

B&C CONSER

MEMBER PROFILE:

Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. (1887-1945)

By Leonard H. Wurman B&C Regular Member



Boone and Crockett Club founder Theodore Roosevelt's heroics in Cuba during the Spanish-American War vaulted him into the New York governor's

mansion and subsequently the White House.

TR had four sons, all of whom displayed the same wartime courage and occasional recklessness as their father. The eldest, Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., or Ted, was born on September 13, 1887.

TR preached the strenuous life to his boys, often leading them on difficult hikes and swims to strengthen both body and spirit. Young Ted was given his first rifle at age ten, a .22 that his father imprudently

tested by firing into an upstairs bathroom ceiling. At 13, Ted received a 16-gauge shotgun and accompanied his father duck hunting on Long Island. TR sent Ted to the Adirondacks one summer to learn from the aging naturalist John Burroughs.

TR drove both himself and his children to challenge themselves and achieve. As a result, ten-year-old Ted developed headaches and anxiety symptoms. At a doctor's suggestion, Ted lived with an aunt for a while and his symptoms disappeared.

TR shared his pugnacious militarism with his children. Young Ted was often present when dinner guests discussed world and military matters. Reports of his father's heroism in Cuba enthralled the boy.

Ted initially attended the Cove Neck School near Sagamore Hill and made many lifelong friends of working-class families. He later attended private boarding schools and hoped to attend either West Point or Annapolis. However, TR, who had a poor impression of many career officers,

opined that Ted should attend Harvard. Ted, who weighed less than 150 pounds, made second string on the varsity football team. He initially was a gentleman-C student, but a castigating letter from his father intimidated Ted to earn his way onto the dean's list and graduate a year early.

Shortly after graduation, Ted married the woman who became the "other Eleanor Roosevelt." He refused his family's financial aid and found his first job with a carpet manufacturer in San Francisco. In 1912, he moved back to New York, where he worked for a banking firm and two years later became a partner in a Philadelphia investment bank. He joined the Boone and Crockett Club in 1917.

When World War I broke out in Europe in 1914, both TR and Ted argued for military preparedness and for the U.S. to enter the war in support of the allies. With the support of TR's old Cuban commander, General Leonard Wood, Ted organized a volunteer officers training camp from which he and two brothers, Archie and Quentin, graduated.

World War I

TR urged his former Cuban comrade, General John Pershing, now commander of the American Expeditionary Force, to let Ted and Archie join the AEF right away. Ted, at age 30, and Archie, 7 years his junior, sailed to France to join the infantry in June 1917.

All four of TR's sons fought bravely. His Majesty's (British) Forces commissioned

PORTRAIT OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT AND HIS FOUR SONS, KERMIT, ARCHIBALD, QUENTIN, AND THEODORE, JR. INSET BELOW: HARVARD UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL PLAYER, THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR., JOGGING WITH OTHER FOOTBALL PLAYERS ON THE ATHLETIC FIELD - CIRCA 1905 .



NATIONISTS

28-year-old Kermit to fight the Turks in Mesopotamia, where he was awarded the British War Cross for gallantry. When the Mesopotamian theater was finished, Kermit joined the AEF artillery in France.

The youngest brother, Quentin, faked his vision exam by memorizing the eye chart and joined the Army Air Corp. He was extremely congenial and popular, but his flying skills were not as highly regarded.

To the consternation of his European allies, Pershing would not bring the AEF into battle until his forces were adequately prepared and exceeded 1 million soldiers. Ted was assigned to train the new troops.

Ted's wife Eleanor left her three children with family in New York and established a YMCA canteen for American soldiers in Paris. She lived in the home of a relative who had left for America to avoid the war's rationing. This spacious house became a retreat for the Roosevelt boys when on leave or convalescing. Ted, at his own expense, used Eleanor to purchase food and sports equipment for his men.

The Roosevelt boys paid a high price when American troops saw action in 1918. In

March, shrapnel shattered Archie's kneecap and broke his arm. He received the French Croix de Guerre and a total disability.

In May, the Germans began a counteroffensive. Ted's force, reputed to be the best-trained American brigade, repulsed the center of the attack, but was heavily gassed. For several weeks afterward, Ted could only sleep sitting, yet he never sought medical help.

Quentin finally saw action in July and downed a German plane on the 11th. Three days later, flying "tail-end Charlie" for his squadron, he peeled out alone to intercept pursuing Fokkers under the command of Hermann Göring and was killed in action.

In August, a bullet penetrated Ted's lower right thigh. He hobbled off the field,

hitched a ride in a motorcycle sidecar, and had a friend drive him in a borrowed car to Eleanor's house in Paris, where he requested a meal and champagne. Rejecting his delirious demands, Eleanor took Ted to the hospital where his wounds were cleansed.

In his typical machismo fashion, Ted exaggerated the extent of his recovery, reported back to the front, and was promoted to Lt. Colonel. His father, however, was in ailing health and died two months after the war ended in November.

Politics

Ted was part of the army of occupation where, along with fellow officers, he planned



TOP: SECRETARY OF WAR JOHN WEEKS, PRESIDENT CALVIN COOLIDGE, AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR., AT THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER ON ARMISTICE DAY IN 1923. MIDDLE: IMAGE OF SERGEANT JAKE ALEX STANDING WITH LIEUTENANT COLONEL THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR., AND AN UNIDENTIFIED MAN IN CHICAGO IN 1919. BOTTOM: MR. AND MRS. THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR., STANDING IN FRONT OF A PASSENGER TRAIN CAR IN A RAILROAD STATION WITH A MAN IN UNIFORM IN 1929.

B&C CONSERVATIONISTS

MEMBER PROFILE: Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.



IN 1925 KERMIT, SECOND FROM LEFT, AND TED, SECOND FROM RIGHT, EXPLORED TURKISTAN. THEY ARE PICTURED ABOVE WITH THEIR SHIKARIES AT SRINAGAR UPON THEIR RETURN. INSET: KERMIT AND TED HOLDING A BEAR SKIN RUG IN 1929.

a peacetime organization to maintain the army's post-war camaraderie and patriotism. Within nine months, Congress chartered the American Legion, with nearly 6,000 posts. For the rest of his life, Ted vigorously supported veterans' activities.

In 1919, Ted was elected to the New York Assembly. The following year, he campaigned against the Democratic presidential ticket on which his distant cousin, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, ran for vice-president.

President Harding appointed Ted as assistant secretary of the Navy, a post both TR and FDR had held. The president directed Ted to dismantle many of the same ships his father's administration had constructed, but Congress rejected his plan. Fearing the rise of Japanese sea power, Ted oversaw the conversion of several ships into "aircraft carriers" and the con-

struction of eight cruisers and three prototype submarines.

Although he was exonerated, Ted's reputation was tarnished when he was painted with the broad brush of the Teapot Dome scandal. When he ran unsuccessfully for New York governor, FDR's wife, the more famous Eleanor Roosevelt, campaigned against him in a vehicle with a teapot on top. Her antics aggrieved Ted; not only was Eleanor his first cousin, but after her father's untimely death, TR had taken his late brother's child under his wing, and she had spent many days with the family at Sagamore Hill.

Hunting Asia

In 1925, Ted recruited Kermit and, financed by Chicago's Field Museum, explored and hunted in Turkistan. In 7 months, they collected 2,000 specimens of birds, reptiles, and small mammals, 8 *Ovis poli* sheep, and 70 specimens of other large mammals. They also took two tigers in Nepal. Their book, *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*, describes the expedition.

Ted hunted China in 1928 for the giant panda, an animal rarely seen by a Caucasian, and whose existence some naturalists doubted. Ted and another partner collected more than 5,000 bird and reptile specimens, as well as 2,000 small-mammal and 40 large-mammal specimens, including one giant panda.

Territorial Governors

President Herbert Hoover appointed Ted the governor of Puerto Rico, a territorial island struggling with poverty, unemployment, disease, and malnutrition. Ted encouraged agricultural self-sufficiency and revamped the educational system to emphasize technical training. When the 1931 banking crises started a run on local banks, Ted deposited \$100,000 of his own money to curtail the panic.

After three years in Puerto Rico, President Hoover designated Ted the governor-general of the Philippines. The United States needed the Philippines to confront German adventurism and Japan's continued expansion of its Pacific sphere of influence. Philippine independence was expected within a few years, and all parties respected Ted and wanted him reappointed. But Ted's live 1932 trans-Pacific radio address to the nation in support of Hoover's reelection incensed FDR who, after winning the presidency, dismissed Ted.

Back in the States

Returning home, Ted served on the board of Chase National Bank and subsequently became chairman of the American Express Company. He was heavily involved in charitable work, becoming a vice president of the Boy Scouts and serving on the boards of the NAACP and the National Conference of Christian and Jews.

After a successful jaguar hunt in Brazil in 1935, Ted joined the Doubleday publishing company to specifically develop books on world affairs. In 1938, he and Eleanor moved into "Old Orchard," the home they built at Sagamore Hill and which is now a museum.

In 1940, Ted joined the America First Committee, an isolationist organization founded by Charles Lindbergh to keep the United States out of the developing European war. But when he learned that Lindbergh was anti-Semitic and a Nazi sympathizer, and that three-fourths of the AFC's million members would refuse to enlist even if the United States was drawn into the war, Ted quit the organization.

World War II

Ted appealed to his old friend, Army Chief of Staff George Marshall, to leave the reserves and return to active duty. At age 54, Ted was promoted to brigadier general in his old First Division. His son, Quentin Roosevelt II, joined him as a second lieutenant. The Roosevelt feud ended when FDR invited Ted to the White House.

Ted's brothers also enlisted. Kermit, 51, initially joined the British Army, but when they found that his chronic alcoholism had caused cirrhosis, he was discharged. As a consolation to the family, FDR accepted Kermit into the Army Air Corp and sent him to Alaska, where on June 3, 1943, Kermit put his Army Colt .45 beneath his chin and ended his life.

Archie, 48, was commissioned a lieutenant colonel and served in the Pacific theatre. In January 1944, he received a wound to the same knee shattered in World War I and became the only serviceman to receive two 100 percent disabilities.

Ted and his son participated in the invasion of North Africa. When the allies laid siege to the city of Oran, and total destruction appeared the only way to victory, Ted hung a dirty T-shirt as a flag of truce, drove into the city, and arranged the surrender.

Shortly after that, Quentin II was severely wounded by a strafing bullet and was awarded the Silver Star and the Croix de Guerre. It was four months before he could be evacuated home. Once healthy, he returned to England.

Unarmed and under a flag of truce, Ted went ashore on the island of Sardinia and convinced an Italian parachute division to surrender. He was next appointed liaison to the French Expeditionary Force invading Italy. The words "Rough Rider" were painted below the windshield on his jeep, and he received his second Croix de Guerre.

D-Day

Transferred to Britain, Ted appealed to General Omar Bradley to accompany the expected invasion of France. He refused hospitalization for pneumonia for fear of missing the assault.

Ted was not healthy. He walked with a cane and kept secret his chest pains. Disdaining helmets and wearing a knit cap, Ted was on the first craft to hit Utah Beach on D-day. The officers, realizing they were a mile from the planned landing site, debated whether to relocate

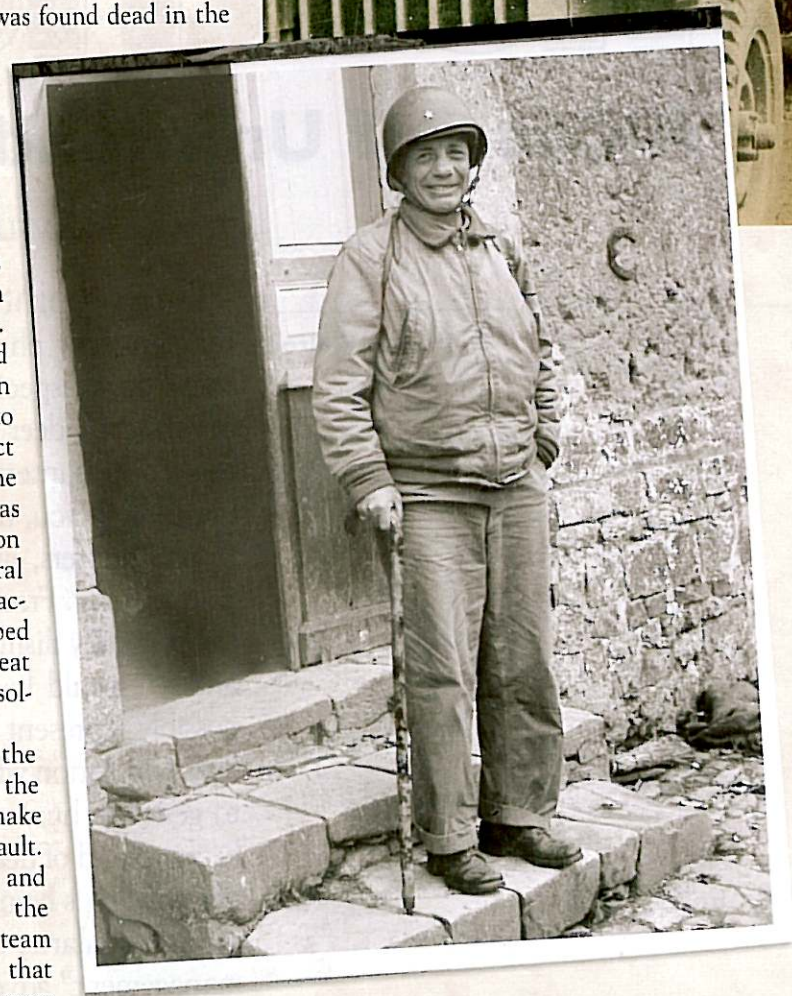
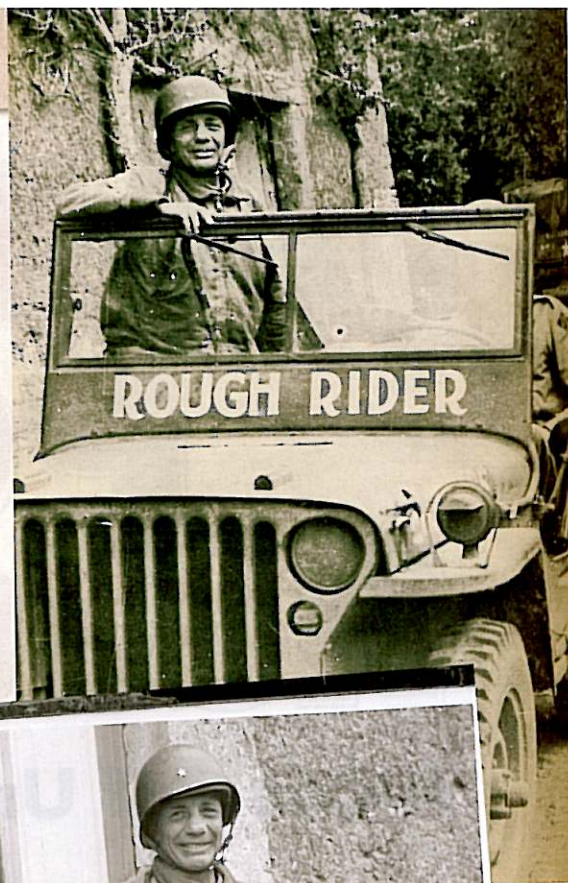
down the beach. Legend has it that Ted ordered, "We'll start the war right here," and hobbled with his troops inland.

After he led one group into the hills, he was back on the beach bringing another group up, recklessly giving encouragement and rousing laggards, and using his cane to both walk and brandish. When Cherbourg fell, Ted was appointed military commander, but lusted for action and shortly rejoined his troops. His promotion to major general in command of the 90th Division was awaiting Eisenhower's signature when Ted paid the price of ignoring his cardiac symptoms. After a two-and-a-half hour visit with his son on the evening of July 11, 1944, Ted returned to his lodging. He was found dead in the morning.

It was on Bastille Day that Ted was laid to rest in the French soil he so vigorously defended through two wars. Generals Bradley and Patton were pall bearers. Years after World War II ended, when Bradley was asked to name the bravest act he had witnessed, he responded that it was General Roosevelt on Utah Beach. General Patton was more accurate. He described Ted this way: "Great courage, but no soldier."

Ted was the oldest soldier and the only general to make the D-day assault. Additionally, he and Quentin II were the only father-son team that went ashore that day. Ted earned more medals for bravery in the two World Wars than any other officer, became World War II's most decorated officer, and received the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously.

President Roosevelt's wife Edith outlived her husband and three of her four sons. All three died in uniform. TR and his boys were often praised for bravery, but condemned for imprudence. The apples didn't fall far from the tree. ■



THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR., PICTURED IN HIS "ROUGH RIDER" JEEP IN 1944 — NOTE THE BULLET HOLE IN THE WINDSHIELD. BOTTOM: GENERAL THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR., POSES BEFORE THE DOOR TO HIS COMMAND POST WHILE ON ACTIVE SERVICE SOMEWHERE IN FRANCE IN 1944.

© BETTMAN/CORBIS