Journal of Army Special Operations History
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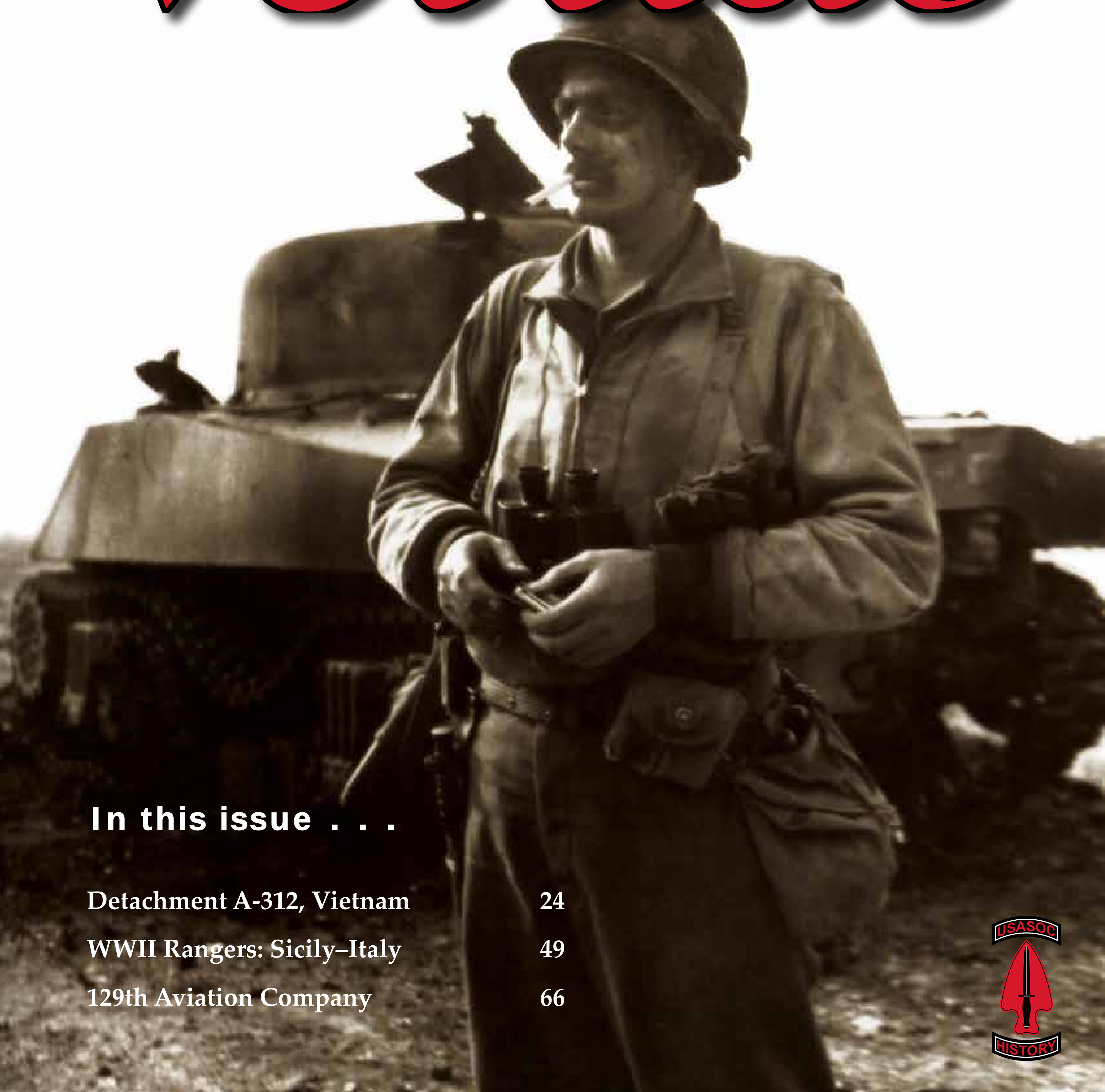
Veritas



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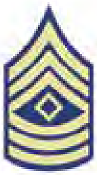
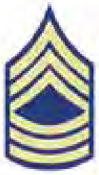
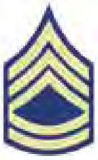
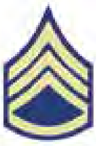
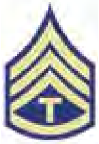
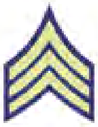
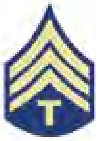
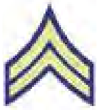
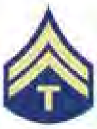
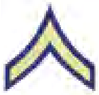
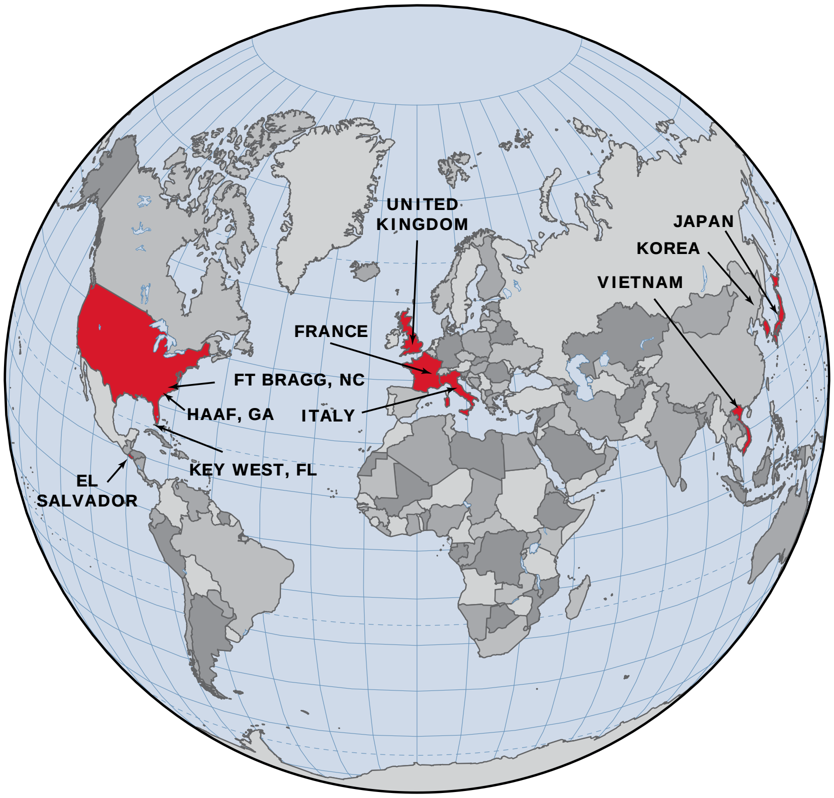
HISTORY

Errata

In the article "Herbert R. Brucker: SF Pioneer: Part II, Pre-WWII-OSS Training 1943," *Veritas* 2:3, Brucker is referred to as a "Technical Sergeant." This is incorrect. His real rank was "Technician Fourth Grade." During WWII, the enlisted ranking system was much different than today. As opposed to now, grades were ranked in reverse, with pay or rank Grade-1 being the first sergeant and Grade-7 being a private. In 1948, the system was reversed so that Grade-1 became the lowest rank. During WWII there was a system of "technician" grades. This allowed soldiers rank commensurate with their specialized skills, but without giving them NCO authorities and privileges. Brucker was a "Technician Fourth Grade," abbreviated as T/4, or Grade-4. He received the same pay as a Sergeant, but had none of the authority that rank would carry. There were three technician ranks: T/3, received Staff Sergeant's pay, T/4, received Sergeant's pay, and T/5, received Corporal's pay. To further confuse things, a T/5 was not addressed as a T/5, but rather, as "Corporal." One distinguished the technical ranks from the NCO ranks by observing the rank the soldier wore. In the case of a technician rank, the rank insignia would have a "T" below the stripes, as illustrated in the chart below.

Pay Grade	**Grade-1**		**Grade-2**	**Grade-3**		**Grade-4**		**Grade-5**		**Grade-6**	**Grade-7**
Insignia											*No Insignia*
Title	First Sergeant	Master Sergeant	Technical Sergeant	Staff Sergeant	Technician Third Grade	Sergeant	Technician Fourth Grade	Corporal	Technician Fifth Grade	Private First Class	Private
Abbrev.	1st Sgt.	M/Sgt.	T/Sgt.	S/Sgt.	T/3.	Sgt.	T/4.	Cpl.	T/5.	Pfc.	Pvt.



In This Issue:

In the past sixty years, ARSOF units and personnel have made history in diverse places throughout the world. Locations highlighted in this issue of Veritas are indicated on the map.

- *Italy*—In WWII, the Rangers fought in Sicily and Italy.
- *Japan and Korea*—The 1st RB&L conducted PSYWAR operations during the Korean War.
- *Vietnam*—Special Forces Team A-312 was based at Buong Brieng during the Vietnam War.
- *El Salvador*—El Paraiso was a focus of attacks by the FMLN.
- *United Kingdom*—Herbert Brucker of the OSS conducted training in the UK prior to jumping into France. The UK also served as the OSS supply point for the campaign in Europe.
- *Key West, Florida*—The ARSOF Underwater Operations School is in Key West.
- *HAAF, Georgia*—The 129th Aviation Company was reconstituted at Hunter Army Airfield.
- *Fort Bragg, North Carolina*—Fort Bragg is the home of the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade.

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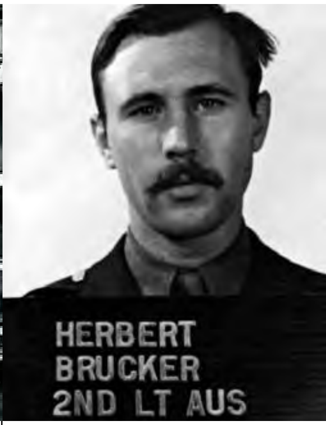

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COVER: Showing the stress of combat in Italy, PFC Edward J. Wall Jr., of the 4th Ranger Battalion, takes a smoke break on the Anzio beachhead before a raid.

The Azimuth of the USASOC History Office

Though *Veritas, ARSOF In Colombia,* appeared in February of this year, this is the first of the four issues slated for 2007. It is a spectrum edition with Army SOF history articles ranging from World War II through El Salvador in the 1980s to the Special Warfare School today. Our first of two Vietnam articles covers the Special Forces missions originally described in *National Geographic* by Howard Sochurek in 1964. While the third Major Herbert R. Brucker article will be the last personally edited by him, the amazing story of this Special Forces pioneer will continue to be shared. One of a trilogy of articles covers the early period of the El Salvador war (1980–1993) when U.S. Army SOF made the biggest contribution to that successful national COIN campaign. The 1st Ranger Battalion of North African fame became the basis for three Ranger battalions destined for combat in Sicily and Anzio, Italy.

The timely distribution of Veritas has proved to be a challenge. The magazine is mailed directly from our Maryland printer using the U.S. Postal Service. We strive to publish an issue every four months. If you feel you are not receiving *Veritas* in a timely fashion, please drop us a note. That is the only way we can pinpoint a problem. Thanks for reaffirming our azimuth and for the kind words on the quality of our historical efforts. Constructive comments, suggestions, and requests for specific articles are appreciated.

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Key West:

Home of ARSOF Underwater Operations

by Kenneth Finlayson

OSS Seal

Dive Badge

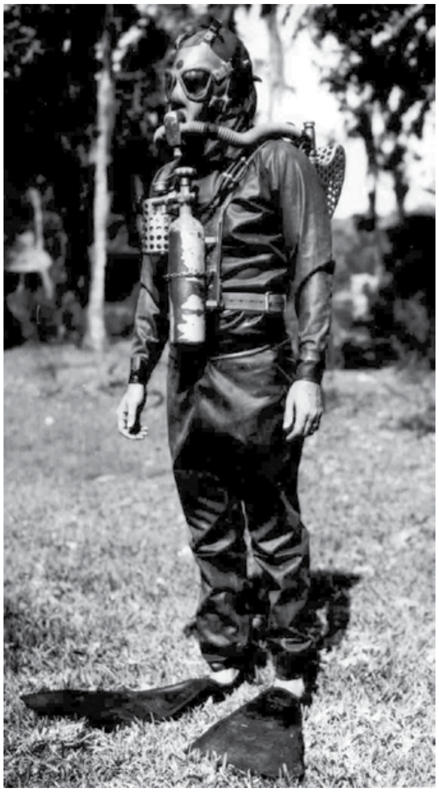
ARMY Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) employs a variety of methods to insert troops in their area of operations. Infiltration by air, land, and sea are all viable options evaluated by ARSOF units during mission planning.[1] The proponency for waterborne operations training, either surface or sub-surface, has been assigned to Special Forces since 1952. This article will trace the origins of Army underwater operations from World War II to the establishment of the Special Forces Underwater Warfare Operations (SFUWO) school at Key West, Florida. Special Forces underwater operations have undergone a number of course changes and facilities upgrades since the school was established at Key West in 1965.

Dr. Christian Lambertsen (left) and U.S. Coast Guard Lieutenant John P. Booth conducted the dive training for the Maritime Unit in Nassau, the Bahamas.

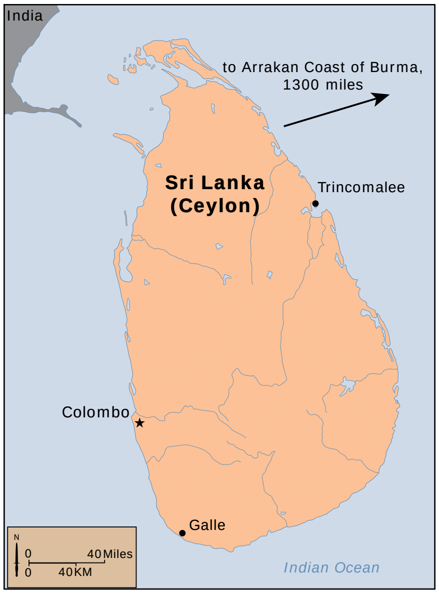
The origins of ARSOF maritime operations can be traced to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II. The OSS had a Maritime Operations Branch and Maritime Unit (MU) that became operational on 20 January 1943. The Maritime Unit trained for surface and sub-surface swimming operations using first-generation underwater breathing equipment. In 1940, Dr. Christian J. Lambertsen had invented a closed-circuit (recycled air system) underwater breathing device. It was known as the Lambertsen Respiratory Unit (LARU) and became the standard apparatus for underwater swimmers in the MU.[2] Lambertsen transferred to the OSS in 1943 from the Army Medical Corps. After training newly recruited MU swimmers on his apparatus on Catalina Island, California, and in Nassau, Grand Bahamas, Lambertsen was sent to Ceylon (Sri Lanka) on 7 January 1945. He joined the MU at the base at Galle, Ceylon, where the MU had been headquartered since arriving in the theater in June 1944.[3]

The Maritime Unit was in the China-Burma-India Theater (CBI) because Brigadier General William O. Donovan, the director of the OSS, promised Lord Louis Mountbatten, the theater commander, that he would furnish forces to assist in intelligence gathering. The under-manned and under-supplied CBI was an "economy of force" theater in World War II.[4] Based on Ceylon, the MU was initially locat-

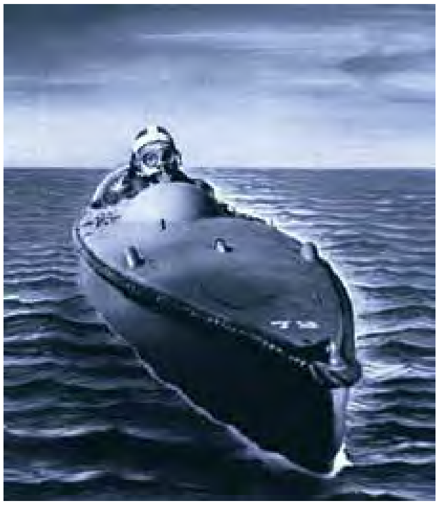
SCUBA: Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus is the term commonly applied to underwater diving equipment other than those of the "hard-hat" variety. Where necessary, the different types of systems will be explained.



The Lambertsen Rebreathing Unit was the closed-circuit underwater breathing system used by the Maritime Unit.



The Maritime Unit was based in Galle before moving across the Bay of Bengal to the Mergui Archipelago in December 1944.



The Sleeping Beauty was an underwater submersible of British design.

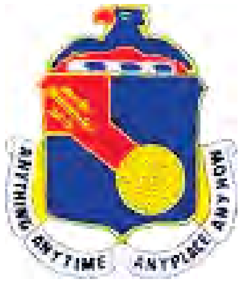
ed at the British Naval facility in Trincomalee before relocating to Galle on the southwestern end of the island. Galle remained the primary MU base until the unit moved across the Bay of Bengal to the Mergui Archipelago in December 1944.[5] This new base significantly reduced the 2,600-mile round-trip from Galle to their primary area of operations on the Arakan Peninsula of Burma.

Stationed at the OSS Maritime Unit Base in Galle, Dr. Lambertsen continued to train the MU swimmers with his rebreathing apparatus and in the use of the British submersible, the Sleeping Beauty. "Dual-hatted" as the unit medical officer, he divided his time between training the MU swimmers, maintaining the delicate submersibles, and attending to the medical needs of the men. At the end of the war, Lambertsen transferred back to the Army Medical Corps where he remained until his discharge in 1946.[6]

The MU focused its efforts against the Arakan coast of Japanese-occupied Burma, gathering intelligence and inserting agents along the mangrove-dominated coast. Between 1 January 1944 and 23 May 1945, thirty-six missions were conducted—the majority against the Japanese in Burma, but some covered Thailand, Sumatra, and the Andaman Islands.[7] The MU was eventually incorporated into the "OSS 101 Arakan Field Unit" on 15 February 1945, where they continued to conduct maritime operations until disbanded on 15 June 1945. Dr. Christian Lambertsen and the underwater swimmers of the Maritime Unit in the CBI pioneered the techniques and equipment that formed the basis for the future of Special Forces underwater operations.

The end of the war prompted President Harry S. Truman to dissolve the OSS by executive order in 1945. But military interest in underwater operations continued. Between 1947 and 1949, Dr. Lambertsen worked with Army Field Forces Board #2 improving his LARU and gaining approval for adoption for standard use by Army divers.[8] Until the 1950s, the Corps of Engineers was the only Army element interested in diving. The Corps employed "hard-hat" divers for underwater salvage work and repair of lock and dam facilities. The creation of Special Forces in 1952 expanded the Army's interest in maritime operations. By the mid-1950s, Special Forces soldiers were training for missions that required the underwater diving equipment of the time, technology that was readily available and rapidly evolving.

In the post-war years, underwater diving had moved from a strictly military application to one of recreation. In the pre-war years, Frenchman Jacques Cousteau and Austrian Hans Hass had each invented "open-circuit" diving systems that used bottled oxygen and discharged the used air into the water. Cousteau's "Aqua-lung" was marketed commercially after the war and became the standard for recreational divers. In an academic paper on physiology related to diving, Dr. Lambertsen coined the term SCUBA (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus) that became the popular term for all types of underwater breathing systems. The first Special Forces divers were part of the SCUBA boom. In an early example, men of the 77th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, formed a "Para-Divers" Club in 1955 with membership open to those individuals who were trained parachutists and SCUBA divers. The club officers, Master Sergeant Carl J. Brewster, President; Master Sergeant Walter Boyling, Vice-President; Sergeant First Class Everett White, secretary; and Sergeant First Class George H. Campbell, treasurer, received certification from the National Frogmen Club of Glendale, California, at that time the official sanctioning body for recreational diving in the United States.[9] At this time, the



77th SFG Distinctive Unit Insignia

Members of the 77th Special Forces Group. SCUBA-qualified members in the Group formed a "Para-Divers" Club in 1955.

Men of Detachment-Berlin assist local officials with an underwater body search and recovery in Bavaria, 1961.

NAVSCOL
UNDERWATER
1 Runyon
4 Walker
5 Jones

Graduating class of the Navy's Underwater Swimmers School, June 1958. Sergeant Robert F. Mulcahy is in the second row, 5th from the right.

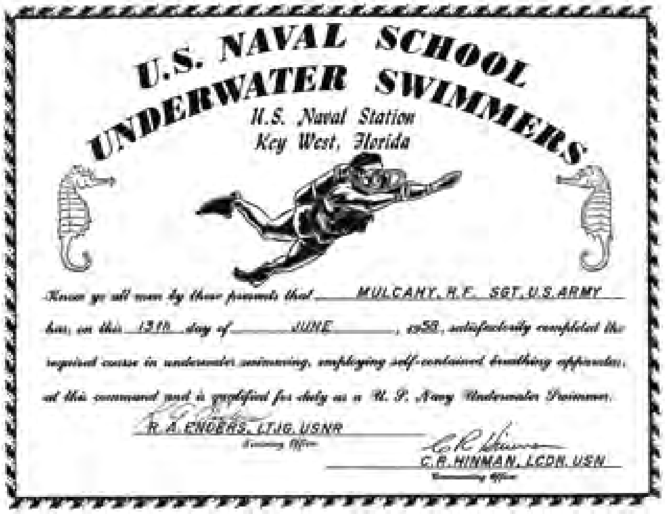
other Special Forces Groups were training and conducting underwater operations.

The 1st Special Forces Group (SFG) on Okinawa and Detachment A in Berlin, as well as the 8th SFG in Panama all conducted training and operations to become proficient in SCUBA operations because it was an infiltration technique.[10] The early Special Forces SCUBA divers were trained by the Navy at their underwater swimmers school at Key West, Florida. Sergeant Robert F. Mulcahy was one of ten members of 77th SFG who completed the Navy's Underwater Swimmers School at Key West in June 1958.[11] The next year, Mulcahy and nine SCUBA divers from the 77th SFG received advanced underwater training at Norfolk, Virginia, with the Navy.[12] The growing interest in Special Forces underwater operations led to the establishment of a course of instruction through the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center in 1961.

Brigadier General William P. Yarborough, commander of the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, saw the need to standardize the underwater training in the SF Group. "At that time, SF Scuba was a hodge-podge of programs. We had the same problem with HALO (high-altitude low-opening parachuting) and we needed to develop training programs. In 1961, the Special Warfare Center established a cross-training program with the Navy Underwater Demolition Teams."[13] It soon became clear that the Army Special Warfare Center needed a facility for its own underwater operations course.

In 1964, Captain Ola L. Mize was assigned to the Advanced Training Committee at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center (formerly the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center). Mize, recipient of the Medal of Honor in the Korean War, was initially the committee chief. The Advanced Training Committee was responsible for HALO (now called military free-fall) training, the Fulton Recovery System (Skyhook), and the Jumpmaster courses for HALO and static-line parachuting. At BG Yarborough's direction, Mize was also put in charge of a program of instruction for underwater operations.

"I took over the Scuba School, and the biggest assets were [SFC Johnny] Dolin the medic and 'Ski' Sichowski who was a UDT [Navy Underwater Demolition Team veteran] from World War II. We tried our best to find someplace here in North



U.S. NAVAL SCHOOL
UNDERWATER SWIMMERS
U.S. Naval Station
Key West, Florida

Know ye all men by these presents that MULCAHY, R.F. SGT. U.S. ARMY
has, on this 13th day of JUNE, 1958, satisfactorily completed the required course in underwater swimming, employing self-contained breathing apparatus, at this command and is qualified for duty as a U. S. Navy Underwater Swimmer.

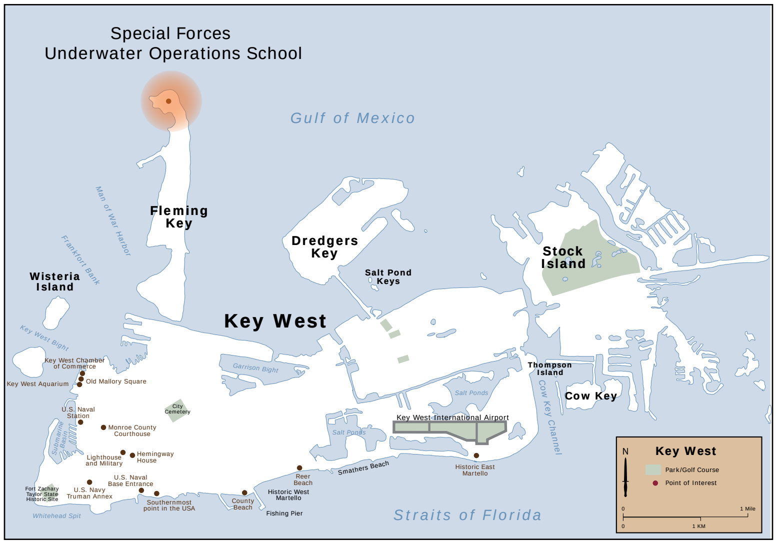
R. A. ENGERS, LTJG, USNR
Training Officer

C.R. Hinman
C.R. HINMAN, LCDR, USN
Commanding Officer

Certificate awarded to Sergeant Robert F. Mulcahy upon completion of the Navy's Underwater Swimmers School at Key West in 1958.

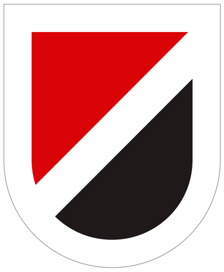
As the commander of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare School, Brigadier General William P. Yarborough was instrumental in the establishment of the Special Forces Underwater Operations school.

Medal of Honor recipient Colonel Ola L. Mize established the underwater operations school at Key West while serving on the Advanced Training Committee at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare School.


Special Forces
Underwater Operations School
Gulf of Mexico
Man of War Harbor
Frankfort Bank
Fleming Key
Wisteria Island
Dredgers Key
Salt Pond Keys
Stock Island
Key West
Key West Bight
Key West Chamber of Commerce
Key West Aquarium
Old Mallory Square
Garrison Bight
Salt Ponds
Thompson Island
Cow Key
Cow Key Channel
U.S. Naval Station
City Cemetery
Monroe County Courthouse
Submarine Basin
Key West International Airport
Salt Ponds
Lighthouse and Military
Hemingway House
Smathers Beach
Reer Beach
Historic East Martello
U.S. Naval Base Entrance
Fort Zachary Taylor State Historic Site
U.S. Navy Truman Annex
Southernmost point in the USA
County Beach
Historic West Martello
Fishing Pier
Whitehead Spit
Straits of Florida
Key West
N
Park/Golf Course
Point of Interest
0
1 Mile
0
1 KM

Map of Key West showing Fleming Key. The school is located at the extreme northern tip of Fleming Key.

Carolina for the school. We tried talking with the Navy about going up to Little Creek, Virginia, but they were very much against it."[14] The Navy position was to retain proponency for all military dive training. Captain Mize and his staff put together a two-week training program that was first conducted at Camp Blanding, Florida, for members of the 20th Special Forces group.[15] "We found out about Key West and I sent [Sergeant Walter L.] Shumate and [Sergeant First Class Johnny F.] Dolin down there. They came back and told me what a fine place Key West would be, so that's where we established the school. We didn't have to go through a big rigmarole of studies and approvals of general officers all the way up the line. I made the decision for the school to be down there and everybody backed me one hundred percent," Mize recalled.[16] The school was established in Key West in July 1965.



6th SFG beret flash

The best location was at the extreme end of Fleming Key, next to A Battery, 6th Missile Battalion, 65th Artillery Regiment, whose Hawk anti-aircraft missiles were oriented toward Cuba. Initially, they used temporary facilities, but after agreements were made with the Naval Air Station, Key West, some permanent buildings were constructed in the late 1960s. At that time, the curriculum concentrated on open- and closed-circuit diving.

Sergeant Earl J. Moniz was assigned to the 6th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg when he attended the school in 1969. "We stayed in Quonset huts; there were two or three on the site. The course was six weeks in length, with four weeks of open-circuit (SCUBA) and two weeks on closed-circuit equipment, (the Emerson rebreather unit). We used the pool at the Navy Officer's Club. There was no surface work with kayaks at all, nor any lock-out (submarine exit) training. We parachuted in [a water jump] to start the course and I remember I graduated on my 21st birthday."[17]

The course was soon expanded to seven weeks to include training on submarine lock-out techniques using an older model diesel submarine.[18] (A submarine lock-out involves entering an airlock from inside the submarine which is then flooded and the divers exit a hatch to the outside). Captain Thomas Purvis commanded the school in 1972, and he recalled some of the cost-saving measures undertaken to keep the school operating. "Master Sergeant William G. 'Pappy' Loggins, the Senior

Sergeant Walter L. Shumate (third from right, front row) was one of the Special Forces soldiers detailed by Captain Ola Mize to determine the best location for the Underwater Operations School.

The Hawk missiles of A Battery, 6th Missile Battalion, 65th Artillery occupied Fleming Key when the Special Forces team came looking for a site for the school.

JOHN F. KENNEDY
U.S. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES
SPECIALIZED TRAINING
INSTITUTE FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE

Cinder block buildings were the order of the day when the school was first established in Key West. The School initially used GP Medium tents for housing.

Apollo XIII Commander James Lovell visited the school in 1972 as part of an Army recruiting event. From left to right: Sergeant Eric Erickson, Instructor SFUWO; Mr. Glen Swengros, Advisor, The President's Council on Physical Fitness; Captain Tom Purvis, Commander SFUWO; and Captain James Lovell, U.S. Navy.

NCO [non-commissioned officer] came up with the idea of jumping the students into Key West to start the course and when they left, to jump them back into [Fort] Bragg. This saved all transportation costs, gave the students an initial water jump on arrival and gave everyone in Key West quite a show as we normally jumped the students in quite high."[19]

In addition to using an airborne operation to start and end the course, Purvis sent instructors to the Evinrude Outboard Motor Company in Milwaukee for training on outboard motors and to the U.S. Divers School in California to learn to maintain the regulators on the dive equipment, thereby saving on maintenance costs. The school acquired the entire stock of the Emerson rebreather units from the Navy when their UDT dive school at Key West was closed.[20] Up until 1970, the instructors at the school were on Temporary Duty (TDY) status. In 1972, the cadre was permanently assigned to Key West which provided stability for the instructors.[21] In addition to paring costs, the cadre worked to increase the visibility of the school by actively participating in local community events.

In one instance, the commander of the Apollo Flight XIII, Navy Captain James Lovell, visited Key West as part of an Army Recruiting effort in conjunction with the President's council on Physical Fitness. Lovell received a full tour of the facility and training with a commensurate amount of media publicity, enhancing the image of the school.[22]

In June 1989, the unit became C Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group in the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School. The school had evolved into a joint operation with Navy SEALs, Air Force Para-Rescue Jumpers (PJ's), and Army Rangers undergoing training with the Special Forces soldiers and providing instructor support for classes that averaged thirty students per rotation.[23] In October 1989, a Water Infiltration Course (WIC) was begun at Key West specifically to train Special Forces soldiers in surface swimmer, rubber boat, and kayak operations. The five-week course was divided into three phases that covered those aspects of waterborne infiltration not requiring sub-surface diving.[24] The course is not currently offered in the school program of instruction, but elements of waterborne infiltration are incorporated into the Combat Divers Qualification Course (CDQC).

On 16 October 1992, the Corps of Engineers broke ground for a new training facility. Twenty-one months later, on 28 July 1995, the $9.7 million facility was dedicated. The new facility consists of a 12,000 square foot headquarters and classroom building, a 30,000 square foot barracks for students and cadre, a new 3,500 square foot dining facility, and a 1,500 square foot medical aid station. Unique to the complex is the fifty-foot high dive tower used to execute lock-out training and free-ascent diving techniques and two hyperbaric chambers for dive emergency training and to provide medical services for

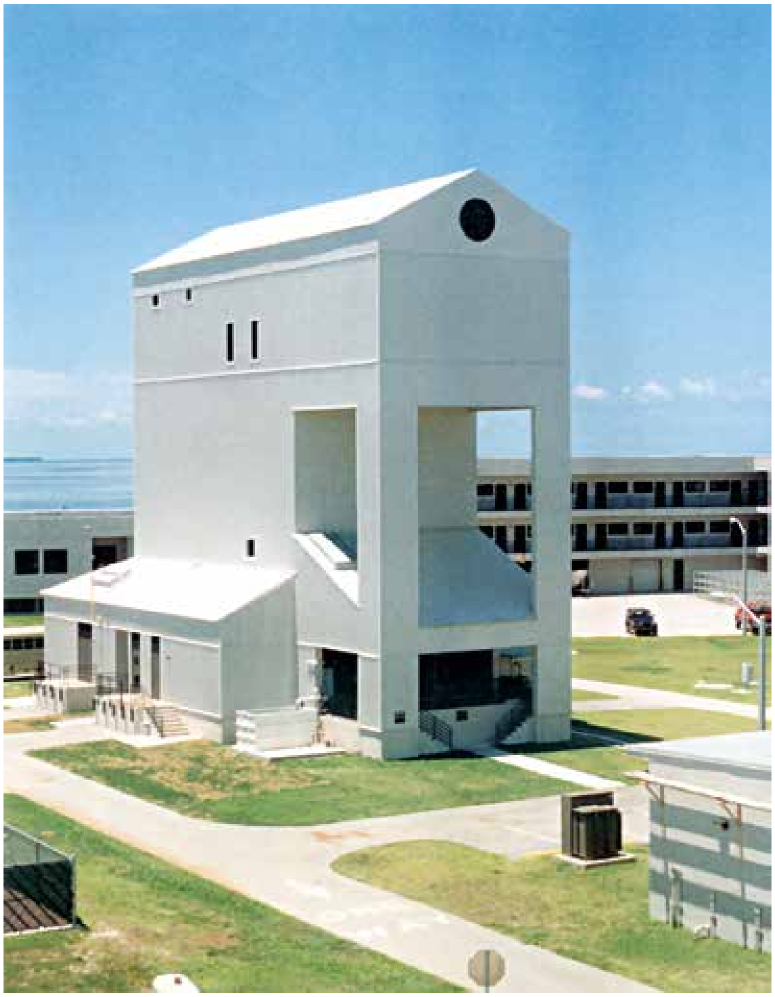
Troop barracks replaced Quonset huts for the soldiers at the school in the 1970s. These troop barracks were in use until 1995. Master Sergeant Sam Foster painted the Group flashes on the buildings in 1988.

The Water Infiltration Course included training on the Klepper folding kayak. The use of kayaks goes back to the OSS Maritime Unit of World War II.

Members of the family of Sergeant Major Walter L. Shumate assist in the unveiling of the new dive tower named in his honor.

all dive emergencies that occur south of Miami. Also included in the new facility is a stand-alone compressor-generator building for providing compressed air for dive systems, a 4,500 square foot boat storage and maintenance facility, and a parachute drying tower.[25] The facility is self-contained with a pool (the first improvement built in 1986), a boat launching site, and all the maintenance facilities needed to keep boats and dive equipment in top operating condition. The soldiers are not neglected as the dining facility is a past recipient of the Army's Connolly Award for the best small unit mess. In recognition of his role in the establishment of the school, at the opening of the new facility, the dive tower was named in honor of Sergeant Major Walter L. Shumate.[26]

Over the years, the course has grown to accommodate all aspects of underwater operations. Presently the school offers three residency courses, a preparatory training course, and two distance learning courses. The heart of the curriculum is the Combat Diver Qualification Course lasting thirty-nine days. This is the basic combat diver's course and focuses on open-circuit and closed-circuit systems and subsurface infiltration techniques. Recently, a pre-CDQC course has been inaugurated at the school to reduce the impact on the Special Forces groups preparing their candidates for CDQC.[27] The three-week Combat Diving Supervisor Course (CDSC) prepares CDQC graduates for planning and executing combat diving operations. Special Forces medics assigned to SF dive teams are trained at the three-week Special Forces Diving Medical Technician Course (DMTC) to handle the specific medical problems asso-



The new fifty-foot dive tower allows for the simulation of locking out of a submarine and for training in the free ascent from deep water.

Deck training during the Combat Diver Qualification Course. Rigorous physical training is an essential element of the course.

Swimmer completes the free ascent exercise in the fifty-foot tower. This event is essential for learning to return to the surface from deep water.

ciated with dive operations. Further medical training is provided through distance learning programs in decompression and diving physics.

With its roots stretching back to the OSS Maritime Unit of World War II, Special Forces underwater operations have been a key component in the arsenal of the Special Forces Groups. Constantly at the forefront of technology and techniques, the Special Forces Underwater Operations School at Key West is one of the premier training facilities in the world.

The author would like to thank Mr. Tom Purvis, Major Pat Lesley, and Master Sergeant Jeffrey Burns for their assistance with this article.

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

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Resurrected Again:

95th Civil Affairs Brigade (Airborne)

by Robert W. Jones Jr.

On 16 March 2006, Lieutenant General Robert W. Wagner, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command commanding general, signed the activation document authorizing the formation of the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade as a provisional unit.[1] The unit moved from provisional to active status on 16 March 2007. The need for an active duty Civil Affairs brigade had not been discussed since 1991 following Operation DESERT STORM, but was finally approved because of the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review.[2] After one year as a provisional unit, the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (Airborne) will become the only active component Civil Affairs brigade within the Department of Defense. Its mission is to provide operational and tactical Civil Affairs support to special operations forces and contingency forces. Over the next several years, the brigade will expand from one operational battalion, the 96th, to four. The new battalions will be the 91st, 97th, and 98th Civil Affairs Battalions, all stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.[3] On 17 August 2006, Colonel Ferdinand Irizarry II officially assumed command of the brigade in a ceremony at Meadows Field, Fort Bragg.[4]

The history of 95th Civil Affairs Brigade is one of a series of activations and deactivations since it was formed as the 95th Military Government Group on 25 August 1945 at the Presidio of Monterey, California. The headquarters deployed to Japan for occupation duty and to Korea for combat.[5] After 1952, the headquarters did not deploy. However, its two subordinate units, the 41st and 42nd Military Government Companies, deployed on various missions supporting units based in the United States, including the XVIII Airborne Corps. The 95th Civil Affairs Group's subordinate 41st Civil Affairs Company supported Operation MERCY (Hungarian refugee resettlement), Operation POWER PACK (the Dominican Republic), and was later detached to serve in Vietnam.[6] The 95th Civil Affairs Group headquarters supported the Civil Affairs School at Fort Gordon, Georgia, and the Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg.

The article may seem sketchy to many readers—this is intentional. Part of this article's intent is to solicit history from veterans of the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade and its subordinate units, whether they served the country in peace or in war. A secondary intent is to remind soldiers of the importance of preserving their unit's history for the future.

Photo by Karla Marshall

Colonel Hector Pagan, USASOC Deputy Commander, Colonel Ferdinand Irizarry, 95th Civil Affairs Brigade Commander, and Command Sergeant Major Timothy Strong, 95th Civil Affairs Brigade Command Sergeant Major, prepare to unveil the new 95th Civil Affairs Brigade Colors at Fort Bragg on 16 March 2007 during a rainstorm.

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4 Maurer, "Newly Formed 95th Civil Affairs Brigade activates," sec. B, 1.

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STATEMENT OF SERVICE
HEADQUARTERS AND HEADQUARTERS COMPANY
95TH CIVIL AFFAIRS BRIGADE

Constituted 25 August 1945 in the Army of the United States as the 95th Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, Military Government Group and activated at the Presidio of Monterey, California.

Inactivated 30 June 1946 at Kurume, Japan.

Redesignated 7 September 1948 as the 95th Military Government Group.

Activated 29 October 1948 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Inactivated 28 October 1951 at Pusan, Korea.

Allotted 9 December 1954 to the Regular Army.

Activated 9 February 1955 at Camp Gordon, Georgia.

Reorganized and redesignated 25 June 1959 as the 95th Civil Affairs Group.

Relocated to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, 8 July 1971.

Assigned to the US Army Special Warfare School.

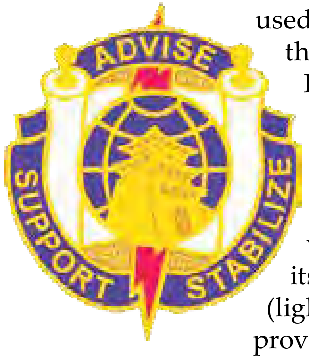
Inactivated 21 December 1974 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Redesignated 14 March 2006 as Headquarters and Headquarters Company (Provisional), 95th Civil Affairs Brigade.

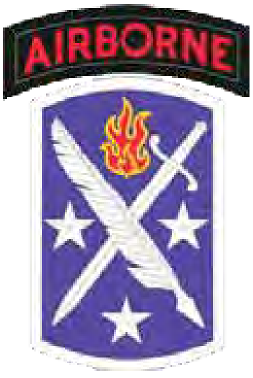
Activated 16 March 2007 at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Campaign Credit Participation
  Korean War
  First UN Counteroffensive
  CCF Spring Offensive
  UN Summer-Fall Offensive

THE Distinctive Unit Insignia (DUI) for the 95th Civil Affairs Group was originally approved on 27 March 1969. The DUI was redesignated for the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade on 26 July 2006. The symbolism for the DUI is in keeping with the history of Civil Affairs. Purple and white are the colors used to signify Civil Affairs. The Brigade's three campaign awards for service in Korea are commemorated by the gold Korean Gate. The white scroll alludes to civil and military laws and the safeguarding of records. The globe refers to the unit's capability to fulfill worldwide responsibilities in accomplishing its mission. Together with the red flash (lightning bolt), which denotes keenness in providing guidance and swift courageous action, the DUI signifies the Brigade's successful performance of Civil Affairs functions in support of combat and post-combat phases of military operations.



THE Shoulder Sleeve Insignia (SSI) for the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade was approved on 15 August 2006 by the Department of the Army. The SSI is a purple rectangle arched at the top and bottom with a white border between three white stars and scarlet flames edged yellow-in-chief; a crossed white quill and sword points down. Above the insignia is the black "AIRBORNE" tab inscribed in scarlet. The symbolism of the patch is interesting. Purple and white are the traditional colors associated with Civil Affair units. The quill and sword with points down represent the transition from war and conflict to the post-combat phase of military operations. The flame, adapted from the torch of the Civil Affairs branch insignia, symbolizes guidance and enlightenment, yet also underscores the flames of war, the change to peace, and then the defense and enforcement of the peace. The three stars commemorate the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade's campaign awards for service in Korea.



El Paraiso and the War in El Salvador

Part I (1981–1983)

by Charles H. Briscoe

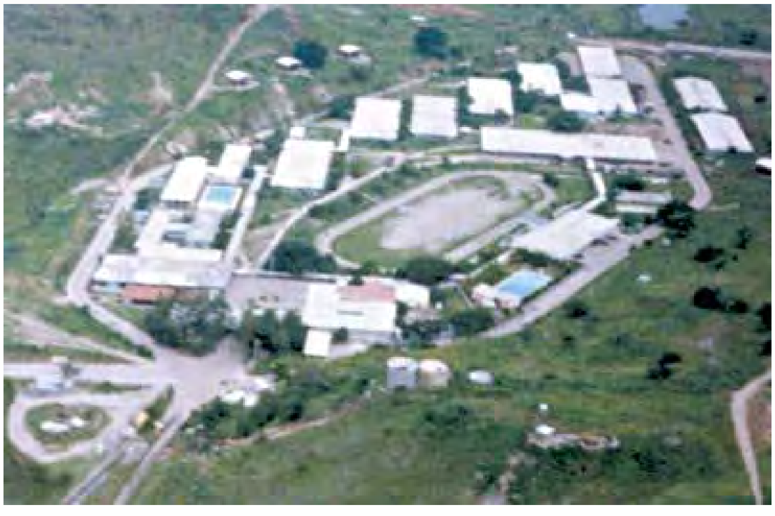
From 1980–1993, the government of El Salvador, with U.S. assistance, waged a national counterinsurgency (COIN) campaign against guerrilla forces of the FMLN (*Frente Farabundo Marti de Liberación Nacional*). That COIN campaign was one of the few successful efforts in recent history. U.S. Army SOF, performing FID (Foreign Internal Defense) missions in support of the U.S. Military Group (USMILGP) El Salvador, played a significant role. However, it was the Salvadoran national strategy, not the military strategy, that brought an end to the insurgency. Nobody "won" the war. The losers were the victims of the fighting. The thirteen-year insurgent war was ended by negotiation. Concessions were made by both sides to end the fighting, to bring peace to the country, and to do so without reprisals to either side.

The purpose of this article is to show what it took to begin transforming a small, poorly trained conventional military and security force into an effective armed force capable of waging a successful COIN war. The transformation did not happen in one, two, or three years as some have hoped could be done in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Salvadoran military had to be tripled in size, trained, and equipped to fight ever-growing guerrilla forces that were supplied by Cuba and Nicaragua. And, the FMLN kept changing its strategy and tactics.

In the midst of this evolving war, the 4th Brigade *base* (fortified camp) at El Paraiso in the Department of Chalatenango was attacked in 1981 and 1983.[1] The progress that was being made in other areas had little impact on Salvadoran static defense strategy. But, when assessed in conjunction with the total Salvadoran military "ramp-up" to fight a COIN war, the "acceptability" of the attacks on El Paraiso will help ARSOF soldiers understand and appreciate the dynamics associated with evolving military campaigns that are being prosecuted in Afghanistan, Iraq, Colombia, and the Philippines, with or without national strategies.

In 1980, El Salvador, one of the most densely populated (nearly six million people) and smallest countries in the world (the size of Massachusetts), had 10,000 armed forces to protect national interests and 7,000 paramilitary police and internal security forces to maintain law and order. The army (about 9,000 on paper) was organized into four infantry brigades, an artillery battalion, and a light armored battalion.[2] All units and headquarters were small by American standards. The politically-aligned Salvadoran officer corps had been split when conservative senior officers engineered a presidential coup in October 1979. However, this did not alter their conventional war mindset that posed Honduras as an external threat and discounted the growing internal insurgency. Fortunately, the Salvadoran insurgent groups operated independently from 1970–1979.[3] Their lack of unity prevented effective action.

On 10 October 1980, the FMLN front was formed at the behest of the Cubans. Its Central Command, with representatives from the five major organizations, was a coordinating body. The front, composed of some 10,000 guerrillas in late 1980, was not an organic, unified force. It was a confederation of insurgent organizations, each having its own dogma, fighting element, and controlling separate areas (see sidebar).



Panorama of 4th Brigade base *at El Paraiso in 1988.*

Major FLMN Organizations

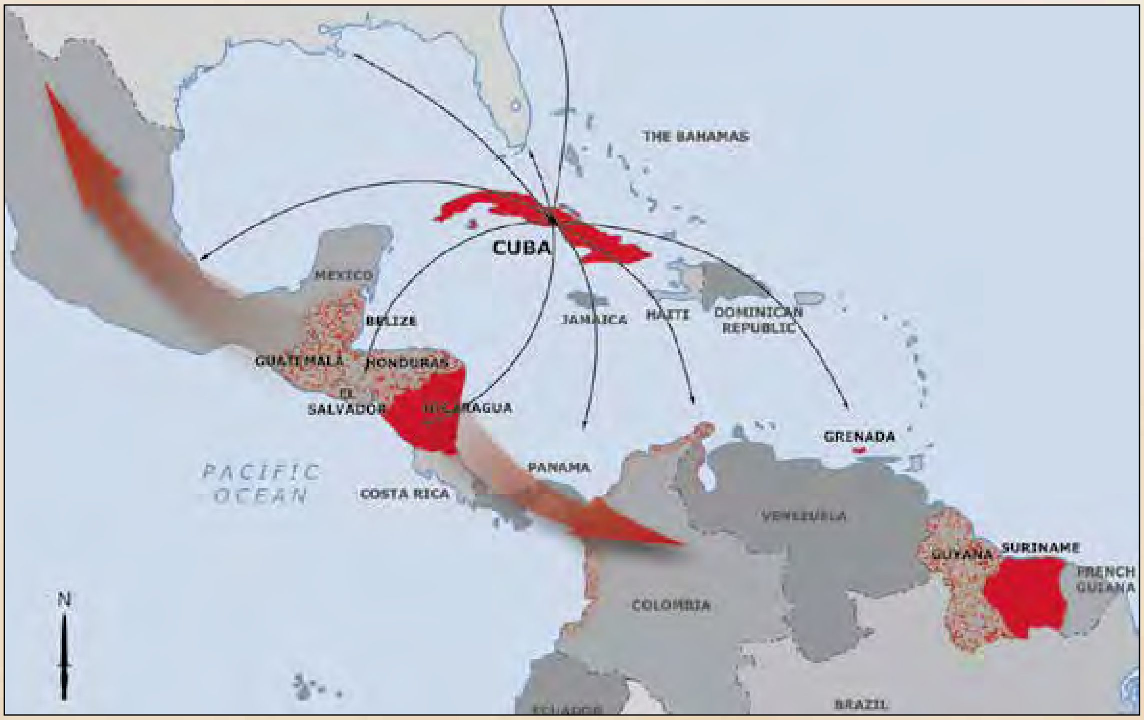
The *Partido Comunista de El Salvador* (PCES) was led by Jorgé Shafik Handal, the link for Eastern bloc military aid. Historically, the PCES was oriented toward Moscow. It did not advocate violence to overthrow the government until 1980. Its paramilitary wing, the *Fuerzas Armada de Liberación* (FAL), were primarily located in Morazán and San Vicente departments.[1]

The *Frente Acción Popular Unida* (FAPU) was a militant front for peasant, labor, and teachers' groups with numbers as high as 15,000. Its pro-Cuban Marxist terrorist wing was the *Fuerzas Armada de Resistencia Nacional* (FARN). Many of its members had splintered off from the *Ejército Revolucionario Popular*. During the 1970s, they garnered operating funds ($60 million) by robbing banks and kidnapping, according to Fermán Cienfuegos. Its *Batallón Carlos Arias* was primarily based in the Guazapa volcano area of Cuscatlán with smaller elements in Morazán and La Unión.[2]

The *Ejército Revolucionario Popular* (ERP) was formed by Castroite, Maoist, and Trotskyite dissidents that broke from the PCES in 1972. Led by Joaquin Villalobos, the ERP emphasized urban terrorism and armed violence. The *Liga Popular de 28 de Febrero* (LP-28) was its front organization. The ERP had about 3,000 members, mostly students and intellectuals. It was the most organized of the insurgent groups. The most effective fighting element in the FMLN, the BRAZ (*Brigada Rafael Arce Zablah*) was strongest in northern Morazán.[3]

The *Fuerzas Populares de Liberación* (FPL) was founded in 1974 by dissident elements of the Communist Party. They advocated violence to achieve revolutionary ends. It was led by Salvador Cayetano Carpio until April 1983. Advocating a Cuban-style armed revolution, it was the largest of the guerrilla organizations. The *Bloque Popular Revolucionario* (BPR) was the political front for the FPL. Composed of peasant, labor, and student organizations, the FPL numbered 30,000–60,000 members in Chalatenango and San Vicente departments.[4] They were the biggest threat to the 4th Brigade at El Paraiso.

The *Partido Revolucionario de Trabajadores Centroamericanos* (PRTC) formed in the mid-1970s. Terrorist acts were its specialty. It had fighting elements in northern Chalatenango, northern San Miguel, and San Vicente. The political wing was the *Movimiento de Liberación Popular* (MLP) headed by Fabio Castillo, former Rector of El Salvador University, who had long-standing Soviet connections.[5]



Map showing Cuban influence in Latin America circa 1980.

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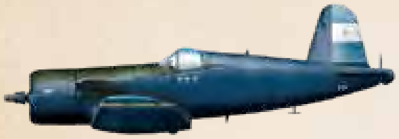
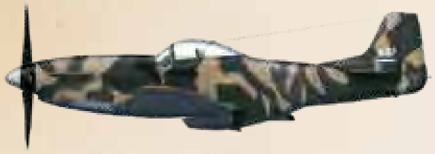
The 1969 El Salvador–Honduras War

On 14 July 1969, the Salvadoran Air Force launched preemptive airstrikes against the major cities and airports of Honduras, as the *Guardia Nacional* (National Guard) and Army invaded from the south along three mountain routes. The ill-prepared Honduran Army pulled back, trading "space for time," while the nation mobilized. The well-trained, better-equipped Honduran Air Force, flying their faster, more powerful WWII-era F4U-5 Corsairs against the Salvadoran F-51 Mustangs and earlier model Corsairs, quickly achieved air superiority and provided close air support to the infantry. The Honduran Air Force retaliated by seriously damaging El Salvador's oil refinery at Acajutla. By 17 July, Honduran armed forces had managed to establish a line of defense. Salvadoran ground forces had run out of gasoline, ammunition, and supplies thirty miles inside Honduras. The stalemate enabled the Organization of American States (OAS) to arrange a ceasefire after four days of fighting.


Honduran Air Force F4U-5 Corsair fighter.

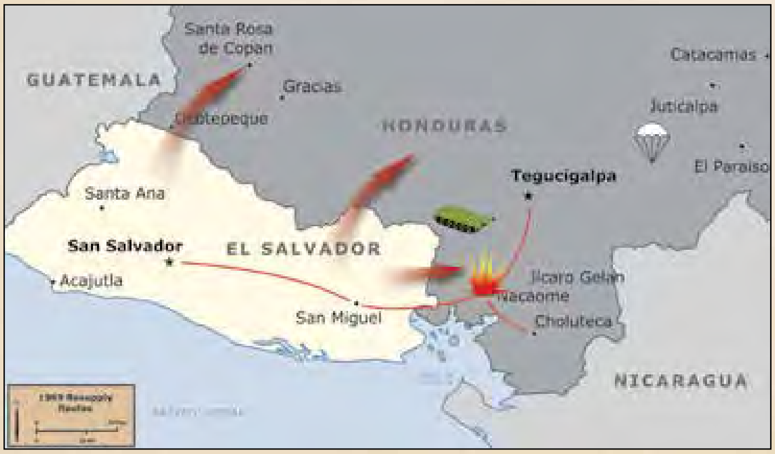

Salvadoran Air Force F-51D Mustang fighter.

In April 1969, Honduran President Oswaldo López Arellano initiated land reforms to reduce peasant unrest. "Free" land in the sparsely settled mountainous area along its southern border was made available. However, that region had been occupied by 300,000 Salvadoran "squatters" who had migrated north from the smallest, but most populous, country in Central America (105 people/km²). Even given thirty days to vacate their holdings, violence quickly erupted as land-starved Honduran peasants flocked to the south to claim all they could. The citizenship papers for most Salvadorans had long expired. The displaced Salvadorans were denied re-entry by the Salvadoran *Guardia Nacional*.

El Salvador and Guatemala, lightly industrialized, had become the two most prosperous countries in the Central American Common Market. Honduras, with its agrarian-based economy, was the least developed. The military government in El Salvador had expanded and modernized its armed forces. Unable to absorb 300,000 Salvadoran refugees into its economy, tensions grew between the two nations along the frontier. Clashes erupted between the *Guardia Nacional* and Honduran border and immigration police over the refugees.

Honduras and El Salvador were the major contenders to represent Central America in the 1969 World Cup competition. The escalating political situation spilled over into the Cup games. Hostilities broke out during the second World Cup game in San Salvador. Honduran players and fans were physically assaulted during and after the game. El Salvador had issued ultimatums and was mobilizing for war. American newscasters labeled the Salvadoran invasion of Honduras on 14 July 1969, the "Soccer War." That was a specious connection. Since independence, the wars between Latin American counties have been over borders and access to the sea.

The Salvadorans called their victory, *la Guerra de Cien Horas* (the 100–Hour War). This "pyrrhic victory" caused the collapse of the Central American Common Market; discredited CONDECA (*Consejo de Defensa Centroamericana*), the Central American Defense Council; eroded confidence in the Organization of American States (OAS); and hurt the image of the United States in the region. President Richard M. Nixon, whose motorcade was stoned in Caracas, Venezuela, during a goodwill tour (as Vice President to Dwight D. Eisenhower), was focused on getting out of Vietnam—"Peace with Honor." In mid-July 1969, Nixon was more interested in an American astronaut landing on the moon than preserving peace in Central America.[1]



July 1969 map with Salvadoran invasion routes into Honduras.

The Acajutla oil refinery after being attacked by the Honduran Air Force.

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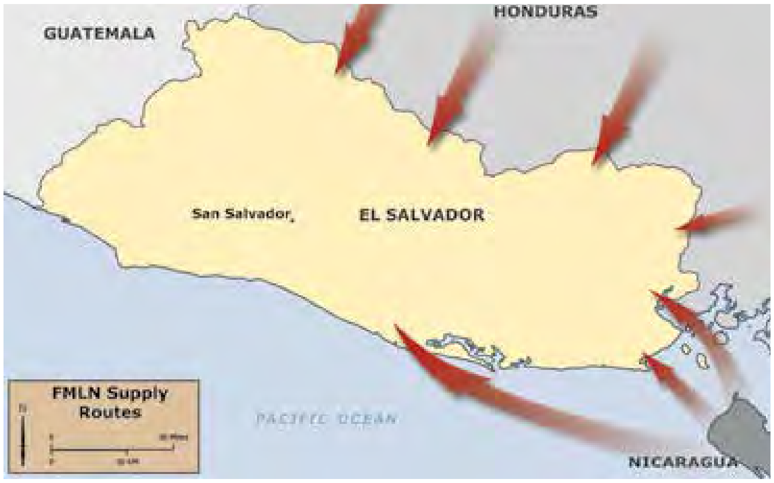
[1] Charles H. Briscoe, *Treinta Años Después* (Tegucigalpa, HO: Editorial Guaymuras, 2000).



Arrows on the map denote main FMLN land and water resupply routes.

"The Cubans became the managers, and Nicaragua the warehouse and bridge of solidarity. Nicaragua, the Cubans decided, would be the base of operations for political, diplomatic, and logistic affairs. The Sandinistas would arrange the shipment of arms and munitions to the FMLN and decide how they would be divided among the insurgent organizations that had joined the front," explained Napoleón Romero Garcia (*Comandante Miguel Castellanos*) in 1985.[4]

Two of the main guerrilla supply routes from Honduras into El Salvador were through the *bolsones* (pockets) areas in northern Chalatenango and Morazán. The *bolsones* were disputed, demilitarized areas along the southern border of Honduras that dated to the 1969 war between the two countries. In addition to housing numerous refugee camps, the *bolsones* became *focos* (centers) for Salvadoran guerrilla training base and supply distribution points. The *campesinos* in the refugee camps proved willing recruits. These overland routes were augmented by sea and air delivery sites.[5]

With a conventional war mentality (defense against Honduran retaliation for its 1969 incursion), the *Estado Mayor* (General Staff) moved the 4th Brigade into the Chalatenango Department. A second, large fixed *base* blocking a primary Honduran invasion route would reinforce the DM-1 (*Destacamento Militar Uno*) district *cuartel* in Chalatenango (city), in the midst of the FPL *foco*. That conventional war mindset made the 4th Brigade at El Paraiso a very convenient guerrilla target. To the east, in the Department of Morazán, the DM-4 *cuartel* at San Francisco de Gotera was located near the border, along another access corridor in an ERP *foco*.[6]

The 3rd Brigade *base*, positioned near San Miguel, the second-largest city in the country, had been located there for similar reasons. The proximity of these Salvadoran military *bases* and *cuarteles* near FMLN epicenters made them very lucrative political, military, and psychological targets. Despite their locations astride two major FMLN supply routes, they did little to hinder guerrilla logisticians in the early years of the war.

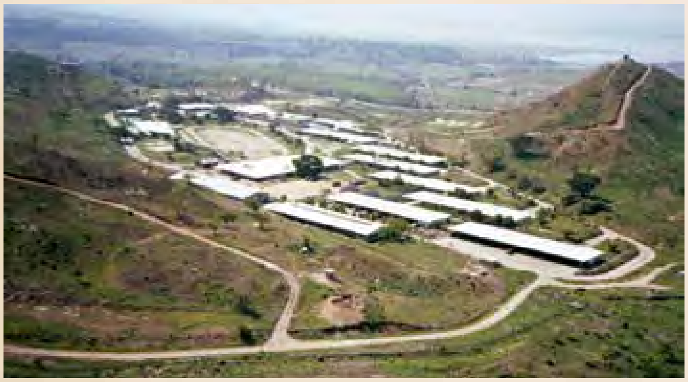
Before 1981, the FMLN insurgent elements had been regarded as internal threats by the military-dominated governments of El Salvador. Law and order problems

Cuarteles versus *Bases*

NATIONAL defense was centered about "nineteenth century fortress-like," thick-walled *cuarteles* (quartell-lays) in each military district, *destacamento militar*. The brigade *bases* were fortified camps ringed with barbed-wire fencing encircling perimeter bunkers. They were not constructed like Vietnam fire bases with interlocking fires between fighting positions, defense in depth, artillery centrally located to fire anti-personnel rounds 360 degrees at bunker level, nor with structures having sufficient overhead protection to withstand mortar, rocket, rocket-propelled grenade, nor heavy machinegun fire.

Typical Destacamento Militar cuartel *in El Salvador.*

Salvadoran tactical military defenses at *cuarteles* and *bases* were more like that security typical of industrial sites—fence-oriented with a controlled-access main-road entry gate and a restricted-access supply delivery gate.



The 4th Brigade base *at El Paraiso.*

Neither wire communications nor radios linked perimeter bunkers, including the outposts, to tactical operations centers (TOCs) in *bases*. Long-established *cuarteles* had internal telephone links. Local security patrols were rarely performed.[1] These tactical security weaknesses made them lucrative targets for FMLN attacks.

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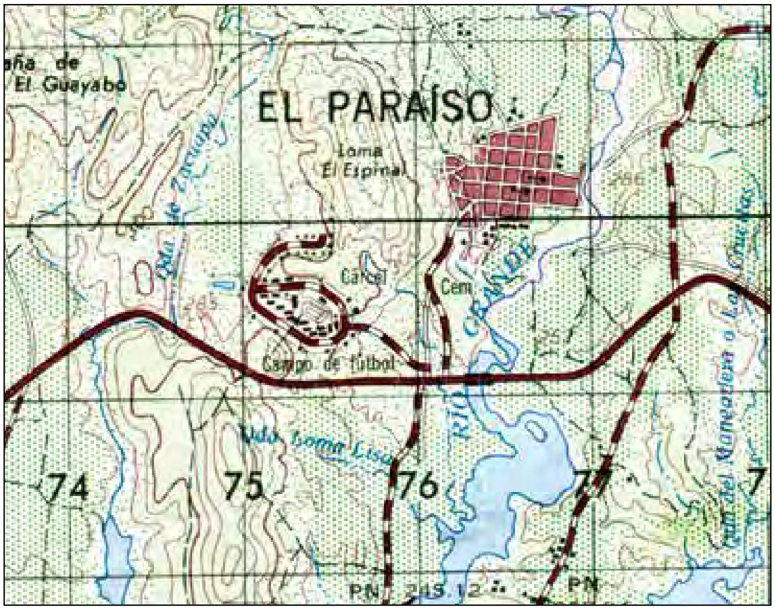
[1] Master Sergeant (Retired) Allen B. Hazlewood, telephone interview with Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 20 March 2007, Miami, FL, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Master Sergeant (Retired) Robert Kotin, interview with Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 24 April 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Ft Bragg, NC.

Guardia Nacional troops conducting highway security with an armored car.

were the responsibility of the paramilitary *Guardia Nacional* in the countryside, *Polícia Nacional* (national police) in the cities, the customs/border police (*Polícia de Hacienda*), and intelligence security forces, that cooperated with "death squads," much like they did in Colombia in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1980, all three Salvadoran police elements numbered only 3,000 personnel.[7] Political unrest, evinced by demonstrations, insurgency, and terrorist acts, was traditionally brutally repressed, as it was in most Latin American countries, by security forces. Rightist "death squads" augmented official efforts to eliminate internal threats.[8] The Salvadoran Army, focused on external security, placed its forces to defend the country.

The 4th Brigade *base*, one of the newest and most modern in the Army, was a sprawling facility that covered a square kilometer. Flat land for easy, fast construction had determined its specific location, not defensible terrain. It occupied a saddle between *Loma* (steep hillock) *El Espinal* to the north and *Loma Lisa* to the south and adjacent to the *Truncal del Norte* highway (San Salvador through Chalatenango into Honduras), two hundred meters to its south. The small town of El Paraiso was about a kilometer and a half (by road) to the northeast. A long-extinct volcano, El Guayabo, was less than two kilometers to the northwest, and a major inlet of *Cerron Grande* (a lake and dam for hydroelectric power) was about a kilometer to the southeast (see map insert). Effective fire could be placed on the interior of the camp from several of the *lomas* that surrounded it.[9]



Section of topographical map for El Paraiso environs.

The hydroelectric dam at Cerron Grande was a critical part of the Salvadoran national infrastructure.

The 4th Brigade, numbering about 1,200 men in 1980, consisted of three understrength infantry battalions of poorly trained conscripts. Brigade commanders were responsible for the protection of infrastructure—dams, bridges, electric power generators, radio-relay sites, and other key governmental installations—against guerrilla attacks. Thus, 60–80 percent of the 4th Brigade soldiers routinely manned static defense sites (from squad to company size) outside the *base*.[10] That was the situation when the newly formed FMLN thought it was possible to overthrow the Salvadoran government.

Emboldened by the Sandinista victory against U.S.-supported Anastasio Somoza Debayle in Nicaragua in 1979, President Jimmy Carter's suspension of military aid to El Salvador after "security forces" killed four American church women in December 1980 reinforced their commitment. The "final offensive" was based on five assumptions:

1. That carefully organized strikes would lead to popular uprisings in cities and towns;
2. That 3,000 fighters would win decisive victories against Chalatenango, Morazán, and La Paz *cuarteles* and *bases*;
3. That some Salvadoran units would mutiny, surrender their *bases* or *cuarteles*, and align with the insurgents;
4. That the Military Junta-led government was so unstable that a major offensive would cause its popular repudiation; and
5. That the "lame duck" Carter administration would do nothing.[11]

About 5:00 P.M. on 10 January 1981, the FMLN launched attacks against forty-three military and police sites throughout the country. The size and breadth of the offensive was greater and its gravity more serious than the disruption of the coffee harvest anticipated by Salvadoran military and security forces.[12] Captain Juan Francisco Mena Sandoval led a mutiny in the 2nd Brigade, killed Lieutenant Colonel Francisco Baltazar Valdés, set the Santa Ana *base* afire, and took 150 soldiers to join the ERP. That was totally unexpected and fear wracked the officer corps until the FMLN assaults sputtered out on 18 January.[13]

"There was no surprise," recounted *Comandante Miguel Castellanos*. His attack on the Zacatecoluca garrison failed, as did another against the guard post at Fecoluca. "Our lack of communications was a serious weakness, as was the absence of artillery support. The people did not rise up, nor was there a general strike."[14] The attacks were not controlled nor coordinated. The separate attack forces had to rely on *Radio Liberación,* focused on trumpeting propaganda from Managua, for news and direction. The FMLN Central Command in Nicaragua had no sense of reality (situational awareness). It was obvious to the guerrilla combatants that, separately, they were not capable of taking a *base* or *cuartel*.[15]

The 4th Brigade at El Paraiso and DM-1 at Chalatenango withstood the assaults, but the 1981 offensive was the first time that the Salvadoran government had really been pressured by the insurgent groups. The threat was sufficient to prompt President Carter, accused of "losing" Nicaragua to the Communists (Sandinistas), to reinstate military assistance and add $5.9 million in lethal aid.[16] However, after withstanding the offensive, Salvadoran military leaders were left with a false impression of their operational capability to combat the guerrillas. The renewed U.S. aid further bolstered confidence, encouraged a return of government support to "death squads," promulgated lax security in the field, and justified the dispatch of Special Forces mobile training teams (MTTs).

In March 1981, with President Ronald Reagan in charge, Special Forces MTTs began arriving in El Salvador to train and equip the 9,000-man Salvadoran army to counter the FMLN insurgency—to fight a COIN war. Numbers were kept small to satisfy Congressional concerns that El Salvador would not become another Vietnam-like quagmire. These MTTs from Panama were expected to quickly convert a poorly trained and ill-equipped conventional army into a COIN force capable of defeating an estimated guerrilla force of 4,000, a prospect that *The New York Times* had judged that government forces "had no hope" of doing.[17]

However, in three years, forty Special Forces MTTs managed to convert that conventional army into a COIN force capable of combating the insurgents.[18] But, it was not done easily, and most often without the support of senior Salvadoran commanders. "With no training nor experience in counterinsurgency warfare, the Salvadoran officers 'did what they thought that they knew how to do,' whether it was the right thing against guerrillas or not. A battalion movement to contact was a single column (line) of some 700 soldiers," recalled SF Captain William R. "Bobby" Nealson.[19] Lieutenant colonels "commanded" these offensive operations from the *base* tactical operations center (TOC) with the AN/PRC-77 radio (seven–ten kilometer range) powered by 110-volt electricity.[20] "Maps were scarcer than radio batteries. Artillery forward observers were not attached to brigades and the infantry captains and majors leading in the field did not know how to call for supporting fire," remembered SF Major Cecil Bailey.[21] Colonel Reyes Mena, the 4th Brigade commander, objected to the *Estado Mayor* directive on MTTs, and gave little support to CPT Nealson's attempt to conduct unit training. The 4th Brigade officers "didn't see the need for us. They [felt that they] were perfectly capable of training their own units," said Nealson.[22] Fortunately, more support was provided at national level by a U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) team.

Brigadier General Frederick F. Woerner, 193rd Infantry Brigade commander in Panama, and six officers were sent to evaluate the Salvadoran capabilities to wage a COIN war in the spring of 1981 and to recommend a military strategy. The Woerner Report ("Report of the El Salvador Military Strategy Assistance Team"), as it became known, recommended tripling the size of the Salvadoran Army combat forces and reorienting Salvadoran doctrine and tactics to fight a COIN war. Ten additional infantry battalions would increase the ground force to twenty-five battalions. Eight of these would mirror existing Salvadoran battalions while two were organized as quick reaction battalions, like the Atlacatl Battalion being trained by SF MTTs (March–August 1981). Better command and control and improved communications, intelligence, and logistics capabilities were also recommended. Specific materiel and equipment packages to arm, equip, and rapidly transport these new units contained everything from combat boots to UH-1M Huey helicopter gunships. Training was to focus on small unit offensive operations.[23]

To support rapid force expansion, the *Estado Mayor* agreed to send some 500 officer candidates to the United States to be trained as small unit leaders to fill the new units. The *Estado Mayor* had to recruit, train, and field four new battalions before March 1982, the date for national elections.[24] Increased military aid was contingent on the Salvadoran military protecting, but not interfering with, the elections.[25] Knowing the limitations of developing a military strategy without a national strate-

UH-1M Huey gunship.

U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador Deane Hinton with Colonel Domingo Monterrosa, commander of the BIRI Atlatcatl.

gy, General Woerner had to make assumptions—the appropriate national objectives for an emerging democracy—and make his military strategy recommendations consistent with them. He had little choice. His mission was to develop a strategy in two months.[26]

While the Woerner Report concentrated on "hard" elements of combat capabilities and left the "soft" elements vital to a successful counterinsurgency effort—psychological operations and civil affairs—for later, the plan satisfied President Reagan's desire to militarily prevent an insurgent takeover in El Salvador.[27] That decision was timely because the FMLN, flush with arms and supplies from Nicaragua to equip and train its growing numbers of fighters, had decided to change tactics. "Hit and run" attacks on lightly-protected infrastructure targets enabled new recruits to be trained and the effects would destroy popular confidence in the government. Their major objective was to physically obstruct the Constituent Assembly elections in 1982. That Assembly was to draft a new constitution establishing democratic government in 1984.[28] A first "line in the sand" had been drawn for both sides. Fortunately, a Military Group commander with COIN experience in Latin America was assigned to the country team of Ambassador Deane R. Hinton in March 1982.

Special Forces Colonel John D. Waghelstein, a veteran of the 8th SF Group (SFG) in Panama in the 1960s, had served in the Dominican Republic and Bolivia. COL Waghelstein would direct the Salvadoran military expansion, training, and help formulate a national campaign plan. It was to be done with fifty-five U.S. military trainers in country as mandated by Congress. "The number '55' had been chipped in stone . . . the result of a mélange of Vietnam syndrome, Liberal Democrat opposition to our Central American policy in Congress, the ESAF's [El Salvadoran Armed Forces] lousy human rights record, and the tenuousness of our long-term commitment," said Waghelstein.[29] Ingenuity and innovation became key to mission accomplishment.

Colonel John D. Waghelstein, commander of the USMILGP El Salvador, March 1982–June 1983.

Alternate ways had to be found to train the new battalions. To become more effective and reduce risk to civilians, the Salvadoran Air Force formed a reconnaissance company, the *Compania de Patrulla Reconacimiento de Alcance Largo* (PRAL) of volunteers to be trained by 3/7th SFG personnel in Panama from July through September 1982. The Air Force's airborne company was expanded to a battalion several months later.[30] In late 1982, a Venezuelan MTT organized and trained three 350-man *Cazador* (Hunter) battalions (similar to those trained by the 8th SFG in the 1960s) in a compressed six-week program.[31] The *Cazadores* were to be lightly armed, lightly equipped mobile battalions of veteran soldiers that could deploy with little notice. Some Salvadoran commanders liked these light battalions because they were easier to support, field, and control than their traditional 600–700-man infantry battalions. They could also be trained and fielded in six-weeks versus the six-months required for immediate reaction battalions [(BIRI) *Batallón de Infantería Reacción Inmediata*]. They were assigned to the brigades, whereas the *Estado Mayor* controlled the BIRIs. The Salvadoran *Cazadores,* however, like most Salvador battalions, were comprised of conscripts with some basic infantry training.[32] While more *Cazador* battalions were activated than any other type to satisfy U.S. aid quotas, they proved no match for the well-armed and equipped 600-man battalions being fielded by the FMLN in northern Morazán and Chalatenango in late 1982.[33] Stateside training of Salvadoran battalions proved extremely expensive.

The Ramón Belloso Battalion (BIRI) was trained by 1st Battalion, 7th SFG, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, from January–June 1982 for $12 million in U.S. military aid. That was what it cost the Salvadorans to equip and train four infantry battalions at home. The Atonal Battalion, another BIRI, began training in Panama, received an accelerated ten-week basic training program at El Paraiso from an MTT to meet the March 1982 election deadline, before yet another experiment was tried.[34]

A U.S.-funded regional military training center (RMTC) was created at Puerto Castillo, Honduras, to quickly train Salvadoran units without the distraction of combat operational requirements. Some 2,400 Salvadoran conscripts would undergo basic infantry training alongside Honduran and other isthmian soldiers. Enmity pervaded the atmosphere when battalion-sized groups of Salvadoran conscripts, traditionally trained in brigades, were sent to be trained by Americans on Honduran soil. The Salvadoran military resented this diversion of U.S. military aid to their enemies and the brigade commanders did not like losing that source of revenue.[35] The Honduran airborne battalion was the token element "trained" at the RMTC. Progress was slow.

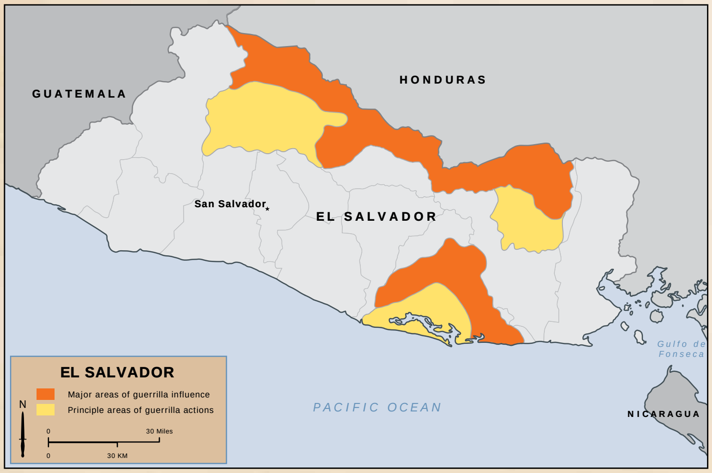
Since FMLN strongholds along the Honduran border and in southern El Salvador were simply too strong in the early 1980s for the government forces to attack

Semi-trailer destroyed by the FMLN along the Pan-American Highway.

1982 Guerrilla Strengths by Department		
Morazán	ERP	1,000–2,000
La Unión	ERP & FARN	500
Usulutan	All	700–1100
San Vicente	PRTC, FAL, FPL	1,000
Guazapa	FARN	1,200
Chalatenango	FPL	1,000–1,500
San Salvador	All	200
Santa Ana	FPL, FARN, ERP	300

Note: These 1982 estimates are larger but do not reflect the disruption and relocation of the guerrillas when the National Campaign Plan was launched in San Vicente in June 1983. Likewise, they do not reflect the arming and training of *massas* (camp followers) in late 1983. [1]

[1] Colonel John D. Waghelstein, "El Salvador: Observations and Experiences in Counterinsurgency," Carlisle Braacks, PA: U.S. Army War College Study Project, 1 January 1985," A-4.



Map depicting rebel areas of dominance circa 1981.

directly, the Salvadoran Air Force (FAS) began bombing and strafing rebel-dominated villages. The harassment attacks in Chalatenango and on the Guazapa Volcano, thirty miles from the capital, did not prevent the FMLN destruction of several Salvadoran infantry units and the loss of significant numbers of weapons.[36] In the meantime, COL Waghelstein and a small SF Planning MTT had begun working to bring a strategic focus to ESAF operations.

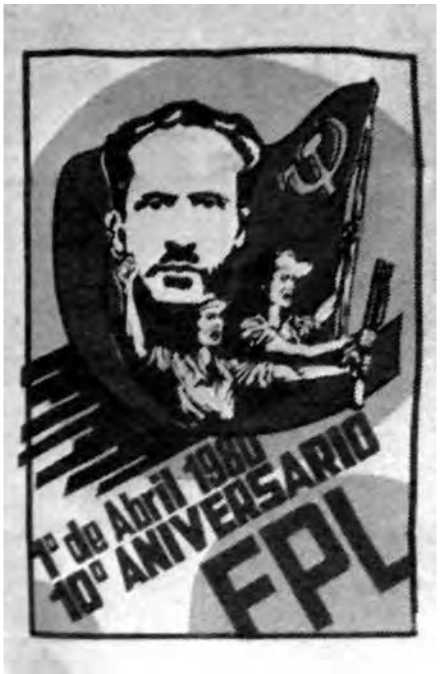
The resultant National Campaign Plan (NCP) was a combined civil-military strategy to regain government support. The battalion "sweeps" against elusive guerrillas were disrupted by mines, booby traps, and ambushes, while FMLN forces targeted small Salvadoran outposts guarding infrastructure. These demoralized the military and sabotaged the national economy, further eroding confidence in the government.[37] The economy had been in a fatal tailspin for three years. There was an obvious connection to the effects of the war, especially since the FMLN had publicly stated that the economy was their principal target.[38]

Waghelstein: "I was convinced that the real target was to gut the Salvadoran economy and that all the shooting and all the attacks . . . on the various *cuarteles* were just smoke, that the real target was economic and not military."[39] SF Master Sergeants Bruce Hazlewood and Leon Sonnenberg were sent out to collect data on railroad, electrical grid, crop dusting, agricultural irrigation systems, bridges, airports, seaports, and highway traffic attacks and they prepared a map overlay for each. "When they had fifteen or twenty piled on top of the El Salvador map, it was obvious even to a blind man that the focus was on the departments of Usulutan and San Vicente," said Waghelstein.[40] Then, they added known guerrilla resupply points, supply routes, base camps, caches, and unidentified aircraft sightings to provide more emphasis to the findings. President Alvaro Magaña and the *Estado Mayor* had to agree with the assessment. "By February 1983, the Salvadorans were working on a joint military-civilian plan [National Campaign Plan (NCP)] aimed at securing the central departments of San Vicente and Usulutan and to reestablish government services and authority," said Waghelstein.[41]

The concentration of BIRIs in San Vicente and successes achieved made the other parts of the country more vulnerable. It has to be remembered that the national strategy priority was to protect the infrastructure and preserve the economy. Community Civil Defense had been made an integral part of the National Campaign Plan. Many assessed the NCP as a failure, calling it a "sand castle on the beach" because the FMLN returned to dominate San Vicente when the joint "experiment" ended. But, the necessity for a national COIN strategy having specific civil-military priorities was realized at a time when major leadership shakeups enabled the Salvadoran government to capitalize on U.S. assistance for several years.

The Salvadoran military shakeups were triggered by the visit of Vice President George W. Bush, who carried an ultimatum from President Reagan. In a speech to the top Salvadoran leaders, civilian and military, Bush stated that "if these death squad murders continue, you will lose the support of the American people" and presented the requirements for further U.S. military aid.[42] These requisites included a list of Salvadoran officers known to have conspired with the "death squads" and

Ana Mélida Anaya Montes (Comandante Ana María)



10th Anniversary FPL poster

Salvador Cayetano Carpio (Comandante Marcial)

demanded their relief and expulsion from the ESAF immediately.[43] A new Minister of Defense, General Casanova Vides, began assigning competent field commanders to brigade command positions, without regard to seniority, and pulled those experienced field commanders to the *Estado Mayor* to direct the war.[44] Just a few months earlier, the Central Command of the FMLN inadvertently assisted the Salvadoran military.

The FMLN hierarchy in Managua convulsed into internecine power struggles after the murder of Ana Mélida Anaya Montes (*Comandante Ana María*), second in command of the FPL on 6 April 1983. That was subsequently followed by the suicide of Salvador Cayetano Carpio (*Comandante Marcial*), founder of the FPL, the majority faction of the FMLN.[45] By 1984, the infighting within the leadership of the FMLN groups was severe. In true Communist fashion, purges and executions of the leaders were carried out. Guerrilla strength declined as rebel troops watched their leaders abandon the FMLN in disgust.[46] It ended when Fidel Castro got the Central Command to relocate from Managua into the interior of El Salvador in October 1983. The FDR elected to remain in Nicaragua, but the perceived legitimacy of the FMLN had already been eroded by its predominantly military strategy.[47] The respite for the Salvadoran military, however, proved short.

The FMLN initiated a series of impressive military actions countrywide in the wake of Vice President Bush's visit. The most serious was the attack on the Cuscutlan Bridge on New Year's Eve 1983. It was the FMLN's second major success on Lempa River bridges. The 1981 destruction of *Puente de Oro* had been a major embarrassment to the ESAF. But, the attack on the 4th Brigade headquarters at El Paraiso on 28 December 1983 was even more demoralizing.

By then, the guerrilla fighting units were larger (300–800 personnel), better armed, more willing to cooperate, had radios to coordinate attacks and support, and most had special commando "sapper" platoons trained by the Vietnamese. Central Command wanted to "prove" its new large units and demonstrate to the Cubans and Sandinistas the new spirit of cooperation by conducting a spectacular operation. Overrunning an army *base* would strike a political blow and inflict a military defeat. The 4th Brigade *base* at El Paraiso fit their criteria.[48] A group of *Fuerzas selectas especiales* (FES) sappers spent months collecting intelligence and preparing attacks.

The result was a well-rehearsed, well-executed primary attack against El Paraiso with diversionary actions to draw Salvadoran troops away from FLMN assembly areas beforehand and then attacks to block reinforcements from DM-1 in Chalatenango. The date was based on when the least number of soldiers (an infantry company) would be at the *base*. Infiltrators had been very useful. At 10:00 P.M. 28 December 1983, fifty mud-caked FPL sappers, clad only in shorts, and carrying German MP-5, Israeli Uzi, or American CAR-15 sub-machineguns (SMG), and two U.S. M-26 fragmentation grenades, cut several holes in the barbed wire perimeter fence and began marking routes through the minefields.[49]

Two hours later, the sapper force triggered an 81mm mortar barrage by throwing grenades into bunkers and the TOC and then gunning down confused, screaming soldiers running from their billets to fighting positions. When the thirty to forty-five minutes of indirect fire ended, some 300 guerrillas from the Chalatenango Battalion X-21 (FPL), hidden along the outer fence, charged through the openings along "safe" paths in the minefields, inside the *base* interior.

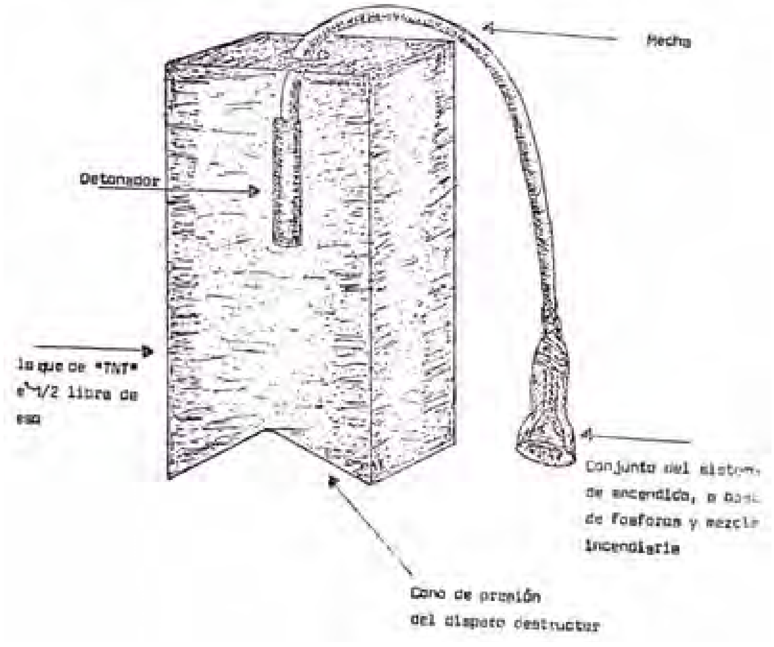
Outside the *base*, another FPL battalion from Chalatenango (K-93) attacked El Refugio, El Barrancon in La Reina, and the Colima bridge to block relief

The Puente de Oro bridge after being destroyed by the FMLN in 1981.

forces.[50] In the midst of these well-coordinated FPL attacks, a single American SF advisor, who had been checking strategic sites (the Cuscutlan bridge near San Miguel and the Colima bridge in Chalatenango), managed to escape from the *base* in the midst of the chaos. In civilian clothes, he slipped away to find shelter in the outskirts of Chalatenango. Then, carrying only his weapon, he evaded FMLN units for a day and a half while working his way back to San Miguel.[51]

As soon as all resistance was eliminated, the guerrillas, who would occupy the *base* for another two days, ransacked the facility, collecting useful material and equipment. Some five hundred of six hundred weapons captured were American M-16 rifles. Using three kilogram explosive charges (*bloques*), they systematically destroyed the buildings, bunkers, and heavy equipment. More than a thousand TNT *bloques* were used during the assault and destruction afterward.[52] By then, Salvadoran relief (an airborne company and the Atlatcatl Battalion) had surrounded the *base*.[53]

The FMLN threatened to kill the military and civilians taken prisoner. The Salvadoran military had no choice but to negotiate. A convoy of seventeen operable 4th Brigade trucks and busses was formed to carry the guerrilla force, their hostages, and accumulated "booty." They were allowed to leave unhindered and were last seen driving north toward La Palma.[54] Ten guerrillas were reportedly killed during the attack. More than two hundred Salvadoran soldiers and camp workers were killed or captured in the attack. The only FMLN failure in the Chalatenango Department was at the Colima Bridge. Attempts by Cuban-trained FPL combat swimmers to collapse the bridge failed on 30 December and in mid-January 1984 because of faulty explosive fuses.[55]



FMLN schematic of improvised explosive device (IED) called a bloque.

Photo shows the thick vegetation just outside the perimeter of the 4th Brigade base *at El Paraiso.*

FMLN attacks on the 4th Brigade at El Paraiso became almost routine during the war. Close proximity to the Honduran border provided easy escape for the FPL, the most active and better armed of the FMLN elements in the region. The FPL targeted this *base* for several reasons: operational activity patterns were apparent; poor security measures invited attack; commanders and most officers were habitually absent on weekends and holidays; the security was routinely lax behind thin, easily penetrated fence-line defenses; there were no interlocking fires between bunkers; soldiers rarely left the bunkers; there were no interior patrols; communications between the bunkers, outposts, and the TOC were nonexistent; discipline was poor; vegetation along the fences was rarely cut back; and El Paraiso was the *base* most infiltrated by guerrillas and FMLN sympathizers.[56] Still, the protection of infrastructure remained the top priority in the national COIN strategy. With that excuse, *base* and *cuartel* defenses were a distant second to most brigade commanders.

The success at El Paraiso encouraged FMLN organizations to seek decisive battles that would consolidate and expand the revolutionary struggle. It prompted the ERP leader, Joaquin Villalobos, in Morazán to try to divide the country by capturing the dominant heights north of the Pan American Highway to the coast. Conducting the military operations to achieve that goal was more important to Villalobos than winning popular support.[57] His major attack on the 3rd Brigade *base* at San Miguel was thwarted because an SF MTT, extended to serve through the elections, managed to break up repeated attacks.[58] That, ironically, was the final SF MTT mission in El Salvador.

FMLN ERP leader Joaquin Villalobos

By then, the Salvadoran military outnumbered the rebels three to one.

Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State, served as the chairman of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America.

New battalions had been formed and trained in El Salvador, the United States, Honduras, and Panama. The National Bipartisan Commission on Central America (Kissinger Commission) reported that the Salvadoran Army of 37,000 was too small to defeat the latest estimate of 12,000 FMLN guerrillas. The commission reinforced the Reagan and Congress edict that aid be conditioned on progress in attaining specific human rights goals. It further recommended that military aid be substantially increased to enable the ESAF to more effectively conduct a humane war against the FMLN. Funding catapulted to $197 million in 1984 (its peak during the war); the average in next four years was $100 million annually.[59] The Salvadoran Army and Air Force in 1983, while trained and equipped to start fighting a COIN war, were "just hanging on, living from one military aid supplement to the next."[60]

This article covered the ramp-up, training, and doctrinal shift necessary to transition a 9,000-man, poorly trained, conventional war-minded armed force into a 37,000-man COIN warfighting element capable of combating aggressive, well-trained FMLN insurgent elements in El Salvador. It took several years to create these critical building blocks with the Congressionally-mandated 55-man rule. This constraint, however, caused the Salvadoran military to fight their war, the objective of FID.[61] The Salvadorans suffered numerous defeats along the way, most notably at their fixed sites. The early attacks on the 4th Brigade *base* at El Paraiso in 1981 and 1983 revealed why it was a favorite FMLN target. The late nineteenth century *cuarteles* in the military districts were "hard" targets only because of their thick, high-walled construction, while brigade *bases* were "soft" targets based on their camp-like layouts. While both "forts" provided security, they were essentially administrative headquarters, commanding and controlling little outside their walls or barbed-wire fence perimeters. Security measures were more industrial. The brigade *base* "camps," not tactically defensible to counter guerrilla attacks, were easily penetrated unlike U.S. firebases in Vietnam. The defense of these field sites was never a priority in the national or military COIN strategy as the Salvadoran military forces were expanded to fight a counterinsurgency war.

The next El Salvador war article will show how good defensive measures employed during the 28 March 1984 attack on the 3rd Brigade at San Miguel repulsed the ERP guerrillas with heavy losses. A later El Paraiso article–Part III (1986–1989) will demonstrate that while major progress was made by the Salvadoran military against the FMLN, the 4th Brigade *base* in the Chalatenango Department remained a "soft" target for determined guerrillas. SF Staff Sergeant Gregory A. Fronius, if he were alive today, would attest to that fact.

Special thanks go to MG James Parker, BG Simeon Trombitas, retired Colonels John Waghelstein, James Steele, and Cecil Bailey, SGM Robert Kotin, and MSG Allen Hazlewood for their review, edits, and comments on this article.

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Endnotes

1 The FMLN guerrillas had major successes against El Paraiso in 1983 and 1987, had partial success in 1988, were beaten back in 1988, and repulsed twice in 1989.

2 *The Military Balance, 1981–1982* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1982), 82.

3 Courtney E. Prisk, ed. *The Comandante Speaks: Memoirs of an El Salvadoran Guerrilla Leader* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 28.

4 Javier Rojas-P, *Conversaciones con El Comandante Miguel Castellanos* (Santiago, Chile: Editorial Andante, 1986) in Prisk, *The Comandante Speaks*, 25.

5 Colonel John D. Waghelstein, "El Salvador: Observations and Experiences in Counterinsurgency," Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Study Project, 1 January 1985, 21.

6 Based on the success of the Honduran Air Force during the 1969 war, the surrounding high ground provided excellent anti-aircraft (AA) defense positions to protect the base against flat strafing approaches. Major General James Parker, e-mail to Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 30 March 2007, copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

7 Domestic order was the mission of the security forces—the *Polícia Nacional* (National Police) in the cities and the *Guardia Nacional* (National Guard). The National Police were responsible for urban security while the National Guard, a paramilitary constabulary force, had rural security. Brian J. Bosch, *The Salvadoran Officer Corps and the Final Offensive of 1981* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1999), 17. The Treasury Police (*Polícia de Hacienda*), responsible for border security as part of its customs function, was a third security element. In 1980, the combined strength of all three forces was about 5,000.

8 William M. LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America, 1977–1992* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 37.

9 Lieutenant Colonel Simeon G. Trombitas, undated monograph, "Duty as an Operations, Plans, and Training Team Chief in El Salvador, 1989 to 1990," USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

10 James S. Corum, "The Air War in El Salvador," *Air Power Journal* (Summer 1998), 30.

11 Prisk, *The Comandante Speaks*, 29.

12 Colonel (Retired) Orlando Rodriguez, telephone interview with Cecil Bailey, Annapolis, MD, 21 August 2003, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; William M. LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America, 1977–1992* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 45.

13 Bosch, *The Salvadoran Officer Corps and the Final Offensive of 1981*, 83–85; *El Conflicto en El Salvador*, Documento de La Prensa Gráfica (San Salvador, 1992), 34.

14 Prisk, *The Comandante Speaks*, 30, 31.

15 Prisk, *The Comandante Speaks*, 31.

16 Cynthia J. Arnson, *Crossroads: Congress, the President, and Central America* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press), 51.

17 Arnson, *Crossroads*, 65. This was based on a Pentagon assessment that the Salvadoran Armed Forces were so poorly trained and equipped that they had "no hope" of defeating the insurgency; Richard Halloran, "Military Aspects of Crisis Are Underlined by Haig and a Pentagon Study," *The New York Times*, 21 February 1981.

18 Arnson, *Crossroads*, 65.

19 Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) William R. Nealson, interview with Colonel (Retired) Cecil Bailey, Annapolis, MD, 15 May 2003, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

20 The AN/PRC-77 Radio Set is a manpack, portable VHF FM combat-net radio transceiver used to provide short-range, two-way radiotelephone voice communication in common usage throughout the world. Its planning range was seven to ten kilometers line-of-sight. Originally U.S.-manufactured, several countries have produced it. The Salvador military and police forces had U.S. and Israeli-made models. Nealson interview 15 May 2003; "AN/PRC-77 Portable Transceiver," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AN/PRC-77_Portable_Transceiver.

21 The officers at El Paraiso were not interested in supporting maneuver forces with artillery. They were content to limit its use to harassing fire. The reason for not attaching forward observer teams was that the artillery battalion at San Juan Opico could not spare the manpower. Colonel (Retired) Cecil Bailey was at El Paraiso when this occurred.

22 Nealson interview, 15 May 2003.

23 Corum, "The Air War in El Salvador," 30–31.

24 The Woerner Report, iii, iv, and General (R) Frederick Woerner, interview with LTC Kalev Sepp, Boston, MA, 7 May 1998, hereafter Woerner interview and date.

25 Woerner interview, 7 May 1998.

26 Woerner interview, 7 May 1998.

27 Woerner interview, 7 May 1998.

28 Prisk, *The Comandante Speaks*, 36.

29 Waghelstein, "Ruminations of a Pachyderm or What I Learned in the Counter-Insurgency Business," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 5:3 (Winter 1994), 364.

30 Waghelstein interview, 22 October 2003; Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Richard R. Perez, telephone interview with Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 8 February 2007, Tampa, FL, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Command Sergeant Major (Retired) Henry Ramirez, telephone interview with Cecil Bailey, 18 November 2003, Annapolis, MD, USASOC History Office Classified Files; Master Sergeant (Retired) Allen B. Hazlewood, e-mail to Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 28 March 2007, copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

31 Colonel Joseph S. Stringham, interview with Colonel Charles A. Carlton, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 29 May 1985, U.S. Army War College/U.S. Army Military History Institute Oral History Program, Carlisle Barracks, PA, transcription, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; John D. Waghelstein, telephone interview with Cecil Bailey, Annapolis, MD, 23 October 2003, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. The Venezuelans trained three Cazador battalions in the western departments of Santa Ana and Ahuachapan. The Venezuelans were pleased to help the Salvadorans, at U.S. urging, as a gesture of thanks for the assistance provided to them during their fight against insurgency in the 1960s when the 8th SF Group trained their *Cazador* battalions.

32 Colonel Jeffrey Nelson, e-mail to Cecil Bailey, 24 January 2004, copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

33 Colonel Joseph S. Stringham observed that, "It was good concept for the Orinoco River Valley, Venezuela, vintage 1962, against that threat, on that terrain, and in that type of vegetation. This concept was not completely translatable to the Central American conflict, vintage 1983." The Orinoco River Valley is very compartmented, mountainous, and heavily vegetated with few roads. Terrain in El Salvador was somewhat similar along the Salvadoran border with Honduras, but was less rugged in the rest of the country. It was more developed with road and highway networks. Stringham interview, 29 May 1985.

34 Colonel (Retired) Rudolph M. Jones, interview with Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, Fort Bragg, NC, 3 August 2006, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

35 Jones interview 3 August 2006. Conscript soldier pay was controlled by each Salvadoran brigade commander.

36 Corum, "The Air War in El Salvador," 30–31.

37 Max G. Manwaring and Courtney Prisk, eds. *El Salvador at War: An Oral History of Conflict from the 1979 Insurrection to the Present* (Washington, DC: National Defense University press, 1988), 141–42. This strategy was confirmed in interviews with Joaquin Villalobos, Commander of the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP), "In the previous campaign [January through June of 1982] we wanted to prove that we could win the war. Now we wanted to push the Army to the point where its morale would collapse. To beat an army it is not necessary to annihilate all its men, not to capture all its arms, only to cause the collapse of its morale. How can we achieve our aim? On the basis of deepening the three lines of the previous campaign: First, actions of strategic annihilation wherever possible. Second, destabilizing the country through sabotage, fundamentally against transportation, power lines, telephone lines, and fuel. Third, harassment ambushes and annihilation of minor positions." Marta Harnecker interview, originally published in Mexico, November–December 1982, in Marlene Dixon and Susanne Jonas, eds. *Revolution and Intervention in Central America* (San Francisco, CA: Synthesis Publications, June 1983).

38 Waghelstein, "El Salvador: Observations and Experiences in Counterinsurgency," C-1–2.

39 Waghelstein interview 23 October 2003. Waghelstein's conclusions coincided with FMLN strategy to isolate territory east of the Lempa River by cutting all of the bridges. Usulutan and San Vicente departments straddled the Lempa River, making control of either or both departments essential to that strategy. Waghestein suspected that much of the FMLN activity in the north was to draw the ESAF into major operations against their strongholds while small guerrilla attacks chipped away at the economically vital agricultural centers of San Vicente and Usulutan. By ruining the economy, the government would be crippled in turn, and the eastern third of the country would become isolated under FMLN control.

40 Waghelstein interview 23 October 2003.

41 Waghelstein, "El Salvador: Observations and Experiences in Counterinsurgency," 51.

42 Waghelstein, "El Salvador: Observations and Experiences in Counterinsurgency," Enclosure 3.

43 LeoGrande, *Our Own Backyard*, 230–31.

44 Stringham interview 29 May 1985.

45 United States Institute of Peace, Truth Commissions Digital Collection: Reports: El Salvador, "Chronology of Violence," 3, http://www.usip.org/library/tc/doc/reports/el_salvador/tc_es_03151993_chron2_4.html.

46 Prisk, *The Comandante Speaks*, xvii–xix; Corum, "The Air War in El Salvador," 35.

47 Prisk, *The Comandante Speaks*, 67.

48 David E. Spencer, *From Vietnam to El Salvador: The Saga of the FMLN Sappers and Other Guerrilla Special Forces in Latin America* (Westport, CN: Praeger Publishers, 1996), 53.

49 Spencer, *From Vietnam to El Salvador*, 53.

50 Spencer, *From Vietnam to El Salvador*, 55–56.

51 Hazlewood interview 20 March 2007.

52 Spencer, *From Vietnam to El Salvador*, 56; Trombitas, "Duty as An Operations, Plans, and Training Team Chief in El Salvador 1989 to 1990," 3; *El Conflicto en El Salvador*, 66. Lieutenant Colonel José Ricardo Vaquerano and Sub-Lieutenants Freddy Hugo Panameño and Iván Dario Menjívar and more than a hundred troops died in the attack.

53 Hazlewood interview 20 March 2007.

54 Hazlewood interview 20 March 2007.

55 Spencer, *From Vietnam to El Salvador*, 56; Trombitas, "Duty as An Operations, Plans, and Training Team Chief in El Salvador 1989 to 1990," 3; *El Conflicto en El Salvador*, 66.

56 Hazlewood interview 22 March 2007.

57 Prisk, *The Comandante Speaks*, 45.

58 Sergeant Major (Retired) Peter J. Moosey, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 13 March 2007, Colorado Springs, CO, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

59 Master Sergeant (Retired) Allen B. Hazlewood, e-mail to Dr. Charles H Briscoe, 28 March 2007, copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Benjamin Schwarz, "American Counterinsurgency Doctrine and El Salvador: The Frustrations of Reform and the Illusions of Nation Building," RAND Report R-4042 (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1991); Michael Childress, "The Effectiveness of U.S. Training Efforts in Internal Defense and Development—The Cases of El Salvador and Honduras," (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1995), 9, 20. The Kissinger Commission recommended six U.S. foreign policy goals for Central America: economic stabilization, economic growth, expansion of economic benefits, promotion of democracy and respect for human rights, security assurance with coordinated military and civil actions, and diplomatic settlement of insurgencies.

60 Colonel (Retired) James J. Steele, e-mail to Dr. Briscoe, 5 April 2007, copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Corum, "The Air War in El Salvador," 32.

61 Colonel (Retired) James J. Steele, telephone interview with Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 3 April 2007, Midland, TX, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

A Team Effort:

Special Forces in Vietnam
June–December 1964

by Robert W. Jones Jr.

CHINA
LAOS
Gulf of Tonkin
Buon Brieng
VIETNAM

THE typical image of Special Forces in the Vietnam War is one of a huge 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne) (5th SFG) running specialized covert operations country-wide and cross border operations into Cambodia, Laos, and North Vietnam. That did not happen until post-1965 when the 5th SFG took over operations in Vietnam. The Special Forces commitment to Vietnam had a more humble start centered around twelve-man "A" teams. It began in 1957 with a ten-man SF detachment sent to train Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) soldiers in Ranger tactics and techniques. Special Forces A teams rotated in and out of Vietnam on mission-specific mobile training teams until 1960. Then A teams from the 1st and 7th SFGs rotated as units for six-month temporary duty (TDY) tours to "train, advise, and lead Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) Montagnard (sometimes Nung, Cambodian, and Vietnamese) irregular soldiers against the Viet Cong in the Central highlands of South Vietnam." This article centers on the experiences of Team A-312, 1st SFG in 1964, and will explain the early role of SF in the CIDG program in Vietnam prior to the arrival of the 5th SFG.[1]

"Vietnam" is actually spelled as two words in the Vietnamese language, i.e., "Viet Nam" (pronounced "vee-it" and "nom," rhymes with "Tom").

The early Special Forces presence in Vietnam was primarily "A-Teams" (today's operational detachment alpha or ODA) that rotated in for six-month tours to train the CIDG forces throughout Vietnam. Teams from the 7th SFG at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and the 1st SFG on Okinawa, Japan, deployed to meet the requirement. After 1964, Special Forces soldiers rotated in and out of Vietnam on one-year tours as individual replacements to SF teams throughout the country rather than deploying as a unit.[2]

One of the early teams supporting the Vietnam mission was Team A-312 from C Company, 1st SFG on Okinawa. The team, commanded by Captain Vernon Gillespie, was a mix of veterans and two newcomers. Ten members of Gillespie's team (including himself) had already been to Vietnam and had had multiple deployments throughout Asia. For the two newcomers, this was their first of several combat tours in Vietnam. Specialist Fourth Class Earl Bleacher and Sergeant Lowell Stevens had both just completed the Special Forces Qualification Course (commonly called the Q-course).[3]

Specialist Fourth Class (SP4) Earl Bleacher was new to Special Forces but not to the Army. Bleacher had enlisted in the Army in 1950, and served nine years in the 11th Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, reaching the rank of staff sergeant. Seeking another challenge, he left the Army in 1959 to attend Millersville State Teachers' College.[4] Missing the Army, Bleacher reenlisted in 1962 for an airborne assignment. He was sent through basic infantry training again before reporting to the 504th Airborne Battle Group, 82nd Airborne Division as a private E-2. Starting over again, the senior parachutist and non-commissioned officer academy graduate wanted more than the daily grind in the 82nd Airborne Division. After some resistance from his chain of command, "I hand carried my request for Special Forces through the bureaucracy. I knew a few shortcuts," said Bleacher. He was soon headed down Ardennes Street to Smoke Bomb Hill and the Special Forces Qualification Course. Bleacher trained as a weapons sergeant and graduated from the "Q-course" in May 1963 with an assignment to the 1st SFG in Okinawa.[5] Several other new graduates (including Lowell Stevens) joined him in Okinawa.

West Virginian Lowell Wesley Stevens began his Army career when he enlisted in 1959. After basic infantry training at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, he was assigned as a mortar man (today's MOS 11C) in C Company, 502nd Airborne Battle Group, 101st Airborne Division. In the late 1950s through the early 1960s, many soldiers assigned to the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions attended airborne training at their respective posts (Forts Bragg or Campbell). After completing jump school, the soldiers usually stayed in their units for their entire enlistment. In three and a half years, Stevens worked his way up from a private E-2 M-274 "Mule" driver to mortar section sergeant, a staff sergeant position.[6]

Anticipating a promotion to staff sergeant because he had been filling that position for almost a year, Sergeant Stevens asked the personnel clerk about his promotion chances. He was shocked when the clerk said "Never. A staff sergeant on the division pistol team officially held the mortar section leader position." "The only way to get promoted was for someone to retire, get busted, or die," said Stevens.[7] Having just reenlisted for six years, Stevens had to find another way to make rank.

So mad "he couldn't see straight," SGT Stevens went back to his company. As he stormed down the hallway, his company commander, Captain David Ranger [his real name], stopped him. CPT Ranger said, "What's the matter?" As Stevens proceeded to explain, Ranger ushered him into his office and shut the door. For a few seconds, Stevens thought that he was in big trouble. It was rare that a sergeant entered the company commander's office except for punishment. Based on Steven's experience, training, and personality, CPT Ranger thought that he would do well in Special Forces and suggested that he try out. It just so happened that an SF recruiting team was at Fort Campbell. CPT Ranger told Stevens that if he qualified, he would endorse his transfer to attend Special Forces training, even if it meant getting "heat" from the battle group and division. Many in the chain of command highly discouraged soldiers from applying for Special Forces, whether based on the needs of the unit, or simply because they disliked specialty units. That day, Stevens took a battery of tests for Special Forces. "The prospect of slow promotions turned me towards Special Forces, even though in 1963, Special Forces were the two most hated words in the Regular Army," said Stevens.[8] That started his eighteen-year adventure.[9]

When SGT Stevens and SP4 Bleacher attended the Special Forces Qualification Course in 1963, there were three phases—Methods of Instruction, military occupational specialty (MOS) training, and "Branch" training. The first phase, "Methods of Instruction" (MOI) trained the soldier to be an instructor, the primary role of Special Forces. Students had to organize, develop, and present three classes, complete with training aids. The topics ranged from basic rifle marksmanship to field hygiene. "As the final test, you had to prepare three subjects [classes]. Then, the cadre member would pick the class you taught for a grade. If you didn't get through MOI, then you were gone, back to your unit," said Bleacher.[10]

The second phase was devoted to the soldier's specialty (MOS). In the 1960s, Special Forces soldiers were trained in five specialties: weapons, engineer (demolitions), communications, medical, and operations and intelligence (O&I). Weapons men (today's 18B, Special Forces weapons sergeant) were split into heavy and light specialties as a primary MOS and then cross-trained. Today's 18C, Special Forces engineer, was called a "demo man" in the 1960s, but trained to build as well as to blow up things. The "commo men" (18E, Special Forces communications sergeants), trained initially at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, or Fort Gordon, Georgia, on conventional Army radios before being schooled on SF-specific communications equipment at Fort Bragg. The medics (18D, Special Forces medical sergeant) received the majority of their thirty-eight weeks of training at Brooke Army Hospital at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, additional advanced training at the Special Warfare Center, and some with their unit surgeons.[11] The final specialty was operations and intelligence (O&I), today's 18F Special Forces operations and intelligence sergeant, taught at Fort Bragg.[12]

The last phase of training, called "Branch," was centered on unconventional warfare (UW) training. It not only stressed UW, but direct action missions such as raids, ambushes, and reconnaissance. Branch phase culminated in a final field training exercise. For Stevens' class it was called Cherokee Trail I—the predecessor of the current Robin Sage Exercise. While it supposedly was centered on UW, it seemed to Stevens to stress more direct action missions, not unconventional warfare.[13]

Throughout the Special Forces "Q" course, the one thing that struck Lowell Stevens as odd, was that some instructors would say, *"Pay Attention, you might find yourself down south and may need*

Private Lowell Stevens prior to his first jump January 1960 at the 101st Jump School.

SF Setup and Growth

SPECIAL Forces began as a fraction of the U.S. Army's total strength when the 10th Special Forces Group was activated in June 1952 at Fort Bragg under the legendary Colonel Aaron Bank. In 1953, the 10th SFG deployed to the Flint Kaserne at Bad Toelz, Bavaria, West Germany. Before the 10th SFG shipped out to Germany, it was divided in half to create the 77th SFG in September 1953. The 77th would be reflagged as the 7th Special Forces Group in 1961. In 1957, the 1st SFG was established in Japan as a third Special Forces group in the Army. No new SF groups would be established until President John F. Kennedy was elected in 1960.

On 2 April 1956, the Army activated the 14th Special Forces Operational Detachment (Area) (Airborne) at Fort Bragg under the cover of the 8251st Army Unit.[1] This sixteen-man detachment had the overwhelming mission of organizing and training Asian resistance forces against any Chinese or Soviet thrust into Southeast Asia (Indochina, Malaya, South Korea, etc.). Three similar SF detachments were activated in Japan under the cover of the 8231st Army Unit and tasked with a similar mission. These covered SF units came under the operational control (OPCON) of the 1st SFG (Airborne), activated on 24 June 1957 at Camp Drake, Japan (near Tokyo). The 1st SFG relocated to Okinawa in July 1957.[2] The 1st SFG immediately organized mobile training teams to teach U.S. unconventional warfare tactics to training cadres in the armed forces of South Korea, the Philippines, South Vietnam, Taiwan, and Thailand.[3] By 1957, 1st and 7th SFG teams were also conducting Ranger courses for the South Vietnamese army. On 21 October 1957, Captain Harry G. Cramer (assigned to the 14th Special Forces Operational Detachment), was killed in a Viet Cong mortar attack near Nha Trang. He became the first SF soldier to die in Vietnam.[4]

Special Forces and SF missions began to grow in size and scope after John F. Kennedy became president. The three Special Forces groups (1st, 7th, and 10th) had a combined strength of less than 2,500. The 5th SFG was formed at Fort Bragg on 21 September 1961 and deployed to Vietnam in late 1964 to assume command and control of Special Forces throughout the country. [5] As the Cold War intensified, worldwide American Special Forces were expanded in the U.S. Army. By the end of 1963, three additional Special Forces groups had been activated in quick succession—the 8th SFG at Fort Gulick, the Panama Canal Zone on 1 April 1963; the 6th SFG, at Fort Bragg on 1 May 1963; and the 3rd SFG at Fort Bragg on 5 December 1963.[6]

As Special Forces was growing, the demand for soldiers increased. The new Special Forces soldiers needed training, but not all went through the Special Forces Qualification Course (SFQC) at Fort Bragg. As the 1st SFG stood up, some soldiers transferred from the 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team to fill up the new unit. Soldiers from units throughout Germany volunteered for the 10th SFG, especially those with language abilities. Those soldiers underwent extensive "On the Job Training," which included cross-training in military occupational specialties for team, company, and group assignments. Every new recruit cross-trained in two other specialties. MOS-qualified infantryman learned medical or demolitions skills while medics and communicators cross-trained on weapons. Units ran language classes with either soldiers or contracted instructors to give the soldiers language basics. The soldier then had to pass proficiency tests in his primary MOS as well as two others, and serve on an A Team for an indeterminate period. Until training was accomplished, they wore a "candy stripe" bar (with the SFG colors) on their green beret. The soldier was then eligible to be awarded the "3" additional skill identifier ("ASI," later this would be changed to the "S" suffix for SF-qualified soldiers) by the chain of command, and wore the group SF flash on their green beret rather than the second-class "candy stripe."[7]

In the 1960s all soldiers assigned to Special Forces groups wore the green beret. However, SF qualified wore the full group flash. Non-SF–qualified soldiers wore a "candy stripe" in lieu of a full flash on the green beret to distinguish themselves (the full 1st SFG flash is show to the right). The unit crest was worn above the "candy stripe."

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[1] Chalmers Archer Jr., *Green Berets in the Vanguard; Inside Special Forces, 1953–1963* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 27–28; Shelby L. Stanton, *Green Berets at War: US Army Special Forces in Southeast Asia 1956–1975* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1985), 1; Cherilyn A. Walley and Charles H. Briscoe, "SF Detachment 39: SFLE in Korea," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2006, 39–40; Charles M. Simpson III, *Inside the Green Berets, The First Thirty Years* (Navato, CA: Presidio Press, 1983), 50.

[2] Shelby L. Stanton, *Green Berets at War: US Army Special Forces in Southeast Asia 1956–1975* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1985), 5.

[3] Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, 5.

[4] Archer, *Green Berets in the Vanguard*, 72–77; Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, 54.

[5] Colonel Francis J. Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces, 1961–1971* (Washington DC: Center for Military History, 1989), 5.

[6] Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces, 1961–1971*, 5.

[7] Vernon W. Gillespie Jr. and Shirley Gillespie, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 23 February 2006, Locust Grove, Virginia, digital recording, USASOC History Office Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Lowell W. Stevens Sr., interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 27 October 2005, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

this," if something was particularly important. In 1963, Vietnam was not mentioned in training, though many instructors had been there. When one of the instructors slipped and said *Vietnam*, "I went to the post library to look up *Vietnam* in an Atlas. I couldn't find it, because the Atlas was so old that it listed the region as *French Indo China*," said Stevens.[14] Little did he know then, that *Vietnam* would become a household word in the United States in less than five years.[15]

SGT Stevens and SP4 Bleacher arrived in Okinawa just after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy on 22 November 1963. The two were assigned to C Company, 1st SFG, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Elmer Monger. As he entered the company headquarters, SGT Stevens saw eleven memorial plaques on the wall. Each plaque had a green beret and the name of a 1st SFG soldier and the date he was killed in Vietnam. These were some of the first U.S. casualties in Southeast Asia. "That was really an 'attention getter,' because at Fort Bragg the word *Vietnam* was rarely, if ever, spoken and no reference was made to combat there," said Stevens. However, this would soon change for Bleacher and Stevens.[16]

The 1st SFG beret flash from its creation until the assassination of President Kennedy. In 1964, the "mourning strip" was added.

In an overseas SF group, the company sergeant majors had enormous power. With their assignment to C Company, Stevens and Bleacher entered the domain of Sergeant Major Robert DePuy. DePuy wore a 101st Airborne Division combat patch, a Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB), and two gold stars on his master parachutist wings signifying World War II combat jumps (D-Day and Operation MARKET GARDEN). SGM DePuy had one priority—taking care of soldiers so they could accomplish the mission. "But, it was abundantly clear that if you got on his bad side you had a major problem," remembered Stevens.[17]

A sergeant major in the early 1960s had the power to change MOSs to fill vacancies in the unit as well as to support promotions. Though Specialist Bleacher was a light weapons man, SGM DePuy discovered that he was married. His wife and children were still in Fayetteville, because to bring a family overseas a soldier had to be at least a sergeant. DePuy put him into a demolitions position with a proficiency pay ("pro" pay equaled $55 a month). An E-4 in 1963 received about $150 a month, plus $55 for jump pay. "The 'pro' pay was not a gift, I had to earn it," remembered Bleacher, "I had just a short time to train and pass a test to qualify as a Special Forces engineer."[18] In short, a sergeant major's word was law in a unit, but especially so overseas. Since the sergeant major also made all enlisted assignments in the company, Stevens and Bleacher were assigned to Team A-312.[19]

IN MEMORIAM

Memorial plaques in the hallway at C Company, 1st SFG, in 1964. Each represents a C Company SF soldier killed in Vietnam.

In the spring of 1964, several teams received TDY orders for Vietnam. It was 1st SFG's turn in the Vietnam rotation. Team A-312 would replace a 7th SFG team for six months at the Plei Do Lim (Pley-do-lim) CIDG camp southeast of Pleiku. It had been established by Captain Herbert Hardy's A-334 in December 1963. Hardy was killed there on 4 March 1964. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously for leading a three-man counterattack when the Viet Cong ambushed his company three weeks earlier (19 February 1964).[20]

In the 1st SFG, officers were assigned to specific A teams for deployments [missions] only. Team sergeants throughout the Group vied for candidates to fill their elements, especially when scheduled to deploy. They wanted the best soldiers available. The team sergeants built their teams with the advice of the company sergeant major. The senior team NCOs and the company sergeant major selected the team leader and got the approval of the company commander. Once the team leader was selected, he and the NCOs would select an executive officer from the available first lieutenants in the Group.[21]

SGM DePuy and the NCOs of A-312 selected Captain Vernon W. Gillespie Jr., an Oklahoma native and Infantry Officer Candidate School

Captain Herbert Francis Hardy Jr., the commander of A-334, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), was killed in action on 4 March 1964 on a patrol near Plei Do Lim, the Republic of Vietnam. CPT Hardy was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross posthumously for actions against the Viet Cong on 19 February 1964.

(OCS) graduate who was one of the more experienced captains in 1st SFG. As an infantry officer, he had served at Fort Benning, Georgia; at Fort Meyer, Virginia; and in Iceland. Gillespie later was awarded a Regular Army commission in the Field Artillery. Since Regular Army commissions were extremely competitive and hard to obtain, Gillespie accepted the branch transfer and was assigned to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, "the Home of the Artillery." A secondary benefit was that it was close to both his and his wife Shirley's families.[22]

As a student of military history, Gillespie's interest in irregular warfare drew him to Special Forces. In 1960, he attended a guerilla warfare course at Fort Benning. After completing the Field Artillery officers career course in October 1962, Gillespie volunteered for Special Forces. In 1962, SF was critically short officers because of its expansion. Gillespie attended a two-month long counter guerilla operations course at the Special Warfare Center. The combination of his two guerilla warfare courses was sufficient to waive the "Q" course requirement because of the shortage of team leaders. After two months of French language training, "I was able to finagle an assignment to 1st SFG, because I wanted to take an A Team to Vietnam."[23]

CPT Vernon Gillespie arrived on Okinawa in December 1962, and was immediately assigned to command Team A-124. Foreshadowing the next few years in SF, Shirley Gillespie with their two young sons, Richard, age six, and Stewart, age three, arrived on Okinawa a few weeks later, just days before Vernon deployed to Vietnam. In February 1963, Gillespie's Team A-124 deployed to Khe Sanh (kay saw). They transformed a Montagnard Bru tribe into a CIDG unit and used it to track North Vietnamese Army units that were infiltrating into Vietnam from Laos. The Bru lived near the border of North Vietnam in the I Corps sector. He also had another deployment in Asia and some staff time at the Group headquarters. After being selected to command A-312, Gillespie and his NCOs had four months to prepare for their six-month TDY in Vietnam.[24]

One of the first things that CPT Gillespie did was to articulate his "Rules for Deployment." First, the primary mission of the team was to gain the trust and respect of the Montagnards. Second, disrespectful treatment of a Montagnard was grounds for return to Okinawa for courts-martial. Finally, sexual relations with a Montagnard woman was grounds for return to Okinawa for courts-martial. Since ten of the team members had previously served in Vietnam, a few with several deployments under their belts, Gillespie's rules were accepted and perfectly understood.[25]

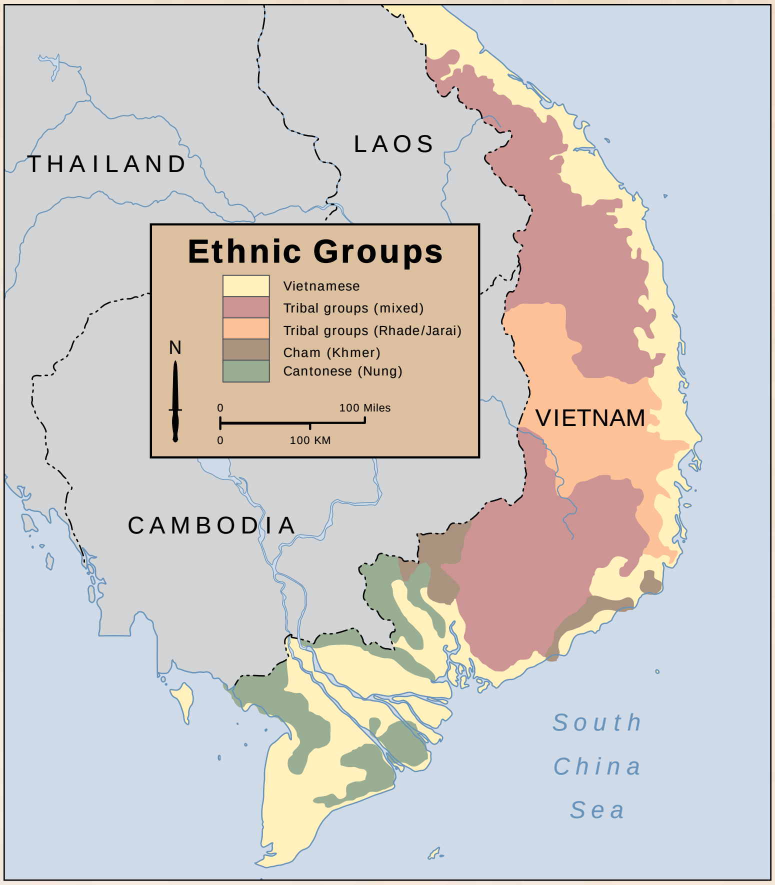
Team A-312's soldiers underwent extensive preparations before their deployment to Vietnam. Initial mission preparation included an extensive area study of Vietnam, with a special emphasis on the Central Highlands in the II Corps area. They received French classes three hours each day when not in the field. Heavy weapons training was done at Camp Hardy in the northern training area of Okinawa.[26] Team members cross-trained in various specialties and attended medical and communications classes conducted by the 1st SFG staff. SGT Stevens attended a three-week medical class. When he arrived, it turned out to be a specialty class for medics. "I learned more about childbirth than I really cared to know, although the knowledge would later be helpful with the Montagnards," said Stevens. [27] While Special Forces deployment training today is similar—cross-training in weapons, medical, and communications—one aspect was unique to 1st SFG.[28]

Captain Vernon Gillespie (on the right), the commander of A-312, on patrol with some of the Montagnard CIDG. Sergeant Lowell Stevens is on the left holding a captured Viet Cong flag.

A standard part of pre-deployment training was called "compatibility week." Conducted in the northern training area of Okinawa, the entire team spent a week playing pinochle. Twice a day, the communications sergeants made a radio check with company headquarters. The purpose of the exercise was to find out whether all twelve men could live in an isolated environment as a team without killing each other. "If at the end of the week there was anyone who couldn't work together, they would be gone. I wanted a fully capable team ready for Vietnam," remembered Gillespie.[29] Everyone survived. Team A-312 was compatible and ready for Vietnam.

Since they would be at a remote location, each team member received a special per diem allowance of $9. With the advance pay, all soldiers chipped in $200 each for the team food fund (this was roughly the equivalent of a month's pay). The team sergeant bought canned and packaged food in Okinawa for shipment to Vietnam. Additional supplies could be purchased at the Navy commissary in Saigon. A cook and kitchen helpers were hired locally, normally the same ones used by the previous team.[30]

Two unexpected attachments to A-312 were a pair of Malayan Sun Bear cubs. They had been brought from Vietnam by another team, A-124. Importation of Sun Bears was illegal under U.S. and Okinawan law. The compromise with the authorities was that the next SF team going to Vietnam would take the bears off the island. That team was A-312.



Montagnard Tribes

THE story of Special Forces in Vietnam is entwined with the "Montagnards." The term "Montagnard" is French, simply meaning "mountain people." The Montagnards are the aboriginal people (ethnically from Mon-Khmer or Malayo-Polynesian groups) who, centuries earlier, had been driven into the mountain highlands by the Vietnamese.[1] The lowland ethnic Vietnamese used the pejorative term "moi," meaning "savage" and treated them with contempt. U.S. Special Forces simply called them "Yards," a term of endearment. From 1962 on, Special Forces in the Republic of Vietnam were increasingly deployed in the highlands to work with the "Montagnards."

Vietnam contained between 600,000 to 1,000,000 Montagnards comprising twenty-nine tribal groups, most of whom hated the lowland Vietnamese and the Republic of Vietnam (south) almost as much as they despised the Communist-led Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the north.[2] The two largest tribes were the Rhade and Jarai. After the 1955 Geneva Accords partition of Vietnam into north and south, tension grew between the Montagnards and the RVN government when refugees from North Vietnam were resettled in the highland areas, often on Montagnard lands. This resettlement was organized and sanctioned by the government in Saigon.

The Montagnard longhouse was the home for several generations of a family. The woman at the front is shelling rice, to her rear are chickens.

Montagnard refugees fleeing the VC outside the gate at Buon Brieng. They were temporarily housed in tents until a new village site could be arranged and built.

The Montagnards were primarily a matriarchal society. Women owned all property and generally controlled most village activities. The extended family was the basis of Montagnard society, with several family groups forming a village. The village adults elected the village leaders, including the headman or chief. Shamans (sorcerers or witches) had enormous power within the village.

The basic Montagnard dwelling was the longhouse. Built on stilts, it was constructed of bamboo, logs, straw (thatch), and palm fronds. Montagnard villages had between five and thirty longhouses, with a population ranging from 200 to 800 people. The terrain and subsistence environment determined the size of the village. Most Montagnards practiced "slash and burn" agriculture, and grew rice, corn and vegetables. Meat came from hunting and raising pigs, chickens, and ducks.[3]

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[1] Charles M. Simpson III, *Inside the Green Berets, The First Thirty Years* (Navato, CA: Presidio Press, 1983), 100; Shelby L. Stanton, *Green Berets at War: US Army Special Forces in Southeast Asia 1956–1975* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1985), 38–39.

[2] Colonel Francis J. Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces, 1961–1971* (Washington DC: Center for Military History, 1989), 20.

[3] *Ronald A. Shackleton, Village Defense: Initial Special Forces Operations in Vietnam* (Arvada, CO: Phoenix Press, 1975), 5; U.S. Army Special Warfare School, *Montagnard Tribal Groups of the Republic of South Viet-Nam* (Fort Bragg, NC: U.S. Army Special Warfare School, July 1964).

The night before leaving for Vietnam, Sergeant Ronald Wingo, Specialist 4 George Underwood, and SGT Lowell Stevens thought that it was a shame that the bears had not seen much of Okinawa. In a moment of inspiration, they decided to take the male bear into Naminoue to the Sunflower Bar, one of their favorite watering holes. While Underwood distracted the Okinawan taxi driver, Wingo and Stevens pulled the bear into the cab, pushing it down on the floor behind the front seat. The plan was working until the bear broke free, stood up, and placed both paws on the back of the front seat. When the driver turned his head, the bear was only inches from him. Panic stricken, the driver slammed on the brakes and jumped from the taxi, screaming "Kuma," the Japanese word for "bear." It took all three soldiers and some extra money to finally convince him to take them all downtown. In the bar, the bear was a big hit with the girls, but caused problems with the other patrons. The Okinawan police and MPs were called. Using a "Keystone Cops" trick one soldier ran out of the bar just as the police arrived and pointed down the street, shouted, "They went that way!" The police and MPs were running away down the street when the three soldiers and the bear escaped in the opposite direction, hailed a taxi, and headed back to the base.[31]

The Malaysian Sun Bears A-312 had to bring back to Vietnam. The bears are not cubs, they are fully-grown.

Once discovered, the bears were out of the footlockers.

When they returned to the barracks, CPT Gillespie, who was not amused, met the three culprits. The three knew that they were in big trouble. "A team commander had a lot of power. We could have lost a stripe or even been kicked out of the unit, especially since it was the night before a deployment," said Stevens. After a brief lecture about responsibility, Gillespie decided that the "bar hoppers" would load all of the team's equipment on the C-124 by themselves. Whether the bear helped cannot be remembered.[32]

Another problem still had to be resolved: how to get the bear cubs on the aircraft without the loadmaster and pilot finding out. "Then someone remembered that if you rubbed the bear's stomach, they fell into an almost catatonic sleep for a few hours," said Gillespie.[33] The bears were tucked away in footlockers and, with their bellies rubbed, drifted off to sleep. Quickly and carefully, the footlockers were loaded. Once the plane reached cruising altitude, everyone fell asleep. While the "good paratroopers" slept, the bears woke up and began clawing the insides of the footlockers trying to get out. The loud scratching startled the unsuspecting Air Force crew chief. "Suddenly I was awakened by the crew chief shaking me and I was ordered to the cockpit," remembered Gillespie. "The pilot told me in no uncertain terms that he would declare an emergency and return to Okinawa if the bears did anything that might jeopardize the aircraft."[34] CPT Gillespie convinced the pilot that the team would keep the bears under control and out of trouble. For the rest of the flight, one of the soldiers kept the bears quiet with food and belly rubs.[35]

When A-312 arrived at Nha Trang, headquarters of the U.S. Army Special Forces, Vietnam (Provisional), the mission had changed. Instead of going to Plei Do Lim, the team would work at Buon Brieng (B-won Bring), a camp established by A-321 from the 7th SFG. After a C-47 flight to Ban Me Thout, A-312 flew in UH-1B helicopters for a short flight to Buon Brieng.[36]

In 1964, Buon Brieng was one of the largest CIDG camps in II Corps. It had been built around a Montagnard village. CPT Gillespie's A-312 joined a Vietnamese Special Forces team to work with a battalion-sized Montagnard strike force. Five CIDG companies (about 750 men) made up the force. Each company was organized as a light infantry company with a headquarters section and four platoons of thirty Montagnards armed with World War II surplus weapons—primarily M1 and M2 carbines, M3 submachine guns ("Grease Guns"), Browning Automatic Rifles (BARs), and M1919A6 .30 caliber light machineguns. The camp had two M79 grenade launchers that were rotated among elements going out on patrol.[37]

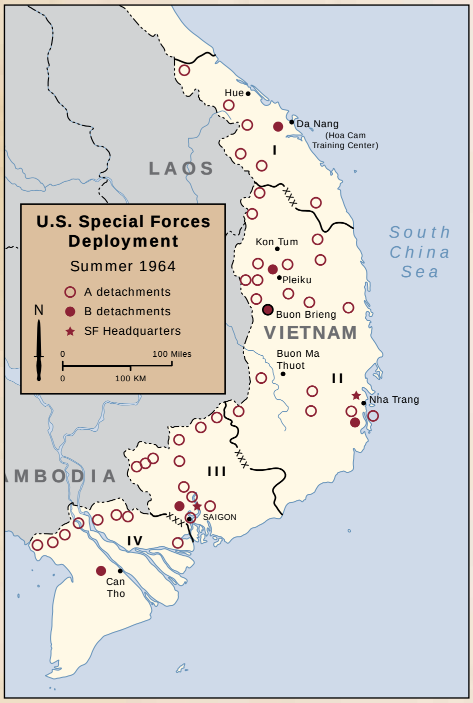
The SF supplied and paid the CIDG strike force soldiers. Monthly pay ranged between 500 to 1,000 Vietnamese piasters per month (in 1964 the exchange rate was about seventy-three piasters to one dollar, so a striker was paid between $6.85 to $13.70 a month), depending on his duties. The pay was more than a soldier in the Vietnamese Army would make and three times more a month than the average Montagnard. For food, every Montagnard CIDG striker was issued a cup of uncooked rice and a can of fish daily in camp. On patrols, they were issued two cups of uncooked rice and two cans of fish a day. Truck convoys from Ban Me Thout brought in most supplies, but some arrived in U.S. Army planes and helicopters at the small airstrip adjacent to the camp.[38]

Officially, the American SF just advised the Mon-

The CIDG Program

In the early 1960s, most SF missions in Vietnam concentrated on the Civilian Irregular Defense Groups (CIDG) program. Originally begun by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the CIDG program initiated training and equipping indigenous forces to fight the Viet Cong. It was designed to combat VC recruitment and break their control in rural areas. This was especially critical in remote areas like the Central Highlands of the II Corps area (sometimes called the II Corps Tactical Zone). In many of these remote areas, the Viet Cong ruled because the Army of Vietnam (ARVN, pronounced ar-vin) did not venture into those areas.

Rather than simply cede the remote areas to the Viet Cong, a joint CIA–Special Forces team developed the CIDG program. The CIA identified the Montagnards as potential anti-communist allies. The CIDG program would organize and train companies of primarily Montagnard tribesmen to protect their villages and combat the Viet Cong. The French had good success with the Montagnards as irregular troops. The CIDG forces were not a part of the ARVN. They were funded and directed by the United States primarily through the Special Forces A Teams that trained and advised them. However, actual command of the CIDG had been relegated to the Vietnamese Special Forces, the Lực Lượng Đặc Biệt (LLDB).[1]



The SF-supported pilot project for the CIDG program in Vietnam began in the Darlac Province village of Buon Enao (pronounced Boon-ee-now).[2] The camp was located in the heart of Rhade (pronounced Rah-Dey) territory. The Rhade were one of the two largest Montagnard tribes. Special Forces Team A-113 (a seven-man 1st SFG element), led by Captain Ronald Shackleton, and a counterpart team of ten Vietnamese Special Forces arrived in Buon Enao in February 1962 to train a full-time strike force and village self-defense force. The composition of the Vietnamese Special Forces team at Buon Enao fluctuated, but an effort was made to ensure that it was at least 50 percent Montagnard (Rhade and Jarai). A-113 also trained village medics and supervised local civic action projects.[3]

From November 1961 to November 1962, the Central Intelligence Agency controlled the CIDG program. The responsibility changed between September 1962 and July 1963, when control was gradually shifted to the U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) and U.S. Army Special Forces–Vietnam (Provisional). The transition was codenamed Operation SWITCHBACK. After Captain Shackleton and A-113 established the first CIDG camp in 1962, the program was rapidly expanded to outlying villages. By the end of 1963, there were thirty CIDG camps. A year later, there were forty camps. Then it was expanded to cover all of Vietnam.[4] From July 1963 to the spring of 1965, when major Army and Marine Corps conventional units were sent to Vietnam, MACV administered the CIDG program. When the 5th SFG arrived, the MACV administered the program through them.[5]

The Viet Cong or "VC" were the common names for the National Liberation Front. The term is derived from the Vietnamese name Viet Nam Cong San, translated into English it is simply "Vietnamese Communist."

As the CIDG program expanded, other minority groups were enrolled. During the course of the war, Special Forces soldiers advised and led strike forces of Montagnards, Kampucheas (ethnic Cambodians), and Nungs (ethnic Chinese). The CIDG program also included the Vietnamese Cao Dai and Hoa Hao religious sects (two anti-communist groups). By 1965, CIDG units and camps existed in each of the four Corps areas.

CIDG "strikers" with Lowell Stevens and Burhl Cunningham on patrol.

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[1] Charles M. Simpson III, *Inside the Green Berets, The First Thirty Years* (Navato, CA: Presidio Press, 1983), 102.

[2] Colonel Francis J. Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces, 1961–1971* (Washington DC: Center for Military History, 1989), 12–14.

[3] In some reports and articles Shackleton's team, A-113 is misidentified as A-35. *Ronald A. Shackleton, Village Defense: Initial Special Forces Operations in Vietnam* (Arvada, CO: Phoenix Press, 1975), v; Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces, 1961–1971*, 26.

[4] Simpson, *Inside the Green Berets*, 113; Shelby L. Stanton, *Green Berets at War: US Army Special Forces in Southeast Asia 1956–1975* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1985), 41–43.

[5] Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces, 1961–1971*, 15.

tagnards, but in reality, they commanded the CIDG Montagnard units. The Lực Lượng Đặc Biệt (LLDB), Vietnamese Special Forces, were in charge of the CIDG, but they rarely left camp. They were content with the SF arrangement. During patrols, two Americans would "officially" advise; however, they were the command and control element for the Montagnards. Every camp had an assigned area of responsibility. In theory, as more camps were established and patrols expanded, the Viet Cong would be driven out of the area.[39]

The first priority of work for A-312 was security. Although the camp's defenses were robust, they were constantly being improved. A-312 added more M-18 claymore mines to those already in place, raising the number to more than 500 around the perimeter. Between the outer concertina barbed wire and the inner perimeter bunkers was 100 yards of "tangle foot," barbed wire to slow an attacker that penetrated the outer concertina wire. The weapons and demo sergeants supervised the improvement of the camp defenses. Machineguns were emplaced in bunkers around the perimeter. "Every night, either myself or Burhl [Cunningham, the other weapons sergeant] would go around the camp and check the headspace and timing of the machineguns before test firing every one," said Stevens.[40] If the VC attacked, they met fierce resistance.[41]

One of SGT Stevens' primary concerns were the camp's mortars. If a VC attack hit the camp, its main fire support would come from the single 81mm and four 60mm mortars. Key to defense against VC attack was accurate target reference points (TRPs). To establish their accuracy, Stevens would fire 81mm and 60mm rounds with the safety pins in place. SF team members would park a 2½ ton truck at the designated target reference point. From underneath, they called in adjustments. This was the most accurate way to adjust the fire. The mortars had to function properly at all times because it was the primary fire support. Other fire support, namely close air, might come later, but the team knew they could trust Stevens to put accurate and deadly fire on any attacker.[42]

The CIDG strike force companies at Buon Brieng rotated duty much like American units. One company would conduct a long-range patrol to attack the VC supply routes. A second company manned the camp's perimeter, improved positions, and conducted combat patrols around the camp (up to five kilometers) to thwart staging attacks. The third company would train locally and provide security for the camp at night. The fourth company "stood down," but they were subject to recall to reinforce if anyone needed assistance. The final company conducted civil military operations primarily with displaced Montagnard refugees.[43]

Training Montagnards was a new experience for SGT Stevens and SP4 Bleacher. Though both had experience training U.S. soldiers, the Montagnards were different. The highly intelligent Montagnards could not understand abstract concepts of training. If the skill being taught did not affect one of their five senses, it was hard to convince the indigenous fighters that it was necessary or dangerous. The best example was the proper use of

Camp Buon Brieng

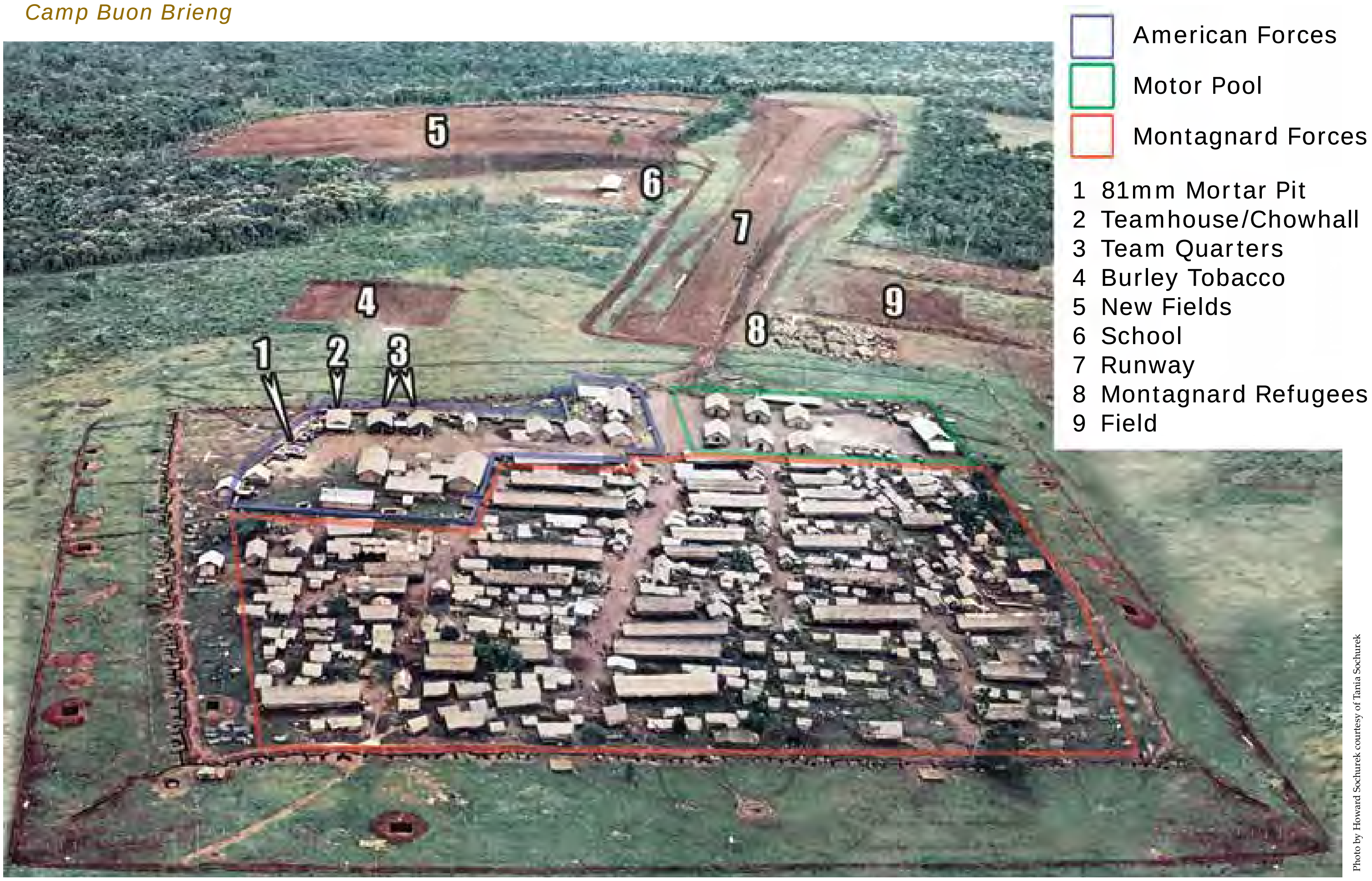
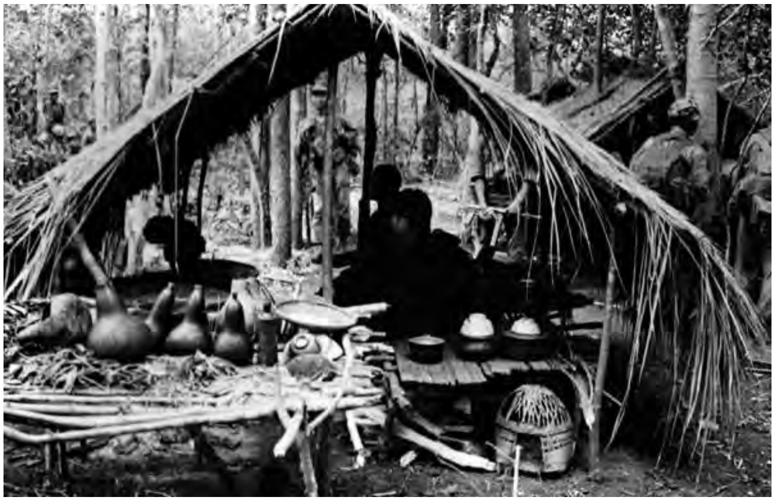


Photo by Howard Sochurek courtesy of Tania Sochurek

The camp's 81mm mortar, Sergeant Lowell Stevens place of duty when not on patrol. The 81mm with the 60mm mortars were the camp's fire support.

hand grenades. After throwing the grenade, American soldiers dropped to a prone position. The Montagnards stood and clapped when it exploded. Stevens tried in vain to explain that the exploding grenade threw deadly fragments about. The "Yards" (the SF nickname for the Montagnards) reasoned that only the black explosion cloud was dangerous. Since they could not see the shrapnel in the air, it simply was not there. No matter how hard Stevens tried to explain the danger, they simply did not believe. Finally, quite frustrated he began throwing the grenades shorter and shorter distances. Eventually, a piece of shrapnel struck one of the standing Montagnard platoon leaders in the neck. The Strikers gathered around their stricken leader while a medic applied first aid. Teaching point made, Stevens got them to pay attention to the physics of a grenade explosion. The platoon leader survived with a small scar, and the "Yards" accepted the dangers of a hand grenade in later combat operations.[44]

There were two enemies in the Central Highlands (the II Corps area), the Viet Cong (VC) and what were called the Viet Montagnard Cong (VMC). The VC were ethnic Vietnamese who traced their lineage to the Viet Minh, the communist-supported movement that fought against the Japanese and then the French for independence in Indochina. The VMC worked with the VC units in Montagnard areas. Many had been pressed into service by the Viet Cong as guerillas to control local populations and to guard "way stations" in the vast supply network. Special Forces soldiers recognized firefights with VMC units because there were rarely any casualties on either side. There was a lot of shooting and then contact was broken. It ended there, without pursuit or calls for artillery or close air support. The Montagnards on both sides shot six to eight feet high. They had no wish to hurt their brothers or the Americans. On the other hand, if the Montagnard CIDG made contact with a VC element, the fighting was tough and almost ruthless.[45]

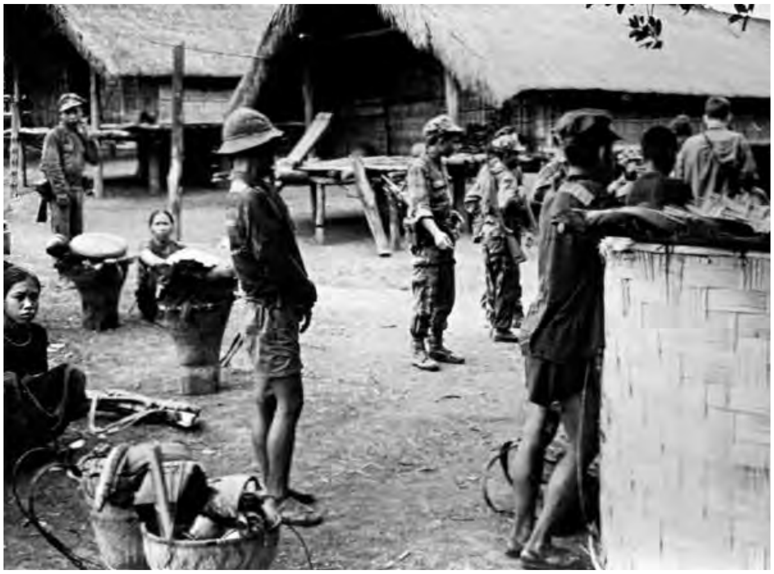


Viet Cong supply "way station" located a day's march along the VC supply network

The VC and North Vietnamese moved supplies through the area from Laos and Cambodia. Montagnards were forced into service as porters ("coolies"), to man pack the supplies to "way stations" or rest areas along the route. These were one day's march apart. Three to four VC guards escorted the supply column to make sure the Montagnards did not escape. The CIDG at Buon Brieng routinely sent out patrols to attack the supply route "way stations." The supplies and buildings were burned. The CIDG brought the VC prisoners and any Montagnard porters back to Buon Brieng. The Montagnards could return to their villages or remain in the camp. As the CIDG patrols became more successful, the VC altered supply routes.[46]

On patrol with the CIDG, the Americans quickly adapted to the Montagnard nomadic routines. The Army did not have a field ration for indigenous troops. Since the SF were paid per diem, they were not authorized C-Rations. The Americans "lived like the natives." The patrol would stop once a day, around noon, to cook their rice. "Picture this scene," said SGT Stevens. "As we walked through the jungle, practically every Montagnard carried a medium-size cook pot, blackened on the outside from wood cooking fires, hanging on the rear of his rucksack, secured with pieces of rope or, in most cases, jungle vines. As we neared the noon hour, the troops would begin pulling and cutting edible plants from the jungle as we walked. They would place the vegetation on the top of the rucksack, or on top of the cook pot carried by the man in front of them. It didn't take long before essentially every Montagnard looked like he was carry-

The patrol burns the VC "way station."



Patrol in a Montagnard village. In the center of the photo is a VC prisoner (dressed in shorts and a "boonie cap" with his hands tied in front). The striker on the right is leaning on the village communal latrine.

On patrol cooking with a "Hongo." Left to right: Ron Wingo, Burhl Cunningham, and Team Sergeant Marv Compton.

ing a bale of freshly cut greens."[47]

At noon, the patrol would set up a security perimeter and begin lunch. The Americans used an Okinawan "Hongo" rice cooker, a kidney shaped pot with a tight fitting lid and a wire carrying handle that was used to suspend it over a fire. Inside the Hongo were two recessed lines showing the required level for the dry rice and the correct water level required to cook the rice. "One could say it was idiot proof. We learned early on that a standard issue brown cushion soled sock, preferably a clean one, when filled with dry rice to the point that only enough of the top was left to tie a knot in the material, was the precise amount of rice to last seven days," remembered Stevens.[48] The patrol would cook a pot of rice, and then empty it, usually on top of a makeshift table/plate made of banana leaves. The patrol then repeated the process, setting the pots aside to cool since that was the evening meal's rice. The Americans carried luxuries like dehydrated chicken soup, onions, and C-Ration peanut butter to round out their meals. "Growing wild throughout the jungle were the smallest hot peppers I have ever seen. The peppers were only ¼ to ⅜ of an inch long, but they are by far the hottest peppers I have ever eaten. I have always prided myself on my ability to eat hot spicy food, but these were beyond belief," Stevens recalled.[49] While not on patrol, the team's efforts centered on camp defense.

Destroyed 2½ ton truck that SP4 George Underwood was traveling in when ambushed..

As the American-led CIDG patrols became more aggressive, the VC looked to retaliate. With the camp well-situated tactically and strongly defended, an outright attack would result in heavy VC casualties and might end in their defeat. Another option was to ambush a patrol, but all went out heavily armed. On 23 July 1964, a VC battalion on the QL-14 road from Ban Me Thout to Pleiku ambushed a four-truck convoy lead by Specialist Fourth Class George Underwood, the A-312 junior medic. Underwood and thirty-nine Montagnards were killed in "…a well laid out ambush with dug-in positions."[50] A few women and children and some CIDG survived, because First Lieutenant John Horn, the team executive officer, and Specialist Fifth Class Vincent Skeeba, the team operations and intelligence sergeant, led the camp reaction force on a rescue operation. A nearby patrol hurried to the "sound of the guns" to reinforce the reaction force. Skeeba and Horn were later awarded Silver Stars for their effort. Underwood became the forty-fifth SF soldier to die in Vietnam (the thirty-third killed in action). His plaque was added to the wall at the 1st SFG.[51]

After the ambush, the camp leaders approached CPT Gillespie about a problem. The Montagnards believed the ambush had brought "evil spirits" to the camp and they would continue to plague the unit unless a proper sacrifice was made.[52] The ceremony included a water buffalo sacrifice and imbibing in a Montagnard rice wine called "Nhom Pae." "Montagnard women would chew the rice for a while and spit the mixture of rice and saliva into large ceramic jugs," said Stevens. "The saliva was a fermenting agent for the wine."[53] As the Americans drank the Nhom Pae through long reeds, the Montagnard shaman chanted and daubed their feet with the blood of the sacrificed buffalo to drive the evil spirits away. Meanwhile "Montagnard girls danced in a tribal manner to a tune on brass gongs."[54] At the conclusion of the ceremony, the Montagnards placed copper bracelets on the Americans as a sign of the friendship. The spirits satisfied the camp went back to work.

The SF team missions in Buon Brieng were not limited to combat operations. Integrated into the overall mission was a robust program of Civil Military Operations

U.S. ARMY
3B7800

Specialist Fifth Class Vincent Skeeba behind a .30 caliber machinegun mounted on a ¾-ton truck. To his rear are part of the reaction force that fought to the ambush site.

The Buon Brieng "hospital" run by the team's medics was the only medical care facility for many miles. The medics cared for the strike force, their families, and pretty much everyone else in the area.

(CMO). As Montagnard refugees fled VC-controlled areas, they flocked to Buon Brieng and other CIDG camps for safety. Not all of the refugees were housed inside the camp perimeter, nor did Special Forces want them there for security (force protection) reasons. Consequently, small villages sprang up around the camp, like the suburbs of a city. The Special Forces and CIDG assisted in the construction of the new villages. The Montagnards planted gardens to grow their own food. When the population grew to more than 5,000 Montagnards in and around the Buon Brieng CIDG camp, A-312 hired a teacher for the children. Montagnards were treated as third-class citizens by the Vietnamese government. The Americans realized that education could bring them into the twentieth century and increase their socio-economic power.[55]

Typical of all Special Forces "A-Camps," the medics operated an aid station, which became the *de facto* hospital for the area. The medics ("Bac Si," in Vietnamese) treated the Montagnard CIDG strike force and their families. The Buon Brieng "hospital" was the only medical facility for Montagnards in the area. The nearest Vietnamese government clinic was in Ban Me Thout. Often Montagnards walked several days to bring their sick to camp for medical care. Sometimes the medics went to outlying villages. The medics could go to villages unmolested because many people treated were VMC family members. Refugees had to be medically screened and treated to prevent disease from spreading to the SF camp. The humanitarian services enabled the SF to "keep the pulse" on enemy activities in the area. The medics dealt with a variety of health issues, from tuberculosis to childbirth. The SF medics also trained some Montagnards to serve as medics for the strike force. Humanitarian civic action went beyond people.[56]

Introduction of better agricultural techniques and heartier livestock was designed to improve Montagnard food production. Yorkshire pigs from the United States were brought to crossbreed with native Vietnamese pigs to grow bigger animals and provide more nutritious food for the Montagnards. The A-312 team sergeant, Master Sergeant Marvin Compton, wanted to improve the quality of the locally grown Montagnard tobacco. Friends in Kentucky sent him Burley tobacco seeds. Compton supervised the planting by the Montagnards and enjoyed some of the crop.[57] The first half of A-312's tour in Buon Brieng was typical for Special Forces A Teams serving in the Republic of Vietnam between 1961

The Montagnard ceremony to drive out the "evil spirits" after the ambush included copious amounts of "Nhom Pae," rice wine sucked through long reeds. Left to right: Earl Bleacher, Burhl Cunningham, Gene Bell, and Lowell Stevens.

Master Sergeant Marvin Compton's contribution to the Montagnards of Buon Brieng, Kentucky Burley tobacco.

and 1964.

CIDG base camps were established and Montagnards organized into CIDG strike forces. Many camps were built from scratch. Strike Force soldiers were recruited and trained while veterans received sustainment training. The Special Forces soldiers from 1st and 7th SFGs quickly adjusted to the six-month TDYs in Vietnam. The second half of A-312's tour took a surprising turn when they became entangled in a major Montagnard revolt organized against the ARVN, now referred to as the Montagnard Uprising of September 1964.[58]

The Montagnard Uprising will be the subject of an article in Veritas 3:2, *scheduled for release in Spring 2007.*

The author wishes to thank Lowell Stevens, Earl Bleacher, Ronald Wingo, and Vernon Gillespie for their help with this article. The photo of Camp Buon Brieng is courtesy of Tania Sochurek, all others are from Lowell Stevens.

Robert W. Jones Jr. is a historian assigned to the USASOC History Office and is a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army Reserve. A graduate of the University of Washington, he earned his MA from Duke University and his MS from Troy State University. Current research interests include Special Forces in Vietnam 1960–1966, military government and civil affairs, special operations in World War II, Operation JUST CAUSE, and Operation ENDURING FREEDOM.

Endnotes

1 Most readers are more familiar with the current operational detachment alpha (ODA), however from the late 1950s until the late 1970s, the term usually used by the Special Forces soldiers to describe the basic element was "A Teams;" Brigadier General James Lawton Collins Jr., *Vietnam Studies, The Development and Training of the South Vietnamese Army 1950–1972* (Washington DC: Center for Military History, 1991), 38; By the beginning of 1965, the U.S. Army Special Forces Group Vietnam (Provisional) had a strength of less than 1,300 assigned and attached, to a high of 3,725 by 1968 assigned to the 5th Special Forces Group, Colonel Francis J. Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces, 1961–1971* (Washington DC: Center for Military History, 1989), 5.

2 Earl Bleacher, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 18 November 2005, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Lowell W. Stevens Sr., interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 27 October 2005, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

3 Stevens interview, 13 October 2005; Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005.

4 Today Millersville State Teachers College is Millersville University and is located in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania; Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005.

5 Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005.

6 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005; The M274 Mule was a small 4x4 wheeled vehicle with a 4-cylinder 14 horsepower gasoline engine that was meant to carry mortars, 106mm recoilless rifles, and other equipment for light infantry and airborne units.

7 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

8 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

9 Stevens interview, 13 October 2005.

10 Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

11 Charles M. Simpson III, *Inside the Green Berets, The First Thirty Years* (Navato, CA: Presidio Press, 1983), xiii.

12 Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005; Ronald Wingo, e-mail to Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 27 November 2005, USASOC History Office Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Ian D.W. Sutherland, *Special Forces of the United States Army 1952–1982* (San Jose, CA: R. James Bender Publishing, 1990), 142–44.

13 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

14 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

15 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

16 Colonel Monger was a two time Combat Infantryman's Badge recipient and later became the commander of the 3rd SFG until it was inactivated on 1 December 1969 at Fort Bragg; Stevens interview 27 October 2005.

17 Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

18 Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005.

19 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

20 Vernon W. Gillespie Jr. and Shirley Gillespie, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 23 February 2006, Locust Grove, Virginia, digital recording, USASOC History Office Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Shelby L. Stanton, *Green Berets at War: US Army Special Forces in Southeast Asia 1956–1975* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1985), 78.

21 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006.

22 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006.

23 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006.

24 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006.

25 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006; Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

26 Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, 78; Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006; Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

27 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

28 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

29 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006; Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

30 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

31 Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

32 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006; Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

33 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006.

34 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006.

35 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006; Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

36 Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

37 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006; Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

38 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

39 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006; Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

40 Stevens interview, 13 October 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

41 Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Wingo e-mail, 27 November 2005.

42 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005; Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005.

43 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

44 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

45 Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

46 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

47 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005, and Stevens e-mail.

48 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005, and Stevens e-mail.

49 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005, and Stevens e-mail.

50 Vincent J. Skeeba, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 13 February 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

51 Stevens interview, 13 October 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005; Skeeba interview.

52 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

53 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

54 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

55 Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005.

56 Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

57 Gillespie interview, 23 February 2006; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

58 Bleacher interview, 18 November 2005; Stevens interview, 27 October 2005.

RIGGER SECTION
AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY
PUT TOOLS AWAY

Supplying the Resistance:

OSS Logistics Support to Special Operations in Europe

by Troy J. Sacquety

This article on OSS logistics was prompted by gaining access to Lieutenant Colonel Fitzhugh Chandler's photo album, courtesy of his son, William Chandler. The logistics capability of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during World War II has rarely been studied. LTC Chandler was the commanding officer of OSS Area H in England, the facility that provided weapons and supplies to the French Resistance, as well as to OSS Operational Groups (OGs), Special Operations (SO), Jedburgh, and Secret Intelligence (SI) teams.[1] Resupply was critical in helping those fighters waging a resistance war against German occupation. Without material support, these OSS teams could not have accomplished their missions. This article explains what was done at Area H, and how those supplies were delivered behind enemy lines.

On 26 June 1942, the OSS and its British equivalent, the Special Operations Executive (SOE), agreed to divide the world into regions in which one service would have primacy over the other.[2] The SOE retained Western Europe, and it was decided that the OSS SO would operate there under general SOE supervision, but would retain its independence.[3] By 14 January 1944, SO and SOE had combined their headquarters to enhance coordination.[4] This arrangement facilitated an exchange of personnel between the two organizations.

While the British had excellent operational capabilities, they had been fighting since 1939 and lacked material. The fledgling SO branch had to build a supply chain in England to assist in the Allied liberation of Europe, as the SOE could not also support OSS operations. The first step was to get aircraft capable of clandestinely delivering supplies into occupied Europe. On 5 May 1943, the SO branch requested a bomber squadron to drop agents and supplies into German-occupied Europe from the U.S.

LT. COL. F.H. CHANDLER

Lieutenant Colonel Fitzhugh Chandler was the commanding officer of Area H. After service in England, Chandler served with the OSS in China. He later made the transition from OSS to the Strategic Services Unit (SSU) and later served at Fort Bragg.

Area H at Holmewood, UK, as seen from the air.

A modified B-24 Liberator of the 492/801st Bomb Group, or "Carpetbaggers" takes off from RAF Harrington in 1944.

Stacks of British Enfield rifles await packing into containers.

Army Air Force (USAAF).[5] Five months later, after considerable pressure from the OSS Director, Major General William Donovan, SO received its sixteen-plane squadron with the promise of another by the end of the year.[6]

The B-24 squadron commanded by Colonel Clifford Heflin had originally been formed for anti-submarine duty.[7] Redesignated the 801st Bomb Group, but popularly known as "Carpetbaggers" [after their mission code name, Operation CARPETBAGGER], the 801st became the USAAF element that would conduct nighttime supply drops to resistance and special operations groups in German-occupied Europe. The first CARPETBAGGER missions were flown out of Royal Air Force (RAF) Tempsford in January 1944.[8] The 801st aircrews were sent to RAF Tempsford to learn from SOE air teams and to be trained in clandestine supply operations. Then, after a short stint at Alconbury, the 801st moved its airbase to Harrington. There, the Carpetbaggers grew to four sixteen-plane squadrons with 2,500 airmen.[9] On 13 August 1944, the 801st was redesignated the 492nd Bombardment Group, and its squadrons renamed: 36th to 856th, 406th to 858th, 850th to 857th, and 788th to 859th.[10]

With airlift resolved, the OSS needed a logistics base in England where it could accumulate, store, and prepare items for airdrop into occupied Europe. A memo dated 6 July 1943 from Colonel Charles Vanderblue, the chief of OSS SO London, to OSS Headquarters, Washington DC, established the need for what would become OSS Area H. "It appears evident from the position of SOE and SO that the greatest contribution we can make is in the form of supplies. Therefore we should be guided in setting up our organization by that condition . . ."[11] By early August 1943, OSS Washington tasked SO London to meet the logistics requirements of 100 agents, 35 Jedburgh teams, and 100,000 resistance fighters.[12] Anticipating heavy losses during the drop process, SO reasoned that they should double what was estimated to arm a force of this size. That meant SO had to accumulate and store some 71,400 knives, nearly 104,000 sub-machineguns, 24,000 carbines, 104,000 pistols, 793,000 grenades, over 704,200 pounds of explosives, nearly 18 million rounds of ammunition, and 38,000 parachutes.[13] SO London had to find a site quickly where these items could be stored and packed for air delivery.

British Brigadier General E. E. Mockler-Ferryman of SOE suggested that the OSS SO facility be located close to the SOE packing station (Station 61) at St. Neots. That way, the two organizations could access a common reservoir of supplies.[14] Leaving the headquarters of the SO Air Operations section in London, the majority of the staff element moved to Holmewood, a sixteenth-century estate near the village of Holme. Holmewood was eighty miles north of London and twenty miles away from Station 61. The manor was used to house officers and their mess, and also served as the administrative headquarters common recreation rooms. Agents were sometimes housed—and isolated—in the manor prior to departing on their missions. The estate stables and outbuildings were used for storage.

Construction on the OSS facilities, named Area H,

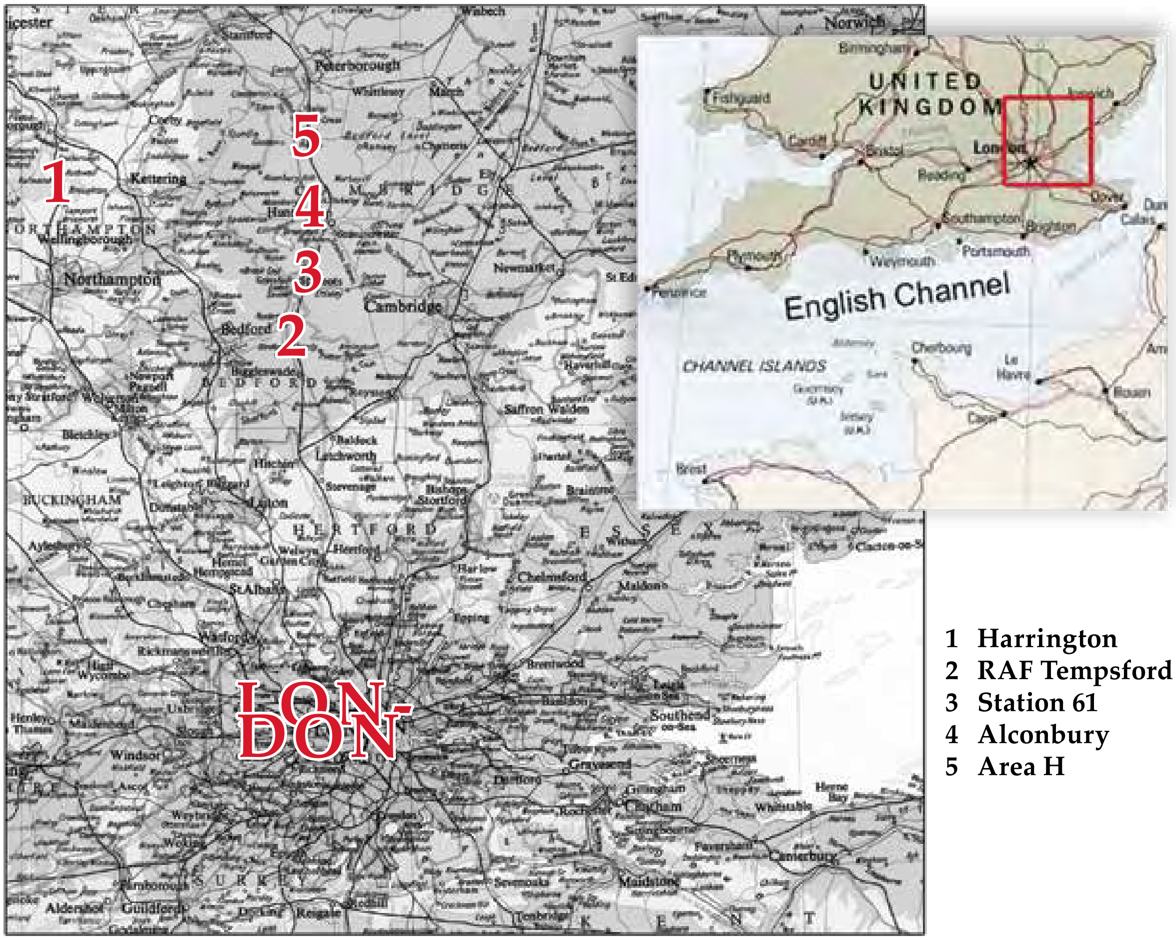
Holmewood House, Holme, UK, served as the officer's quarters and planning facility for Area H.

Piles of grenades being packed.

The Area H enlisted quarters which housed 323 men. The tents were erected over concrete slabs.

was started in January 1944 and completed two months later. Area H became the largest SO supply facility in the European Theater.[15] By then, Area H could accommodate 18 officers and 326 enlisted men.[16] Although electricity and water came from offsite, heating came from a newly constructed power house. Sheet metal buildings housed the dispensary, administrative and maintenance sections, as well as the motor pool. Isolated buildings for ammunition and explosives, such as incendiary devices, were erected away from the main camp. That area had four Nissen huts and five brick buildings. Each was revetted with brick walls to contain accidental explosions.[17] Another Nissen and four Romney huts housed the packing operations.[18] A new brick storage shed served to protect the packed containers. Area H could store 500 tons of material. The SOE base at St. Neots could handle an additional 300 tons. Security for Area H was heavy. High woven-wire fences topped with barbed wire surrounded the compound. At night, guard dog teams patrolled the fence line. The three gates had guard houses to control access.

Coordination between the OSS and SOE was constant, and packing procedures mirrored each other.[19] The delivery of supplies to occupied Europe started with specially designed packing containers. These long tubular metal or plastic containers came in two types, the "H" and the "C" model. Nearly identical on the outside, "H" containers had compartments inside while the "Cs" did not. Once dropped, an "H" container could be unclamped and separated into five segments, each of which could be carried by one man. The "C" containers were for long items, such as rifles or machine guns. Once taken from storage, the empty containers were stenciled with a serial number before delivery to the packing shed.[20] The contents were padded with shock-absorbing material such as burlap, and the containers were squeezed shut. If a particular item would not fit in a container, a package would be custom-designed and specially cushioned so that the contents



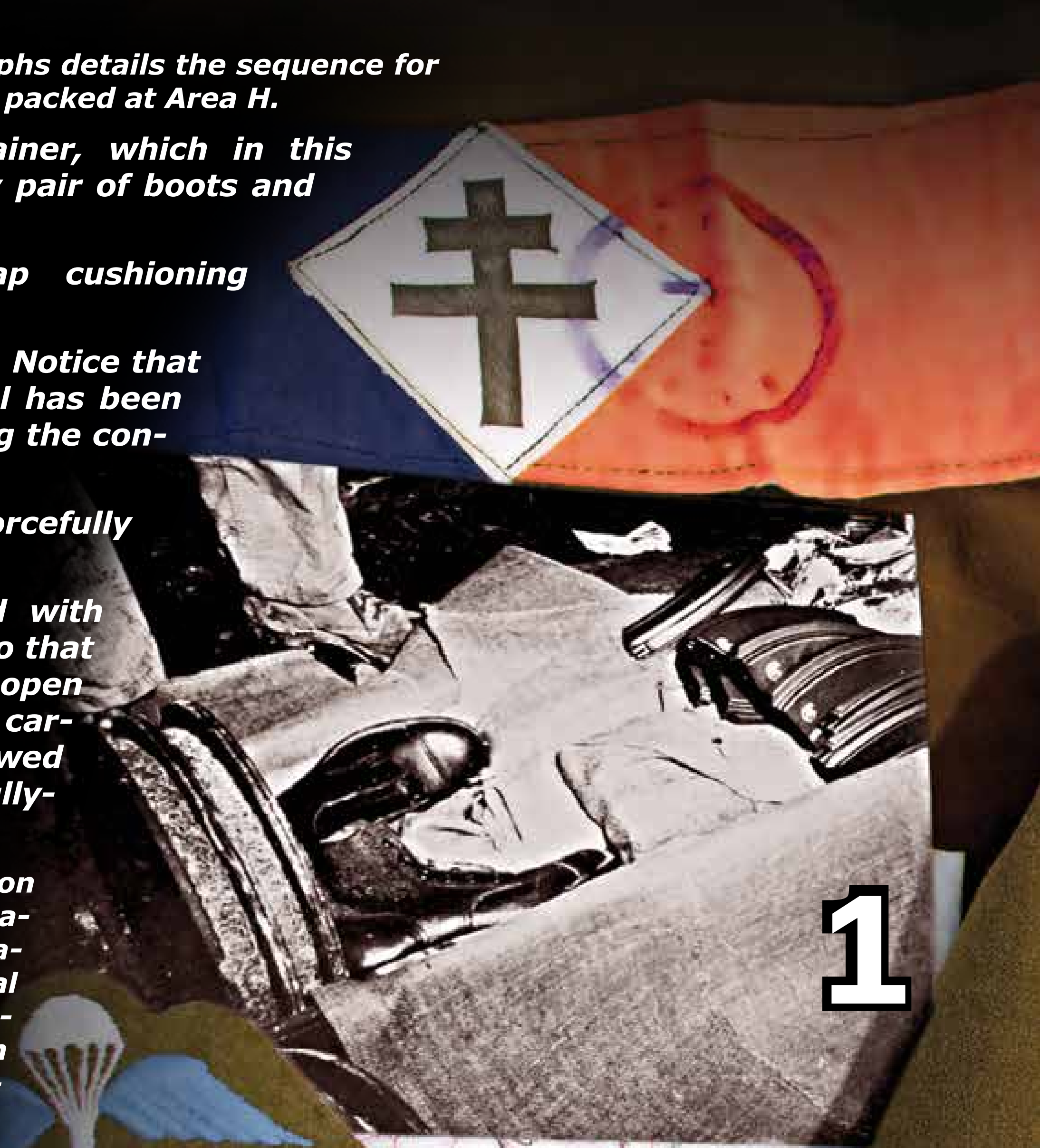
1 Harrington
2 RAF Tempsford
3 Station 61
4 Alconbury
5 Area H

Airfields and SOE sites surrounding Area H.

This series of five photographs details the sequence for one of the containers being packed at Area H.

1. ***Contents of the container, which in this example is the unlikely pair of boots and Bren gun magazines.***
2. ***Shock-absorbing burlap cushioning material being added.***
3. ***Completed packing job. Notice that the cushioning material has been secured to make closing the container easier.***
4. ***Container being forcefully closed.***
5. ***The locks are secured with the help of a hammer so that the container will not open in mid-air. Notice the carrying handles that allowed four men to carry the fully-loaded container.***

The photographs are lying on artifacts that are representative of OSS Special Operations. Included are several insignia: a Free French armband, British and American paratrooper wings, and a locally-made dagger. Of special interest is the Airborne Command patch, worn by airborne OSS personnel, since they had no official patch, and the Jedburgh uniform with the Special Force wing attached. The Special Force, or "SF" patch was worn by OSS Operational Group members based out of the United Kingdom, as well as the Jedburghs and Special Operations personnel. British and Allied personnel assigned to Special Force Headquarters also wore this unofficial wing. The "OSS" pin, as seen under photo # 3, was given to former OSS personnel when the organization was disbanded in October 1945.



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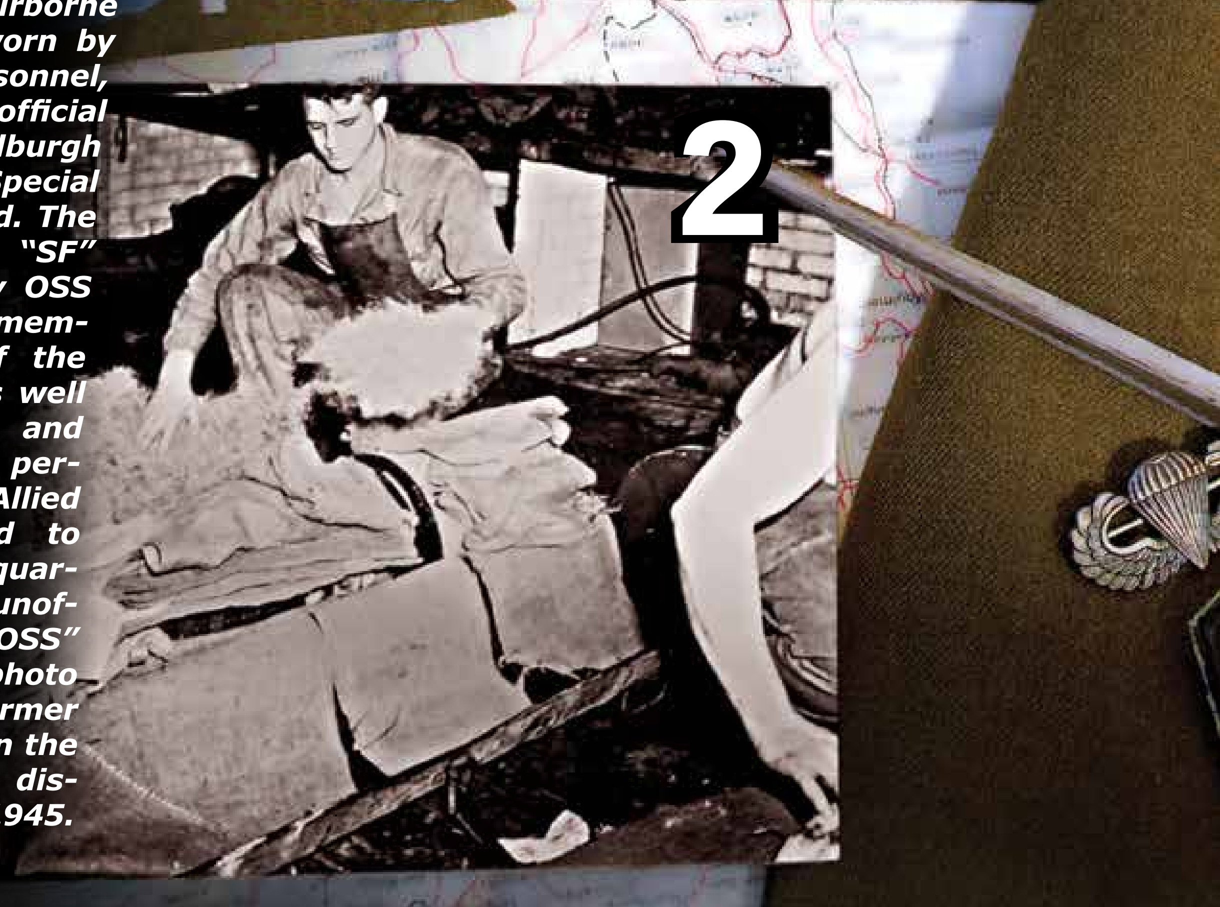

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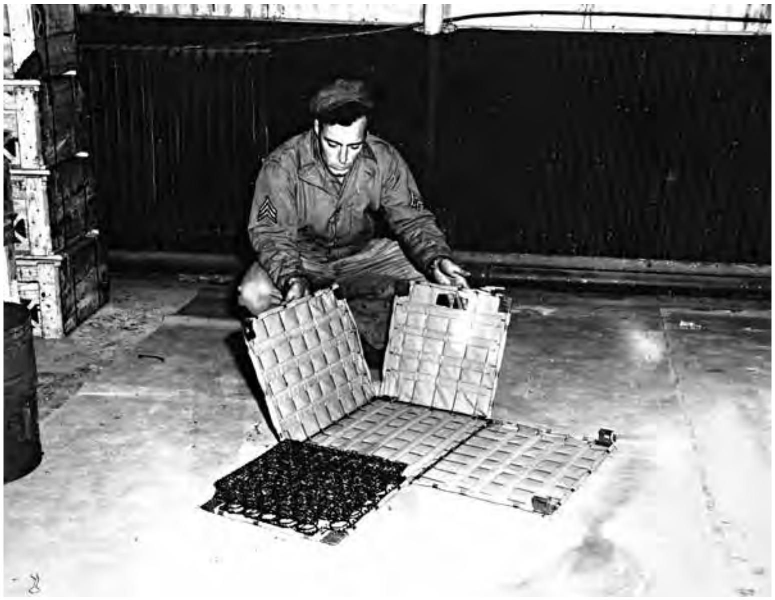


This spring "mattress" acted as a shock absorber for non-standard packages.

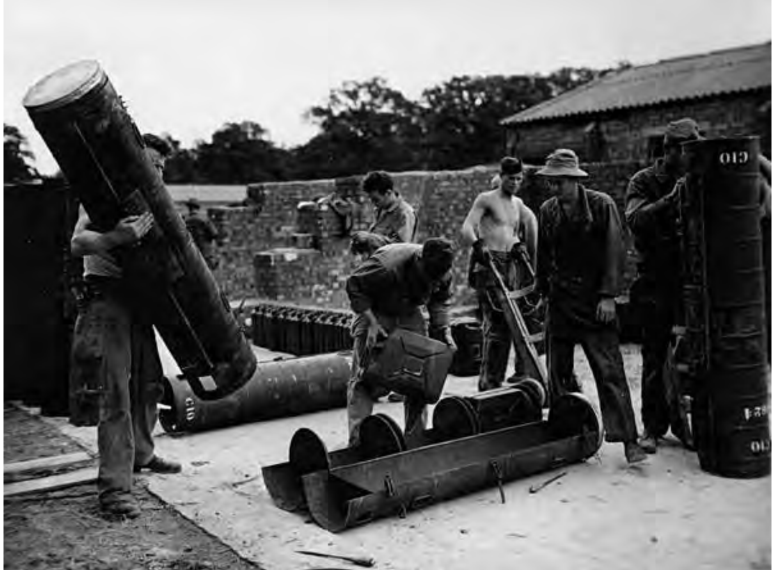
A completed "package" is ready for dropping.

could withstand the opening shock of the parachute as well as the landing. These were referred to simply as "packages."

The containers or packages might contain any of 400 separate U.S. Army, British military, OSS, or SOE issue items, in addition to personal sundries. Supplies of all of these items had to be kept on hand. These stocks included British and American weapons of different calibers. When resistance and OSS groups were armed, the personnel at Area H had to know what weapons each element carried to provide the correct ammunition.

Sometimes, the contents of a package or container were further tailored for specific missions or requests. Although he was resupplied by the Algiers packing station, the experience of Captain Arthur Frizzell, the commander of Operational Group EMILY, would be treated the same as a team being supplied by Area H. Fizzell recalled that his containers appeared "to have been packed especially for us and contained those items requested, to additionally include any APO mail from home . . . that mail was heavily censored at Algiers HQs with some of it looking like paper off the player piano roll—what with the excision of names of persons and places. The mail also included goodies from home such as Mom's favorite cookies, salami, etc. . . . I recall one container had a bottle of bourbon."[21] Thus, the "assembly" style packing facilities at Area H had to be extremely flexible to satisfy mission requests. Those receiving the air drops needed to ensure that they had enough personnel at the drop zone to carry away and hide the containers and packages before daylight, when the Germans might come to investigate.

Often, drops to multiple groups required similar items. This led to the development of a series of standard loads. It also provided a more accurate estimate of the total weight of a load going into a drop aircraft. For instance, one of the standard loads for an "H" container was 5 Sten guns with 15 magazines, 1500 rounds of 9mm ammunition, 5 pistols with 250 rounds of ammunition, 52 grenades, and 18 pounds of explosives. The weight of this container was 281 pounds. The contents of each container were distributed and packed into each cell to balance the load and improve the chances of an easy landing.[22] The



Gasoline being packed in type "C" containers. Notice the brick revetting walls.

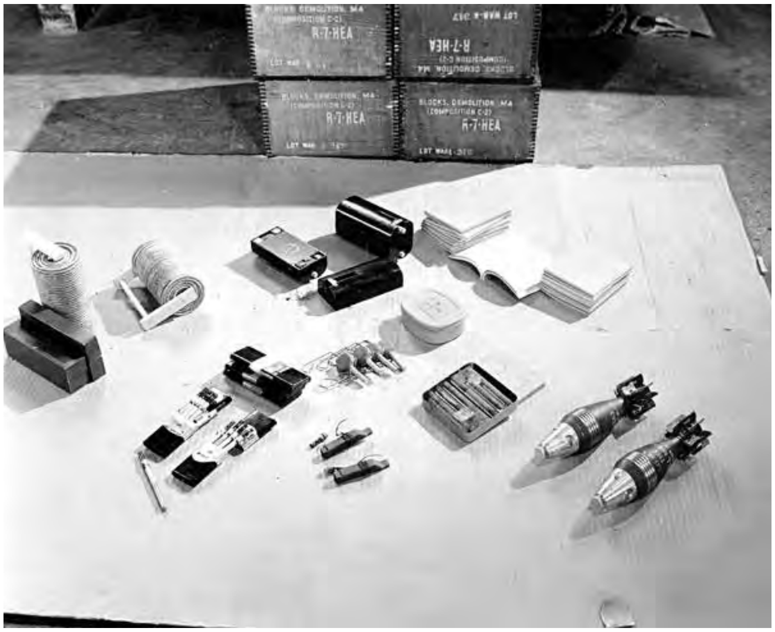
CHEST. BREN .303-in MC. MK I
CHEST. BREN .303-in MC. MK I
SPLY/MP/202

British Bren light machineguns are unpacked from their transit cases prior to being packed into drop canisters.

A test drop at Area H.

same was true for a "C" container. In one standard load, a "C" could hold two British Bren light machineguns complete with 16 magazines and 2000 rounds of .303 ammunition, weighing 303 pounds.[23] To verify their packing techniques, the personnel at Area H conducted drop tests—including free drops of items—to see if their containers, packages, or even bazooka rounds, survived intact.

Once packed, the containers and packages were taken by convoy to the waiting aircraft at nearby SOE or USAAF airfields. The primary USAAF airfield that Area H supported was Harrington, where the Carpetbaggers were based. Although most containers were dropped into occupied Europe shortly after delivery to the airfields, Harrington could store 4,000 loaded containers.[24] Just before loading, parachutes were attached to the containers. This insured that the parachutes would be in the best possible condition, and reduced malfunctions.



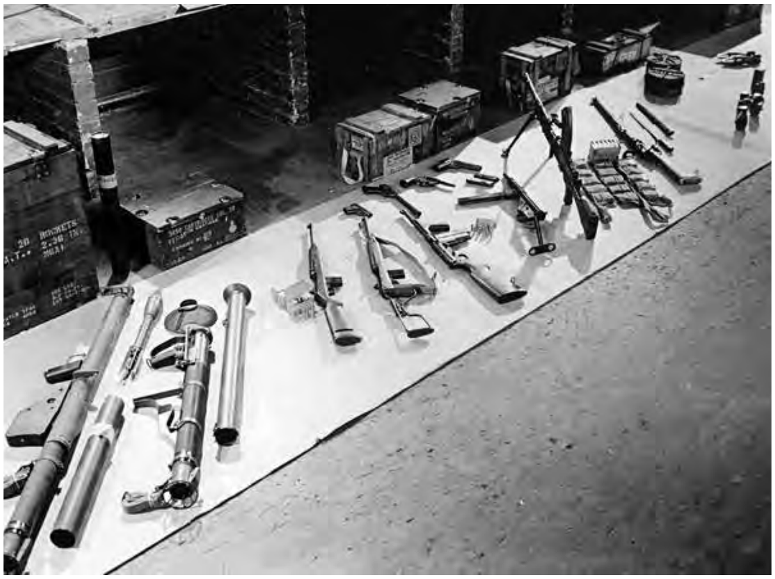
Here is a selection of OSS "gadgets" dropped into occupied Europe. Among those pictured are a "pocket incendiary," "fog signal," "clam," firing devices, and timing pencils. Such items were used for demolitions.

Carpetbagger or RAF crews supervised the loading and dropping of supplies, as well as any agents being infiltrated into the occupied territories. The Carpetbaggers used specially modified B-24 Liberators. These planes had radar, flash suppressors mounted on their machineguns in the top and rear turrets, static-line cables, British container release equipment replaced the bomb racks, and they were painted all black. The removal of the belly ball turret created a "joe hole" for parachuting agents.[25]

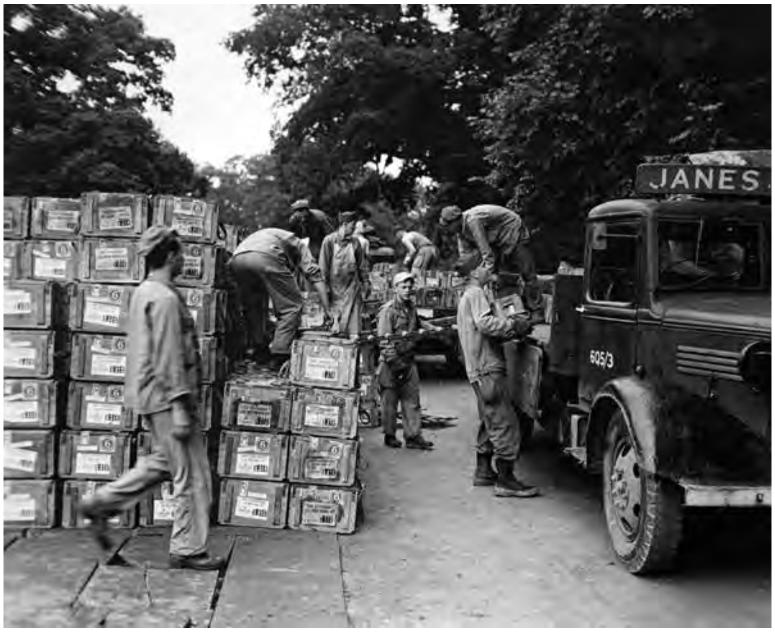
The Carpetbaggers pioneered low-level night flying in the USAAF. All missions were conducted only during the full moon period, when the extra light could assist the pilot's vision. European based–USAAF bombing squadrons clung to the doctrine of daylight "precision" bombing.[26] The Carpetbaggers stayed below 2,000 feet to avoid German radar and anti-aircraft defenses as well as to make more precise airdrops.[27] Once over a target, the Carpetbagger plane communicated with the ground contacts using a device called an "S" phone, a short-range ground-to-air radio, which allowed greater accuracy in drops. If the reception committee did not have an "S" phone, they communicated using flashlights or signal fires.

Airdrops of supplies and personnel were made between

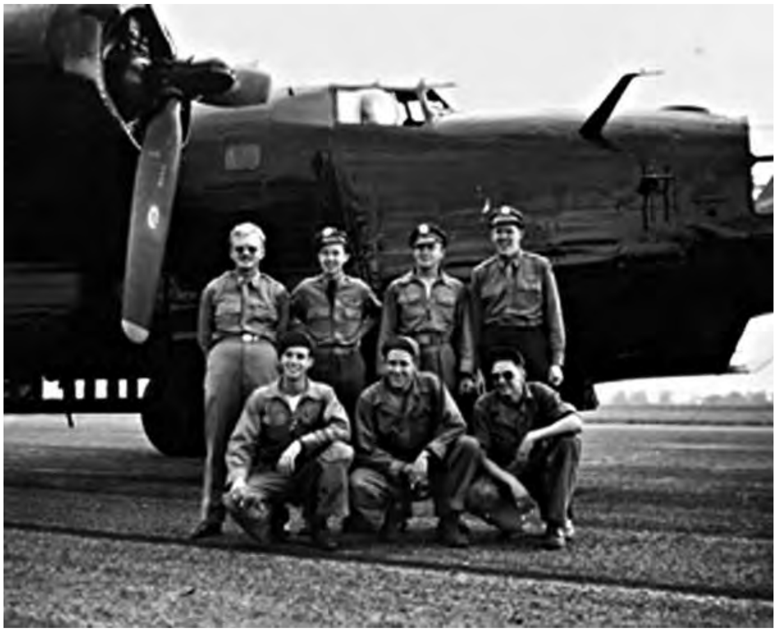
According to the original caption written on the back of this photo, not one of the Bazooka rounds exploded during this free-drop test.



A selection of arms that were dropped into German-occupied Europe. From left to right: bazooka (assembled and disassembled), M-1 carbine, M-1 carbine with folding stock, a United Defense model 42 submachinegun, a British Sten submachinegun, a British Bren light machinegun, and a British Enfield rifle.



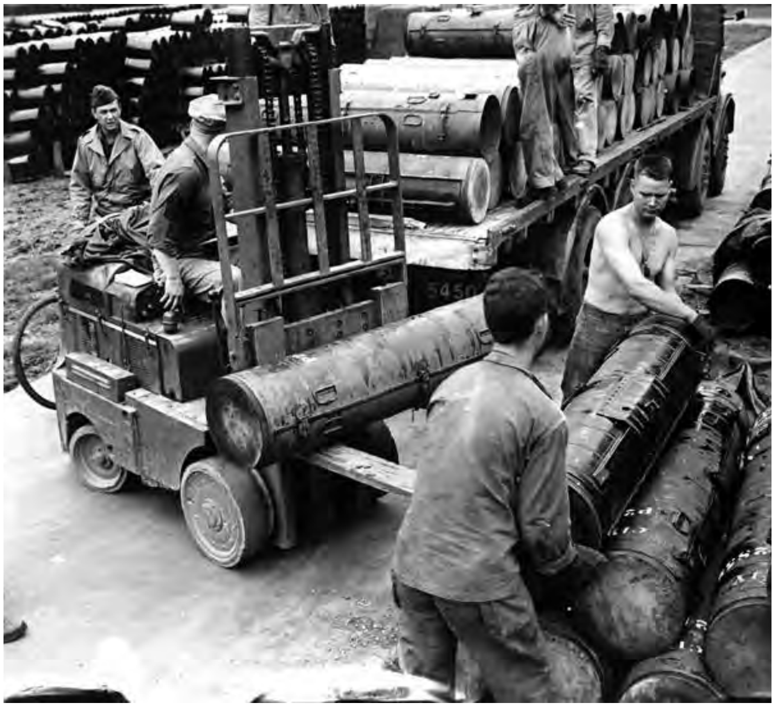
Unpacking ammunition at Area H. Notice the business sign still on the requisitioned civilian truck.



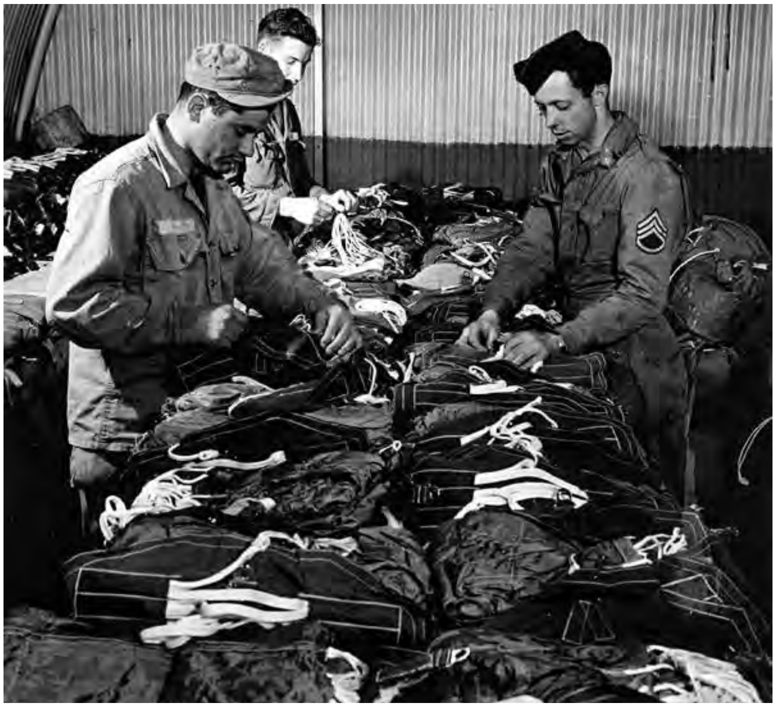
A Carpetbagger crew outside their B-24 Liberator that has been modified for night dropping operations. Notice the lack of a front turret, which was removed on Carpetbagger B-24s, and that the aircraft is painted all black.

400–600 feet and under 130 miles per hour. This velocity was near the stall speed of the B-24, but it reduced the opening shock of the parachute and lessened the chance of damage to the container contents and casualties among the agents. Often, leaflet drops were made at other sites to hide the primary mission. Sometimes, leaflets, supplies, and agents were dropped by the same aircraft in a single mission.

USAAF began dropping supplies into occupied Europe in January 1944. These initial drops started an ever-increasing demand on Area H.[28] Operations conducted in January and February 1944 presented a steep learning curve for the Carpetbaggers. Only twenty-eight of seventy-six operational sorties were successful.[29] "Success" was defined as containers dropped and the plane returned. The crew never knew if they dropped supplies to a German-controlled group, or if the supplies were undamaged. By March, the ratio had improved with forty-four of seventy-two sorties successful. During the first three months of 1944, 6 agents, 799 containers, and 265 packages—with more than a million rounds of small arm ammunition—were dropped, with a loss of three aircraft.[30] In July 1944, the Carpetbaggers were assigned the mission of bringing personnel back from occupied Europe. A few C-47s were attached to the Carpetbaggers, and through September 1944, carried seventy-six agents into occupied Europe, and exfiltrated 213.[31]



Packed containers are loaded for shipment to a local airfield. Sergeant James Gearing, on the bicycle behind the forklift, is supervising.



Riggers are stowing the static lines on parachutes that will be attached to canister containers.

The Daylight Drops

THE RAF and the USAAF Carpetbaggers were not the only groups who dropped supplies to the French Resistance, or *Maquis*, as they were known. During the campaign to liberate France, the USAAF conducted four massive daylight supply drops to arm and equip resistance forces for the OSS. The 3rd Air Division, 8th Air Force, committed hundreds of B-17 bombers with fighter escorts. The missions were Operation ZEBRA (25 June 1944), Operation CADILLAC (14 July 1944), Operation BUICK (1 August 1944), and Operation GRASSY (9 September 1944). Prior to each scheduled drop, local *Maquis* units would be notified the evening before the drop by coded messages in broadcasts by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). This notified the resistance groups the number of containers to be dropped and the time that they were to light signal fires that would mark the drop zones. The groups had to confirm by radio that they had received the message. These precautions reduced the chances that the supplies would drop into German hands.

One hundred seventy-six aircraft dropped 2,109 containers at four locations during Operation ZEBRA. One of the thankful *Maquis* groups signaled after the drop, "The Maquis thank the U.S. Air Force for a damned good show. When is the next?"[1] Operation CADILLAC had 320 aircraft drop 3,791 containers on seven drop zones, enough to supply 20,000 *Maquis*.[2] A British SOE observer aboard a B-17 described his experience: "As we approached the target area, the bonfires were clearly visible . . . at a range of approximately twenty-five miles . . . a very large quantity of parachutes were so close to the dropping point that they formed an almost solid mass of canopies . . . . Excellent shooting!"[3]

Operation BUICK involved four drop areas with 192 aircraft dropping 2,286 containers and a seven-man OSS SO team, code-named UNION II.[4] United States Marine Corps (USMC) Sergeant Jack Risler (UNION II) said that he "got kissed on both cheeks as soon as I got out of my chute!"[5] The final massive daylight supply mission in France was Operation GRASSY, conducted with sixty-eight aircraft on 9 September 1944. The planes dropped 814 containers on one drop zone.

All told, the 812 sorties of B-17s in these massive daylight drops supplied the *Marquis* with nearly 2,700,000 pounds of equipment and arms. During the four operations, two B-17s were lost and sixty-five damaged. However, nine German aircraft were destroyed in air-to-air combat. A *Maquis* leader put it well, "We now consider this area to be well armed."[6] There was a downside. While possibly more important psychologically to the *Maquis* than the night drops, the daylight drops prompted some severe German reprisals. One case was in the Vercors region, where the Germans strafed villages with aircraft and conducted an airborne landing to counter the *Marquis* and OSS groups. This retaliatory action, including the ordeal of OSS Operational Group JUSTINE, will be the subject of a future article in *Veritas*.

8th U.S. Army Air Force patch

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[1] "OSS Aid to the French Resistance in World War II: Massive Supply Drops," ARSOF Archives, Ian Sutherland Collection, Fort Bragg, NC.

[2] Kermit Roosevelt, ed., *The Overseas Targets: War Report of the OSS; Volume II*," (New York: Walker and Company, 1976), 199.

[3] "OSS Aid to the French Resistance in World War II: Massive Supply Drops."

[4] UNION II was lead by USMC Major Peter J. Ortiz and was composed of Army Air Forces Captain Francis Coolidge, USMC Gunnery Sergeant Robert La Salle, USMC Sergeants Charles Perry, John P. Bodnar, Frederick J. Brunner, and Jack R. Risler, and Joseph Arcelin, a Free French officer. MAJ Ortiz, SGT Risler, SGT Bodnar, and Arcekin were later captured and held as POWs.

[5] Albert Hemingway, "The Great Parachute Drop," *Military History*, April 1990, 50.

[6] "OSS Aid to the French Resistance in World War II: Massive Supply Drops."

B-17s of the USAAF 8th Air Force over England in 1944.

French civilians observe USAAF B-17s dropping supplies on 14 July 1944 (Bastille Day) during Operation CADILLAC.

Personnel at Area H unload supplies from the local rail station. These supplies would then be packed and dropped into occupied Europe.

The riggers at Area H could be called upon to repair parachutes, make harnesses, or to construct diplomatic mailbags that were used to smuggle supplies to neutral Sweden for the Norwegian government in exile.

Work schedules at Area H were demanding. Although the personnel of Area H considered that their job was finished when the packed containers were delivered to the airbases, it was the volume of supply drops that set their pace. To provide the 10,000 containers a month required in July 1944, two eight-hour shifts worked overtime, seven days a week. Packing personnel were given one day off a week.[32] Periodic surges were also required. Area H packed 15,323 containers and packages in one month.[33] Many of these surges were to accommodate USAAF massive daylight drops to the French Resistance, or a 19 September 1944 drop of 1,084 containers to the Polish Resistance, who the Germans had under siege in Warsaw.

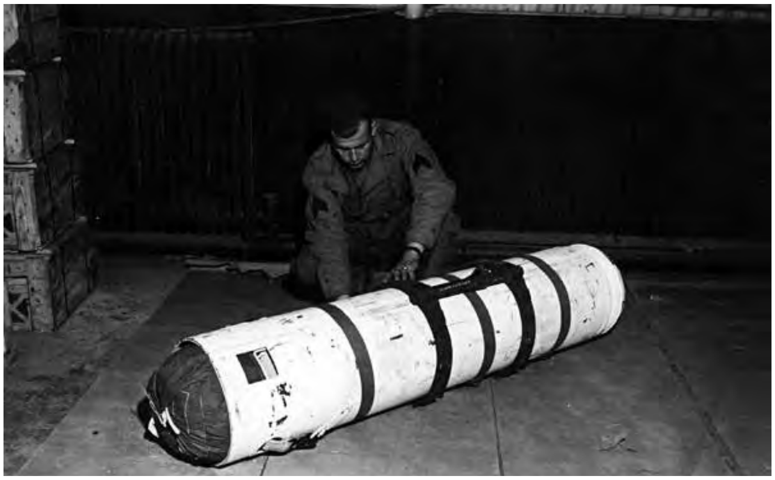
After September 1944, the pace at Area H slowed. France, the primary country for aerial resupply operations, no longer needed a specialized air resupply. The Carpetbaggers converted their B-24s to fly fuel directly to Lieutenant General George S. Patton's Third Army, which had outrun its logistic tail. The Carpetbaggers delivered 822,791 gallons of gasoline in a month. Although there was still a need for the Carpetbaggers, it was considerably reduced. By the end of the war in Europe, the 801st/492 Bomb Group dropped 551 agents and 4,511 tons of supplies, at the loss of 223 aircrew. By then, the scope of their operations included France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Poland, and Norway.[34]

In November, Area H was the scene of renewed activity when resupply of the resistance in Denmark and Norway was increased. Supplying the resistance in German-occupied Norway involved a bit of creativity. In addition to direct air drops, the OSS smuggled supplies over the border from neutral Sweden. Specially-made diplomatic mail pouches were carried by representatives of the Norwegian government-in-exile into Sweden. Once safely secreted in the warehouse of the Norwegian Legation in Stockholm, the bags were unpacked and the contents covertly smuggled into Norway.[35] By mid-December, some six and a half tons of supplies had been stockpiled in Sweden for use in Norway.[36] Area H was preparing to pack 10,000 containers a month for Norway and Denmark, and one Carpetbagger squadron, the 856th, was retained, when the war against Germany ended in May 1945.

The OSS logistics effort at Area H was an unqualified success. During 1944, Area H packed 50,162 containers for air delivery by the RAF and the USAAF.[37] In the first nine-months of 1944, this included more than 75,000 small arms

Like soldiers everywhere, the OSS personnel at Area H spent their free time relaxing . . .

. . . or on KP!



White canisters were used for air-drop operations in Scandinavia.

RIGGER
SECTION

Men of the Rigger Section pack parachutes. Notice the bright lighting which helped to ensure that the parachutes were packed correctly.

and 35,000 grenades. Area H provided 96 tons of supplies to Belgium, 9 to Denmark, 3,055 to France, 119 to Poland, and 56 to Norway.[38] Operations in 1945 in Denmark and Norway raised the total tonnage supplied. Supplying the resistance forces, as well as the SOE and OSS teams in occupied Europe, did not come without cost. Twenty-one Carpetbagger aircraft and most of their crews were lost in action.

Although the logistics division gets little credit for the success of OSS operations, the staff at Area H played a vital role in the liberation of France. Major General William J. Donovan, Director of the OSS, commended the Area H personnel, "I personally wish to commend each of you for the superior manner in which you have performed your duties. Unquestionably, the work of the packing station constitutes a vital link in the difficult job of supplying the Resistance groups and has contributed materially to the effectiveness of these Groups against the common enemy."[39] By the outstanding manner in which they performed their mission, the logistics personnel at Area H, and the aircrews that delivered the supplies and agents behind German lines, directly contributed to the success of the OSS in occupied Europe.

I wish to thank Mr. Thomas Emsminger, Mr. Clive Bassett, Mr. Arthur Frizzell, Mr. David Kenney, and LTC Benjamin Jones, USAF, for their help in preparing this article. I also want to express my deep appreciation to Mr. William Chandler for allowing access to his father's photograph albums.

Troy J. Sacquety earned an MA from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and is completing his Ph.D in Military History through Texas A&M University. Prior to joining the USASOC History Office staff he worked several years for the Central Intelligence Agency. Mr. Sacquety has previously contributed articles to Studies in Intelligence: Journal of the American Intelligence Professional. *Current research interests include Army and Office of Strategic Services (OSS) special operations during World War II, and Camp Mackall, North Carolina.*

Area H personnel pose with the 50,000th canister packed.

Lieutenant Colonel Chandler takes his bike for a spin. On the back is Major Louis Rafferty and on the front, his pet dog "Ack-Ack." Ack-Ack was GI slang for "flak" or German antiaircraft fire.

Endnotes

1 OG, SO, and SI were separate branches in the OSS. The Jedburghs were inter-allied teams composed of US, British, French, Belgian, Dutch, and Canadian personnel. The OSS portion of the Jedburgh program fell under the SO branch.

2 The agreement was formally approved by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) on 26 August 1942.

3 Kermit Roosevelt, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, (New York: Walker and Company, 1976), 207.

4 Kermit Roosevelt, ed., *The Overseas Targets: War Report of the OSS; Volume II*," (New York: Walker and Company, 1976), 145.

5 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," chronological summary, vii, Copies held at the National Archives II, College Park, MD, the ARSOF Archives, and selectively available online at http://home.comcast.net/~defactohistorian/Index.html.

6 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," x.

7 For more information, see Thomas L. Ensminger's excellent website; http://home.comcast.net/~defactohistorian/Index.html or his two-volume book, *Spies, Supplies and Moonlit Skies* (United States: Xlibris, 2004)

8 Airfields under RAF control/use are denoted with the prefix RAF. If they had been given over for USAAF use, not RAF prefix is used.

9 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 65.

10 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 90.

11 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Supply, Roll 10, Vol. 10," iii.

12 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," v.

13 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," vii.

14 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," vi.

15 Roosevelt, ed., The Overseas Targets, 198; There was a smaller OSS logistics base in Algiers, with 142 personnel, to supply operations in Southern France during and after Operation DRAGOON. Southern France was beyond the range of England-based supply bombers.

16 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 65.

17 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 16.

18 Nissen huts were half-circular sheet metal sheds developed in 1916 by Peter Norman Nissen, a Canadian Mining engineer. They were used extensively in WWII by the U.S. military and were a feature of many Army bases. Romney huts were a similar version used by the British. The more famous Quonset hut was a U.S. Navy adaptation of the Nissen hut.

19 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Supply, Roll 10, Vol. 10," 5, OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 17.

20 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 19.

21 Arthur Frizzell to Troy Sacquety, email, 23 March 2007.

22 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 24-25.

23 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 25.

24 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 47.

25 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 30.

26 The RAF adopted the policy of night bombing.

27 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 33.

28 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 7.

29 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 11.

30 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 56.

31 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 91.

32 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 22.

33 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 82.

34 Two Carpetbagger squadrons were retained for dropping operations. The group reverted back to its traditional bombing role except the 859th which was sent to Italy to supply the Balkans, and the 856th which was used to supply operations in Denmark and Norway.

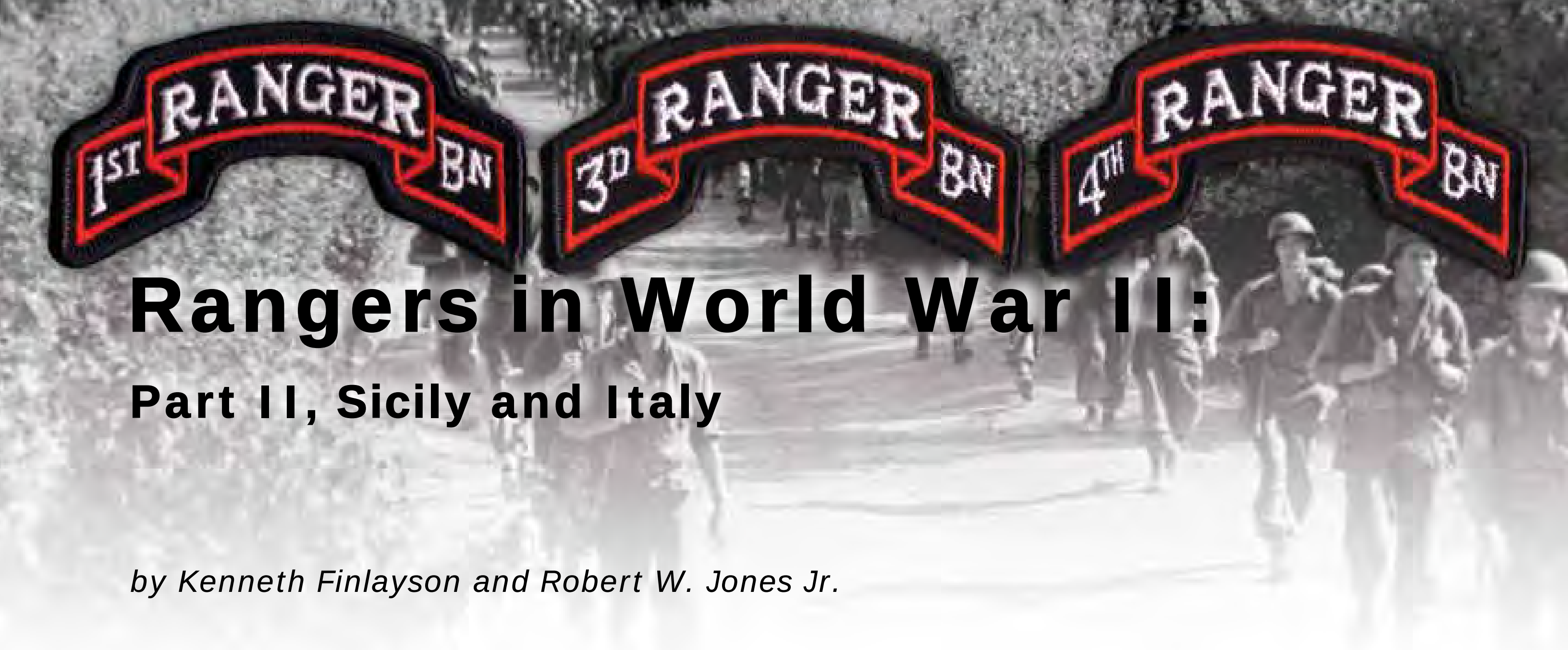
35 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Supply, Roll 10, Vol. 10," 15.

36 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 113.

37 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Supply, Roll 10, Vol. 10," 13, 17; A slight majority of the Area H prepared supplies went to the RAF.

38 OSS London War Diary, "Special Operations Branch: Air Operations, Roll 9, Vol.6," 7; A ton equals 2,000 pounds.

39 OSS London War Diary, "SO Branch, OSS London, Roll 10, Vol. 6, Air Operations," 98.



Rangers in World War II:

Part II, Sicily and Italy

by Kenneth Finlayson and Robert W. Jones Jr.

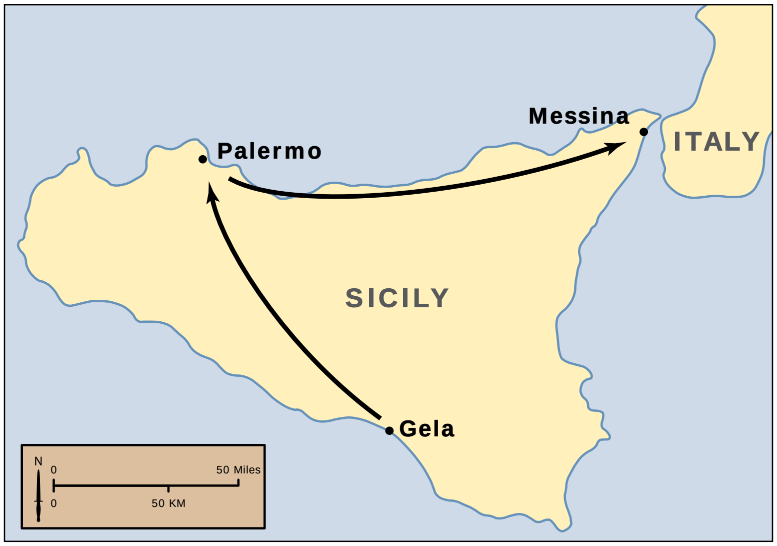
THIS is the second installment in a four part series concerning the Ranger Battalions in World War II. This article begins with the formation of two new Ranger battalions in North Africa, covers the Ranger operations in the invasion of Sicily in July 1943 and the Allied landing at Salerno, and carries them through to the battle of Cisterna following the Anzio landing in January 1944. The destruction of two of the three Ranger battalions at Anzio ended the employment of the Rangers in the Mediterranean Theater. New Ranger battalions were formed for the Normandy invasion and will be the subject of a future article.

The Rangers took part in the invasion of Sicily and in three operations in Italy. The Italian campaign began with an amphibious landing near Salerno, on 9 September 1943, and included the subsequent seizure and defense of Chiunzi Pass. The second operation was during the Allied drive on Naples and the prolonged fighting in the mountains that formed the German Winter Line. The third part of the Italian campaign began with the amphibious landing at Anzio on 22 January 1944, and came to an abrupt end eight days later with the disastrous operation at Cisterna di Littoria (Cisterna). The battle of Cisterna marked the end of the use of the Rangers in the Mediterranean Theater.[1]

The performance of the Ranger battalions in Sicily and Italy is characterized by the slow erosion of the effectiveness of the units. The 1st Ranger Battalion formed and commanded by Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) William O. Darby in Scotland and which fought in North Africa was superbly led and extremely well-trained.[2] In the spring of 1943, following the battles at Arzew and Djebel el Ank, the Rangers were a unit at the peak of combat efficiency. The expansion from one battalion to three, the inability of replicating the rigorous training of Scotland, and the constant addition of new replacements caused a steady decline in the Ranger's capabilities after North Africa. While the Rangers were an effective fighting force in Italy, the unit would never regain the extremely high standard set in Algeria and Tunisia.

The success of the Allied forces in defeating the Germans and Italians in North Africa led to a decision to invade the continent of Europe through the Italian peninsula. At the Casablanca Conference in January 1943, U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff worked out a strategic plan for the conduct of the war against Germany that included Operation HUSKY, the Allied invasion of Sicily.[3] The long-term strategy for the conduct of the war was often a contentious issue between the Allies. Operation HUSKY was developed as a compromise between the American desire for a major offensive across the English Channel into France and the British position that favored continued operations in the Mediterranean—which could be expanded to encompass Turkey and the Balkans—as well as the need to open a second front to relieve the pressure on the Soviet Union.[4] The decision to launch HUSKY initiated the build-up of Allied forces in North Africa, a build-up that included the Rangers.

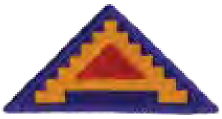
British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt with the Combined Chiefs of Staff at the Casablanca Conference. The meeting resulted in the decision to invade Sicily and Italy.



Ranger operations in Sicily followed a clockwise course around the island, from the Gela landings to Palermo and ending near Messina.

The Rangers trained near Arzew in Tunisia prior to the invasion of Sicily.

Because of the successes of the 1st Ranger Battalion in North Africa, LTC Darby was ordered to form two new Ranger battalions.[5] The Allied planners had asked Darby for a recommendation on the number of Ranger battalions he thought would be needed to support Lieutenant General (LTG) George S. Patton's Western Task Force in the assault on Palermo, Sicily. Darby's estimate of fifteen battalions was deemed too high and he was told to stand up three battalions.[6] Darby, his officers, and noncommissioned officers traveled throughout North Africa giving speeches to soldiers, "When I spoke to one thousand men, I got a hundred volunteers. When I spoke to two thousand, I got two hundred."[7] From the hundreds of combat-tested soldiers available in the Seventh Army units, Darby and his recruiters picked " . . . true volunteers with a clean record who hopefully had basic infantry training. . . . To ensure that Ranger veterans would be in leadership positions, the volunteers who were not technicians would not be over the grade of private first class."[8]



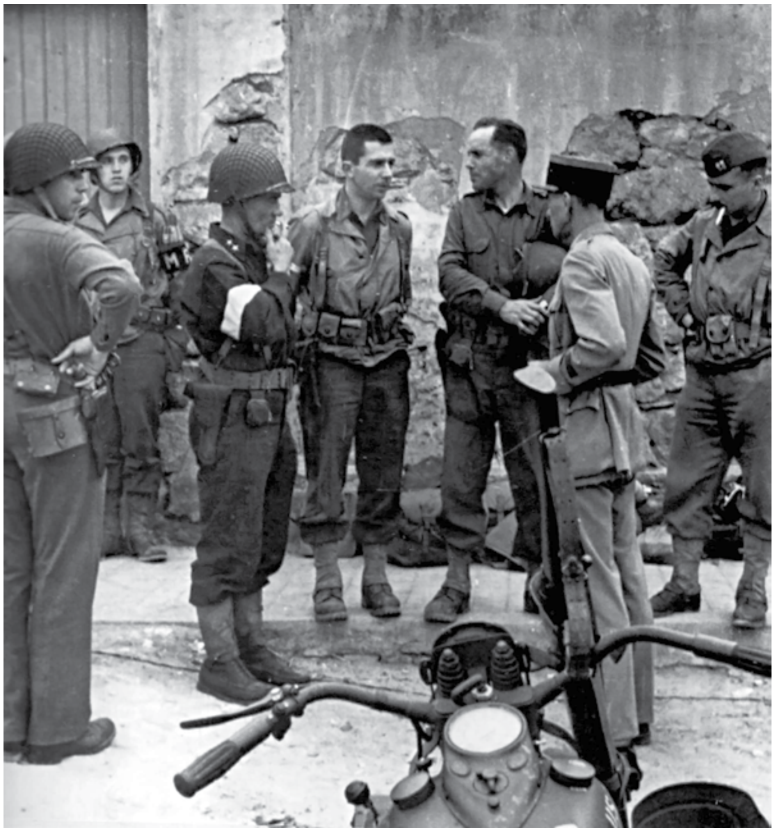
Seventh Army shoulder patch

William O. Darby organized and led the Rangers in North Africa and Italy. This picture is taken following his promotion to Colonel.

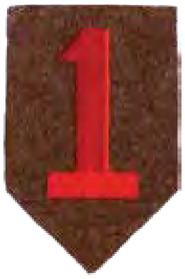
Using the veterans of the 1st Battalion as cadre, the 3rd and 4th Ranger Battalions were activated and trained by Darby at Nemours, Algeria, in April 1943. The 1st Battalion was reformed from A and B companies; the 3rd Battalion from C and D companies; and the 4th Battalion from E and F companies.[9] (The Army's 2nd Ranger Battalion had been activated on 1 April 1943 at Camp Forrest, Tennessee, and was not affiliated with Darby's force). The officers of the original 1st Battalion became the leaders of the new units. Major Herman Dammer took command of the 3rd Battalion, and Major Roy Murray the 4th Battalion. Darby remained the commander of the 1st Battalion, but in effect was in command of what became known as the "Darby Ranger Force." The Army still viewed the Rangers as provisional or temporary units and thus did not allocate manpower for a force headquarters.[10] This proved to be a source of constant frustration for Darby who had declined a promotion and a regimental command in expectation of forming a Ranger brigade.

The expansion of the Rangers from one battalion to three inevitably caused a dilution in the overall quality of each battalion. The Ranger battalions were organized with a headquarters company and six line companies. A Ranger company was manned with between sixty-three

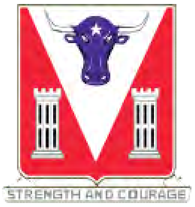
The Rangers of 3rd Battalion preparing to load landing craft for the amphibious landings in Sicily.



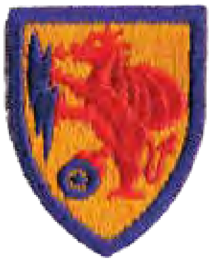
November 1942. Major General Terry de la Mesa Allan (White Arm Band), Commander of the 1st Infantry Division, and Lieutenant Colonel Darby (third from right) confer during a training exercise in North Africa. Also pictured are Rangers Captain Stephen J. Meade (on Darby's right) and Captain Frederick J. Saam (far right).



1st Infantry Division shoulder patch



39th Combat Engineers Distinctive Unit Insignia



83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion shoulder patch

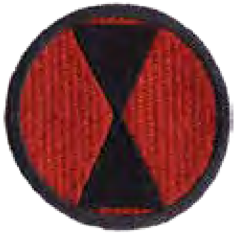
and sixty-seven men, far less than the standard infantry company of 1943 that contained 193 infantrymen.[11] With the expansion, the veteran leadership and experience from two companies was spread through the six in each battalion.

Once the men were selected, training began. The Ranger cadre began an arduous three-week training program preparing the new units for Operation HUSKY. This was a daunting task as the Rangers had less than six weeks to prepare both the new units and soldiers for the invasion.[12] Forced marches, cliff climbing, weapons training, and amphibious operations formed the core of the Ranger training program. The plan for HUSKY called for the Rangers to land at two locations and secure key port facilities on the southwest side of the island.

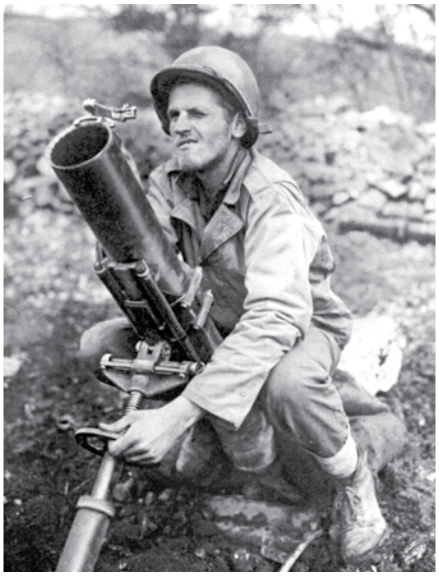
Attached to Major General (MG) Terry de la Mesa Allen's 1st Infantry Division of LTG Patton's Seventh Army, the three Ranger units spearheaded the American landings in Sicily on 10 July 1943. For the capture of the key port of Gela, Allen formed "Force X" consisting of the 1st and 4th Ranger Battalions, the 1st Battalion, 39th Combat Engineer Battalion, three companies of the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion (4.2-inch mortars), and the 1st Battalion, 531st Engineer Shore Regiment (who prepared the landing beaches to receive follow-on forces).[13]

Commanded by LTC Darby, Force X landed at Gela and the 3rd Ranger Battalion, under Major Dammer, landed twenty miles to the west at Licata. At Gela, the lightly-armed Rangers secured the port facilities and fought their way into the city after sustaining a number of casualties from mines and machinegun fire. In Gela, they engaged enemy tanks using captured 37mm anti-tank guns, the 4.2-inch mortars, and their own small arms against the counterattack of an Italian armored column. This experience convinced Darby that the Rangers needed more firepower. After the battle, Darby acquired four M-3 Halftracks mounting 75mm guns to provide heavier supporting fires. These became know as the Ranger "Gun Trucks"

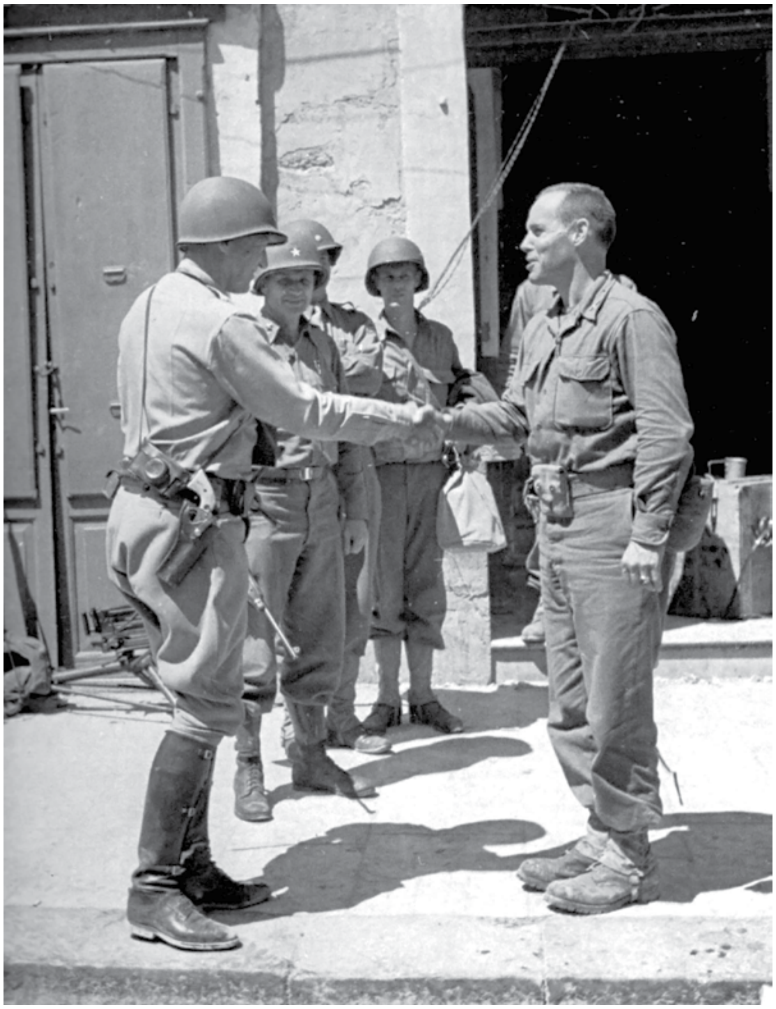
Lieutenant Colonel Darby (standing center back) addressing the Rangers at the beginning of the crossing to Sicily, 9 July 1943. The Rangers landed at Gela on 10 July 1943.



7th Infantry Division shoulder patch



The 4.2-inch Chemical Mortar (Four-Deuce) fired high explosive and white phosphorus rounds. The 4.2-inch mortars of the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion provided fire support to the Rangers throughout the campaign in Italy.



Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Commander of Seventh Army, greets Lieutenant Colonel Darby after the landing at Gela, Sicily. Darby's Rangers led the American amphibious assault.

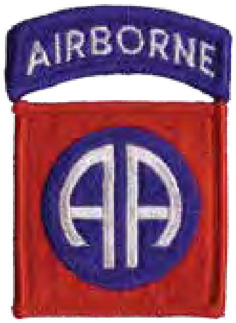
Rangers of the 3rd Battalion going ashore at Licata on 10 July 1943. The 3rd Battalion opened the way for the 7th Infantry Division landing.

for the duration of the campaign.

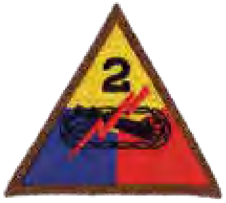
At the Licata beachhead, the 3rd Battalion, attached to the 7th Infantry Division, landed on schedule and quickly seized the high ground around the landing beaches located three miles west of the town. Once the infantry regiments passed through them, the Rangers reorganized and moved to capture Castel San Angelo, a prominent villa overlooking the city of Licata from the west. The Allied naval bombardment of the city prevented the Rangers from entering Licata, and they remained at Castel San Angelo until the town was secured by follow-on units. In the ensuing days, the 3rd Battalion screened ahead of the 7th Division on the drive westward and played an instrumental role in the capture of the towns of Montepuerto and Porto Empedocles as

Major General Geoffrey Keyes commanded the Provisional Corps that captured the city of Palermo. The Provisional Corps was composed of the 82nd Airborne Division, the 2nd Armored Division, and the Rangers.

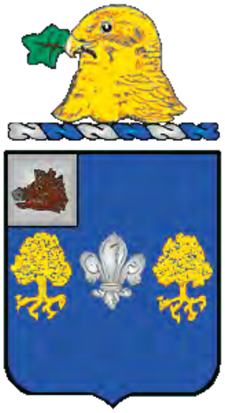
Private William E. Ketchens of the Ranger Cannon Company with the M-3 Half-track. Ketchens later served with the First Special Service Force when the Cannon Company moved to the Force after the Rangers were disbanded. Photo was taken in Castellar, France, in late 1944.



82nd Airborne Division shoulder patch



2nd Armored Division shoulder patch



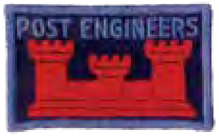
39th Infantry Regiment Distinctive Unit Insignia the American forces took the city of Agrigento.[14]

After the capture of Agrigento, the U.S. Army turned its attention northward across the island to the city of Palermo. MG Geoffrey Keyes' Provisional Corps, composed of the 82nd Airborne Division and the 2nd Armored Division, led the drive on the city. Keyes resurrected Force X under LTC Darby. As before, the 1st and 4th Ranger Battalions were joined by the 39th Engineer Battalion and two companies of the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion. The 1st Battalion of the 531st Engineer Shore Regiment was no longer part the organization. Keyes assigned Force X the mission of pushing west to cover the northern flank of the 2nd Armored Division's assault on Palermo. The Force moved rapidly along the line of advance and the reconnaissance platoon captured over 400 Italian soldiers at Castelvetrano. The rapid advance brought the Force to within twenty-five miles of Palermo. The Rangers captured over 4,000 Italian prisoners and opened the way for the armored thrust that took the city on 22 July 1943.[15] With the fall of Palermo, the way was clear for the U.S forces to drive on Messina.

Major General Lucien K. Truscott's 3rd Infantry Division with the attached 3rd Ranger Battalion led the U.S. drive to capture Messina.

Located in the northeast corner of the island, Messina was the gateway for the Italian and German forces on Sicily to make their escape onto the Italian mainland. From the beginning of Operation HUSKY, the primary objective of the British Eighth Army in Sicily was the capture of Messina, and the city now became the focus of Patton's Seventh Army after Palermo was taken. The rugged terrain, poor roads, and stout Axis defenses slowed the Allied advance to a crawl. For the 3rd Ranger Battalion, recently attached to Major General Lucien K. Truscott's 3rd Infantry Division, the last Ranger operation on Sicily took place on 11–12 August, as the U.S. forces continued to grind toward Messina. In an effort to accelerate the advance on Messina and cut off the German and Italian forces on the island, LTG Patton used a series of amphibious "end-runs" to insert forces behind the German defensive lines. On 11 August, the 3rd Infantry Division landed the 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, in the German rear on the beach at Brolo on the northern coast of Sicily, about sixty miles from Messina.

Lieutenant General George S. Patton confers with Lieutenant Colonel Lyle A. Bernard on the drive to Messina. LTC Bernard's 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry, was inserted behind the German lines at Brolo Beach.



531st Engineer Shore Regiment shoulder patch

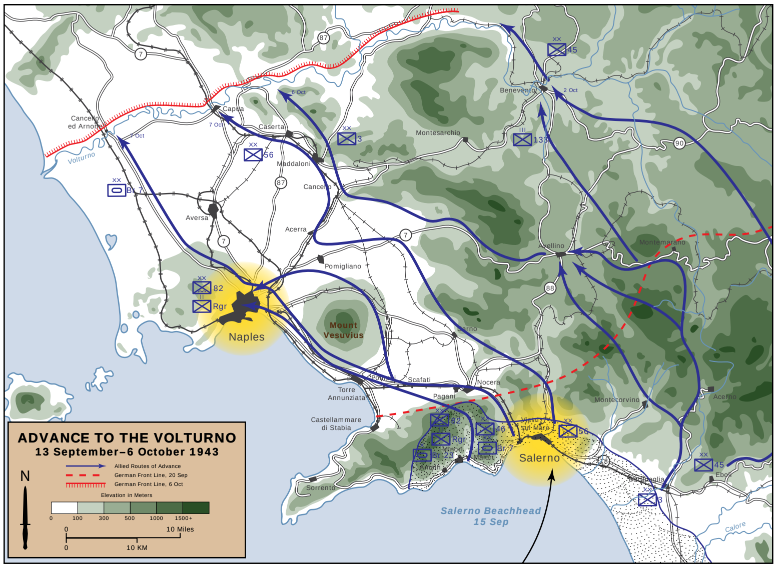
OUR COUNTRY, NOT OURSELVES
ROCK OF THE MARNE, JULY 14-18, 1918

30th Infantry Regiment Distinctive Unit Insignia

3rd Infantry Division shoulder patch

Simultaneously, the remaining battalions of the 3rd Infantry Division, including the 3rd Ranger Battalion attacked the German 15th and 71st *Panzer Grenadier* Regiments that held the high ridge separating the Americans from their unit on the beach. In two days of fighting, the American forces punched through the German defenses and linked up with the beleaguered battalion on the beach. The Rangers fought as conventional infantry, and at the conclusion of the battle, took no further part in the operations in Sicily. The 3rd Battalion rejoined the 1st and 4th in the vicinity of the town of Corleone, where the Rangers received replacements and began training in preparation for their next mission, the landing at Salerno.[16]

Sergeant (SGT) George G. Sabine Jr. was one of the new volunteers to join the Rangers in Sicily. Assigned to 3rd Battalion, Sabine took part in the train-up for the invasion of the Italian mainland. "I joined the Rangers right after the campaign in Sicily. I was one of the first replacements that they had. We had some marginal training in Sicily. We didn't have a lot of time before we made the invasion of Salerno."[17] Sabine was assigned duties as a Scout. "We concentrated on scouting and patrolling. They made me a scout and I used to go out with the company commander and the first sergeant, and we'd do a lot of talking and a lot of looking. A lot


ADVANCE TO THE VOLTURNO
13 September–6 October 1943
Allied Routes of Advance
German Front Line, 20 Sep
German Front Line, 6 Oct
Elevation in Meters
0
100
300
500
1000
1500+
N
0
10 Miles
0
10 KM
Naples
Salerno
Mount Vesuvius
Salerno Beachhead
15 Sep
Volturno
Cancello ed Arnone
Capua
Caserta
Maddaloni
Cancello
Aversa
Acerra
Pomigliano
Montesarchio
Benevento
Avellino
Montemarano
Sarno
Scafati
Nocera
Pagani
Torre Annunziata
Castellammare di Stabia
Sorrento
Amalfi
Minori
Maiori
Vietri sul Mare
Montecorvino
Acerno
Eboli
Battipaglia
Calore
6 Oct
7 Oct
2 Oct
82
Rgr
56
3
133
45
46
Br 7
Br 23
7
87
88
90

The Allies landed at Salerno to capture the port of Naples.

of Boy Scout work. You listen for sounds and look for tracks, that sort of thing."[18]

Operation AVALANCHE was the codename for the Allied landing near Salerno. The mission was to secure a beachhead in the vicinity of Naples, the second largest city and largest port in Italy. The capture of Naples would force the evacuation of the German forces in the south, secure the port and possibly precipitate Italy's exit from the war. Heading into the landing, the Allies were elated to learn that Italy had surrendered on 8 September 1943. The Germans reacted quickly to disarm the Italian forces, but the initial feeling among the Allied troops was that the landing would be a simple one. This proved to be far from the truth, as the Germans began to rapidly move forces to the vicinity of the Salerno beachhead.

Maiori beach and the rugged terrain above the town. The Rangers landed at Maiori and quickly moved to secure the Chiunzi Pass above the town.

The Ranger Force was part of the British 10th Corps and consisted of the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Ranger Battalions, the British Number 2 and Number 41 Commando, and Companies C and D of the 83rd Chemical Mortar Battalion.[19] The Rangers came ashore before daylight on 9 September 1943 at Maiori, about twenty miles west of Salerno on the extreme left flank of the Allied landing. Their mission was to take the town, destroy the nearby coastal defenses, then move to the high ground above the town, and seize the Chiunzi Pass over which passed the main road to Naples. Once at the pass, they were to prevent any Germans attempts to retake the pass which would hold up the Allied advance toward Naples. The 4th Battalion under Major Roy Murray quickly secured the beach and cleared the way for the 1st and 3rd battalions, who headed northwest to secure the Chiunzi Pass.[20] The Rangers surprised the few defenders around Maiori, and they quickly gained their objectives by midmorning of the first day, occupying the heights on both sides of Chiunzi Pass.[21] Unlike the Rangers, however, the main invasion force failed to achieve most of its D-Day objectives. The Fifth Army was slow to break out of the beachhead as the Germans quickly moved to contain the landing. The Rangers' two-day mission to hold the heights ended up lasting more than two weeks. The Rangers fought off successive German counterattacks and suffered through sustained artillery barrages as the Allied divisions continued to try to break through the stubborn German defenses.[22] The Rangers' defensive position stretched steadily westward toward the sea as they were forced to extend the line to match the movement of the Germans trying to outflank Salerno.[23] In the days following the landing, Darby's Ranger Force grew with the addition of a battalion of the 143rd Infantry, a battalion of the 325th Glider Infantry (minus one company), as well as tank, tank destroyer, and artillery elements. When the Allies finally broke through and reached Naples on 8 October 1943, LTC Darby was in command of a force of roughly 8,500 men.[24] Not until 9 February 1944 did the Rangers reach Naples and establish themselves in the city as the German Army evacuated and pulled back to defensive positions further north.

The 1st and 3rd Ranger Battalions won the Distinguished Unit Citation for their success at Chiunzi Pass, but the recognition came at a high price. In the month of September, Darby's Ranger Force lost twenty-eight killed, nine missing, and over sixty-six wounded—approximately

Fifth Army shoulder patch

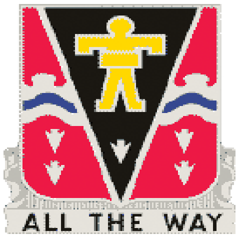
325th Glider Infantry Regiment Distinctive Unit Insignia

10 percent of the force. Most of the casualties were suffered during the conventional fighting that followed the seizure of Chiunzi Pass.[25]

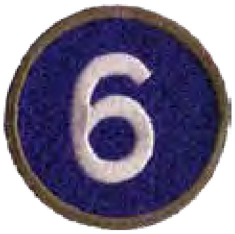
For the next few months, all three Ranger battalions were employed as conventional infantry in the bitter winter mountain fighting near San Pietro, Venafro, and Cassino as the Allies sought to pierce the German Winter Line. Not used as assault troops in a manner befitting their training, they were used to hold terrain on the defensive line. The small size of the Ranger companies, 63 men versus the 193 of the regular infantry, meant that the Ranger lines were stretched very thinly. Combat along the Winter Line was heavy.

Sergeant Sam Sabine was wounded at this time. "I got wounded on the eighth of December, on Hill 960 near San Pietro. I got hit with a hand grenade, set off a mine, and that knocked me out. Then my platoon sergeant and I got hit with another hand grenade."[26] Sabine was evacuated and returned to the unit at the end of the Italian campaign. The Rangers suffered significant casualties in the vicious fighting, most notably the 1st and 4th battalions, who were in heavy combat from 11–13 November near Venafro.[27]

Private Donald H. Golde of F Company, 3rd Battalion, was detailed as a stretcher bearer in support of the 1st and 4th battalions. "I was helping carry down a stretcher in the mountains near Venafro. Under fire, I had to jump backwards off a rock terrace and hurt my arm, neck, and elbow. At the time, I also had trench foot and so I was evacuated."[28] Golde later rejoined the battalion at Anzio.



509th Parachute Infantry Regiment Distinctive Unit Insignia



VI Corps shoulder patch

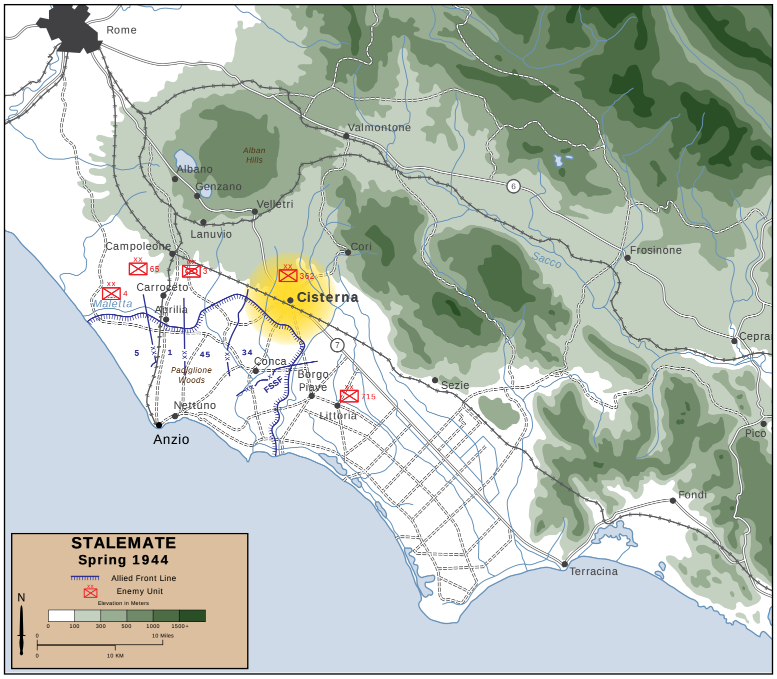
After the tough fighting in the Italian mountains, the three Ranger Battalions were redesignated as the "6615th Ranger Force." On 11 December 1943, LTC Darby was promoted to colonel and assumed command of the force. The 6615th included the three Ranger Battalions, with the Ranger Cannon Company; the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion; the 83rd Chemical Warfare Mortar Battalion; and H Company, 36th Combat Engineer Battalion.[29] There was little time to relax; new recruits had to be found to make up the losses and the newcomers trained for the upcoming missions. After a short period of resting, reorganizing, and recruiting new volunteers, the unit was again part of an Allied amphibious operation.

Attached to Major General John Lucas' VI Corps, the first employment of the 6615th Ranger Force was as the spearhead of the surprise night landings at Anzio. Operation SHINGLE was meant to be an end run around the tough German defenses of the Winter Line and open the way to Rome, but, as at Salerno, it became a defensive stalemate. In this case, a lack of aggression on the part of the Allies allowed the Germans to bottle up the VI Corps.

Rangers of D Company, 3rd Battalion, in combat near Santa Maria, Italy, November 1943. The bitter combat in the Italian mountains took a heavy toll on the Rangers.

The mission was a classic Ranger operation: seize the port facilities, destroy gun batteries, and secure the beachhead. The 6615th Ranger Force landed at Anzio before dawn on 22 January 1944. The landing was the smoothest of any in which the Rangers had taken part. They landed successfully and with no opposition. Only two undermanned German battalions defended the area and offered little opposition for the twenty-seven battalions of the Allied force coming ashore. The German troops, who had come to Anzio from the Winter Line for rest and rehabilitation, were quickly overrun. By midnight, VI Corps had landed over 36,000 men and 3,200 vehicles, and had taken 227 prisoners at a cost of 13 killed, 97 wounded, and 44 missing.[30] The landing was an unqualified success.

During the next few days, VI Corps cautiously expanded its beachhead. General Lucas hesitated to make a decisive thrust inland toward Rome, giving the Germans



Intended to open the way to Rome, Anzio was to be the end of the Rangers.

time to seize the high ground surrounding Anzio and prepare for a counterattack. By 25 January, German Lieutenant General (*Generaloberst*) Eberhard von Mackensen had elements of eight divisions deployed for the defense with five more on the way. Mackensen's mission was to counterattack as soon as possible and drive the Allies into the sea.

Soon the entire VI Corps was trapped within the Anzio perimeter. As British Prime Minister Winston Churchill later noted," I had hoped that we were hurling a wildcat onto the shore, but all we had got was a stranded whale."[31] A bold move was required to achieve a breakout of the beachhead. The VI Corps staff developed a plan for a general offensive to break out of the German encirclement. The Ranger mission was to infiltrate two battalions through the German lines and attack the small town of Cisterna di Littoria, a key VI Corps objective. On the night of 30 January 1944, the 1st and 3rd battalions were to infiltrate five miles behind the German Lines and seize the town. Simultaneously, the 4th Battalion would attack to clear the main road toward Cisterna.

The Ranger Force order, which was signed by Major Dammer and issued at Darby's command, was simple and in keeping with the type of missions for which the Rangers were designed.

Of the mission, Darby said, "The plan was not an unusual one for my Rangers. In fact, it was down our alley and one that would have delighted the heart of Major Rogers in pre-Revolutionary days."[32] The 1st Ranger Battalion would cross the line of departure, which was a road running east to west, and move roughly four miles to Cisterna under cover of darkness. The terrain between the line of departure and Cisterna was flat farmland with little cover other than drainage ditches and scattered farm buildings. Because the Rangers would be vulnerable in the open country, they were to use the irrigation ditches for concealment when possible and avoid enemy contact before reaching their objective. Upon arriving at Cisterna, the 1st Battalion was to enter the town, destroy the enemy units in it, occupy the ground to the immediate northwest, and prepare to repel enemy counterattacks. At daylight, the Battalion was to send a patrol to the northwest to make contact with the 7th Infantry Regiment, whose mission was to attack east of the town.

Private First Class Ed Wall of the 4th Ranger Battalion at Anzio. Wall was one of the Rangers who moved to the First Special Service Force when the Rangers were disbanded.

7th Infantry Regiment shoulder patch

15th Infantry Regiment Distinctive Unit Insignia

601st Tank Destroyer Battalion shoulder patch

The 3rd Battalion would cross the line of departure fifteen minutes after the 1st Battalion and follow the 1st Rangers to Cisterna. If the enemy interfered with the 1st Battalion, the 3rd Rangers were to engage them, thus freeing the 1st Rangers to continue their attack on Cisterna. The 3rd Battalion would assist in the capture of Cisterna and, if necessary, occupy the ground immediately northeast of town, and then prepare to repel enemy counterattacks. At daylight, it was to send a patrol to the northeast to contact the 15th Infantry Regiment whose attack took them west of the town.

The 4th Battalion, with an eight-man minesweeping party attached, would cross the line of departure at 0200 hours and advance on Cisterna astride the Conca–Isola Bella–Cisterna road, clearing the road of mines and enemy troops. At Cisterna, it would become part of the Ranger Force's reserve. The Ranger Cannon Company and a platoon of the 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion would be prepared to move on Cisterna by way of the Conca–Isola Bella–Cisterna road and furnish anti-tank protection for the Ranger Force once in Cisterna. The 83rd Chemical Battalion was to assemble on the Conca–Isola Bella–Cisterna road and move forward to give fire support to the Rangers with their 4.2-inch mortars.

At 2315 hours on 30 January, the Ranger Force began to move the command post forward from a location well behind the lines, set up in an isolated house near the line of departure and just to the right of the Conca–Isola Bella–Cisterna road. From here, Colonel Darby would direct the attack. At 0200, the attack commenced.

The 1st and 3rd battalions passed through the line of departure as planned and began to move toward Cisterna through a ditch that offered cover and concealment. At 0248, however, the first of several events took place that did not augur well for the mission. Four radio operators from the Ranger Force headquarters element, who were to have accompanied the 3rd Battalion, became lost and returned to the Force command post. A second problem developed when the 3rd Battalion lost contact with the 1st Battalion about halfway to the objective. The three trail companies of 1st Battalion halted, but the unit split when the three lead companies continued to advance. The dangers of conducting a night infiltration with so many relatively untrained and inexperienced men was becoming painfully evident.

Captain Charles Shunstrom took command of the 1st Battalion's three rear companies and sent a runner back to find the 3rd Battalion. The runner returned with

First Special Service Force shoulder patch

word that the battalion commander, Major Alvah Miller, had been killed by a German tank round.[33] However, the battalion was moving forward to link up with the 1st Rangers. They did not fire on the Germans and tried to radio Darby. They failed to make contact and continued to creep forward through some empty trenches until they reached a flat field on the southern edge of Cisterna.

The 3rd Ranger Battalion and the three companies of the 1st Ranger Battalion that had been separated were able to get within 300 yards of the three lead companies before running into the Germans. After Ranger bazooka men destroyed two tanks that had been blocking the way, Shunstrom went forward with a runner and two other men and made contact with Major Jack Dobson, who briefed him on the situation. Dobson, who was new to the Rangers, had been given command of the 1st Ranger Battalion by Darby shortly before the landing at Anzio. The two battalions were halted 800 yards short of the town.

The 4th Battalion began its attack up the Conca–Isola Bella–Cisterna road as scheduled, but was stopped short of Isola Bella by fire from German tanks, self-propelled guns, automatic weapons, and small arms. Cisterna was more strongly held than anyone had anticipated. Darby, who was gravely concerned about the virtually nonexistent communications he had with the two lead battalions and the difficult time the 4th Rangers were having, saw the urgent need to break through the German roadblock. Indeed, the survival of the 1st and 3rd battalions depended on their doing so. The two battalions were coming under ever-increasing pressure.

Three German tanks that approached were destroyed by bazookas, but automatic and small arms fire continued to tear through the Rangers, most of whom had gathered in an area about three hundred yards in diameter. German attempts to overrun the 1st and 3rd battalions, and the Ranger attempts to break out of the encirclement, were each turned back with mutual ferocity. After two hours, the Rangers' ammunition began to run out and the men started searching the wounded and dead for ammunition. By now, it was full daylight and the situation was becoming untenable.

Almost out of ammunition and facing German tanks and infantry closing in, surrender became the only option. Calmer men disassembled their weapons and destroyed radios before the Germans overran the area. The 3rd Battalion sergeant major, Robert Ehalt, was the last man to speak to Darby by radio from Cisterna. "Some of the fellows are giving up. Colonel, we are awfully sorry." Ehalt concluded, "They can't help it, because we're running out of ammunition." Ehalt then destroyed his radio and continued to fight on until two German tanks blew the roof off the house he and his men were defending.[34]

Unfortunately for the Rangers, the Germans had been preparing for an attack of their own in the same sector and had reinforced their lines only the night before with elements of three divisions. This led to the 1st and 3rd Battalions being surrounded by superior forces. The Rangers fought bravely, until both ammunition and time ran out. The 4th Battalion, with armored reinforcements, tried desperately to break through to the 1st and 3rd Battalions as all along the Anzio perimeter VI Corps units attacked in their sectors to try to pierce the strong German positions. Only eight Rangers survived to return to American lines. The 1st and 3rd battalions suffered 12 killed, 36 wounded, and 743 captured.[35] Among the killed in action (KIA) was the 3rd Battalion commander, Major Alvah Miller. The 1st Battalion commander, Major John Dobson, was wounded. The 4th Battalion sustained 30 killed and 58 wounded in their attempt to relieve the trapped battalions.[36] Later intelligence revealed that the Ranger attack on Cisterna had thwarted the planned German counterattack, but at an extremely high cost.[37]

Cisterna marked the end of the Ranger Force. In a later action on 4 February, the 4th Ranger Battalion helped turn back a German counterattack. On 19 February, those Rangers still surviving were temporarily attached to the Canadian-American First Special Service Force. Those men who had recently joined the Rangers and had not spent enough time overseas to justify being returned to the United States were absorbed into the First Special Service Force.[38]

At this point, the Rangers were disbanded. About 150 returned to the United States and about 400 were permanently transferred to the First Special Service Force where they participated in the liberation of Rome and the invasion of Southern France.[39] The Rangers would return for the D-Day invasion in the form of the 2nd and 5th Battalions and as a distinct entity in the 6th Rangers in the Philippines. Colonel Darby would go on to command the 179th Infantry Regiment in the 45th Division for two months before being sent to Washington DC for assignment to the War Department. During an inspection tour of Europe, he obtained a position as assistant division commander with the 10th Mountain Division. He died from shrapnel wounds on 30 April 1945, near Lake Garda in northern Italy. Two days later, the Germans in Italy agreed to an unconditional surrender.[40]

The Ranger campaigns in Sicily and Italy demonstrated the viability of the Ranger concept for specialized missions. They also revealed the importance of a rigorous training program to accomplish those specialized missions. The decline in the quality and intensity of the training and the number of new, untested recruits led to an erosion in the effectiveness of the Rangers. The Rangers paid a heavy price for this at Cisterna, where the small number of veteran Rangers were not enough to offset the lack of experience in the battalions.

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23 Murray interview.

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SICILY 1943
NAPLES-FOGGIA 1943-1944
ANZIO 1944
ROME-ARNO 1944

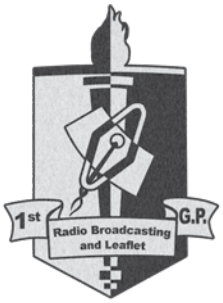
The Ganders:

Strategic PSYWAR in the Far East
Part I: Introduction and Movement to the Far East

by Robert W. Jones Jr.

AFTER World War II, the U.S. Army followed its historic pattern of demobilizing. During the war, a robust psychological warfare capability had been built "from the ground up" (today's "psychological operations," PSYOP was referred to as "psychological warfare" or PSYWAR). After World War II, the PSYWAR capability was reduced to small staff sections at major headquarters. By 1948, the only PSYWAR unit in the Regular Army was the Tactical Information Detachment (TID) at Fort Riley, Kansas. This small unit (four officers and twenty soldiers) used loudspeakers and leaflets to support aggressor elements in maneuvers against U.S. forces.[1]

With the 1950 North Korean invasion of South Korea, PSYWAR units were needed to support United Nations forces. To cover tactical support, the TID became the 1st Loudspeaker and Leaflet Company. However, there was a gap in PSYWAR capability at the strategic level. The Department of the Army decided to form several units at Fort Riley while the Army scrambled to reestablish psychological warfare staffs and units at all levels. In less than a year, a PSYWAR school was established; several units formed, trained, and deployed; staff officers trained, and PSYWAR sections created from Department of the Army to corps and division headquarters. This article discusses the formation, training, and initial service of one such unit, the 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, nicknamed the "Ganders" by the soldiers.



1st RB&L Group insignia

During World War II, there were several tiers of PSYWAR capability in the U.S. Army effort. In the European Theater, PSYWAR was directed by Brigadier General Robert A. McClure at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) level. Staff sections were established at Corps, Army, and theater headquarters. Experience gained in the Mediterranean theater was incorporated for the Normandy and Southern France invasions. At the tactical level, Mobile Radio Broadcasting Companies with organic radio broadcast, printing, and loudspeaker capabilities provided support.[2]

In the Southwest Pacific Area Command, General Douglas MacArthur was slow to develop a PSYWAR structure. In early 1944, his Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB) numbered less than forty soldiers, but it grew to almost five hundred by the end of the war. Several tactical loudspeaker units attached to the infantry units operated in the Philippines and Okinawa.[3] At the end of the war, all the tactical PSYWAR units were inactivated and the staff sections at all levels disappeared.

In 1947, the Far East Command (FEC) in Tokyo reestablished Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB) as the "Special Projects Division" under the G2 (Intelligence).[4] Major General Charles Willoughby, the FEC G2, selected Colonel J. Woodall Greene to head the PWB. Greene had been a Psychological Warfare officer and the executive officer of the PWB during World War II. With a small staff of two civilians and two officers, he began planning psychological warfare for conceivable conflicts in the Far East.[5] These early preparations were invaluable in 1950.

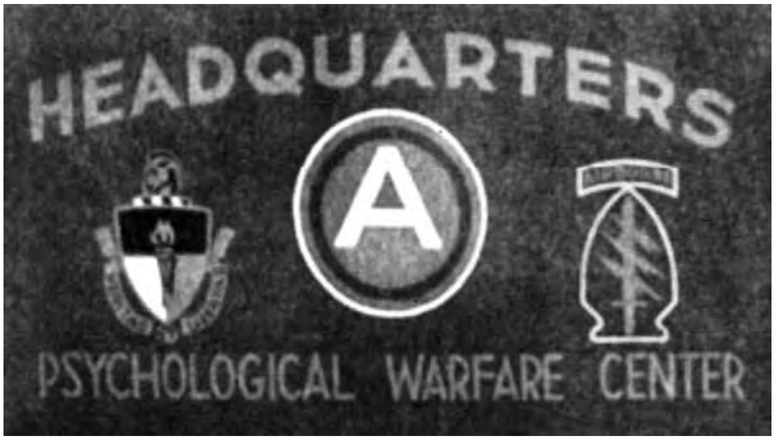
Kim Il Sung's North Korean People's Army (NKPA) invaded South Korea in the early morning of 25 June 1950. President Truman ordered U.S. forces to assist the South Koreans on 27 June 1950.[6] The U.S. advisors assigned to ROK units were immediately drawn into combat, while in Japan, the U.S. occupation forces began preparations to deploy. The numerically superior and better armed North Korean units quickly pushed aside the Republic of Korea (ROK) Army into the Southeast corner of the pennensula.[7]

The small Psychological Warfare Branch (PWB) was energized and responded quickly with PSYWAR products. The U.S. Air Force was dropping leaflets over the battle area in Korea on 28 June 1950. These 12 million crude, hastily printed leaflets produced by Japanese printing firms, urged the Koreans to resist the Communists and said that help was on the way. Civilian radio stations in Japan broadcast into Communist-held areas a few days later.[8] It was a "band aid" PSYWAR operation but it was better than nothing.

The scramble in the United States to "reinvent" PSYWAR included Secretary of the Army Frank Pace Jr.'s selection of Brigadier General Robert A. McClure, General Dwight D. Eisenhower's chief of European PSYWAR in WWII, to be Chief of the newly designated Office of Psychological Warfare. Formed on 15 January 1951 from the small Army Psychological Warfare Section in the Army G-3, BG McClure was responsible for PSYWAR training.[9] He had to start from scratch since there was no psychological warfare training in the Army. According to Dr. Alfred H. Paddock, the Army had less than ten PSYWAR-qualified officers on active duty in the summer of 1950. The Army immediately tried to redress this by sending six officers to a semester of psychological warfare training at Georgetown University in October 1950.[10] The long-term solution was the creation of an Army school to resurrect the World War II capability.

In the spring of 1951, the Psychological Warfare Department of the Army General Ground School at Fort Riley began training students. The course was six to seven weeks long, covered psychological warfare, strategic intelligence, and foreign army organization. Four officer and two non-commissioned officer classes produced 334 graduates. All four services and some Allied nations were represented.[11] When Army Reservists and draftees with PSYWAR skills (psychologists, journalists, illustrators, advertising executives, newspapermen, commercial radio technicians, etc.) were called up, they were sent to Fort Riley for training and assignment. Theater-specific training took place when they arrived in Japan or Korea. The Psychological Warfare Department at the Army General Ground School became an independent Army School when it relocated to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in early 1952.[12]

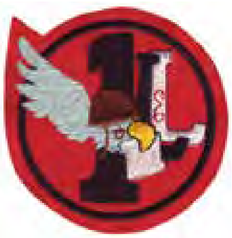
General Dwight D. Eisenhower presenting Brigadier General McClure with a Distinguished Service Medal as Chief of PSYWAR in World War II. McClure was the pick of the Secretary of the Army to revitalize PSYWAR in the service.



Psychological Warfare Center sign at Fort Bragg circa 1954–1955. While the Psychological Warfare School started at Fort Riley it expanded at Fort Bragg.

The Psychological Warfare Center, the predecessor of today's U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, was the proponent responsible for Psychological Warfare training, doctrine, and equipment. The Psychological Warfare Board of the Center evaluated PSYWAR tactics, techniques, procedures, doctrine, and equipment. During the Korean War, the board conducted over forty evaluations of receiver/transmitters, loudspeakers, mobile reproduction equipment, and improved leaflet dissemination techniques. Supporting the PSYWAR Center at Fort Bragg was the 6th Radio Broadcasting & Leaflet Group (RB&L), formed 14 September 1951, at Fort Riley.[13]

When the Korean War broke out, the only tactical PSYWAR unit in the Army was the Tactical Information Detachment (TID) at Fort Riley. The four officers and twenty enlisted men in the unit were alerted for movement to Korea in August 1950. They left Fort Riley by train on 9 September, and sailed from Seattle on 15 September.[14] The TID that arrived at Pusan on 15 October was short on personnel and equipment, but was redesignated the 1st Loudspeaker and Leaflet Company (L&L) on 4 November 1950. The 1st L&L began tactical loudspeaker operations, but most systems were inoperable by the time the Chinese entered the war in late November.[15] The UN retreat, subsequent defensive operations, and a lack of equipment kept the 1st L&L from routine loudspeaker operations until early 1951.[16] While the 1st L&L Company covered tactical PSYWAR for the Eighth U.S. Army, there was no strategic level support. That would be solved by creating new units at Fort Riley.[17]



1st L&L Company pocket insignia

To provide a strategic PSYWAR capability, Brigadier General McClure directed the formation of a new type of unit called the Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group.[18] Three Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Groups were authorized. The 1st RB&L was formed at Fort Riley from reservists and draftees, and deployed to Japan. Its sister unit, the 6th RB&L Group supported the school at Fort Riley, and later Fort Bragg. The 301st RB&L was a Reserve unit from New York. It was hastily created and mobilized, and joined

While Fort Bragg is the current home of PSYOP, the birthplace could be considered Fort Riley, Kansas. Fort Riley was the hub activity for U.S. Army Psychological Warfare at the beginning of 1951. Simultaneously, the Army established a school, trained individual soldiers and units, formed the 1st and 301st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Groups, and the 2nd Loudspeaker and Leaflet Company. The 301st RB&L, a reserve unit from New York, was destined for duty in Europe and eventually went to Heidelberg, Germany.

the 1st RB&L in Kansas for training before being shipped to Germany.[19] Korea was the priority for BG McClure.

Lieutenant Colonel Homer S. Shields, a European PSYWAR veteran, was selected by Brigadier General McClure to command the 1st RB&L slated for Korea. Mobilized with the Indiana National Guard in 1942 as an infantry lieutenant, Shields later served as the executive officer of the 7th Army Combat Propaganda Team in March 1944. After service in North Africa, Italy, and Southern France, Major Shields became chief of PSYWAR for the 6th Army in October 1944. Afterward, he became Brigadier General McClure's executive officer at Supreme Headquarters until the end of the war in Europe. Following the war, Shields returned to Indianapolis and the newspaper business, but maintained his commission in the Indiana National Guard.[20]

Lieutenant Colonel Shields had a monumental task to accomplish in less than four months. He and his staff had to form, equip, train, and ship the 1st RB&L to the Far East. The table of organization and equipment evolved as the Group received and trained soldiers. The 1st RB&L Group consisted of three companies. The Headquarters Company, responsible for the normal administrative and logistical support, also had a Research and Analysis Section "responsible for the preparation and composition of propaganda material" at the theater level.[21] The 3rd Reproduction Company produced the strategic leaflets, newspapers, and other paper products. They would eventually print 20 million products a week. The 4th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company was to broadcast PSYWAR from either fixed or mobile radio stations.[22] In the division between tactical and strategic responsibility, the 1st RB&L's area of operations began where the 1st L&L Company's ended, forty miles behind the line of contact.[23]

Lieutenant Colonel Homer S. Shields, the first commander of the 1st RB&L Group, in his office in Tokyo.

With the North Korean invasion of South Korea, the U.S. government mobilized Reserve and National Guard units and called-up inactive individual reservists and increased draft quotas (selective service).[24] Many of the draftees had technical skills and college educations. Some Reservists called-up were World War II veterans who had gone to college afterward and acquired new job skills since the end of the war. To take advantage of these skills and education, the Army established a screening and classification station at Fort Myer, Virginia. Basic training soldiers with a college education and/or specific job skills were taken to Fort Myer for evaluation. At Fort Myer, they were usually asked questions about their civilian background (i.e., education, job experience, language ability). Most soldiers did not have to produce any evidence, they were simply taken at their word.[25] Despite the sometimes casual nature of the selection process, it was able to select some highly qualified young men. The 1st RB&L drew soldiers from the Fort Myer pool to form the unit.

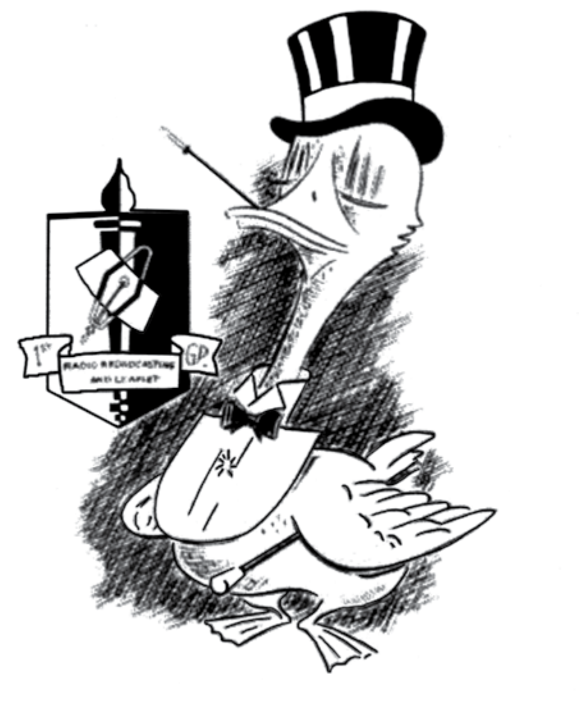
Simultaneously, the Army attempted to man the new PSYWAR units, establish a school, and fill staff positions throughout the service. The recruits came from a variety of sources. The 1st RB&L is a representative example in that it was primarily composed of draftees and mobilized reservists with civilian skills related to PSYWAR (i.e., journalists, artists, printers, graphics designers, etc). Over one-third of the enlisted men were college graduates, some with advanced degrees.[26]

For many of the newly drafted soldiers, the telegram announcing "Greetings" was a complete surprise. Gudmund Berge had served in the Navy during World War II. Enlisting under the V-12 program, he then attended Navy ROTC at the University of Washington, and served for a short time on a destroyer escort before being discharged in August 1946.[27] Following his Navy service, Berge returned to the University of Washington to complete his degree in architecture. After certification, he began work as an architect in Seattle. Surprised when he received a draft notice, he was informed that his Navy service did not satisfy his national service obligation.

"You must remember the times—you didn't question the government, you had a job to do and you did it. I had received my education through the GI Bill and I was ready to pay it back," remembered Berge.[28] After basic training at Fort Ord, California, he was ordered to Fort Myer, for classification. Given the choice of service as an Army combat engineer or going to a new unit, he elected to go to Fort Riley in January 1951.[29] To occupy his first days in the 1st RB&L Group, "I painted a wall mural (8′ x 14′) of Fort Riley on a mess hall wall."[30] Berge became a graphic artist designing leaflets.

Others were even more surprised at being drafted, especially those that had been declared "4-F" (unfit for duty) during World War II. Bill McCorkle was a sports reporter at the Borger *News-Herald* in Borger, Texas, when he received his draft notice. "I had been classified as 4-F in 1944 because of asthma," said McCorkle.[31] "I was drafted in November 1950 and attended basic training at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas, and then Chemical Corps training at Edgewood Arsenal (now part of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland)." In March 1951, McCorkle was ordered to Fort Myer with a follow on assignment to the 1st RB&L.[32] He was assigned as a scriptwriter in the 4th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company (MRB).

During training LTC Shields held a contest for a unit mascot to cultivate a unit identity. With a collection of trained artists, it was quite a challenge. The winner was a cartoon figure drawn by Gudmund Berge dubbed "the Proper Gander" (a take-off of "Propaganda"). Berge received a three-day pass.[45]



Bob Herguth volunteered for the Army in World War II, but was classified 4-F because of a heart murmur and a spot on the lung.[33] After graduating from the University of Missouri's School of Journalism, he went to work as a copy editor for the *Peoria Star* newspaper. Shortly after the North Koreans had invaded the south, he was reclassified as 1-A and drafted to be a military policeman (MP). He went to basic training at Camp Custer, Michigan, on 24 September 1950.[34] "An officer on the battalion staff found out I was a newspaperman, so I became the editor of the battalion newspaper in addition to training," said Herguth. "I was about halfway through advanced MP training when I was pulled out to go to the 1st Radio. The Army was looking for people with [civilian] skills so they didn't have to train them. There were a lot of guys with college educations and skills that the Army could use. So I was a 'fit' for the 1st Radio," remembered Herguth.[35] After being evaluated at Fort Myer, he was assigned to the 1st RB&L at Fort Riley. Herguth was assigned as a radio scriptwriter in the Group S-3.

After receiving his draft notice, Thomas Klein reported to Fort Sheridan, Illinois, in December 1950. Because he was a college graduate, Klein was shipped to Fort Myer for classification. It was there that he first heard of "this PSYWAR outfit and it seemed pretty interesting."[36] Klein was then on his way to the 1st RB&L at Fort Riley. With a Masters degree in economics (University of Michigan), he was assigned to the Group's Research and Analysis Section.[37] Klein deployed with the second increment, because he had not received basic training. Private Klein, when he arrived in Japan in September 1951, worked in Tokyo and spent time as a radio scriptwriter in Pusan during the summer of 1952.[38]

Most of the 1st RB&L officers came from the reserves, many with World War II combat experience. First Lieutenant (1LT) Eddie Deerfield had served in the 303rd Bombardment Group as a B-17 radio operator/aerial gunner flying from England during the war. After thirty missions, Deerfield had earned a Distinguished Flying Cross, three Air Medals, and a Purple Heart. After being discharged as a technical sergeant in 1945, Deerfield used his GI Bill to attend Northwestern University and received a journalism degree. During his senior year at Northwestern, Deerfield accepted a Reserve officer commission as a "journalism specialist" (public affairs).[39] He was working as a reporter for the *Chicago Times* when he got orders to report to the 1st RB&L at Fort Riley by April 1951.[40] Deerfield was assigned to the 4th MRB and eventually became the officer in charge of the Pusan radio detachment.

Another Reserve officer, 1st Lieutenant Alvin Yudkoff, spent World War II in the Pacific. After enlisting in the Army in 1943, he attended Japanese Language Training at the University of Michigan before assignment to a Japanese Language Detachment filled primarily with Nisei (Japanese-American) soldiers. Yudkoff participated in the invasion of Okinawa and later served in the occupation of Japan. After the war, he became a writer and had started a career as a documentary filmmaker when he was recalled to active duty and sent directly to the 1st RB&L. Assigned to the Group headquarters, Yudkoff was put in charge of radio script production.[41]

Once the majority of the soldiers had arrived at Fort Riley, training began in earnest. LTC Shields and his staff began a ten-week training program in March 1951.[42] The three phase training program was devised by the Group staff and conducted using 1st RB&L soldiers as instructors and assistants. 1LT Eddie Deerfield remembered "teaching classes in news writing."[43] The program began with basic soldiering skills, moved to general PSYWAR doctrine, and ended with six-weeks of PSYWAR topics. Training culminated with the development and dissemination of leaflets and radio broadcasts.[44] The formation and training of the 1st RB&L was shaped by conditions in the Far East.

Unbeknownst to most soldiers in the unit was a maelstrom of messages and letters between the FEC and BG McClure's office pushing for a May 1951 deployment. The PWB in Tokyo wanted the RB&L in theater by June. The unit was still under strength and short equipment. Most important were its mobile radio transmitters which were not due to arrive until August 1951. LTC Shields offered a compromise. A large advance party would augment the PWB as soon as possible. The main body would follow in July 1951. A third increment would remain at Fort Riley to train on the new equipment and then bring it to Japan in September 1951.[46]

An advance party of twelve left Fort Riley bound for Tokyo in mid-June. The Air Force transport stopped to refuel on the West Coast, Wake Island, and Iwo Jima before arriving in Tokyo. LTC Shields gave the advance party two missions. They were to augment current PSYWAR operations in FEC by assisting the PWB with radio broadcasts and leaflet design. The second mission was to prepare for the arrival of the main body in July.[47]

The majority of the unit was to depart Fort Riley by train for California. Kansas was hit by a five-day rainstorm on 11 July that caused massive flooding throughout the state. The Manhattan, Kansas, and the Fort Riley train stations were under two feet of flood water. A two and a half

Leaving Fort Riley by bus during a storm on 12 July 1951. LTC Shields says goodbye to Colonel "Whitey" Gruber. The five-day rainstorm flooded the area and most of Kansas.

Troops line up ready for departure on 12 July 1951.

"It gets pretty tiresome to sit on a train for forty-eight hours so at stops we had drills or exercised," said LTC Homer S. Shields

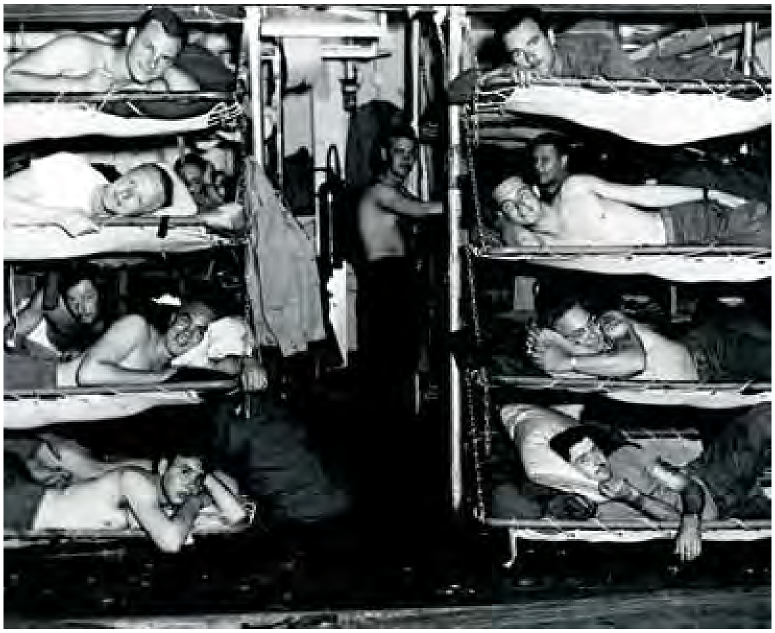
Troops preparing to depart Camp Stoneman, California.

1,200 additional troops infantry replacements for Korea aboard the USS Brewster *in Hawaii.*

hour bus ride to Lincoln, Nebraska, solved the problem.[48] The three-day train ride began on 12 July 1951.

The port of embarkation was Camp Stoneman, near San Francisco. The soldiers loaded onto the USNS *Brewster* on 18 July 1951. The four to five hundred soldiers were put into the ship's hold in compartments with canvas and metal frame bunks four-to-six high. The trip to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, took five days. The civilian ship captain recommended that the soldiers be kept aboard rather than risk AWOLs in Pearl Harbor. Instead, LTC Shields announced on the public address system that as the troop commander he was allowing a twenty-hour pass for Hawaii. He told everyone that he was assuming personal responsibility that everyone would make the troop muster at 0900 hours the following day. The men returned that respect and confidence with a 100 percent muster the next morning.[49]

After the night in Honolulu, the 1st RB&L soldiers had a real surprise when they reboarded the USNS *Brewster.* About 1,200 more troops, mostly infantrymen, had been loaded aboard for Korea. Worse than the overcrowding were the nineteen days to get to Japan. Aboard ship, the PSYWAR soldiers printed a daily newssheet. Movies were shown on deck, as well as boxing and wrestling matches, and religious services. The 1st RB&L Group organized and directed a variety show for everyone. Many of the soldiers simply read a lot. Bill McCorkle managed ". . . a book a day, including classics such as [Ernest] Hemingway, [John] Steinbeck, John Dos Passos, and [F. Scott] Fitzgerald."[50] A popular book was *Thunder out of China* by Theodore White, on the Communist takeover of China.[51] Still, the nineteen days at sea were long.



Troopship hold accommodations for the 1st RB&L soldiers during their trip to Japan.

When the Ganders got to Japan, their adventure was only one-third complete. Conducting PSYWAR became the business of the day. The majority of the command worked in Tokyo. The 3rd Reproduction Company went to the Far East Command Printing and Publications Center in the small town of Motosumiyoshi, half-way between Tokyo and Yokohama. Small PSYWAR detachments, mostly from the 4th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company, went to Korea to reestablish the Korean Broadcasting System for the United Nations.

This is the first of two articles on the 1st RB&L Group. The second article will explain the PSYWAR mission of the 1st RB&L soldiers in Japan and Korea.

This article would not have been possible without the assistance of 1st RB&L veterans including Tom Klein, Gudmund Berge, Robert Herguth, William McCorkle, Eddie Deerfield, and Alvin Yudkoff. The majority of the photos are courtesy of the Shields family.

Photo courtesy of the Shields family

The USNS Brewster *steaming into Yokohama harbor. The RB&L left the ship while the infantry replacements for Korea stayed aboard. A band on the dock greeted the newcomers to Japan.*

Endnotes

1 Stanley Sandler, *"Cease Resistance: It's Good for You": A History of U.S. Army Combat Psychological Operations* (Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), 206; Colonel Kenneth Hansen, *Psywar in Korea* (Washington DC: Joint Subsidiary Activities Group, Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1960), 26; Charles H. Briscoe, "'Volunteering' for Combat: Loudspeaker Psywar in Korea," *Veritas: The Journal of Army Special Operations History*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2005, 47; Alfred H. Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1982), 99.

2 Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins,* 12–13.

3 Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins,* 10–11.

4 Sandler, *"Cease Resistance: It's Good for You,"* 206.

5 Stephen E. Pease, *Psywar: Psychological Warfare in Korea 1950–1953* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1992), 15; Hansen, *Psywar in Korea,* 6; Sandler, *"Cease Resistance: It's Good for You,"* 322; Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins,* 89.

6 Roy E. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu* (Washington DC: Center for Military History, 1992), 38.

7 Appleman, *South to the Naktong,* 21; T.R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War* (Washington DC: Brassey's, 2000), 34.

8 Pease, *Psywar: Psychological Warfare in Korea 1950–1953,* 15; Sandler, *"Cease Resistance: It's Good for You,"* 207, Hansen, *Psywar in Korea,* 10.

9 Sandler, *"Cease Resistance: It's Good for You,"* 216; Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins,* 46; Pease, *Psywar: Psychological Warfare in Korea 1950–1953,* 16.

10 Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins,* 93.

11 Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins,* 116.

12 Pease, *Psywar: Psychological Warfare in Korea 1950–1953,* 25; Sandler, *"Cease Resistance: It's Good for You,"* 215.

13 Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins,* 82.

14 Briscoe, "'Volunteering' for Combat," 47; George S. Pettee, *US PSYWAR Operations in the Korean War* (Washington DC: Operations Research Office John Hopkins University, 1951), 29; Paul A. Wolfgeher, telephone interview by Steven Kuni, 2 January 2006, written notes, USASOC History Office Unclassified files, Fort Bragg, NC.

15 George S. Pettee, *US PSYWAR Operations in the Korean War,* 29; Sandler, *"Cease Resistance: It's Good for You,"* 225.

16 Sandler, *"Cease Resistance: It's Good for You,"* 210, 218.

17 Sandler, *"Cease Resistance: It's Good for You,"* 216; Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins,* 46; Pease, *Psywar: Psychological Warfare in Korea 1950–1953,* 16.

18 Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins,* 98–99.

19 Sandler, *"Cease Resistance: It's Good for You,"* 216; Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins,* 99.

20 Hansen, *Psywar in Korea,* 88; Reunion book, 123–124.

21 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group Command Report, 6–31 August 1951, National Archives, entry 439, box 5015, record group 407, copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; The Research and Analysis Section would be the combination of a Strategic Studies Detachment and Product Development Center in a Psychological Operations Battalion today.

22 Pease, *Psywar: Psychological Warfare in Korea 1950–1953,* 22–24; 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group Command Report.

23 Pease, *Psywar: Psychological Warfare in Korea 1950–1953,* 22–24; Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins,* 93.

24 James F. Schnabel, *United States Army in the Korean War. Policy and Direction: The First Year* (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1978), 120–21; With the Selective Service Extension Act of 1950 President Harry S. Truman had the authority to mobilize Reserve and National Guard units, and individuals, and draft new men.

25 Thomas M. Klein, with Robert Herguth and Robert McConaughey, *Psychological Warfare in Korea: Life and Times in the First Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group 1951–1952* (Greenwich, CT: Round Hill Productions, 2002), 5 (hereafter noted as Reunion book); Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins,* 93.

26 Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins,* 93.

27 The Navy's V-12 program sent officer candidates to college for a year of intensive instruction in science and mathematics. The officer candidates then attended either Navy or Marine Corps Officer Candidate School, followed by commissioning as either an Ensign in the Navy or 2nd Lieutenant in the Marine Corps.

28 Gudmund Berge, 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 21 February 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, telephone interview notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

29 Berge interview.

30 Berge interview.

31 William L. McCorkle, 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 15 February 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, telephone interview notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

32 McCorkle interview; Reunion Book, 209–10.

33 Robert Herguth, 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 15 February 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, telephone interview notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Reunion book, 184.

34 Herguth interview; Reunion book, 184.

35 Herguth interview; Reunion book, 184.

36 Thomas Klein, 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 1 March 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, telephone interview notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

37 Klein interview; Reunion book, 194–95.

38 Klein interview; Reunion book, 194–95.

39 Eddie Deerfield, 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, e-mail to Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 5 March 2007, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Reunion Book, 164–65.

40 Deerfield e-mail; Reunion Book, 164–65.

41 Alvin Yudkoff, 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones Jr., 15 February 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, telephone interview notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Reunion book, 250–51. Several of the Group's lieutenants were recent Princeton University graduates, the product of the Reserve Officer Training Corps program. Captain Robert Horn had a Ph.D in political science from Princeton, and as a recalled Reservist, the WWII veteran became the head of the Group's Operations Research Section. Captain Fred Laffey, another WWII veteran, worked a variety of civilian radio jobs in his native Massachusetts before receiving his assignment as a radio program manager in the 4th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company.

42 Reunion book, 24.

43 Deerfield e-mail.

44 Reunion book, 24.

45 Berge interview.

46 Colonel Edward J.F. Glavin, Acting Chief of Psychological Warfare, memorandum to Lieutenant Colonel Homer S. Shields, subject: Deployment of 1st RB&L, 15 May 1951, (National Archives, entry 339, box 19, record group 319), copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Chief PSYWAR message to PsyWar Branch, Far East Command, subject: Urgent Personnel Needs, 27 May 1951, (National Archives, entry 339, box 19, record group 319), copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

47 Berge interview; Herguth interview.

48 "The five most dangerous days in Kansas history," *Capital Journal* online, Topeka, Kansas, http://cjonline.com/webindepth/flood/stories/070801_disasterousdays.shtml; Reunion book, 27.

49 Reunion book, 27.

50 McCorkle interview.

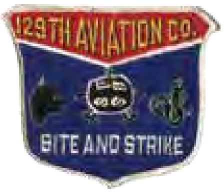
51 McCorkle interview.

A Tale of Two Units:

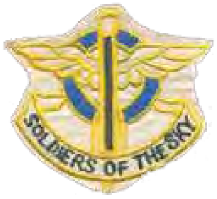
The 129th Assault Helicopter Company

by Kenneth Finlayson

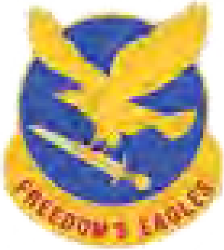
THE 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) provides rotary wing (helicopter) aviation support to today's Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF). The "Night Stalkers" are the premier practitioners of long-range, low-level night operations. During the Vietnam War, the 129th Assault Helicopter Company performed missions similar to those associated with modern SOF aviation. Inactivated in the years after the Vietnam War, the 129th was resurrected during the formative years of the 160th SOAR.[1]



129th Vietnam shoulder patch



10th Aviation Battalion Distinctive Unit Insignia



17th Aviation Group Distinctive Unit Insignia

The 129th Assault Helicopter Company was formed on 3 July 1965 and activated on 5 July 1965 at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The unit deployed to Vietnam where it served from 21 October 1965 to 8 March 1973. The company was assigned to the 10th Aviation Battalion, part of the 17th Aviation Group. An Assault Helicopter Company, the principal mission of the 129th was the tactical air movement of troops and equipment within the area of operations. In conjunction with this mission, armed helicopters provided suppressive fire support to protect the insertion of troops. The organization of the company reflected these two missions.

When the unit arrived in Vietnam, it was organized into four platoons. Two of the platoons were "lift platoons" flying Bell UH-1D "Huey" helicopters. (In 1968 the unit received newer "H" model Hueys). Called "Slicks" because the cargo area of the helicopter was devoid of seats or other equipment to facilitate carrying troops and cargo, these two platoons formed the "Bulldog" element of the company. Supporting the two lift platoons was one armed platoon, nicknamed the "Cobras," flying the UH-1B model "Hog" Hueys. (Later in the war, Bell fielded the AH-1 Cobra model attack helicopter, a two-man gunship.)[2] The fourth platoon in the company was the service platoon that included the aviation maintenance, supply, and mess teams.

After a year in Vietnam, the company reorganized into a five-platoon configuration by adding a third lift platoon as well as the 394th Aircraft Maintenance Transportation Detachment and the 433rd Medical Detachment (Air Ambulance) for additional maintenance and medical capability.[3] The average strength of the company was 15 officers, 52 warrant officers, and 152 enlisted men.

The troop-carrying element of the 129th was known as the Bulldogs. A UH-1D with the Bulldog Logo.

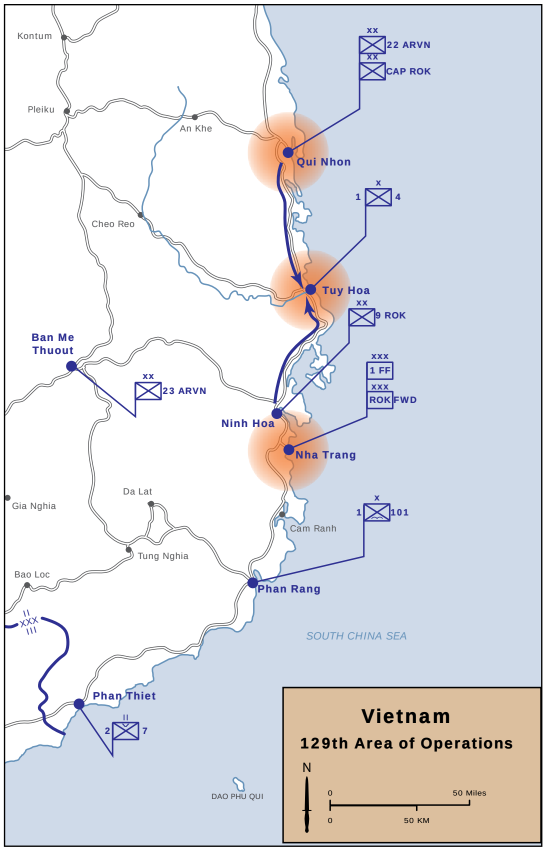
UH-1D "Slick" was the troop-carrying aircraft of the 129th.

A UH-1D of the 129th lands atop a ridge in Vietnam. The mission to deliver troops and equipment dictated landings such as this.

The principle mission of the 129th was to support the air assault operations of the United States and its allies.

The two flying elements, the "Bulldogs" and "Cobras," were the reason behind the company motto "Bite and Strike." The unit compiled an impressive record during the eight years it was in Vietnam.

The 129th supported a wide variety of units and missions in Vietnam. The company flew in support of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), 4th Infantry Division, and 25th Infantry Division, as well as the 5th Special Forces Group (SFG). The 129th also worked extensively with units of the Republic of Korea (ROK) 2nd Marine Brigade (Blue Dragons), the Army's Capitol (Tiger) Division, and 9th (White Horse) Division, as well as the 47th Army of Vietnam (ARVN) Regiment.[4] Many of the missions performed were similar to those now associated with Army Special Operations Aviation (ARSOA). On 13 March 1966, the company joined with the 48th and 117th Assault Helicopter companies that supported the 1st Brigade (Airborne), 101st Airborne Division, to conduct a battalion-sized night combat assault in the vicinity of Tuy Hoa. This was the first large night insertion in the war. The insertion took place at 0140 hours into a series of rice paddies marked only by the flashlights of Pathfinder Teams.[5] Later, the 129th would insert and extract Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrols (LRRPs) from the 101st and Special Forces teams from 5th SFG.[6] Support to ARSOF units in the Republic of Vietnam made the 129th a forerunner of the 3-160. Another was its ability to rapidly deploy as a unit.


Kontum
Pleiku
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XX 22 ARVN
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XX 9 ROK
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XX 23 ARVN
XXX 1 FF
XXX ROK FWD
Ninh Hoa
Nha Trang
Gia Nghia
Da Lat
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Cam Ranh
Tung Nghia
Bao Loc
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II XXX III
SOUTH CHINA SEA
Phan Thiet
II 2 7
DAO PHU QUI
Vietnam
129th Area of Operations
N
0
50 Miles
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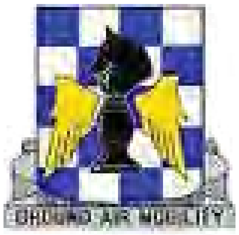
Map of Vietnam highlighting areas where the 129th conducted missions.

In the parlance of the time, the 129th was an "airmobile light" aviation company. The unit was designed, and trained extensively, for rapid displacement from one location in theater to another. The unit could, and frequently did, dismantle the entire company operation, pack, palletize equipment, and relocate with the objective of being capable of launching missions upon arrival. All the mess equipment, tentage, and supply and service equipment were palletized for loading onto U.S. Air Force C-130 aircraft, which also carried the company's wheeled vehicles.[7] The company helicopters self-deployed to the new location, and the unit was normally capable of meeting all support requirements on the day it arrived. Between January 1966 and September 1967, as an example, the unit made

When the 129th returned to Fort Bragg in 1973, it was part of the 82nd Aviation Battalion.

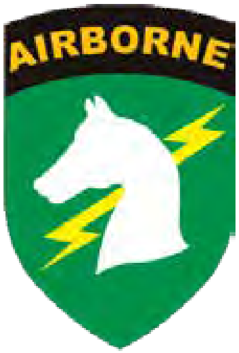


82nd Aviation Battalion Distinctive Unit Insignia

seventeen tactical deployments to various locations in South Vietnam.[8]

The 129th remained in Vietnam until 1973, when the unit returned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina. For its service in Vietnam, the unit was awarded two Valorous Unit Awards, two Meritorious Unit Commendations, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, and the Vietnamese Civic Action Honor Medal. Thirty-nine members of the unit were killed in action during the 129th's eight years of service in Vietnam.[9]

On the company's return to the United States, the 129th became B Company, 82nd Aviation Battalion, at Fort Bragg. Further restructuring of aviation assets in the battalion resulted in the inactivation of the 129th on 15 September 1979. After a seven year "break in service," the 129th Special Operations Aviation Company (SOAC) was activated at Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia, on 3 October 1986, under the command and control of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Battalion.[10] Major Gene Edwards was the first commander.



1st Special Operations Command shoulder patch

The 129th SOAC was activated as part of 1st Special Operations Command (SOCOM) and joined with the four Special Forces Group aviation detachments and the 160th Aviation Battalion as the Army's Special Operations Aviation components. Task Force (TF) 160 was the Army's response to Desert One, the failed attempt to rescue the American hostages in Iran in 1980. Henceforth the Army would have dedicated aviation support to Army special operations forces. Task Force 160 was based at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and initially consisted of a headquarters and headquarters company, five aviation companies, and a maintenance company. From October 1986 until January 1988, the 129th remained a separate aviation company supporting 1st SOCOM.

The newly reactivated 129th SOAC bore little resemblance to the Vietnam-era 129th Assault Helicopter Company. Designed to be a separate aviation company, the 129th was organized into a headquarters platoon, three flight platoons, and a maintenance platoon. The unit received new UH-60A Black Hawks directly from the Sikorsky production facility in Stratford, Connecticut. The 129th pilots picked up the aircraft at the factory and flew them to Corpus Christi, Texas. The installation of larger additional internal fuel tanks, advanced avionics, fast-rope extraction systems, an electronic hoist, and satellite communications equipment converted the UH-60As into the SOF-specific MH-60A models.[11] The company received fifteen MH-60As, five of which were subsequently allocated to the 617th Special Operations Aviation Detachment (SOAD) that was dedicated to provide aviation support to the Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH) in Panama.[12] (See sidebar.)

Chief Warrant Officer 4 (CW4) Todd Thelin was one of the first pilots assigned to the 129th and was part of the crew that picked up the new Black Hawks. "When I reported in there were only six people, the commander and his two instructor pilots, one crew chief, plus another pilot and an E-7 [sergeant first class] who reported in the day before me. We had a hand-me-down desk and three chairs in a borrowed office in the Hunter [Army Airfield (HAAF)] Legal Center,"[13] said Thelin. The first priority was to get the new aircraft.

"In the first couple of months our flying consisted of going up to Connecticut to pick up aircraft at the factory," Thelin related. "We normally picked up two at a time so our group consisted of four pilots and our one crew chief, Sergeant Bruce Willard. Once we picked up the aircraft, our standard route went west from the factory to the Hudson River. Then we flew down the river, took a few photo [opportunity] turns around the Statue of Liberty, exited

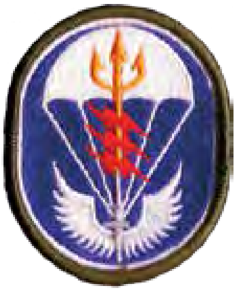
The 129th picked up "Vanilla" UH-60A Black Hawks from the Sikorsky factory and took them to Texas to receive the special operations modifications.

The MH-60A Black Hawk was the first MH-60 model used by the 129th to support Army Special Operations Forces.

south past the Verrazano Narrows Bridge, and headed southwest for the long boring flight to Texas."[14] The delivery flights were in daylight and took two or three days, with the flight stopping every two hours. It took eight trips over four months to pick up the new Black Hawks and deliver them to Corpus Christi. When the modifications were completed, the aircraft were delivered to HAAF and training commenced in earnest.[15]

Major James A. Cerniglia, who replaced Major Edwards in August 1987, was the second and final commander of the 129th. He commanded the unit until the company was inactivated in 1989. The 129th's mission was to "provide long-range rotary-wing air lift support to special operations units, Rangers, Special Forces, SEALS, and others ["White SOF"]. The primary customers were Special Forces units."[16] To support these units, the 129th underwent an extensive training program. As Cerniglia described the training program, "The focus of attention was on night, long-range, low-level flight operations. The unit trained in Europe, Canada, off-shore in the Gulf of Mexico, Panama, Honduras, and in almost every state in the U.S. Flight crews were required to attend rotary wing egress [in-water exit "dunker"] training at Jacksonville, [Florida] every six months, and regularly conducted night vision goggle ship landing training with the Navy. Survival training, weapons training, land navigation, and an extremely demanding physical training program complimented the personal skills [individual tactical and survival] training required by the Army Training Program."[17]

Captain Richard W. Sheppard, a flight platoon commander, noted that the training program was not the only mission for the company. "At the time, we were recruiting, training, and deploying, all at the same time."[18] In order to man the 617th in Pan-



Special Operations Command South shoulder patch

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Charles B. Lapp in the "Dunker" prior to immersion.

617th SOAD

THE 617th Special Operations Aviation Detachment (SOAD) was the first forward-deployed Army Special Operations Aviation (ARSOA) element in the Army Special Operations Forces inventory.[1] Born out of Initiative 17, which was the joint Army and Air Force directive that aligned rotary-wing (helicopter) aviation under the Army and fixed-wing aviation under the Air Force, it supported Special Operations. The 617th was formed out of the 129th Special Operations Aviation Company (SOAC) to replace the five Air Force UH-1N Hueys based at Howard Air Force Base, Panama.[2]

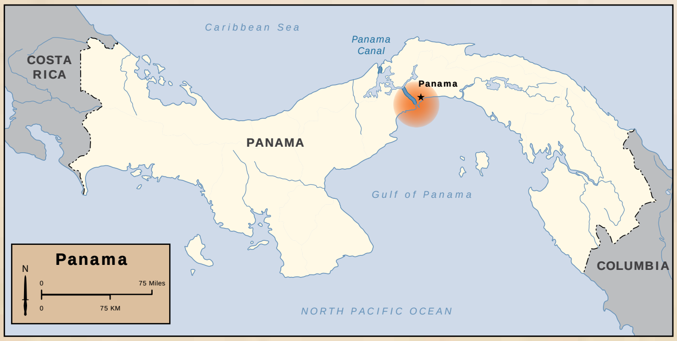
The 129th SOAC was activated at Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia, on 3 October 1986. Of the original 15 MH-60 Black Hawks assigned to the 129th, five were stationed at Howard AFB in September 1987, in what became the 617th SOAD. For the first eighteen months of the detachment's existence, a platoon from the 129th deployed to Panama on a 180-day temporary duty (TDY) rotation to man the unit. The rotations continued until March 1989, when the 617th accepted the transfer of the five aircraft and stood on its own.[3] In July 1994, the 617th became D Company, 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment.

The mission of the 617th was to provide rotary-wing aviation support to Special Operations Command South (SOCSOUTH), at that time based in Panama. The 617th was under the operational control (OPCON) of SOCSOUTH. Administrative control (ADCON) of the unit was through the 129th SOAC, part of the 160th Special Operations Aviation Group (SOAG). The 617th provided the aviation support to all SOF units operating in the SOCSOUTH area of operations. In December 1989, the 617th participated in Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama, providing aviation support to the SOF forces involved.

[1] Major Walter Rugen, "The Impact of Forward-Based Special Operations Aviation," *Special Warfare*, Summer 2001, Vol. 14, No. 3, 23–25.

[2] Lieutenant Colonel Andrew N. Milani II, "Evolution of the 3-160th SOAR Through Desert Storm," *Special Warfare*, Summer 2001, Vol. 14, No. 3, 14.

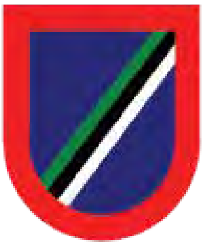
[3] Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Richard W. Sheppard, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 9 February 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Chief Warrant Officer 5 Charles Lapp, 3rd Battalion, 160th SOAR, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 11 April 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, notes in the USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.



Fort Kobbe and Howard Air Force Base are located on the Pacific coast of Panama near the western end of the Panama Canal.

Aerial view of Howard Air Force Base, Panama, home of the 617th Special Operations Aviation Detachment.

ama, one platoon deployed to Fort Kobbe on a 180-day temporary duty (TDY) rotation. This rotation continued for two years, until 1989, when the 617th became OPCON (operational control) to SOCSOUTH.[19] After two hectic years supporting Army SOF world-wide, the 129th was again inactivated, but its lineage was perpetuated.



160th Special Operations Aviation Group beret flash

On 16 January 1988, the 129th Aviation Company was inactivated at Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia, and was immediately reconstituted as A Company, 3rd Battalion, 160th Special Operations Aviation Group (Airborne) (SOAG).[20] The Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) for the company was the same as that of the former 129th, which authorized seven officers, twenty-six warrant officers, and ninety-four enlisted soldiers.[21] Company A became the nucleus for the new 3rd Battalion, 160th SOAG. The stand-up of the new battalion would take another year.

Training with the 7th Special Forces Group over Lake Huron, Michigan, using the troop ladder method of ascending to the helicopter.

The 3rd Battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Dell L. Dailey. On 2 June 1989, Dailey officially activated the battalion. At the time of its activation, 3rd Battalion, 160th SOAG, consisted of Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) commanded by Captain Richard W. Sheppard, A Company commanded by Major Mark Ochsenbein, B Company (briefly under First Lieutenant Eric Peterson), then commanded by Major Bruce Bridges, C Company led by Major Conway Ellers, and D Company commanded by Major Robert Bruns.[22]

The elements of the former 129th formed the heart of the battalion. The mess section, vehicle maintenance section, supply, parachute riggers, and battalion staff came from the headquarters platoon of the 129th. Company A, after formally transferring five MH-60A Black Hawks to the 617th was built around the ten remaining 129th aircraft. B Company was equipped with eight MH-47 Chinook helicopters that required extensive SOF-peculiar modifications to configure them into the MH-47. C Company was created from the 129th aviation maintenance platoon.[23] D Company was to provide command and control of the flight detachments supporting each of the four Special Forces Groups. Each SF Group had a flight detachment of four MH-60A Black Hawks. At the direction of 1st SOCOM, D Company was created to standardize training and support for the detachments located at Fort Lewis, Washington, Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Fort Bragg,

Crews of the 129th training with members of 7th Special Forces Group helocasting in Panama.

The 129th flew MH-60A Black Hawks during deck landings with the Navy off the coast of Virginia.

Training using the Stabilized Body Operations (STABO) harness. This system can be used for insertion and extraction of troops.

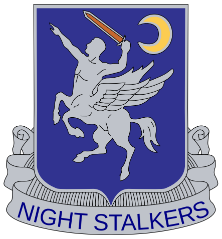
The MH-60L Black Hawks and MH-47G Chinooks are the latest models in use by the 3rd Battalion, 160th SOAR.

North Carolina, and Fort Devens, Massachusetts. In early 1990, the SFG flight detachments were disbanded to provide the force structure spaces for what was to become the 2nd Battalion, 160th SOAG.[24] With the transfer of the SF Group flight detachments, D Company's mission was complete.

The mission of 3rd Battalion was to support the same "White" SOF units as the 129th. When the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) was activated from the 160th SOAG on 26 June 1990, the 3rd Battalion shared some of the White SOF support mission with the newly-created 2nd Battalion. The first combat deployment for the 3rd Battalion was as Task Force 3-160. The 3rd Battalion, with elements of the 2nd Battalion, deployed in support of ARSOF in Operation DESERT STORM in September 1990. During the six-week war, TF 3-160 flew fifty-seven combat missions in support of Special Forces without losing any soldiers.[25]

The success of TF 3-160 in Operation DESERT STORM was the capstone of a four-year evolution in which the 129th SOAC became the 3rd Battalion, 160th SOAR. The 129th lineage goes back to the Vietnam War. The flight missions performed by the 129th Assault Helicopter Company in support of SOF elements laid the foundation for the long-range night penetrations that are the hallmark of the Night Stalkers.

160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment beret flash



160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment Distinctive Unit Insignia

The author would like to thank COL(ret) James Cerniglia, COL Andrew N. Milani, LTC (ret) Richard Sheppard, CW5 Charles Lapp, CW4 Todd Thelin, and Ms. Linda Rogers for their assistance.

Endnotes

1 While not a SOF aviation unit, the 129th did support SOF elements on the ground. The most direct link from the 129th to the 160th was First Lieutenant Bryan D. Brown, who was assigned to the 129th from September 1971 to April 1972. The former commander of the 160th SOAR, General Brown is currently the Commanding General of United States Special Operations Command.

2 Alex Fernwalt, "129th Aviation Company History," http://www.huey.co.uk/129th.php. 1–5.

3 First Lieutenant Edwin Steven Brague Jr., "Unit Historical Outline: 1 January 1966 to 31 December 1966," http://www.129th net/history/1966.html, 3. First Lieutenant Brague, the complier of the 1966 unit historical report, was killed on 7 January 1967 while on a mission with the 129th.

4 Brague, "Unit Historical Outline," 7–9.

5 Brague, "Unit Historical Outline," 2.

6 Brague, "Unit Historical Outline," 4–6.

7 "Airmobile Light," *Hawk Magazine,* 1st Aviation Brigade Public Affairs Office, September 1967, htt;//www.1stavnbde.com/Artcles/129art1.html, 1–3.

8 "Airmobile Light", 2.

9 Fernwalt, "129th Aviation Company History," 5.

10 Lieutenant Colonel Andy Milani, "Evolution of the 3-160th SOAR Through Desert Storm," *Special Warfare*, Summer 2001, Vol. 14, No. 3, 14.

11 Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Richard W. Sheppard, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 9 February 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Milani, "Evolution of the 3-160th SOAR Through Desert Storm," 15; Chief Warrant Officer 5 Charles Lapp, 3rd Battalion, 160th SOAR, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 11 April 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

12 Sheppard interview.

13 Chief Warrant Officer Todd Thelin, 3rd Battalion, 160th SOAR, e-mail to Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 15 March 2007, copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

14 Thelin e-mail.

15 Thelin e-mail.

16 Colonel (retired) James A. Cerniglia, e-mail to Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 7 March 2007, copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

17 Cerniglia e-mail.

18 Sheppard interview.

19 Lieutenant Colonel (retired) Richard W. Sheppard, e-mail to Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 12 March 2007, copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

20 Headquarters, Department of the Army, General Orders No. 3, 16 January 1988, copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

21 Department of the Army, MTOE 1-257JFC58, FC 1088 dated 16 January 1988, copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

22 Colonel Andrew N. Milani II, United States Army Special Operations Command, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 9 February 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Milani, "Evolution of the 3-160th SOAR Through Desert Storm," 16; Sheppard document.

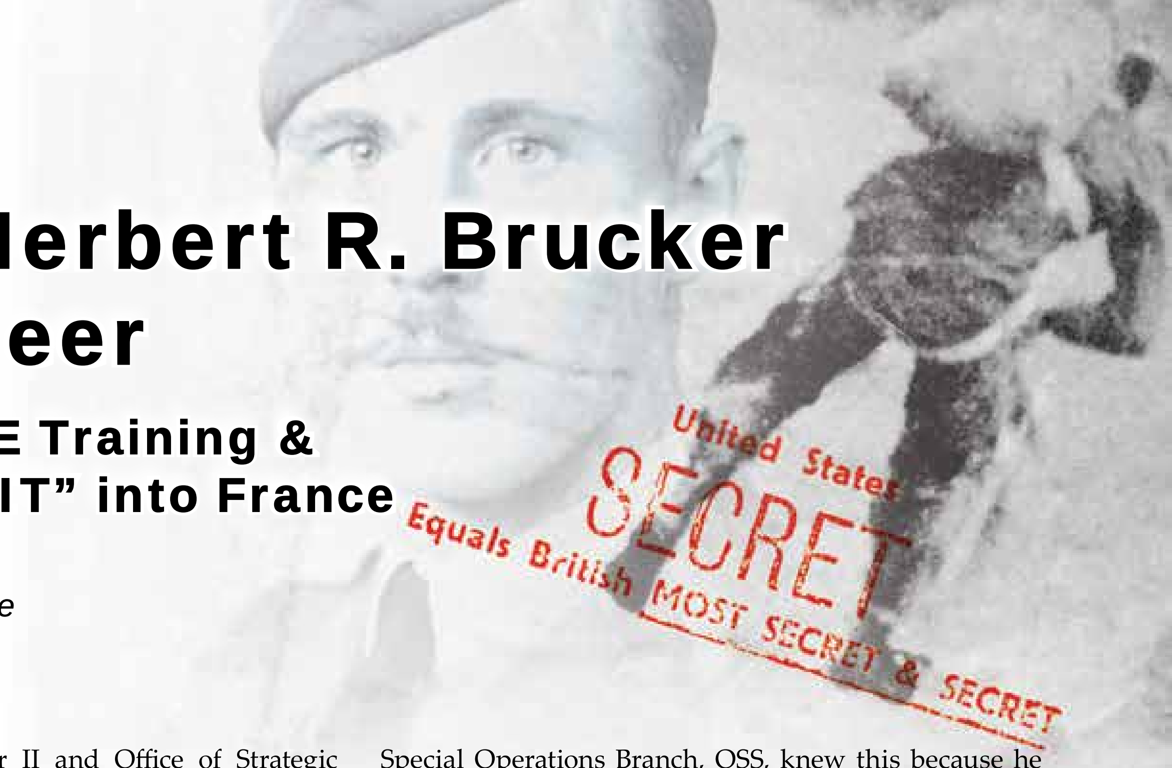
23 Sheppard interview; Milani, "Evolution of the 3-160th SOAR Through Desert Storm," 16.

24 Sheppard document; Milani, "Evolution of the 3-160th SOAR Through Desert Storm," 16.

25 Milani, "Evolution of the 3-160th SOAR Through Desert Storm," 22.

Major Herbert R. Brucker SF Pioneer

Part III: SOE Training & “Team HERMIT” into France


United States
SECRET
Equals British MOST SECRET & SECRET

by Charles H. Briscoe

THE pre-World War II and Office of Strategic Services (OSS) training experiences of Major Herbert R. Brucker, a pioneer in Special Forces, were discussed in *Veritas* (Vol. 2, No. 3).[1] While American-born, he was raised from infancy in the bilingual provinces of Alsace and Lorraine in France. His father brought him back to the United States in 1938. It was 1940 when Brucker joined the U.S. Army. Knowledge of English was not critical for radio operators then because Morse Code (CW) was an international language. Brucker excelled in a skill that was critical in the Army, but more so in the OSS. Technician Four (T/4) Brucker volunteered for “dangerous duty” to escape training cadre duty and his language skills made him a natural to become an OSS special operative. After completing OSS/SO training in the United States, he was detailed to the British Special Operations Executive (SOE).

This article chronicles T/4 Herbert Brucker’s SOE training in the United Kingdom and ends with the airborne insertion of “Team HERMIT” into south central France on 27 May 1944. Team HERMIT supported the French Resistance conducting unconventional warfare missions north of the Loire River until mid-September 1944. During those operations in France, Second Lieutenant (2LT) Brucker was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism. After duty with SOE/OSS in Europe, Brucker volunteered to serve in OSS Detachments 101 in Burma and 202 in China. He was a “plank holder” in the 10th Special Forces Group (SFG) with Colonel Aaron Bank (an OSS Jedburgh), served in the 77th SFG, taught clandestine operations in the SF Course, and went to Laos and Vietnam in the early 1960s.[2] Brucker’s real special operations training began in January 1944.

British SOE had been putting agents into the German-occupied countries of Europe since 1940. This was almost three years before the United States formed the Office of Strategic Services.[3] As such, British field training for special operatives far surpassed anything that the OSS could provide. Colonel Charles Vanderblue, Chief, Special Operations Branch, OSS, knew this because he had detailed one of his training officers, Captain John Tyson, to evaluate SOE instruction. Tyson reported on 30 July 1943: “The training any prospective SO agent has received in our Washington schools prior to his arrival in this theater is entirely inadequate and no trainees should be considered for field operations until they have had further training in this theater, which in many cases will involve a period of three months.”[4]

Spread thin by constant operational requirements, the SOE had agreed to joint training and covert activities with the OSS. Highly-proficient bilingual CW radio operators (capable of sending and receiving more than twenty words a minute) were always needed by the SOE. Hence, a trilingual OSS/SO operative (T/4 Brucker) with these radio skills was a real bonus.[5]

OSS/SO T/4 Brucker, during his SOE training, would be detailed for service with a British special operations team in south central France prior to D-Day, somewhat as a *quid pro quo* for the joint OSS/SOE arrangement.[6] His team, HERMIT, was to replace “PROSPER.” That team had been “rolled up” along with the Resistance network, when their female Hindu radio operator, Noor Inayt Kahn, codenamed “Madelaine,” was captured by the Gestapo in late March 1944. This article will chronicle the SOE training received by T/4 Brucker and his team from January to May 1944 because there are numerous similarities with Special Forces assessment, qualification (“Q” Course), specialty, and advanced skills courses today. Unknown to Brucker at the time,

SOE special operative Noor-un-nisa Inayat Khan, RTO for Team PROSPER. She was posthumously awarded the George Cross MBE and Croix de Guerre with Gold Star.

the SOE training was specifically tailored for the HERMIT mission team members.

Traveling in uniform from Washington to New York, T/4 Herbert R. Brucker, the newly-minted Special Operations (SO) operative "E-54," was accompanied by another OSS soldier. There, Brucker and his escort, Andre, boarded a troop carrier (a former Australian cattle boat) bound for England. "When we got aboard that night, the vessel was virtually empty. The city was supposedly under 'brownout' conditions, but I remember a large red neon *Coca-Cola* sign blinking away in the night. Troops were billeted from the bottom to the top deck and from the rear to the front. Naturally, since we got on first, we ended up in the bottom rear. I grabbed a lower bunk and went to sleep. When a lot of noise woke me up in the morning, I realized that I was above the propeller," said Brucker.[7]

"We were underway and there were troops jam-packed everywhere. All of the triple-stacked bunk beds were filled with men. I was issued a cork lifebelt, but where I was bunked, I didn't have a chance if we got torpedoed. There was only one stairway to the deck in my section. Besides, we never practiced lifeboat drills," mused Brucker. "We were in a convoy and the boat zig-zagged back and forth."[8] The dining area for the enlisted on the ship was so small (capacity for fifty) that meals were served twenty-four hours a day. Each soldier received a colored card that indicated his eating shift. Food was served in buckets (boiled potatoes filled one, beef stew another, and bread a third). Soldiers doled out what they wanted. Whoever emptied a bucket had to get it refilled. "The meals were very simple, but there was plenty because a lot of guys were seasick. The North Atlantic in winter was rough. For those 'hugging their bunks' in the bay, five dollars for a 'K-ration' meal was a good deal," said Brucker.[9]

Life aboard the cattle boat was crude. There was one latrine on each deck. That was the only place where smoking was permitted. "An MP limited access; one man out . . . one man in. It was always packed. Once inside you stumbled about in a thick cloud of cigarette smoke that reeked of human waste and vomit. It was terrible. Despite the cold of winter (mid-December 1943), some soldiers slept on deck because it was so hot in the crowded bays below and they figured that they could jump overboard if torpedoed. They wouldn't have lasted ten minutes in the cold water. It was a big relief when we finally docked at Glasgow, Scotland, on 23 December 1943," remembered the OSS operative.[10]

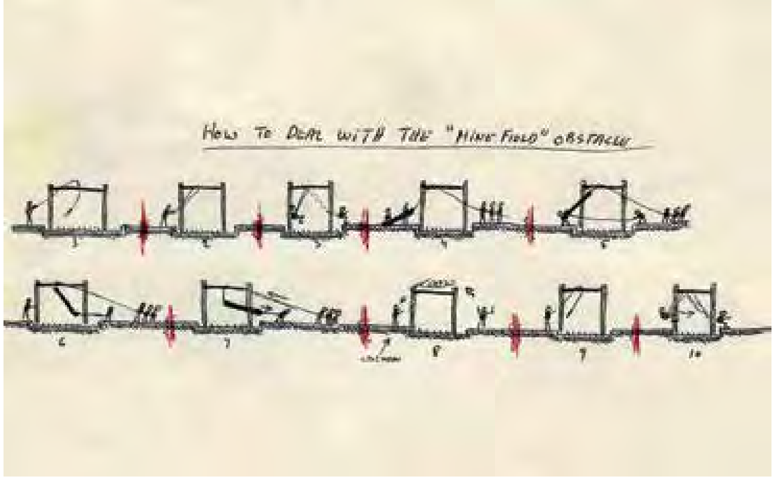
Once ashore, T/4 Brucker and Andre, his OSS escort, boarded a troop train for London with railway cars that were half the size of American ones. When the train arrived in London, "blackout" was in effect. Brucker recalled that "it was pitch black outside . . . so dark that you couldn't see the man in front of you. We were formed into 'chain gangs' and marched to the U.S. Army Replacement Center ('Repo Depot' in soldier parlance). We dropped our duffle bags in an assigned room. Outside we formed another 'chain gang' and shuffled off in the dark to a messhall. 'Blackout' in London made the 'brownout' in New York ridiculous."[11]

Destruction caused by the German Luftwaffe's *nightly "blitz" of London.*

The two OSSers discovered that the war was real the next morning. Both men were awed by the devastation caused by the Luftwaffe bombing "blitz" of London each night. Once T/4 Brucker had been in-processed at the Repo Depot, Andre disappeared. The day after Christmas 1943, Brucker was picked up by car and taken to a headquarters in London. There, he was informed that he would be attending SOE training and to report back on 2 January. "That came as a shock. I had already been trained by the OSS. I felt that I was ready for combat."[12]

No one in Washington, including his OSS/SO handler, George F. Ingersoll, had ever explained why he was being sent to England, nor that Brucker was going to be detailed to the British SOE. When he protested to the Director of F-Section (France), Major Maurice J. Buckmaster replied that "it would simply be murder to send you on an operation with just OSS training."[13] Brucker was one of sixty-five Americans waiting to attend SOE schools at the end of 1943.[14] Later, he had to admit that "SOE training was far superior. It made most of my OSS/SO stateside training seem amateurish."[15] Not happy to undergo more schooling, Brucker, the professional soldier, did as he was ordered.

Initial SOE training, like Special Forces assessment and selection, was to determine the physical conditioning and psychological suitability of candidates. This was accomplished at STS 7 (Special Training School 7) near Pemberley, twenty miles to the west of London. Activities were sometimes done singly and other times in teams, but obstacle courses were used regularly. "Since we were a 'mixed bag of nationalities' having different levels of English language skills, you had to quickly determine physical abilities and agree on a leader. The instructors were always looking for those with initiative, risk takers, and clever innovators," remembered Brucker.[16] They assessed how the physical obstacles were tackled, how problems or puzzles were solved, and the number of

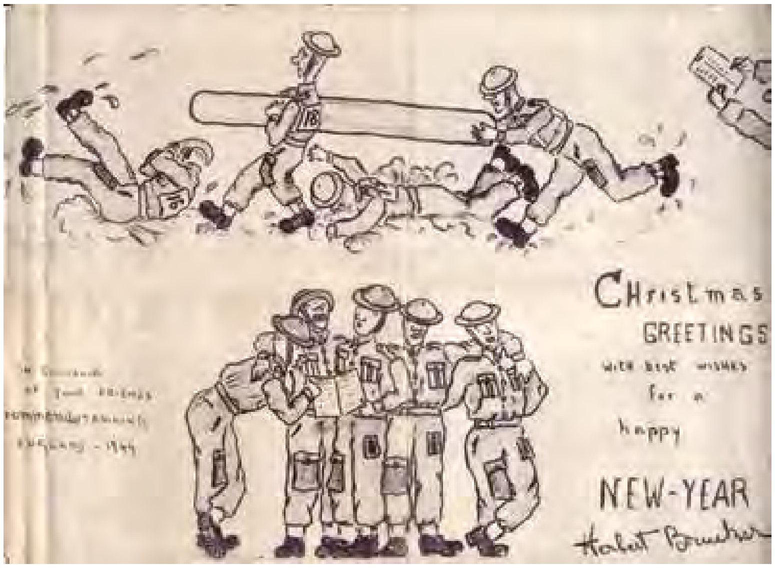


T/4 Herb Brucker, stumped by the minefield obstacle, later figured out a better way to get men across than trying to "tip-toe" across barbed-wire stakes in the pit. The sketch reveals that the team also had to carry a log across.

The farm at Garramor, Inverness, Scotland, site for STS 25 (Paramilitary Training).

details remembered during memory tests (maps, pictures, photos, critical steps of a process, or after reading instructions). Stress was a constant companion. "'Hurry up! Do something!' were regular commands of the instructors. The trainees never got feedback. So, Brucker did his best all the time."[17]

"Speed was not necessarily critical. It was how you solved the challenges. I failed the barbed wire and minefield obstacle because I crawled under the wire and tried to wiggle around the mines. I found out later from a buddy that the best solution was to walk across using the barbed wire stakes," said Brucker. "Often numerical values were assigned to an obstacle and success was measured by how fast you or your team could get fifty points. Tough ones might be worth twenty-five points each, while simpler ones would have less value. You had to calculate how to meet the standard before your agility waned and strength failed."[18] The team problem solving tests were much like those encountered in Army Leader Reaction Courses in Basic Non-Commissioned Officer Courses (BNCOC) and SF assessment and selection. After the psychological and physical evaluations, Brucker returned to London.



T/4 Herb Brucker's hand-drawn Christmas 1943/ New year's 1944 card depicting training at STS 7 near Pemberley, England.

In the British capital, Brucker lived in an attic room of a private boarding house for the elderly. During air raids, he slid his blackout curtains aside to get a panoramic view of the bombing. Then, he would hear "the anti-aircraft ack-ack gun shrapnel tinkling down on the roof like sleet."[19] His "control" headquarters was in the top floor suite of an old, fancy hotel. "This was the routine," Brucker explained. "You knocked on the door. A peephole was opened (like a 'Roaring 20s speakeasy') by Herbert, the security guard. The female receptionist, sitting at a desk in the center of a living room, checked the list of trainees. She told you to go to a particular room for a meeting, or gave you your next assignment with specific instructions."[20]

T/4 Brucker, in his U.S. Army uniform, joined a group of American servicemen and a British officer at the Pennington train station to go to para-military training (STS 21–25) in northern Scotland. A British "conducting officer" accompanied all trainee groups. Since he went through all training, this officer was an evaluator as well.[21] The group was housed at a hunting estate in Inverness-shire. British battle dress uniforms were worn during basic commando training. "The weather was miserable . . . cold and foggy. Midway through the course we were assigned a sabotage mission and provided a map. All twelve of us had a specific task and we had to prepare plans of action and brief them to the others. Then, a few days later, the instructor chose the team leader and we had to execute the mission without notes or doing a rehearsal. Once done, our 'commando' was critiqued. The mission was repeated until accomplished successfully," recalled Brucker.[22] At Aberdeen, Scotland, the northwest railway terminus, his group was taught to "drive"—start and stop—a steam locomotive and how to place explosives on the railway tracks to insure that it derailed.

After learning the basics of engineering a steam locomotive, they were given explosives training. In a darkened room, the men learned how to quickly place "808" plastic explosive and timers by touch and feel. To derail an oncoming locomotive and railcars, two sabo-

An SOE trainee crossing a two-rope bridge at STS 25.

teurs, working directly opposite one another, had to place their explosive charges on the rails when the train was so close that the engineer could not stop it in time. Brucker said, “I remember how hard the rails were vibrating from the weight of the oncoming locomotive. Looking up, I saw the engineer pulling the steam whistle cord and trying to reverse the train wheels. By then, the locomotive was a mega-ton monster skidding towards us. Clouds of steam were blowing out the air brakes, the whistle was shrilling, and the piston arms driving those huge steel wheels were screaming in protest. Thank heavens my partner and I did it right the first time. We managed to jump clear of the onrushing train just in time. Believe me, that was scary, but it was typical of how realistic SOE training was.”[23] After that hair-raising experience, the OSS operative returned to London for new instructions from “control.”

SOE schools were all numbered by specialty: STS 3, STS 7, etc. No “set” curriculum existed.[24] “Some people learned how to ride motorcycles, to drive trucks and cars,

F.A.N.Y.

First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (F.A.N.Y.) “girls” of The Princess Royal’s Volunteer Corps and Women’s Auxiliary Armed Forces (W.A.A.F.) filled numerous A.T.S. (Army Transport Service) requirements. More than half of the F.A.N.Y. strength was dedicated to the British SOE. F.A.N.Y.s “were recruited by invitation and were mostly of ‘good family.’”[1]

FIRST AID NURSING YEOMANRY

F.A.N.Y. insignia

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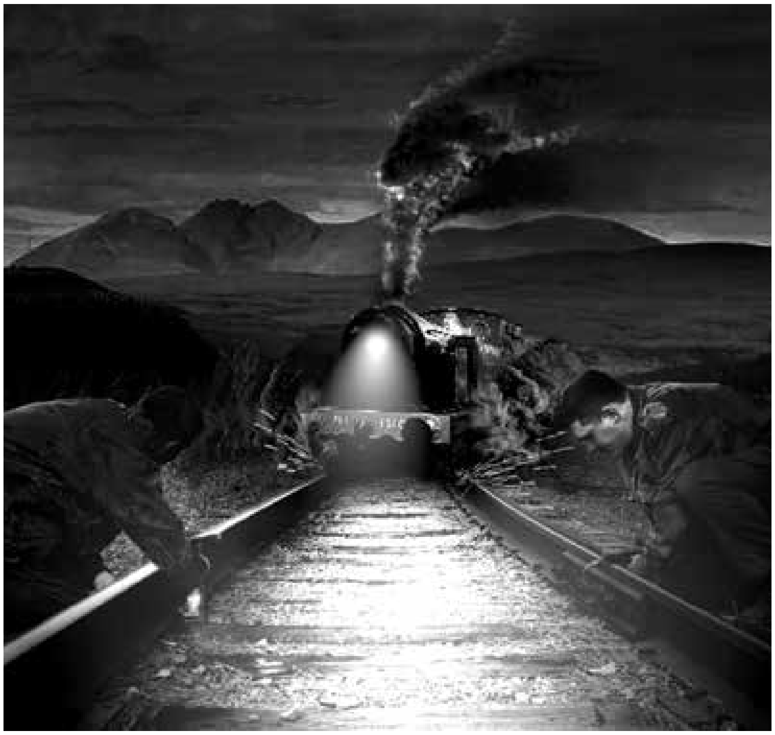
[1] M.R.D. Foote, *SOE in France: An Account of the Work of the British Special Operations Executive in France, 1940–1944* (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1984), 48.

Numerous F.A.N.Y.s worked at the Beaulieu estate, located southwest of Southhampton. The SOE used this facility for intelligence training.



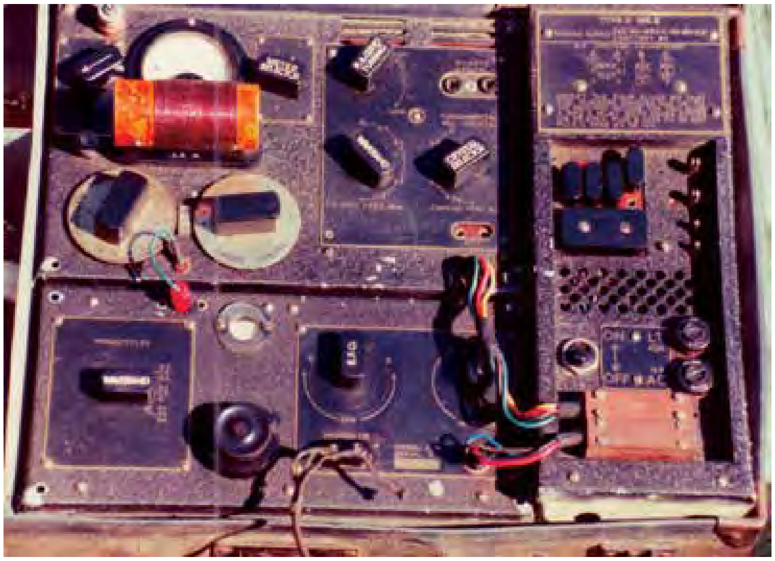
Dan Telles

Two SOE trainees simulate setting explosive charges to derail the onrushing steam locomotive near Aberdeen, Scotland.

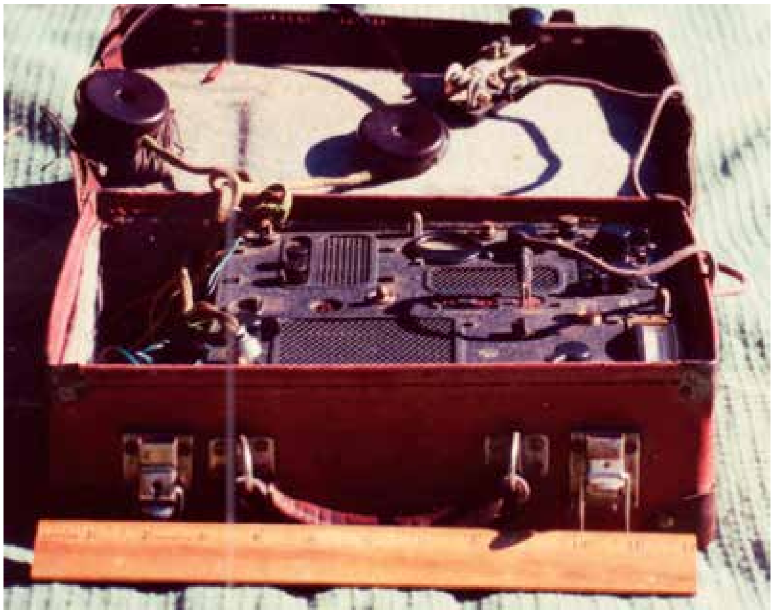
Selected SOE Schools for Special Operatives	
STS 3	Foreign Weapons
STS 7	Agent Student Assessment Board
STS 17	Industrial Sabotage
STS 21-25	Para-Military School
STS 31-37	Security and Finishing School
STS 39	Propaganda School
STS 40	Reception Committee
STS 47	Special School in Foreign Weapons, Booby Traps, Mines, and Sniper Course
STS 51	OSS Parachute Training
STS 52	Wireless Training School
STS 54	Advanced Radio and Wireless Operator Training
STS 61	Lysander and Dakota Course[1]

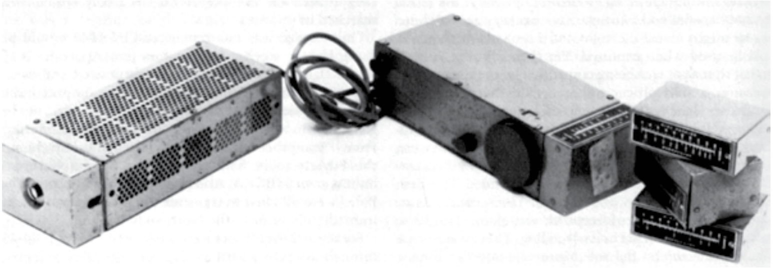
[1] *War Diary*, SO Branch, OSS London, Vol. 9: Training, 41.

to operate power launches and sail boats, and to drive streetcars and locomotives. I went where they told me, but I always wondered how success was measured in the various courses. It wasn't like marksmanship training where you were supposed to hit the bull's eye. They did monitor us to determine natural strengths and special skills."[25] Brucker's next training was at the Special Radio and Wireless School at Thames Park, Oxfordshire (STS 54).[26]



Large Type 3 Mark II radio above and the small Type A Mark III radio below in suitcase containers.



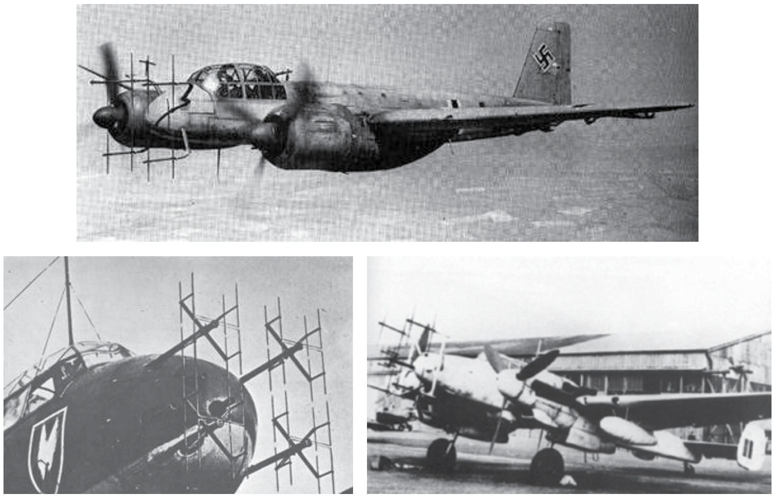


The cigarette pack-sized "Biscuit" AM radio receiver with ear plug.

At the radio school, most of the instructors were ATS "girls." Students of all nationalities, male and female, attended. Some were taught the basics of CW . . . simply enough to communicate (five words per minute) in an emergency. Other RTOs like Brucker were given advanced training. Small one-room sheds with a door and a window were scattered all over the grounds. The shed was just big enough for table, chair, electric lamp, and radio transmitter and receiver. Antennas were set up to limit transmissions to a couple hundred yards. "Because I sometimes had trouble understanding the English spoken by the instructors, I wanted to read the messages to make sure that I got them right. According to assigned schedules, we transmitted and received using the large Type 3 Mark II suitcase radio (fifty pounds with transformer), the little Type A Mark III radio, and the cigarette pack-sized "Biscuit" receiver with an earplug, " said Brucker.[27]

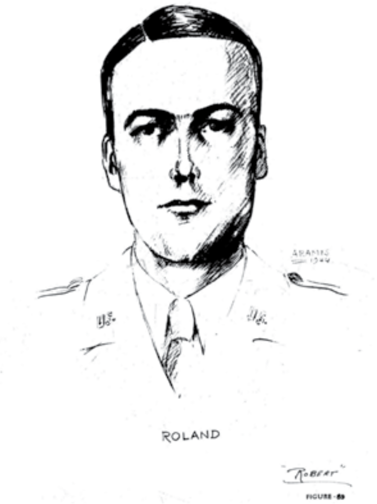
Radio training was tailored to specific missions. Special Operations (SO) and Special Intelligence (SI) operatives received different classes. "I learned field expedient repairs ('Rube Goldberg' fixes) for my assigned radios, similar ones, and generators. Male maintenance 'experts' created problems that we had to identify by listening to malfunctioning sets. We had to limit transmissions and move constantly to make direction-finding by triangulation difficult. Germans also used airplanes to locate transmitters. The airplanes' noses bristled with antennas. Photos of German ground mobile units and their special planes were shown to help us recognize them," said Brucker.[28]

By the time an RTO had finished the course, the ATS radio monitor had "fingerprinted" his transmission style. It was usually established by how a specific letter was keyed by the operator. That fingerprint, referred to as his "fist," was recorded on a gramaphone disc. Brucker's personal security trait was to send only a single letter when a word contained paired sets. If forced to transmit under duress, his preamble was to contain a deliberate error. But,

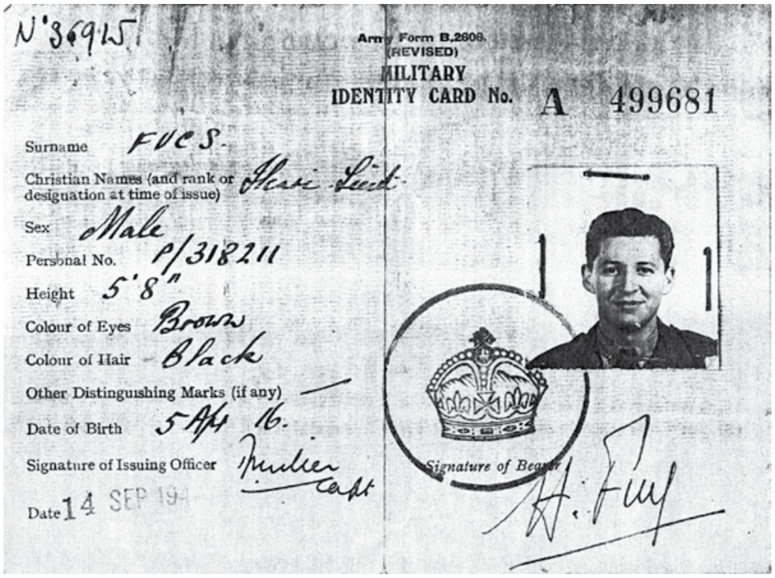


Top: German Junkers JU88G night bomber in flight; Left: Nose of the JU88G night bomber bristled with antennas; Right: German Messerschmitt Me110G4 night fighter with nose antennas.

U.S. Army ID photo of 2LT Roger B. Henquet.


ARAMIS 1944
U.S.
U.S.
ROLAND
"ROBERT"
FIGURE 89

OSS/SOE sketch of "Roland" = Henquet.



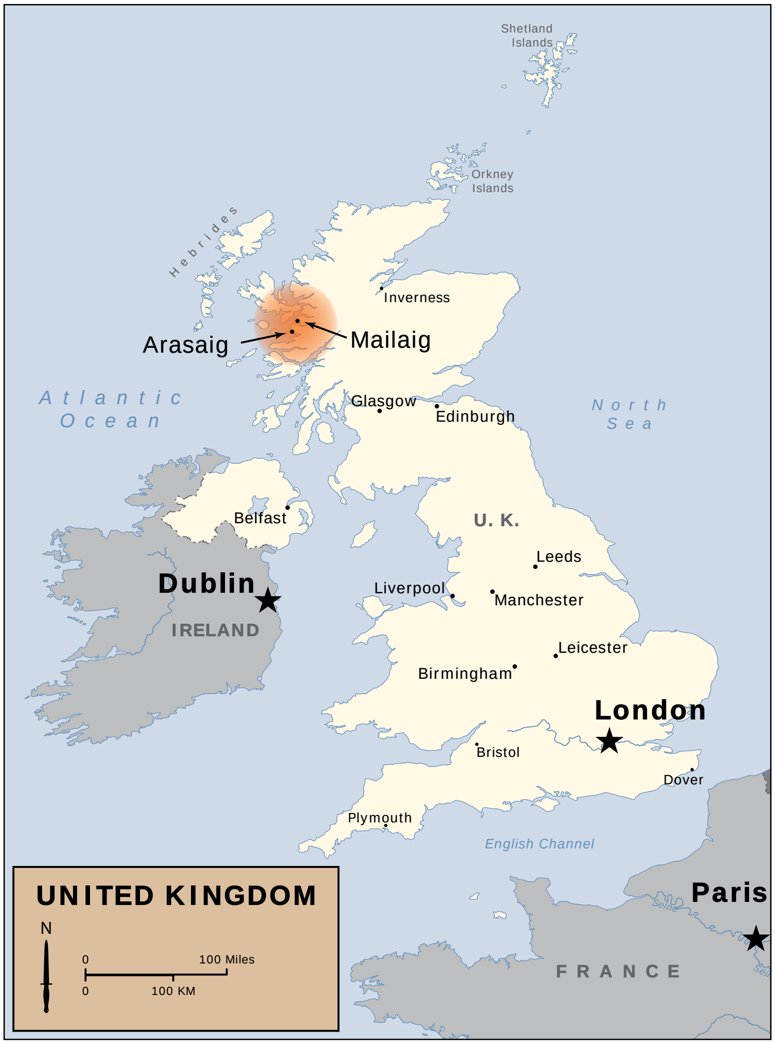
N°36915

Army Form B.2606.
(REVISED)
MILITARY
IDENTITY CARD No. A 499681

Surname FUCS.
Christian Names (and rank or designation at time of issue) Henri Lieut.
Sex Male
Personal No. P/318211
Height 5'8"
Colour of Eyes Brown
Colour of Hair Black
Other Distinguishing Marks (if any) —
Date of Birth 5 Apr 16.
Signature of Issuing Officer Muller Capt
Date 14 SEP 194

Signature of Bearer H. Fucs

Herbert Fucs' ID card


Shetland Islands
Orkney Islands
Hebrides
Inverness
Arasaig
Mailaig
Atlantic Ocean
Glasgow
Edinburgh
North Sea
Belfast
U. K.
Dublin
IRELAND
Leeds
Liverpool
Manchester
Leicester
Birmingham
London
Bristol
Dover
Plymouth
English Channel
UNITED KINGDOM
N
0
100 Miles
0
100 KM
Paris
FRANCE
Seine

Highlight showing Mailaig and Arasaig, Scotland.

the RTOs never practiced the duress signal. The OSSer ended his messages with the popular jingle, "Shave and a haircut." He never received the corresponding "Two bits" response until he was ordered back to England when the HERMIT mission was complete. "Supposedly, my gimmick 'flagged' me as an American. But, many German Army radio operators typically ended their transmissions with two '8's'. Decoded they were two 'H's' that meant 'Heil Hitler!'" retorted Brucker.[29] After completing the radio and wireless school, T/4 Brucker was teamed up with his mission partners.

It came as a surprise when French-speaking Roger B. Henquet (pronounced "On-Kay"), a former vice president of Schlumberger Oil Company in Texas, and surgeon Henri Fucs (pronounced "Fooks"), a German Jew who spoke French, corralled Brucker at "control" headquarters on 11 March 1944, to announce the partnership.[30] "During training, many of the students were British. Though Americans were going through, we weren't billeted together, and I did not socialize with anybody in particular. I kept to myself," explained Brucker.[31] Henquet and Fucs liked training with him and thought that he was a superb radioman. British special operations teams were usually composed of an American or British officer, a Frenchman, and an RTO. "The daily CW training was 'play' for me. That's why they picked me," said Brucker.[32] From then on, they worked together as a team, starting in northwest Scotland.

Some SOE field training was conducted at a hunting and fishing estate in northwest Scotland, near Arisaig. The escorted SOE trainees went by train from London to Mailaig, Scotland, the rail line terminus, and then by motor launch to an estate near Arisaig. In STS 47, they trained in British uniforms.[33] After a hot tea and milk at wakeup, everyone ran a two to three–mile course through the moors that ended at a small lodge. On a table at the door were daggers. "Running up to the table, you had to grab a dagger and rush inside to attack a sand-filled 'dummy.' First, thrust at the face to cause the defender to shield his eyes. Then, with the chest exposed, you made your major knife thrust. Daily PT ended with ju-jitsu 'chop chopping' exercises to harden the heels of your hands," explained Brucker. [34] After cleaning up, they went to breakfast. Then, training began; classroom instruction preceded practical exercises and training was always progressive. Three constants in every course were CW, codes, and cipher practice; hand-to-hand combat, and explosives training. "It was at Arisaig that we learned to set off explosives underwater using a waxed "fusee" match," stated Brucker.[35]

Instead of using a facsimile shooting facility like the "House of Horrors" created by British Major William F. Fairbairn for OSS trainees in America, the men practiced instinctive firing against pop-up targets on different trails around the Arisaig estate. Allied and Axis small arms were used. Trainees were given the merits, limitations, and typical problems of every pistol, rifle, and submachine gun, types of ammunition, and silencer used. Brucker recalled "that the German Luger pistols always shot low, the silenced Sten gun simply made a clack-clack-clack sound, and the bullets a 'phftt—phftt—phftt' popping sound as they hit the ocean, and they were given a 'lot of garbage information' to forget (details and specifications)."[36] Good camouflage was demonstrated afterward at the beach. "Before my eyes, well-concealed support troops began popping up all over the place," said Brucker.[37]

Land navigation was more like orienteering done day and night. "We had one compass, were given an azimuth, distance, and a readily identifiable terrain feature . . . an old oak tree, crumbling wall, small bridge, etc. When we found the feature, it became a treasure hunt to find the hidden message telling us where to go next. Henquet and Fucs were my partners. Usually, I ferreted out the note. At night, we read our instructions by flashlight, set an azimuth, and measured the distance by keeping a pace."[38] Another time, the Arisaig trainees were taken by launch to Loch Nevis for boat work. A fisherman taught them how to sail. They learned to tack against the wind and to hold position in rough seas with a sea anchor.[39] Instructor-led parlor games involving alcohol were another assessment, much as they had been in OSS training.[40] Intelligence agent training followed this team-building effort in northwestern Scotland.

At the intelligence school near Beaulieu, west of Southampton, Brucker and his teammates Henquet and Fucs had to write plausible cover stories. They had to be a mixture of fact and fiction, but all elements had to be familiar—name, date and place of birth, parents' names, where raised, education, and technical training. The cover explained language capabilities. The new name had to sound similar to the real one. One had to react and respond appropriately when hailed by this new name. Herbert R. Brucker therefore became Albert Brunion: "I had been in the French Army and was captured during the breakthrough in 1940. Interned as a POW at Stalag 17B, near Krems, Austria, I was later released because of stomach ulcers. In those days, no one could check for ulcers. I was discharged in Lyon," said Brucker.[41] Covers were memorized and rehearsed over and over.

Students were pulled from training and constantly rousted out of bed in the middle of the night for grueling interrogations in German, French, and English by German SS–uniformed instructors in the STS 31–37 intelligence courses.[42] The trainees quickly learned to answer only what was asked and to stick to a sequence, otherwise another interrogator would detect a flaw and exploit it. Pressure was a constant.[43] "A twenty-year-old sailor named Parent had a great solution. He broke down, crying hysterically. The instructors never got an answer from him. The instructors started their classes by reading Adolph Hitler's edict to execute all agents," remembered Brucker. "And, we often

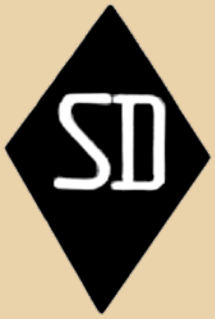
Typical interrogation of an OSS Special Operations trainee.

Excerpts from Adolph Hitler's *Kommmandobefehl* of 18 October 1942

"HENCEFORTH, all enemies on so-called Commando missions in Europe or Africa, confronted by German troops, even if they are to all appearances soldiers in uniform or demolition troops, whether armed or unarmed, in battle or in flight, are to be slaughtered to the last man. It does not make any difference whether they are dropped by parachute. Even if these individuals, when found should apparently be prepared to give themselves up, no pardon is to be granted them on principle. In each individual case, complete information is to be sent to the O.K.W. (German High Command) for publication in the Report of the Military Forces.

Adolph Hitler

If individual members of such Commandos, such as agents, saboteurs, etc., fall into the hands of the military forces by some other means, through the police in occupied territories, for instance, they are to be handed over immediately to the S.D. (*Sicherheitsdienst* Security Service). Any imprisonment under military guard, in P.O.W. stockades, for instances, etc., is strictly prohibited, even if this is only intended for a short time."[1] *Note: S.D. was that part of Heinrich Himmler's police force dedicated to the suppression of "internal resistance."[2]



SD badge

[1] "Hitler's Kommandobefehl," http://users.nlc.net.au/Bernie/Hitler.htm.

[2] Hermann J. Giskes, *London Calling North Pole* (London: The British Book Centre, 1953), 207.

learned by our mistakes."[44]

In one scenario, Brucker, using a "dead letter drop," had arranged to meet a "contact" in a second floor room. The drop had to be concealed so that the actions of the "dropper" and the "retriever" would not be obvious. It was easier said than done. "All Clear" and "Danger" signals did not always go right.[45]

As the "contact" hurriedly passed some anti-Axis propaganda leaflets to Brucker, a squad of "German" soldiers came pounding up the stairs, shouting, "Open the doors! Open the doors!" His "contact" yelled, "Do something! Do something quick!" Brucker was dumbfounded and just managed to stuff the leaflets under his shirt. Of course, the incriminating propaganda material was found and he was taken off for interrogation. "Later I found out that the 'best solution' was to open the window and toss them out," remembered Brucker.[46] However, he proved very adept as a burglar stealing documents.

Brucker and another trainee were to enter a "German" barracks at night, find a paper hidden by an informant, and escape without being detected. After several hours of surveillance from the nearby woods, the two decided to enter through a second-floor bathroom window which was "cracked" to provide ventilation. The initial approach at dusk was discovered by returning soldiers. When the two tried "to hide in plain sight" like they had been taught, a soldier began shouting, "Get the dogs!" That prompted the would-be burglars to bolt for the woods. Well after midnight, the pair tried again.[47]

The second attempt proved successful. Brucker, the smaller and lighter of the two, was boosted up onto the window ledge of the bathroom. As he wedged himself on the ledge, the light inside came on. He froze in horror with his heart pounding (in his mind loud enough to be heard inside) while his partner scooted behind some bushes. A soldier had entered to use the facilities. "After some five minutes that lasted forever," the toilet flushed and the light went out. "My heart was still racing as I pushed the window up, scrambled inside, and ran to lock the door," said Brucker.[48]

Then, he went back to the open window, leaned over the ledge, and helped his partner climb up and inside. The burglars quietly slipped down the hall, past the rooms of the sleeping "German troops." Stepping on outside edges of each stair to avoid making a squeak, the two moved downstairs and found the office. After carefully checking the door for "booby traps," they slid inside and locked the door. "I was under the desk when my buddy pulled open the center drawer. The hidden 'document,' taped to the back, flapped across my head as he pulled the drawer out. 'Document' in hand, we eased out the front door. While I was letting my eyes adjust to the dark, I sensed a presence on my left. I knew that it wasn't my partner. So, I spun left raising my flashlight to eye level and flipped it on. The glaring face in the beam was our instructor. I jammed the 'document' in his hand and took off," said Brucker.[49] This proved to be his last training exercise.

As luck would have it (more likely the approach of D-Day), parachute training was Team HERMIT's final schooling before France. SOE operatives Brucker, Henquet, and Fucs received two weeks of airborne training (STS 51) at Ringway, adjacent to the Manchester airfield.[50] They were billeted in a small "mansion" apart from other trainees. T/4 Brucker explained: "Our program was very basic. It wasn't geared to make paratroopers out of us. Parachuting was merely a means of insertion. Wearing parachutist smocks and foam helmets, we did swing-landing training and received turning and harness release instructions inside an outbuilding on the estate. The British were already using the quick release system." American paratroopers still escaped their parachute harness by unsnapping individual leg and shoulder straps. In the attic of a Ringway hangar was a balcony replicating the "joe hole" exit. (American paratroops exited jump aircraft from side cargo doors. The British traditionally used a three-foot by three-foot trap door hole in the belly of the aircraft to airdrop personnel and bundles. "Joe hole" was British slang for an outdoor toilet. Americans call it an outhouse.) As SOE trainees dropped down the "joe hole," a propeller-driven wind machine gave them a "feel" for landing properly.[51]

According to T/4 Brucker, "Since England has a lot of fog during the fall, winter, and spring, a barrage balloon was tethered to a truck. We climbed into a large wicker basket attached underneath the balloon. A winch on the truck was released, the cable reeled out, and up we went. I have no idea how high we were, but we weren't wearing reserve parachutes. The wind blowing through the wires holding the wicker basket made a low whistling sound as the basket creaked with our weight."[52]

"Bessie" the barrage balloon at Tatton Park used during parachute training at STS 51 Ringway.

Wicker gondola basket with "joe hole" attached to barrage balloon.

Parachutist descending after jumping from the moored barrage balloon.

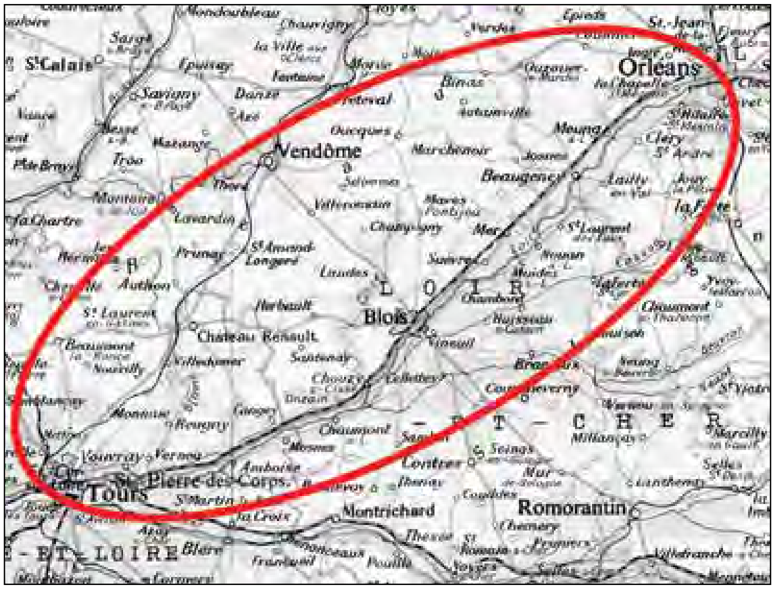
Major Herbert Brucker's British Special Forces (SF) parachute badge.

Even in heavy fog Brucker recollected that it was amazing how clear the voices of the instructors using bullhorns below came up. "When given 'Action Station No. 1, Stand by!' you scooted on your butt over to the 'joe hole' and dropped your feet into it. On the command, 'Go!' you lifted your butt with your hands and pushed away. We received commands to turn, to slip, and keep your feet and knees together all the way down. I can't remember how long it took the parachute to open. I wasn't counting. The second jump was the same."[53]

British instructors were clever. They sometimes put a woman in the No. 1 position on the airplanes to insure that the men would jump. Brucker recalled that "an instructor kept saying to one woman, 'Remember what your mother always told you. Keep your feet and knees together.' Our third was a day jump from a bomber and the fourth, from a bomber at night. We didn't jump equipment or weapons. These were strictly 'Hollywood' jumps. Our graduation jump . . . as it turned out—was for real . . . a night combat jump."[54]

Sometime in early May 1944, Brucker, wearing his custom-made civilian clothes to "season" them, reported in to "control" in London. The receptionist instructed him to wait in Room #3. A U.S. Marine Corps Major William F. Grell came in and asked for a training report. When Brucker finished, Grell told him to get his duffle bag packed and to prepare a separate overnight bag with uniform trousers, shirt, field jacket, dog tags, and toilet kit. Then, he was to join his teammates Roger Henquet and Henri Fucs at a basement flat "safehouse" to prepare for a mission. That turned out to be his SO mission alert.[55]

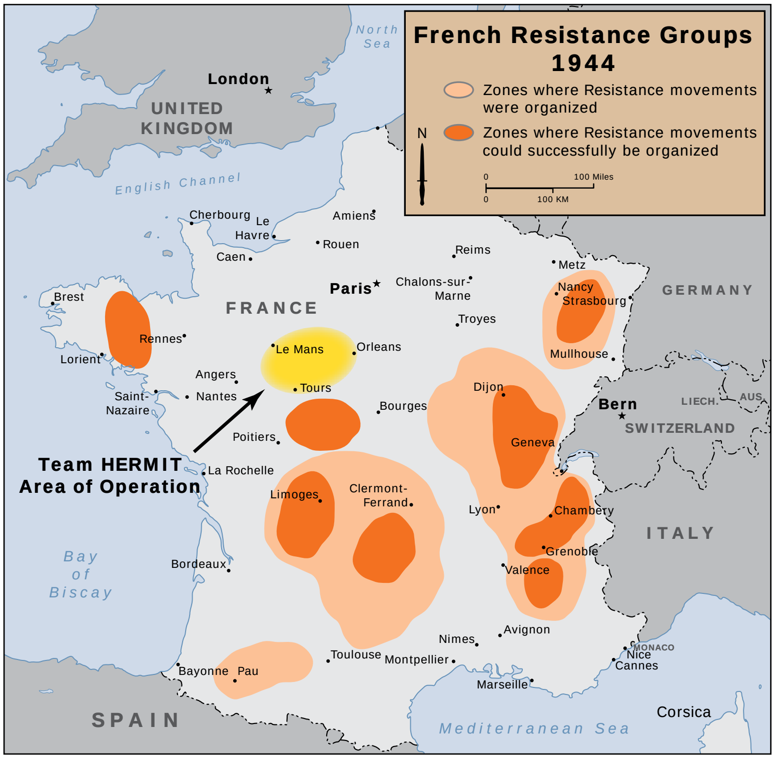
"At the safehouse, it was pure bedlam. Every room, including the bathroom, was being used by teams to review documents, codes, [and] ciphers, and to look over the assigned operational areas on maps. ID cards and ration coupons were spread on the floor getting 'seasoned' by foot traffic," recalled Brucker.[56] Team HERMIT was to be Henquet, Fucs, and Brucker. Their mission was to organize a resistance circuit in the area between the Sartee and Loire Rivers.[57] The operations area was delineated: north of the Loire River in the Departments of Loir et Cher and Indre et Loire. However, targets were given both north and south of the Loire River.[58]



Orleans
Vendôme
Blois
Tours
St. Pierre-des-Corps
Romorantin
L O I R
L O I R - E T - C H E R
E T - L O I R E

Map of the Area of Operations (AO) in central France for SO Team HERMIT.

The two-weeks mission preparation period was filled with mandatory activities. One day, the teams were escorted to a pistol range below the Baker Street Underground station. A British sergeant reviewed instinctive firing with the M1911 .45 cal. automatic pistol. He won numerous bets by "plugging" the large English pence with a single shot. This proved to be HERMIT's last marksmanship practice. Afterward, the group of operatives was taken to a "lost and found" facility of the public transportation system. The men were allowed to pick whatever items they needed to support their civilian "cover"—wallets, glasses, umbrellas, briefcases, hats, etc. Afterward, Henquet and Fucs took their RTO to a fancy restaurant in Piccadilly. They enjoyed a good meal. "But, I was shocked when my bill came. For someone of my



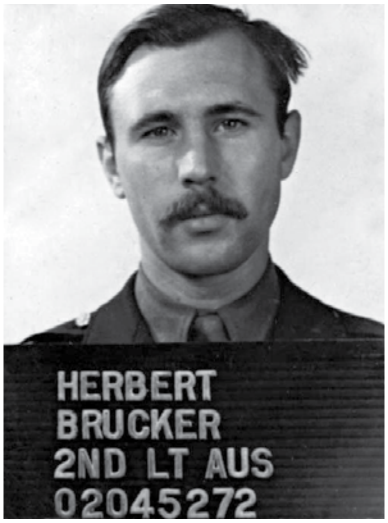
French Resistance Groups 1944
Zones where Resistance movements were organized
Zones where Resistance movements could successfully be organized
N
0 100 Miles
0 100 KM
North Sea
London
UNITED KINGDOM
English Channel
Cherbourg
Le Havre
Amiens
Rouen
Caen
Reims
Metz
Brest
Paris
Chalons-sur-Marne
Nancy
Strasbourg
GERMANY
FRANCE
Troyes
Rennes
Le Mans
Orleans
Lorient
Mullhouse
Angers
Tours
Saint-Nazaire
Nantes
Bourges
Dijon
Bern
LIECH.
AUS.
SWITZERLAND
Poitiers
Geneva
Team HERMIT Area of Operation
La Rochelle
Limoges
Clermont-Ferrand
Lyon
Chambery
ITALY
Grenoble
Bay of Biscay
Bordeaux
Valence
Avignon
Nimes
Toulouse
Montpellier
MONACO
Nice
Cannes
Bayonne
Pau
Marseille
Corsica
SPAIN
Mediterranean Sea

Map showing French Resistance Groups in July 1944.

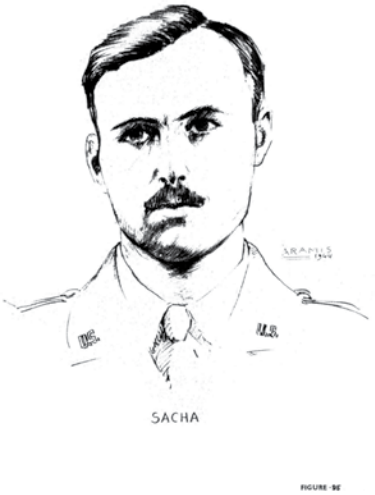
SO, SI, OGs, and Jedburghs

"THE SO operatives of OSS, unlike OSS Jedburghs and OSS Operational Group (OGs) assigned to France, had to speak the language fluently (100 percent like a Frenchman), to understand linguistic nuances, slang, and recognize various regional dialects. The OSS/SOs had to be familiar with the culture in the different regions as well as social customs, traditions, how to dress, eat, smoke 'European-style,' to write numbers with the right marks and money using decimals based on knowledge gained by living there, not from a book. Surviving an interrogation was critical. SI operatives were the 'real spooks.' They received more intelligence training and it was very sophisticated. The SOs got a lot of demonstrations. What we learned in the schools was to enable us to make suggestions to the Resistance leaders," stated Brucker. "Jeds" and OGs had to be able to speak some French and know a little culture. Most of them came from second or third generation immigrant families. The SO and SI operatives wore civilian clothes while the OGs and Jeds wore uniforms," said Brucker. "Everything in the OSS and SOE was compartmented and actions taken different from the normal routine attracted attention and raised suspicions. When I declined a pass to finish training sooner, that refusal triggered an interrogation by Major Buckmaster. They grilled me hard. It turned out that an old Fort Jackson, South Carolina, buddy was on a team that had gone missing in France in early 1944. After that, I did exactly as instructed," said T/4 Herbert R. Brucker.[1]

[1] Brucker interviews, 30 November 2005, 30 May 2006, and 15 February 2007. When T/4 Herbert Brucker filled out his background questionnaire for the OSS, he had no real references except his parents. He had no idea what his mother's address was in the United States. Corporal Maurice A. LePage at Fort Jackson had suggested that Herbert use his wife Yvette and her employers, Mr. And Mrs. Robert Benchley (the son Peter Benchley authored *Jaws*) as references. Thus, the Benchleys unknowingly co-sponsored Brucker by *de fault*. Brucker interview, 27 March 2006. The Germans managed to capture an agent in Holland in late 1942 before he could destroy his codes. "Having broken" the codes, the Chief of Military Counter-Espionage in Holland, Belgium, and Northern France, Oberleutnant H.J. Giskes, managed to decoy nearly two hundred drops of men and equipment into that region through the Anglo-Dutch Secret Service that was attached to the British Special Operations Executive. H.J. Giskes, *London Calling North Pole* (London: The British Book Centre, 1953): 86. Before the British SOE realized what was happening in the autumn of 1943, the so-called *Englandspiel* had caused forty-three of fifty-six dispatched agents to fall into enemy hands. Thirty-six were executed. All supplies dropped into German hands. David Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance, 1940-1945: A Survey of the Special Operations Executive, with Documents* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980): 94.



U.S. Army ID photo of 2LT Herbert R. Brucker.



OSS/SOE sketch of "Sacha" = Brucker.

background, it was exorbitant, so I kept the receipt as a souvenir," said Brucker.[59] The final day before departing on their mission was filled with last minute administrative details.

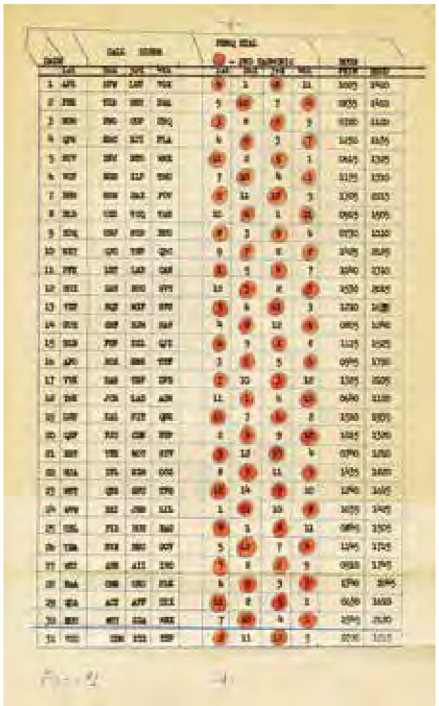
Henquet and T/4 Brucker had reported to control headquarters without Fucs because he had injured his leg learning to ride a bicycle. It turned out that Brucker was being discharged as an enlisted man and commissioned as an Army Reserve second lieutenant. While the paperwork was being completed, he had to take off his blouse and put on one commandeered from a passing lieutenant. His ID picture was taken. Then, a waiting dentist examined his teeth and filled out a dental record. After signing his discharge, he raised his hand, was sworn in as an officer, and penned his signature on a commission form. The process did not go as smoothly with Roger B. Henquet, the OSS civilian.[60]

Roger B. Henquet, former Vice President of Schlumberger Oil in Texas, had volunteered to join the OSS as a civilian. He wanted no part of the military, let alone a U.S. Army commission. One after another officer explained the rationale for the commissioning, but Mr. Henquet stood his ground. By the time he finally relented, it was too late to do the administration. Brucker was issued his documents and a briefcase with his assigned radio frequency crystals (to regulate the wave lengths of radio transmissions), one-time code pad, time schedule, and his part of the money to carry. Henquet, the team leader, received a briefcase with money, his codes, and documents. "Finally, an ATS girl gave us small silver-plated flasks of rum and wished us luck in French by saying, *'Merde'* ('S—t'). Then, we were ushered into a waiting room," said Brucker.[61] They were being sent to France as a two-man special operations team; Fucs would follow later.

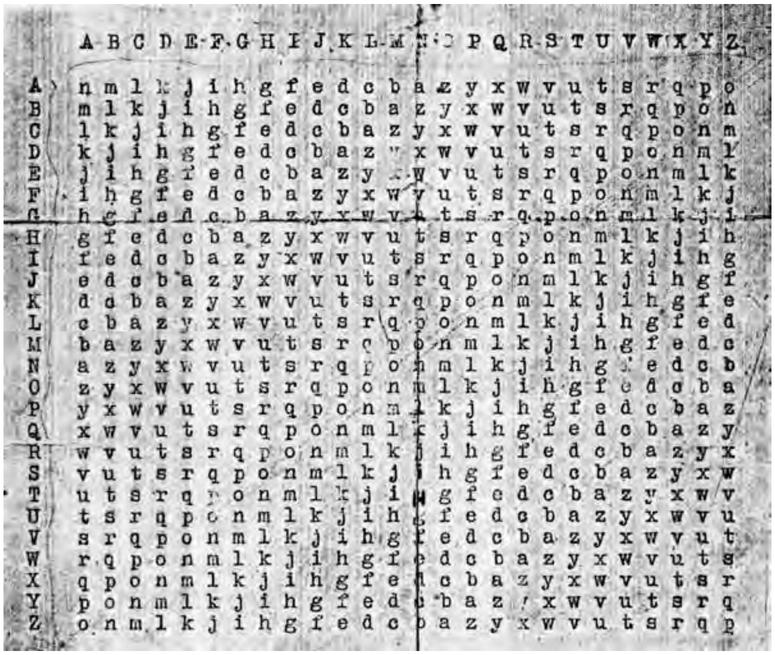
Two cars arrived at dusk on 26 May 1944.

CR-8/U
3640
KC

Actual size of a frequency crystal for Type A Mark III radio.

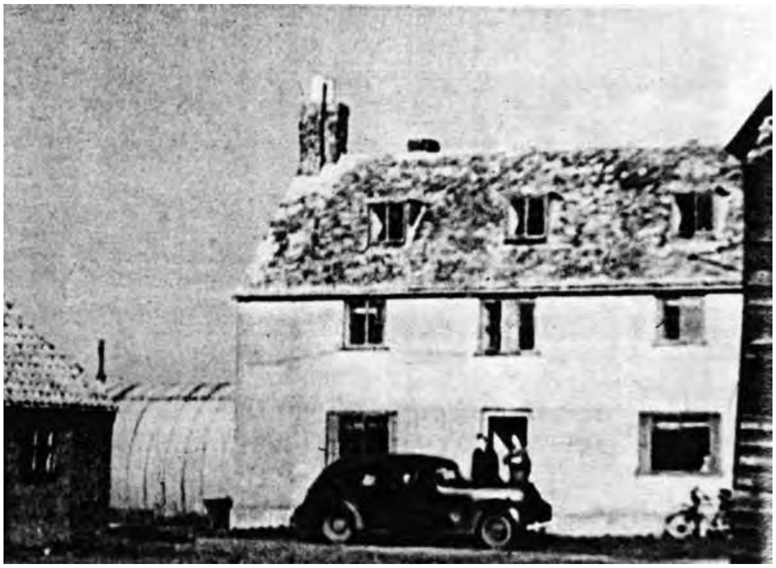


Brucker's call-in time schedule for Team HERMIT.



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
A	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o
B	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n
C	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m
D	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l
E	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k
F	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j
G	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i
H	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h
I	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g
J	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f
K	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e
L	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d
M	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c
N	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b
O	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a
P	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z
Q	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y
R	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x
S	v	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w
T	u	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v
U	t	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u
V	s	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t
W	r	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s
X	q	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r
Y	p	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q
Z	o	n	m	l	k	j	i	h	g	f	e	d	c	b	a	z	y	x	w	v	u	t	s	r	q	p

2LT Herbert Brucker's "one-time" code pad as RTO for Team HERMIT.



The farmhouse/safe house with adjacent Romney hut at RAF Hempsford used by OSS/SOE operatives Roger Henquet and Herbert Brucker in late May 1944.

New 2LT Herbert R. Brucker (cover name Albert Brunion on his documents and codenamed "Sacha") and Mr. Roger B. Henquet (codenamed "Roland") got into one. [*Note: Codenames were used in message traffic. Cover names were used on all personal documents.] Another unknown operative, 2LT Emile Rene Counasse, was in the second car. He was the new RTO for Team VENTRILOQUIST that would be the drop zone reception party.[62] They were taken to RAF Tempsford, about forty miles north northeast of London. Brucker recalled that "there was nobody on the highway. When we went through a forested area, it was jam-packed with military vehicles and equipment—trucks and jeeps to tanks and artillery . . . rows and rows of them. The air reeked of the smell of gasoline." They wound up at an old farmhouse near an airstrip. In an upstairs bedroom, the two were fed a meal of bread, eggs, and wine. Then, they were told to relax and rest at bit. Blackout curtains covered the windows.[63]

After a few hours of "relaxing," the two SOE operatives were taken to a nearby Romney hut. "It had long tables . . . like parachute packing tables. We had to stand in front of a British sergeant as he very systematically filled two suitcases with our second set of civilian clothes, item by item. He announced something, we acknowledged receipt, and so on, until he finished with *Gauloise* cigarettes. It was somewhat like clothing issue at an Army post, except our two suitcases were whisked away," remembered LT Brucker. That was when the inspector told them to empty out their pockets. He gleefully produced the Piccadilly restaurant receipt from Brucker's pile. "It made his day! I was embarrassed, but it reminded me to always double-check things. Somewhat sheepishly I took the proffered tin with its cyanide capsule, sleeping pills, and amphetamines," said Brucker.[64] The two men, still carrying their briefcases, were ushered into a small round building.

It was time to "parachute up." After taping their trousers, they were issued heavy British Denison parachutist smocks, foam helmets, and parachutes . . . no reserves. They jammed the briefcases inside their suit jackets, pulled the smocks over their suits, and donned their parachutes. The unknown third SOE operative (Counasse) joined them. After inspection by a "dispatcher" (British jumpmaster), the three men waddled out into the darkness and were helped aboard a waiting bomber. They were the only passengers; the rest of the plane contained bundles and containers.[65]

"About fifteen minutes after take-off, all hell broke loose! Startled, I looked to the dispatcher for an explanation. Nonchalantly offering tea from his thermos, he said, 'We're over the Channel now. They're just test firing the machineguns.' Then, the airplane began periodically changing course and altitude. The first time that the dispatcher (not wearing a parachute) opened the 'joe hole,' it was to push bundles of leaflets out. The next time he opened it, pigeons in tubular cardboard containers and several more bundles were dumped out. Then, he said that it was almost time," recalled the RTO for Team HERMIT.[66] They were really going in; it was not a rehearsal.

"The command, 'Action Station Number One' was issued. As I swung my feet down into the 'joe hole,' I began thinking, 'What am I doing here?' That was my 'wake-up call.' 'This one's for real!' Looking down it seemed that

The RAF bombers that regularly supported SOE missions were the four-engine Stirlings (top) and Halifaxes (middle) and the twin-engine Hudsons (bottom).

SOE operative sitting on the edge of the "joe hole" ready to parachute into German-occupied France.

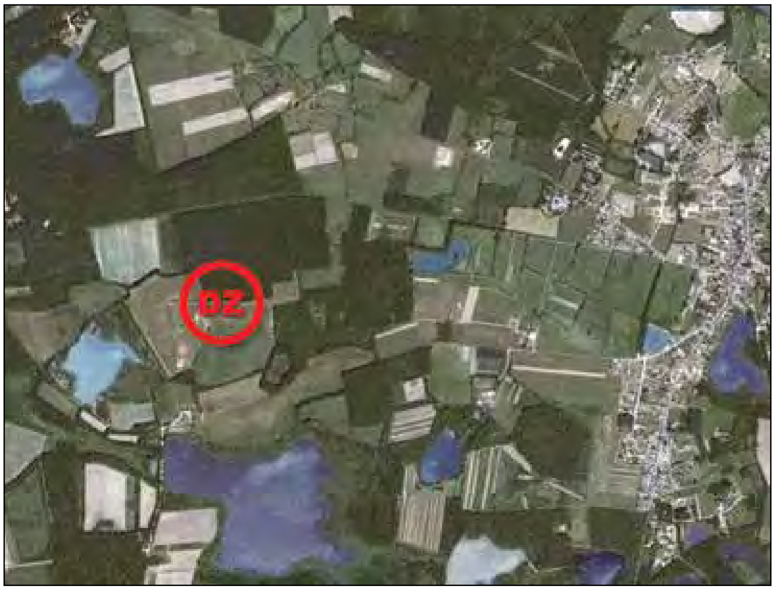
the ground was covered with snow (it was actually the moonlight reflecting off the trees). We were that low. Then, I noticed some lights go by below me. Then, the dispatcher was yelling, 'Go! Go!' I was so bundled up that I felt glued to the edge of the 'joe hole.' Then, out I went. My chute had barely opened when I saw treetops. I had a good PLF [parachute landing fall] amazingly and reacted automatically," said Brucker.[67]

The Special Operative was reeling in his parachute when he detected a dark shape to his right. Instinctively, 2LT Brucker began grabbing to get at his pistol because he was convinced that German soldiers were behind every bush. "I was still frantically fumbling to find my gun under all those clothes when that dark shape carrying a Sten gun whispered. 'Are you OK?' in French. When I told him that I was, he spun around and started shouting loudly, 'He's over here! He's over here!' That scared me to death. There I was shaking with nervousness, covered in sweat, and this fool is announcing my 'clandestine arrival' to the whole world! It was idiotic!" recalled Brucker.[68]

But, it was a beautiful, warm, moonlit night in late spring near St. Vaitre. One could hear the crickets chirping. Surrounded by the heavily armed partisans, Brucker was escorted to a nearby farmhouse. "Inside was a long table filled with all kinds of food . . . a virtual feast. I couldn't believe it because we had been told that the French were starving under German occupation. Obviously, that was not the case in the countryside. My stomach was in a knot. I was too nervous to eat or drink anything they offered," said Brucker.[69] It disappointed his hosts, but the bizarre "covert" reception had left him emotionally-charged. All Brucker wanted to do was to strip off the parachutist smock because he was sweating profusely. When Henquet entered the farmhouse followed by LT Counasse, there was Brucker standing in the rural farmhouse in his three-piece business suit. Behind them was an unhappy "Antoine," the VENTRILOQUIST team leader. All the bundles had fallen into the lakes around the drop zone. Since that had never happened before no flotation devices had been attached. Fortunately, they still had the money. After Henquet gave "Antoine" his team's share and new instructions from London, he became friendlier and agreed to provide Team HERMIT with a radio.[70]

British special operations Team HERMIT was in the war, but the French operational environment proved to be quite different from that briefed in London. "The mission for SOE from Prime Minister Churchill was to set Europe ablaze. So, hundreds of little bastards were dropped all over the place. SOE operatives had been taught to lie, burgle, steal, forge, impersonate, kill, destroy, and spy. I was a 'jack of all criminal trades and a master of none' but Team HERMIT was supposed to wreak havoc on the Germans," said Brucker.[71] How the

St. Viatre Drop Zone and nearby farmhouse where Special Operatives Brucker and Henquet were "welcomed" to France.



Map of St. Viatre with Drop Zone marked.

HERMIT team accomplished its mission in north central France from late May until mid-September 1994, will be explained by OSS/SOE special operative 2LT Herbert R. Brucker in the next issue of *Veritas*.

British SOE training had been arranged for American OSS operatives in mid-1943. Despite the better quality of training offered (based on three years of combat experience), the OSS continued its stateside training of candidates. The Special Forces soldier of today should recognize that many elements of the OSS and SOE evaluation and training are still being used: psychological assessments; individual and team physical evaluations using obstacle and Leader Reaction-type courses; a constant stress environment; special skills training—from weapons to demolitions to communications to intelligence—medical is unique to SF thanks to Colonel Aaron Bank who saw the advantages provided by a medic on the OSS OG teams; advanced special operations training; small unit tactics—raids and direct action to reconnaissance; area assessments; language skills; and unconventional warfare advisor roles.[72] The evaluations and training proved themselves in World War II and they are viable in Afghanistan, Iraq, Colombia, and the Philippines today. This account will eliminate some of the mystery that has surrounded special operations conducted during WWII; show that innovative junior officers were responsible for most tactical and operational success; and demonstrate that the stress, fear, and sweat induced in training built confidence, competence, and reduced casualties in combat.[73]

Special thanks go to Mr. Richard Brucker, Mr. Thomas Emsminger, and Mr. Clive Bassett for their assistance with this third article on the late Major Herbert R. Brucker, former OSS/SOE special operative.

Endnotes

1 Charles H. Briscoe, "Herbert R. Brucker, SF Pioneer: Part II Pre-WWII-OSS Training 1943," *Veritas* 2:3, 26–35.

2 Briscoe, "Major (R) Herbert R. Brucker, DSC: Special Forces Pioneer: SOE France, OSS Burma and China, 10th SFG, SF Instructor, 77th SFG, Laos, and Vietnam," *Veritas* 2:2, 33–35.

3 The total number of OSS Special Operations (SO), Jedburghs, and Operational Group (OG) personnel working behind the lines in France during 1944 was 523; 85 were SO agents and radio operators, 83 Jedburghs, and 355 (in 22 sections) were OGs. Kermit Roosevelt, "Introduction" to the 1976 Walker and Company, New York edition of History Project, Strategic Services Unit. *The Overseas Targets. War Report of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services) Volume 2* (Washington, DC: Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, 1946), xii, hereafter Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets II.*

4 *History of the London Office of the OSS 1942–1945: War Diary*, SO Branch, OSS London, Vol. 9: Training, iii–iv, hereafter cited as *War Diary*. OSS Headquarters in Washington accepted Captain Tyson's report but decided that "a short training course in the United States would, at the very least, serve as a process for weeding out undesirable personnel." *War Diary*, Vol. 9: Training, viii.

5 David Stafford, *Britain and European Resistance, 1940–1945: A Survey of the Special Operations Executive, with Documents* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980) 148; M.R.D. Foote, *SOE in France: An Account of the Work of the British Special Operations Executive in France, 1940–1944* (Frederick, MD: University Publications of America, 1984), 57, 207, 210.

6 All OSS/SI activities were strictly American, while most OSS/SO operatives worked with the SOE. The British SOE controlled a number of circuits established in the early days of the war and maintained most of the inter-allied missions. Arthur Funk, "The OSS in Algiers," in George C. Chalou, ed. *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II* (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), 181 n.10.

7 Major (Retired) Herbert R. Brucker, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 3 July 2006, Fayetteville, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

8 Brucker interviews, 26 September 2006 and 27 January 2007.

9 Brucker interviews, 3 July 2006 and 26 September 2006.

10 Brucker interviews, 3 July 2006 and 26 September 2006.

11 Brucker interview, 3 July 2006.

12 Brucker interview, 3 July 2006.

13 Brucker interview, 14 November 2005.

14 *War Diary*, Vol. 9: Training, xiv.

15 Brucker interview, 14 November 2005.

16 Brucker interview, 27 January 2007; Foote, *SOE in France*, 54.

17 Brucker interviews, 7 December 2005 and 3 July 2006; Foote, *SOE in France*, 54.

18 Brucker interview, 27 January 2007; The OSS Assessment Staff, *Assessment of Men: Selection of Personnel for the Office of Strategic Services* (NY: Rinehart & Co., 1948), 516–23, hereafter cited as *Assessment of Men*.

19 Brucker interview, 27 January 2007.

20 Brucker interview, 26 September 2006.

21 *War Diary*, Vol. 9: Training, 41.

22 Brucker interview, 27 January 2007; Foote, *SOE in France*, 55.

23 Brucker interview, 7 December 2005 and 19 January 2007; Foote, *SOE in France*, 55–56.

24 *War Diary*, Vol. 9: Training, 41; Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets II*, 183.

25 Brucker interviews, 7 December 2005 and 7 June 2006.

26 *War Diary*, Vol. 9: Training, 41.

27 Brucker interview, 30 May 2006.

28 Brucker interviews, 27 March 2006, 9 May 2006, 16 May 2006, 7 June 2006, and 26 February 2007. Broken radio waves caused by the making and breaking of the keying circuit (key-clicks) in a radio transmitter could be detected by German direction finding receivers in the vicinity. H.J. Giskes, *London Calling North Pole* (London: The British Book Centre, 1953), 207.

29 Brucker interviews, 23 May 2006, 7 September 2006, and 15 February 2007.

30 *History of the London Office of OSS, 1942–1945*. Vol. 3, F-Section. HERMIT 216: Activity Report of 2nd Lieutenant Roger B. Henquet, AUS (Robert), 103, National Archives RG 226: M1623: Roll 10.

31 Brucker interview, 27 March 2006.

32 Brucker interview, 27 March 2006.

33 *War Diary*, Vol. 9: Training, 41.

34 Brucker interview, 26 September 2006; Foote, *SOE in France*, 55.

35 Brucker interview, 26 September 2006. The "fusee" for detonating explosives underwater most likely contained magnesium. Foote, *SOE in France*, 55.

36 Brucker interviews, 26 September 2006 and 9 February 2007; Briscoe, "Herbert R. Brucker, SF Pioneer: Part II Pre-WWII-OSS Training 1943," 32; Foote, *SOE in France*, 55.

37 Brucker interviews, 9 February 2007 and 15 February 2007; Foote, *SOE in France*, 57.

38 Brucker interview, 9 February 2007.

39 Brucker interviews, 15 February 2007; Foote, *SOE in France*, 55.

40 Brucker interview, 27 January 2007; Foote, *SOE in France*, 55.

41 Brucker interview, 27 March 2006; Foote, *SOE in France*, 56–57; Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets II*, 186.

42 *War Diary*, Vol. 9: Training, 41.

43 Brucker interview, 27 March 2006; Foote, *SOE in France*, 57.

44 Brucker interview, 26 September 2006.

45 Brucker interview, 15 February 2007.

46 Brucker interview, 26 September 2006.

47 Brucker interviews, 27 January 2007 and 9 February 2007.

48 Brucker interviews, 27 January 2007 and 9 February 2007.

49 Brucker interviews, 27 January 2007 and 9 February 2007.

50 *War Diary*, Vol. 9: Training, 41.

51 Brucker interviews, 27 March 2006 and 9 February 2007; Foote, *SOE in France*, 56. Jump aircraft shortages were the major reason. But, it was cheaper and faster to qualify trainees with the balloon.

52 Brucker interviews, 27 March 2006 and 9 February 2007.

53 Brucker interviews, 27 March 2006 and 9 February 2007.

54 Brucker interviews, 27 March 2006 and 9 February 2007.

55 Brucker interview, 9 February 2007; *History of the London Office of the OSS*, F-Section, 104. SOE tailors and shoemakers copied European styles, fabrics, tailoring, and manufacturing techniques. Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets II*, 162.

56 Brucker interviews, 27 March 2006, 7 June 2006, and 26 September 2006.

57 *History of the London Office of the OSS*. Organization: HERMIT CIRCUIT (P2–Area: BLOIS–VENDOME, LOIR ET CHER) Sheet 8A compiled from the file of Lieutenant Henri Fuc.

58 *History of the London Office of the OSS*. Report. F-Section, 104.

59 Brucker interviews, 27 March 2006, 7 June 2006, and 26 September 2006.

60 Brucker interview, 7 March 2007.

61 Brucker interviews, 27 March 2006 and 7 March 2007; Giskes, *London Calling North Pole*, 206; Foote, *SOE in France*, 59.

62 Brucker interview, 27 March 2006.

63 Brucker interview, 27 March 2006.

64 Brucker interviews, 27 March 2006 and 7 March 2007. Personnel were offered sleeping, stimulating, and suicide tablets if they cared to take them. Each operative received one "L" or suicide tablet, six "B" or stimulating tablets, and six "K" or sleep-producing tablets. *History of the London Office of the OSS*. Vol. 6. National Archives. RG 226. Roll 9. Target 5, 45.

65 Brucker interview, 27 March 2006; Giskes, *London Calling North Pole*, 206. Lieutenants Brucker and Roger B. Henquet each carried two million French francs and Lieutenant Rene Counasse carried a million French francs. Brucker interviews, 24 April 2006 and 2 May 2006. 138 Squadron at Tempsford in May 1944 had four-engine Stirling bombers while 161 Squadron had twin-engine Hudson bombers. Foote, *SOE in France*, 76.

66 Brucker interview, 2 May 2006.

67 Brucker interview, 2 May 2006.

68 Brucker interview, 2 May 2006.

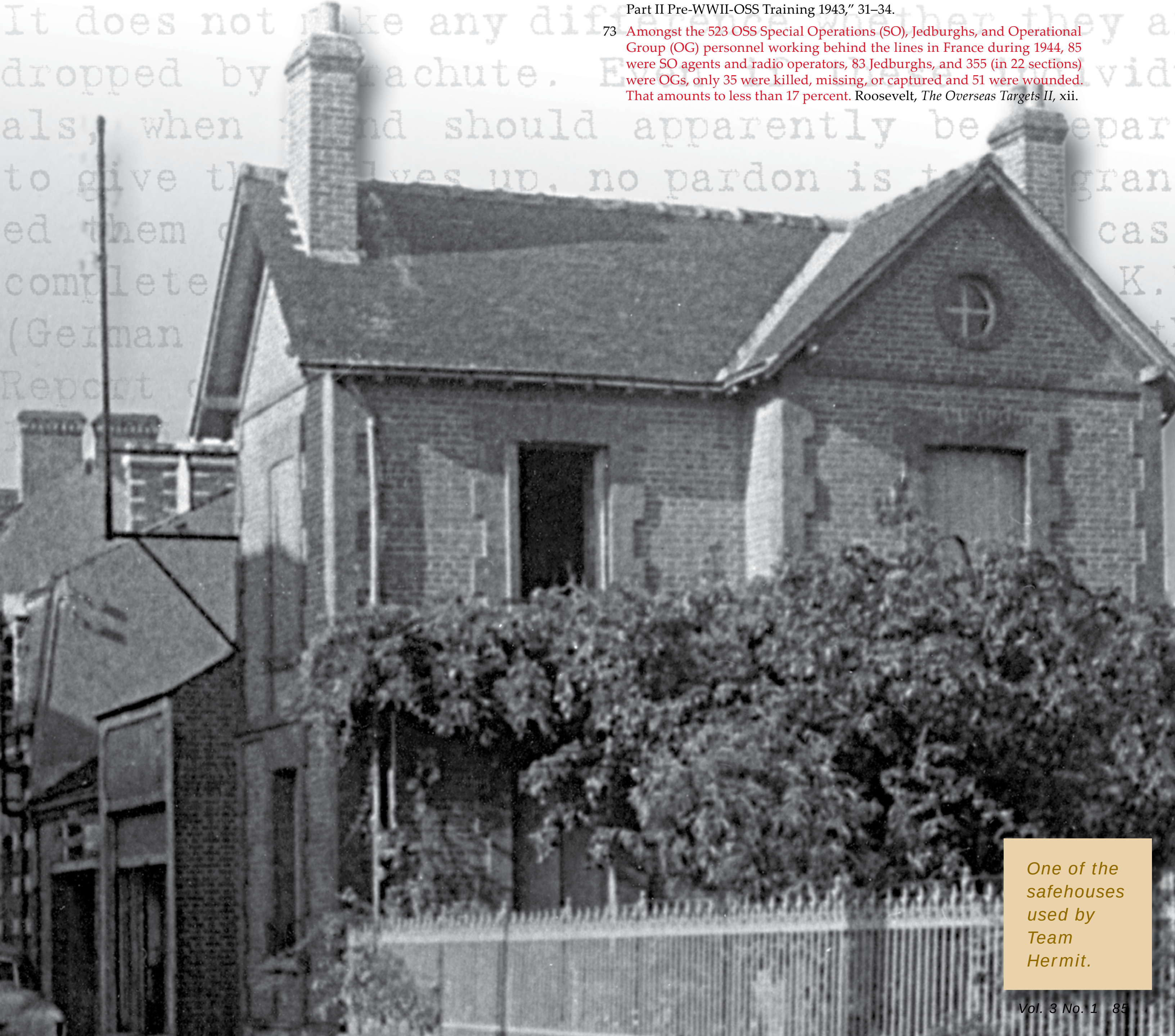
69 Brucker interviews, 2 May 2006 and 15 February 2007.

70 Brucker interviews, 2 May 2006 and 15 February 2007; *History of the London Office of the OSS*. F-Section, 104.

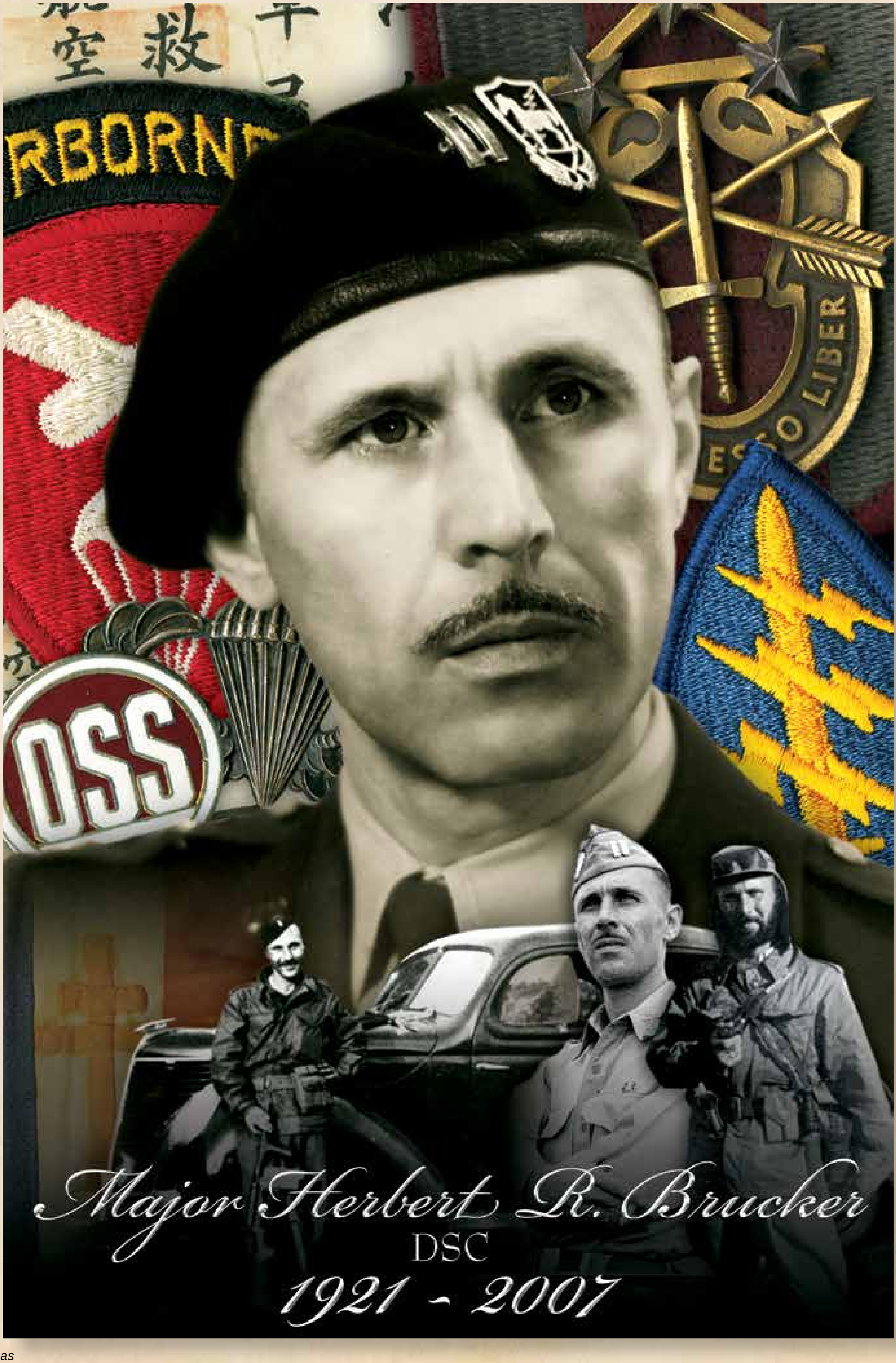
71 Brucker interviews, 9 February 2007 and 15 February 2007.

72 Brucker interview, 8 March 2007; Briscoe, "Herbert R. Brucker, SF Pioneer: Part II Pre-WWII-OSS Training 1943," 31–34.

73 Amongst the 523 OSS Special Operations (SO), Jedburghs, and Operational Group (OG) personnel working behind the lines in France during 1944, 85 were SO agents and radio operators, 83 Jedburghs, and 355 (in 22 sections) were OGs, only 35 were killed, missing, or captured and 51 were wounded. That amounts to less than 17 percent. Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets II*, xii.



One of the safehouses used by Team Hermit.


空救
RBORN
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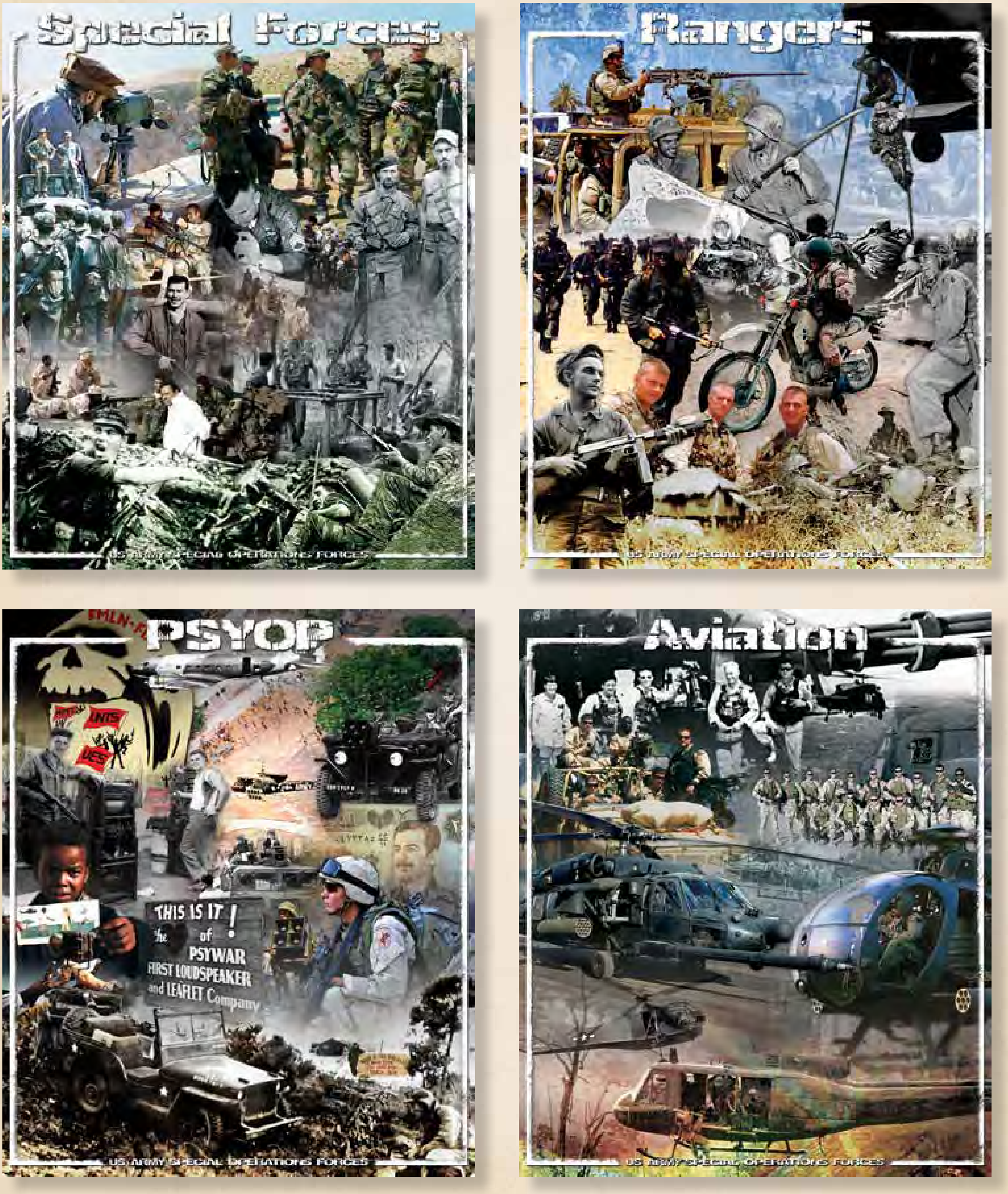
LIBER

Major Herbert R. Brucker

DSC

1921 - 2007


Special Forces
US ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES
Rangers
US ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES
PSYOP
THIS IS IT ! the of PSYWAR FIRST LOUDSPEAKER and LEAFLET Company
US ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES
Aviation
US ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

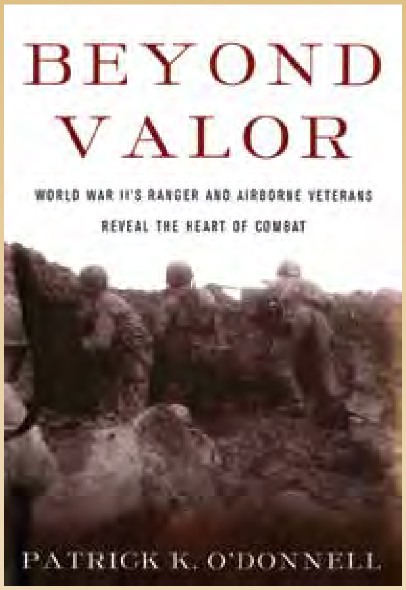
These represent four of the six Army SOF photo collages by the USASOC History Office that will be displayed in the entryway of the Green Beret Club on 9th Infantry Road in the Smokebomb Hill area of Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The other two are Civil Affairs and Army SOF Support. Photos in each collage span World War II to the present. Artwork by Dan Telles.

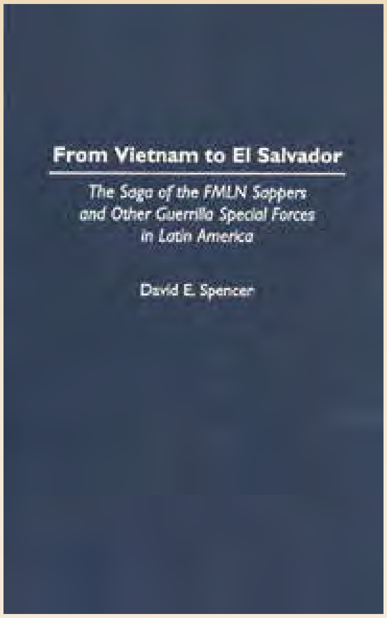
Books in the Field

"Books in the Field" provides short descriptions of books related to subjects covered in the current issue of *Veritas.* Readers are encouraged to use these recommendations as a starting point for individual study on topics related to Army Special Operations history.

Patrick K. O'Donnell, *Beyond Valor: World War II's Rangers and Airborne Veterans Reveal the Heart of Combat* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001)

O'Donnell is the author of other oral history books on WWII elite units such as *Into the Rising Sun: In Their Own Words, World War II's Pacific Veterans Reveal the Heart of Combat*, and *Operatives, Spies, and Saboteurs: The Unknown Story of the Men and Women of WWII's OSS*, as well as the more recent *We Were One: Shoulder to Shoulder With the Marines Who Took Fallujah*. In *Beyond Valor,* O'Donnell provides an engaging account of Ranger and paratrooper veterans' experiences in the European and Mediterranean Theaters, from Anzio to Normandy and Southern France, to the Battle of the Bulge into Holland, and the Hürtgen Forest. O'Donnell provides a brief strategic overview of the war at the beginning of each chapter, but allows the WWII veterans to describe their actions in their own words. The result is a gripping account of combat in the Second World War. Includes photos, maps, an order of battle of U.S. Airborne and Ranger units, notes, and an index.


BEYOND VALOR
WORLD WAR II'S RANGER AND AIRBORNE VETERANS REVEAL THE HEART OF COMBAT
PATRICK K. O'DONNELL



From Vietnam to El Salvador

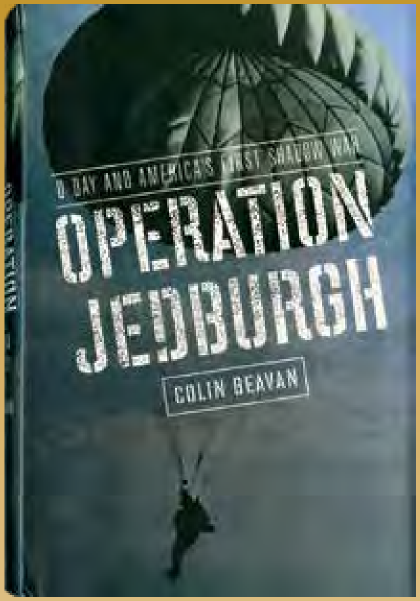
The Saga of the FMLN Sappers and Other Guerrilla Special Forces in Latin America

David E. Spencer

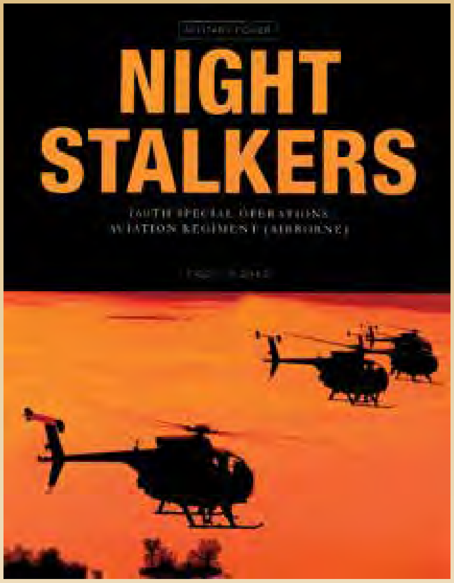
David E. Spencer, *From Vietnam to El Salvador: The Saga of the FMLN Sappers and Other Guerrilla Special Forces in Latin America* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1996)

In this work, David E. Spencer provides a view of "special forces" units in the FMLN factions during the El Salvador war. Captured FMLN documents reveal that these elements were created to counter the Salvadoran military's heavy armaments—airplanes, helicopters, artillery, and armored vehicles. Following North Vietnam's lessons, and with training in Cuba, the FMLN special forces units were essentially sapper units that could infiltrate Salvadoran military bases to destroy their facilities and wreck key infrastructure targets like bridges and electrical power sites. The FMLN then expanded this concept to other specialized elements to form maritime and urban commandos. However, the extensive training and selectivity needed to create these specialty units meant that even light casualties had significant impacts on unit cohesion and continued effectiveness. Spencer bases his research on a variety of sources, including debriefings of captured FMLN fighters. However, it lacks official U.S. documentation and is based on the premise that the reader must trust the author that his unnamed sources are correct. Includes a list of acronyms, photos, notes, bibliography, and index.

Colin Beaven, *Operation Jedburgh: D-Day and America's First Shadow War* (New York: Viking, 2006)



As part of the large clandestine operations effort in Europe supplied from Area H, the Jedburghs acquired a significant reputation in the history of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). However, the American OSS was only one of the organizations involved in the Jedburgh project. The teams were composed of American, British and French, as well as Canadian, Belgian, and Dutch personnel. Beavan has made an effort to show the multi-nationality in his account by using archival materials and first-hand interviews of veterans. In so doing, he presents a very detailed look at the training and operations of the Jedburgh teams in France. In this he has succeeded admirably, and the result is a well-written, engaging account. Beaven's work is among many that detail Jedburgh operations, but it does not discuss actions outside of France. However, it is the most recent and most extensively documented. Included are photos, maps, list of Jedburgh team members and missions, notes, bibliography, index.



Fred J. Pushies, *Night Stalkers: 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne)* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2005)

The 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (Airborne) the "Night Stalkers" is the Army's Special Operations Aviation unit and the premier practitioner of long-range, low-level, night infiltration operations. Fred J. Pushies' *Night Stalkers*, one of the few sources on the unit, is a concise overview of the regiment. This "coffee table" book has a brief history of the 160th SOAR, the organization and its specialized training, the modified aircraft, and its role in major operations from Operation URGENT FURY (Grenada) to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. Well-illustrated, it is a good introduction to the 160th SOAR. However, it provides no documentation or even a list of sources. Included are photos, glossary, list of abbreviations, and index.

Other Recommended Books on Topics Covered in this Issue:

- S.J. Lewis, *Jedburgh Team Operations in Support of the 12th Army Group, August 1944* (U.S. Army Combat Studies Institute)
- LTC Will Irwin, *The Jedburghs: The Secret History of the Allied Special Forces, France 1944* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005).

In the Next Issue of Veritas

"We Badly Needed Something to Do:" Glider Jumping At Camp Mackall, 1943

by Troy Sacquety

Used today as a training area for United States Army special operations, in World War II, Camp Mackall, NC was the headquarters of the Airborne Command. Several airborne units were formed or trained there, including the 551st Parachute Infantry Battalion. Nicknamed the "GOYAS," the 551st trained and tested airborne techniques at Camp Mackall, to include using the CG-4A WACO glider as an airdrop platform. This trial will be reviewed in detail.

OSS Detachment 404 and Operations in Southeast Asia

by David G. Knapp

The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Detachment 404 was formed to conduct operations in the Southeast Asia. Headquartered in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, Detachment 404 conducted operations in southern Burma, Malaya, the Andaman Islands, Sumatra, the Dutch East Indies, and Thailand. OSS veteran Peter White, a member of an OSS Special Operation (SO) team earmarked for Thailand, provided details on how personnel were trained for their missions.

"If you liked Beruit, you'll love Mogadishu": An Introduction to ARSOF in Somalia

by Eugene Piasecki

The United States had been involved in Somalia on an irregular basis from the late 1970s until 1992, when it became part of a coalition force providing humanitarian relief supplies to Somalia under UN supervision. Not understanding Somalia and the complexities of its society fostered an evolution from peace keeping to peace enforcement missions. ARSOF was involved in every aspect of United States activities in Somalia from Operation RESTORE HOPE in 1992 through Operation UNITED SHIELD in 1995.

Commander, USASOC
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