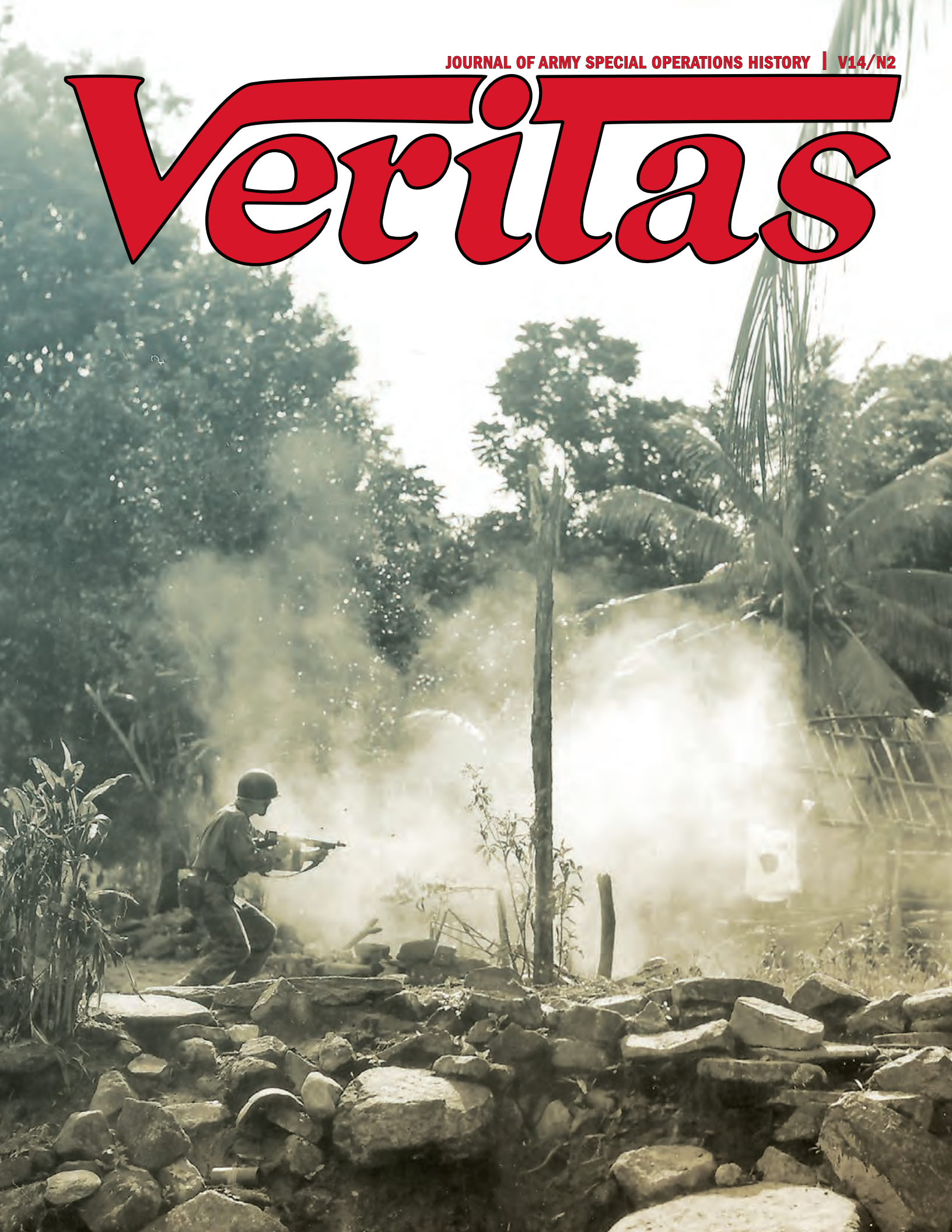


JOURNAL OF ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS HISTORY | V14/N2

Veritas



This is the second of three ‘spectrum’ (WWII to recent history) issues to fill the gap created by the cancellation of a special edition. Two articles in the last *Veritas* are tied to a pair in this one. The combined, joint rescue of 516 Allied prisoners of war (POWs) at the Cabanatuan camp in the Philippines on 29/30 January 1945, was driven by the discovery that the Japanese had massacred the majority of the POWs at Camp 10-A on Palawan island in mid-December 1944. “Shoot and Salute: U.S. Army Special Warfare in Laos” provided strategic and operational backgrounds for the special warfare mission in Laos in the last issue; “More Than Shoot and Salute: U.S. Army Psywar in Laos” covers tactical through national psywar programs run inside Laos.

A couple of articles provide ‘ground truth’ on the mythology about Office of Strategic Services (OSS) veterans influencing SF in the formative years, and the primary reason behind President John F. Kennedy visiting Fort Bragg (12 October 1961). The number of soldiers with OSS credentials was surprisingly small; the biggest contributors to Special Forces training were obscure instructors, not any widely recognized icons. After accessing several holdings the photo essay on the 35th presidential visit shows who received the most attention, time-wise, to clarify the primary and secondary purposes for President Kennedy’s visit.

Two 1st SF Group articles cover the original rationale for a fourth battalion and combined training with the Indian Army. A poignant letter from Major (MAJ) James E. Rudder shortly after D-Day fulfilled his sense of duty to the family of a fallen Ranger. A U.S. Army Psywar Center Memorandum (Number 15) of 17 November 1952, will revive memories of the monthly ‘Christmas Parades’ on Smoke Bomb Hill.

We appreciate all the assistance provided by our Army SOF veterans and the USASOC component commands.

– CHB

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By Charles H. Briscoe

FRONT COVER: After throwing a grenade into an abandoned native village building, PFC Warren Boes, of Coldwater, Michigan, engages targets with his Thompson submachine gun, 17 January 1944. Photo was taken at the Alamo Scout Training Center (ASTC), Fergusson Island, New Guinea.

ABOVE: A 1st SFG soldier coaches two PARA (SF) BN soldiers firing M4 carbines at Yakima Training Center during Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR 2011.

A Commander's Sense of Duty

The U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) inducted six retired officers into its Commando Hall of Honor at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, on 18 April 2018: Major (MAJ) Raymond P. Ambrozak, Generals (GEN) Bryan D. Brown and Stanley A. McChrystal, Major General (MG) James E. Rudder, U.S. Army; Captain (CAPT) Charles M. Heron, U.S. Navy; and Colonel (COL) William J. Kornitzer, U.S. Air Force. Following the ceremony, James E. 'Bud' Rudder Jr., the son of the WWII 2nd Ranger Battalion commander, provided the author a letter. It revealed the depth of a commander's sense of duty.

Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Rudder's 2nd Ranger Battalion was split into three groups to assault the French coast at Normandy on D-Day, 6 June 1944. While LTC Rudder led Force A to scale the cliffs at Point du Hoc and seize the enemy guns believed to be emplaced there, Force B, consisting of C Company, 2nd Battalion, landed at Omaha Beach. Force B was to fight overland through Point de la Percée and Vierville-sur-Mer, and clear three miles of coastal road guarded by enemy emplacements enroute to linking up with Force A.¹ What was supposed to be accomplished in two hours took more than two days. As Ranger historian Robert W. Black wrote, "No Ranger unit engaged in the invasion of Europe

suffered as heavily as the men of C Company."² Of the sixty-eight Rangers that landed with C Company, twenty-one were killed and another eighteen wounded.³ Among the dead was Corporal (CPL) Willie C. Caperton.

Less than a week after securing Pointe du Hoc, with the battle for Normandy still raging, LTC Rudder made time to write the families of his soldiers killed in action. MG Rudder's son provided a copy of a letter sent to the family of CPL Caperton. Additional research located his family. They still had the letter sent by LTC Rudder from Normandy seventy-four years ago. We thank the Rudder and Caperton families for providing a sobering reminder of the terrific costs that soldiers pay in their service to the nation. The letter is a testimonial to the impact on the families who suffer tragic losses in war, and to the leadership and character exhibited within the Army Special Operations Community. ▲ TJS

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(Above) The cliffs at Pointe du Hoc after the battle. (Opposite) Assault route of Force B (LTC Rudder) is marked on his map.



LTC James E. Rudder



CPL Willis 'Bill' C. Caperton



HEADQUARTERS
SECOND RANGER INFANTRY BATTALION
APO 230 c/o P.M., New York, N.Y.

FRANCE
13 July 1944

Re: Cpl Willis C Caperton - 36610503

Dear Mrs Caperton:

No Commanding Officer can ever find words to adequately express his deep sympathy with those whose sons, husbands, or brothers finished their earthly tour of duty while under his command. The soldiers who formed the Ranger Battalion were the best - all volunteers. Their strenuous training and carefully supervised work and recreation brought officers and men, and the men and their buddies close, so close that they learned mutual respect and a dependence upon each other to carry out the individual tasks in order that the unit plan might work. The Day of Invasion found these men ready, fully trained, fully equipped not only physically but mentally. On the day before they came to France, men of all Faiths had gathered with the Chaplain and dedicated the work at hand to God and their individual part in it as subject to His Holy Will.

The mission of the Rangers was successfully accomplished but as with all worthwhile things, the cost was great, so great indeed, that it cost the life you cherished and lost us a comrade and a friend. A Country must be great to call for the sacrifice of such men but America will always be great just because such men have fallen in order that the principles expressed in our Constitution might endure.

Every public honor will be accorded his memory. His President has already proclaimed him a hero. A grateful Congress will erect a monument to his name. The people of America will realize what that Gold Star means to those who loved him and will resolve to keep America worthy of such men. More than all these, however, the surviving Rangers, his buddies, will carry with them all their lives the example of his courage and will do their best to instill a like nobility in the hearts of generations to come.

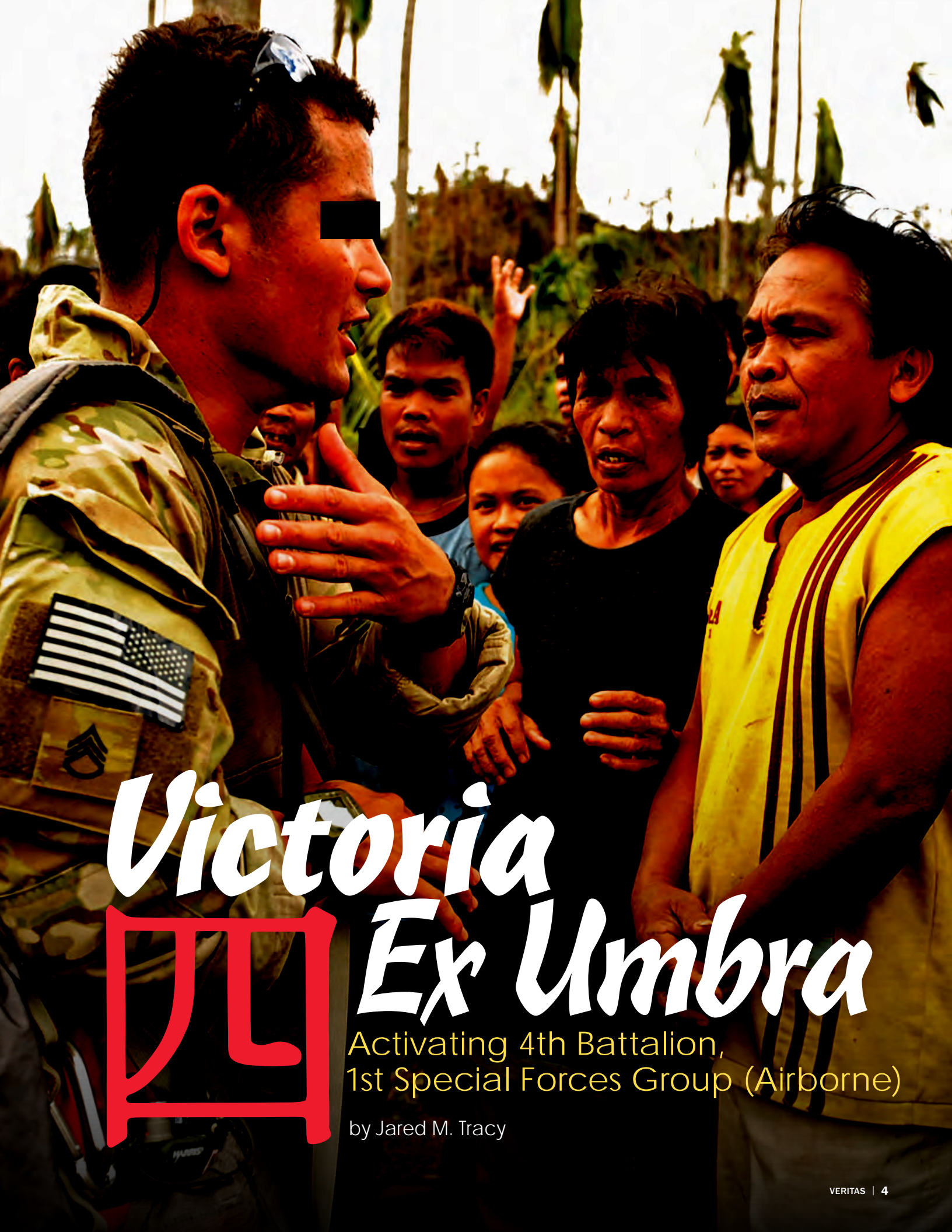
So our comrade has gone and we realize that there is a void in your heart which neither your Country's gratitude nor our sympathy can fill. We, with whom he shared his life ask only now to share his memory that it may inspire us all to the gaining of an early Victory and the making of a lasting peace.

With deepest sympathy,

James E. Rudder
JAMES E. RUDDER
Lt Col Infantry
Commanding



Original letter from LTC Rudder to CPL Caperton's mother expressing condolences for the death of her son. To the left is the Purple Heart awarded posthumously to CPL Caperton.



Victoria Ex Umbra

Activating 4th Battalion,
1st Special Forces Group (Airborne)

by Jared M. Tracy



IAW USSOCOM Sanitization Protocol for Historical Articles on Classified Current Operations, pseudonyms are used for majors and below who are still on active duty, unless names have been publicly released for awards/decorations or DoD news release. Pseudonyms are identified with an asterisk (). The eyes of active ARSOF personnel in photos are blocked out when not covered with dark visors or sunglasses, except when the photos were publicly released by a service or DoD. Source references (end notes) utilize the assigned pseudonym.*

“Steve, I challenge you to lead this battalion to excellence.”

— COL Brian R. Vines

Coin of LTC Steven A. Warman, first commander of 4-1st SFG.

This was Colonel (COL) Brian R. Vines’ charge to Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Steven A. Warman at the 26 August 2011 ceremony activating 4th Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (SFG), at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), Washington. Vines, Deputy Commanding Officer, 1st SFG, reminded Warman, 4th Battalion commander, “You and your battalion will never have this opportunity again to make an initial and enduring impact . . . The history of 4th Battalion starts today.”¹

This article recounts the background of the activation of 4th Battalion, 1st SFG. High operational tempo (OPTEMPO) after the 9/11 terrorist attacks led the Department of Defense (DoD) to expand Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) formations. The goal was to reduce strains on ARSOF soldiers and families while continuing operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. For each active duty SFG, this meant a fourth battalion to deploy companies (Operational Detachments – Bravo [ODBs]) and teams (Operational Detachments – Alpha [ODAs]) to conduct Unconventional Warfare (UW), Foreign Internal Defense (FID), and other SF mission sets. On activation, 4th Battalion, 1st SFG would support its higher headquarters’ mission: “[conduct] Special Operations throughout the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) Area of Responsibility and other theaters as directed, in order to support USPACOM objectives and U.S. national interests.”² This article explains the impetus for activating operational fourth battalions in each active duty SFG, with particular focus on 1st SFG.

By 2005, continual deployments to Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) in Afghanistan and the Philippines (OEF-P), Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF) in Iraq, and other locations had severely strained the U.S. Army. For example, from September 2005 to December 2008, the Army averaged 128,000 personnel deployed to OEF and OIF-A, a large portion of total Army strength. (Active Army end-strength grew from 487,000 in 2002 to 557,000 by December 2008.)³ A small but vital population within the Army, ARSOF personnel were especially taxed by the high OPTEMPO of a multi-front war.

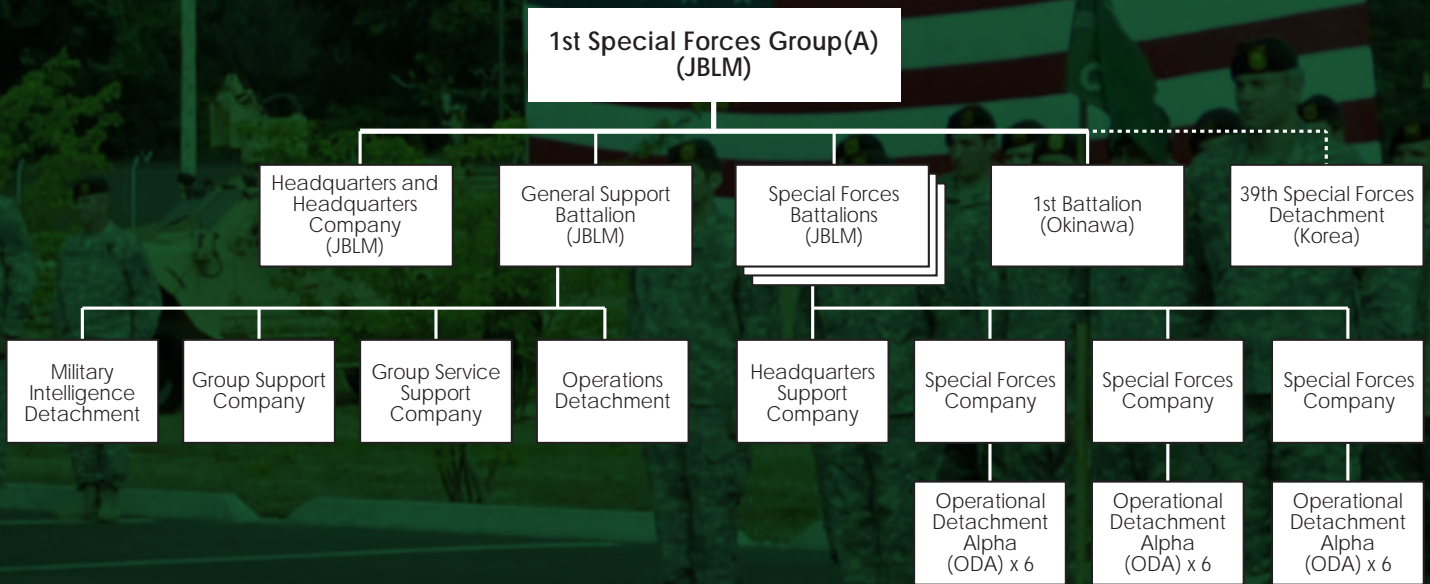
To meet these global demands, the DoD looked to expand ARSOF structure, particularly Special Forces. A 2005 DoD Program Decision Memorandum (PDM) advocated growing each SFG by one battalion. The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) echoed the need for additional SF battalions in order to “strengthen forces to defeat terrorist networks.”⁴ As COL Vines explained later, “The establishment of fourth battalion[s] is intended to allow SFGs more flexibility in executing their missions. Additionally, it provides relief to our soldiers who have been continuously deployed since 2001 in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).”⁵ On 21 May 2008, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates described the planned activation of fourth battalions in each active duty SFG as proof that SOF “will continue to be front and center” in the GWOT.⁶

With the fourth battalion plan formally approved, the U.S. Army Special Forces Command (USASFC) at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, created the 4th Battalion Coordination Cell under its G-8 (Force Modernization). That cell provided “the planning, synchronization, and coordination within [USASFC] to effectively implement the QDR and PDM directives.” It “serve[d] as the Office of Primary Responsibility for the establishment of five

Formerly the Director of Central Intelligence and President of Texas A&M University, Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates (December 2006 to July 2011) approved the expansion of active duty Special Forces Groups from three to four battalions.



1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) Organization, 2011



Fourth battalion activations were scheduled as follows:

2008: 4-5th SFG ■ 2009: 4-3rd SFG ■ 2010: 4-10th SFG ■ 2011: 4-1st SFG ■ 2012: 4-7th SFG ²⁷



Deputy Commanding Officer, 1st SFG, COL Brian R. Vines, addressed the formation and attendees at the 4-1st SFG activation ceremony, 26 August 2011.

additional [SF] Battalions on time and combat ready.”⁷ A new fourth battalion would be activated annually until all active duty SFGs had one. On 8 August 2008, 4th Battalion, 5th SFG, the first new SF battalion in sixteen years, activated at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.⁸ This was followed in 2009 by 4-3rd SFG, and in 2010 by 4-10th SFG. COL Vines later stated that the lessons learned from the activation of those fourth battalions had given 4-1st SFG a head start “in developing its manning, equipping, facilities infrastructure, and training.”⁹

Between late-2009 and August 2011, an activation element within 1st SFG laid the groundwork for the new 4th Battalion. On 17 August 2011, nine members of the still-forming provisional battalion and six members of USASFC met to discuss the new unit’s status. First, the battalion’s organizational structure was in place: a Headquarters Support Company, a functional staff (S-1 [personnel], S-2 [intelligence], S-3 [operations], S-4 [supply and logistics], and S-6 [information]), and three operational companies, each with six ODAs.¹⁰

Second, the S-1, Captain (CPT) Emily L. Millet*, listed the battalion at 72 percent strength with 314 personnel, and was optimistic about meeting the next milestone of 349 personnel by November. (At full strength, the battalion would have 432 military personnel and 6 civilians.)¹¹ Third, the S-3, Major Yung M. Choe*, remarked that the battalion

was reaching its validation and certification benchmarks thanks to ongoing training.¹² Fourth, the battalion had 79 percent of its allotted equipment. Finally, the meeting closed after discussing equipment procurement, budgetary matters, and the upcoming activation ceremony.¹³ LTC Warman later praised the work of the “plank holders in the activation element” during the battalion’s formative stage.¹⁴

On 26 August 2011, 4-1st SFG officially activated at JBLM.¹⁵ “It is a distinct pleasure for me to serve as reviewing officer for today’s ceremony to activate our 4th Special Forces Battalion,” said COL Vines, in the absence of the 1st SFG commander, COL Francis M. Beaudette, who was in the Republic of the Philippines as the ‘dual-hatted’ commander of the Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines (JSOTF-P). In his remarks, Vines explained that “an experienced and dynamic command team has been selected to complete the activation of the battalion, and see it through its full operational capability on the 16th of August 2012.”¹⁶

Commanding 4-1st SFG was LTC Steven A. Warman, a 1992 Norwich University graduate and former Field Artillery Officer who later became an SF Officer and deployed multiple times to OEF and OIF.¹⁷ According to Vines, LTC Warman “was highly recommended, respected, and talented Special Forces leader [who] has proved himself an outstanding combat leader and a knowledgeable Special Forces operator.”¹⁸ Warman’s Senior Enlisted Advisor was Command Sergeant Major (CSM) George L. Hines*, a 1983 Army enlistee who later became SF qualified and held

leadership positions from the team level up. His deployments included two to OIF and one to OEF-P.¹⁹ COL Vines remarked that Hines* had “excelled as a Special Forces operator and is highly respected within our community . . . The battalion will quickly benefit from his leadership, and his mentoring and developing of the battalion’s NCOs.”²⁰

LTC Warman had the last words at 4-1st SFG’s activation ceremony: “While this ceremony marks the completion of the stand-up of this battalion, it is only the beginning of its legacy. The reputation of this battalion will be a reflection of the soldiers that stand before you. Your deeds will shape our unit’s history . . . I challenge us to ensure that the bedrock that we build over the next months will stand forever. We have some work ahead as we accept the mission [to] train, man, and equip eighteen [ODAs] to place on the field of battle . . . From all accounts, as I look at the men in front of me and the work that you have already accomplished, we are up to the challenge.”²¹

POSTSCRIPT

4th Battalion, 1st SFG was very active during its provisional stage and in the first year after formal activation, thus validating the need for a fourth battalion. In 2011, Company A, 4-1st SFG hosted Indian Army Special Forces soldiers for a Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) exercise at JBLM called VAJRA PRAHAR 2011 (see full article in this issue of *Veritas*). In addition, an ODA from Company A conducted FID training with the Japan Ground Self Defense Forces, Special Operations Group (JGSDF SOG) as

CSM George L. Hines* receives the battalion guidon from LTC Steven A. Warman at the 4-1st SFG activation ceremony, to symbolize the role of the Senior Enlisted Advisor as the ‘keeper of the colors’.



part of exercise SILENT EAGLE. Meanwhile, ODAs from Company B, 4-1st SFG joined 2nd Battalion soldiers in a JCET with Philippine National Police (PNP) to improve counter-narcoterrorism (CNT) capabilities.²²

4-1st SFG OPTEMPO picked up in 2012. Two ODAs from Company A deployed to OEF-Afghanistan, with assignment to Special Operations Task Force – Southeast (SOTF-SE), Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force – Afghanistan (CJSOTF-A), to conduct Village Stability Operations (VSO) and FID. Alongside U.S. Marine Corps personnel, Company A, 4-1st SFG soldiers deployed to the Philippines for a JCET with the Philippine Marine Corps 62nd Force Recon Company and Marine Battalion Landing Team (MBLT), to improve host nation capabilities. Other teams deployed to the Philippines to train with such agencies as the 12th Scout Ranger Commandos and the PNP. Also in 2012, Company A personnel conducted FID training with the Singhanath Commando Battalion and Mahabir Ranger Battalion from Nepal, the Taiwanese Army Aviation SF Command (AASFC), and the Malaysian Commandos, as well as CNT training with the Royal Thai Police from Thailand.

Company B personnel deployed to the Philippines for counter-terrorism training with Philippine Security Forces (PSF), and later as assigned members of JSOTF-P. Company C soldiers trained with the PNP in the Philippines; the Anti-Terrorism Platoon, 1st Para Commando Battalion, from Nepal; and the Maldivian National Defense Force. Along with the 4-1st SFG headquarters and teams from 19th SFG, Company C deployed to Thailand for COBRA GOLD 2012, training on UW and FID with the Royal Thai SF.²³ The following year, 4-1st SFG elements deployed again to Afghanistan and the Philippines. LTC Owen G. Ray, Warman's successor as 4-1st SFG commander as of 8 August 2013, stated succinctly: "ODA work is our business, our priority of effort."²⁴ Simultaneously, the battalion looked for ways to improve its ability to conduct UW across all seven phases (Preparation, Initial Contact, Infiltration, Organization, Buildup, Employment, and Transition).²⁵ From Thailand, to Afghanistan, to the Philippines, to the Maldives, 4th Battalion has proved critical to the 1st SFG mission of conducting Special Operations "throughout the [USPACOM] Area of Responsibility and other theaters . . . in order to support USPACOM objectives and U.S. national interests."²⁶ ▲

JARED M. TRACY, PhD

Jared M. Tracy served six years in the U.S. Army, and became a historian at USASOC in December 2010. He earned an MA in History from Virginia Commonwealth University and a PhD in History from Kansas State University. His research is focused on the history of U.S. Army Psychological Operations.

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Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR 2011

DEFENSE

Diplomacy

by Jared M. Tracy

In August 2011, Company A, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) and Indian Army (IA) Special Forces (SF) elements conducted a Joint-Combined Exchange Training (JCET) exercise, VAJRA PRAHAR 2011, at Yakima Training Center (YTC) and Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), Washington. The purpose of VAJRA PRAHAR 2011 was “to prepare for future missions, improve interoperability and U.S. Army Special Forces FID [Foreign Internal Defense] capabilities.” It also helped strengthen the strategic Indo-U.S. partnership.¹ Before explaining VAJRA PRAHAR 2011, the background of U.S.-India relations and mutual security interests is necessary.

The U.S. established diplomatic relations with British India in November 1946. Nine months later, India gained independence; the U.S. immediately recognized its sovereignty. Bilateral relations warmed and cooled over time. India resented the American friendship with Pakistan, its chief territorial rival over the northern region of Kashmir. At the same time, the U.S. disliked India’s ties to the Soviet Union and its diplomatic recognition of

Communist China. Relations improved in the early 1960s, when the U.S. began to see India as a counterweight to China, supporting it during the 1962 Sino-India War. Tensions resurfaced in the late 1960s and early 1970s due to ongoing American support of India’s chief rival, Pakistan.² The U.S.-India relationship improved slightly in the late 1970s and 1980s, but remained generally lukewarm.

U.S. strategic assessments changed in the early 1990s with the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union (India’s main trading partner). In the new environment, the U.S. and India “began exploring the possibilities for a more normalized relationship between the world’s two largest democracies.” However, Indian nuclear testing in the late 1990s ran counter to U.S. non-proliferation goals, leading to protests by the President William J. Clinton Administration. While efforts to “bring New Delhi more in line with U.S. arms control and non-proliferation goals . . . went unfulfilled,” the U.S. and India soon “engaged a broader agenda on the entire scope of U.S.-India relations.”³

In the 1990s, the U.S. and India “began exploring the possibilities for a more normalized relationship between the world’s two largest democracies.” — Congressional Research Service



(L) President John F. Kennedy meets with the President of India, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, in the Oval Office on 3 June 1963.

Despite a historically lukewarm relationship, the U.S. had firmly supported India in the 1962 Sino-India War. (R) President Barack H. Obama and Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh, meet at the White House on 24 November 2009. Because of India’s tough anti-terrorist stance and ongoing role as a counterweight to China, it remains a valuable strategic ally of the U.S.



In the years after the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the U.S., India pledged full cooperation and support for counterterrorism operations, in which it had a vested interest. Compounding India's longstanding rivalries with Pakistan and China were direct terrorist threats from groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e Mohammed (JeM), and Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI). For example, the Pakistan-based LeT led the terrorist attacks against India's Parliament in December 2001, as well as the November 2008 attacks on multiple civilian targets in Mumbai (killing some 165 people).⁴ Due to India's anti-terrorism stance and its role as a counterweight to Communist China, a growing geopolitical rival of the U.S., President Barack H. Obama called the relationship "one of the defining partnerships of the 21st century."⁵ According to the U.S. Department of Defense, the military dimension of this partnership "involves a robust slate of dialogues, military exercises, defense trade, personnel exchanges, and armaments cooperation."⁶

Overseeing U.S.-India security cooperation at the highest level was the Defense Policy Group (DPG), co-chaired by the U.S. Under Secretary of Defense for Policy and the Indian Defence Secretary. Military training exercises further cemented that relationship. For example, in 2004, the U.S. Army began the combined annual exercise YUDH ABHYAS with India. By 2011, YUDH ABHYAS had expanded from a company-level Field Training Exercise to "battalion live fire exercises and brigade-level command post exercises." At that time, the combined defense priorities were maritime security, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, and counterterrorism. In fiscal year 2011, the U.S. conducted fifty-six military exercises with India, among them VAJRA PRAHAR 2011 (the second installment of that "SOF-exclusive" JCET).⁷

U.S. elements of VAJRA PRAHAR came from Company A of the still-provisional 4th Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (SFG), specifically Operational Detachment – Bravo (ODB) 1410 and Operational Detachments – Alpha (ODAs) 1412, 1413, and 1416, totaling around thirty SF-qualified soldiers. Heading ODB 1410 were the commander, Major (MAJ) Andy R. Rice*, Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CW2) Larry J. Naulet*, and Sergeant Major (SGM) Mark L. Kloninger*. Captain (CPT) Jimmy M. Townshend* commanded ODA 1412, and was assisted by Team Sergeant Master Sergeant (MSG) Nick Dawson*. CPT Alan M. Furlow* and Team Sergeant MSG Stanley Rivacoba, Jr.* led ODA 1413. And CPT Timothy P. Worbel* and Team Sergeant MSG Cody M. Wilson* headed ODA 1416.⁸

In addition to U.S. Special Forces personnel, around twenty non-SF soldiers supported VAJRA PRAHAR 2011. These included riggers, drivers, medics, and eight enlisted Hindi interpreters. The latter had joined the U.S. Army via Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest (MAVNI), a program awarding U.S. citizenship to immigrants in exchange for military service and language/cultural expertise.⁹ During the exercise, the interpreters proved themselves extremely valuable in



MAJ Andy R. Rice* was the first commander of ODB 1410 (Company A, 4th Battalion, 1st SFG), the senior American element participating in VAJRA PRAHAR 2011.



1st PARA (SF) BN Commander, COL Alin Deb Saha, led the Indian Army contingent of the exercise. The Indian Army Parachutist Badge can be seen above his front-right pocket.

facilitating communication between U.S. and Indian Special Forces.

The Indian contingent came from The Parachute Regiment, the IA elite special operations unit consisting of three active duty airborne parachute (PARA) battalions (5th, 6th, and 7th) and seven Special Forces PARA battalions (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 9th, 10th, and 21st).¹⁰ The 1st PARA (SF) Battalion commander, Colonel (COL) Alin Deb Saha, explained both the SF and airborne battalion missions: "SF battalions are tasked for small team operations: reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition and designation, and direct action. The airborne PARA battalions jump in for offensive actions behind enemy lines, similar to a U.S. airborne division."¹¹ Commanded by a colonel, a typical PARA (SF) battalion consisted of four teams, each commanded by a major and equal in size to a conventional U.S. infantry company. In turn, a team consisted of four or five troops, each commanded by a lieutenant (LT) or CPT and equivalent in size to a U.S. infantry platoon.

The roughly sixty Indians participating in VAJRA PRAHAR 2011 came from the 1st PARA (SF) and 4th PARA (SF) Battalions. Heading the IA contingent was COL Saha, a Kolkata, India, native, and veteran of the 1st PARA (SF) Battalion since 1993. Other commissioned officers included MAJ Thaiba Simon (assault team leader), CPT Paras Joshi

Indian Army Parachute Regiment

A Brief History

The Parachute Regiment traces its lineage to the 50th Indian Parachute (PARA) Brigade, established by the British Army in October 1941. The 50th consisted of the 151st British, 152nd Indian, and 153rd Gurkha Parachute Battalions. The Indian airborne soldiers' combat experience in World War II included the Battle of Sangshak in the frontier region between India and Burma in March 1944. The paratroopers were later reorganized and expanded into the 44th Indian Airborne Division (subsequently re-designated the 2nd Indian Airborne Division). This division consisted of the 50th Indian PARA, 77th Indian PARA, and 14th Air Landing Brigades.¹

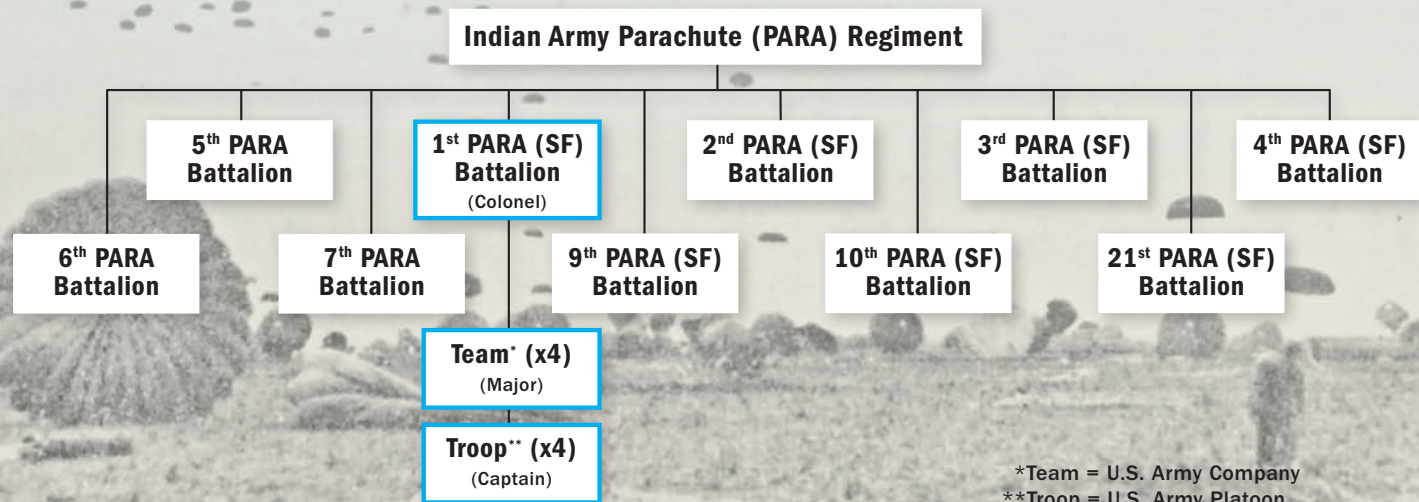
Following WWII and Indian independence in 1947, the paratrooper force was reduced to just the 50th Indian PARA Brigade, consisting of the 1st (Punjab), 2nd (Maratha), and 3rd (Kumaon) PARA Battalions. Though employed as conventional ground infantry, the airborne soldiers distinguished themselves in territorial battles with Pakistan in the late

1940s. On 15 April 1952, two months before the activation of the U.S. Army 10th Special Forces Group, the three Indian PARA Battalions were consolidated to form The Parachute Regiment. By 2011, the regiment had grown to three airborne and seven Special Forces battalions.²

In addition to its longstanding role in border disputes, The Parachute Regiment has deployed soldiers in support of overseas military and peacekeeping operations. Examples include Korea (1951–1954), which involved jumping into Munsan-ni with the U.S. Army 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team in March 1951; Gaza (1956–1958), where the 1st and 3rd PARAs supported peacekeeping efforts following the Arab-Israeli War; and Sierra Leone (2000), where the 2nd PARA (SF) supported UN peacekeeping efforts after years of civil war in that nation.³ From its inception to the present day, The Parachute Regiment has served as “the elite volunteer force of the Indian Army.”⁴



Organization: Parachute Regiment & 1st PARA (SF) Battalion



(sniper element commander), LT Yogendra Kathayat, and LT Maneet Kumar Pant from the 1st PARA (SF) Battalion. MAJ Archit Goswami (assault team leader) and CPT Rajat Chandra came from the 4th PARA (SF) Battalion.¹²

In June 2011, these and other ‘cream of the crop’ Indian SF personnel were selected to participate in VAJRA PRAHAR 2011. According to CPT Chandra, a trained sniper and 4th PARA (SF) Battalion troop commander, “We had some criteria for people to attend the training. For example, snipers had to have four or five years of experience.”¹³ “We started training in India about a month before coming here [to JBLM],” said LT Pant, a 1st PARA (SF) Battalion troop commander.¹⁴ Because of careful selection and preparation of participating personnel, VAJRA PRAHAR 2011 would offer both the Indians and Americans the opportunity to train each other.

ODB 1410 commander MAJ Andy R. Rice* had three main objectives for VAJRA PRAHAR 2011. The first was to assist the PARAs with developing a fully capable operations center which “monitors and directs its subordinate units.” The second was to “advise and assist” the IA PARA (SF) in “planning and executing the Full Mission Profile (FMP),” a term denoting the entire scope of a mission, including planning, rehearsals, infiltration, actions on the objective, and exfiltration. The final was simply to

improve combined interoperability. The desired end state was enhanced “military-to-military relations and interoperability . . . leading to an increased desire to conduct future VAJRA PRAHAR exercises” as a means to strengthen “the strategic relationship between the [U.S.] and India.” In the end, “ODAs [will] have improved their ability to conduct operations by, with, and through a host nation partner.”¹⁵

COL Saha had his own goals. He wanted his men to “understand the dynamics of joint operations, the mechanics required to operate together, and the points you can take from U.S. Special Forces. At the same time, we should impart our skills which we have gained over a period of time.”¹⁶ Both commanders’ goals would be realized over the course of five scheduled phases:

- » Pre-deployment (25–30 July)
- » Deployment (30 July)
- » Employment (1–25 August)
- » Redeployment (26–28 August)
- » Post-deployment (28–31 August)

ODB 1410 had begun preparations for VAJRA PRAHAR months before Phase I began. Company A Chief Warrant Officer, CW2 Larry J. Naulet*, a former Infantryman and SF Medical Sergeant, described the ‘big picture’ planning process for the JCET: “We had an IPC [Initial Planning Conference] in May, which included four Indian officers. It was nice to get a face-to-face with those guys to ask, ‘Hey, what do you want to do? How do you want to play this?’”¹⁷ Reporting to Company A, 4-1st SFG on the first day of the IPC was SGM Mark L. Kloninger*. Beginning his Army career as an M1 Armor Crewman, Kloninger* had been an SF Weapons Sergeant and Communications Sergeant, and had previously served in 2-1st SFG and in the 39th Special Forces Detachment (Republic of Korea). According to Kloninger*, during the IPC, “We took the Indian officers on a tour of potential training areas, lodging and mess facilities, ranges, and gave them situational awareness of JBLM and YTC.”¹⁸

The last planning conference was in June. According to CW2 Naulet*, “We presented them with our final Administrative Procedures Agreement and the training plan. When they blessed off on that, we really started pushing stuff forward.”¹⁹ Handling much of the ODB planning and coordination was Operations Sergeant MSG Leroy P. Bryce, II*, who “procured equipment and facilities, and coordinated training areas and events at YTC and JBLM.”²⁰

Ironically, many of the ODB 1410 preparations, and the publication of the VAJRA PRAHAR 2011 Concept of Operations (CONOP), occurred prior to the July 2011 assumption of command by the first Company A commander, MAJ Andy R. Rice*. The Eugene, Oregon, native and 1998 graduate of Western Oregon University served in the 1/506th Infantry in Korea and the 1/38th Infantry at Fort Benning, Georgia, before becoming SF-qualified in December 2003. He commanded ODA 012 (1-10th SFG), deploying to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM

[The desired end state was enhanced] “military-to-military relations and interoperability. . . leading to an increased desire to conduct future VAJRA PRAHAR exercises.”

— MAJ Andy R. Rice*



Parachute Regiment Insignia



PARA (SF) Battalion Insignia

in 2004–2005. He also served as a staff officer at Special Operations Command, Europe (SOCEUR) and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). “When I got here in July 2011, they were buried in work ahead of the exercise,” Rice* said. “My job was to take some of the burden off of them and focus on the things like the POIs [Programs of Instruction] and protocol issues.”²¹

When Phase I began in late July, ODAs 1412, 1413, and 1416 were putting the final touches on their assigned areas of training. Preparations for the ‘shoot-house’ scenarios, urban assault courses, and much of the range work for VAJRA PRAHAR 2011 had fallen on ODA 1412, led by CPT Jimmy M. Townshend*. A Cleveland, Ohio, native, Townshend* earned a Field Artillery commission in 2003 after graduating from Kent State University with a degree in Justice Studies. He first served as a Platoon Leader in a 155mm Howitzer battery in the 2/8th Field Artillery Regiment. After a 2004–2005 deployment to Iraq, he served in the S-3, 1st SFG. Becoming SF-qualified in 2008, he then headed ODA 1213 (2-1st SFG) until April 2011, when he took command of ODA 1412.²²

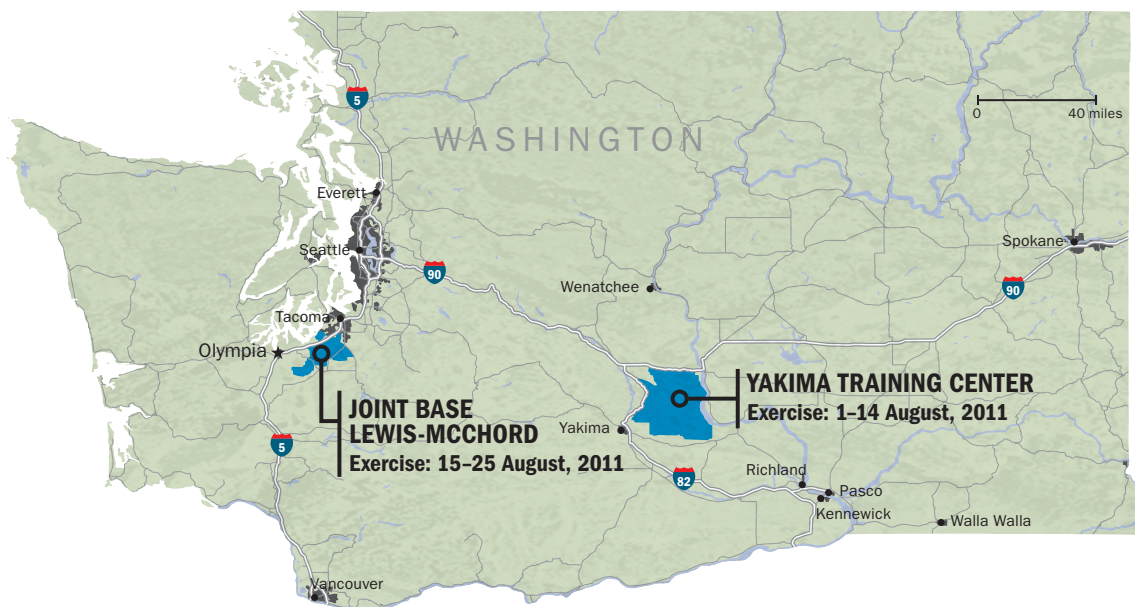
Responsible for ODA 1413 preparations was CPT Alan M. Furlow*, another Ohio native who in 2005 graduated from Ohio University with a degree in International Studies. After serving in the 173rd Airborne Brigade, he became SF-qualified in 2010, and took command of ODA 1413.²³ For VAJRA PRAHAR 2011, ODA 1413 planned for the advanced long-range marksmanship portion at Yakima. “We did quite a bit of preparation,” explained Furlow*. “On a typical SF team, you have a couple sniper-qualified individuals who have gone through official courses. That knowledge is then passed down to the team. We took our trained snipers out and went shooting for a couple of weeks. We developed a mini-POI, internal to the ODA. As a captain, you don’t always get the opportunity to conduct training like that. I was lucky enough to get

behind a weapon system and get a true understanding of sniper techniques.”²⁴

Different training responsibilities fell on ODA 1416, led by CPT Timothy P. Worbel*. The Bloomfield, New Mexico, native, 2005 U.S. Military Academy graduate, and former Engineer Officer became SF-qualified in 2011. A 2007–2008 deployment to Afghanistan heading a route clearance platoon in the 70th Engineer Battalion proved relevant to Worbel*’s training responsibility for VAJRA PRAHAR 2011: the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) lane. ODA 1416 worked with the U.S. Army Asymmetric Warfare Group and other agencies to develop the POI. “We created a mission scenario for the IED lane, based on intel from historical precedent. Basically, what you would get in theater before you go on a route.”²⁵ By late July, Company A, 4-1st SFG had everything in place for VAJRA PRAHAR 2011.

On 24 July 2011, the Advanced Echelon (ADVON) of the IA PARA (SF) contingent arrived in the U.S. A week later, Company A leadership received the Indian main body when it arrived at the Seattle-Tacoma (SEATAC) International Airport, thus ending Phase I. The brief Phase II entailed the mass movement to YTC, procurement of vehicles and lodging for the IA, area familiarization, safety briefings, and final equipment preparations.²⁶

The bulk of the training came during Phase III, with two weeks at YTC and the rest at JBLM. Participants split into two assault troops and a sniper element. The American hosts used the ‘crawl-walk-run’ method. Reviewing emergency procedures, safety precautions, and basic skills characterized the ‘crawl’ phase. The ‘walk’ phase consisted of training with non-lethal rounds. Trainees moved into the ‘run’ phase “only when ODAs and IA PARA (SF) [were] thoroughly confident and knowledgeable with the abilities and TTPs [Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures] of the other.”²⁷



Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR 2011, Joint Base Lewis-McChord and Yakima Training Center, Washington



1st SFG and PARA (SF) BN soldiers load a .50 caliber rifle at Yakima Training Center on 6 August 2011. ODA 1413 oversaw the long-range marksmanship part of the training.

“We developed a mini-POI, internal to the ODA. As a captain, you don’t always get the opportunity to conduct training like that.”

— CPT Alan M. Furlow*

The run phase included weapons ranges, Close Quarters Battle (CQB) and Advanced Military Operations in Urban Terrain (AMOUT) scenarios, explosive breaching, the IED lane, and Fast Rope Insertion Extraction System (FRIES) training. Finally, there were two Full Mission Profile (FMP) events (18–19 August and 23–24 August), which involved real-time combined planning processes, FRIES insertions, clearing a mock insurgent compound under sniper over watch, treating and evacuating casualties, and exfiltration. Providing aerial support for the in-flight sniper elements, the 16 August ‘friendship’ airborne jump, and live FRIES training was Company C, 4/160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR), also headquartered at JBLM.²⁸

The combined planning sessions offered both armies the forum to show how they prepared for missions. According to CPT Furlow*, “We had the Indians explain to us how they did mission planning, and we explained to them how we do it. So we’ve had a merging of planning theories come into play.”²⁹ CPT Worbel* echoed, “For the FMPs, we integrated completely with the Indians. We

initially attempted to teach the full MDMP (Military Decision-Making Process). We modified it to just troop-leading procedures, since the simpler training mission didn’t really warrant the full MDMP.”³⁰

CPT Townshend* explained the different planning styles. “They have a more battle drill-focused planning process. In real life, they often get a target or mission, and within 30-40 minutes they have to react. A lot of times, their mission is already given to them as far as how they’re going to take the target down or execute the objective. The mission stays very high up, as far as the officers are concerned. Their NCOs really have no visibility until the very last second.”³¹ MSG Nick Dawson* of ODA 1412 echoed: “The Indian Army is a lot more top-driven. They have an NCO Corps but it’s not built like ours.”³² “Sometimes, that becomes a bit of a challenge for us,” according to SGM Kloninger*. “Their officers make all the decisions, and their NCOs pretty much wait on guidance.”³³ The exercise had been valuable for exposing the different command and control styles of U.S. and Indian SF units.

After all training finished, there was a final After Action Review (AAR). In the spirit of cooperation and learning, this and previous AARs provided both armies the opportunity to assess how things went. As Townshend* said, "We tried to make AARs more positive, more of a learning experience, instead of a beat-down session. At the end of the day, you don't want to walk away from this JCET with people frustrated with one another. You want more of a learning environment instead of a morale-crushing experience."³⁴

Phase III formally ended with the 25 August 2011 closing ceremony. The Reviewing Officers were COL Saha and COL Brian Vines, Deputy Commanding Officer, 1st SFG. (The 1st SFG Commander, COL Francis M. Beaudette, was then in the Republic of the Philippines as the 'dual-hatted' commander of the Joint Special Operations Task Force – Philippines). The Distinguished Guest was Brigadier General Bhupesh Kumar Jain, Indian Defence and Military Attaché in the Indian Embassy. American and Indian SF participants stood in formation as MAJs Simon and Rice* exchanged their respective nation's parachutist wings for the recent combined airborne drop. After that, LTC Steven A. Warman, 4-1st SFG commander, and COL Saha made their remarks.³⁵

LTC Warman praised the conduct of the exercise, and looked forward to an enduring relationship with the IA. "The team approach was evident in everything that the Task Force executed. At the urban assault course at Yakima, I saw squads of Green Berets and PARA (SF) dismounting the helicopters together and assaulting their targets together, all under the watchful eyes of a combined sniper element. At the friendship jump, I watched both elements exit the ramp of the [MH-47 *Chinook*] together and joking on the Drop Zone afterward. And during the final FMP event at [JBLM], I watched you fast rope together from the helicopters, clear the objectives, and exfil together,

just as you would in a real-world operation . . . We must continue to share [our] knowledge with each other in future exercises, enhancing both of our capabilities and continuing to move forward . . . I truly hope we will be able to continue these exercises in the future, and build upon the solid relationship we have established."³⁶

COL Saha underscored Warman's sentiments. "The exercise has helped both armies in learning, practicing, and refining their skills and understanding their counterparts. With the completion of this exercise, the interoperability, integration, and the procedural dynamics have been refined and suitably modified to help in making operations at all levels easy and successful. Apart from the great amount of learning value gained from this exercise, one should not forget the fond memories which I hope each individual present here will carry throughout his life. In this exercise, we have been able to bond ourselves together and develop a relationship which will continue throughout our lifetime."³⁷

After the ceremony concluded and pleasantries were exchanged, Phase IV began. It consisted of inventorying, packing, and shipping back IA PARA (SF) equipment, and the departure of the Indian contingent from SEATAC. Finally, during Phase V, ODAs 1412, 1413, and 1416 conducted equipment recovery and maintenance, and submitted a consolidated AAR to 4-1st SFG.³⁸ Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR 2011 had come to a close.

The PARAs responded positively to the training. According to LT Pant, "We learned a lot from the technical expertise that the U.S. Special Forces have. In spite of the language barrier, they coordinated well with the Indian troops."³⁹ CPT Chandra seconded, "It was good exposure for my troops to get out of the country and work with U.S. Special Forces."⁴⁰ A six-year veteran of the 1st PARA



"The team approach was evident in everything that the Task Force executed . . . assaulting their targets together, all under the watchful eyes of a combined sniper element." — LTC Steven A. Warman

U.S. and Indian personnel, including CPT Rajat Chandra from the 4th PARA (SF) (standing, right) and sniper element commander CPT Paras Joshi (seated, right), conduct pre-mission planning on 17 August 2011 for the Final Full Mission Profile (FMP), beginning the next day at JBLM.

PHASE

3

TRAINING



TOP An MH-60 Blackhawk with part of the combined assault element lands in a mock town during VAJRA PRAHAR at Yakima Training Center on 10 August. ODA 1412 planned the Advanced Military Operations in Urban Terrain (AMOUT) training.

1 With a 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) crewman (L) offering guidance, COL Alin Deb Saha (center) and a 1st SFG soldier practice aerial sniping techniques and provide over-watch for combined elements on the ground.

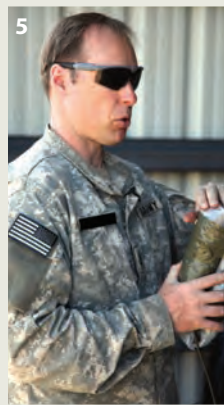
2 ODA 1413 Team Sergeant MSG Stanley Rivacoba, Jr.* demonstrates a Jumpmaster Personnel Inspection (JMPI) on a PARA (SF) soldier at JBLM on 15 August 2011. 1st SFG and PARA (SF) personnel conducted the combined jump using MC-6 parachutes the following day.

3 A 1st SFG soldier observes his Indian Army PARA (SF) counterpart during long-range marksmanship training at Yakima Training Center.

4 PARA (SF) BN soldiers train on room clearing on 6 August 2011. ODA 1412 prepared the 'shoot-house' portion of the training.

5 On 12 August, SFC David L. Faban* provided instruction on building explosive breaching charges, with follow-on practical training at Range 24 at Yakima Training Center.

6 PARA (SF) soldiers move through a mock town under the watch of a 1st SFG soldier during at Yakima Training Center on 11 August 2011.







With Indian and American flags as a backdrop, COL Saha addresses the combined U.S.-Indian formation at the closing ceremony of Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR 2011, 25 August 2011.

At the 25 August closing ceremony, MAJ Thaiba Simon (L), 1st PARA (SF) BN assault team leader, and MAJ Andy R. Rice* (R), ODB 1410 commander, exchange their country's parachutist wings for the combined 'friendship' jump on 16 August from CH-47s belonging to 4/160th SOAR.

“It wasn’t that we were just training them, it was us working together.”

— MSG Nick Dawson*



(SF) Battalion, MAJ Simon stressed that the goal was not to have the U.S. and Indian SF mirror one another, but to understand and leverage each other’s unique capabilities. “The U.S. believes in speed, volume of fire, and shock action because they have the firepower and aerial support. They can dominate the target area from the air, which we can’t. So, our movement is slightly quieter, we insert in smaller teams very close to the target, and attack the enemy without losing surprise.” Because of VAJRA PRAHAR 2011, “I know that if we go out together, the U.S. will do things one way, and we will do them another.”⁴¹

American SF personnel got their own value out of the training. According to CPT Furlow*, “Our long-range marksmanship has increased 100 percent. Just from that, this exercise has been really positive.” In addition, “Some of my troops are just out of the SF Qualification (‘Q’)

Course, so it’s been their first opportunity to work with a foreign force. From that perspective, it’s been very valuable because it gave them a flavor of what a future FID mission might look like.”⁴² SGM Kloninger* stated similarly, “We have a lot of young guys, fresh from the ‘Q’ Course. This is an easy target of opportunity for us to conduct a FID-type operation in CONUS (Continental U.S.). It’s giving our guys the experience of working with foreign troops and better preparing them for future deployments.”⁴³ According to CPT Townshend*, ODA 1412 likewise gained greater understanding of “how to work with another military. They also understand that no matter how well a plan is thought out, things are always *not* going to go the way you thought they would. You have to be flexible.”⁴⁴

CPT Worbel* said, “First, this was the first time ODA 1416 had done much on the CQB/AMOUT side, so we were



ODA 1412 commander CPT Jimmy M. Townshend* (R) mingles with PARA (SF) personnel following the 25 August 2011 closing ceremony.

able to develop a lot of our SOPs. Second, it was just a great opportunity for my team to get that JCET experience. We have five new SF guys, including myself, and in the past we have only worked with Afghans and Iraqis."⁴⁵ MSG Dawson* explained how ODA 1412 adapted its training style for the exercise. "Our guys had to tone down how we operate a bit because we're used to being in the lead. But here, we are totally combined. We had to take each other's techniques and combine them to where we were interoperable with each other. It wasn't just us training them; it was us working together."⁴⁶

Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR 2011 achieved the goals of the CONOP and, in the process, bolstered U.S. and India's strategic partnership. MAJ Rice* commented on many positives of the exercise: "Obviously, deploying overseas is the ultimate test, but the miniature deployment we conducted to Yakima was very useful. The teams and company got another chance to load out and vet our own SOPs and packing lists. And working with a foreign military in any capacity is always very valuable. The rapport between us and the Indians has been excellent."⁴⁷ LTC Warman summed up VAJRA PRAHAR 2011 well: "The American and Indian Special Forces that participated in this training accomplished everything that they have because they worked together as a team."⁴⁸

EPILOGUE

Although VAJRA PRAHAR 2011 ended on a highly positive note, there were no annual VAJRA PRAHAR JCETs from 2012 to 2015. In January 2016, VAJRA PRAHAR was reinitiated at JBLM with 2nd Battalion, 1st SFG, hosting their Indian Special Forces counterparts. In March 2017, VAJRA PRAHAR was held in Jodhpur, India, and in January 2018, the exercise returned to JBLM.⁴⁹ †

Thanks to Company A, 4-1st SFG (A), and the Indian Army 1st and 4th PARA (SF) Battalions, for their assistance with this article.

JARED M. TRACY, PhD

Jared M. Tracy served six years in the U.S. Army, and became a historian at USASOC in December 2010. He earned an MA in History from Virginia Commonwealth University and a PhD in History from Kansas State University. His research is focused on the history of U.S. Army Psychological Operations.

Endnotes

- 1 ODB 1410, "CONOP-VAJRA PRAHAR 2011," 29 June 2011, 2, hereafter "VP CONOP," copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 2 For U.S.-India relations during the Cold War, see Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War on the Periphery: The United States, India, and Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
- 3 Congressional Research Service, "CRS Report for Congress: India-U.S. Relations," 12 August 2008, 14, <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/109486.pdf>, accessed 18 February 2015.
- 4 Daniel Byman, *Al Qaeda, the Islamic State, and the Global Jihadist Movement: What Everyone Needs to Know* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015), 125.
- 5 U.S. Department of State, "A Guide to the United States' History of Recognition, Diplomatic, and Consular Relations, By Country, Since 1776: India," <http://history.state.gov/countries/india> (accessed 6 January 2015); U.S. Department of State, "U.S. Relations with India," <http://www.state.gov/t/pa/ei/bgn/3454.htm>, accessed 6 January 2015.
- 6 U.S. Department of Defense, "Report to Congress on U.S.-India Security Cooperation," November 2011, 2, http://www.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/20111101_NDAA_Report_on_US_India_Security_Cooperation.pdf, accessed 6 January 2015, hereafter "U.S.-India Security Cooperation."
- 7 "U.S.-India Security Cooperation," 2-4; "Yudh Abhyas," http://www.army.mil/article/47441/yudh_abhyas/ (accessed 6 January 2005); Express News Service, "Indo-US joint military exercise 'Vajra Prahar' to be held in Seattle," 16 January 2018, <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/indo-us-joint-military-exercise-vajra-prahar-to-be-held-in-seattle-5026208/> (accessed 6 April 2018).
- 8 Company A, 4th Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group, "Special Forces Qualified VP Participants," 19 August 2011, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; "VP CONOP," 1.
- 9 "Non-SF VP Participants," 19 August 2011, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; "VP CONOP," 1-2.
- 10 For more on The Parachute Regiment and where it fits into the Indian Army, see <http://www.indianparachuteregiment.kar.nic.in/home.html> (accessed 14 January 2015) and <http://indianarmy.nic.in>, accessed 14 January 2015.
- 11 COL Alin Deb Saha, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 23 August 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 12 MAJ Thaiba Simon, "Nominal Roll of JT INDO US VP-2011," no date, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **Indian junior officer ranks participating in the exercise included *subedar* and *naib subedar* (roughly equivalent in rank to an American second lieutenant or a senior NCO). Participating Indian junior NCO and enlisted ranks included *havildar* (sergeant), *naik* (corporal), *lance naik* (lance corporal), and private.**
- 13 CPT Rajat Chandra, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 25 August 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 14 LT Maneet Kumar Pant, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 25 August 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 15 "VP CONOP," 2.
- 16 Saha interview, 23 August 2011.
- 17 CW2 Larry J. Nault*, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 22 August 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 18 SGM Mark L. Kloninger*, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 22 August 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 19 Nault* interview, 22 August 2011.
- 20 MSG Leroy P. Bryce*, II, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 22 August 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 21 MAJ Andy R. Rice*, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 22 August 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 22 CPT Jimmy M. Townshend*, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 25 August 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 23 Furlow* interview, 23 August 2011.
- 24 Furlow* interview, 23 August 2011.
- 25 CPT Timothy P. Worbel*, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 25 August 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 26 "VP CONOP," 3.
- 27 "VP CONOP," 3.
- 28 "VP CONOP," 3.
- 29 Furlow* interview, 23 August 2011.
- 30 Worbel* interview, 25 August 2011.
- 31 Townshend* interview, 25 August 2011.
- 32 MSG Nick Dawson*, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 23 August 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 33 Kloninger* interview, 22 August 2011.
- 34 Townshend* interview, 25 August 2011.
- 35 VAJRA PRAHAR 2011 Closing Ceremony, Joint-Base Lewis-McChord, 25 August 2011, hereafter VP Closing Ceremony.
- 36 VP Closing Ceremony.
- 37 VP Closing Ceremony.
- 38 "VP CONOP," 3-4.
- 39 Pant interview, 25 August 2011.
- 40 Chandra interview, 25 August 2011.
- 41 MAJ Thaiba Simon, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 25 August 2011, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 42 Furlow* interview, 23 August 2011.
- 43 Kloninger* interview, 22 August 2011.
- 44 Townshend* interview, 25 August 2011.
- 45 Worbel* interview, 25 August 2011.
- 46 Dawson* interview, 23 August 2011.
- 47 Rice* interview, 22 August 2011.
- 48 VP Closing Ceremony.
- 49 SSG Terrance Payton, "1st SFG(A) Vajra Prahar JCET," 3 February 2016, https://www.army.mil/article/161783/1st_sfga_vajra_prahar_jcet (accessed 6 April 2018); Indian Defence News, "Indo-US joint military exercise 'Vajra Prahar' to be held in Seattle," 16 January 2018, <http://www.defencenews.in/article/Indo-US-joint-military-exercise-%e2%80%98Vajra-Prahar-%e2%80%99-to-be-held-in-Seattle-525820> (accessed 6 April 2018); Indian Defence Updates, "Indian Defence Updates: US India Vajra Prahar 2018, DAC Clears New Rifles, India Upgrades T-90," 16 January 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7oQB-15S0c> (accessed 6 April 2018).

Indian Parachute Regiment Endnotes

- 1 Ken Conboy and Paul Hannon, *Elite Forces of India and Pakistan* (Elms Court, Chapel Way, Botley, Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 1992), 3, 5; The Parachute Regiment, "Brief History," no date, accessed online at <http://www.indianparachuteregiment.kar.nic.in/home.html> (25 July 2011); The Parachute Regiment, "Our History..." no date, <http://www.indianparachuteregiment.kar.nic.in/history.htm> (25 July 2011).
- 2 Conboy and Hannon, *Elite Forces of India and Pakistan*, 5-20; "Brief History"; "Our History..."
- 3 Conboy and Hannon, *Elite Forces of India and Pakistan*, 7; "Brief History"; "Our History..."
- 4 The Parachute Regiment, "Parachute Regiment Policy," accessed online at <http://www.indianparachuteregiment.kar.ni.in/welfare.htm> (25 July 2011). **For a detailed operational history of The Parachute Regiment through the 1970s**, see K.C. Praval, *India's Paratroopers: A History of The Parachute Regiment of India* (London: Leo Cooper, 1975).

The background is a composite image. On the left, a human skull is shown in a warm, golden-brown light. On the right, a soldier in a green uniform is visible in a green-tinted, somewhat blurry field setting. The text is overlaid on this background.

THE
OSS
INFLUENCE ON
SPECIAL
FORCES

by Troy J. Sacquety



Veterans of World War II airborne and special operations units (Philippine guerillas, Merrill's Marauders [5307th Composite Unit (Provisional)]), Office of Strategic Services [OSS], 1st Special Service Force [FSSF], Alamo Scouts), and Korean War guerrillas contributed to the creation, organization, doctrine, and training of Special Forces (SF).

However, a grossly disproportionate share of the 'pioneering' influence has been incorrectly attributed to the OSS veterans who joined early SF. According to popular misconception, multitudes of former OSS veterans joined early SF and shaped the force into becoming a continuation of the disbanded WWII organization.¹ Evidence reveals this was not the case. This article examines that fallacy with a simple analysis that details the number of former OSS personnel who joined SF from 1952 to 1954 and the disparate experiences those veterans brought to the force. Finally, the article explains that of the few OSS veterans who joined SF in the first two years, those that served as instructors in the SF Department at the Psychological Warfare Center and School (PWCS) (today's U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS)) were the most influential.

First, the author conducted by-name comparisons between the list of OSS personnel against the rosters of personnel assigned from 1952 to 1954 to the SF Department at the Psychological Warfare Center and School (PWCS); the 10th Special Forces Group (SFG); officers assigned to the 77th SFG; and orders for the 99 SF-trained personnel sent to serve in Korea. The result was concrete evidence of disinformation and exaggeration perpetuated by the active force and veterans associations. The rosters reveal that **only fourteen** former OSS members joined SF from 1952-1954. Thus, the total number of former OSS veterans in SF was less than one percent of the total 1,169 SF soldiers.²

Secondly, a deeper inspection was made on the few OSS veterans to see what skills they brought to the new force. A comparison of their WWII OSS assignments and locations with their subsequent duty position in SF revealed little commonality, other than most of the OSS veterans served in either the OSS Special Operations (SO) or Operational Groups (OG) Branches.

These OSS veterans did not uniformly influence SF. While soldiers underwent early SF training within their units, field grade officers in these formations performed little instruction during team level exercises, thereby minimizing the lessons they passed on to younger soldiers. This left the instructors in the SF Department of the PWCS as those tasked with creating lesson plans and programs of instruction (POI) for SF training. Therefore, the five former OSS instructors in the SF Department, constituting approximately one-third of the instructor cadre from 1952-1954, are the ones who provided the most influence from their OSS experiences on the developing force.³ Because the five interacted with or impacted every soldier trained in the SF program at the school, they gave students undergoing instruction an exaggerated impression about the overall presence of former OSS veterans in SF. Regardless, as USASOC Command Historian Dr. Charles H. Briscoe's prior *Veritas* article "The Good 'Ole' Days of Special Forces: Marginalized Before JFK" demonstrated, the early POIs impacted the instruction for years to come.⁴ Because these instructors provided the OSS influence to the SF POI, a brief look at their operational backgrounds shows what they offered to the budding force.

OSS VETERANS OF EARLY SPECIAL FORCES

COL AARON BANK

Commander, 10th SFG; Jedburgh (SO) Team PACKARD (France), SO Team RAVEN (Laos)

LTC WINSTON W. EHRGOTT

Instructor, SF Department; SO Greece/Saudi Arabia

LTC JAMES M. GOODWIN

Instructor, SF Department; SO Team FLOTSAM (Yugoslavia), OSS Special Project JAVAMAN

LTC JACK T. SHANNON

Deputy Commander, 10th SFG/Commander, 77th SFG; SO Interallied Mission BERGAMOTTE (France), SO Detachment 101 (Burma)

LTC REGINALD THORLIN

TDY to 77th SFG; SO Detachment 101 (Burma)

CAPTAIN (CPT) LEIF BANGSBOLL

Instructor, SF Department; SO Team (Denmark)

CPT HERBERT R. BRUCKER

Assistant S-2, 10th SFG; SO HERMIT circuit (France); SO Team IBEX/LION (China)

CPT ARTHUR N. FOSTER

SF to Korea; OG CHRISTOPHER (France), SO Team BABOON (China)

CPT JOHN H.N. HEMINGWAY

Instructor, SF Department; SO Team France, Secret Intelligence Strategic Services Section (France)

CPT SOLON H. TATE

B Team Leader, 77th SFG, Special Funds Finance Officer (Yugoslavia, Italy, Austria)

1LT ANDRE J. BOUCHARDON

SF to Korea; Two missions with the SO SACRISTAN Circuit (France), Special Allied Airborne Reconnaissance Force (SAARF)

1LT CAESAR J. CIVITELLA

Instructor, SF Department; OG LAFAYETTE (France), OG SEWANEE (Italy)

1LT BARTINE H. COADY

HQ and HQ Company, 77th SFG; recruited into OSS August 1945, Washington DC; no operational OSS assignment

MASTER SERGEANT ROMAYO J. BIZAILLON

FA Team #10, 10th SFG; OG EMILY (France), OG BLACKBERRY (China)



OSS collar insignia.



SF Distinguished Unit Insignia.

CPT LEIF BANGSBOLL

The son of a rear admiral who commanded the Danish submarine fleet, Bangsboll grew up sailing and learned submarine operations and diesel engine maintenance.⁵ In 1935, he volunteered for the Royal Danish Naval Air Force and trained as an observer prior to joining the merchant marine.⁶ With the outbreak of war, he joined the Norwegian Air Force (in exile) in Canada as a flight sergeant, but in the hope of seeing combat, he volunteered for the U.S. Army on 22 March 1943.⁷ In September 1943, the OSS recruited Bangsboll for his fluency in Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish.⁸ The OSS first employed Corporal Bangsboll as an instructor at RTU-11, otherwise known as 'the Farm,' a school on an estate in Southern Maryland that taught secret intelligence tradecraft, before assigning him to the Danish SO section.⁹ On 5 October 1944, Sergeant (SGT) Bangsboll parachuted into occupied Denmark near Allborg to be "the only American officer serving as an agent" in that country.¹⁰

Until the end of the war Bangsboll lived as a civilian, being subject to execution as a spy if caught. His mission was to help arm, train, and lead the Danish resistance, engage in sabotage missions on rail and communications lines, and to report on local conditions. Because the OSS could not yet commission SGT Bangsboll, the British Army made him a first lieutenant to better engage with Danish resistance leaders.¹¹ His lieutenantcy in the British Army ended on 6 November 1944 when he received a commission as a Second Lieutenant (2LT) in the U.S. Army. In May 1945, as the war was drawing to a close, 1LT Bangsboll led resistance elements as they helped to liberate Copenhagen. For his service, he received the Distinguished Service Cross.¹²

After WWII, Bangsboll attended intelligence officer's training at Camp Holabird, Maryland, and then served in airborne units at Fort Bragg before deploying to pre-war South Korea as a Public Safety Officer with the 59th Military Government Headquarters and Headquarters Company.¹³ But it was as an Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon leader in the 187th Airborne Infantry Regiment that 1LT Bangsboll once again found himself in combat, earning the Silver Star for an action on 16 November 1950, near Pyongyang-ni, North Korea.¹⁴

CPT Bangsboll arrived at the SF Department in May 1952, and served until March 1954 as an instructor of clandestine operations and guerrilla warfare.¹⁵ He was so well-suited for this position that the director of the SF Department, COL Francois D'Eliscu, wrote, "Bangsboll is one of the most experienced and trained officers in our specialized field of activities. He is the only man in this country, to my knowledge, who has had so many foreign assignments in the field of secret operations that fits him for his present important assignment as instructor in the Special Forces Department of the Psychological Warfare School."¹⁶



For his mission in occupied Denmark, 1LT Bangsboll received the Distinguished Service Cross.



Special Force Wing.

1LT CAESAR J. CIVITELLA

The son of Italian immigrants, Civitella began his military career in February 1943. He volunteered for the airborne and went to the 597th Airborne Engineer Company at Camp Mackall, North Carolina, where he again volunteered for the OSS OG.¹⁷ In April 1944, Technician Fourth Grade (T/4) Civitella deployed to North Africa. While assigned to Company B, 2671st Special Reconnaissance Battalion, Separate (Provisional), on 29 August 1944, his 14-man team LAFAYETTE parachuted into southern France in support of Operation DRAGOON, the 15 August 1944 invasion of Southern France. LAFAYETTE assisted in the capture of nearly 4,000 enemy troops and worked with elements of the French resistance until 8 September 1944.¹⁸

SGT Civitella then transferred to Company A, 2671st in Italy, where he served as a 'kicker' to provide aerial resupply to other OSS elements.¹⁹ On 13 April 1945, SGT Civitella parachuted into the Valtellina valley in northern Italy with OG team SEWANEE to join OG team SPOKANE in supporting the Italian resistance, preventing enemy destruction of critical infrastructure, and to cut the road through the alpine Stelvio Pass.²⁰ The two OG teams met all of their objectives, including clearing the valley and the pass of all enemy troops, and preventing the destruction of the area's critical power plants. Until 22 May 1945, when conventional forces secured the valley, the OGs conducted Civil Affairs (CA) functions by providing local administration, arranging repair to roads and buildings, and organizing rest points and food drops for thousands of former forced laborers returning to the area.²¹ After helping with the OSS effort to document its history, Staff Sergeant (SSG) Civitella received a discharge on 17 October 1945.²²

Having reenlisted in the Air Force in 1947, SSG Civitella petitioned to transfer to the Army. On 23 February 1948, he became the regimental S-2 sergeant for the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.²³ On 28 January 1951, Master Sergeant Civitella received a direct commission to Second Lieutenant, and was posted to the 508th Airborne Infantry Regiment at Fort Benning, Georgia.²⁴ Newly promoted First Lieutenant (1LT) Civitella reported to the PWCS on 12 May 1952 and served as a guerrilla warfare instructor in the SF Department until August 1953.²⁵ Then, he joined the 77th SFG, but remained involved with the school as an SF representative to the Psychological Warfare Board. In June 1955, he joined the 10th SFG in Germany.²⁶



2671st Special
Reconnaissance Battalion,
Separate (Provisional) shoulder scroll

LTC JAMES M. GOODWIN

LTC Goodwin enlisted in the Maryland Army National Guard briefly in 1934, but it was his civilian construction job working with explosives that influenced his military career.²⁷ Drafted into the Army on 21 April 1941, Goodwin served in the cavalry until May 1942 when he joined the OSS predecessor, the Coordinator of Information. SSG Goodwin created a demolitions training course, then supervised the same program after receiving a commission as a 2LT.²⁸ After parachute and field training, the OSS sent 1LT Goodwin to U.S. Army Forces in the Middle East (USAFIME) in Cairo, Egypt, where he was a Dispatching and Supply Officer with the 2677th Regiment, OSS (Provisional), managing OSS property, budgets, and inspecting agents prior to their insertion.²⁹ Then, on 19 January 1944, CPT Goodwin jumped into a British-led mission in Yugoslavia (Bosnia).

Its commander, Brigadier General (BG) Fitzroy H.R. MacLean, ordered the OSS CPT to the FLOTSAM mission. For two months Goodwin walked through wintry mountains to arrive at Semic, Slovenia. Within a week, BG MacLean dismissed the Canadian officer in charge of FLOTSAM and appointed CPT Goodwin commander. As a liaison to both the partisans and the Russian mission, he requested supplies for the guerrillas, persuaded them to attack the Germans, and assisted in the rescue of more than three hundred downed American airmen.³⁰ On 20 September 1944, while attacking a German stronghold at a railroad bridge over the Sava River, at Litija, Major (MAJ) Goodwin was wounded by an enemy grenade.³¹

After recovering from his injuries, the OSS assigned MAJ Goodwin to the Special Projects Office to work on the JAVAMAN project.³² Never employed operationally, JAVAMAN utilized an explosives-laden watercraft steered to its target by remote control and directed by television carried aboard an airborne B-17 'Flying Fortress' heavy bomber.³³ Following WWII, he served in a number of engineer assignments in the U.S. and the Caribbean until reporting to the PWCS in July 1952. LTC Goodwin was the "Chief of Academic Committee in weapons, demolitions, and sabotage" in the SF Department and represented SF on the Psychological Warfare Board until July 1953.³⁴



MAJ Goodwin received the British Military Cross for his work in Yugoslavia.



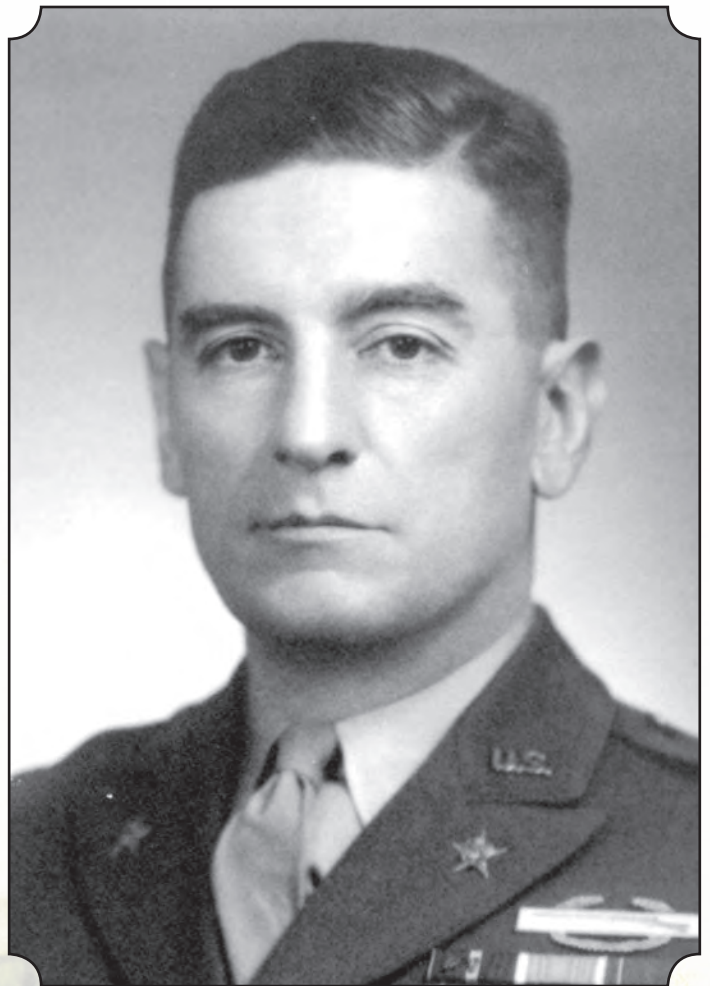
US Army Forces in the Middle East (USAFIME) SSI

LTC WINSTON W. EHROGOTT

LTC Ehrgott began his military career in 1920 with the New York National Guard and was part of Lieutenant Commander Richard E. Byrd's 1926 Arctic Expedition.³⁵ Called to active duty in March 1942, he served in the Cavalry before joining the SO Branch. Assigned to USAFIME from February to May 1944, CPT Ehrgott worked in occupied Greece with Communist cavalry partisans, keeping them focused on fighting the Germans, rather than other guerrillas.³⁶ From June 1944 to January 1945, he was a senior instructor and executive officer of the U.S. Military Mission in Saudi Arabia.³⁷

MAJ Ehrgott returned to the Army and fought in Italy.³⁸ From October 1945 to May 1946, he commanded 2nd Battalion, 351st Infantry Regiment, 88th Infantry Division (ID), as it conducted military government duties in occupied Trieste.³⁹ He then assisted counter-insurgency efforts with the U.S. Military Mission to Greece from December 1947 to March 1948 before leaving active duty.⁴⁰

Ehrgott returned to active duty during the Korean War and received a position in the Miscellaneous Group, 8086th Army Unit, the command for the anti-communist Korean guerrillas. He commanded Task Force LEOPARD on Paengyong Island from August until November 1951. LTC Ehrgott arrived at the PWCS on 14 June 1952, and, as the Director of Training in the SF Department until November 1952, helped to develop and approve lesson plans. He then served as a guerrilla warfare instructor and in various positions in the PWCS before leaving in December 1953.⁴¹



USAFIME SSI

CPT JOHN H.N. HEMINGWAY

Hemingway dropped out of Dartmouth in 1943 to enlist in the Army. After Officer Candidate School, he received a posting to the black 780th Military Police Battalion in the segregated Army of WWII. When the 780th deployed to Algiers, the French-speaking 1LT used his family connections (as the son of author Ernest M. Hemingway) to join the SO Branch. After serving as an instructor with the 2677th Regiment, he parachuted as part of an SO team into occupied France in support of Operation DRAGOON.⁴² His team was to organize and arm French resistance groups in the Hérault region and to report on enemy movements. But, having lost their radios in the drop, the operation was largely ineffectual and returned to headquarters for reassignment when bypassed by the French Army.

1LT Hemingway then joined the 3rd ID Strategic Services Section (SSS). Divisional SSS elements provided tactical intelligence to combat units under the 7th U.S. Army.⁴³ In late October 1944, in the Vosges Mountains in France, the Germans isolated the 1st Battalion, 141st Regiment, 36th ID. On 28 October, near Herival, 1LT Hemingway teamed with an officer from the 36th ID SSS to get a French agent through to 'the lost battalion.'⁴⁴ They ran into a platoon of German soldiers and all three were wounded and captured, but both officers hid their OSS affiliation.⁴⁵ Hemingway briefly escaped captivity in late March 1945, before being recaptured after several days of evading. After repatriation CPT Hemingway waived his discharge points to go to China, but the war ended and he served his remaining time at a German POW camp at Camp Pickett, Virginia, before leaving the service.⁴⁶

With no civilian job prospects, Hemingway again utilized family connections to rejoin the U.S. Army in 1948, and served in intelligence billets. While with the XVIII Airborne Corps at Fort Bragg, CPT Hemingway learned of a new unit looking for volunteers.⁴⁷ After an interview with COL Bank, Hemingway joined the first SF qualification course. He helped teach the second, and remained a guerrilla warfare instructor at the PWCS until January 1954.⁴⁸ Although writing later that he resigned his commission in protest over a schism in the PWCS over whether SF soldiers should be trained in UW or direct action, he was actually a victim of Army downsizing after the Korean War.⁴⁹



7th US Army SSI

PRIOR OSS SF INSTRUCTOR EXPERIENCE

	LTC Ehgott	LTC Goodwin	CPT Bangsboll	CPT Hemingway	1LT Civitella
Worked with Guerrillas	◆	◆	◆	◆	◆
Senior Liasion work	◆	◆	◆		
Military Government/CA	◆		◆		◆
Served in an Airborne Unit		◆	◆	◆	◆
Organized Resistance Forces			◆	◆	◆
Foreign culture or language			◆	◆	◆
UW instruction	◆	◆	◆	◆	
Escape/Evasion		◆		◆	

Approximately one-third of the eighteen instructors in the SF Department of the PWCS were former OSS members.

Only fourteen OSS veterans joined SF from 1952 to 1954. Five served as instructors in the SF Department of the PWCS. Along with non-OSS background instructors, they pooled their collective experiences to write the qualification course POI.⁵⁰ Four of the five OSS veterans had significant experience in unheralded elements of the SO Branch (while the last had OG experience). Significantly none were Jedburghs, a multinational project also inaccurately portrayed as providing the model for early SF to emulate. All had worked with guerillas, some for months. They brought significant experience in UW instruction and methods to the PWCS. Thus, as the evidence in this article has shown, it was not the experiences of a large number of former OSS personnel that influenced SF for years to come, but rather that of a small core of instructors. ↑

THANKS: To Caesar Civitella (deceased), the families of Winston W. Ehgott, James M. Goodwin, and Leif Bangsboll, Eric Kilgore (NPRC), and COL (retired) Richard M. Ripley.

TROY J. SACQUETY, PhD

Troy J. Sacquety earned an MA from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and his PhD in Military History from Texas A&M University. Prior to joining the USASOC History Office staff he worked several years for the Central Intelligence Agency. Current research interests include Army and Office of Strategic Services (OSS) special operations during World War II, and U.S. Army Civil Affairs.

Endnotes

- 1 An example of this perception can be found at “Special Forces History: Early Roots of Special Forces,” found on internet at <http://specialforceshistory.info/roots.html>, accessed 12 June 2018. Another example is found in Shelby L. Stanton, *Special Forces at War: An Illustrated History, Southeast Asia 1957-1975* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Howell Press, 1990), 13.
- 2 The list of OSS personnel is at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in College Park, MD. However, a searchable database is located at <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/1593270>, accessed 25 October 2017; “Headquarters: The Psychological Warfare Center, Officer’s Roster,” 20 October 1953, “77th Special Forces Group Officer’s Roster,” 20 October 1953, both located in the Jack T. Shannon collection, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; “Movement Order to Commanding Officer, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne),” 25 September 1953, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. “Deployment of the 10th Special Forces Group in 1953,” in *Special Forces: The First Fifty Years* (Tampa, FL: Faircount LLC for the SFA, 2002), see roster “10th Special Forces Group Deployments to Germany and Korea in 1953,” p. 94-101; “Headquarters 77th Special Forces Group Airborne,” 20 November 1954, USASOC History Support Center, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 3 **Administratively, those SF soldiers in the PSYWAR Center were held on the rolls of the 10th or later 77th SFG.**
- 4 Charles H. Briscoe, “The Good ‘Ole’ Days of Special Forces: Marginalized Before JFK,” *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*: 13:1 (2017), 21-29.
- 5 **Leif Bangsboll was the son of Rear Admiral Frederick Christian Bangsboll.**
- 6 Leif Bangsboll, “Memorandum,” 6 January 1943, Leif Bangsboll personnel file, NPRC.
- 7 MG Guy V. Henry to The Commanding General, Armored Forces, Fort Knox, Ky., “SUBJECT: Bangsboll, Leif,” 23 March 1943, Bangsboll personnel file, NPRC; “Computation of Officer’s Service,” 30 June 1962, Bangsboll personnel file, NPRC.
- 8 “Application for Employment and Personal History Statement,” [Spring 1943], Folder Bangsboll, Leif, Box 0034, Entry 224, Research Group 226, NARA. **He was also able to speak French, German, and Greenlandic.**
- 9 Kermit Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS* (New York: Walker and Company, 1976), p. 76.
- 10 Charles E. Brebner to CO, Hq & Hq Detachment, OSS, European T of Operations, “SUBJECT: Job Description to Accompany Recommendation for Promotion of 2d Lieutenant Leif Bangsboll,” 15 March 1945, Folder Bangsboll, Leif, NARA.
- 11 “Application for Employment,” 19 January 1957, Bangsboll personnel file, NPRC.
- 12 COL James R. Forgan to Commanding General, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, “SUBJECT: Recommendation for Award of the Distinguished Service Cross,” 25 June 1945, Folder Bangsboll, Leif, NARA. **1LT Bangsboll led a resistance force in an attack on Ryparken that captured German artillery pieces and machineguns, leading to the surrender of the local enemy garrison.**

- 13 "Efficiency Report," 31 August 1948, Bangsboll personnel file, NPRC.
- 14 "Special Orders Number 149: Headquarters Fort Lawton, Washington," 23 June 1951, Bangsboll personnel file, NPRC. Bangsboll directed a platoon that overwhelmed an enemy garrison at a food storage warehouse. Later ordered to destroy the building, Bangsboll's numerically smaller force incurred no casualties as they killed the defenders and burned the building and its estimated 100 to 150 tons of dried food.
- 15 "Officer Efficiency Report," 12 March 1954, Leif Bangsboll file, NPRC.
- 16 Francois D'Eliscu to Commanding Officer, The Psychological Warfare Center, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, "New Category Statement," 4 December 1953, Bangsboll personnel file, NPRC. "Special Orders number 67, HQ, The Psychological Warfare Center," 1 April 1954, Bangsboll personnel file, NPRC; "Bangsboll, Leif (NMI); DA Form 66," 29 June 1960, Bangsboll personnel file, NPRC; From TAG to MDW, "Form DD 334: Request necessary contractual. . .," 31 August 1953, Bangsboll personnel file, NPRC; "DA Form 99C," 12 October 1962, Bangsboll personnel file, NPRC; Ruffin W. Gray, "SUBJECT: Letter of Evaluation," 25 June 1957, Bangsboll personnel file, NPRC. He also attended the Psychological Warfare Course at Georgetown University from 26 September 1953 to 23 January 1954. After working at the PWCS, Bangsboll had a number of Special Warfare assignments, including as a team leader in the 77th and 10th SFGs. Even his few conventional assignments involved special warfare. While as a Ground Liaison Officer in the 302nd Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, he taught Air Force personnel escape and evasion and psychological warfare techniques. After a final assignment as a Counterinsurgency Instructor with the Para Military Actions Department, U.S. Army School, Europe, LTC Bangsboll retired on 30 April 1963.
- 17 "Application for Appointment and Statement of Preferences for Reserve Officers," 5 August 1950, Caesar J. Civitella personnel file, NPRC. After training at the Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Maryland, he deployed to North Africa and was assigned to the same command as the French OG. See Alfred T. Cox, "Commanding Officers Report," p. 1, contained in *Operational Report: Company "B" 2671st Special Reconnaissance Battalion Separate (Prov.)*, (Grenoble, France: No publisher information, 1944).
- 18 Odilon J. Fontaine, "Operation-Name LAFAYETTE," p. 1-7, contained in *Operational Report: Company "B" 2671st Special Reconnaissance Battalion Separate (Prov.)*.
- 19 To prepare for his mission, he attended the British Mountain and Ski School at the Gran Sasso, Italy.
- 20 The first elements of SPOKANE parachuted into Italy on 4 March 1945.
- 21 "Report of the SPOKANE Mission," and "Report of the SEWANNEE Mission," contained in the "Italy Operational Group War Report," [May 1945], Folder 1, Box 46, Entry 99, Research Group 226, NARA.
- 22 "Enlisted Record and Report of Separation Honorable Discharge," October 1945, Civitella personnel file, NPRC.
- 23 Caesar J. Civitella, Headquarters 31st Fighter Group, Turner Field, Georgia, "Voluntary Request to Transfer to Airborne Duty," 5 January 1948, Civitella personnel file, NPRC; Headquarters, 31st Fighter Group, "Special Orders Number 27," 23 February 1948, Civitella personnel file, NPRC.
- 24 "Application for Extended Active Duty," 28 January 1951, Civitella personnel file, NPRC; "Brief History of Officer's Records," 28 January 1951, Civitella personnel file, NPRC.
- 25 Department of the Army, "Special Orders 87," 30 April 1952, Caesar Civitella personnel file, NPRC; "Officer Efficiency Report," 18 October 1952, Civitella personnel file, NPRC.
- 26 Edson D. Raff, Headquarters, the Psychological Warfare Center, "Certificate of Achievement to First Lieutenant Caesar J. Civitella," June 1955, Civitella personnel file, NPRC; Civitella personnel file, NPRC; DA Form 67-4, 4 March 1960, Civitella personnel file, NPRC. When the 10th SFG deployed to Germany on 1 November 1953, Civitella remained behind as cadre for the 77th SFG (today's 7th SFG). He served as a Company and G-3 staff officer before becoming a SF representative to the Psychological Warfare Board. From 1955 to 1958 he served with the 10th SFG in Bad Toelz, Germany, as an 'A' Detachment Commander and in the group S-3 office. Captain Civitella then returned to the 77th SFG at Fort Bragg as Doctrine Organization Training Officer on the Unconventional Warfare Committee, U.S. Army Special Warfare School. After serving a year (1961) as a Military Advisory and Assistance Group (MAAG) training advisor in South Vietnam, Major Civitella returned to the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center to be the chief, G-3 Training Division, until his retirement from the Army on 31 August 1964. On 1 September 1964 Civitella began a new career with the Central Intelligence Agency, serving until 1983.
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- 29 Charles S. Cheston to The Adjutant General, War Department, Washington, D.C., "SUBJECT: Promotion," 23 November 1943, Folder Goodwin, James, M., Box 282, Entry 224, Research Group 26, NARA, College Park, MD.
- 30 Edward J. F. Glavin to Commanding General, MTOUSA, "SUBJECT: Recommendation for Award," 26 April 1945, Goodwin personnel file, NPRC. N.N. Deranian, Chief SO OSS Bari to Chief, SO Washington, "Report of Capt. James M. Goodwin on his Observations and Activity While on SO Mission in Yugoslavia," 31 October 1944. Copy provided by Gregory Goodwin. Copies also reside in Box 88, Entry 210, Research Group 226, NARA, and in the Franklin Lindsay papers, Box 13, Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, CA.
- 31 H.L. Thomas to James M. Goodwin, "SUBJECT: British Decoration," 4 May 1945, Folder Goodwin, James, Major (Army), Box 282, Entry 224, Research Group 26, NARA; [Military Cross Citation], Folder Goodwin, James, Major (Army), Box 282, NARA; Graham G. Campbell to Commanding Officer, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, OSS Washington, D.C.; "SUBJECT: Presentation of Decoration," 24 September 1945, Folder Goodwin, James, Major (Army), Box 283, Entry 224, Research Group 226, NARA. For his service in Yugoslavia, OSS chief Major General (MG) William J. Donovan presented Goodwin with the Legion of Merit on 24 September 1945. The British also awarded MAJ Goodwin with the Military Cross. For additional reading on the OSS effort in Yugoslavia, see Franklin Lindsay, *Beacons in the Night: With the OSS and Tito's Partisans in Wartime Yugoslavia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993).
- 32 The Special Projects Office was a separate OSS branch created to conduct assignments and missions approved by OSS Director, MG William J. Donovan.
- 33 Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 228-230. Also see Christian E. Fearer, "The Lordly Pilot and Lowly Saboteur: The Army Air Force, Office of Strategic Services, and Project CAMPBELL/JAVAMAN," September 2015, U.S. Special Operations Command History & Research Office, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. MAJ Goodwin participated in the successful 11 August 1944 demonstration of the project off Pensacola, Florida, that resulted in the sinking of the derelict freighter *San Pablo*.
- 34 Fillmore K. Mearns, "DA Form 67-2; Officer Efficiency Report," 23 June 1953, Goodwin personnel file, NPRC. Barton G. Lane, Jr., "DA Form 67-3; Officer Efficiency Report," 14 February 1955, Goodwin personnel file, NPRC; Arthur L. West, Jr., "DA Form 67-4; Officer Efficiency Report," 15 April 1958, Goodwin personnel file, NPRC. After PWCS LTC Goodwin went to Korea to command Detachment 34, 8036th Army Unit, of the U.S. Army Advisory Group. He advised the South Korean Army Headquarters Intelligence Detachment in covert intelligence activities and as parachutists. At the Armor School, Fort Knox, Kentucky, from 1955-1957, one of the courses he taught to officers was "Special Force Operations." When Colonel Goodwin retired on 31 July 1962 he commanded the 326th Engineer Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.
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- 37 William A. Eddy to David G. Barr, "Dear General Barr," 10 September 1947, Ehr Gott personnel file, NPRC.
- 38 He commanded 3rd Battalion, 168th Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry Division by war's end.
- 39 WD Form 66, 17 May 1954, Ehr Gott personnel file, NPRC.
- 40 WD Form 66, 17 May 1954, Ehr Gott personnel file, NPRC.
- 41 WD Form 66, 17 May 1954, Ehr Gott personnel file, NPRC; "DD Form 1300," 4 September 1980, Ehr Gott personnel file, NPRC. For more on the 8086th AU, see Michael Krivdo, "Creating an Army Guerrilla Command: Part One: The First Six Months," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 8:2 (2012), 12-26. LTC Ehr Gott retired from the U.S. Army Reserve on 1 December 1961.
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- 44 John Hemingway, "Report on Activities from October 28 to May 9 While a PW," 12 May 1945, Folder Hemingway, John, Box 0326, NARA.
- 45 John Hemingway, "Report on Activities from October 28 to May 9 While a PW," 12 May 1945, Folder Hemingway, John, Box 0326, NARA. An account of this capture can be found in Richard M. Kelly, "Spy-Work Ahead," *Blue Book Magazine*, August 1947 and Jack Hemingway, *Misadventures of a Fly Fisherman: My Life With and Without Papa* (Dallas, TX: Taylor Publishing Company, 1986), 171-175. The French agent died of his wounds.
- 46 Jack Hemingway, *Misadventures of a Fly Fisherman*, 207. After recovering from his wounds, 1LT Hemingway went to *Offizier Lager XIII B* at Hammelburg. He was present when Task Force (TF) Baum, a small U.S. armored element, battled fifty miles behind German lines to the camp in a rescue attempt. However, the number of POWs exceeded the carrying capacity of TF Baum's remaining vehicles. Many chose not to risk escape, but 1LT Hemingway fled with the TF. When it stopped for the night, Hemingway opted to continue on foot, and on the morning of 28 March 1945, was far enough away from the TF to avoid immediate capture but also close enough to witness its destruction by heavy German tanks. A few days later, conscripted Hitler Youth captured the hungry and cold lieutenant. 1LT Hemingway was then force-marched along with thousands of POWs to stay ahead of the advancing Allies. On 29 April 1945, while at *Stalag VII-A* at Moosberg, elements of the 14th Armored Division liberated 110,000 allied prisoners including Hemingway. Ironically, the 14th AD force was led by Brigadier General Charles H. Karlstad, who was later the first commandant of the PWCS.
- 47 Jack Hemingway, *Misadventures of a Fly Fisherman*: 273.
- 48 John Hemingway, interview by Cynthia L. Hayden, 3 March 2000, p. 2, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; "Headquarters The Psychological Warfare Center Fort Bragg, North Carolina Officer's Roster," 20 October 1953, LTC Jack T. Shannon Collection, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 49 Jack Hemingway, *Misadventures of a Fly Fisherman*, 277. COL (ret) Richard M. Ripley, interview by Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 9 August 2017, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
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JFK

VISITS FORT BRAGG

A Photo Essay

by Charles H. Briscoe



President John F. Kennedy was welcomed by the Pope Air Force Base commander and LTG Thomas J. H. Trapnell, the Third U.S. Army commanding general.

President John F. Kennedy's trip to Fort Bragg, NC, on 12 October 1961 is remembered on Smoke Bomb Hill because it has become associated with his approval of the Green Beret for U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) soldiers. During his visit, the 35th President directed that SF wear their berets. While obeying that order was a pleasure, SF unit leaders on Smoke Bomb Hill had to scramble to get everyone in the proper uniform. By following the sequence of events on that day, this essay will dispel some mythology about the president's visit to Fort Bragg and set it in context with the ongoing Berlin crisis and the Cold War.

President Kennedy began the day by officially mobilizing 23,000 Army Reservists and federalizing twenty-eight Air National Guard flight squadrons for the Berlin crisis.¹ On the way to Fort Bragg on 12 October 1961, President Kennedy stopped at Chapel Hill to address 30,000 students, faculty and staff at the University of North Carolina and to receive an Honorary Degree of Laws. Then, he returned to the Raleigh-Durham Airport to board a four-engine turboprop VC-118, an Air Force-VIP converted version of the Douglas DC-6 *Skymaster* commercial airliner, to come to Pope Air Force Base (AFB).²

The paratroopers, weaponry, vehicles, helicopters, and equipment of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions were arrayed in ranks along the runways and taxiways of Pope AFB when President Kennedy arrived. Accompanying him on the VC-118 were Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of the Army Elvis J. Stahr Jr., the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), General (GEN) Lyman L. Lemnitzer, the Army Chief of Staff (CSA), GEN George H. Decker, and an entourage of Pentagon generals. Airborne color guards held unit colors with Presidential Unit Citation (PUC) streamers next to the reviewing stand.³

After receiving a 21-gun salute from a battery of M-101A1 105mm light howitzers, President Kennedy 'trooped the line' with Lieutenant General (LTG) Thomas J.H. 'Trap' Trapnell, the Third U.S. Army commander.⁴ They inspected the paratroops from his Lincoln *Continental* convertible. The president got out to talk with the soldiers several times before returning to the reviewing stand for remarks.⁵

After an Air Force fighter bomber flyover and a small firepower demonstration, President Kennedy addressed only the "famous 82nd Airborne Division" and emphasized that their last overseas duty was in Berlin at the end of World War II. Then, he complimented and congratulated the men of the Armed Forces "who have been both soldiers and diplomats at the edge of the Iron and Bamboo Curtains for 16 years."⁶

Unheard by almost all Army special warfare soldiers were the president's words that pertained to them. Conventional warfare was not mutually exclusive from nuclear warfare:

*"Just because you give a soldier a pistol does not mean that you are doing away with the artillery. The purpose is to give this nation all the tools — not just some of the tools — that it needs to protect freedom... we are paying more attention to the growing threat — and the growing exercise — of conventional warfare which includes guerrilla warfare, anti-guerrilla warfare, counter-insurgency action, and psychological warfare. I look forward to hearing and seeing the report and demonstrations of the Special Warfare School here at Fort Bragg. In this particular field we are sharing our knowledge and our weapons with our friends from all over the world and, at the same time, we are drawing upon their knowledge and experience and skills to improve our own."*⁷

Making unconventional warfare an integral part of the conventional forces' mission had been adroitly accomplished by the CSA, GEN Decker. He had presciently followed President Kennedy's guidance. In less than four years Army and Marine ground forces were fighting to stop the spread of Communism in South Vietnam.⁸

LTG Trapnell joined President Kennedy to review the vehicle-mounted paratroopers of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions as they paraded.⁹ After the review, the Commander-in-Chief and LTG Hamilton L. Howze, the XVIII Airborne Corps commander, got into the two convertibles that led a caravan of cars to McKellar's Pond. While Brigadier General (BG) William P. Yarborough, commander of the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center, waited at the pond, the presidential caravan drove down roads flanked on both sides by saluting SF soldiers, standing proudly in fatigues and wearing green berets.¹⁰

Three months of rehearsals, construction, and site preparation preceded the Army Special Warfare demonstration. McKellar's Pond was dredged to accommodate amphibious vehicles. A rappel tower, a 'slide for life' apparatus, and a dirt road around and behind the reviewing stands were constructed. A full dress rehearsal for the CSA, GEN Decker, and several generals from Washington did not go well six weeks prior. Considerable revamping of the program was directed, and BG Yarborough provided GEN Decker regular status reports.¹¹

RIGHT | Aerial photo of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions in formation on Pope Air Force Base (AFB), NC, awaiting the visit of President John F. Kennedy on 12 October 1961.

Late Thursday morning, 12 October 1961, BG Yarborough welcomed the 35th President, Secretary McNamara, GEN Decker, and the distinguished guests at the reviewing stand. Then, M52 5-Ton Semi-tractor Trucks towing displays mounted on their 12-Ton double-axle Trailers ('cattle cars') each stopped momentarily in front of the grandstand, 'Rose Bowl parade float style.' This allowed BG Yarborough to reinforce the narrator's dialogue. First, team members of an Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) in succession explained their position title, duties, and language qualifications.¹² Then, four 'people' display trailers covering Special Warfare School curriculum, the elements of counterinsurgency (COIN), the international student program, and a Civic Assistance scene stopped in succession.¹³ They were followed by a trailer-mounted display of soldiers operating a portable printing press and loading an artillery shell with Psychological Warfare (Psywar) leaflets. Two M-820 5-Ton 6X6 Truck Expansibile Print Vans, brought up the rear, signaling the transition to action-oriented activities.¹⁴

SF soldiers fought hand-to-hand to demonstrate unarmed combat techniques. Two SF medics controlled the descent of a stretcher-bound 'wounded' soldier down the 60-foot rappel tower before two other Green Berets followed in 'single brake' rope rappels. Another soldier traversed McKellar's Pond on the 'slide for life' cable, glissading into the water. Explosions, smoke grenades, and firefight simulators across the pond signaled a guerrilla attack as an SF ODA carrying rucksacks camouflaged with pine boughs 'double-timed' past the president. The demonstration of SF insertion methods consisted of soldiers paddling two seven-man inflatable rubber boats (RB-7s) while SCUBA team personnel hopped from the stern of a 5-ton amphibious 'truck,' a wheeled lighter, amphibious resupply, cargo (LARC) rigged with a plywood silhouette to look like a patrol boat. Two military freefall (MFF) instructors with civilian Para-Commander parachutes splashed into the pond.¹⁵ A look to the future followed.

Research and development potentially for use by SF was explained. A twin-engine CH-37 *Mojave* medium lift helicopter flew over the pond carrying a sling-loaded CONEX container. A little more exciting was a Bell Aircraft engineer strapped into a 125-pound Rocket Belt, who fired his rockets in a LARC and jetted towards President Kennedy stirring up a great plume of water. The pilot landed, saluted the Commander-in-Chief, and strode away. The demo finale consisted of an L-19 *Bird Dog* dropping commemorative leaflets upon the assembled caravan of cars.¹⁶ Then, forty minutes after the demo started, LTG Howze spirited the president and his entourage off to Sicily Drop Zone (DZ).

An airborne firepower demonstration awaited. It began with a pair of Air Force F-104 *Starfighters* screaming overhead to drop bombs and napalm. After the aerial bombardment, a 600-man airborne infantry battalion from the 101st Airborne Division filled the sky in a mass tactical parachute assault from C-130 *Hercules* transports. Vehicles and artillery followed the personnel drop. After talking with some 101st Airborne soldiers, President Kennedy and his group headed back to Pope AFB to return home to Washington, DC.¹⁷

Three months' work produced a highly supervised and well-rehearsed 'dog and pony' military capabilities show for President Kennedy on 12 October 1961. BG Yarborough had addressed the Commander-in-Chief's challenge to incorporate Special Warfare into the Army mission sets and make COIN simple. This visit placed SF in the vanguard of America's fight against 'Wars of National Liberation' threatening developing nations worldwide. Though the 'lion's share' of the Commander-in-Chief's time (4 ½ hours) had been devoted to the national strategic ready force (XVIII Airborne Corps), great lasting impressions of SF were made.¹⁸ The visit to Fort Bragg in 1961 by the charismatic JFK will be long remembered by Army Special Operations veterans and the Fort Bragg/Fayetteville communities. ▲



HOW THE DAY PLAYED OUT...



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2



3

ARRIVAL AND REVIEW

- 1 The 35th President received a 21-gun salute from a battery of M-101A1 105 mm light howitzers.
- 2 President Kennedy 'trooped the line' of paratroopers with Lieutenant General (LTG) Thomas J.H. Trapnell, the Third U.S. Army commander, from his 'signature' Lincoln *Continental* convertible.
- 3 A battery of truck-mounted MGR-1 *Honest John* surface-to-surface nuclear-capable rockets can be seen behind the soldiers.



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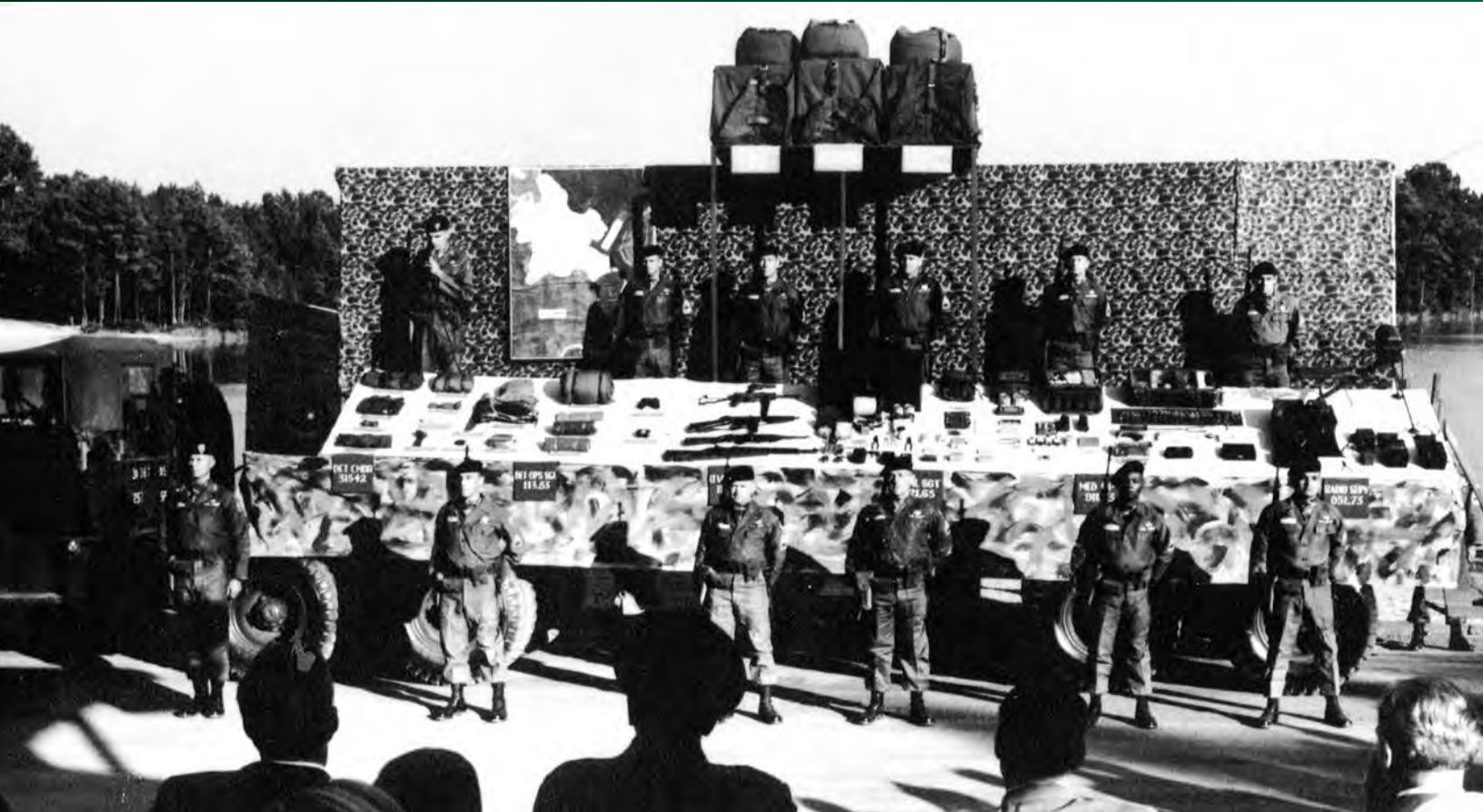
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PASS IN REVIEW

- 1 President Kennedy addressed the “famous 82nd Airborne Division,” emphasizing that their last overseas duty was in Berlin at the end of World War II. Then, he stressed that “conventional warfare included guerrilla warfare, anti-guerrilla warfare, counter-insurgency action, and psychological warfare.”
- 2 A battalion in the 82nd and 101st Airborne Division wore winter overwhites and carried rucksacks, skis, and snowshoes.
- 3 Vehicular elements of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions passed by the reviewing stand to conclude the presentation of troops. In the background is an airborne infantry battalion wearing winter overwhites and carrying winter gear.



McKELLAR'S POND: SPECIAL WARFARE DEMONSTRATION

A Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) displayed its organic weaponry and communications equipment on a trailer-mounted display. Half of the ODA 'double-timed' alongside the trailer until it momentarily stopped for a moderator to explain the organization and mission of the basic SF element. Three other trailer demonstrations showed:

- 1 U.S. Army Special Warfare School instructors in period uniforms to depict education and training over the years.
- 2 Instructors portrayed the three elements of counterinsurgency: security, isolation, and destruction.
- 3 Psychological warfare soldiers showed artillery shells packed with 'Safe Conduct Passes' to be fired into enemy lines.



SPECIAL FORCES CAPABILITIES DEMONSTRATION

Special Forces soldiers demonstrate:

- 1 A rappel litter carry down the face of the 60-foot tower built by McKellar's Pond.
- 2 A Special Forces soldier traverses the pond on a 'slide-for-life' cable before dropping safely into the water.
- 3 Special Forces wearing SCUBA gear jump into McKellar's Pond from a plywood silhouette patrol boat while an SF team paddles alongside in RB-7 rubber boats.



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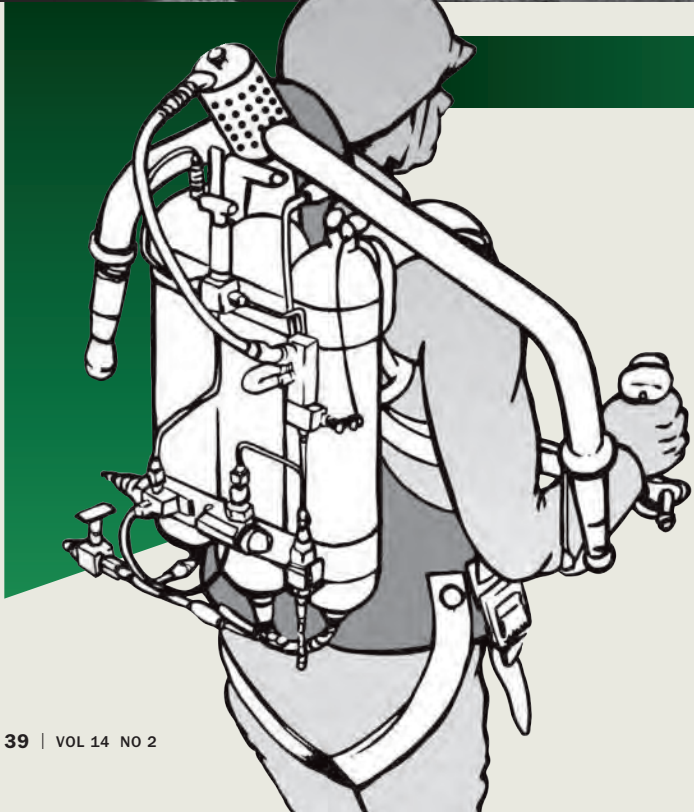
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ROCKET BELT

1-3 Bell aircraft engineer Harold Graham (inset) demonstrated the 'Rocket Belt' [Small Rocket Lift Device (SRLD)] to President Kennedy at McKellar's Pond, Fort Bragg, NC, on 12 October 1961. The 125-pound rig with five gallons of hydrogen peroxid allowed the pilot to clear a 27 foot obstacle, but flight time was limited to 21 seconds. Graham launched from a LARC (Lighter, Amphibious Resupply, Cargo, 5 ton).

4 A CH-37 *Mojave* medium helicopter demonstrated its external sling-load carrying capability with a CONEX storage container.

FAREWELL TO COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

1 Brigadier General (BG) William P Yarborough talked with President Kennedy following the 12 October 1961 special warfare demonstration at McKellar's Pond. The visit had been arranged by the president's aide-de-camp, Major General (MG) Chester V. 'Ted' Clifton, a West Point '36 classmate.



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2 This Psychological Warfare (Psywar) leaflet, sketched by Specialist Four (SP4) Bruce R. Armstrong, 3rd Psywar Det (Reproduction), 1st Psywar Battalion (Broadcast & Leaflet), was scattered over President's Kennedy's cavalcade by an L-19 *Bird Dog* aircraft.

3 LTG Hamilton L. Howze, Commanding General, XVIII Airborne Corps, escorted President Kennedy from the reviewing area at McKellar's Pond.



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1-3 **L to R** | Defense Secretary Robert A. McNamara, Army Chief of Staff GEN George H. Decker, President Kennedy, and Army Secretary Elvis J. Stahr Jr, await the airborne mass tactical jump at Sicily DZ on Fort Bragg. The mass tactical parachute assault was preceded by Air Force F-104 *Starfighters* dropping bombs and napalm. After the parachute jump President Kennedy was briefed by paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division near the Sicily Drop Zone viewing stand.

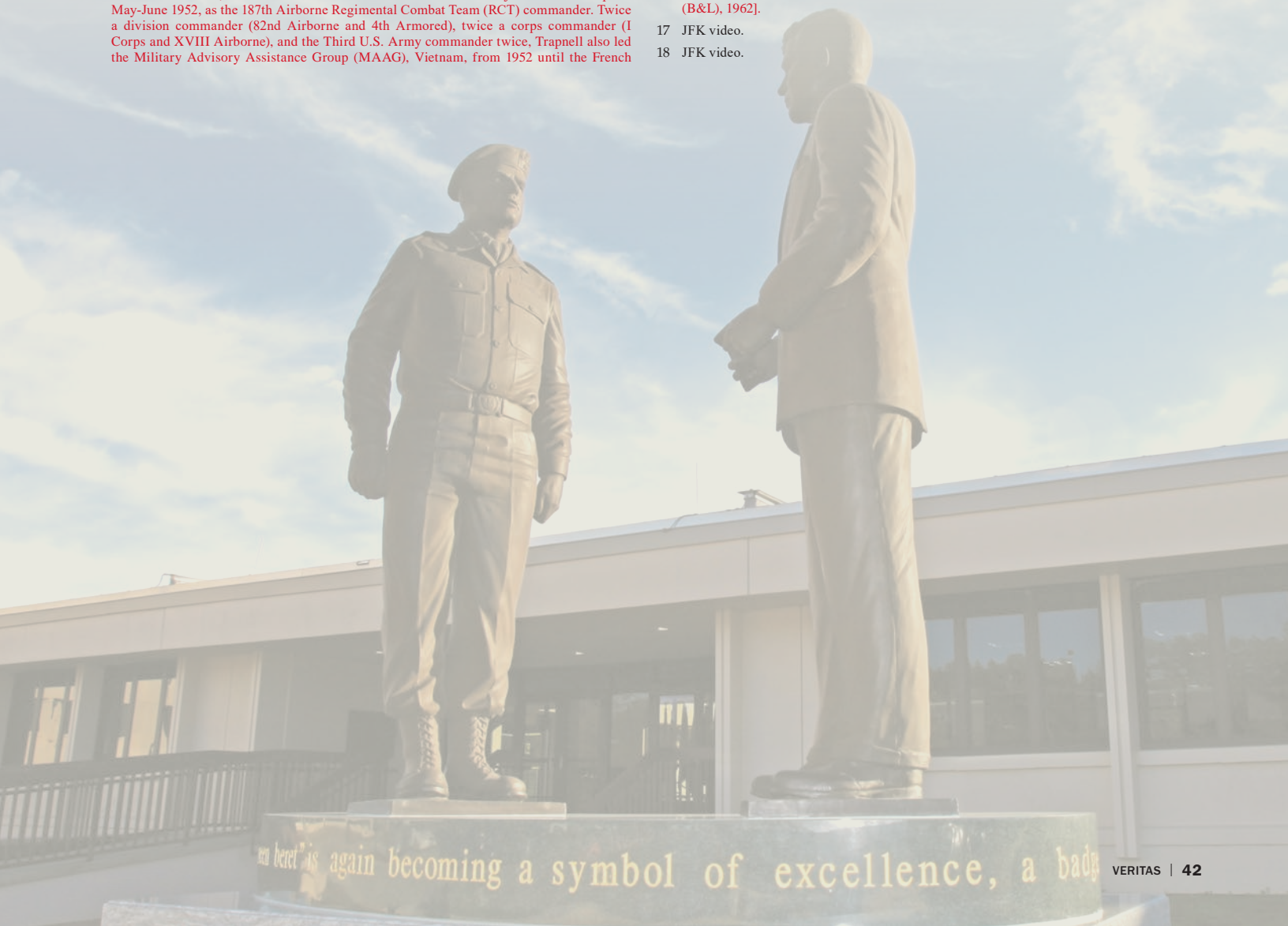
Special thanks go to Ms. Eva Davis, archivist at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum and Ms. Roxanne Merritt, curator of the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Museum for providing itineraries, photos, leaflets, and other documentation.

CHARLES H. BRISCOE, PhD

Charles H. Briscoe has been the USASOC Command Historian since 2000. A graduate of The Citadel, this retired Army special operations officer earned his PhD from the University of South Carolina. Current research interests include Army special operations in Latin America, the Congo, and the Lodge Act.

Endnotes

- 1 Donald A. Carter, "The U.S. Military Response to the 1960-1962 Berlin Crisis," at <https://www.archives.gov/files/research/.../1961-berlin-crisis/.../us-military>, accessed 7/12/2018; "Berlin Crisis" at <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/berlin.htm> accessed 7/12/2018; President John F. Kennedy, "Remarks to 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 12 October 1961" at <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/Archives/JFKPOF-036-003.aspx>, accessed 6/19/2018; "New York Times Chronology (October 1961) – John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum" at <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Research/Research-Aids/Ready-Reference/New-York-Times-C...> Accessed 6/21/2018. On 17 August 1961, Secretary of the Army Elvis J. Stahr Jr. announced a freeze in service for more than 84,000 enlisted men whose time in service was scheduled to end between 1 October 1961 and 30 June 1962. He also extended the tours of Army personnel in Germany and Japan by six months. Carter, "The U.S. Military Response to the 1960-1962 Berlin Crisis" cited above.
- 2 U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center & School. Audio Visual Department. Video entitled "President Kennedy's Visit to Fort Bragg, NC in honor of LTG Yarborough's 90th Birthday" 12 May 2002. USASOC History Office, Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited as JFK Visit video; "United States Presidential & VIP Aircraft, Air Force One, Marine One" at <https://www.airplanesofthepast.com/united-states-presidential-aircraft.htm>, accessed 6/29/2018.
- 3 JFK Visit video. Lieutenant General (LTG) Hamilton L. Howze commanded XVIII Airborne Corps at the time. Major Generals (MGs) Theodore J. Conway and C.W.G. Rich commanded the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, respectively.
- 4 JFK video. LTG Thomas J.H. 'Trap' Trappnell, the Third U.S. Army commander, survived the Bataan 'Death March,' the O'Donnell and Cabanatuan POW camps in the Philippines, and the sinking and disablement of two POW hell ships bound for Japan. He eventually was liberated from Hoten POW Camp in Manchuria in August 1945 by Russian forces. The former 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment commander was instrumental in suppressing the rebellion of 80,000 Chinese and North Korean POWs at the Koje-do Island camps in May-June 1952, as the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team (RCT) commander. Twice a division commander (82nd Airborne and 4th Armored), twice a corps commander (I Corps and XVIII Airborne), and the Third U.S. Army commander twice, Trappnell also led the Military Advisory Assistance Group (MAAG), Vietnam, from 1952 until the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. He was nominated to hold the rank of General (GEN) in retirement. Adam Bernstein, "Army Gen. Thomas Trappnell," *The Washington Post*, 15 February 2002 at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2002/02/15/army-gen-thomas-trappnell/da8...> accessed 7/18/2018; "Gen. Thomas J.H. Trappnell Dies," *Huron Daily Tribune*, 13 February 2002 at <https://www.michigansthumb.com/news/article/Gen-Thomas-J-H-Trappnell-Dies-7359947>, accessed 7/18/2018.
- 5 JFK video.
- 6 JFK video.
- 7 President John F. Kennedy, "Remarks to 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 12 October 1961."
- 8 Christopher K. Ives, *US Special Forces and Counterinsurgency in Vietnam: Military Innovation and Institutional Failure, 1961-1963* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 60; Charles R. Schrader, *History of Operations Research in the United States Army, Volume II: 1961-1973*, 254-255.
- 9 JFK video.
- 10 JFK video.
- 11 Retired Major Raymond P. Ambrozak, unpublished notes on President John F. Kennedy's 1961 Visit to Fort Bragg (2016). USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. McKellar's Pond was dredged, a circular dirt road was constructed for the cavalcade of 5-ton tractor trucks pulling flatbed trailers with displays explaining Special Warfare, a rappelling tower was built, and a 'slide for life' apparatus was stretched across the pond.
- 12 JFK video.
- 13 JFK video. These elements had been researched by Brigadier General (BG) Richard D. Stillwell, the Special Assistant to the Chief of Staff, Army, General George H. Decker, on behalf of the Secretary of the Army, Elvis J. Stahr, in support of President John F. Kennedy's directive to the military services to inculcate Special Warfare into their mission sets. Ives, *US Special Forces and Counterinsurgency in Vietnam*, 60; Schrader, *History of Operations Research in the United States Army, Volume II: 1961-1973*, 254.
- 14 JFK video.
- 15 JFK video.
- 16 Specialist Four (SP4) Bruce R. Armstrong, 3rd Psywar Detachment (Reproduction), 1st Psywar Battalion (Broadcast & Leaflet) did the artwork on the leaflet dropped during President John F. Kennedy's visit to Fort Bragg, NC, on 12 October 1961. SP4 Armstrong and Private (PVT) George M. Clark did the sketches used in *Pictorial Story of the Special Forces Soldier* [Ft Bragg, NC: 3rd Psywar Det (Repro), 1st Psywar Bn (B&L), 1962] as well as Armstrong, Clark, SP4 Gary C. Wallace, and SP4 Gilbert G. Early, *Pictorial Story of the Psychological Warfare Soldier* [Ft Bragg, NC: 3rd Psywar Det (Repro), 1st Psywar Bn (B&L), 1962].
- 17 JFK video.
- 18 JFK video.



BY MICHAEL E. KRIVDO

RESCUE AT CABANATUAN



Former POWs from the Cabanatuan prison camp celebrate their rescue in the town of Guimba, Luzon, Philippines. They were rescued by a combined force consisting of the Sixth Ranger Battalion, Philippine guerrillas, and Alamo Scouts.

On 6 May 1942, Lieutenant General (LTG) Jonathan M. 'Skinny' Wainwright IV surrendered the last American forces in the Philippines to the Imperial Japanese Army. With that capitulation more than 23,000 American servicemen and women, along with 12,000 Filipino Scouts, and 21,000 soldiers of the Philippine Commonwealth Army became prisoners of war (POWs).¹ To add to the misfortune, about 20,000 American citizens, many of them wives and children of the soldiers posted to the Philippines, were also detained and placed in internment camps where they were subjected to hardship for years. Tragically, of all the American prisoners in World War II, the POWs in the Philippines suffered one of the highest mortality rates at 40 percent. About 13,000 American soldiers captured in the Philippines died, and many thousands of them were shipped throughout the Japanese Empire as slave laborers.²

The fate of the Americans left behind in the Philippines weighed heavily on the senior leaders who escaped. General of the Army (GEN) Douglas A. MacArthur's staff closely tracked the status of Allied POWs on the islands. Headquarters, Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) (MacArthur's Headquarters in Australia) asked several guerrilla units to pinpoint the locations of POWs and

internees in the Philippines. They were to establish contact with them and report. This information would be used to develop rescue plans.³

In late 1944, reports of the Palawan POW Camp Massacre traveled quickly to SWPA (see article in previous issue). The initial information came from the guerrillas who assisted survivors after escaping. The horrific details prompted SWPA to dispatch amphibian aircraft to recover the escapees. Once in Australia, eyewitness accounts of the mass execution caused military leaders to swear to prevent other atrocities. Thousands of other prisoners were still held by the Japanese, including the thousand or so still believed held at Cabanatuan, on Luzon Island.⁴

This article incorporates reports and accounts from the 6th Ranger Battalion, Sixth U.S. Army, Alamo Scouts, and various guerrilla units that supported the rescue of 516 POWs from Cabanatuan. It chronologically merges these

A POW in Cabanatuan Prison drew this sketch of an inmate giving water to a sick POW. (*Library of Congress*)

Japanese Army soldiers force marched American prisoners to camps in the middle of Luzon during the 'Bataan Death March.'





LTC Henry A. Mucci (L) and CPT Robert W. Prince (R) of the 6th Ranger Battalion.



Map depicting the rough area of operations for Major Lapham's Luzon Guerrilla Armed Forces (LGAF).

accounts into a single narrative history and concludes with an operational analysis. The reader is immersed at the tactical level to appreciate the detailed planning and coordination behind this textbook raid. One will see events as they unfold. Having the participants speak makes the history personal. Although the mission was well-executed, the article reveals weaknesses as well. The outcome of this operation influenced similar ones afterward in which more allied lives were saved.

After MacArthur's forces landed at Lingayen Bay, Luzon, on 9 January 1945 and fought towards Cabanatuan, Major (MAJ) Robert B. Lapham, leader of the Luzon Guerrilla Armed Forces (LGAF), had renewed hope for of freeing the Cabanatuan prisoners.⁵ In light of what had recently happened on Palawan, a prison rescue merited reconsideration.

Planning the Rescue

Soon after the successful Lingayen landing, GEN MacArthur attached Lapham's LGAF to Lieutenant General (LTG) Walter Krueger's Sixth U.S. Army. MAJ Lapham became Krueger's senior guerrilla advisor. He assigned his 'squadrons' to each of the major subordinate commands in Krueger's Sixth Army. "I raised the question [of a rescue] again," Lapham recalled. This time it prompted action. On 26 January, LTG Krueger listened to the guerrilla reports about the prison camp. The Sixth Army commander "assigned his G-2, Colonel [COL] Horton [V.] White, and White's [deputy], MAJ Frank Rowale, to consider the whole venture and make appropriate plans" for a rescue.⁶ COL White centralized planning at the headquarters of the 6th Infantry Division, in the town of Guimba on the forward line of troops (FLOT).

LTG Krueger assigned the rescue mission to Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Henry A. Mucci, the commanding officer of his 6th Ranger Battalion. He directed Mucci "to furnish one reinforced company . . . from his battalion" as the central element of the raid force. The 6th Rangers had already made several successful raids, which reassured Krueger. Mucci, a short, stocky former West Point athlete, jumped at the mission and left for Guimba to join COL White.⁷

Mucci began his preparations. He had selected Company C, commanded by CPT Robert W. Prince, as the core of his force and reinforced it with 2nd Platoon, Company F, led by Second Lieutenant (2LT) John F. Murphy. Because preliminary intelligence indicated a high probability of encountering enemy tanks or vehicles, Mucci "borrowed some bazookas and AT [antitank] grenades from the 6th Infantry Division." With his men alerted, LTC Mucci and CPT Prince left for Guimba in the early hours of 27 January.⁸

As soon as they arrived, Mucci and Prince discovered that other elements had been attached to the raid force. LTG Krueger had directed MAJ Lapham to provide the



6th Army Rangers WWII Shield patch (L) and the 6th Ranger Battalion Scroll (WWII theater-made) (R).



MAJOR ROBERT B. LAPHAM

Guerrilla Commander

“Early in 1945, [Major Lapham] conducted offensive operations against the enemy, cutting communication lines, ambushing troop convoys, and attacking garrisons and supply dumps. This fighting continued until the Americans had passed through the area occupied by the guerrilla troops, after which his entire force of approximately 12,000 men was made available to the Sixth Army.”⁵

— Distinguished Service Cross Citation

Born in 1917 in the rural town of Davenport, Iowa, Robert B. Lapham grew up during the Great Depression. He attended the University of Iowa and completed a two-year Reserve Officer's Training Corps (ROTC) program to get a reserve commission as a U.S. Army Second Lieutenant. After graduation in 1939, Lapham went to work for the Burroughs Corporation in Chicago as a sales trainee.¹

In May 1941, First Lieutenant Lapham volunteered for active duty and got orders to the Philippines. He was assigned to the Philippine Scouts, a 10,000-man unit with both U.S. and Philippine soldiers. Although technically part of the American Army, the Philippine Scouts were equipped with few vehicles, obsolete equipment, and aged weapons. Despite those deficiencies, the Scouts worked hard to train for the looming war. Lapham learned the art of working alongside the “cream of Filipino soldiery” in the 45th Infantry Regiment (Philippine Scouts).²

When the Japanese attacked the Philippine Islands on 8 December 1941, CPT Lapham was the Executive Officer of Company I, 3rd Battalion, 45th Infantry (Philippine Scouts). After the Japanese landed at Lingayen Gulf on Luzon, he became head of Military Police detachment and saw combat while delaying the enemy advance. As Japanese invaders pushed the Americans and Filipinos deeper into the Bataan Peninsula, Lapham and others found themselves

behind Japanese lines. Determined to continue the fight, these men (and some women) organized guerrilla units.³

Lapham spent the next three years in the central plains of Luzon, north of Manila, as the guerrilla leader. Unsuccessful guerrilla leaders did not live long. By the time MacArthur returned to the Philippines in late 1944, CPT Lapham commanded several regimental-sized guerrilla units and had a very effective network of intelligence agents. When American forces landed at Lingayen Gulf on 6 January 1945, they were greatly assisted by Lapham's more than 12,000 guerrillas who provided them with the enemy's strength and dispositions. The Sixth U.S. Army commander, GEN Walter Krueger, made MAJ Lapham his guerrilla advisor. He advised Krueger on courses of action for rescuing prisoners of war and detainees and arranged for some of his guerrillas to assist the 6th Rangers.⁴

For his actions as commander of guerrilla forces in Central Luzon, GEN MacArthur awarded Lapham the Distinguished Service Cross. And after the war, the Government of the Philippines presented him with the Philippine Legion of Honor and the Philippine Distinguished Service medals. Lapham returned to active duty in 1947 to serve as a consultant to the U.S. Army's Guerrilla Affairs Section in Manila, documenting Filipino participation in guerrilla activities during the war to settle claims.⁶

Rangers with guerrillas familiar with the area around the POW camp. "I was able to contribute two excellent officers, [Captains (CPTs) Eduardo L.] Josen, and [Juan] Pajota, and some four hundred men to the venture," stated Lapham. All lived within ten miles of the camp and were intimately familiar with the area. "I immediately sent a note [by runner] to [CPT] Pajota," Lapham recalled, directing him to meet the Rangers at Balingcari (today Balangkare). Pajota's men would bring fifty land mines that had been delivered by submarine.⁹ The mines would help isolate the objective against enemy reinforcements.

Successful raids require detailed enemy information. The best reconnaissance unit in the theater was Krueger's Alamo Scouts (see sidebar), who worked for the G-2. COL White selected two of his best teams to support the mission, Team NELLIST and Team ROUNSAVILLE (named for their respective leaders, First Lieutenant [1LT] William E. 'Bill' Nellist and 1LT Thomas J. 'Tom' Rounsaville). Those teams had done several small prisoner rescues in New Guinea.¹⁰ White designated Bill Nellist as the Scout lead. Another Scout would be the 'contact officer' (or liaison) to Mucci's Rangers. 1LT John M. 'Jack' Dove, an experienced

Alamo Scout team leader, had led a dozen missions behind Japanese lines. His job was to manage the flow of information to the Rangers. With the recon element mission settled, White sent the two Scout teams to Cabanatuan that same afternoon. The Scouts needed time to collect the information Mucci needed to complete his plan. Since the Rangers planned to depart Guimba on the afternoon of 28 January for a tentative attack time the afternoon of the 29th, the Scouts had only a twenty-four hour 'head start' to gather the information.¹¹

One final addition to the raid force was a four-man detachment from Combat Photo Unit F, 832nd Signal Service Battalion. They were to document the historic rescue. Led by 1LT John F. Lueddeke, the detachment was to take photographs and 'motion picture' footage, where practical.¹² Within the SWPA, significant events were captured on film to show the American public how the war was going. GEN MacArthur's landing at Leyte Island several months earlier epitomized that strategy. It was rehearsed and filmed several times, then widely distributed at home and abroad. Sixth Army and SWPA staff officers hoped to capitalize on the raid's success.

RAID FORCE TASK ORGANIZATION

Based on their early analysis of the mission to rescue over 500 POWs from the prison camp near Cabanatuan, the Sixth Army assigned the following elements to the raid force.

6TH RANGER BATTALION: 124 men

LTC Henry A. Mucci, *Raid Force Commander*

C Company

CPT Robert W. Prince

2ND Plat, F Company

LT John F. Murphy

Det, Combat Photo Unit F, 832nd Signal Service Bn.

LT John F. Lueddeke

ALAMO SCOUTS: 13 men

LT John M. 'Jack' Dove, *Liaison Officer*

Team NELLIST

LT William E. 'Bill' Nellist, *Scout Commander*

Team ROUNSAVILLE

LT Thomas J. 'Tom' Rounsaville

PHILIPPINE GUERRILLAS: 300-350 men

LGAF Squadron, Balingcari: 90 armed/160 bearers

CPT Juan Pajota

LGAF Squadron, Lobong: 75 men

CPT Eduardo L. Josen

*LGAF= Luzon Guerrilla Armed Forces



CPT Juan Pajota,
LGAF guerrilla commander,
Balingcari.



(B) Philippine guerrillas of
CPT Pajota's Squadron.



ALAMO SCOUTS



Weapons training and LTG Walter Krueger, commander of the U.S. Sixth Army, aka 'Alamo Force.'

U.S. Army Lieutenant General (LTG) Walter Krueger, commander of the U.S. Sixth Army (also known as the 'Alamo Force'), established the Alamo Scouts in the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) in late 1943. With an area of responsibility composed more of water than land, Krueger realized that he needed a small unit of skilled men with specialized reconnaissance expertise to provide him with information needed to defeat the Japanese. As a result, on 28 November 1943 he directed that select soldiers be trained in the special skills of amphibious reconnaissance, jungle warfare, and clandestine operations behind enemy lines.¹ They would become Alamo Scouts.

An Alamo Scouts Training Center was established that utilized an innovative assessment and selection process. An evolving program of instruction (POI) incorporated both internal and external evaluations throughout the course to ensure that only the best soldiers were selected to be trained as Alamo Scouts. Combat veteran volunteers for the course were given intensive training in weapons, communications, intelligence reporting, physical conditioning, amphibious reconnaissance skills, and extended patrolling techniques. Students also learned to infiltrate enemy territory employing a variety of means, ranging from swimming and operating rubber boats to PT Boats, submarines, and Catalina

floating boats. Students trained for six weeks, unaware of their status until they graduated. Of the several hundred students who attended the course, only 138 were selected as Alamo Scouts.²

After graduating, Alamo Scouts were organized into ten teams of five-to-ten men and assigned to tasks that ranged from special reconnaissance to direct action and prisoner/hostage rescue. Their patrol reports contained valuable information that higher units used in the field. By war's end, the Scouts conducted over 100 missions behind enemy lines, a remarkable feat.³

The Alamo Scouts were to provide amphibious reconnaissance on Kyushu Island for the invasion of mainland Japan when the dropping of two atomic bombs forced Japanese surrender. After a short time as security for key officers during the occupation of Japan, the unit was disbanded in Kyoto in November 1945.⁴

Several members of the Alamo Scouts found their way into the ranks of Army Special Forces later in their careers. One such member, CSM Galen Kittleson, had the distinction of being in four POW rescue missions in two separate wars. Alamo Scout training, including their use of peer evaluations during training, found their way into the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC).⁵

During the planning, LTC Mucci and CPT Prince voiced several concerns. All reports indicated that there were significant numbers of Japanese forces near the camp capable of reinforcing the Cabanatuan garrison. Exact numbers were uncertain, but estimates ranged from 500 to 7,000. The Rangers wanted air support but were concerned about operational security (OPSEC). “The success of this mission depends on surprise and a large amount of luck,” Mucci pointed out. He needed “luck that enemy traffic along the highway in front of the camp will be light,” that “the final half-mile approach to the camp over largely open terrain can be crossed without discovery,” and that “no one will tip off the Japs that an attack [is] pending.”¹³

COL White promised that “There’ll be NO security leaks. I’ll guarantee that.” He continued, “No one – absolutely no one, except those of us right here – knows what’s coming off.” COL White stipulated that, “only those taking part will be briefed, and only at the last possible moment.” The Sixth Army G-2 emphasized: “The Navy has no need to know, and the Air Force will be kept in the dark unless you initiate a call for emergency air cover during the last stages of withdrawal.”¹⁴

**“WHENEVER AMERICAN
PLANES FLEW NEAR
THE CAMP THE JAPANESE
BECAME UPSET AND
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EYES ON THE SKY FOR
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AFTER THE PLANES HAD
PASSED BY.”¹⁹**

— CPT Juan Pajota, Philippine guerrilla commander

The mention of the word ‘dark’ triggered a thought. “That,” said Mucci, “is another point that bothers me. I’m all for doing the clean-up business under cover of darkness, but we’re going to need at least fifteen minutes of last daylight to see what we’re doing at the most crucial time - when we move in on the camp and round up all the poor bastards we’re going in after.” That is why Mucci set the time of attack for 1945 hours, fifteen minutes before dark. But, he noted, even that timing had a weakness; “how we’re going to infiltrate the area around the POW camp - even if it’s twilight - when the approach has about as much cover as a billiard table?”¹⁵

MAJ Rowale, COL White’s assistant, offered a suggestion. CPT Pajota had noticed that when U.S. aircraft overflew the prison that the captors became transfixed and watched the sky even after the planes had passed. Rowale proposed that, “We might arrange for something like that to distract the guards at the camp while you rush that last short distance right up to the stockade.” The idea was well received.¹⁶

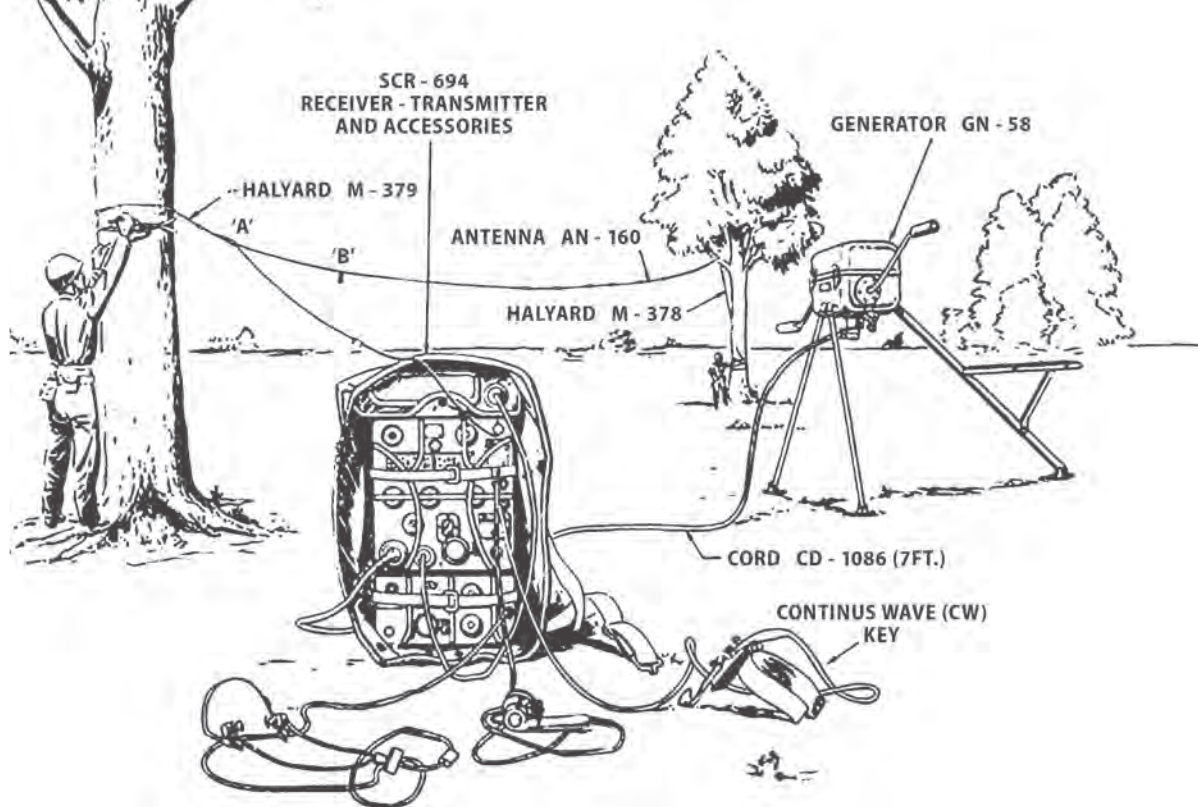
LTC Mucci agreed, but he still had OPSEC concerns. “Bringing in the Air Force would violate the security blackout, which could be worse. And we’re talking about time getting command approval, the briefings, coordination, and the usual inter-service [issues],” Mucci pointed out. MAJ Rowale proposed bypassing the normal process to “lay this [directly] on the 547th.”¹⁷ The 547th Night Fighter Squadron operated out of an expeditionary runway on the Lingayen landing beaches, a short drive from the Sixth Army headquarters. He could drive to the squadron, brief the pilots and aircrew in person, and emphasize OPSEC.

MAJ Rowale’s proposal had the added advantage of providing Mucci’s men with support from adept night-fighting pilots. COL White agreed to coordinate the



LTC Henry A. Mucci (L), and CPT Robert W. Prince, 6th Ranger Battalion, review a map after the successful Cabanatuan POW Camp rescue.

Drawing of the various components making the SCR-694 radio functional.



mission personally with the 547th Night Fighter Squadron. As a bonus, the unusual shape and size of the aircraft (see sidebar on the P-61 'Black Widow' aircraft) would distract Japanese attention while the Rangers crawled into their assault positions.¹⁸

With all his concerns satisfied, Mucci confidently agreed to begin the assault at 1945 hours. With all decisions made, the planners left, and the assault leaders went to prepare their units. LT Dove, the Scout liaison officer, would accompany the two teams until the passage of lines was complete, then join the Rangers. COL White and MAJ Rowale went to the 547th Night Fighter Squadron. MAJ Lapham radioed link-up instructions to his guerrillas.²⁰

Back with his Rangers, LTC Mucci told "all the men who were going on this expedition that we would all go to church. When I got there, I made a little speech in which I asked every man to swear he would die fighting rather than let any harm come to the prisoners of war under our care. I did that because I believe[d] in it: Everybody on the mission took that oath," Mucci stated.²¹

The Rangers would travel light for speed and mobility. The raiders had to march 22-24 miles from Guimba to Balingcari in one night to stay on the schedule. The Rangers wore soft caps and left their packs behind. They carried little food or water, planning to acquire both from the Filipino natives whose villages they would be traveling through. The guerrillas would assist in this. "About all we did carry was arms, ammunition, and some cigarettes and candy to give to the prisoners when we got to them." In addition to the bazookas and anti-tank grenades they got from the 6th Division, the Rangers were armed with their standard M1 Garand rifles, M1 Carbines, and M1911 pistols. For heavier firepower they carried .30-06 M1919 Browning Automatic Rifles (BARs) and .45 cal. M1928A1 Thompson

submachineguns. Extra ammunition for the BARs and Thompsons was spread throughout the formation.²²

In the field the Rangers would rely on the use of guerrilla runners for internal communications. To talk with Sixth Army headquarters and allied aircraft, Mucci's men carried two 'long-range' SCR-694 radio sets (see sketch). The SCR-694 could transmit voice communication 15 miles and 30 miles with continuous wave (CW/ Morse code). It took five Rangers to carry the various components, hand-crank generator, antennas, and ancillary equipment for the 192-pound SCR-694 sets. The two radio sets gave LTC Mucci the ability to establish a relay site near Guimba just for that purpose.²³

Movement to the Objective

Though they were given very little 'prep time,' the Alamo Scouts relied on experience and their standard operating procedures (SOPs). LTs Rounsaville and Nellist issued final orders before personally inspecting their men and equipment. In addition to the Scouts' weapons (a mix of M1 Garand rifles, M1 Carbines, and M1928A1 Thompson submachineguns), LT Nellist had each Scout "carry extra ammo bandoliers, a .45 caliber automatic [pistol] with spare clips, a trench knife, and three hand grenades." The two teams boarded two-and-a-half ton trucks to get to the front line. Before crossing the lines, the men ate a quick meal of black beans and rice and napped until 2100 hours.²⁴

Private First Class (PFC) Galen C. Kittleson (Team NELLIST) and two Philippine guerrillas took point for the Scouts 24-mile night movement. They moved in file through the underbrush, tall grass, and rice paddies "under a starry night lit by a half moon." Nine miles into the movement, Kittleson signaled for a halt. LT Nellist moved forward and Kittleson whispered to him, "Lotta' #!@? up ahead the way it sounds." The distant sounds of

CABANATUAN RAID

T I M E L I N E

— 27 JANUARY, 1945 —

- 0630 Guimba - Planning begins (6th Rangers, Alamo Scouts, G-2 & Lapham)
- 1200 Planning session ends, units prep for mission
- 1400 Alamo Scouts move to departure point outside Guimba
- 1900 Alamo Scouts depart friendly lines.

— 28 JANUARY —

- Dawn Alamo Scouts arrive Balingcari, meet CPT Pajota's guerrillas, begin recon
- 0500 Rangers move to Guimba departure point
- 1400 Rangers depart Guimba for Lobong, cross line of departure (LD)
- 1800 Rangers link up with CPT Joson's guerrilla unit (near Lobong)
- 1830 Rangers/Joson depart for Balingcari
- 2400 Rangers/Joson cross Talavera River

— 29 JANUARY —

- 0400 Rangers/Joson cross Rizal Road
- 0600 Rangers/Joson arrive Balingcari, link up with CPT Pajota's guerrillas
- 1600 Rangers/guerrillas depart for Plateros, meet with Alamo Scouts
- 1800 Postpone attack 24 hours. New time on target: 1945 hours, 30 January

— 30 JANUARY —

- 0930 Alamo Scouts/guerrillas reconnoiter camp and area
- 1500 Alamo Scouts/guerrillas return to Plateros with information
- 1700 Rangers move to Plateros and on to assembly area 1 mile from camp
- 1800 Rangers move to attack positions
- 1925 Attackers in position, ready for assault
- 1935 Aerobatics of P-61 'Black Widow' aircraft draws the attention of Japanese
- 1945 **ASSAULT OF CAMP BEGINS**
- 2015 CPT Prince fires 2nd flare to signal withdrawal from the camp
- 2030 Column arrives at Plateros, pick up 25 carts
- 2100 Raid Force departs Plateros for Balingcari
- 2400 Raid Force departs Balingcari for Matasna Kahoy with 40 carts (picked up 15)

— 31 JANUARY —

- 0200 Raid Force arrives Matasna Kahoy, picks up 11 more carts (51 total)
- 0230 Raid Force departs Matasna Kahoy for General Luna *barrio*/Rizal Road
- 0430 Last man clears Rizal Road, column continues to Sibul
- 0800 Raid Force arrives at Sibul, pick up 20 more carabao carts (71 total)
- 1100 Trucks and ambulances meet column, transport POWs to Guimba
- 1300 **END OF MISSION**

Japanese tanks and vehicles moving along the Rizal Road was obvious. Kittleson and the two guerrillas confirmed their suspicions. Japanese vehicles and troops were moving to the northeast along the hard-packed dirt road. Though three Japanese tanks were guarding a thirty-foot bridge spanning a ravine, Kittleson was confident that he could lead the patrol undetected down a watery ditch under the bridge. Nellist approved. Clear of the danger area the Scouts picked up the pace. Four hours later, and two-thirds of the way to Cabanatuan, the Scouts faced another danger area – the Rizal Road. With the Japanese vehicle traffic more spread out, the Scouts could sprint across in groups of three-to-four men in the traffic gaps. Afterwards, 1LT Nellist increased the pace. Just at daylight, the Scouts reached Balingcari, CPT Pajota's headquarters.²⁵ Together, the Americans and Filipino leaders prepared for the difficult work ahead, reconnoitering the POW camp.

After a short rest and meal, the two Scout teams left for the village of Plateros. It was along the banks of the Pampanga River, a sizeable waterway that meandered through the district about a mile north of the POW camp. The Scouts, who had plenty of experience working with guerrillas, paired up with them. With the guerrillas as guides, the combined two-to-four-man teams split up for an initial reconnaissance of the camp and surrounding area. When each team had checked their designated area, they all rejoined to compare notes. They estimated that less than 200 soldiers were stationed in the camp. However, the lead elements of a Japanese division were marching along the road that fronted the prison. It appeared the enemy was withdrawing by echelons to the mountains northeast of Cabu. The presence of sporadic Japanese units marching past the camp's front hindered the collection of information.²⁶

While the Scouts and guerrillas dealt with enemy movement through the camp area, LTC Mucci and CPT Prince continued to prepare for the operation. At 0500 on 28 January, MAJ Lapham gave LTC Mucci the latest intelligence. There were four enemy tanks in or around the camp and large numbers of Japanese moving northeast along the Cabanatuan to Cabu road. This information meant that the Japanese were withdrawing to the mountains of northeast Luzon to establish a new defensive line. Mucci and Prince then led the Rangers to their 'jump off' point outside of Guimba. After a late breakfast they rested until early afternoon.²⁷

At 1400 hours the Rangers did a passage of lines and made for Balingcari, twenty miles to the east. The Ranger file was guided by Scout LT Dove and two Filipino guerrillas. "Once we left Guimba, we were in [Japanese] territory," Mucci said. "There were several rivers and ravines to cross before I got into CPT Joson's territory." They linked up with Joson at Lobong, a *barrio* (village) about two miles north of the town of Santo Domingo. There, the seventy-five men of the 213th Squadron joined the Rangers.²⁸

The group quickly reorganized their march order and departed. "Under cover of darkness, we went northeast

... avoiding all barrios until we [were] 500 yards from the first highway," Mucci said. Scouting parties found a suitable crossing." "While we hid near [the road] in ditches and rice paddies, we saw ten enemy tanks go by heading north." As soon as they passed, "we got across the highway fast" despite an interruption by six Japanese trucks filled with troops.²⁹

At midnight, the Rangers forded the Talavera River, a sizeable obstacle. Then, they double-timed for a mile to make up time but slowed down to sneak by a Japanese tank at an intersection. They reached the Rizal Road at 0400 hours, their point element reported sporadic, light enemy traffic. "We edged up to the road, crawling," and between gaps in the vehicle traffic, the Rangers rushed across. Mucci double-timed them for "another mile" to get back on schedule. Mucci reported "by 0600 . . . we reached Balingcari where we bivouacked." There, the Rangers met CPT Pajota and his force of 250 guerrillas (90 armed, and 160 unarmed men).³⁰



The 6th Rangers move through tall grass enroute to rescue POWs from a Japanese camp near Cabanatuan.

Reconnaissance of the Objective Area

At Balingcari LTC Mucci and CPT Prince met the Alamo Scouts who reported: "The camp is guarded by approximately 200 soldiers and up to 1,000 are bivouacked by the Cabu Bridge." LT Nellist confirmed the guerrilla report that an enemy division was moving past the camp

toward Cabu. The Scout leader suggested: "If we wait twenty-four hours, sir, they will move on."³¹ Mucci agreed and slipped the attack until 1945 hours on 30 January. He radioed Alamo Force headquarters where COL White was standing by, to delay the air support 24 hours later.³²

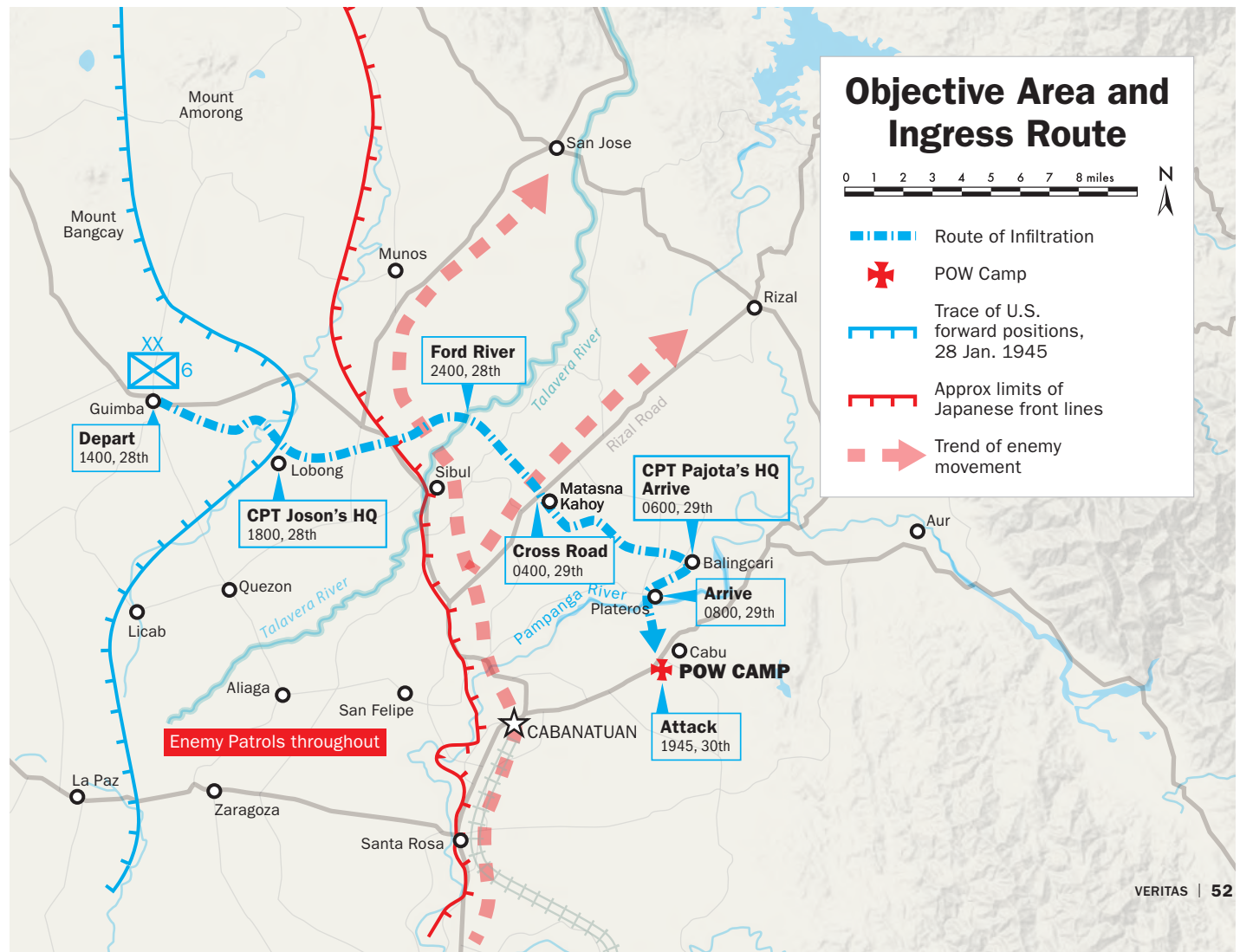




Photo of Alamo Scout Teams NELLIST and ROUNSAVILLE taken after the Cabanatuan rescue mission.

Front, from left: PFC Galen C. Kittleson; PFC Rufo V. Vaquilar; 1LT William Nellist; 1LT Thomas J. Rounsaville; and PFC Franklin B Fox.

Back, from left: PFC Gilbert Cox; Tech SGT Wilbert C. Wisner; SGT Harold N. Hard; SGT Andy E. Smith; PFC Francis H. Laquier.

Not shown are: PFC Sabas A. Asis; SSG Thomas A. Siason; PFC Alfred Alphonso; 1LT John M. Dove.

LT Nellist decided to pair up some of his shorter Scouts with CPT Pajota's men. Borrowing some farm clothing, they began moving about the area looking like locals. They took notes, sketched the camp, kept track of the guard routines, and became familiar with key parts of the camp. The combined Scout/guerrilla teams located the guard barracks, POW buildings, guard towers and bunkers, and transient troops housing. They discovered a shed with four light tanks and marked its location. The Cabanatuan-Cabu City road (Highway 5) ran directly across the northern edge of the POW camp.³³

LT Nellist and PFC Rufo V. 'Pontiac' Vaquilar, a native Filipino in the Scouts, really got into the farmer ruse. They found a grass hut containing farm tools just 300 meters in front of the front gate of the prison that overlooked the entire camp. Dressed as native farmers with large straw hats pulled low over their faces, the two Scouts approached the hut. They stopped periodically to inspect the surrounding crops. Nellist walked stooped over and limped. Separately, and by meandering routes, the two entered the hut and then remained all day taking notes. As Nellist and Vaquilar took turns sketching and observing the camp, "the natives would get the appropriate people, bring them in to us, and we'd question them and find out just exactly what we wanted to know." With all that information, Nellist and PFC Vaquilar made detailed maps of the camp and annotated key elements on a G-2 aerial photo. At dusk the two returned to the rendezvous point with a wealth of information. "We knew which way the

gate opened. We knew how many guards there were, what time they changed, how many strands of wire there were, and the works," 1LT Nellist stated.³⁴

The pairing of Scouts with guerrillas increased the effectiveness of both units. Pooling them together produced a synergistic effect and allowed them to maximize each other's capabilities. It combined the technical expertise of the Alamo Scouts with the guerrillas' keen knowledge of the area and ability to move freely. The guerrillas lived near the camp, and were familiar with it and the surrounding fields, rivers, and woods. The Scouts were well practiced in observation and reporting. They were able to discern the types of enemy bunkers, pillboxes, and guard posts, and were trained in determining their fields of fire and other specifics. The small combined reconnaissance teams covered a large area within a remarkably short time.

The guerrillas' ability to move freely facilitated their collection capability. An adolescent guerrilla rode a carabao (indigenous ox used for farming tasks and mobility) around the camp. He could estimate distances and see the Japanese defensive positions up close. A female guerrilla sold fruit to soldiers guarding the front gate, and then passed the information learned back to her leader. Each effort added another piece to the puzzle.³⁵

The Alamo Scouts and guerrillas gathered at Plateros at 0300 hours on 30 January. LTC Mucci listened to their reports and was pleased that all his critical questions had been answered. "I had the camp mapped and, after drawing up the plan of action, we decided to attack that night."³⁶

The Scouts confirmed the poor physical condition of the prisoners. It was apparent that many were not capable of walking twenty miles back to friendly lines on their own. Three years of harsh treatment had taken its toll. Mucci needed a plan to transport those in the worst shape. He leveraged the guerrilla influence on the locals: "I had the Number 1 man at a little Filipino barrio round up some carabao carts in which to bring back our American prisoners, who would be pretty weak – some would be sick and unable to make a march." Mucci asked the natives to stage the carts near Plateros south of the Pampanga River at 2000 hours. "I also asked our Filipino friend to bring along fifty or sixty unarmed men to help carry our prisoners who were sick." CPT Prince emphasized that: "the main thing is to get the prisoners moving. Herd them, shove them, carry them, I don't care. But we have to get them back to the Pampanga River" and the waiting carts.³⁷

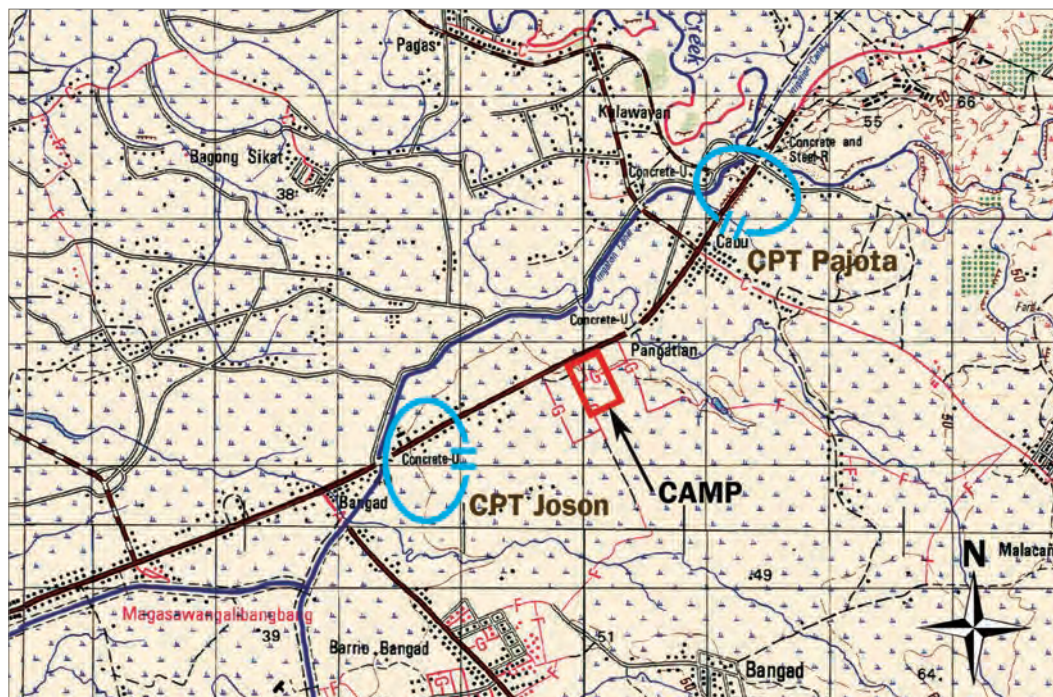
A major tactical concern was to isolate the camp from Japanese reinforcement. The most likely threat were the Japanese troops moving along the Cabanatuan-Cabu Road. Pajota was to "take his men to the south side of the bridge leading toward Cabu, where the main strength of the [Japanese were] and set up a roadblock there [see map "Blocking Positions"]."³⁸ The 50 landmines would help them in that task. Mucci directed Pajota to "keep the Japanese from breaking through until the prisoners were freed."³⁹ Once the guerrillas saw two flares from his Very pistol (signaling that all POWs were out of the camp and enroute to Plateros), they were to withdraw to the north, protecting the flank of the raid force as it fell back to the Pampangas River with the POWs.⁴⁰

Likewise, LTC Mucci directed CPT Joson to take his seventy-five guerrillas and "set up another road block about 800 yards south of the main gate." He was to block any Japanese attempting to reinforce from the south and west along the Cabanatuan-Cabu Road (see map). To meet the enemy's armor threat, Prince attached a six-man bazooka team led by Staff Sergeant (SSG) James O. White of the 2nd Platoon, F Company, 6th Ranger Battalion. When signaled, CPT Joson's unit was to withdraw towards Plateros to the north and west, thereby protecting the Rangers' left flank as it moved toward Plateros and Balingcari (see map "Exfiltration")⁴¹

CPT Prince gave detailed instructions on the infiltration, actions on the objective, and the exfiltration. He kept one squad from 1st Platoon, C Company as a reserve with him. When all was prepared, Mucci told everyone: "Remember, all of the prisoners go. No one is left behind."⁴²

The Assault on the Camp

With the attack scheduled for 1945 hours, 30 January, the raid force crossed the line of departure south of the Pampanga River at 1600 hours and maneuvered through tall grass toward the camp three kilometers away. The force moved in three columns: CPT Joson's ninety guerrillas were on the right; CPT Pajota's men were on the left; and the Rangers and Alamo Scouts were in the middle. Since 2LT John F. Murphy and his platoon from F Company had the greatest distance to travel to reach their attack positions on the far side of the camp, they were at the front of Prince's column. As concealment grew less, the men moved forward first in a high crawl, then dropped into a slow, low crawl until they reached their attack positions.⁴³



Map featuring the two blocking positions set by the Philippine Guerillas (with some Rangers). The blocking positions sealed off the objective area, preventing Japanese soldiers from reinforcing the guard force at the Cabanatuan POW Camp. The effort was highly effective and killed more than 300 Japanese soldiers.



RAID AT CABANATUAN
30 January 1945
1945 Hours

- Structures
- Water tank
- Pillbox
- Guard tower
- Barbed wire fence
- Raid force movement



The command element moved to a slight rise about 700 yards from the main gate, from “where we could get a pretty good view” of the camp. “We could see there was only one tower with a [Japanese] sentry on it. The other guards had probably gone to supper,” he surmised. By 1930 hours the assault elements were in place and ready to attack.⁴⁴ Men sighted their weapons on Japanese soldiers as they waited for the signal to attack.

Right on schedule, a P-61 ‘Black Widow’ night fighter roared over the camp, drawing everyone’s eyes upward. The prisoners cheered and the guards froze, just as expected. Sharp-eyed watchers could read ‘Hard to Get’ written in large letters under the cockpit – right next to a colorful drawing of a reclining nude blonde woman.⁴⁵ If the plane alone was not sufficient to capture everyone’s attention, its painted lady clinched it.

The strangely-shaped P-61, flown by CPT Kenneth E. Schreiber and 1LT Bonnie E. Bucks as radar operator, had a hawk’s-eye view of the camp, and the aircrew could see some of the Rangers ringing the camp. Schreiber asked “Did we blow their cover?” 1LT Bucks replied “Negative.” However, his concern drove him to circle out and make another pass over the camp. This time, when right over the prison, CPT Schreiber cut his left engine and the ‘Black Widow’ shuddered in the air. Flipping the ignition back on, the engine made a loud backfire that glued all eyes to the spectacle in the sky.⁴⁶

As CPT Prince later recalled, “While we were crawling across the open field, he was flying 500 feet above the camp, cutting his motor, doing every crazy thing he could to attract attention.”⁴⁷ Those Rangers not yet in position took advantage of the distraction and crawled forward. Schreiber again circled the camp with his engines sputtering and kicking, thanks to his skilled manipulation of the ignition. Once over the camp he waggled the wings, killed the ignition and again caused the craft to shudder in the air. After a few more seemingly distressed passes, he flew over the prison and headed for a tree-covered ridgeline on the horizon. All eyes on the ground followed the apparently troubled ‘Black Widow’ as it slowly disappeared over the trees, still popping and backfiring. Many of the watchers expected to hear the sounds of a crash and a ball of flame rising above the trees. Instead, Schreiber maintained a low and level flight away from the camp, his immediate task of serving as a diversion now completed.⁴⁸

The assault from the Rangers began precisely at 1945 hours when 2LT Murphy’s platoon (2nd Plt, F Co) opened fire on the Japanese guards who were milling about outside their quarters at the far southern side of the camp (see camp map). Several Rangers also took out the solo guard in the watchtower. Concurrently, a six-man squad led by SSG James V. Millican hit the enemy pillbox on the northwest corner of the camp with a bazooka and a volley of rifle grenades, taking it out of action.⁴⁹

On hearing Murphy’s platoon open fire, the other assault elements went to work. 1st Platoon, C Company (1LT William J. O’Connell) had responsibility for breaching

the main gate and neutralizing the adjacent guardhouse.⁵⁰ Ranger Sergeant Theodore R. Richardson ran to the gate and smashed at the lock with his weapon. One of the POWs sitting on a bench near the gate described the event: “This Ranger hit the padlock on the front gate with his carbine, dropped the clip, picked it up, and shot the guard.”⁵¹ The rest of O’Connell’s platoon was stacked behind Richardson. When the gate was breached, they ran past him to shoot at the Japanese in the guardhouse and then killed enemy soldiers exiting nearby buildings to see what was happening. A bazooka team fell in behind the assaulters. In quick succession the bazooka gunners moved up and destroyed four tanks and two trucks, along with the enemy soldiers trying to get them into action. The anti-tank weapons were then employed to blast pillboxes and bunkers occupied by Japanese. 1st Platoon Rangers with wire-cutters furiously clipped strands of barbed wire to allow the 2nd Platoon to pass through to the POW part of the compound.⁵²

Once the wire fences were parted, Rangers of 2nd Platoon (LT Melville R. Schmidt), quickly fanned throughout the POW section of the camp, efficiently killing every guard they encountered. They then prodded the still surprised POWs to move toward the front gate.⁵³ “The prisoners were like wild animals,” observed PFC Kittleson just outside the main gate. “They were running all over the place.”⁵⁴ CPT Prince’s reserve element then entered and helped direct

Northrop P-61

‘Black Widow’ Night Fighter

- » Designed as a night fighter; unusually large for a fighter
- » Crew of three: pilot, gunner, and radar operator
- » “Devastating firepower:”
 - › Four 20mm Hispano forward-firing cannons in the belly
 - › Four .50 cal. machineguns mounted in an upper rotating dorsal turret
- » Guns were mounted aft of the cockpit to protect the pilot’s night vision from the muzzle flash
- » Powered by two Pratt & Whitney R-2800 engines
- » All-metal twin tail booms connected by a central horizontal stabilizer provide a stable firing platform
- » Tricycle landing gear, full-span retractable flaps
- » Fuel capacity of 646 gal (2,445 l) provided long range of flight and/or greater loiter time
- » Could also carry up to four 1,600 lb (725 kg) bombs or auxiliary drop tanks





Soldier firing the M1 2.36" Rocket Launcher ('Bazooka'). The M1s weighed 18 pounds and were widely used against concrete bunkers in addition to light tanks/vehicles.

**“RECONSTRUCTING IT
NOW I CAN SEE HOW
WELL OUR SQUAD
LEADERS CARRIED OUT
THEIR ASSIGNMENTS”⁶⁷**

—LTC Henry A. Mucci, Commander, 6th Ranger Battalion

the still-confused prisoners to freedom. Corporal (CPL) Milton A. Englin, a Marine captured at Corregidor in 1942, recalled, “I thought they were guerrillas at first, then some big Texan came to me and said, ‘Head for the main gate.’”⁵⁵ U.S. Navy Warrant Officer Paul Jackson, captured at Mariveles Naval Base three years earlier, remembered that “When the firing started, most of us thought it was the Japs coming in to kill us.”⁵⁶ “We had to talk many of the POWs out of their huts,” Alamo Scout PFC Gilbert Cox recalled. “They were afraid the attack might just be a trick of the Japanese,” he explained.⁵⁷ In quick fashion,

the former POWs were sought out in the growing dark and told to head to the main gate while the remainder of the assault force tracked down and eliminated the enemy.⁵⁸ POWs who could not move on their own were carried by stretcher-bearers to the designated staging area, twenty-five yards in front of the main gate.⁵⁹

The only real opposition put up by the Japanese came while the Rangers were outside the main gate, sorting and organizing the former POWs for movement. As described by Alamo Scout leader 1LT Rounsaville, “We were all at the main gate and the [Japanese] got three rounds off with the mortars.” 1LT Nellist continued, “We saw flashes [from the mortar tubes] and we shot at the flashes. The [Japanese] only fired three shots.”⁶⁰ However, those three rounds were on target and inflicted a number of casualties. The Japanese mortar men mortally wounded the Rangers’ medical officer, CPT James C. Fisher, who was treating the freed prisoners near the gate. The mortars killed one other Ranger, CPL Roy F. Sweeny, and four Rangers and two Alamo Scouts were seriously wounded.⁶¹

The mortar explosions added urgency to getting the freed prisoners organized and on the way to Platero. LT Schmidt’s platoon was still searching and clearing the several POW barracks, aided by the light of a full moon and clear skies. While searching the camp, they had discovered a small group of Englishmen amongst the American POWs. With Schmidt’s men shouting, “All American prisoners head for the main gate,” a couple of British soldiers retorted, “we’re not Americans, but we’re coming too!”⁶²

By 2015 hours, only half an hour after the assault began, CPT Prince had completed his search of the POW compound and determined all the POWs had been evacuated. He then fired off the second of his flares, signaling the guerrillas protecting his flanks that the force was withdrawing to Plateros. As a precaution, one Alamo Scout team (Team NELLIST) remained behind until daylight to double-check that all the prisoners had been rescued.⁶³

Meanwhile, the Rangers pushed groups of freed prisoners down the trail to the Pampanga River, where the carabao carts were staged. When he had fifty ex-POWs organized and ready, Mucci assigned Rangers to act as guides/escorts for the group and dispatched them toward Plateros. Mucci recalled, “Getting those prisoners out was quite a task. Some were dazed. Some couldn’t believe it was true. Some tried to take their belongings . . .,” which was immediately discouraged. “Many were barefooted,” he continued. “Some of the Rangers gave their shoes and most of their clothes to the men who needed them.” However, Mucci believed “the spirit of the old-timers was wonderful. There was an old man who could barely hobble,” he related, “but he insisted on walking alone. He said, ‘I made the death march from Bataan, and I can certainly make this one.’”⁶⁴ Each was determined to do their best to get out of there. “I had lost a leg while at the prison camp,” Warrant Officer Jackson recalled, “and after going for half a mile or so on my homemade peg, had to give up and be carried by my rescuers.”⁶⁵

Those not so hardy were carried on stretchers or supported by Rangers until they met the carts just south of the Pampanga River across from Plateros. Soldiers helped the freed POWs cross the Pampanga, at that time waist-deep and free-flowing. Several of the carts had problems fording the river, but the Rangers were able to muscle them across. At Plateros, the raiders and the rescued were met by friendly Filipinos offering food and water. With security forces posted, the file halted to rest and reorganize.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, Pajota's and Joson's forces on the blocking positions entered the fray as Japanese Army units reacted to the attack on the prison garrison. Using the terrain and the factor of surprise to their advantage, the guerrillas withheld fire until the Japanese were deep into their kill zone. Like a well-oiled machine, the two blocking positions kept the objective area isolated from enemy interference. To the east, CPT Pajota's force was aided by CPT Schreiber's P-61 night fighter, which engaged the now-visible weapons flashes of the Japanese guns. Looking to join the fight after his earlier deception play, Schreiber's 'Hard to Get' P-61 rolled in again and again, sweeping the enemy riverbank with machinegun and cannon fire. Like 'shooting fish in a barrel,' the high technology craft easily discerned Pajota's men's positions from those of the enemy through muzzle flashes. The P-61

destroyed several tanks and cut down scores of Japanese trying to cross a bridge that Pajota's men had mined beforehand. The combined force from the guerrillas and the air pushed back the Japanese repeatedly. The Japanese lost over 300 troops, eight tanks, and many trucks before CPT Pajota began his withdrawal towards Plateros.⁶⁸

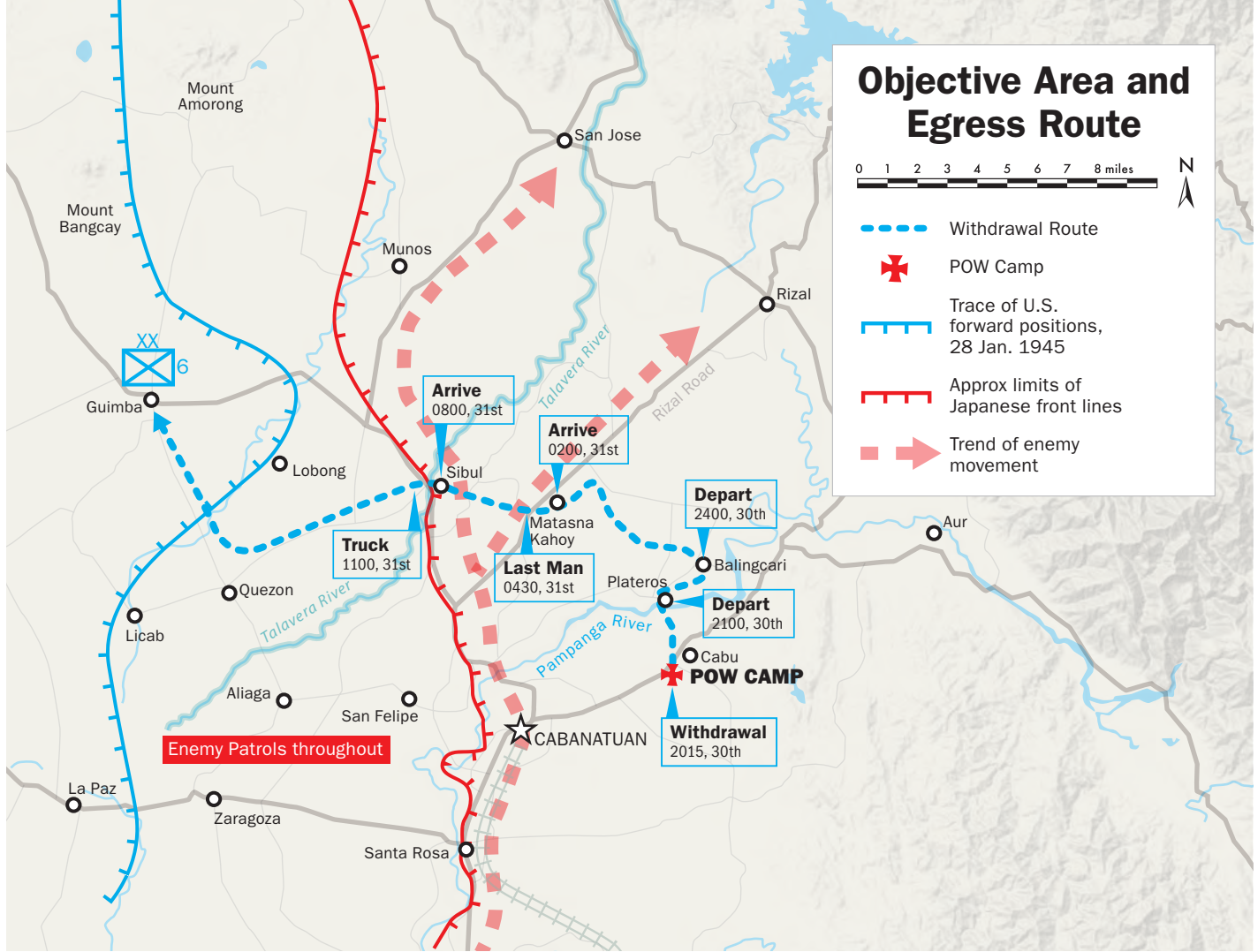
Withdrawal

Having executed a textbook assault and rescue, LTC Mucci dismissed that he had greatly underestimated the physical condition of the POWs. In Plateros, with his own doctor mortally wounded, Mucci asked a local guerrilla physician, Doctor Layug, to treat the sick and wounded. While Layug triaged the worst cases and hastily treated them, Mucci decided to send the ex-POWs who would be able to walk "in groups guarded by Rangers to ... Balingcari, as fast as they could be organized. The first group left at 2100 hours on the 30th [of January]." He added, "About 115 men were moved from Plateros to Balingcari in 25 carabao carts." Concurrently, CPT Prince organized the rear guard to protect the column from Japanese action.⁶⁹

Once at Balingcari, the villagers provided food and water to everyone. LTC Mucci met with village leaders to ask for 15 more carts. The 'walking wounded' had run out

From left to right, PFC Julius Cobb, Navy Gunner's Mate Clarence Hall, British Army SGT Robert Hall, CPT Robert J. Duncan (in cart), and two unidentified Rangers pose with the carabao cart used to transport rescued POWs to Guimba on 31 January 1945.





“THE RAID AT CABANATUAN REPRESENTS PERHAPS THE BEST CONCEIVED AND EXECUTED RANGER MISSION OF WORLD WAR II.”⁷⁶

—Historian David P. Hogan Jr.

of strength. After another break and some rearranging of persons, Mucci reported that the group “left Balingcari at 2400 [hours] for [the village of] Matasna Kahoy [now Mataas Na Kahoy].” They arrived at 0200 January 31. “Here, we got 11 more carts, making a total of 51, and this lengthened our column to a mile and a half.”⁷⁰ Fortunately for the Rangers, they still travelled under a full moon, and the guides were familiar with the trails. By then, the Japanese seemed to have lost interest in the POWs.

After a brief rest for food and water, the column departed Matasna Kahoy at 0230 hours. In only a few miles they reached the Rizal Road, a major danger area. LTC Mucci directed that “The 1st Platoon, Company C, under

LT O’Connell, move ahead behind guerrilla scouts to set road blocks on the Rizal Road. One section with a bazooka and anti-tank grenades set up a road block 400 yards north . . . A second section moved south on the road to a point 400 yards south of where the column left the road.” Once security was established, it took over an hour to get all men across the road, with the last men crossing at 0430 hours.⁷¹

Throughout, the Rangers pushed the group forward. The rescued men were impressed by the endurance of the Rangers, Scouts, and guerrillas during the long march. WO Jackson remarked, “As if they had not done enough already, they further helped by pushing the carabao carts, holding back on the going down steep banks, and

deploying at every stop to cover any ambush – and never a complaint . . .”⁷² Mucci kept the men moving for another hour before stopping the lengthening column for a brief rest at 0530 hours.⁷³

The long night movement took its toll on the exhausted, sick, malnourished POWs. After three years of brutal captivity, even the fittest were unprepared for a 20 mile night forced march. At 0800 hours the exhausted procession reached the village of Sibul. There, Mucci borrowed another 20 carts to keep the group moving.⁷⁴ His caravan of **71 total carts** was three times his original estimate. Fortunately for the Rangers, the townspeople responded and supplied food and water.



American prisoners of war who were recently liberated from the Cabanatuan prison camp by the 6th Ranger Battalion wait on the porch of an aid station for transfer to a base hospital. (*National Archives*)

**“WE WERE SUCCESSFUL
BECAUSE WE HAD ALL
TRAINED TOGETHER AND
KNEW EACH OTHER”⁸²**

—Robert W. Prince

After crossing the Talavera River, the column ground to a halt. The rescued POWs were exhausted. Just seven miles from friendly lines, LTC Mucci established security and radioed headquarters for transportation. After a brief discussion, COL White dispatched trucks and ambulances to the river to transport them back to Guimba. There, the rescued were met by LTG Krueger, who remarked: “Most of them were in pitiable condition and could not realize they were actually safe.”⁷⁵

Accomplishments

The Cabanatuan mission proved to be a major psychological victory for the Americans.⁷⁷ The combined force of Rangers, Alamo Scouts, and Philippine guerrillas freed 516 Allied prisoners and killed at least 530 Japanese soldiers.⁷⁸ Of note, the light infantry Rangers and guerrillas destroyed twelve enemy tanks and a large number of trucks. Friendly casualties were 26 guerrillas



CPT Robert Prince (L) and COL Horton V. White (G-2, Sixth U.S. Army) discuss the rescue mission in Guimba, Luzon, 31 January 1945. (*Robert Prince Collection*)



Ten Rangers and two Alamo Scouts from the Cabanatuan Raid met with President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the Oval Office of the White House, 7 March 1945.

and 2 Rangers killed, and two of the rescued men died of heart attacks during or right after the movement to safety.⁷⁹

The overwhelming success of the mission prompted similar efforts against other prison camps throughout Luzon.⁸⁰ Some of these adopted the proven combination of Alamo Scouts and/or Philippine guerrillas working side-by-side to provide the raiders with the detailed information they needed. In less than a month, American forces conducted three more raids on POW camps or detainee facilities, rescuing over 9000 persons from harsh Japanese treatment.⁸¹

The Cabanatuan rescue operation remains relevant today because it is an excellent example of the sound application of the principles of raiding. The raid was characterized by solid, detailed planning throughout; sound execution; violence of action; the creative use of deception to maximize surprise; the capitalization of unit strengths; and the ability to adapt to situational changes. The Cabanatuan rescue highlights the importance of many tactical principles: conducting a proper reconnaissance; developing (and disseminating) a detailed plan of action; isolating the objective; and planning for contingencies. The actual assault took place in just six minutes, leaving the enemy forces thoroughly beaten. Within thirty minutes the raiders were able to locate, move to the front gate, and organize the movement of over 500 ailing and emaciated POWs in darkness. Enemy strengths (armor support and their ability to quickly reinforce the camp) were planned for and soundly defeated.

If there was one weak area, it was in the logistics planning for transporting the rescued to safety. This operation was the first major POW rescue operation in the Pacific theater, and the condition of the POWs after three years of captivity was grossly underestimated. Subsequent rescues in the Philippines benefited from that knowledge. But despite this issue, the raid force effectively assessed the problem and came up with a primitive solution. With the guerrillas help, the force was able to leverage the good will of the populace to use native transport. The Cabanatuan raid is yet another excellent example of what Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) can achieve with a little audacity and a bit of imagination.

Epilogue

Twenty-five years later, U.S. Army LTC Joseph R. Cataldo, a medical officer, began an intense study of the physical conditions of POWs as encountered in rescues during WWII, Korea, and the few that were released early by the North Vietnamese. Since Cataldo was the chief medical officer for the Son Tay Raid force, his interest had profound applications. The Son Tay Raid was an attempt in November 1970 to rescue American POWs held at a rural camp in North Vietnam. Based on his historical research, Doctor Cataldo developed a profile to brief the raiders on what to expect when they encountered POWs in the camp. He predicted that the men would be in poor physical condition, malnourished, intolerant of cold, and incapable of ingesting food like that found in rations at that time. To alleviate those conditions, he arranged for the raiders to carry special rations developed just for the POWs, and he gained supplies of field ponchos and liners to deal with the cold while being air transported. Cataldo also arranged for the force to provide the POWs with loose tennis-type shoes in various sizes to use for footwear (see photo on next page).⁸⁴ In short, LTC Cataldo planned for ways to keep newly-freed POWs as mobile as possible and less of a logistical burden to the small raid force – a direct ‘lesson learned’ from the experiences of the Cabanatuan Rangers.

“THIS RESCUE OPERATION WAS A BRILLIANT SUCCESS. CAREFULLY PLANNED, EFFECTIVELY RECONNOITERED BY ALAMO SCOUTS, DARINGLY EXECUTED BY THE RANGERS AND GUERRILLAS, THE SURPRISE ACHIEVED REFLECTED GREAT CREDIT UPON THE OFFICERS AND MEN INVOLVED.”⁸³

— Lieutenant General Walter Krueger, Commander, Sixth U.S. Army (‘Alamo Force’)

RESCUED

◆ 516 POWs Total

- 489 Americans
- 23 British
- 2 Norwegians
- 1 Dutch
- 1 Filipino

PROS/STRENGTHS

- Achieved mission success in a complex operation
- Excellent mission planning through the attack phase
- Outstanding use of deception to gain total surprise
- Exceptional use of reconnaissance assets to support enroute planning
- Achieved synergy by integrating the different capabilities of elements in an effective manner
- Violence of action on the objective overwhelmed the enemy guard force
- Effective isolation of the objective area
- Excellent execution of a detailed scheme of maneuver

Although the Son Tay Raid rescued no American POWs, research after the fact confirmed the pin-point accuracy of Dr. Cataldo's profile. The subsequent questioning of POWs released in 1972 verified those conditions and justified the time and effort that had been invested into the study of missions that had gone before. It is hoped that future missions go into action similarly prepared. ↑

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Endnotes

1 Considered by many military historians to be the greatest defeat of U.S. forces in any conflict, the chaotic conditions following the fall of the Philippines make it difficult to accurately account for all American and Allied persons that became captives of the Japanese Army. The problem of accountability was compounded by incidents such as the 'Bataan Death March,' and similar acts of mistreatment, as well as the later Japanese policy of relocating prisoners throughout the Japanese Empire to perform slave labor tasks in support of its war effort. Moreover, few records of the early days of the Philippine Campaign survived the war. All these factors combined to make accurate personnel accounting of prisoners and detainees difficult. In addition to the figure of 23,000 American soldiers, sailors, and Marines taken captive in the Philippines, tens of thousands of American citizens, many of them dependent wives and children of the soldiers, were also detained and subjected to the same harsh conditions as prisoners of war. The figures cited are from: Office of the Provost

CONS/WEAKNESSES

- Plan was highly dependent on the support of the indigenous population
- Underestimated the poor physical condition of the POWs
- Underestimated the transportation and logistical requirements to support the withdrawal
- Required headquarters intervention to cover the last seven miles of travel



POW Escape and Evasion footwear produced for use during the Son Tay Raid, based on Dr. Cataldo's research on the Cabanatuan Raid. (Courtesy of SGM (Ret.) John A. Larsen)

Marshal General, "Report on American Prisoners of War Interned by the Japanese in the Philippine Islands," 19 November 1945, copy on Internet at: http://www.mansell.com/pow_resources/camplists/philippines/pows_in_pi-OPMG_report.html, accessed on 27 February 2017. See also: Louis Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines, The War in the Pacific* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1953), 454-55, 579-83.

2 Although accurate numbers are difficult to ascertain due to lack of documentation on the part of the Japanese, there have been some studies made comparing pre-war records with wartime and post-war accounting of survivors. The cited 40 percent mortality rate comes from: William P. Skelton III, "American Ex-Prisoners of War," Independent Study Course, Released: April 2002, Department of Veterans Affairs, Employee Education System, on Internet at: <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/docs/vhi/pow.pdf>, accessed on 22 March 2017, 11. Robert E. Klein, et al, "Former American Prisoners of War (POWs)," U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, April 2005, on

- Internet at: www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/specialreports/powcy054-12-06jsmwrfinal2.doc, accessed on 22 March 2017, 4. The U.S. Army alone counted 25,580 soldiers captured or interned in the Philippines. Of that number, 10,650 died while a POW. Those figures do not include U.S. Navy or Marine Corps personnel, nor civilian detainees. The same source also soberly notes that 30 percent of the captives died in their first year of captivity.
- 3 A number of period documents highlighted the need to task guerrilla forces to gain information regarding American prisoners of war (POWs) and details on prison camps. For example, see Staff Study for the Chief of Staff, "Subject: Development of Contact with American POW in Japanese Camps," 11 December 1943, reprinted in Charles A. Willoughby, Editor-in-Chief, *Intelligence Activities in the Philippines during the Japanese Occupation*, Documentary Appendices (II), Volume II, Intelligence Series (Washington, DC: GPO, 1948), 2-6.
 - 4 For more information on the Palawan Massacre and its influence on increasing the need for rescuing POWs from similar fates, see the preceding article (Michael E. Krivdo, "Catalyst for Action: The Palawan Massacre," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* (14:1) in this issue. For good secondary source accounts from the survivors' perspective, see: Stephen L. Moore, *As Good as Dead: The Daring Escape of American POWs from a Japanese Death Camp* (New York: Caliber, 2016); and Bob Wilbanks, *Last Man Out: Glenn McDole, USMC, Survivor of the Palawan Massacre in World War II* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., Publishers, 2004).
 - 5 Robert Lapham and Bernard Norling, *Lapham's Raiders: Guerrillas in the Philippines, 1942-1945* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1996),
 - 6 Walter Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon: The Story of Sixth Army in World War II* (Washington, DC: Combat Forces Press, 1953), 237; Lapham and Norling, *Lapham's Raiders*, 172-78, quote from 178.
 - 7 Quotes from Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon*, 237; David W. Hogan, Jr., *U.S. Army Special Operations in World War II* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 84-86.
 - 8 Henry A. Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," *Saturday Evening Post*, 7 April 1945, 18; Henry A. Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," *Infantry Journal* (April 1945), 15, quote from text.
 - 9 Lapham and Norling, *Lapham's Raiders*, 179; Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 18.
 - 10 Kenneth Finlayson, "Alamo Scouts Diary," *Veritas, The Journal of Army Special Operations History* (4:3), 1-17.
 - 11 Larry Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle: The Alamo Scouts Behind Japanese Lines in World War II* (New York, NY: NAL Caliber, 2009), 234-35, quotes from 234. According to Alexander's account, LT Rounsaville had been designated mission commander the last time Teams ROUNSAVILLE and NELLIST were paired up. As a result, it was LT Nellist's time to assume that responsibility. The Alamo Scouts often rotated duties as a way of 'spreading the load' across their ranks. The two Alamo Scout teams planned to depart at 1900 hours on 27 January. That would put them in the objective area 24 hours prior to the Rangers arrival, giving them time to collect the information requested by LTC Mucci so he could complete his plans.
 - 12 Document, "List of Participants," undated, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, 7.
 - 13 George Pames, "The Great Cabanatuan Raid," *Air Classics* (Sept-Oct 1984), 23. The high estimate of enemy troops in the vicinity of the camp comes from Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon*, 238.
 - 14 Pames, "The Great Cabanatuan Raid," 23.
 - 15 Pames, "The Great Cabanatuan Raid," 23-24; Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 18. Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon*, 238. Pames cites 2015 hours as the designated time to begin firing at the Japanese garrison guarding the POWs. Krueger and Mucci both cite 1945 hours as the time the attack began, based on their experiences and written records.
 - 16 Pames, "The Great Cabanatuan Raid," 24.
 - 17 Pames, "The Great Cabanatuan Raid," 24.
 - 18 Pames, "The Great Cabanatuan Raid," 24.
 - 19 Pames, "The Great Cabanatuan Raid," 24.
 - 20 Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon*, 237-38; Lapham and Norling, *Lapham's Raiders*, 179; Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 18; Pames, "The Great Cabanatuan Raid," 24; Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle*, 234-35.
 - 21 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 18.
 - 22 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 18-19; Pames, "The Great Cabanatuan Raid," 13.
 - 23 War Department, *Radio Set SCR-694-C, Technical Manual (TM) 11-230C, 15 August 1944* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office [GPO]), 1; Gordon L. Rottman, *The Cabanatuan Prison Raid: The Philippines, 1945* (New York, NY: Osprey Press, 2009), 29.
 - 24 Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle*, 235; Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 188.
 - 25 Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle*, 234-38, quotes from 234 and 35, respectively. PFC Kittleson remained in the Army after the war. He leveraged his experiences in Alamo Scouts to a long and very successful career in Special Forces that extended past the Vietnam War. When he retired as a Command Sergeant Major (CSM) in 1978, he was the one Special Forces soldier to have served in four POW rescue operations in two different wars (WWII and Vietnam). CSM (Ret.) Kittleson died in 2006 and was inducted as a Special Forces Distinguished Member of the regiment (DMOR) in 2009. See: Document, "Distinguished Member of the Special Forces Regiment, Command Sergeant Galen C. Kittleson, Inducted 9 July 2009," on Internet at: http://www.soc.mil/SWCS/RegimentalHonors/pdf/sf_kittleson.pdf, accessed 12 November 2017.
 - 26 Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 188-89. Like the Rangers, the Alamo Scouts traveled light and planned on subsisting off the villagers as a way to lighten their individual load. Fortunately for them they were well-taken care of by the largely sympathetic, supportive Filipino populace. In other regions, this approach might not have proved as dependable, perhaps even leading to mission failure.
 - 27 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 18.
 - 28 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 18.
 - 29 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 18.
 - 30 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 18, first quote; Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 15, second quote.
 - 31 Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 189.
 - 32 Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 15-16, quote from 16.
 - 33 Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle*, 238-40.
 - 34 Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle*, 238-40; Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 189-91, quotes from 190.
 - 35 Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle*, 238-40.
 - 36 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 19.
 - 37 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," Mucci quotes from 19; Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle*, 244-45, Prince quote from 245.
 - 38 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 19.
 - 39 Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 17.
 - 40 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 19.
 - 41 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," quote from 19; Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 17.
 - 42 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 19; Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 17; Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle*, quote from 245.
 - 43 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 19; Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 17; Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle*, 245-46.
 - 44 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 19.
 - 45 Pames, "The Great Cabanatuan Raid," 72.
 - 46 Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle*, 245-46; Pames, "The Great Cabanatuan Raid," quotes from 72.
 - 47 Quote from interview with Robert W. Prince in: Mike Barber, "Leader of WWII's 'Great Raid' looks back at real-life POW rescue," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 24 August 2005, on Internet at: <http://www.seattlepi.com/local/article/Leader-of-WWII-s-Great-Raid-looks-back-at-1181340.php>, accessed on 14 March 2017.
 - 48 Pames, "The Great Cabanatuan Raid," 72-73.
 - 49 Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 18.
 - 50 Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 17-18.
 - 51 Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 191. Quote attributed to Don H. Adams, a survivor of the Bataan Death March and former Cabanatuan prisoner. Adams was very surprised at seeing the "big men" burst through the gate and take control of the camp, killing every Japanese soldier they encountered.
 - 52 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 19; Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 18.
 - 53 Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 19.
 - 54 Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 192.
 - 55 Quote from Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 192.
 - 56 Letter, Warrant Officer Paul Jackson, U.S. Navy, to "My Dear Mrs. [Selma] Robbins," Long Beach, CA, 15 March 1945, copy in the USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 57 Interview, Dr. Charles H. Briscoe and Gilbert Cox, 6 February 2006, copy in the USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
 - 58 Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 19.
 - 59 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 19.
 - 60 Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 192.
 - 61 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 19, 110.
 - 62 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 19, 110.
 - 63 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 110. The decision to leave Team NELLIST behind proved fortuitous as they recovered one British POW from the camp the next morning. The British soldier had severe dysentery and was in the latrine during the assault. In addition to being seriously ill, he was also quite deaf. Team Nellist recovered him and helped transport the man back to Guinta. See: Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle*, 251-52.
 - 64 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 19, 110.
 - 65 Jackson Letter.
 - 66 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 110; Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 19.
 - 67 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 110.
 - 68 Mucci, "We Swore We'd Die or Do It," 110; Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 19.
 - 69 Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 19, quotes from text, **emphasis added by author to draw reader attention to the number of carts originally requisitioned for the task.**
 - 70 Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 19. Again, **emphasis added by author to the numbers of carts needed to support the growing logistical effort to transport more and more of the freed prisoners.** While the initial projection was only 25 carts needed to carry the invalid ex-POWS, the actual requirement became almost three times that – **71 carts.** That transportation effort not only extended the column to its limits of control but made the whole force far more vulnerable to enemy action.
 - 71 Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 19.
 - 72 Jackson Letter.
 - 73 Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 19.
 - 74 Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 19.

- 75 Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 19; Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon*, 239, quote from text.
- 76 David W. Hogan, Jr., *Raiders, or Elite Infantry?: The Changing Role of the U.S. Army Rangers from Dieppe to Grenada* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 88.
- 77 The boldness of the operation quickly captured the heart of America. In early March, twelve Rangers and two Alamo Scouts were selected to participate in a nationwide War Bond drive across the United States. The representatives visited the White House and met with President Franklin D. Roosevelt, took part in radio broadcasts, and met with celebrities such as the famous singer Bing Crosby.
- 78 Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle*, 235. Early reports listed a total of 512 or 513 prisoners rescued. These figures were cited verbatim in other accounts of the rescue and were not questioned. In actuality, because of the conditions those counts were taken (in the field, at night, and on the move), it took a while for a full accounting to be made. The 516 figure is likely the most accurate and based on actual rosters created after the rescue. Conversely, the estimates of Japanese casualties from the raid are most likely low, with some estimates topping one thousand dead. The estimates were made on the basis of actual counts made on site days later, and probably do not count Japanese casualties evacuated in the heat of the battle.
- 79 Mucci, "Rescue at Cabanatuan," 19.
- 80 In short succession, several other rescue missions were launched to recover American or Allied POWs and/or detainees throughout Luzon. The major ones were: Santo Tomas (3 Feb. 1945), Bilibid (4 Feb. 1945), and Los Banos (23 Feb. 1945).
- 81 See, for example, the chart in Michael Krivdo, "Catalyst for Action: The Palawan Massacre," *Veritas*, 14: 1 (2018), 35-41.
- 82 Quote from interview with Robert W. Prince in: Mike Barber, "Leader of WWII's 'Great Raid' looks back at real-life POW rescue," *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 24 August 2005, on Internet at: <http://www.seattlapi.com/local/article/Leader-of-WWII-s-Great-Raid-looks-back-at-1181340.php>, accessed on 14 March 2017.
- 83 Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon*, 239.
- 84 U.S. Army Infantry School Library, Transcript, "Son Tay Raid Panel Discussion," USSOCOM Commanders' Conference, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, 29 March 1988. On Internet at: <http://www.benning.army.mil/library/content/Virtual/Documents/Hardcopy/paper/Son%20Tay%20Raid%20Panel%20Discussion.pdf>, accessed on 30 March 2018.

MAJ Robert Lapham Endnotes

- 1 Robert Lapham and Bernard Norling, *Lapham's Raiders: Guerrillas in the Philippines, 1942-1945* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1996), xi-xii.
- 2 Lapham and Norling, *Lapham's Raiders*, 1-8.
- 3 Lapham and Norling, *Lapham's Raiders*, 8-22.
- 4 Lapham and Norling, *Lapham's Raiders, passim*; David W. Hogan Jr., 76, 86-88.
- 5 Citation, "Distinguished Service Cross," General Orders No. 9, 1945, Headquarters, U.S. Forces-Pacific.
- 6 Lapham and Norling, *Lapham's Raiders*, 222-31, 241-42.

The Alamo Scouts Endnotes

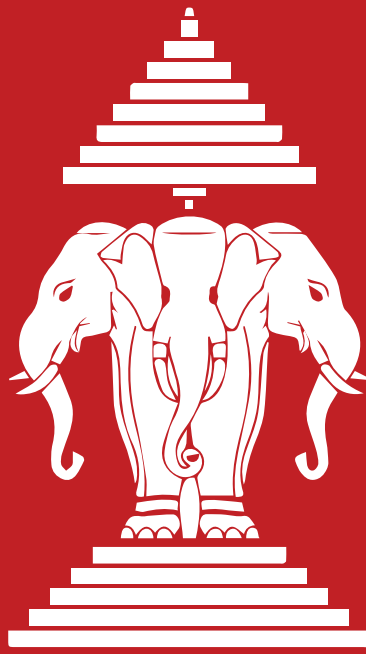
- 1 Larry Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle: The Alamo Scouts Behind Japanese Lines in World War II* (New York, NY: NAL Caliber, 2009), 44. LTG Krueger created the 6th U.S. Army Special Reconnaissance Unit as a result of his frustration with the lack of timely, complete information during Operation DEXTERITY, the Sixth Army's landings on Western New Britain Island.
- 2 Lance Q. Zedric, *Silent Warriors of World War II: The Alamo Scouts Behind Japanese Lines* (Ventura, CA: Pathfinder Publishing, 1995), 40-41, 43-46; Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle*, 51-66.
- 3 Alexander, *Shadows in the Jungle*, 5.
- 4 Zedric, *Silent Warriors of World War II*, 241-49.
- 5 Kenneth Finlayson, "Alamo Scouts Diary," *Veritas, Journal of Army Special Operations History*, 4:3 (2008), 17; Michael E. Krivdo, Text of Class on "History of Army Special Forces," Document, Class outline for Special Forces Qualification Course, 30 November 2016, copy in the USASOC History Office History Support Center, Fort Bragg, NC. The four POW rescue missions that Galen Kittleson participated in were the raid at Oransbari and the Cabanatuan Raid during World War II, and both the attempted rescue of U.S. Army Special Forces Captain James N. 'Nick' Rowe, and the Son Tay Raid during the Vietnam War.

Northrop P-61 'Black Widow' Source

Website, "Northrop P-61 Black Widow," *The Aviation History Online Museum*, on Internet at: <http://www.aviation-history.com/northrop/p61.html>, accessed 10 January 2018.



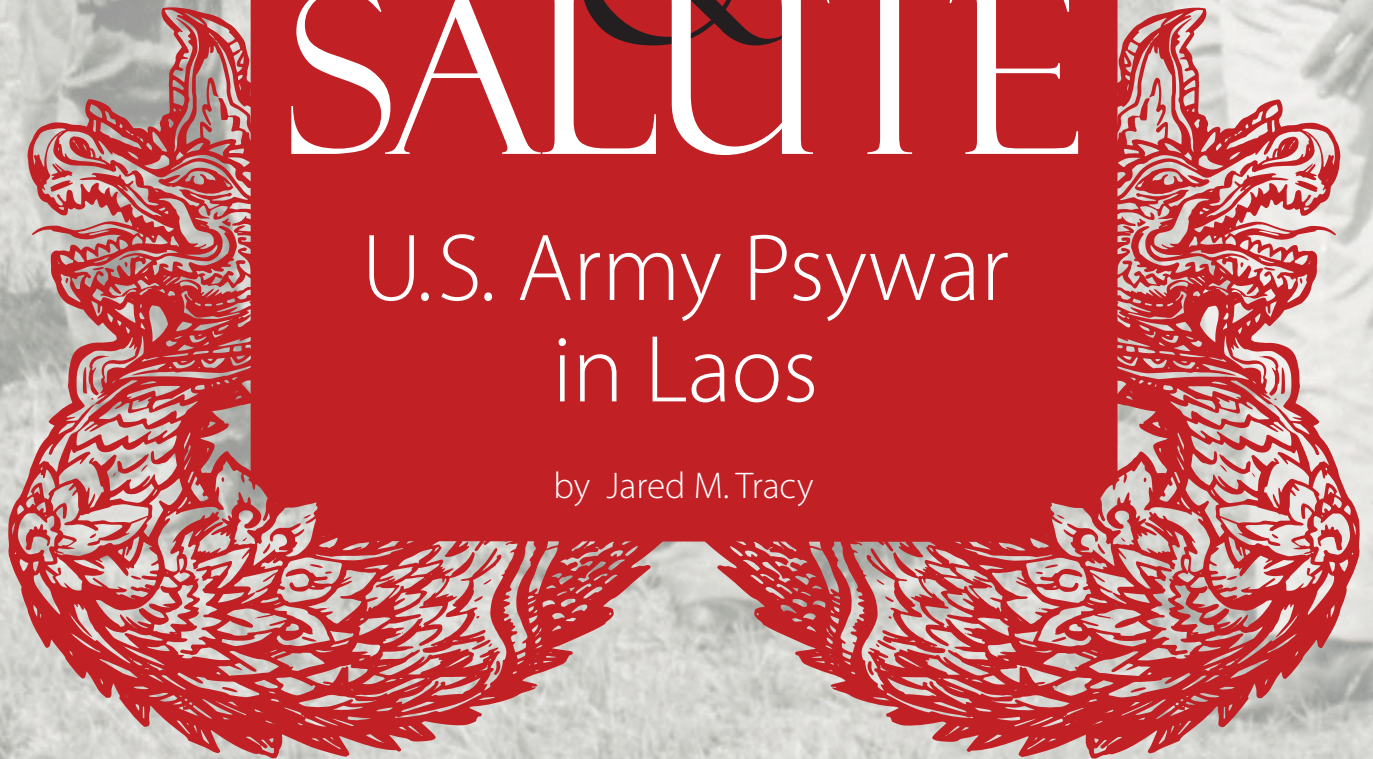
POWs freed from the Cabanatuan prison camp marching towards the American lines. Those unable to walk rode on carabao carts.



MORE THAN SHOOT & SALUTE

U.S. Army Psywar
in Laos

by Jared M. Tracy



In January 1961, a twelve-man team from the 1st Psychological Warfare (Psywar) Battalion (Broadcasting and Leaflet [B&L]) deployed to Laos as part of a secretive, small-scale U.S. Army Special Warfare presence to advance U.S. strategic objectives in Southeast Asia (SEA). Assigned to the Programs Evaluation Office (PEO) in the Laotian capital, Vientiane, the psywar team offered multi-media psywar support to U.S. agencies operating in-country, but its primary role was augmenting the U.S. Information Service (USIS). In addition, team members advised the Royal Lao Government and armed forces, which had been fighting the externally-supported Communist Pathet Lao and other insurgents since 1954.

Comprised of mostly junior officers and soldiers, many of them new to the Army or on their first deployment, the psywar team was inserted into a highly ambiguous situation (as explained in the contextual Laos article in the previous issue of *Veritas*). Afforded little preparation, guidance, or direction from higher headquarters, these soldiers relied heavily on their own education, experiences, and initiative. The team's selection, pre-mission preparations, and six-month deployment, the focus of this article, are described by three of its members: Second Lieutenant (2LT) Raymond P. Ambrozak, Specialist 4 (SP4) Neil E. Lien, and Private First Class (PFC) William J. Dixon.

Born in Nanticoke, PA, on 8 November 1935, 2LT Raymond P. Ambrozak studied Industrial Engineering at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, before being drafted into the Infantry in September 1958. His enlisted time was short, as he completed Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, GA, in October 1959, earning a commission as an Infantry 2LT. Expecting an Infantry assignment, he inexplicably received orders to the 1st Loudspeaker and Leaflet (L&L) Company at Fort Bragg, NC, as a Psywar Officer.¹ On 24 June 1960, the 1st L&L was re-designated as the 1st Psywar Company [L&L], a subordinate unit of the 1st Psywar Battalion.² Adding to his confusion was notification of deployment to an unknown country in SEA a couple of months later. Two other unsuspecting prospective members of the psywar augmentation team were SP4 Neil E. Lien and PFC William J. Dixon.



2LT Raymond P. Ambrozak,
Psywar Officer in the
1st Loudspeaker and
Leaflet Company,
1st Psywar Battalion.

Born, raised, and educated in western Chicago, Neil E. Lien attended Lawrence College in Appleton, WI, where he double majored in English/Creative Writing and Speech Arts. The latter discipline encompassed such fields as theater, oral interpretation, and radio broadcasting. He also minored in psychology and worked at the college radio station. Graduating in June 1958, Lien waited “for the shoe to drop (for my draft notice to come).” In anticipation, he bought the *Draftee’s Guide to Military Life and Law*. Receiving his draft notice in late summer 1959, then-Private (PVT) Lien felt prepared. While in basic training at Fort Ord, CA, he had his Classification and Assignments (C&A) interview with a career counselor to determine his Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). Looking at his fields of study and radio broadcasting experience at Lawrence, the NCO said, “There’s only one place for you to go: psywar.” He reported to Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), 1st Psywar Battalion (B&L), on Smoke Bomb Hill, Fort Bragg, in late 1959, as a radio broadcaster.³

“There’s only one
place for you to go:
psywar.”

William J. Dixon was born, raised, and educated in Dixon, IL. He attended the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, IN, graduating in June 1959 with a B.A. in Fine Arts. His father, a retired colonel who had served in both World Wars, felt strongly about his five sons joining the military. Accordingly, in 1959, Bill enlisted for two years as an Army Illustrator. He attended basic training at Fort Riley, KS, before reporting to the HHC (S-3), 1st Psywar Battalion (B&L), around Thanksgiving, as one of seven illustrators in the battalion.

After six months learning from more experienced illustrators and performing ‘extra duties as assigned,’ Dixon got wind of a real-world ‘opportunity.’ “One day, I got an urgent message to get back to my company,” recalled Dixon. Informed by his leadership that he may be deploying on a secret mission, he was not sure why *he* among the illustrators was selected. He suspected that since he was an ‘excess’ soldier above and beyond the battalion’s Table of Organization and Equipment (T/O&E), the unit had wanted to send him so as not to lose assigned personnel.⁴

LTC Charles A. Murray

Born on 22 May 1908, LTC Charles A. Murray graduated from Austin High School in Chicago, IL, in 1926. The 1931 Economics graduate from Ripon College in Ripon, WI, was commissioned an Infantry 2LT in the U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) on 10 June 1931. A captain (CPT) during WWII, he was assigned to the 612th Tank Destroyer (TD) Battalion and the 671st TD Bn, deploying to the Pacific with the latter (December 1944 to November 1945). From September 1946 to September 1949, he served in the Allied Translator and Intelligence Service, GHQ, FECOM. As a major (MAJ), he was assigned to the USAR Instructor Group, 2304th Area Service Unit (ASU), Virginia Military District from 1949 to 1953. Following that, he again deployed to the Pacific as a member of the Troop Information and Education (TI&E) Section, HQ, Korean Communications Zone, until January 1955. Returning to the U.S. as a LTC, he was briefly the TI&E Officer, XVIII Airborne Corps, at Fort Bragg, NC, before becoming Director, Extension Courses Department, U.S. Army Special Warfare Center (USASWC). The 1956 Psywar Officer Course graduate commanded the 1st Psywar Battalion (B&L) from 13 April 1959 until becoming OIC of the Psywar Team to Laos in January 1961. He returned to USASWC in July 1961 and retired on 31 December 1961.



Lien had another theory for their selection. “First, we all had good reputations. I was Soldier of the Month twice, I never caused any problems, and I was really affable with the other guys. The second consideration was skills—what skills were needed to build this team, and who had them? For example, mine was radio broadcasting.” Finally, each enlisted member had to have enough time left in service for the deployment. Lien had just enough, with two months to spare. “On those three criteria, that’s how I qualified.”⁵

Lien, Dixon, and sixteen other prospective candidates—including a civilian and a major—met in an empty barracks for a more detailed rundown. “They didn’t tell us where the mission was, but said it would be for roughly six months,” said Dixon. Interested people would need to get a security clearance, a time-consuming process; therefore, they needed to volunteer ‘on the spot.’ “Everyone raised their hands. However, within a month or so, there was a shakeout and it narrowed down to twelve.” The major had to leave for another assignment, and was replaced as Officer-in-Charge (OIC) by Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Charles A. Murray.⁶ Eventually ‘filled in’ on the particulars and sworn to secrecy, the team began *ad hoc* pre-deployment training.

Slated to arrive in Laos by September 1960, the team had about six weeks to prepare for deployment. The 1st Psywar Battalion (B&L) provided no training regimen, so they developed their own. According to 2LT Ambrozak, they built an “area study” to familiarize themselves with the people, culture, economy, and political situation in Laos. “We parsed out each one of these areas to different members of the team.” Once an individual completed his ‘class,’ he presented it to the group. In addition, the team received a crash course in the Lao language from a 7th Special Forces (SF) Group NCO (non-commissioned officer) who had spent a year in-country and had picked up 200–300 words. Ambrozak pointed out that while the language training was minimal, it actually did help “promote a quick relationship with the local Lao people” during the deployment.⁷

In August 1960, the team had nearly completed its pre-deployment training when its overseas movement was delayed due to the chaos in Laos following Captain (CPT) Kong Le’s insurrection. The group took advantage of the time by improving their area study and continuing *ad hoc* language training in French and Lao. Having lost their SF language instructor, the team elected one of their own who had earlier gotten the best scores in the Lao language: 2LT Ambrozak. “I became the language instructor for a country I didn’t even know existed six weeks prior to that,” he remembered.⁸ For the rest of 1960, the team continued learning more about its host country.

“We parsed out each one of these areas to different members of the team.”

— 2LT Raymond P. Ambrozak

While CPT Kong Le's rebellion had been the main reason for the delayed overseas movement, another was that not all of the administrative steps involved with an 'off-the-record' military deployment had been completed. Formal U.S. military involvement in Laos, evidenced by President John F. Kennedy's creation of Military Assistance Advisory Group, Laos (MAAG Laos), was still eight months away. There was to be no indication that these twelve men were U.S. Army soldiers. "We were administratively severed from the Army and assigned as DoD civilians," even though their pay, allotments, and time in grade in the Army continued. "Before leaving, a State Department employee came down from Washington, DC, met with our team, and provided us with civilian passports, DoD civilian identification cards, and international drivers' licenses," according to Lien.⁹

On 5 January 1961, the formal deployment order arrived. All twelve men were listed as 'Mr.' and given fake DoD civilian (General Schedule [GS]) grades on the orders. The 'civilian' status of these men meant that "there was no rank consciousness," Lien remembered. "There was no separation between officers and enlisted; we were all *compadres*."¹⁰ With their civilian passports in hand, they were to deploy around 25 January for duty with the Programs Evaluation Office (PEO) in Vientiane, Laos.¹¹ The PEO, the 'civilian' predecessor to MAAG Laos, was established in 1955 as a low-key DoD staff agency providing advice and assistance to the Laotian government and military. It had been the higher headquarters for American SF teams training their Laotian counterparts since 1959, and would be for the psywar team as well.

"We packed our Army uniforms in duffle bags, which shipped separately from us. I don't know where they went, and I never saw them again until I got back to Fort Bragg," recalled Dixon. "In civilian clothes, we drove up to Washington and flew out on Capital Airlines. After a layover in Chicago, we flew into San Francisco and stayed there for five days. Then, we flew out on a chartered Pan Am *Constellation* from Travis Air Force Base (AFB), CA. We were in the air for around 48 hours, with only short stops for refueling and changing crews. It took us twelve hours just to get to Hickham AFB, HI."¹² When they finally landed in Bangkok, Thailand, they reported to Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group, Thailand (JUSMAGTHAI). Activated in 1953, JUSTMAGTHAI had since developed a close relationship with the PEO, and was the gateway for U.S. personnel destined for Laos. JUSMAGTHAI presented a number of briefings to the team, with topics ranging from health and safety to current intelligence estimates on Laos.¹³

The team initially thought that it would just be working in Vientiane; JUSMAGTHAI and the PEO changed that perception. While most of the psywar personnel would 'live' and work in Vientiane, the team would send one officer to each Military Region (MR) in Laos (except the Communist-infested MR II) to advise Laotian commanders and support U.S. agencies in those areas.¹⁴ 2LT Ambrozak would be 'solo' in Luang Prabang (MR I); 1LT George M. Daly in Savannakhet (MR III), but as it turned out, Daly would



Soldiers from the 1st Psywar Battalion in Laos. From left to right are SFC Andrew K. Greer (NCOIC), PFC William J. Dixon, and SP5 Leslie H. Hollomon.

Psywar Augmentation Team

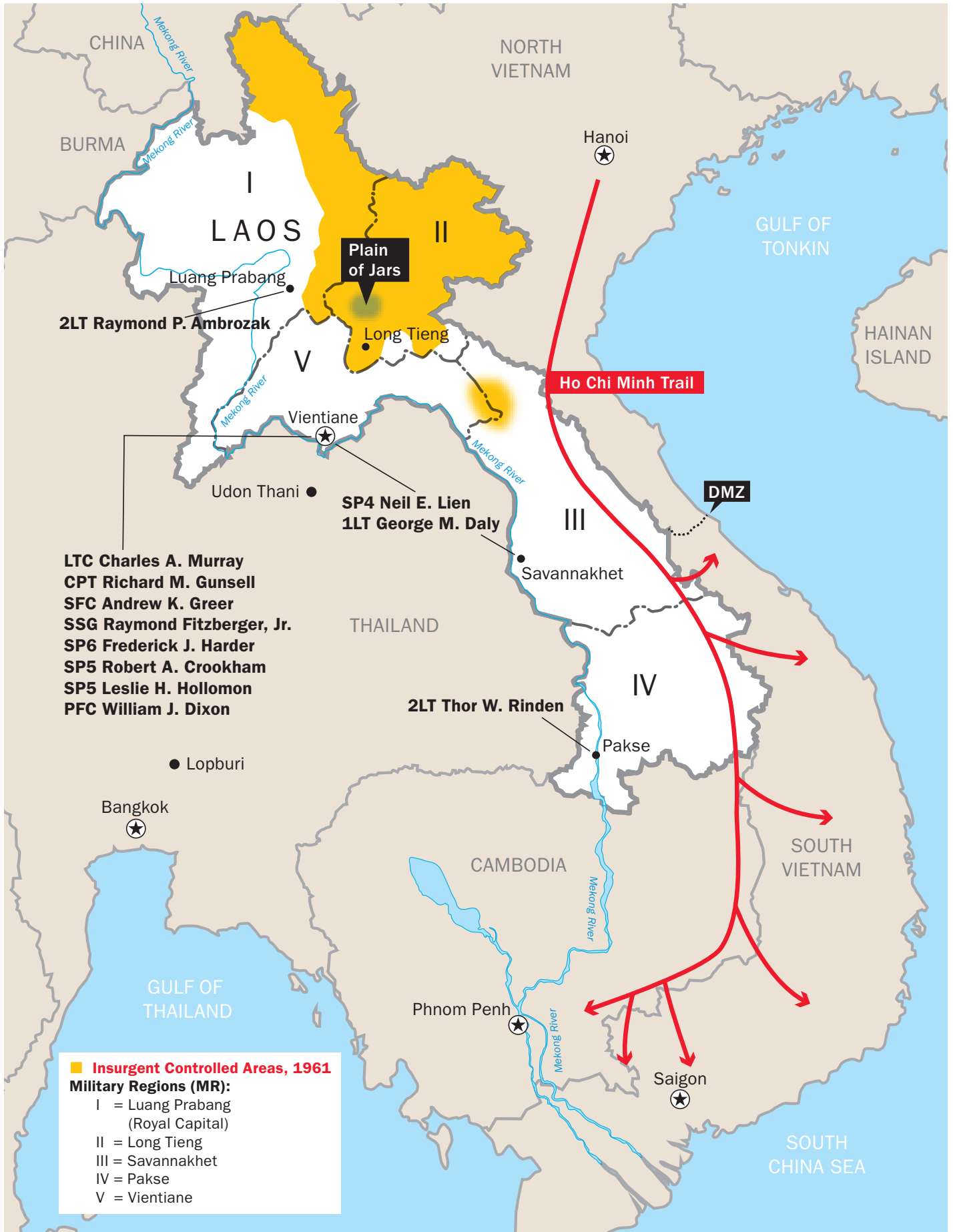
Civilian ranks were used to reduce their operational profile.

OFFICERS

LTC Charles A. Murray (OIC)	GS-13
CPT Richard M. Gunsell	GS-11
1LT George M. Daly	GS-11
2LT Raymond P. Ambrozak	GS-11
2LT Thor W. Rinden	GS-11

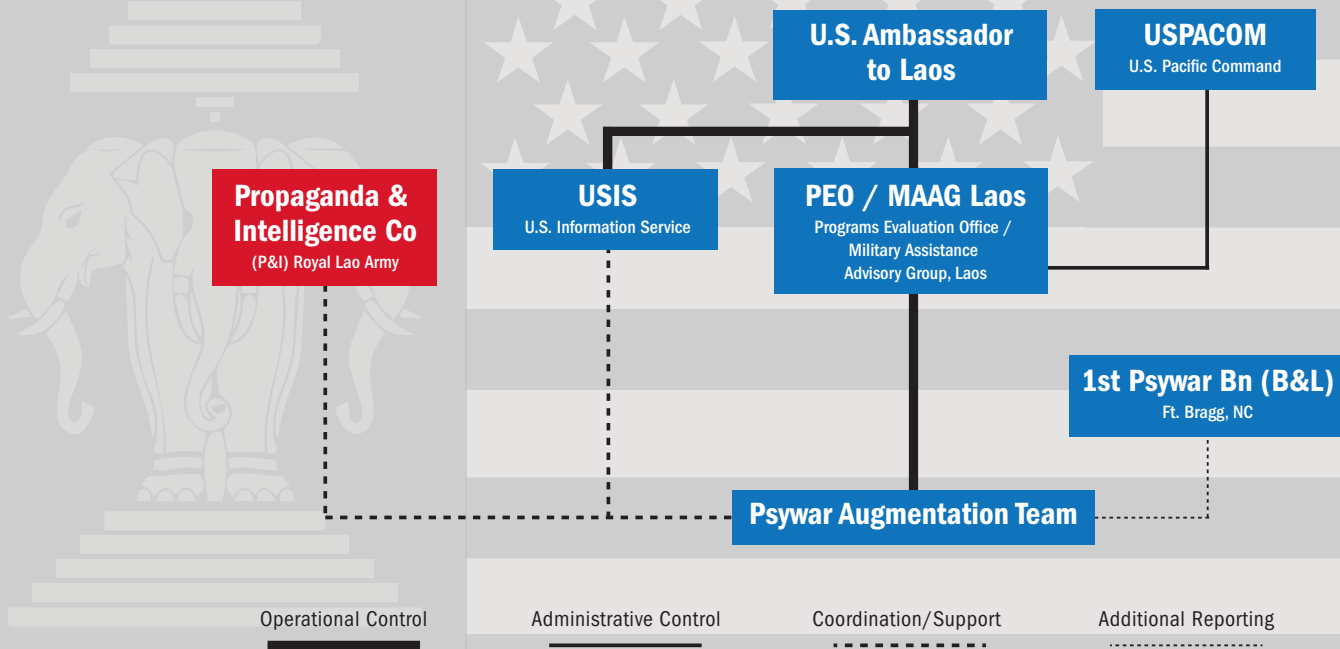
ENLISTED

SFC Andrew K. Greer (NCOIC)	GS-9
SSG Raymond Fitzberger, Jr.	GS-5
SP6 Frederick J. Harder	GS-5
SP5 Robert A. Crookham	GS-5
SP5 Leslie H. Hollomon	GS-5
SP4 Neil E. Lien	GS-5
PFC William J. Dixon	GS-5



COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

Laos, 1961



be mostly in Vientiane; and 2LT Thor W. Rinden in Pakse (MR IV). LTC Murray, CPT Richard M. Gunsell, and all of the enlisted men would operate from Vientiane (MR V).

2LT Ambrozak recalled the threesome’s trepidation after that was decided. “We three [Ambrozak, Daly, and Rinden] went into a quiet panic mode . . . This was our first rodeo and we felt that the credibility of PSYOP [psychological operations] rested on our shoulders.” The three lieutenants met in a hotel room in Bangkok to coordinate plans for their respective regions. In addition, they came up with a plan to get ‘buy-in’ from their host nation counterparts. “We thought that a letter signed by a senior commander, outlining areas where we could work with them, would give us some status with our counterparts and specify programs for immediate attention.”¹⁵ The team drafted a letter and wired it to the PEO before catching a military ‘hop’ from Bangkok to Vientiane.

Their draft letter was published in the form of an official two-page memorandum from Laos’s Defense Minister and staunch U.S. ally, General (GEN) Phoumi Nosavan, to senior Laotian Army commanders. Titled “Plan for Increased Emphasis Upon Psychological Operations,” the memorandum “included some items not in our [original] message, which we felt was a good sign. Someone had given some thought to our mission and wanted our assistance,” Ambrozak remembered.¹⁶ Phoumi wrote of his desire for unity and peace in Laos, but regretted that they could not be achieved with Communist propaganda infecting villages throughout the country. “We must counteract this threat,” he wrote. He then laid out a plan for “a strong [Royal Lao

Army] psychological operation” to support national aims and earn popular support for the Royal Lao Government.¹⁷

Phoumi informed his commanders that “twelve [American] specialists . . . are now in Laos to assist [us] in the development of a strong information program and to teach the techniques necessary to conduct such a program.” These ‘specialists’ would help with four main areas. First, helping Laotian soldiers understand the need to improve conditions in villages and counter Communist propaganda. Second, educating villagers by training Laotian soldiers to show motion pictures and hand out printed materials throughout Laos. Third, curbing Lao-on-Lao violence by assuring Pathet Lao fighters of proper treatment by the Laotian government if they surrendered or deserted. Finally, improving radio operations, which he called “essential for the education and training of our troops and for informing our people of our aims and programs for their better living.”¹⁸ This memorandum provided a basic framework for the U.S. Army psywar role in Laos.

Once in Laos, 2LT Ambrozak headed to Luang Prabang (MR I) with the official title of Information Consultant to the Regional Commander, GEN Bounleut Sanichanh, although he had little more than an occasional briefing relationship with the general. In this capacity, “I could affect both military [and] civilian programs which were supporting national objectives in that region. These happened to be right in line with what USIS was doing there, so I began working very closely with the USIS personnel in that area.”¹⁹ For several weeks, Ambrozak supported USIS pro-

government product development and dissemination. Unfortunately, tragedy gave him greater responsibility.

On 1 April 1961, the USIS chief in MR I and Ambrozak's mentor, Mr. Francis P. 'Frank' Corrigan, died on a leaflet delivery mission when his Cessna O-1 *Bird Dog* engine failed shortly after takeoff and crashed.²⁰ Ambrozak took the loss of his friend and mentor hard, but he had little time to dwell on it. The Chief of USIS in-country, Daniel E. Moore, asked him to take over the USIS office in Luang Prabang until they could get a replacement. The USIS staff expected this assignment "because they assumed I was with USIS anyway." Ongoing USIS efforts included nascent radio operations, printed products, and training Lao governmental and military personnel to conduct pro-government and anti-Communist messaging throughout the country. "We didn't try *anything* on a unilateral basis. We always pulled in the appropriate Lao military or civilians into any campaign that we had going on."²¹

One day, Ambrozak received an urgent call from LTC Murray to return to Vientiane, as did 1LT Daly in Savannakhet. In the capital, they were directed to assist 2LT Rinden in MR IV with developing a Pathet Lao Prisoner-of-War (POW) 're-orientation' program at a camp just outside of Pakse. Their main task was to make assessments and recommendations to Laotian government personnel running the site. After arriving in Pakse, the three LTs visited the camp and quickly identified problems. "First, it was filthy," noted Ambrozak. "We recommended cleaning up the camp, bathrooms, and showers, and providing the nearly fifty POWs with clean clothes and better food. Second, we found out that the guards weren't treating the POWs well. If there was ever to be any hope of 'repatriating' these POWs, then it needed to start with the attitudes of the guards."²² They recommended training guards in the fair treatment of prisoners.

The team also established POW 'discussion groups.' "If there was a former Pathet Lao soldier who had

A multinational team investigates the crash site of Frank Corrigan's Cessna O-1 *Bird Dog*.



Left
Francis P. 'Frank' Corrigan was the senior USIS officer in MR I (Luang Prabang).

Right
Buddhist monks pay respects to Frank Corrigan before his remains are shipped to the U.S. Note the non-uniformed SF soldiers kneeling behind them.





Top Left

Powering a pedicab, 2LT Thor W. Rinden and his passenger PFC Dixon pass by a small group of Laotian children. Rinden represented the psywar team in MR IV.

Top Right

2LT Ambrozak and a 're-oriented' Pathet Lao POW take a break while constructing the antenna tower for the new radio station in Luang Prabang.

Left

2LT Ray Ambrozak (left, standing) and interagency partners from U.S. Operations Mission (USOM) (Dallas C. Voran, center, rear) and USIS (unknown, left, kneeling) pose with Laotian counterparts in Luang Prabang.

successfully completed the program and reintegrated, we would bring him back as a discussion group leader," Ambrozak stated. "We'd also bring in elders from the prisoners' home village, and get them to talk." Finally, cooperative Pathet Lao POWs needed to feel trusted if there was any possibility of them 'reintegrating' back into the mainstream. Accordingly, Laotian administrators gradually allowed cooperating POWs to visit their home villages (supervised) or to receive family visitation.²³

Ambrozak and Daly returned to their posts only a week after arriving in Pakse, and therefore could not assess the long-term impact of their POW 're-orientation' program. However, the Laotian government ended up implementing this 'pilot' program throughout the country, including Luang Prabang. The Laotian military "asked me [Ambrozak] if I knew anything about this, which I thought was pretty funny. I didn't let on that I knew about it." The young lieutenant "was surprised how closely it resembled what we had developed."²⁴ Not only had the

POW program taken root throughout Laos, but it provided a working model for future PSYOP-supported programs in such locations as Vietnam during the 1960s (the *Chieu Hoi* program) and Afghanistan during the Global War on Terror (Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program).²⁵

While in Luang Prabang, 2LT Ambrozak had another priority: the completion of a radio station, Radio LUANG PRABANG, with a 60' antenna tower, to reach audiences throughout the province. Frank Corrigan had promised a new station to the king before his death, and "it was almost complete by the time that I got there." Once all remaining equipment arrived, "with the other members of the team, I was able to finish off the radio station and put in the antenna field."²⁶ 2LT Ambrozak, SP6 Frederick J. Harder (visiting from Vientiane), and a dozen 're-oriented' POWs were the construction crew.

Ambrozak explained the construction steps: "In erecting the antenna, a gin pole (15ft) was built (a framed tower with a wheel on top). The completed antenna lay on the ground

connected to the base in a manner which would allow the antenna to rotate to a vertical position. A rope was then attached to the antenna and passed over the wheel of the gin pole with enough length for six POWs and two U.S. PSYOP advisors to grab hold and pull. A storm was blowing in as the antenna began to move off the ground arcing toward the gathering clouds. Guy wires were adjusted as slack was needed or taken up as the crew of eight strained at the rope.²⁷

“At the point of no return, when the rope cleared the gin pole, as if that was the signal, heavy drops of rain pelted the field which quickly turned to mud.” The makeshift construction crew “dug in harder through the deluge until the tower was vertical with guy wires set to see that it stayed that way.”²⁸ Upon its erection, local Buddhist monks blessed the antenna. This ceremony was followed by a brief visit from King Savang Vatthana, who spoke quietly to the provincial governor, waved at the U.S. personnel, and departed, justifiably pleased with ‘his’ new station and antenna.²⁹ Radio LUANG PRABANG would play a key role in the state funeral for the previous monarch, Sisavang Vong, which Ambrozak thought offered a terrific psychological opportunity to unify all Laotians.

When King Sisavang Vong died on 29 October 1959, his body was encased in a sandalwood coffin and preserved until funeral arrangements could be made. Due to internal strife within the country following CPT Kong Le’s rebellion in 1960, the king’s funeral had been postponed several times. The Laotian government finally deemed it suitable to hold the state funeral and cremation ceremony in April 1961. The psywar team would facilitate the live, national broadcasting of the occasion, “the first time that this had ever been attempted,” according to Ambrozak.³⁰

The plan had many ‘moving pieces.’ A Laotian assigned to USIS would carry an AN/PRC-10 radio and accompany the funeral procession, starting at the royal palace in Luang Prabang. He would relay what was going on to an announcer at the cremation site, a soccer stadium near the palace. The announcer would repeat the information via telephone to Radio LUANG PRABANG, the content of which was in turn received and relayed country-wide by the main USIS station in Vientiane.

Villages throughout the country had been told that the broadcast would take place. In preparation, “Some of the villages had set up loudspeakers to broadcast the event locally,” recalled Ambrozak. “We were about as ready as we could be on the day of this event. When things started happening, I was able to follow what was going on at the procession and also at the cremation site.”³¹ Exactly how many people heard the broadcast via receivers or village loudspeakers was unknown, although Ambrozak later estimated that it may have been as much as two-thirds of the population. Despite their relative youth and junior rank, the psywar team members had helped foster a rare sense of national identity amongst Laotians by broadcasting the king’s funeral via Radio LUANG PRABANG.

While 2LT Ambrozak was working in Luang Prabang, SP4 Neil E. Lien was sent to Savannakhet further south

in MR III for a month. “There was no psywar effort of any kind going on there. I linked up with a SF team, who was providing basic training to recruits in the Royal Lao Army.” He interviewed several trainees to see if there was “some kind of psywar opportunity that could be executed.” Lien also met with James D. McHale, a USIS officer who had been in Laos since November 1959. “He was a great resource for me. He encouraged me to get with some of the religious and political leaders in Savannakhet.”³² Because there was no radio station within listening distance, any psywar messaging Lien developed would have to happen face-to-face. Lien was recalled to Vientiane before getting any program off the ground, but his brief visit had given him valuable experience interviewing members of the populace, which served him well later.

Lien had several jobs while living and working in the capital. One of his primary duties was to assist CPT Gunsell with the team’s monthly situation report (SITREP) to

**“We were about as ready
as we could be on
the day of the event.”**

— 2LT Raymond P. Ambrozak

Fort Bragg. In addition, “I developed a course on radio broadcasting in Vientiane for a group of Lao students recruited by the CIA.” The CIA planned to equip each with a small transmitter to broadcast positive messages to the countryside. “My job was to prepare them to do that. I had limited reference material, so I relied heavily on my personal broadcasting experience.” Within ten days, his class was ready to go. “Once the class started, we had an interpreter present the lectures.” Lien also worked with each student individually on basic radio repair, using the interpreter. “At the end of the two-week course, I felt like the students were in good shape for broadcasting.”³³

After the course ended, Lien spent a weekend in a small village in northeastern Laos, a region with little government presence or influence. “I went there seeking psywar opportunities.”³⁴ After a thirty-minute helicopter ride to the village, he interviewed local leaders, including the school superintendent, the mayor, and the chief of police. While the two-day visit did not result in a major psywar program, it assured village leaders of continued U.S. support. Unfortunately, the Pathet Lao attacked thirty minutes before Lien’s scheduled departure, which forced



Situated beside the Mekong River, the royal palace at Luang Prabang served as the start point for the funeral procession of King Sisavang Vong.



The funeral procession enters the soccer stadium where the cremation pyre was built, just outside of Luang Prabang. The gold canopied royal carriage with the urn for the king's ashes is in the left side of the entryway.



The culmination of the funeral for King Sisavang Vong was his cremation on this elaborate pyre. Laotians, monks, and foreign dignitaries paid their respects, prayed, and offered gifts on the steps of the pyre.



With Lao flags prominently displayed, thousands lined the route to observe the funeral procession of King Sisavang Vong.

him to abandon his notes and tape recordings. However, he knew that he could not come back empty-handed.

“As soon as I got back to Vientiane, I went to the USIS office (about 10–15 minutes by *sāhm-lór* [pedicab]), found a typewriter, and spewed out everything while it was still fresh in my mind. I wrote it up, polished it, sent it up the chain, and forgot about it.” Shortly before re-deploying, Lien got a call to report to Ambassador Winthrop G. Brown’s office. “I had no idea why, nor did Mr. Murray. When I got to the ambassador’s office, he welcomed me by shaking my hand, and said, ‘This report you prepared from your three days at that site is one of the best things I’ve read about this country. I just want to thank you and commend you for your work.’”³⁵ This praise was a ‘feather in the cap’ of the young psywarrior.

PFC William J. Dixon, one of Lien’s team members, also worked in Vientiane. “The team lived in the same house. We had our own offices in a compound that was about the size of a football field. At the center of the compound was a green Malaysian-style house, surrounded by another twelve-foot-high fence. That’s where CAS [a CIA euphemism] was located.”³⁶ In Vientiane, Dixon had three major tasks: (1) develop leaflets based on USIS directives; (2) conduct aerial leaflet drops; and (3) train the Laotian Army Propaganda and Intelligence (P&I) Company OIC, a captain.

Developing printed products occupied most of Dixon’s time. “Our focus was determined by the head of USIS, Daniel E. Moore. He or his secretary would visit every Monday or Tuesday. They’d say, ‘We need a leaflet or other product like this.’” Then he would meet with three Thai illustrators assigned to his section, each of whom arrived at 0800 hours every morning after crossing the Mekong River on a water taxi. “Fortunately, one of them spoke perfect English. I would give the one English-speaking illustrator a rough idea of what I wanted, and maybe provide a little sketch. I asked him to think about it. The two other fellows drew the actual leaflets. It would take them a day or so to produce a draft. I’d recommend minor changes while welcoming their input. It was a real team effort.”³⁷

U.S. Ambassador to Laos Winthrop G. Brown personally commended SP4 Neil E. Lien for his informative report on conditions in the Laotian countryside.



Leaflets promoted host nation legitimacy, anti-Communism, and public health and welfare messages. “The one we got the biggest kick out of was *Vietnamese Eat Dogs*,” Dixon recalled. “In Laos, dogs were revered. The Lao would never kill them. In fact, older dogs would simply die of natural causes, lay around in the street, and get bloated, because the Laotians would never put them down or handle their corpses. However, the North Vietnamese would kill dogs, which irritated the Laotians. So, USIS wanted to highlight the poor North Vietnamese treatment of dogs to turn the Laotian population against them.”³⁸ All leaflet guidance came from USIS.

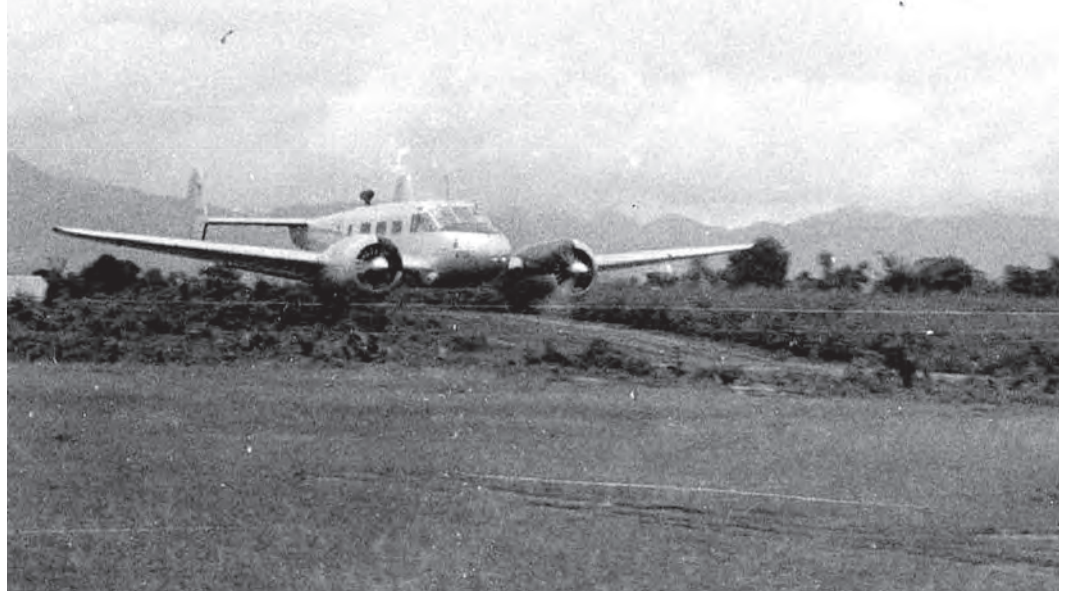
Once Mr. Moore approved the design, Dixon went to a local vendor to get the leaflets printed and cut to size before dissemination. USIS had no air assets, but the PEO

“I’d recommend minor changes while welcoming their input. It was a real team effort.”

— PFC William J. Dixon

did.³⁹ Dixon arranged aerial delivery with COL William H. Pietsch, Jr., the PEO intelligence chief. “Mr. Pietsch went out to collect intelligence two or three times a week, and we coordinated our missions with him. The aircraft were Air America C-45 *Expeditors*. We would drop the leaflets in pre-designated areas, often where CPT Kong Le was still active. Despite the low literacy rate in Laos, we hoped that at least some people would pick them up and read them. We were trying to get the Laotian people to stop supporting Kong Le’s efforts to overthrow the government.” Dixon and his team experimented with time fuses to get the widest and most accurate aerial leaflet delivery. “We worked it out so that the leaflet packs would burst at around 500 feet and cover a couple of villages.”⁴⁰

While the young psywarriors focused on leaflet delivery, occasionally Dixon and Lien served as ‘kickers’ of rice and equipment from U.S. Marine Corps HUS-1 *Seahorse* helicopters to help meet village needs. “That was not really why we were there, but we all just wanted to do what we could to help.”⁴¹ In addition to these re-supply missions, radio repairmen SSG Raymond Fitzberger, Jr. and SP5 Robert A. Crookham frequently visited Laotian Army and



Top Left

COL William H. Pietsch, Jr., an OSS Jedburgh during WWII, was the intelligence officer in the PEO. Leaflet drops were coordinated with Pietsch's weekly intelligence trips.

Top Right

The psywar team conducted its leaflet drops using Air America C-45 *Expeditor* aircraft that supported the PEO.

Left

Psywarriors supported village supply drops with U.S. Marine Corps HUS-1 *Seahorse* helicopters.

private radio stations to fix or do preventive maintenance on the transmitters. Psywar team members performed these missions as 'value added.'

Dixon's third task was briefing and training the Laotian Army Propaganda and Intelligence (P&I) Company OIC, a captain. Since the private had no formal psywar training himself, he based his lessons on developing USIS leaflets. "I met with him once a week. I'd get there around 1000 hours, leave at lunchtime, and return at around 1500 hours. I'd advise him about how his unit could conduct psywar more efficiently, based on what I'd learned from our leaflets."⁴² While Dixon got no indication that the Laotian Army conducted its own psywar, the arrangement built rapport with the host nation force and lent credibility to U.S. efforts. When MAAG Laos stood up in April 1961 and directed the wear of military uniforms, the psywar team successfully lobbied to continue wearing civilian clothes so as not to hurt their personal connections with their counterparts.⁴³

In June 1961, the first U.S. Army psywar team in Laos neared the end of its deployment. An eight-man replacement team from 1st Psywar Battalion (B&L) arrived on 15 June. It consisted of CPT Desmal G. Smith (OIC); 1LTs Cecil E. Bray, James Carney, Jr., Frank J. Coughlin, and Benjamin R. Lane; 2LT Janis Ikstrums; and SP4s Stephen G. Lorton and Charles F. Streichert.⁴⁴ "The first thing I noticed was that there were more officers this time, whereas we had been more balanced," recalled Dixon. "They overlapped with us for about two weeks, so we were really cramped in our quarters. We gave them some training before we left for the States."⁴⁵ The first psywar augmentation team returned before Independence Day 1961. They laid a solid foundation for the next two WHITE STAR psywar team rotations (June to December 1961 and December 1961 to September 1962).⁴⁶

This article has detailed the deployment of a twelve-man team from the 1st Psywar Battalion (B&L) to support Project HOTFOOT/Operation WHITE STAR in Laos in

early 1961. With little direction, these men, mostly young, militarily inexperienced, and of junior rank, made the best of an ambiguous situation in Laos by being creative and adaptable, and by relying on their own knowledge and experience. As SP4 Lien said, "We had to *ad lib* our way through the six months."⁴⁷ To prepare themselves, the team studied Laotian history, society, culture, and language before deployment, and later conducted 'site surveys' throughout Laos. They successfully coordinated efforts with the USIS, CIA, and State Department, and worked closely with host nation forces. And they developed local, regional, and national information programs to unite the Laotian people and promote popular support for the government. Their actions proved that U.S. Army Special Warfare was ideally suited for the mission.

In 1961-1962, the U.S. had reason for cautious optimism, since a fourteen-nation agreement in July 1962 reiterated Laotian sovereignty and neutrality, ending MAAG

Laos/WHITE STAR by October.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, this optimism would be short-lived. The Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV, 'North Vietnam') violated this agreement by continuing to aid the Pathet Lao insurgency and by using a sophisticated trail network in eastern Laos (the 'Ho Chi Minh Trail') to supply Communist insurgents in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN, 'South Vietnam').

In response, later in the 1960s, the U.S. conducted some of the most intensive bombing in history against the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Meanwhile, it deployed personnel to Laos to augment attaché staffs in Vientiane on a Temporary Duty (TDY) basis. In May 1966, the Joint Chiefs of Staff formalized this system by creating Project 404. The roughly 120 members of Project 404 were on permanent assignment, administratively controlled by JUSMAGTHAI and operationally controlled by the attachés in Vientiane. Interagency PSYOP continued in the late 1960s, including leaflets, radio broadcasts, and advising the Royal Lao

BG Andrew J. Boyle, Chief, MAAG Laos, presented this Certificate of Achievement to LTC Charles A. Murray at the end of the psywar team tour in Laos in mid-1961.



Army.⁴⁹ However, despite decades of American assistance, Laos (like the RVN) ‘fell’ to Communism in 1975.

The ultimate fate of Laos notwithstanding, in 1961, twelve U.S. Army psywar ‘specialists’ had made a positive impact on the U.S. counterinsurgency campaign in Laos. Although few in number, given little direction, and employed over a wide area with minimal resources, their hard work, ingenuity, and application of Special Warfare principles increased the overall effectiveness of the American interagency effort in Laos. Project HOTFOOT/Operation WHITE STAR offered U.S. Army Special Warfare soldiers an operational ‘dress rehearsal’ for the ‘main show’ in Vietnam later in the 1960s. 📌

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JARED M. TRACY, PhD

Jared M. Tracy served six years in the U.S. Army, and became a historian at USASOC in December 2010. He earned an MA in History from Virginia Commonwealth University and a PhD in History from Kansas State University. His research is focused on the history of U.S. Army Psychological Operations.

Endnotes

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- 3 Neil E. Lien, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 27 April 2017, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Lien interview.
- 4 William J. Dixon, interview with Jared M. Tracy, 17 April 2017, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Dixon interview.
- 5 Lien interview.
- 6 Dixon interview.
- 7 Raymond P. Ambrozak, recorded video narration, no date, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter Ambrozak narration.
- 8 Ambrozak narration.
- 9 Lien interview.
- 10 Lien interview.
- 11 Headquarters, Department of the Army, “SUBJECT: Orders (AGPA-O [4 Jan 61]),” 5 January 1961, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
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- 18 Phoumi PSYOP memo. **For more on Laotian government views on the ‘psychological factors’ of the conflict, see** USIA, “Inspection Report: USIS Laos,” 31 March 1960, 8-9, in Folder “Laos, April 19, 1960; February 6-17, 1956,” Record Group (RG) 306: Records of the U.S. Information Agency, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), hereafter “USIA Inspection Report” with page number.
- 19 Ambrozak narration.
- 20 “U.S. Aide Dies in Laos: F.P. Corrigan of USIS is Killed in Laos,” *New York Times*, 2 April 1961, 2. **Originally from Napa, California, 35-year-old Mr. Francis P. ‘Frank’ Corrigan. Corrigan had lived and worked in Hawaii and New York before joining the USIA in 1957. After his death, Frank’s wife, Flora, came up from their residence in Bangkok to attend three days of ceremonies and social events to honor him. This culminated at the royal palace in Luang Prabang where King Savang Vatthana conferred Laos’ highest award for service on Corrigan. A small-scale Buddhist ceremony, attended by U.S. SF personnel and others, was held at the airfield prior to sending his casketed remains to the States.**
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- 23 Ambrozak interview.
- 24 Ambrozak interview.
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- 34 Lien interview.
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- 39 “USIA Inspection Report,” 16.
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- 42 Dixon interview.
- 43 Dixon interview. **For more on the activation of MAAG Laos, see** NARA, “RG 334: Records of Interservice Agencies,” <https://www.archives.gov/research/guide-fed-records/groups/334.html#334.5.9>, accessed 12 July 2017; Kenneth Conboy, *The War in Laos, 1960-1975* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1989), 33-36.
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- 45 Dixon interview.
- 46 Sherman, *Who’s Who*, 19, 42.
- 47 Lien interview.
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- 49 COL (ret.) Joseph D. Celeski, “Project 404—The Assistant Attachés and the Secret War in Laos,” in Lewis Sorley, Tom Yarbrough, et al., *Indochina in the Year of the Cock—1969* (Houston, TX: Radix Press, 2017), 70-84.

Christmas Every Month on Smoke Bomb Hill



COL Charles H. Karlstad
& 3rd Army SSI.



COL Aaron Bank &
Airborne Command SSI

Colonel (COL) Charles H. Karlstad, a combat infantryman in WWI and WWII, was an ‘Old Army’ soldier who firmly believed that close order drill and ceremonies instilled pride and discipline in military formations. It was an integral part of the Infantry School curricula at Fort Benning, GA, where as the Chief of Staff he was selected by Brigadier General (BG) Robert A. McClure, the Army Chief of Psychological Warfare (Psywar), to be the first Commandant of the newly established Psywar Center at Fort Bragg, NC. Its [Special Forces (SF) and Psywar] units had different shoulder sleeve insignia (SSI)/patches. However, lacking distinctive unit insignia (DUI)/crests, COL Karlstad directed that colored scarves, a long time decorative accoutrement, be worn at the monthly reviews.¹

COL Aaron Bank, Chief, Special Forces (SF) Branch and Executive Officer at the Psywar Center; and the Commander, 10th SFG, chose burgundy scarves/ascots for his SF soldiers. Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Lester L. Holmes, commander, 6th Radio Broadcasting & Leaflet (RB&L) Group, and LTC John O. Weaver, Chief, Psywar Branch at the Psywar Center, selected green for their scarves/ascots. The Headquarters Detachment of the Psywar Center also wore green scarves. Unit fund-purchased scarves for enlisted soldiers became “company fund property” to be turned in when transferred, “or paid for at the cost price.”² It was the Psywar soldiers of the 6th RB&L Group who labeled COL Karlstad’s monthly reviews on Smoke Bomb Hill as the ‘Christmas Parades’ based on the colors of the scarves worn by the two elements—themselves and the SF soldiers.

“Once a month the 8th Mobile Radio Broadcast Company, 6th Radio Broadcast and Leaflet Group (RB&L) marched in the ‘Christmas Parades’ with the Special Forces. COL Karlstad, the Psywar Center Commandant, was the reviewing officer. In the parades we wore green ascots and bloused combat boots. The SF did not like that we bloused our boots for the ‘Christmas Parades.’ We wore Third Army shoulder patches, but had no unit crest. They wore WWII Airborne Command patches and hissed ‘Legs’ at us when marching by. The 6th RB&L soldiers, surrounded and outnumbered by the SF on Smoke Bomb Hill, avoided their unit areas and favorite service clubs,” recalled former Corporal (CPL) Hans R. Ulander, a Swedish immigrant Army radio broadcaster who received his citizenship at Fort Bragg, NC, in August 1952.³

“Those monthly ‘Red & Green Parades’ gave us something to do. We marched better than the Special Forces did and our basketball team, the ‘Psychos,’ always beat theirs. We won the Fort Bragg championship in 1953,” remembered former Private First Class (PFC) Martin J. ‘Marty’ Paul, a pressman in the 6th RB&L.⁴

The ‘Christmas Parades’ were one of the rare times when the Psywar and Special Forces soldiers did something together. A few years later, COL Edson D. Raff was relieved as the Psywar Center Commandant by Major General (MG) Paul D. Adams, the XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg commander, for permitting the 77th SFG to parade in green berets after being told that SF would not wear them on post.⁵ MG Adams had been the Executive Officer of the airborne First Special Service Force (FSSF) during WWII, the official lineage unit for Special Forces.⁶ Interestingly, SF and Psychological Operations (PSYOP) were both assigned a shade of green as their branch color by the Department of Defense Institute of Heraldry: Forest Green for SF and Bottle Green for PSYOP. ▲ CHB

Endnotes

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- 2 HQ, The Psychological Warfare Center, Ft Bragg, NC, Memorandum Number 15: WEARING of SCARVES dated 17 November 1952; 6th Radio Broadcast & Leaflet Group, *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 2, No. 2, Friday, 12 September 1952, Henry Bast, 8th Mobile Radio Broadcast Company, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 26 May 2009, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 3 Former CPL Hans R. Ulander, 8th Mobile Radio Broadcast Company, 6th Radio Broadcast and Leaflet Group, interview by Briscoe, 21 October 2009, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 4 Former PFC Martin J. Paul, 6th RB&L Group, interview by Briscoe, 23 November 2009, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
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- 6 U.S. Army. Field Manual (FM) 3-18: Special Forces Operations (28 May 2014), 1-7.

HEADQUARTERS
THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE CENTER
Fort Bragg, North Carolina

MEMORANDUM
NUMBER 15

17 November 1952

WEARING OF SCARVES

1. The wearing on ceremonial occasions, when prescribed by this headquarters or by unit commanders, of burgundy colored scarves by personnel of the 10th Special Forces Group (Abn), and the wearing of green scarves by the personnel of the 6th RB&L Group and its attached units, and of Headquarters Detachment The Psychological Warfare Center, is hereby authorized as an additional item of the uniform.

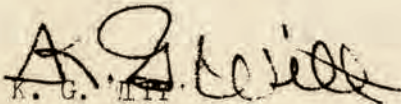
2. Unit commanders will authorize the purchase of scarves for enlisted personnel of their units from available unit funds. Scarves so purchased will become company fund property and, when issued, will be turned in by individuals at such time as they are transferred from the unit, or paid for at the cost price.

3. To insure uniformity of scarves within units, major unit commanders will direct the procurement of scarves of appropriate color for their units. It is suggested that the necessary sewing involved in the making of the scarves be done by hire, using a simple form of competitive bidding.

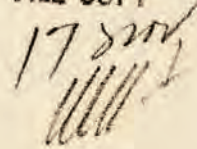
BY ORDER OF COLONEL KARLSTAD:

OFFICIAL:

R. W. BEYER
Lt Col, Arty
Adjutant


K. G. III
Capt, AGC
Asst Adjutant

DISTRIBUTION:
"A"

FILE COPY
17 Nov 52


Memorandum Number 15

The original letter from LTC R. W. Beyer, of the Psychological Warfare Center, outlines the wearing of scarves as directed by COL Charles H. Karlstad.



Commander, USASOC
ATTN: AOHS (Veritas)
E-2929 Desert Storm Drive
Fort Bragg, NC 28310

Future Veritas...

The next issue of Veritas will be another spectrum, with articles covering multiple Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) branches and topics. It will include an article on *Operacion JAQUE*, the successful hostage rescue mission in July 2008 conducted by the Colombian Armed Forces. This operation liberated fifteen hostages, including three Americans, held by the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Columbia (FARC)*, after years of jungle isolation and captivity. The article will clarify differing perspectives on the operation and provide ground truth on U.S. support. Persistent ARSOF presence in Colombia paid tactical dividends.

Another feature article will discuss recent Psychological Operations support to multiple Central African nations as part of Operation OBSERVANT COMPASS. For years these nations waged counter-insurgency campaigns against the terrorist group known as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), notorious for a variety of human rights abuses since the 1980s. Starting in 2011, ARSOF support to Central Africa increased, to include PSYOP elements. Operation OBSERVANT COMPASS successfully concluded in 2017, largely due to PSYOP-induced defections from the LRA.

In addition, an article will highlight a 'schoolhouse' company from the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (USAJFKSWCS), the Special Forces Underwater Operations Company at Key West, Florida. In addition to teaching several challenging courses, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group routinely provides *ad hoc* support to the U.S. Navy and Coast Guard, demonstrating a flexibility and adaptability inherent in ARSOF.

