grade literature book, which she memorized.

From the start, the Riddles's only child was a whiz in the classroom. In the second grade, her 97.2 average led the class. It was a position at the head that would characterize all of her

Margie Riddle Bearss

school years. In high school in Brandon, she edited the school paper and the annual. At Hinds Junior College, working her way through by washing dishes, waiting tables, and sweeping halls. She also edited the paper and was a member of Phi Theta Kappa, the national scholastic honorary society. Her classmates at Hinds elected her the "Most Intelligent," and she was in the Hall of Fame. At Blue Mountain College, the Baptist school where she was on a scholarship and got her teaching degree, she was poetry and art editor of the school magazine, art editor of the annual, secretary of the President's Club and president of the "Scribblers," a writer's club. Her major was English. Like Ed, she was strong in the liberal arts.

AFTER GRADuation, she had taught school for eight years in Goodman, Mississippi, some fifty miles north of Brandon, and when she met Ed, she was in her fourth year of teaching in Lexington, a dozen or so miles farther northwest.

Margie had thought nothing further of Ed Bearss after their meeting at Vicksburg. She had thought nothing of her friend's comment. She had assumed that the black-haired secretary, who had seemed so protective of his time, was his wife or his girlfriend. "I wasn't the least bit interested in him anyhow," she says, "only in his

maps and diaries."

Some weeks later, after a hard day in the classroom in Lexington, she had left immediately when the bell rang, gone home, kicked off her shoes and took off her hose and slipped into something more comfortable, when the phone rang. It was the secretary from school calling to say there was a Mr. Marse there to see her. "Mr. Marse?" said Margie. "I don't know anybody named Marse."

"He said he's from Vicksburg, helping you with some research."

Margie's father—Ralph Riddle.

Margie's mother—Mattie Riddle.

Margie put her clothes on and went back to the school. The "Mr. Marse" was Ed, who told her he was up that way to speak at Columbus and stopped by to see if she would like to have some coffee. "I later found out," she says, "that he hadn't been speaking in Columbus at all."

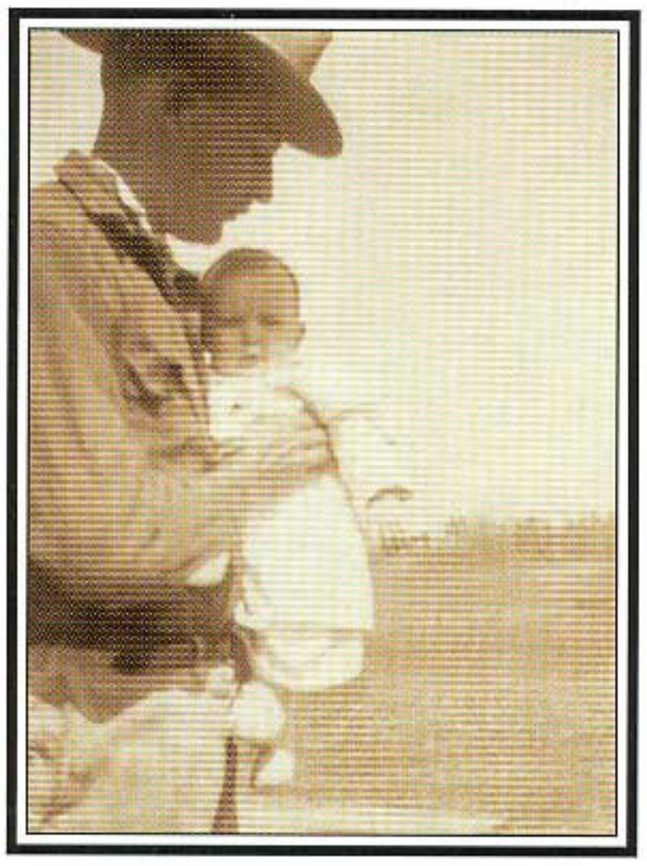
Ed started going up to see Margie on his days off. The second time he went, he took her a cannonball and the three volumes of the *Official Records* that covered the Meridian expedition. She says, "Other women get roses, I get a cannonball." It was a sign Ed was courting in earnest.

"I was going out with somebody else at the time," Margie says, "but Ed was very persistent. I was not terribly impressed with him personally, but I was impressed with his knowledge. He was interesting. We started going out to battlefields. I was a bit leery at first going out on battlefields with this strange-looking man." But she couldn't resist. She was into the Civil War as much as he was. She loved stepping back in time as much as he did.

THERE WAS SOME indication she knew as much about it—more about some things—than he did. They were, indeed, to have a number of arguments about the war. After they were married, a friend asked if they intended to name their house Appomattox, and they said, "Hell no, we're going to name it Fort Sumter." Driving together one late afternoon, she pointed up a road and said there was a little church there called Franklin Church where there was a skirmish during the war. "In a very superior tone," Margie remembers, "he said, 'I know all the skirmishes in Mississippi and there was not one at Franklin Church.' 'Why you pompous ass,' I thought. But I didn't say anything. He took me on home and went looking in the *Official Records* and found there was indeed a skirmish at Franklin Church. So he called and apologized, admitted he was wrong." "Had to eat crow," Ed says. Some years later, she was introduced at a Civil War Round Table as the only person who had ever proved Ed wrong, and that he had married her to keep her mouth shut.

For whatever reason, Ed had marrying Margie very much on his mind. One day, he said he wanted to give her a ring. "A ring?" she exclaimed. "For what?" "An engagement ring," he said. When he asked if she would marry him, she turned him down. She really didn't want to get married. But asking her again later he promised her a month-long honeymoon trip out West. "That sounded pretty good," she says, "so I married him."

She dreaded for him to meet her parents, however, "because they were simple country folks. But he picked me up one Sunday morning, and we went to my house to meet them. My mother was getting ready to leave to teach



Margie—a baby in her father's arms.

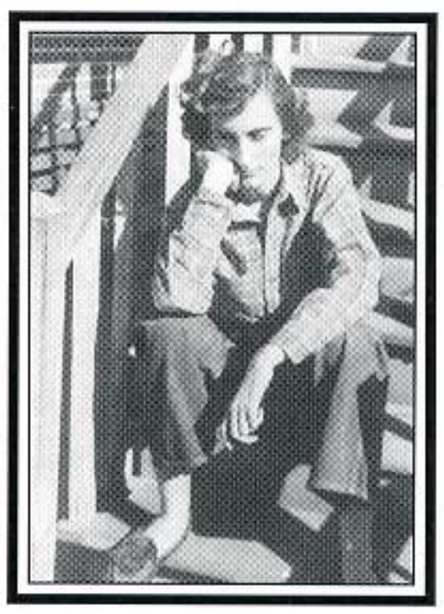
Margie, a young girl growing up in Mississippi.

Sunday school. To make conversation, Ed asked her what was the lesson that day. She said Moses leading the children of Israel through the wilderness out of bondage. My Daddy said, 'Hell, Stonewall Jackson could have led them across in a week and on half rations.' Ed laughed and laughed and laughed. They were fast friends forever after."

ED AND MARGIE became engaged in June 1958 and were married on July 30. Margie wore a two-piece wedding dress with azure blue lace and a rosebud corsage. The maid of honor was Betty Jeann Waller of Yazoo City. The best man was Warren Grabau, a geologist-engineer with the Army Corps of Engineers.

They left immediately on the honeymoon Ed had promised her out West. "Off we went for a month," Margie says, "often cut off from everybody and everything. There were a couple of times, however, that he bet me $50 there would be nobody for miles and miles around and we got there and there was a crowd. It was an unusual honeymoon. You don't usually get up at five o'clock in the morning to travel around to see the sun come up over the cliff dwellings or walk the lava beds. We had WPA guidebooks his mother had checked out of the Indiana library for us. They got a little bit overdue. But we saw everything we wanted to. We visited every western state but four."

"It was exhausting," Ed remembers, "ten thousand miles of driving. We went to Montana, to the Little Big Horn, the ranch. The most exciting thing we did, I had heard about Grasshopper Glacier up near Granite Peak, the highest point in Montana, named for the grasshoppers frozen in the ice. I never got there when we lived in Montana. So I rented two horses, put Margie on Jughead. I still didn't see it. We rode and I missed the trail and we ended up after about five hours in front of a sheer rock escarpment instead of at Grasshopper Glacier. The next day Margie was so sore from the ride we had to lie over in Silver Gate, Montana, until she could get in traveling condition again."



The woman who won Ed's heart.

When they returned from the West, Margie went back to teaching school in Lexington—she had signed a contract for the coming year before they left on their honeymoon. She went to Lexington for the week, returning to Vicksburg for the weekends. They rented one of the oldest houses in Vicksburg, dating from the 1830s, where Civil War soldiers had camped and where U.S. Grant had once stayed, and where they would live for the next eight years. It was only semi-furnished, so when Margie left for Lexington

the first week of school, she told Ed to go buy what he wanted. "When I came back, he had bought a pencil sharpener and a can opener."

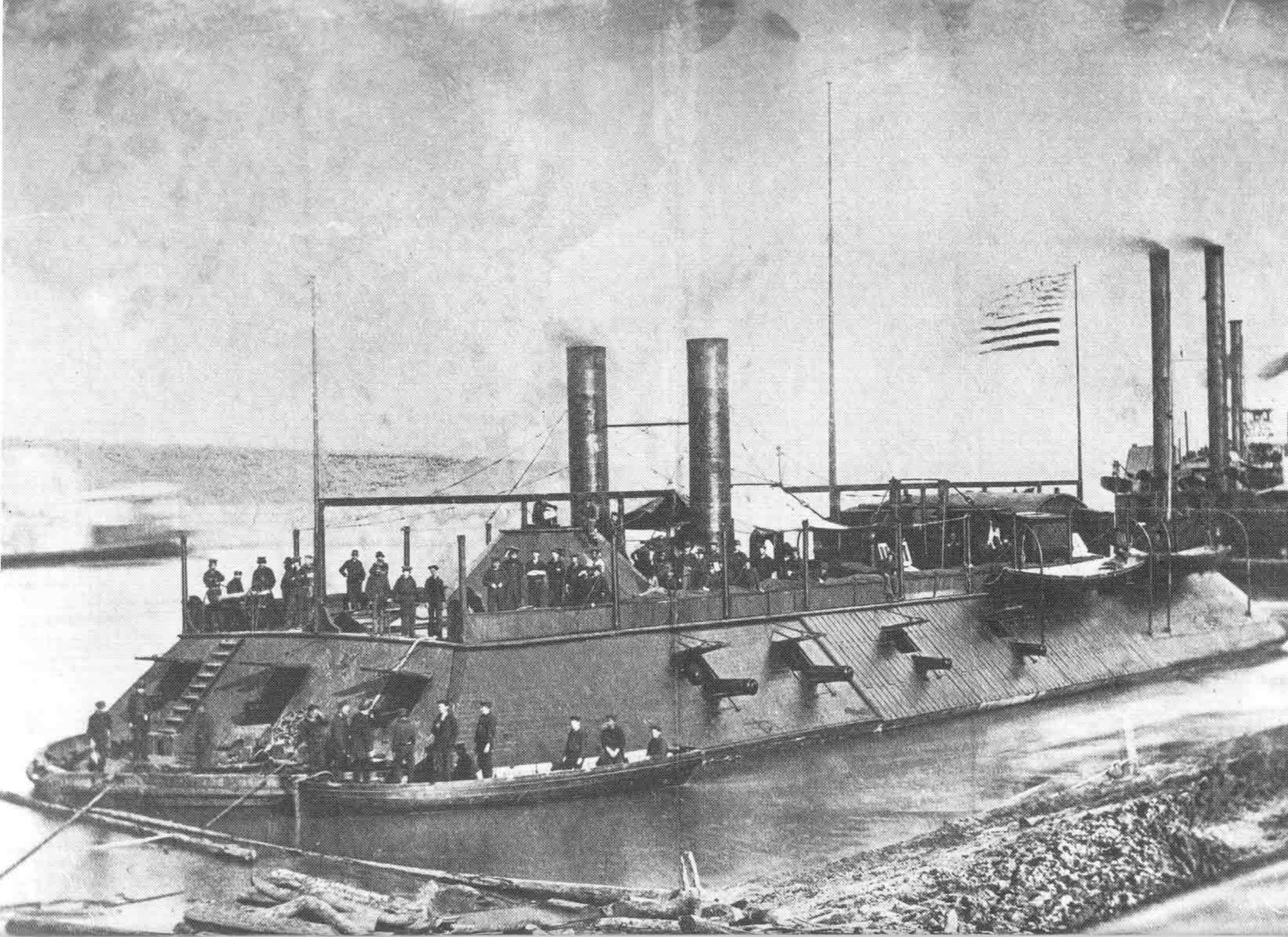
He had also hired a maid. "Her name was Rosalie," Margie says. "She was black, and she was wonderful. At first, we had her two times a week, but after the kids were born we had her four times. She ran the place and she raised our children, and they loved her." Their son, Cole, loved her so much he said that if he ever had a daughter, he was going to name her Rosalie.

The wedding party, July 30, 1958. Left to right, Maid of Honor Betty Jeann Waller, Ed, Margie, and Best Man Warren Grabau.

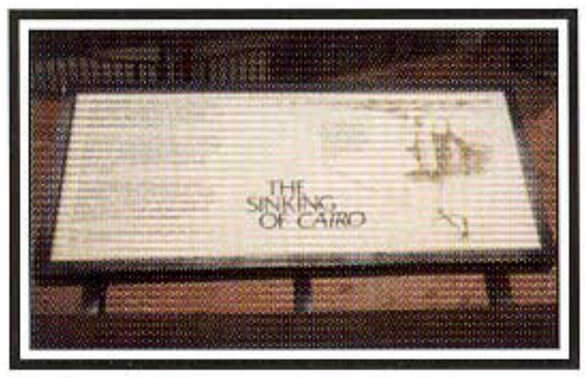
Rosalie was also something of an antidote for Ed's basic ineptness in the kitchen. One morning, he put eggs on to boil and went to shave. Margie heard an explosion like a gunshot in the kitchen, then another, and ran to the scene. Ed had put eggs in a pan to boil, but neglected to add water. The eggs, which exploded all over the kitchen ceiling, stayed there until they moved. Margie told Ed "we ought to put up an historical marker." Margie was soon to prove of far more use to Ed and his career than just a fount of clever suggestions and repartee. She became indispensable. Her introverted nature was to prove a fine balance-wheel to his extroverted ways. Drawing on her English major background, she would edit, proofread, and index every book Ed would later write. She would be a strong support in everything he did outside the Park Service. She would be somebody with whom he could talk for a lifetime about history. She finished that book on Sherman and titled it *Sherman's Forgotten Campaign: The Meridian Expedition*, the subject that had thrown them together in the first place.

And when Ed was to find the Union ironclad *Cairo* at the bottom of the Yazoo River and raise it for all posterity to see, enjoy, and profit from, Margie was to prove, once again, indispensable.

The 1830s Leila Luckett House in Vicksburg, where Grant's soldiers stayed, and Ed and Margie lived for eight years.



HARDLUCK IRONCLAD



THERE IS serendipity in historical research—an unknown piece of information long locked away and unexpectedly found, an unlooked-for fact that changes the way we look at the past, a place newly-rediscovered where history happened but had been long forgotten.

Those are the rewards of research, what historians look and live for. And Ed Bearss, the rising research star of the National Park Service, had a gift for serendipity, a special knack, since he walked the ground, of finding long-lost or forgotten sites or relics of the Civil War. He was building a reputation for it. His research located the "Widow Blakely," a cannon used on the Vicksburg defense line, that had long been on display at West Point as "Whistling Dick." He rediscovered two forgotten Confederate forts at Grand Gulf, where U.S. Grant had landed one-third of his Union army in his end run around Vicksburg in 1863—Forts Coburn and Wade, earthenworks with trenches, battery sites and gun emplacements.

But his *pièce de résistance*, one of the seminal discoveries from the Civil War past, was to be the *USS Cairo*, a Union ironclad, sunk by Confederate submarine torpedoes in December 1862 and long-lost to sight and mind in the mud of the Yazoo River.

The *Cairo* was one of seven City Class ironclad river gunboats built early in the war to operate against the Confederates on the lower Mississippi. With its flat bottom and black iron-sheathed sides it moved through the water tortoise-like. Indeed it and its sister boats were called "Pook's Turtles," after their designer, Samuel M. Pook. Built at Mound City, Illinois, by James B. Eads, the *Cairo* was commissioned on January 15, 1862. It would never be one for good luck, and before year's end, it would lie at the bottom of the Yazoo.

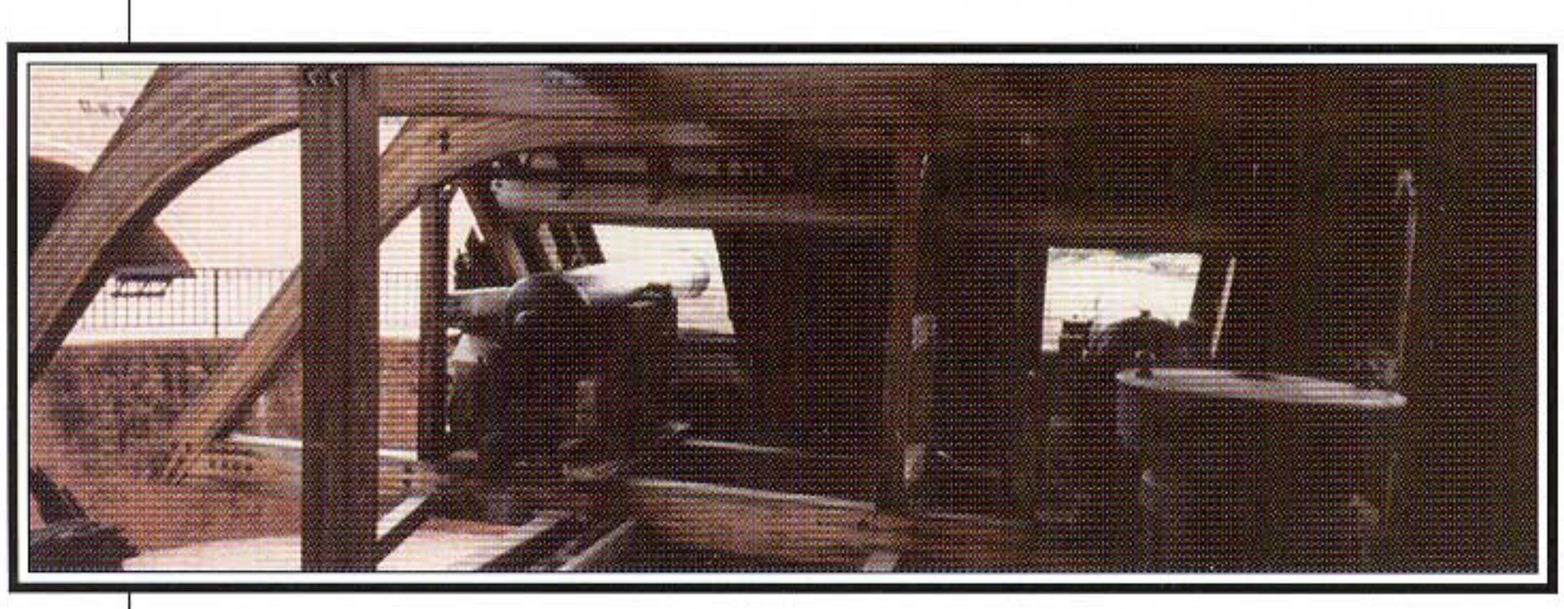
AFTER THE UNION army captured Confederate Fort Henry in February 1862, the newly commissioned *Cairo* steamed up the Cumberland River to help occupy Clarksville and Nashville. In April, it escorted mortar boats down the Mississippi for the Union siege of Fort Pillow, and in May, it participated in the fighting there. In June, it was among the gunboats that fought the Confederate River Defense Fleet around Memphis, and for the rest of the summer, it had patrolled the Mississippi from Memphis to Fort Pillow. In September, it was pulled from the water for overhaul and extensive modifications to its iron sheathing. In December, it was back in the water again, steaming up the Yazoo in a naval demonstration preceding an attack on Vicksburg by a force under Major General William T. Sherman.

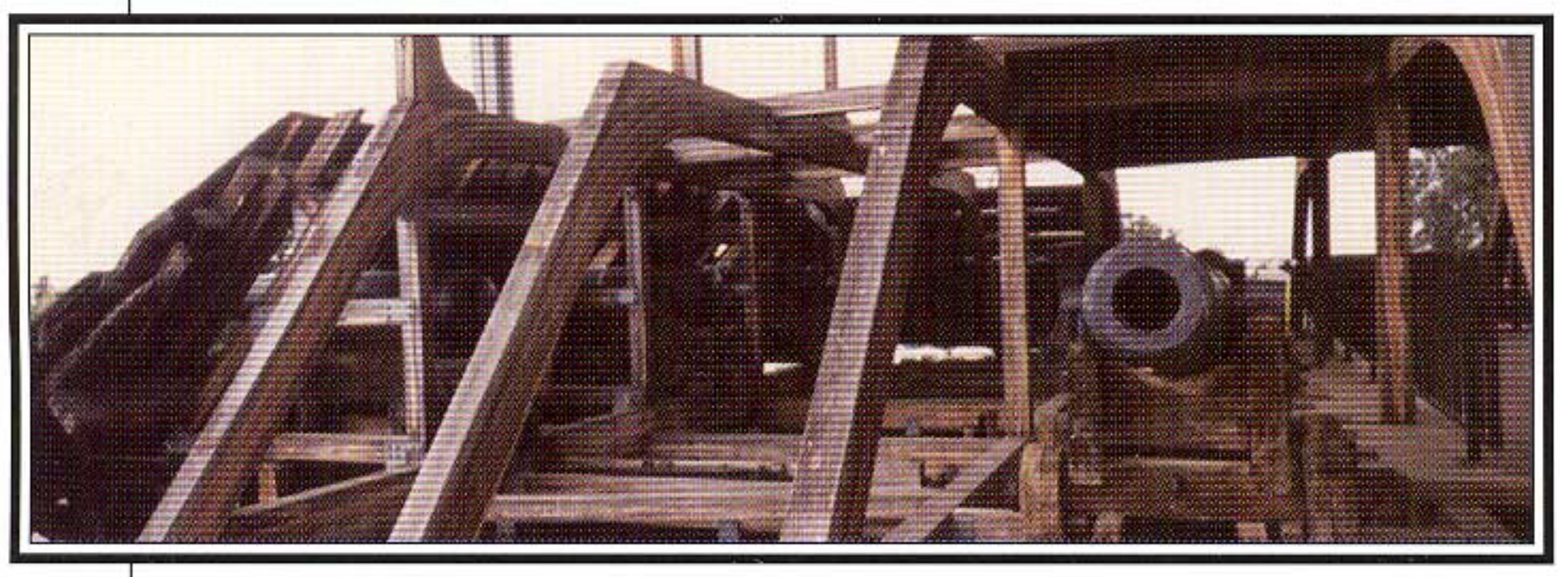
The river, a tributary of the Mississippi, was a deathtrap for gunboats. The Confederates had seeded it with a nest of floating

Opposite page: The USS Cairo—the only existing photograph taken before her sinking in the Yazoo on December 12, 1862. Photo courtesy of Library of Congress.

mines, called torpedoes, anchored to the bottom of the river. On December 12, about sixteen miles in from the mouth of the Yazoo, the hardluck *Cairo* struck two of those "infernal machines."

The *Cairo*'s captain, its third skipper in eleven months, was Lt. Cdr. Thomas O. Selfridge, born of a seafaring family, son of a ranking naval officer. He had graduated first in his class at the U.S. Naval Academy in 1854. He was a more than competent officer. As soon as the *Cairo* struck the torpedoes, Selfridge could see she was mortally stricken and ordered her pilots to run her aground. As her bow plowed into the river bank, bluejackets leaped ashore to cinch a houser to a cottonwood tree to keep the vessel from slipping back into deep water. By the time an accompanying boat, the *Queen of the West*, reached her side, the water in the ironclad was waist deep on the forward gundeck. The *Queen of the West* took off part of the crew, and the rest escaped in the ironclad's three remaining small boats. No lives were lost.





THE *CAIRO* began to slide back into the river. The houser tightened, held for a moment, then snapped under the enormous weight. The gunboat slid away and was "swallowed up in the seething cauldron of foaming water." Shortly before noon, a brief twelve minutes after she had been ripped by the torpedoes, she had vanished but for the tops of her chimneys and jackstaffs. One of her small boats took down the Stars and Stripes still snapping at the top of her partly-submerged jackstaff. The *Queen of the West* then pulled down her chimneys and the jackstaffs to hide the stricken hulk from Confederates who might try to salvage her guns. Then there was nothing in sight. The Yazoo rolled placidly over and into her hidden grave.

Her sinking was a touchstone in naval history. For the first time an electrically-activated submarine torpedo had sunk an armored warship.

When Ed Bearss arrived at Vicksburg in September 1955, the *Cairo* had been lost to history for nearly a century. Nobody was certain precisely where in the river she had sunk or precisely where she now rested. It was only known that somewhere around sixteen miles up the Yazoo she was buried deep in sludge in one of the muddiest rivers in the world.

Almost immediately, her whereabouts

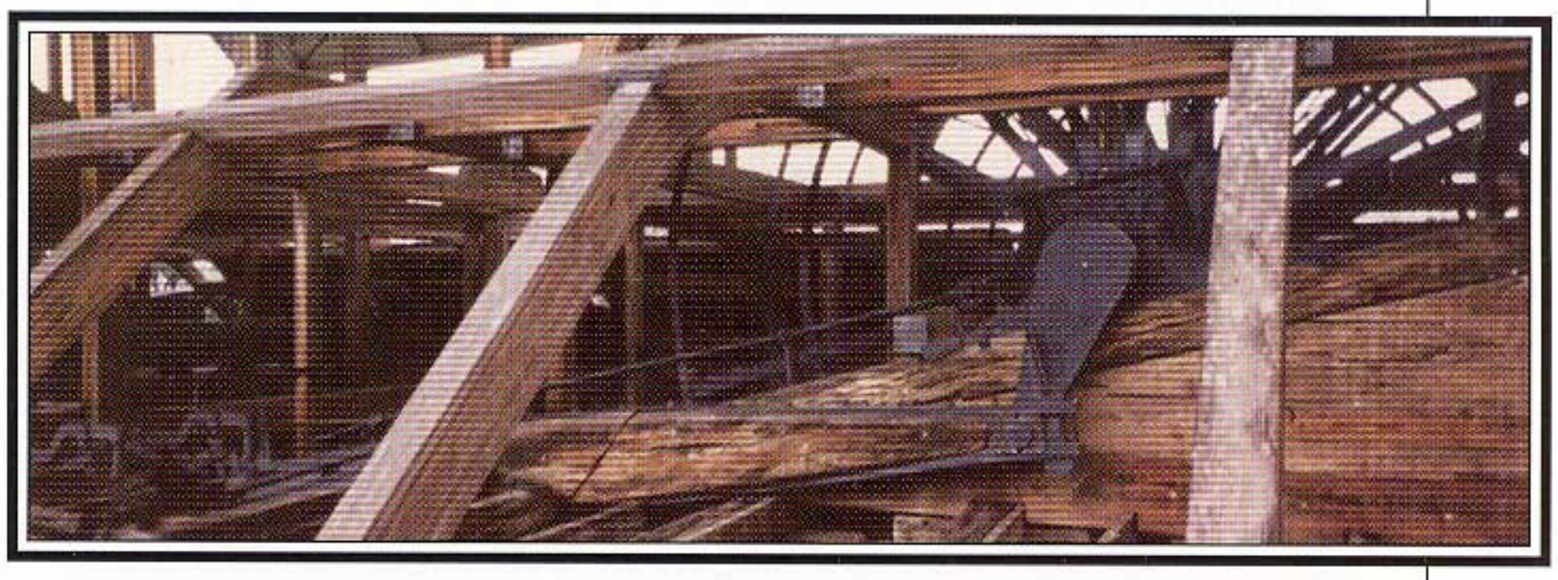
drew the young, new park historian's interest. The superintendent at Vicksburg, also curious, urged Ed to pick up the hunt for the long-lost boat. In August 1956, less than a year after he arrived at Vicksburg, Ed began the search. One day at Snyder's Bluff on the Yazoo, he was talking with some locals. They asked him if he would like to see where the *Cairo* was. They walked him down to the river below the bluff and said, "She's there."

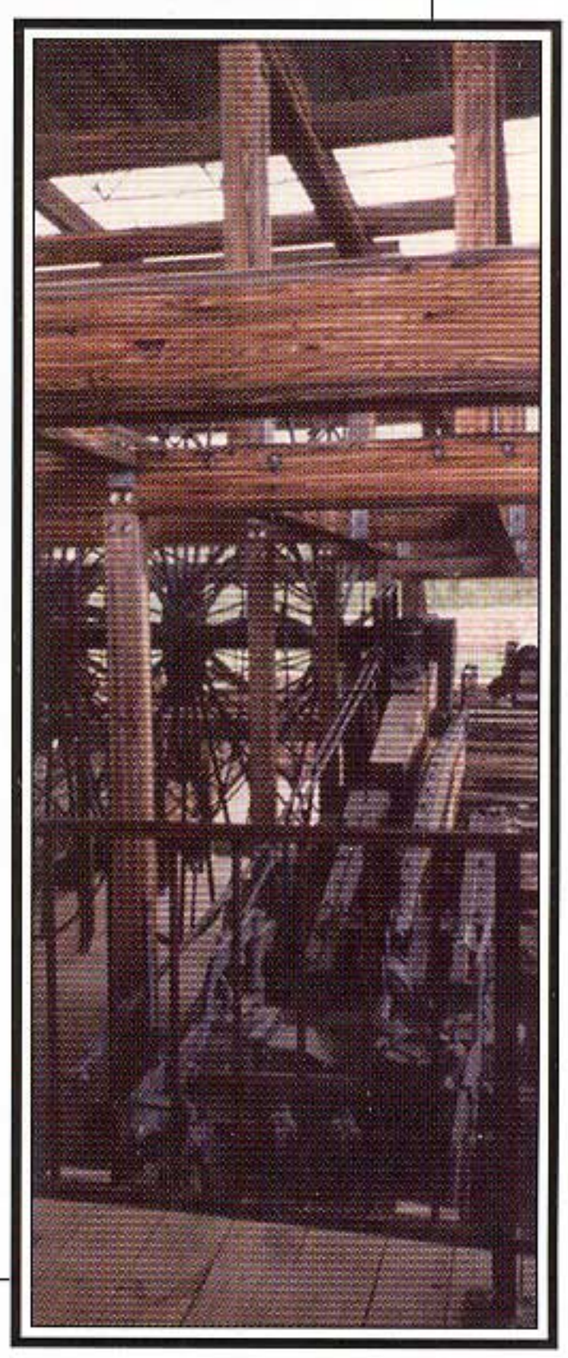
ED WAS NOT convinced. He knew from the written record, from his research, from the paper trail, that the gunboat was not under fire when she was sunk. If it was where the locals thought, she would have been under fire by Confederate batteries on the bluff. What they thought was the *Cairo* must be the raft the Confederates had positioned in the river. The locals scoffed, said Ed didn't know what he was talking about and called him "just a Yankee historian."

Ed took that as a challenge. He consulted Don Jacks, a maintenance man at the park, who knew the river intimately. Jacks said, "I don't know where the *Cairo* is, and we don't know much about her, but I can tell you one thing. If something sinks in the mud of the Yazoo, which has a very stable course but silts very rapidly, it's going to be where it sank."

Ed, Jacks, and Warren Grabau, the Army engineer and geologist who would be the best man at Ed and Margie's wedding, set out together in Jacks's fourteen-foot runabout to find the hardluck ironclad on Armistice Day 1956. It was their day off. Ed, with his research, and Grabau and Jacks, with their knowledge of the Yazoo, began to drift downstream in the section of the river where they believed the boat to be, holding to a course ten to fifteen yards off the bank. They had no dip needle, only a World War II magnetic military compass, which would fluctuate wildly over anything under the water with a huge iron content.

They knew the ironclad had been driven onto the river bank bow first, so they knew she was going to lie nearly perpendicular to the bank with her stern slightly downstream. They drifted, probing the water beneath with metal





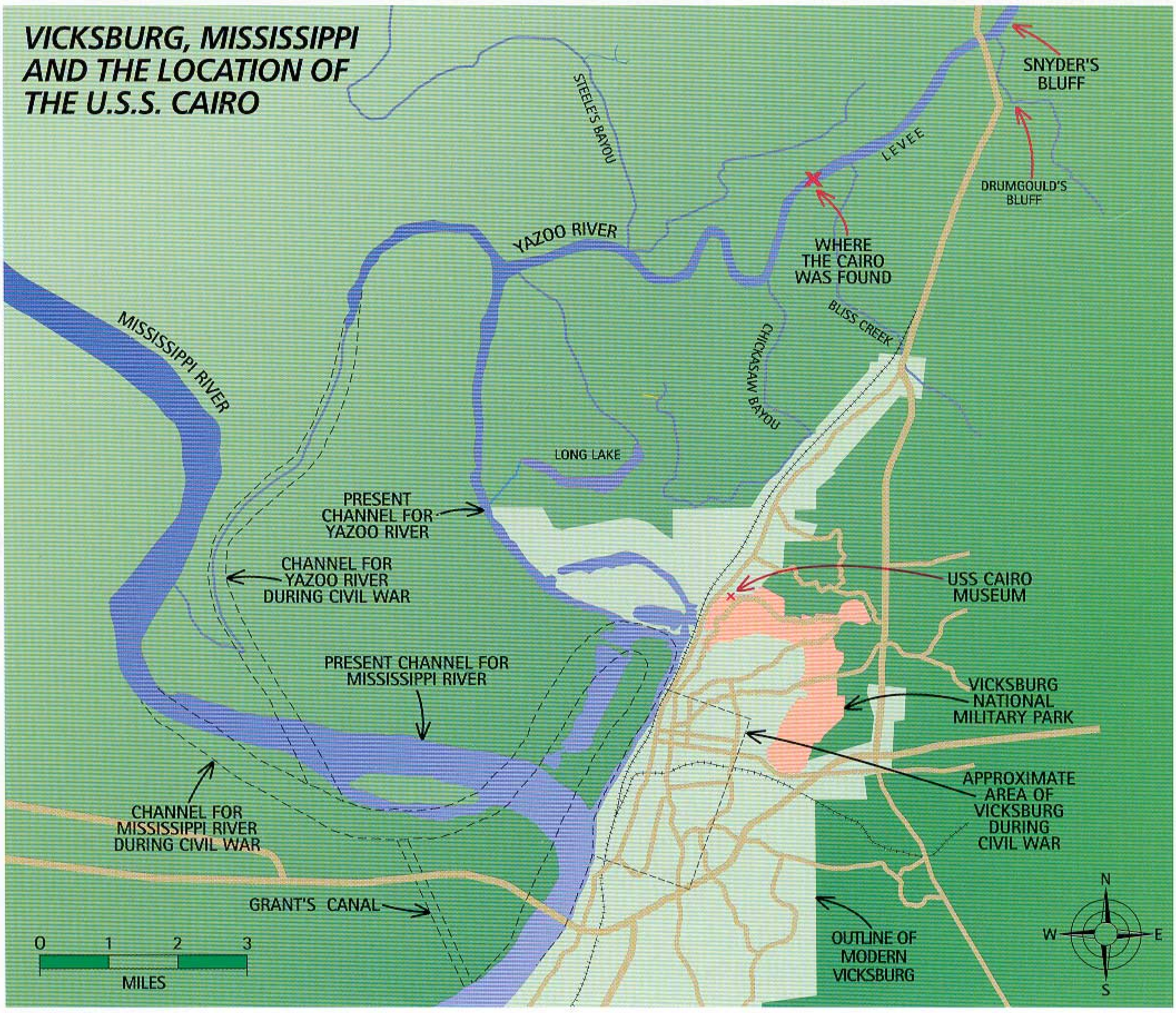
The Cairo back from her watery grave—a picture gallery.

rods whenever the compass needle fluctuated.

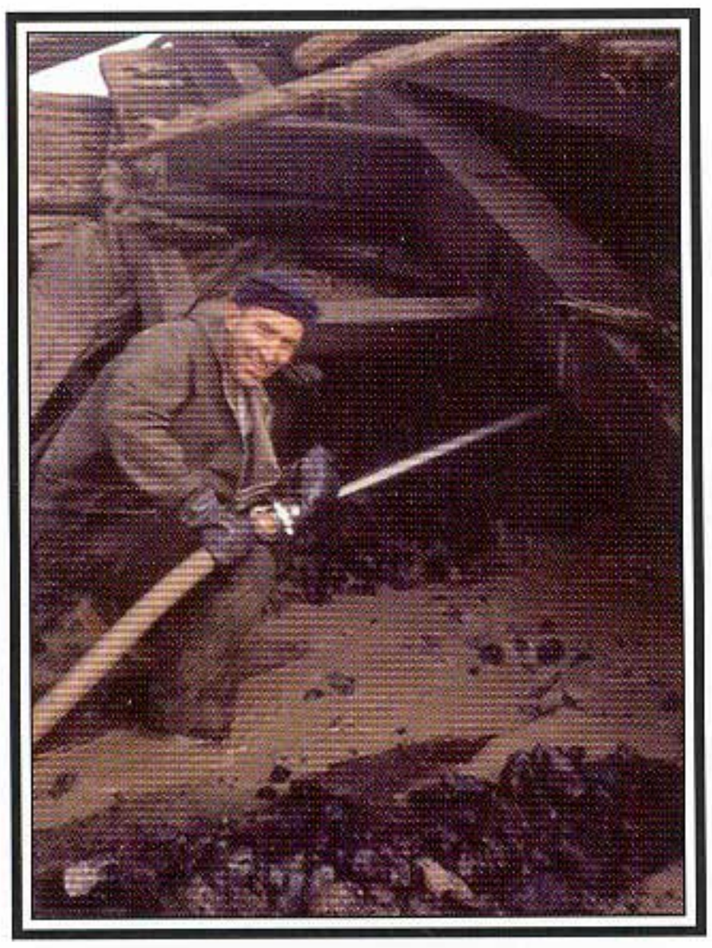
Finally, they hit a spot where the compass went wild—spinning about 180 degrees. They moored the runabout and returned to Vicksburg for longer probing rods.

November 11 was a beautiful autumn day, one month and a day shy of ninety-four years after the *Cairo* had gone to the bottom. Out in the runabout over the spot on the river where the compass has spun so fiercely, they began probing with the longer rods. They hit sloping metal. They knew they had found the boat. It was surely buried there, beneath them in the bed of the river resting in its cocoon of sand, silt, and mud. Only the top two feet of the pilot house was sticking up into the water above the level of the muck. It was the only part of the boat that could be touched.

Finding her Ed says, "was the easy part." Now they had to confirm that she wasn't just a pile of junk, then puzzle out what to do with her, how to raise her from her century-old grave. "We had more than our share of enthusiasm," he says, "but very little money." If they had the funds, the ideal way would be to divert the river and conduct a full scale archeological project. Then they could recover virtually everything intact, because the boat had sunk so fast. There was no reason in Ed's mind that she shouldn't be raised. There were no moral



Map by Kieran McAuliffe



Ed hosing Yazoo mud from the new-risen Cairo.

issues, no mortal remains involved as with two other notable vessels that had been sunk in the war, the Union monitor, *Tecumseh,* and the Confederate submarine, *Hunley*, which sank with their crews. They were tombs and Ed believed tombs should be left where they lay, unviolated.

THEY SET THEIR sights first on raising the pilothouse. But it wasn't until 1960 as the Civil War centennial was approaching, that they could do even that, after a nonprofit organization, Operation Cairo, Inc., was chartered to raise and preserve the vessel as a naval museum.

"We went back then," Ed says, "to find it again. It took us longer to relocate it than it did to find it originally. The bank was unstable. The triangulation was all out of synchronization. We did find it, finally, after about ten hours of searching." They borrowed a World War II pumping unit from the Jackson, Mississippi, fire department and a barge. Ken Parks, a friend and television personality, and James (Skeeter) Hart, a Jackson, Mississippi, firefighter, both scuba divers, went down in the river. They worked in total darkness, feeling their way by touch around the eight sloping sides of the pilothouse, jetting away mud from inside and exposing a couple more feet from the mire. A big lumber company in the area loaned them a tug and work barge with an A-frame and derrick.

"We went up the river," Ed says, "with the tug and barge and tied two cables to the pilothouse at four lifting points—all by feel. When we were ready and began lifting, the strain got greater and greater. The barge tipped, and we feared it was about to capsize. But then something gave and we saw a shot of bubbles coming to the surface, then a sight no human being had seen since the last Civil War soldier and sailor died—the pilothouse broke the surface." Ed was staggered. He later wrote: "As this relic from another age emerged from the river in the twilight, shivers ran down my spine. At no moment of my life have I felt a greater awe." Brought to the surface with the pilothouse was a nine-inch navy gun.

Hoisting the rest of the massive hulk from the bottom would be a challenge many times more difficult, the equivalent of lifting a seventeen-story building. And it would take money—an estimated $300,000—money they didn't have. There was no federal funding forthcoming. It would all have to be raised by them, a lifting job no less daunting.

In 1962, they got some money to conduct an underwater archeological survey, which showed that the vessel was reasonably intact. In 1963, they wanted to go back and raise the hulk. They now had a little start-up money. A Jackson businessman had donated $20,000. Ed, whose general knowledge of the Civil War was by now perhaps unequaled in the world, went on a reactivated quiz show, "The $64,000 Challenge," which was pitting a professional against an amateur on the subject of the Civil War. If the amateur could defeat three professionals, he would win $64,000. If a professional won, he could get $20,000 for the cause of his choice. Ed went to New York to go against an amateur from Wisconsin who had already defeated the first professional challenger.

When the amateur learned his second challenger was to be Bearss, Ed remembers, "he said he knew he was beaten before they started." Each got the first question right. The next question was in two parts and the amateur missed the first part. He was done. Ed won his $20,000, giving the *Cairo* cause

THE USS CAIRO: VITAL STATISTICS

- Type: Ironclad River Boat
- Class: City Class
- Number of vessels in the class: 7
- Length: 175 feet
- Breadth: 51 feet 2 inches
- Draft: 6 feet (fully loaded)
- Tonnage: 512
- Speed: 6 knots
- Armor thickness: 2 and 1/2 inches
- Total weight of armor: 122 tons
- Plate armor material: charcoal iron
- Number of engines: 2
- Paddle wheels: 22 feet in diameter
- Boilers: 5 (36 inches in diameter, 24 feet long)
- Twin chimneys: 28 feet high, color banded
- Fuel: coal
- Fuel consumption per hour: 1980 pounds of coal
- Paint: black exterior, white-washed interior
- Cost to build: about $100,000
- Crew: 175
  - 17 officers
  - 27 petty officers
  - 111 seamen
  - 3 landsmen
  - 1 apprentice
  - 12 firemen
  - 4 coal heavers
- Commanders
  - Lt. James E. Pritchett
  - Lt. Nathaniel Bryant
  - Lt. Cdr. Thomas O. Selfridge
- Names of sister City Class boats: St. Louis (De Kalb), Carondelet, Cincinnati, Mound City, Louisville, Pittsburg
- Commissioned: January 15, 1862
- Sunk: 11:55 a.m., December 12, 1862
- Site of sinking: 16 miles from the mouth of the Yazoo in 6 fathoms.
- Armament:
  - Three 7-inch 42-pounder army rifled guns
  - Three 9-inch 64-pounder smooth-bore guns
  - Six 32-pounder smoothbore guns
  - One 30-pounder rifled Parrott gun
- Gunports:
  - Bow—3
  - Beam—4 each side
  - Stern—2

$40,000 plus volunteer labor and miscellaneous other contributions.

Setbacks—there were many, among them the loss of one life and high water pushing the barges out of position—halted efforts in 1963. When they returned to pick up the task again in 1964, Ed was permitted to work full-time on the project.

Running the salvage operation this time was a veteran of such undertakings, Capt. W. A. (Billy) Bisso, Jr., the most experienced salvage man on the lower Mississippi. As everybody knew, it wouldn't be easy. But finally the *Cairo* was dislodged from her silt bed and lifted up. Spectators anticipating the historic event gathered on the bank to watch the operation. On Sunday, October 18, the winches cranked and the river began to boil and churn. The tip of the starboard casemate shield broke the surface. Cheers echoed and reechoed from the army of observers on the bank.

Using winch lines, the still-submerged hulk

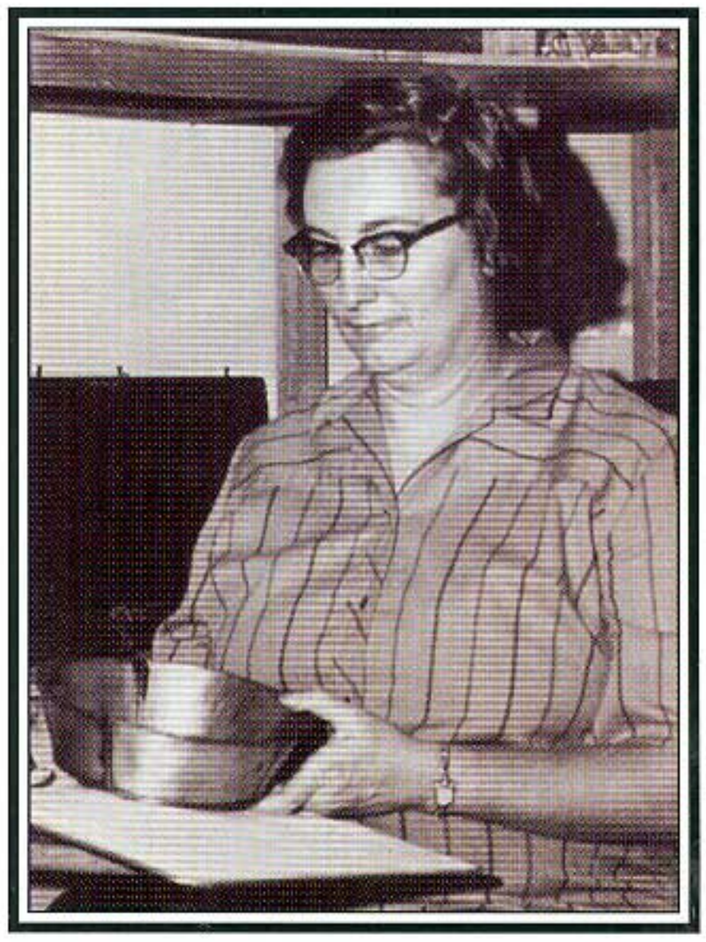
of the *Cairo*, nesting in seven lifting wires, was moved upriver 100 yards along the bottom, clear of the rim of her mud hole, by the four floating derricks that had pulled her from her grave. Then a giant lifting barge 240 feet long and 40 feet wide was sunk alongside the hulk, into the hole from which the *Cairo* had been pulled. The ironclad was to be lifted in its slings on to the submerged barge, which was then to bring her to the surface. But there was a problem. The water in the river was uncomfortably low. And as the ironclad was being lifted inch by inch up and onto the sunken barge, it was partly out of the water and losing buoyancy that a higher river would have given her. The strain was enormous. Soon it became too great and two of the wires slashed deep into the ironclad's sides, separating her into three sections. Instead of a vessel they hoped would be intact, it would be coming to the surface in three parts. Finally, the broken and battered hulk was hoisted atop the barge and started its slow ride to the surface.

THE LIFTING operation took more than a month and was watched at times by national TV and hundreds of anxious spectators. But by mid-December, the mud-bogged, wrecked victim of the Confederate "infernal machines" was afloat once more. It had been 102 years since her sinking. Bisso turned to Ed and said, "Please don't find another Civil War battleship." It hadn't been a picnic.

The saga now shifted to another totally different, but just as challenging, phase—resurrecting, cleaning, restoring, cataloging, curating, and preserving this century-old relic and all of its salvaged parts and artifacts.

At this point, Margie moved into the picture, jumping in to lead this second phase. "From the day the pilothouse came up," she says, "and we knew for sure it was the *Cairo*, I started taking care of the artifacts." She would handle every artifact coming up after that—some 10,000 of them—and would come to know more about what was on the boat than anybody alive.

She had been awarded a contract in 1962 to create the Grand Gulf Museum, all of it, the diorama, the maps, the exhibits, and do all the research on the river towns involved in that historic campaign. By the time the *Cairo* was raised, she was seasoned in the art that was now necessary to bring the boat and its parts into this century in a meaningful way. She was eventually awarded a contract from the Park Service, which had also moved in for this phase, to inventory and catalog everything on the ship in the accepted Park Service fashion.



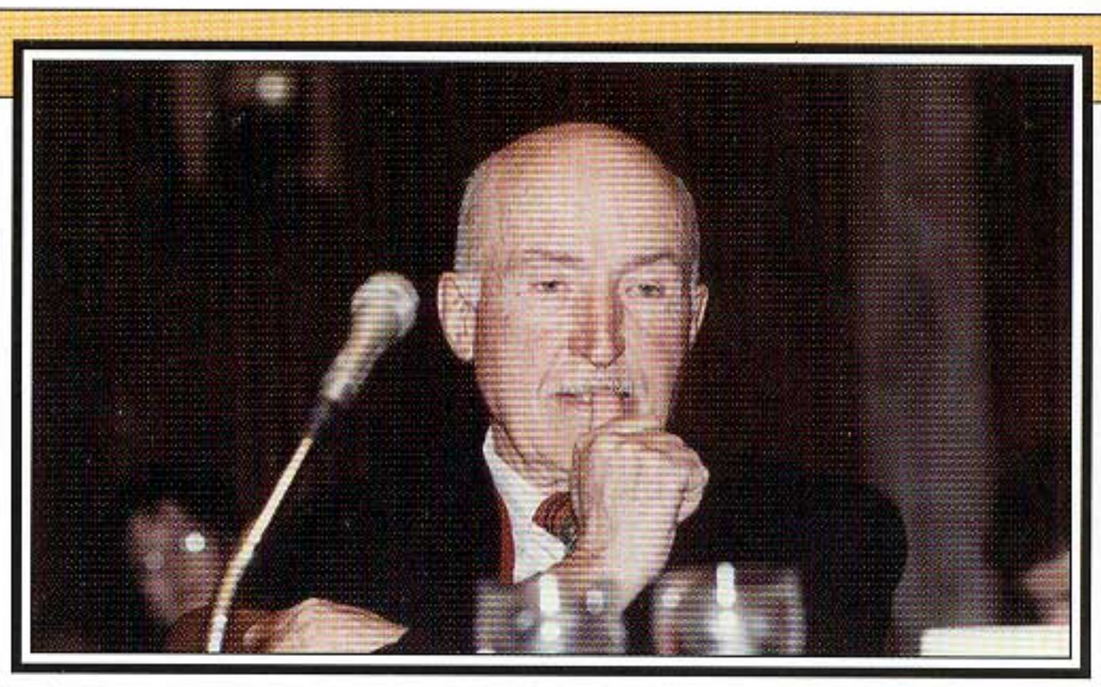
Margie with one of the more than 10,000 artifacts reclaimed from the Cairo.

Margie cleaned the caked mud from the artifacts and wrote several hundred letters chasing down identifications and confirming information. She washed several pounds of mud from Ed's clothes when he was helping wash down the interior of the raised boat and hounded him until he finally wrote—which she edited—an account of the project, *Hardluck Ironclad: The Sinking and Salvage of the Cairo*, a book published in 1966 by the Louisiana State University Press.

Ed estimated that Margie spent 3,000 hours washing off mud and spray-varnishing artifacts. He says she played an "absolutely major role." She says, "It was the most exciting thing I've ever done. I washed stuff I knew nobody had handled but the sailors on that boat, stuff no other human eye, no living person had ever seen."

The *Cairo* is now restored and preserved for posterity at Vicksburg, a landmark find from the Civil War. It owes much to Ed's way with research and Margie's way with an artifact.

Park Service Superstar



Ed, as Chief Historian of the National Park Service, testifying before a Congressional Committee.

BY 1966, ED WAS in his tenth year with the National Park Service, three of them as a park historian and seven as a regional researcher, all at Vicksburg. He had carved a solid niche and made a giant impression.

But things were about to change. There was a new director of the Park Service, George B. Hartzog, a restless man of vigor and foresight. He wasn't happy with the way research was done in his new agency. He wanted it changed—radically. He wanted a corps of research historians brought in from the field where research was now centered and assembled and recentered in Washington. He had ordered the service's Chief Historian, Robert M. Utley, to see to it.

One of the first historians Utley thought of for his new research team was Ed Bearss. But one of the last things Ed wanted to do was go to Washington. He had made it big in Vicksburg. He was the living authority of its Civil War years and he had become one of the town's most popular citizens, its man of the year in 1963. It was often debated whether the mayor of the city, Johnny Holland, or Ed was more often mentioned in the local newspaper. Vicksburg had made him. He had become a big fish in a relatively small pond and he relished his status. He frankly feared that in Washington he would become the little fish in the big pond.

But he had earned a degree of national renown when he had helped raise the *Cairo*. And from this comfortable base and his seven years as a regional research historian, he had become familiar with all of the National Park Service's Civil War sites. He now knew more about them collectively than anybody. That was his downfall. Ed Bearss knew too much not to be brought to Washington as part of the new order of things.

So he went. Marines do their duty. He left in April 1966, ahead of Margie and the children, now numbering three. They were to follow when their oldest, Sara, finished kindergarten in June. Margie hated to go far worse than Ed did. She was Mississippi to the marrow of her bones, had never known any other place. As they drove past the Confederate monument leaving Brandon, she wept.

This initial centralizing of the Park Service's research arm wasn't the last of Hartzog's changes. There was to be yet other shifts, a major one in the early 1970s when Hartzog decided to consolidate the Park Service's Eastern and Western Service Centers into a single Denver Service Center. Utley reorganized and consolidated his corps of research historians there. Ed was a part of that new order of things. However, he was transferred to Denver in name only. He was one of a handful who continued to headquarter in Washington. "My soul," he says, "went to Denver, but my body stayed in Washington."

By then, Ed had become as comfortable and even more fortunately situated in Washington than he had been at Vicksburg. "In a very short time in Washington, I found that you could be an important fish in that big pond, if not a big one," he says. "All of the decision-making power was in Washington, and I had become close to Hartzog, who was the biggest of the fishes."

IN WASHINGTON, Ed had become the historian in charge of Park Service's historical sites of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—an assignment squarely in his wheelhouse. It was exactly the kind of assignment he relished. "I liked to know more about a site to be studied than anybody in the Park Service," he says, "because if you know a great deal about the site you are in a position of power." In those years, from 1966 to 1981, he would carve out a place in ways unparalleled in the Park Service's history program.

Barry McIntosh, a longtime associate, aide, and friend of Ed's in the Park Service, explains what that involved: "It was part of new area planning. When a place was proposed as a potential historical site, Ed went out and did the basic historical research. A great number of sites in the Park Service perhaps do not owe their presence necessarily to his work, but he did much to shape their boundaries. He was the one most responsible for defining the area a new park site would encompass."

This played to his strength. He did the studies, walked the ground, stepped off boundaries, and learned more about the sites and their physical assets collectively than other Park Service historians. All of the nation's major battlefield parks have felt the tread of his feet—many times over—been subjected to his unique mastery of terrain, felt the touch of his hand. The list is exhaustive: Vicksburg, Pea Ridge, Wilson's Creek, the Ray House, Fort Smith, Stones River, Fort Donelson, the battles around Richmond, Bighorn Canyon, Redwoods, the Booker T. Washington site, the goldminer route over Chilkoot Pass in Alaska, Fort Moultrie, Fort Point, Fort Hancock, Ship Island, Boston Navy Yard, Fort Jefferson, Monacacy, and countless others. He often came to know more about a park and its potential and resources than the people on the ground.

He was prodigiously productive. In one year, he produced three major reports—on the Klondike, Redwoods, and Bighorn Canyon. His work on the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park was symptomatic of his style. It was again a case of walking the ground. He hiked alone for three days over Chilkoot Pass, sleeping in the open, subsisting on cans of sardines and raisins, which he had heard were both lightweight and nourishing. His trek became a thing of legend called "The Great Sardine March." He covered the ground but never ate sardines again.

"As chief historian, he set a comparable pace, demanding unprecedented exertion from his harried staff to produce top quality work within unyielding deadlines."

He raised his sights, branching out beyond the Civil War. He took dives at Fort Jefferson for a shipwreck study and walked the hills and back country of Guam for the War in the Pacific National Historical Park. The native Guamanians marveled at him, called him "the bald-headed commando."

Among the most important new places added to his repertoire in those years and in the years following would be presidential sites. It would fall to him to do the studies for the Eisenhower Farm at Gettysburg, the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, the William Howard Taft National Historic Site, and the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site. For the latter, he went to Georgia to interview local people, do oral histories, learn all there was to learn. Carter, impressed, invited him to a church supper.

His most important and satisfying presidential assignment, however, was the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park in Texas. In December 1969, President Richard Nixon signed legislation establishing the Johnson birthplace cottage and boyhood home as a park, which would later be expanded to

embrace the entire LBJ ranch as an historical site. In February 1971, an historic resource study of the LBJ site was launched, and Ed headed for Texas in March.

His work there is again an illumination of his style. "I went there for six weeks the first time," he says, "preparing studies, staying in Johnson City, not then meeting either Lyndon or Lady Bird. I stayed in Johnson City to get to know the people who knew the president." He was practicing a tenet he lived by in such cases: "Get as close to the people as you can. Don't stay detached." He stayed in a below-average motel, the locals got to know him and to trust him, and it developed into a huge oral history project. It didn't hurt that having grown up on a ranch himself he could talk the language.

Johnson heard of it, liked it. They met finally on Ed's return trip when he brought his report for Johnson's review, and they sat together under a big oak tree at the ranch. LBJ had read the report and was telling people Ed knew more about him and his family than he did himself. Ed has maintained a fast friendship since Johnson's death with Lady Bird Johnson.

These presidential site studies also made Ed the Park Service's authority on presidential history. Before his career in the Park Service ended, there would be virtually no place in the American past in which he was not thoroughly at home—the Civil War, the presidents, the Revolution, the War of 1812, the Indian Wars, and World Wars I and II. He had become the Park Service's superstar. There was to be no horizon of our history beyond his vision and understanding. His longtime associate, friend, and fellow historian Harry Pfanz says, "He could read something once and never forget it. And he had a great understanding, an ability to dredge and mine detail from his mountain of knowledge instantly and at will." He had become a true historical polymath and time traveler.

PFANZ HAD succeeded to the Park Service's top historical job, chief historian, in the years Ed was researching new sites. But by 1981, Pfanz wanted to retire to research and write full time on what would become the seminal studies of the Gettysburg campaign. The job of chief historian was open. The logical man to fill it, in many minds, was Ed Bearss.

"He could read something once and never forget it. And he had a great understanding, an ability to dredge and mine detail from his mountain of knowledge instantly..."

Ed, however, wanted nothing to do with it. He didn't see it as his kind of job, sitting in an office, doing administrative work, shuffling papers instead of walking the ground. All he saw was a lot of bureaucratic paperwork. He wanted to do history, lead tours, and write. Pfanz had hated it. "I liked what I was doing," Ed says. "I never aspired to it."

For ten months in 1981, as Park Service brass recruited for the position, it remained empty, and Ed might never have made a move toward it if it hadn't been for Harry Butowsky.

Butowsky was one of the bright young men of the Park Service, an historian out of the University of Illinois, where he had specialized in German and modern European history but had later taught American history at Monmouth College before joining the Park Service.

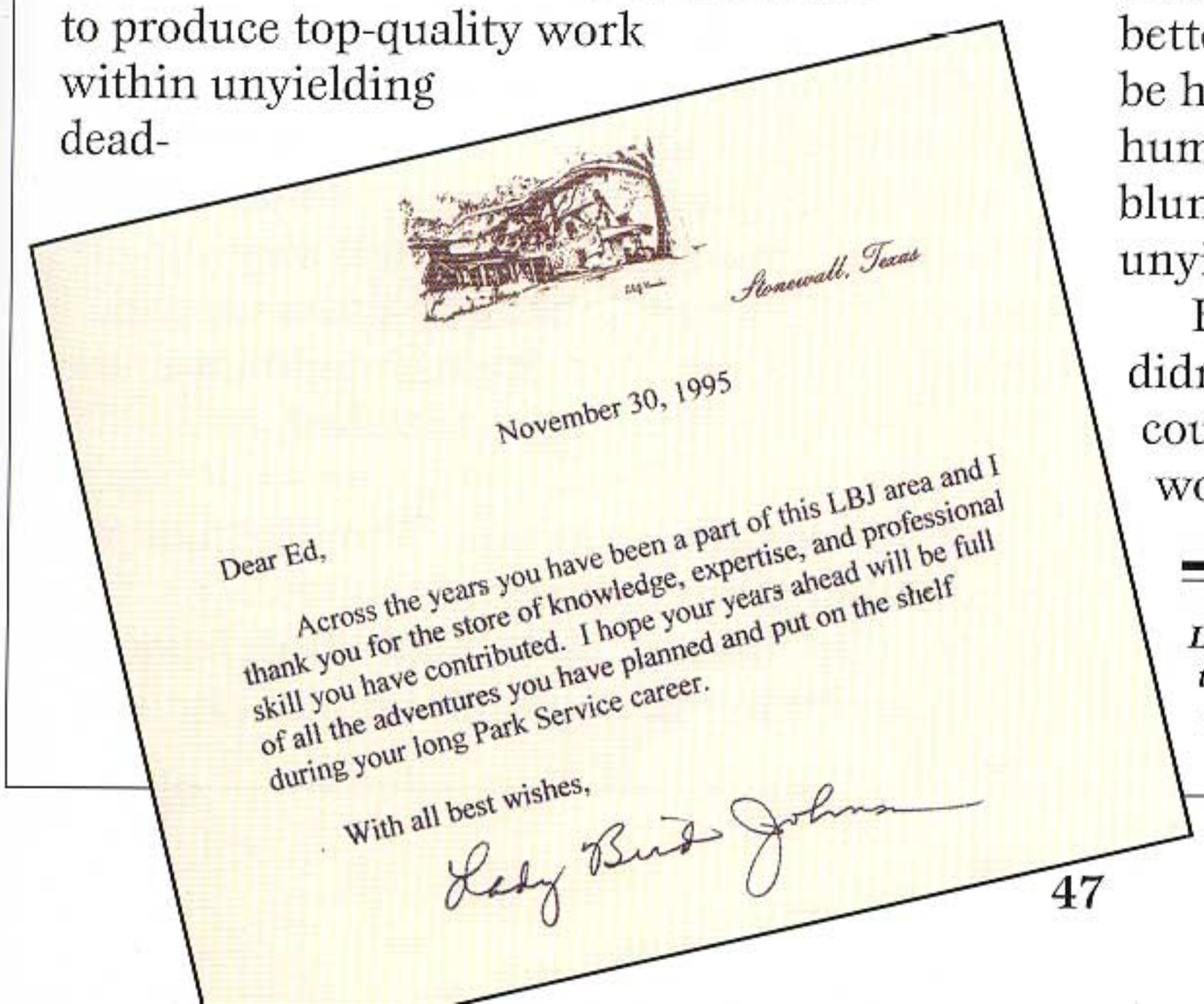
Butowsky had met Ed in 1976 and began to work with him two years later when he was brought to Washington by Harry Pfanz. Butowsky struck up an immediate friendship with Ed, whom he admired. Others in the service were putting pressure on Ed to apply for the job of chief historian, promising their support. But nobody put more pressure on than Butowsky or did more to make it happen.

Prodding him to apply, Butowsky offered to handle the bureaucratic work in the office, the budgeting, programming, and personnel matters, getting money and people—what he was expert at—leaving Ed free to do what he wanted and was so expert at—speaking for history and pushing Park Service preservation and interpretation projects. Ed finally said he would take the job if offered, but wouldn't assert himself. So Butowsky wrote his application for him. "Obviously," Butowsky says, "he was the best-qualified candidate."

Ed won the job and took it over on November 1, 1981. He had become a very big fish in that big pond—one of the biggest.

Ed built an excellent senior staff, hiring the men and women he wanted. True to his word, Butowsky remained to do the bureaucratic work. Besides Butowsky, one of the men Ed brought in was Barry McIntosh as agency historian. That staff, those two in particular, Ed says, "made it easy for me to do what I wanted to do to be effective, do what were my strengths—reaching out, working with outside constituents, keeping on the go, winning support, ingratiating myself with Congress and, as it happened, with two secretaries of the interior. For eight years, I had secretaries of the interior I could walk into their offices any time."

Ed was both a burden and a joy to work for. "As chief historian," McIntosh says, "he set a comparable pace, demanding unprecedented exertion from his harried staff to produce top-quality work within unyielding dead-


Stonewall, Texas

November 30, 1995

Dear Ed,

Across the years you have been a part of this LBJ area and I thank you for the store of knowledge, expertise, and professional skill you have contributed. I hope your years ahead will be full of all the adventures you have planned and put on the shelf during your long Park Service career.

With all best wishes,

Lady Bird Johnson

lines. In my first year under this human dynamo, while devoting nights and weekends to office assignments, I wondered more than once why I voluntarily left the comparative ease of my prior position." Writing of those early years McIntosh said, "Ed led by example, spurring us on to do more and better than we thought we could. In the daily company of such a model of achievement, one cannot help but achieve."

This model of achievement had a management style that was ingratiating. He was, one associate says, "relentlessly upbeat. If he ever had a bad day—and surely he did—he never showed it." McIntosh and Pfanz both agree: "He had an amazing optimism," McIntosh says. "He was never down, never depressed, always upbeat, positive. It was infectious. He never admitted to being tired, which was astonishing to me. He was the very antithesis of a hypochondriac." Pfanz believes Ed "has never gotten over being a nineteen-year-old Marine. He never admitted to any physical problem or illness—never."

McIntosh remembers, "He would come in and make his rounds, and spend a little time with everybody in the office during the day. He kept things lively. You always knew when he had arrived. He entered with a commotion, stirred things up." It wasn't that Ed didn't have his moments. "There were times," McIntosh says, "when he could wear on you a little. But on the whole, he was a pleasure to have around and to work for. You always felt a little better when he was there. He had the ability to be himself, friendly and unpretentious, good-humored, with a delightful personality that blunted all the demanding hard work on those unyielding deadlines."

Butowsky remembers he had a temper. "He didn't show it often, but from time to time he could flare out at you. But he was easy to work for. I worked with him from 1981 to

Letter from Lady Bird Johnson to Ed on his retirement from the National Park Service—in gratitude for his help in creating the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park.

1995, and it was a pleasure. In many ways, it was probably the highest point of my National Park Service career. He was a lovely man who always treated you with fairness and respect, and I was continually impressed with what he could do. He continues to impress me today."

Ed's priority as chief historian, which he had learned early in his career, was serving the parks, "doing anything to support their programs." To do that, he took his talents and his knowledge to the highest governmental levels that he could. In the 1970s, he had begun making presentations before Congress on various bills touching on the Park Service and in Park Service briefing sessions. He took this pursuit to its ultimate level as chief historian. As the man in the service who knew most about the Civil War, he was in heavy demand.

The lawmaker he worked most closely with over time was Dale Bumpers, the former U.S. senator from Arkansas, who chaired the subcommittee on national parks. "Like most Americans," Bumpers says, "I was not a scholar or student of the Civil War. I had read some general histories. But I became interested as chairman of that committee in Civil War battlefield preservation. After I got a commission established to put together a list of the battlefields that were most endangered and most important to preserve, I held hearings."

That was when Ed became the most important adjunct to his efforts. "As we held hearings on various aspects of the war and on the battlefields, Bearss was always there. Fifty percent of the time information I wanted during the question and answer session was unavailable from the witness. So I would ask Ed to stand up from the audience and tell us the answer to the question. His testimony was so reliable. We took everything he said as gospel. First of all, he has the kind of personality that doesn't have an ounce of guile. He couldn't distort or embellish anything if he tried. You accepted everything he said because you knew everything he said had been carefully researched. He was, and will be until he dies, the authority."

Bumpers, now a Washington lawyer, remembers, "He had the most amazing mind I ever encountered in my life. It was remarkable. He knew not only every battle and every battlefield, but every facet of it. He had the most remarkable memory. I have often said that somebody with an unlimited supply of tapes ought to be talking to Ed Bearss all day every day until everything he knew was extracted and put on tape, because there is just nobody else in his league that knows all of these facts, the minutiae, the little individual stories as well as the macro story of the battle and how it evolved and how it ended and what all happened in between. A truly remarkable mind."

"He had the most amazing mind I ever encountered in my life. It was remarkable. He knew not only every battle and every battlefield, but every facet of it."

Ed also made a vivid impression in the government's executive department. His influence on that level began with Interior Secretary Donald Hodel. When Manuel Lujan, Jr. became secretary, Ed's influence reached its zenith. Lujan called Ed in to brief not only him, but his staff, even his wife, on the Civil War. In effect, Ed gave Lujan a course in Civil War 101, some twenty hours of briefings, and took him to the battlefields.

Ed sums up all this interplay with Congress and the interior secretaries in this way: "It was important to me that they knew me and that they requested me. It was important to the Park Service to get support, funding, and public interest."

His style in his briefings and presentations is perhaps best described by Dan Jordan, former chairman of the National Park System Advisory Board. In a typical situation, Jordan

explains, "A Civil War site was nominated. Ed Bearss stormed into the room. He was ready, as always, and he took the board through every hour of the battle; he established the field commanders, the division commanders, and then perhaps described a little of the company-level action. At each critical point he named the home state of important people, making sure that if there were any board members from that state to mention them in a gratuitous fashion. All this was presented without ever referring to a single note to refresh his memory. Everybody was mesmerized and convinced that this one battlefield was the greatest thing since Waterloo."

His speaking style is described by William J. Hamilton, a Charleston attorney: "Occasionally he would pause, grope for a detail, and finding the narrative string again, go on. It was as if he was sorting through some great accumulation, snapping up some dusty artifact and attaining a new grip on the history he was describing. There were no notes. He had it all, the whole history of the country, stored away in his head."

SUMMING UP Ed as a chief historian of the National Park Service, Harry Pfanz, who ought to know having been one himself, says, "He was one of the two or three outstanding chief historians over the years. He was always very helpful to me in projects I was involved in. He was a great ambassador for the Park Service, its finest diplomat to Congress and to the executive. He could disarm and get things done, an excellent troubleshooter." McIntosh says, "He was not a nuts and bolts type. He wasn't into the detail of running the office. He relied on others for things of that sort. He wasn't in the office much. He was an outside operator with lots of contacts in and out of the Park Service. He kept a high profile and brought us visibility, high visibility."

Summing himself up, Ed says the most important thing he accomplished in the Park Service and as chief historian was the role he played in establishing and supporting many important parks and sites now preserved for posterity. Some of the most important in his mind—Pea Ridge, Wilson's Creek, the Gulf Island National Seashore with its coastal fortifications, the Monocacy National Battlefield, the U.S. Grant Home National Historic site in St. Louis, the Jimmy Carter and the LBJ sites. Those are his Park Service accomplishments most important to him—the establishment and definition of at least five national historical sites and one seashore, "which will still be here long after I am gone." Ed had left his handprints all over the National Parks system.

"He was one of the two or three outstanding chief historians over the years. He was a great ambassador for the Park Service, its finest diplomat."

By 1995, he had served the federal government in one capacity or another for half a century. He decided it was time to retire. And when he left, he left in a hail of heartfelt accolades. Leslie Starr Hart, the superintendent of the LBJ National Historical Park, which Ed had played such a central role in establishing, pointed to "a staff that daily utilizes the research documents you prepared for this park as if they were the Bible."

Melody Webb, another of his cohorts in the National Park Service, wrote, "With your departure, Ed, the Park Service loses an institution. It also loses its memory."

Bob Utley, now a leading historian of the American frontier, wrote from the West of his own "splendid judgment, one of which I am very proud"—"leaning on a stubbornly reluctant Ed Bearss to abandon Vicksburg for larger and more significant battlefields." The end result: "You made yourself a legend."

What some perhaps suspected, Ed in retirement was to make the legend grow larger still.

THE KIDS

The Bearss children, left to right: Jenny, Cole, and Sara.

THEIR CHILDREN, "little strangers," as new arrivals were called in Ed and Margie's favorite century, the nineteenth, began arriving in 1960.

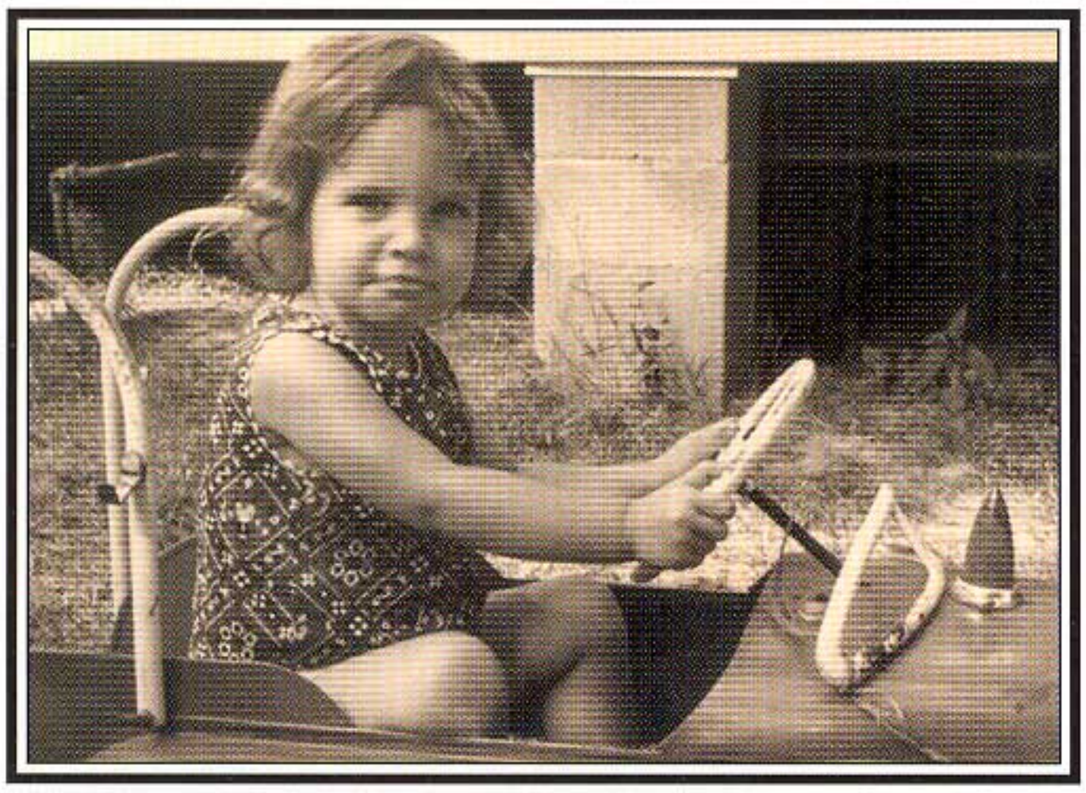
Sara Beth came first. Edwin Cole, Jr., who would be called Cole in his growing up years and Ed, Jr. now, arrived two years later. In 1965, the baby in the family, Mary Virginia, who would be called Jenny, arrived. Margie said she wanted one more, but "by then I was nearly forty and was pushing my luck." She was suffering by then with a heart ailment that has continued to vex her. "But as it is, I figure I got three pretty good ones."

From the beginning, the three Bearss children were in some ways quite different from one another. Sara explains how. "I was the student achiever among us, the classicist and the historian. Cole was the one with the street smarts, and Jenny was the one with the practical common sense, the one who knew how to do things. Roll us all into one bundle and we would make one terrific person."

They were also quite alike in some ways. All of them inherited, to some degree, the Bearss characteristics. The genes were definitely at work in the decibel level of their voices. It was said of Ed and his father and a cousin that when they were out on the street together one couldn't necessarily tell which was talking, but you could hear whoever it was a block away. Their voices carried to infinity. It was the same with this new generation of Bearss prodigy. "The three of us could be heard from one end of the shopping mall to the other," Sara says. "None of us," Jenny agrees, "have ever been accused of being quiet. None of us is soft-spoken. You can hear us everywhere, just like you can hear Dad everywhere." "Mom, with her quiet, sharp intelligence, was the soft-spoken one in the family," Sara says. "Soft-spoken as she is," Jenny says, "she never bored my father. Both have such a love of learning."

THE KIDS were grounded in history—and they walked the ground. "Sara probably climbed over more cannon and played on more battlefields and ate more battlefield dirt than any baby her age," Margie says. There was a joke going around the National Park Service that Ed had married, which was surprising, because as Harry Pfanz says, he was no Casanova. But it was considered remarkable that he and Margie had a little girl who was several months old already and hadn't published a thing yet. However, it very early appeared that that day would not be very long coming.

In school, Sara was a classroom star from the start—indeed, she became a national star. In her senior year in high school at the National Classical League convention at North Texas State University in 1978—attended by 1,200 teenage Latin students from all over the country—Sara was named the best all-around classics student in the United States. In a week of academic contests in Latin grammar, mythology, Roman history, vocabulary derivatives, dramatic reading, and oratory (in both Latin and English), she won ten ribbons, including five first place honors. She was also an excellent actor, appearing often in plays in her high school and college years. She could be anybody, Margie says, and remembering lines was a piece of cake. She had her father's



Little Sara—Margie believes Sara probably climbed over more cannon, played on more battlefields, and ate more battlefield dirt than any baby of her age.

indelible memory, also supplied from the genes.

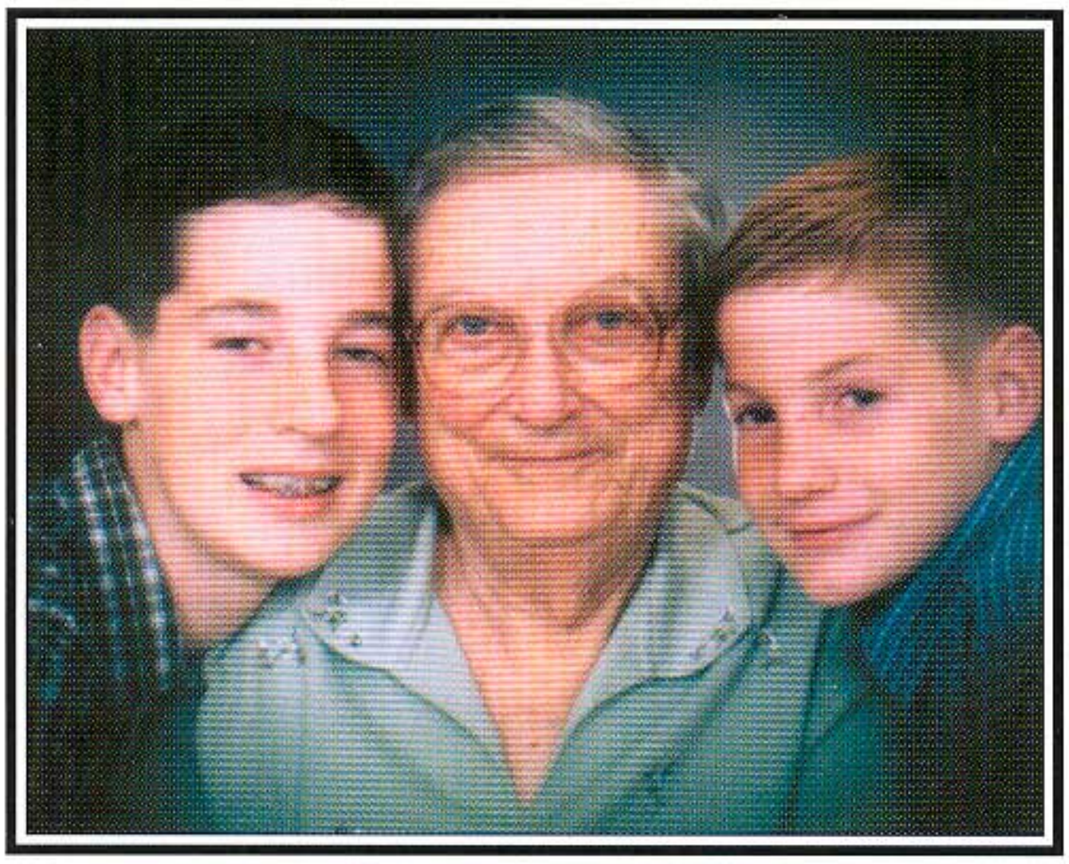
"Sara had a talent for loving to learn, a joy for learning," Margie says, inherited from both parents. "When she learned a new word, she would call me all excited. In some ways, it was tough on Cole and Jenny, following this family protégé in the classroom." Both of the two other children had unique strengths of their own—Cole with his street smarts, and Jenny, who her mother says, "was whip smart but didn't want you to know it." But neither had the academic inclinations of their older sister. And in some ways, it hurt. Margie remembers walking down the hall with the three of them on the way to a parent's conference when the principal of the school stopped them and said, "I want to tell you this, Sara is the most nearly perfect child I have ever taught. Not only is she nearly perfect, but she is one of the brightest I ever taught." Cole and Jenny heard it. "It was tough on them in a way," Margie says.

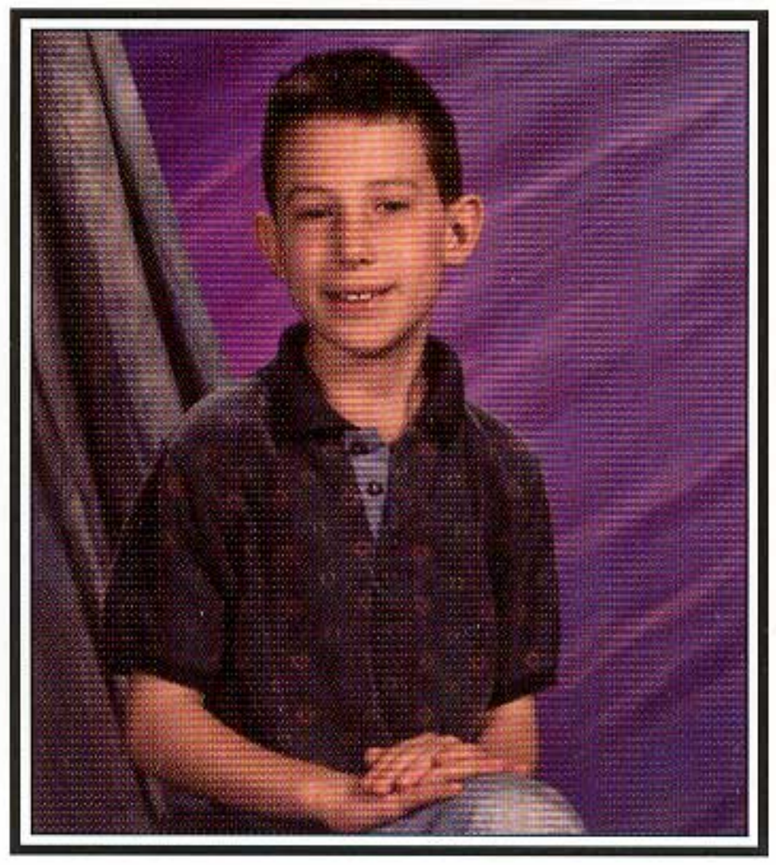
Growing up with Ed Bearss as a father was a different kind of experience, not always easy. Margie, in a frank assessment, says, "Ed isn't all that attuned to children. Although he wanted them, he wanted them instantly grown." Ed is likely to agree with that assessment. "Never changed a diaper in my life," he says, with some pride. He played to his strengths. "The only thing I was good at," he says, "was taking them to historic sites, being their battlefield guide."

And he did that faithfully. Every Sunday he would take them somewhere, to some historic venue—the Smithsonian, a Civil War battlefield or historic site, the zoo. Now and again, he would speak to one of their classes in school. Sara remembers that, as each of them reached the fourth grade and their first exposure to Virginia history, Ed and Margie took them on a weeklong swing through the state to battlefields and other historic and natural sites, being their personal private tour guides. Those were trips many Bearss followers today would kill for.

THE KIDS generally spent their summers in Mississippi with Margie after they moved to Virginia in the mid-1960s. Ed never was with them there. He was working. That is the thing Jenny growing up remembers most vividly about her father. "I always remember Dad working hard," she says, "working all the time. He was up at 5:30 in the morning, working until he went to work, working at work, coming home, working at night. Work was his passion. It wasn't work for him. He sat at the kitchen table writing, proofreading what he had written, reading it aloud over and over until he got it right." Jenny says they never resented his work. "He was there for anything we really needed him for."

And life was seldom dull. One evening, when Sara was just a baby, they were having dinner. A friend of Ed's had dropped in. When they had finished the main course, Ed asked Margie, "What's for dessert?" "You had dessert at lunch," Margie replied. "My mother made me dessert every lunch and dinner," Ed protested. "I'm going to train Sara here to make me desserts." This irked Margie, who picked up her glass of buttermilk and threw it at him. "I raised my voice quite a bit," Margie remembers, "and Sara started screaming. I got up and left the room. Broken glass and buttermilk





Left: Margie, a proud grandmother, with Jenny's Andy and Todd. Right: Cole's son, Mike.

were spilled all over the kitchen. Years later when Sara and I were remembering and laughing about it, Sara said, 'Momma, did you really leave me alone in that room with those two maniacs?'"

"I'm like him in many ways," Jenny says. "Like him, I am perpetually in motion. As a kid, I absorbed from him qualities I didn't think I had. I can't sit still either. Got to be moving all the time. Bred into me. I catch myself being a chip off the old block, Daddy's girl in that respect. I am perhaps the closest of us kids to him in personality."

All of his working "gave us a strong work ethic," Jenny says. "I've been working every day for twenty years without being sick a single one of them. (Ed is noted for the same stickability.) He is punctual; I'm punctual. He sticks to his schedule, does his thing. So do I. I get irritated when people don't show up on time, just like him. And he always called it like it was. I admire that about him."

And Ed, who Jenny describes as "the world's best storyteller," was always telling them stories—out of the past, about the Marines, about baseball. He turned Jenny into an avid Chicago Cubs fan. She wasn't interested in everything he was saying, but she found herself remembering it anyhow. "I am not a Civil War fan," she admits, "but I still remember things he told us. I can look at a gun and tell you what size shot it fired. Whether it was your forte or not, you learned it."

Sara gave Ed a card one Father's Day, which read: "Dad, thanks for your lectures. I never change horses in the middle of a job worth doing, I know the squeaky wheel gets the worm, and I never count my chickens until I've walked a mile in their shoes—and you thought I wasn't listening."

THE FACT THAT they were listening has been reflected in their adult lives. "It helped shape me," Sara says, "growing up in a house where history, writing, and reading were important." Out of it, the world got another Bearss working in public history. Sara got her undergraduate degree in history at Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, Virginia, and her master's from the University of Virginia. At first, she thought she might be an archeologist. "But I did some Indian digs in Mississippi and decided it was just moving dirt around, and the archeologist in charge got all the credit." She is an authority on Henry Clay and knows more perhaps than anybody living about George Washington Parke Custis, Washington's adopted son. For a time, she was the assistant editor of the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. She is now editor of the *Dictionary of Virginia Biography* at the Library of Virginia in Richmond. She is not married.

The stories Ed told of the Marines stuck with Cole. He joined the Marine Corps in

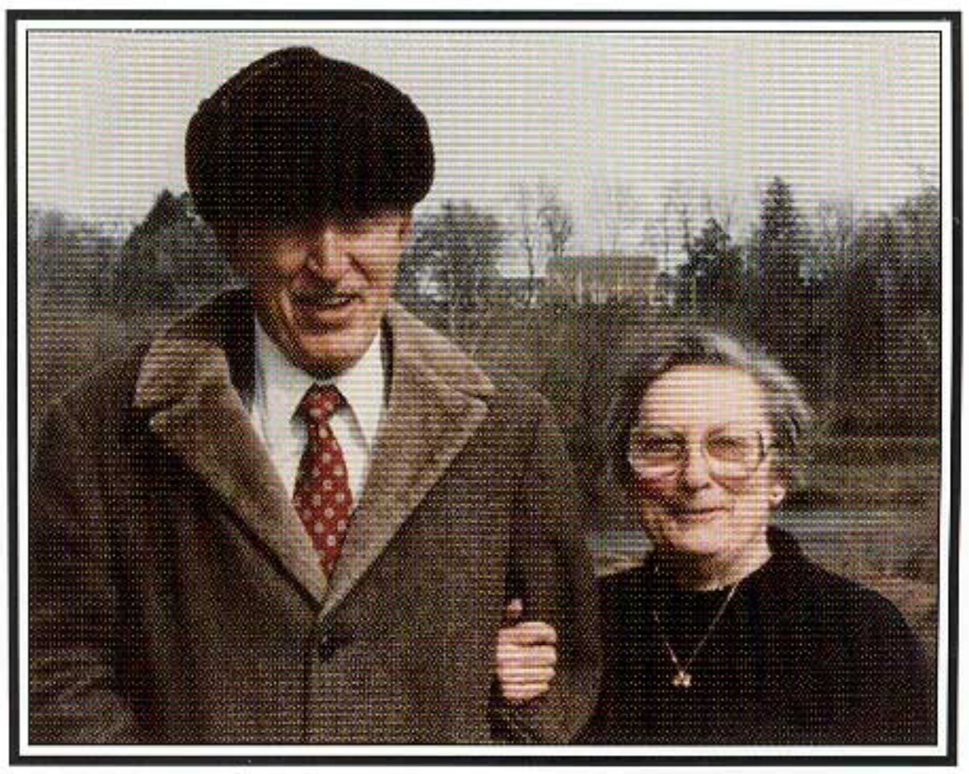
1981. For thirty months, he was in an elite branch of the Marines, an embassy guard, first in the American embassy in Rumania, one of the harder-core Iron Curtain countries, then in Portugal. He served with distinction in both assignments and was promoted to sergeant. He married Annika Höög, a Swedish-Finnish girl he met in Rumania working as a nurse for a Rumanian family. They married in 1986 and named their first child Michael, after the family's U.S. Marine Medal of Honor recipient, Hiram (Michael) Bearss. Back in the States, Cole became a staff sergeant, a Marine drill instructor, and paratrooper. He retired in 1995 as a gunnery sergeant after fifteen years service. He now works for the state of Georgia.

The Marines also took a firm grip on Jenny's imagination. "I just sort of soaked it up, hearing stories about it all those years," she says. She joined the Corps in 1986, went to quartermaster school and spent thirty months in Okinawa. She was discharged in 1995 after eight years in the Corps. Returning to the U.S. between stints, she had married another Marine and they had two children, Todd and Andy. She and her husband are now divorced, and she works for the department of finance in her native state of Mississippi, running the state payroll.

Ed is quite satisfied with the way their kids turned out. "None of them are in jail," he says, "and none of them live with us, so they are all successful."

And how do they perceive him? "He has gotten truly famous," Jenny says. Sara had some inkling of this development at age two when she was at a dedication of Vicksburg monuments with him and Margie. "We were at the back of the crowd along the road," Margie remembers, "and when Ed came to the platform to speak, and after he said the first word, Sara looked up and said, in that Bearss voice, 'That's my Daddy!' Everybody turned around and looked. Her voice was as loud as his. Still is."

"But we never realized he was famous," Jenny says, "until we were older and began seeing him on TV." Sara says she first really noticed she was the daughter of a famous father in college when people began asking her if she was related to him. Now, the kids take it as a natural matter of course and with some Bearss humor. When Sara heard Ed was going to be involved with the movie, "Gods and Generals," she asked, "Is he satisfied to be a general or is he going to have to be God?"

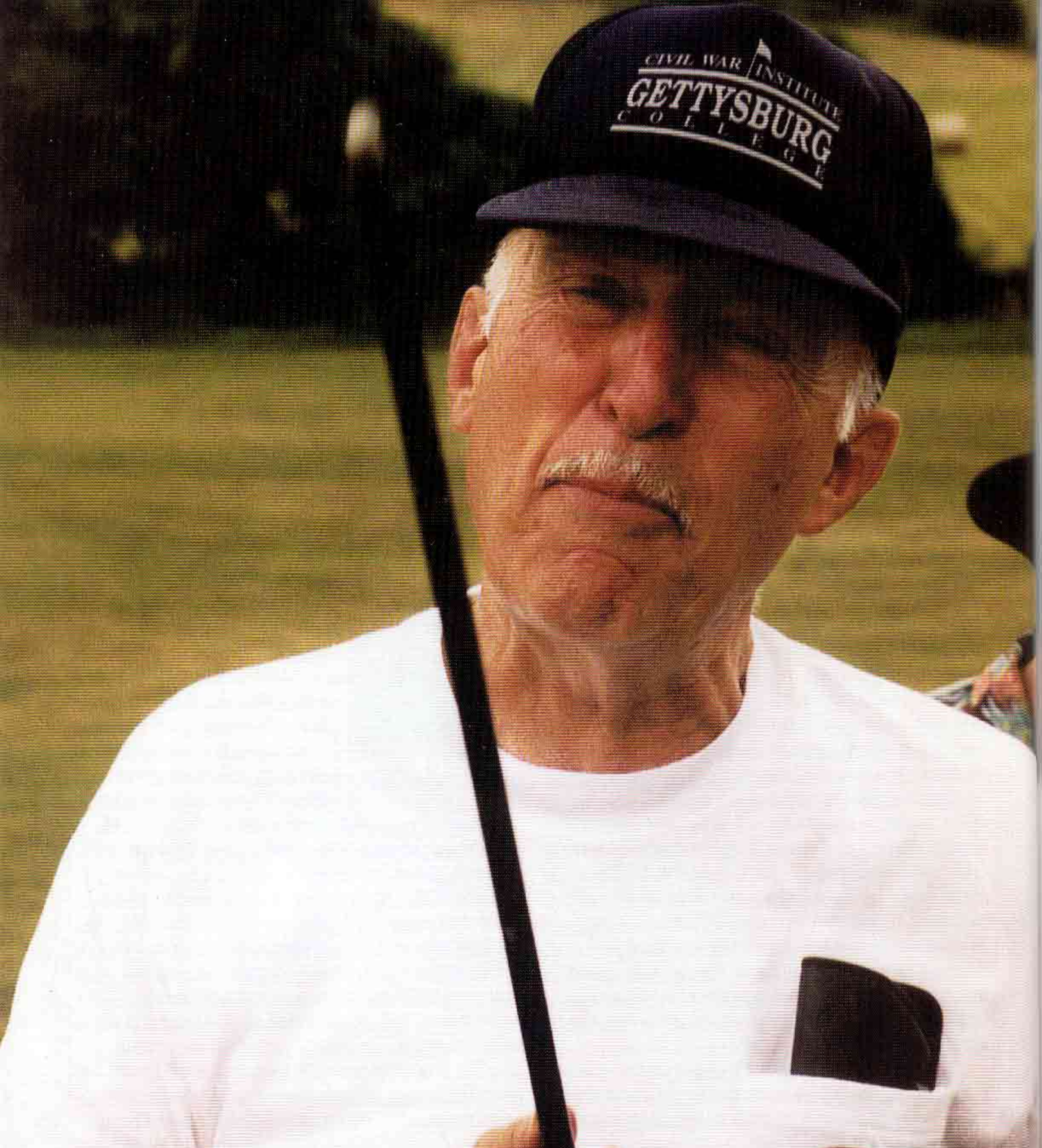


The parents-grandparents—"Big Ed" and "Dear Dear."

And now, there are three grandchildren and Ed tells Margie, although she is two years younger than he, "I am married to an older woman, because you're a grandmother." Margie smiles and says, "Ed doesn't see himself as a grandfather."

Michael, Cole's son, is a math and sciences whiz. "Must get it from Cole's wife's family," Ed says. Todd, Jenny's oldest son, is somewhat quiet, introverted, reads a lot and is a computer whiz. Her Andy, younger and more extroverted, is into sports, a good athlete. He is said to have his grandfather's charisma, and also his memory. Jenny's kids call their grandmother "Dear," which means when they write her they start their letters "Dear Dear." They call their grandfather "Ed," except Michael, who calls him "Big Ed."

He has doubtless made an impression on them under whatever name—as he does on everybody. Andy wants to take him to class some day for show and tell.


CIVIL WAR INSTITUTE
GETTYSBURG
COLLEGE
Delta Queen
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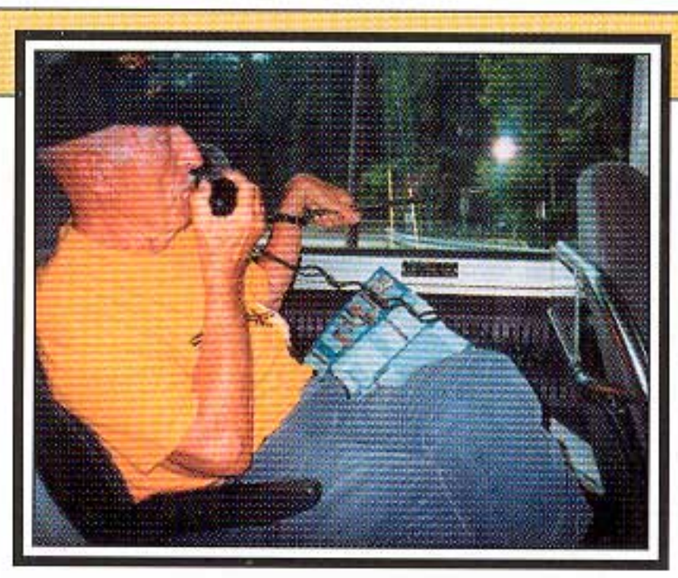
The Impresario of Public History



Ed in his usual place at the front of the bus, microphone in hand, the words pouring out. One reporter said his voice is "a cross between Paul Harvey and a pirate ship captain."

LESS THAN A WEEK after he arrived in Vicksburg in 1955, armed with only a rudimentary knowledge of the park and what had happened there in the Civil War, Ed Bearss gave his first battlefield tour.

It was to public history in a league with Babe Ruth swinging his first bat, Michael Jordan dunking his first basket, Tiger Woods holing his first putt, Pete Sampras launching his first serve, Lance Armstrong sitting on his first bicycle seat. In the forty-seven years since, he has, in sports patois, put up numbers that perhaps nobody will ever equal. He has found and perfected his true calling, interpreting the past to legions of fans as hooked on his sport and as mesmerized by his performance as any fan of any great athlete.

Ed is not an academic historian, though his writing and his knowledge would put him in the most elite of that calling. He is a public historian. Harry Butowsky explains the difference: "Academic history is done for a selective audience—in monographs and books written by academics for other academics. Sometimes this work reaches a popular audience. But that is not its primary target. Often it is specialized and loaded with jargon and footnotes, often not understandable to the general public. Public historians are the David McCullochs, the Stephen Ambroses, National Park historians, the Ed Bearsses of the world. They interpret the past for the public, for a general audience." Barry McIntosh says, "Ed is a public historian in every sense of the word. He is not above using anecdotes, stories to educate an audience, draw it in, methods often anathema to staid academic historians."

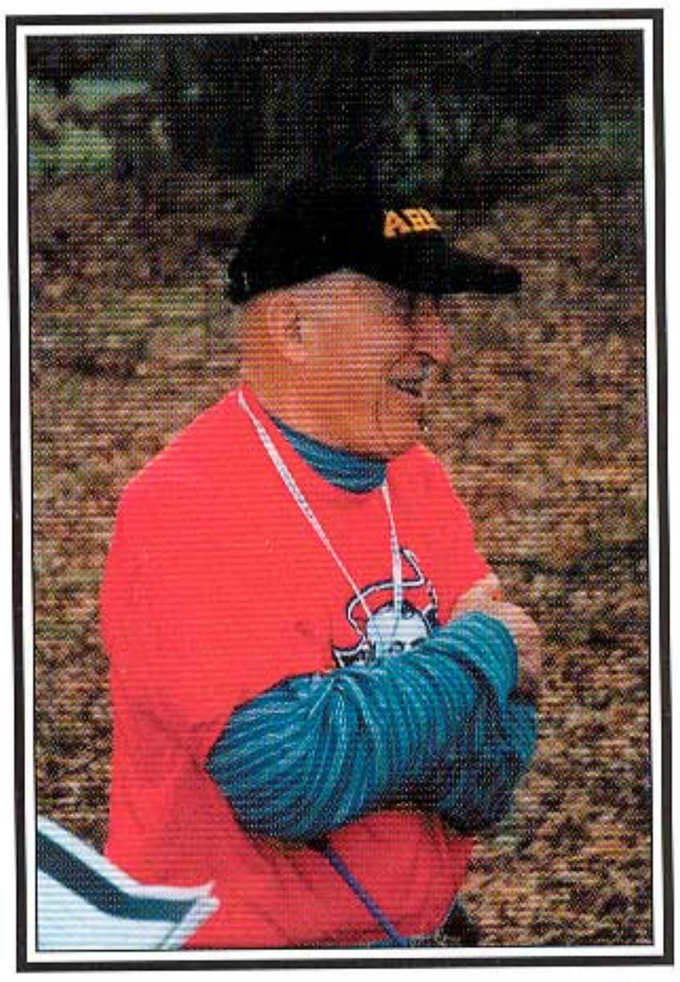
Butowsky says that if a public historian doesn't do a good job drawing the public in, that public lets you know—"you get graded very quickly." In that world of public history, Butowsky says, "Ed is at the top of the class." And his tool for staying at the top of the class after his retirement has been the historic tour, at which he is one of the best in the world.

At Vicksburg, he learned to pitch his tours to all ages, conditions, and levels of education. As a park historian, he did as many as eight one-hour tours a day. They had to be, he says, "lively, fast-moving, relevant, and site associated," and packed with human interest. He would do such unprecedented things as challenge a school group's best athletes to a race up the 136 steps to the top of one of the Vicksburg Park's three ninety-foot observation towers. "I never lost," he says, "and it never failed to wake them up." Annually he led the tour of the park for the Louisiana School for the Blind and Deaf—one of his greatest challenges and one of his fondest memories.

ALMOST FROM the beginning, he had the golden touch, backed by encyclopedic knowledge, a virtually photographic memory, a preternatural feeling for the drama of the past, a passion for sharing that past with others, and the gift of a master storyteller. One writer has written of his "unique ability to charm, teach, and inspire."

In 1958, when his job description no longer mandated tours, he kept giving them anyhow, devoting weekends to them, always

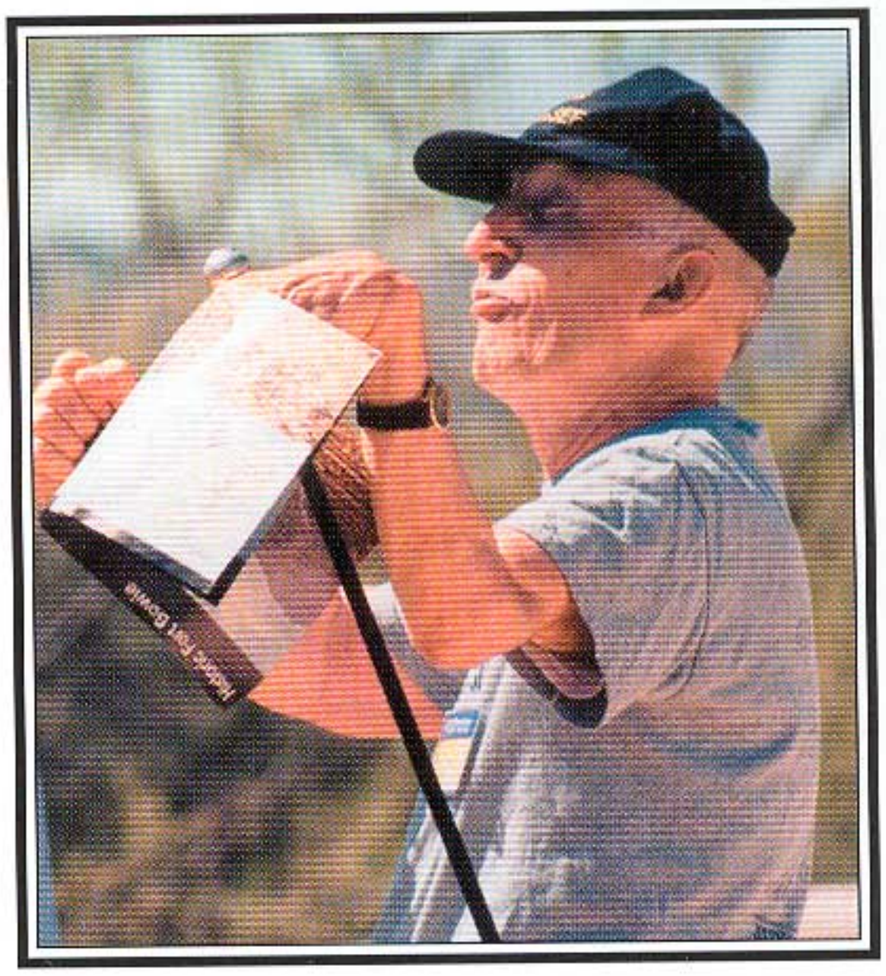
Ed with his swagger stick-pointer—the king of the historical tour and his scepter.



ROTC classes, VIPs, high-ranking generals, and other historians. In 1961, he began leading the annual battlefield tours for the prestigious Chicago Civil War Round Table.

IN 1976, AFTER Jerry Russell, a leading Civil War preservationist leader, organized the first Congress of Civil War Round Tables, Ed began leading its annual tour—to wherever—and has done it ever since. In 1981, after Russell started the first Confederate Historical Institute, Ed began leading its tours as well and has done that every year since. He conducted his first battlefield tour for the Smithsonian Institution—to Antietam, the battleground that shares a name with his favorite boyhood cow—in 1977. Over the years, his tours to various venues around Washington have been among the most popular and heavily demanded and attended in the Institution's repertoire. Wendy Swanson, a Washingtonian who has been on many of his Smithsonian tours, says, "They put on a new tour with him and it is like a feeding frenzy. His army flocks to it. It is sold out before it is even advertised."

seeing them as part, perhaps the most important part, of his mission. In 1959, he began leading day-long, sometimes multi-day tours, to sites of the Vicksburg campaign for Civil War Round Tables,

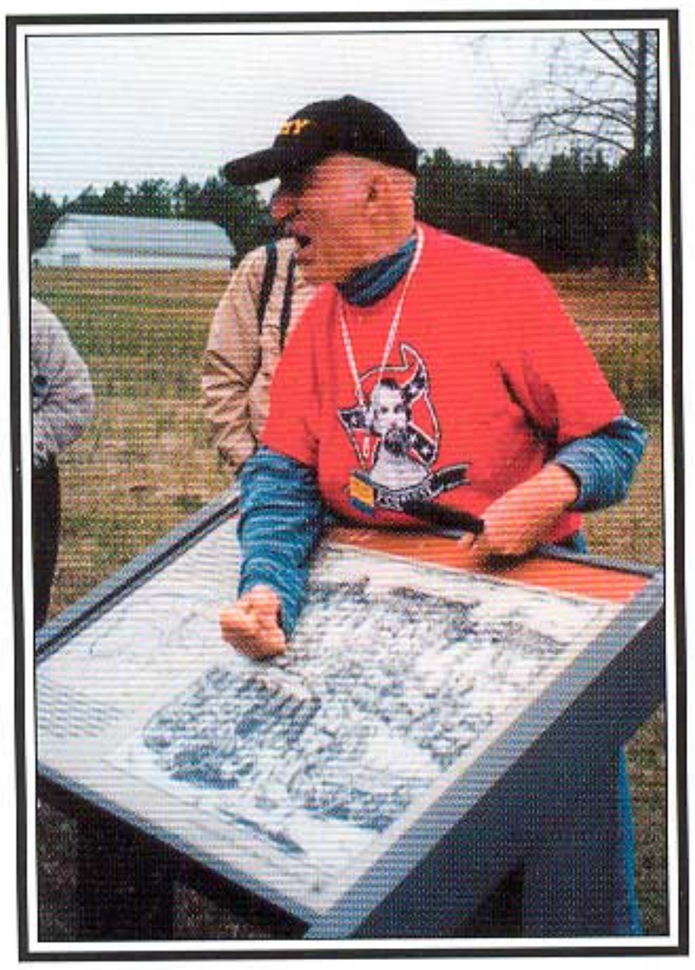


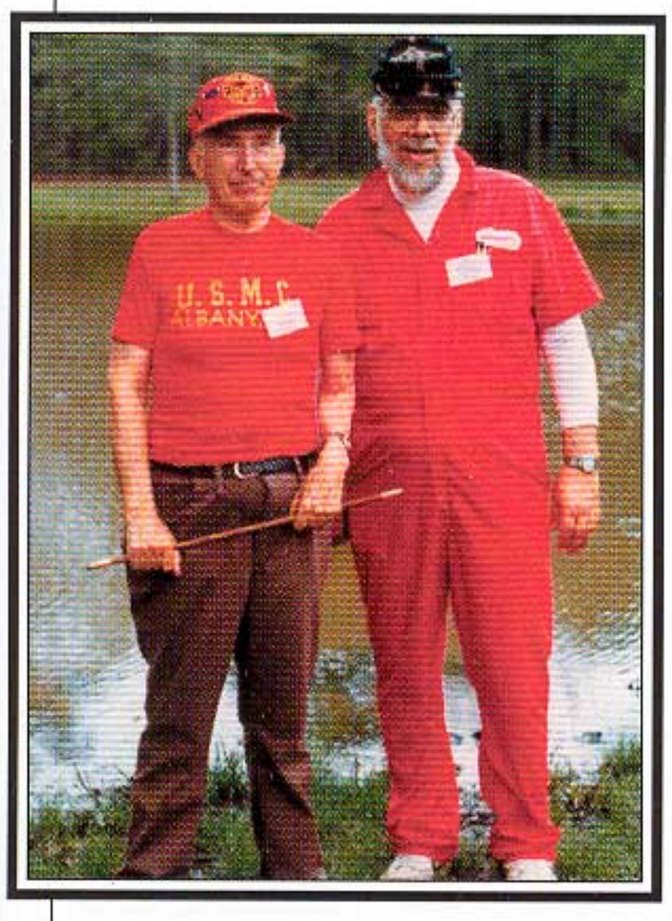
Ed in action on the battlefield.

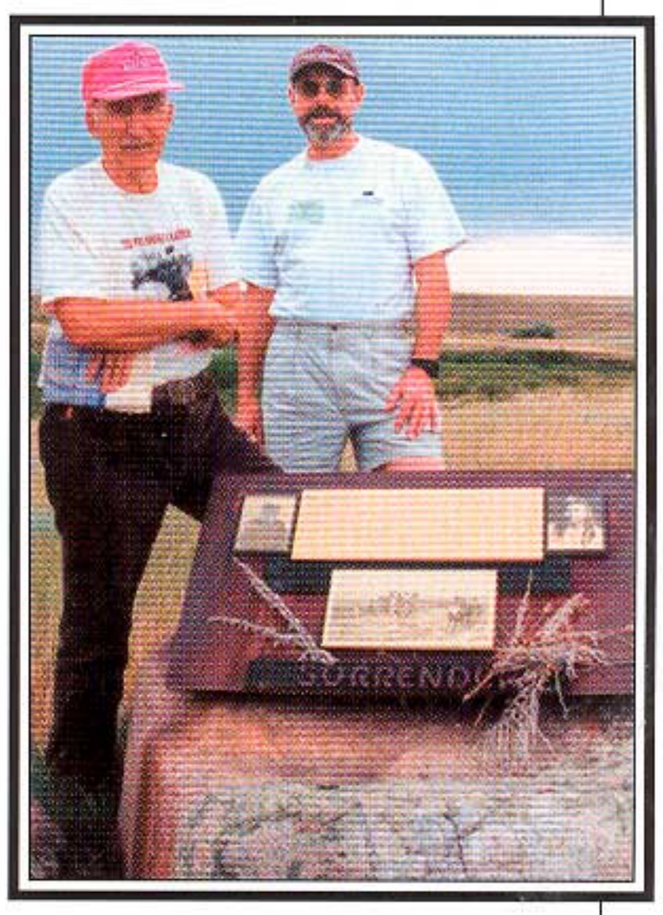
In 1986, when chief historian, he began leading Sunday tours of Civil War sites near Washington for National Park Service and Interior Department personnel. By 1990, he was in such heavy demand—and relishing it so completely—that he was giving all of his weekends, holidays, and annual leaves to it.

In the early 1990s, Pete and Julia Brown started HistoryAmerica TOURS, a front-line organization specializing in tours in the American past, for a time in partnership with Russell. They ran their first tour with Ed in 1993, "Riding with Forrest," HistoryAmerica's first sellout tour. The next year it added two more offerings with Ed. By 1996, he is leading six of its tours. The ratio has continued to climb. In 2003, he is leading half of them. He conducts tours for other organizations as well, among them the Blue and Gray Education Society.

But each year, he pencils in Russell's two tours and the Chicago Round Table tour, to which he feels a grateful and nostalgic allegiance, as a matter of annual routine. He then builds a prodigious schedule around them







Ed with the two tour directors who have logged the most miles with him on the buses. Ed and Jerry Russell of HERITAGE PAC (photo at left). Ed and Pete Brown of HistoryAmerica—at Bear's Paw Battlefield in Montana.

that would exhaust an ordinary historian. It was clear, when Ed retired from the National Park Service in 1995, that he had set his sights on making touring and speaking of the past, taking it to anybody who would listen, the work of the rest of his life. He has done it with a messianic fervor, very nearly nonstop.

"When you are on a battlefield with Ed Bearss," the noted Civil War historian Dennis Frye says, "it is a transcendental experience." A *Wall Street Journal* reporter wrote that Ed evokes "almost hallucinatory sensations." *Washington Post* reporter, Phil McCombs, speaks of Ed's "Homeric monologues." There is evidence that they might even be Christlike. Bill Vodra, a prominent Washington attorney who has been on some seventy one-day or week-long Bearss tours, remembers a day on Little Round Top at Gettysburg. "His voice carries," Vodra says, "and all of a sudden, as he was atop that hill, a crowd, not of us, began to gather." Soon the hillside was covered with people, their jaws dropping. Ed was flinging his arms, pointing with his ever-present swagger stick, blasting his Homeric monologue down the hillside and mesmerizing everybody. One astonished watcher said, "I felt I was at the Sermon on the Mount."

Ed's daughter, Jenny, believes he has the gift of charisma, that he is a human magnet. "He is genuinely friendly," she says, "talks to everybody, knows everybody, is interested in everybody. And he doesn't need to get to know you first. People are drawn to him."

Wendy Swanson believes he magnetizes not only humans, but animals. She has seen horses and cows drift to the side of fences where he is talking, drawn by his bugle voice. "When he asks for questions, the horses whinny and the cows moo. He attracts not just people. He attracts all critters."

HIS FRIEND and fellow historian, Harry Pfanz, has this vivid picture of Ed in a rainstorm at Vicksburg. "His tour is in progress. His audience is huddled in a mass under umbrellas, and atop an earthworks waving his arms is Ed, disdaining an umbrella, oblivious of the elements."

Someone has said of him that he has the gift of bringing the past vividly to the present, in "the language of the vernacular." One of his legion of followers is reported to have said after one of his tours, "It's like he had just had dinner with these people he is telling you about, he brings them so alive. I've heard him talk nonstop for twelve hours and there wasn't a dull moment." The reporter Phil McCombs covering one of his tours, wrote that he tells old stories. "Somehow, though, I was hearing it for the first time."

The eminent Civil War historian James M. McPherson says of Ed, "He has this photographic memory and a remarkable sense of place. If you lowered him blindfolded from a helicopter at night on any Civil War battlefield, I believe he would immediately know where he was and what happened there." In short, his gift is the genius of being able to step out on a now quiet battlefield, remember it as it was, as if he had fought there himself, and make

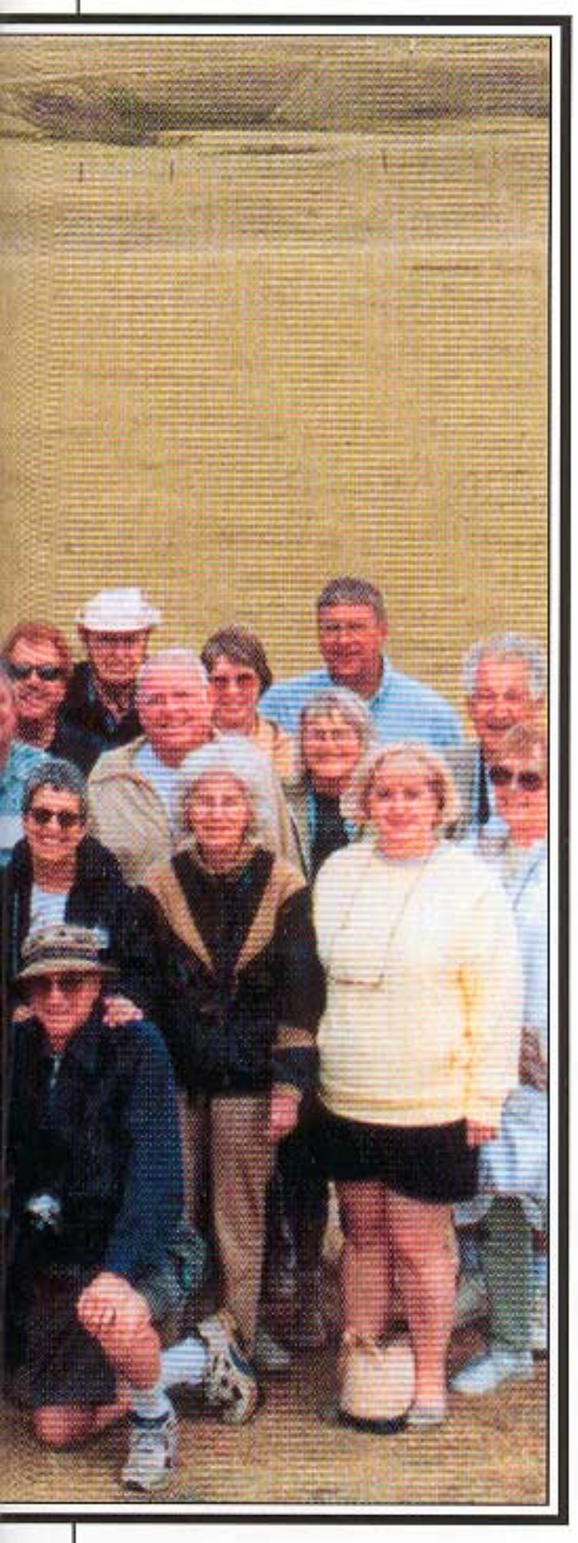
it come again to life in detail, with all of its shot and shell, bloodshed and pain, fear and heroism, death and dying, victory and defeat. Making history live again is what he is all about.

AS ONE BEARSS'S adherent says, "It is theater." A typical Bearss tour goes this way: They start arriving early—some of them hours early—to get a seat near the front of the bus where he sits. Outside the bus before boarding he chit-chats until time to board. When he steps on the bus, now loaded, a cheer goes up, with applause. Ed takes his seat in the front of the bus, just behind the driver, sits back and closes his eyes for a moment, rubs his head, and in a voice that reporter Kristen Singleton of the Winona (Minnesota) *Daily News* has described as "a cross between Paul Harvey and a pirate ship captain," he begins to spin his mesmeric web. After an interpretation on the ground he will often step away twenty yards or so from the bus, alone for a moment, and as Marty Gane, a close friend of both Ed and Margie, describes it, "You can see him rewinding the clock."

Often, he will walk the aisle of the bus as he walks the battlefield, taking questions. When he gets a few, he goes back to the front of the bus and answers them for everybody, taking each question in turn as the bus continues to speed down the highway at 65 miles an hour. Jerry Russell says, "He takes every question as a challenge." And there are few, if any, he can't answer. Occasionally he gives a speech entitled simply, "Stump Bearss." In it, he takes any question his audience can think to ask about the past. It is rare that he is stumped. And even when an answer eludes him at the moment, he is likely to find it somewhere in the vast warehouse of his memory before the evening is over. "He speaks with such authority," Russell says. "People are amazed. They say how can he possibly know that?"

Margie says that the only speed he knows is full ahead, that he hasn't slowed a wit, that "he thinks the faster he runs the more he can keep them thinking." Marty Gane says, "He is perpetual motion. We all want to know what he is taking."

Whatever it is, it appears as inexhaustible as his knowledge, which fuels everything he says and does. Barry McIntosh speaks of Ed's "retinue" of facts and events. Harry Pfanz speaks of his "great pitchforks of data. He researches with a shovel." Harry Butowsky says, "You get the impression talking with him that you are only getting the tip of the iceberg. You feel, given more time, you would be swamped with detail. The iceberg technique. Almost total recall of everything he reads and



Ed, kneeling in front in the yellow tee shirt and pink hat, and behind him the Nez Perce tour group in 2000—a small sampling of the vast brigade of history lovers and converts addicted to him.

he never forgets any of it. I have never seen anybody like him."

The research never stops. Ed is always after information to add to his incredible storehouse. Margie reports that "he even tries to get information out of me at home, and I'm telling you, I never leave the house. I don't know whether he wants me to tell him about the birds or the squirrels in the backyard or the mailman or the garbage people or what." On the road, he typically rises at five in the morning every day and reads until it is time to start the day's tour. He has done it virtually every day of his life. With Ed, facts are the thing, the detail of history. They are his intellectual nourishment. Margie says he reads no fiction, that "he has even stopped reading the comics."

Why is he so good? Pete Brown of HistoryAmerica TOURS who, with Russell, has probably spent more time on a bus with him than anybody alive, sees several reasons. First, there is his prodigious memory, being added to and replenished by his relentless reading. "When he gets out on the tour, he never needs to consult anything but his own memory bank," Brown says. "That gives him more freedom than most historians."

He has a gift for theatrics, a gift for acting. Margie says he is a "ham, always has been." Barry McIntosh says, "Ed loves making an impression. It nourishes him and enriches him, allows him to interact with an audience. He is a ham in that sense. He is not ambitious for higher office or money or possessions. But he likes to be known, to make an impression, make a splash. He relishes the center stage."

"He must have been an actor in another life," Brown says. "He has this unique gift for dramatizing the past, personalizing it, making it real with role playing. He loves spicy subjects, getting into the personal and love lives of the people he is talking about. He can throw in ancillary incidents that enrich, recreate, and amaze." Ed says of himself, "I'm not a wallflower. I do everything I can to entertain as well as enlighten."

Not only can he answer virtually any question, he is put off by none. "If he gets a question that has been asked before or shouldn't have been asked in the first place," Brown says, "he rolls with it. He has great patience." Wendy Swanson believes Ed gets as much as he gives from his tours. Ed would agree. He says of himself, "I like people. I don't view any of their questions as foolish. I've never led a tour where I haven't learned something new myself."

HE IS FEARLESS. "He is not afraid to take a bus where buses generally don't go," Brown says. "He has a mastery of maps and terrain and an ability to read and interpret them. He knows where to go—through neighborhoods or whatever—to get as close as possible to where something actually happened. He takes you there literally, not just with his words. What is incredible to me, you can take him to a place he has never been before and he so quickly grasps it. In such cases, he is like a kid himself, with something new." Wendy Swanson says, "He is like a sponge, excited with anything new that he learns."

Brown, who has accompanied him many times on the same tour, says each one is invariably different. "Each trip deepens his own insights. He learns of a better place to go, a better view, a better place to park the bus to recreate what happened there. And he can

access studies and files about sites instantly from his National Park Service experience. In many cases, he has been the one who compiled the file, made the study, laid out the boundaries of the site himself."

FORMER U.S. Senator Dale Bumpers says what many believe about a battlefield tour with Bearss. "He is so candid, so open, so non-ostentatious. The stuff just flows naturally. He isn't trying to impress anybody, just trying to communicate what he knows. It is so refreshing to hear him go on and on, fact after fact, description after description. It is so edifying. He never embellishes, never exaggerates anything, just a true historical story. That was the thing I admired most about him, I knew I was getting the unvarnished facts."

Ed can also tell the unvarnished truth about himself as an historic tour guide. "I have certain advantages to start with," he says. "I don't need a loudspeaker to be heard. I have a good memory. I don't have to look at notes. I can communicate, and I know what people like. They don't want to know everything. They want to know what is interesting, and

Fellow Travelers

THERE HAVE BEEN a steadily rising number of distaff travelers in the army that has become addicted to Ed Bearss tours. For a long time the subject matter, particularly the Civil War, was thought of as a mainly male dominated field of interest. No longer.

Two of the women hooked on history by him, Sheryl Scarborough, an engineer, and Wendy Swanson, who works for the Social Security Administration, both live in Washington, DC, and have marched many miles in the "Bearss Brigade." Here is what they say:

Sheryl Scarborough

"History had been my outlet in school—to what was a technical education. I was interested in the Revolutionary War and the period up to about 1850, but never in the Civil War. We didn't get much of that when I was in school. I was very interested in Thomas Jefferson and in leadership.

"After I came to Washington, I found the Smithsonian offering a seminar on leadership—eight lecturers. The first lecturer was Ed Bearss. There he was, striding up and down on the platform, using absolutely no notes while I was scrambling to take notes. He talked for an hour and a half about people I had never heard of. I didn't know who George McClellan was. No idea.

"It got me interested and I started reading about the Civil War. Then I started taking tours with Ed. Day trips at first. It was awesome. The only time he wasn't lecturing, giving us information, was when he had to stop to give the driver directions. At first, I was so ignorant--and so intimidated. He would walk up the aisle of the bus asking for questions. At first, I just followed back in the pack. But I soon learned that when he got going, he moves. You have to keep up. I learned that pretty quick. There is what they call Bearss mileage. He may say something is only 300 yards, but when you start walking there it seems like half a mile or a mile. He doesn't seem to ever have to stop to go to the bathroom. One of the rare times when he did, people followed him right into the men's room thinking it was part of the tour.

"I found out the Smithsonian had a Bearss cycle of tours—the entire range of what he does on the Civil War around Washington. I did them all. It took me about three years. I realized that if I was going to learn anything, I had come to the right place and found the right person. Those trips pulled

they are more interested in vignettes and personalities than in strategy and techniques and the tactics of battle." To that end, he has built a bottomless repertoire, a quiver full of anecdotes fitting every need.

"I have learned you have to be succinct, but entertaining," he says, "or you can't hold an audience. People want to be entertained while they learn. The battlefield is my classroom and the challenge is to make history come alive, because if no enthusiasm is generated by your knowledge, then it will not be shared. A presentation must be animated. It must play on their emotions. It must make history live." History, he believes, is not boring. "It is more interesting than any novel, but it is how it is delivered, how it is presented."

He is a self-confessed collector of battlefields. He collects battlefields and historic sites like others collect baseball cards or stamps or coins. "I have never found one that doesn't interest me," he says—or one he couldn't make interesting to everybody else. "I get a high from being on one, talking with people and seeing the light in their eyes. That light fires my own enthusiasm."

me into other Civil War things and eventually other historical subjects. I started taking tours with other historians. Ed had taught me how to read the battlefields.

"What has he meant to me? First, he has become a friend, and it means something to me to have a friend of his stature. Second, he has opened my eyes to an understanding of our past and how it relates to our present and future. I know when I am with him I am going to learn something. I have become a better rounded person knowing him. He has taken me to places I would never have gone but for him. And, through him, I have made new friends, built a whole new world of experiences. I am basically a shy, retiring person. He has made me more social. I know if Ed is going to be there, there is bound to be somebody else I know.

"He's an addiction. If you haven't traveled with him in a while, you feel you have to have your Ed fix. When I start going to new sites, I have to go with him first. I know he is going to tell me the important stuff."

Wendy Swanson

Wendy Swanson would agree with all of that. She began touring with Ed in the mid-1980s on the Smithsonian cycle. Her first tour was to the defenses of Washington during the Civil War.

"What struck me, unlike any other tour I had ever taken, was the way those tours were like family. They welcomed Ed like he was a conquering hero when he got on the bus. Nobody can combine so many facets as he does—the movements, strategies, and tactics—with the human side. The sway all this had over us, and the camaraderie, made me feel that I was living back there in that time. It really got to me. I was hooked.

"I began branching out, taking some of Ed's HistoryAmerica tours around the country outside of Washington. I was so ripe for that kind of experience. I had been primed in my high school days in Erie, Pennsylvania, where I had been blessed with an extraordinary history teacher.

"And then I found Ed. From him, I have gotten a wonderful education in history. He has given me an avocation. And it all started with him. He has opened whole new worlds to me. It has been like traveling with a friend. He has taken me places and to worlds I had never been, taken me on wonderful adventures.

"He introduced me to scores of people from the past that I would have never known, and to an army of fellow tourists who have become close friends. He has balanced the routine and drudgery of my day job. He has enriched my life."

With his knowledge, his substance, and his skill in delivering and presenting that knowledge and substance, he goes now from tour to tour unlocking the door of the past to whomever he is with.

His closest, most avid, most devoted followers are virtually historical groupies. They call themselves the "Bearss Brigade" and they have this compulsion to celebrate their leader. Some years ago they organized a party for him on his birthday and baked him a cake. There has been one ever since. At first, these birthday parties were local affairs organized only for the Washington-area faithful. Now, about 100

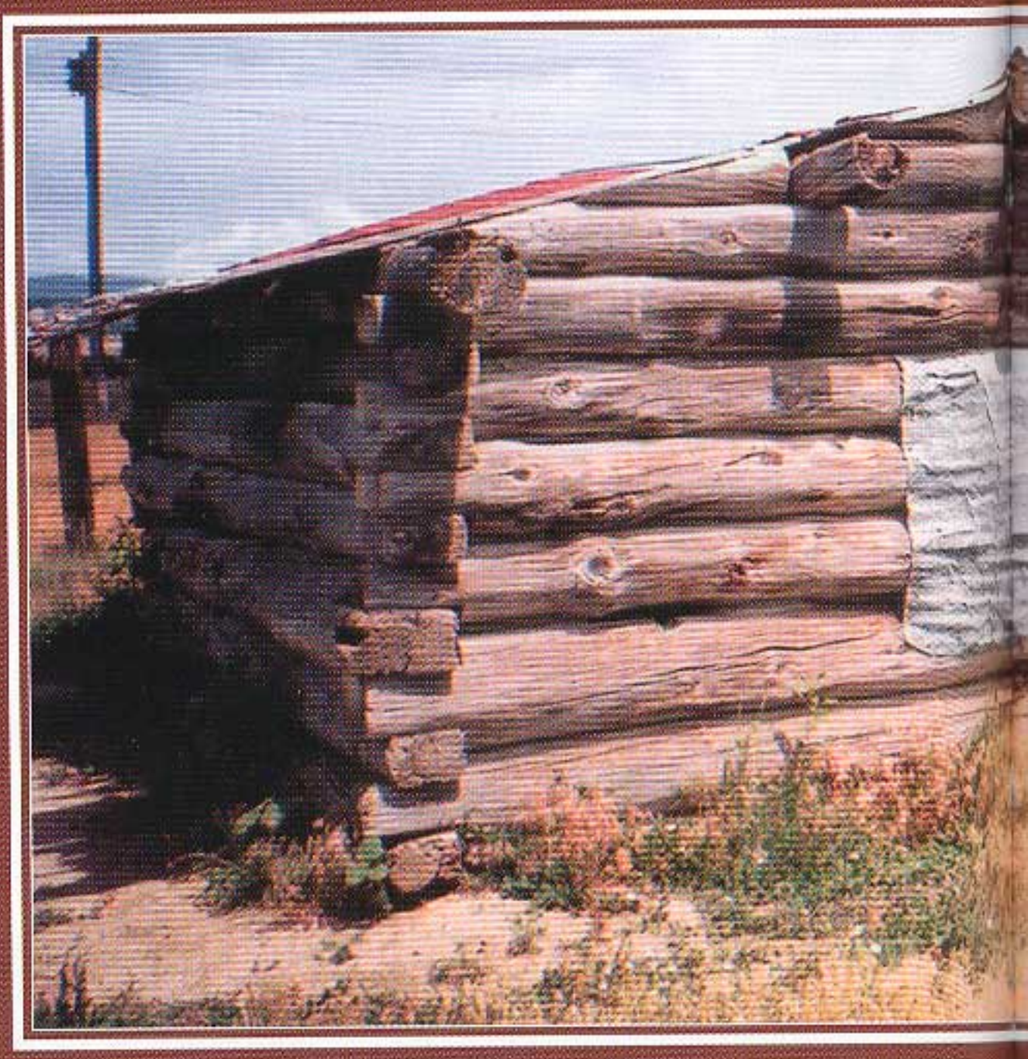
"Ed is a public historian in every sense of the word. He isn't trying to impress anybody, just trying to communicate what he knows."

Bearss admirers come every year for his birthday party from all around the country. It has become an institution, full of high fun and high jinks, and high meaning.

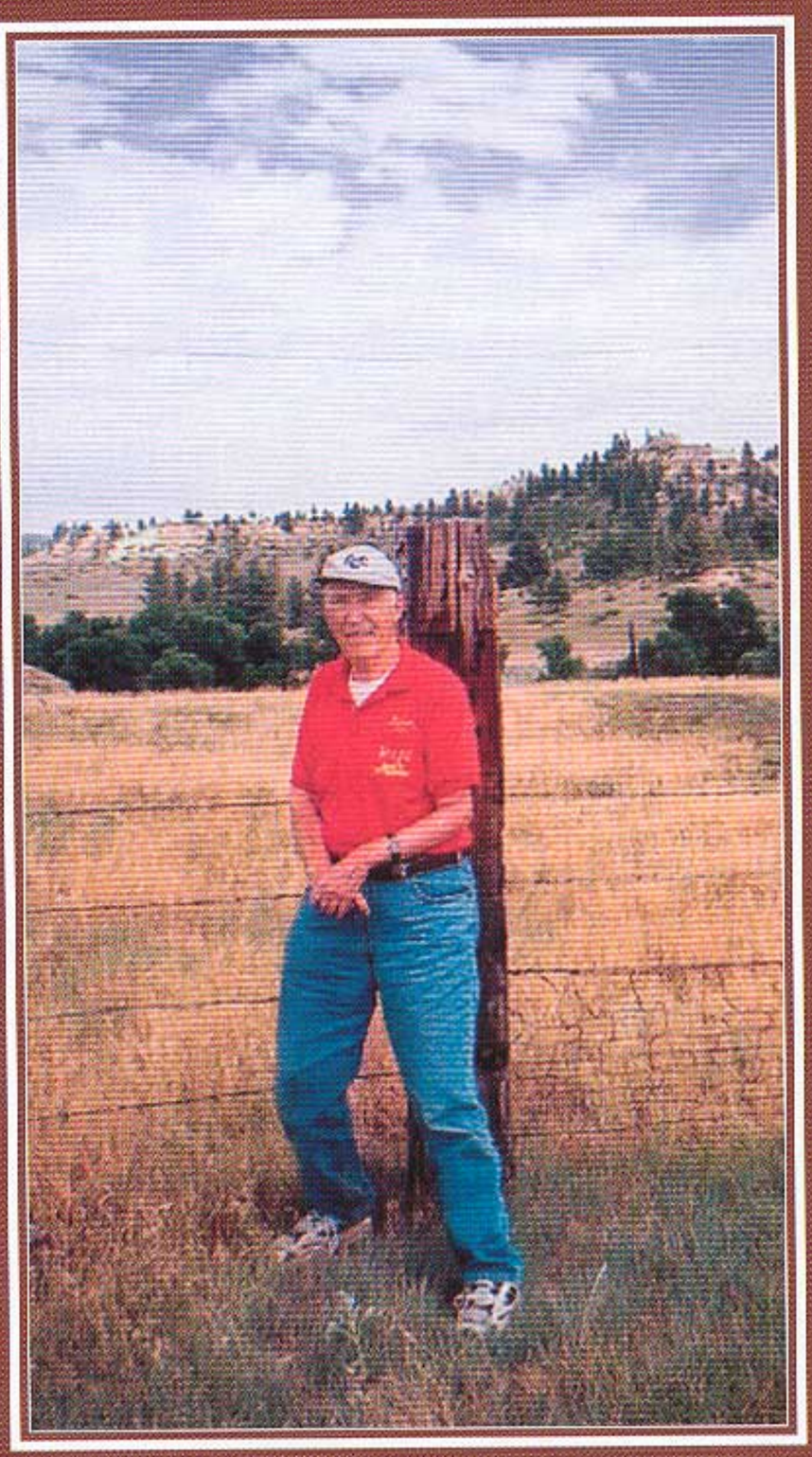
His "brigade" has used it in recent years to raise money for worthy historical causes—battlefield preservation or improvements—causes close to his heart. The first such effort raised $3,000 for markers at the North Anna battlefield. At the last one, $9,000 was raised to publish maps and Ed's study of the Monocacy battlefield.

These parties are conducted, to some degree, for the members of his following that throws them as much as for him. Wendy Swanson says, "For many of us he is the most unforgettable character we have ever met." They mean to celebrate him. And it comes from their hearts when they give him a birthday card that reads, "Happy Birthday Ed!!—And many thanks for all the time and knowledge you share with us."

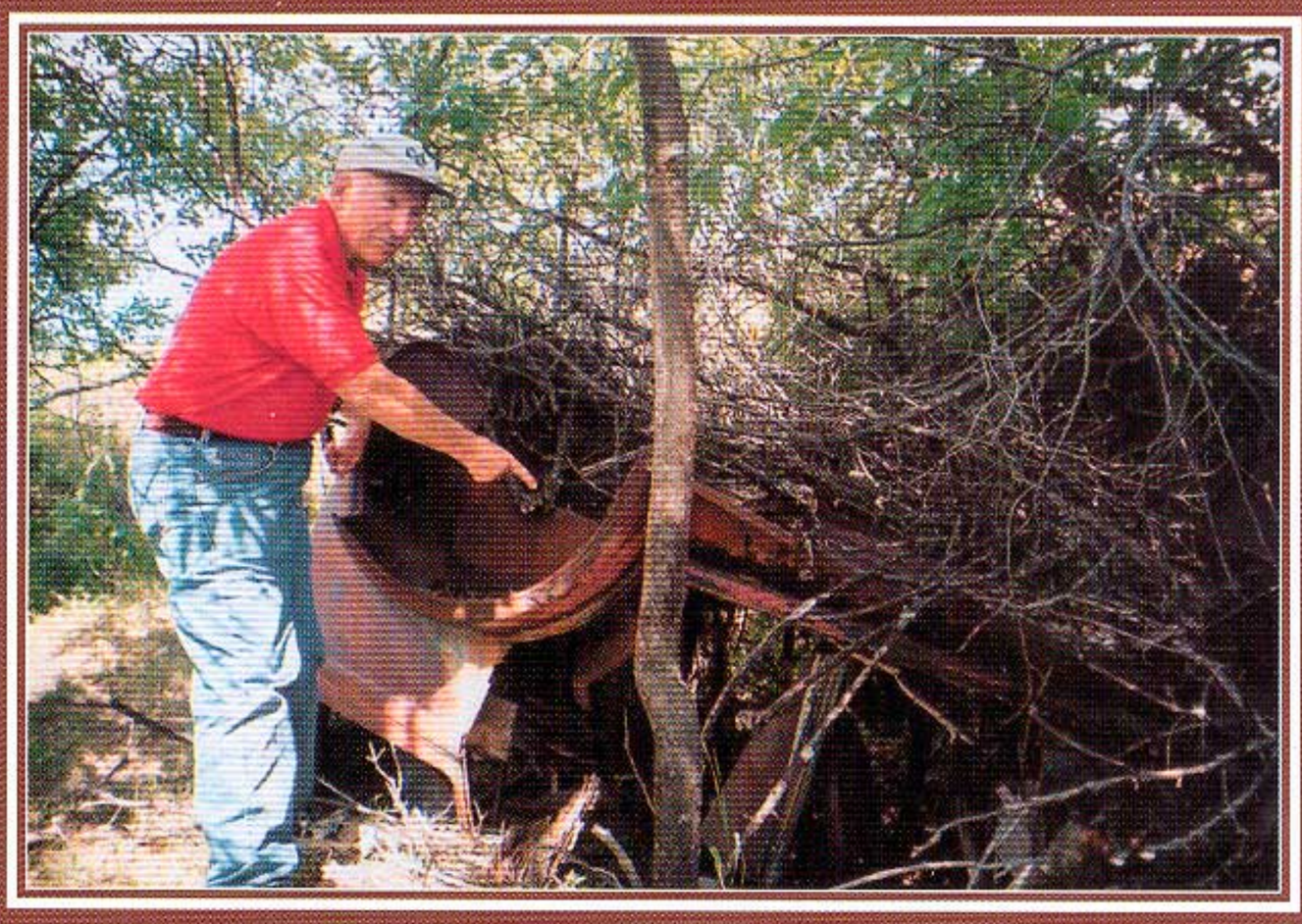
And there is that light in their eyes when they present it.



The bunkhouse. The oldest building on the ranch, built by homesteaders before Ed's grandfather bought the ranch.



Ed stands along the fence line on the ranch in his return to Sarpy.

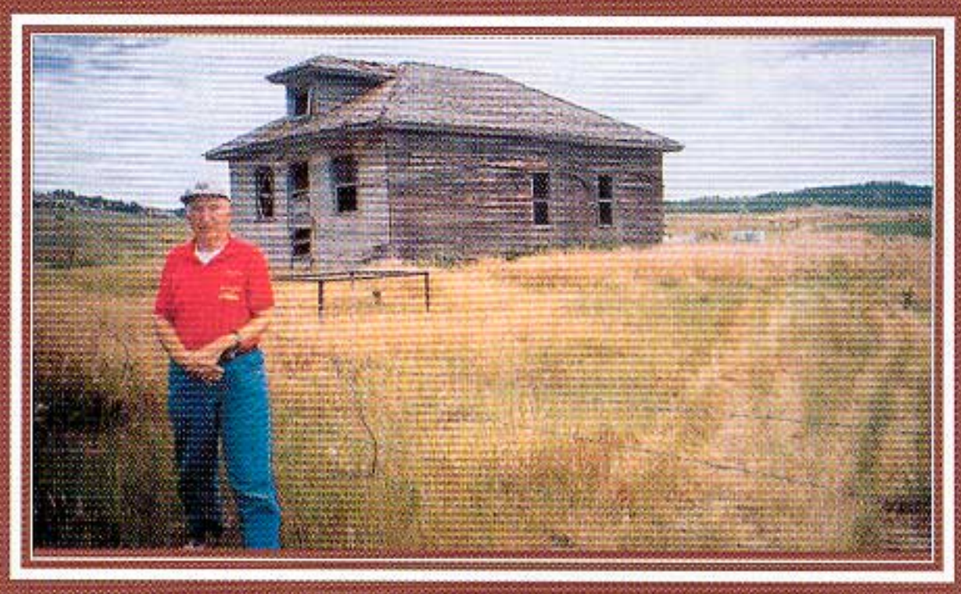


Remains of the car of his high school days, tumbled into the creek in 1941 and still resting there.

RETURN TO SARPY

IN 2000, ONE of Ed Bearss's trips back in time was a return to his own past. He was in Billings before a tour of the Little Big Horn with one of his Bearss Brigade regulars, Marty Gane. There in that country, under its big sky, were his roots—his own history—and he wanted to revisit them. So he and Marty drove down to the ranch in Sarpy. "It was a beautiful spot, a little valley with hills all around," she remembers, "and he was like a little kid."

As they drove along the road, still unpaved, he pointed to old landmarks, turning them over in his memory, remembering everything, retelling their stories, sharing it all with Marty. She saw the place where two cars collided and he was thrown through the windshield when he was only twelve years old; the fence line down which his mother, lariat in hand, chased him on horseback to bring him back to wash the dishes. He posed before the bunkhouse, the only building still standing on the ranch, now empty and ramshackled. He showed her the remnants of the horse corral, where the barn and the ranch house and chicken house had stood, where his mother planted her rhubarb garden. "There were still two rhubarb plants growing there," Marty says.



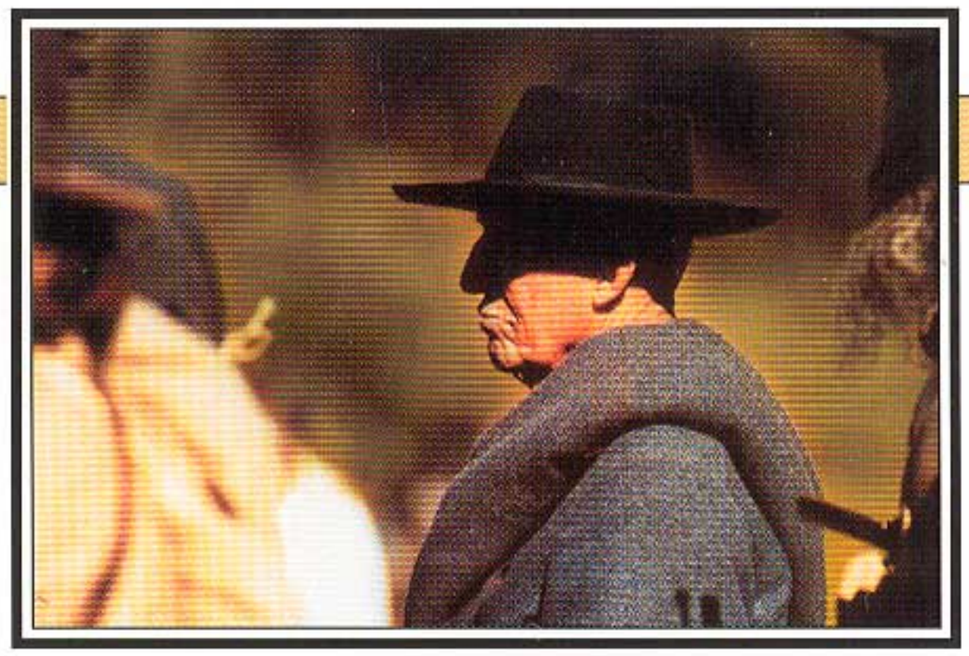
The one-room schoolhouse in Sarpy where Ed spent his sixth to eighth grade years, riding the six miles to and from every day on horseback.

They drove into Sarpy six miles down the dirt road and found the one-room school house where he and his brother, Pat, rode their horses every day, now deserted, deteriorating, fading back in time. They stopped along the road to see if the car of his high school years, pushed into the creek by buddies, was still there. It was, rusted and grown over with underbrush.

Ed found in that brief return to his past that you could go home again and that, if everything had changed and much had disappeared, the memories hadn't.

They were all still there, vivid and unchanged by the years.

9 The National Treasure



FEW MEN OR WOMEN blessed with such a prodigious memory have done so much as Ed Bearss to stir and enrich the memory of us all. Indeed, his knowledge, his research, his feel for the past, and how he has chosen to use his genius, have made him a keeper of the national memory.

Michael Hedges, of the Scripps Howard News Service, writing in the *Washington Times* in 1997 called him a "defender of authentic history." "In one way or another," Hedges wrote, "he has been a storyteller, preserving and vivifying that greatest yarn of all, America's past."

"In one way or another, he has been a storyteller, preserving and vivifying that greatest yarn of all, America's past."

In 1996, after he retired from the National Park Service, Congress paid him tribute in a proclamation, propounding a simple truth: "His expertise in the Civil War era expanded the nation's knowledge of that tragic time." Ken Apschnikat of the National Park Service has written to him, "Thousands of us consider you to be Mr. Civil War." Another associate has called him "the voice of the Civil War." Pete and Barbara Long, eminent contributors to our knowledge of the Civil War in their own right, wrote him in 1980, "Your many contributions to Civil War history are appreciated by the wide world of Civil War students. You have aided so many in a greater understanding of our history."

It has not just been our Civil War memory that Ed has stirred and nourished. He is a recognized authority today on all of the American wars. Indeed, little in American history has escaped the wide sweep of his all-embracing mental net. And he has drawn from that net to expand our knowledge, hone our appreciation, and stir our memory with every tool available to him.

HE HAS DONE it with unparalleled site studies during his National Park Service years.

In 1983, he was awarded the Department of the Interior's Distinguished Service Award, its highest honor. Secretary of Interior at the time, James Watt, called Ed "unquestionably the most productive historian in the history of the National Park Service." Barry McIntosh says, "His prodigious output during his years as the Service's preeminent research historian must have exceeded that of all other NPS historians combined." He raised the bar for field historians to heights that well might be unmatchable. "Your deep tracks," Thomas B. Carroll of the National Park Service wrote him when he retired, "can never be successfully copied."

HE HAS DONE it with books. He has written, edited, or contributed to numerous books in his long career and hundreds of articles, introductions, and monographs. Perhaps nobody understands better the contribution he has made with the written word—as well as the spoken word—than Robert Younger, of the Morningside Book Store and publishing house in Dayton, Ohio. Younger first met Ed in Vicksburg in the early

1960s when doing research of his own. Since then, Younger has published several of his books, including the three-volume work on the battle of Vicksburg and the book on Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest's victory at Brice's Cross Roads in 1864. Both of these books are considered the standard histories of those campaigns.

When Younger founded the highly respected *Gettysburg Magazine*, Ed wrote the introduction to the first issue and has written every one since. He has also critiqued each article and strongly supported the magazine throughout its existence, and Margie has worked closely with both of them in the editing process. Thanks to them, Younger believes, the venture has been a success.

Jerry Russell believes Ed has inspired not only thousands of lay people and politicians, high and low, with his testimony, his tours, and his books, but a couple of generations of other Civil War historians and writers as well. "Many historians," Russell says, "have turned to him, still do, to read their manuscripts. He has been a tremendous influence in that way, setting a standard of accuracy for other writers."

HE HAS DONE it with pioneering work in battlefield preservation.

Russell, who heads HERITAGE PAC, a leading Civil War preservation organization, says flatly, "Ed Bearss has done more to promote and accomplish battlefield preservation than any other person in history." The Civil War Preservation Trust, the country's largest battlefield land trust, apparently agrees. In 2001, it created the Ed Bearss Award for outstanding contributions to battlefield preservation and made him its first winner.

Historian Dennis Frye, a former president of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites, says, "Ed has been a monument in the field of preserving and interpreting Civil War sites. He has been a visionary throughout his career, one of those people who was able to transport himself back into the past while still clearly seeing the future."

Ed himself believes the most enduring work of his career has been his influence with former Secretary of the Interior Lujan and former Senator Bumpers to pass legislation establishing the American Battlefield Protection Program.

HE HAS DONE it with his tours. *The Civil War Courier*, online, has called him "the most legendary battlefield guide in America." He has had all of the equipment and tools to elevate himself to that rarefied status. Barry McIntosh puts it this way: "He is a great interpreter, with a gift for presenting history to the public on a personal level. He has built his reputation on that. With his great memory and his grasp of details, he is able to make an indelible impression. He is such a memorable character. You remember Ed Bearss. If there is such a thing as a magnetic personality, he has it."

Harry Butowsky believes that his most lasting legacy will be "the thousands—hundreds of thousands—of people who he has impacted through his tours and his appearances on TV. He has generated enthusiasm for the history of this country in the American people, in people who would never, never pick up an academic volume or subject or would ever think they would be interested in such things. He turns them on. He is generating an understanding and meaning of our history and an enthusiasm for it. He does what any good historian should do. He communicates his knowledge of the past to a wider audience."

The knowledge he gives people is not the end of the process, but often only the beginning. He jump-starts people into the past, "leaves you hungry," Butowsky says, for digging deeper, learning more. Former Senator Bumpers says, "It is my guess nobody has had more influence on the study of Civil War history than he has."

Bill Vodra, who has been on those more than seventy tours with Bearss, speaks for many when he calls him "a national treasure." James McPherson has repeated the notion, adding, "He probably knows more about the

Civil War than any man alive."

No men have been more astonished or impressed by his career than his fellow World War II Marines. Harold McKenzie, his old war buddy and friend, says, "He is not the same man we knew in the Marine Corps. There has been a complete metamorphosis through the years. I had no idea in all our time together that Ed had such a burning, intense love of the Civil War. Not even in college did I know it. I didn't find it out until he was at Vicksburg.

"I never thought he would ever be a speaker of note. We all knew of his ability—his knowledge. There was the same intelligence we see now. But we never knew that side of him. None of us did. In the Marines and in college, he was a very reserved, quiet guy, usually in the background. But he has achieved tremendous recognition now, amazing recognition. He has made the most of his intellect, he absolutely has fulfilled to the maximum his ability. In my mind, he is without question one of the top scholars, one of the top men of knowledge, and one of the great tour guides of our time—so dynamic. It is unbelievable. And he has not let his war injury stop him. Indeed, he prides himself on his physical ability."

Jerry Russell has said, "There is no one like him in the Civil War community. Nobody can touch him on a broad basis. Nobody has his comprehensive knowledge. I can't say enough about him. He has been a wonderful friend to battlefield preservation and to Civil War history. He does such good things, and never for his own benefit. What he does benefits him, but that is not why he does it. He is a living legend." He has made himself into that legend with what the *Washington Post* reporter Phil McCombs has described as his "booming voice. . .full of passion for the history of our country."

It is clearly believed by many of his associates, friends, and followers that Bearss has, as one of them says, "the credentials for greatness."

His friend and publisher, Bob Younger, says, "If you did not know he was great, stand back and look."

Honors: A Talent Recognized

ED BEARSS HAS been widely celebrated for his work in bringing the American past alive.

Among his honors and awards:

- Chicago Civil War Round Table $1,000 award to the individual or group that has done most to preserve Civil War battlefields
- Civil War Preservation Trust Edwin C. Bearss Award for leadership in the preservation of Civil War Sites; Ed was its first recipient
- National Park Service Edwin C. Bearss Fellowship Award, established on his retirement to fund advance studies for NPS employees
- Letter of commendation from the Secretary of the Army for his key role in efforts to resume army staff rides
- Department of the Interior's Distinguished Service Award, its highest honor, rarely given prior to someone's retirement; Ed got his twelve years before he retired
- Elected a member (1964), then a Fellow, in the Company of Military Historians (1966)
- First annual Harry S Truman Award for meritorious service in the field of Civil War History
- Virginius Dabney Award from the Museum of the Confederacy for outstanding contributions to public understanding of the Confederacy and the American Civil War
- Man of the Year at Vicksburg in 1963
- B.L.C. Wailes Award for 1998-99, the State of Mississippi's highest historical award
- First award of the Pat Cleburne Sword by the Coalition of Arkansas Round Tables
- Bell I. Wiley Award from the New York Civil War Round Table
- Nevins-Freeman Award for work in Civil War History from the Civil War Round Table of Chicago
- First Annual T. Harry Williams Award from the Baton Rouge Civil War Round Table

And the enduring gratitude of countless other Civil War Round Tables to which he has cheerfully spoken, pacing their rostrums, without a single note, without a microphone, without honoraria, and without a single dull moment.

THE BEARSS CANON

ED HAS WRITTEN, edited, or contributed to nineteen books and more than a hundred articles in his long and productive career.

Books:

Decision in Mississippi (Little Rock, Arkansas,1962)
Rebel Victory at Vicksburg (Little Rock, Arkansas,1963)
Hardluck Ironclad: The Sinking and Salvage of the Cairo (Baton Rouge, Louisiana,1966)
Battle of Cowpens: A Documented Narrative and Troop Movement Maps (Washington, DC, 1967)
Steele's Retreat from Camden and the Battle of Jenkins' Ferry (Little Rock, Arkansas,1967)
Fort Smith: Little Gibraltar on the Arkansas (Norman, Oklahoma, 1969), with A. M. Gibson
The Battle of Wilson's Creek (Bozeman, Montana, 1975)
Forrest at Brice's Cross Roads and in North Mississippi in 1864 (Dayton, Ohio,1979)
Protecting Sherman's Lifeline: The Battles of Brice's Cross Roads and Tupelo, 1864 (Washington, DC, 1971)
Battle of Five Forks (Lynchburg, Virginia, 1985), with Chris Calkins
The Campaign for Vicksburg, 3 vols. (Dayton, Ohio, 1986)
First Manassas Battlefield Study (Lynchburg, Virginia, 1990)
River of Lost Opportunities: The Civil War on the James River (Lynchburg, Virginia, 1995)
Smithsonian's Great Battles and Battlefields of the Civil War (New York, New York,1997), with Jay Wertz

Books Edited:

A Southern Record: History of the Third Louisiana Regiment, by Willie Tunnard (Dayton, Ohio, 1970)
A Louisiana Confederate: Diary of Felix Pierre Poché (Natchitoches, Louisiana, 1972)
Memoirs of a Confederate, Historic and Personal: Campaigns of the First Missouri Confederate Brigade (Dayton, Ohio,1972)
"Your Affectionate Husband, J.F. Culver": Letters Written during the Civil War (Iowa City, Iowa, 1978), with Leslie W. Dunlap

Contributor:

The Civil War Battlefield Guide (New York, New York, 1998), edited by Frances H. Kennedy

Acknowledgments

No work of nonfiction, no work of a person's life, is possible without help. And the help that has stepped up to bring off this tribute to Ed Bearss has been, like its subject, world-class.

The book would have been impossible to do without Margie Bearss, Ed's wife, who for nearly half a century has shared not only his life, but his love of the past. I spent the better part of two days mining her memory of their lives together. Margie and her dear friend and companion, Marty Gane, and I spent hours in restaurants around Alexandria, Virginia, digging out the jewels of information and the anecdotes necessary for a book such as this.

One of the delights of the project was talking at separate times to Ed's two daughters, Sara and Jenny. What they remembered of growing up with their father and mother was invaluable. Ed's brother, Pat Bearss, who shared Ed's own growing up years on the ranch in Montana, was also extremely helpful.

It was a delight also mining the memories of some of Ed's closest friends and colleagues in the National Park Service—Harry Butowsky, Barry McIntosh, and Harry Pfanz. It was a pleasure to hear so eminent a battlefield preservationist as former U.S. Senator Dale Bumpers speak in such praise of Ed and his place in the Civil War subculture. Two women who have traveled extensively with Ed through the years, Sheryl Scarborough and Wendy Swanson, added invaluable perspective. Jerry Russell, a longtime friend instrumental in launching Ed's history-touring career, cheerfully added his keen insights. And Bob Younger of Morningside Books in Dayton, Ohio, who has published several of Ed's works, was a most gracious help.

Two of Ed's wartime buddies, Harold McKenzie and Edward Cupido, reached back into their memories to help me reconstruct Ed's Marine Corps years.

And there is a whole other kind of help as instrumental to this book as the people who told the stories. The project would never have been started without the driving energy, insights, and skill of Pete Brown of HistoryAmerica TOURS. From start to finish, this was his idea. He conceived it and raised the money to make it happen. That it got finished owes everything to him and to the two women who work shoulder to shoulder with him at HistoryAmerica, his wife and partner, Julia Brown, and their invaluable colleague, Erin Cameron.

Another husband-wife team, Bill and Dru Vodra of Washington, DC, working behind the scenes, contributed much. Bill, an eminent Washington attorney, supplied the legal savvy and acted as the exchequer. Dru worked her magic in many unseen ways.

Finally, there is to be a life beyond this booklet. A documentary film about Ed based on it is planned for the future. And Damian Paul, who has taken canister after canister of video footage of Ed's tours, is leading that charge.

For all of this invaluable and skillful help, thanks to all.

Battlefield Preservation

Proceeds from the sale of this book are to be used for battlefield preservation,
a cause dear to the heart of Ed Bearss. To that end, the Edwin C. Bearss Tribute Fund, Inc.,
a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization, made up of generous friends of Ed Bearss,
has donated the funds to make the publication of this book possible.

A salute to the Bearss Battlefield Preservation Corps:

Aide-de-camp

Gail Azbill – Houston, TX
Rosemary Carey and Ed Hynes – Rowayton, CT
James W. Davis – Flushing, NY
Fred C. Morse, III – Austin, TX
Bill and Dru Vodra – Washington, DC
Jan Warner and Marty Rotter – Carmel, CA and Tucson, AZ

Staff Officer

Mary and Mike Abroe – Wilmette, IL
Bruce and Provi Airheart – Romeoville, IL
Benjamin Brand – Carlsbad, CA
Wayne H. Carmony – Manilla, IN
Keith and Carolyn Chamberlin – Ada, MI
R.J. Cicero – Washington, DC
Peter L. Comanor – Seattle, WA
Edward T. Cotham, Jr. – W. University Place, TX
E. Otis and Jean Dyer – Rehoboth, MA
Thornton F. Jordan – Columbus, GA
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Battlefield Preservation

Trooper (Continued from Page 70)

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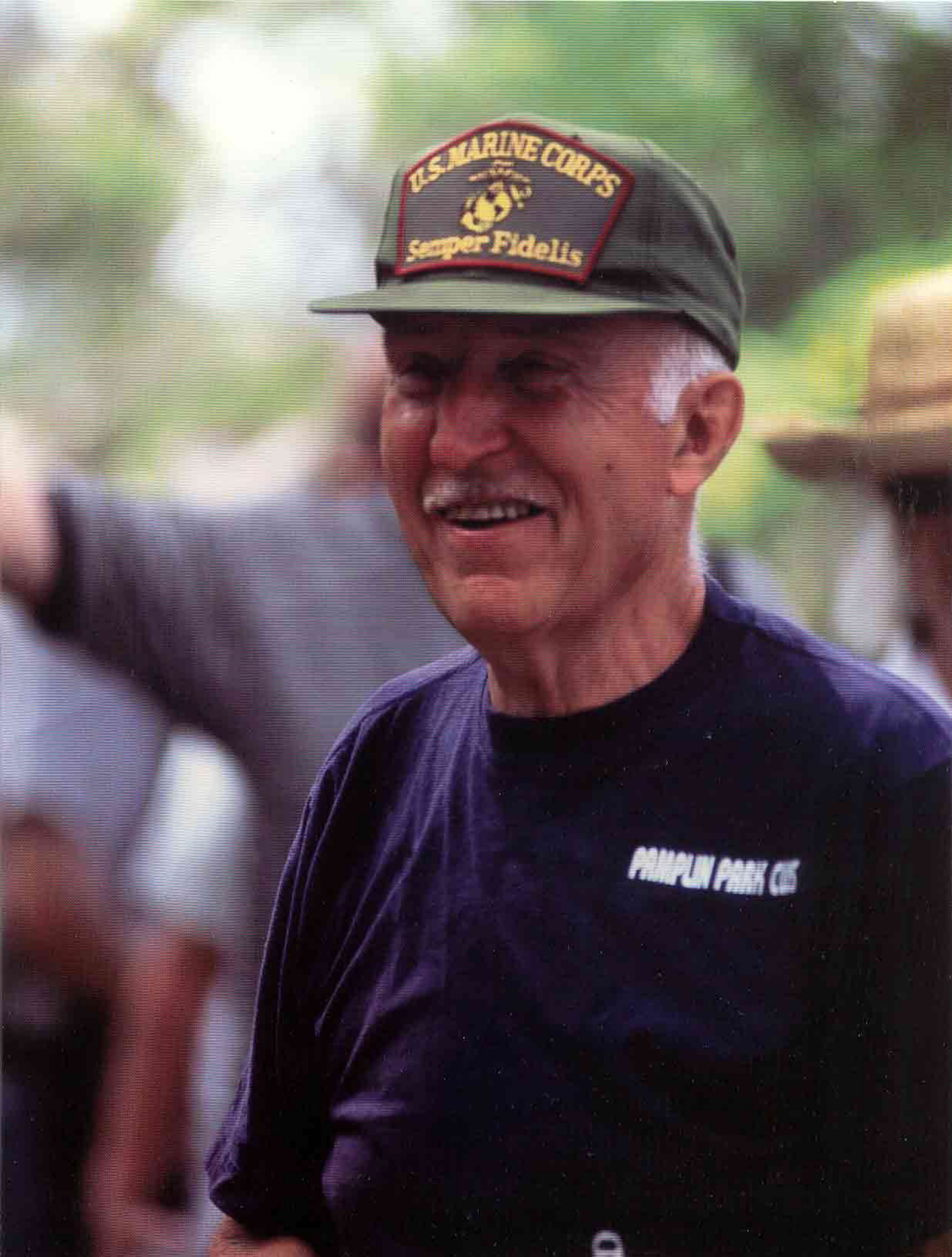
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