

Donald D. Blackburn:

World War II
Guerrilla Leader &
Special Operations
Plank Holder

By Kenneth Finlayson

On 24 May 2008 Brigadier General Donald D. Blackburn passed away at his home in Sarasota, Florida. During a career that spanned more than thirty years, Blackburn was instrumental in the development and application of special operations doctrine in the Army. His involvement in special operations began in 1942 when he and Major Russell W. Volckmann refused to surrender to the Japanese in the Philippines. In the late 1950s and early 1960s he served in Vietnam as a provincial advisor and was the commander of the 77th Special Forces Group. He returned to Vietnam in 1965 as the second commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam-Studies and Observation Group (MACV-SOG). He concluded his career in special operations as the Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities (SACSA) in the Office of the Secretary of Defense where he was the architect of the Son Tay prisoner of war rescue mission. This article will briefly trace his career and show the impact Blackburn had on Army Special Operations.

Born on 14 September 1916 in West Palm Beach, Florida, Second Lieutenant (2LT) Blackburn was commissioned in the Army Reserve from the University of Florida in 1938. After less than two years at Georgetown University Law School in Washington, DC, he sought and accepted an active duty assignment in the Infantry. In September 1940 Blackburn was assigned to the 24th Infantry Regiment at Fort Benning, Georgia as the communications officer. The 24th Infantry was a segregated black regiment with white



COL Russell W. Volckmann, the advisor to the Philippines 11th Infantry Regiment. Volckmann and Blackburn organized the guerrilla groups in Northern Luzon.

officers. During the summer of 1941, the 24th Infantry Regiment took part in the Louisiana Maneuvers, the largest of the pre-War Army field exercises. By October 1941, LT Blackburn had orders to serve as an adviser to the Philippine Army, then under the command of retired Major General (MG) Douglas A. MacArthur.¹

In the Philippines, First Lieutenant (1LT) Blackburn was to advise the headquarters battalion of the 12th Infantry Regiment located at Baguio, 175 miles north of Manila on the island of Luzon.²



24th Infantry Regimental DUI



U.S. Army Forces in the Philippines, North Luzon Patch

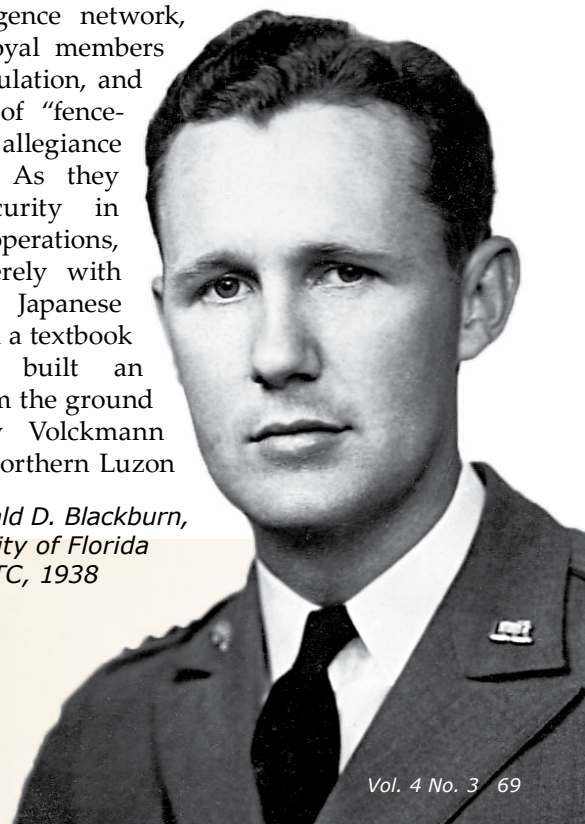
Training the ill-equipped and poorly-led conscripts proved to be a daunting task. The Japanese Army invaded the Philippines on 8 December 1941, landing on Luzon and Mindanao. On Luzon, major forces landed at Lingayen Gulf and rapidly forced the American and Philippine forces back onto the Bataan Peninsula. War Plan Orange, the U.S. plan for the defense of the Philippines dictated a defensive stand on Bataan.³ The commander of the Philippine battalion relinquished his command to Blackburn, who tried to stop a Japanese amphibious landing force. After firing the first shots, Blackburn's raw troops fled in panic and he was forced to collect the unit and head towards Bataan.

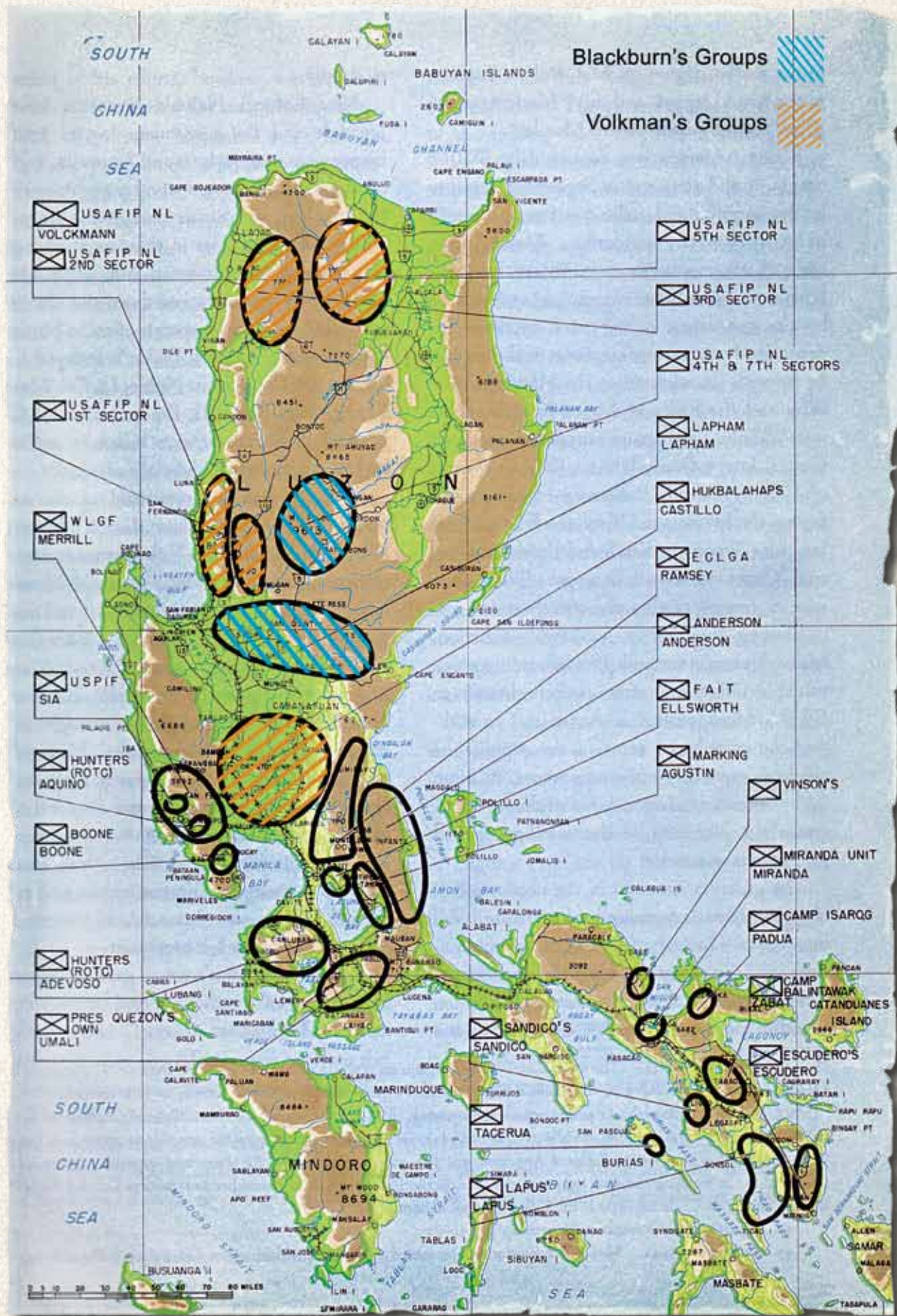
As the Japanese onslaught continued, Blackburn and MAJ Volckmann, the advisor to the Philippine 11th Infantry Regiment, decided that rather than surrender as LTG Jonathan M. Wainwright, the commander of U.S. Forces in the Philippines had ordered, they should evade capture and escape to the northern mountains of Luzon.⁴ They broached their plan to Major General William E. Brougher, commander of the 11th Division (Philippine Army), who remarked that were he a younger man, he would pursue the same course.⁵ That evening, as surrender bonfires were lit around the U.S. perimeter, Blackburn and Volckmann crept through the porous lines and fled north with the intent of working their way into the mountains. They were ill-prepared for the arduous journey to come.

What followed was a harrowing trek that took the two across the vast central plain of Luzon and into the foothills. Moving cautiously and frequently delayed by recurring attacks of malaria, the pair finally got sanctuary with the primitive Igorote tribes more than two months later.⁶ For the next three years, Blackburn and Volckmann would organize guerrilla forces in northern Luzon.

Under Volckmann's leadership, the two men first built an intelligence network, identified the loyal members of the local population, and gained control of "fence-sitters" whose allegiance was uncertain. As they established security in their area of operations, they dealt severely with informants and Japanese sympathizers. In a textbook example they built an insurgency "from the ground up." Eventually Volckmann organized the Northern Luzon

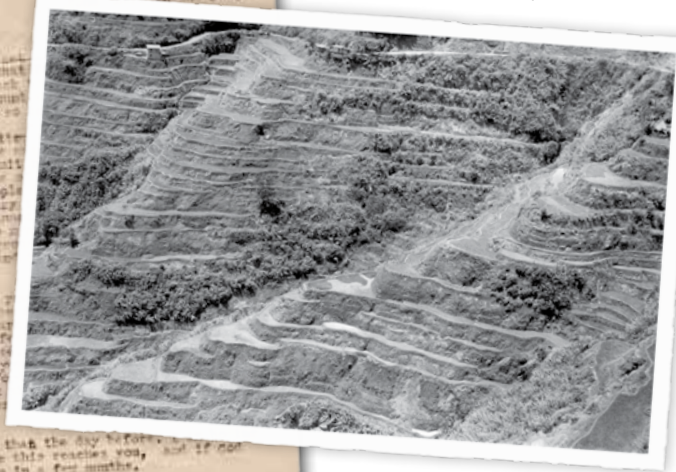
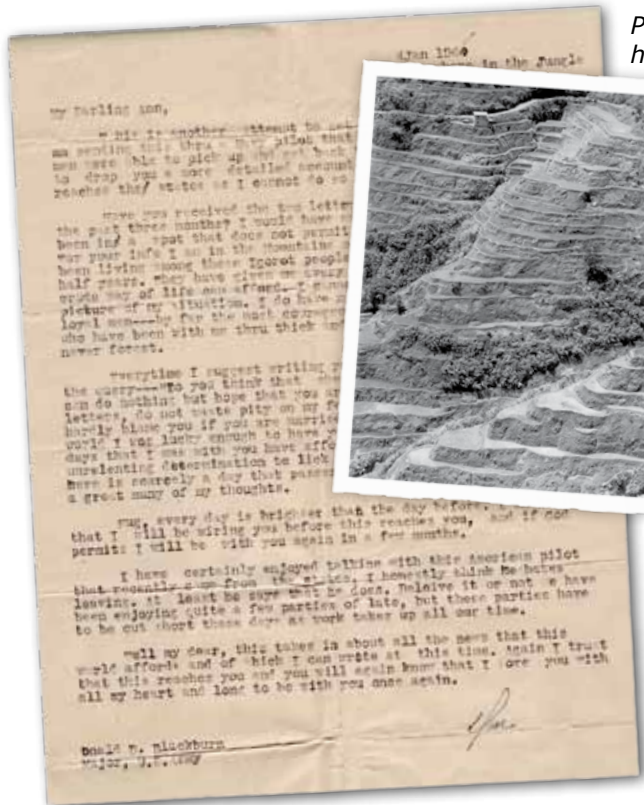
Cadet Donald D. Blackburn, University of Florida ROTC, 1938





The guerrilla organizations in the Philippines. COL Russell W. Volckmann organized the Northern Luzon into seven regiments. LTC Donald D. Blackburn was in command of the 4th and 7th Regiments at the end of the war. Other guerrilla units were controlled by Americans who refused to surrender.

Personal letter from MAJ Blackburn to his future wife Ann, 4 June 1944



The rugged terrain in Northern Luzon protected Blackburn and his guerrillas from the Japanese. The steep, terraced hillsides and thick jungle made rapid movement difficult for the Japanese Army.



LTC Donald D. Blackburn in Luzon, 1945.

Japanese and positively on the guerrillas.”⁹ The men who remained behind in the Philippines along with Blackburn, including COL Volckmann and COL Wendell W. Fertig, (leader of the guerrilla forces on Mindanao) later became a select coterie who, working at the Infantry School and with BG Robert A. McClure, were instrumental in developing unconventional warfare doctrine and special operations organization.¹⁰

LTC Blackburn was retained in the Regular Army at the end of the war, one of a very few of the tens of thousands of reserve officers who served. After a six-month orientation/update course at the various branch schools for former POWs and guerrilla fighters, he became the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (Intelligence) and Provost Marshall for the Military District of Washington. In September 1947 he attended the Infantry Officer Advanced Course at Fort Benning, Georgia.



POW Orientation Class, Ft. Bliss, Texas, 15 May 1946. LTC Blackburn is in the back row, 5th from right.

guerrilla forces into seven regions. Blackburn was in charge of the fourth and seventh.⁷ By 1945, Blackburn, now a lieutenant colonel, reformed the 11th Infantry Regiment and his troops supported the U.S. 6th Infantry Division in routing the Japanese from their last strongholds in northern Luzon.⁸ These soldiers were incorporated into the Regular Philippine Army after the Japanese surrender in August 1945.

The lessons that Blackburn learned about organizing a resistance, training, and supplying a guerrilla element had a major impact on him for the rest of his career. As Blackburn described it, “The earlier American fiasco had taught us that our own fate was linked to that of the local population and their support was absolutely essential to our effectiveness; from that time on, we fostered their support in every way we could. We conducted an effective information program that reflected adversely on the

“...our own fate was linked to that of the local population and their support was absolutely essential to our effectiveness;”

—LTC Blackburn, 1945

His student paper entitled “The Operations of the 11th Infantry, USAFIP, NL in the Capture of Mayomayo Mt, Province of Luzon, P.I., 26 July – 8 August 1945” explained guerrilla operations in the Philippines during World War II.¹¹

The 34-year old LTC Blackburn completed Basic Airborne Training at Fort Benning enroute to the United



COL Blackburn, Commander of the 3rd Training Regiment and Miss South Carolina inspect the troops of the regiment at Fort Jackson, South Carolina.

States Military Academy at West Point. While there, the Commandant of Cadets, MG Paul D. Harkins, persuaded Blackburn to publish his memoirs of the Philippines. This was not difficult as he had already been sharing his experiences with the soon-to-be commissioned lieutenants headed for Korea. The result was the 1955 best-seller *Blackburn's Headhunters*.¹² "He was always deeply engaged in the psychological aspects of guerrilla warfare, and as an instructor in the Department of Military Psychology, he was able to pass along his expertise to the cadets," said author Shelby Stanton.¹³

Blackburn attended the Armed Forces Staff College in 1953 before assignment to NATO Allied Forces Northern Europe in Oslo, Norway. Newly promoted Colonel Blackburn returned to the United States in August 1956 to command the 3rd Training Regiment at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Following this command Blackburn was sent to the Military Assistance Advisory Group, South Vietnam at the time of the Geneva Accords.¹⁴

Blackburn became the Senior Advisor to the 5th Military Region Commander for a year. The 5th Region encompassed the Mekong Delta in the south. There he dealt with a hodge-podge of South Vietnamese Army, Civil Guard (Vietnamese National Guard) and Territorial (Vietnamese Reserve) units under different commanders. There was no unified national strategy to deal with the Viet Cong insurgency. The units lacked training and equipment. During this tour he returned to the Philippines as the technical advisor for the filming of the movie "Surrender - Hell!" based on his exploits in the Philippines. Blackburn would later regret his affiliation with the film.¹⁵ Though unable to influence much in the Delta, this tour introduced him to the Vietnamese problem. Blackburn returned to Washington DC in September 1958 to take command of the 77th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, NC.

Among his training programs with the 77th was to have Special Forces Operational Detachments-Alpha (ODAs) train Advanced Infantry Training (AIT) companies from Fort Jackson. The 77th also conducted extensive partnership training with the Army National Guard 20th Special Forces Group in Utah. Blackburn's intent was to prepare his teams for their core mission, the training of indigenous personnel as infantrymen. While commanding the 77th,



L to R. Francisco Dulnuan, Keith Andes, Imicpao and Blackburn in the Philippines during the filming of "Surrender -Hell!" Andes played the role of Blackburn. Imicpao was one of Blackburn's guides during the war.



As commander of the 77th Special Forces Group COL Blackburn deployed Special Forces troops to Southeast Asia.

he again became heavily engaged in operations in Southeast Asia.

Beginning as the classified HOTFOOT mission, Operation WHITE STAR was the first significant employment of Special Forces to a foreign country facing an active counter-insurgency. The Laotian Government requested assistance from the United States to train the Royal Laotian Army to counter the growing threat of the Communist Pathet Lao. The French Army was already in Laos ostensibly providing training in infantry tactics. The initial call-up of Special Forces, as remembered by COL Blackburn, went thus:



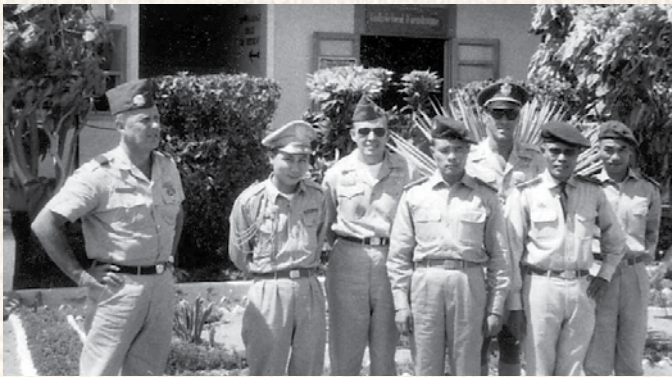
United States Military Academy, Instructor, DUI



77th Special Forces Group DUI



White Star MAAG Laos Patch



COL Blackburn in South Vietnam in 1965. Beginning with his tour as Senior Advisor to the 5th Military Region in 1957 and culminating with his role in the 1970 Son Tay Raid, Blackburn was continually involved with special operations in the Vietnam War.

In 1959 there was a call from the Pentagon to Colonel George Jones who was the commanding officer of the Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg. He called me and said 'The question is, how soon can you get Special Forces into Laos?' And I said 72 hours. I heard him tell the Pentagon, 'I'll call you back.' He said, 'Get over here.' So I went over to see him. And he said, 'How are

you going to get them there within 72 hours?' I said, Number One, the Pentagon will never be prepared to let us move in 72 hours. And, I said, put the onus on them, not on you. Well, we went in six months later.¹⁶

Nine Special Forces ODAs deployed on the first rotation under LTC Arthur D. "Bull" Simons, the former company commander in the World War II 6th Ranger Battalion; Ultimately, WHITE STAR would continue until 1962 and end with the declaration of Laotian neutrality.¹⁷ The White Star mission was one of the earliest deployments of Special Forces to Southeast Asia and was the training ground for many of the Special Forces soldiers prior to their going to Vietnam.

Almost simultaneously with the Laotian alert, Blackburn was summoned to Saigon to meet with Lieutenant General Samuel T. "Hanging Sam" Williams, the Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) commander in Vietnam. LTG Williams was looking for a solution to the politically sensitive problem of introducing American military advisors to improve the Vietnamese training in the military regions. Colonel Blackburn had faced this issue in 1957-58. Blackburn organized a 4-week Ranger training program conducted at three locations by 77th SFG ODAs.¹⁸ It proved very successful. For over a year the program produced highly-trained Ranger units for the Army of Vietnam (ARVN). When Blackburn returned to Vietnam in 1965, he discovered that the Ranger units had been disbanded and the well-trained soldiers spread throughout the ARVN.¹⁹ Shortly before he relinquished command, the 77th was redesignated the 7th Special Forces Group.

After attending the Army War College, Blackburn was the Deputy Director of Development for Special Warfare in the Office of the Chief of Research and Development, Department of the Army (OCRD). This placed Blackburn in a position to influence special operations doctrine and equipment.

Special Forces was growing in size with the addition of the 5th, 6th, and 8th Special Forces Groups and taking an increasingly active role in Vietnam. Blackburn was an active participant in this expansion. He made regular visits to Vietnam and to Fort Bragg, NC, where he met



The Ho Chi Minh Trail was an extensive network of roads and trails that formed the logistical lifeline for the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army forces in South Vietnam.



Communist forces using Russian trucks to move supplies down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Interdiction of the trail was a major mission of MACV-SOG.



MAAG-Vietnam
SSI

with BG William P. Yarborough, the commander of the Special Warfare Center, and other members of the Special Forces community. In May 1965 he was again actively applying his expertise in combat in Vietnam.

One of the most intractable problems confronting the U.S. and South Vietnamese armies was an inability to gather intelligence on North Vietnamese Army (NVA) movements and to interdict the support to the Viet Cong via the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The trail paralleled the western border of South Vietnam in Cambodia and Laos and was the primary logistical route used to supply and reinforce the Viet Cong and NVA in the south. Project LEAPING LENA, a program under CIA direction, inserted Special Forces-trained reconnaissance teams into Laos. This was an abject failure. Out of this grew the Military Assistance Command Vietnam-Studies and Observation Group (MACV-SOG). Blackburn was the second commander of SOG.²⁰ Blackburn's task was to reinstitute cross-border operations, under the code name Operation SHINING BRASS.²¹

"Well, when they put LEAPING LENA in there, that was a complete fiasco. I don't think any of them came back . . . After that all cross-border operations were stopped. When I took over SOG, I thought why not try to get that opened up again and do it in a little different way," said Blackburn.²² Blackburn and his staff (including LTC Bull Simons) developed a comprehensive list of over 500 suspected enemy targets that identified the trail networks. With this in hand, Blackburn brought in General (GEN) William Westmoreland, the MACV commander to show him the magnitude of the infiltration and supply network.

"I called Westmoreland and asked him if he could drop by with General [MG Joseph H.] Moore who had 7th Air Force, and General [MG William E.] DePuy the J-3. . . They were kind of shocked that we had so many of them that you could see through that jungle . . . I later got a call from [MG Joseph A.] McChristian the J-2 who asked me how we were going to prove what was there. The first 45 teams we sent in there all paid off. . . [MSG] Dick Meadows brought out artillery fire control equipment from one of those targets."²³

From this beginning in 1966, SOG operations would expand to include cross-border forays into Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam and the maritime insertion of agents on the North Vietnamese coast. Under Blackburn, Colonel Sully Fontaine developed a program to recruit Montagnard tribesmen in an effort to increase the human intelligence (HUMINT) capability of SOG.²⁴ "Blackburn built MACV-SOG into a full-service special operations organization," said Dr. Richard H. Schultz Jr.²⁵ Blackburn turned over command of MACV-SOG to COL John K. Singlaub. It was back to the Pentagon as the Assistant Deputy Director for Intelligence and Evaluation in the newly created Defense Communications Planning Group (DCPG).

The DCPG was tasked to develop and evaluate remote sensing devices for use along the borders. Blackburn, having just left command of the unit most involved with



COL Blackburn (left) visits a MACV-SOG field location in Vietnam. As the commander of MACV-SOG, Blackburn restarted the cross-border operations that had been terminated with the failure of the LEAPING LENA program.



President Lyndon B. Johnson visited Fort Bragg to farewell the 3rd Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division as it deployed to Vietnam in February 1968. COL Blackburn, the ADC-S is at the far right.

cross-border operations, provided cogent comments on the construction of the United State's ground sensor-based "McNamara Wall."²⁶ Blackburn remained with the DCPG until September 1967 when he was reassigned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

As the Assistant Division Commander for Support (ADC-S) 82nd Airborne Division, he was charged with preparing the 3rd Brigade for deployment to Vietnam. In May 1968 Blackburn became the Assistant Division Commander for Operations (ADC-O), and was promoted to Brigadier General, and directed 82nd units sent to quell



MACV-SOG Patch



82nd Airborne Division SSI



BG Blackburn was the Assistant Division Commander for Operations when the 82nd again deployed during the civil unrest in Washington, DC in April 1968.

the civil unrest and demonstrations in Washington DC. This led to the publication of a manual (now FM 3-19) for handling civil disturbances. In 1970 he returned to special operations as the Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities in the Office of the Secretary of Defense (SACSA).²⁷ The SACSA supervised all SOG activities and streamlined the approval process for SOG missions while by-passing the normal bureaucratic chain.²⁸ As the SACSA, he played a pivotal role in one of the most significant special operations of the Vietnam War. Blackburn was the architect of Operation IVORY COAST.

On 21 November 1970, U.S. Army Special Forces led by COL Arthur D. "Bull" Simons, assaulted the infamous Son Tay Prison 20 miles northwest of the North Vietnamese capitol of Hanoi. The lightning raid was to rescue 70 American prisoners of war in the camp. Unbeknownst to the raiders, the prisoners had been transferred to another facility because the Son Tay compound, along a river, was in danger of being flooded by the summer monsoon. Despite the swift and skillful execution of the raid, the force returned empty-handed.

As the SACSA, BG Donald D. Blackburn designed the mission and personally selected many of the key personnel. In addition to COL "Bull" Simons, he chose LTC Elliot P. Sydnor and CPT Richard Meadows (the first two 77th SFG personnel to complete the British Special Air Service Selection course) and Air Force BG Leroy Manor. Blackburn controlled all operational security (OPSEC) and orchestrated the planning and training from Washington DC.²⁹

Blackburn recalled, "It was run right out of Washington. I felt that rather than delegate it to the field, we knew what we wanted to do. I had the guys I wanted. It had to be run out of Washington because of all the politics."³⁰ Blackburn shepherded the plan through the bureaucratic maze of Washington while maintaining strict secrecy. "Being able to establish the type of security we wanted was crucial . . . Then getting the Secretary of Defense to agree to it,



'THANKS FOR TRYING!'

Political cartoonist R. B. Crockett of the Washington Star drew this cartoon which ran when news of the attempted rescue was made public. Morale among the POWs rose after the raid, and treatment of the prisoners by the North Vietnamese improved.



Son Tay Raider Patch

[Melvin] Laird, then [Secretary of State Henry] Kissinger, then [President Richard M.] Nixon. That would have been very hard for a field element to do."³¹

The strict OPSEC was preserved. "This thing went beautifully from a standpoint of security and cooperation," said Blackburn, who pushed to execute the mission, even when intelligence began to indicate that the prisoners might have been moved.³²

When told by his intelligence chief that it was highly probable the prisoners were not at Son Tay, BG Blackburn went directly to Admiral Thomas H. Moorer, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He wanted to go forward with the mission. "I felt that if we're doing this, it was high time we did something for the POWs, with what they were going through out there. The North Vietnamese were in Da Nang and [throughout] South Vietnam, and they didn't have to worry about anything in their own backyard . . . I told Moorer, if we don't go now, we'll never have another opportunity . . . I still feel to this day that it was the right decision, the prisoners got a break, a big break and it made the North Vietnamese reluctant to leave their own backyard."³³

Blackburn's reasoning proved sound. In the eleven months preceding the end of the war, treatment of the POWs improved significantly and the North Vietnamese

Army was forced to station combat divisions around Hanoi. Blackburn ended his career in 1971, retiring as the SACS. As assessed by Dr. Richard H. Schultz, "Blackburn was one of the really creative thinkers in special operations. He could succeed when given a tough task, like SOG, based on his experience and his reputation."³⁴ COL (ret) Alfred Paddock served under Blackburn in the 77th Special Forces Group. "I was always impressed by BG Blackburn. He had charisma, but he was also a thoughtful, insightful individual. It was those guys from the Philippines, Blackburn, Volckmann, and Fertig who were most instrumental in implementing MG McClure's vision of special operations."³⁵

In his post-military career he worked for the firm of Braddock, Dunn and Macdonald as Vice-President of Special Projects until 1979. Blackburn worked with a number of other unconventional warfare experts such as MG Edward Lansdale and LTG William P. Yarborough. He was an original member of the Special Operations Policy Advisory Group, chaired by the Assistant Secretary of Defense. This group met frequently at the headquarters of United States Special Operations Command after its activation in 1989 as part of the military reorganization directed by the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

BG Donald D. Blackburn's contributions to Army special operations spanned thirty years, from his World War II experience as a guerrilla leader in the Philippines to orchestrating one of the most famous special operations raids in history. Blackburn's military career was devoted to sharing his experiences, providing insight, and providing equipment best suited for ARSOF soldiers. This legacy of service truly makes him a Special Operations plank holder. ▲

The author would like to thank Dr. Richard H. Schultz, Dr. Alfred H. Paddock, Mr. Shelby Stanton, and Mr. Carlos Jaramillo for their assistance in the preparation of this article.

Kenneth Finlayson is the USASOC Deputy Command Historian. He earned his PhD from the University of Maine, and is a retired Army officer. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, special operations aviation, and World War II special operations units.

Endnotes

- 1 Following his tour as the Chief of Staff of the Army, Major General Douglas A. MacArthur was posted to the Philippines in 1935 to reorganize and train the Philippine Army. He retired from the United States Army in 1937 and took the title of Field Marshall and Director of Philippine National Defense. He formally returned to the U.S. Army in July 1941 as the Commander of U.S. Forces in the Far East, with his headquarters in Manila. Ordered to evacuate to Australia by President Roosevelt after the Japanese invasion, General MacArthur eventually returned to liberate the Philippines as the Commander-in-Chief of the Southwest Pacific Theater.
- 2 Brigadier General Donald D. Blackburn, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert B. Smith, USAF, Senior Officers Oral History Program, Project 83-9, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 30.
- 3 Louis Morton, *The U.S. Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific, The Fall of the Philippines* (Washington DC: The Office of the Chief of Military History, 1953), 61-64.

- 4 In September 1940, Jonathan M. Wainwright was promoted to temporary Major General and returned to the Philippines to take command of the Philippine Division. As the senior field commander of U.S. and Philippine forces under General MacArthur, he had tactical responsibility for resisting the Japanese invasion that began in late December 1941. Pushed back from beachheads in Lingayen Gulf, his Philippine forces withdrew onto the Bataan Peninsula early in January 1942, where they occupied well prepared defensive positions and commanded the entrance to Manila Bay. When MacArthur was ordered to Australia in March 1942, Wainwright was promoted to temporary Lieutenant General and appointed to command U.S. Army Forces in the Far East, which was immediately redesignated U.S. Forces in the Philippines. <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/jwainiv.htm>.
- 5 Blackburn interview, Senior Officers Oral History Program, Project 83-9, 68.
- 6 Blackburn's exploits in the Philippines are described in Philip Harkins, *Blackburn's Headhunters* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1955); Blackburn, interview, Senior Officers Oral History Program, Project 83-9.
- 7 United States Army Forces in the Philippines-North Luzon, *Guerrilla Days in North Luzon: The Story of the USAFIP in North Luzon* (Camp Spencer, Luna, La Union, PI: Historical records Section, USAFIP-NL, 1946) 51.
- 8 Blackburn interview, Senior Officers Oral History Program, Project 83-9, 195-198.
- 9 Blackburn, "War Within a War: The Philippines 1942-1945," *Conflict*, Vol 7, No 2, 1987, 129-153.
- 10 Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2002.)
- 11 Lieutenant Colonel Blackburn, "The Operations of the 11th Infantry, USAFIP, NL) in the Capture of Mayomayo Mt, Province of Luzon, P.I., 26 July - 8 August 1945." Advanced Infantry Officers Class No. 2, Academic Department, The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia, <https://www.infantry.army.mil/monographs/content/wwii/STUP2/Blackburn.%20Donald%20D.%20LTC.pdf>.
- 12 Harkins, *Blackburn's Headhunters* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1955). **The author, Philip Harkins was the brother of MG Harkins.**
- 13 Shelby Stanton, telephonic interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 22 August 2008, notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 14 The Geneva Accords were agreements reached in 1954 designed to provide the basis for the end of the First Indochina War (1946-1954), the conflict between the Communist Viet Minh against Vietnam's pre-World War II colonial ruler, France. Drawn up at the Geneva Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, in July 1954, the accords called for the withdrawal of French troops from much of Southeast Asia and partitioned the country into North Vietnam and South Vietnam. It was intended that elections in 1956 would bring about reunification. The continued struggle over this partitioning eventually led to the United States involvement in the Vietnam War (1959-1975).
- 15 Susan B. Douglas, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 9 July 2008, Sarasota, FL, notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **Mrs. Douglas is the daughter of BG Blackburn said that her father felt the movie, released in 1959, was a sensationalized "Hollywood version" of operations in the Philippines.**
- 16 Brigadier Donald D. Blackburn, interview by Dr. Richard W. Stewart and Dr. John W. Partin, 24 August 1993, Long Boat Key, FL, tape recording, U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School Archives, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 17 Kenneth Finlayson, "Operation White Star: Prelude to Vietnam," *Special Warfare*, June 2002, Vol 15, No 2, 48-51.
- 18 Brigadier General Donald D. Blackburn, interview by Dr. John W. Partin, 27 January 1988, MacDill Air Force Base, FL, paper transcript, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Blackburn interview, Stewart and Partin, 24 August 1993.
- 19 Blackburn interview, 27 January 1988.
- 20 Other reconnaissance programs, notably Projects Delta, Sigma and Omega grew out of the failure of LEAPING LENA. These were programs that conducted in-country reconnaissance country-wide for MACV in the case of Project Delta, and operations in support of the Field Force II and III respectively for Sigma and Omega.
- 21 Thomas K. Adams, *US Special Operations Forces in Action: The Challenge of Unconventional Warfare* (London: Frank Cass 1998), 120.
- 22 Blackburn interview, 24 August 1993.
- 23 Blackburn interview, 24 August 1993.
- 24 Colonel Sully Fontaine, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, Fort Bragg, NC, interview notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 25 Richard H. Schultz, Jr., telephonic interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 26 August 2008, notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **Dr. Schultz is the Director of the International Security Studies Program at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. His book, *The Secret War Against Hanoi* recounts the operations of MACV-SOG in the covert war against North Vietnam.**

- 26 The Defense Communication Planning Group was formed by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara as part of the Defense Communications Agency. The primary function of the DCPG was to develop, evaluate and field remote sensing devices. The sensors were designed for airdrop emplacement along the South Vietnamese border to detect cross border movement. The "McNamara Wall" was the name attached to array of remote sensors installed along the border. John D. Bergen, *Military Communications: A Test for Technology*, The U.S. Army in Vietnam series (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 1986) 392.
- 27 Graham A. Cosmas, *MACV: The Joint Command in the Years of Escalation, 1962-1967*, The United States Army in Vietnam series (Washington DC: Center of Military History, 2006), 16.
- 28 Richard H. Schultz, Jr., "The Great Divide: Strategy and Covert Action in Vietnam," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn/Winter 1999-2000, 95.
- 29 Benjamin F. Schemmer, *The Raid* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1976). Schemmer's book of the Son Tay Raid is a comprehensive account of the operations and the considerable political fall-out that occurred after the mission.
- 30 Blackburn interview, Stewart and Partin, 24 August 1993.
- 31 Blackburn interview, Stewart and Partin, 24 August 1993.
- 32 Blackburn interview, Stewart and Partin, 24 August 1993.
- 33 Blackburn interview, Stewart and Partin, 24 August 1993.
- 34 Schultz interview.
- 35 Dr. Alfred H. Paddock Jr., telephonic interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 2 September 2008, notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. Dr. Paddock's book, *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (Lawrence, KS, University of Kansas Press, 2002), provides a detailed history of the early days of Army special operations.

HEADHUNTERS

