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# Mortars

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In July 1803, however, Morocco declared war following the failure to reach a settlement. Dissatisfied with the situation, Secretary Smith ordered Morris to relinquish his command to Captain Rodgers and return home.

A subsequent inquiry determined Morris had been insufficiently forceful in maintaining American interests in the Mediterranean. This was largely fueled by the testimony of Eaton, who returned to the United States earlier and charged Morris with a lack of "diligence and activity necessary to execute the important duties of his station."

Based on the findings of the inquiry, in May 1804 the navy revoked Morris's commission. Morris then wrote and published in August 1804 a spirited defense of his conduct, which contained the official documents of his negotiations, *A Defence of the Conduct of Commodore Morris during His Command in the Mediterranean*. Morris retired to Morrisania, where he engaged in family affairs and private business until his death on 13 May 1815.

See also TRIPOLITAN WAR.

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— Christopher S. Roman

**Morristown, New Jersey** (6 January–28 May 1777; 1 December 1779–22 June 1780) *Site of two Continental army winter encampments*

General George WASHINGTON twice selected Morristown, New Jersey, as the winter quarters for the Continental army. A small village of only some 50 houses, it nevertheless possessed several advantages of location. It was the center of a fertile agricultural area, well protected by a series of hills, and positioned on both occasions to threaten the British quartered mainly in and around New York City.

During the winter of 1777 Washington initiated a radical program of smallpox inoculation while in Morristown, which, combined with the soldiers' foraging, did little to endear them to the locals. Despite the army's rapid dwindling (down to 3,000 men in March), Washington maintained pressure on the British army. He kept up patrols to frustrate British foraging parties in New Jersey and kept his own troops busy. By spring recruiting had returned the army's strength to 8,000 men.

Although the suffering of the Continental army at VALLEY FORCE in 1777–78 is more well known, the winter spent in Morristown in 1779–80 proved much more severe.

With the British back in New York City, Morristown again assumed its role as winter quarters. The troops, now experienced at building their winter log cities, quickly threw up about 1,000 log huts chinked with clay. The weather turned bitter early, with four feet of snow piling up in December alone and New York's harbor freezing solid. The army's commissariat, despite its now hard-earned experience, struggled to deal with a devastating winter, a rapidly depreciating Continental currency, and the Continental Congress's abdication of responsibility to the states. Starvation became a real threat in the deepening winter. Washington for his part limited military activity, except for a raid on Staten Island in January (over the frozen harbor), and full operations did not resume until June.

See also AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR, LAND OVERVIEW.

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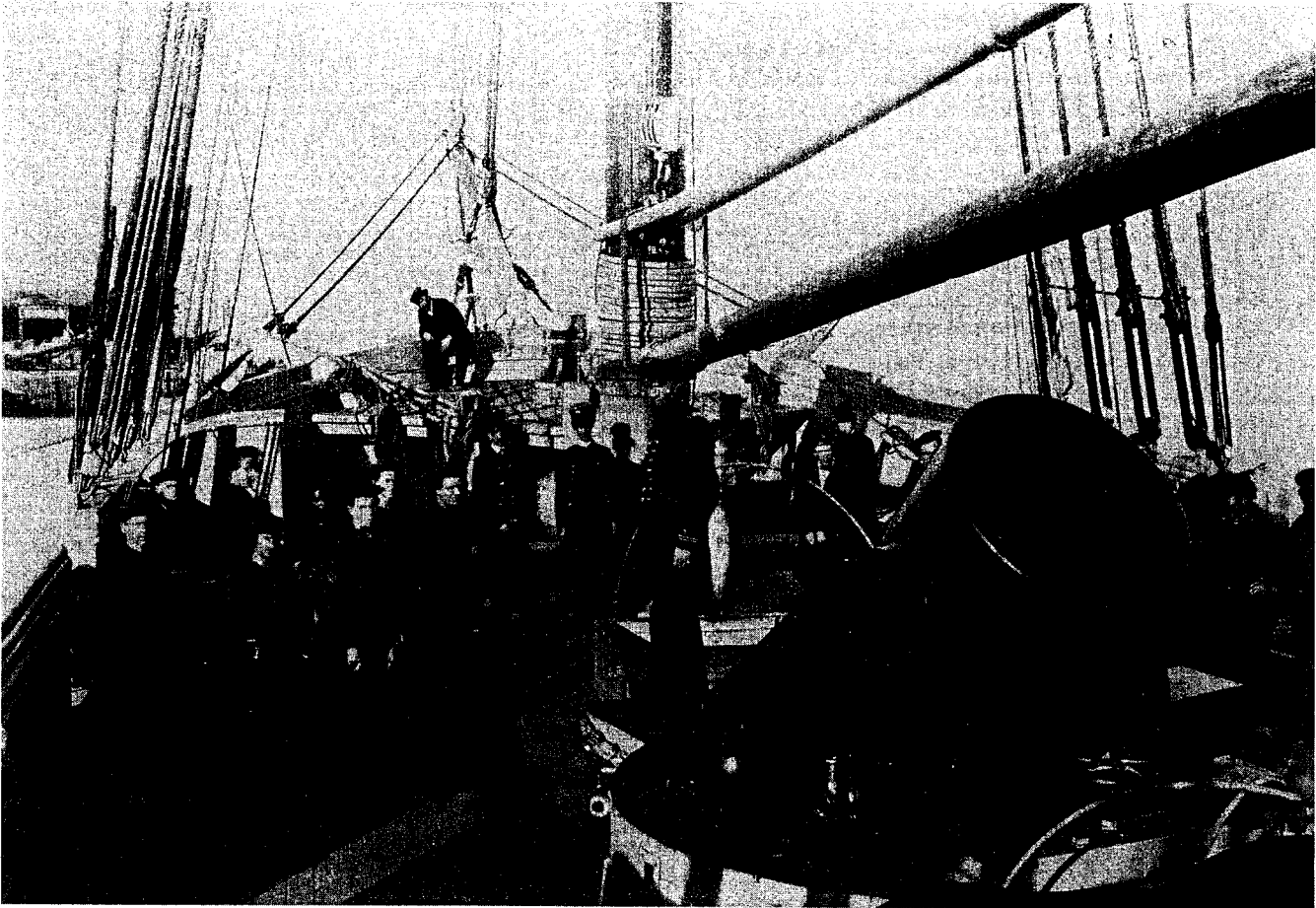
— Wayne E. Lee

**mortars** *Smooth-bore, high-angle fire weapons*

Mortars are normally employed when artillery and air strikes are either impractical and/or unavailable. Two families of mortars exist: essentially, early and modern. The first dates back to the 1453 siege of Constantinople and is based upon heavy bombardars. Typically, this form of mortar was used in slow, ponderous sieges and fell out of use by American forces after the CIVIL WAR.

During the AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR, U.S. forces used two types of heavy mortars. Both were 13-inch weapons firing a 200-pound shell. One type was composed of iron, weighed 4,030 pounds, and had a maximum range of 2,900 meters. The other type was composed of brass, weighed 2,800 pounds, and had a maximum range of 1,400 meters. Twelve heavy mortars were employed in the 1781 Siege of YORKTOWN.

During the Civil War, Union forces employed 13-inch sea coast, eight- and 10-inch siege, and smaller 4.62-inch (12-pounder) and 5.82-inch (24-pounder) Coehorn mortars. Coehorns utilized a wooden fuse plug and a paper time fuse. In 1865, during the siege of PETERSBURG, 13-inch mortars weighing 7.6 tons were employed. They fired a 200-pound shell, had a maximum range of 4,500 meters, and were mounted on flatbed railroad cars for greater mobility. Union naval forces also used the 13-inch mortars, mounted one mortar per schooner, for shore bombardment. Among other places, they were employed against



U.S. Navy 13-inch sea mortar mounted aboard a mortar schooner during the Civil War (Library of Congress)

ISLAND NO. 10 and the Mississippi forts guarding the southern approaches to NEW ORLEANS.

The second, or modern, family of mortars dates to trench warfare in WORLD WAR I and the advent of the British three-inch Stokes-type (stovepipe) mortar in 1915. It fired high-explosive shells. It was not until after the war, however, that tail-stabilizing fins were employed. Even though the shell tumbled in flight, it had a range of 900 meters. A four-inch version of this mortar also fired poison gas, thermite, and smoke shells. These weapons provided mobile infantry fire support and were of high value, along with grenades, in the trench fighting. Since U.S. forces were not properly prepared for this type of warfare, they relied upon British mortars and American copies. Along with the Stokes mortar, U.S. forces also used the British six-inch Newton mortar, which was organized in motorized batteries. It had a maximum range of 1,500 meters.

By WORLD WAR II modern mortars were widespread in U.S. forces and were divided into three types. These types have, for the most part, become the basis of U.S. mortar

employment over the last 50 years. The first type was the M-2 60 mm mortar, which was found at three per rifle company. It had a range of 1,800 meters and fired high-explosive, illuminating, smoke, and white phosphorous (WP) shells. The second type was the M-1 81 mm mortar, found at three per heavy weapons company of each infantry battalion. It fired the same shells as the M-2 and had a range of 2,900 meters. As with the M-2, the M-1 was man portable. The third type was the M-24 4.2-inch ("Four Deuce") mortar, organic to chemical units but which later made its way into the infantry. This 107 mm mortar fired a 12-pound shell, weighed more than 70 pounds, and had a range of 5,400 meters. Besides firing chemical and harassing agents, the M-24 also fired conventional rounds. It was normally carried by a mule (broken down) or a vehicle (broken down or assembled).

In 1951, during the KOREAN WAR, the M-30 4.2 inch (107 mm) replaced the M-24. It had a crew of six, could fire 20 rounds a minute, and had a range of 5,420 meters. Six 107 mm mortars were found in each infantry regiment. In

the 2d Chemical Mortar Battalion, there were nine 107 mm mortars (three per company). During one three-day battle in 1951 at HEARTBREAK RIDGE, more than 120,000 combined mortar rounds were fired by U.S. forces. During the VIETNAM WAR the 81 mm M-1 was mounted in the M577A1 troop carrier. The larger 107 mm mortar was emplaced in firebases and mounted in the M114A1 armored personnel carrier (APC). The smaller 60 mm mortar was more useful for patrols, but U.S. forces never matched Vietcong forces in their use of mortars.

Since the Vietnam War, U.S. Army and MARINE CORPS forces have incorporated the newer M224 60 mm mortar at company level. This weapon has a maximum range out to 3,490 meters and rate of fire of 30 rounds a minute. The newer M252 81 mm mortar is being employed by the mortar platoon of marine infantry battalions but not with army units. It has a maximum range of 5,700 meters and rate-of-fire of 33 rounds a minute. Finally, the 107 mm mortar has been replaced by a new, M121 120 mm mortar in army units and its use has been discontinued by marine units. The M121 mortar can be towed by a Humvee or mounted in the M1064 armored personnel carrier. It has a maximum range of 7,200 meters and rate of fire of 16 rounds per minute.

See also CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WARFARE.

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— Robert J. Bunker

**Mosby, John Singleton** (1833–1916) *Confederate partisan commander during the Civil War*

Born on 6 December 1833 at Charlottesville, Virginia, John Mosby graduated from the University of Virginia in 1852. In 1855 he was admitted to the bar and practiced law in Bristol, Virginia, until the beginning of the Civil War.

In May 1861 Mosby enlisted as a private in the 1st Virginia Cavalry. He saw action during the First Battle of BULL RUN/MANASSAS in July. The following year Mosby served as a scout for Brigadier General J. E. B. STUART's cavalry forces near Richmond. In January 1863 Mosby received Stuart's permission to launch guerrilla operations in northern Virginia. Mosby began with just nine men.

Mosby, who came to be known as the "Gray Ghost," achieved renown when on 9 March he and 29 men captured Brigadier General John H. Stoughton and 100 soldiers at Fairfax Court House, Virginia. For the next two years, Mosby's Rangers waged partisan warfare against Union posts in northern Virginia and Maryland, cutting

communications and disrupting supply lines. Mosby later estimated that he had kept some 30,000 Union troops away from fighting elsewhere.

At peak strength Mosby commanded two battalions of eight companies, some 800 men in all. Most operated in bands of 20 to 80 men each. Many men were attracted to Mosby by the lack of discipline. The Rangers furnished their own weapons, food, horses, and uniforms. At the end of a mission they scattered, only to link up at a predetermined site. Rangers divided captured goods among themselves, causing Union officials to regard them as criminals rather than soldiers. Lieutenant General Ulysses S. GRANT ordered that Mosby and his followers, when captured, be hanged without trial.

Mosby assisted General Robert E. LEE's Army of Northern Virginia by providing intelligence and capturing Union soldiers and large quantities of arms, equipment, horses, and supplies. In December 1864 Mosby was promoted to colonel. On 21 April 1865, he disbanded his command, refusing to surrender until June.

Following the war, Mosby returned to practice law in Warrenton, Virginia, and eventually worked in the federal government. He served as a consul in Hong Kong from 1878 to 1885, in the General Land Office, and as an attorney in the Department of Justice from 1904 to 1910. He wrote two books about his Civil War experiences: *Mosby's War Reminiscences and Stuart's Cavalry Campaigns* (1887) and *Stuart's Cavalry in the Gettysburg Campaign* (1908). Mosby died in Washington, D.C., on 30 May 1916.

See also CAVALRY; CIVIL WAR, LAND OVERVIEW.

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— Alexander Mendoza

**Murphy, Audie L.** (1924–1971) *America's most decorated World War II combat soldier*

Born on 20 June 1924 near Kingston, Texas, Audie Leon Murphy was the seventh of 12 children (nine surviving) in a poor sharecropper family. His father abandoned the family when Murphy was 12, and the boy had to quit school to work on a neighbor's farm. A crack shot, he augmented the family diet by hunting rabbits.

In 1941, when Murphy was 16, his mother died. To keep the family together he took a second job, working at a gas station and general store. When America entered World War II in December 1941 he tried to enlist in the