

Journal of Army Special Operations History
PB 31-05-2 Vol. 4, No. 3, 2008

Veritas



Areas of Operations Covered in this *Veritas*...



Cover Photo: Privates First Class Hugo J. Wagner (left) and Albert W. Weaver (right) of Merrill's Marauders [5307th Composite Unit (Provisional)] peer from a Japanese pillbox that they had just captured on the outskirts of Myitkyina, Burma on 14 July 1944. In the foreground are a Japanese helmet and rifle that were left by the previous occupant, while other enemy troops were still holding positions just fifty yards away.

A Stinson L-1 Vigilant of Detachment 101 of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) lands somewhere in Burma in 1944. Detachment 101's air wing, the "Red Ass Squadron," preferred the older L-1 over newer types of light aircraft because of its durability and greater utility.





1



18



38



54



68

Veritas

CONTENTS

- ii Azimuth
By Charles H. Briscoe
- 1 Alamo Scouts Diary
By Kenneth Finlayson
- 18 Fighting Through the “Fog of War”: The Battle of An-Najaf, 28-29 January 2007, Part II
By Charles H. Briscoe
- 38 A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign, Part II
By Troy J. Sacquety
- 54 A Second Chance: Operation PACIFIC HAVEN
By Robert W. Jones, Jr.
- 68 Donald D. Blackburn: World War II Guerrilla Leader & Special Operations Plank Holder
By Kenneth Finlayson
- 78 Snap Shot
By Earl J. Moniz
- 82 Blackburn Tribute
By Daniel W. Telles
- 83 Books in the Field

The Azimuth of the USASOC History Office



The “Azimuth” in each *Veritas* explains what the USASOC History Office is doing and plans to do to disseminate well-documented Army Special Operations history. Command support is strong. Distribution has increased dramatically since the first issue in the Fall of 2005, a good indicator that our work is well-received.

To date our supplies of all back issues are exhausted. We generally run out of the previous issue within a month after the latest issue comes out. Thanks to some capitalistic entrepreneurs in the military, old issues, like our books, occasionally become available on Ebay. For credit reasons and copyright issues our written products will not be published electronically. Permission to use photographs from private collections was granted only to the USASOC History Office. These photos are not available for public use.

A Smoke Bomb Hill area historical marker that shows Army SOF unit locations from 1952 to the present based on an old aerial photograph has been installed in front of the Green Beret Club on 9th Division Street, Fort Bragg. The GB Club building is one of two remaining World War II structures on Smoke Bomb Hill. The other is the Chapel located at the corner of Gruber Road and 6th/Sapper Street.

Included in this issue is an introductory article on BG Donald D. Blackburn, an Army special operations pioneer who passed away in May. Blackburn organized and led Philippine guerrilla units in North Luzon from 1942-45, commanded 77th SFG when SF

MTTs trained Rangers in South Vietnam and Laotian Army units (later White Star), was the MACV-SOG commander, and the SACSA (Special Assistant for Counterinsurgency and Special Activities) for the Son Tay Raid. BG Blackburn will be interred in Arlington National Cemetery on 5 November 2008.

A special tribute is appropriate for Dr. John W. Partin, who recently retired after serving as Command Historian for USSOCOM since that headquarters stood up in 1987. This unheralded historian insured that the documentation for all SOF current operations (classified) was collected by USSOCOM historians deployed overseas, cataloged, and meticulously archived. Classified historical summaries were published electronically on the SIPR net to assist SOF commanders worldwide. USSOCOM History Office holdings were primary sources for *Weapon of Choice: ARSOF in Afghanistan*, *All Roads Lead to Baghdad: ARSOF in Iraq*, and the special *Veritas* and *Special Warfare* issues covering Colombia and the Philippines, respectively. Partin is truly a quiet professional.

This spectrum edition of *Veritas*, spanning World War II to current operations in Iraq, is a little bigger than usual. The last *Veritas* for 2008, will be devoted entirely to the 8th SFG mission to Bolivia in 1967 that led to the demise of Ernesto “Che” Guevara. The SF Mission Area Analysis (MAA) format will be followed and we will use material and information available in 1967. Thanks for the support. CHB

VERITAS: *Veritas* is published quarterly by the United States Army Special Operations Command, Fort Bragg, North Carolina (ISSN 1553-9830). The contents are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. government, Department of Defense, USSOCOM, or USASOC. The contents are compiled, edited, and prepared by the USASOC History Office. All photos not credited are courtesy of the USASOC History Office.

COPYRIGHT: Material in *Veritas* may be reprinted, except where copyrighted, provided credit is given to *Veritas* and the creators.

COPIES: Copies of previous *Veritas* issues are no longer available. A limited number of the current issue are maintained at the USASOC History Office.

PERMISSION TO USE PHOTOGRAPHS: Permission to use photographs from private collections was granted only to the USASOC History Office. These photos are NOT available for public use.

QUESTIONS: Address questions and comments to USASOC, ATTN: AOHS *Veritas*, E-2929 Desert Storm Drive, Fort Bragg, NC 28310, or e-mail one of our editors.

FIREWALLS AND SPAM BLOCKERS: DOD computer FIREWALLS routinely place unrecognized addresses into a Junk E-Mail box. Encryption is another problem. Personal computer SPAM blockers further delay and negate responses. Therefore, if you would like your e-mail answered, please adjust your personal SPAM blocker before you send a message. Thanks.

SUBMISSIONS: Submit manuscripts, art, illustrations, and photos to the address above. Digital format is preferred. Please provide complete contact information for all submissions. The USASOC History Office reserves the right to edit all copy presented for publication.

COMMAND HISTORIAN AND EDITOR:

Charles H. Briscoe, PhD, briscoec@soc.mil

ASSOCIATE EDITORS:

Kenneth Finlayson, PhD, finlaysk@soc.mil

LTC Robert W. Jones Jr., jonesr@soc.mil

Troy J. Sacquety, PhD, sacquett@soc.mil

ART DIRECTOR:

Daniel W. Telles, tellesd@soc.mil

GRAPHIC DESIGNER:

Laura Goddard, laura.goddard@soc.mil

PHOTO EDITOR:

Earl J. Moniz, monize@soc.mil

ILLUSTRATORS:

Frank E. Allen, fallen1364@sbcglobal.net

Mariano Santillan, mariano@santillan.cc

Alamo Scouts Training Center



To whom
 40th Infantry
 of instruction
 from 15
 of his proficiency
 Remarks _____

Specific Area
 Date June 22, 1944
 CONNELL Sgt. 38087930
 completed the prescribed course
 TRAINING CENTER
 is awarded in recognition
 included in the course.



McGowen Team after the 1st Alamo Scout mission, the reconnaissance of Los Negros Island, New Guinea, 27-28 Feb 1944.

General Krueger.
W. Bradshaw
 W. BRADSHAW
 Colonel, G.S.C.
 Director of Training

Alamo Scouts Diary

By Kenneth Finlayson

Inserted at 7:00 p.m. by Navy PT boat onto the deserted beach, the small team moved stealthily along the trail until it reached its objective at 2:00 a.m. Two local guides were sent into the tiny village to obtain the latest information on the enemy disposition and ascertain the status of the personnel held hostage there. On the guide's return, the team leader modified his original plan based on their information and the men dispersed to take up their positions.

The leader with six team members, the interpreter, and three local guides moved to the vicinity of a large building where eighteen enemy soldiers slept inside. Two team members and one native guide took up a position near a small building occupied by two enemy intelligence officers and a captured local official. The assistant team leader, four men, and two guides were to neutralize an enemy outpost located more than two miles away on the main road to the village. The outpost was manned by four soldiers with two machine guns. This team would attack when they heard the main element initiate their assault in the village.

The team leader opened fire on the main building at 4:10 a.m. and within three minutes his team killed or wounded all the enemy combatants. The two enemy officers in the small hut were killed and their hostage released. In the village, the interpreter and the native guides went from hut to hut gathering the sixty-six civilian hostages. As soon as everyone was accounted for, the group began moving to the pickup point on the beach. The assistant team leader and his men were unable to hear the brief gun

battle in the village and waited until 5:30 before attacking the guard post from two sides, killing the four enemy soldiers. After neutralizing the guard post, the team moved to the pick-up point, secured the area, and made radio contact to bring in the boats for the evacuation. The main body with the newly-freed hostages soon arrived. By 7:00 a.m., everyone was safely inside friendly lines.¹

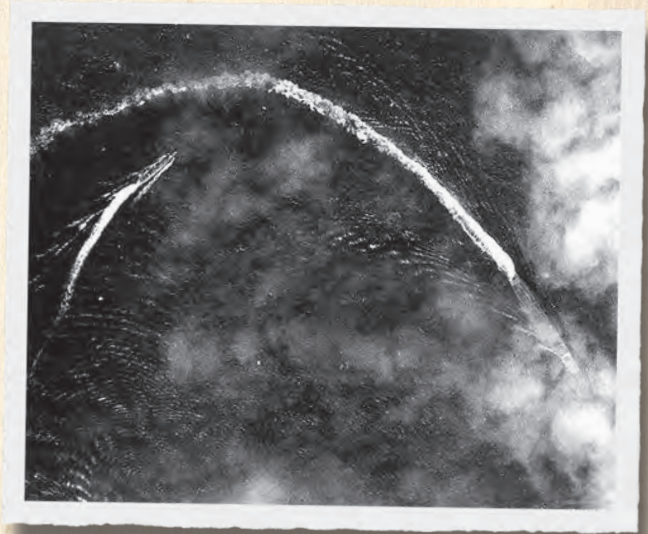
This well-planned, flawlessly executed hostage rescue could easily have come from today's war on terrorism. In reality, it took place on 4 October 1944 at Cape Oransbari, New Guinea. The team that rescued sixty-six Dutch and Javanese hostages from the Japanese were part of the Sixth U.S. Army's Special Reconnaissance Unit, called the Alamo Scouts. This article will look at the formation, training, and missions of that unique special operations unit.

The Japanese Advance

Following the 7 December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese military was on the march. The Imperial Army had been fighting in Manchuria since 1931 and was a veteran, battle-tested force. The Japanese grand strategy was to drive the European nations from their colonial holdings in Asia and implement the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, an involuntary assembly of Asian nations under Japanese domination. In December 1941, Nazi Germany occupied the Netherlands and France,



Nellist Team after the Oransbari Rescue mission. Pictured L to R, back row, Andy E. Smith, Galen C. Kittleson, William E. Nellist, kneeling, front row, Wilbert C. Wismer, Sabas A. Asis and Thomas A. Siason. Taken New Years Day, 1945 on Leyte, Philippine Islands.



The Japanese aircraft carrier Akagi was sunk by aerial attack at the Battle of Midway. To the left a Japanese destroyer maneuvers to avoid the American aircraft. The defeat at Midway spelled the end of the Japanese expansion.

and the British Commonwealth was locked in a struggle with the Axis. The United States was preoccupied with building up its own military forces and providing war materials to the embattled British. Japan chose this time to launch their attack on Pearl Harbor, and begin offensive operations throughout East Asia. The initial months of the war were a string of unbroken Japanese victories.

August 1942 was the high-water mark for the Japanese military. The Imperial Army captured Malaya and



General Douglas A. MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Area. The red line shows the limit of advance of the Japanese military in 1942. MacArthur's campaign strategy was to retake New Guinea and move north and recapture the Philippines prior to the assault on the Japanese home islands.

Singapore, occupied Borneo, Sumatra, and Java in the Dutch East Indies, and marched into Thailand. They pushed the British out of Burma, and dealt the United States a major defeat in the Philippines. Japanese forces swept south and east into New Guinea, where they established major bases at Rabaul on New Britain Island, and Tulagi in the Solomon Group and occupied the Marshall and Gilbert Islands in eastern Micronesia. They pushed north to seize Attu and Kiska in the Aleutians. Their forces were threatening Australia when the U.S. Navy decisively defeated the Japanese Navy at the Battle of Midway in June 1942. On 7 August 1942, the United States and her allies attacked Guadalcanal, Tulagi, and Tanambogo, effectively checking further Japanese expansion.² From this point on, the Japanese were forced to adopt a defensive posture to consolidate their holdings and prepare to fight off the growing strength of the Allies.

Maritime operations against the Japanese took place in two theaters. The Southeast Asia Command was under British control and led by Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten. The Pacific Theater was divided into two areas. The largest was the vast Pacific Ocean Areas (POA) commanded by Admiral (ADM) Chester W. Nimitz, the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, The POA extended from the continental United States westward across the ocean to Japan and included most of the Pacific

islands. The South Pacific area was commanded by Rear Admiral Robert L. Ghormley. The second subdivision, the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA), encompassed Australia, New Guinea, the Dutch East Indies, and the Philippines and was under the command of General (GEN) Douglas A. MacArthur.³ It was in the SWPA that the Alamo Scouts were created and operated.

The SWPA and Sixth Army

After his evacuation from the Philippines to Australia in March 1942, GEN MacArthur, was installed as the Commander in Chief of the SWPA, a joint command composed of United States, Australian, and Dutch forces. Of the major theaters of World War II, only the China-Burma-India Theater (CBI) was more poorly resourced than the SWPA. MacArthur's General Headquarters (GHQ) directed three subordinate sections, the Allied Air Forces (Lieutenant General George C. Kenney, U.S. Army Air Forces), Allied Land Forces (General Sir Thomas A. Blamey, Australian Army) and the Allied Naval Forces, (Rear Admiral Arthur S. Carpender, U.S. Navy).⁴ In January 1943, MacArthur specifically requested that his long-standing friend Lieutenant General (LTG) Walter Krueger be assigned to command the newly constituted Sixth Army.⁵ In a move designed to keep the bulk of the American ground troops separate from the Allied Land



The campaign in New Guinea. LTG Krueger's Alamo Force executed a series of amphibious landings along the northern coast of New Guinea. The Alamo Scouts conducted 40 reconnaissance missions on the landing beaches and the off-shore islands in support of Alamo Force.

Forces, MacArthur established a new command, the New Britain Force, around the Sixth U.S. Army, reporting directly to SWPA GHQ.⁶ The name was soon changed to the Alamo Force, because Sixth Army originally stood up in San Antonio, Texas, the home of the Alamo. LTG Krueger noted:

The reason for creating Alamo Force and having it, rather than Sixth Army, conducting operations was not divulged to me. But it was plain that this arrangement would obviate placing Sixth Army under the operational control of the CG, Allied Land Forces, although that Army formed a part of these forces. Since the CG, Allied Land Forces, likewise could not exercise administrative control of Sixth Army, it never came under his command at all.⁷

General MacArthur's strategy in the SWPA was to conduct a series of amphibious landings along the northern coast of New Guinea, capture the Japanese-held islands of the New Britain archipelago and destroy the major Japanese naval base at Rabaul. This would eliminate the Japanese threat to Australia and begin the process of recapturing the Philippines prior to assaulting the Japanese home islands. From July through September, 1942, Australian troops on New Guinea fought the Japanese between Port Moresby and the northern coast. The attack followed the treacherous Kokoda Trail across the towering Owen Stanley Mountains. The enemy's final attempt to consolidate his holdings on New Guinea's northern coast was repulsed at Milne Bay.⁹ Fierce fighting led to Allied victories at Buna, Gona, and Sanananda. The Japanese penetration along the New Guinea coast and the occupation of Solomon Islands were disrupted. The Allies began to roll them back when the Sixth Army commenced operations.

The Japanese still occupied the majority of northeastern New Guinea, with strongholds at Lae and Salamaua. LTG Krueger's Alamo Force launched an offensive in June 1943, landing on Woodlark and Kiriwina islands on 30 June.¹⁰ Airfields were rapidly built on these islands. The Allies began to move methodically up the northeastern coast of New Guinea, capturing Lae and Salamaua and executing amphibious landings further westward. For the Army,



L to R: LTG Walter Krueger, MG Franklin C. Sibert, RADM William M. Fechetler, BG Charles E. Hardis, New Guinea. General MacArthur said of General Krueger, "He was swift and sure in attack; tenacious and determined in defense; modest and restrained in victory-I don't know what he would have been in defeat because he was never defeated."

When LTG Krueger arrived in Australia in February, 1943, Sixth Army contained I Corps, the 32nd and 41st Infantry Divisions, the 1st Marine Division (under Army operational control), the 158th Infantry Regiment, the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 40th and 41st Antiaircraft Brigades, the 98th Field Artillery Battalion, (Pack) and the 2nd Engineer Special Brigade. The 24th Infantry and 1st Cavalry Divisions joined Sixth Army in May and July, 1943 respectively. By November 1944, prior to the invasion of the Philippines, the Alamo Force (Sixth Army) had grown considerably. It now included the X Corps composed of the 1st Cavalry Division, the 24th Infantry Division and the 6th Cavalry Regiment and the XXIVth Corps, made up of the 7th and 96th Infantry Divisions, the 11th Airborne Division, the 20th Armored Group, and the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment. Included in the Sixth Army troop lists were the 32nd and 77th Infantry Divisions, the 2nd Engineer Special Brigade, the 21st and 381st Infantry Regiments and the 6th Ranger Battalion.⁸



Troops of the 32nd Infantry Division cross a bridge in the jungle during the battle of Buna in New Guinea, November 1942. The 32nd was a Sixth Army unit in the Alamo Force.

amphibious operations on this large scale were a new experience, and there were many lessons to be learned. It was during the conduct of these early battles that LTG Krueger saw the need for more accurate timely intelligence, and ground reconnaissance of the landing areas.

The Birth of the Alamo Scouts

Intelligence about the enemy disposition and the conditions on the ground on the New Guinea mainland were hard to come by. Aerial overflights were not effective in piercing the thick jungle that began at the edge of the beaches, and there was no human intelligence network in place in the Japanese-occupied areas. In the other theaters of World War II, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) provided much of this tactical intelligence. Douglas A. MacArthur specifically prohibited the OSS from conducting operations in the SWPA. He would not allow any organizations in his theater that did not report directly to him.¹¹ In July 1942, in an attempt to address the intelligence shortfalls, GEN MacArthur established an organization to collect information through clandestine operations behind enemy lines. The Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB) incorporated several loosely-knit organizations, including the Australian "Coast Watchers" and made an effort to insert agents with radios by submarine.¹² The Navy also established a short-lived organization, the Amphibious Scouts, on Fergusson Island in July 1943 to conduct reconnaissance of the landing beaches. The Amphibious Scouts included several Army personnel. The unit was disbanded in December 1943. The innovative Krueger, conscious of the intelligence failures that occurred before the battles on Kiska Island in the Aleutians and at Guadalcanal, took steps to acquire his own intelligence gathering capability.¹³

LTG Krueger said, "The trouble that we had met in getting information of the enemy and our objective area



Australian "Coast Watchers" in late 1943. The civilian Coast Watchers were later incorporated into the Australian Navy and were a vital part of MacArthur's Allied Intelligence Bureau. One of the few American Coast Watchers, Frank Nash, is seated on the right, bottom row.

LTC Frederick Bradshaw (r) with LTC Sylvester Smith of Sixth Army G-2 on the boat dock at the Alamo Scout Training Center (ASTC), Fergusson Island, New Guinea. Bradshaw, a lawyer from Mississippi, formed the ASTC and served as the first director.



prompted me to issue orders on 28 November 1943 establishing a training center near Headquarters, Alamo Force for training selected individuals in reconnaissance and raider work.¹⁴ Sixth Army General Order 353-B established the Alamo Scout Training Center (ASTC) to provide trained reconnaissance troops to Sixth Army units. Krueger shrewdly used his prerogative as an Army commander to establish a training center instead of trying to create a new unit, an option that required approval by the Army General Staff. Krueger also converted the 98th Field Artillery Battalion (Pack) into the 6th Ranger Battalion when the need for a raiding capability was identified.

LTC Frederick W. Bradshaw, the Sixth Army Assistant G-2 was selected to command the ASTC. The self-effacing former lawyer from Mississippi was initially assisted by Major (MAJ) John F. Polk from the 1st Cavalry Division. Polk soon moved into the role of liaison with Sixth Army Headquarters and Bradshaw picked Captain (CPT) Homer A. Williams to be his executive officer. A gruff personality and a strict disciplinarian, Williams was the perfect counter-weight to the quiet, good-humored Bradshaw. Bradshaw made equally good choices with his other staff officers.

A critical position in establishing and maintaining the school was the supply officer. Bradshaw recruited First Lieutenant (1LT) Mayo S. Stuntz who had served in the Amphibious Scouts. An inveterate “scrounger”, Stuntz was able to work wonders in the logistically constrained environment of the SWPA, provided, “no questions were asked.”¹⁵ In addition to building his staff, Bradshaw was on the look-out for a location for the school. It was likely to be a “bare-bones” operation.

The Sixth Army orders establishing the ASTC required Bradshaw to have the school set-up and training its first class by 1 January 1944 at a location in the vicinity of Sixth Army Headquarters, then on Goodenough Island off the east coast of New Guinea. The mosquito-infested swamps and rough surf around Goodenough Island offered no suitable locations for the school. On 30 November, Bradshaw dispatched two former Amphibious Scouts, Lieutenants Daily P. Gambill and Milton Beckworth, and two enlisted men to follow up a rumor that the Navy reconnaissance unit was being disbanded. They had a camp on Fergusson Island.¹⁶ The rumor proved true, and on 3 December 1943, Bradshaw and his staff moved to what would be the first of five homes of the ASTC. The school would run until after the end of the war, closing in September 1945.

The native village of Kalo Kalo sits on a quiet bay on the northwest coast of Fergusson Island. Only a 30-minute boat ride from Sixth Army Headquarters, the spot was ideal. It provided good areas for training in the jungle surrounding the village and easy access to the ocean for amphibious training in rubber boats. LTG Krueger sent construction engineers to build classrooms, a supply room, boat docks and a 50-man dining hall, all properly screened with cement floors. 1LT Stuntz “found” a kerosene-powered refrigerator, generators, and electric lights for the camp, a radio and movie projector for the dayroom, and a host of other amenities. 1LT William Barnes, who graduated in the first class recalled, “We had a wonderful setup on Fergusson Island. It was the nicest of all the camps. Stuntz rigged up a latrine and even managed to find a couple of toilet seats. That’s probably the reason the men called the camp the ‘Hotel Alamo’.”¹⁷

As the construction of the camp continued, LTC Bradshaw began to fill out his instructor corps. The demise of the Amphibious Scouts provided him with several soldiers who had served in the Navy recon unit.

“the men called the camp the ‘Hotel Alamo’.”

—1LT William Barnes

On 27 December 1943, a month after the order establishing the ASTC, the first class of Alamo Scouts began training at Fergusson Island.

Alamo Scout Training and Selection

Candidates for the Alamo Scouts came from units within the Sixth Army, initially from the 32nd Infantry



Amphibious Scouts SSI



98th Field Artillery Battalion Patch



6th Ranger Battalion Scroll

Division (32nd ID) and 158th Regimental Combat Team (the Bushmasters). The Scouts were all volunteers, and units were tasked to screen candidates for suitability prior to sending their names forward. LTG Krueger's influence was felt down to the lowest level. 1LT Robert Sumner volunteered for the Scouts in April 1944. "The Army Commander, General Krueger, insisted on quality people to begin with, and took a personal interest that quality people were made available. This is very clearly stated in his original order. So the commanders knew that the old man would look askance on this thing if a bunch of turkeys kept turning up all the time. So, you got a pretty good guy," said Sumner.¹⁸

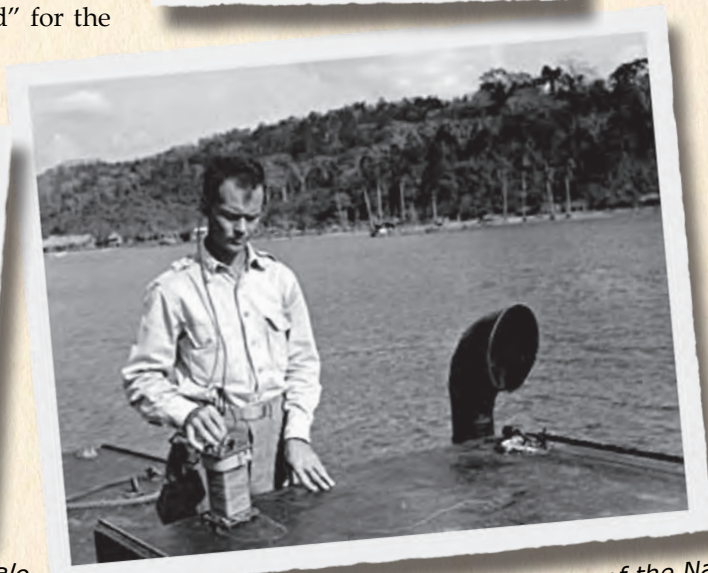
Nineteen year-old Private First Class (PFC) Galen C. Kittleson won a Silver Star on Noemfoor Island with the 503rd Parachute Infantry. He "volunteered" for the Alamo Scouts with little knowledge of



1LT Mayo Stuntz with 1LT Rafael Ileta at the last ASTC on Luzon, Philippine Islands. Stuntz was the ASTC Supply Officer renowned for his ability to "scrounge necessities." Rafael Ileta was a West Point graduate who later rose to be Chief of Staff of the Philippine Army and Secretary of National Defense.



The first Alamo Scout Training Center at Kalo Kalo was nicknamed the "Hotel Alamo." The industrious 1LT Mayo Stuntz had provided the camp with refrigeration, electricity, and other amenities not seen in the SWPA Theater. The sign travelled to subsequent camps.



1LT Myron Beckwith was an Army veteran of the Navy's Amphibious Scouts. As an instructor at the ASTC, he demonstrates the operation of a special waterproof radio to be used by the reconnaissance teams.



Major Homer "Red" Williams was the executive officer for LTC Bradshaw before becoming the ASTC director. A no-nonsense disciplinarian, Williams was an effective counter-part to the soft-spoken Bradshaw.



Trainees at the first Alamo Scout Training Center on Fergusson Island, New Guinea. The training center would be established in five separate locations in New Guinea and the Philippines as the Southwest Pacific Campaign unfolded. A total of eight classes were completed, and a ninth was cut short in September 1945, after the Japanese surrender.



There were five separate Alamo Scout Training Centers established between December 1943 and September 1945.

Camp 1 - Kalo Kalo on Fergusson Island, New Guinea.

27 Dec 43 – 31 Mar 44, Classes 1 and 2.

Camp 2 - Mange Point, Finschafen, New Guinea.

15 May 44 – 22 Jun 44, Class 3.

Camp 3 - Cape Kassoe, Hollandia, New Guinea.

31 Jul 44 – 28 Oct 44, Classes 4 and 5.

Camp 4 - Abuyog, Leyte, Philippines.

26 Dec 44 – 1 Jun 45, Class 6.

Camp 5 - Mabayo (Subic Bay), Luzon, Philippines.

23 Apr 45 – 2 Sep 45, Classes 7 and 8.

the unit. "I and a Lieutenant Cole from the 503rd were told, 'We are going to send you to a recon school because you are a scout.' I didn't really know what the hell the Alamo Scouts were. I thought, well I suppose the more I can learn, the better off I'll be. They really didn't say it was voluntary, either."¹⁹ SGT Zeke (Chief Thunderbird) McConnell, a Native American Cherokee with the 40th Infantry Division on New Britain recalls "My Colonel came up and said, 'You're an Indian. How would you like to go to Scout training? Then you can come back and show us how to do it.'"²⁰ Unfortunately for the Colonel, McConnell remained with the Alamo Scouts when he completed the course. Volunteer or not, everyone went through a rigorous six-week training program.

The Alamo Scout course was designed to maximize the soldier's ability to penetrate behind enemy lines and gather accurate, timely intelligence. Heavy emphasis was placed on the skills necessary for a successful recon patrol. 1LT Robert Sumner went through the ASTC after attending a company commander's course at Fort



The Alamo Scout Training Center at Cape Kassoe, Hollandia, New Guinea. Classes #4 and 5 were run from this facility between August and November 1944. Later training centers were not as plush as the original "Hotel Alamo."

Benning, GA. "The training program [at the ASTC] was an advanced sort of proposition. We had all the basic training, of course, in map reading, area photography, individual weapons. However, at the Scout Training Center, your training was detail work on reading maps and reading aerial photography."²¹ The nature of the Scout mission, amphibious insertion onto the landing beaches, dictated that a major portion of the training be devoted to the use of rubber boats.

The Alamo Scouts depended on small inflatable rubber boats (RB-7's) for their entry into enemy territory. "I think the rubber boat training was the easiest part, but we practiced it a lot," said Galen Kittleson. "We went out into the ocean and worked with those waves coming in. Because if you don't know a little bit about it, you turn sideways and you're automatically capsized."²²

Scouts were also expected to be proficient open water swimmers. Corporal (CPL) Andrew E. Smith remembers an unusual training exercise. "There were two taped off areas in the bay. You went under water at one end and they [the cadre] told us, 'Now don't come up until you get to the other one because there are going to be bullets hitting the water.' It was ninety or a hundred yards."²³

Every aspect of patrolling, including conducting operations in the tropical jungle, was addressed in the training. Sumner said "There was an Australian officer, a Lieutenant Ray Watson who was attached to the Scouts as one of the training cadre. He had his own native police boys with him. In their pidgin English, they gave us instruction in jungle survival."²⁴ 1LT Tom Rounsaville described the training "as nothing really new. It was just concentrated, a hell of a lot of physical stuff, a lot of work in the water because we were going to be working in the water a lot. And stuff like map reading and patrolling, [for] the first ten days or two weeks."²⁵ "The physical training aspect was called Ju-Jitsu, and we had a young fellow who was one of the very, very few American brown-belters. We're

talking the 1940's, and he was very good," said Robert Sumner.²⁶ Not everyone had a positive experience with the physical training. "They paired me with big Gib [Gilbert] Cox," said Andrew Smith. "He was a football player from Oregon State and he threw me around like a pretzel. Then he'd say, did I hurt you, Smitty?"²⁷

The six week training program of the Alamo Scouts involved an initial period devoted to classroom and hands-on instruction. "The classroom portion was very detailed and went on until 2200 [hours] each night. [It was] four weeks of this training, from 0800 to 2200 at night. Classroom [work] with practical training on the ground. Then we went into a series of exercises," said

Robert Sumner.²⁸ Each class of students was divided into teams of one officer with five or six enlisted men and the members were rotated throughout the training. This was by design and supported one of the unique selection aspects of the Alamo Scouts.

1LT Robert Sumner went through the fourth class at the ASTC. "Everybody trained with everybody else during this entire period, so that you would get to know other men and they would get to know you. There was a logical reason for this, which we were unable to see to begin with."²⁹ The reason became clear when it was time to execute the culminating exercise of each class.



A member of Littlefield Team, Native American SSG Zeke McConnell participated in over a dozen missions in New Guinea and the Philippines. Shown here after the war, Staff Sergeant McConnell wears the Alamo Scout patch on his right shoulder.



Alamo Scout training was arduous and intensive, concentrating on reconnaissance techniques and honing the men's ability to move through the jungle. Here trainees at the ASTC at Kalo Kalo conduct a forced march on Fergusson Island, New Guinea, February 1944.



LTG Walter Krueger congratulates SGT Gilbert Cox after awarding him the Silver Star. PFC Galen C. Kittleson, also a Silver Star recipient is in the background. Leyte, Philippines, 1944.



32nd Infantry Division SSI



158th Regimental Combat Team Patch



503rd Parachute Infantry Patch



40th Infantry Division SSI

Trainees of ASTC Class #4 at Hollandia, New Guinea were instructed in Ju-Jitsu as part of the physical training program. The training was taught by one of the few Americans qualified in this form of martial arts.




Alamo Scout trainees had to swim an under-water course under fire. Here 1LT Preston Richard fires at the surface from the surface with a Thompson sub-machinegun. LTC Frederick Bradshaw, ASTC Director (hands on hips), and MG Innis P. Swift, commander of I Corps (in helmet) observe the training, ASTC Fergusson Island, January 1944.

In a rare example of a unit conducting training in enemy-occupied terrain, the Scouts ran their final exercise in disputed areas. "At the end of the class, they would break us out into teams and send us on a mission, usually into some of the areas that were recently taken over by us. I mean there were still some Japanese in them, but they were kind of a virgin area," said 1LT Tom Rounsaville.³⁰ Sergeant (SGT) Gilbert Cox remembers his team going onto the New Guinea mainland. "We ran a mission back to the Tami-Avery Trail that the Japanese were using



A Scout team at the 1st ASTC prepares to conduct a night reconnaissance. Front L-R, PFC Joseph Johnson, 1LT Michael Sombar and CPL David Milda. Back L-R, SGT Byron Tsingine, SSG Alvin Vilcan, CPL John A. Roberts, CPL Walter A. MacDonald and SSG Caesar Ramirez, 8 January 1944.

Alamo Scouts Training Center




Southwest Pacific Area

Date June 22, 1944

To whom it may concern:

This is to certify that ZEKE McCONNELL Sgt. 38087930
40th Infantry Division has successfully completed the proscribed course
of instruction at the **ALAMO SCOUTS TRAINING CENTER**
from 15 May to 22 June. This certificate is awarded in recognition
of his proficiency in all subjects included in the course.

Remarks Excellent - ALAMO SCOUT

By command of Lieutenant General Kuogee

F. W. BRADSHAW
Colonel, G.S.C.
Director of Training

The graduation certificate of SGT Zeke McConnell of Littlefield Team. The certificate reads "Excellent-Alamo Scout." If the rating Excellent or Superior appeared on the certificate, the individual was retained on a Scout team. If not, he returned to his unit.



An Alamo Scout Team, (most likely Dove Team) lands from a Landing Craft-Vehicle on the rocky coast near Tanahmerah Bay, New Guinea. The team was scouting the area prior to the amphibious landings to seize Hollandia, June 1944.

to cross the Owen Stanley Mountains. We saw a few dead guys that didn't make it."³¹ At the conclusion of these exercises, each man was given an opportunity to evaluate his fellow classmates.

Using a secret ballot, each enlisted man was asked to rank in order of preference, the officer he would most like to serve under, and the five other enlisted men he wanted on his team. Officers were asked to provide the names of five enlisted men they would like to have on their team, in rank order. CPL Andrew Smith said, "I was to put on a piece of paper, the person I would most like to associate with on missions. Of course, there wasn't a man who graduated that I wouldn't gladly go with."³² These peer evaluations were combined with a cadre assessment of each man. The projected mission requirements of Sixth Army determined who and how many Alamo Scouts would come from each class.³³ Who was selected was not revealed until the graduation ceremony.

"On graduation day, we formed up in platoons, about an eight or nine-man squad with the lieutenant standing at the end. All the cadre officers were there, all lined up neatly. The director of training would make a few remarks, you know, the usual hype, and then the graduation exercise would start. The young officer was called forward. He marches up, salutes the director, and receives his diploma. And this was the first time you would know if you had been selected," said Robert Sumner.³⁴ If the words "Superior or Excellent - Alamo Scout" appeared on the diploma, the man was retained at the ASTC. If his diploma read "Alamo Scout", he was a successful course graduate, but returned to his unit. On average, between 20 and 25 Scouts were selected from each class, enough for three complete teams. The teams

selected out of the first five classes conducted operations supporting Sixth Army as it moved up the northern coast of New Guinea.

The New Guinea Missions

The first Alamo Scout mission was conducted on 27 and 28 February, 1944 by 1LT John R. C. McGowen's team. Alamo Scout teams were generally identified by the team leader's name. McGowen Team was to conduct a pre-invasion reconnaissance of Los Negros Island in the Admiralty Island chain. Transported by Catalina PBY Flying Boat, the team encountered bad weather that delayed the insertion until dawn was breaking. The Scouts identified the Japanese positions and pinpointed their areas of concentration, information that proved invaluable for selecting the bombing targets for the invasion. On the exfiltration, the nervous pilot refused to slow the aircraft sufficiently to allow the team, barely able to clamber aboard the moving PBY, to recover their rubber boat. The mission of McGowan Team validated



LTG Walter Krueger inspecting trainees at the Alamo Scout Training Center. Corporal Robert Beattie is in the foreground.



A Consolidated PBY Catalina Flying Boat was used to insert and extract the McGowen Team on Los Negros Island. Difficulty in launching and recovering the team ended the use of the PBY as a means to insert Alamo Scout teams.

the Alamo Scout program and led to, among other lessons learned, the abandonment of the "Flying Boat" as a means of delivering teams. Subsequent missions went in by submarine or Navy Patrol Torpedo (PT) boat.³⁵

Nearly forty Alamo Scout missions on the mainland of New Guinea and nearby islands were run by seventeen teams from the first five graduating classes of the ASTC.³⁶ With the exception of the rescue of the civilian detainees at Cape Oransbari, reconnaissance was the primary mission of these teams. LTG Krueger took a close personal interest in the Scout operations. PFC Gil Cox said, "When we were planning for a mission, LTG Krueger often briefed the teams himself."³⁷ Dove, Nellist, and Rounsaville Teams were combined for one of the final missions in New Guinea, the Cape Oransbari rescue described at the beginning of this article.³⁸ When the tide of battle shifted from New Guinea to the Philippines, the mission of the Alamo Scouts changed.

Unlike New Guinea and the adjacent off-shore islands, the Philippines had well-developed resistance movements of Filipinos and Americans. Men such as LT Donald Blackburn, LTC Wendell Fertig, and MAJ Russell Volkman stayed behind following the surrender of the U.S. forces in May 1942. They fled to the interior regions and waged guerrilla warfare against the Japanese Army. When the United States began landing on the different Philippine islands, the guerrillas increased their activity against the Japanese, necessitating the need for communication between the guerrillas and the U.S. Army. While still continuing their reconnaissance missions, the new mission for the Alamo Scouts was to be the liaison between these resistance groups and the Sixth Army.

The Philippines

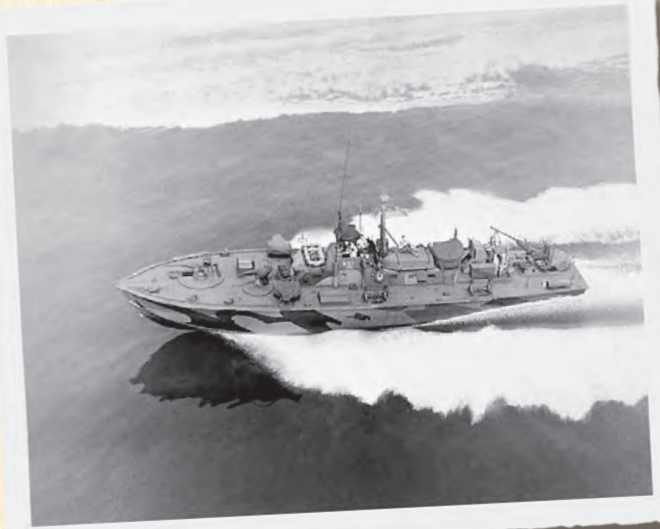
The U.S. strategy for liberating the Philippines involved initial landings on the island of Leyte in October 1944, followed by landings on Mindanao and Samar before finally capturing Luzon and the capitol city of Manila.³⁹ The capture of Leyte, located in the center of the Philippine Archipelago, allowed the U.S. to build airfields and achieve air superiority over the entire region. On 17 October 1944, the first U.S. forces, the 6th Ranger Battalion, landed on Homonhan and Suluan Islands which guarded the approaches to Leyte Gulf and the island's capitol of Tacloban.⁴⁰ Alamo Scout teams were actively involved in the landings, providing reconnaissance of the beaches and intelligence on the enemy disposition.

Following the initial landings, Alamo Scout teams were inserted to reconnoiter future landing beaches. Littlefield Team and McGowen Team were inserted at Palo, on Leyte. Nellist Team landed on Mindanao and Sumner Team on Samar at the same time.⁴¹ These missions were all of two to three days in length. Later liaison missions were of much greater duration.

The team of 1LT Woodrow E. Hobbs was inserted at Cananga on Leyte on 12 November 1944 and remained on the island until 5 December. 1LT Robert



Alamo Scout Team Leaders following an awards ceremony at Leyte, Philippines in December 1944. L-R, 1LT William Nellist, 1LT Thomas Rounsaville, 1LT Robert Sumner, and 1LT John Dove.



The Navy's Patrol Torpedo (PT) boats were the primary vessel used to insert Alamo Scout teams. Swift and maneuverable, the 80-foot craft were ideal for the mission of dropping off and recovering the teams.

Sumner's team returned from Samar and went into the strategically critical Ormoc Valley on Leyte on 6 November, remaining until withdrawn on 22 December, when major combat operations ceased and the mopping up phase on Leyte began.⁴² When the Sixth Army began the invasion of the main island of Luzon, the primary Scout missions were liaison.

The invasion of Luzon commenced on 9 January 1945 in Lingayen Gulf northwest of Manila, and set off the most intense period of Alamo Scout activity. 1LT Robert Sumner was part of the Luzon operations. "We did not put anyone ashore prior to the landings in Luzon. Obviously the G2 [intelligence officer] didn't feel it was necessary; and I think they were absolutely right. The guerrilla forces furnished all of the responses to the



The campaign to retake the Philippines was divided between the Eighth Army and the Sixth Army. Seventeen Alamo Scout teams conducted more than 70 missions in support of the two Armies. In the Philippines, the Scouts added liaison with the guerrilla units to their reconnaissance mission.

EI [essential elements of information],” said Sumner.⁴³ Instead, the Alamo Scout teams were ferried in Landing Craft Infantry (LCIs) to Lingayen after the initial assault to link up at the Sixth Army forward command post (CP). “We assembled at the Sixth Army jump CP in the morning after the landings. From then on we were fully employed. We were off and running. A couple of the teams worked their way on up into the northern part of Luzon and were up there three and four months at a time,” Sumner said.⁴⁴

William Nellist’s team was sent southeast to the Legaspi-Sorsogon Peninsula on 9 February to establish contact with guerrilla groups in the vicinity and reconnoiter the landing areas for the insertion of the 158th Regimental Combat Team (158th RCT). CPL Andrew Smith relates that the team was divided up to cover multiple locations. “They split our team up in Tagay and Bulan one time. And they left me in the middle. [SGT Galen] Kittleston, [Staff Sergeant Thomas] Siason, and [1LT William] Nellist went over the mountain to the Pacific side and the rest went out to Bulan. I accused Nellist of leaving me by myself and he said, ‘Well, hell, you were only there for thirty days.’ Thirty days is a long time to not have someone that speaks your language or [provide you with] something to eat.”⁴⁵ 1LT Nellist experienced difficulties with rival guerrilla groups and, on order from Sixth Army, took over control of all guerrilla operations on the peninsula.⁴⁶ He remained in charge of the guerrillas until 1 April. With the arrival of the 158th RCT, Nellist Team turned over the liaison mission to the 158th and returned to the Army headquarters. It was the Nellist Team along with the Rounsaville and Dove Teams that took part in the most famous Alamo Scout mission, the rescue of the prisoners from the Cabanatuan Prison Camp.

The two Alamo Scout teams worked with the 6th Ranger Battalion and a Filipino guerrilla force under Captain Eduardo Josen to rescue 513 American and British prisoners from their camp at Cabanatuan, then thirty miles inside Japanese lines.⁴⁷ The rapid advance of Sixth Army imperiled the POWs in Japanese hands. The mission was planned and executed on very short notice between 27 January and 1 February 1945. The Rounsaville and Nellist Teams with guerrilla guides negotiated the 30 miles to the vicinity of the POW camp and linked-up with the main Philippine guerrilla unit. The Scouts placed the camp under surveillance on the 29th and 30th as the guerrillas moved into blocking positions near the camp. Dove Team accompanied C Company of the 6th Ranger Battalion and arrived at the Camp on the 29th. Based on the intelligence gathered by the Nellist and Rounsaville teams, LTC Henry Mucci, the 6th Ranger Battalion commander, agreed to wait one day for Japanese units traversing the area to move on before attempting the rescue. On the 30th, the forces hit the camp at 7:45 p.m., killing the 200 Japanese guards and rescuing the prisoners. In thirty minutes, the prisoners, escorted by the Rangers, were on their way back to friendly lines,

while the Alamo Scouts provided security to cover the withdrawal.⁴⁸ The success of this mission generated such publicity that SGT Harold Hard and SGT Gilbert Cox were sent back to the United States with twelve of the Rangers to meet President Roosevelt and take part in a War Bond drive.⁴⁹ The campaign for the capture of Luzon would last until nearly the end of the war and involve the Alamo Scouts in increasingly complex missions.



6th Rangers move through the grass to take up positions prior to the raid on the Cabanatuan Prison compound. The Nellist and Rounsaville Teams with Filipino guides led the Rangers into position and covered the retreat of the 513 POWs after the successful rescue.



Following the successful Cabanatuan Prison Rescue, a select group of Rangers and Alamo Scouts were brought back to the United States to participate in a War Bond drive. Here the men meet with President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the White House. Alamo Scouts SGT Harold Hard, Rounsaville Team (5th from left) and SGT Gilbert Cox, Nellist Team (far right) were part of the publicity campaign surrounding the successful rescue, March 1945.



LTG Krueger took Alamo Scout Teams with him from the Philippines to Japan after the surrender in August 1945. Adkins Team performed a reconnaissance of the Wakayama landing beach and Derr Team provided personal security for Krueger.

Until July 1945, when Sixth Army turned over control of operations in Luzon to Eighth Army to begin preparations for the invasion of the Japanese home islands, the Alamo Scouts were continually employed. The teams gathered intelligence on Japanese strengths and locations, set up communications sites and advised and supplied guerrilla units in central and northern Luzon. When not engaged in operations behind the Japanese lines, Alamo Scout teams acted as the personal security detachment for LTG Krueger on his forays away from Sixth Army headquarters.

On to Japan

General Walter Krueger held the Alamo Scouts in high esteem, and from the inception of the unit, employed a team as his security detachment. The final Alamo Scout mission involved the teams of 1LT George A. Derr, 1LT Henry A. Adkins and 1LT Martin Grimes who had taken over the Shirkey Team. They sailed from Manila with Krueger on 14 September 1945 bound for Japan. About twenty Alamo Scouts were part of the Sixth Army GHQ. The Derr Team accompanied Krueger when he took control of the Sasebo Naval Air Base on 20 September. Later Grimes Team toured Nagasaki with LTG Krueger. SGT Gilbert Cox recalled, "We were just in and out of Nagasaki. The people were still staggering around. It was a mess. Ground Zero was nothing but red dirt, and maybe a chimney standing here or there."⁵⁰ When the Sixth Army convoy landed at the port city of Wakayama on 25 September 1945, members of the

The 6th Ranger Battalion

The 6th Ranger Battalion was created in December 1943 at the direction of General Douglas A. MacArthur, who saw the need for a Ranger force to replicate the Marine Raider battalions in the Pacific Theater.¹ LTG Walter Krueger, the Sixth Army commander, converted the 98th Field Artillery Battalion (75mm Pack Howitzers) into a provisional Ranger Battalion. The mission of the new unit would be for "employment on amphibious raids and diversionary attacks of limited duration."² Commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Henry A. Mucci and using volunteers from Sixth Army units, the 6th Ranger Battalion grew to six rifle companies and a headquarters company. Ironically, it was the decimation of the 1st, 3rd and 4th Ranger Battalions at Cisterna, Italy that provided the TO&E personnel spaces to expand the 6th Rangers.³

Following a rigorous training program, the Rangers quickly achieved a high level of fitness and proficiency. They proved their mettle by seizing the islands guarding the harbor entrance during the landing at Leyte Gulf in the Philippines. Later, a reinforced C Company under LTC Mucci's direction joined two Alamo Scout Teams and a Filipino guerrilla force to rescue 513 prisoners held at Cabanatuan.

1 David W. Hogan, Jr., *Raiders or Elite Infantry: The Changing Role of the U.S. Army Rangers from Dieppe to Grenada* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 83.
 2 Hogan, *Raiders or Elite Infantry*, 83-84.
 3 Hogan, *Raiders or Elite Infantry*, 85.

Adkins and Grimes teams performed an advanced reconnaissance. This proved unnecessary as the Japanese had evacuated the city.⁵¹

LTG Krueger and the Sixth Army were scheduled to establish their headquarters in the ancient Japanese capital city of Kyoto. A select group of Alamo Scouts accompanied Krueger as his Honor Guard when he arrived on 28 September. From this point forward, the Scouts were detailed to the 6th Ranger Battalion for administration but had no real duties. As time passed, the men gradually rotated back to the United States. The Alamo Scout Training Center, then located on Luzon at Subic Bay, closed on 10 October 1945. The Alamo Scout teams were never officially disbanded, but simply melted away with the drawdown of American forces.

The Alamo Scouts were established to meet the specific needs of Sixth Army. Their missions grew from straight-forward reconnaissance to increasingly sophisticated operations supporting the Philippine guerrillas and establishing intelligence networks. The product of a stringent selection process and an exceptional training program, the Alamo Scouts are part of the legacy of Army Special Operations Forces. In March 1988, they were awarded the Special Forces Tab in recognition of their role as one of the predecessors of Army Special Forces. ♣

The author would like to thank Mr. Les Hughes for his contribution to the research of this article.

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

Endnotes

- 1 Gibson Niles, "The Operations of the Alamo Scouts (Sixth U.S. Army Special Reconnaissance Unit), on the Following Missions: 1. Advanced Reconnaissance of Los Negros Island, 27-28 February 44, Prior to Landing by the First Cavalry Division in the Admiralty Islands (Bismarck Archipelago Campaign); 2. Rescue of Sixty-six Dutch and Javanese from the Japanese at Cape Oransbari, Dutch New Guinea, 4-5 October 1944 (New Guinea Campaign); 3. Reconnaissance of Enemy Dispositions and Contact with Guerrilla Elements, Degaspi-Sorsogon Peninsula, 19 February - 26 April 1945, (Luzon Campaign)," Advanced Infantry Officer Class II, 1947-1948, Fort Benning, Georgia, monograph in the Donovan Research Library Digitized Monograph Collection, <https://www.infantry.army.mil/monographs/content/wyii/STUP2/NilesGibson%20LTTC.pdf>.
- 2 Louis Morton, *The U.S. Army in World War II. The War in the Pacific: Strategy and Command, The First Two Years* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1962); John C. Boleyn, "The Japanese Expansion in the Pacific, 7 December 1941-12 September 1942," Advanced Infantry Officer Course, 1948-1949, Fort Benning, Georgia, monograph in the Donovan Research Library Digitized Monograph Collection, <https://www.infantry.army.mil/monographs/content/wyii/STUP2/Boleyn.%20John%20C.%20ILT.pdf>.
- 3 Samuel Milner, *The U.S. Army in World War II. The War in the Pacific: Victory in Papua* (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1971), 49.
- 4 Morton, *The War in the Pacific*, 407-408.



U.S. troops landing at Wakayama, Japan, 25 September 1945. The Alamo Scout Adkins and Grimes Teams conducted advance reconnaissance of the landing beaches. Derr Team accompanied LTG Krueger from the Philippines and served as his personal security team when Krueger took control of the city.

- 5 General Headquarters, Southwest Pacific Area, *The Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific*, Vol I (Washington DC: Center of Military History Publication 13-3, reprint 1994), 107-109.
- 6 Morton, *The War in the Pacific*, 408.
- 7 Walter Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon: The Story of Sixth Army in World War II*, (Washington DC, Combat Forces Press, 1953) 10.
- 8 Morton, *The War in the Pacific*, 407; GHQ SWPA, *The Reports of General MacArthur*, 183.
- 9 GHQ, SWPA: *The Reports of General MacArthur*, 67.
- 10 GHQ, SWPA: *The Reports of General MacArthur*, 117.
- 11 Kermit Roosevelt, *War Reports of the OSS: The Overseas Targets Vol II* (New York: Walker and Company, 1976), 358.
- 12 GHQ, SWPA: *The Reports of General MacArthur*, 54. For a more complete story of the Allied Intelligence Bureau, see William B. Breuer, *MacArthur's Undercover War: Spies, Saboteurs, Guerrillas, and Secret Missions* (Edison, NJ, Castle Books, 2005) and Allison Ind, *Allied Intelligence Bureau: Our Secret Weapon in the War Against Japan* (New York: David McKay Co) 1958.
- 13 The Japanese evacuated the island of Kiska undetected by the Allies in July 1943. Three weeks later, the Allies landed a major invasion force on the island. The enemy executed a similar evacuation from Guadalcanal. Kenneth Finlayson, "Operation Cottage: The First Special Service Force in the Kiska Campaign," *Veritas*, Vol 4, No. 2, 2008.
- 14 Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon*, 29.
- 15 Lance Q. Zedric, *Silent Warriors: The Alamo Scouts Behind Japanese Lines* (Ventura, CA: Pathfinder Publishing Co., 1995), 45-50.
- 16 Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 52.
- 17 Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 54.
- 18 Colonel Robert Sumner, Alamo Scouts, interview by Dr. John W. Partin and Dr. Richard Stewart, 10 December 1991, Tampa FL, transcript, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 19 Command Sergeant Major Galen C. Kittleson, Alamo Scouts, interview by Dr. Richard Stewart and Dr. Stanley Sandler, 10 October 1993, Fort Bragg, NC, transcript, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 20 Staff Sergeant Zeke McConnell, Alamo Scouts, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 7 April 2006, Seattle, WA, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 21 Sumner interview.
- 22 Command Sergeant Major Galen C. Kittleson, Alamo Scouts, interview by Ms Cynthia Hayden, 10 March 2000, Fort Bragg, NC, transcript, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 23 Corporal Andrew E. Smith, Alamo Scouts, interview by Dr. Richard Stewart and Dr. Stanley Sandler, 10 October 1993, Fort Bragg, NC, transcript, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

- 24 Sumner interview.
- 25 First Lieutenant Thomas J. Rounsaville, Alamo Scouts, interview by Dr. Stanley Sandler, 1 October 1993, Fort Bragg, NC, transcript, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 26 Sumner interview.
- 27 Smith interview.
- 28 Sumner interview.
- 29 Sumner interview.
- 30 Rounsaville interview.
- 31 Sergeant First Class Gilbert J. Cox, Alamo Scouts, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 14 December 2005, Des Moines, WA, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 32 Smith interview.
- 33 Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 86-87.
- 34 Sumner interview.
- 35 Niles, "The Operations of the Alamo Scouts", 5.
- 36 Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 276-279.
- 37 Cox interview.
- 38 Cox interview.
- 39 M. Hamlin Cannon, *The U.S. Army in World War II, Leyte: The Return to the Philippines* (Washington DC, Office of the Chief of Military History, 1954), 21-39.
- 40 Cannon, 54-57. **The 6th Ranger Battalion was another special operations unit created by LTC Krueger. The battalion was not affiliated with the Ranger battalions created by COL William O. Darby that fought in the European Theater. Lieutenant Colonel Henry Mucci, the battalion commander, led C Company of the 6th Ranger Battalion, the main element in the Cabanatuan Prison Camp liberation in February 1945. Two Alamo Scout teams, Nellist and Rounsaville, acted as the advanced reconnaissance and guides on this operation.**
- 41 Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 276-279.
- 42 Sumner interview; Cannon, 329-346.
- 43 Sumner interview.
- 44 Sumner interview.
- 45 Smith interview.
- 46 Niles, "The Operations of the Alamo Scouts", 20.
- 47 **The Cabanatuan rescue mission is one of the most famous POW rescues in history. SGT Galen Kittleson of Nellist Team had the distinction of being on both the Oransbari and Cabanatuan rescue missions in World War II as well as the Son Tay POW rescue attempt in the Vietnam War. The Cabanatuan rescue is well documented. See Hampton Sides, *Ghost Soldiers: The Forgotten Epic Story of World War II's Most Dramatic Mission*, (New York; Doubleday, 2001); Zedric, 187-198; Forest Bryant Johnson, *Hour of Redemption: The Heroic WW II Saga of Americas Most Daring POW Rescue* (New York: Warner Books, Inc. 1978); Charles W. Sasser, *Raider* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002).**
- 48 Sides, *Ghost Soldiers: The Forgotten Epic Story of World War II's Most Dramatic Mission*, 309-312.
- 49 Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 199-200.
- 50 Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 245.
- 51 Zedric, *Silent Warriors*, 246.

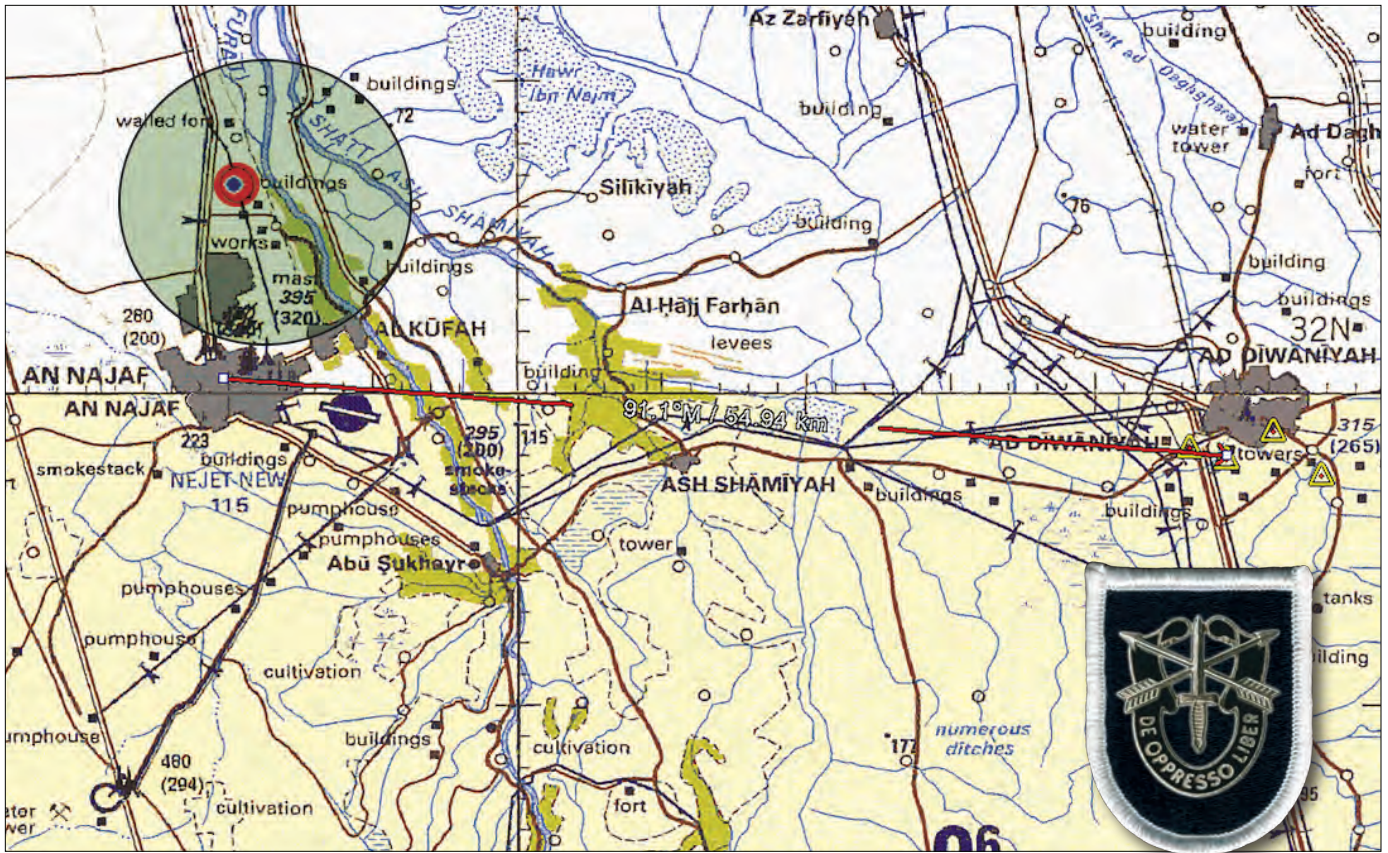


Fighting Through the “Fog of War”

**The Battle of An-Najaf,
28-29 January 2007, Part II**

by Charles H. Briscoe





Air map section shows the two key cities in the ODA 566 area of operations with the battle site marked. Contact site is bi-colored bullseye in upper corner.

5th SFG beret flash with SF DUI.

*In keeping with USSOCOM Policy, Special Operations Soldiers Major and below and the operational objectives in this article have been given pseudonyms.

Prologue

ODA 566, TF Raptor, and ODA 563 with Hilla SWAT sequentially became heavily engaged just north of An-Najaf by the early afternoon of 28 January 2007. The action began when General Uthman, the 8th Iraqi Division commander, asked ODA 566 to help one of his scout platoons break contact. This required more combat power than the SF team had. TF Raptor, relieved of its high value target (HVT) mission in An-Najaf, reinforced ODA 566 with significant assets. The two SF elements, having employed close air support (CAS), used their combined fire power and personnel to assault the main point of enemy resistance. This offensive maneuver enabled more than fifty trapped Iraqi officials, police, and military to reach the safety of friendly lines. The relative calm afterwards convinced Iraqi General Qais, the Province Security Chief, and Colonel (COL) Saadi Al-Maliki, the 1st Brigade commander, 8th Iraqi Division, that the compound fight was over. After accomplishing the morning's relief mission, ODA 566 and TF Raptor were cheered by the villagers along the road as they started back to Camp David to refit and go their separate ways.¹

Unfortunately, the fighting had just begun. ODA 563 and a company of SWAT police were dispatched from Hilla

by the AOB 560 (Advanced Operating Base) commander to assist ODA 566 at the contact site. However, TF Raptor, ODA 566, and ODA 563 and Hilla SWAT used different routes to approach and depart the contact site. Reassured by ODA 566 at Camp David that the fight was over, the ODA 563-led convoy of SWAT trucks was surprised when hit by a heavy volume of fire from the southern berm of the compound. As the lead ground mobility vehicle (GMV) swung left to directly assault the linear ambush, the pseudo echelon left maneuver executed by the trucks behind evolved into a "cavalry line" charge. The volume of fire from the crew-served machineguns on the ODA 563 and SWAT vehicles caused the enemy to abandon their primary positions on the top of the berm. They moved into protected secondary trenches inside until the



Hilla SWAT trucks spread along the southern base of the walled compound.



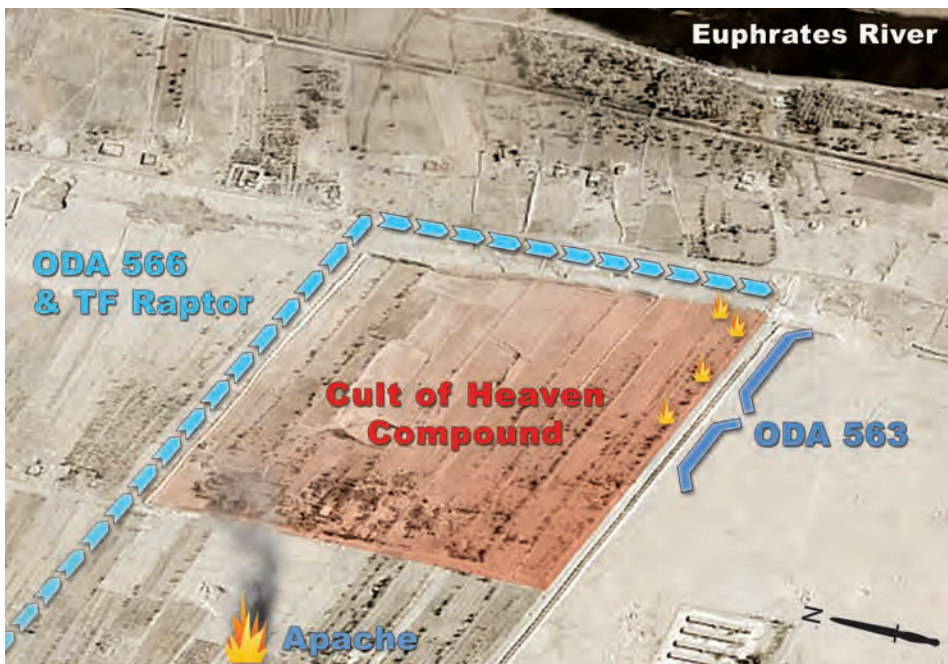
Hilla SWAT medic patch has the Red Crescent, the Muslim symbol for the Red Cross Patch is courtesy of Harry Pugh.



Dismounted Hilla SWAT police relax against the southern berm during a lull in the fighting.



Iraqi Hilla SWAT commander COL Abbas standing next to the CAS-destroyed truck-mounted DShK heavy machinegun in the southeast corner of the compound.



This map shows the return route of TF Raptor and ODA 566 to the contact site. ODA 563 and Hilla SWAT were in the southeast corner.

vehicles reached the base. Then, the enemy fighters reappeared on top to quickly pin down the last two-thirds of the convoy when the SWAT police and SF soldiers dismounted. Several attempts to rally the policemen to continue offensive action were fruitless. The valiant efforts by two SF sergeants to get a Carl-Gustav M-3 anti-tank weapon into the fight were twice stopped cold by heavy enemy fire.² After treating his fellow soldiers SSG Peter Stoneman*, the senior medic, spotted six SWAT policemen, in a far left flank position, isolated and clearly pinned down by enemy fire. Stoneman unloaded the wounded from the "War Pig," slipped behind the wheel of the 5-ton truck, and with SSG Carl Apo* manning the M-240 machinegun, drove over to rescue the SWAT police from their tenuous position. With the truck positioned as a shield and Apo providing covering fire, Stoneman jumped out, manhandled the six trapped Iraqis aboard the armored truck, and drove back to the main body.³

Meanwhile, Captain (CPT) Robert Konrad*, the ODA 563 commander, COL Abbas, the Hilla SWAT commander, CPT Ali, the company commander, and several others on the far right flank, conducted a ground reconnaissance covered by their truck guns. The small group, using a series of bounding overwatch moves supported by crew-served weapons, discovered a weak spot in the enemy defenses along the eastern wall. After a 500-pound bomb was dropped by an F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter, the group managed to crest the berm. Having surprised the enemy with their maneuvering, they delivered effective small arms fire from the eastern flank until the SWAT captain was shot in the face.⁴

However, during the ODA 563 and SWAT cavalry assault against the southern wall, an AH-64 Apache attack helicopter making cannon runs on the compound was shot down. That act triggered a number of escalated responses from the JSOTF (Joint Special Operations Task Force) and the multi-national JTF (Joint Task Force) headquarters. While ODA 566 and TF Raptor were simultaneously being tasked by their respective commands with the CSAR (Combat Search and Rescue) mission, a Stryker battalion task force was alerted to

execute a “Fallen Angel” mission (recovery of a downed aircraft and aircrew).⁵

Major (MAJ) Jack Guardino*, the TF Raptor commander and CPT Eldon Johnson*, the ODA 566 commander, were still not aware of how significant the enemy threat was in the compound. They quickly put together a plan that included a request for “Big Army” support. Then, with ODA 512 leading, they headed back to the morning contact site. Part I of the Battle of An-Najaf article in *Veritas* 2-08 concluded with CPT Gordon Muldoon*, the ODA 512 commander in the lead of TF Raptor, approaching CPT Konrad (ODA 563), just after he had called in CAS on a truck-mounted 12.7mm DShK machinegun in the southeast corner of the compound.⁶

The fighting to this point emphasized how the Iraqi Army’s assumption of control of the battle space affected U.S. Army Special Forces and the Iraqi military and police elements with whom they worked. Since American SF had direct access to CAS, Iraqi military and political leaders regularly asked them to help military and police units break contact, often in the worst of circumstances. The first half day of fighting on 28 January revealed that the assault forces and SWAT police needed small unit infantry tactical training. But, more importantly, the quantity of ammunition carried by Iraqi elements determined their level of aggressiveness and how long they could deliver sustained fire. Modular Integrated Communications Helmets (MICH), body armor, and up-armored vehicles with ballistic glass saved lives and enabled courageous men to stay in the fight, trading round-for-round, with disciplined, well-trained enemy fighters.⁷

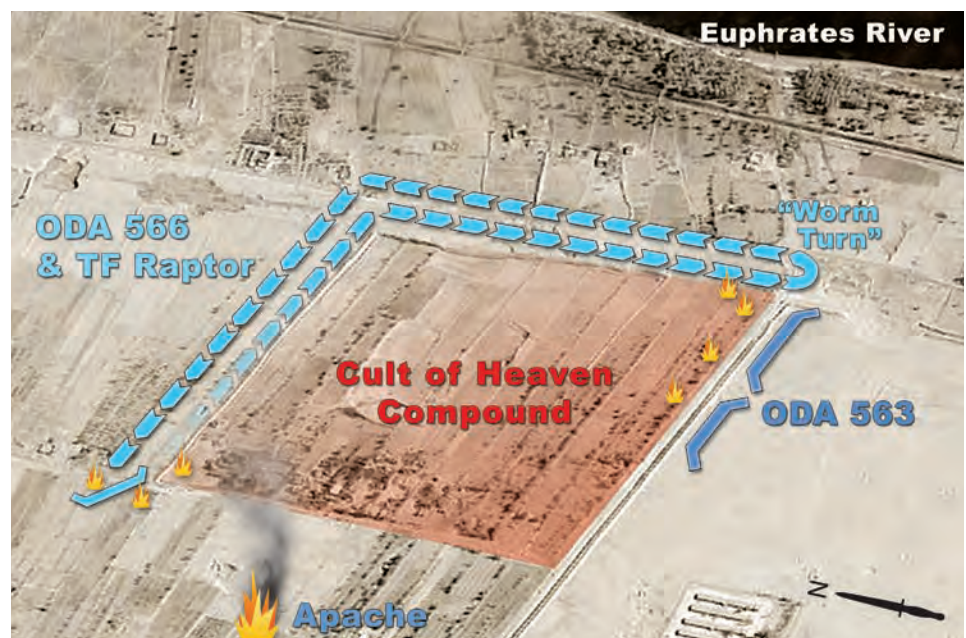
CSAR Gets TF Raptor & ODA 566 Back in the Fight

The intensity of combat ratcheted up several notches when TF Raptor and ODA 566 returned to the fight. Focused on quickly expanding the search for the downed Apache, the two elements unknowingly chose a road that paralleled the western wall of the large compound. The ten to twelve-foot high western berm with tiered fighting positions and trenches was manned by determined fighters with a seemingly limitless supply of ammunition for a variety of weapons. The rest of the Battle of An-Najaf, 28-29 January 2007 proved dramatically different from the morning fights.

When TF Raptor and ODA 566 departed less than two hours before, the Iraqi military, police, and political leaders present were confident that they had control of the situation. Because the Falcon View computer map navigation system was not calibrating

fast enough in the maze of walled orchards and farm buildings, CPT Muldoon was using his topographical map and compass to shoot back azimuths to verify crash coordinates. Reverting to the basics was second nature for the former Ranger battalion fire support officer. ODA 563 and Hilla SWAT had dismounted after their vehicle assault and were exchanging fire when CPT Konrad was told about the downed Apache by SSgt Robert MacGregor*, his JTAC (Joint Terminal Attack Controller). Map coordinates were provided by the wingman circling high overhead.⁸ They did not match those that Muldoon had, but Konrad had a better idea as to the size of the walled enemy compound and the threat inside.⁹ The wingman of the downed Apache, hovering high overhead, was coaxed by Konrad’s JTAC to mark the crash site with chaff. Worried about the AAA (anti-aircraft artillery) or RPG (rocket-propelled grenades) that had downed his partner, the remaining Apache stayed several thousand feet over the site when he dumped chaff. The steep angle to the helicopter made it impossible to shoot a good compass azimuth. CPT Konrad surmised that the plume of smoke rising beyond the far left side wall was probably the downed Apache. This was sufficient for CPT Muldoon. He “shot” several compass back azimuths from different locations along the berm before rejoining MAJ Guardino (Raptor commander) and CPT Johnson (ODA 566). During that short stop two Iraqi assaulters were wounded by enemy fire.¹⁰

Since CPT Konrad had called for CAS on the walled compound, MAJ Guardino asked him to delay further employment until Raptor got to the helicopter crash site. The Hilla SWAT captain who had been shot in the face was loaded aboard a Raptor vehicle to hasten his medical evacuation. Because ODA 563 and the Hilla SWAT police were engaged with the enemy on the southern end of



Dashed arrows show the entry route of TF Raptor and ODA 566 to the contact site. After meeting CPT Konrad (ODA 563) in the southeast corner, the convoy “worm turned” to retrace their route.



TF Raptor & ODA 566 head back to the contact area.



This photo shows how Raptor assaulters were positioned in the back of their GMVs when the convoy entered "the gauntlet."

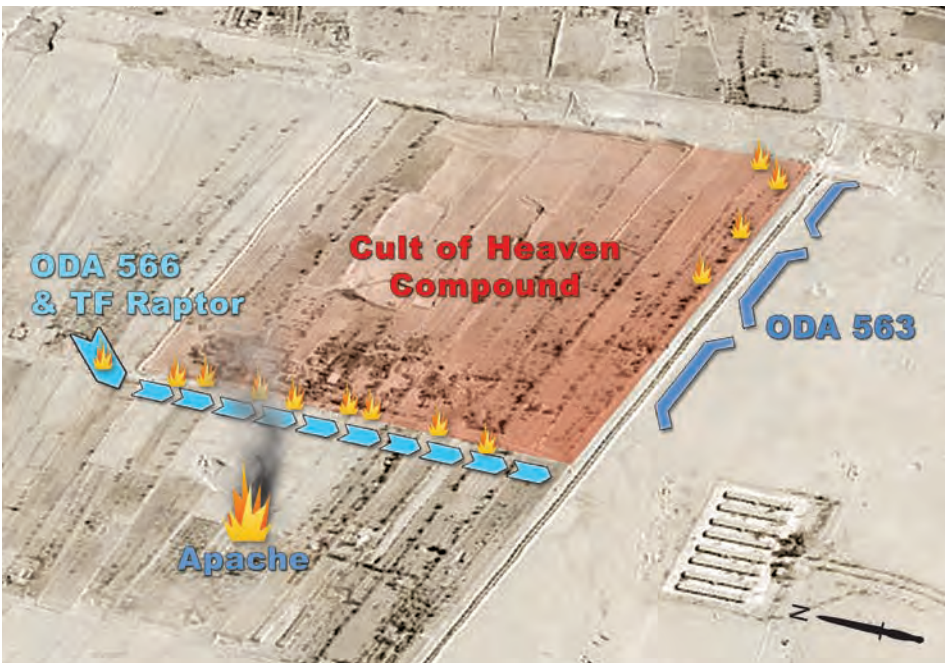


TF Raptor and ODA 566 execute a "worm turn" to retrace their route while CPT Robert Konrad and the ODA 563 and Hilla SWAT reconnaissance element guard the southeast corner of the compound.

the compound, the rescue convoy reversed direction and backtracked along their entry route. CPT Muldoon established the convoy pivot position and the element simply "worm turned," thereby keeping everyone in their original positions. This grandiose maneuver (nine trucks) along the near side the compound did not go unnoticed by the enemy. The volume of small arms fire and RPGs directed at the slow moving convoy increased as the vehicles returned to the north end of the walled-in area and started turning left.¹¹

TF Raptor "Runs the Gauntlet"

The American-led rescue force bypassed a road that ran parallel to the long axis of the compound because they were headed towards the largest plume of smoke. Thus, inadvertently they approached the morning's contact site from the opposite direction. CPT Muldoon and MAJ Guardino agreed that since the helicopter crash had not been spotted from this route that they should try the sandy road that they had bypassed on entry. This would extend the search pattern. Unknown to them that particular road paralleled the western side of the walled enemy compound (250 meters in length). As the lead vehicles turned left heading down the narrow sandy track, the proverbial "chit hit the fan" as the Raptor-led nine-vehicle convoy edging around the corner, momentarily stopped when a flurry of RPGs were fired at the lead trucks.¹²



When the convoy temporarily stopped at the corner, the last Raptor truck & the two ODA 566 trucks were jammed up. About a hundred meters down the western wall of the compound, CPT Gordon Muldoon (ODA 512) leading the TF Raptor convoy, halted momentarily when several RPGs were fired at his vehicle. That short pause caused the convoy to "accordion" when he radioed, "Cinch it up tight," and started the race to break through the "gauntlet of fire."

along the top of the wall, engaged the convoy. CPT Muldoon described the action. "The Raptor mini-gunner, the .50 cal machinegunners, and the GIBs (guys in back) on the M-240 machineguns were firing point blank at enemy shooters to their left no more than 5-6 feet away. You could see them drawing careful 'beads' with their AK-74s. The rooftops of buildings inside the compound were visible to the gunners. As all hell broke loose, I radioed, 'Cinch it up!' alerting the Raptor drivers to close up tight and hit the gas. We had to escape that "gauntlet of fire" as fast as possible."¹³ But, the momentary stop caused the convoy to "accordion" as it resumed movement.

When the assault force in the lead stopped abruptly, CPT Johnson's driver (ODA 566), initially blinded by their dust cloud, had to hit his brakes and swerve right to narrowly miss the last Raptor GMV. MSG Sam Kavanaugh* (ODA 513) was "shotgun" in that assault truck. SSG Adam Donitz*, manning the twin M-240 machineguns above, was slammed against the ring mount as the GMV jerked to a halt halfway into the turn.¹⁴

"I was recovering my balance, wondering what those Iraqi Army guys hunkered down off to the right were doing there, when I spotted a group of thirty enemy fighters in the corner of the compound concentrating their fire on the GMV in front of me. The Iraqi assaulter on the .50 cal was killed in an onslaught of heavy fire and slipped down inside the truck. When I tried to swing the twin 240s to bear, I could not move them. Empty shell casings and links in the traversing ring groove had locked the mount perpendicular to the truck. Unfortunately, the enemy fighters were clustered at about 45 degrees. When he realized that I was not shooting, the leader directed them to concentrate on our truck. As bullets pinged off my armored gun shield, I pulled out my Glock 9mm pistol and began shooting into the massed group. They were close—no more than twenty feet away. I managed to kill their leader and hit several more before my clip ran out. Rather

than change magazines, I ripped a hand grenade off my vest and threw it into their midst," said SSG Donitz. "RPGs seemed to be whoosing all around us."¹⁵

"Realizing my dilemma, MSG Kavanaugh quickly handed another grenade up. I had just tossed it when our driver hit the gas slamming me against the ring mount. As we got parallel to the compound wall I was able to bring my twin 240s to bear. With 1,000 round belts on each gun, I quickly went 'cyclic' because there were so many targets blasting away just 10-15 feet from us. I was firing point blank into them and they still kept at it. Armed fighters ran out of buildings inside, down trenches, and then dropped prone to fire from the berm. Everybody aboard the Raptor trucks was shooting like mad as we tore down that road. I felt the heat of RPGs as they flew by. They were that close. By the time we turned the corner, I had about 150 rounds left of my original 2,000. That's how bad it was," said SSG Donitz. "The volume of fire was ten times greater than any 'Mad Minute' fire power demonstration or 'EXPENDEX' at the machinegun range."¹⁶

"Raptor was the biggest, most vulnerable target based on the tactical arrangement of our GMVs, but we had speed to cut the time in the 'kill zone.' The enemy was placing well-directed fire from their left wall positions into the rear open bays of the Raptor trucks causing havoc. The assaulters were hanging on with one arm 'spraying and praying' as American mini-gunners and Iraqi machine gunners cycled through boxes of ammunition on the trucks. One heroic assaulter without hesitation climbed into a .50 cal machinegun ring in the midst of the fighting when the gunner, shot dead, fell down inside the truck. It was truly a 'free for all' as the enemy fighters fired point blank and threw hand grenades down on us. Most hand grenades just bounced off, exploding on the ground. RPGs, fired at such close range, did not arm. But, when they hit, they slammed into the trucks like sledgehammers, splintering and shattering metal, sending jagged fragments everywhere. We fought our way down the far side of the compound. The whole thing was wild and crazy," recalled MAJ Guardino.¹⁷

"The sound of gunfire kept escalating until it became a massive roar . . . louder than any volume of fire I had ever heard before. I saw enemy heads pop up and shoot, then, they dropped down and reappeared further down the line. Rounds were constantly smacking into the truck. I ducked when a heavy burst of fire spider-webbed the driver's window in my GMV. It killed our Iraqi .50 cal gunner.



Iraqi "Raptor" Patch



Artist's Sketch: With the twin M-240 machineguns locked at 90° SSG Adam Donitz engaged the grouped enemy fighters with his pistol just before TF Raptor ran the "gauntlet of fire" on 28 January 2007 (D. Telles).

He slipped down inside the truck, into the Combat Cameraman's lap on the right. As we raced down the road an Iraqi assaulter in the back clambered up top to man the .50 cal in the middle of the fighting," said SFC Zeke Monroe* (ODA 513). "That was really gutsy."¹⁸

ODA 566 "Runs the Gauntlet"

The first ODA 566 GMV, stopped at the corner, saw what was happening to the Raptor trucks as they sped away into the "gauntlet of fire." The GMV gunners saw thirty to forty enemy fighters firing side-by-side, then roll to a new position, engage again, and then get up and run to man other fighting positions further down the wall. They saw inner defense trenches behind the berm. RPGs were smacking the Raptor vehicles while armor piercing bullets cut through truck bodies. Anti-personnel bullets, kicked up dust where they impacted the truck and then ricocheted off in all directions. The Iraqi assaulters, engaging targets just feet away, were being slammed down into the truck beds, often wounded, by direct body hits (fortunately absorbed by armor). "Run flat" tires were being shredded as the closed-up trucks raced away at 45 mph trying to use speed to break clear of the linear ambush.¹⁹ ODA 566 in the rear was still in the starting blocks.

As the only American combat force assigned to the province, ODA 566 traveled heavy with three times their basic load of ammunition and extra fuel. Operating essentially alone in a province with two major cities, they had to defend themselves and have sufficient firepower to break contact. As the loud roar of gunfire enveloped his truck, SSG Allen Lawrence*, driving the first 566 vehicle with CPT Johnson, watched the Raptor convoy accelerate away. Instinctively, he "floored" his gas pedal. "The intensity and noise of gunfire were incredible. Bullets smacked into the windshield and my side window, spiderwebbing them. I hunched down to look out of the top section and saw nothing but gun barrels pointed down, firing directly at us. The best that I could get was 30 mph on the straightaway. By then, the last Raptor truck had disappeared in the dust," said Lawrence.²⁰ It was worse outside in the back of the truck.

"As I began engaging the enemy with my Squad Assault Weapon (SAW), I could see the death and destruction caused by the .50 cal, M-240s, and the mini-guns of Raptor. But, it didn't seem to have much impact on them.

They kept pouring fire at us. SSG Mark Watson* was steady hammering them with the .50 cal. Then, my M-249 was blown apart, slicing up my face, knocking me backwards. I let go of it and instinctively grabbed my M-4 carbine. That's when I noticed that MSG Roger Ligon's* truck was taking a real beating. At that point we were about ten meters apart," said SFC Jack Carter*, the GIB on the lead 566 GMV.²¹

"ODA 563 was telling us to 'Cease Fire' because they thought we were 'firing them up.' (In reality the enemy force in the compound was engaging both elements simultaneously). When we got to the far corner of the wall, I had SSG Lawrence stop to scan his mirror for MSG Ligon. My worst fear was that we might have to fight our way back down the road to rescue them. Though it was less than a minute before we caught sight of Ligon's truck emerging from the dust, that time seemed like an

eternity," said the ODA 566 commander.²² For the men in the team sergeant's truck, it almost was.

As expected the last two vehicles in the convoy (ODA 566) got the brunt of the assault. They were the slowest, separated from one another and Raptor, and the enemy fighters were able to relocate *en masse* along the walls for the coming "turkey shoot." MSG Ligon, the 566 team sergeant, was "riding shotgun" (right seat) in the last vehicle



Artist's Sketch: SSG Allen Lawrence drives the lead ODA 566 GMV through the "gauntlet of fire" on 28 January 2007 (D. Telles).

of the convoy. They were just turning the corner when he heard the heavy crescendo of gunfire ahead. It made him conscious of how bad it was going to be. "We were on a very narrow dirt road channelized by berms on each side. SSG Lawrence, the lead 566 GMV driver, had gotten a slight jump on us when SSG Geoffrey Kendrick* hit the gas hard. By then, we were being hammered by bullets. RPGs were flying while hand grenades bounced off the hood. When I saw the convoy pulling away in a massive cloud of dust, I yelled, 'Go! Go! Go!' knowing that we were the 'tail gunner,'" said Ligon.²³

SSG Kendrick, driver of the last truck, remembered that "we were getting pounded so hard. The side windows and windshield cracked and spidered. It was hard to see out. I had to scrunch down to see out. The enemy was so close that I could actually see into their eyes and anticipate the strike of the hand grenades they were throwing down on us. An RPG zipped across the hood. Armor piercing rounds were punching through everywhere, kicking up small puffs of dust inside. A round smacked down between my legs from the top of the truck. I knew some of the tires had been hit just the way the truck was handling. The lead GMV was out of

sight. The dust was so thick that Roger Ligon was helping me stay in the middle of the narrow track. The noise inside from the impacting rounds, grenades, and RPGs created an incredible din. And, we had thought the morning fight was bad. That was child's play compared to the 'gauntlet.' We really got a beating. It was so bad that I was mentally willing the truck not to stop," said Kendrick, "because I knew the two guys in the back were having a worse time."²⁴ And, they were.

As the last "duck" in the enemy "shooting gallery," the fighters swarmed to concentrate their fire on Kendrick's truck. SSG Matt Porter*, the .50 cal machine gunner, was slammed back from the gun as the body armor covering his left shoulder absorbed most of the impact. SFC Paul Jackman*, the GIB on the M-249, had only gotten off a few rounds when he was knocked away from the machinegun as several bullets hit the firing bolt, sending splintered steel shards into his right arm. The senior medic grabbed his M-4 carbine and was returning fire when that too, was shot from his hands. Then, a bullet slammed into his MICH helmet rocking him backwards.²⁵

This was fortunate for the American-Iraqi interpreter Steve*, riding in the back with SFC Jackman. The enemy volley of bullets that destroyed his M-4 and knocked him backwards had spun him enough for his armor to absorb several back hits and turned him towards the rear of the bouncing truck. That was when Jackman caught sight of the wounded interpreter on the verge of tumbling out of the truck. "I reacted out of sheer adrenaline. My right arm was useless. I lunged and caught his pants belt with my left hand as he teetered on the edge of the lowered tailgate. How I managed to pull him back into the truck I still don't know. Nelson had been hit and dropped his rifle. He stumbled while trying to grab the weapon before it skittered out of the racing truck. Once I got him in, I pushed him down by the spare tire because the firing had not diminished. Using my left hand I somehow managed to fumble my .45 cal pistol out of the left side-mounted chest holster as I knelt down beside Nelson. As I started firing my pistol, I could see into their eyes. They were that close. Two guys stood up and ran down the berm continually shooting broadside at the truck," remembered SFC Jackman. "As I was crouched behind the spare tire that was taking hits, I was thinking, 'This is really a Lulu. If we stop

they'll swarm us.' Then, we turned the corner and the firing let up."²⁶ By that time Raptor had gotten to the next parallel road beyond the compound where yet another surprise awaited.

Another Player on the Battlefield—MiTT 810

As CPT Muldoon led Raptor down the road paralleling the "gauntlet" he spotted three HUMVEEs on the left. They were opposite a distinct plume of black smoke rising behind a house in an open field to the right. On hyper alert after escaping the "gauntlet of fire" Muldoon directed his team to flank the three trucks and with the crew-served weapons protecting him, went forward to sort out "the latest smoke" on the confused battlefield. They turned out to be soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, serving as the province Military Transition Team (MiTT 810). Their collective reaction to CPT Muldoon was, "Holy Cow! Did you just drive through that? What are you doing here?"²⁷ He had like questions for them. The MiTT had been on the way to An Najaf to spend a few days working with the Iraqi Army brigade commander and staff. They just happened to be nearby when they heard the radio report of an AH-64 Apache shoot down. With M-240 machineguns on their vehicles and carrying small arms (9mm pistols and M-4 carbines), LTC Stephen Hughes, the MiTT leader, having eleven soldiers, decided to investigate and render assistance.²⁸

Covered by the other two MiTT trucks, MSG Thomas Ballard took his HUMVEE forward to the crash site. While making a quick dismounted check, he came under enemy fire. Having determined that there were no survivors, Ballard, wounded in the arm, beat a hasty retreat. After that excursion the MiTT decided to pull back and wait for help. When CPT Konrad (ODA 563) brought in CAS, they marked their position with green smoke as instructed. They did not know the extent of the fighting that had taken place in the area, nor that this SF element at their position, not ODA 563, had the CSAR mission for the downed Apache.²⁹ While MAJ Guardino and CPT Johnson were making an assessment of their combat capabilities—soldiers and vehicles, SSG Lawrence (ODA 566), using an M-79 grenade launcher, and SGT Rex Peters* (TF Raptor) with a Carl-Gustav, eliminated the enemy threat in a small building near the crashed helicopter site. By then, CPT Konrad was directing another pair of Apaches against the enemy compound.³⁰



Artist's Sketch: The wounded SFC Paul Jackman (ODA 566) grabbed Steve, the interpreter, by his belt in time to keep him from tumbling out of the last truck running the "gauntlet of fire" on 28 January 2007 (D. Telles).



25th Infantry Division SSI

While fanned out in a perimeter around the MiTT trucks, the ODA 566 and TF Raptor medics began checking casualties. "Our M-2 .50 cal gunner, SSG Mark Watson*, had been shot through one hand and SFC Carter, the GIB manning a M-249 SAW, had a sliced finger caused by a round that had smashed the trigger mechanism, breaking the gun. SFC Jackman, the GIB in the last vehicle, had a serious right arm wound and numerous shrapnel cuts on his face. He received these when his M-4 was trashed by a volley of gunfire. The .50 cal gunner had a head wound from taking a direct hit on his helmet. Two Iraqi machine gunners were dead and several were wounded, none seriously, except for CPT Ali, the SWAT company commander, whom TF Raptor had agreed to medevac (medical evacuation) before running the 'gauntlet.' We found him on the floor of the third truck, choking on his blood. Shot in the face, a 7.62mm bullet had passed through both cheeks knocking a tooth out as it exited. We got him to sit up and checked his wounds. Then, we told him to lower his head between his legs and reassured him that he would survive," said SSG Lawrence, the ODA 566 junior medic.³¹ "A few of our wounded guys, like Specialist Four (SP4) Norman Bond*, the intelligence analyst, were treated by our medic, SFC Ken Dougherty*. The trucks were pretty trashed—all the left side windows and windshields were spider-webbed and there were lots of flat tires. The Iraqi assaulters deserve a lot of credit. Many of them performed heroically," stated SFC Monroe.³²

A rapid damage assessment was critical to determine the SF capability to complete the CSAR mission. SGM Fred Nathan*, the AOB 510 (Raptor) sergeant major, and MSG Ligon, ODA 566, established a hasty casualty collection point to enable the SF medics to triage the wounded. The Raptor mobility sergeant, SSG Steve Black*, responsible for the operational readiness of vehicles and crew-served weapons, drivers, and machine gunners, had already started checking vehicles for battle damage. SP4 Toby Parker*, the attached mechanic from the 5th SFG Support Battalion, was on flank security. Drivers were changing tires (twenty-two flats including spares). Iraqi Raptor HUMVEEs did not have "run flat" tires. Two Raptor .50 cal machineguns had been disabled by breach block hits. The two team sergeants supervised the ammunition and operable machinegun redistribution to balance the fighting power.³³ "Those guys did a lot of wind sprints in helmets and body armor. The vehicles were fifteen to twenty meters apart and the enemy never stopped firing at us from the berm to the rear of the downed Apache,"



In its search for the downed AH-64 Apache attack helicopter, TF Raptor encountered MiTT 810 just after clearing "the gauntlet" and turning north.

said CPT Muldoon. "Under fire the men changed 20 tires and got one of the .50 cal's 'up' by cannibalizing another damaged one. Though we fired some AT-4s and Carl-Gustavs at the enemy, they did not abandon the berm. After an Apache put a Hellfire missile into the small house in the right corner of the compound the harassment fire was reduced considerably."³⁴

Since the MiTT confirmed that there were no Apache aircrew survivors, assaulting a determined enemy to secure two bodies and a "black box" made little sense to MAJ Guardino and CPT Johnson considering the state of their equipment and forces. The radio message that a Stryker task force was less than an hour away solved the dilemma.³⁵ Wounded were consolidated aboard an ODA 566 and a MiTT truck and prepared for evacuation to the Polish military hospital in Ad Diwaniyah as ODA 563 resumed CAS. The MiTT sent their HUMVEE sporting a set of Texas longhorn cattle horns on the hood to guide the Strykers in from Route Miami while the SF took defensive positions and refitted while they waited.³⁶

The Enemy Keeps ODA 563 Fixed in Position

Realizing that he had accomplished his goal, CPT Konrad moved to rejoin the remainder of his force. They were spread out along the southern wall of the compound from the center to its eastern corner. That proved easier said than done. While the enemy pummeled TF Raptor and ODA 566 as they "ran the gauntlet" down the west wall, another large group concentrated on ODA 563 and Hilla SWAT police, firing from southern wall positions. When he first heard the Raptor miniguns, MSG Shamus Flanagan*, the team sergeant for ODA 563, thought that the heavy volume on his group was coming from them, but it made no sense. The enemy threat was reduced when SSgt MacGregor, the JTAC with CPT Konrad, called in a



COL Abbas and several Hilla SWAT police along the southern berm of the compound.

couple of airstrikes. The CAS enabled the reconnaissance element to rejoin MSG Flanagan and the main body.³⁷ When two trucks tried to slip into the chicken farm behind ODA 563 about dusk, they were driven off by fire.³⁸ These actions proved wise because it would not be until 2 a.m., 29 January 2007, that B Company, 2/3 Infantry (Stryker) drove down “the gauntlet” unhindered to link up with ODA 563. These Strykers provided much-appreciated resupplies of ammunition, food, and water.³⁹



2nd Infantry Division SSI

“Big Army” Strykers Join the Fight

The 5 p.m. arrival of the lead Stryker unit, C Company, 2/3 Infantry Regiment task force enabled TF Raptor and ODA 566 to prepare for a battle hand-off. But, the first necessity was to sweep and secure the crash site. Having twenty Stryker armored vehicles and carrying a 120mm and two

60mm mortars for indirect fire, CPT Bradley Commins* had significantly upgraded the American ground combat power. After positioning the mortars to cover his assault the Stryker commander cleared the area around the aircraft crash site, established security, and assessed the recovery requirement. ODA 512 accompanied the Strykers and provided the attached engineer sappers with body bags. Shortly after C Company finished the sweep, the remainder of the 2/3 Infantry task force led by LTC Barry F. Huggins arrived.⁴⁰

The Stryker battalion commander provided a quick capabilities brief while his second armored company (B Company) expanded the security around the crash area. MSG Kavanaugh (ODA 513) and his Air Force JTAC, SSG Boyd Partain*, explained the limits and deconfliction line for the SOF “kill box” to LTC Huggins and his JTAC. CPT Konrad (ODA 563) in the southeastern corner of the compound would continue to control CAS for two reasons: because CJSOTF had committed Air Force SOF AC-130U Spectre gunships; and because he had better situational awareness. Putting ODA 563 under 2/3 Infantry tactical control (TACON), making Konrad the SOF liaison officer to the battalion commander, and co-locating the Stryker JTAC with ODA 563 satisfied all parties.⁴¹ A Stryker escort to Camp David for TF Raptor and ODA 566 completed the battle handoff arrangements. By then, only sporadic firing was coming from the compound between air strikes.⁴²

CJSOTF Refits & Prepares SSE

Reinforcements pulling resupply trailers met CPT Johnson (ODA 566) in the lead Stryker vehicle at a Route Miami check point. ODA 565 (CPT Steve Watson*) with another company of Hilla SWAT had been sent by MAJ Brockman, the commander of AOB 560. They joined Raptor and ODA 566 as they limped back to Camp David to effect another refit. “Our convoy was a real sight. The

After the reconnaissance mission the ODA 563 GMV added its firepower to the southern berm defense.





Since the Stryker can go 65 mph, it took less than an hour for the TF to drive from FOB Kalsu to the An Najaf area.



The C Company 60mm mortars were co-located with the 120mm mortar and its fire direction system inside the Stryker to the rear.

trucks were lurching side-to-side like 'a circus cavalcade of clown cars' with guys all packed inside, good trucks towing broken ones, and 'run-flat' tires wobbling every which way. It was hard to stay 'closed up tight' in the dark because we were driving with smashed windshields and windows and seeing the road was difficult. The 'right seaters' kept the drivers straight," said SSG Lawrence.⁴³ MiTT 810 with its "Texas longhorn" HUMVEE leading left to spend the night at the Polish military compound at Camp Echo.⁴⁴

The FOB and AOB commanders closely monitored the fight on the radio and visually tracked activities on the ground with Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV). They coordinated for the Stryker relief force, stacked CAS sorties, arranged ammunition resupply and critical items (tires, windows, and windshields), and anticipated the need for a sensitive site exploitation (SSE) element the following day. "When American SOF is in heavy contact, all the petty bureaucratic issues fall away. Everyone pitches in, making aircraft available for medical evacuation and emergency resupply, providing hard-to-get items (Super Swamper tires), medics to reduce the load on the teams, and mechanics to get damaged fighting vehicles operational as quickly as possible. The 'push down' from all levels was incredible," commented LTC Miller, the FOB 52 commander.⁴⁵ "The CJSOTF and FOB staffs quickly realized that this was a major action. That became apparent when lots of ammunition was being delivered and they still kept running out," said SGM Jerry Koulter*, the FOB 52 operations sergeant major.⁴⁶

Everyone contributed. "MSG Ben Fidelli*, AOB 560 operations sergeant, and SFC Mark Roberts*, his assistant, put refit/resupply packages together. CPT Geoff Mathews* and ODA 2074 (20th SFG Army National Guard), slated for assignment to Ad Diwaniyah was the logical choice for the SSE mission. SGM Koulter, given a team of augmentees, was charged to lead the SSE effort," said MAJ Brockman, the AOB 560 commander. All American elements crowded inside a very jam packed Camp David to prepare to execute their missions at daylight.⁴⁷ "We (SGT Tom Port*, SP4 Parker, and several mechanics provided by the CJSOTF) worked all night on the trucks to get them operational,



Strykers encountering Ashura crowds in Hilla.



The Stryker interpreters worked with the Hilla police to bypass the Ashura parade floats.



Iraqi Raptor assaulters in combat gear.



Raptor mini-gun truck being overhauled at Camp David. Ammunition brass is still visible on the hood.

cannibalizing and applying field expedient solutions, refueling, and rearming,” recalled SSG Black, the Raptor mobility NCO.⁴⁸ Back at the contact site, air attacks and mortar fire constrained the enemy fighters.

Integrated Assaults by Fire on the Compound

All night long, CAS was used against the compound. “He (Konrad) was kept in place because CJSOTF had directed that terminal control of AC-130 gunships, a unique SOF asset, would not be given to a conventional Army ATAC,” said LTC Christopher Miller, FOB 52 commander. “The CAS ranged from F-16 Fighting Falcon fighters to A-10 “Wart Hog” fighter-bombers to AC-130U Spectre gunships and AH-64 Apache helicopters.”⁴⁹ The two Air Force joint terminal attack controllers (ODA 563 and TF 2/3 Infantry) and LTC Huggins coordinated air strikes and mortar fire to isolate the compound and reduce harassment fire on C Company and the Engineer sappers and mechanics as they worked to recover the remains of the Apache pilots and to load the wrecked aircraft for transport back to Kalsu. These tasks took much longer than anticipated and delayed the B Company movement to join ODA 563 on the southern end of the



2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment Stryker at An Najaf.

compound to secure that sector. This was important because the Stryker task force had told the Iraqi police and military to relocate to Route Miami. It was too hard to distinguish the friendly forces from enemy fighters at night.⁵⁰ In between CAS missions, SSGs Carl Apo* and Jesse Bartram* (ODA 563), wearing night vision goggles (NVGs), engaged enemy fighters with their M-240 and .50 cal machineguns intent on resupplying and reinforcing their comrades on the walls.⁵¹

Despite almost constant aerial bombardment, the Stryker one-hour ceasefire at midnight to broadcast surrender appeals (interpreters using commercial loudspeakers) enabled the enemy to recover, bring casualties to their infirmary, and redistribute munitions. A very porous Iraqi military and police cordon on the far west side of the compound (actually Route Miami) and the orchards along the Euphrates River to the east offered good night escape routes. The enemy in the compound used this time to get their heavy machineguns into the fight.⁵² B Company, having done its escort mission and recovered the Apache, was sent to reinforce ODA 563 and shore up the southern and flank defenses. Twenty heavily armed Strykers had an uneventful trip down the “gauntlet” road. Once positioned to best employ their thermal sights the Stryker gunners “locked down” security, closing earlier gaps in coverage.⁵³

Still, the enemy fighters persistently fired at the Americans during the infrequent lulls. The SF machine gunners on the trucks wearing NVGs engaged them as they “popped up” between airstrikes. It was not until the predawn hours that the firing from the compound dwindled down to infrequent bursts.⁵⁴ By then, LTC Huggins, the TF 2/3 Infantry commander, had finalized his assault plan. It was to commence after a final surrender appeal was broadcast by loudspeakers at first light.

As C Company moved into positions along the northern wall and at its corners to block for the B Company, ODA 563, and Hilla SWAT assault from the south, people carrying white flags began to emerge from the compound. A group of forty women and children came first to “test the water” and when the American infantrymen of C Company did not fire, that prompted more and more to start walking towards the Strykers. Soldiers quickly replaced the pins

Strykers Enter the Fight.



The first white surrender flag from the compound appears in front of C Company.

C Company take support by fire (SBF) positions to cover B Company.



While the first enemy fighter to surrender was being searched, a group of forty women and children materialized from the compound and sat down.

Concerned that the first enemy fighter to surrender is a suicide bomber, he is thoroughly searched by C Company personnel.





2/3 Infantry Stryker soldier guards the detainees being held in makeshift concertina enclosures.



2/3 Infantry Strykers provide security while Iraqi Army and Police process detainees from the compound.

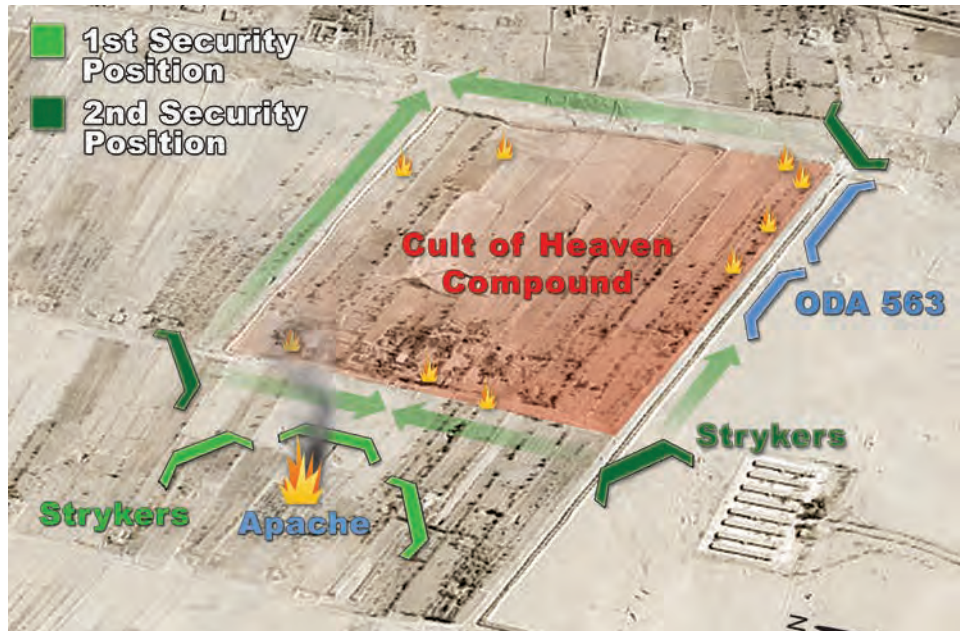


Hilla SWAT police join 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment Stryker task force to clear the enemy compound on 29 January 2008.

B Company, 2/3 Infantry Strykers, ODA 563 with its five-ton "War Wagon," and the Hilla SWAT prepare to launch a combined assault from the south to clear the compound on 29 January.



Modified map of compound showing ODA 563 & Stryker company security positions, before TF Raptor and ODA 566 left for Camp David on 28 January 2007.

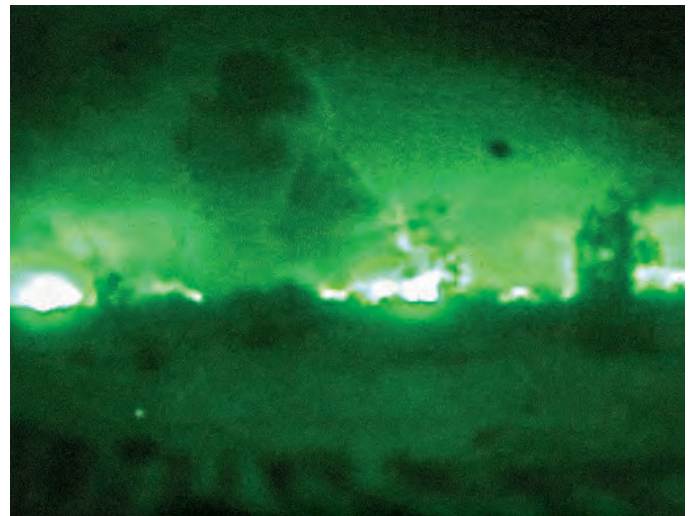


in hand grenades and carefully maneuvered to control the oncoming people. "There were no innocents, wounded or not. They were fighters and their families. They had chosen to stay and support the resistance. Our first concern was suicide bombers. When two hundred had come outside, it was obvious to LTC Huggins that while the compound still had to be cleared, our basic mission had changed radically," said CPT Commins. "We were unloading the 'C' (concertina) wire off the vehicles as our interpreters began broadcasting instructions. Though they had wounded among them, our first priority was to separate, search, and segregate."⁵⁵ As the Strykers dealt with the post-conflict tasks, TF Raptor was enroute to Baghdad, towing three disabled trucks.⁵⁶

Epilogue

When CPT Johnson and ODA 566 arrived at the battle site, the C Company interpreters had induced the survivors in the compound to come out and surrender shortly after dawn. Then, B Company, 2/3 Infantry, ODA 563, and the Hilla SWAT began clearing the walled facility and surrounding areas. Resistance by the wounded left inside was minimal. Circular concertina wire enclosures separated 411 blindfolded and flex-cuffed males from 200 plus women and children and the wounded in a triage area. During the late morning sandstorm three UH-60 Black Hawk medevac helicopters carried out the seriously injured. It was about noon when General Uthman, 8th Division commander, and COL Saadi, 1st Brigade commander, took charge of the detainee operations. Then, an "Iraqi face" was put on the operation. The 810th MiTT and the B Company Strykers stayed until the last detainees were delivered to Baghdad on 30 January 2007.⁵⁷

An estimated 370 enemy KIA and 411 captured males substantiated the initial Iraqi Scout and Police reports of 800-1,000 fighters on 28 January. The dead fighters were uniformly well-armed, had clip-on plastic identification badges, were similarly clothed, and most wore black canvas chest ammo carriers. They each had seven to eight magazines and several weapons. Iraqi soldiers identified the dead foreign fighters. "The CJSOTF Air Officer had committed everything that they had in the wing against this hundred acre target," said LTC Miller, FOB 52 commander.⁵⁸ Yet, after eighteen



Thermal image of airstrikes lighting up the night sky.



Night vision sight photo of airstrike on enemy compound.



These photos show how elaborate the defenses in the compound were, the variety of heavy weapons, and the quantity of small arms captured.

hours of CAS (14 F-16C, 8 A-10, and 4 AC-130U sorties) against the compound, more than six hundred survived—a testament to strength of the defenses.⁵⁹

The interior of the compound was a labyrinth of well-constructed, thick-walled buildings, most with deep, bunkered cellars. An underground medical clinic (100' by 30') was used to treat the wounded while the battle raged. The fighting positions along the walls of the compound were several feet thick. The eight-twelve foot high walls were terraced with platforms to allow fighters to reload and get resupplied under cover. They obviously had been constructed using a backhoe or bulldozer. There were fighting trenches around the buildings. Secondary defense lines behind wall positions were tiered and planks bridged the trenches. Eleven 60mm and 82mm mortars had been clustered in a corner. There was a ZPU-1 anti-aircraft (AAA) heavy machinegun on a truck and three more DShKs mounted on trailers. It was most likely one of these crew-served guns that shot down the Apache after two RPGs missed the two aircraft. One truck-mounted DShK had driven into the corner nearest ODA 566 the morning before. Hastily abandoned Iraqi Scout HUMVEES and civilian trucks outside the compound had been destroyed by the CAS as were numerous 5-ton trucks, pickup trucks, automobiles, and motorcycles inside. Truckloads of functional small arms, light machineguns, mortars, a couple hundred RPGs, vast quantities of ammunition (the majority armor-piercing) and mortar rounds, medical supplies, and more than a ton of packaged food ("Happy Cow" cream cheese and "Kire" for bread making) in stacks six feet high had been loaded aboard the Iraqi Army trucks for their future use.⁶⁰

Large stacks of eight-page propaganda newspapers identified the leader, Diya' Abd-al-Zahra' Karim or Ahmad Al-Hassan, and explained why this well-trained, and equipped fighting force, *Jaysh al Ra'ab* (Army of Heaven) had been positioned near An Najaf. It was a non-JAM, non-Badr Shia messianic extremist group, *Ansar Al-Imam Al-Mahdi* (Supporters of the Messiah) determined to install their leader as the 12th Imam of the Shia. Documentation revealed a 575-man battalion organized along former Iraqi Army lines, with names beside each position, and detailed target folders to support assassinations of the senior leaders to effect a seizure of Shia power after the elimination of the eleven Imams.⁶¹



This picture of Imam Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the prophet Mohammed, was on the wall of the Ahmad Al-Hassan's meeting room in the compound.



Stacks of this multi-paged newspaper with Diya' Abd-al-Zahra' Karim or Ahmad Al-Hassan on the front page explained why this well-trained, and equipped fighting force, Jaysh al Ra'ab (Army of Heaven) had been positioned near An Najaf.

A Summation

In August 2004, major combat had taken place around the Ali Mosque and cemetery between the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), three battalions of the 1st Cavalry Division, and Iraqi forces on one side and the Islamist Mahdi Army of Muqtada al-Sadr on the other. Fighting began in the city center, moved through the cemetery, and shifted to the Ali Mosque where the Mahdi Army took refuge. The shrine was surrounded by American and Iraqi forces. Four 2000-pound JDAMs (Joint Direct Attack Munitions) on two hotels adjacent to the shrine being used by the insurgents finally prompted a ceasefire. Iraqi police assumed control of the city when the U.S. forces and Mahdi Army agreed to withdraw. Thirteen U.S. were KIA and more than a hundred WIA, forty Iraqi Security Forces were KIA, and forty-six Iraqi Security Forces were WIA compared to 159 Mahdi Army fighters KIA and another 261 captured.⁶² While the Mahdi fighters had to surrender their weapons in order to leave, none were detained.⁶³ For its role in the 2004 battle TF Raptor received a Meritorious Unit Citation.⁶⁴

Jund al-Samaa “Army of Heaven”



The 12th Imam is located at the far left, face enshrouded by brilliant light.

The messianic Shiite group, *Ansar Al-Imam Al-Mahdi*, or “Supporters of the Messiah” and its armed wing, *Jund al-Samaa* or “Army of Heaven” established themselves in a well-fortified compound in an orchard area between Al Zarqa’ and Al Maf’hanah, north of An Najaf. The group’s leader, Ahmed Hassani al-Yemeni, or Dia Abd al-Zahra Kadim, proclaimed himself as Al Mahdi, or the guided one. According to Shi’a belief, the 12th Imam, Muhammad al-Muhantazar, who disappeared as a child, would reappear as a messianic figure, Al Mahdi, at the end of the world to save mankind and usher in a perfect Islamic society. Evidence showed that Hassani/Kadim and his followers planned to attack the city of An Najaf on the final day of Ashura to seize the holy shrine of Imam Ali, assassinate the senior Shiite clerics, to include the Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, and in the apocalyptic chaos afterwards, proclaim that Al Mahdi had returned.

Hassani/Kadim was described as a disgruntled disciple of Muhammad Al-Sadr, the father of the Mahdi Army leader Muqtada Al Sadr, who founded the Sadrist strain of Iraqi Shiism. The group was considered a fringe, radical offshoot of the Sadrist movement. However, just like the younger Sadr and his followers, they opposed the

mainstream Shiite religious establishment in Iraq and were hostile to the U.S. government and Sunni Arab insurgents. Hassani/Kadim was killed in the fighting on 28-29 January 2007.

The 550-575 man “Army of Heaven” had five line companies with three platoons each. These platoons had three eleven-man squads. The headquarters company had administrative, medical, supply, transportation, security (body guards), intelligence, crew-served weapons (heavy machineguns and mortars), and sniper sections. The “Army of Heaven” was well-organized, trained, and highly disciplined. Target folders had been prepared to support the assassinations of senior Shiite clerics. These attacks would herald the messianic and apocalyptic events that were to precede the return of Al Mahdi. He would save the true believers from their trials and tribulations at the hands of the Sunni and infidel oppressors according to Shiite belief. Several six-foot high stacks of propaganda newspapers with Hassani/Kadim on the front page were standing ready for distribution in the wake of the chaos planned by the “Army of Heaven” at the Imam Ali shrine on the last day of Ashura, 30 January 2007.



American and Iraqi TF Raptor personnel conducted a memorial service for the Iraqi assaulters killed in action, at An Najaf, 28 January 2007.

Friendly casualties from the Battle of An Najaf in 2007 were light. Four Iraqi military were KIA and two dozen wounded. There were two Americans killed (Apache pilots) and eight wounded versus 370 enemy fighters KIA and untold numbers wounded.⁶⁵ A lot of GMVs and weapon systems were battle-damaged. But, less than twenty-four hours after TF Raptor had returned to Baghdad, the assault force was 100% mission ready. Restoring combat readiness to the assets involved at An Najaf became the top priority for the CJSOTF. Army SOF support personnel worked around the clock to accomplish those tasks. It was a herculean team effort.⁶⁶

Despite a success with relatively few casualties, the last remnants of the “fog of war” associated with the 28-29 January 2007 fight that developed from an “Iraqi only” operation were not removed until several weeks afterwards (see sidebar on Messianic Shiite Group). The first day of the 28-29 January battle dramatically revealed the impact of Iraqi Army assumption of battle space control. The Americans were expected to help the Iraqi military and police break contact, often in the worst of circumstances. Politics play a major role in every Iraqi military operation. The airstrikes and indirect fire that accompanied the sheer combat power of a Stryker task force with more than forty armored vehicles broke the will of the “Army of Heaven” fighters during the night of 28-29 January 2007. While the initial Stryker surrender appeal with a ceasefire at midnight provided the enemy with some relief to resupply and reinforce, subsequent appeals the following morning were successful and saved many lives.⁶⁷

In retrospect, the failure of the SF elements to share tactical intelligence assessments with one another and the conventional force added to the “fog of war.” The Stryker force successfully integrated the battlefield operating systems of both elements to “lock down” the compound with night vision optics in order to most effectively use coordinated fire attacks. The necessity to train direct

action assault forces and SWAT police in small unit infantry tactics was realized. Equally important, the amount of ammunition carried by soldiers and police determined the level of their aggressiveness and ability to sustain effective fire. American combat equipment works. MICH helmets, body armor, and up-armored vehicles with ballistic glass saved lives and enabled very courageous men to stay in the fight, trading point blank fire with disciplined, well-trained enemy shooters just feet away.⁶⁸ With that said, the Special Forces elements, having stretched their capabilities to the limit, were ready to relinquish the fight to a conventional force that had the ground combat power to decisively break the enemy resistance . . . a Stryker task force.

The intensity and violence of the combat during “the gauntlet” was difficult to project in words. However, it will linger in the memories of these gallant Special Forces and Iraqi soldiers and police. And that is not all bad. ♣

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

Endnotes

- 1 CPT Eldon Johnson* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 14 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, MAJ Jack Guardino* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 15 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, MAJ Walt Brockman* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 4 December 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, and SFC Zeke Monroe* telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 13 June 2008, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 2 CPT Robert Konrad* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 13 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, CPT Konrad and MSG Shamus Flanagan* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 15 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, MSG Flanagan, SSG Jesse Bartram*, SSG Daniel Malcolm*, and SSG Carl Apo* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 4 December 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, MAJ Brockman interview, 4 December 2007, MSG Flanagan telephone interview notes, 4 September 2008, and CPT Konrad email to Dr. Briscoe, 25 May 2008, Subject: An Najaf Article, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 3 MSG Flanagan interview, 4 September 2008.
- 4 CPT Konrad interview, 13 November 2007, CPT Konrad and MSG Flanagan interview, 15 November 2007, MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007, MAJ Brockman interview, 4 December 2007, MSG Flanagan interview, 4 September 2008, and CPT Konrad email to Dr. Briscoe, 25 May 2008, Subject: An Najaf Article, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 5 LTC Christopher C. Miller interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 14 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, MAJ Brockman interview, 4 December 2007, CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007, and Department of Army, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team (SBCT), 2nd Infantry Division, LTC Barry F. Huggins, Memorandum for Record, SUBJECT: After Action Review, PATRIOT Battalion Operations Near An NAJAF (ZARQA), Iraq, 28-29 Jan 2007, dated 11 February 2007, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf AAR.
- 6 CPT Konrad interview, 13 November 2007.
- 7 LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007 and MAJ Brockman interview, 4 December 2007.

- 8 CPT Konrad interview, 13 November 2007, CPT Gordon Muldoon* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 13 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, and CPT Konrad email to Dr. Briscoe, Subject: An Najaf, Part II Article, 29 August 2008.
- 9 CPT Konrad interview, 13 November 2007 and CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007.
- 10 CPT Konrad interview, 13 November 2007, CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007, SSG Adam Donitz* telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 12 June 2008, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, and SSG Cliff Bronson*, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 23 June 2008, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **MSG Shamus Flanagan (ODA 563) had satellite radio communications with CPT Eldon Johnson (ODA 566).** MSG Flanagan interview, 4 September 2008.
- 11 MAJ Guardino interview, 15 November 2007, CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007, and SFC Monroe interview, 13 June 2008.
- 12 MAJ Guardino interview, 15 November 2007, CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007, and SSG Donitz interview, 12 June 2008.
- 13 MAJ Guardino interview, 15 November 2007, CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007, and SSG Donitz interview, 12 June 2008.
- 14 SSG Donitz interview, 12 June 2008.
- 15 SSG Donitz interview, 12 June 2008.
- 16 SSG Donitz interview, 12 June 2008.
- 17 MAJ Guardino interview, 15 November 2007, CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007, and MSG Sam Kavanaugh* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 13 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 18 SFC Monroe interview, 13 June 2008.
- 19 SFC Jack Carter* telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 23 January 2008, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 20 SSG Allen Lawrence* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 21 December 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 21 SFC Carter interview, 23 January 2008.
- 22 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007.
- 23 MSG Roger Ligon* and SSG Geoffrey Kendrick* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 14 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 24 MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick Interview, 14 November 2007.
- 25 SFC Paul Jackman* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 5 December 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, and CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007.
- 26 SFC Jackman interview, 5 December 2007 and CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007.
- 27 CPT Muldoon interview, 3 November 2007.
- 28 CPT Muldoon interview, 3 November 2007, CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007, and SFC Monroe interview, 13 June 2008.
- 29 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007.
- 30 MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007, SFC Carter interview, 23 January 2008, SSG Donitz interview, 12 June 2008, and Teri Weaver, "We Out-Gunned Them," *Stars and Stripes*, 14 June 2008, <http://www.stripes.com/articleprint.asp?section=140&article=63233&archive=true>, 15 August 2008.
- 31 SSG Lawrence interview, 21 December 2007.
- 32 SFC Monroe interview, 13 June 2008 and SSG Steve Black* telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, Fort Campbell, KY, 14 July 2008, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 33 MSG Kavanaugh interview, 13 November 2007 and MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007.
- 34 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007 and CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007.
- 35 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007 and CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007.
- 36 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007, CPT Muldoon interview, 13 November 2007, MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007, and CPT Bradley Commins* telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 15 August 2008, Presidio, CA, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 37 CPT Konrad and MSG Flanagan interview, 15 November 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, and SSG Bronson interview, 25 June 2008.
- 38 MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007.
- 39 CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008.
- 40 CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008, and MSG Kavanaugh interview, 13 November 2007.
- 41 LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007, MAJ Brockman interview, 4 December 2007, MSG Kavanaugh interview, 13 November 2007, CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008, and 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf AAR.
- 42 MSG Kavanaugh interview, 13 November 2007.
- 43 SSG Lawrence interview, 21 December 2007 and SSG Black interview, 14 July 2008.
- 44 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007 and MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007.
- 45 LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007 and MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007.
- 46 SGM Jerry Koulter* interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 5 December 2007, Fort Campbell, KY, digital recording, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 47 CPT Johnson Interview, 13 November 2007, MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo Interview, 4 December 2007 and MAJ Brockman Interview, 4 December 2007.
- 48 SSG Black interview, 14 July 2008.
- 49 LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007 and SSG Bronson interview, 23 June 2008.
- 50 CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008.
- 51 MSG Flanagan, SSG Jesse Bartram*, SSG Daniel Malcolm*, and SSG Carl Apo* interview, 4 December 2007.
- 52 CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008 and 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf AAR.
- 53 CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008.
- 54 MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007 and CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008.
- 55 CPT Commins, 15 August 2008. **During the final surrender appeal on 29 January, some fifty males attempted to "squirt" northwest during the confusion. MSG Flanagan, with part of ODA 563 and truck-mounted SWAT police, chased them down and herded the men back to the detainee area.** MSG Flanagan interview, 4 September 2008.
- 56 CPT Konrad and MSG Flanagan interview, 15 November 2007, MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007 and SSG Black interview, 14 July 2008.
- 57 MAJ Brockman interview, 4 December 2007, MSG Flanagan, SSG Bartram, SSG Malcolm, and SSG Apo interview, 4 December 2007, CPT Johnson interview, 14 November 2007, MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007, and CPT Commins, 15 August 2008.
- 58 CPT Johnson interview, 14 November 2007, LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007, and SGM Koulter interview, 5 December 2007.
- 59 LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007 and SGM Koulter interview, 5 December 2007.
- 60 MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007, SSG Lawrence interview, 21 December 2007, and SGM Koulter interview, 5 December 2007.
- 61 MSG Ligon and SSG Kendrick interview, 14 November 2007.
- 62 "Battle of Najaf (2004)," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Najaf_%282004%29.
- 63 "Battle of Najaf (2004)," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Najaf_%282004%29.
- 64 MAJ Guardino email to Dr. Briscoe, Subject: Battle of An Najaf, 22 May 2008.
- 65 CPT Johnson interview, 13 November 2007.
- 66 SSG Black interview, 14 July 2008.
- 67 LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007, MAJ Brockman interview, 4 December 2007, and CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008.
- 68 LTC Miller interview, 14 November 2007, MAJ Brockman interview, 4 December 2007, and CPT Commins interview, 15 August 2008.
- 69 Sumedha Senanayake, "Iraq: Al-Najaf Mystery Reflects Iraqi Divisions," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, 2 February 2007, <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1074465.html>, 30 July 2008.
- 70 "Messianic Shiite Group in Iraq Posted Threats on Its Website," *Global Issues Report* (31 January 2007).

A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign Part II

by Troy J. Sacquety



On 17 May 1944, a combined Allied force was poised to deliver Myitkyina, the prize of Lieutenant General (LTG) Joseph W. Stilwell's brilliant three-month north Burma campaign. The night before, indigenous Kachin guerrillas of Detachment 101 of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), had led Merrill's Marauders [5307th Composite Unit (Provisional)] unseen to the edge of Myitkyina's airfield. The next morning, Chinese troops and the Marauders surprised the Japanese and quickly captured the airfield. Then, the Chinese 150th Infantry Regiment was given the honor of seizing the city. It was considered an easy task based on the small number of defenders thought to be in Myitkyina.

This assignment would affect thousands of men on both sides for the next three months. On the afternoon of 17 May, the two separate attacking battalions of the 150th Infantry mistook one another for the enemy and inflicted heavy casualties on themselves. Worse yet, the Chinese repeated the same mistake the next day and virtually destroyed the regiment. These debacles gave the surprised Japanese time to reinforce the city. They flooded Myitkyina with troops garrisoned in nearby towns. General Stilwell's quick victory vanished. With the conventional forces of the Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC) decisively engaged, Detachment 101 was called upon to expand its guerrilla warfare (GW) operations.

This article explains how Detachment 101's GW campaign continuously attrited the Japanese forces in and around Myitkyina to cause its fall in August 1944.¹ The views from three levels of command are provided; the NCAC theater overview, Detachment 101 headquarters, and the OSS field operators. Now, an overview of the theater activities will explain how NCAC's conventional forces became decisively engaged.

The Allied force had captured the Myitkyina airfield in the nick of time. But, the success before the monsoon proved illusionary. The 150th Chinese Infantry Regiment decimated themselves just after the Marauders expended their last bit of energy on the airfield. NCAC had no choice but to pause. It was unprepared to lay "siege" to the city. The monsoon rains arrived and drowned out hope by reducing the flow of badly-needed replacements and supplies. While Myitkyina could not be taken by force, the Japanese had to be attrited and their supply lines cut.

Myitkyina was key to keeping China in the war. China's seaports were occupied and the Japanese controlled the



Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell was the commander of the Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC). In reference to his demeanor, his men knew him simply as "Vinegar Joe."



LTG Stilwell needed to capture Myitkyina before the onset of the monsoon rains, which would flood the surrounding countryside, bog down the advance, and aid the Japanese defense. The amount of rain that the monsoon brought could be tremendous as the floods in the Assam region of north India from the 1944 monsoon indicate. Unfortunately, the Allies did not take Myitkyina before the rains began and the Japanese held onto the city for another three months.



China-Burma-India SSI



Detachment 101 Patch



Merrill's Marauders Patch



Chindit Patch



A Merrill's Marauders mortar crew bombards Japanese positions in Myitkyina.



Soldiers from Merrill's Marauders use a M1917A1 water-cooled machinegun to fire on Japanese positions about 100 yards away in Myitkyina.

overland route, the Burma Road. Only the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) airlift of supplies from Assam, India to Kunming, China via the hazardous "Hump" route was keeping the Chinese in the war. Reopening an overland route was critical because the airbridge simply could not handle the demand. Capturing Myitkyina would open an alternate overland route, and its airfield would reduce the Japanese fighter threat on the Hump route. The rugged terrain around Myitkyina favored the defense and there were insufficient conventional troops available to isolate the city from Japanese support.

The Allied pause gave the Japanese the opportunity to infiltrate their outlying garrisons into the city. By the end of May 1944, the original Japanese garrison of several

hundred men had grown to 2,500. The Japanese held both sides of the Irrawaddy River that flowed south along the east side of Myitkyina. This vital artery plagued the Allied efforts. By August, the Japanese garrison at Myitkyina—which grew to some 5,000 men—managed to hold off an Allied force of more than 30,000 men.² The Japanese had accepted the loss of Myitkyina, but they planned to delay the Allies as long as possible. The city's commander, Major General Genzu Mizukami, ordered his men to hold the city until the end of August 1944, and then, the surrounding area for another thirty days.³ Fortunately for the Allied forces outside Myitkyina, the Japanese high command was also being threatened by a strong force to the south.

MYITKYINA CAMPAIGN CHRONOLOGY:

- **JAN 1942** JAPANESE FORCES INVADE BURMA FROM THAILAND
- **MAY 1942** ALLIES FINISH THEIR RETREAT FROM BURMA
- **JULY 1942** OSS DETACHMENT 101 ARRIVES IN THE CBI
- **DEC 1942** OSS DETACHMENT 101 FORWARD GROUP ARRIVES AT FT. HERTZ, BURMA
- **FEB 1943** OSS DETACHMENT 101 LAUNCHES "A" GROUP, THE FIRST OF ITS LONG-RANGE PENETRATION ATTEMPTS
- **FEB-MAY 1943** OPERATION LONGCLOTH: THE FIRST CHINDIT OPERATION
- **AUG 1943** OSS DETACHMENT 101 FORMS THE KNOTHEAD GROUP IN THE UPPER HUKAWNG VALLEY
- **AUG 1943** QUEBEC CONFERENCE; U.S. AGREES TO FORM A LONG-RANGE PENETRATION UNIT (MARAUDERS) AND THE FIRST AIR COMMANDO GROUP

DEFEAT (1942)

REBUILD (1943)



JAN MAY JULY DEC FEB MAR APR MAY JUN

Two independent Allied forces were south of Myitkyina trying to cut off Japanese support. Two Chinese divisions were pushing down the Mogaung Valley to link up with the 3rd Indian Infantry Division, the British long-range penetration group better known as the Chindits. The Japanese 18th Division was directed against them both. The Chindits, in the field since early March, were astride the only rail line that ran to Myitkyina.⁴ These Allied forces were threatening to sever the tenuous supply lines to Myitkyina. The Japanese rushed sufficient reinforcements to contain these divisions. While the two Allied conventional units were diverting Japanese support to Myitkyina, they became decisively engaged by a determined enemy. Now, the NCAC conventional forces in Myitkyina and to the south were stuck slugging it out, unable to break contact and maneuver.



An aerial view of some of the trenches surrounding Myitkyina. The conditions on both sides were atrocious. The troops dug in, turning the battlefield into one more similar to the First World War than to WWII. The monsoon rains fell incessantly; soaking the troops and flooding Allied positions. And, malaria-carrying mosquitoes did not discriminate; both sides were mired in stifling, disease-ridden positions from which they could not gain the upper hand.

The only remaining maneuver element available to LTG Stilwell—and one for which the Japanese did not have a counter—was Detachment 101, a paramilitary OSS unit. They became his “wildcard,” attacking isolated enemy garrisons and supply lines to constantly attrite the Japanese in and around Myitkyina and to the south. The Detachment 101 commander, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) William R. Peers, had wisely anticipated an expanded role in the campaign.

Since America’s strategy in WWII was to defeat Germany first, OSS operations in the Far East were a

low priority. OSS chief William J. Donovan intended Detachment 101 to be a strategic asset supporting conventional forces in north Burma, but the unit had been given little. Detachment 101 made do with whatever assets could be made available, even excess European operatives. LTC Peers was determined to undertake a program to fill the critical needs for NCAC when he assumed responsibility for “all operations which

- **OCT 1943** CHINESE FORCES BEGIN TO PUSH INTO THE UPPER HUKAWNG VALLEY
- **FEB-MAR 1944** THE MARAUDERS AND THE CHINDITS KICK OFF THEIR OFFENSIVE
- **MAR-APR 1944** THE MARAUDERS’ BATTLE OF NHPUM GA
- **MAY 1944** THE ALLIES TAKE THE MYITKYINA AIRFIELD, BUT THE CHINESE BLUNDER THE ATTACK ON THE TOWN
- **MAY-AUG 1944** SIEGE OF MYITKYINA

SIDESHOW (TO NCAC)

- **FEB 1944** THE JAPANESE LAUNCH OPERATION HA-GO INTO THE ARAKAN; THE BRITISH DEFEAT THEM IN THE BATTLE OF THE ADMIN BOX
- **MAR-JUL 1944** THE JAPANESE LAUNCH OPERATION U-GO INTO THE KOHIMA-IMPHAL PLAIN; THE BRITISH DEFEAT THEM AFTER A BRUTAL STRUGGLE

■ **MID-1943-1944** OSS DETACHMENT 101 FOCUSES ON INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION AND STARTS TO BUILD A GUERRILLA FORCE

ATTACK (1944)



[other units] are not prepared to undertake."⁵ Missions subsequently evolved rapidly.

Designed to operate deep in enemy territory, Detachment 101 transitioned during three phases of the campaign from its primary role of intelligence collection to guerrilla warfare. In Phase One, (mid-1943 to February 1944) OSS agents and teams infiltrated north Burma to gather enemy order of battle intelligence. During Phase Two (February to May 1944), Detachment 101 assumed a unconventional warfare (UW) role by recruiting, training, and employing guerrilla forces. By Phase Three (May to August 1944), guerrilla warfare had become Detachment 101's primary function. The tasks associated with intelligence collection enabled Detachment 101 to gradually build a GW capability.

The USAAF relied heavily on Detachment 101 for the majority of their targets: "101 reports usually concerned the enemy in movement or at an established location ... The latter usually led to immediate attack."⁶ They were the only source available to pinpoint the exact locations of enemy installations. The OSS teams also performed bomb damage assessments and manned mountaintop air warning stations. They radioed alerts on approaching Japanese aircraft and helped downed airmen escape and evade. The capture of the Myitkyina airfield prompted Detachment 101 to push deeper into Japanese-held areas.

LTC Peers wanted "to keep our units in positions where they can watch and report on every move of the enemy for our intelligence reports to air fighter and ground commands ... our information is now supplied to twenty-five military branches ... which otherwise could not get this intelligence."⁷ Terrain made rapid relocation exceedingly difficult. While their movements south and south-east were covered by the monsoon rains, air resupply was interrupted.

That impacted on recruiting indigenous personnel. From the beginning in north Burma, the OSS formed solid bonds with the fierce and pro-Allied indigenous Kachin tribesmen. At first, the Kachins were used as intelligence collectors and acted as guides/scouts for the conventional forces. They led the Marauders unseen to



U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander James C. Luce, commander of the FORWARD group (later Area #1) with some of Detachment 101's first Kachin recruits.

Unique Backgrounds



Second Lieutenants Charles Coussoule (L) and Daniel Mudrinich (R) in Cairo in 1943. Recruited by the OSS because of his Serbian background, Lieutenant Daniel Mudrinich was trained to operate with Royalist Dragoljub "Draža" Mihailović's Chetnicks in German-occupied Yugoslavia. While in Cairo, Egypt, Mudrinich found out that during the November 1943 Tehran Conference the U.S. and British decided to give all their support to Mihailović's rival, Communist Marshall Tito (Josip Broz), negating his ability to go into the field. Coussoule had been recruited by the OSS for operations in Greece.

the Myitkyina Airfield on 16 May 1944. Since the city had not been captured, the conventional Allied forces of NCAC had become decisively engaged with the Japanese. This strategic dilemma provided a tactical advantage to the Detachment 101 guerrilla forces. They could take greater chances and not face certain retaliation. Stalemated in late May/early June, LTG Stilwell told Peers to build a 10,000-man guerrilla force. The OSS recruited primarily from the Kachins, but also used the Gurkhas, Nagas, Karens, Shans, and Chinese. By the beginning of Phase Three, Detachment 101's GW campaign was beginning to pay off.

The elusive and field-wise Kachins enabled the OSS to turn the north Burma jungles against the Japanese. In June 1944, Major R.T. Shelby, the Detachment 101 operations section officer, reported that the move from purely intelligence collection to OG [Operational Group] operations was attributed to the large numbers of indigenous personnel recruited for guerrilla operations.⁸ As the guerrilla force grew, they kept the Japanese off balance by ambushing isolated garrisons, small enemy elements, supply convoys and depots, and blowing bridges and railroads to relieve pressure on the Allies at Myitkyina.

By June 1944, the OSS had some 3,300 newly-recruited guerrillas in five major groups headed by American or British advisors that were organized into five major groups. TRAMP, with roughly 650 guerrillas, was farthest to the west in the Chindwin River Valley. They were intercepting scattered enemy forces withdrawing from the failed Japanese offensives against the British at Imphal and Kohima.⁹ The 350 guerrillas of KNOTHEAD scouted the Hukawng Valley for Merrill's Marauders from February to April 1944. PAT's 400 guerrillas were infiltrating down the course of the Mogaung to Myitkyina railroad. Farthest to the south and in support of the Chindits, were 400 guerrillas with Group #10.¹⁰ FORWARD, with 1,500 guerrillas, was located east of Myitkyina near Sadon. They were attacking Japanese forces east and south of the city. As the guerrilla forces got larger Detachment 101's operations became more complex.

Anticipating an expanded role in the north Burma campaign, in July 1944 LTC Peers simplified the Detachment's command and control structure. He established three operational areas and decentralized field operations by pushing more responsibility down to the field commanders; FORWARD became "Area #1;" PAT, KNOTHEAD, and Group #10 Operation consolidated under "Area #2;" and TRAMP became "Area #3." The Detachment headquarters then pushed a tactical communications center forward to NCAC headquarters that then communicated directly with each Area commander. Before, groups and teams had contacted headquarters directly. By August 1944, the forward-based radio section at NCAC headquarters handled all traffic to



Captain Sherman "Pete" Joost, the Area #1 Commander, in his primitive headquarters. Before taking over Area #1, he had spent months in the field. In early March, Joost and several OSS Kachins had landed at the Chindit's BROADWAY operating base in a First Air Commando Group CG-4A Waco Glider to accompany the "Dah" Force, a column of seventy-five Chindits who were given the mission of recruiting Chinese guerrilla troops.

and from Detachment 101 headquarters at Nazira while the Area headquarters received the communications from the OSS elements in their sectors. At each level, radio operators determined which messages were forwarded to the higher level. If any Area station was

CPT Charles C. Stelle (in camouflage suit) and PVT Thomas J. Davis (to Stelle's left). Both commanded guerrilla elements in Detachment 101's Group #10, which was the OSS element assisting the British Chindits. These guerrilla forces became part of Area #2 after Detachment 101 consolidated its operational structure in July 1944 in response to an increasing guerrilla warfare role.





OSS Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign June - August 1944

During the Myitkyina Campaign, Japanese and Allied [American, British, and Chinese] forces were locked in a bitter struggle. The American and Chinese conventional forces were stalemated at Japanese-held Myitkyina, while the British and Chinese forces to the south were facing intense opposition. This situation allowed Detachment 101 the flexibility to conduct an effective unconventional warfare campaign against the Japanese lines of communication. Detachment 101 targeted the rail line leading to Myitkyina and the Irrawaddy River and inflicted numerous casualties by ambushing the enemy throughout the area. By August 1944, the Japanese forces in north Burma were in retreat. Detachment 101 had raised thousands of guerrillas, and continued conducting a full-fledged guerrilla war in the American-led Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC) until the end of the war in north Burma in mid-1945. The areas of operations for NCAC and the British are shown in the smaller area map.





This hilly north Burma terrain is typical of the area in which 1LT Daniel Mudrinich was operating in the months prior to the siege of Myitkyina.



A Detachment 101 element on the move. Although on foot, the guerrilla units could be highly mobile using jungle trails that were often unknown to the Japanese.



Daniel Mudrinich, was a 2LT when he arrived at the FORWARD group in early 1944. He initially served as the group's Executive Officer.

temporarily off-line while relocating, the forward section handled its message traffic until that Area's communications "center" was operational again.¹¹ The new areas of responsibility (AORs) and the emphasis on more guerrilla operations meant that the OSS field operators were hard-pressed to accomplish Peers' new directives. The biggest problem they faced in relocating was the terrain—described as a "green hell"—and the monsoon.

North of Myitkyina are steep mountains—the foothills of the Himalayas with peaks as high as 7,000 feet—with few roads. Most movement was on foot. Before moving close to Myitkyina, 1LT Daniel Mudrinich, serving in FORWARD (Area #1), was in the high country. "We would wake up in the morning and there would be frost ... when we looked down, we could not see the ground. The clouds were below us ... We would get fogged in, particularly during the monsoon. They [the supply drop aircraft] could not even find us." He continued, "Sometimes, we would march our unit for twelve hours and cover eight miles ... it was one-step forward and two steps back." When he moved his troops closer to Myitkyina, they had new difficulties.

The annual monsoon, that lasted from June through September, and endemic diseases like scrub typhus, dysentery, and malaria were extreme challenges. Mudrinich recalled the monsoon as "terrible" because "we were always wet." Illness made it worse. Mudrinich

A Detachment 101 officer and his Kachin junior officers instruct new recruits, Burma, 1944.





Kachins of OSS Area #1 cook rice over an open fire. Rice—supplemented with what was available—was a staple for American and indigenous soldiers in Detachment 101.



An OSS Area #1 headquarters in enemy-occupied territory as seen from the air. The firing range on the right was used to train indigenous recruits.

remembered, “We had a hell of a time ... almost all of us had malaria a number of times.” And, as if that were not enough, Mudrinich added that he had almost constant diarrhea and “during the monsoon, you were [always] covered with leeches.”¹² Getting enough food on the move during the monsoon was a major problem for the OSS units in mountainous terrain.

Relocating to their new AORs made air resupply difficult. Mudrinich described life when his group (FORWARD) was on the move, “We might miss two or three drops in a row, and it might be a month before we got a drop ... By that time our rice [their staple] was just about gone ... [and] was pretty bitter because it was already moldy.”¹⁸ Life in the field got pretty rank: “We were in the same clothes for weeks. We all smelled the same so it was livable ... In the rain it wasn’t so bad, [because] it would wash off,” said LT Mudrinich. The PETE Group solved their own supply problems.

In July/August 1944, the eighty-man PETE group commanded by Captain Peter K. Lutken was moving from the Area #3 AOR over a hundred miles to the south to target the Katha-Mogaung rail line in Area #2’s AOR. The inhospitable terrain made resupply almost impossible. Worried about supplies, Lutken decided to become self-sufficient. First, PETE organized its own transportation corps of captured elephants and bullocks to carry bulk supplies. Then SGT Edgar J. Buck, under the PETE Group, solved the food problem by attacking Japanese supply dumps.¹⁹ Still, to expand the guerrilla forces, the OSS had to be able to arm, equip, and feed new recruits.

To raise and prepare his force, Mudrinich “started with about forty men. We just put them through something like our basic training ... We taught them guerrilla tactics ... and would carry on their training even after we were formed and in action.”²⁰ The selection of leaders often was based

on who had pre-war experience in the British-led Burma Rifles and spoke at least some English. These veterans “had a fairly good training background ... A lot of our *Subedars* and *Jemedars* [Officers] and *Havildars* [Sergeants] knew weapons and a little bit about tactics,” said LT Mudrinich.²¹ However, communicating was a challenge.

The majority of Kachins did not speak English, and few Americans understood Jinghpaw, their local tongue. Interpreters, who often only had a basic understanding of English, were hired. Second Lieutenant (2LT) James R. Ward, leading a Kachin group, initially used “Kenny,” his Karen (different ethnic group) radio operator to communicate with the troops. “None of the Kachins spoke any English. I spoke no [Jinghpaw] or Burmese. Kenny would speak in Burmese to the Kachin leaders. They in turn would speak Kachin to their troops. This was a very round about way of trying to command an organization.”²² Ward started learning Jinghpaw because he could not take Kenny, his radio operator, with him on patrols or ambushes lest he be killed. When all else failed, Mudrinich used “a lot of hand motions” to get the message across.²³ Having limited tactical experience was not uniquely an indigenous problem.



Captain Peter K. Lutken commanded the PETE subsection of the TRAMP Group during the Myitkyina Campaign. Lutken was a member of the British-led “V-Force” before joining the OSS.

Although OSS operatives were well-trained in their specialties, many learned “on the job.” When LT Mudrinich, an infantryman, arrived, he discovered that FORWARD’s M1919 machineguns were not used in the field because they jammed. “We did not have a single guy there in our American group who was an infantryman. For a long time the whole battalion went without machineguns because they were not trained on them and no one knew about the headspace.”²⁴ LT Mudrinich set the headspace on the light machineguns. This solved the problem and enabled the other OSS personnel to properly

The Monsoon and Air Resupply



An OSS Area #1 group unpacks a supply drop for easier transportation in late 1944. The hills in the background give a good indication of the type of terrain over which the drop aircraft had to fly in order to deliver their cargo.



A Detachment 101 operated Stinson L-1 Vigilant. This one, nicknamed the "Burma Belle" has been fitted with floats to allow it to land on waterways.

The mission of the Detachment 101 field groups to raise thousands of guerrilla troops meant that the OSS in Nazira and Myitkyina had to supply, equip, and feed them. This required air resupply by Detachment 101 Air Drop personnel aboard USAAF aircraft or direct support from the "Red Ass Squadron," the Detachment's own air wing.

The Air Drop section prepared, loaded, and "kicked" supplies to Detachment 101 groups in enemy territory. Since C-47, C-46, and B-25 drop aircraft were the key to maintaining the Allied toehold at Myitkyina, Detachment 101 used every ploy with LTG Stilwell and the USAAF to get a fair share of aircraft during the monsoon. Detachment 101's need was compounded by LTG Stilwell's direction to expand the guerrilla force to 10,000 fighters. They dropped 251,500 pounds of supplies into the field in June, 310,000 pounds in July, and 850,000 pounds in August, 1944. Yet, at times even this was not sufficient. Groups could not delay movements just because the weather negated supply.

To help deal with contingencies, a forward Detachment 101 supply section was established at the Myitkyina airfield in June. Rather than have cargo planes return to their Dinjan, India airbase with full loads because bad weather precluded airdrops, the planes were unloaded at Myitkyina.¹³ That way, they could take advantage of opportune airlift to attempt other drops. This was important because the USAAF daily allotment of aircraft from Dinjan of aircraft for Detachment 101 was

2.3 plane loads of supplies.¹⁴ Opportune airlift from Myitkyina did not count toward the daily quota. But, life for the Air Drop section at Myitkyina was far from safe.

First Lieutenant Bernard M. Brophy, serving at the Myitkyina Air Drop Depot, remembered that a P-51 Mustang fighter crashed landed on top of a P-40 Warhawk. They got the pilots out, but the planes caught on fire, which then spread to the OSS warehouse. "There was ammunition going off all day ... next thing we knew half of our warehouse was gone!"¹⁵ When air resupply got critical, Detachment 101 sent its air wing to help out.

Unlike other OSS units, Detachment 101 had organic air assets. Its "Red Ass Squadron," eventually grew to include Stinson L-1 Vigilants, Piper Cubs (L-4 Grasshoppers), a De Havilland Gypsy Moth, Stinson L-5 Sentinels, a Noorduynd UC-64A Norseman, Stearman PT-17 "Kaydets," and a British Spitfire fighter.¹⁶ For most missions the squadron used the outdated L-1. The OSS preferred it because pilots could carry heavy loads, land and take off from rough, short airfields, and it was strongly-built. Red Ass pilots performed emergency supply drops, medical and prisoner of war extractions, couriered time-critical intelligence, observation, liaison, and the occasional light bombing mission. The Detachment 101 light planes usually landed on crude airstrips hacked out of the jungle, on river sandbars, or in open fields. In June 1944 they extracted forty-nine wounded Chindits from the Mogaung area.¹⁷

A Stinson L-5 Sentinel lands at an airfield in north Burma, 1944. Both the L-5 and L-4 Grasshopper were more common liaison aircraft than the Red Ass Squadron's preferred L-1 Vigilant.





LT James R. Ward (kneeling in M-42 jumpsuit) with a group of Kachin guerrillas in 1944.



1LT Daniel Mudrinich instructs Kachin recruits in the use of the .30 M1 carbine. Notice the thick jungle scrub which is common in north Burma.



A Detachment 101-trained indigenous radio operator contacts headquarters in 1944, while another guerrilla turns a crank to supply power. Many of the radio operators had little to no English language skills but were very efficient in sending and receiving Morse Code messages.



A group of Kachins with a parachute-qualified OSS officer somewhere in Burma 1944-45. The group displays the variety of weapons that was prevalent in Detachment 101's guerrilla elements. They are armed with U.S. .30 M1 rifles and carbines, a .45 Thompson submachine gun, and a British .303 Bren light machinegun.

maintain the weapon. Commanders in the field also had to use common-sense.

The field leaders decided how their guerrillas would be armed. A large variety of American and British weapons were available. "The guy in the field had a hell of a lot of power placed on him ... do what you think makes sense," summed up Mudrinich when he described the guidance given him.²⁵ 2LT Ward, in Area #2, explained his criteria for arming his Kachins: "They were strong but not very tall ... the carbine [M1] was an easy size for them to carry, but it didn't have the stopping power. The Garand had much more range and stopping power, but it was very heavy and big."²⁶ Ward armed most of his troops with the .45 caliber M1A1 Thompson sub-machinegun. While heavy, its stopping power, ease

of use, compactness, and heavy volume of fire was great for ambushes, Detachment 101's specialty.

Hit and run tactics favored the recruits in training, often on their first combat operations. After positioning themselves at the best place along the road to cripple enemy movement, they waited for the Japanese.²⁹ The Kachins "would open up with everything they had, but for only five or ten minutes ... this was our normal way of fighting," said Mudrinich.³⁰ Then, they would scatter and regroup elsewhere.

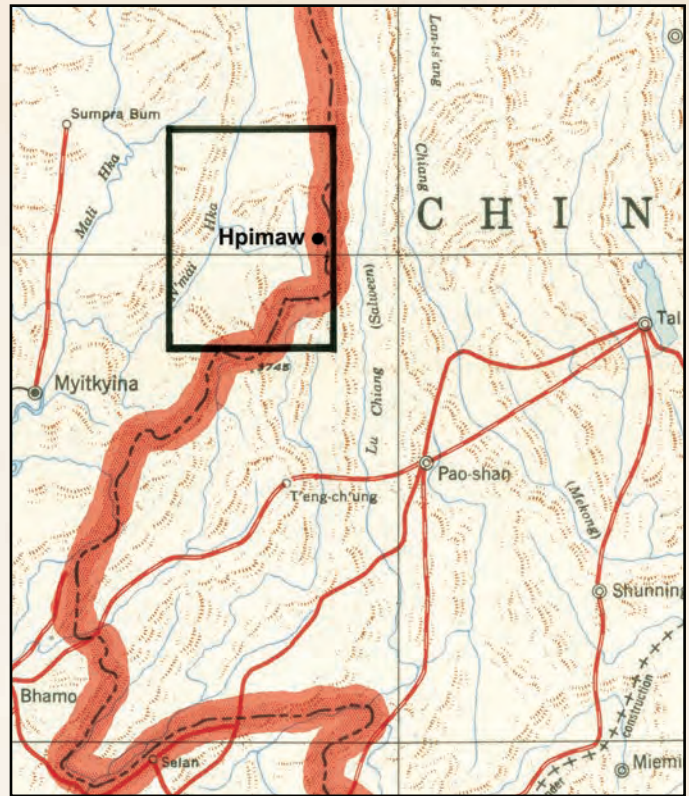
Several ambushes and raids a week became standard practice. With Myitkyina under siege, FORWARD managed to drive the Japanese from outlying towns and prevented them from joining the city's garrison. Roads and trails leading into Myitkyina and further south were constantly covered. Japanese forces became very frustrated and paranoid. The main avenue of approach, however, was the Irrawaddy River, on the east side of Myitkyina flowing south. This was the primary Japanese

Cultural Awareness



LTC William R. Peers confers with OSS Chief Major General William "Wild Bill" Donovan in early 1945.

U.S. Navy surgeon Lieutenant Commander James C. Luce commanded the FORWARD group until he went back to Detachment 101 headquarters at Nazira, India to establish a hospital. Luce had been wounded on 7 December 1941 at Pearl Harbor while serving aboard the U.S.S. Maryland.



Location of the Maru uprising along the Burma/China border.

Cultural awareness was just as important in World War II as it is today. "The Kachins didn't have the same sense of [time] that we did. We [measure] everything we do in hours, minutes, days, and weeks. To the Kachins, there are just days ... there are only two seasons ... a rainy season and a dry season. That is all," said 2LT Ward. "The Kachins weren't in a hurry to get the war over with ... this war had been going on for years ... for us to be pushing every single day was ridiculous to them."²⁷ Problems at home occasionally took precedence over fighting the Japanese.

Although Kachin guerrillas were paid, there was no formal contract, nor a serious way to discipline adverse behavior. They served of their own volition and

occasionally deserted. When Japanese troops withdrew from the China-Burma border town of Hpimaw to support Myitkyina, Chinese troops occupied the area in June 1944. Under FORWARD were numerous Maru troops, a Kachin sub-tribe, who learned that the Chinese were looting their villages. FORWARD's commander, U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander James C. Luce, started moving to the south as ordered by LTC Peers. During the first day's march south, 110 Marus deserted, taking their weapons and equipment. These Marus waged war against the Chinese for three weeks. Though the Chinese reported seventy-five of their troops killed, OSS intelligence reports placed the number closer to 400.²⁸

evacuation route for their wounded and for resupply.

The FORWARD guerrillas set up ambushes along the Irrawaddy close to Myitkyina while other OSS groups established river blocks to the south. Mudrinich and 200 guerrillas occupied a favorite position below Myitkyina for nearly two months. The Japanese tried to escape Myitkyina "on camouflaged rafts ... anytime we saw any movement ... we shot it up if we could."³¹ Bodies were recovered downstream and searched for intelligence. LTC Peers told OSS chief Donovan that the enemy was "like clay pigeons for our marksmen on the banks."³² LTG Stilwell was impressed. Even his 21 July 1944 diary entry read, "indications are now that we have the noose [around Myitkyina] good and tight and that few will get away."³³ As the Detachment 101 elements around Myitkyina tore

up the Japanese escape routes, NCAC forces in the south sealed their fate.

The OSS guerrillas in Area #2 had been protecting the flanks of the worn-down Chindits who were pressing the attack on Mogaung.³⁴ After getting a message from the Chindits that they would leave if Chinese troops did not arrive in two days, OSS Agent "Skittles," (Harry Hengshoon) and his Kachins led the 114th Regiment of the 38th Chinese Division around the flank to encircle Mogaung and link-up with the Chindits.³⁵ It would not have been accomplished without the OSS liaison personnel that were in contact with each group. The two forces took the town on 26 June 1944, severing one of the last remaining Japanese links to supply, reinforcement, and relief to their forces in the north.³⁶ Still, the Japanese

defenders in Myitkyina held on for another month.

The Detachment 101 guerrillas had to increase their efforts. They began patrolling the length of the Mogaung-Myitkyina rail line.³⁷ 1LT Ted U. Barnes in Area #2 was mopping up Japanese stragglers who were "badly organized, badly equipped, and trying to get through to the south."³⁸ OSS elements continued to hammer the Japanese. The Irrawaddy became a shooting gallery. Under increased pressure, the Japanese position in north Burma unraveled.

On 3 August 1944 Chinese troops discovered that Myitkyina had been abandoned.³⁹ Wounded that could not be moved were left behind and a small rear guard covered the retreat. The combination of conventional and unconventional warfare had finally attrited the Japanese. The OSS guerrillas continued to harass the Japanese forces fleeing north Burma. Even Detachment 101's Air Drop section got in the action. First Lieutenant Bernard M. Brophy, manning the OSS supply at Myitkyina, occasionally went on supply drops to groups south of the city. He recalled that on the return flights, the pilots would often fly low to the ground. The OSS "kickers" kept a watch out the open door for a chance to use the cache of grenades that they always carried on such flights for "the off chance that we spotted something." If they spotted an enemy-manned raft on the Irrawaddy or a Japanese patrol, they would toss out a few grenades. He said, "We never knew if we hit anything or not ... there was no real rhyme or reason for it, just a chance to do something."⁴⁰ LT Mudrinich added, "they were so beat up. It was kind of a miracle that any of them got out and got home again."⁴¹ With Myitkyina finally in Allied hands, the conventional forces stopped to rest. Detachment 101 could not because LTG Stilwell was planning the next offensive.

Detachment 101 was the only American or British ground force that participated in the Myitkyina Campaign

Harry Hengshoon, AKA "Skittles," was a Burmese national of Chinese descent. He spoke several languages fluently, including Chinese, Burmese, and English. He was one of the top agents employed by Detachment 101.



to remain intact afterwards. The Marauders and the Chindits had been rendered ineffective, mostly by disease. The remaining Marauders still on their feet became the cadre of the 475th Infantry Regiment, one of two in the 5332nd Brigade (Provisional), known as the MARS Task Force. The Chindits never returned to the field and were disbanded in February 1945. The war was over for them, but not for Detachment 101.

The OSS guerrilla units continued to intercept Japanese elements fleeing south, preventing them from regrouping, refitting, and being able to stand against the Allied drive after the monsoon stopped. In August 1944, the Detachment added several hundred more Japanese killed to their accomplishments. The reality was that the OSS guerrillas were the only Allied element maintaining contact with the Japanese south of Myitkyina until 15 October 1944, when NCAC resumed its offensive.⁴² The OSS had proved itself to be an extremely capable "wild card" maneuver force.

Securing Myitkyina ended Japanese domination of north Burma. The Allies could use the city as a supply depot for the Ledo Road and its airfield supported operations in lower Burma. Because cargo planes no longer had to

Soldiers of Merrill's Marauders take a well-earned break away from the battle of Myitkyina on 2 August 1944. The Japanese positions were about 75 yards away.





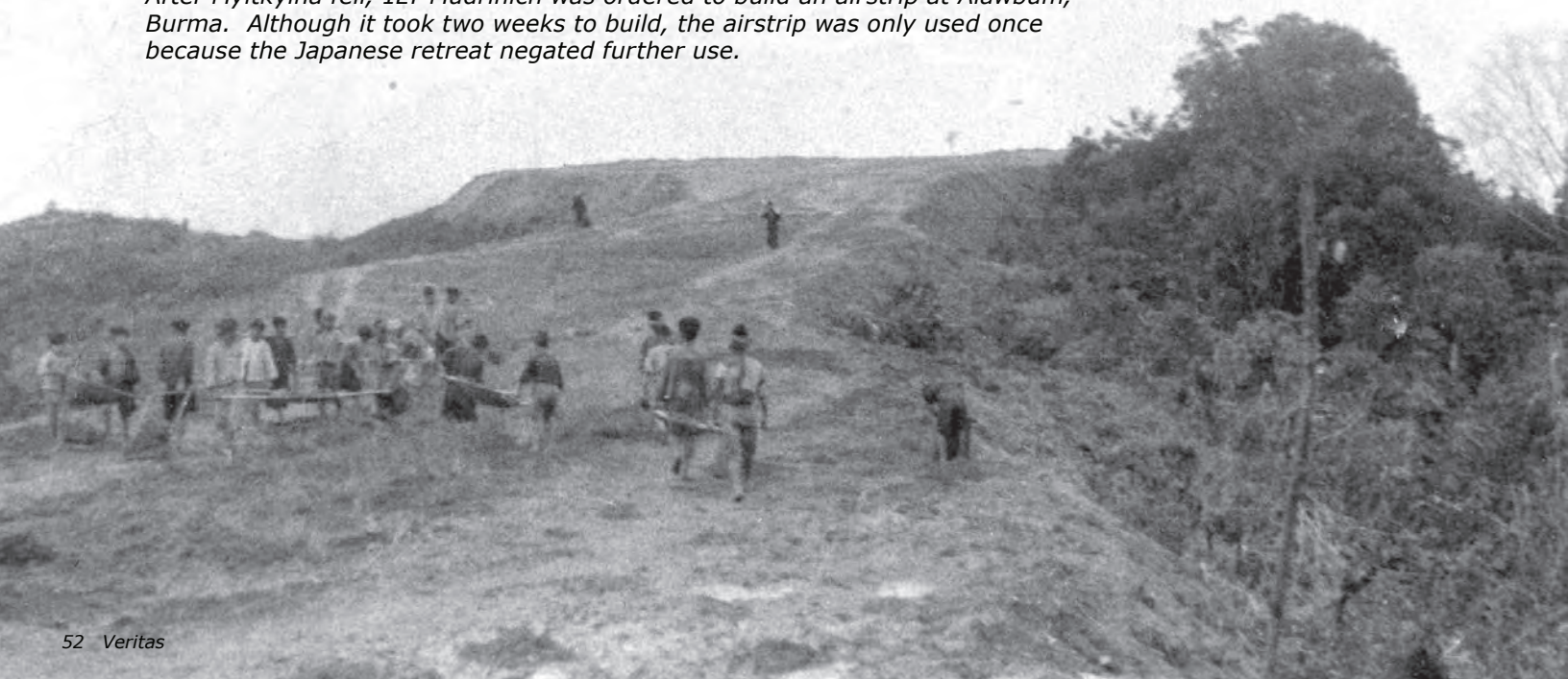
Area #1 officers pose in the field, late 1944. On the left standing is CPT Sherman "Pete" Joost, 1LT Danny Mudrinich, Father MacAllindon (an Irish Catholic priest who was assisting the OSS), U.S. Navy Pharmacist Mate Lysle E. Wilson, and standing on the far right, 1LT Joseph E. Lazarsky, (kneeling unknown).

fly the original "Hump" route to avoid Japanese fighter aircraft based there, the tonnage increased from 13,000 tons a month in May 1944 to nearly 40,000 by November 1944.⁴³ Strategically, Detachment 101 had a major impact, but theirs was an economy of force effort.

There were only some 90 Americans and British in the field with the guerrilla forces.⁴⁴ At the end of August 1944, Area #1 had five American and three British officers and fourteen American and three British enlisted men working with the units.⁴⁵ The OSS had been a force-multiplier because its guerrillas tied up thousands of

Japanese in north Burma and had severely attrited the enemy in an around Myitkyina.⁴⁶ The intelligence flow to the USAAF never ceased. Major General Howard Davidson, 10th USAAF, commended the unit in August 1944 for providing the bulk of the intelligence used by his unit throughout the campaign.⁴⁷ It was truly Detachment 101 that tipped the balance in favor of the Allies in north Burma. LTC Ray Peers had transformed the unit into the strategic theater asset envisioned by OSS director William Donovan when he sent the group to Burma in 1942. ♣

After Myitkyina fell, 1LT Mudrinich was ordered to build an airstrip at Alawbum, Burma. Although it took two weeks to build, the airstrip was only used once because the Japanese retreat negated further use.



I wish to thank Mrs. Marje Luce and Detachment 101 veterans Bernard Brophy and Peter Lutken for their assistance. In particular, I wish to express my gratitude to the family of Danny Mudrinich, who spent many hours discussing the campaign with me but passed away before he could see the article's completion.

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

Endnotes

- 1 The role of Detachment 101 leading to the 17 May 1944 capture of the Myitkyina airfield was presented in "A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign, Part I" by Troy J. Sacquety, in *Veritas* 1: 2008
- 2 William Slim, *Defeat Into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942-1945* (New York, NY: Copper Square Press, 2000), 280.
- 3 Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *United States Army in World War II: China-Burma-India Theater: Stilwell's Command Problems* (Washington, D.C: Center of Military History, 1987), 232.
- 4 Brigadier General Bernard E. Fergusson's 16th Infantry Brigade (3,000 men) began a 360-mile march to their operating area on 5 February 1944. For more on the LRPGs, see "Allied Long Range Penetration Groups for Burma: The Chindits, the Marauders, and the MARS Task Force," by Troy J. Sacquety, in *Veritas* 1: 2008.
- 5 William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May to 30 June, 1944," [30 June 1944], F 13, B 34, E 190, RG 226, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).
- 6 LTC Emile Z. Berman, "Special Report on Activities of Detachment 101 O.S.S. in Relation to Air Force Action in North Burma," 11 September 1944, F 16, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.
- 7 Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May," [30 June 1944], NARA.
- 8 Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May," [30 June 1944], NARA. The OSS OGs organized, trained, and equipped resistance organizations, conducted "hit and run" missions against enemy-controlled roads, railways, and strong points, or prevented their destruction by retreating enemy forces. OG teams operated in Italy, France, Yugoslav Islands, Greece, Burma, and China.
- 9 Operation TRAMP, formed out of the RED group under Pat Maddox, had been augmented in April by the DOW and PETE groups (named after their commanders) and composed of Americans that had been in V-Force, a British-led intelligence unit. The V-Force personnel were extremely valuable to Detachment 101 and brought with them a wealth of experience on the operating environment. Several had learned to speak Kachin, and were well-respected by the local population.
- 10 William R. Peers and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), 137-139. Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May," [30 June 1944], NARA.
- 11 William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June to 31 July, 1944," [31 July 1944], F 14, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.
- 12 Daniel Mudrinich, telephone interview by Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 11 April 2008, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 13 Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May," [30 June 1944], NARA.
- 14 Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June," [late July 1944], NARA. The Detachment 101 quota of aircraft was insignificant compared to that necessary to hold Myitkyina's airfield.
- 15 Bernard M. Brophy, telephone interview by Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 25 August 2008, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 16 Vince Trifletti, "Rocky Reardon's Airforce," *101 Association Incorporated*, April 1975, 3-5.
- 17 Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May," [30 June 1944], NARA.
- 18 Mudrinich interview, 11 April 2008.
- 19 Peter K. Lutken, telephone interview by Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 2 July 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, notes. Also see Reginald Thorlin, "Pete Group," 28 August 1944, F 439, B 64, E 190, RG 226, NARA.
- 20 Mudrinich interview, 11 April 2008.
- 21 Mudrinich interview, 11 April 2008. Detachment 101 used the Burma Rifle's ranks from the pre-war British Indian Army.
- 22 James R. Ward, interviewed by COL Larry A. Hoff, 1989, 16-18, draft manuscript in author's possession.
- 23 Daniel Mudrinich, interview by Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 20 May 2008, Seminole, FL, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 24 Mudrinich interview, 11 April 2008.
- 25 Mudrinich interview, 20 May 2008.
- 26 Ward, interview, 24-25.
- 27 Ward interview, 49-50.
- 28 James C. Luce, see "Report on Tour of Duty With Office of Strategic Services Detachment 101: North Burma and Assam, November 1, 1943 to April 1, 1945," [April 1945], original in author's possession; "Interview with Maj. Drown," 16 May 1945, F 46, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Relations with the Chinese troops were so poor that members of Detachment 101 were given a standing order that they were to keep themselves and their troops well away from them unless a specific liaison task was given.
- 29 Mudrinich interview, 20 May 2008.
- 30 Mudrinich interview, 11 April 2008.
- 31 Mudrinich interview, 11 April 2008.
- 32 William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report covering period 31 July to 31 August, 1944," [31 August], F 15, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.
- 33 Joseph W. Stilwell, *The Stilwell Papers* (New York: William Sloane Associates, 1948), 307.
- 34 [Interview of Ted Barnes], 1 December 1944, F 78, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA. One of the screening groups was the DAVIS group. It armed Kachin villagers to serve as militia and agents, and organized local labor to build airstrips and be stretcher-bearers. These Kachins served as the nucleus for new groups. See Thomas J. Davis to Opero, radio message 22, 23 June 1944, F 415, B 28, E 154, RG 226, NARA., and Thomas J. Davis to Operations, "Report of Field Operations for Period April 7," [July 1944], NARA.
- 35 "Harry S. Hengshoon (Skittles)," [May 1945?], F 46, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA. The Chindits did most of the fighting for Mogaung, but Stilwell gave the Chinese the credit for taking it. Chindit Brigadier General James "Mad Mike" Calvert signaled in protest; "The Chinese having taken Mogaung 77 Brigade is proceeding to take Umbrage". See Shelford Bidwell, *The Chindit War: Stilwell, Wingate, and the Campaign in Burma, 1944* (New York: Macmillan, 1979), 274.
- 36 In fact, a Japanese Regimental Combat Team of the 53rd Division had been under way to relieve Myitkyina, but was turned back by the Allied advance on Mogaung.
- 37 Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June," [31 July 1944], NARA.
- 38 [Interview of Ted Barnes], 1 December 1944, F 78, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA.
- 39 Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 233-236.
- 40 Brophy interview, 25 August 2008.
- 41 Mudrinich interview, 20 May 2008.
- 42 William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period 30 September to 31 October, 1944," [1 November 1944], F 17, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.
- 43 Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 112, 254.
- 44 Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 31 July," [31 August 1944], NARA.
- 45 Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report covering period 31 July" [31 August], NARA.
- 46 Robert Rodenberg to William R. Peers, "Casualties of Detachment 101 Personnel," 31 August 1944, F 209A, B 26, E 165, RG 226, NARA. From 1942 until August 1944, Detachment 101 killed nearly 2000 Japanese, more than half of which occurred from May-August 1944. According to "KNOTHEAD GROUP," F 48, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA, Japanese dead were only counted if a body was seen, or if a Japanese soldier was observed to fall after being shot.
- 47 Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 31 July," [31 August 1944], NARA. See Howard Davidson to William J. Donovan, "Contribution of Detachment 101, OSS, to USAAF in Northeastern Assam and North Burma," 1 August 1944.

A SECOND CHANCE: Operation PACIFIC HAVEN

by Robert W. Jones, Jr.



HAVING just returned from an Ulchi-Focus Lens exercise in South Korea, Major (MAJ) Henry J. “Hank” Henry was at home on Saturday morning (14 September) when the telephone rang. Told to come immediately to the 8th Psychological Operations Battalion (8th POB) headquarters, Henry was met by the Battalion XO, MAJ Chris Leyda and the S3, MAJ Tim Longanacre. Together they met with Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Michael Mathews, the Battalion Commander. LTC Mathews gave MAJ Henry a warning order. I was “to take a small team of specialists including my detachment, two civilian analysts from the Strategic Studies Detachment, several tactical PSYOP soldiers, and two soldiers from the Product Dissemination Battalion and deploy to Guam for Joint Task Force-PACIFIC HAVEN,” remembered MAJ Henry.¹ The task-organized unit, called a “Military Information Support Team” (MIST), would support Kurdish refugees fleeing from northern Iraq.² This article explains the psychological operations performed by the 8th POB for this little known

mission, Operation PACIFIC HAVEN, the humanitarian support of nearly 7,000 Kurds in Guam and preparing them for emigration to the United States.

The 8th POB was regionally oriented to the Middle East and Asia/Pacific. Although responsible for Asia/Pacific, B Company received the mission because Company A was completely tasked out for other duties. PSYOP soldiers from two other battalions in the 4th

MIST: A Military Information Support Team (MIST) was a non-doctrinal organization created in the 4th POG to support ambassadors in the U.S. Southern Command’s area of responsibility. The team provided PSYOP support to either an ambassador or to a supported commander. The size, composition, and capability of a particular MIST was mission-specific.⁴

1996, A Busy Year for Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF)



In addition to numerous Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) readiness exercises and training missions, ARSOF units supported contingency missions worldwide. In Europe, ARSOF soldiers supported conventional forces in Operations JOINT ENDEAVOR (Bosnia) and ABLE SENTRY (Macedonia). ARSOF soldiers conducted a non-combatant evacuee operation, ASSURED RESPONSE in Liberia. In the Western Hemisphere ARSOF supported Operation SEA SIGNAL with Haitian migrants in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, while others, primarily 7th Special Forces Group, supported Operation SAFE BORDER, a peacekeeping mission on the Ecuador/Peru border.



Examples of leaflets used during Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. They were a map of the camp with assistance locations marked; a warning about mines; and rules for receiving aid once the refugees got to a safe location.

ground, he could ask for additional help from the battalion or group if necessary. To cover many contingencies, and to be self-sufficient for at least thirty days, the MIST brought computers, two risographs (high speed presses), two loudspeakers, and a 12-foot video screen and projector.⁸ On Tuesday morning, after a quick predeployment briefing, they joined B Company, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion at Pope Air Force Base. Both elements received no further mission guidance prior to take-off. The two groups boarded a C-141 Starlifter and landed on Guam on the afternoon of 19 September, two days after the first contingent of Kurds had arrived, because of delays en route.⁹ This humanitarian mission resulted from the Kurdish rebellion against Saddam Hussein following Gulf War of 1990-91.

After the Iraqi military defeat in Kuwait in March 1991, Kurdish groups in northern Iraq rebelled against Saddam Hussein's government. Saddam Hussein responded with a brutal military offensive that targeted civilians with artillery and chemical weapons to crush the rebellion. Masoud Barzani, the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) leader, said that over three million Kurds had fled into the mountains of northern Iraq and towards

the Turkish border for safety.¹⁰ Having its own rebellious Kurdish minority, Turkey did not allow the refugees to cross the border. Instead, refugee "shanty towns" sprang up in the mountainous border area. In the harsh and unpredictable weather, hundreds died of exposure and sickness. Food, water, and adequate shelter were essential for the refugees' survival. The growing humanitarian crisis forced a United Nations' response.

Psychological Operations Group (4th POG) and two experienced civilian PSYOP analysts from the 8th POB Strategic Studies Detachment (SSD), Dr. Ehsan Entezar and Dr. Joseph T. Arlinghaus, were added to the MIST as an afterthought. The two civilian analysts played critical roles during the operation.³

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed two resolutions in response to Saddam Hussein's actions. On 3 April 1991, UNSC Resolution 687 called for Iraq to give "assurances of peaceful intentions and prohibited the use of weapons of mass destruction."¹¹ Two days later, the UNSC passed Resolution 688, condemning Iraqi actions and asking member states to provide humanitarian aid and support to the Kurds and other refugees in northern Iraq.¹² The United States government responded to the crisis first.

President George H. W. Bush ordered U.S. European Command (EUCOM) to stand up a Joint Task Force (JTF) to

After receiving his warning order, MAJ Henry immediately contacted Staff Sergeant (SSG) Brad Virden, his Non-Commissioned Officer-in-Charge (NCOIC) to alert the rest of the soldiers.⁵ Several soldiers were on a funeral firing detail that morning. SSG Virden caught them as they finished the ceremony. "As we began to turn in our weapons, SSG Virden showed up with a packing list and a verbal warning order for the deployment to Guam," said Specialist Brian Furber.⁶ A telephone call from SSG Virden surprised Specialist Craig Coleman. "I had just returned from Operation ASSURED RESPONSE [the non-combatant evacuation from Liberia] and was still assigned to the 9th PSYOP Battalion," said Coleman. "I was not scheduled to transfer to the 8th POB for another week."⁷ The weekend "off" was consumed with packing for the mission.

On Monday morning (16 September 1996) the 8th POB only had a deployment order to Guam. On the surface the mission seemed simple; support the Joint Task Force with PSYOP information products. The rest was left up to MAJ Henry and his team, who had to figure it out. Once on the



8th PSYOP Battalion DUI



4th POG DUI



One of the many refugee "shanty towns" that sprang up along the mountainous Iraq-Turkey border. Hundreds died of exposure and sickness in the harsh and unpredictable weather.



Kurdish refugees fleeing Saddam Hussein's forces with all their worldly belongings pause for a rest on a road near a refugee camp. The refugees received aid from CJTF-Provide Comfort at the camp. (DOD Photo by JO1 J.D. Dimattio, 4/1/1991)

begin humanitarian assistance operations on 6 April 1991 from Incirlik Air Base, Turkey. When British and French forces joined the effort, the task force became Combined Joint Task Force PROVIDE COMFORT (CJTF-PC). Its mission was to "provide relief to the refugees and enforce the security of the humanitarian efforts of the CJTF as well as the various non governmental organizations attending to the needs of the Kurds."¹³ The UN created a Kurdish "safe haven" in northern Iraq. It became known either as the "Provide Comfort" zone or the "Autonomous Kurdish Region." The zone assumed a *de facto* quasi-independent country status supported by the Coalition.¹⁴ The zone was protected with a Coalition-enforced "No-Fly Zone" to prevent the Iraqis from conducting offensive flights.

On 24 July 1991 Operation PROVIDE COMFORT (OPC) evolved into a second phase called Operation PROVIDE COMFORT II (OPC II). In effect, the northeast portion of Iraq (the ethnically Kurdish area) became a United Nations

(UN) supported protectorate zone. In October 1995, the UN assumed responsibility for the humanitarian aspects of OPC, while the CJTF-PC provided security. "Provide Comfort is a triad, so to speak: a security force for the 3.2 million people in northern Iraq, a deterrent force against Iraqi aggression, and a humanitarian relief effort," said U.S. Air Force Brigadier General John R. Dallager, the co-commander of CJTF-OPC II.¹⁵ The Kurds established a 105-seat Kurdish parliament after 1992 elections in the OPC zone.¹⁶ Humanitarian efforts became secondary to deterring Iraqi attacks on the Kurds. The relative peace and safety in the protectorate zone were broken in the summer of 1996 when internal fighting broke out among rival Kurdish groups.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) each had equal power in the parliament. In August 1996, political relations deteriorated into all out fighting. The intensity escalated

In the relative safety of a CJTF-Provide Comfort camp near Zaku, Kurdish refugees fill containers with purified water. Clean water saved hundreds of lives.





Map of Iraq showing the two No-Fly zones and the Kurdish area that became the Operation PROVIDE COMFORT zone.

between 17 and 22 August, when, in a surprise move, the KDP allied with the Iraqi Army to seize the PUK controlled city of Irbil. The city was significant for several reasons: it was the site of the Kurdish Parliament; and the headquarters of the Iraqi National Congress that opposed the Iraqi government. With his new allies, Saddam Hussein launched a 40,000-man force into the OPC area.¹⁷

In response to the Iraqi offensive the CJTF-PC II commander launched air strikes (Operation DESERT STRIKE) against the invaders and ordered all coalition personnel withdrawn from northern Iraq.¹⁸ The Republican Guard and *Mukhabarat* (intelligence service) moved into the void. Opposition leaders and coalition supporters were killed.¹⁹ The air strikes stopped the overt Iraqi offensive and forced a withdrawal, but the KDP and Saddam Hussein had accomplished what they wanted.²⁰

During the five years of OPC, the coalition and Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) had hired local Kurds as interpreters, drivers, and to perform other jobs. Now the local workers were at risk of retaliation by Iraqi and KDP forces. Rather than leave its former employees in a life-threatening situation, the Department of State (DOS) received presidential approval to implement a voluntary evacuation.²¹

The DOS solution was a two-phase operation. First,

Operation QUICK TRANSIT (QT), conducted primarily by the DOS and the U.S. Air Force providing transportation support, would move the Kurdish refugees from northern Iraq to an intermediate safe area for immigration screening and processing.²² The second phase, Operation PACIFIC HAVEN (PH) conducted on Guam, would support the process, including housing, and then get the refugees to the USA or other countries.

JTF Quick Transit (JTF-QT) delivered the Kurds first across the border into Turkey and then to Guam. Simultaneously to receive the refugees, an Air Force-dominated JTF PACIFIC HAVEN, supporting the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), was stood up at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam. The island was selected as an intermediate staging base for two reasons; first, it had recently vacated housing associated with the 1993 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process.²³ Secondly, Guam was a remote secure site to evaluate and process the refugees seeking political asylum.²⁴ The Kurdish

refugees could not “walk out the gate” of the base and find refuge in the United States; they needed documentation to emigrate.²⁵ The two JTFs focused on transportation, housing, and processing, without considering how to prepare the refugees for life elsewhere.

Additional military forces were needed to perform the humanitarian mission on Guam. In the beginning, the JTF PACIFIC HAVEN staff and assets came primarily from Air Force and Navy units stationed on Guam. Significant Army augmentation came from U.S. Army Pacific Command (USARPAC), Hawaii. The 25th Infantry Division sent infantry and military police units as a security force. The Department of the Army tasked the active and the Army Reserve for specialized units and individual augmentees. These were the sources of administration, medical, engineering, public affairs, and linguistic support.²⁶ It took time to accumulate these assets. The Fort Bragg-based Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs units were landing as the other forces converged on Guam.

When MAJ Henry’s MIST arrived in Guam, there was an asset already in place, SSG Carl S. Alerta from the PSYOP Forward Support Detachment in Hawaii. “The notification to deploy to Guam was short-notice ... approximately two hours. About 10 a.m. [Friday 13 September] I was told



Operation QUICK TRANSIT moved the Kurdish refugees from northern Iraq to Incirlik AFB and then to Guam. Operation PACIFIC HAVEN cared for the refugees on the island until they received immigration clearance and left for the United States.

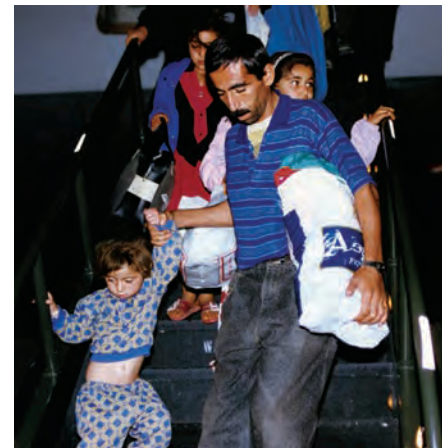
by the J-32 colonel that I had two hours to get my things packed for deployment to Guam,” said SSG Alerta. “This meant that I had to drive to my residence on the other side of the island, pack and return by noon. I accomplished the requirement, but wound up packing a bag full of dirty clothes, since I hadn’t done my laundry.” As it turned out, Alerta could have done several loads of laundry. The U.S. Pacific Command team rushed to the Honolulu airport and then waited for a flight later that evening.²⁷

Until additional personnel arrived, the five-man team was slotted as advisors to the 13th Air Force (JTF-PH), because it had not trained as a Joint Task Force. The five PACOM advisors included a U.S. Marine colonel from J-3 Operations, a Navy Public Affairs officer, a medical operations planner, a Reserve Civil Affairs LTC, and SSG Alerta as the PSYOP planner. “We were included because there were no PSYOP or CA assets on Guam and the JTF staff had no PSYOP or CA planning experience,” commented Alerta.²⁸

SSG Alerta began advising the JTF-PH commander and staff on what the Fort Bragg PSYOP assets en route could do for him. He was also a one-man PSYOP advance party, arranging for billets, finding working space, and setting up transportation. MAJ Henry discovered that SSG Alerta coordinated everything necessary “to get in and get set up for the operation,” said MAJ Henry.²⁹ Four hours after they arrived the MIST was ready to operate.

The DOS planned for a single group of Kurdish refugees. Initially the primary concern of JTF-QT was getting the refugees out of harm’s way. A key planning assumption was that the entire mission would take 30 to 60 days. Once the refugees landed on Guam, the lead agency switched from the DOS to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). On Guam a myriad of government agencies, including the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, helped the DHHS prepare the refugees for emigration. JTF-PC established a Humanitarian Assistance Center (HAC) to coordinate the governmental,

A father helps his daughter down the stairs of a plane. The Kurdish refugees had just completed a 17-hour flight from Turkey to Guam. (DOD photo by PH1 Kurt Lengfield, 9/96)



private volunteer, and non governmental organizations (NGOs) that came to assist.³⁰

In spite of the short preparation time, JTF-PH developed a good reception plan for the Kurds. Once on Guam, they received everything from medical to security screening. Since the initial group of refugees were former employees, and family members that worked for the U.S. Agency for International Development’s Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and CJTF PROVIDE COMFORT, the 30-60 day processing assumption seemed valid.³¹ How the refugees would be prepared for assimilation in their new country was not factored.

When the commercially contracted planes landed at Andersen AFB, the Kurdish refugees were greeted and given a hot meal. Assigned volunteer escorts helped each family through the reception and screening process, which included customs, medical screening, and an initial INS interview. Buses then transported the families to the Andersen South Housing Area for housing assignment. Once installed, the Kurds began the bureaucratic waiting game tied to an approval to emigrate. Since the Kurds had arrived in extended family groups, they were kept together. As families were cleared, they waited to fill a charter aircraft to go to the United States.³²



A volunteer escort meets a Kurdish refugee family upon arrival at Andersen AFB, Guam. The volunteer would help the family through customs, medical screening, and an initial INS interview. (DOD photo by PH2 Rex Cordell)



A Kurdish refugee boy carries food for his family to his temporary home at Andersen AFB, Guam from the dining facility. The sign on the right assures the Kurds that the food is "Free from Pork," meeting Muslim religious dietary customs. (DOD photo by PH2 Rex Cordell, 19 Sep 1996)



Medical personnel take a blood sample from a newly-arrived Kurdish boy who is being comforted by his father. The medical screening procedures were critical for getting approval to emigrate. (DOD photo by PH2 Jeff Viano)

Andersen South was a furnished housing area for the refugees. The Base Housing Office provided all furniture and household items, from pots and pans to linens. A centralized dining facility was set up in the center of the community to provide three hot meals a day. But, after the first few weeks, Kurdish leaders asked that the families be allowed to cook at home. Food, with special attention to Muslim dietary restrictions, was provided from a central issue site.

MG Dallager named Air Force LTC Elwood Johnson the Andersen South "Mayor," to coordinate refugee operations. In a "four-plex" in the center of the community, near the dining facility and hospital, he established an office with PSYOP, CA, and supply departments in the other three apartments. Co-located with the Kurds in the community LTC Johnson eliminated many issues before they became problems. He hosted meetings with the Kurdish leaders and held open "town hall" meetings for the community at large.³³

Medical care became the responsibility of the U.S. Air Force 36th Medical Group. The USAF brought in a 14-bed mobile hospital from Japan to help with medical screening and medical support of the refugees. The Navy and the Army provided additional medical assets as the operation continued. Every refugee had to receive a complete medical examination, including the required vaccinations. In the process, more than thirty children were born on Guam, automatically making them U.S. citizens.³⁴

One factor that greatly assisted the operation was local volunteer support and donations from the military and civilian communities on Guam. Since many Kurds arrived with little more than the clothes on their backs, the local community's outpouring of goodwill was a godsend. Clothing, household items, toiletries, toys, and other things amounting to \$650,000 were donated, as well over 40,000 volunteer hours.³⁵

To provide for the refugees' religious needs, the Navy sent its first Muslim Chaplain, Lieutenant (Junior Grade) M. Malak Abd Al Muta'ali Noel, Jr., to Guam.³⁶ Air Force and Navy engineers built two mosques in the housing area. While over ninety percent of the Kurds were Muslim, there were also Syrian or Chaldean Christians, so local Christian chaplains provided religious services.³⁷

When the MIST got to Guam, the first groups of Kurdish refugees had been there between 48 and 72 hours. The MIST went into "reaction mode," producing information products as fast as they could to reduce the culture shock on the refugees. There had not been time for pre-deployment training. However, the MIST had a head start: "Our training for Ulchi-Focus Lens had been intense. It helped us develop and refine Product Development Center (PDC) procedures," said MAJ Henry.³⁸ Added to the standing operating procedures they had a solid foundation for all activities.

While MAJ Henry briefed the JTF on his unit's capabilities, the rest of the team assessed the needs of the Kurdish refugees. In reality, the PSYOP soldiers had two target audiences; the refugees and the JTF staff who had



Civilian and military volunteers sort through clothing donated on Guam. The local community donated \$650,000 worth of clothing, household items, toiletries, toys, and other things, as well over 40,000 volunteer hours during the six months of the operation. (DOD photo by PH2 Rex Cordell, 19 Sep 1996).



A sample marriage certificate. One of the duties of the Muslim chaplain was to "re-marry" many of the Kurdish couples to provide them proper emigration documentation.

never worked with PSYOP and did not understand the capabilities. "It became apparent early on that we would need to train the Task Force [staff] on the capabilities/limitations of what a MIST can and should do," wrote MAJ Henry. "We ... turned away requests to translate lengthy pamphlets into Arabic for distribution. Pamphlets require too much time/equipment and translator investment with too little overall return."³⁹ One-page handbills were used to rapidly pass information to the refugees.

The PSYOP soldiers did have a "playbook" based on earlier refugee operations. During Operation SAFE

HAVEN, the 4th POG worked with Haitian refugees (classified as "economic migrants" by DOS and INS) and Cubans seeking political asylum quarantined at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and later on the Empire Range area in Panama.⁴⁰ PACIFIC HAVEN was not a "typical" PSYOP mission; the Kurds were refugees ("evacuees" or "guests" in the JTF parlance). The MIST had to plan a campaign to integrate the Kurds into Western society. "We are not conducting PSYOP on the Kurds. They are guests and we are simply providing information to make their relocation less stressful, which in turn will assist

Aerial view of the temporary lodging for Kurdish refugees, the Andersen South Housing Area, Guam. The housing area initially held over 2,400 Kurds. (DOD photo by PH2 Jeff Viano, 23 Sep 1996)



the JTF Commander in accomplishing his mission," MAJ Henry later briefed.⁴¹ The intent was to provide a smooth assimilation into U.S. society (although not all would be granted asylum there).

The PACIFIC HAVEN conditions were different from most refugee situations. The "camp" was in reality a neighborhood, albeit a temporary one. The Kurds were not living in tents in an isolated area or on the fringes of a war zone, but there were other challenges. "As you can imagine there are a lot of things you have to tell [inform] the people; things like how not to lock yourself out of your house, trash pick up, meal times, medical clinic hours, and where to go if you have a problem," said MAJ Henry.⁴² "The team (including the two PhDs [Entezar and Arlinghaus]) talked to the people, finding out their questions," said Specialist Coleman. "Then, we developed products to help them; things like camp rules, safety issues, how to operate household equipment, etc."⁴³

MAJ Henry and SSG Virden split their time between JTF headquarters and working with the MIST. The entire team, assisted by Drs Entezar and Arlinghaus, worked through the product development process. Specialist Brian Furber recalled, "For the first two to three weeks we sometimes worked 18 to 20 hours a day preparing products and working with the translators."⁴⁴ It took that long to assess and fulfill the immediate needs of the JTF. Once the JTF developed a routine ("battle rhythm"), the MIST schedule became more normal and included physical training.⁴⁵

The MIST became "Joint" with the attachment of Arabic-speaking Air Force, Navy, and Marine linguists. Arabic was a language that the Kurds either understood or spoke. Chief Warrant Officer Two (CW2) Kamran Gardi, a native Kurdish speaking aviator from Fort Hood, Texas was assigned to the JTF headquarters. A TDY order and a plane ticket to Guam arrived soon after Gardi got a call from the U.S. Army Personnel Command to confirm that he did

indeed speak Kurdish. Gardi served as a conduit for the refugee community leaders and the JTF headquarters.⁴⁶

Since the JTF staff had no experience working with PSYOP, the MIST had to show its effectiveness as a force multiplier. The MIST had to demonstrate that its PSYOP information products worked. Effectiveness could be shown almost immediately. A MIST handbill on how to operate an electric stove reduced the number of fire department responses to kitchen fires. Another describing the proper use of the garbage disposal stopped damage to both utensils and fingers. The MIST knew that the information products were simply quick fixes. They recognized that the larger mission was to prepare the refugees for life in their new home.

Dr. Entezar, a former Afghan refugee, and Dr. Arlinghaus understood that there had to be an assimilation program for the refugees. The real JTF mission was to prepare the refugees for "life after Guam." "The trauma of leaving everything you know to go to a country you know little or nothing about is terrifying. Few people will ever know how that feels, and words cannot describe it," said Entezar.⁴⁷ He knew from his own refugee experience that the Kurds needed to gain an awareness of life in America and that meant being a familiar enough with English to survive.

Since the original plans did not envision a new phase of the operation (preparing for life in a Western nation), the MIST recommendation for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes came as a surprise. The MIST was the only element that realized the JTF planning was deficient. When they raised the need, Drs. Entezar and Arlinghaus met only resistance from the JTF staff. But, their attitude dramatically changed when Lieutenant General (LTG) William M. Steele, the Commander of USARPAC visited. He specifically asked about an ESL program. That spurred a sudden interest in funding and personnel.⁴⁸ Civil Affairs personnel assisted Entezar and

Arlinghaus by getting end of year funding for the classroom materials. ESL prompted the JTF to look beyond just processing the Kurds for emigration.⁴⁹

While some Kurds spoke English, the majority of them did not. By chance, the two MIST civilian analysts had experience with ESL programs. Dr. Entezar had earned his PhD in applied linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin. He had taught language, including developing and administering the U.S. Peace Corps Dari (Farsi) language program. Dr. Arlinghaus had taught English in Nepal as a Peace Corps volunteer before earning his doctorate in history. After LTG Steele's visit there was a whirlwind of activity as the two analysts designed a prototype ESL syllabus for the Kurds. The result was a 4-week program with classes running half a day, three times a week. Dr. Entezar coordinated with Guam Community College (GCC) and the University of Guam for ESL materials. The GCC textbook was more practical and was adopted for the Kurdish ESL classes.⁵⁰



A MIST product to help the refugees. The "garbage disposal handbill" helped prevent fingers and utensils from getting chewed up.



Specialist Four Sarah Williams teaching one of the ESL classes. Assigned to the 8th POB and deployed with the MIST, she had been a teacher before joining the Army. As the ESL program expanded more teachers were needed to meet the demand. (DOD photo by PH2 Kevin Tierney)

The ESL program took on a life of its own as JTF support grew. In addition to the two MIST analysts, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard personnel, and local civilians volunteered to teach. But first, the teachers had to become students. Dr. Arlinghaus taught an introduction to the Middle East, Kurdish culture, the refugee process, and why the people were seeking asylum. Dr. Entezar instructed them in the basics of ESL teaching and provided suggestions on how to relate to the students. After a lot of work over a few short days, the two analysts prepared to launch the ESL program.⁵¹

One task remained, to determine the student's English language skill levels before classes began. In a normal academic situation, this is done with a formal written test. However, since the MIST did not have a test, Dr. Entezar personally conducted five to ten minute interviews with every candidate, before assigning them to a skill level and class.⁵²

The pilot program began on Monday, 7 October 1996, with fifty students in three classes: beginning, intermediate, and advanced. However, a problem arose the day classes began. Entezar was inundated with requests for ESL from Kurds not selected for the first classes. With the increased demand there had to be drastic action. The ESL classes were temporarily halted. After a lot of work training additional teachers and finding classrooms, the greatly expanded program was restarted on Monday, 14 October, as "The Freedom School," with over 300 students in 19



Dr. Ehsan Entezar teaching an ESL class. This program was designed to help facilitate integration into American society. (DOD photo by PH2 Kevin Tierney)

mixed gender classes. As classes progressed, interim tests enabled some students to move into more advanced groups. The expanded program called for Drs. Entezar and Arlinghaus to teach, manage the classes, and develop additional materials to help the teachers and students.⁵³

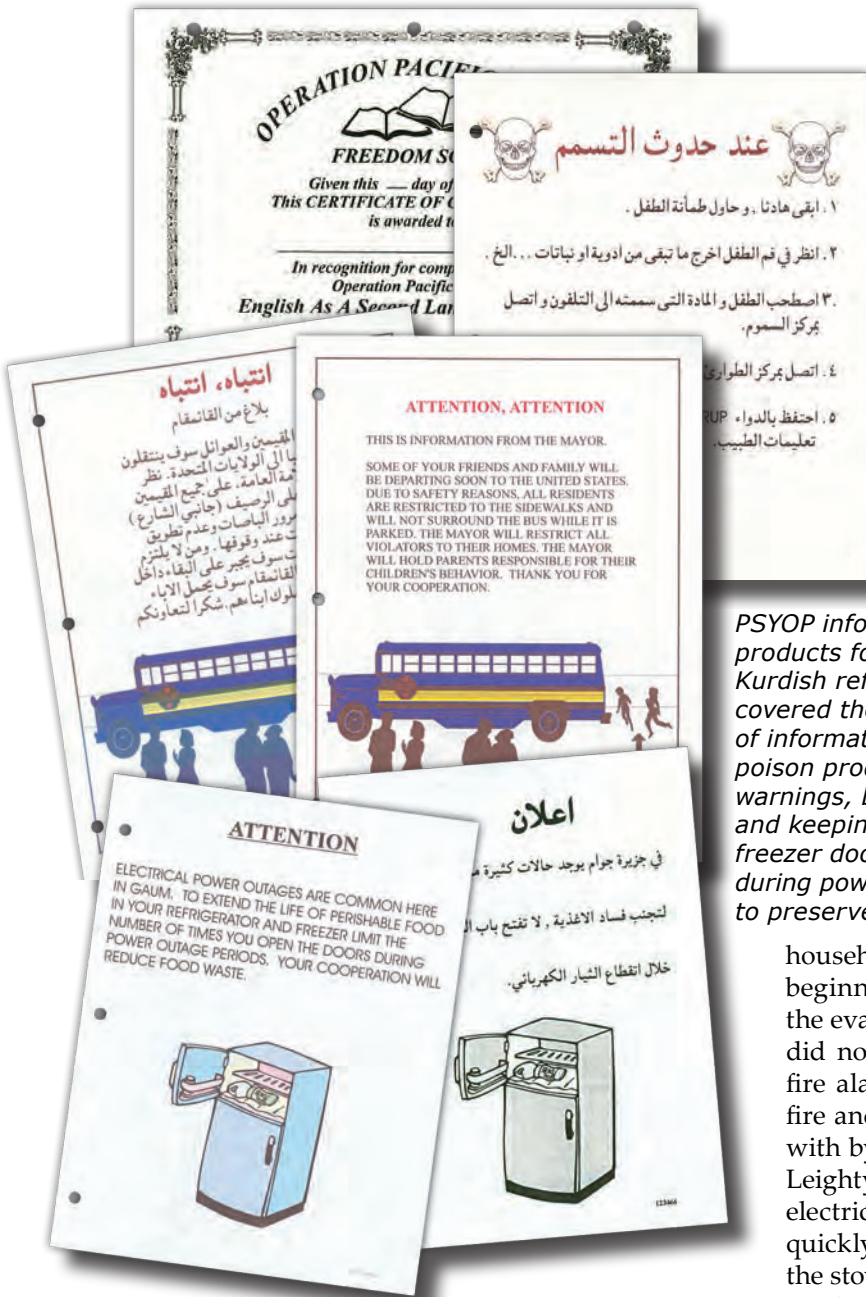
The Kurds received the ESL program with enthusiasm. The classes provided structure to their days rather than just sitting idle waiting for emigration. "Following formal instruction at the day's end we would see the women students assemble children in their driveways, each seated on a box for their family English instruction. They would review what they had learned that day with their kids. It was moving!" said Major Henry.⁵⁴ The MIST provided printed classroom materials and simple English language information sheets for the bulletin boards around the community. Starting with the "Schoolhouse Rock" television program, the MIST expanded the Kurds exposure to the U.S. by installing a 12-foot video screen and projector in the recreation center. "We began showing movies four to five times a day," said MAJ Henry. The movies helped the Kurds learn English and gave them additional familiarity with the United States.⁵⁵

The initial ESL classes graduated just as the first visas to the United States were approved. Once the INS cleared an entire family, they received permission to travel. Sponsors across the United States, from family members to private religious organizations, volunteered to help the Kurds. The states most supportive of immigration were Missouri, Tennessee, Minnesota, and Washington.⁵⁶

Due to other mission requirements, the 4th POG decided to replace the MIST in November 1996. MAJ Henry's detachment was scheduled for a demining operation in Cambodia in early 1997.⁵⁷ MAJ Charles A. Tension had just over a week to prepare the second MIST from the 8th POB for Guam.⁵⁸ The two civilian analysts, Drs. Entezar and



Dr. Joseph Arlinghaus shares a joke with his students while teaching an ESL class. Entezar and Arlinghaus were critical to getting the ESL program started during Operation PACIFIC HAVEN. (DOD photo by PH2 Kevin Tierney)



the DOS concluded that there was “a well founded fear of persecution,” which made them eligible for evacuation.⁶¹ In mid-October 1996, another QUICK TRANSIT Task Force (QT II) was stood up at Incirlik AFB in Turkey, to be quickly followed by QUICK TRANSIT III (QT III) in December 1996.⁶²

The QT II and QT III airlifts more than doubled the number of refugees in Guam. The original PH plan changed, adding to the scope and duration of the operation. The refugees from QT I were still trickling out of Guam, when the first of 4,380 new refugees began to arrive. A second community was established at the U.S. Navy Tiyan Housing Area (formerly part of Naval Air Station Agana) that was vacated as part of the 1993 BRAC.⁶³

PSYOP information products for the Kurdish refugees covered the gamut of information; poison product warnings, bus safety, and keeping the freezer door shut during power outages to preserve food.

Problems solved with the first group of refugees arose again. Fortunately MAJ Henry’s MIST had alerted the new team of the latest arrivals and left copies of their product development sheets and computer files. The new groups of Kurds had to be oriented and informed about the basic living rules. “A simple thing, such as translating instructions on labels of cleaning and

household products was something we thought of in the beginning, so the basics wouldn’t be absolutely foreign to the evacuees,” said MAJ Charles Tennison.⁶⁴ “The Kurds did not understand American technology. If the home fire alarm went off the Kurds did not associate it with fire and smoke. The loud annoying noise was best dealt with by using a broom handle to stop it,” said SSG Cliff Leighty.⁶⁵ Several women even tried to bake bread in the electric clothes dryers. Simple information sheets were quickly printed and distributed, telling the people to use the stove oven.⁶⁶

Arlinghaus, remained for a few extra weeks to transition the ESL program over to Civil Affairs. The second MIST arrived in time to greet the first Kurds from the subsequent lifts of refugees.⁵⁹

SSG Clifford D. Leighty, assigned to the 4th POG’s Product Dissemination Battalion, was on the second MIST. “As we were checking our bags, I noticed the Fayetteville Airport [luggage] tags were labeled “GUA.” “I asked what that meant and was told the Guatemala [Guatemala City] airport. That would have been a bad way to start the mission. We had to get all the bags rechecked for Guam [GUM],” said Leighty.⁶⁰ The two MIST teams had a one-week overlap to get oriented. It proved critical.

After the initial lift of refugees (QT I), the Department of State (DOS) was flooded with additional requests for asylum. Ten separate United Nations agencies and sixty-three NGOs petitioned DOS to protect their former employees with immigration. After a quick investigation,

The information products produced by the MIST were not sophisticated compared to other operations. Instead of taking the time to do free hand drawings, all of the information products were made using off the shelf computer graphics. “We put out a weekly newspaper, household information leaflets, and bulletin board notices to saturate the communities with information,” said Leighty.⁶⁷ Until the Kurds began learning English, the MIST-produced information products were virtually the Kurds’ only source of knowledge. The refugees were surrounded by a radically new culture and information was critical to understanding.

Operation PACIFIC HAVEN was a classroom for both the PSYOP soldiers and the refugees. On Guam, the Kurds had time to adjust to a new life in the United States. The ESL classes were a critical cultural component for the Kurdish assimilation, not just to survive, but to also prosper in the United States. English lessons included practical activities, such as check cashing, letter writing,

The Civil Affairs Mission in PACIFIC HAVEN

To support Operation PACIFIC HAVEN the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion (CAB), the only active duty civil affairs battalion in the Army at the time, received the initial mission. The 96th CAB, a 220 soldier battalion, supported operations and training exercises worldwide. Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Michael Rose tasked his B Company with the mission. Major (MAJ) Patrick A. McCarthy, the company commander, issued a warning order to the company and nineteen soldiers to prepare for deployment.¹ Like the 8th POB MIST, the CA unit had received little information concerning the mission before the flight to Guam.

Arriving a few days after the first Kurds got to Guam, the Civil Affairs contingent established its headquarters next to the Mayor's office in the Andersen South housing area. MAJ McCarthy focused his small force on five areas. McCarthy and the company headquarters reviewed future JTF requirements. His CA teams conducted liaison between the Kurds and the JTF; managed cultural assimilation and assisted with the English as a Second Language (ESL) program; coordinated the distribution of supplies and resources with the Mayor; and assisted the INS on asylum issues.² B Company, 96th CAB worked the first part of the operation, from 18 September to 2 November 1996.

Because of continued worldwide requirements, the active Army CA normally remained on site for 60 days. This gave U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (USACAPOC) time to mobilize Reserve CA forces from the 351st Civil Affairs Command in Mountain View, California. However, individual volunteers came from units across the country.

To meet the requirement unit administrators and operations officers began calling the Reserve soldiers at home and work. LTC Stephan Maxey, a Los Angeles Police Officer, was offered the command of the provisional Reserve unit. LTC Maxey arrived on Guam in late November 1996. CPT Richard Sele volunteered to serve as a CA operations officer in the JTF headquarters, and arrived in October.³

The composite USAR CA Detachment assembled in Hawaii for a mission brief from the PACOM staff before flying to Guam. On the island the Reserve CA personnel began the transition with the 96th CAB soldiers. They were assigned duties based on their CA experience and civilian backgrounds.⁴

The CA Reservists, like the second MIST, were assigned increased duties. The QUICK TRANSIT II and III lifts were beginning to arrive, adding 4,380 more Kurdish refugees to the JTF-Pacific Haven

mission. Taking responsibility for running the ESL program and setting up the new camp in Tijan became two of the top priorities.⁵ The ESL program prepared the Kurds to live in the United States and kept them busy while they waited to emigrate.

The Civil Affairs involvement to Operation PACIFIC HAVEN centered on coordination between the JTF and the Kurds. B Company, 96th CAB, was the "first CA responder" and shaped the battle space for the USAR CA unit. The CA Reservists provided the long term commitment and brought their civilian specialties to enhance mission accomplishment. The composite USAR CA unit remained on Guam until the end of Operation PACIFIC HAVEN in April 1997.

Author's Note: This is a thumbnail sketch of the Civil Affairs mission in Operation PACIFIC HAVEN. The focus of this article was PSYOP. As historical materials become available a fuller recounting of the CA mission will be possible.

Endnotes

- 1 From 1974 to 2006 the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion (CAB) was the sole CA unit in the active Army. In 2006 the 97th CAB activated, followed by the 95th CA Brigade. Ultimately the active duty CA force will be four battalions and a brigade headquarters; B Company, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion supported the U.S. Pacific Command Area of Responsibility; Major Patrick A. McCarthy, Company B, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion, interview by Senior Master Sergeant Robert J. Davis, tape recording, 24 October 1996, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Command History Division, Headquarters Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 120.
- 2 McCarthy interview, 24 October 1996.
- 3 Lieutenant Colonel Stephen E. H. Maxey, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., digital recording, 15 February 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Lieutenant Colonel Richard K. Sele, e-mail to Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., 18 July 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 4 Sele e-mail, 18 July 2008.
- 5 U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 112, 115; Sele e-mail, 18 July 2008.



96th Civil Affairs
Battalion DUI



351st Civil Affairs
Command DUI



The first groups of Kurds leave Guam after getting clearance to emigrate to the United States. (L to R) Kneeling, partly obscured is the JTF-PH commander, MG Dallager, standing is Rear Admiral Brewer, the deputy commander, and then the lone Army representative, CPT Richard Sele, from the 321st Civil Affairs Brigade.

and grocery shopping. “America has already given them clothes, food, and housing here in Guam. I just do not want them to expect that when they get to the States,” said Dr. Entezar.⁶⁸ At least a few of the Kurds repaid the United States for opening its doors for a new life. CW4 Kamran Gardi, the Kurdish speaking aviator, met several who were working in northern Iraq as interpreters for the U.S. Army during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.⁶⁹

The deployment to Guam became a PSYOP “classroom.” On Guam, in a secure environment, the PSYOP soldiers could see the entire product development process from start to finish rather than isolated in a forward operating base or a headquarters hundreds of miles from the target audience.⁷⁰ “If I wanted to talk to the people and get their opinion you would just walk out the door and it was just down the block,” said Cliff Leighty.⁷¹ The organization and size of the MIST allowed the soldiers to cross train in other areas to gain additional skills. The MIST was also able to practice tactical information operations, one of the many aspects of psychological operations that is often buried in the bottom of the PSYOP toolbox and only brought out when needed.⁷² ♣

The author wishes to thank all of the Psychological Operations veterans of Operation PACIFIC HAVEN who assisted in the article, especially Dr. Ehsan Entezar and Dr. Joseph Arlinghaus. For the information on Civil Affairs the author would like to thank LTCs Richard Sele and Steven Maxey.

Robert W. Jones Jr. is a historian assigned to the USASOC History Office and is a Lieutenant Colonel in the U.S. Army. A graduate of the University of Washington, he earned his M.A. 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 Lieutenant Colonel (R) Henry J. Henry, e-mail to Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., 20 February 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; **In 1996 the Product Dissemination Battalion was a provisional unit of the 4th POG. It is now the 3rd Psychological Operations Battalion.**
- 2 Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008; **The “Military Information Support Team” (MIST) had become the standard task organized package for the short notice deployments common in the 4th Psychological Operations Group (4th POG) in the 1990s.**
- 3 Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008.
- 4 Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-53, Doctrine for Joint Psychological Operations, 5 September 2003, VI-5-6; Department of the Army, Field Manual 3-05.50 Psychological Operations, (Draft), 1 July 2007, 6-6; Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1-02, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 17 October 2007, A-94.
- 5 Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008.
- 6 First Lieutenant Brian Furber, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., digital recording, 18 March 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 7 Master Sergeant Craig Coleman, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., digital recording, 12 February 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 8 Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008; Major Henry J. Henry, Company B, 8th Psychological Operations Battalion, interview by Senior Master Sergeant Robert J. Davis, tape recording, 24 October 1996, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.; JTF – Pacific Haven MIST AAR, 6 October 1996.
- 9 Joint Task Force – Pacific Haven Military Information Support Team After Action Review, 6 October 1996, ARSOF Archives, USAJFKSWCS, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 10 David McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 372; Colonel Donald G. Goff, *Operation Provide Comfort* (U.S. Army War College, May 1992), 4; Command History Division, Headquarters Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 108; **The number of refugees has never been officially confirmed, it varies from one to three million.**
- 11 Command History Division, Headquarters Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 108; Text of United Nations Security Council Resolution 687, 3 April 1991 can be found at the United Nations website, < <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/296400.5.html> > accessed on 20 February 2008.
- 12 Text of United Nations Security Council Resolution 688, 5 April 1991 can be found at the United Nations website, < <http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/3110034.html> > accessed on 20 February 2008; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 373.
- 13 Frank N. Schubert and Theresa L. Kraus, ed., *The Whirlwind War. The United States Army in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM* (Washington DC: Center for Military History, 1995), 232; Command History Division, Headquarters Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 109.
- 14 McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 374-75.

- 15 Timothy P. Barela, "Comfort Zone," *Airman*, online version <http://www.af.mil/news/airman/1095/comfort.htm>; Linda Brandon, "Military Coordination Center: Forward Component of Provide Comfort," *Special Warfare*, July 1994, vol 7, 30.
- 16 McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 382-85; Gordon W. Rudd, *Humanitarian Intervention. Assisting the Iraqi Kurds in Operation Provide Comfort, 1991* (Washington, DC: Center for Military History, 2004), 245; **On 31 December 1996 Operation PROVIDE COMFORT II officially ended.**
- 17 "Iraqi troops attack Kurdish rebel stronghold of Irbil," *CNN online*, 31 August 1996, <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9608/31/iraq/index.html> accessed 16 July 2008; Wael Faleh, "Iraqi Troops Are Leaving Captured City – U.S. Troops In Gulf Area Remained On High Alert," *Seattle Times*, 2 September 1996; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 388-89.
- 18 Command History Division, Headquarters Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 109; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 389.
- 19 Jonathan C. Randal, "Iraqi Opposition Describes Mass Execution Near Irbil," *The Washington Post*, 2 September 1996, page A20.
- 20 Associated Press, "U.S. Cruise Missiles Hit Iraq – Clinton Says Saddam Must 'Pay The Price' For Attacking Town in Kurdish Region," *The Seattle Times*, 3 September 1996, <http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/cgi-bin/PrintStory.pl?slug=2347296&date=19960903>.
- 21 U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 109; **On 31 December 1996 Operation PROVIDE COMFORT II officially ended**; McDowall, *A Modern History of the Kurds*, 389.
- 22 **In Department of State terminology it was "Mission Quick Transit," however for continuity I will use "Operation" as the term**; U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 111.
- 23 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, "1993 Report to the President," *Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission*, 1 July 1993, <http://www.defenselink.mil/brac/docs/1993com2.pdf>, accessed on 19 June 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 24 Vik Jolly, "Kurds fleeing Iraq find haven in Guam," *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, 17 September 1996, online version < YPERLINK "<http://starbulletin.com/96/09/17/news/story2.html>" > <http://starbulletin.com/96/09/17/news/story2.html>>, accessed on 12 November 2007.
- 25 **This had been a problem going as far back as 1956 with Hungarian refugees at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. It was repeated with Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s and Cubans in the 1980s; On a tertiary note Major General John R. Dallager, commander of the 13th Air Force on Guam had formerly been the co-commander of Combined Joint Task Force – Operation PROVIDE COMFORT II only a year previous and had the experience of dealing with the Kurds. Whether or not MG Dallager's presence in Guam was a factor in putting the refugees there is unknown.**
- 26 Department of the Army Historical Summary: Fiscal Year (FY) 1996, 78 <<http://www.army.mil/CMH/books/DAHSUM/1996/ch05.htm>> assessed on.
- 27 Chief Warrant Officer 3 Carl S. Alerta, e-mail to Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., 23 June 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; **The 4th Psychological Operations Group had assigned Forward Support Elements to several of the overseas Combatant Commands, including Pacific Command and European Command**; Joint Task Force – Pacific Haven Military Information Support Team After Action Review, 6 October 1996, ARSOF Archives, USAJFKSWCS, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 28 Alerta e-mail, 23 June 2008.
- 29 Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008; Henry interview, 24 October 1996; JTF – Pacific Haven MIST AAR, 6 October 1996.
- 30 U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 120; Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) Annual Report to Congress – 1997, <<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/policy/97arcl.htm>>, accessed 1 December 2007.
- 31 U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 109.
- 32 Charles H. Nicholls, Historian Pacific Air Forces, e-mail to Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., 2 January 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 115.
- 33 U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 120; Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008; JTF – Pacific Haven MIST AAR, 6 October 1996.
- 34 Lieutenant Commander Jack R. Rumbaugh, "Operation Pacific Haven: Humanitarian Medical Support for Kurdish Evacuees," *Military Medicine*, Volume 163, number 5, May 1998, 269; U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 115; **The 374th Air Transportable Hospital came from Yokota Air Force Base, Japan, to help with medical screening and support of the refugees. Additional support came from U.S. Naval Hospital, Guam, and the 3rd Medical Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, Okinawa, Japan.**
- 35 Department of Defense, "Operation Pacific Haven Wraps Up Humanitarian Efforts," *DefenseLink*, 15 April 1997, <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=1218>, accessed 18 June 2008.
- 36 U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 115.
- 37 Dr. Joseph T. Arlinghaus, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., digital recording, 6 February 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Senior Airman Aimee Groben, "A Piece of Heaven at Pacific Haven," *Airman*, June 1997, <http://www.af.mil/news/airman/0697/haven4.htm>.
- 38 Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008; Henry interview, 24 October 1996.
- 39 Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008; JTF – Pacific Haven MIST AAR, 6 October 1996.
- 40 **Operations SEA SIGNAL, SAFE HAVEN and SAFE PASSAGE (8 September 1994 to 15 March 1995) were designed to relieve the overcrowded migrant camps at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base. Joint Task Force Safe Haven established four camps on Empire Range, Panama, for up to ten thousand Cuban migrants. Operation SAFE PASSAGE returned the migrants to Guantanamo after the crowded conditions were alleviated in February 1995. At its height the operations cared for over 21,000 Haitians and 32,000 Cubans**; Department of the Army Historical Summary: Fiscal Year (FY) 1995, 46-47.
- 41 JTF – Pacific Haven MIST AAR, 6 October 1996; Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008.
- 42 Henry interview, 24 October 1996.
- 43 Coleman interview, 12 February 2008.
- 44 Furber interview, 18 March 2008.
- 45 Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008.
- 46 Chief Warrant Officer 4 Kamran Gardi, e-mail to Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., 15 March 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008; JTF – Pacific Haven MIST AAR, 6 October 1996.
- 47 Sharon M. Dewar, "Sharing The Wealth: Former Refugee Teaches Evacuees," *Pacific Haven Weekly*, 20 December 1996, Andersen Air Force Base, 4, copy in ARSOF Archives, USAJFKSWCS, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 48 JTF – Pacific Haven MIST AAR, 6 October 1996.
- 49 Entezar interview, 5 June 2008; Arlinghaus interview, 6 February 2008.
- 50 Entezar interview, 5 June 2008; Arlinghaus interview, 6 February 2008.
- 51 Entezar interview, 5 June 2008; Arlinghaus interview, 6 February 2008.
- 52 Entezar interview, 5 June 2008.
- 53 JTF – Pacific Haven MIST AAR, 6 October 1996; Entezar interview, 5 June 2008; Arlinghaus interview, 6 February 2008.
- 54 Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008; Henry interview, 24 October 1996; JTF – Pacific Haven MIST AAR, 6 October 1996.
- 55 Henry e-mail, 20 February 2008; Henry interview, 24 October 1996; JTF – Pacific Haven MIST AAR, 6 October 1996.
- 56 JTF – Pacific Haven MIST AAR, 6 October 1996; Arlinghaus interview, 6 February 2008.
- 57 Memorandum for ARFOR Commander, Subject: Military Information Support Team (MIST) Long-term Sustainment Plan, dated 29 October 1996, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 58 Colonel Charles A. Tennison, e-mail to Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., 6 February 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 59 Tennison e-mail, 6 February 2008; Staff Sergeant Clifford D. Leighty, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Jones, Jr., digital recording, 7 March 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 60 Leighty interview, 7 March 2008.
- 61 U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 112.
- 62 U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 115.
- 63 U.S. Pacific Command History, Volume I, 1997, 121; Nicholls e-mail, 2 January 2008.
- 64 Senior Airman Aimee Groben, "MIST breaks communication barrier," *The Pacific Times*, Andersen Air Force Base, 24 January 1997, page 2.
- 65 Leighty interview, 7 March 2008.
- 66 Leighty interview, 7 March 2008.
- 67 Leighty interview, 7 March 2008.
- 68 Sharon M. Dewar, "Sharing The Wealth: Former Refugee Teaches Evacuees," *Pacific Haven Weekly*, 20 December 1996, Andersen Air Force Base, 4, copy in ARSOF Archives, USAJFKSWCS, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 69 Gardi e-mail, 15 March 2008.
- 70 Coleman interview, 12 February 2008.
- 71 Leighty interview, 7 March 2008.
- 72 Department of Defense, "Operation Pacific Haven Wraps Up Humanitarian Efforts," *DefenseLink*, 15 April 1997, <http://www.defenselink.mil/releases/release.aspx?releaseid=1218>, accessed 18 June 2008.



Donald D. Blackburn:

World War II
Guerrilla Leader &
Special Operations
Plank Holder

By Kenneth Finlayson

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

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



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

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

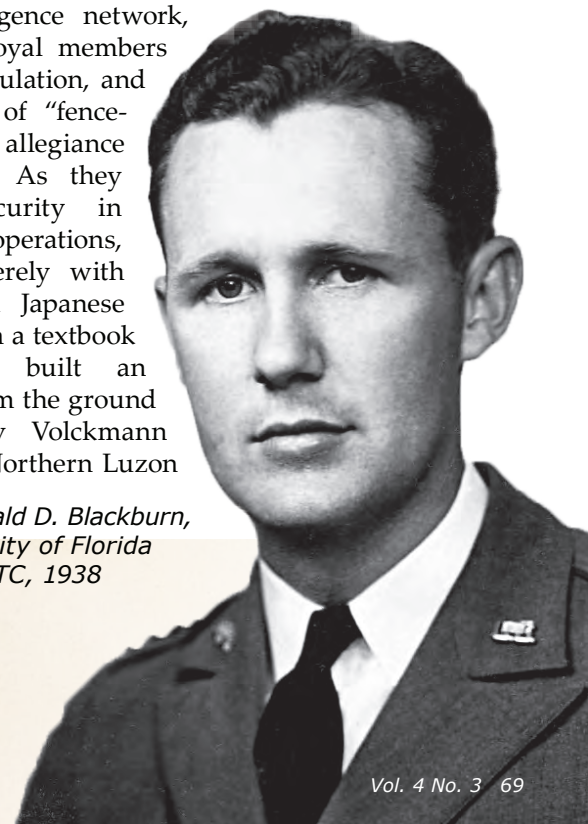
In the Philippines, First Lieutenant (1LT) Blackburn was to advise the headquarters battalion of the 12th Infantry Regiment located at Baguio, 175 miles north of Manila on the island of Luzon.²

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

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

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

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



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



24th Infantry Regimental DUI

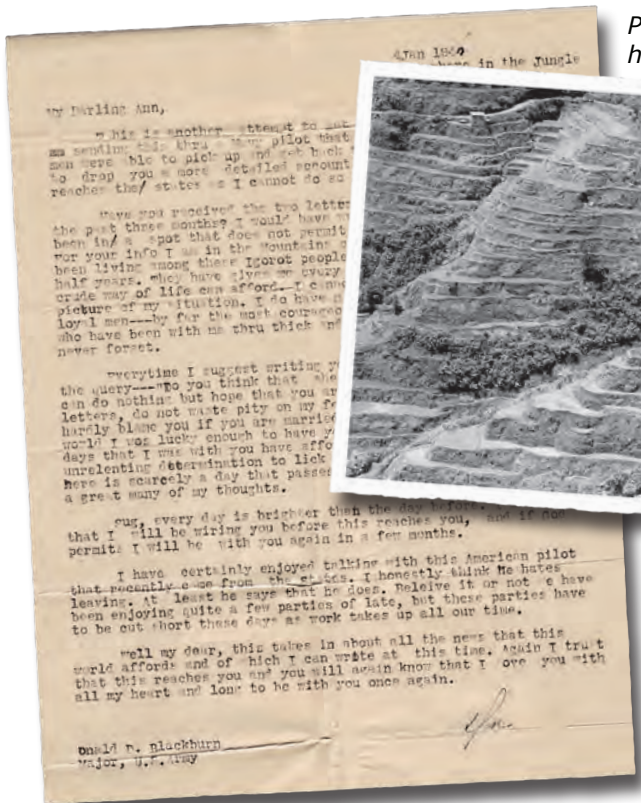


U.S. Army Forces in the Philippines, North Luzon Patch



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

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



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



LTC Donald D. Blackburn in Luzon, 1945.

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

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



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

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

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

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

—LTC Blackburn, 1945

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

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



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

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

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

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

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



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



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

he again became heavily engaged in operations in Southeast Asia.

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



United States Military Academy, Instructor, DUI



77th Special Forces Group DUI



White Star MAAG Laos Patch



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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



MAAG-Vietnam
SSI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

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



MACV-SOG Patch



82nd Airborne Division SSI



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

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

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

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

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



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



Son Tay Raider Patch

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Endnotes

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

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

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

HEADHUNTERS





Snap Shot

by Earl J. Moniz

Detail from the initial wide angle shot enlarged to 300% original size; notice the lack of detail and grain introduced through the enlargement process.

Panoramic Photography in Field Conditions, Part II

In the last issue (Vol. 4, No. 2), the advantage of using panoramic images to record or document events in your unit history was discussed. The *SSOFAS* acronym (*Same Spot; Overlap; Focus; Aperture; Sequence*) was introduced to explain the technique. In this article, the actual shooting sequence introduced in Part 1 is demonstrated along with the preliminary panorama assembly (stitching) process.

SSOFAS: shoot from the *Same Spot*; determine the *Overlap*; keep the *Focus* constant; use the same *Aperture* setting; and determine a *Sequence*.

STEP 1: SETUP AND PREPARATION

Our model for this demonstration is the Freedom Village at Camp Mackall near Hoffman, North Carolina which is just a short drive from Fort Bragg. This spot has these primary factors: 1 - a combination of ambient landscape and 2 - moderate detail.

The railing of a nearby building was used to **stabilize** the camera. A single distant image was photographed to use as a comparison. Heavy overlap is used because fine



The cardboard component makes it easier to slide the entire mount in unison while the tea mix establishes a pocket around which the camera pivots.

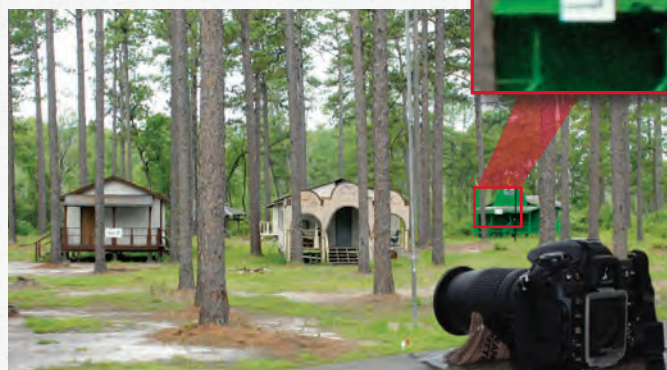


Figure 1. The initial wide angle shot of the entire scene was created by standing back to encompass the entire area of interest in a single shot with no regard for detail.

detail uncertainties are anticipated during the stitching process. The focus and aperture settings are set to **manual**. The shooting sequence is left to right. A short machine screw in the tripod mount serves as the pivot point and a few Meal, Ready-to-Eat (MRE) components help stabilize the camera.

STEP 2: EXECUTION

A series of three shots is taken. Each series is shot three times in order to select the best from each shot sequence for the final panoramic composition. The same manual aperture and focus settings are used for each shot. Why nine shots with the same aperture and focus settings? A cloud might drift over to alter shadows and/or lighting. A person may inadvertently walk into the scene. One major detail (a plaque or sign) may be obscured by a passing vehicle. Taking a number of shots over a period of time allows one to select the best shots to compose the final panoramic image.

STEP 3: TRANSFER

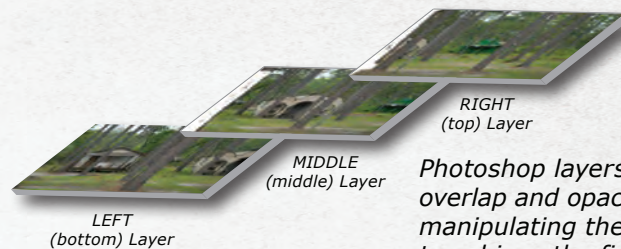
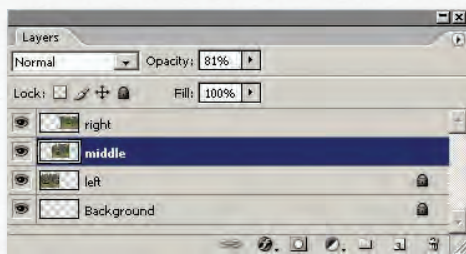
The images are transferred into the computer where photo editing will take place. Different manufacturers of digital cameras have different transfer methods. Some require the user to remove the memory module and connect it to the computer. Others provide a cable which permits the camera to be connected directly to the computer. The compact flash card from our camera is removed, inserted into an adapter, and plugged into a universal serial bus (USB) connector on the computer.



Figure 2: All three pieces in rough alignment in a single window; the middle layer opacity has been reduced for alignment with the underlying layer (left); notice the right layer is on the top of the entire stack. The size of the canvas is slightly larger than the required space for the images. It will be adjusted (cropped) in one of the final steps.

Here is the detail of the panoramic shot enlarged to 300% of its original size; notice the clarity of the image.

Figure 3: The layers palette indicating the left layer locked in place, the middle layer adjusted for opacity, and the right layer on top of the stack.



Photoshop layers STACK allowing overlap and opacity change while manipulating the composite image to achieve the final desired result.

In all cases, once connected, the camera memory device will appear on the computer screen as an external storage device. The images from the memory module may be **dragged** and **dropped** into any desired folder on the computer hard drive. Once the images appear on the computer hard drive, the camera or memory module may be disconnected. The images on the camera storage device should not be deleted until all images now residing on the computer have been opened, verified as complete (not corrupted in any way), and backed up to additional media (external storage, CD, or data DVD).

STEP 4: CREATE NEW IMAGE

Create a new blank image in Adobe Photoshop (or your own favorite photo editing application) large enough to hold all three images side by side.² Open all nine images and select the best ones to be the left image, middle image, and right image. **Drag** these best images, one at a time in the sequence they were taken (left one first, middle one second, and right one last), from their own window to the empty workspace created. As each image is dragged into the blank workspace, they form a layer of their own as depicted in Figure 3. These separate layers enable each image of the composition to be manipulated (rotated,

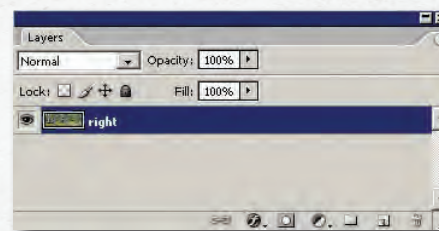


Figure 4: The layers palette indicating the single layer that exists after the panorama has been cropped and flattened.

enhanced, and shifted) without affecting the other layers. Label each layer (left, middle, right) in the layer palette to minimize the confusion during the stitching process.

STEP 5: ALIGN TO STITCH PROPERLY

Work flow centers around a base image (left layer) to which the other layers are stitched.³ Using the drag and drop sequence in Step 4, there should be four layers in this new image (Figure 4). The right layer (1) is on top, the middle layer (2) is second from the top, the left layer (3) is third from the top, and the transparent background layer (4) is on the bottom. If they are not in this sequence, drag and drop each layer in the layer palette to stack them accordingly.

STEP 6: STITCH

The left layer is the base layer. No adjustments are made to that layer. It needs to be locked in place to eliminate any inadvertent movement. In the layer palette,

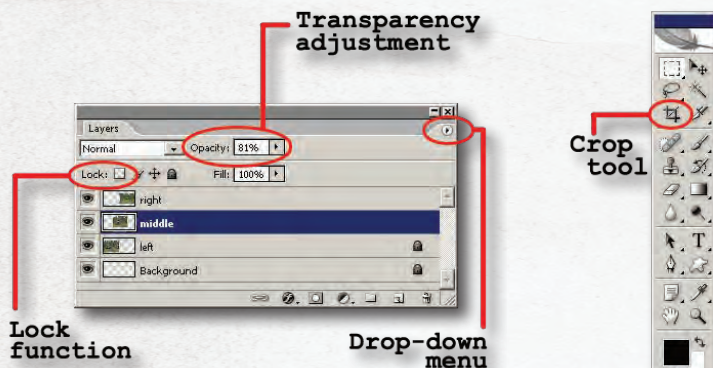


Figure 6: The crop tool icon located on the tool palette.

shift, and rotate the middle layer to most closely align it with the bottom layer. Once complete, return the opacity to 100% and **lock** the middle layer in place to avoid unintended movement while working on the top layer.

Repeat the moving, shifting, and rotating of the top-most layer (the right side image) over the middle layer to get them most closely aligned. Once the top layer is aligned, return the opacity to 100% and **lock** it in place.

Figure 5: The layers palette with identifying information for several of the functions discussed in the article - transparency adjustment; lock function; and the drop-down menu button where the flatten function is located.

click on the left layer to make it active. Near the top of the layer palette is the lock options selection bar. Click on the **lock** icon. The lock icon will appear on the right side of the left layer to indicate it is locked. (Figure 5)

Click on the middle layer in the layer palette to make it the active layer, lower the opacity to 70-80%, and move the layer to roughly align the middle image with the left image. (Figure 5)

The technique to align the images accurately involves the opacity adjustment. Select the middle layer and lower the opacity so that a bit of the bottom layer shows where both images overlap (between 70 and 80%). Move,

STEP 7: FINALIZING

At this point, the final image may be **flattened** (all the layers are compressed into a single layer), using the Flatten Image function from the layer palette drop-down menu. Refer to Figure 5.

The image is then cropped to its final dimensions. Select the Crop Tool from the tool palette as depicted in Figure 6. This function allows you to cut the image to the desired dimensions by allowing you to draw a box around the image you want to keep. The rest is cut away. There are eight handles on each box; one in each corner and one on each side. These handles allow precise alignment of the box before hitting the **enter** button to execute the **crop**.



Figure 7: The final product of the entire project depicting the relationship of each building with enough detail for further investigation, horizontally leveled, flattened to a single layer, with color and contrast adjustments completed.

Finally, use the save function to **save** the panoramic image in the desired format.

STEP 8: STUBBORN SOLUTIONS

Any panoramic project has a few stubborn elements that do not align or join correctly. A branch has an irregular shadow. An ear does not overlap cleanly. The horizon is not completely flat.

At this point, the stubborn elements technique is applied. This involves carefully erasing those pesky elements causing the problems.⁴ Erasing uncooperative elements must be done very selectively and accurately to avoid doing more harm than good.

In this article, the preliminary steps for creating a panoramic image from standard-sized images were explained with illustrations. In the next issue, Part 3 will focus on fixing the glitches in a panorama to make overlaps appear seamless. Included will be a few hints and tips to make the overlapping edges smooth and seamless. Remember these fundamentals: 1 - erase so that the overlaps occur in bright light, dark shadows, or areas with random patterns; 2 - use the “fuzziest” setting on the erase tool to allow the highest degree of blending at the seams. ♣

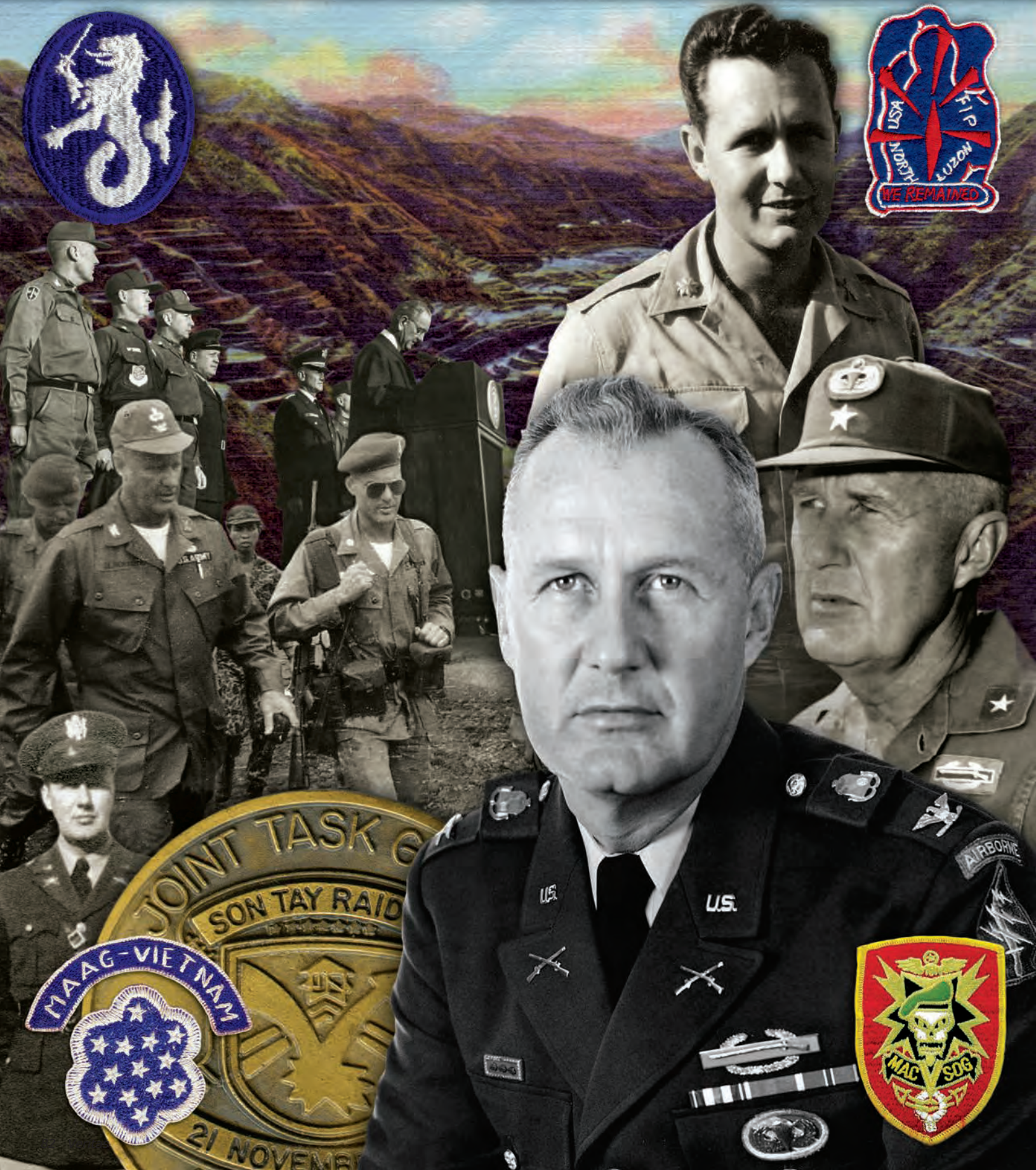
Earl J. Moniz has been a digital information specialist with the USASOC History Office since 2001. After retiring as a Special Forces noncommissioned officer, he earned his M.L.S. from North Carolina Central University. Current projects include the USASOC History Office Kiosk Program, digital imagery for USASOC History Publications, and the cataloguing and organization of History Office imagery.

Endnotes

- 1 Shoot the sequence from the Same Spot; Overlap each shot over the last; Focus manually on the most important shot in the series; set the Aperture to manual and lock it for the entire series; and use a logical Sequence to ease stitching.
- 2 The final composition is cropped to the final size once the compositing is complete. Initial blank image dimensions are not critical. The discussion describes the actions in Adobe Photoshop.
- 3 A generic photographic term for compositing two or more images into one image; known as blending layers in Adobe products. Elaine Weinmann and Peter Lourekas, *Photoshop for Windows and Macintosh* (Berkeley, CA: Peachpit Press, 2004), 270-77.
- 4 A technique that is not difficult to understand or master; just erase those pesky rascals.

BG Donald D. Blackburn

1916-2008

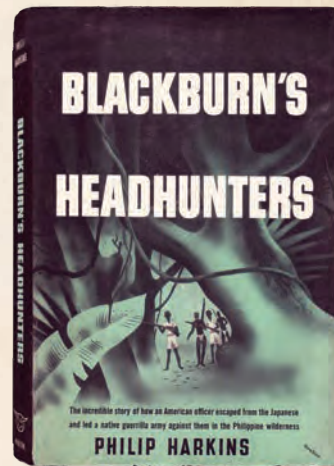


Books in the Field

"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 Army Special Operations history topics.

Philip Harkins, *Blackburn's Headhunters* (New York: WW Norton, 1955)

In his diary 1LT Donald Dunwoody Blackburn wrote: "October 23, 1941, Arrived Manila to Fort McKinley." This entry began Blackburn's service in the Philippines from 1941-1945, mostly behind Japanese lines. *Blackburn's Headhunters* is primarily based on his wartime diary, but augmented with U.S. Army operations reports. It details the story of his initial service as an advisor to the ill-equipped and poorly trained Philippine Army. Rather than surrender with U.S. forces when Bataan fell in 1942, he fled into the jungle with Major Russell W. Volckmann. Together they evaded the Japanese and organized guerrilla units to fight the Japanese until General Douglas A. MacArthur's forces landed on Luzon in 1945. Blackburn's regiment was made up of the mountain Igorots, a tribe of headhunters, who proved to be capable soldiers against the Japanese. The book does not have endnotes nor an index and has only one map. Although out of print it is found in many used bookstores and libraries (including Marquat Library at USAJFKSWCS).

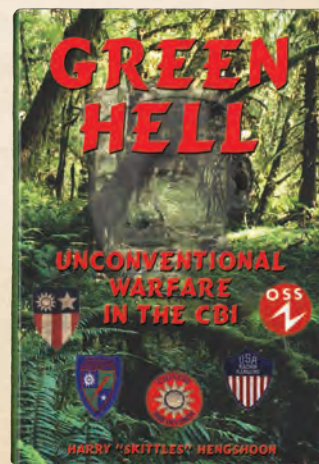


Richard H. Schultz Jr., *The Secret War Against Hanoi* (New York: Harper Collins books, 1999).

From 1964 until 1972, the United States military ran an aggressive and highly secretive covert operations campaign against the North Vietnamese. Controlled out of the Pentagon's Special Operations Group under the code-name Studies and Observation Group, (SOG), it was the most extensive covert operation since World War II. In eight years, SOG inserted agents into North Vietnam, ran cross-border operations into the North as well as Cambodia and Laos to interdict the Ho Chi Minh Trail, executed a sophisticated psychological warfare campaign using a fictitious guerrilla organization and staged commando raids against Hanoi's coastal cities. Dr. Richard H. Schultz Jr. is the Director of International Security Studies in the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. He conducted extensive interviews with key personnel at all levels of the military and government and had access to many declassified documents for this well researched book. Contains maps, photographs, endnotes and index.

Harry "Skittles" Hengshoon, *Green Hell: Unconventional Warfare in the CBI* (Huntington Beach, California: B&L Lithograph, 2000)

Code-named "Skittles," because he excelled at a British bowling game, Harry Hengshoon had several attributes that made him an ideal secret agent. He was a pro-Allied Burmese native of Chinese descent, who in addition to being intelligent, had common sense and savvy, and was fluent in several local languages—Urdu, Hindi, four Chinese dialects, Burmese and English. Skittles who served with OSS Detachment 101 from 1943-1945, was singled out by COL William R. Peers, as one of the unit's outstanding indigenous intelligence agents. *Green Hell* is an engaging story about Hengshoon's pre-war experiences, the Japanese invasion of Burma, his OSS field service, and Burma in the immediate postwar period. In the field, Hengshoon served with Chinese, American, and British troops, including the Chindits, Merrill's Marauders, and the MARS Task Force. Contains photos and appendices.



Upcoming Veritas...

Bolivia

The 1960s was a turbulent time in the United States and worldwide. Communist-inspired "Wars of National Liberation" sprang up in Central and South America, Africa, and Asia. These "brushfire wars" resulted in an expansion of U.S. Army Special Forces to meet the growing insurgent threat. The 8th Special Forces Group, configured as a Special Action Force (SAF) at Fort Gulick in Panama, was responsible for Central and South America. The most noteworthy counterinsurgency training mission in Latin America during this time was the deployment of a Special Forces team to train the 2nd Ranger Battalion in Bolivia. This team was lead by Major Ralph "Pappy" Shelton, a Korean War and White Star veteran. The Bolivian Rangers captured the Communist revolutionary, Ernesto "Che" Guevara.

Veritas 4-2008 will focus on the turmoil existing in Bolivia in the 1960's and the training that enabled the Bolivians to capture Che Guevara. It will explain the political, economic, and military situation in Bolivia that spawned the insurgency and will describe the United States military role in 1967. This special issue will be a comprehensive overview of a successful counter-insurgency effort in support of a foreign internal defense mission.



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