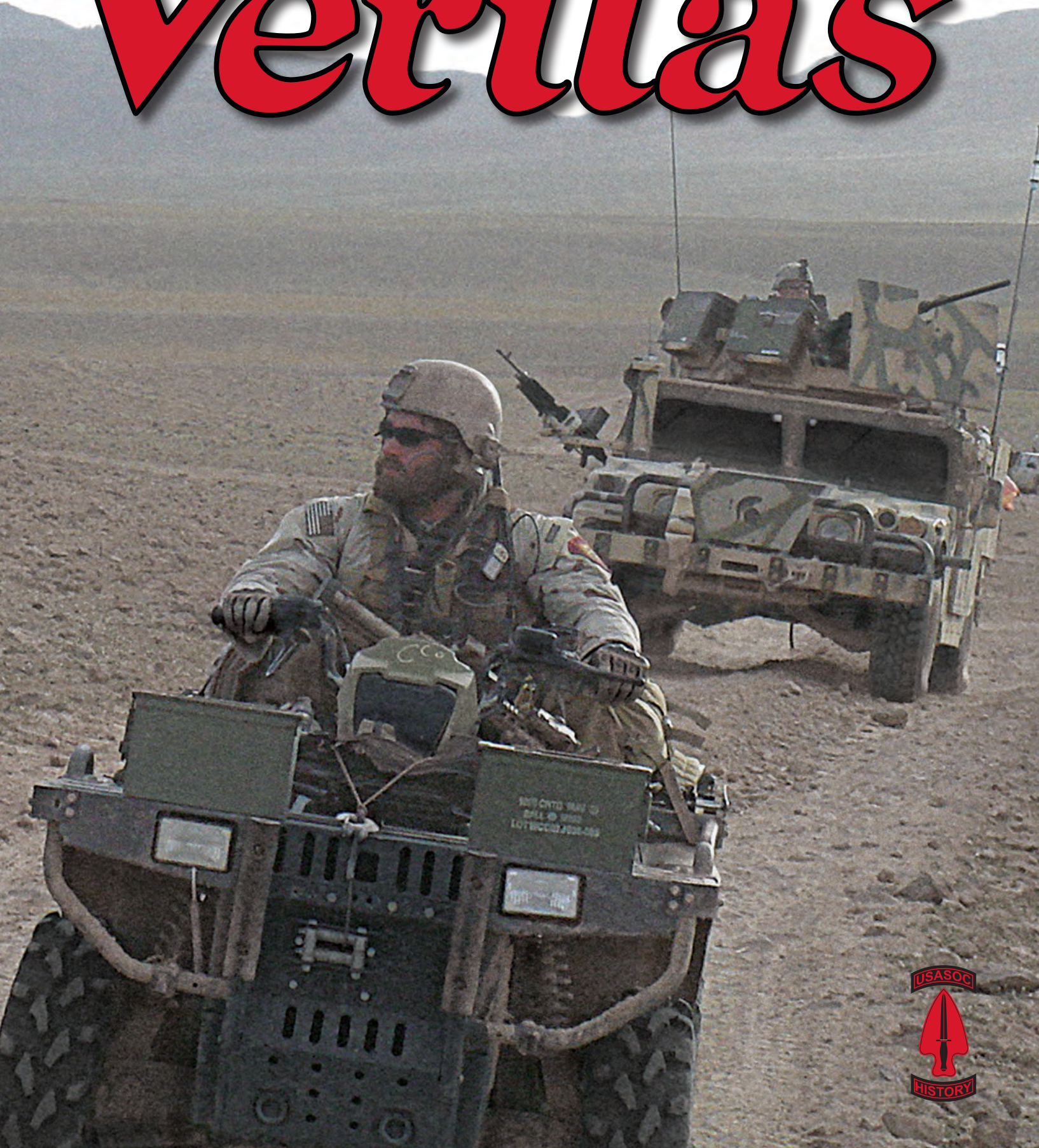


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Veritas



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



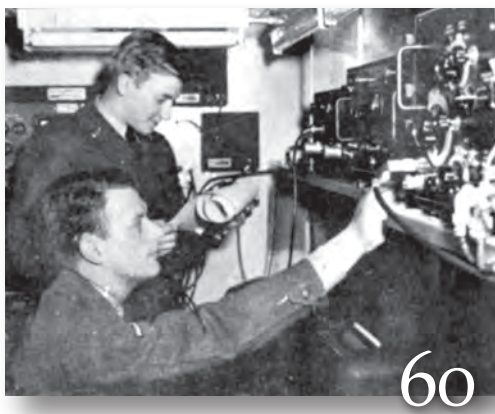
Cover Photo: ODA 3125, B Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group on patrol in Oruzgan Province, Afghanistan. In 2009, the ODA worked closely with Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations teams in Deh Rawod, Afghanistan, to improve the security and living conditions of the local population.





Veritas

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IBC Books in the Field

The Azimuth of the USASOC History Office



This is the fourth and final *Veritas* for 2009. The first issue for 2010 will be a special, "Army SOF in Korea, 1950-53." It will be the bedrock for a proposed USASOC History panel at the 2010 Society for Military History (SMH) Conference to be held at Virginia Military Institute in May.

We want to do this academic Outreach to show the teaching profession our approach to capturing and presenting well-documented, interesting modern military history in context to a much wider audience. Unlike some military historians, we do not write "dead people" history derived from the "polished official reports" and "carefully cleansed" memoirs of senior officers prepared years after the events. Our history subjects are veterans of all ranks. They are alive and tell it like they saw it. We cross-check accounts for accuracy, and they review and comment on our drafts. Our purpose is to provide the connective tissue, context, and authentication. After all, it is their history.

As the first step towards a Special Warfare Center of Excellence, the historical resources of the command (the former USAJFKSWCS Archives) have all been consolidated under the USASOC History Office. These two elements will be physically "joined at the hip." The USASOC Historical Resource Center is being built onto the History Office located in E-1930

(the HHC USASOC building), Desert Storm Drive. Completion is scheduled for May 2010 in conjunction with the new USASOC Memorial Wall. A key part of the new Historical Resource Center will be the ARSOF Senior Leader Documents Repository. Appropriately, the Force's Senior Leaders encompass General, field grade, and warrant officers and senior NCOs. MG John K. "Jack" Singlaub and other Army SOF "gray beards" will be leading the way on this long overdue endeavor.

The importance of ARSOF unit newsletters, newspapers, special anniversary pamphlets, and yearbooks should become evident from the article on the 8th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company, a 1950s ARSOF "plankholder" on Smoke Bomb Hill. It would still be unknown without having gained access to a collection of *The Psyn-post* newsletters. Veterans, help today's Force by sharing your military "treasure."

Requests to reprint *Veritas* articles as well as photographs, sketches, maps, and schematics in other publications have increased. While this reflects well on the journal and the authors, reprinting a well-received article in a modified version and/or without documentation (endnotes) degrades serious historical scholarship. Thanks for the continued great support. CHB

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OVER *the* *HILLS* *and* *FAR AWAY:*

The MARS Task Force, the Ultimate Model for Long Range Penetration Warfare

By Troy J. Sacquety



One of the great military engineering projects, the Ledo Road bypassed the Japanese controlled part of the Burma Road, to permit the delivery of supplies to besieged China.

The China-Burma-India Theater (CBI) is almost forgotten in WWII history. However, the Theater—especially operations in Burma—is still very relevant for ARSOF. The several special operations legacy units that served there provided lessons that remain current. Because of the difficult operating environment all U.S. ground combat forces slated for Burma were uniquely organized and specifically mission-oriented. Two of these units, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Detachment 101 and the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), more commonly known as Merrill’s Marauders, have received considerable recognition for their accomplishments. However, another Army special operations legacy unit, the 5332nd Brigade (Provisional), known as the MARS Task Force, has not. This article “introduces” that unit to *Veritas* readers with a brief overview of its organizational structure, subordinate units, and campaign history. But, why were Long Range Penetration Groups (LRPG) needed in Burma?

A Unique Mission

From the outset, Burma presented a challenge for the United States Army. The British were in charge of operations in the country because it was their former colony. In north Burma, the U.S.-led Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC) had a small force of mostly Chinese troops. These were nominally under American control. Burma was one of the most difficult geographical environments in WWII and a lack of resources plagued operations. NCAC had to clear the area so that it could build a bypass—the Ledo Road—from Ledo, India to the portion of the Burma Road not controlled by the Japanese. Otherwise, all supplies into China had to arrive by air. Secondly, the Allies wanted to keep the bulk of the Japanese ground forces engaged in mainland Asia because the main advance against Tokyo was across the Pacific islands. To keep the bulk of the Japanese Army fixed, the Nationalist

Chinese Army had to have desperately needed supplies to constitute a viable threat.

Although the effort was insufficient, the air bridge from India to Kunming, China supplied vital resources until the Ledo Road was complete. Japanese fighter aircraft based at Myitkyina, Burma were a major threat for Allied cargo planes flying the “Hump” route. This forced the unarmed aircraft to fly a longer and more dangerous course. Clearing higher passes in the Himalayas and the additional distance meant that aircraft carried less cargo. To secure the trace of the Ledo Road and make the Hump flights more effective, Myitkyina had to be taken from the Japanese. It was for this reason that the U.S. Army formed the GALAHAD Force [nicknamed Merrill’s Marauders after their commander Brigadier General (BG) Franklin D. Merrill], the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional).

The 3,000-man Marauders started their penetration campaign in February 1944 and by late May, secured Myitkyina’s airfield. Three grueling months in the Burmese jungle, numerous sharp engagements, and disease—typhus, malaria, and dysentery—considerably reduced the strength of the LRPG. They were not strong enough to capture the city of Myitkyina by themselves and the attached Chinese units did not help. Even though the Marauders were already spent, they remained Lieutenant General (LTG) Joseph W. Stilwell’s only American ground combat force in NCAC. Politically, he could not withdraw the unit to rest and refit. As American replacements arrived in theater, LTG Stilwell committed them, and others hastily scraped together from in-theater personnel to the siege of Myitkyina.

Replacements, often poorly trained for the mission, were derisively dubbed “New GALAHAD” by the dwindling veterans, even as they changed the image of the Marauders. But, they kept an American presence on the battlefield. The new arrivals quickly became combat veterans as the Allied noose was tightened



China-Burma-India
SSI



MARS Task Force
Patch



Merrill's Marauders
Patch



Chindit Patch

around Myitkyina. Even so, by the time the city fell in early August, the Marauders (old and new GALAHAD) were combat-ineffective. The remainder, still fit, became the core for the newly activated 475th Infantry Regiment (Long Range Penetration, Special). NCAC created the 3,100-man unit on 5 August 1944 at Myitkyina and relocated it to nearby Camp Robert W. Landis for combat training on the banks of the Irrawaddy River ten miles north of Myitkyina.¹ Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) William L. Osborne, a former Marauder and veteran of the 1941-42 Philippines campaign, took command of the regiment, a part of the lineage of the 75th Ranger Regiment.² The 475th Infantry was just one of the major components that made up the second LRPG created specifically for service in Burma, the MARS Task Force.

The MARS Task Force

NCAC activated the 5332nd Brigade (Provisional), the MARS Task Force, on 26 July 1944 under the command of BG Thomas A. Arms.³ After a motor vehicle accident, he was replaced by BG John P. Willey on 31 October 1944.⁴ The second component for the 5332nd, the 124th Cavalry Regiment (Special), a federalized Texas National Guard unit of 2,700 men, arrived at Ramgarh, India in late August 1944. As one of the last horse cavalry units, the 124th was formed in 1929 and saw extensive service patrolling the Texas-Mexico Border and maintaining order in the Texas oilfields. After Executive Order No. 8594 federalized the unit on 18 November 1940, it moved to Fort Bliss, TX. The 124th continued to patrol the Mexican Border until April 1944 (Mexico did not declare war on the Axis Powers until May 1942). The U.S. Army sent the unit to Fort Riley, KS, and ordered it to dismount. Mules replaced horses because only they had the mobility needed for Burma.⁵ Despite being cavalry without horses, the unit retained “squadrons” instead of battalions and “troops” instead of companies. After the fall of Myitkyina, the unit moved to Camp Landis, Burma to join elements of the 475th Infantry.⁶

The 1st Chinese Regiment (Separate), commanded by Colonel Lin Kuan-hsiang, was to be the third combat component of the MARS Task Force. Like the 124th Cavalry, it had been schooled in LRPG tactics at the Ramgarh Training Center.⁷ Although assigned on paper to the MARS Task Force, in reality, it was the NCAC reserve and never fought with the 5332nd.⁸ Thus, the MARS Task Force organized as a brigade with two combat teams. However, unlike the 5307th, the 5332nd was made self-sufficient with attached supporting units. The largest of these were two mule pack field artillery battalions (FAB) of approximately 460 men each; the 612th and 613th FAB (Pack). They were a natural choice for MARS and among the few artillery formations designed from the start to be part of an Army Special Operations unit. *(Article continues on page 6)*



The MARS Task Force trained at Camp Robert W. Landis before setting out on combat operations in late 1944.



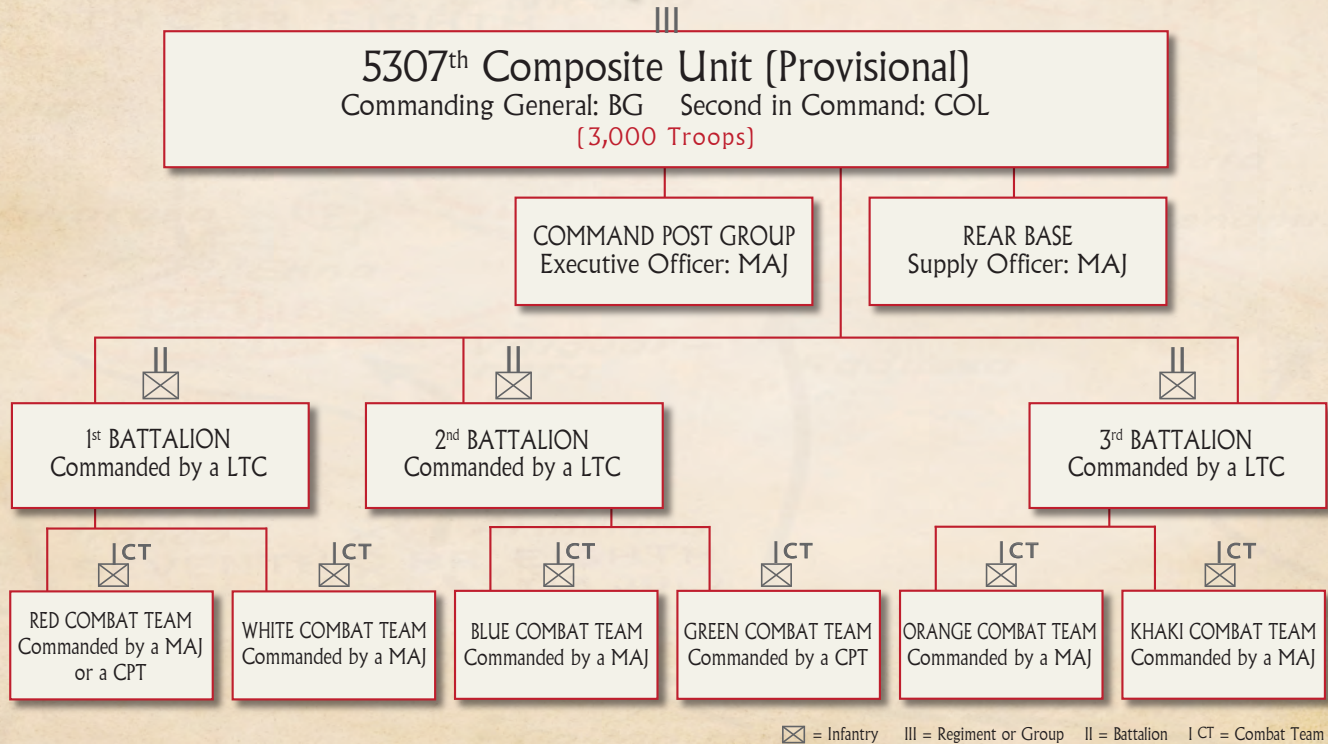
Brigadier General John P. Willey commanded the MARS Task Force in the field.



The 124th Cavalry was a Texas National Guard unit in Federal Service. Although replacements thinned the ranks, a large percentage of the men were Texans.

GALAHAD and the MARS Task Force: Two Vastly Different L RPGs for Burma

5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) Order of Battle 27 April 1944

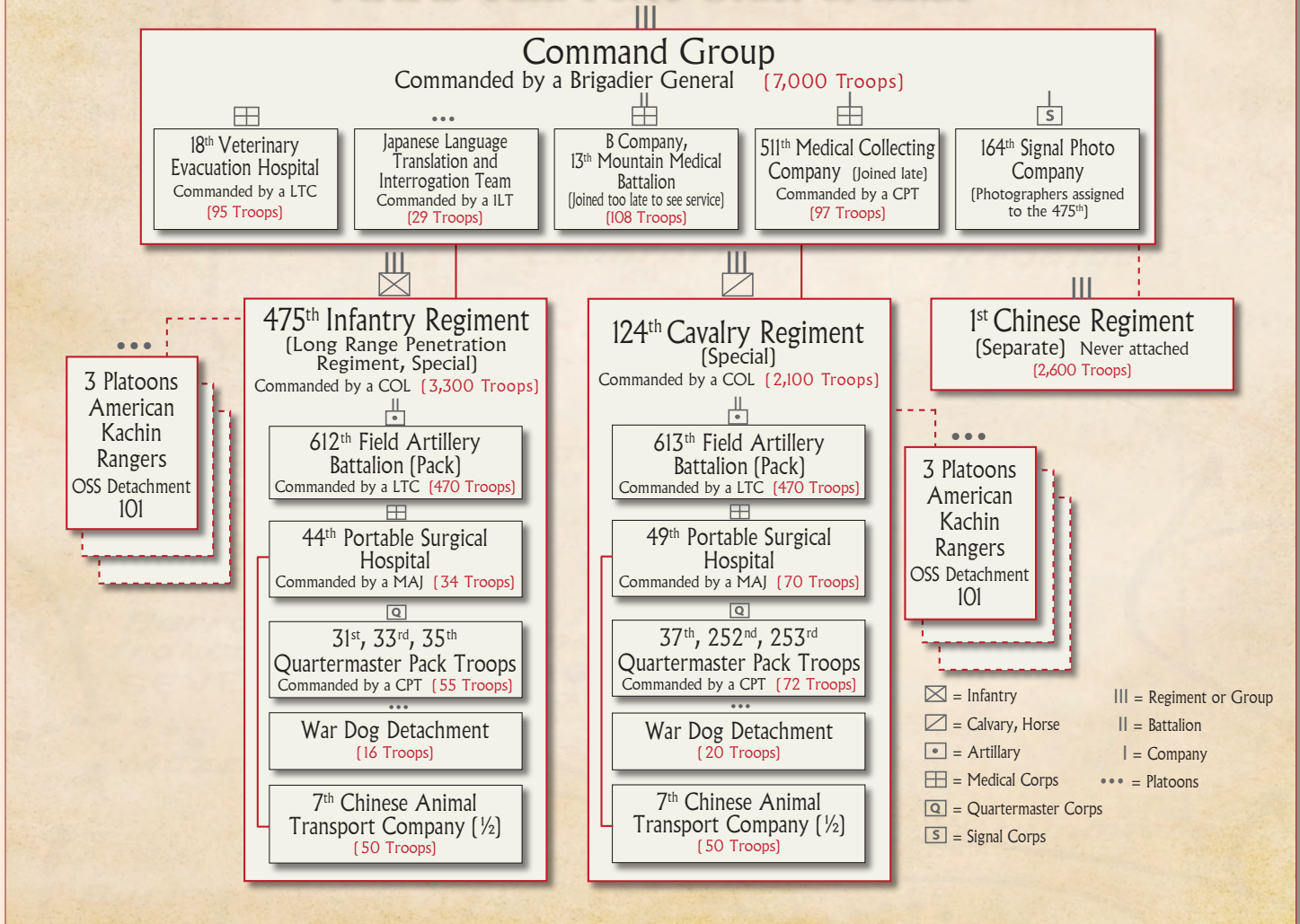


The U.S. Army modeled GALAHAD, the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), after a British L RPG dubbed the “Chindits.” In mid-1942 British Major General Orde C. Wingate formed the Chindits to operate deep within Japanese held-territory. The British followed the first Chindit operation in early 1943 with a second in 1944 that coincided with NCAC’s push for Myitkyina. It was in that push that Merrill’s Marauders got “bloodied” in combat. Originally conceived to serve as the American component of MG Wingate’s Chindit command, the 5307th organized along British lines; three light battalions, each subdivided into two color-designated combat teams.¹ Like the Chindits, the entire force ranged well ahead of Allied lines and received resupply by airdrop alone. Entering the field as an independent unit, however, the Marauders’ organization proved unsatisfactory and the first American L RPG encountered a steep learning curve. The absence of artillery and the lack of coordination with local guerrillas were most noteworthy. Both became necessities when the Japanese surrounded the 2nd Battalion at Nhpum Ga in April 1944.

With no organic artillery the Marauders were outgunned by the Japanese until aircraft dropped two 75mm M1 pack howitzers to the 2nd Battalion. Improvised crews, made up of Marauders who had served with the 98th Field Artillery Battalion (Pack) on New Guinea, manned the guns. The two howitzers helped counter the Japanese artillery at Nhpum Ga, and provided much needed artillery support during the two month siege of Myitkyina.

Another shortcoming was the Marauders’ lack of coordination with the local guerrillas. Kachin tribesmen organized and armed by Detachment 101 of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) were a significant combat force in the Marauder area of operations. Although BG Merrill knew about Detachment 101, he did not capitalize on their talents.² It would be the acting commander, Colonel Charles N. Hunter, who praised the Kachins and credited them with “saving over two-thirds of Merrill’s forces.” They warned the unsuspecting American force of the Japanese counterattack that created the siege of Nhpum Ga. Afterwards, the Kachins became an integral part of the Marauders.³ Other problems plagued the Marauders.

MARS Task Force Order of Battle



Drastic rates of death and incapacitation from disease were unanticipated. Mobile medical facilities would have helped as would have additional veterinary care for their mules. The lessons of the Marauders were integrated into the MARS Task Force structure. The unit "was able to profit by the experience of Wingate's Raiders [Chindits] and Merrill's Marauders in Burma jungle operations."⁴

As the second LRPG created for Burma, the 5332nd Brigade (Provisional) did not resemble the Marauders, even though it was a successor unit. MARS addressed in duplicate the deficiencies in GALAHAD's organization. Both regimental combat teams had organic field artillery, medical, and quartermaster units, and three platoons of Kachins detailed from the OSS to serve as an intelligence and reconnaissance force.⁵ The headquarters controlled veterinary, additional medical, and a small element capable of interrogating Japanese prisoners and translating captured documents. These were not the only differences.

Size wise, the MARS Task Force, of nearly 7,000 men was twice as big as the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) of 3,000 men.⁶ Had the 1st Chinese Regiment

(Separate) ever joined the unit, the MARS Task Force would have been the size of a light division. Using the lessons learned from the Marauders, the MARS Task Force was designed to be the model of an ideal LRPG for Burma, with artillery, support, and medical facilities integral to all maneuver elements.

Endnotes

- ¹ *Merrill's Marauders* (Washington D.C.: Military Intelligence Division, U.S. War Department, 1945), 12-13; Charlton Ogburn, Jr., *The Marauders* (New York: Harper, 1959), 15.
- ² For more on the OSS Detachment 101 role in the Myitkyina Campaign, see "A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign Part I" *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 4 (1): 30-47 (2008); and "A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign Part II" *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 4 (3): 38-53 (2008).
- ³ "KNOTHEAD GROUP," [March-May 1944], F 48, B 38, E 190, RG 226, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD; Anonymous, *Merrill's Marauders* (Washington DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1990), 96-97.
- ⁴ LTC Ralph E. Baird, "Narrative History - 5332d Brigade (Prov), copies provided by the USAJFKSWCS Archive and the Mr. Randy Colvin collection, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- ⁵ John Randolph, *MARSmen in Burma* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri-Columbia, 1990), 33-40.
- ⁶ Numerical breakdown of the MARS Task Force, provided by the Mr. Randall Colvin collection, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.



An M1 75 mm pack howitzer with its 613th FAB crew.



The Field Artillery received its ammunition in clover-arranged tubes of three, that were packed three to a mule. Each gun had at least a basic load of twenty-seven rounds at all times.

1st Section, C Battery, 612th Field Artillery fires at Japanese positions near the Burma Road, 19 January 1945. Standing at left is SGT George Hasse, while (L to R) PFCs John Elliot and Stan Eddy kneel at the gun trail.



Activated at Camp Gruber, OK, on 17 December 1943 and filled by personnel from nine different U.S. Army posts, the 612th Field Artillery (Pack) trained at Camp Carson, CO, before it shipped out for Bombay, India.⁹ There, on 26 August 1944, one of the artillerymen commented on the crowded waterfront and wrote, "If all of India is like this I know I am not going to like it."¹⁰ He did not have much time to find out. Elements of the 612th reached Camp Landis on 19 September, but the rest trickled in through early November. On 12 November LTC Severn T. Wallis assumed command and the 612th was attached to the 475th Infantry Regiment shortly afterwards.¹¹

The 613th FA had also been activated at Camp Gruber, OK on the same date, under the command of LTC James F. Donovan.¹² With personnel from Fort Bragg, NC, and Camp Carson, CO, the 613th trained at Camp Carson before following its sister unit across the Pacific. It arrived in India on 23 November and six days later was engaged in jungle training at Camp Landis, Burma and attached to the 124th Cavalry.¹³

The organization of the 612th and 613th FABs was identical. Each battalion had four batteries; A, B, C, and Headquarters and Service (H/S). The firing batteries, A, B, and C, had four 75 mm pack howitzers each. A single firing battery supported a battalion in the 475th or a squadron in the 124th. The firing batteries had a Detail and Service Section and four Gun Sections, led by a Sergeant. Corporals served as gunners and there were five Private First Class cannoneers in each howitzer crew. Cannoneers had specific jobs: the #1 man assisted the Gunner with elevation and fired the howitzer (pulled the lanyard); #2 man loaded and unloaded the gun, #3 and #4 men set the fuse and proper charge for range, and #5



Unlike Merrill's Marauders, each regiment in the MARS Task Force and the 5332nd Brigade Headquarters had attached mobile medical units. The 44th Portable Surgical Hospital seen above supported the 475th Infantry Regiment.

man adjusted the direction of fire by moving the trail of the howitzer to the correct compass azimuth. Ten other privates served as mule drivers that packed/unloaded the guns and ammunition.¹⁴ Muleskinner Corporal Phillip Sparn, C Battery, 613th FAB, recalled that "we took care of that mule better than we did ourselves."¹⁵

In addition to artillery, a host of smaller units were attached. Critical to the 5332nd were the Army Quartermaster Mule Teams. By providing additional pack support beyond those mules supporting each regiment and FAB, the Quartermaster units increased the quantity of supplies that the MARS Task Force carried, allowing it to conduct independent operations longer. Initially, mules were a novelty to many of the soldiers, although that quickly changed. One muleskinner, SGT Ernie Mutch, said "When it comes to eatin' and sleeping with 'em, I lose my affection damn fast."¹⁶ Despite some dissatisfaction associated with the mules, they proved invaluable in Burma. The MARS brigade-wide standard of one mule leader per animal meant that the mule trains moved very efficiently, if a bit unwieldy and slowly. The 3,000 mules in the 5332th—all shipped from the United States—made the Task Force largely self-sufficient.¹⁷

Smaller units had specific functions. Each regiment had a section of "war dogs." Twenty enlisted men and

nineteen dogs were attached to the 124th and sixteen men and dogs to the 475th.¹⁸ Each regiment had a mobile medical facility assigned to take care of the sick and wounded while deep in Japanese territory. The Task Force headquarters controlled veterinary and other medical units, as well as photographers and *Nisei* translators. Civil Affairs tasks, such as paying cash for war damaged crops, were handled by Captain Terrance Carroll, a British officer from NCAC headquarters.¹⁹ The



The MARS Task Force had sections of "war dogs" assigned to both the 475th Infantry Regiment and the 124th Cavalry Regiment.

After the USAAF dropped supplies to the MARS Task Force, the soldiers then had to repack the material onto the mules. Special harnesses helped distribute the loads on the mule's back to prevent injury and fatigue.



Private First Class James L. Miller, L Company, 3rd Battalion, 475th Infantry, rests with his mule prior to climbing a steep grade on 10 February 1945. Carrying the majority of the unit's supplies, mules were critical to MARS Task Force operations.



Civil Affairs officer British Captain Terence Carroll, assigned to NCAC, pays local villagers for war damage caused by the MARS Task Force.



Japanese-American *Nisei* assisted the MARS Task Force by translating captured documents or interrogating prisoners. Although assigned to the command group, they served in each of the two regiments.



10th Army Air Force
SSI

only outside support came from the U.S. Army Air Forces (USAAF) 10th Air Force.

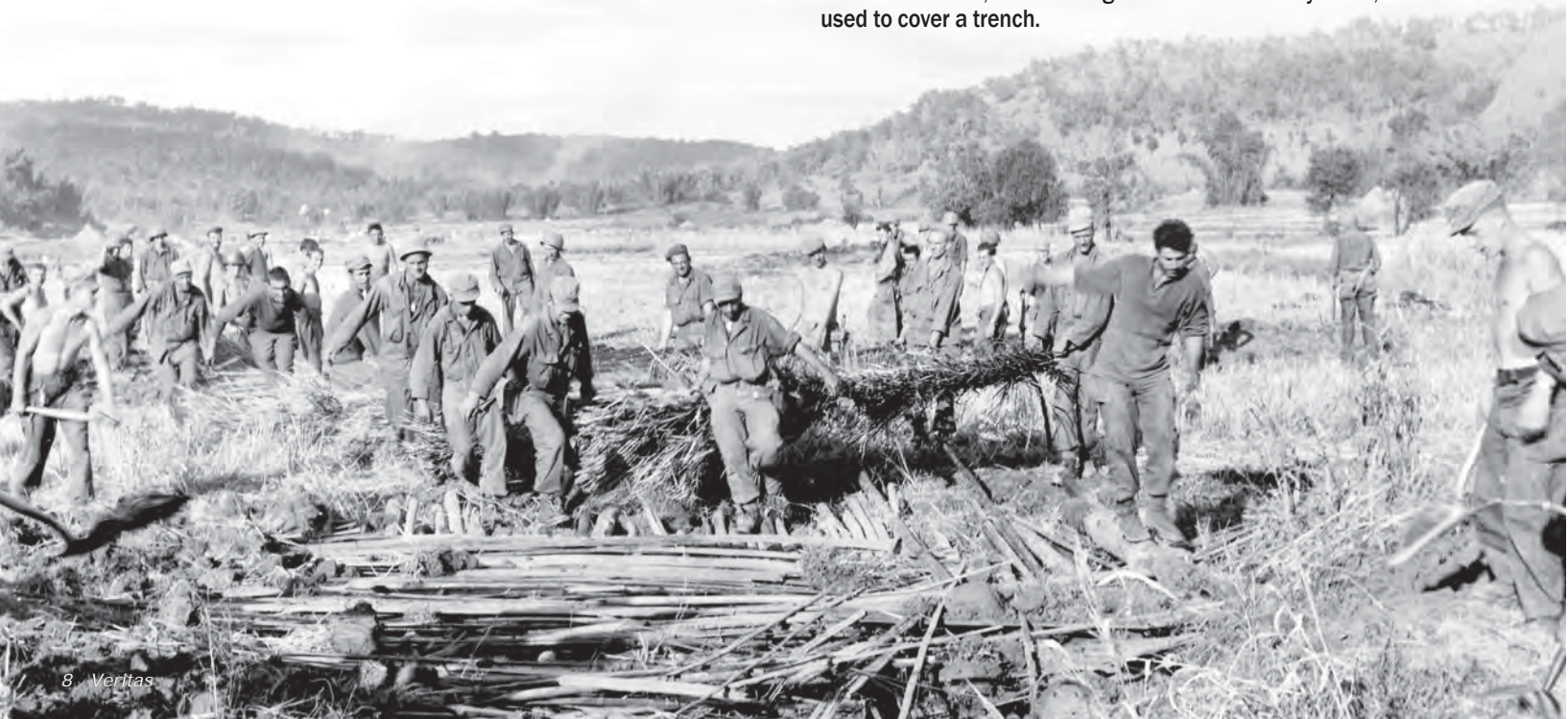
Since the Japanese lost air superiority over Burma after Myitkyina, this enabled the MARS Task Force to exploit its LRP capabilities to the utmost.

NCAC supplied the MARSmen by air dropping food and ammunition by parachute every three days.²⁰ In addition to aerial resupply, the USAAF also evacuated the sick and wounded of MARS. The unit would not simply leave their casualties behind as the British had in their 1943 Chindit operation. Light liaison aircraft like the Stinson L-1 Vigilant and the Stinson L-5 Sentinel performed medical evacuations. Although small and limited to one or two wounded at a time, their ability to take off and land on short improvised runways made them ideal. Sick and injured had only to stay in the field until a suitable landing site was found. A critical support element for MARS came from the indigenous population.



Once a place was found on which to land a light plane, wounded and sick soldiers were evacuated by air to hospitals in the rear.

MARSmen had to reduce obstacles on potential landing strips while on the march so that wounded or sick soldiers could be evacuated. Here, local roofing material followed by earth, was used to cover a trench.





Casualty evacuation by air was not foolproof as shown by this wreckage of an L-5 near Namhkam, Burma on 20 January 1945. Uneven and improvised landing fields claimed many aircraft.



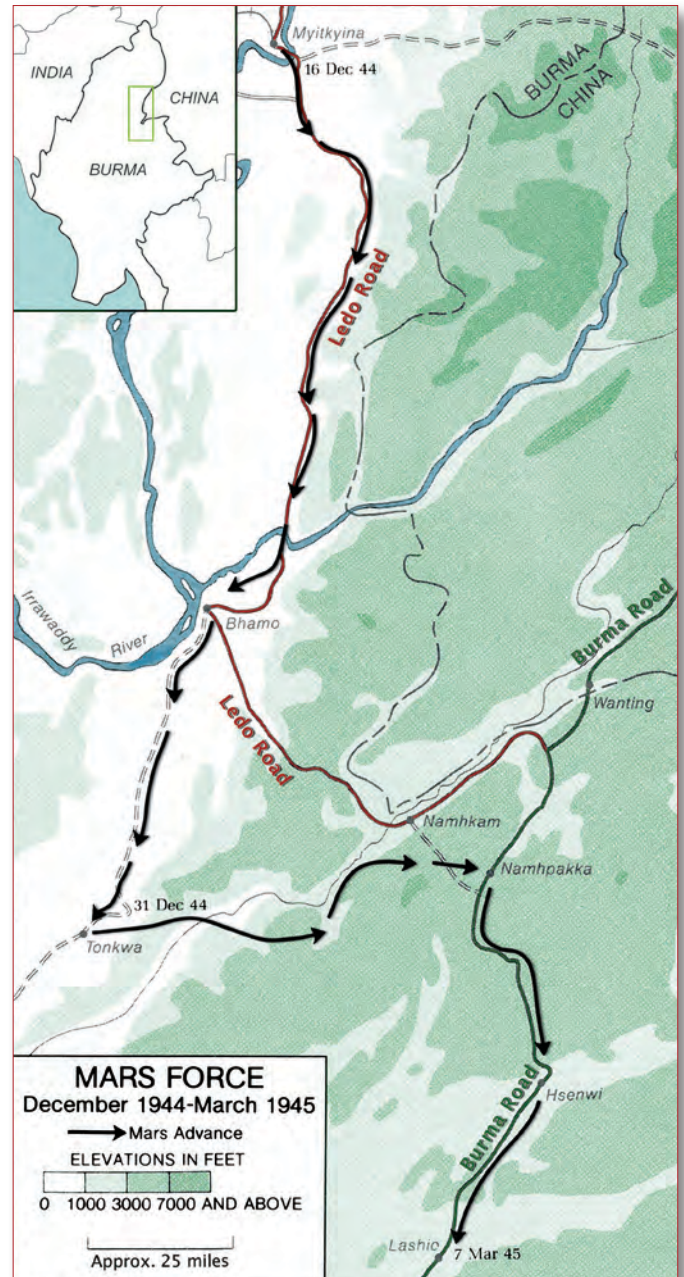
Although the majority of wounded were evacuated safely once airborne, not all were. Four men had to be rescued from this overloaded L-1.



The Kachin tribesmen of OSS Detachment 101 (Jingpaw Rangers) provided valuable service to the MARS Task Force. They scouted ahead of the main body, identifying drop zones and warning of enemy forces.

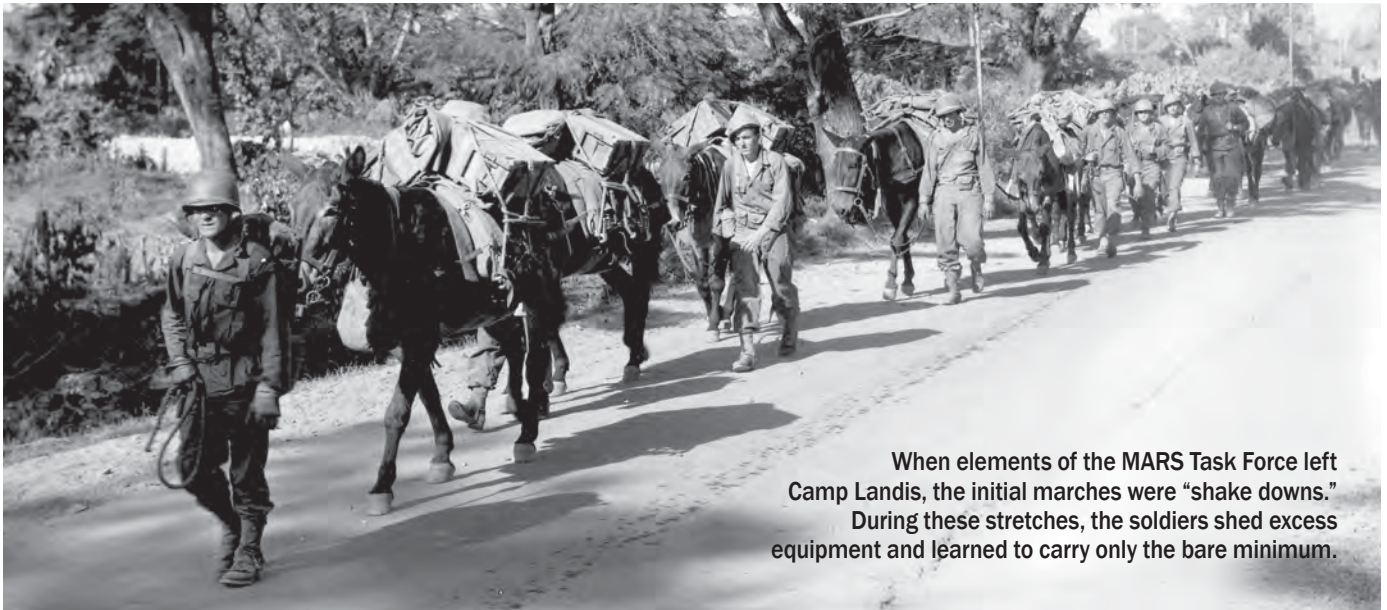


Detachment 101 Patch



Route of the MARS Task Force in Burma, December 1944-March 1945.

Although not assigned or attached, three platoons of OSS Detachment 101-led Kachin tribesmen acted as intelligence and reconnaissance scouts for each regiment. Originally created for intelligence collection and sabotage in Japanese-controlled Burma, Detachment 101 expanded its capability to conduct guerrilla warfare. With recruits primarily from the Kachin tribes of north Burma, the OSS had a distinct advantage over the Japanese and ambushes were invariably deadly. In addition, the unit supplied tactical intelligence to the USAAF for bombing missions. The Kachins scouted at least a day ahead of the MARS main body. In doing so, they located Japanese troop concentrations, drop zones, and medical evacuation strips.



When elements of the MARS Task Force left Camp Landis, the initial marches were “shake downs.” During these stretches, the soldiers shed excess equipment and learned to carry only the bare minimum.



Private Charles H. Pelsor, E Company, 2nd Battalion, 475th Infantry, fires a Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) at Japanese near Tonkwa on 15 December 1944.



Corporal Tony S. Damiano shows Private Joseph P. Knoapack Christmas stockings he received in a package from home, 20 December 1944, Tonkwa, Burma.

With these elements assigned and attached, the MARS Task Force was combat-ready after a relatively short training period. The 475th Infantry began moving south into Japanese-controlled Burma in late November 1944. The 124th Cavalry followed them out of Camp Landis in mid-December. On these early marches soldiers shed excess equipment and learned to carry only what was needed to live in the field, though special things were occasionally hidden in a mule load. The MARS Task Force campaign consisted of three phases: first, the march from Camp Landis to the first combat at Tonkwa; second, the mission to cut the Burma Road; and third, the movement to serve as instructors in the Chinese Combat Command.

MARS Enters the Field

The march south from Camp Landis on 17 November ended at Tonkwa for the 475th, supported by the 612th FAB. They had been ordered by NCAC to help the Chinese envelop Tonkwa. From 12 to 24 December, the 612th FAB assisted the 475th by firing approximately 2500 shells on enemy positions.²¹ The 475th was first “bloodied” at Tonkwa. Private First Class Richard W. Hale, who experienced a *banzai* charge, said, “The [Japanese] made a mistake by preceding their attack with a ten-minute artillery barrage, so we were more than ready for them . . . The charging Japanese ran into a firestorm of .30 caliber bullets. I do not know how many of the 220 Japanese dead at Tonkwa we killed that night, but they broke off that action and never tried it again against our portion of the perimeter.”²² After helping to weaken the Japanese hold on Tonkwa, the Chinese 50th Division managed to occupy the town during the British drive in Central Burma. This forced the enemy to retreat south, ceding the area to the Allies.²³ After Tonkwa, the MARS Task Force was ordered to intercept retreating Japanese forces by cutting the Burma Road near Nampakka, Burma, close to where the Ledo Road intersected it. It was also the site of a large enemy ammunition dump. For Phase Two, the

475th joined the 124th, which had left Camp Landis on 16 December 1944 headed for Nampakka.

Cutting the Burma Road deep in enemy-held territory was critical for several reasons. First, it hindered Japanese lines of communication to their forces north of the block, forcing the enemy to retreat, freeing all convoys traveling the now completed Ledo Road from Japanese interference. Second, NCAC hoped to goad reluctant Chinese forces into action by placing an American force deep inside Japanese territory—an attempt to embarrass them into resuming the offensive. Third, securing the area lessened the Japanese threat to the rear of British forces in the west who were driving south into Central Burma. During the Second Phase, the MARS Task Force validated its mission as a long range penetration unit.

All resupply came by air because the route of march traversed some of the most difficult terrain in the world. The official U.S. Army history stated, “The men would peer ahead and look out across

Because they were plentiful, MARSmen used parachutes to make life as comfortable as possible. This soldier uses a silk parachute as a foxhole liner.

Once the MARS Task Force entered enemy territory, its only link for outside assistance was by radio.



This photograph shows the terrain that the MARS Task Force traversed in order to reach the Burma Road. It took a whole day for a single battalion to pass any given point.





MARSmen cross the swollen Shweli River on 2 March 1945. Soon after, heavy rains threatened to sweep the “bridge” away. Mules were unpacked and led across one at a time while the men carried the supplies.



If a mule lost its footing and went over the side of the trail, the unfortunate muleskinner was duty-bound to retrieve the animal if it were still alive, or to salvage the load if not.



the valleys to where lay row on row of hills, like the waves of a frozen sea.”²⁴ Marching up the steep mountains and back down into the valleys was so exhausting that at times one or two minutes of climbing was followed by five minutes of rest. One particularly hard day the Task Force only managed to march three and a half miles.²⁵ Trails were so narrow and precipitous that fully-loaded mules occasionally toppled over the side. When that occurred, MARSmen climbed down to collect the lost supplies, and bring the mule back to the column if it was alive, or to shoot it on the spot if it was too injured to do so. Fortunately, few mules were lost. The intermittent rain plagued the 124th and its attached units because they were following the 475th column. Trails became mud slides. At the Shweli River, the trail down was so steep and muddy that it was nicknamed the “Shweli Slide” because once you started down it “there was no stopping until we hit the bottom,” recalled John Randolph, who chronicled the campaign in *MARSmen in Burma*.²⁶

“We crossed some of the roughest country in the world, and after seventeen days of marching, we arrived at the Burma Road,” wrote one 612th FAB soldier in his diary.²⁷ Still, they managed to surprise the Japanese 4th Regiment on 17 January 1945. Then, in a scene reminiscent of the Battle of Gettysburg during the American Civil War some eighty years before, both sides rushed to secure the high ground. Unbeknownst to the MARS Task Force, the Japanese had nearly 11,500 men in the area (the entire 56th Division, the 168th and 4th Regiments, and the regimental-sized Yamakazi Detachment).²⁸ Outside combat

When on the march, the MARS Task Force columns stretched for several miles. Because the trails were often narrow, the 7,000 men and 3,000 mules had to travel single-file.

assistance for MARS came from American airpower. Fortunately, the Japanese were intent on withdrawing their forces south to fight the British at Mandalay. Putting a noose on the Burma Road was a serious problem.

The MARS Task Force secured elevated positions looking down on the Burma Road, but, the Japanese managed to keep the Americans from cutting the roadbed. The Americans could only block the road temporarily with artillery fire and occasional ambushes. Fierce Japanese opposition limited maneuver. It became a knockdown fight for control of the heights overlooking the road, with the MARS Task Force also forced to protect the rear area drop and evacuation zones.

On 17 January, the 475th had captured its first positions. This permitted the 612th Field Artillery to interdict enemy traffic with its pack howitzers, forcing the Japanese units to use the road only at night. By the next day, the Japanese had recovered. From positions overlooking the Americans, observers called in larger caliber artillery to reach the drop zones. It took several days before pack howitzers firing at maximum range and the USAAF reduced the threat. Blockage of the Burma Road was having an effect.

On 21 January, MARS Task Force patrols encountered the Chinese 114th Regiment, which had begun to push south. For the next week, the MARS Task Force patrolled on the west side of the road and tried to interdict Japanese traffic with artillery fire. With their forces in full retreat along the Burma Road and adjacent trails, the Japanese goal became to prevent the Task Force and nearby Chinese from cutting off their escape. Both regiments of the 5332nd were hard pressed. The 2nd Battalion, 475th Infantry struggled to seize Loi-Kang hill and the village on top. It took two battalions to push the enemy off the hill. The 124th Cavalry faced similar obstacles.

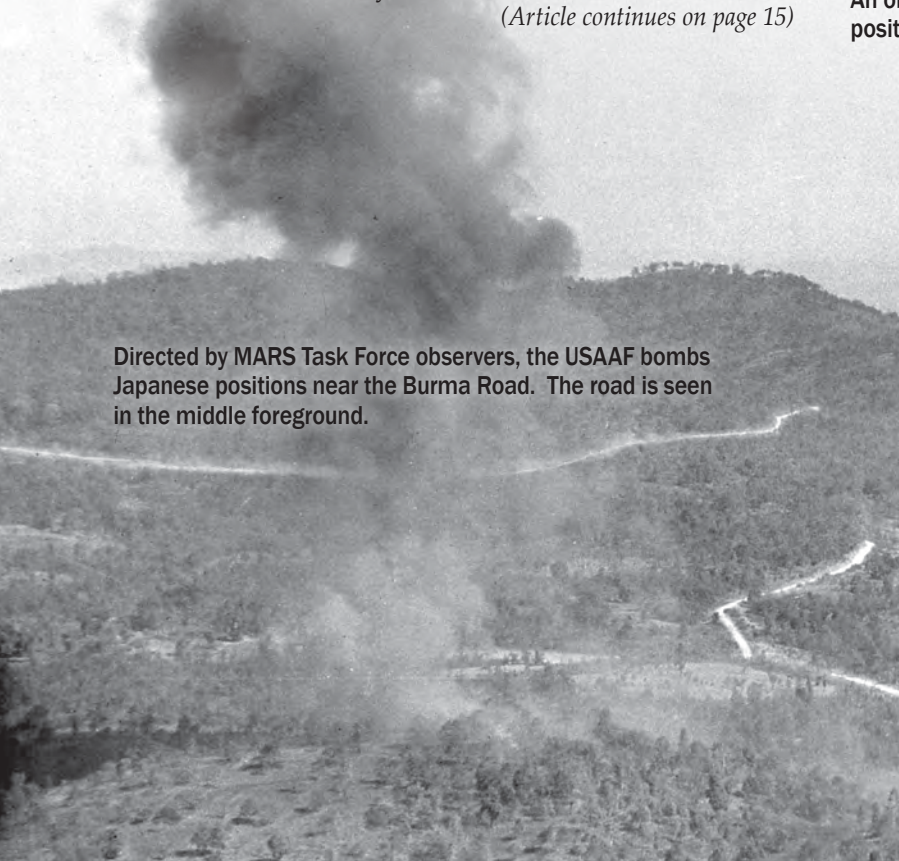
(Article continues on page 15)



Soldiers of the 475th Infantry attempt to capture Loi-Kang hill on 17 January 1945. Stubborn Japanese resistance prevented their success until much later.



An observer from the 612th FAB calls in artillery on Japanese positions along the Burma Road, 19 January 1945.



Directed by MARS Task Force observers, the USAAF bombs Japanese positions near the Burma Road. The road is seen in the middle foreground.



The MARS Task Force's positions overlooking the Burma Road forced the Japanese to use it only at night. Then, the Americans placed machine-gun and artillery fire on the road to harass the enemy and prevent them from using the road in the dark.

1LT Jack L. Knight

First Lieutenant (1LT) Jack L. Knight was the Commander of F Troop, 2nd Squadron, 124th Cavalry Regiment. On 2 February 1945, 1LT Knight received orders to attack the right side of a Japanese-held ridge north of Loi-Kang.²⁹ The intent was to gain a closer ridge from which the 124th could more easily interdict Japanese traffic retreating down the Burma Road. The attack was fierce; all officers in F Troop were either killed or wounded.³⁰ 1LT Knight's heroic actions were particularly valorous, based on his Medal of Honor citation.

"On 2 February 1945, near Loi-Kang, Burma, First Lieutenant Jack Llewellyn Knight, 124th Cavalry Regiment, MARS Task Force, led his cavalry troop against heavy concentrations of enemy mortar, artillery, and small arms fire. After taking the troop's objective and while making preparations for a defense, he discovered a nest of Japanese pillboxes and foxholes to the right front. Preceding his men by at least 10 feet, he immediately led an attack. Single-handedly, he knocked out two enemy pillboxes and killed the occupants of several foxholes. While attempting to knock out a third pillbox, he was struck and blinded by an enemy grenade. Although unable to see, he rallied his troops and continued forward in the assault on the remaining pillboxes. Before the task was completed, he fell mortally wounded. First Lieutenant Knight's gallantry



and intrepidity were responsible for the successful elimination of most of the [Japanese] positions and served as an inspiration to the officers and men of his troop."³¹ When 1LT Knight was killed, Second Lieutenant (2 LT) Leo C. Tynan, his artillery observer from the 613th FAB, took command of F Troop when he discerned that all other officers were wounded or dead. For his gallantry during the attack, 2LT Tynan was awarded the Silver Star.³²

COL William L. Osborne, the 124th Cavalry commander, commented: "In over four years of combat I have seen many officers fight and die for their country, but the actions of Lieutenant Knight in leading his troop against a strong enemy will always remain as the finest example of American courage, valor, and leadership of any officer I have had under my command. It is officers of Lieutenant Knight's caliber, and troops that follow that kind of leadership, who are winning the war—not colonels and generals."³³ The British head of the South East Asia Command—which oversaw NCAC in theater—Lord Louis Mountbatten, proclaimed on 18 February 1945 that the hill that F troop had captured would be declared "Knight's Hill."³⁴ 1LT Knight from Garner, TX, was the only ground combat soldier to receive the Medal of Honor in the CBI. He was also the only soldier from an ARSOF legacy unit to do so in WWII.



MARSmen snipe at Japanese positions near the Burma Road. The Mars Task Force was issued "light-gathering" night scopes called "sniperscopes" and "snooperscopes" to improve night marksmanship.



MARSmen move into an assembly area on 18 January 1945 before launching another attack on the Japanese.



A 4.2 inch mortar crew fires on Japanese positions. Like the 75 mm pack howitzers, the 4.2 inch mortars were mule-packed.



To prevent the Japanese from recovering their stranded vehicles during the night, patrols used explosive charges to destroy the enemy equipment.



After blowing a large crater in the Burma Road on 19 January 1945, a MARS Task Force patrol returns in daylight to inspect the night's "catch" of two tankettes and a truck.

The Japanese hold was finally broken on 9 February. One MARSman later said, "They really gave us the works, but we were better."³⁵ The MARS Task Force lost 115 killed in action and 938 wounded, but the unit had validated LRPG operations.³⁶ Unfortunately, this battle was to be its last.

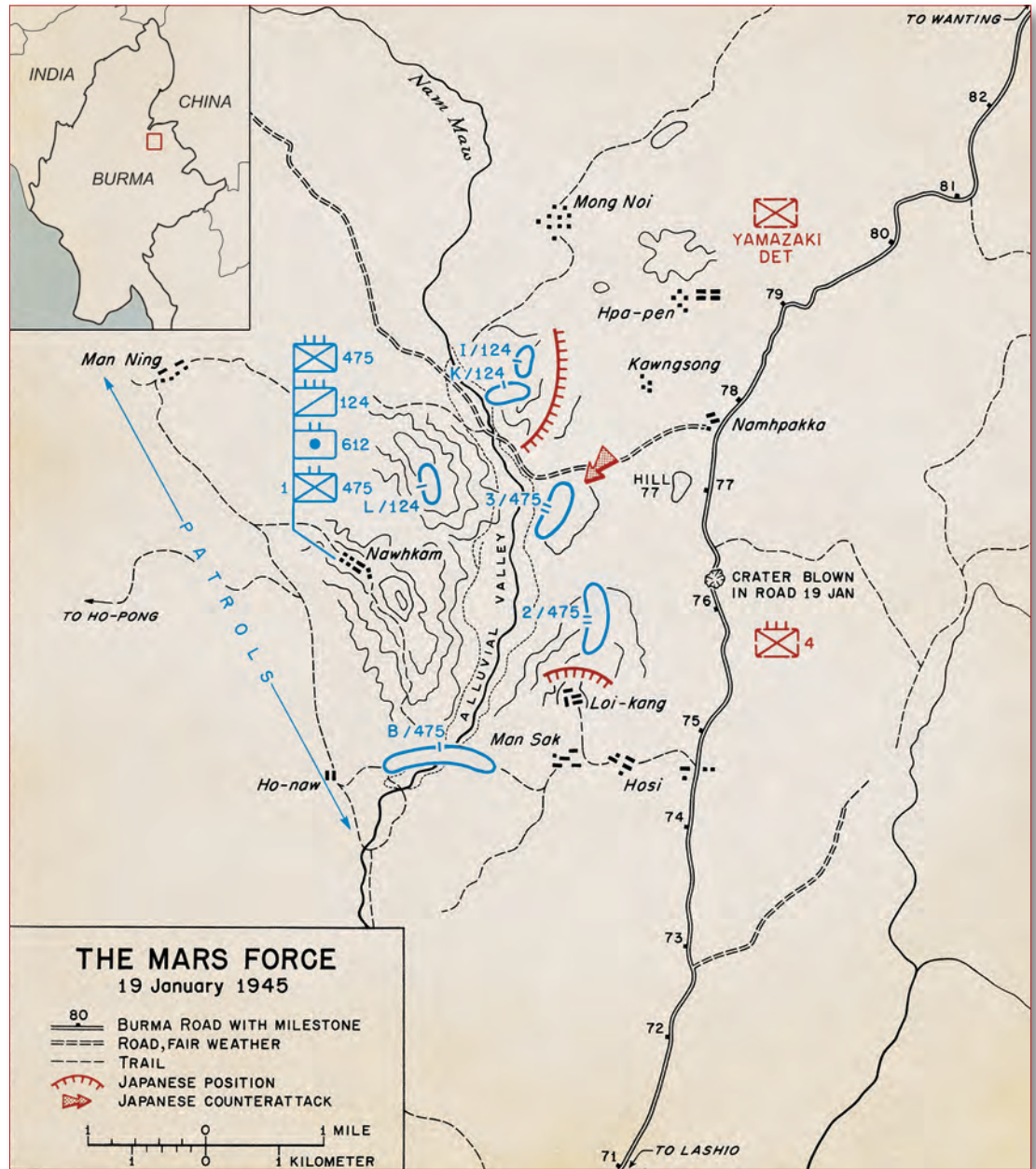
Events in north Burma rapidly turned in NCAC's favor. With the upper reaches of the Burma Road in Allied hands, the Japanese could no longer hold north of Lashio. The rapid advance of NCAC's Chinese divisions after the British breakthrough forced the Japanese to withdraw even further south. Isolated Japanese elements concentrated in the eastern Shan States. NCAC tasked OSS Detachment 101 to harass these forces and prevent them from escaping to reinforce enemy units in Thailand.³⁷ With no combat mission remaining for the MARS Task Force in Burma, the unit was ordered to China to advise and train the Nationalist Chinese Army; its third phase of activity.

From March to May 1945, elements of the MARS Task Force were flown to China, but the mules were transported overland in seven groups. In two of the groups, the mules caught surra, an insect-born parasitic blood disease. They, and those in another group that ran out of water during the trip, were destroyed. Some 2,000 mules were turned over to the Chinese Army pack artillery units and 1,000 were lost en route.³⁸

In China, most troops served as training cadre in the Chinese Combat Command. Each component had specific training responsibilities, for instance the Field

(Article continues on page 17)

On 17 January 1945, the MARS Task Force surprised the enemy by marching deep into their territory and attacking the Burma Road. This map shows the positions of the two opposing forces on 19 January 1945. The surprised Japanese quickly recovered and fiercely defended the hills to the east of the road, preventing the MARS Task Force from cutting it. The best the MARS Task Force could do was interdict it with artillery fire and occasional patrols. There was a stalemate for two weeks until the Japanese retreated under pressure from Chinese forces in the north. This was the last combat mission of the LRPG.



After attacking the Burma Road, the MARSmen were ordered south but the rapid Chinese advance ended further combat for the force.



Artillery soldiers trained the Chinese on 75 mm and 105 mm howitzers. It was a mission for which they had not trained, but fortunately, it did not last long. On 11 June 1945 the MARS Task Force was disbanded, and on 1 July 1945 both the 475th Infantry and 124th Cavalry and their attached units followed suit.

Although technically not a Ranger unit, the MARS Task Force is part of the lineage of the U.S. Army Ranger Regiment, validating several operational concepts.³⁹ The MARS model of an LRP in Burma, proved how vital attached artillery and indigenous units were. It also reinforced the Marauder and OSS proven use of air evacuation for wounded and sick soldiers and that mules still had a role in an age of mechanized combat. With these central concepts the MARS Task Force had the combat power to drive deep into enemy-occupied territory to break the Japanese hold on the northern stretches of the Burma Road. Yet, the MARS Task Force remains somewhat forgotten. This article is a primer on the organization and service of that LRP. Future articles will explore the special training and combat operations of the MARS Task Force in depth. ▲

Thank you to the MARS Task Force Mountain Artillery Association for helping with this article, in particular, Mr. Randall Colvin and LTC (ret) Willard B. Woodruff. Thanks go as well to my colleagues Earl J. Moniz and Ms. Laura Goddard for acquiring and preparing the photographs for publication.

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Endnotes

- 1 Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Time Runs Out in the CBI* (Washington DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1999), 94.
- 2 **COL Osborne fell ill after his campaigning with the Marauders and was replaced by COL Ernest F. Easterbrook. He later returned to the MARS Task Force in early January 1945 to replace COL Thomas J. Heavey as commander of the 124th Cavalry.**
- 3 Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Time Runs Out in the CBI*, 90.
- 4 Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Time Runs Out in the CBI*, 95.
- 5 John Randolph, *Marsmen in Burma* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri, Columbia, 1990), 5, 11-15.
- 6 **Robert W. Landis was the first member of Merrill's Marauders to be killed in action.**
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- 15 Phillip Sparn, interview by Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 3 September 2009, Washington D.C, notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.



The USAAF started flying the men of MARS to China in March 1945 to serve as trainers in the Chinese Combat Command.



Chinese Training Command Patch



The MARS Task Force patch became the model for the 75th Ranger Regiment Distinctive Unit Insignia (DUI).

- 16 SGT John McDowell, "Mules, Vets of Burma, China Bound," *CBI Roundup*, 9 August 1945, copy provided to the USASOC History Office by Mr. Randy Colvin, the Mr. Randy Colvin collection, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 17 Baird, "Narrative History – 5332d Brigade (Prov)."
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- 20 George W. Patrick, interview by Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 23 April 2008, Fort Bragg, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **For more on air resupply in Burma, see "Wings Over Burma: Air Support in the Burma Campaign," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 4 (2): 16-29 (2008).**
- 21 "Combat History of the 612th Field Artillery Battalion (Pack) North and Central Burma Campaigns 18 November, 1944-18 April, 1945," [May 1945], copy in the USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 22 Richard W. Hale, "The MARS Task Force in Burma: A Personal Memoir," http://www.americanveteranscenter.org/?page_id=1654, accessed 27 October 2009.
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- 25 Baird, "Narrative History – 5332d Brigade (Prov)."
- 26 Randolph, *Marsmen in Burma*, 120.
- 27 John R. Delong, "C BTRY 612th," Copy provided by Randall Colvin, the Mr. Randy Colvin collection, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 28 Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Time Runs Out in the CBI*, 190.
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- 31 Charles Briscoe, "Lieutenant Jack L. Knight; MARS Task Force MOH Winner," *Special Warfare*, February 2004, 38-41.
- 32 Bill Knight, *Knight's Hill: The Story of a Family in War* (Victoria, BC, Canada: Trafford, 2004), 273.
- 33 "Jack L. Knight Medal of Honor Winner," *The Burman News*, December 2005, 2-3.
- 34 Jordan, "The Operations of 2d Squadron, 124th Cavalry Regiment Special in the Battle of Knight's Hill."
- 35 Delong, "C BTRY 612th."
- 36 Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Time Runs Out in the CBI*, 213.
- 37 **OSS Detachment 101 received a Presidential Unit Citation for its role in this final campaign.**
- 38 Randall Colvin, "The Move of Mules from Burma to China, 1945," Copy provided by Mr. Randall Colvin, the Mr. Randy Colvin collection, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; SGT John McDowell, "Mules, Vets of Burma, China Bound," *India-Burma Theater Roundup*, 9 August 1945.
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Civilian Irregular Defense Group:

The First Years:
1961-1967

By Eugene G. Piasecki



On 7 May 1954, the Communist-supported Vietnam Independence League, commonly known as the Viet Minh, defeated elements of the French Expeditionary Corps at Dien Bien Phu in Northern Indochina.¹ A day later, peace talks began in Geneva, Switzerland that led to an armistice. France lost its colony in Indochina, Vietnam was divided at the 17th parallel, and popular elections were mandated. President Dwight D. Eisenhower promised assistance to South Vietnam's Premier Ngo Dinh Diem and by July 1954, the United States had 342 military advisors in South Vietnam. The Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) initially focused on countering Viet Minh action committee false propaganda instigating South Vietnamese opposition to the Diem government.²



President Ngo Dinh Diem before his death in South Vietnam's 1963 coup d'etat. Diem's authoritarian government was overturned and power became centered in the hands of inexperienced ARVN generals.

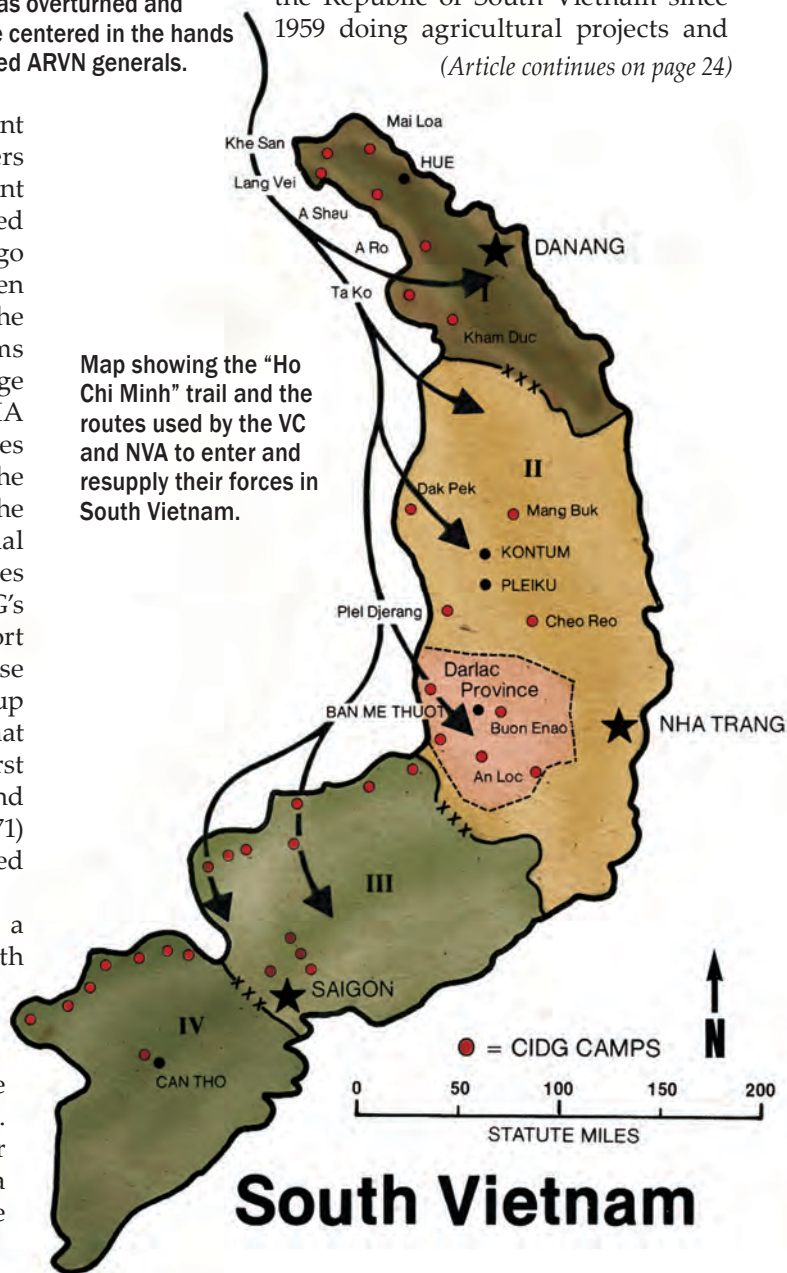
By 1961, the Viet Minh, called Viet Cong (VC) in South Vietnam, began to escalate their insurgency against the government and military. Concerned about the growing numbers of Wars of National Liberation worldwide, President John F. Kennedy, with Congressional support, increased U. S. economic and military aid to now President, Ngo Dinh Diem.³ This assistance was meant to broaden South Vietnam's counterinsurgency efforts against the Viet Cong and was conducted through several programs such as the one to improve Central Highland village agricultural conditions. This in fact was a covert CIA effort intended to collect information on VC activities and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) infiltrations into the heavy jungle of the mountainous border areas while the agency evaluated developing the paramilitary potential of selected minority groups.⁴ U.S. Army Special Forces ODAs, assigned to the CIA's cover organization, MAAG's Combined Studies Division (CSD), provided support with military training and advisory assistance to these minorities through the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) program.⁵ This article is the first of two that explains the U.S.- sponsored CIDG Program. The first begins with the creation and development (1961-1967) and the second, the CIDG during Vietnamization (1968-1971) when SF-trained units and individuals were integrated into the Army of Vietnam (ARVN) Ranger Command.

Why the CIDG program? First, the CIA believed a paramilitary force of minorities would expand South Vietnam's counterinsurgency efforts into remote areas. Second, the largest of these minorities, the Montagnards, had always been treated as third class citizens by the government which made them prime targets for Communist propaganda and recruiting. VC dominance of the Central Highlands was a major concern.⁶ By 1961, the VC insurgency presented a real threat to the Diem regime and the ARVN. The

South Vietnamese government sought the help of the CSD and gave them permission to meet with Rhade tribal leaders (see Buon Enao sidebar). After establishing rapport, the CSD offered defense training and small arms to the Rhade if they would swear allegiance to South Vietnam's government and start village self-defense programs.

The first village selected was Buon Enao in Darlac Province, hence that became "The Buon Enao Experiment."⁷ By presidential decree, it was to be controlled solely by the Combined Studies Division, not the Vietnamese Army nor the MAAG. In October 1961, two Americans, David A. Nuttle, a career International Volunteer Services (IVS) official who had been serving in the Republic of South Vietnam since 1959 doing agricultural projects and

(Article continues on page 24)



Map showing the "Ho Chi Minh" trail and the routes used by the VC and NVA to enter and resupply their forces in South Vietnam.



This Montagnard longhouse represents the most common type used when American Special Forces served in South Vietnam's Central Highlands.

Montagnard Tribes

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

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

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



Montagnard elders dressed in Rhade tribal ceremonial attire for a special occasion.

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

This article is a reprint from Robert W. Jones Jr. "A Team Effort: Special Forces in Vietnam June-December 1964," Veritas, Volume 3, Number 1, 2007, 24-36.

Endnotes

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- 2 Colonel Francis J. Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces, 1961-1971* (Washington DC: Center for Military History, 1989), 20.
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1st Special Forces Group Flash

The village of Buon Enao as it appeared in 1962.

The Buon Enao Experiment

In January 1962, MACV renamed the Village Defense Program (VDP) formed in Vietnam's Central Highlands the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) program. The Central Highlands were important because they dominated the Mekong Delta to the south, the rice producing lands to the east, and provided the Viet Cong (VC) numerous trails and supply routes from North Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia into South Vietnam's Delta region. Approximately 700,000 Montagnard tribesmen lived in the Central Highlands and since Vietnam's division in 1954 had been harassed and exploited as much by the VC as they had been ignored by the South Vietnamese government. Captain (CPT) Ronald A. Shackleton would later observe: "All they [the Rhade Montagnard Tribe] really wanted was to be left alone. They were capable of self-protection if given the means."¹ As the VC insurgency gained momentum so did South Vietnam's counterinsurgency. The Viet Cong and South Vietnamese both aggressively pursued efforts to gain and maintain Montagnard loyalty and support for their respective causes.

By developing the VDP, South Vietnam began meeting its objectives of securing Montagnard loyalty, providing them protection, and developing their counter-guerrilla fighter potential. Unlike President Diem's Strategic Hamlet Program, which was intended to isolate rural Vietnamese from VC influences, the Montagnards would stay in their own villages and receive training on how to use updated weapons and defensive tactics to protect their homes, families, and possessions from the VC.² The task of creating the VDP was assigned to CPT Shackleton and Detachment A-113, 1st Special Forces Group on Okinawa. Although A-113 originally trained for duty in Laos, its orders were changed in February 1962, directing Shackleton and seven team members to Vietnam.³ The village of Buon Enao was inhabited by approximately 400 Rhade tribesmen and selected as the initial VDP site for three reasons. First, the Rhade were considered the most experienced and socially advanced of the Montagnard tribes; second, many of its men were combat veterans of the French Expeditionary Corps; and third, Darlac Province was considered a major VC danger zone.⁴

A-113 Team Members

CPT (O-3) Ronald A. Shackleton	Commander
MSG (E-8) John Slover	Operations Sergeant
SFC (E-6) Manfred Baier	Medical Specialist
SGT (E-5) Lester Walkley	Communications Chief
SGT (E-5) William Beltsch	Communications Specialist
SGT (E-5) John Clark	Heavy Weapons Specialist
SGT (E-5) Charles Lindewald	Light Weapons Specialist
SP5 (E-5) Alford Warok	Engineer Specialist

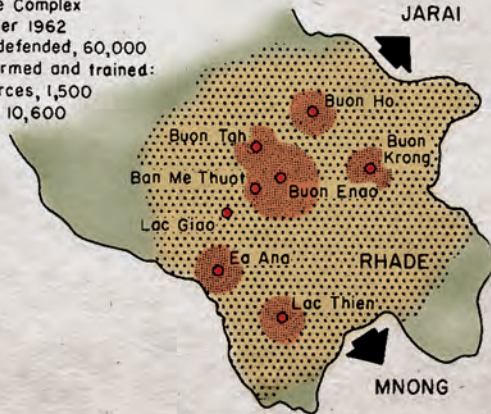


BUON ENAO EXPANSION

40-Village Complex
December 1961 - April 1962
Population in defended villages, 14,000
Population armed and trained:
Strike Forces, 300
Villagers, 975



200-Village Complex
April - October 1962
Population, defended, 60,000
Population armed and trained:
Strike Forces, 1,500
Villagers, 10,600



Map showing the expansion of the CIDG Program from its 40-village beginning in December 1961 until its 200-village expansion by October 1962.

From January to August 1962, Shackleton and A-113 prepared Buon Enao to be the province's operational base for directing, supporting, and administering the VDP. This meant preparing village defensive measures such as improving individual training, constructing security fences and digging shelters. Systems were also put into effect which stressed patrolling, early warning, communications, intelligence collection and reporting, population control, and mutual support coordination with neighboring villages.⁵ By August 1962, the results of A-113's efforts were becoming obvious. More than 200 Montagnard villages spread over approximately 4,000 square kilometers and more than half of the 120,000 Montagnards in Darlac Province's were protected by a local militia of thousands of village defenders and a 1,500-man mobile strike force. A-113 was so successful that as 1962 came to an end, Darlac Province was declared secure and VDP control became the Darlac Province Chief's responsibility. Realizing the program's future potential to negate VC activity, it was expanded country-wide and its name changed from the Village Defense Program (VDP) to the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) Program.⁶



Underground shelters were dug to protect village non-combatants such as the elderly, women, and children from VC attacks.



A fence reinforced by punji stakes around Buon Enao was the village's first line of defense.



Rhade CIDG soldier stands guard at Buon Enao.

Endnotes

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- 6 Shackleton, *Village Defense*, 138.



The American Embassy in South Vietnam was located on Thong Nhut Boulevard in Saigon.

a Special Forces Medical Sergeant on special duty from the 1st SFG, Staff Sergeant (SSG) Paul F. Campbell, went to Buon Enao. Campbell recalled the first session with the village elders: “Nuttle explained that the project was intended to improve Montagnard living, agricultural, and medical facilities. The concept was to go into a village like Buon Enao, teach the people to put some sort of defense around the village to keep everybody out, not just the Viet Cong, but also the ARVN.” It would be “a show of defiance” with the villagers acting as a national guard or a self-defense force.⁸ After two weeks of conversations and SSG Campbell’s successful medical treatments, the elders agreed and they swore allegiance to start the Village Defense Program (VDP). The Montagnards built a protective fence around the village, dug shelters to protect the elderly, women, and children against VC attack, constructed a training center, built a medical clinic, and established an intelligence network that tracked movement in and around the village and served as an early warning system against attack.⁹

By mid-December 1961 the Buon Enao project was finished. Another fifty men from a neighboring village were trained as a local security or strike force to protect Buon Enao and its environs.¹⁰ With the first village secured, Darlac’s province chief expanded the program to include forty more Rhade villages within a fifteen-kilometer radius of Buon Enao and required those village chiefs and sub-chiefs to take defensive training.¹¹ The Village Defense Program grew so fast that between April and October 1962 another two-hundred Rhade villages were included. By the end of 1962, these

successes prompted the RVN government to assign program responsibility to the Darlac province chief with instructions to include the Jarai and Mnong tribes.¹² The Buon Enao Experiment generated more American SF activity in South Vietnam. South Vietnamese Special Forces (LLDB) received more training. These increased the number of ODAs in Vietnam on six-month temporary duty (TDY) tours and caused the establishment of Headquarters, U.S. Army Special Forces, Vietnam (Provisional) [USASFV(P)]. In Mid-September 1962, Colonel (COL) George C. Morton, Chief, Special Warfare Branch, J-3 MACV and seventy-two 5th SFG advance echelon (ADVON) personnel from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, formed a C-Team with four ODAs as the nucleus of the USASFV(P) Headquarters in Saigon.¹³ By November 1962, the main body had arrived in Saigon. The C-Team now had fourteen officers and forty-three enlisted men. COL Morton sent Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Eb Smith and eighteen enlisted men to Nha Trang to establish the Special Forces Operations Base (SFOB) with the intent of moving the C-Team out of Saigon. From this central location, COL Morton controlled 530 Special Forces soldiers serving on four B-Teams and twenty-eight ODAs throughout South Vietnam.¹⁴

In the meantime, MAAG, Vietnam restructured and changed its name to the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). This transition triggered two significant changes: MACV would advise and assist the South Vietnamese government on how to organize, train, equip and employ VDP forces; and the Village Defense Program (VDP) was changed to the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) Program.¹⁵ In February 1962, the Combined Studies Group ran the CIDG program, controlled the SF units supporting it, and coordinated CIDG activities with MACV. By May 1962, the CSD was in charge of CIDG logistics and



Military Assistance Command Vietnam SSI

MACV Headquarters Complex, Tan Son Nhut, South Vietnam.





Map showing the areas affected by the Montagnard Rebellion.

operations. Control of the LLDB shifted to South Vietnam's government. These seemingly minor changes redefined operational relationships.

On 23 July 1962, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) National Security Action Memorandum 57 directed that all overt Special Forces paramilitary activities be transferred from the CIA to MACV. The U.S. Army became the executive agent for CIDG logistics. DoD retained sole authority to appoint the Special Forces commander in Vietnam. The U.S. Army was to institute flexible, efficient, effective supply and funding procedures to support the CIDG program.¹⁶

Codenamed Operation SWITCHBACK, this command and control redirection changed military operational objectives; the VC became military targets, but minority populations were not to be further mobilized.¹⁷ Accomplished in phases, SWITCHBACK was completed on 1 July 1963. By then, Special Forces had trained enough hamlet militia, strike force soldiers, and other indigenous personnel to reduce VC exploitation throughout the rural areas of South Vietnam.¹⁸ The VDP and CIDG program successes from May 1962 to October 1963 were almost negated by significant military and political events.

A *coup d'état* on 1 November 1963 resulted in the death of U.S.-supported President Ngo Dinh Diem and the end of his regime. This prompted MACV and the ARVN to implement major changes afterwards. Diem had not allowed MAAG/MACV and ARVN commanders and staffs to interfere with either U.S. Special Forces (SF) training activities or LLDB and CIDG operations.¹⁹ On 5 January 1964, the military-dominated South Vietnamese government followed the precedent of Operation SWITCHBACK and restricted LLDB independence by assigning them to the ARVN.²⁰ Without Diem's restrictions, MACV quickly instituted major command and control changes. SF personnel in Vietnam were placed under the operational control of the senior U. S. Army advisor (MACV) in each Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ). COL Theodore Leonard replaced COL Morton as the USASFV(P) commander. COL Leonard reevaluated and redefined USASFV(P)'s mission and centrally located and controlled the CIDG program. Management was further shifted to MACV Headquarters. Operationally, MACV directed that the Republic of Vietnam's border be manned by fortified SF camps defended by Chinese Nung mercenary units.²¹ Furthermore, SF area-development projects were deemphasized and CIDG forces were to be organized as conventional elements (Strike Forces) to supplement regular ARVN combat formations.²²

These operational changes and the resumption of minority mistreatment by Vietnamese authorities almost killed the CIDG program. On 19 September 1964, five Montagnard CIDG camps near Ban Me Thuot revolted against the Vietnamese government.²³ Located in the II CTZ, Ban Me Thuot was the provincial and traditional Montagnard capital. The ten-day revolt ended only when U.S. advisers, acting as intermediaries, were finally able to stop hostilities. They convinced the Vietnamese government officials that each side could benefit if they were willing to accept or at least consider compromises on native rights.²⁴ Though of short duration, the rebellion had long-term consequences because in the end, "old grievances and old hatreds remained unresolved."²⁵

Special Forces had to accept reality: MACV disliked irregular forces; the Vietnamese resented those sympathetic toward the Montagnards and other minorities; CIDG camps could be closed as quickly as they were opened.²⁶ With the country's internal stability shaken, the Viet Cong increased their activities. DoD and MACV realized that future SF assignment and employment policies in Vietnam had to be established.

On 1 October 1964, DoD reassigned the 1,297-man 5th Special Forces Group (SFG) (Airborne) from Fort Bragg,

North Carolina to Nha Trang, South Vietnam to replace USASFV(P). The 674 members of the USASFV(P) would be integrated into Headquarters, 5th SFG. Overseas assignments to the 5th SFG in Vietnam would be one-year permanent change of station (PCS). The six-month temporary duty tours by SF ODAs would end by 1 May 1965.

The 5th SFG mission was to: exercise command less operational control of ODAs deployed with U.S. senior advisers in each corps; advise MACV on opening and closing of CIDG camps; establish new CIDG camps; advise the Vietnamese Special Forces High Command; and when required, provide formal training for LLDB and CIDG units. Mission "creep" increased SF strength in South Vietnam to four ODCs, twelve ODBs, and forty-eight ODAs by February 1965.²⁷

Initially, the presence of the 5th SFG headquarters had little effect on the activities of the ODAs or the CIDG strike forces. SF continued advising and assisting the CIDG program while its strike forces protected tribal villages.²⁸ During Tet in late 1964, the military situation in Vietnam changed. Organized main force VC units began engaging and defeating large ARVN forces. Thus, the 5th SFG redefined its counterinsurgency program in January 1965. DoD announced that large well-equipped conventional military forces would arrive for combat duty in Vietnam by the Spring. Until these units arrived and became operational, General William C. Westmoreland,

Extract of the 5th SFG Letter to A, B, and C Detachment Commanders:

DEFINITION: THE SF COUNTERINSURGENCY PROGRAM IS A PHASED AND COMBINED MILITARY-CIVIL COUNTERINSURGENCY EFFORT DESIGNED TO ACCOMPLISH THE FOLLOWING OBJECTIVES: (A) DESTROY THE VIET CONG AND CREATE A SECURE ENVIRONMENT; (B) ESTABLISH FIRM GOVERNMENTAL CONTROL OVER THE POPULATION; AND (C) ENLIST THE POPULATION'S ACTIVE AND WILLING SUPPORT OF, AND PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAMS.

THESE OBJECTIVES ARE ACCOMPLISHED WHILE EXECUTING ANY ONE OF THREE POSSIBLE ASSIGNED MISSIONS: (1) BORDER SURVEILLANCE AND CONTROL, (2) OPERATIONS AGAINST INFILTRATION ROUTES, OR (3) OPERATIONS AGAINST VC WAR ZONES AND BASES.

CONCEPT OF THE OPERATION: THIS IS ESSENTIALLY A CLEAR, SECURE, AND DEVELOP OPERATION. A FUNDAMENTAL POINT IN THE COUNTERINSURGENCY PROGRAM IS THAT, WHERE POSSIBLE, THE STRIKE FORCE PERSONNEL SHOULD BE LOCALLY RECRUITED IN ORDER TO PROVIDE AN EXPLOITABLE ENTRY TO THE POPULACE WHICH, IN TURN, FACILITATES MILITARY-CIVIL RELATIONS.²⁸

Commander, MACV, directed that "SF and the irregulars assume an offensive role with the mission of becoming hunters and finding and destroying the enemy."²⁹

This increased insurgent operational tempo (OPTEMPO), instead of being the rationale for expanding foreign internal defense and development (FIDD in those days), had caused U.S. military leaders to commit American conventional forces to assist the ARVN. This added impetus to MACV's intent to "conventionalize" civilian irregular forces, convert selected CIDG units to Regional Force status by 1 January 1967, and implement the first steps of its master plan to phase out all American SF in Vietnam. CIDG strike force operations switched from protecting tribal and territorial holdings against VC exploitation to offensive conventional actions country-wide to defeat the enemy.³¹

During this transition, MACV realized that SF-led CIDG troops were highly skilled at gathering intelligence, finding and fixing enemy forces, and could engage the enemy on his own terms. These capabilities created a double-edged sword for SF and CIDG strike forces. The quality of the intelligence provided served to revitalize and strengthen the CIDG program, but reduced effective area development and information gathering on home front VC activities.³² As intelligence requirements increased between 1965 and 1968, efforts to expand the minority village defense system declined.

SF-led CIDG forces continued to engage the enemy. With helicopters provided in May 1966 they became mobile counterinsurgency strike forces to commit against enemy-controlled zones. As mobile strike force numbers doubled and combat skills improved, they were employed more frequently as exploitation forces or reaction forces for camps that needed reinforcement during VC attacks. By September 1966, SF had opened twenty-two new camps and increased the number of CIDG combat reconnaissance platoons from thirty-four to seventy-three. MACV tasked 5th SFG to establish a Recondo School at Nha

5th SFG Commanders:

Colonel John H. Spears	August 1964-July 1965
Colonel William A. McKean	July 1965-June 1966
Colonel Francis J. Kelly	June 1966-June 1967
Colonel Jonathan F. Ladd	June 1967-June 1968

5th Special Forces Group Headquarters, Nha Trang, South Vietnam November 1963-March 1971.



Trang. The mission was to provide a twelve-day combat orientation course for all SF replacements and the long-range patrol personnel of conventional combat units.³³ Having achieved more success against the VC in 1966 by emphasizing night operations, General Westmoreland directed COL Francis J. Kelly, 5th Special Forces Group, to closely examine current and proposed ODA deployments throughout Vietnam and to produce an annual campaign plan coordinated with each Corps Tactical Zone commander.³⁴



MACV Recondo Patch



Entrance to the MACV Recondo School located at Nha Trang and operated by 5th SFG personnel.

This relook directed by COMUSMACV contained specific guidance: Each SF Team and camp was to be positioned to maximize its full mission potential; ODAs could be replaced by converting civilian irregular strike forces into ARVN forces; coordinate campaign plan with Corps MACV senior advisors and their counterparts.³⁵ “Simply stated, our mission is to help the Vietnamese people to help themselves,” said COL Kelly in August 1966.³⁶ If American SF advisors were being reduced, the Vietnamese Special Forces (LLDB) would have to assume the role.

The Americans in Vietnam had little confidence in the LLDB organization and capabilities. This was based on experience with joint SF-LLDB operations. While on combat operations, LLDB officers and non-commissioned officers proved to be poor leaders who lacked initiative. They were not very aggressive. Because of this, American SF advisors often commanded CIDG camps and led combat operations. They had little time left to advise the teams. During the Montagnard uprising, Camp To Chau’s LLDB detachment (one officer and three enlisted) disappeared and did not return until it was over according to CSM (ret) John E. Kessling (A314).³⁷

This had to be changed. SF advisors worked to improve LLDB performance to the point that they assumed complete control of the Plei Mrong CIDG camp by 1 May 1967. Those LLDB at Vinh Gia and Min Thanh did the same by the end of June 1967.³⁸ Progress was constantly overshadowed by American and South Vietnamese political maneuvering.

By 1967, the MACV campaign plan did not have a schedule to end the war. It only addressed U.S. military expansion and a major increase in ARVN forces. Still, COL Kelly published the CIDG program annex that had been reviewed and approved by all four Vietnamese Corps commanders and their senior American advisors. It had: a country-wide strategy for the CIDG camps and a plan to phase-out American Special Forces by the end of 1971. To accomplish both, MACV had to withdraw SF from those camps without a border surveillance mission and reallocate them to new CIDG camps along the frontier.³⁹ The intent was not to reduce the number of camps or Special Forces personnel, but to reapportion critical U.S. assets to better support the allied effort to

“Vietnamize” the war. Unfortunately for the U. S. and South Vietnamese armies, North Vietnam had other plans. MACV long-range plans collapsed in January 1968 during the Tet Offensive. †

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Endnotes

- 1 Colonel Francis J. Kelly, *Vietnam Studies, U.S. Army Special Forces* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1989), 3.
- 2 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 4.
- 3 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 5.
- 4 Paul F. Campbell, Personal notes of COL Gilbert Layton, Director of the Office of Combined Studies, MAAG, email to Eugene G. Piasecki, 18 August 2009, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. Hereafter referred to as Layton Notes.
- 5 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 6.
- 6 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 19.
- 7 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 24.
- 8 Christopher K. Ives, *US Special Forces and Counterinsurgency in Vietnam. Military innovation and institutional failure, 1961-1963* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 15-16. Paul F. Campbell, interview with Stephen Sherman, 27-28 January 1991, Raleigh, North Carolina, *Broken Promises and Other Readings about U.S. Army Special Forces and the Montagnards of South Vietnam*, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 9 “US Army Special Forces Vietnam, Provisional 1962-64,” *US Army Special Forces Vietnam, Provisional*, 1 June 2009, http://www.groups.sfhq.com/adv_rvn_61_63.htm.
- 10 Layton Notes. **When first formed, the mobile fighting units were called Strike Forces. When MACV gained control, they referred to them as Mike Forces.**
- 11 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 25.
- 12 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 28.
- 13 Shelby L. Stanton, *Green Berets at War. U.S. Army Special Forces in Southeast Asia 1956-1975* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1985), 52-53.
- 14 Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, 54. **At this time ODAs (A-Teams) were comprised of two commissioned officers and 10 non-commissioned officers (12), and ODBs (B-Teams) had six officers and seventeen enlisted men (23), and ODCs (C-Teams) had six officers and eighteen enlisted men assigned.**



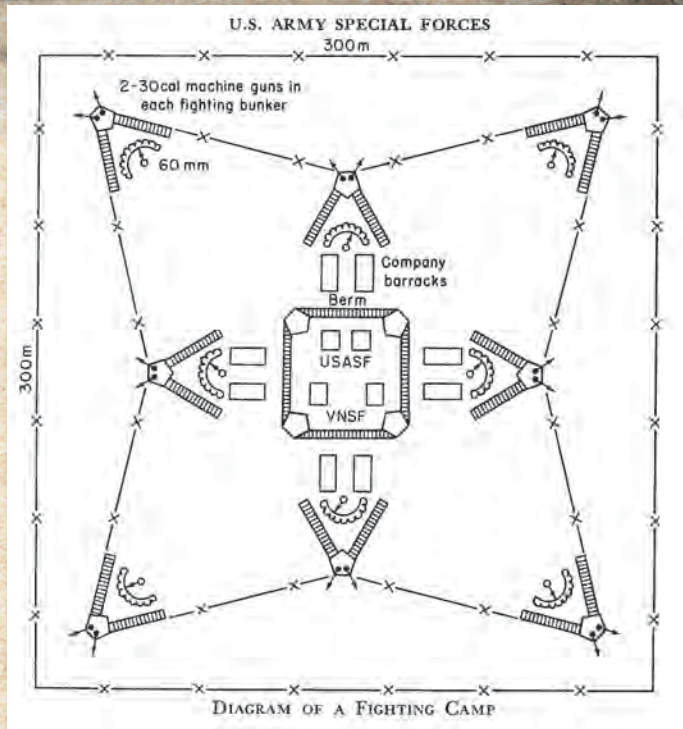
CIDG camps were constructed to maximize the natural defensive characteristics of the terrain and support combat operations. Pictured is a 1965 photograph of Camp A-322, located at Minh Thanh in the III Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ).

A 1967 CIDG camp

In 1967 each CIDG camp was supposed to be commanded by a Vietnamese Special Forces (LLDB) A Detachment commander. The A Detachment organization paralleled that of the American Special Forces ODA; its members were trained in operations, intelligence, medical, weapons, political warfare, communications, supply and demolitions. Each Vietnamese detachment member was advised by his American ODA counterpart.

The ideal CIDG camp consisted of:

- Four 132-man CIDG companies.
- Two combat reconnaissance platoons.
- One civic action and psychological operations squad.
- A recoilless rifle or 105mm artillery section.⁴⁰



15 "US Army Special Forces, Vietnam, Provisional 1962-64," *US Army Special Forces Vietnam, Provisional*, 1 June 2009, http://www.groups.sfhq.com/adv_rvn_61_63.htm.

16 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 30.

17 Ives, *US Special Forces and Counterinsurgency in Vietnam*, 24.

18 Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, 57.

19 Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, 64.

20 Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, 76.

21 CSM (ret) John E. Kessling, interview by Eugene G. Piasecki, 10 October 2009, Fayetteville, NC, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

22 Shelby L. Stanton, *Special Forces at War. An Illustrated History, Southeast Asia 1957-1975* (Charlottesville, VA: Howell Press, 1990), 37.

23 Stanton, *Special Forces at War*, 37. **One account of the Montagnard Uprising can be found in an article written by LTC Robert W. Jones, Jr., USASOC Command History Office. It is entitled: "A Team Effort: The Montagnard Uprising of September 1964" and is contained in *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, Volume 3, Number 2, 2007.**

24 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 64. **A list of demands made by the Montagnards to the Vietnamese government can also be found on this page. They are not listed here because their political implications exceed the scope of this article.**

25 Stephen Sherman, *Broken Promises and Other Readings About U.S. Army Special Forces and the Montagnards of South Vietnam* (Houston, TX: The RADIX Press, 1999), 61. USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **This first appeared in an article written by Howard Sochurek titled: "American Special Forces in Action: How Coolness and Character Averted a Blood Bath When Mountain Tribesman Rose in Revolt," for *National Geographic Magazine*, Volume 127, No. 1, January, 1965.**

26 Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, 79. **The five camps involved in the Montagnard uprising, Bon Sar Pa, Ban Don, Bu Prang, Buon Mi Ga and Buon Brieng were all shut down within a year of the uprising.**

27 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 74.

28 Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, 91.

29 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 77.

30 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 77.

31 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 78-79.

32 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 81.

33 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 96. **This is supported by Shelby Stanton in *Green Berets at War*, 170-173.**

34 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 97.

35 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 97.

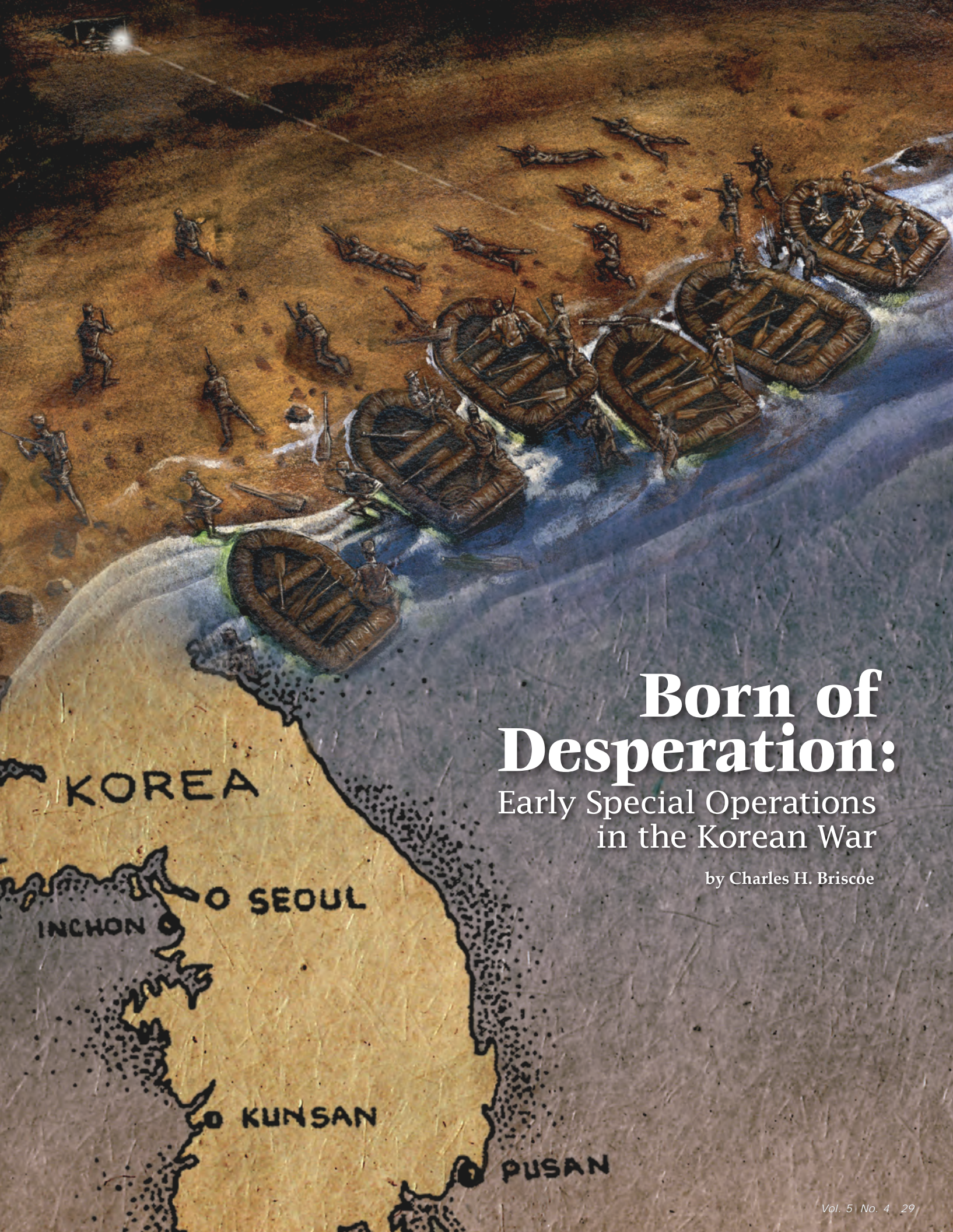
36 Colonel Francis J. Kelly, "The Role of the Special Forces Soldier in Vietnam," *The Green Beret*, 1 August 1966, Volume 1, Number 1, 1:2.

37 CSM (ret) John E. Kessling, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe and Eugene G. Piasecki, 21 April 2009, Fayetteville, NC, tape recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

38 Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 102.

39 Charles M. Simpson III, *Inside the Green Berets, The First Thirty Years. A History of the U.S. Army Special Forces* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1983), 200.

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Born of Desperation:

Early Special Operations in the Korean War

by Charles H. Briscoe

KOREA

INCHON

SEOUL

KUNSAN

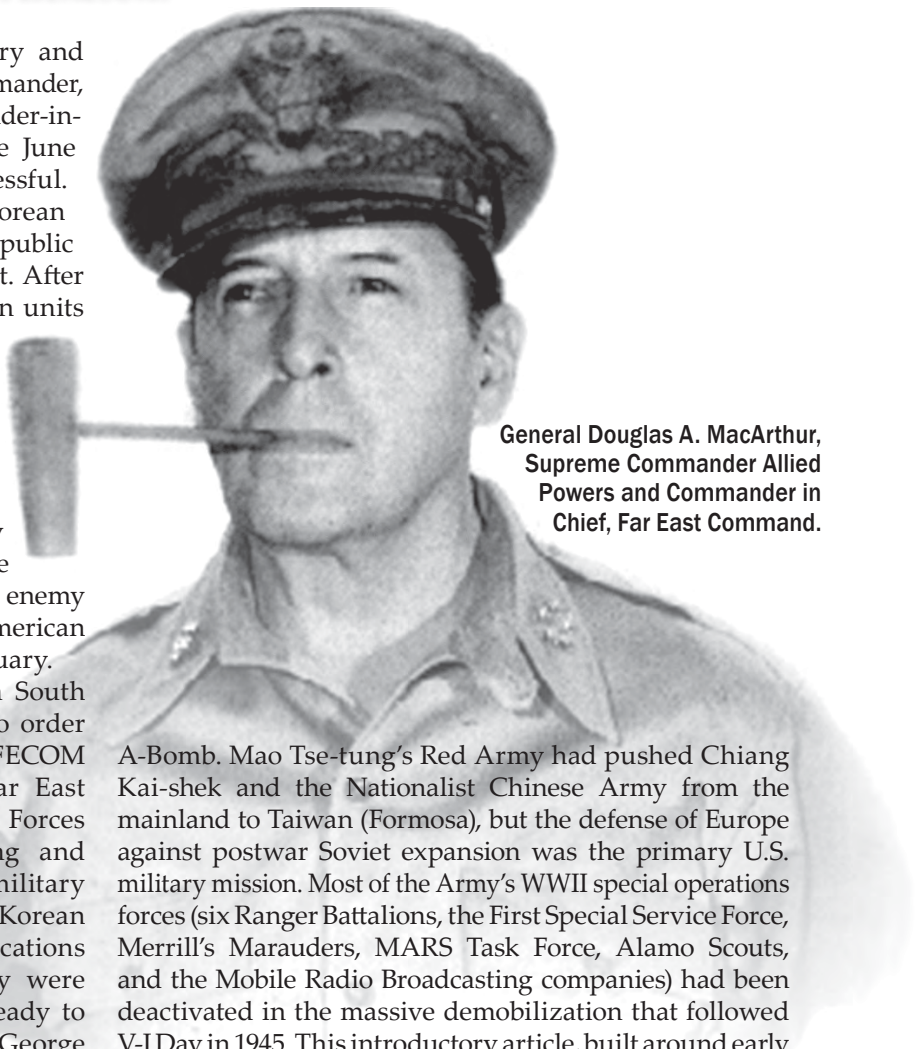
PUSAN

“They were desperate times and every headquarters was ready to try anything,”
—Lieutenant (j.g.) George Atcheson.

The initial efforts of the South Korean military and General Douglas A. MacArthur, Supreme Commander, Allied Forces Pacific (SCAP) and Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command (FECOM) to halt the June 1950 invasion from the north were unsuccessful. The Russian-equipped, trained, and advised Korean People’s Army (KPA) routed the poorly-led Republic of Korea (ROK) ground forces across a wide front. After Seoul fell to the enemy juggernaut, South Korean units conducted delaying actions southward. General MacArthur, plagued by limited naval assets and airlift, committed under-strength (two regiment divisions with two battalion regiments), poorly trained U.S. occupation troops piecemeal from Japan to bolster ROK forces. When Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker, the Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) commander, decided to form a defensive bastion around the southeastern port of Pusan, enemy pressure had to be reduced on the ROK and American forces to enable them to withdraw into that sanctuary.

In late July 1950, after continual setbacks in South Korea, desperation drove General MacArthur to order the formation of commando/raider forces from FECOM headquarters, to solicit British Royal Navy Far East support, and to press U.S. Commander, Naval Forces Far East (COMNAVFE) “to conduct harassing and demolition raids against selected North Korean military objectives and execute deceptive operations in Korean coastal areas” to disrupt enemy lines of communications and supply and to deceive the enemy.¹ “They were desperate times and every headquarters was ready to try anything,” said Lieutenant (junior grade) George Atcheson, after his Underwater Demolition Team 3 (UDT-3) element was pulled off a beach survey mission in Japan to successfully destroy a railroad bridge on the south coast of Korea on 6 August 1950.² While this was happening, the FECOM Adjutant General (AG) screened records for candidates to organize a “Raider Company” from General Headquarters (GHQ) volunteers.

The Pentagon was no better prepared to deal with a conventional war in Asia than was General MacArthur’s Far East Command in 1950. The Russians had gotten the



General Douglas A. MacArthur,
Supreme Commander Allied Powers and Commander in Chief, Far East Command.

A-Bomb. Mao Tse-tung’s Red Army had pushed Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist Chinese Army from the mainland to Taiwan (Formosa), but the defense of Europe against postwar Soviet expansion was the primary U.S. military mission. Most of the Army’s WWII special operations forces (six Ranger Battalions, the First Special Service Force, Merrill’s Marauders, MARS Task Force, Alamo Scouts, and the Mobile Radio Broadcasting companies) had been deactivated in the massive demobilization that followed V-J Day in 1945. This introductory article, built around early theater harassment and interdiction efforts and the GHQ Raider training and initial combat missions, announces a special issue of *Veritas* for 2010 covering all Army SOF units in the Korean War, 1950-1953.

On 6 August 1950, the Commanding General (CG), Headquarters and Service Group, GHQ organized a provisional unit consisting of 6 officers and 100 enlisted men as part of a Raiding Forces Group. Organizational equipment was to be provided from station and/or depot stocks, the HQ & Service Group and/or Eighth Army.³ The Provisional Raider Company was to be organized into three 10-man squads per platoon and three platoons in the company.



Lieutenant General Walton H. Walker,
Eighth U.S. Army Commander



Eighth U.S. Army SSI



Far East Command SSI



General Headquarters Raiders SSI

Unit armament varied with the mission but was light, basically M-2 .30 cal. carbines and M1911A1 .45 cal. automatic pistols, with a M-1 .30-06 cal. Garand rifle, a M1918 .30-06 cal. BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle), and a M1919A2 .30-06 cal. light machinegun or 60 mm mortar per squad. A special Raider Company weapons platoon (4 officers and 56 soldiers) was to be trained and equipped, depending on the mission, with either M1A1 75 mm pack howitzers, 81 mm mortars, or 60 mm mortars.⁴

The GHQ Raiders trained at the EUSA amphibious training center. It had been established in the spring of 1950 at Camp McGill, near Yokosuka, on the east coast

of Sagami Bay, sixty miles southwest of Tokyo. Nearby Chigasaki Beach was suitable for landing exercises.⁵ U.S.M.C. Mobile Training Team (MTT) Able [First Lieutenant (1st Lt.) James A. MacDonald, Jr., Technical Sergeant (TSgt) H.C. Mitchell, and Staff Sergeant (SSgt) Marlan A. Knobbs], augmented by additional Marine sergeants and unit officers for weapons instruction and marksmanship, began training the Raider candidates on 9 August 1950 at Camp McGill, three days after the first UDT demolitions raid.⁶

MTT Able trained the Raiders on day and night rubber boat operations from submarine and naval vessels, demolitions, and amphibious reconnaissance techniques.⁷ U.S. Navy UDT-1 officers [Lt. Shutler and Lt. (j.g.) Smith] taught surf launching and landings with the large 10-man rubber boats (RB-10s), tactical open



Above: GHQ Honor Guards salute GEN MacArthur and his Aide-de-Camp, COL Bunker at the entrance of the Dai Ichi building, Tokyo, Japan.



GEN MacArthur's limousine and entourage were protected by GHQ Honor Guards and given a wide berth as sirens announced its approach. At night the Five-Star vehicle plates were lit up by lights.



Far East Command was located in the Dai Ichi building in Tokyo, Japan.



U.S.M.C. Mobile Training Team Able at Camp McGill, Otawa, Japan.

water formations, and surf swimming before conducting practice day and night amphibious raids on Nagai Beach with live munitions, 7-8 August 1950.⁸ Tough physical conditioning, particularly long distance open water swims, and constant mental stress were a part of the culling process to select the best soldiers and to eliminate those not suited for special operations combat missions. Critical infantry skills, small unit tactics, and hand-to-hand combat were taught by the WWII veteran officers.⁹

The United Kingdom (UK) Volunteers (11 enlisted naval ratings and 3 Royal Marines from the British Fleet in the Far East) joined the Raider training.¹⁰ Simultaneously, the 41 Independent Commando (225 personnel) was formed at Camp McGill with Royal Marines from England and Hong Kong.¹¹ In EUSA G3 Operations, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) John Hugh McGee, an escaped WWII POW and guerrilla leader in the Philippines, and Pacific theater regimental commander (169th Infantry Regiment, 43rd Infantry Division) proposed guerrilla operations in North Korea. He was given the mission to recruit a WWII-style Alamo Scout or Ranger Company. EUSA General Order No. 237, dated 24 August 1950, authorized the formation of the seventy-six man (three officers and seventy-three enlisted men) Eighth Army Ranger Company.¹²

After an intense 30-day training regimen, MTT Able rated the GHQ (Provisional) Raider Company "operationally ready" on 10 September 1950. The UK Volunteer Force led by Captain E.G.D. Pounds was qualified four days later as an independent unit capable of carrying out small amphibious raids, demolition



Submarine ASSP-313 *Perch*

GHQ Raiders board rubber boats from the ASSP-313 *Perch* for another training exercise.

The GHQ Raiders conducted rubber boat exercises from the ASSP-313 *Perch* and the Destroyer APD 123 *Diachenko*



Submarine ASSP-313 *Perch* Patch



PFC Martin L. Broussard prepares coffee after Kimpo Airfield operations.



GHQ Raiders relax after Kimpo missions.



Map of Camp McGill, Japan.

missions, and reconnaissance raids. Raiders referred to the 14-man British element as "Pounds' Force."¹³

In the meantime, General MacArthur's orders to conduct harassing and interdiction raids behind North Korean lines along the coasts led to unilateral action by the services and the United Kingdom. Coordination was minimal as the U.S. Navy commenced to launch special operations. The combined, joint Raiding Force Group of GHQ Raiders, 1st Marine Division Reconnaissance Company, UDT-1, United Kingdom (UK) Volunteer Force, and the 41 Independent Commando Royal Marines fell apart before it could be

assembled. But, South Korea supported the concept of carrying the fight behind enemy lines. Three hundred specially-selected ROK military and policemen were sent to Camp McGill on 19 September 1950, to receive thirty days of raider and guerrilla training. A U.S. Army advisory team, led by LTC William G. "Mike" White, was assigned and they became the Special Attack Battalion (SAB) of the Special Activities Group (SAG), the name selected for MacArthur's Raiding Force Group.¹⁴

The Special Operations Group (SOG) of Amphibious Group One (PhibGruOne) that had the USS *Bass*, *Begor*,

Diachenko, and *Wantuck* [(APDs 124, 127, 123, and 125), UDT-1, and the U.S. Marine 1st Recon Company (-) assigned conducted a series of demolition raids against railroad targets (tracks, bridges, and tunnels) along the east coast of Korea, 12-15 August 1950.¹⁵ The PhibGruOne staff operations officer, most recently the Officer in Charge (OIC) of the Navy's Amphibious Reconnaissance School, Coronado, California, USMC Major Edward P. Dupras, was a WWII Raider Battalion veteran. The APDs (by U.S. Navy Hull classification AP = transport and D = destroyer) had been specially modified to support Raider operations during WWII and operational UDT elements were already in Japan for the EUSA amphibious training program.¹⁶

In reference to the PhibGruOne SOG, "We were ready to do what nobody else could do, and what nobody else wanted to do," said Lt. Teddy Roosevelt Fielding, the Executive Officer of the UDT-1 detachment.¹⁷ Still, attempting to destroy railroad tunnels with explosives proved to be an exercise in futility, though the explosion at night was "a sight to behold" according to Lt. (j.g.) K.J. Christoph, UDT-1. The tunnels remained intact even when an ammunition train found hiding inside added to the explosive power. "It simply blew a huge fart out both ends," clarified Lt. (j.g.) George Atcheson.¹⁸ Part of the deception plan to mask General MacArthur's counter-offensive against the North Korean Army was a subsequent mission assigned to the PhibGruOne SOG.

Rear Admiral James H. Doyle (PhibGruOne) tasked the SOG to carry out several beach recons on the west coast to locate possible alternative landing sites for Inchon. Doyle and Major General (MG) Oliver P. "O.P." Smith, the 1st Marine Division commander, were leery of the dangerous tidal ranges and flat beach gradients at Inchon. During darkness on 21 August 1950 the *USS Bass*, carrying the UDTs and Recon Marines, arrived just off the first objective, a beach at the opening of a narrow

U.S. Navy and Marine Corps Maritime Raids in Korea in 1950
(Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 260)



WWII U.S.M.C. Raider SSI



Lt. George Atcheson, UDT-3
(Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 122)



Destroyer APD 123
Diachenko Patch



Destroyer APD 123 *Diachenko*

bay 60 miles south of Inchon. Two other destroyers accompanied the *Bass* to provide fire support if needed. To take advantage of high tide the beach landing party had to operate under an almost full moon. But, everything went as planned. The *Bass* recovered all personnel and moved further south to Kunsan, the second objective.¹⁹

The next beach reconnoitered had an airstrip nearby guarded by North Korean troops living in a barracks to the north. This beach was protected by a



Rubber boats on HMS *Whitesand Bay*.

centrally-located machinegun bunker above the sand dunes. The Marines landed after receiving an “all clear” signal from the scout swimmers and scattered to establish a defensive perimeter. While the UDT teams prepared to make depth soundings and measure beach gradients, an enemy patrol was spotted approaching the Marine perimeter. A loud warning shout in English triggered the enemy machinegun team to rake the beach with heavy fire, badly wounding the Marine sergeant who sounded the alarm. With the recon compromised, an immediate withdrawal was ordered. Because loaded rubber boats created bigger targets in the moonlight, everyone slipped overboard to swim them out of small arms range. Some of the boats, hit by the gunfire, were barely usable. In the confusion of breaking contact, men were left behind.²⁰

A rescue party had to be launched from the *Bass* to recover nine Marines and a UDT-3 seaman, Mack Boynton. Rifle and machinegun fire greeted the rescue force, but the Marines, including two wounded, were recovered. Finding his boat deflated by gunfire, Boynton swam the two miles back to the APD. Luckily, he got to the vessel shortly after the rescue party was recovered. He was pulled aboard after shouting, “Ahoy the *Bass*.”²¹ Three weeks later the GHQ Raider Company and Pounds’ Force returned to reconnoiter the Kunsan beaches.²²

The last major feint to distract the North Koreans from the Allied invasion site at Inchon was done by Army and British Raiders of General MacArthur’s Special Activities Group. The GHQ Raider Company (106 personnel) and the fourteen men of the UK Volunteer Force (Pounds’ Force) received the 13 September 1950 mission. This combined raiding element, attached to COMNAVFE for operations effective 7 September and “chopped” to X Corps on 9 September were led by Major James H. Wear,



The Royal Navy Frigate HMS *Whitesand Bay* took the Raiders and Pounds’ Force to Kunsan, 100 miles south of Inchon, where they disembarked in rubber boats to reconnoiter four beach areas.



GHQ Raiders 3rd Sqd, 3rd Plt less Joe Myers on HMS *Whitesand Bay*. Standing L to R Davis, Ulshoefer, Cooper, Bach, Bates; kneeling L to R Young, Hisao, Miklovic; sitting L to R Unknown, Boyer

a WWII combat infantryman. The new SAG commander, artillery Colonel Louis B. Ely, accompanied them.²³

The Royal Navy frigate, HMS *Whitesand Bay*, carried the two elements just below Kunsan, about 100 miles south of Inchon, where the raiding force disembarked in 10-man rubber boats to reconnoiter four separate beach sites. The northern element, the 3rd Platoon (1LT Louie W. Donoho) GHQ Raiders led by MAJ Wear, the central force (1LT Albert T. Noreen, Jr., 2nd Platoon), and the smallest, LT Pounds’ Force (accompanied by MAJ D.L.S.M. Aldridge, executive officer, 41 Commando, observing) headed to their assigned beaches on the mainland while 1LT Daryl G. Robb, accompanied by COL Ely and escorted by 1LT James W. Clance, a battlefield-commissioned WWII paratrooper, headed toward Sokae-do to secure that island and cover the withdrawal from the Kunsan beaches. MAJ Wear with 3rd Platoon (north) was separated from the center beach site (LT Noreen and 2nd Platoon) by a promontory on the mainland. Pounds proceeded with his force to investigate the southernmost beach.²⁴

Pounds’ Force encountered no resistance, but the Raider force on the northern beach began receiving heavy enemy machinegun fire shortly after the flotilla of RB-10s grounded ashore. “When we hit the beach, we did all the right things. We grabbed the rubber boats and went up about 15 yards, all the while stomping on small rocks. It sounded like Headquarters and Service Battalion parading down the street from the Dai Ichi building. When the machinegun opened up, I remember



The Kunsan beach and Sokae-do ingress routes for the three GHQ Raider Company elements and Pounds' Force are shown on this 1950 U.S. Army 1:25,000 map.



X Corps SSI



The X Corps Raiders were included in the Navy Presidential Unit Citation awarded to the 1st Marine Division, Reinforced by the Secretary of Navy on 11 October 1950.

green and orange flashes (tracer) and the sound of air being lost from the rubber boats," said Sergeant First Class (SFC) Patrick T. Gannon, Sr.²⁵ The first burst of .61 cal machinegun fire seriously wounded Corporal (CPL) Raymond E. Puttin, crouching near MAJ Wear.



GHQ Raider PFC John W. Connor with Pounds' Force commando on the HMS Whitesand Bay.

Unbeknownst to the Kunsan beach recon elements, CPL John W. Maines was killed and 1LT Clance seriously wounded on Sokae-do after scouting the island. Hearing the firing on the mainland, Robb's platoon began returning to their boats where COL Ely and some guards were waiting.²⁶ The lightly armed Raiders and Forcemen held their fire when the enemy opened up on the northern beach recon party. "I was in a prone position with the bolt pulled back on my Thompson (submachinegun), but no orders came to fire – so, I didn't. I was happy that we had the discipline we did, because I had no way of knowing that those dim, fast-moving figures (on Kunsan beach) were our own people," recalled SFC Gannon.²⁷

Having been discovered, MAJ Wear and the other commanders ordered an immediate withdrawal. Since they were not carrying hand grenades and had no radio to call for covering fire to break contact, the withdrawal and escape in the rubber boats proved chaotic. In the confusion CPL Puttin, treated and being sheltered by Raider medic CPL Billy D. Oneyear, was evacuated to the boats.²⁸

However, the dead Maines and mortally wounded Clance were left behind on the island of Sokae-do. COL Ely who was trailing behind the island recon force seemed to have been the only one to fire his weapon. He claimed to have "killed a few g----" in the darkness afterwards.²⁹ When the colonel turned on a flashlight and began calling the roster to account for everyone, its beam served as a magnet for enemy fire. A Raider put an end to that by knocking the flashlight into the sea. The enemy fire was so intense that PFC Robert Bach, BAR ammo bearer for PFC Delmer E. Davis, 3rd Squad, 3rd Platoon had his paddle shattered by machinegun fire.³⁰

After the elements assembled they paddled back to the Whitesand Bay. Later that night a valiant attempt to recover the two Raiders left behind on Sokae-do



General MacArthur watches the bombardment of Inchon from the bridge of the USS *Mount McKinley* with (left to right) Vice Admiral A.D. Struble, MG E.K. Wright, and MG Edward M. Almond, X Corps commander.

island was scrubbed when the volunteers discovered the shore swarming with NKPA soldiers.³¹ Aboard ship CPL Puttin died before the *Whitesand Bay* could meet a naval vessel with a surgeon. The Raider was buried at sea late the next afternoon as the SAG forces proceeded north for their next mission.³²

During the Inchon invasion planning, Major General Edward M. Almond, Chief of Staff, UN Command, and COL Ely had conjured up another mission to follow the Kunsan feint. The HMS *Whitesand Bay* would carry SAG forces to a transfer point between the two UN coastal blockade screening stations, 26 and 27. While at sea, they were to transfer to ROK naval vessels which would ferry them to a point off Changbong-sudo. Then, the SAG elements were to unload their RB-10s and paddle three miles on the evening tide of D-Day (15 September 1950) to land at Koajan-ni. From there, the reinforced Raider company was to move overland (12 miles) and seize Kimpo Airfield by D+1 and hold it until relieved by 1st Marine Division. The airfield was reputedly guarded by a battalion-sized NKPA force.³³

Even though the 1st Marine Division commander, MG O.P. Smith, had convinced MG Almond to cancel the airfield assault, COL Ely chose to ignore the decision and continued on with the mission. However, transloading personnel and equipment from vessel to vessel at sea proved extremely difficult and time consuming (because it had never been practiced). Hence, by the time the ROK vessels reached the drop off point in the Han River estuary, the outgoing tide was at its peak. The current was too strong to launch the rubber assault boats. Crossing two miles of mud flats at low tide after the RB-10s grounded was still another impossible challenge for the combined raiding force.³⁴

While it was a good thing in retrospect, the Raiders' failure to get ashore caused them to be stranded aboard



Map of United Nations Command Offensive, 15-20 September 1950. (Boose, *Over the Beach*, 175)



The GHQ Raiders and Pounds' Force embarked on APA-27 USS *George Clymer* for three days following the aborted Kimpo Airfield mission.

APA-27, USS *George Clymer*, until D+4. APA-27 had carried elements of the 1st Marine Division from Japan for the Inchon invasion. Afterwards, it steamed offshore serving as the alternate amphibious command and control vessel and hospital ship. The upper deck was rigged up as an

emergency evacuation center that had “operating and recovery rooms as well as small surgical and medical wards.”³⁵ The aborted Kimpo mission was the end of the Raiders’ amphibious raiding role and COL Ely as the SAG commander.³⁶ However, “we had a ringside seat, just like General MacArthur did on the USS *Mount McKinley* for the Inchon invasion,” said PFC Delmer E. Davis, BAR man, 3rd Squad, 3rd Platoon of the GHQ Raiders.³⁷

“The Provisional Raider Company and the Royal Navy Volunteer Group were successfully employed in the Kunsan, Korea area on D-1 and 2 in implementation of the Cover and Deception Plan for the Inchon invasion. They were successfully withdrawn from this area and moved to the objective area on D-Day to be debarked with objective of capturing Kimpo Airfield. This latter operation was cancelled due to inability to launch the small boats.” These were General MacArthur’s comments in his message to Army Chief of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins, after the successful landings at Inchon.³⁸

BG E.W. Piburn, the CG of Headquarters and Service Command, GHQ cited the Raider Company for its significant role in the Inchon invasion (Operation CHROMITE): “The Raider Company, particularly the diversionary attack (at Kunsan), materially aided in the success of the Inchon invasion.”³⁹ Thus, they were included in a Navy Presidential Unit Citation (as the Army Special Operations Company) awarded to 1st Marine Division, Reinforced for exemplary service from 15 September to 11 October 1950 by the Secretary of the Navy.⁴⁰

General MacArthur’s FECOM Chief of Staff and newly appointed X Corps commander, MG Almond, realized the value added (intelligence collection and counter-guerrilla operations) that SAG could provide to his corps in North Korea. And, supporting ground SOF missions was much simpler than coordinating naval assets to conduct coastal raiding. The X Corps Raiders and the ROK Special Attack Battalion of SAG performed superbly in North and South Korea for MG Almond.

Special operations during the Korean War were primarily shaped by weather, moon phases (tides and illumination) and driven by availability of transport for delivery, recovery, and resupply, level of unit training, service branch and/or allied contingent support. The absence of unified command and control added to the confusion and competition for scarce delivery means. Strategic employment of special operations forces was largely ignored. Critical tactical situations at regiment and battalion level regularly caused them to be used as assault elements for infantry attacks, armor force protection, reaction forces to recapture key terrain, to “plug gaps,” or simply to blunt enemy penetrations in static defensive lines.⁴¹

It was the availability of transportation that most determined what was done by special operations units in Korea. The American Raiders and Rangers in Korea shared three things in common: Both did a lot of walking; both did very little truck riding; and, they fought with distinction until their deactivations in late July and early August 1951. The GHQ/X Corps Raiders, the EUSA Ranger

Company, and the eight Ranger Airborne Infantry Companies (trained at Fort Benning, Georgia) that served in Korea faded from Army rolls without fanfare less than a year after being created.⁴² This article, built around GHQ Raider training and their early missions, is intended to be an introduction to special operations during the early months of the Korean War. The U.S. Army psychological warfare and military government units committed to the fray in the fall of 1950, will be included in the next *Veritas*, a special edition dedicated to chronicling Army SOF in Korea, 1950-1953. ♣

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Endnotes

- 1 U.S. Navy. Commander, Naval Forces, Far East (COMNAVFE) message DTG 270344Z July 1950 to CTF 90 via Operations Order (OPORDER) 11, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 2 Letter, George Atcheson to John B. Dwyer, July 1985, cited in John B. Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea: The History of Amphibious Special Warfare in World War II and the Korean War* (Boulder, CO: Paladin Press, 1998), 237.
- 3 General Headquarters, Far East Command, APO 500 letter AG 320 (6 Aug 50) GC-TC to CG, Headquarters and Service Group, General Headquarters, Far East Command, APO 500, SUBJECT: Provisional Group, Raiding Forces dated 6 August 1950, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 4 GHQ, FECOM, Outgoing message from CINCFE (MacArthur) to DA WASH DC, 121343 September 1950, PERSONAL FOR GEN Collins (CSA), USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 5 Donald W. Boose, Jr., *Over the Beach: U.S. Army Amphibious Operations in the Korean War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 82.
- 6 U.S. Navy. Mobile Training Team Able, Troop Training Unit, Amphibious Training Command, Pacific Fleet, Letter SUBJECT: Report of Team Operations for the Period 24 July 1950 to 7 November 1950 dated 7 November 1950 and Letter ComPhibGruOne, file AT6-3/35/ceb Serial 007 dated 6 August 1950, hereafter cited as MTT Able Report and Letter ComPhibGruOne, file AT6-3/35/ceb Serial 007 dated 6 August 1950, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 7 MTT Able Report and Letter ComPhibGruOne, file AT6-3/35/ceb Serial 007 dated 6 August 1950.
- 8 MTT Able Report and Letter ComPhibGruOne, file AT6-3/35/ceb Serial 007 dated 6 August 1950.
- 9 MTT Able Report, Letter ComPhibGruOne, file AT6-3/35/ceb Serial 007 dated 6 August 1950; retired CWO-3 Delmer E. Davis, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 25 August 2009, El Paso, TX, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date, and retired 1SG Daniel W. Bish, telephone interview by Dr. Briscoe, 26 October 2009, Norco, CA, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 10 MTT Able Report and Letter ComPhibGruOne, file AT6-3/35/ceb Serial 007 dated 6 August 1950. Fred Hayhurst, *Green Berets in Korea: The Story of 41 Independent Commando Royal Marines* (Cambridge, England: Vanguard Press, 2001), 28 stated that The Fleet Volunteers consisted of ten sailors and six Royal Marines. Petty Officer John Tate (KIA November 1950) was the senior Royal Navy rating and Corporal Raymond (Sweeney) Todd was the senior Royal Marine.
- 11 GHQ, FECOM, Outgoing message from CINCFE (MacArthur) to DA WASH DC, 121343 September 1950, PERSONAL FOR GEN Collins (CSA).

- 12 Retired COL Ralph Puckett, Jr., telephone interview By Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 15 October 2009, Columbus, GA, personal notes, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC and Robert W. Black, *Rangers in Korea* (New York, NY: Ivy Books, 1989), 13-14. According to COL Puckett, LTC Hugh McGee had been searching for the 6th U.S. Army Alamo Scouts TO&E (Table of Organization & Equipment) when he found one for a WWII Ranger Battalion. He took the personnel numbers and equipment for a Ranger Company from it. McGee told Puckett that had he found the Alamo Scout authorization document first, the unit would have been the Eighth Army Scouts instead of the Rangers.
- 13 MTT Able Report and Letter ComPhibGruOne, file AT6-3/35/ceb Serial 007 dated 6 August 1950. According to Hayhurst, *Green Berets in Korea*, 42, LTC D.D. Drysdale, the Independent 41 Commando commander selected Lieutenant Derek Pounds, Royal Marines, to lead the Fleet Volunteers.
- 14 GHQ, FECOM message from CINCFE (MacArthur) to DA WASH DC, 121343 September 1950, PERSONAL FOR GEN Collins, John B. Dwyer letter to Delmer E. Davis, 26 October 1999, Subject: GHQ Raiders, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, and retired ROK MG Jangnai Sohn (former SAB platoon and company commander) email to David L. Carter, Subject: Special Attack Battalion Questions, 10 September 2009, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. MG Sohn provided reality about the ROK volunteers. Among the 300 volunteers were wounded veterans just out of the hospital and new, untrained conscripts. The training at Camp McGill was described as "very rigorous. Quite a few of the soldiers drowned while conducting rubber boat landings at night in a bad storm."
- 15 Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 239-240. The US Navy Hull classification APD meant "AP" for transport and "D" for destroyer.
- 16 Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 232, 239.
- 17 Taped recollections of retired USN Captain Teddy Roosevelt Fielding to John B. Dwyer, July and November 1985, cited in Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 239.
- 18 Letter, Rear Admiral K.J. Christoph, Jr. to John B. Dwyer, May 1994, and Letter, George Atcheson to John B. Dwyer, October 1985, cited in *Commandos From the Sea*, 240, 241.
- 19 Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 242.
- 20 Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 242-243 and Bish interview, 26 October 2009.
- 21 Taped recollections of retired USN Captain Teddy Roosevelt Fielding to John B. Dwyer, July and November 1985, cited in Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 242-243. The Special Operations Group (SOG) of PhibGruOne was awarded a Navy Unit Commendation for its 12-15 August 1950 missions that read in part: "For outstanding heroism in support of military operations 200 miles behind enemy lines on the east coast (of Korea), destroying bridges, disrupting enemy lines of communications, and conducting hydrographic surveys of enemy-held beaches." Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 244.
- 22 Hayhurst, *Green Berets in Korea*, 44.
- 23 David I. Carter, GHQ Raiders draft article corrections note to Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 23 September 2009, Las Vegas, Nevada, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Davis interview, 25 August 2009; Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 243; CINCFE Memorandum SUBJECT: Prov Raider Co and Royal Navy Volunteer Grp Attached to COMNAVFE for Operations dated 7 Sep 50 [UN/18 (TS-F) Bk 1], General Headquarters, United Nations Command, General Orders No. 7: Establishment of Command dated 5 September 1950, National Archives, Record Group 7, Box 1, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC and Hayhurst, *Green Berets in Korea*, 42-44. Special Activities Group (SAG) had the mission to "organize, train, and prepare for employment a group of specially qualified U.N. command units and individuals to conduct such raiding, commando, intelligence, and other operations as may be directed by the Commander-in-Chief (MacArthur)." Interestingly, Seaman Johnnie Futcher, Pounds Force, had volunteered while assigned to the HMS *Whitesand Bay*.
- 24 Carter, GHQ Raiders draft article corrections note to Dr. Briscoe, 23 September 2009, Davis interview, 25 August 2009; Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 243; CINCFE Memorandum SUBJECT: Prov Raider Co and Royal Navy Volunteer Grp Attached to COMNAVFE for Operations dated 7 Sep 50 [UN/18 (TS-F) Bk 1], GHQ, UNC General Orders No. 7: Establishment of Command dated 5 September 1950, National Archives, Record Group 7, Box 1, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC and Hayhurst, *Green Berets in Korea*, 42-44.
- 25 Patrick T. Gannon, Sr. email to Delmer Davis, 25 June 1999, Subject: GHQ RAIDER COMPANY, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 26 John W. Connor, *Let Slip the Dogs of War: A Memoir of the GHQ 1st Raider Company (8245th Army Unit) a.k.a. Special Operations Company Korea, 1950-51* (Bennington, VT: Merriam Press, 2008): 106,107; Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 243-244; Boose, *Over the Beach*, 176, and retired British MG D.E.K. Pounds' comments in Dwyer letter to Patrick T. Gannon, 14 April 2000. "My force landed on extreme right of Kongsoon (Kunsan) beach. Landing conditions were good – rising tide, half-moon, visibility 100 yds. My mission was to probe inland as far as the railway, protect the right flank, and recon enemy positions." In letters to John B. Dwyer from Colonel James H. Wear and LTC Albert T. Noreen, October and December 1994, The Raiders were victims of friendly fire. While the body of CPL John W. Maines was recovered several days later, that of mortally wounded 1LT James W. "Tiger" Clance, an 82nd Airborne Division WWII veteran, was not found. Source Note 10, Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 244 and Davis interview, 25 August 2009. CPL Raymond E. Puttin died of his wounds aboard the *Whitesand Bay* and was buried at sea on 14 September 1950. Boose, *Over the Beach*, 176 and excerpts from HMS *Whitesand Bay* log, 12-13 September 1950 in Dwyer letters to Davis, 19 & 23 February 2000. "13 Sept. 1910 hrs. (just after sunset) speed slow ahead, the body of Pvt 1st Class R. Puttin (died of wounds rec'd ashore) laid to rest with military honors."
- 27 Gannon email to Davis, 25 June 1999, Subject: GHQ RAIDER COMPANY.
- 28 Daniel W. Bish, GHQ Raiders draft article corrections note to Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 30 September 2009, Norco, CA; Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 244; Davis interview, 25 August 2009, and excerpts from HMS *Whitesand Bay* log, 12-13 September 1950 in Dwyer letters to Davis, 19 & 23 February 2000. "First 'dinghy' carrying mission personnel left ship at 2248 on 12 Sept. Firing ashore first heard about 2 hrs. later. Then, first boat returned to ship at 0110."
- 29 Davis interview, 25 August 2009.
- 30 Davis email to Dwyer, 7 September 2001, Subject: Some Kunsan Details & Questions, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 31 David I. Carter email to Delmer Davis, 26 October 1999, Subject: GHQ First Raider Company Korean War 1950-51, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, and Connor, *Let Slip the Dogs of War*, 107.
- 32 Bish, GHQ Raiders draft article corrections note to Dr. Briscoe, 30 September 2009, Dwyer, *Commandos From the Sea*, 244, Davis interview, 25 August 2009, and excerpts from HMS *Whitesand Bay* log, 12-13 September 1950 in Dwyer letters to Davis, 19 & 23 February 2000.
- 33 Headquarters, X Corps, APO 909 (Tokyo), OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE Joint Message from CG (MG Almond), FRAGO supplementing X Corps OPORD One (26 Aug 50) dated 9 September 1950, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 34 Boose, *Over the Beach*, 186.
- 35 Bish note to Dr. Briscoe, 30 September 2009, "USS George Clymer (APA-27" NavSource Online: Amphibious Photo Archive, <http://www.navsource.org/archives/10/03/03027/03/03027.htm> dated 10/21/2009, Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships, "George Clymer," http://www.history.navy.mil/danfs/g4/george_clymer.htm dated 10/21/2009, and Davis email to Gannon, 1 September 1999, Subject: GHQ Raider Company, Korean War, verified that the USS *George Clymer* was the command & control ship to which the Raiders were delivered after their Kimpo Airbase mission was aborted.
- 36 Boose, *Over the Beach*, 186.
- 37 Davis interview, 25 August 2009.
- 38 GHQ, FECOM Outgoing message from CINCFE (MacArthur) to DA WASH DC, 121343 September 1950, PERSONAL FOR GEN Collins (CSA). Some of the Royal Marines from Pounds' Force were integrated into 41 Commando and the seamen were reassigned to Royal Navy units in theater.
- 39 Headquarters and Service Command, General Headquarters, Far East Command, 8252d Army Unit, APO 500 Letter of Commendation to CPL Martin L. Broussard, HHC, Staff Battalion dated 31 July 1951 from BG E.W. Piburn, copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 40 Presidential Unit Citation (U.S. Navy) from http://www.1stmarinedivisionassociation.org/puc-nuc-citation-folder/korea.50_Page1.htm dated 11/25/03.
- 41 Retired MG John K. Singlaub, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 12 September 2008, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 42 Eighth United States Army, Korea. General Order No. 584 dated 25 July 1951 cited in Black, *Rangers in Korea*, 202.

The Provisional Raider Company, and the Royal Navy Volunteer Group were successfully withdrawn from the Kunsan, Korea area on D-1 and 2 and moved to the objective area on D-Day to be debarked with the objective of capturing Kimpo Airfield (shown below). This latter operation was cancelled because the RB-10s could not be launched against the outgoing tide.

From 1952 until 2006, each Special Forces Group (SFG) developed its own internal standard operating procedures (SOP) based upon its mission, area orientation, and specific equipment requirements. While these same factors contributed to Special Forces' reputation as a unique, independent, and highly individualistic society, they also created confusion among both the conventional U.S. Army and SF veterans about the way each SFG designated its subordinate maneuver echelons. The early SFG commanders personalized field and garrison policies and procedures for their respective units based on their experience and training. This was especially true when numbering the Special Forces basic maneuver element, the Operational Detachment A (ODA). Over the years, several attempts were made to establish a uniform designation system, but it was not until 2006 that U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) implemented a standardized ODA numbering system. This article explains the evolution of this ODA numbering system beginning with the 10th SFG.

In April 1952, the Psychological Warfare (Psywar) Center was established on Smoke Bomb Hill, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The Center had a provisional Psychological Warfare School with Special Forces and Psywar Departments, a Psywar Board for research and development, and the 6th Radio Broadcast and Leaflet Group. When the Department of the Army was given responsibility for organizing guerrilla forces in early 1952, the Office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare directed by Brigadier General (BG) Robert A. McClure and the Psywar Center became the proponents for that initiative.¹ Having been allocated 2,300 positions from the fourteen recently deactivated Airborne Ranger Infantry Companies in 1951, the Center built the original SFG Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) which was approved on 14 May 1952. On 20 June 1952, the 10th Special Forces Group, consisting of a Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC) and three Special Forces Companies, was activated.² The HHC contained the Group staff and organic support elements. It provided limited command and control and service support to the three SF companies. Each SFG was also composed of FC, FB, and FA Teams. All three levels of SF teams were deployable command and control elements.

The FC Team was commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel in garrison and in the field and corresponded to a provisional Battalion Headquarters to provide command and control for its organic four to five FB Teams (commanded by Majors), and their subordinate four to ten

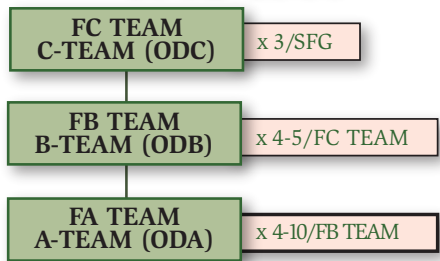
THE A TEAM NUMBERING SYSTEM

By Eugene G. Piasecki

or more FA Teams (commanded by Captains). In garrison, the FC Team was augmented by an administrative detachment and provided administration and training for the FB and FA Teams. FB Teams in garrison functioned as a headquarters for its assigned FA Teams. When deployed, FB Teams were responsible for a specifically assigned region in a particular country and provided command and control to all FA Teams operating in their area of operations. The original TO&E of 1952 also established the FA Team as the basic unit of SF with fifteen personnel assigned.³ FA Teams were capable of organizing, equipping, training and advising indigenous guerrilla companies, battalions, or regiments up to 1,500 men.

The original TO&E remained effective until 1960 and was the basis for activating the 77th SFG in 1953 (became 7th SFG in 1960) at Fort Bragg and the 1st SFG on Okinawa in 1957. By 1960, Special Forces had matured and organizational changes were needed to improve the SFG capabilities and reduce dependence on conventional Army service support. The June 1960 TO&E removed the "F" as part of the designator for all operational echelons and elements. The SF Provisional Battalion (FC Team) became simply the C Team or ODC in the field; the FB Team became the B Team or ODB; and the FA Team became the A Team or ODA. The echelons of Command and Control in descending order were C to A. The second and most dramatic change was the reduction of the fifteen-man FA Team to a twelve-man A-Team or ODA. Of all the operational changes made to Special Forces, this one has remained in effect the longest and has proven to

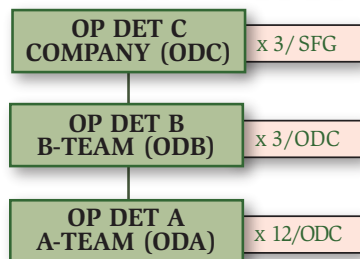
Special Forces Organization 1952-1960



- Authorization authority: TO&E 33-510 (May 1952)
- The Psywar Center labeled the first echelon SF Teams (ODAs) as “FA Teams” and based their strength on the 15-man OSS Operational Groups (OG) of World War II.*⁵
- FA Teams were numbered beginning at 1 and continued in order until all teams were designated, i.e. FA Team 1 to FA Team 70. (10th SFG in 1952)
- FA Teams, controlled by FB Teams, were capable of advising and supporting a guerrilla unit as large as 1,500 personnel.⁶
- Each FB Team commanded and controlled two or more FA Teams.

* Major force structural element.

Special Forces Organization 1960-1971



- Authorization authority: TO&E 31-105D (June 1960)
- Reduced the size of the FA Team to 12 men* and removed the “F” prefix designation for all SF Teams. (FC to C; FB to B; FA to A)
- Assigned four ODAs (former FA Team) to each ODB (former FB Team) for a total of 12 ODAs per SF Company (ODC) the former FC TEAM.⁷
- Each ODA was now identified by three numbers that specified the company (ODC), the ODB in the company, and the specific team in that ODB. For example in 1963, ODA-312 indicated:
 - 3 C Company, 1st SFG
 - 1 ODB 31
 - 2 The second ODA assigned to ODB 31.⁸

*Major force structure change.

This system remained relatively consistent in all SFGs with the exception of the 5th SFG after it went to South Vietnam on 1 October 1964. For a brief period in late 1968, ODAs in the 5th SFG had fourteen men rather than the authorized twelve. The additions were a First Lieutenant (1LT) Civic Action/Psychological Operations Officer and a Specialist Fifth Class (SP5) Civic Action/Psychological Operations Specialist.

At times ODA numbers were switched or reassigned as SF personnel changed locations based on the military and political situation in Vietnam, 5th SFG OPTEMPO or special mission assignments. The numbers in sequence for ODA-257 (Pleiku area) reflected these elements:

- 2 Represented the Corps Tactical Zone (1 to 5) in which the ODA operated.
- 5 Was the second digit of the parent ODB (in this case B-25).
- 7 Identified the specific team among those ODAs assigned to B-25.¹⁰

This system remained in effect in RVN until 31 March 1971 when the 5th SFG returned to Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

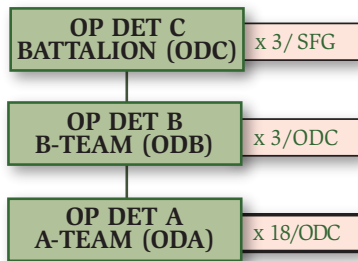
be the most successful in all environments and for all SF missions from combat to humanitarian relief operations. The third expanded the Group HHC by adding a number of service support elements and an SF Signal Company for higher echelon communications support.⁴

The 1960 TO&E was used to activate the 5th SFG in 1961 and the 3rd, 6th, and 8th SFGs in 1963. While the SFG TO&E called for three SF companies, some groups operated with only two companies (8th SFG in Panama). The 3rd and the 6th structure remained unchanged during the short time they were active in the 1960s. The forward-deployed SFGs such as the 8th in Panama and the 5th in Vietnam, task organized to meet the requirements of combating “Wars of National Liberation.” By 1972, SF was no longer in South Vietnam and the U.S. Army was undergoing a post-war reduction. In an effort to reduce friction in the post-Vietnam Army, the SFG staffs were

reconfigured more like conventional combat brigades. The lettered SF companies became numbered battalions (but ODCs in the field), and ODBs became lettered companies in their battalions. The only organization that remained unchanged, except for its numbering system, was the ODA. Although its strength was still twelve Special Forces qualified soldiers, each ODA was assigned to a lettered company and identified by a specific number from one to six that represented its affiliation to the numbered battalion and designated its SFG, ODB, and assignment within that ODB.

Even though this ODA identification system continued to cause confusion (each SFG had retained its own ODA numbering system) it enjoyed the greatest longevity, 1972 through 2006. Ever increasing roles predicated changes especially when SF was committed to fighting America’s Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). By 2006,

Special Forces Organization 1972-2006



- Authorization authority: TO&E 31-105H (June 1970)
- SF Groups reorganized three SF companies into three numbered battalions of **three ODBs, each with six ODAs.***
- ODAs continued to be identified by a three digit numbering system, but the coding changed to reflect the SF Group, ODB and ODA number in each ODB:
- For instance, in the case of **ODA-716** :
 - 7 Signifies that the ODA is part of the 7th Special Forces Group.
 - 1 Places it in A Company, 1st Battalion, 7th SFG. (NOTE: sequential, ascending ODB numbers remained the same).
 - 6 Designates it as the 6th detachment assigned to that company.

Under this system, each ODA's number delineated its parent unit: The **1st** Number signified the Group (0 = 10th SFG; 1 = 1st SFG; 3 = 3rd SFG; 5 = 5th SFG; 7 = 7th SFG; 9 = 19th SFG; 2 = 20th SFG). The **2nd** Number represented the ODB (1st Battalion: A = 1, B = 2, C = 3; 2nd Battalion: A = 4, B = 5, C = 6; 3rd Battalion: A = 7, B = 8, C = 9). The **3rd** Number specifies the actual ODA in each ODB (1 to 6).

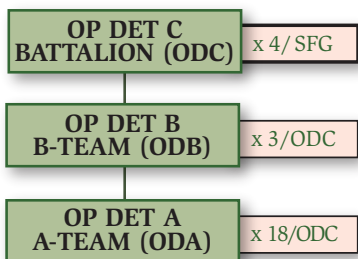
NOTE: ascending sequential numbering for ODBs.

NOTE: In most SFGs, ODA numbers that ended in "4" like A-364 often indicated that the team specialized in High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) parachute operations and the "5," like A-355 reflected that the ODA specialized in Underwater Operations using self-contained underwater breathing apparatus (SCUBA).

**Major force structure change.*

Attempts to standardize ODA numbering for all SF Groups failed until Department of the Army (DA) approved a fourth battalion for all active duty SFGs. This action caused U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) to standardize ODA numbering in November 2006 with implementation by 1 January 2007.¹¹ The 19th and 20th SFGs of the U.S. Army National Guard (ARNG) will not adopt the four digit system until they have been authorized an additional battalion.¹²

Special Forces Organization 2007 - Present (Active Component Only)



- Authorization Authority: TO&E 31-815G (October 2007)
- The four digit ODA numbering system reflects the addition of a **fourth battalion to each active duty SFG.***
- ODAs are identified by the SFG, the battalion, the company, and the team number in that ODB.
- Under this system **ODA-3423** signifies:
 - 3 The ODA is assigned to 3rd SFG.
 - 4 The ODA is in the 4th Battalion (ODC).
 - 2 The ODA is in B Company (ODB) of the 4th Battalion.
 - 3 Is the 3rd ODA of B Company, 4th Battalion.

**Major force structure change.*

Under this system, ODA numbers delineate specific parentage: The **1st** digit identifies the Group (0 = 10th SFG; 1 = 1st SFG; 3 = 3rd SFG; 5 = 5th SFG; 7 = 7th SFG). The **2nd** digit represents the battalion (1st Battalion = 1; 2nd Battalion = 2; 3rd Battalion = 3; 4th Battalion = 4). The **3rd** digit provides the ODB number to which the ODA is assigned (A = 1; B = 2; C = 3) [each ODB ends in 0, i.e. 10 = A; 20 = B; 30 = C] (i. e. 3230 designates the ODB of C Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd SFG). The **4th** digit is that particular team number in the ODB (1 to 6).

the Department of Defense recognized that in order to maintain the required OPTEMPO, the Army needed more SF soldiers. In September 2006, the Department of the Army authorized a fourth SF Battalion with eighteen more ODAs for each active SFG. This "plus up" prompted USASOC to simplify and standardize the entire active SFG numbering system.

Understandably, this latest system is not perfect, but it is simple and helps identify each ODA/ODB/ODC

according to the code. Even though the numbering system has changed over the years, the SF ODA, the backbone of Special Forces has remained the same. ↑

The author would like to express his thanks to CSM (ret) John E. Kessling, MSG (ret) Lowell W. Stevens, Sr., and Mr. Patrick D. Snyder for their assistance and patience in preparing this article.



An Operational Detachment explains its capabilities during a “Gabriel Demonstration” at Fort Bragg, 1964.

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Endnotes

- 1 Gordon L. Rottman, *US Army Special Forces 1952-84* (London: Osprey Publishing, 1985), 6-7.
- 2 CSM (ret) John E. Kessling, interview by Eugene G. Piasecki, 10 October 2009, Fayetteville, NC, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. In 1952, before enlisted SF volunteers were assigned to FA, FB, or FC Teams in the 10th SFG, they were assigned to a numbered SF Operational Training Detachment to undergo ATP (Army Training Program) Special Forces Training. M/SGT John E. Kessling was one of these soldiers and was assigned to the 18th SF Opn Det B. On 25 February 1953 he successfully completed ATP Special Forces Training (mobilization) (tentative) and was among the earliest SF course graduates to be awarded the prefix 3. The prefix 3 was the designation added to a soldier’s basic military occupation specialty code (MOS) that signified he was qualified to be considered for Special Forces assignments.
- 3 Rottman, *US Army Special Forces*, 19.
- 4 Rottman, *US Army Special Forces*, 21.
- 5 COL William Ewald, former Commander, FC1, 77th SFG, telephonic interview by Eugene G. Piasecki, 5 May 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. When asked about the origins of the term FA, FB, and FC for the teams assigned to the 77th SFG, COL Ewald stated the team designations were determined by the Psywar Center and assigned to the Group’s internal organizations.
- 6 Charles M. Simpson III, *Inside the Green Berets. The First Thirty Years. The United States Army Special Forces* (California: Presidio Press, 1983), 36. FB Teams were designed to control an area command within a denied country and to control two or more FA Teams. FA Team strength was 15 men and included two officers and thirteen enlisted men. The enlisted members of the FA Team were skilled in operations and intelligence, light and heavy weapons, demolitions, radio communications, and medical aid.
- 7 Rottman, *US Army Special Forces*, 21. In 1964, the Operational Detachment C (ODC/C-Team), commanded by a Lieutenant Colonel, served as the equivalent to a conventional battalion headquarters. Operational Detachment B (ODB/B-Team), commanded by a Major, served as the equivalent to a conventional company headquarters with three ODBs assigned to an ODC. Originally six ODAs were assigned to each ODB, but by November, the number of ODAs per ODB was reduced to five. The ODA was now comprised of two officers (one Captain, the ODA commander and a First Lieutenant, the Executive Officer) and 10 noncommissioned officers. Two noncommissioned officers were trained in each of the five Special Forces functional areas: weapons, engineer, medical, communications, and operations and intelligence. Cross training in the different skills among the detachment members was a continuous process.
- 8 Master Sergeant (ret) Lowell W. Stevens, Sr., e-mail to Eugene G. Piasecki, 31 August 2009, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 9 Rottman, *US Army Special Forces*, 22-23.
- 10 Stevens e-mail, 31 August 2009. Sometimes when a team was relocated and assigned a completely new designation, the team number often remained the same and provided the only link of continuity between the old and new ODA missions and/or locations.
- 11 Mr. Patrick D. Snyder, DCS, G-35 Plans Readiness and Programs Branch, USASOC, e-mail to Eugene G. Piasecki, 18 August 2009, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 12 Mr. Patrick D. Snyder, DCS, G-35 Plans Readiness and Programs Branch, USASOC, e-mail to Eugene G. Piasecki, 18 August 2009, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.



Both the Special Forces and Civil Affairs medics worked diligently to improve the quality of health care in Deh Rawod. Providing vitamins and oral vaccines to the children was a key part of this effort.

A Collective Effort: Army Special Operations Forces in Deh Rawod, Afghanistan

by Kenneth Finlayson

USSOCOM PAO guidance on current operations dictates the use of pseudonyms for all ARSOF personnel, Major and below. In this article, local nationals in the employment of the U.S. are given pseudonyms.

From December 2008 to August 2009, Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) units in the vicinity of Deh Rawod, Afghanistan successfully reduced the Taliban influence and thereby significantly improved the local security and living conditions in the area. This article describes how Special Forces Operational Detachment 3125 (ODA 3125), Civil Affairs Team 122 (CAT 122), and Tactical Psychological Operations Teams (TPTs), worked together to improve life in a former Taliban stronghold. It shows that the multiple capabilities of ARSOF elements can be integrated to collectively solve the challenges of a Foreign Internal Defense (FID) mission.¹ Among their significant accomplishments were an amphibious operation against the Taliban, enhancing local security and improving the infrastructure in the area, and starting a school for local children.²

Fire Base Tycz (rhymes with “dice”), located a few hundred meters outside the town of Deh Rawod in Oruzgan Province in south-central Afghanistan is named for Sergeant First Class (SFC) Peter P. Tycz II, 3rd Special Forces Group (3rd SFG), killed in action on 12 June 2002. Strategically located astride a major Taliban movement corridor from Helmand Province, FB Tycz is an integral part of the U.S. and Coalition security effort in Oruzgan Province.

Three U.S. ARSOF units manned FB Tycz. ODA 3125, B Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group was the largest. The 12-man ODA had one additional 18 C Engineer Sergeant. A veteran team, ODA 3125 had been on FB Tycz during a previous 6-month rotation in 2008 and returned in January 2009. The four-man Civil Affairs Team 122 (CAT 122) B Company, 91st Civil Affairs Battalion had arrived a month earlier in December 2008. Two 3-man Tactical PSYOP Teams from 1st Battalion,

ODA 3125, B Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group on the move in the countryside near Deh Rawod. The team was on its second consecutive rotation to this former Taliban stronghold.



In an unusual display of the esteem the locals had for ODA 3125, the team was invited to a wedding in Deh Rawod. Native attire and modern weapons are *de rigueur* at weddings, an event where foreigners are rarely seen.



Children display their stickers of the Afghan National colors. Two Tactical PSYOP Teams from the 1st Battalion, 4th Psychological Operations Group supported the ARSOF mission in Deh Rawod by developing a variety of similar products promoting the Afghan government.

CAT 122, B Company, 91st Civil Affairs Battalion, had a wide-ranging mission in Deh Rawod. Working out of Firebase Tycz, they provided medical and veterinary care and distributed humanitarian supplies throughout Oruzgan Province.





Fire Base Tycz is located in the town of Deh Rawod, sixty kilometers from the provincial capital in Tarin Kowt.



With money and materials from U.S. Command Emergency Response Funds, the construction of the Chutu Bridge in 2008 was a major economic boost to Deh Rawod. CAT 122 was present at the opening of the bridge in December 2008.



Dutch Brigadier General Tom A. Middendorp with U.S. General David D. McKiernan, the ISAF Commander. As the RC South Commander, Brig Gen Middendorp employed a population-centric strategy for operations in Oruzgan Province.

4th Psychological Operations Group rotated through FB Tycz during 2009. A 230-man Afghan Security Guard (ASG) unit, contracted and trained by the SF ODA, provided base security. The ARSOF teams had to work closely with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) units in the area.

An experienced command team, Captain (CPT) Steven Hanson* the detachment commander and Master Sergeant (MSG) Jason Poster,* the team sergeant, along with five other members of ODA 3125, had served on FB Tycz previously. They were intimately familiar with what it would take to succeed at Deh Rawod. Their mission was a complex one.

“Our broad mission was to conduct FID [Foreign Internal Defense] operations,” said Hanson. “We worked to increase the legitimacy of the government and cut down on corruption.”³ There were two distinct components to this mission. The first was to work with the local population to gather information that would enable the team to target the insurgents for combat operations. The second was to actively engage the government officials and village elders to determine their requirements for improving the local infrastructure. This approach followed the guidance given to the team by their higher headquarters and dovetailed precisely with the ISAF regional commander’s vision for operations in Oruzgan Province.

ODA 3125 was part of B Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group. B Company, in its role as Advanced Operating Base (AOB) 3110, was headquartered in Tarin Kowt, 60 miles northeast of Deh Rawod. The AOB Commander, Major (MAJ) Martin Calhoun* explained the mission of the team at FB Tycz. “The team in Deh Rawod was there to help build the capacity of the local government to provide basic services to the people.”⁴ While not directly assigned to work with either the Afghan Army or Police forces, the team was to look for opportunities to “enhance the ANA and ANP capabilities.”⁵ In the case of the ANA, the team helped train the Afghan Army units to run effective combat operations, particularly for such skills as mine detection and clearing.⁶ Calhoun’s focus was to integrate his teams into the Dutch operational strategy in RC South while balancing the requirements coming from the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) run by 3rd Special Forces Group in Bagram.

“The guidance from higher [the CJSOTF] tended to be enemy focused,” said Calhoun. “The Dutch had a good handle on Oruzgan, but they were population oriented.”⁷ To better coordinate his teams into the Dutch plan, MAJ Calhoun and CPT Hanson went to the Netherlands before deploying. They met with Dutch Brigadier General (Brig Gen) Tom A. Middendorp, who was to be the RC South Commander during their rotation. The meeting got both sides “on the same sheet of music” and paved the way for a productive working relationship. This was critical for Deh Rawod, a strategic crossroads in Oruzgan.

“The town is like a traffic circle,” said Daoud Madiha* the chief interpreter and cultural advisor for the American

Regional Command South 2009 Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)

In Afghanistan, the U.S. forces are part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). ISAF is the NATO-controlled multinational effort led by U.S. General (GEN) Stanley A. McChrystal whose mission is "To assist the Afghan government in the establishment of a secure and stable environment."¹ Forty-two nations are represented among the more than 64,000 troops in ISAF. The goal is to protect the population and establish a functioning government. ISAF has established five Regional Commands (RCs), North, South, East, West and the Capital region of Kabul. Each RC, under the command of an ISAF partner nation, has a Command and Control (C2) Headquarters and Forward Support Base (FSB) to provide logistics, medical, and transportation support for the region. Every RC has Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), dating to 2002, to extend the Government of Afghanistan's authority.² They are integrated civil-military organizations with a three-fold mission; improve security, extend the reach of the Afghan government, and facilitate the reconstruction effort in their respective provinces.³

In 2009 RC South was the responsibility of the Netherlands, and encompassed the provinces of Nimruz, Helmand, Kandahar, Zabul, Oruzgan and Ghowr. The Dutch Headquarters and FSB for RC South was in Kandahar, supporting four PRTs in Kandahar (Canadian), Lashkar-Gar (British), Qalat (U.S.), and in Oruzgan Province, the Dutch PRT located at Kamp Holland in Tarin Kowt. The multinational nature of operations in RC South extended to Deh Rawod and FB Tycz.

The Dutch PRT stationed a 200-man element of the 12th *Infanterie* Battalion, Van Heutsz Regiment, at Kamp Hadrian near FB Tycz. Their mission was to train the Afghan National Police (ANP) contingent and support reconstruction. The Dutch had a robust medical capability with doctors and nurses and a well-established logistical center. The 12th Infantry Battalion had a U.S. Police Mentoring Team (PMT) from the Illinois Army National Guard 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (IBCT) attached.⁴ Kamp Hadrian also had a French Army contingent.



The French Operational Mentor and Liaison Team (OMLT) was training and advising Afghan National Army (ANA) units. The OMLT personnel were on a four-month rotation cycle. During 2009, several French contingents, including the 2nd French Foreign Legion Infantry Regiment (*2e Régiment Etranger d'Infanterie*), and the Alpine Troops (*Chasseurs Alpains*) worked with the ANA 205th Corps. Operating in this multinational environment was a significant challenge for the ARSOF units.

Endnotes

- 1 International Security and Assistance Force Homepage, Troop Numbers (Placemat), <http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/placemat.html>.
- 2 International Security and Assistance Force Homepage, http://www.nato.int/ISAF/structure/regional_command/index.html.
- 3 United States Agency for International Development, "Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan: An Interagency Assessment," June 2006, pg 10, http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADG252.pdf.
- 4 Department of Military Affairs, Illinois Army and Air National Guard, News Release #091709-164, "Illinois National Guard Soldiers Returning From Afghanistan," September 17, 2009, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

ARSOF teams at FB Tycz. "Roads come in from all four directions. Deh Rawod is the center of economic activity for the region."⁸ There are more than 600 small shops and businesses for a population of roughly three thousand. "Deh Rawod has an importance out of proportion to its small size," said Madiha.⁹ Once a Taliban stronghold, the troops of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group drove the insurgents out and returned the town to government control in 2007. But, the area still harbored an active insurgency because it was a central node for Taliban activity in the province. In this environment, gaining the trust and support of the village residents was a priority for the Special Forces Team.

Sergeant First Class (SFC) Quentin Marshall* was the team's Operations and Intelligence Sergeant (18F). He was responsible for collection and analysis of the various sources of intelligence available to the team. Working with primarily local information sources, Marshall developed the intelligence picture of the team's area of operations. "I would take what our guys collected and look at past events to get a picture," said Marshall. "If we had time prior to an operation, I would 'ping' the CJSOTF for anything they had collected."¹⁰ As the "18 Fox," Marshall worked closely with the Assistant Detachment Commander, Warrant Officer One (WO1) Gordon Hampton* in developing the intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB). "I was collocated with the 18 Fox in the OPCEN [Operations Center] where we ran the intelligence fusion cell for the team," said Hampton.¹¹ Two team members, SFC Craig Kramer* and SFC Roger Scarlatti,* were specifically focused on the collection of information.

"Working with our interpreters, I would interview the local people who are our primary source of information," said Kramer, an 18E Communications Sergeant. "Then you had to work to verify the accuracy of what we got. Once it was collected, we could start to work with it. I found spending time talking to people coming in from outside of town was particularly fruitful."¹² "Your emphasis is based a lot on the situation in the area, specifically how much the



Distributing candy and school supplies among the local children was an effective way of developing rapport with the people.

government is in control," noted SFC Roger Scarlatti, an 18D Medical Sergeant. "The restored government presence made it easier to gain the trust of the people. It helped that we had been there before."¹³ The team members worked with the other ARSOF units on Tycz to develop this rapport with the locals.

"We worked closely with the CA team. They would often go with us and hand out rice and beans or other supplies," said Kramer. "Deh Rawod is a population hub in Oruzgan Province so lots of people come through there."¹⁴ "Having the same team back in this area was a big plus," said Roger Scarlatti. "The locals knew us."¹⁵ The team also shared information with the Dutch forces.

"We coordinated with the Dutch on a daily basis. In one instance, we were able to roll-up a cell that was making IEDs [Improvised Explosive Devices]," recalled SFC Kramer.¹⁶ Another viable source of information was the local workforce that maintained the camp. The supervision of the laborers was the responsibility of Staff Sergeant (SSG) Keith Freeman,* an 18C Engineer Sergeant.

"I handled the day-to-day maintenance requirements in the camp," said Freeman. "We had to keep generators

Deh Rawod was the center of economic activity for the region. Numerous shops and small businesses depended on people coming to the town. One of the ODA missions was to push back the Taliban to allow people to travel safely to Deh Rawod.





ODA 3125 engaged the Taliban throughout Oruzgan Province. By pressuring the enemy in their strongholds, the team improved the security for the people in and around Deh Rawod.

running, the plumbing and electrical systems needed attention, and we were doing some new construction on the firebase. We had a local force of day laborers and a foreman to run the crew. The number varied by what we were doing, usually twenty to thirty each day.”¹⁷ The firebase had billets for the teams, a dining facility with local cooks under the supervision of a food service specialist from the AOB, an operations center, and facilities for vehicle maintenance and ammunition storage. The firebase also had a small radio station capable of broadcasting to the

local area. Some of the existing construction was not exactly “up to code.” “In some of the buildings, the lights were hung off bare wires, even in the showers,” said SFC John Watson.* “We got that fixed and had the generators going so we had electricity 24/7. Craig Kramer even got us wired up to the Internet.”¹⁸ During the rotation, the local contractors improved the plumbing and drainage on the firebase and the team initiated the construction of a combination community center and school for use by the local people. While supervising daily operations on the base and building their collection capability were important parts of the routine, the primary focus of the team was enhancing the security of the local population. To do this, the team conducted a variety of operations throughout the region designed to push the Taliban out of Oruzgan and disrupt their operations in RC South.

“We were not officially partnered with either the ANA or the ANP in Deh Rawod,” said CPT Steve Hanson. “We tried to do our operations with one or the other force, to keep the Afghan forces involved. This required a lot of coordination with the Dutch and French who were advising them.”¹⁹ MSG Jason Poster noted, “In 2007 this place had belonged to the Taliban. They worked right up to the gates of the firebase. We wanted to push the presence of the Afghan forces, to move them out further.”²⁰ One example of this was the establishment of new security checkpoints in the area.



One of the major projects accomplished by the ARSOF teams in Deh Rawod was the construction of a community center. The new building was used as a school and meeting area for the local government.



Filling the pre-fabricated HESCO barriers during the construction of the new checkpoint. The earth-filled barriers formed the protective walls.



Placed on a small rise, the checkpoint had commanding views up and down the valley. The “Instant Checkpoint” of HESCO barriers went up in 24-hours, denying the Taliban easy movement in the area.

SSG David Pruitt,* an 18C Engineer Sergeant, organized and coordinated the construction of a security checkpoint on the road leading to Forward Operating Base (FOB) Cobra, manned by ODA 3124, 60 kilometers north of Deh Rawod. "Cobra was up a real 'IED alley' and we knew a checkpoint there would cut down on Taliban movement," said MSG Jason Poster. "If we controlled that road, it would protect the people coming in to Deh Rawod and help the local economy."²¹ The site selected was on a small hill with commanding views up and down the valley.

"I coordinated to get the equipment and labor organized to put the checkpoint in," said SSG Pruitt. "We had a bucket loader, some trucks, and about 20 workers. We moved the whole circus twenty miles into the mountains and in one day had a manned checkpoint in place."²² The checkpoint, roughly 100 feet by 50 feet, was built of HESCO (Hercules Engineering Solutions Consortium) pre-fabricated barriers with an eight-foot high observation tower. The entire checkpoint was ringed with triple strand concertina wire. "That was a good effort," said SSG Pruitt. "We built it from scratch. One day there was nothing out there, the next a fully operational checkpoint. The CA guys came in later and put in a well to make it more self-sufficient."²³ While a significant accomplishment, the "instant checkpoint" was not the most unusual mission for the team. In the arid desert of south-central Afghanistan, ODA 3125 also conducted an amphibious operation.

Trained in military underwater operations, ODA 3125 was the designated Combat Dive Team for B Company. Normally the team would have little chance to use their unique aquatic skills in the deserts of Afghanistan. "Our intel gave us a good target about 10 kilometers up the Helmand River," said SFC Quentin Marshall. "We coordinated with



Loading the ANA and ANP troops before departing on the assault up the Helmand River. The Dutch provided the large inflatable bridge boats used on the operation. The Dutch engineers (in soft caps) supervised the loading.

the Dutch for a couple of their big, motorized engineer boats to assault the village from the water."²⁴

Normally, the area of operations could be reached only after a two-day drive north out of Deh Rawod to use an existing bridge across the Helmand. Coming up the river violated the enemy sanctuary and placed the team in their rear. "The Dutch boats were big, about twenty-five feet long with 55 horsepower motors," recalled SFC Roger Scarlatti. "We could put one of our ATVs on them with all our gear and we came right in the back door."²⁵ The team made two runs, first with the 30 ANA troops and 25 ANP who were part of the mission, then a second with the ATVs.²⁶ The team surprised the insurgents and routed them from the village. While these operations were key to pushing the Taliban out of the region, a more common mission was presence patrols conducted jointly with the Afghan forces. It was during these forays away from FB Tycz that the other ARSOF elements, both Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations, were incorporated into the plan.

Running up-river with the ATV onboard. The ability to move men and equipment on the river allowed the ODA to invade a Taliban stronghold that was inaccessible by land. The boat operator is a Dutch engineer.





Built with funds procured by the CA Team, this courthouse was a project designed to enhance the influence of the Afghan government.



Distributing blankets and humanitarian supplies. Whenever possible, the CAT placed the distribution in the hands of the Afghans. The ODA provided security from the ridgeline.



Two key ARSOF missions were communications and humanitarian assistance. The hand-cranked radios were popular and enabled the PSYOP teams broadcasting from the FB Tycz radio station to provide the population with information. The goats were being de-wormed and inoculated as part of a Veterinary Civic Action Program (VETCAP).

MAJ Mark Zimmerman* led CAT 122, the only CA team in Oruzgan Province. The four-man team included SFC Brent Montrose,* SFC Michael Gallant,* and SSG Jamie Gruyere,* Under the Operational Control (OPCON) of the CJSOTF, the CAT 122 mission was to increase the development of infrastructure and orchestrate humanitarian assistance programs in the province. “We are enablers,” said MAJ Zimmerman. “We have a habitual relationship with the SF team, but the ODA commander is in charge on the firebase. We looked for the team to increase the security of the area, the ‘white space’ under our control, so we can focus on developing the capability of the local government.”²⁷ The CAT arrived at Firebase Tycz in December 2008, where they quickly discovered that there was plenty of work to do.

SFC Michael Gallant was in charge of the ordering, storage and distribution of the Humanitarian Assistance (HA) materials. “HA materials cover a variety of items: food, clothing, educational supplies, and medical items,” said Gallant. “I had a standard order for rice, beans, oil, flour, clothing, shoes, and things like that. We sent up the orders through the AOB and we would go pick up the stuff in Tarin Kowt.”²⁸ The supplies were stored in a room in the CA team quarters for distribution to the locals. “Some items we got were real popular, like the hand-cranked radios. I let the PSYOP team hand those out. One thing I quit ordering was soccer balls. When they arrive, you have to blow them up. I kept breaking those little inflation needles. And the kids here don’t play soccer anyway,” said Gallant.²⁹ The distribution of HA materials was one of the team’s primary missions. Another was the implementation of infrastructure development projects.

SFC Brent Montrose managed the contracts and the distribution of projects among the local community. “We had four or five major projects, like the renovation of the power grid for the town and the construction of a new courthouse,” said Montrose. “The locals would nominate



Afghan contractors assemble the cellular telephone tower. Bringing cell phone service to Deh Rawod was a major CA success.

their desired projects to the district chief and if they were accepted, we would put together the contracts for the locals to bid on. Here, everyone is a contractor and I made sure never to give one contractor two jobs.”³⁰ This insured that there was an equitable distribution of the contracts and the supporting funds. Among the team’s many projects were the construction of footbridges and culverts, drilling wells, building a local community center, and establishing cell phone service in the district.

“One of our biggest projects was bringing the Roshan cellular telephone network to the district,” said MAJ Zimmerman. “This was viewed as a very positive symbol of government effectiveness. The Dutch subsidized the construction of the relay towers. *Roshan* means “light” in Pashtu, and is the name of the publicly owned telephone company. We worked on that one the whole year.”³¹ “That was a complicated project,” said Daoud Madiha, the chief interpreter. “I don’t think a day went by that MAJ Zimmerman didn’t have me call Kandahar to find out when the towers were going in.”³² Eventually, the towers were emplaced, providing cell phone service in Deh Rawod. Besides assisting the local community to gain access to high-tech communications, the team had a more prosaic mission, improving the basic health care available to the people.

“Outside the gates of the firebase was a small building we used as a clinic,” said SSG Jamie Gruyere*, the CA team medic. “We opened it five days a week for the locals. It was closed on Friday and Sunday. We usually started at eight in the morning. The ODA medics would help when they could, especially SSG Roman Lapenta,* and we had the medic from the Illinois National Guard PMT working there a lot. We were usually busy; lots of kids would come and hang around. I think one day we saw 140 people.”³³ Initially, no women came to the clinic, but later the ODA coordinated through the CJSOTF for a female Air Force medic and some Dutch nurses to assist with a women’s clinic on Saturdays. While the clinic and some of the building projects supported the population of Deh Rawod, the CA team made a particular effort to get out to all parts of the district.



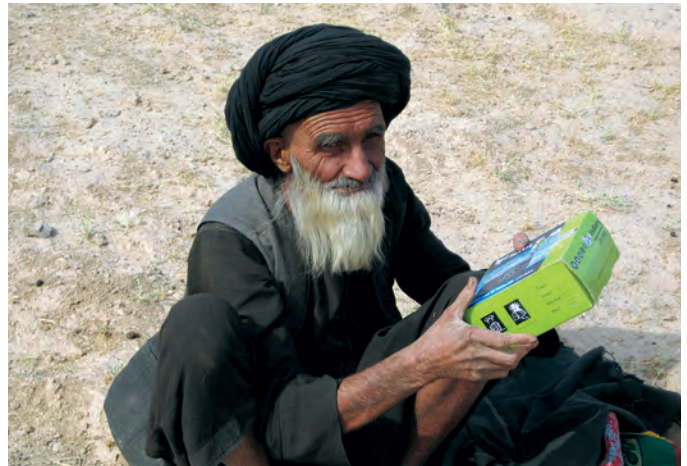
The Roshan cellular telephone tower. *Roshan* means “light” in Pashtu. The project symbolized the best efforts of the Dutch, U.S. and Afghans to improve communications in the region.



“The Goat Whisperer” administered inoculations and deworming medicine to the local herds during a VETCAP. Not all the patients went away happy.



VETCAPs extended to treating the camels that were part of the local livestock. This camel has one leg tied to curtail his movement during treatment.



The ARSOF teams passed out hand-cranked radios. The teams worked hard to counter Taliban propaganda by highlighting government programs that benefited the population.



Firebase Tycz supported a radio station. The PSYOP teams and a contracted disc jockey developed the content to shape public opinion of the Afghan government.

“We would often go with the ODA when they traveled off the firebase,” said SFC Michael Gallant. “We would get out and the team leader would talk with the local elders, see what their needs were. We would distribute HA materials and school supplies. We always tried to get the Afghans involved in the distribution.”³⁴ “We would run MEDCAPs and VETCAPs [Medical/Veterinary Civic Action Programs] when we went out,” said SSG Gruyere. “We could get different packages of medical supplies, some with baby formula, and veterinary supplies for deworming the animals. We learned to set up the MEDCAP separately from the HA distribution. Otherwise people who weren’t sick would get in line for medical treatment.”³⁵ Both the ODA and the CA team utilized the third ARSOF element, the

Psychological Operations Team, as much as possible to enhance their operations.

Two Tactical PSYOP Teams supported Firebase Tycz in 2009. The first arrived with the ODA in January 2009. In March the team sustained two casualties in an IED explosion that necessitated the evacuation of the wounded soldiers and the redeployment of the remaining member back to the United States.³⁶ The second TPT arrived in June. One of their most important missions was operating the radio station on Tycz.³⁷ The station, broadcasting in Pashtu, was an integral part of the ODA and CAT operations.

“Our PSYOP Teams were great,” said CPT Steve Hansen. “We used the radio station to counter the Taliban propaganda. As soon as we got back from a mission, we would broadcast the facts and what we had done to help the people. We integrated radio messages into everything we did.”³⁸ “In the absence of the TPT, we ran the radio station. We employed an Afghan announcer,” said MAJ Mark Zimmerman. “The station had originally been built by USAID [United States Agency for International Development] and we renovated the studio. By distributing radios when we went out, we increased the effectiveness of the station. When the TPT returned, they produced posters and billboards for us to put up announcing projects in the area. The team was a real asset that educated the people about what we were doing.”³⁹

The state of education in the local area was a subject of concern for everyone. “The teachers in Oruzgan Province had not been paid in five months,” said CPT Hansen. “Only 15 per cent of the schools were open. The people didn’t feel secure about sending their children to school. MAJ Zimmerman has a Masters degree in Education and we made improving this situation a priority.”⁴⁰ “We got a project started for an education center in town,” said MAJ Zimmerman. “It included six computers with Internet access. The Dutch were pushing for an agricultural education program like a community college. We got that started and handed it off to the next CAT when we



“We are the smartest kids in Deh Rawod.” The teacher (far right) was the radio station disc jockey. Many of the ODA team members taught the students when time allowed.



A renovated public building on FB Tycz was used by the ODA as a school. Local carpenters made the shelves and benches. The school supplies were provided by CAT-122. Family members in the U.S. donated maps, encyclopedias, and books.



The school supplies provided by the CA team included bookbags decorated with a message stressing the importance of education to the future of Afghanistan.

left. We also renovated the office of the local Minister of Education, who was a great guy and anxious to improve things.⁴¹ “We took the District Chief, the Police Chief, the ANA commander, and the Minister of Education on tours of the schools we had fixed up, to reinforce the importance of good education,” remarked CPT Hansen.⁴² The ARSOF team’s emphasis on education led to one of the most unique achievements of the rotation, starting a school for local children.

“What planet are you on?” The Special Forces sergeant’s question elicited a mixed reaction from the dozen Afghan boys seated on benches in the small, newly painted classroom. Some stared blankly at the soldier. Others talked excitedly among themselves. “Deh Rawod,” one boy said, identifying his hometown. “Not quite,” said the sergeant, “but we’ll figure it out.” School was in session at Fire Base Tycz.

“The CA guys had been paying the radio station disc jockey to teach the kids that hung around the firebase,” said SSG Peter McKenzie. “One cold rainy day we came in and here are the kids huddled around a whiteboard in the carport. I figured we could do better than that.”⁴³



Improving the quality of education in Deh Rawod was one of the key missions for the ARSOF teams. CAT-122 arranged the renovation of the Ministry of Education offices in town. The prestige of having a new office enhanced the image of the Afghan government.



Village elders and government officials distribute new shoes. The ARSOF teams in Deh Rawod worked to improve living conditions in the area and to enhance the legitimacy of the local government.

One of the most popular topics in the FB Tycz School was geography. The school represented of the efforts of the ARSOF teams to improve the lives of the people in Deh Rawod.



McKenzie initiated a project to establish a school on the firebase. "We got the local carpenters to clean out a public building used for storage, paint it, put down some carpet, and build some desks and benches. We started out with about a dozen boys, aged six to sixteen," he said. "The CA guys had a warehouse full of school supplies and they helped us out."⁴⁴ Support also arrived from a number of outside sources.

"I come from a big family and I sent them an email about our school," said SSG David Pruitt. "They started sending shoes and books for the kids."⁴⁵ "I gave them backpacks and school supplies like we were handing out all over," said SFC Michael Gallant, CAT 122. "When I told my folks back home, my mother-in-law contacted the local Lutheran Church. They sent us an encyclopedia and dictionary set."⁴⁶ Several of the team members got involved in teaching the children.

"We started with Geography and Astronomy, then English and Math, since my first question to them, 'What planet are you on?' didn't get a correct answer," said Peter McKenzie. "I got some software to do the Geography."⁴⁷ "I taught some math and basic geometry when I could," said SSG David Pruitt. "We would give them homework. You could tell we were succeeding when the kids asked for more homework to keep from having to do chores at home. If they don't have an education, what chance do they have," observed Pruitt.⁴⁸ SFC Craig Kramer helped out with math. "The kids were real sharp with numbers. It was good to watch them progress."⁴⁹

When the team was on the base, classes were held every day except Friday. "I got copies of the movies *Star Wars* and *Shrek*," said SFC John Watson. "We showed them on Fridays. *Shrek* was a huge favorite."⁵⁰ The school came to represent the type of effort the teams were putting into every facet of their mission.

"Our operational tempo was very high," said MSG Jason Poster. "We encouraged the guys to do their best to

make an impact wherever and whenever they could. The school was a spontaneous effort to develop the kids."⁵¹ The benefits of the impromptu school were evident before the team redeployed. "One of the kids, he was maybe seventeen, is now one of the loan officers in town," noted SFC Roger Scarlatti. "He learned to add and subtract, and because he can, he now has a job."⁵²

In 2009 in Deh Rawod, the three elements of ARSOF combined very effectively to significantly reduce the influence of the Taliban in a strategically vital area. With each element complementing the others, the ARSOF teams made major improvements in a district only recently under the sway of the enemy. As MAJ Martin Calhoun, the AOB Commander observed, "Deh Rawod was a success story. But, it was having the right people in the right place."⁵³ ▲

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 Foreign Internal Defense is the participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization, to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. In the multi-national environment of Afghanistan, there is no more complex and difficult mission. Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-07.1, *Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Foreign Internal Defense (FID)*, (Washington DC, Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), 30 April 2004, I-1.
- 2 Rebecca L. Lykins, "Special Operations Soldiers Bring Gift of Education to Afghan Children," 3rd Special Forces Group News Release, July 2009, Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, copy in the USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

- 3 Steven Hanson, ODA 3125, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 25 August 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 4 Martin Calhoun, AOB 3110, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 2 September 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 5 Calhoun interview.
- 6 Keith Freeman, ODA 3125, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 1 September 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 7 Hanson interview.
- 8 Daoud Madiha, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 11 September 2009, Fort Bragg, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 9 Madiha interview.
- 10 Quentin Marshall, ODA 3125, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 1 September 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 11 Gordon Hampton, ODA 3125, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 15 September 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 12 Craig Kramer, ODA 3125, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 1 September 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 13 Roger Scarlatti, ODA 3125, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 3 September 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 14 Kramer interview.
- 15 Scarlatti interview.
- 16 Kramer interview.
- 17 Freeman interview.
- 18 John Watson, ODA 3125, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 1 September 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 19 Hansen interview.
- 20 Jason Poster, ODA 3125, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 28 August 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 21 Poster interview.
- 22 David Pruitt, ODA 3125, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 28 August 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 23 Pruitt interview.
- 24 Marshall interview.
- 25 Scarlatti interview.
- 26 Roman A. LaPenta, ODA 3125, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 4 November 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, telephone interview, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 27 Mark Zimmerman, CAT 122, 91st Civil Affairs Battalion, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 26 August 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 28 Michael Gallant, CAT 122, 91st Civil Affairs Battalion, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 2 September 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 29 Gallant interview.
- 30 Brent Montrose, CAT 122, 91st Civil Affairs Battalion, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 9 September 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 31 Zimmerman interview.
- 32 Madiha interview.
- 33 Jamie Gruyere, CAT 122, 91st Civil Affairs Battalion, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 9 September 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 34 Gallant interview.
- 35 Gruyere interview.
- 36 **SFC Craig Kramer was also wounded in the IED encounter. After two weeks of hospitalization, he returned to duty with the ODA.**
- 37 **The TPT was still deployed at the time this article was prepared.**
- 38 Hansen interview.
- 39 Zimmerman interview.
- 40 Hansen interview.
- 41 Zimmerman interview.
- 42 Hansen interview.
- 43 Peter McKenzie, ODA 3125, 3rd Special Forces Group, interview by Dr. Kenneth Finlayson, 25 August 2009, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 44 McKenzie interview.
- 45 Pruitt interview.
- 46 Gallant interview.
- 47 McKenzie interview.
- 48 Pruitt interview.
- 49 Kramer interview.
- 50 Watson interview.
- 51 Poster interview.
- 52 Scarlatti interview.
- 53 Calhoun interview.

Installing the flagpole at a newly renovated school. Improving the quality of education was a major focus of the ARSOF teams.

The Trojan Horse Badge:

Distinctive Identity for the 10th Special Forces Group

by Troy J. Sacquety





The Special Forces SSI was designed in 1955 by Captain John W. Frye, 77th Special Forces Group.

Captain Roger M. Pezzelle, a WWII veteran of the 473rd Infantry Regiment (Separate), designed the Trojan Horse Badge in 1955 while serving with the 10th Special Forces Group in Bad Toelz, Germany.



In early 1953, Roger M. Pezzelle and Herbert R. Brucker, two infantry Captains serving in the 10th Special Forces Group (SFG) at Bad Toelz, Germany met at the European Exchange Commission [today's Army and Air Force Exchange Service]. An excited Pezzelle showed Brucker a magazine on sale that had a 77th SFG soldier wearing a green beret on its cover.¹ Captain (CPT) Pezzelle had submitted a supply request for berets when the 10th SFG was still at Fort Bragg. The unit deployed before the berets arrived. They were well-received by the former 10th SFG men who stayed to serve as cadre for the 77th SFG. CPTs Pezzelle and Brucker were determined to get the headgear for the 10th SFG. In the meantime, in an effort at one-upmanship, Pezzelle decided a unique badge was also appropriate.

Insignia have long served to identify special military organizations. This has been especially true for Special Forces. From its beginning in 1952, Special Forces adopted distinctive uniform affectations and insignias to set itself apart. The most recognized today are the Green



The 10th Special Forces Group DUI



The 77th Special Forces Group DUI

Beret and the Special Forces Shoulder Sleeve Insignia (SSI) created by CPT John W. Frye, 77th SFG (approved 22 August 1955). A modified version of that SSI is now worn by all personnel assigned to the U.S. Army Special Forces Groups and subordinate units not authorized their own SSI.² This article will focus on the creation of the 10th SFG Trojan Horse beret badge, a well-known example of how Special Forces built its strong identity and traditions.

Unlike the Special Forces SSI designed by CPT Frye, this insignia was worn by 10th SFG personnel on the unofficial beret. The Green Beret, whose origins will be the subject of a future article in *Veritas*, was eventually approved by President John F. Kennedy in 1961. But, the 10th SFG's distinctive badge never received official approval.

Born to Italian-immigrants, Pezzelle was a WWII veteran. He served with the 473rd Infantry Regiment (Separate) in Northern Italy in 1945 [Commanded by Colonel (COL) William P. Yarborough].³ Having separated from service after the war, Pezzelle rejoined the U.S. Army in 1948 and served in the 82nd Airborne Division before joining the 10th SFG in 1952. Like CPT Brucker, he deployed with the 10th SFG to Germany in December of that same year. In the 10th SFG he concurrently served as an assistant S-3 and as an "A" team commander.⁴

After seeing the magazine cover photograph, CPT Brucker and his wife tackled the beret problem while Pezzelle got to work on the badge. The Bruckers found Mutze Muller, a German haberdasher, to custom-make their berets.⁵ Pezzelle, a talented amateur artist, was inspired by the French parachutist beret badge with its winged knife.⁶ Instead of adapting the French insignia, Pezzelle chose the Trojan Horse as the badge centerpiece. On 5 November 1955 he briefed his badge design and showed Muller's prototype beret at a 10th SFG staff meeting. Commanding Officer COL William E. Ekman recommended that the badge be modified to give it a three-dimensional appearance.⁷

On 17 November, a memorandum was sent to the A Detachment commanders that announced that the beret was being adopted by the 10th SFG. They were told to poll their soldiers to see if they wanted to adopt the Trojan Horse insignia for wear on the beret.⁸ Sergeant Rudolf G. Horvath remembered: "We were

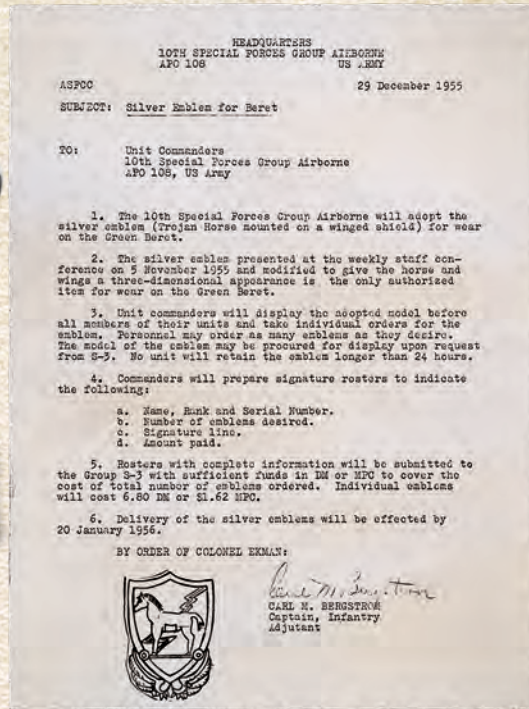
Captain Herbert R. Brucker was a WWII OSS veteran and an early officer assigned to Special Forces. He and Captain Roger M. Pezzelle are central to the story of the 10th Special Forces Group's unique insignia.



At the time of the badge's design, the commander of the 10th Special Forces Group was Colonel William E. Ekman.



The orders describing the Trojan Horse Badge's adoption, cost, and prescribed wear.



Unit commanders were instructed to take orders from their men for "as many emblems as they desire."¹² The cost was to be 6.8 DM (Deutsche Marks) or \$1.62. The badges would be delivered by 20 January 1956.¹³ Like the winged knife insignia on the French paratrooper berets, the 10th SFG Trojan Horse was mounted on the beret above the wearer's left temple. Officers were permitted to affix their rank devices on the beret alongside the badge.

The emblem was made by Eichmann, a local jeweler who cast the insignia out of .900 grade "coin silver." There were actually two different versions made. The first was heavier gauge with sharp corners and a flat pin. When worn it crimped the beret.¹⁴ Staff Sergeant Thomas R. Tomlin recalled additional problems with the initial badge; "It pulled the top of the beret over. It did not stand up straight like we expected it to . . . they flopped over." There were also casting problems with the first badge. "It tended to crack [at the top]. I know mine did," remembered Tomlin.

The second version was a lighter gauge badge with a slightly convex frontal surface that made them easier to wear on the beret. Tomlin said that the lighter version was "definitely liked" by everyone.¹⁵

"They were pretty popular and the [10th SFG soldiers] were proud of them . . . you'd hear pissing and moaning and grumbling about it but when it got down to it the guy was glad to wear it and signified that [he belonged to a] different unit and different type of organization," Tomlin remembered.¹⁶ CPT Carl M. Bergstrom recalled that the troops "loved it. It was a great morale builder and made everybody stand out that much more."¹⁷ Those not on hand to receive the first version, like 1LT Charles W. Norton, bought theirs from the group adjutant or directly from Eichmann's Jewelers.¹⁸

The badge was worn on the beret until 1962.¹⁹ It was then replaced by the SF Distinctive Unit Insignia when the

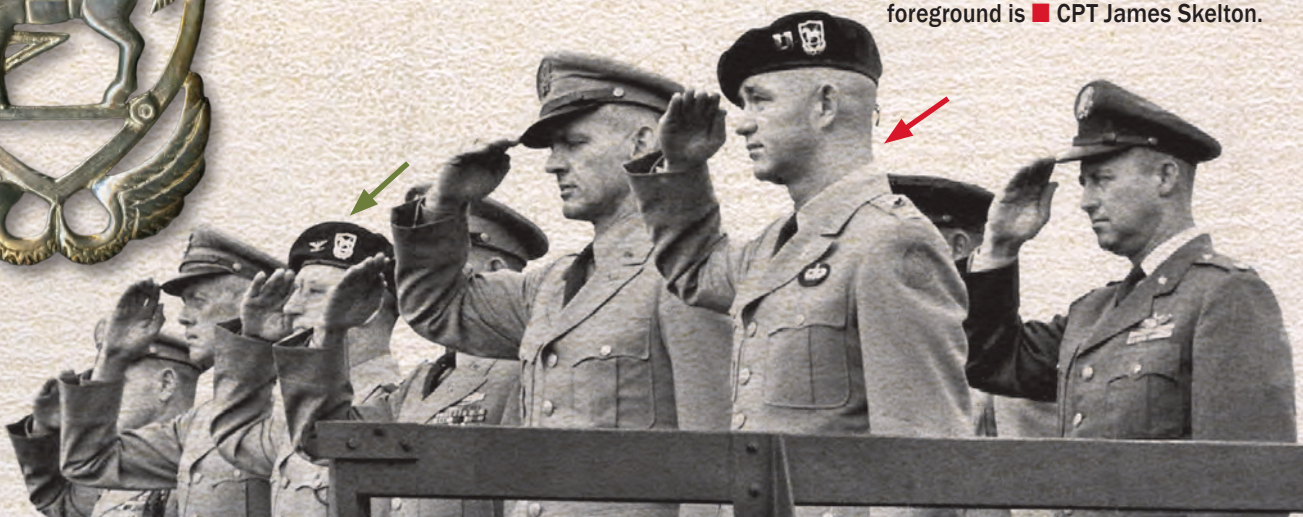
asked what we thought about it. We were at liberty to suggest other forms of insignia."⁹ Like the majority, Horvath approved of the insignia. Second Lieutenant Timothy G. Gannon said that the men of the 10th SFG "saw a similarity between the techniques used in the Trojan Horse in the old days and in what we saw as our mission in the new time frame; surreptitious entry, undercover placement for awhile, and then coming out and doing your thing."¹⁰

Having been widely accepted, the Trojan horse-in-shield emblem was approved on 29 December 1955 as the "only authorized item for wear on the Green Beret."¹¹



The 10th Special Forces Group Trojan Horse Badge.

Officers wore the Trojan Horse Badge on the beret along with their rank insignia. Enlisted men wore just the Badge. Left (middle front) is ■ COL William E. Ekman. In front foreground is ■ CPT James Skelton.



Soldiers assigned to the 10th Special Forces Group wear the unit's Trojan Horse Badge just outside of the gates at Bad Toelz, Germany soon after the unit adopted the badge. From left to right are MSG Ernest E. Emmons, SFC Kenneth W. Gibson, SFC William F. Whitehead, and SFC Bertsy M. Goodson.



The Trojan Horse Badge is still used at 10th Special Forces Group reunions to identify service in the early days.

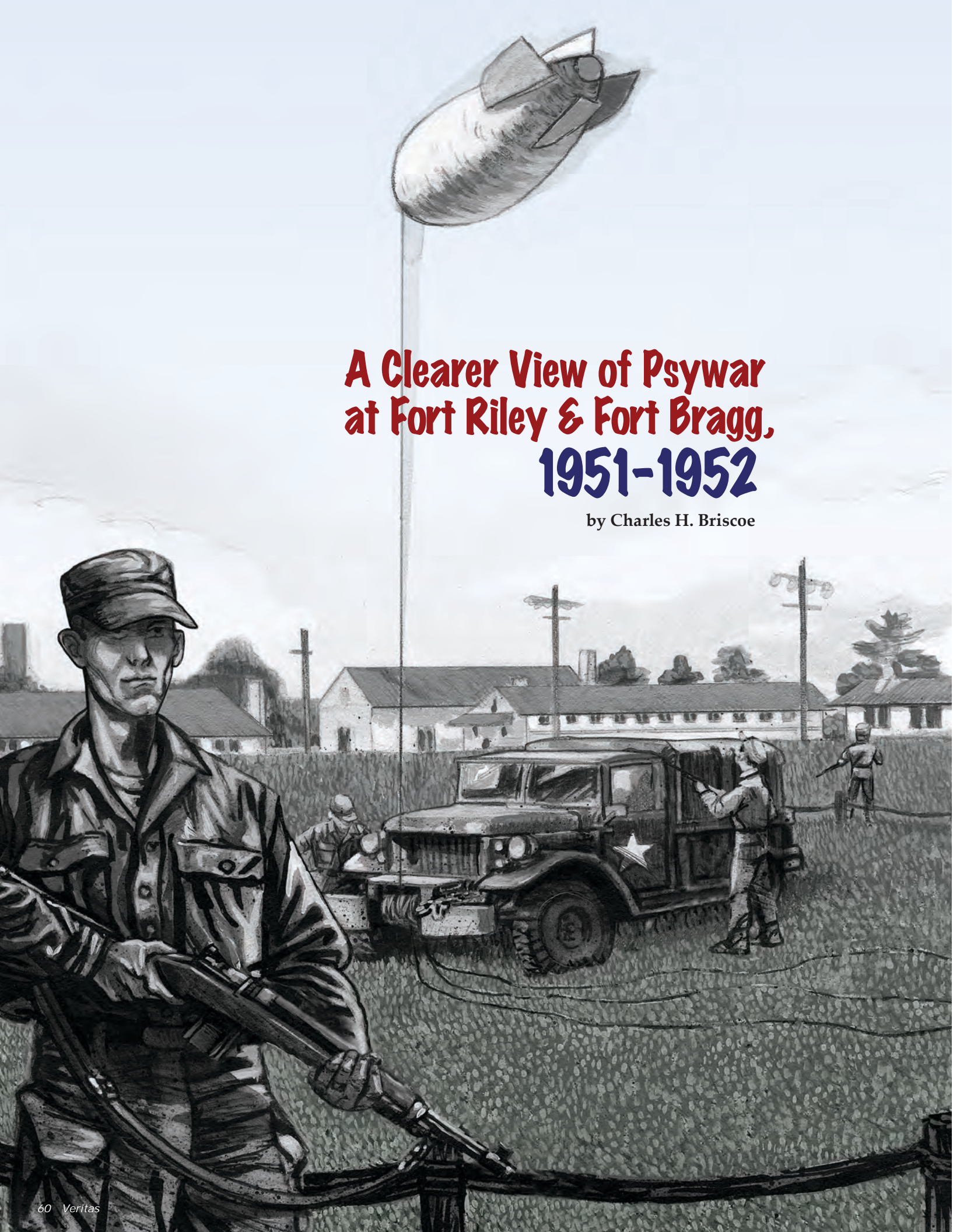
beret flash was introduced. Afterwards, the Trojan Horse badge was used by the 10th SFG to recognize soldierly excellence. The “Best Soldier of the Year” could wear the badge on his shirt pocket for one year.²⁰ Although it never received official U.S. Army approval, the badge remains an honored insignia of the 10th SFG. A few years after the 10th SFG adopted the badge, Special Forces received permission from President Kennedy to wear its most distinctive identifying symbol—the Green Beret. †

Thank you: I wish to thank all who helped with this article: Roger Pezzelle, Jr., MAJ (ret) Herbert R. Brucker, COL (ret) John H. “Scotty” Crerar, CSM (ret) Thomas R. Tomlin, COL (ret) Charles W. Norton, Rudolf G. Horvath, MAJ (ret) Caesar J. Civitella, COL (ret) Clarence “Bud” Skoien, COL (ret) Timothy G. Gannon, COL (ret) Carl M. Bergstrom, Steve Smith, Assistant Historian Army and Air Force Exchange Service, and Alejandro Lujan, Chief Archivist of the Historical Resource Section, USASOC History Office, Fort Bragg, NC.

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Endnotes

- 1 Herbert R. Brucker recalled that the periodical was a men's pulp magazine. However, COL William V. Koch relates in “More on the Beret,” *Veritas*, January 1971, that it was a *New York Times* exposé on Special Forces.
- 2 “U.S. Army Special Forces Group (Airborne),” [http://www.tioh.hqda.pentagon.mil/SF/Special Forces Group.htm](http://www.tioh.hqda.pentagon.mil/SF/Special%20Forces%20Group.htm), accessed 28 May 2009. Troy J. Sacquety, *The Special Forces Patch: History and Origins in Veritas* 3: 2007.
- 3 Roger Pezzelle, Jr, email to Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, Subject: Brief Bio Pezzelle, 25 April 2007.
- 4 **The Special Forces A Teams were actually called FA Teams at the time.**
- 5 SP5 Robert Banta, “The Fight for the Green Beret,” *Veritas*, October 1970, 16.
- 6 COL (ret) John H. Crerar, email to Troy J. Sacquety, 18 October 2007, copy, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 7 CPT Carl M. Bergstrom, “Silver Emblem for the Beret,” 29 December 1955, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 8 Letter from CSM Donald P. Brosnan in “More on the Beret,” *Veritas*, November 1970, 20, Colonel Ekman to Unit Commanders, 10th SFG, “the Green Beret,” 17 November 1955, USASOC History Office classified files, Fort Bragg, NC. **The 10th SFG beret was constructed differently than that worn by the 77th SFG. It was multipiece-wool as opposed to the one piece felt beret purchased from Canada.**
- 9 Rudolf G. Horvath, telephone interview by Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 24 June 2009, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 10 COL (ret) Timothy G. Gannon, telephone interview by Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 6 July 2006, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 11 Bergstrom, “Silver Emblem for the Beret.”
- 12 Bergstrom, “Silver Emblem for the Beret.”
- 13 Bergstrom, “Silver Emblem for the Beret.”
- 14 Roger Pezzelle, Jr, email to Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, Subject: Herb Brucker, 19 March 2007.
- 15 CSM (ret) Thomas R. Tomlin, telephone interview with Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 24 June 2009, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 16 Tomlin interview.
- 17 COL (ret) Carl M. Bergstrom, telephone interview by Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, digital recording, 7 July 2009, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 18 COL (ret) Charles W. Norton, telephone interview by Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 24 June 2009, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 19 COL Jesse L. Johnson, “Trojan Horse Organizational Insignia,” 9 August 1993, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 20 COL (ret) John H. Crerar, email to Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, Subject: Minutiae on Trojan Horse Insignia, 3 June 2009.



A Clearer View of Psywar at Fort Riley & Fort Bragg, 1951-1952

by Charles H. Briscoe

In late fall 1952, a blimp-shaped silver balloon mysteriously appeared 250 feet above the recently-established U.S. Army Psychological (Psywar) Warfare Center on Smoke Bomb Hill at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The ghostly object hovered over the parade field that separated the Special Forces barracks from those of the Psywar units, where on most Friday afternoons, Colonel (COL) Charles H. Karlstad reviewed his command. Armed guards preventing access to a taped-off square cordon below the balloon explained that it was lifting an antenna to extend the range of the 8th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company radio transmitters. Standing watch in the center was another with his M-1 Carbine at the ready to shoot down the antenna balloon if the cable broke. A typical comment by the curious was, "So that's what you Psywar guys do."¹

Our knowledge about the units stationed on Smoke Bomb Hill, Fort Bragg, NC has been Special Forces-centric since the 1950s. Forgotten is that Special Forces began as an office in the Psywar Center in April 1952. COL Aaron Bank was working for Brigadier General (BG) Robert A. McClure, Chief of Psychological Warfare (CPW), when he left to become the Center Executive Officer and SF Office director for COL Karlstad.²

The Psychological Warfare Center was the umbrella organization for the Psywar School (proponent for Psywar and SF doctrine and training), a Psywar Board to test material, tactics, techniques, and procedures for Psywar and SF, the 6th Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group (RB&L) recently transferred from Fort Riley, KS, and the formation of Special Forces.³ When the 10th Special Forces Group (SFG) departed for Germany in October 1953, the 5th Loudspeaker & Leaflet (L&L) Company departed Fort Riley, KS for Europe.⁴

The purpose of this article is to show how *The Psyn-post*, first published on 16 January 1952 by the 5021st Psychological Warfare Detachment A.S.U. (Army Special Unit indicated provisional status) at Fort Riley, KS as *The Weekly*, provided a view of the 8th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company (MRBC), a 6th RB&L unit.⁵ LTC Frank A. McCulloch, the detachment commander, explained the value of a weekly unit newsletter: "It is the medium whereby we can share bits of fact and humor. In time, it will be the mirror of missions and accomplishments, the weekly reflections of our daily lives and a continuing history of our service to our country."⁶

War revitalized the Army's moribund Psywar capability. Shortly after the North Korean Peoples' Army (NKPA) invaded the South in June 1950, the Tactical Information Detachment (TID) at Fort Riley, the only operational Psywar element in the Army, which supported the Aggressor Force of Army Field Forces, was alerted to deploy to Korea. The 30-man TID became the nucleus of the 1st Loudspeaker & Leaflet (L&L) Company and provided Eighth U.S. Army (EUSA) tactical Psywar support throughout the war. BG McClure succeeded in getting the 1st RB&L activated to conduct strategic



COLs Charles H. Karlstad (U.S. Army Psychological Warfare Center & School Commandant) and Aaron Bank (Center Executive Officer) with LTCs Lester L. Holmes (6th RB&L Group commander) and John O. Weaver (Psywar Division Chief of the Psychological Warfare School) pose by the Headquarters sign on Smoke Bomb Hill, Fort Bragg, NC.



WWII veteran LTC Frank McCulloch commanded the 5021st Psychological Warfare Detachment, Army Special Unit at Camp Forsyth, Fort Riley, KS.



The title headers for the *Weekly* and *The Psyn-post*, were roll-printed using a mimeograph. It took some skill in commercial printing to introduce the brown color.



Enlisted Psywar Course #1-52 was the last one conducted at the Army General School, Fort Riley, KS.



This was *The Psyn-post* header for CPT Robert A. Durk's article, "The Fourth Fighting Arm."



A 5021st Psychological Warfare Detachment soldier stands by the unit sign at Camp Forsyth, Fort Riley, KS.



Psywar for Far East Command (FECOM), the 301st RB&L [U.S. Army Reserve(USAR)] for Europe, and several more L&L companies (2nd, 5th & 9th) as well as the 5021st Psywar Detachment at Camp Forsyth, Fort Riley that became the basis for the 6th RB&L headquarters and its subordinate companies.⁷ While the official Psywar record reads well, it did not reflect reality.

Captain Robert A. Durk, a student in the Army General School's second Staff Officers Course (January-March 1952), showed how broken Psywar was and the lack of attention given to it by the Pentagon eighteen months after war exploded in Korea. In his *Psyn-post* article, "The Fourth Fighting Arm," CPT Durk stated, "In 1952, the Psywar Division of the Army General School at Fort Riley, KS was in its second year of operation. Organized at the end of 1950, the school had graduated one Psywar Staff Officers Course, a Psywar Officer class, and an NCO class by January 1952."⁸ Few graduates of these 30-50 man courses went to Korea.⁹

What CPT Durk did not mention was that PFC George Vlandis was the PsyWar Division Instructor Committee chairman for the Enlisted Psywar Course, which required a college degree and a score of 110 or better on the G.E.D.

(General Educational Development) tests.¹⁰ Ninety percent were college graduates, some with advanced degrees.¹¹ Using faint praise attributed to General Dwight D. Eisenhower to show Psywar's importance to the Army only emphasized how postwar leaders perceived its usefulness: "Without doubt, Psychological Warfare has proved its right to a place of dignity in our military arsenal."¹² One can better appreciate the uphill battle that BG Robert A. McClure, GEN Eisenhower's European Chief of Psychological Warfare, fought to revitalize Psywar capabilities in the Army.

The 5021st Psywar Detachment, a collection point for Psywar personnel, had been "created in September 1951 by the flick of the 2nd L&L Company clerk's fingers on a typewriter keyboard preparing another Morning Report" read a May 1952 *Psyn-post*.¹³ The Department of Army screened prior service records for Psywar experience and relevant skills and draftees for the "scientific professional" program. But, priorities for officer and enlisted schooling and the limited equipment went initially to units slated for overseas, the 1st and 301st RB&Ls.¹⁴

Psywar unit T/Ds (Tables of Distribution for provisional units) and TO&Es (Table of Organization & Equipment for authorized units) were being built by the Psychological Warfare Board. But, its members included the course instructors in the Psywar Division, Army General School.

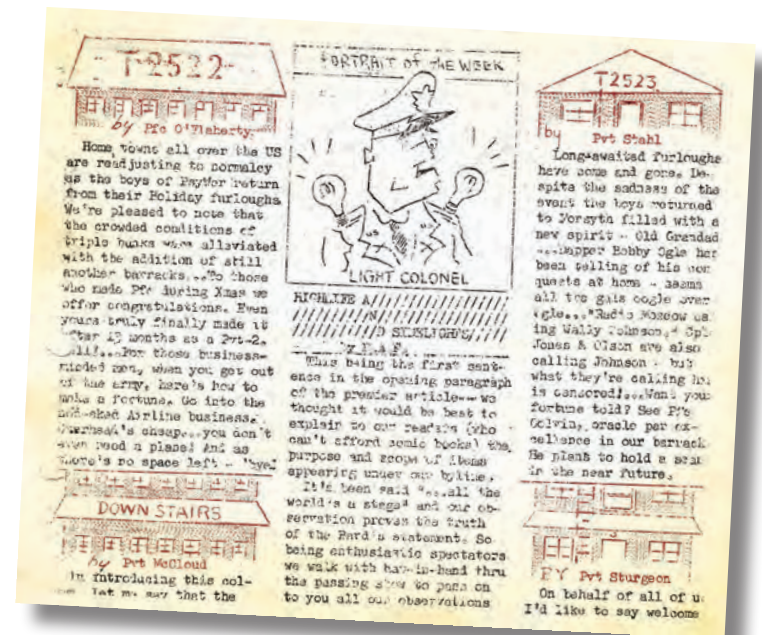
The Psywar Division in the Directorate of Resident Instruction, Army General School, Fort Riley, KS was responsible for all Psywar officer, staff officer and enlisted courses in 1951-52.



Mobile Radio Broadcasting Companies served throughout the European Theater during WWII.

In May 1952, A *Psyn-post* photo revealed how small the Psywar School staff was: one sergeant, three corporals, and eight PFCs with LTC John O. Weaver as Director.¹⁵ The personnel section of the T/Ds and TO&Es was done first. Identifying specific unit and individual assigned equipment was a "constant work in progress" involving the Psywar Division, 5021st officers and BG McClure's staff in the Pentagon.¹⁶ The only available Psywar model was the WWII Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company and significant technology advances had been made since 1944.¹⁷ But, the personnel engine once started, kept pumping qualified soldiers into the 5021st.

The 6 February 1952 *Psyn-post* reported enlisted talent being siphoned to fill the 5021st Psywar ranged from chemists and botanists to lithographers and printers. Stefan Osusky, Paris-born in 1928, had moved to London in WWII with the Czech Government-in-Exile. He graduated from Oxford in 1948 before emigrating to the U.S. when his father went to work for Radio Free Europe.¹⁸ PVT Kursk was described as a "capable mathematician-physicist."¹⁹ Linguists Ladislav Rezler, Ernst Smitka, Milan Kuchta, and Joseph Kucal, were all East Europeans who



Each of the four elements in the 5021st Psywar Detachment was allotted a column in *The Psyn-post* and posted according to their assigned areas in the two Camp Forsyth WWII barracks, T-2522 and T-2523 ("T" prefix meant a temporary building).



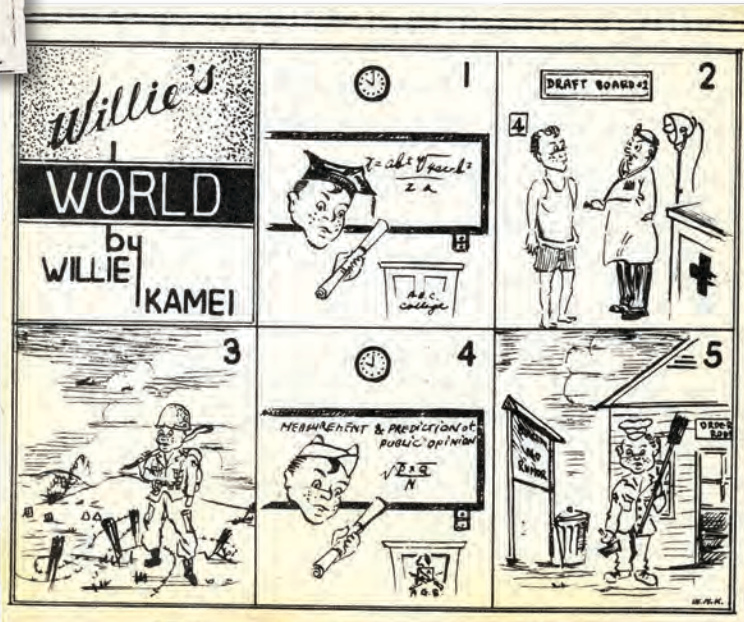
This *Psyn-post* caricature shows the respect accorded the Psywar soldiers at Fort Riley.

enlisted under the Lodge Act and did not volunteer for airborne training.²⁰ An early 1950s T/D for a MRBC had 11 linguists and interpreters authorized: 2 in the Monitoring Section; and 3 each in the three MRB platoons.²¹

March 1952 was a big month for accomplishments. At that time the 5021st had two hundred personnel organized into four provisional units. They were assigned to a pair of two-story WWII wooden barracks, T-2522 and T-2523, at Camp Forsyth. Each unit had its own barracks floor. SGTs Alfred Paterson and Curtis Johnson, veterans from the 1st L&L Company in Korea, joined the detachment along with Private Alan H. Smith, a graduate of Syracuse University (1951), who had worked for CBS Shortwave and Syracuse Radio Station WAER in New York.²² Despite the highly-educated and well-credentialed soldiers being assigned to the 5021st, the Psywar unit got little respect.

The *Psyn-post* reported that to uninitiated soldiers, Psywar was the “weird result of a misspelled word on a set of orders from the Pentagon. Mail and individual assignment orders often read: “Psycho Ward,” “Physical Warfare,” and “Pie Training Detachment.” Fort Riley medics sent notices to “Sigh War,” Psy Wad,” and “Surgeon, Psycho Ward.”²³ Others labeled them the “Dry War Detachment”, “Physiological Carfare Detachment”, “Psycho Warfare Department”, and the “Sigh War Detachables”.²⁴ Quite ironically, Fort Riley had a number of unusual units. “Fort Riley was filled with oddball units; sonic wave units, a camouflage & deception unit, the Psywar elements, and a brigade-size Aggressor Force dressed in dark green uniforms, wearing Centurion-like helmets having a top fin, and all speaking *Esperanto*, the universal language,” recalled Alan Smith.²⁵

Keeping these highly-qualified and educated soldiers focused on their mission without having equipment for training frustrated the 5021st commander, WWII infantryman LTC McCulloch. He tried to boost morale through *The Psyn-post*: “We lack, at the moment, one vital essential—equipment. From this lack there probably arises the feel [ing] of uselessness. But, connect the talented personnel with the proper equipment and you have a unification of men and material; you have a reason [for serving] even as you have a purpose and an obligation.”²⁶ Little did he know that the talented, work-experienced draftees and recalled reservists from the radio and television broadcast industry and the commercial print sector would prove very innovative. It was 1LT Nevin F. Price, a U.S. Army Air Force (USAAF) B-26 radioman/gunner in WWII, described by PVT Alan Smith as the



This *Psyn-post* satirical cartoon by William Kamei depicted the reality of these college-educated draftees being assigned to the 5021st Psywar Detachment at Camp Forsyth.

“world’s greatest scrounger,” who succeeded in getting radio equipment for the provisional MRBC.²⁷

In early July 1951, 1LT Nevin Price was assigned to the provisional MRBC, which like the other 5021st elements, lacked T/D equipment. The Signal Corps lieutenant, slated to attend Psywar Officers Course #2 at the Army General School in January 1952, wanted his soldiers to have “something to play with” other than the shortwave receiver in his 1950 Nash Ambassador automobile.²⁸ But, before he could start scrounging, a horrendous storm struck, flooding central Kansas and Nebraska just as the 1st RB&L was to entrain to begin their trip to Japan. Fort Riley and the surrounding area, inundated with water, was paralyzed by massive power outages.²⁹

Private Wallace A. Johnson set up his HAM radio at the highest spot on Camp Forsyth to establish communications “with the outside world.” With Private Hans R. Ulander to share radio shifts, the two became the Army link to Fort Riley for almost a week. The rest of the 5021st soldiers filled sandbags to stem overflowing rivers. The nearest railroad station not affected by flooding was in Lincoln, Nebraska. The 1st RB&L troops were bussed there on 12 July 1951.³⁰ Once that emergency was contained, the MRBC lieutenant began an earnest search for radio equipment.

Following the 1st RB&L bus route, LT Price took a 6X6 truck to Offutt Air Force Base near Omaha, Nebraska. In their salvage yard he found old radar station components—power transformers, radio receivers, transmitter drivers—and obsolete aircraft radios. These served as trading material with the Fort Riley units, including the MARS



The header for *The Psywar Monitor* printed by the 6th RB&L Group at Fort Bragg, NC.



The Military Affiliate Radio Station (MARS) replaced the Army Amateur Radio System after WWII.

5021st Psywar Detachment interpreters and linguists monitor international radio broadcasts at Camp Forsyth, KS.



(Military Affiliate Radio Station replaced the WWII Army Amateur Radio System) station. Price planned to rebuild shortwave radios.³¹ By the end of February 1952, Price had accumulated sufficient parts for a half-dozen radios. An Amateur Radio Station supervised by the MARS had been established by the MRBC soldiers and on-the-job-training (OJT) had been arranged at the Public Information Office on Main Post for some MRB soldiers. LT Price's work did not go unnoticed.

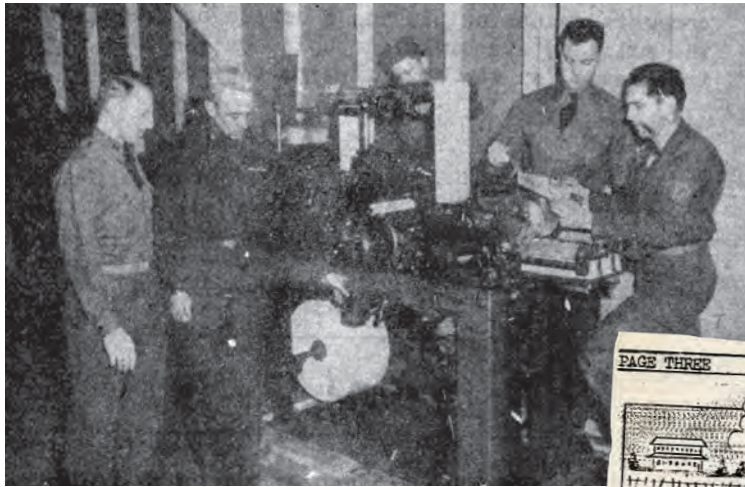
According to a May 1952 *Psyn-post* the MRB element "overcame its greatest obstacle, by collecting various pieces of radio equipment" and creating a radio room in the old Detachment Classroom. Much headway was made in the field of radio monitoring and record cataloguing—for use in future Psywar productions. "Although limited by geographical location, the assigned linguists were monitoring foreign broadcasts around-the-clock and turned in excellent reports," stated 1LT John J. Rutmayer, provisional unit commander.³²



Caricature depicting a 6th U.S. Army Mobile Radio Broadcaster in action (MAJ Nevin Price collection).

The reality was that "LT Price and several licensed HAM operators connected a number of rebuilt AN-GRC 26 Collins shortwave radios to WWII-era tape recorders to collect *Radio Moscow*, *United Nations Radio*, *Voice of America*, and other overseas broadcasts," said Alan Smith.³³ Three shifts of interpreters and linguists culled world news for 18 hours each day and prepared brief summaries for the 5021st intelligence section. These reports became the basis for *The PsyWar Monitor* that was first published as a daily training exercise on 8 April 1952.³⁴ This work kept MRBC interpreters and linguists actively engaged and gave writers, photographers, and print soldiers something practical to do. *The Psyn-post* had evolved for the same reason. But, it was just busy work. The only Psywar mission the detachment had received from the Pentagon was to assemble personnel.³⁵ In the meantime, 1LT Peter A. DeFranco, nicknamed "Press" by the soldiers, obtained access to the Fort Riley print plant in Building 193, Main Post, Fort Riley which had a Webendorfer Press.

The *Psyn-post* went from a mimeographed, hand-stapled weekly newsletter to a finished offset printing press product.³⁶ COL David T. Hall in the Office of the Commander, Army Field Forces (OCAFF) at Fort Monroe, Virginia, an old friend of McCulloch, praised the new format: "Our hearty congratulations on the fine appearance of the new *Psyn-Post*! Even in its



LTC Frank McCulloch presses the “Start” button as CPT Otto Bennett looks on. PVT Rus, 1LT Peter A. DeFranco, and SGT Gilbert examine the first copies of an offset press-printed *Psyn-post* in Building 193, Fort Riley.

The *Psyn-post* header for LTC John O. Weaver’s article on Fort Bragg, NC.



“Spotlight on Psywar” on 27 March 1952, produced by the OJT personnel from the MRBC.”⁴⁰

Suspicions that Psywar would be moving from Fort Riley to Fort Bragg, NC, were confirmed in January 1952. LTC John O. Weaver, Chief, Psywar Division, Directorate of Resident Instruction, Army General School, published his impressions of the Smoke Bomb Hill area in *The Psyn-post*. It was the ultimate in disinformation propaganda as most of the original SF soldiers can attest:

“The area has barracks, mess halls and assorted buildings which have been completely rehabilitated. The landscaping surrounding these newly-painted buildings might match a picture in some ‘House Beautiful’ magazine. The area can boast of paved streets. All of Psywar will be centered in this ideal location—school, units and personnel. Each unit will have its own company area—which means its own barracks, mess hall, day room and orderly room. As beautiful as the buildings and area itself, is its location on Fort Bragg. It is only 10 miles from the nearest town, Fayetteville, which has a population of 40,000 people. The Post provides bus service direct from Smoke Bomb Hill to Fayetteville. Our area is only about a half mile from the Main Post.”⁴¹ More articles about Fort Bragg and the surrounding area followed, but the 5021st had begun to organize into functional units in April 1952.⁴²

The 6th RB&L, consisting of a Headquarters & Headquarters Company (HHC), the 7th Reproduction Company, the 8th MRBC, and 9th L&L Company (totaling 11 officers, 2 warrant officers, and 134 enlisted men), was provisionally activated by Department of Army (DA) Letter on 14 April 1952 at Fort Riley, Kansas. The Tables of Distribution (T/D) specified: 6 officers, 2 warrant officers, and 69 enlisted men for HHC; 2 officers and 31 enlisted for 7th Reproduction Co; 3 officers and 34 enlisted for the 8th MRBC. The 9th L&L Co had a TO&E for 5 officers and 66 enlisted men.⁴³

During the official activation LTC Frank McCulloch relinquished command to a fellow infantryman, LTC Lester Holmes, a WWII veteran (Provost Marshal, 12th Armored Division, Europe), Class of ‘27, University of Iowa, who attended the Psywar Officer Course #2 with his

mimeo form it was outstanding in style, content and newsy presentation, but the new format right off the offset press, surpasses any that I have seen in the way of a unit publication.”³⁷ This opened further inroads to other Fort Riley assets.

According to *The Psyn-post*, the Psywar soldiers most active in the establishment of the Fort Riley Amateur Radio Station (ARS) under the MARS network supervision were Privates Wallace A. Johnson, Hans Ulander, and Albert Mandel and LT Charles Johnson. The ARS was situated next to the MARS station in Building 1770 at Camp Funston, the other WWII barracks facility that was a part of Fort Riley, KS.³⁸ By then a half-dozen “Psy-Warriors” were doing OJT (On-the-Job-Training) in the PIO (Public Information Office) supervised by CPT Robert Hibbard. They were “PFC David Glascock, CPL Mike Rupee, a former disc jockey-salesman for a Milwaukee radio outlet, PFC Rudy Simons, ex-radio and TV director for a Detroit ad agency, PFC Doug Stone, one-time engineer for an independent radio station in Michigan, and Privates Al Mandel and Al Smith, who have TV and radio experience ‘under their belts.’”³⁹ The OJT in radio and news dissemination was helpful. The weekly Fort Riley *Guidon* began including a Psywar column called



The 8th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company assembled in front of their Camp Forsyth barracks for this commemorative photo before leaving for Fort Bragg, NC.



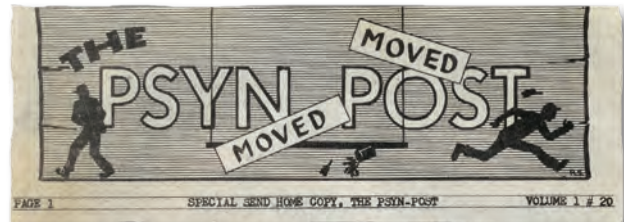
The Coat of Arms for the 6th Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group



LTC Lester L. Holmes assumed command of the 6th RB&L Group at Camp Forsyth, Fort Riley, KS.



When the 6th RB&L Group left Fort Riley, they moved from Fifth U.S. Army command to the Third U.S. Army.



Before departing Fort Riley, *The Psyn-post*, produced a commemorative edition that the Psywar soldiers could mail home.



Major General Thomas F. Hickey was the Commanding General of Fort Bragg in July 1952.

unit officers from January to March 1952.⁴⁴ The two lieutenant colonels served together at Fort Monroe, VA in the Office of the Chief of Army Field Forces

before Fort Riley. LTC Holmes received the Greek Military Cross for distinguished service with the American Military Mission in 1948, the most turbulent year in that country's modern history according to the 10 April 1952 *Psyn-post*.⁴⁵

The 6th RB&L was alerted for movement on 5 May 1952 and scheduled to depart on or about 1 June to arrive at Fort Bragg by 8 June 1952. Command was shifted from Fifth U.S. Army to Third U.S. Army.⁴⁶ It would be a simple movement of personnel since none of

the RB&L elements had received their unit equipment. Shortly before the RB&L movement order arrived BG Robert McClure got Department of Army to make some major changes affecting Psywar.

The Chief of Psychological Warfare convinced Army Chief of Staff, General J. Lawton Collins to consolidate Psywar and Special Forces training activities. In May 1952, Department of Army announced the activation of the U.S. Army Psychological Warfare Center at Fort Bragg to do just that.⁴⁷

The 6th RB&L was welcomed to Fort Bragg by the Commanding General (CG), MG Thomas F. Hickey. The general's letter was published in the first *Psyn-post* printed at Fort Bragg: "The importance of your work in the struggle between governmental ideologies is inestimable. Where the artillery and mortar barrage softens by physical violence, your way is more subtle but equally essential. The influencing of the enemy mind can save untold numbers of lives and possibly avoid global conflict."⁴⁸

The first Fort Bragg *Psyn-post* also had photos and short biographies of the key Psywar Center personnel. The Center and School Commandant was COL Karlstad, a graduate of South Dakota State College, Class of '17, who as the CG, Combat Command A, 14th Armored Division, WWII had used tank-mounted loudspeakers during combat operations in Europe. His Executive Officer was OSS veteran COL Aaron Bank. LTC Carleton E. Fisher, a veteran WWII battalion commander in the 115th and 346th Infantry in Europe was slated to replace Bank. COL Gordon Singles, USMA Class of '31 was the Assistant Commandant.⁴⁹

In September 1952 the five company commanders in the 6th RB&L were: Signal Corps 1LT Nevin F. Price, 8th MRBC; Signal Corps 1LT James W. Lester, HHC; Infantry CPT George B. Blackstock, 2nd L&L Company; Infantry CPT Otto R. Bennett, 7th Reproduction Company; and Infantry 1LT Dwayne A. Panzer, 12th Consolidation Company.⁵⁰ By this time, *The Psyn-post* (Vol. 2, No. 1), 12 September 1952, had been reduced to digest-size like *The Leaflet* of the 5th L&L Company in Germany and the 6th RB&L

Assistant Adjutant, Infantry 1LT Don M. Anderson, who had coined the weekly's title, was the editor.⁵¹ The pin-up "Psy-rene of the Week" was movie star Cyd Charisse, co-star with Gene Kelly in *Singin' in the Rain*.⁵² The first "Psy-rene," none other than Marilyn Monroe, appeared in the 3 April 1952 *Psyn-post* published at Fort Riley.⁵³

According to 1LT Price, the 8th MRBC commander, "Due to the lack of authorized equipment, the company has busied itself building various pieces of radio gear, organizing the radio shack, and fixing up the company area. Nine enlisted men were OJT at the transmitter site and studios of WFNC in Fayetteville. A group had gone to Quincy, Illinois to pick up their long-awaited transmitter and receiver."⁵⁵

Those that went to Gates Radio Corporation, a subsidiary of Harris Radio Corporation, were LT Price and 11 soldiers from the HHC, 8th MRBC, and the 7th Reproduction Company. Price was the 6X6 truck

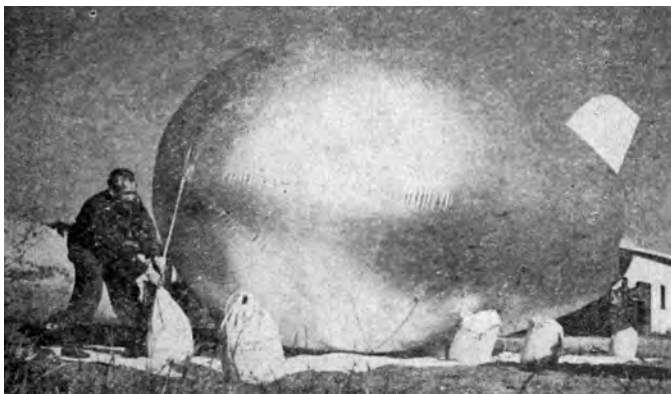


The 12 September 1952 pin-up "Psy-rene of the Week" was movie star Cyd Charisse. The first "Psy-rene," Marilyn Monroe, appeared in the 3 April 1952 *Psyn-post* published at Fort Riley.

commander and two tractor trailer trucks accompanied them to Quincy to haul two 26-foot Graham trailers that housed a mobile broadcast radio transmitter with its transformer and a mobile radio studio.⁵⁶ The balloon described in the introduction and a 180-foot steel tower antenna arrived separately.⁵⁷

There is obviously more to this history, such as the soldiers of the 8th MRBC finally being issued weapons at Fort Bragg when PFC Bast and 28 others qualified with the M-1 Carbine on 29-30 September 1952, the specifics on the broadcast radio transmitter and studio, and exactly where the unit was located on Smoke Bomb Hill. But, this is a start. The equipment T/D and/or TO&E for the 8th MRBC has to be found and veterans from a MRB platoon located. While this article was centered around the 8th MRBC, *The Psyn-post* also contains a wealth of information about the 5021st Psywar Detachment, the courses taught by the Psywar Division, Army General School from

These photos in the *Fort MacArthur News*, 13 February 1953, show the training provided to the 306th RB&L Group, USAR, by 1LT Nevin F. Price and CPL Hans R. Ulander, 8th MRBC.



OPERATIONS OF THE LEAFLET section of the 306th Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group are shown in these exclusive photos. In the above photo 1st Lt. Al Hernandez, CO of the Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company stands beside an inflated balloon used to float leaflets across battle lines. Lieutenant Hernandez and Cpl. Hans R. Ulander (center photo) complete attachments to balloon, 2nd Lt. Eugene S. Rittenburg (right photo) stands by with carbine to shoot down balloon in event it gets loose from its moorings.

1950-52, the 6th RB&L Group, and its other subordinate units. But, the Psywar Board, the 12th Consolidation Company, and what became of the 9th L&L Company remain big unknowns and potential future *Veritas* articles.

Despite being formed without a mission statement and unit equipment, it was innovative, well-educated officers and soldiers with previous radio broadcast and print experience selected by the Army for Psywar who managed to prevail and practice critical skills. A combination of World War II veterans and well-educated draftees persevered to make the 8th MRBC a viable combat force multiplier. These tough pioneers provided a solid

foundation for Army PSYOPS and Special Operations Forces today and outstanding models to emulate.

Epilogue

The short biographies of these four key men reveal why the 5021st Psywar Detachment achieved some success at Fort Riley. They further explain why the 6th RB&L at Fort Bragg sent the three from the 8th MRBC to train RB&Ls in the Army Reserves. All were well-educated, technically proficient and experienced in their professions, and innovative leaders that could "make things happen." ▲

Nevin F. Price, born 9 October 1924 in Canadensis, PA, was sixteen when he graduated from Barrett High School (Mountain Home, PA) in June 1941. Too young to enlist after Pearl Harbor, he went to work in his brother-in-law's radio & electronics shop in Newark, NJ, attending the United Radio and Television Institute (URTI) at night, and studying for a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) second class



commercial radio operator license. When Price graduated in the fall of 1942, he had earned a FCC first class radio license, the key to working on the largest commercial radio broadcast systems.⁵⁷

But, it was wartime. Voluntary enlistment had been halted. So, Nevin Price asked to be drafted as soon as possible, hoping to join his brother-in-law in the Army Signal Corps at Fort Monmouth, NJ. Instead, he was picked for the Army Air Corps, did basic in Miami, and then went to radio school in Chicago and Scott Field, IL. Hallicrafters Radio Company technicians provided the instruction. Then, PFC Price was sent to a B-26 Marauder crew in Savannah, GA, that was hopping to Northern Ireland via Homestead Field, FL,

Georgetown, British Guyana, Belem and Natal, Brazil, Ascension Island, Liberia, Dakar, and Marrakesh, French Morocco.⁵⁸

Radio Gunner Price flew his first combat mission on 20 April 1944 with the 599th Bomb Squadron, 397th Bomb Group, Ninth Air Force from Rivenhall, England and completed his 65th (requisite number) from Airstrip A-72, near Peronne, France, on 29 November 1944. Technical Sergeant (T/Sgt) Price, who walked away from a forced belly-landing at Beaulieu, England, on 11 August 1944, departed the 599th Bomb Squadron in early December. He wore thirteen Air Medals, a distinguished unit citation, and four European Theater campaign stars and was bound for an radio instructor assignment at Scott Field, IL. Discharged on 9 July 1945, the twenty-year old Price was hired on VJ Day (14 August 1945) as an apprentice Radio Transmitter Engineer for Port Washington radio WEAJ on Long Island, NY.⁵⁹

WEAF became WNBC (forerunner of NBC radio & television) in 1946. The postwar Army reinstated a WWII program in 1948 to organize USAR specialty units within industry. WNBC agreed to sponsor the 301st MRBC. Based on his USAAF wartime record and experience, Price was offered a direct reserve commission in the Signal Corps as a Second Lieutenant (2LT). The commander of the 301st MRBC was USAR Captain (CPT) William Buschgen, a WWII Signal Corps officer who was the Program Director for WNBC. It was a married 2LT Price that left the 301st and WNBC in January 1950 to move his family back to Pennsylvania. When he volunteered for active duty in March 1951, 2LT Price was ordered to Fort Monmouth, NJ, to attend the Signal Officers Basic Course. A newly promoted First Lieutenant (1LT) Price reported to the 5021st Psywar Detachment at Camp Forsyth, KS in late spring 1951 bringing a wealth of practical radio broadcasting experience.⁶⁰



Peter A. "Press" DeFranco, born 20 March 1928 in Chicago, Illinois, was a second generation print man. After graduating early from Carl Schurz High School in January 1946, DeFranco enlisted. Completing armor basic training at Fort Knox, KY, the new private shipped out for Third U.S. Army (TUSA) in Heidelberg, Germany and was assigned as a clerk in the Adjutant General (AG) office. Three plus years of Junior ROTC in high school was sufficient to warrant selection for the TUSA Officer Candidate School (OCS) in nearby Seckenheim in December 1946. Three weeks later a newly-minted 2LT DeFranco, USAR reported to the 33rd Field Artillery Battalion in Fulda. "The postwar Army units in Europe were so hard up for junior officers that Third Army came up with this abbreviated OCS. I was assigned as the Munitions Officer in a firing battery, but traveled



all over Germany collecting up unexploded WWII ordnance [duds]." When he was released from active duty in December 1947, 2LT DeFranco transferred to the active USAR and became an offset and linotype printer at E. Raymond Wright Printing Company in Chicago. 1LT DeFranco was recalled to active duty in mid-summer 1951 with the 10th Infantry Division (today's 10th Mountain Division) at Fort Riley. Expecting assignment to an artillery unit, DeFranco was surprised to find out that he had just been reassigned to the 5021st Psywar Detachment at Camp Forsyth. "The Army had been screening military records and had checked with the big city printing unions to identify personnel who had just left for the service. All the enlisted men in my element came with a print background."⁶¹

Former CPL Hans R. Ulander, 5021st Psywar Detachment & 8th MRBC soldier, was born in Stockholm, Sweden on 11 January 1927. Following a mechanical & electrical engineer father, Ulander finished a Masters degree in Electrical Engineering in 1945 before his compulsory one-year service in the Swedish military as an Air Force radar instructor. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1949 where he got an engineering position in electrical vacuum tube manufacture. The Korean War brought a draft notice— "Serve or go home." High expectations of the US Army were dashed at Fort Knox, KY during basic when the trainees were used as "extras" for a Hollywood movie being filmed on post. "After three months of this, we weren't fit to go anywhere, let alone war. None of us went to Korea; a few went to Germany. Since I was bilingual and had an engineering



degree (engineering Masters degrees in the 1950s were rare), I was assigned to Psywar at Fort Riley (under the Professional Specialist program) to write leaflets and do radio broadcasts in my native tongue."⁶² One of the founders of the Amateur Radio Club at Camp Funston, Ulander did OJT at a local Junction City radio station with PVT Alan Smith, and in March 1952 began the last four-week Enlisted Psywar Course #1-52. The Swede was excused from classified parts because he did not have a security clearance. PFC Ulander set up the loudspeaker system for the radio broadcasts, but he also pulled a lot of guard duty at the old Fort Riley water purification plant. Later CPL Ulander assisted 1LT Price when the pair trained the 306th RB&L (USAR) at Fort MacArthur, California in February 1953.⁶³

Former SGT Alan H. Smith, born 31 March 1930 in New York City, to a wire service writer/journalist and medical doctor's assistant, graduated from Forest Hills High School, Queens, NY in January 1947. He worked full time at CBS Shortwave. Smith's aspirations of being a CBS or NBC radio announcer after finishing Syracuse University in 1951 (Speech & Drama Arts and Broadcast Journalism) were delayed when he got his draft notice in October. Expecting to go to Korea, PVT Smith was surprised half way through basic at Fort Dix, NJ when an Army Counter-Intelligence Corps (CIC) agent interviewed him to verify his broadcasting experience prior to assignment under the reactivated wartime Professional Specialist



program. Bored with guard duty and Aggressor Force support details, Smith volunteered to help 1LT Price "midnight requisition" shortwave radio equipment from the Air Force bases near Topeka and Wichita. The two hid their "finds" in Junction City homes of friends. "Even though we were doing nothing, we were immune from reassignment levies, especially overseas. That was the truly the biggest secret about Psywar at Fort Riley." Privates Henry Bast and Hans Ulander were his classmates in Enlisted Psywar Course #1-52, which turned out to be the Army General School's last. A few months after the 8th MRBC established itself at Fort Bragg, NC, PFC Smith went to Chicago with 1LT Price to train a USAR RB&L on its equipment.⁶⁴

Special thanks go to Douglas Elwell, 4th PSYOPS Group, former Sergeant Alan Smith, former Corporals Henry Bast and Hans Ulander, former Lieutenants Peter DeFranco and William Dana, Jr., and retired MAJ Nevin Price, the 5021st Psywar Detachment and 6th RB&L Group veterans, for all their assistance in this groundbreaking article on the 1950s Smoke Bomb Hill "Forgotten," the Psywarriors.

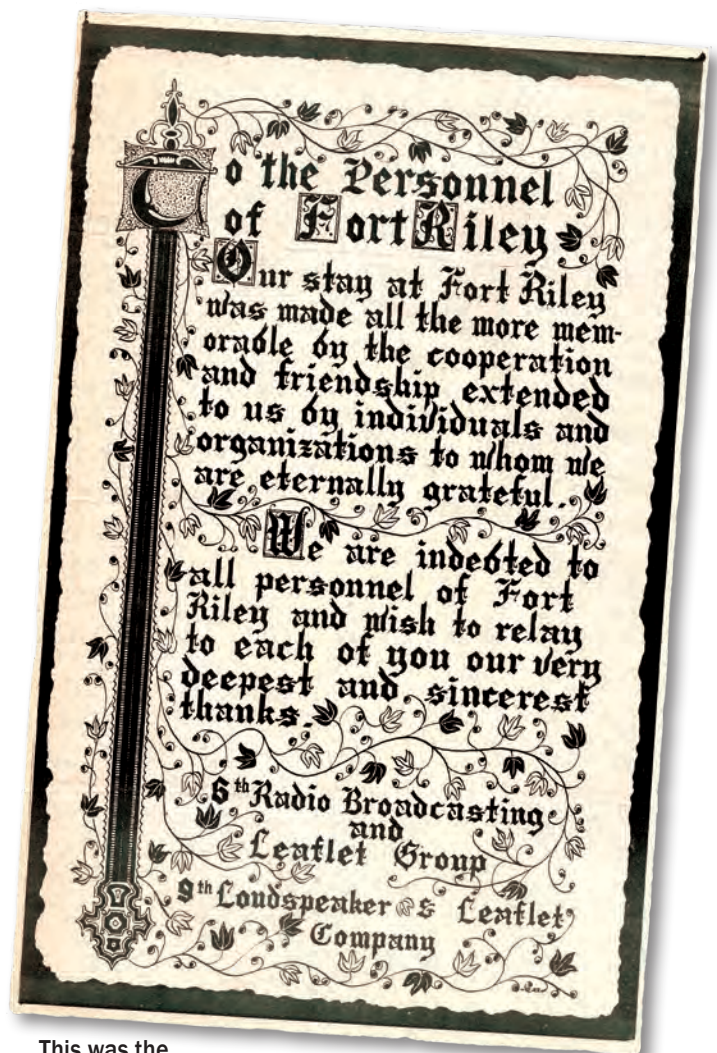
Charles H. Briscoe has been the USASOC Command Historian since 2000. A graduate of The Citadel, this retired Army special operations officer earned his PhD from the University of South Carolina. Current research interests include Army special operations during the Korean War, in El Salvador, and the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

Endnotes

- 1 Retired MAJ Nevin F. Price, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 21 September 2009, Rockville, MD, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 2 In the post-WWII military reductions in force (RIF), officers that had received accelerated wartime promotions in the U.S. Army Reserves to assume wartime combat assignments, reverted back to their highest Regular Army rank. However, when they retired, they did so at the highest grade attained. Thus, when COL Karlstad, the former CG, Combat Command A, 14th Armored Division, European Theater of Operations, retired in the fall of 1953, he did so as a Brigadier General. Office of the Commanding General, Headquarters, Fort Bragg, NC letter, SUBJECT: Welcome to Fort Bragg to the Officers and Men of the Psychological Warfare Center dated 10 July 1952 in 6th Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, *The Psyn-post*, 12 September 1952, Vol. 2, No. 1, in personal files of former CPL Henry Bast, 8th MRBC, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter simply *The Psyn-post* and appropriate citation and Price interview, 30 September 2009.

- 3 *The Psyn-post*, Christmas Edition 1952, Vol. 2, No 3, Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., "Major General Robert Alexis McClure: Forgotten Father of US Army Special Warfare" at <http://www.soc.mil/psypo/mcclureday.html>, 8/31/2009, and Ex-SGT Frank R. Haus, "Recollections of the 2nd Loudspeaker & Leaflet Co" at <http://www.geocities.com/franks-tale/recollections.html>, 11/16/2004.
- 4 Retired LTC Fred W. Wilmot, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 10 November 2004, Carrollton, TX, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 5 5021st Psychological Warfare Detachment A.S.U., Fort Riley, KS, *Weekly*, Vol I, No 1, 16 January 1952 in the personal files of former CPL Henry Bast, 8th MRBC, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter simply *Weekly* with appropriate citation.
- 6 *Weekly*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 23 January 1952.
- 7 Paddock, "Major General Robert Alexis McClure: Forgotten Father of US Army Special Warfare" and Smith interview, 1 June 2009.
- 8 *The Psyn-Post*, Vol. 1, No. 11, 5 March 1952.
- 9 1st Loudspeaker and Leaflet Company, EUSAK, APO 301, Seoul, Korea, *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)* dated 10 August 1952; CPT Herbert L. Avedon, "Command Report No.18," June 1952 Avedon Collection, USAJFKSWCS Archives, Fort Bragg, NC, and U.S. Army General School, Fort Riley, KS, Graduation Exercise for Psychological Warfare Officers' Class No. 2, 1 March 1952. In an effort to affect the lack of school-trained loudspeaker (L/S) personnel, the 1st L&L Company commander, CPT Herbert L. Avedon, a WWII Ranger signal officer and OSS Psywar veteran, instituted a seven-day course in Psywar principles and training on loudspeaker equipment. Increased field requirements for L/S teams across Korea, personnel rotations, combat casualties, and inexperienced enlisted instructors minimized the effectiveness of this solution. CPT Avedon, 1LT Nevin F. Price (4th MRBC), 2LT Ivan G. Worrell (1st L&L Company, L/S Platoon Leader) and the 4th MRBC personnel in Pusan were among the few school trained officers in Korea.
- 10 *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 15, 3 April 1952.
- 11 *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 15, 3 April 1952.
- 12 *The Psyn-Post*, Vol. 1, No. 11, 5 March 1952.
- 13 *The Psyn-Post*, Vol. 1, No. 20, undated (May 1952).
- 14 Former SGT Alan H. Smith, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 1 June 2009, New Rochelle, NY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 15 Photo entitled "The Psychological Warfare School" in *The Psyn-post*, 8 May 1952, Vol. 1, No. 20.

- 16 Former 1LT Peter A. DeFranco, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 29 September 2009, Burnsville, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited with name and date.
- 17 *The Psyn-post*, Christmas Edition 1952, Vol. 2, No 3 and Paddock, "Major General Robert Alexis McClure: Forgotten Father of US Army Special Warfare."
- 18 *The Psyn-Post*, Vol. 1, No. 5, 6 February 1952 and DeFranco interview, 29 September 2009.
- 19 *The Psyn-Post*, Vol. 1, No. 6, 13 February 1952.
- 20 *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 18, 24 April 1952.
- 21 Headquarters, United States Army Forces Far East. Table of Distribution Number 80-8239-2, 4th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company, 1st Radio Broadcasting and Leaflet Group, 8239th Army Unit, dated 1 May 1953, personal papers of retired USAR MAJ Nevin F. Price, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 22 *The Psyn-Posts*, 27 February 1952, 13 February 1952, and 20 March 1952.
- 23 *The Psyn-Post*, Vol. 1, No. 6, 13 February 1952.
- 24 *The Psyn-Post*, Vol. 1, No. 19, 1 May 1952.
- 25 Smith interview, 1 June 2009.
- 26 *The Psyn-Post*, Vol. 1, No. 5, 6 February 1952.
- 27 Smith interview, 1 June 2009.
- 28 Price interview, 30 September 2009.
- 29 Robert W. Jones, Jr., "The Ganders: Strategic PSYWAR in the Far East, Part I: Introduction and Movement to the Far East," *Veritas*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 63-64; Price interview, 30 September 2009; DeFranco interview, 29 September 2009, and former CPL Hans R. Ulander, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 21 October 2009, Wicomico, VA, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited by name and date.
- 30 Jones, "The Ganders: Part I," 63-64; Price interview, 30 September 2009; Ulander interview, 21 October 2009, and DeFranco interview, 29 September 2009.
- 31 Price interview, 30 September 2009 and "Army MARS: The Road Ahead, 19 February 2009" at <http://www.netcom.army.mil/mars/docs/Army%20MARS%20-%20Road%20Ahead.pdf> dated 11/16/09.
- 32 *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 20, undated (May 1952).
- 33 Smith interview, 1 June 2009.
- 34 *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 17, 17 April 1952, 6th Radio Broadcasting & Leaflet Group; *News In Brief*, Vol. 1, No. 36, Monday, 8 September 1952, and the *Monitor*, Vol. 1, No. 51, Friday, 12 September 1952 in personal files of former CPL Henry Bast, 8th MRBC, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter cited simply by name and date.
- 35 Smith interview, 1 June 2009.
- 36 *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 13, 20 March 1952.
- 37 *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 15, 3 April 1952.
- 38 *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 14, 27 March 1952.
- 39 *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 14, 27 March 1952 and Smith interview, 1 June 2009.
- 40 *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 14, 27 March 1952.
- 41 *Weekly*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 23 January 1952.
- 42 *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 15, 3 April 1952.
- 43 The T/D for HHC (250-1201, 18 July 50 w/C 2 to SR 310-30-1) called for 6 officers, 2 warrant officers, and 69 enlisted men. The T/D for 7th Reproduction Co (250-1202, 18 July 50) called for 2 officers and 31 enlisted. The T/D for the 8th Mobile RB Co (250-1203, 18 July 50 w/C 2 to SR 310-30-1) had 3 officers and 34 enlisted. The TO&E for the 9th L&L Co, Army (20-77, 1 Sep 50 w/C 1 (Colm 8) called for 5 officers and 66 enlisted men. Headquarters, Fort Riley Kansas, ALRGO, SUBJECT: Movement Order #18 dated 23 May 1952 in personal files of former CPL Henry Bast, 8th MRBC, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 44 *Weekly*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 16 January 1952.
- 45 *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 16, 10 April 1952.
- 46 Headquarters, Fort Riley Kansas, ALRGO, SUBJECT: Movement Order #18 dated 23 May 1952.
- 47 *The Psyn-post*, Christmas Edition 1952, Vol. 2, No 3 and Paddock, "Major General Robert Alexis McClure: Forgotten Father of US Army Special Warfare."
- 48 *The Psyn-post*, 12 September 1952.
- 49 *The Psyn-post*, 12 September 1952.
- 50 Office of the Commanding General, Headquarters, Fort Bragg, NC letter, SUBJECT: Welcome to Fort Bragg to the Officers and Men of the Psychological Warfare Center dated 10 July 1952, *The Psyn-post* (Vol. 2, No. 1, Friday, 12 September 1952).
- 51 *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 15, 3 April 1952.
- 52 *The Psyn-post*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Friday, 12 September 1952. *The Psyn-post* evolved from a weekly mimeographed news sheet printed by Psychological Warfare Detachment 5021 A.S.U. at Fort Riley, KS. Vol. 1, No. 1 was simply the *Weekly* on 16 January 1952. Two weeks later on 30 January 1952, LT Donald Anderson's suggested title was on the cover page. *Weekly*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 16 January 1952 and *The Psyn-Post*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 30 January 1952.
- 53 *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 15, 3 April 1952.
- 54 *The Psyn-post*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Friday, 12 September 1952 and *Weekly*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 16 January 1952 and *The Psyn-Post*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 30 January 1952.
- 55 *The Psyn-post* Vol. 2, No. 1, Friday, 12 September 1952.
- 56 Headquarters, Fort Bragg, NC, Special Orders Number 209 dated 11 September 1952 and Headquarters, 6th Radio Broadcasting & Leaflet Group, Fort Bragg, NC, Special Orders Number 45 dated 8 August 1952 in personal files of former PFC Henry Bast, 8th MRBC, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC and Price interview, 30 September 2009.
- 57 Smith interview, 1 June 2009.
- 58 Price interview, 28 September 2009.
- 59 Price interview, 28 September 2009.
- 60 Price interview, 30 September 2009.
- 61 Price interview, 30 September 2009.
- 62 DeFranco interview, 29 September 2009.
- 63 Ulander interview, 21 October 2009.
- 64 Ulander interview, 21 October 2009 and "Public Gets First Look At 'Psywar' Equipment," *Fort MacArthur News*, 13 February 1953, Vol. V, No.1, 1, 3.
- 65 Smith interview, 1 June 2009.



This was the 6th RB&L leaflet jokingly dropped over Fort Riley after the unit departed for Fort Bragg. Soldiers were policing up the "Thank You" all over post for a week.

Background to

A Clearer View of Psywar at Fort Riley & Fort Bragg, 1951-1952

By Charles H. Briscoe with Alejandro P. Lujan

The preceding article, "A Clearer View of Psywar at Ft Riley & Ft Bragg, 1951-1952," showed how the 6th Radio Broadcasting & Leaflet Group (6th RB&L) weekly newsletter, *The Psyn-post*, yielded information and insights on Psywar training in 1951 and 1952 and activities of an original U.S. Army Psychological Warfare Center element that formed at Fort Riley, KS. The research methodology behind that article merits sharing to emphasize our most critical element, the Army veteran. He/she usually provides the first opening to the little known or long-forgotten Army units. That was exactly how the 8th Mobile Radio Broadcasting Company was recalled after 50+ years.

One such veteran was former Corporal (CPL) Henry Bast of New Rochelle, NY. Drafted in February 1951, he served in the 5021st Psywar Detachment and the 8th MRBC at Forts Riley and Bragg until February 1953. After keeping almost all unit publications and military records from his two-year service for 50 years, Bast gave them to Mr. Douglas Elwell, the 4th PSYOPS Group Technical Advisor. A quick review of his *Psyn-post* collection led to a telephone interview in which Bast provided the name of another unit draftee veteran, former SGT Alan H. Smith, a Syracuse University graduate, who had considerable radio and television experience.¹ That prompted a thorough, serious note-taking review of *The Psyn-posts*.

The Psyn-post was first published by the 5021st Psychological Warfare Detachment at Fort Riley on 16 January 1952 as the *Weekly*, a unit newsletter.² According to LTC Frank A. McCulloch, the 5021st commander, the intent was to share facts and humor that in time would become a record of missions and accomplishments.³ That purpose was achieved.

Telephone interviews with both men yielded access to their service records, memorabilia, and photographs. But, because they were not career soldiers, views and impressions were limited to their two years of service fifty years ago. *The Psyn-post* collection, however, facilitated expanding the search for more 8th MRBC information. Going on the premise that majors and above and senior noncommissioned officers (NCO) who served in the 1950s were likely deceased, lieutenants and captains having unusual first and/or last names mentioned or pictured in *The Psyn-post* became the focus of internet searches (*White Pages* and *Zaba Search*). The final step was "cold calling" the most likely candidates.

This led to former First Lieutenants (1LTs) William D. Dana, Jr., 12th Consolidation Company and Peter

A. DeFranco, the 5021st Psywar Detachment and 6th RB&L Reproduction Officer in Morristown, NJ, and Burnsville, NC, respectively. Interviews were arranged.⁴ Each individual received several copies of *Veritas* to show legitimacy, validate the research effort, and to demonstrate genuine interest and professional knowledge, promoting further interviews.

The "mother lode" was discovered when retired USAR Major Nevin F. Price was found in Rockville, MD. Not only was Price an 8th MRBC commander, he had served in Korea with the 4th MRBC (1st RB&L) in Pusan afterwards. He had original newspaper articles that described the 8th MRBC mission to train the 306th RB&L (USAR) at Fort MacArthur, CA, photos, and most importantly, a T/D (Table of Distribution).⁵ Price remembered CPL Hans Ulander because the two had worked together on several projects and missions. He said that the draftee Swede had advanced electrical and mechanical engineering degrees,



very uncommon in the 1950s. After collecting Price's prior service and WWII background and interviewing Ulander, it was obvious that the 8th MRBC was not a war-driven "thrown together" Psywar unit.⁶ With the wealth of information from *The Psyn-post* verified and expanded during interviews there was sufficient material accumulated for a cogent, well-documented article on the 5021st Psywar Detachment and the 8th MRBC, an original 1950s Smoke Bomb Hill unit belonging to the 6th RB&L.

The preceding article, however, is only a starting point. The specific personnel and equipment T/Ds and/or TO&E for the 8th MRBC have to be found, along with veterans from a MRB platoon and linguists. While this effort focused on the 8th MRBC, *The Psyn-post* provided a wealth of information on the 5021st Psywar Detachment, the courses taught by the Psywar Division, Army General School from 1950-52, and the 6th RB&L Group and its units. But, the Psywar Board, Psywar School, the 12th Consolidation Company, and 9th L&L Company are big unknowns. All could be future *Veritas* articles, providing missing links in the lineage and heritage of today's Army PSYOP units. Veterans were and are still the key to opening closed doors of other units.

Post Script for Veterans

Unit newsletters, anniversary pamphlets, yearbooks and newspapers are important for historical research by the USASOC History Office. As explained they provide reality and key details often omitted in official documents and publications. Considered personal memorabilia by most veterans, we recognize that these items (especially those containing articles in which the veteran is named) are "treasured." Donations are always welcome, whether you have two or 200. However, we are prepared to scan copies (returning originals with a CD) if you are not ready to part with them. Please do not throw them away as garbage. While you might make your wife or girlfriend happy, it's your history that will be destroyed. We'll even pick them up.

Here are some of the newsletters, newspapers, and veteran association publications that will help us better capture and present ARSOF history: old issues of *Veritas*, *The Psyn-post*, *SAFLAN*, *The Liberator*, *Ex-CBI Roundup*, *The Sentinel*, *Sine Pari*, *Special Warfare*, the *BOD*, 14th RB&L Battalion & 7th PSYOPS Group *Veritas* and *Shurei No Hakari*.

Bottom Line, if it was produced by an ARSOF unit or heritage unit, we are interested. Contact anyone inside the front cover of *Veritas*, our Chief Archivist, Mr. Alex Lujan (910-396-4671 or alejandrolujan@soc.mil) or me direct (910-432-3732 or charles.briscoe@ahqb.soc.mil). Thanks, CHB. ♣

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 Former CPL Henry Bast, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 22 May 2009, New Rochelle, NY, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 2 5021st Psychological Warfare Detachment A.S.U., Fort Riley, KS, *Weekly*, Vol. I, No. 1, 16 January 1952 in the personal files of former CPL Henry Bast, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC, hereafter simply *Weekly* with appropriate citation.
- 3 *Weekly*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 23 January 1952.
- 4 Former LTs William D. Dana, Jr. and Peter A. DeFranco, telephone interviews by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 19 September 2009, Morristown, NJ, and 29 September 2009, Burnsville, NC respectively, digital recordings, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC and 5021st Psychological Warfare Detachment, Ft Riley, KS, *The Psyn Post*, Vol. 1, No. 20, undated (May 1952).
- 5 Retired MAJ Nevin F. Price, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 18 September 2009, Rockville, MD, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 6 "Public Gets First Look At 'Psywar' Equipment" and Fort MacArthur Soldier 'Attends' Party in Sweden," *Fort MacArthur News*, Friday, 13 February 1953, Vol. V, No. 1, 1,3 and Hans Ulander, telephone interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 21 October 2009, Wicomico, VA, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

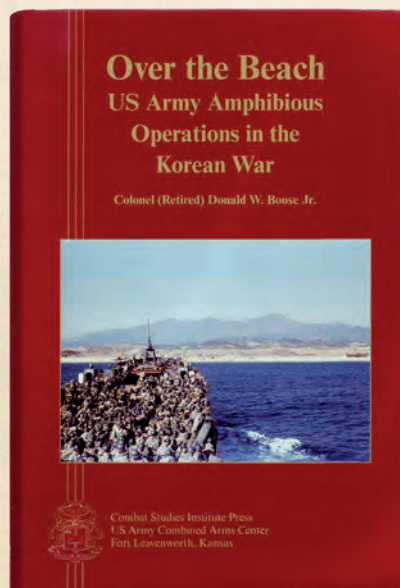
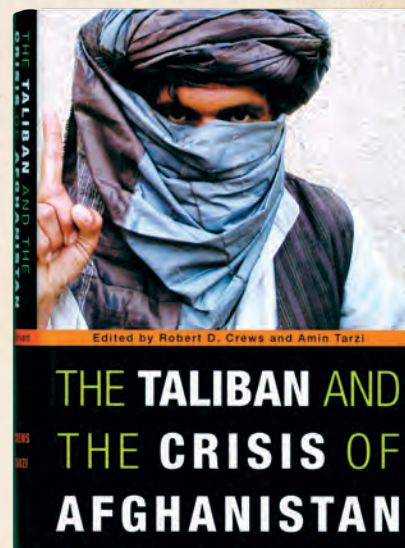


Books in the Field

"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.

Robert D. Crews and Amin Tarzi eds., *The Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

On 7 October 2001, the United States responded to the 11 September attack by launching a military campaign against the ruling Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Fighting alongside local warlord militias, the U.S. forces swiftly drove the Taliban from power. By the end of the year, the Taliban had melted away and the country appeared to be liberated from the oppressive radical theocracy. The resurgence of the Taliban in 2006 destabilized large areas of the country and threatened the ability of the government to protect its citizenry. *The Taliban and the Crisis of Afghanistan* is a history of the Taliban, tracing the movement from 1994 until the present through a collection of essays by eight authors. The writers are scholars specializing in Afghanistan and the book covers a wide variety of topics to include the fundamentals that characterize the organization. This is a well-researched academic study of the enemy in Afghanistan. Contains notes, index, and maps.



Colonel (Retired) Donald W. Boose, Jr., *Over the Beach: U.S. Army Amphibious Operations in the Korean War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008).

Although most remember the 16 September 1950 amphibious landings at Inchon as the turning point of the Korean War, Operation CHROMITE was only one of three major amphibious operations conducted during the conflict. In *Over the Beach: U.S. Army Amphibious Operations in the Korean War*, retired Colonel Donald Boose effectively explores the amphibious assault at Inchon, the earlier unopposed landing of the First Cavalry Division at Pohang, and the subsequent landing of the Seventh Infantry Division at Iwon. The author places the major Korea landings in appropriate historical and doctrinal context and also considers special operations landings in the North Korean islands on the east and west coasts, promulgated by WWII Philippine guerrilla veteran Colonel John McGee who served on the Eighth Army staff in Korea. Although the author recognizes that the Marines evolved into the nation's premier amphibious force, he nonetheless demonstrated that Army troops had to be familiar with amphibious landings, as do special operations forces today. Contains maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, glossary, appendices, and index.



Commander, USASOC
ATTN: AOHS (*Veritas*)
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Fort Bragg, NC 28310

Upcoming Special Edition...

With the victory in WWII, the American military was drastically reduced in the national demobilization that followed. The U.S. Army disbanded its special operations units keeping only Military Government for postwar occupation. When North Korea invaded its southern neighbor in June 1950, Psywar, Ranger, and Military Government units were resurrected. Joint special operations activities evolved as well. This special issue of *Veritas* covers the rebirth of SOF during Korea, 1950-1953, its contributions to the war, and the impact the Korean War had on ARSOF then and now.

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN

KOREA

1950 - 1953

