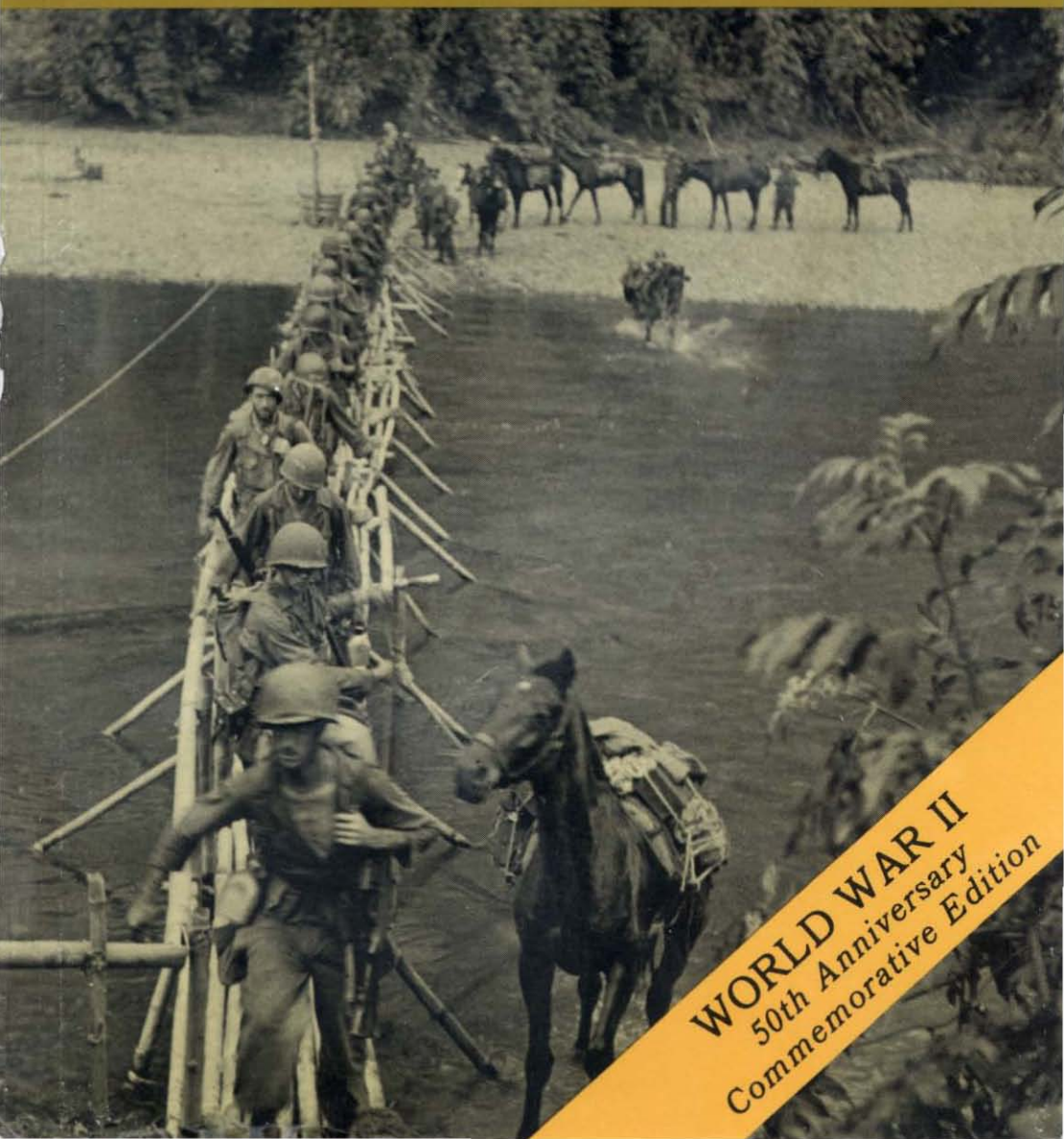
U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN WORLD WAR II

David W. Hogan, Jr.



WORLD WAR II
50th Anniversary
Commemorative Edition

U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN WORLD WAR II

by
David W. Hogan, Jr.



CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY
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Foreword

Special operations—in this context, commando or guerrilla activities—conducted by the U.S. Army in World War II have been the subject of a good many thrilling adventure stories but little sober, historical analysis. Only a handful of works have examined the critical issues underlying special operations, and the Army's historical series on World War II treats the subject only in passing. Yet special operations had a significant role that should not be ignored. Ranger units captured positions critical to the success of amphibious landings in the Mediterranean, France, and the Philippines. Partisans advised by American military personnel provided essential intelligence to American forces and harassed enemy troops in support of American operations in Italy, France, the Philippines, and Burma.

As special operations forces grow in importance within the U.S. Army, we need to look at our experience with such activities in World War II. I recommend this study as an overview for Army leaders and other interested parties of an important, but often misunderstood subject. It fills a gap in the Army's history of World War II and honors individuals whose efforts, frequently unsung, nevertheless made a major contribution to the American and Allied victory in that war.

Washington, D.C.
1 August 1990

HAROLD W. NELSON
Brigadier General, USA
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The Author

A native of Michigan, David W. Hogan, Jr., received his B.A. from Dartmouth College in 1980 and his Ph.D. from Duke University in 1986. He taught briefly at Elon College before joining the Center of Military History in 1987. He has written numerous book reviews and is currently revising for publication his doctoral dissertation on the U.S. Army's Rangers from 1942 to 1983.

Preface

In the past decade special operations have achieved an enhanced role in the missions of all of the armed services. The Army has enlarged its Ranger force to a regiment of three battalions, expanded its Special Forces to five groups, further developed its capabilities in psychological operations and civil affairs, established a new 1st Special Operations Command to supervise these units and activities, and developed new doctrines and training techniques. American leaders, in turn, have made increasing use of these special operations forces in support of national interests, most recently in Panama. In recognition of the growing significance of special operations and in honor of the Army's recent establishment of a Special Forces branch, Brig. Gen. William A. Stofft, then Chief of Military History, directed the preparation of a study on the Army's performance of such activities in World War II. This work is the result of that directive.

Numerous individuals helped make this study possible through their suggestions on sources and comments on the manuscript. Those who have worked with OSS records at the National Archives in the past are well aware of John Taylor's in-depth knowledge of those papers. Richard Boylan, Edward Reese, and Wil Mahoney of the Archives also performed yeoman service in locating key documents. At the U.S. Army Military History Institute in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Richard Sommers and David Keough provided many helpful leads to their treasury of records, and Randy Hackenburg guided me through the Institute's collection of photographs. Dr. Samuel Lewis of the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, suggested some valuable materials based on his research on the Jedburghs. At the Center of Military History Hannah Zeidlik, Geraldine Harcarik, and Mark Wilner produced some essential documents on the Filipino guerrillas, and

Mary Sawyer patiently responded to seemingly endless interlibrary loan requests. Albert Cowdrey, Jeffrey Clarke, Graham Cosmas, and Mary Gillett painstakingly examined successive versions of the manuscript and made many helpful recommendations. The comments of Col. Rod Paschall, Col. Michael Krause, John Partin, and Morris MacGregor, pointing out unexplored areas and suggesting other sources, also contributed much to the end product. Diane Arms did her best to smooth over my prose and make the footnotes comprehensible. Arthur S. Hardyman made numerous helpful suggestions regarding illustrations. Howell Brewer assembled the necessary photographs, and Sherry Dowdy provided the maps. The author alone is responsible for all interpretations, conclusions, and errors that may appear in the work.

Washington, D.C.
1 August 1990

DAVID W. HOGAN, JR.

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U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN WORLD WAR II

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

From the plains of Europe to the jungles of the Pacific, the U.S. Army in World War II employed a variety of commando and guerrilla operations to harass the Axis armies, gather intelligence, and support the more conventional Allied military efforts. During the Allied invasion of northern France on D-day, elite American infantry scaled the sheer cliffs of the Normandy coast, while smaller combat teams and partisans struck deep behind German lines, attacking enemy troop concentrations and disrupting their communications. On the other side of the globe, U.S. soldiers led guerrillas against Japanese patrols in the jungles of the Philippines and pushed through uncharted paths in the rugged mountains of northern Burma to strike at the enemy rear. Special operations such as these provided some of the most stirring adventure stories of the war, with innumerable legends growing from the exploits of Darby's and Rudder's Rangers, Merrill's Marauders, the Jedburghs, the guerrillas of the Philippines, and the Kachins of northern Burma.

Despite the public and historical attention paid to the exploits of American special operations forces in World War II, their significance remains a matter of dispute. Both during and after the conflict, many officers argued that such endeavors contributed little in a war won primarily by conventional combat units. They perceived little, if any, place for such units in official Army doctrine. Yet others have contended that a broader, more intelligent use of special operations would have hastened the triumph of Allied arms during World War II. In their eyes, the experience gained by the U.S. Army in the field during the war was important and foreshadowed the shape of future military operations.

The problem of evaluating such claims arises, in part, from the difficulty in measuring the value of special operations

forces in concrete terms. Their most substantial benefits often lie in the realm of morale and other intangibles. Controversy has surrounded the definition of the term. In the U.S. Army, "special operations" have included, at one time or another, everything from commando, escape and evasion, guerrilla, and counterguerrilla activities to civic action, psychological warfare, and civil affairs. In January 1986 the Department of Defense (DOD) defined special operations as "operations conducted by specially trained, equipped, and organized DOD forces against strategic or tactical targets in pursuit of national military, political, economic, or psychological objectives." The definition further noted that such operations might occur "during periods of peace or hostilities" and might "support conventional operations, or . . . be prosecuted independently when the use of conventional forces is either inappropriate or infeasible." [1]

For the purposes of this study, the official definition is too general to be of much use. Thus, special operations are defined here as commando and guerrilla activities and the gathering of intelligence by partisans and special military units. Commandos, termed Rangers in the U.S. Army, are elite light infantry units, organized and trained to conduct raids and long-range reconnaissance and to seize critical points on the battlefield. Guerrillas, in contrast, are native paramilitary forces operating from bases behind enemy lines with the occasional aid or leadership of outsiders. American leaders employed both types of units extensively, if not systematically, during World War II. In view of the present trend to exclude psychological operations and civil affairs from the Army's concept of special operations, this study will not cover such activities. Airborne and commando-type operations by standard Army units, such as the raids on Hammelburg and Los Banos, are also omitted from the discussion, since they are better analyzed in the context of the conventional war effort.[2]

By the time of American intervention in World War II, both the Axis powers and the Allies had already used special operations with some success. In 1940 German airborne commandos seized the "impregnable" fortress of Eben Emael, the key to the Belgian defense system, while systematic sabotage and subversion by the Brandenburgers, another elite parachute unit, played a large, if often overrated, role in the German



British commandos in a night raid *(Courtesy of the Imperial War Museum)*

conquest of Poland, Scandinavia, the Low Countries, and France. After the fall of Europe, the British turned to special operations to, in Prime Minister Winston Churchill's words, "set Europe ablaze." Beginning in late 1940, the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) airdropped supplies and infiltrated agents to expand the information-gathering and operational potential of resistance movements in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway, and other occupied countries. In addition, the British established a number of elite commando units to conduct raids against the French and Norwegian coastlines, both to keep the Germans off balance and to boost the fighting morale of their own people. Farther south, in the sandy wastes of North Africa, Britain's Long Range Desert Group, Special Air Service, and Popski's Army, an ad hoc paramilitary force of British adventurers, watched enemy movements, liberated prisoners, and raided deep into Axis territory.[3]

Despite the publicity accompanying the exploits of these types of units, American military leaders at first showed little interest in special operations. In the raids and guerrilla operations of such figures as Daniel Morgan, Francis Marion, and Frederick Funston, the U.S. Army could claim a history rich in such endeavors. By 1940, however, the ideas and methods of these men had been obscured by legend, and, for the most part, the Army viewed raids and partisan operations with indifference. American military planners were much more concerned with the transformation of a small peacetime conventional force into a mass army capable of waging a global war.

The Army's passive attitude toward special operations reflected not only the demands of 1940 but also an established orientation toward big-unit warfare. As the United States had grown in size and industrial capability in the decades following the Civil War, the increasingly professionalized American officer corps looked to the large conscript armies and mass warfare of Europe as a model for future conflicts. To the extent they thought of such matters at all, they perceived specialized commando units to be wasteful and special operations to be of no more consequence than the various Indian wars waged on the Western Plains. From the point of view of the American professional officer, victory in a conventional war lay in the overwhelming power of mass armies to attack and destroy an opponent's armed forces, as Ulysses S. Grant had done to the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia.

World War I had reinforced this predilection for mass warfare. Not surprisingly, American officers in the 1920s and 1930s envisioned a future conflict along the lines of the Great War. In the interwar years planners concentrated on the organization of the Reserve and National Guard, mobilization plans, and technological innovations, especially communications equipment, armored fighting vehicles, and combat aircraft. Both field maneuvers and military schools reflected the general orientation toward big-unit warfare. Unconventional operations, with their elements of stealth, secrecy, and political complications, seemed foreign, even devious, to officers accustomed to straightfoward conventional tactics and the interwar Army's ordered, gentlemanly world of polo and bridge. Even if prewar planners had considered the use of special units, the rush to rearm in the year and a half between opening of World



Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan, head of the OSS *(U.S. Army Military History Institute)*

War II and Pearl Harbor would have left little time or resources to create them.[4]

The Army's disinterest in special operations opened the way for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), a new agency that lay outside the conventional services but included a number of Army officers and other military personnel. The OSS was the brainchild of William J. Donovan, hero of World War I, corporate lawyer, and friend of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Ebullient and expansive, Donovan possessed the innovative mind and immense energy needed by the new agency. After observing special operations in Europe, he persuaded the president in July 1941 to form the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) for the collection and analysis of data and for such other "supplemental activities" as the president might direct. From the beginning Donovan's concept of the new organization's role went far beyond the field of intelligence, for he saw the agency as a tool to soften the occupied areas for eventual invasion. Regarding propaganda as an initial "arrow of penetration," he planned to help resistance movements undertake a campaign of sabotage, subversion, and, assisted by commandos, small-unit guerrilla warfare. Drawing on British advice and experience in the field, he formed separate branches for special intelligence (SI) and spe-

cial operations (SO). Despite military suspicion and organizational rivalries, the agency survived, officially becoming the Office of Strategic Services in June 1942.[5]

As a new agency, the Office of Strategic Services was able to take a fresh look at the entire field of special operations. A rather haphazard administrator, Donovan, according to one associate, ran his agency like a country store, but he did demonstrate an eagerness to try new ideas, ranging from plans to establish air bases behind Japanese lines in China to a plot to kidnap German Air Force chief Hermann Goering. Visitors to OSS headquarters were struck by the casual atmosphere, lack of formal lines of authority, and the wide range of personalities on the staff, ranging from Communists to well-connected socialites whom Donovan recruited at cocktail parties, boardrooms, and campuses.[6]

Many of the military personnel in the OSS served in the agency's airborne commando teams, known as operational groups (OGs). In July 1942 Donovan obtained the approval of General George C. Marshall, the Army's chief of staff, to form units of bilingual volunteers that would organize and supply guerrilla bands, gather intelligence, and carry out commando operations behind enemy lines. Recruiting teams canvassed posts and training areas for volunteers who spoke a foreign language and expressed a willingness to perform hazardous duty. These men formed cells, each containing two sections of two officers and thirteen enlisted men, although the actual size of the teams in the field would vary greatly. Primarily infantrymen and demolitions experts, they also contained medical technicians and radio operators. As was generally the case with Donovan's agency, they had their share of romantics and eccentrics, including veterans of the Spanish Civil War, a Czarist Army officer who had fled Russia after the Revolution, and "tough little boys from New York and Chicago," whose main desire, according to an instructor, "was to get over to the old country and start throwing knives."[7]

Lacking experience in special operations, the Office of Strategic Services largely based its training of the operational groups on that of the British commandos. The first stop for OG recruits was the incongruously plush surroundings of the Congressional Country Club outside Washington. In addition

to conditioning runs on the golf course, they received instruction in guerrilla warfare techniques from senior officers who were learning the subject themselves. More rigorous training awaited them at a former Civilian Conservation Corps camp near Quantico, Virginia, where they engaged in a strenuous conditioning program and received instruction in demolitions from a grizzled regular sergeant who had trained with the commandos. Training in weapons, hand-to-hand fighting, and night operations completed the curriculum. By early 1943 the first operational groups were ready for deployment to their initial theater of operations, the Mediterranean.[8]

Notes

1. U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, JCS Pub. 1 (Washington, D.C., 1986), p. 335.

2. For information on psychological operations and civil affairs by the U.S. Army in World War II, see William F. Daugherty and Morris Janowitz, eds., *A Psychological Warfare Casebook* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1958); Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins; Psychological and Unconventional Warfare, 1941–1952* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1982); and Harry L. Coles and Albert K. Weinberg, *Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors*, U.S. Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, Government Printing Office, 1964).

3. Gordon Wright, *The Ordeal of Total War, 1939–1945*, The Rise of Modern Europe (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 26, 146; Roger A. Beaumont, *Military Elites* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1974), pp. 44–49, 55–57, 82. See also John W. Gordon, *The Other Desert War: British Special Forces in North Africa, 1940–1943* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1987). "Popski" was the pseudonym of Vladimir Peniakoff, son of Russian emigres and former cotton factor in Egypt. He raised his own force of raiders for operations in the North African desert.

4. For a discussion of the Army in the interwar period, see Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), pp. 207–22, and *History of the United States Army*, 2d ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), pp. 395–420. Interviews in the senior officers debriefing reports at the U.S. Army Military History Institute (USAMHI), Carlisle Barracks, Pa., testify to the leisurely atmosphere in the Army of the interwar years.

5. Kermit Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2 vols. (New York: Walker & Co., 1976), 1: 5–8, 16, 26; Stewart Alsop and Thomas Braden, *The OSS and American Espionage*, 2d ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), p. 9. For more on Donovan, see Anthony Cave Brown, *The Last Hero: Wild Bill Donovan* (New York: Times Books, 1982).

6. R. Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 3–7; Michael Burke, *Outrageous Good Fortune* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1984), pp. 88, 92–93; Alsop and Braden, *The OSS and American Espionage*, pp. 10, 17, 21–25.

7. Quote from Smith, *OSS*, p. 105.

8. Aaron Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets: The Birth of Special Forces* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1986), pp. 1–6; William B. Dreux, *No Bridges Blown* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971), pp. 1–2, 12–18; Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 1: 225; Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare*, p. 28; Smith, *OSS*, p. 16; Brown, *The Last Hero*, p. 473.

CHAPTER 2

Special Operations in the Mediterranean

The opening blows against Hitler's Fortress Europe came not in Western Europe but in the Mediterranean. Once the United States had entered the war, American leaders pressed for a direct cross-channel assault against the Continent. Through 1942 and much of 1943, however, they yielded to British concerns over Allied readiness for such a large step and accepted less ambitious endeavors against the "soft underbelly" of Axis-dominated Europe. The soft underbelly proved to be a hard shell as Allied armies, after driving the Germans and Italians from North Africa and Sicily, made slow progress against a tenacious German defense in the wet climate and rugged highlands of the Italian peninsula. In this theater of sandy wastes and jagged mountains bordered by the placid waters of the Mediterranean, American forces discovered both a need and a favorable environment for their first major special operations of the war.

Darby's Rangers

While the U.S. Army's Rangers would perform several special operations in the course of the war, they traced their origins to a provisional formation created by the chief of staff to remedy the Army's lack of combat experience during the early months of 1942. When Marshall visited Great Britain in April to urge a cross-channel invasion, he met Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, the charismatic head of British Combined Operations Headquarters (COHQ), and later visited COHQ's commando training center in Scotland. In Mountbatten's commando raiding program, Marshall perceived a means of providing American soldiers with at least some combat experience. At his direction Col. Lucian K. Truscott met with British lead-

ers to determine the best way of fulfilling this objective. Subsequently, Truscott recommended the formation of an American commando unit which would bear the designation Ranger. Under Truscott's concept, most personnel would join the new Ranger force on a temporary basis and then return to their parent units after several months of field operations. Marshall approved the proposals, and on 19 June 1942, Truscott officially activated the 1st Ranger Battalion in Northern Ireland.[1]

As commander of the battalion, Truscott selected Capt. William O. Darby. At the time Darby was serving as an aide to Maj. Gen. Russell P. Hartle, the commander of American forces in Northern Ireland. When Hartle recommended Darby for the command of the new unit, Truscott was receptive, having found the young officer to be "outstanding in appearance, possessed of a most attractive personality, . . . keen, intelligent, and filled with enthusiasm."[2] His judgment proved accurate. The 31-year-old Darby, a graduate of West Point in 1933, soon demonstrated an innate ability to gain the confidence of his superiors and the deep devotion of his men.[3]

Using the model of the British commandos, Darby energetically organized his new unit. Circulars, calling for volunteers, soon appeared on bulletin boards of the 34th Infantry Division, the 1st Armored Division, and other American units training in Northern Ireland. Darby and an officer from Hartle's staff personally examined and selected officers, who, in turn, interviewed the enlisted volunteers, looking especially for athletic individuals in good physical condition. The recruits, ranging in age from seventeen to thirty-five, came from every part of the United States; they included a former lion tamer and a full-blooded Sioux Indian. Although several units attempted to unload misfits and troublemakers on the new unit, most recruits joined out of a yearning for adventure and a desire to be part of an elite force. As the volunteers arrived at the battalion's camp, Darby formed them into a headquarters company and six line companies of sixty-seven men each, an organization which sacrificed firepower and administrative self-sufficiency for foot and amphibious mobility.[4]

The advanced commando training of the battalion lasted approximately three months. Immediately on arriving at Fort William in northern Scotland, the recruits embarked on an exhausting forced march to their camp in the shadow of Ach-



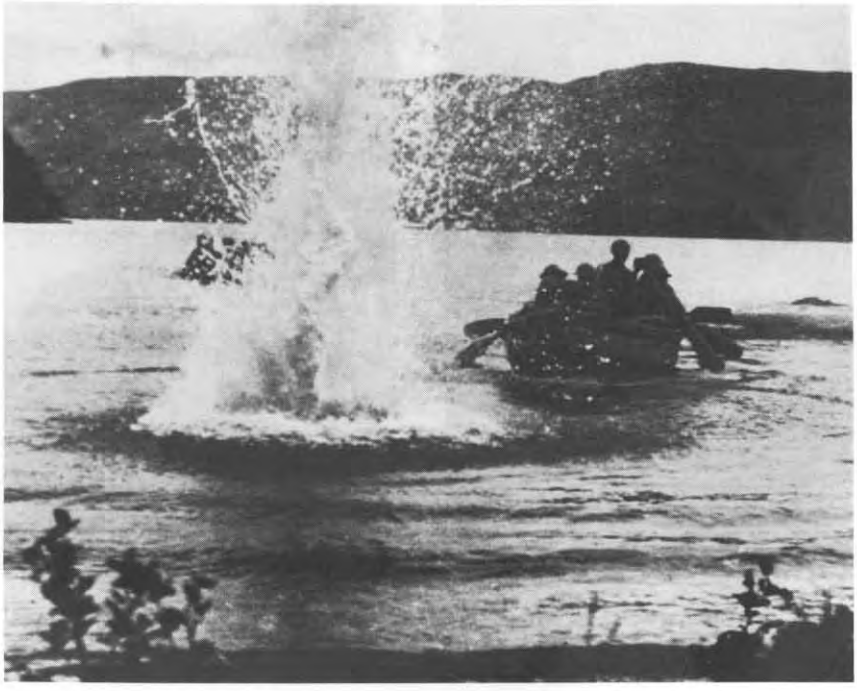
Lt. Gen. Lucian K. Truscott Jr.
(U.S. Army photograph)



Col. William O. Darby
(U.S. Army photograph)

nacarry Castle, a trek that foreshadowed a month of rigorous training. The future Rangers endured log-lifting drills, obstacle courses, and speed marches over mountains and through frigid rivers under the watchful eye of British commando instructors. In addition, they received weapons training and instruction in hand-to-hand combat, street fighting, patrols, night operations, and the handling of small boats. The training stressed realism, including the use of live ammunition. On one occasion, a Ranger alertly picked up a grenade that a commando had thrown into a boatload of trainees and hurled it over the lake before it exploded. In early August the battalion transferred to Argyle, Scotland, for training in amphibious operations with the Royal Navy and later moved to Dundee where they stayed in private homes while practicing attacks on pillboxes and coastal defenses.[5]

While training proceeded, fifty Rangers participated in the raid on Dieppe on 19 August 1942. Although the Allies apparently hoped that the raid would ease German pressure on the Soviets, the ostensible purpose was to test the defenses of the port and force the German Air Force to give battle. To clear the way for the main assault on the town by the 2d Canadian



Members of the 1st Ranger Battalion practice an amphibious landing under live fire *(Courtesy of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library); below,* Rangers train on the terrain of the 8 November assault at Arzew *(U.S. Army photograph).*



Division, two British commando battalions, accompanied by American Ranger personnel, were to seize a pair of coastal batteries flanking the port. Although one of the battalions successfully landed, destroyed its assigned battery west of Dieppe, and withdrew, the flotilla carrying the second battalion was dispersed by German torpedo boats, permitting only a fraction of the force to reach shore. By accurate sniper fire, a small party of this group prevented the battery from firing on the Allied fleet, but many of their American and British comrades were captured. In the meantime, the main assault had turned into a disaster, suffering 3,400 casualties of the 5,000 engaged. While the Allied high command claimed to have learned lessons that proved invaluable to the success of the landings on Normandy two years later, the raid remains a subject of controversy.[6]

North Africa

Dieppe proved to be the only operation undertaken by Darby's Rangers in accordance with Marshall's original concept. In late July the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, under pressure from a president anxious for action against the Germans on some front, reluctantly bowed to British arguments for an invasion of French North Africa, code named Operation TORCH. As planners examined the task of securing the initial beachheads, they perceived a need for highly trained forces that could approach the landing areas and seize key defensive positions in advance of the main force. Accordingly, Darby's battalion received a mission to occupy two forts at the entrance of Arzew harbor, clearing the way for the landing of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division of the Center Task Force *(Map 1).*[7]

The performance of the Rangers in their first independent mission reflected their emphasis on leadership, training, and careful planning. In the early morning hours of 8 November two companies under Darby's executive officer, Maj. Herman W. Dammer, slipped through a boom blocking the entrance to the inner harbor of Arzew and stealthily approached Fort de la Pointe. After climbing over a seawall and cutting through barbed wire, two groups of Rangers assaulted the position from opposite directions. Within fifteen minutes, they had the fort and sixty startled French prisoners. Meanwhile, Darby and the remaining four companies landed near Cap Carbon and

MAP 1


DARBY'S RANGERS
IN NORTHWEST AFRICA
November 1942-March 1943
Ranger Operations
0 50
MILES
SPAIN
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Bizerte
Cap Bon
Tunis
Bone
Algiers
8 Nov 42
Cap Carbon
Arzew
Oran
TUNISIA
Sousse
Kasserine
Dernaia
Sfax
10 Feb 43
Sened
El Guettar
20 Mar 43
Djebel el Ank
Gabes
ALGERIA
LIBYA

climbed a ravine to reach Batterie du Nord, overlooking the harbor. With the support of Company D's four 81-mm. mortars, the force assaulted the position, capturing the battery and sixty more prisoners. Trying to signal his success to the waiting fleet, Darby, whose radio had been lost in the landing, shot off a series of green flares before finally establishing contact through the radio of a British forward observer party. The Rangers had achieved their first success, a triumph tempered only by the later impressment of two companies as line troops in the 1st Infantry Division's beachhead perimeter. Ranger losses were light, but the episode foreshadowed the future use of the Rangers as line infantry.[8]

While Allied forces occupied Northwest Africa and advanced into Tunisia, Darby kept his Rangers busy with a rigorous program of physical conditioning and training in night and amphibious operations. Rumors of possible raiding missions spread within the battalion, but, as December and January passed without any further assignments, morale rapidly declined. Many Rangers transferred to other units. As yet, the Army still had no doctrine or concept of the employment of such units on the conventional battlefield, or elsewhere, and American field commanders were more concerned about their advance into the rear of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's *Afrika Korps* than in any program of seaborne commando raids.[9]

In early February 1943 the Allied high command finally found a mission for the Rangers. Lt. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's theater headquarters attached the battalion to Maj. Gen. Lloyd R. Fredendall's II Corps in Tunisia. Hoping to gather intelligence and mislead the enemy regarding Allied strength and intentions, Fredendall directed the battalion to launch a series of raids against the Italo-German lines. The Rangers struck first against the Italian outpost at Sened. On the night of 10–11 February three Ranger companies marched through eight miles of rugged Tunisian terrain to a chain of hills overlooking the position. After observing the outpost by day, the Rangers, about midnight, began a four-mile approach march, advancing to successive phase lines and using colored lights to maintain formation. At 200 yards the Italians spotted their advance and opened fire, but most of the shots passed harmlessly overhead. The Rangers waited until they were fifty

yards away before launching a bayonet assault. Within twenty minutes, they had overrun the garrison, killing fifty and capturing eleven before withdrawing to friendly lines.[10]

The raiding program was soon cut short by developments to the north. Within days of the action at Sened, the Germans launched a counteroffensive through Kasserine Pass, roughly handling the green American units and forcing Fredendall to withdraw his exposed right flank. After serving as a rear guard for the withdrawal, the Rangers held a regimental-size front across Dernaia Pass and patrolled in anticipation of a German attack in the area. It would not be the last time that field commanders, short of troops, used the Rangers as line infantry in an emergency.[11]

When the II Corps, now under Maj. Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., returned to the offensive in March, the 1st Ranger Battalion played a key role in the Allied breakthrough. After spearheading the 1st Infantry Division's advance to El Guettar, the Rangers found the Italians blocking the road at the pass of Djebel el Ank. The terrain to either side of the position appeared impassable, but Ranger patrols found a twelve-mile path through the mountains and ravines north of the pass to the Italian rear. During the night of 20–21 March, the battalion, accompanied by a heavy mortar company, followed this tortuous route, reaching a plateau overlooking the Italian position by 0600. As the sun rose, the Rangers, supported by the mortars, struck the Italians from flank and rear, while the 26th Infantry made a frontal assault. The enemy fled, leaving the pass and 200 prisoners in American hands. After patrolling and helping to repulse enemy counterattacks from a defensive position near Djebel Berda, the Rangers returned to Algeria for a rest. Shortly afterward, the Axis surrender of Tunis and Bizerte concluded the North African campaign.[12]

Sicily and Italy

The performance of Darby's forces in North Africa and the continuing need for troops to spearhead amphibious landings led Eisenhower's headquarters to form additional Ranger units. Patton and Maj. Gen. Terry Allen, commander of the 1st Infantry Division, praised the Rangers in glowing terms, and Allied planners requested authorization from the War Department to form two more battalions for the invasion of Sicily.

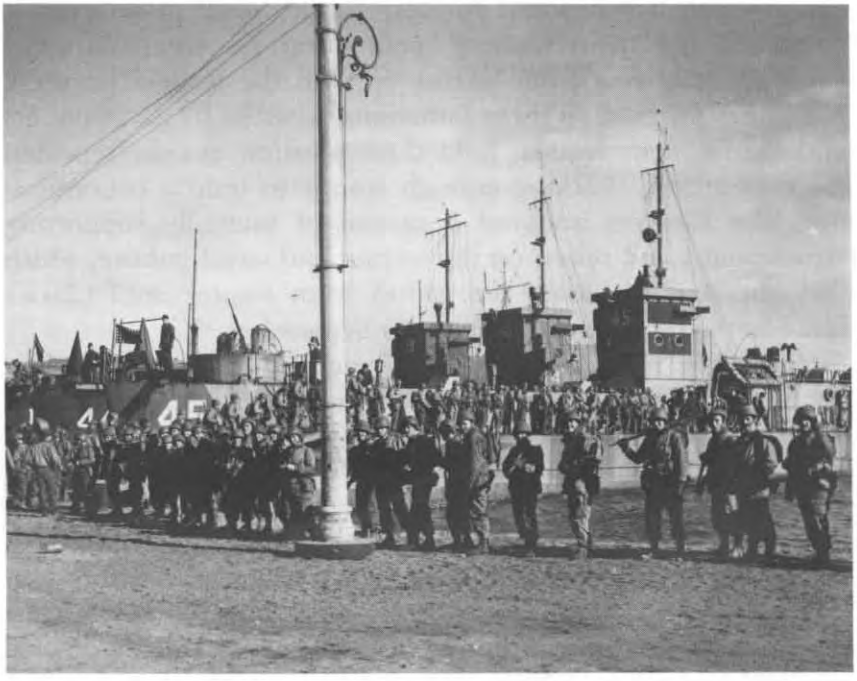
MAP 2


Corsica
Sardinia
TYRRHENIAN SEA
ADRIATIC SEA
IONIAN SEA
ITALY
Tiber R.
Rome
VATICAN CITY
Cisterna
Liri R.
Cassino
Anzio
Venafro
Jan 44
Naples
Salerno
1st, 3rd, 4th
9 Sep 43
Palermo
Messina
Marsala
Sicily
Porto Empedocle
Butera
Gela
10 July 43
3rd
1st, 4th
SOUTHERN ITALY AND SICILY
1943-1944
Ranger Operations
ELEVATIONS IN FEET
0 1500 6000 AND OVER
0 50
MILES

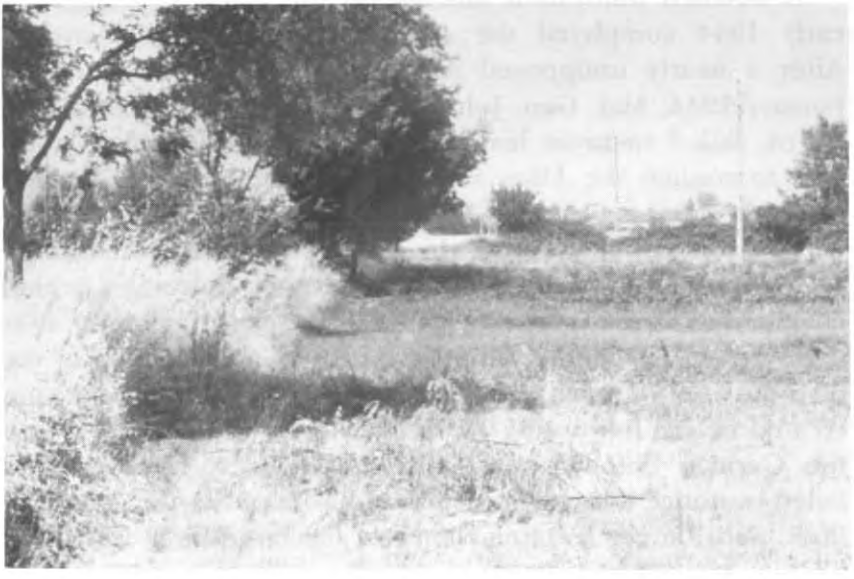
Marshall approved the expansion but again stipulated that Ranger-trained soldiers be returned to their parent units once the need for the battalions had passed. His attitude underlined the continuing status of these battalions as temporary organizations. Nevertheless, Darby and his officers enthusiastically sought out volunteers for the new formations, making stump speeches at replacement depots throughout North Africa. At Nemours, where Dammer had created a replica of the commando training depots, the recruits endured physical conditioning, weapons training, and amphibious landings under live fire.[13]

In Sicily the Rangers served first as assault troops in the landing and then in various task forces in the drive across the island *(Map 2).* At Gela in the early morning darkness of 10 July the 1st and 4th Ranger Battalions, under Darby and Maj. Roy Murray, attacked across a mined beach to capture the town and coastal batteries. They then withstood two days of counterattacks, battling tanks with thermite grenades and a single 37-mm. gun in the streets of Gela. For all the courage of individual Rangers, naval gunfire support proved decisive in holding the town. As Allied forces expanded the beachhead, one Ranger company captured the formidable fortress town of Butera in a daring night attack, while to the west Dammer's 3d Ranger Battalion moved by foot and truck to capture the harbor of Porto Empedocle, taking over 700 prisoners. In the ensuing drive to Palermo, the 1st and 4th Ranger Battalions joined task forces guarding the flanks of the advance, and the 3d Ranger Battalion later aided the advance along the northern Sicilian coast to Messina by infiltrating through the mountains to outflank successive German delaying positions. By the fall of Messina on 17 August, marking the end of the Sicilian campaign, the Rangers were already preparing for the invasion of Italy.[14]

At Salerno the Rangers once again secured critical objectives during the amphibious assault, but, cut off by the rapid German response to the main landings, they were forced to hold their positions for about three weeks, a defensive mission unsuitable for such light units. Landing on a narrow, rocky beach to the left of the main beachhead early on the morning of 9 September, the Rangers quickly occupied the high ground of the Sorrentino peninsula, dominating the routes between



Soldiers of the 3d Ranger Battalion board LCIs that will take them to Anzio. Two weeks later, nearly all would be killed or captured at Cisterna *(U.S. Army photograph); below,* the view looking north toward Cisterna from the vicinity of Isola Bella. Note the lack of concealment *(Courtesy of Dr. Michael J. King).*



the invasion beaches and Naples. To the south the Germans contained the main landing, preventing Lt. Gen. Mark W. Clark's Fifth Army from linking up with the Ranger position. Nevertheless, Darby's three battalions, assisted by paratroopers and British commandos, held their position against repeated German attacks. Lacking enough troops to hold a continuous line, the Rangers adopted a system of mutually supporting strongpoints and relied on the terrain and naval gunfire, which they directed to harass the routes from Naples until Clark's force broke through to them on 30 September.[15]

Casualties mounted when the Rangers served as line infantry in the offensive against the German Winter Line. Lacking troops on the Venafro front, Clark used the Rangers to fill gaps in Fifth Army's line from early November to mid-December. Attached to divisions, the battalions engaged in bitter mountain fighting at close quarters. Although reinforced by a cannon company of four 75-mm. guns on half-tracks, they still lacked the firepower and manpower for protracted combat. By mid-December the continuous fighting and the cold, wet weather had taken a heavy toll. In one month of action, for example, the 1st Ranger Battalion lost 350 men, including nearly 200 casualties from exposure. Moreover, the quality of the battalions declined as veterans were replaced by enthusiastic, but inadequately trained, replacements.[16]

A botched infiltration mission on the Anzio beachhead in early 1944 completed the destruction of Darby's Rangers. After a nearly unopposed Allied amphibious assault on 22 January 1944, Maj. Gen. John P. Lucas, commander of the VI Corps, failed to press his advantage, and the Germans were able to contain the Allies within a narrow perimeter. Seeking to push out of this confined area, Truscott, now a major general and commander of the 3d Infantry Division, ordered the 1st and 3d Ranger Battalions to infiltrate four miles behind enemy lines to the crossroads town of Cisterna. One hour after their departure, the 4th Ranger Battalion and the rest of the division would launch a frontal assault and use the confusion created by the infiltrating Rangers to drive a deep wedge into the German defenses. American intelligence, however, had failed to notice a large German buildup opposite the American lines, and Ranger reconnaissance of the target area was poor.

When the two battalions began their infiltration on the night of 29–30 January, the enemy quickly detected them and by dawn had surrounded them with infantry and armor just outside Cisterna. In a desperate attempt to rescue the isolated units, the 4th Ranger Battalion repeatedly attacked the German lines throughout the morning but succeeded in losing half of its combat strength in the futile effort. About noon, the remnants of the 1st and 3d surrendered. Only eight men escaped to American lines.[17]

Left with a fragment of the Ranger force, American theater commanders decided to deactivate rather than reconstitute the damaged units. Even before Cisterna, the lack of time to train replacements had diluted the quality of the battalions. In truth, the Rangers had become little more than line infantry units, but without the firepower of the normal American infantry regiments of the time. Anticipating tough, methodical fighting for which Ranger units were unsuited, theater commanders preferred to use the remaining Rangers to alleviate the perennial shortage of replacements. Accordingly, in March Rangers with enough points for overseas service returned to the United States, while the remainder joined the 1st Special Service Force, a similar type of formation that had recently arrived in the theater.[18]

The 1st Special Service Force

The 1st Special Service Force traced its origins to Marshall's trip to Great Britain in early 1942, the same visit that had inspired the formation of the 1st Ranger Battalion. Between conferences on grand strategy, Mountbatten had introduced Marshall to Geoffrey Pyke, an eccentric British scientist who had developed a scheme to divert up to half-a-million German troops from the main fronts. Under Pyke's plan, commandos, using special vehicles, would conduct a series of winter raids against snowbound German garrisons of such vulnerable points as hydroelectric stations in Norway and oil refineries in Romania. Exactly how the raiding units would enter and leave the target areas remained hazy, but the concept fascinated Marshall. After returning to the United States, he gave the project a high priority despite the skepticism of War Department planners. Studebaker, an automobile manufactur-



Brig. Gen. Robert T. Frederick
(U.S. Army photograph)

er, received a contract for the design and production of the vehicle later known as the Weasel. In June the Allies also agreed to form a Canadian-American force under Col. Robert T. Frederick to conduct the raids. Although as a War Department staff officer he had opposed the project, the tall, vigorous Frederick proved to be a natural leader, respected by superiors and idolized by his men.[19]

At Fort William Henry Harrison, an isolated post near Helena, Montana, Frederick assembled his new unit, which he named the 1st Special Service Force in an apparent attempt to disguise its true purpose. Initially, it consisted of three battalion-size units of light infantry (officially designated as regiments) and a service echelon. For American personnel, who would constitute about 60 percent of the unit, inspection teams canvassed Army units in the Southwest and on the Pacific seaboard for hardened volunteers, especially those with a background as "lumberjacks, forest rangers, hunters, northwoodsmen, game wardens, prospectors, and explorers."[20] As was the case with the Rangers, many post commanders used the recruiting drive to empty their stockades and rid themselves of malcontents, and some "volunteer" contingents even arrived at Fort Harrison under armed guard. Frederick soon weeded out unfit recruits, driving his men through an intensive



Soldiers of the First Special Service Force undergoing winter warfare training in the mountains near Helena, Montana. Note the railroad boxcars and skis in the background *(From* The Devil's Brigade *by Robert H. Adleman* and *Col. George Walton. Copyright 1966 by the authors. Reprinted with the permission of Chilton Book Co., Radnor, Pa.).*

program that stressed physical conditioning, weapons training, hand-to-hand fighting, demolitions, rock climbing, and the operation of the Weasel. For training in winter warfare, the recruits lived in boxcars on the Continental Divide while receiving instruction in cross-country skiing from Norwegian instructors. The accelerated schedule allowed only six days for airborne training. Frederick wanted to have the unit ready for operations by the winter of 1942–43.[21]

Unfortunately for Frederick's raiders, the Allied high command canceled their mission before they could even take the field. When Frederick visited Great Britain in September 1942, he found that support for the project had evaporated. The Royal Air Force showed little enthusiasm for the diversion of the necessary planes from its bombing campaign, and the Special Operations Executive had already laid plans for a more economic sabotage program that was preferred by Norway's government-in-exile. Mountbatten thus recommended that the project be canceled, and Frederick agreed. While his unit broadened its training to include more general infantry skills and amphibious operations, Frederick investigated other areas



Mount La Difensa *(U.S. Army photograph)*

where his men could use their special capabilities, including the Caucasus Mountains, New Guinea, and the North Pacific. In August 1943 the unit finally went into action for the first time, spearheading the bloodless recapture of Kiska in the Aleutians. The rapid conclusion of the campaign again left Frederick's unit without a mission. Finally, in October, General Clark, desperate for troops, secured the transfer of the 1st Special Service Force to his Fifth Army in the Mediterranean, and the combat history of the 1st Special Service Force began.[22]

Shortly after its arrival in late November, the 1st Special Service Force received its initial mission. Looming over Fifth Army's front, the twin peaks of Monte La Difensa and Monte La Rementanea presented formidable barriers to the Allied advance into the Liri River Valley. A German panzer grenadier division deeply entrenched along the slopes of the two masses had already thrown back repeated Allied attempts to gain control of the heights. Attached to the 36th Infantry Division, the 1st Special Service Force received orders to carry the two peaks. After a personal reconnaissance of the 3,000-foot La Difensa, Frederick decided to avoid the trail leading up the

south side and instead to launch a surprise attack via a 200-foot cliff on the opposite slope. On the night of 2–3 December 600 riflemen of the 2d Regiment moved silently up the face to a position only yards away from the German defenders on the crest. When noise from displaced stones alerted the enemy, the special servicemen assaulted the position and within two hours gained control of the crest. From there, they pushed down a saddle to capture neighboring Monte La Rementanea and to link up with British units on the other side of the valley. The fall of the twin peaks cracked the Winter Line and opened the way for the Allied advance to Cassino.[23]

Any euphoria that Frederick's men might have felt over their success dissipated soon after the unit reentered the fighting as line infantry in late December. Poor weather and a skillful German defense among rocks and gullies slowed the advance to a crawl and took a heavy toll of the special servicemen. Like the Ranger units, they lacked the heavier weapons needed to blast the Germans out of their positions, as well as an adequate system to replace their growing combat and noncombat casualties. After a bitter struggle, the 1st Regiment captured Monte Sammucro but lost much of its fighting power. The 3d Regiment used a surprise night assault to overwhelm the defenders of Monte Majo but then suffered heavy casualties in a three-day defense of the height against German counterattacks. In one month of service before its transfer to Anzio, the force had lost 1,400 of its 1,800 men and badly needed the qualified replacements made available by the disbandment of the Rangers.[24]

Deploying to the Anzio beachhead in early February 1944, the 1st Special Service Force anchored the Allied right flank along the Mussolini Canal and later spearheaded the drive on Rome. At Anzio Frederick's 1,300 troops defended 13 kilometers of the 52-kilometer-long Allied perimeter. Their position in the flat, open tableland adjoining the canal was dominated by German artillery in the heights overlooking the beachhead. Defending its sector, the unit used night patrols to locate targets for artillery, conduct raids on German outposts, and maintain control of the area between the lines. In late May Frederick's troops participated in the breakout from the beachhead and reinforced an armored task force covering the flank

of the subsequent Allied drive on Rome. Early on the morning of 4 June the first elements of the combined force entered Rome and secured the bridges over the Tiber River. The 1st Special Service Force then withdrew to Lake Albano for rest and reorganization.[25]

After the fall of Rome, the unit's final six months proved anticlimactic. Assigned to Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch's Seventh Army for the invasion of southern France, the force received orders to seize German batteries on the Iles d'Hyeres, three rocky land masses on the left flank of the invasion beaches. On the night of 14–15 August the special servicemen, now under the command of Col. Edwin A. Walker, used rubber boats to land on the shores of Ile de Port Cros and Ile du Levant. Within forty-eight hours, the surprised defenders on both islands had surrendered, and Walker's troops prepared to join the main army. Guarding the right flank of Patch's advance, the unit's ensuing drive along the Riviera, the so-called Champagne Campaign, seemed more like an extended route march than a battle. Only a few German rear guards offered any resistance. By early September the unit had established a static defensive position in the mountains along the Franco-Italian border, where it remained for the next three months. In early December Eisenhower's headquarters, under orders from the War Department, dissolved the unit, returning the Canadians to their own army and transferring the Americans to a separate infantry regiment assigned to Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley's 12th Army Group.[26]

The Office of Strategic Services in the Mediterranean

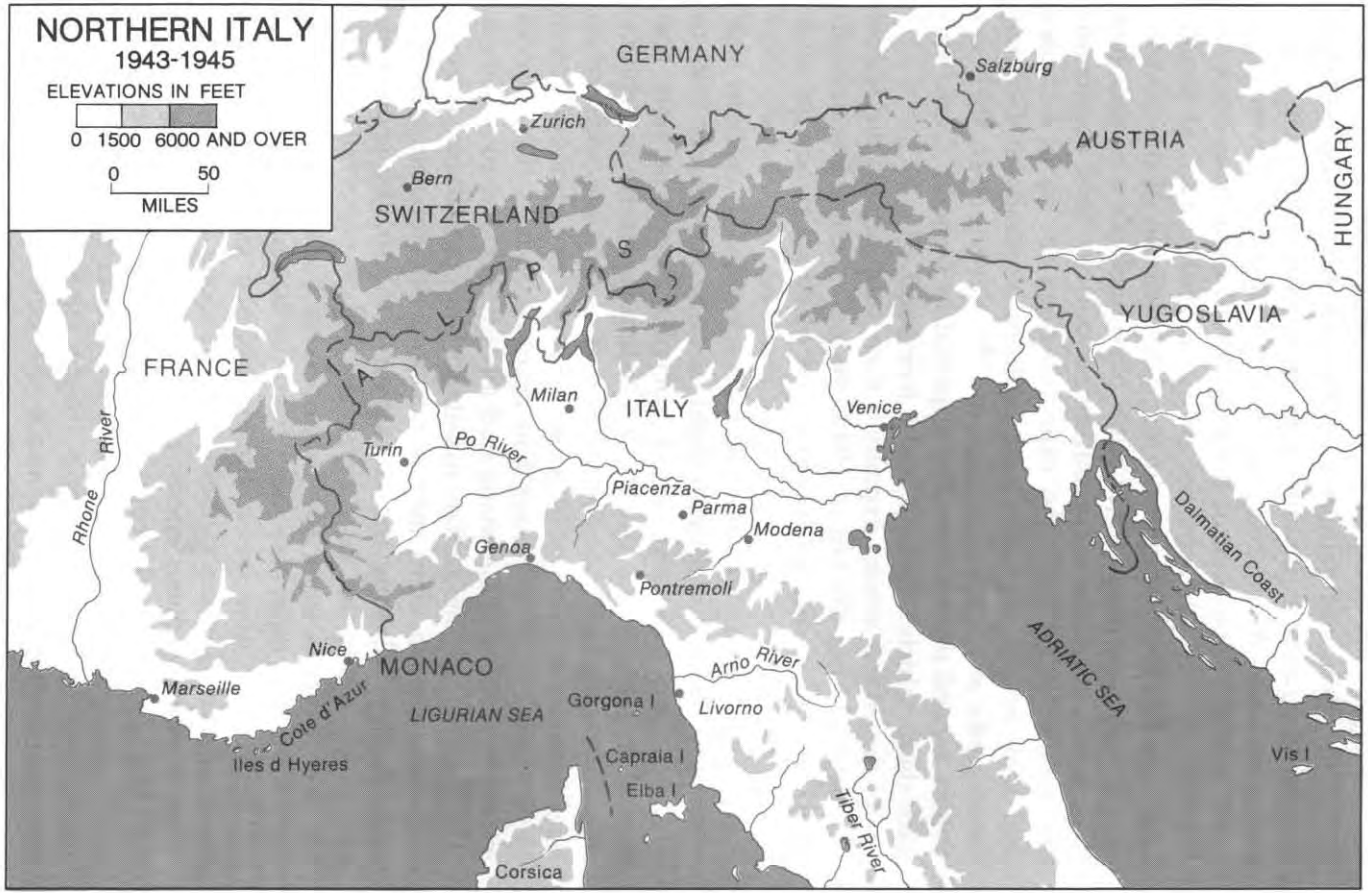
In North Africa and Italy the Army ignored the role that commando-type units, such as the 1st Special Service Force, might have played in operations behind enemy lines, leaving the field to the Office of Strategic Services. Both OSS personnel and their British counterparts in the Special Operations Executive were supervised by the G–3 Division of the theater headquarters, but the Americans tended to be dominant in North Africa, while the British enjoyed greater influence in the eastern Mediterranean. Although OSS personnel initially lacked experience, resources, and the respect of skeptical staff officers in the theater, the agency soon proved its value. Prior

to TORCH, agents established contact with Allied sympathizers in North Africa and gathered intelligence vital to the invasion. To guard against a possible Axis thrust through Spanish Morocco into the Allied rear, two civilian operatives even organized warrior tribesmen of the region into a guerrilla force. At Salerno an OSS detachment provided critical tactical intelligence to Darby's Rangers during their defense of the Sorrentino peninsula. Nevertheless, OSS personnel often complained that their operations were misunderstood by field commanders, citing one colonel who expected them to "sit in foxholes and toss petard grenades and Molotov cocktails at German heavy tanks as they rolled over us." [27] Nevertheless, their activities earned the interest and approval of General Clark, who gave them vehicles, rations, and a free hand. [28]

As the Allied armies expanded their foothold on the Italian peninsula during the fall of 1943, the newly arrived operational groups began to establish bases on offshore islands for raids against the German-held northern coastline. In February 1943 Eisenhower agreed to allow the OSS's Special Operations staff at Algiers to employ four to eight of these commando cells to organize and otherwise assist guerrilla forces in Italy and southern France. Shortly after the Italian surrender in September, Donovan, who was visiting Algiers at the time, ordered an operational group to accompany a French expeditionary force to Corsica, where partisans had revolted against the German garrison. Since the Germans had already decided to withdraw their troops to the Italian mainland, the operational groups and their French allies merely harassed the departing enemy. Immediately following the German evacuation, the groups established an advance base there, as well as observation posts on the nearby islands of Gorgona and Capraia. At Corsica, they were only thirty-five miles from the Italian coast.[29]

From their new bases, the operational groups conducted raids against German communications along the Italian coast in an attempt to divert enemy troops from the main front *(Map 3)*. The narrow, rocky coastal plains of the Italian peninsula were crossed by numerous roads and railways, which the Germans used as lines of supply. Night after night, operational groups crawled ashore to attack the most vulnerable points and reconnoiter enemy installations. Observers at Gorgona

MAP 3


NORTHERN ITALY
1943-1945
ELEVATIONS IN FEET
0 1500 6000 AND OVER
0 50
MILES
GERMANY
Salzburg
Zurich
AUSTRIA
HUNGARY
Bern
SWITZERLAND
ALPS
YUGOSLAVIA
FRANCE
Milan
ITALY
Venice
Rhone River
Turin
Po River
Piacenza
Parma
Modena
Dalmatian Coast
Genoa
Pontremoli
Nice
MONACO
Arno River
ADRIATIC SEA
Marseille
Cote d'Azur
LIGURIAN SEA
Gorgona I
Livorno
Iles d Hyeres
Capraia I
Elba I
Vis I
Tiber River
Corsica

directed air strikes against oil tanks in the harbor at Livorno before German raids finally forced evacuation of the island. But not all OG missions ended successfully. In March 1944 a fifteen-man force, code named GINNY, landed south of La Spezia with orders to dynamite a railway tunnel on the main supply line for the front south of Rome. Local inhabitants discovered the party's poorly concealed rubber boats and alerted the Germans, who found the party hiding in a barn. Although in uniform at the time, the captured OG members were summarily executed in accordance with Adolph Hitler's orders to liquidate all commandos.[30]

After transferring its bases to the Italian mainland in the late summer of 1944, the Office of Strategic Services placed a greater emphasis on partisan warfare. Up to that time, the lack of airlift and other resources and the confused political situation resulting from the sudden collapse of Italy in the fall of 1943 had hindered OSS efforts to establish contact with the resistance in northern Italy. In mid-1944, however, the Americans began to drop supplies and operatives into the region on a much larger scale. At that time, nine operational groups parachuted into the area to discover an indigenous resistance movement already in place, but desperately in need of equipment and supplies. As supply drops and word of Allied successes swelled their strength, the partisans subsequently took the offensive, harassing German forces withdrawing to the Gothic Line during the summer and fall of 1944. With winter, the decline in air resupply due to poor flying weather enabled the Germans to strike back against the guerrillas, who faded into the mountains. Their retreat proved only temporary, for by the spring of 1945 seventy-five OSS teams were equipping and training the resistance bands in preparation for the final Allied effort in Italy.[31]

When the Allied offensive crossed the Po River in late April 1945, partisans, supported by operational groups, rose in revolt throughout northern Italy. Assisted by these American operatives, partisans cut key routes from Lake Como to the Brenner Pass, while south of Piacenza and Parma OG teams organized successful roadblocks on key transport routes and harassed German columns and troop concentrations. Guerrilla roadblocks aided the 92d Infantry Division in its capture of

Pontremoli, and in Genoa 15,000 partisans, directed by operational groups, prevented the destruction of the port facilities and took some 3,000 prisoners. In all, Italian partisans killed or wounded over 3,000 Axis troops, captured 81,000 others, and prevented the destruction of key facilities in the Genoa, Milan, Venice, and Modena areas.[32]

Although British SOE agents dominated operations in the eastern Mediterranean, the Office of Strategic Services still played an important role there. Seeking to pin down German forces far from the OVERLORD invasion, American operatives agreed to provide arms to Communist and socialist guerrillas in Greece as early as October 1943 in return for their subordination to the authority of the theater commander. While the partisans increased their activities, operational groups began to infiltrate into Greece early in 1944 to conduct a series of raids against German road and rail communications in Macedonia, Thessaly, and the Peloponnesus. With the aid of Communist guerrillas, an SO party in May demolished two bridges on the Orient Express line, temporarily interrupting the supply of Turkish chrome to Germany. Extensive OSS operations in Greece continued up to the German withdrawal, ending only in December with the outbreak of a local, but bitter, civil war between the various resistance groups. Off the coast of Yugoslavia, operational groups helped defend the island of Vis, a key base for the supply of Communist partisans under Josip Broz Tito, and joined British commandos in raids along the Dalmatian coast, remaining in the field up to the German departure from Yugoslavia in July 1944.[33]

In the initial assault against Axis-dominated Europe, U.S. forces could thus claim many significant achievements in the field of special operations. At Arzew, El Guettar, Gela, Salerno, Monte La Difensa, Anzio, and the Iles d'Hyeres, the Ranger battalions and 1st Special Service Force had performed missions critical to the success of conventional forces, while in the interior OSS commandos had raided German communications and provided direct support to partisans in northern Italy and the Balkans. The ability of these forces to take advantage of the rough terrain and extended coastlines characteristic of the theater proved to be a major factor in their success. Nevertheless, for the most part, the conventional Allied campaign in the Mediterranean proceeded as if special operations never exist-

ed. The relative insignificance of such activities reflected both American inexperience and a chronic shortage of materiel and manpower resources. But the basic cause was the absence of any doctrine of special operations. Field commanders, uncertain about the proper employment of the Ranger battalions and the 1st Special Service Force, depleted their strength in line operations and eventually disbanded them rather than employ them in a systematic program of raids that would have used their special capabilities. Moreover, the partisan efforts in Italy and the Balkans had only a nuisance value and were rarely tied into the operations of conventional Allied combat units. Thus, despite some isolated successes, special operations made only a limited contribution to the hard-earned success of Allied arms in the Mediterranean.

Notes

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4. Darby and Baumer, *Darby's Rangers,* pp. 25–27, 83; Altieri, *The Spearheaders,* pp. 15–22, 66–67; Memo, Col I.B. Summers, Adj Gen, USAFBI, for Hartle, 13 Jun 42, Theodore J. Conway Papers, U.S. Army Military History Institute, (USAMHI), Carlisle, Pa.

5. Altieri, *The Spearheaders,* pp. 38–41, 80–81; Darby and Baumer, *Darby's Rangers,* pp. 27–49; Instructions and Key to Programme of Work for USA Rangers, 1st to 31st July 1942, and Darby's Progress Report to Truscott, 17 Jul 42, both in Sgt Harry Perlmutter Ranger Battalions of World War II Collection, Ranger Battalions: Historical Background Information on Ranger Battalions and Tables of Organization and Equipment (hereafter cited as Perlmutter Collection), Roll 8, John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center Library, Fort Bragg, N.C.

6. Rpt, Darby to Adj Gen, 11 Jan 43, and Capt Roy Murray's report on Dieppe, 26 Aug 42, both in U.S. Army, Adj Gen's Office, World War II Operations Reports, 1940–1948, Infantry (hereafter cited as WWII Ops Reports), INBN 1–0, RG 407, Washington National Records Center (WNRC), Suitland, Md. From the extensive literature on Dieppe, note especially Lord Lovat, *March Past: A Memoir* (New York: Homes & Meier, 1978), pp. 237–78; Peter Young, *Commando* (New York: Ballantine, 1969), pp. 128–53.

7. Maurice Matloff, ed., *American Military History,* Army Historical Series, 2d ed. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, Government Printing Office, 1973), p. 444; AFHQ Outline Plan, TORCH, 20 Sep 42, U.S. Army Staff, Plans and Operations Division, ABC Decimal File, 1942–48, 381 (7–25–42), Sec. 1 to 4, RG 319, NARA; Darby and Baumer, *Darby's Rangers,* pp. 10–13; King, *William Orlando Darby,* p. 44.

8. Darby's report of action at Arzew, 1 Jan 43, WWII Ops Reports, INBN 1–0, RG 407, WNRC; Darby and Baumer, *Darby's Rangers,* pp. 8–10, 17–23; Altieri, *The Spearheaders,* p. 137.

9. Darby and Baumer, *Darby's Rangers,* pp. 53–55; Altieri, *The Spearheaders,* pp. 146–53, 169–91; Michael J. King, *Rangers: Selected Combat Operations of World War II,* Leavenworth Papers 11 (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 1985), p. 14.

10. Leilyn M. Young, "Rangers in a Night Operation," *Military Review* 24 (July 1944): 64–69; Darby and Baumer, *Darby's Rangers,* pp. 56–60; Darby's report of Sened, 5 Mar 43, WWII Ops Reports, INBN 1–0, RG 407, WNRC.

11. Darby and Baumer, *Darby's Rangers,* pp. 60–65; Darby's report for the period 14–28 Feb 43, WWII Ops Reports, INBN 1–0, RG 407, WNRC.

12. Darby and Baumer, *Darby's Rangers,* pp. 67–77; Darby's report of El Guettar, 9 Apr 43, in WWII Ops Reports, INBN 1–0, RG 407, WNRC; King, *William Orlando Darby,* p. 62; King, *Rangers,* pp. 15–22.

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17. See reports on Cisterna in WWII Ops Reports, INBN 1–0.3 and INBN 3–0.3, RG 407, WNRC; King, *William Orlando Darby,* pp. 136, 145; King, *Rangers,* pp. 29–40; Darby and Baumer, *Darby's Rangers,* pp. 148–55, 159–69; Truscott, *Command Missions,* pp. 312–14.

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20. Quote from Adleman and Walton, *The Devil's Brigade,* p. 48.

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22. Burhans, *The First Special Service Force,* pp. 35–37, 45–46, 86; Adleman and Walton, *The Devil's Brigade,* pp. 86–91, 103–09.

23. Adleman and Walton, *The Devil's Brigade,* pp. 119–32, 142–45.

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30. Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS,* 2: 77–80; Report of ICEBERG Operation, Folder 682, and Rpt, Col Russell Livermore to Commander, 2677th HQ Company Exp (Prov), 4 Jan 44, both in OSS, Algiers SO-OP-9, Entry 97, Box 40, RG 226, NARA; Brown, *The Last Hero,* pp. 474–80.

31. MS, AFHQ, History of Special Operations, Mediterranean, pp. 23, 25–26; Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS,* 2: 107–13, 115; Smith, *OSS,* pp. 107, 109.

32. Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS,* 2: 115–16; MS, AFHQ, History of Special Operations, Mediterranean, pp. 26–27; Smith, *OSS,* pp. 116–17.

33. Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS,* 2: 124, 127–29. Brown, *The Last Hero,* pp. 430–33, 439–42.

CHAPTER 3

Special Operations in the European Theater

From the beginning of the war American military leaders were committed to a decisive clash of mass armies on the European continent. Although the Allies did not fix a firm date for the cross-channel invasion until the spring of 1943, planning for the assault, code named OVERLORD, had been almost continuous since early 1942. For the American generals the prospect of a major amphibious landing on a heavily defended coastline represented a new and formidable challenge. As Marshall later remarked to a Soviet colleague, the military education of the American officer corps had been based on roads, rivers, and railways, and they were now forced to acquire one "based on oceans" if OVERLORD was to take place.[1] The availability of amphibious shipping, the neutralization of the German Air Force, and the ability to isolate the initial beachhead were all key ingredients in the new Allied recipe for success. To ensure a firm lodgment on the Continent, the OVERLORD planners were also prepared to conduct a host of special and unconventional operations. Prominent in these projects would be the operations of Ranger units, OSS commandos, and local partisans, all of which demanded much preparation and forethought.

The 29th Ranger Battalion

Among American planners the need to provide some combat experience to the American soldiers designated for OVERLORD remained a significant concern throughout the long planning process. Although Marshall had envisioned raids as a means of providing that experience, the departure of the 1st Ranger Battalion for the Mediterranean in October 1942 had left the British Combined Operations Headquarters without an



A lieutenant of the British commandos instructs men of the 29th Ranger Battalion in the use of the M1 rifle *(U.S. Army photograph).*

American commando unit for its raiding program. To replace that unit, the U.S. European Theater of Operations (ETO) activated another provisional Ranger formation in December 1942. Designated the 29th Ranger Battalion, the new unit consisted of a tiny cadre from Darby's original group and volunteers from the 29th Infantry Division, an inexperienced National Guard formation from Maryland and Virginia. Under the leadership of Maj. Randolph Milholland, a Maryland National Guardsman who had attended the British General Headquarters Battle School, the volunteers trained for five weeks at Achnacarry. In joint exercises with commandos they impressed the British with their performance in amphibious landings, cliff scaling, and a few practice raids.[2]

Through the summer and fall of 1943 the 29th Ranger Battalion joined the British commandos in a series of raids on the Norwegian and French coasts. The first, an attempt to destroy a bridge over a fjord, ended in failure when the Nor-

wegian guide dropped the magazine for his submachine gun on a concrete quay, alerting the German guards. The Rangers met with more success in their second mission, a three-day reconnaissance of a harbor, but a third foray to the Norwegian coast proved abortive when they found that their objective, a German command post, had been abandoned. After more amphibious training during the summer of 1943, the entire battalion landed on the Ile d'Ouessant, a small island off the Atlantic coast of Brittany, and destroyed a German radar installation. As the raiders departed, they left Milholland's helmet and cartridge belt on the beach as calling cards. Despite the battalion's success, the European theater, in line with the original concept, deactivated the unit on 15 October and returned its members to the 29th Division.[3]

The 2d and 5th Ranger Battalions

By the time of the 29th Ranger Battalion's deactivation, the European Theater of Operations had determined that it would need more permanent Ranger-type units to spearhead the cross-channel invasion. At first, the activation of such formations found little support in the Regular Army. Lt. Gen. Lesley J. McNair, the crusty chief of Army Ground Forces and the man most responsible for building and training the Army, preferred versatile standard units to specialized formations for special jobs. Permanent Ranger units, he feared, would constantly seek unprofitable secondary missions to justify their existence, absorb too many of the Army's better junior combat leaders, and cause a host of administrative problems. Marshall, however, deferred to the judgment of his field commanders and in March 1943 ordered the formation of at least one Ranger battalion to replace the 29th.[4]

During the early spring of 1943 volunteers from units throughout the continental United States assembled among the dusty streets, long white barracks, and green pyramidal tents of Camp Forrest, Tennessee, to form the 2d Ranger Battalion. Many had heard of the exploits of Darby's Rangers and were eager to belong to a similar unit; others simply wanted to move overseas more quickly. All generally possessed above-average physical and mental ability. Some had served with the 1st Ranger Battalion, while others had attended Ranger-type training programs in the United States. The battalion also



Maj. James E. Rudder *(U.S. Army Military History Institute)*

received a number of recruits who were too old for Ranger duty and a few eccentrics. All came under the command of Maj. James Earl Rudder on 30 June. Rudder, a genial former football coach from Texas, proved a popular leader, hosting monthly "gripe" sessions with his troops and improving their food and quarters. For all his affability, he insisted on high standards in the unit.[5]

Through 1943 and early 1944 Rudder pushed his men through an intensive training program, focusing on amphibious assaults and infantry fighting. At Camp Forrest the training combined physical conditioning with basic infantry tactics and fieldcraft. The marches, log-lifting drills, and obstacle courses helped to weed out those lacking in strength and stamina. In early September the battalion attended the Scout and Raiders School at Fort Pierce, Florida. Camped on an insect-infested island, the Rangers practiced small-scale amphibious raids with rubber boats and similar craft. From Fort Pierce they moved to Fort Dix, New Jersey, for training in advanced tactics. After arriving in Great Britain in early December the Rangers worked on cliff climbing, weapons training, navigation, and night maneuvers. Meanwhile, Rudder and his staff officers, in consultation with Combined Operations Headquarters, laid plans for a pair of raids against German

installations near Calais and on the Isle of Herm. Rough weather forced cancellation of the two missions, but individual Rangers later accompanied British commandos on several similar operations.[6]

Meanwhile, in response to ETO's need for a stronger assault force for OVERLORD, Army Ground Forces formed the 5th Ranger Battalion in September 1943. Since the European theater command wanted the battalion in Great Britain by the end of the year, the training of the new unit was rushed. After initial physical conditioning and combat training at Camp Forrest, the 5th moved to Fort Pierce in November for two weeks of amphibious training, and then proceeded to Fort Dix for more speed marches and five-day tactical problems at the company and battalion levels. Following their arrival in Great Britain in January, the Rangers moved north to Scotland for amphibious training specifically tailored to match the Normandy coastline.[7]

In January, as the two battalions trained along the coasts of Britain, Rudder and Maj. Max F. Schneider, the commander of the 5th Ranger Battalion, arrived in London to receive their mission for D-day from Col. Truman Thorson, operations officer of Lt. Gen. Omar N. Bradley's U.S. First Army. Four miles west of OMAHA Beach, the main American landing area, was Pointe du Hoe, a peninsula of steep, rocky cliffs jutting out into the Channel. There the Germans had emplaced a battery of six 155-mm. guns which dominated the invasion beaches. Destruction of the battery was critical to the success of the invasion. Although planners had provided for naval and air bombardments of the Pointe, a direct infantry assault was the only certain way of neutralizing the fortification. To reach the position by sea, the attackers would first have to land on a narrow shoreline and then scale an 83- to 100-foot cliff. One intelligence officer remarked, "It can't be done. Three old women with brooms could keep the Rangers from climbing that cliff." [8] Although initially stunned by the magnitude of the task, Rudder and Schneider stepped up their training program, focusing on cliff climbing and amphibious tactics as the date of the assault drew near.[9]

The intense training of the Rangers paid off. Early on the morning of 6 June 1944, the first assault wave of Rangers,



Route used by Rangers to get to the top of Pointe du Hoe *(U.S. Navy photograph); below*, view of Pointe du Hoe from the east *(U.S. Army Military History Institute)*.



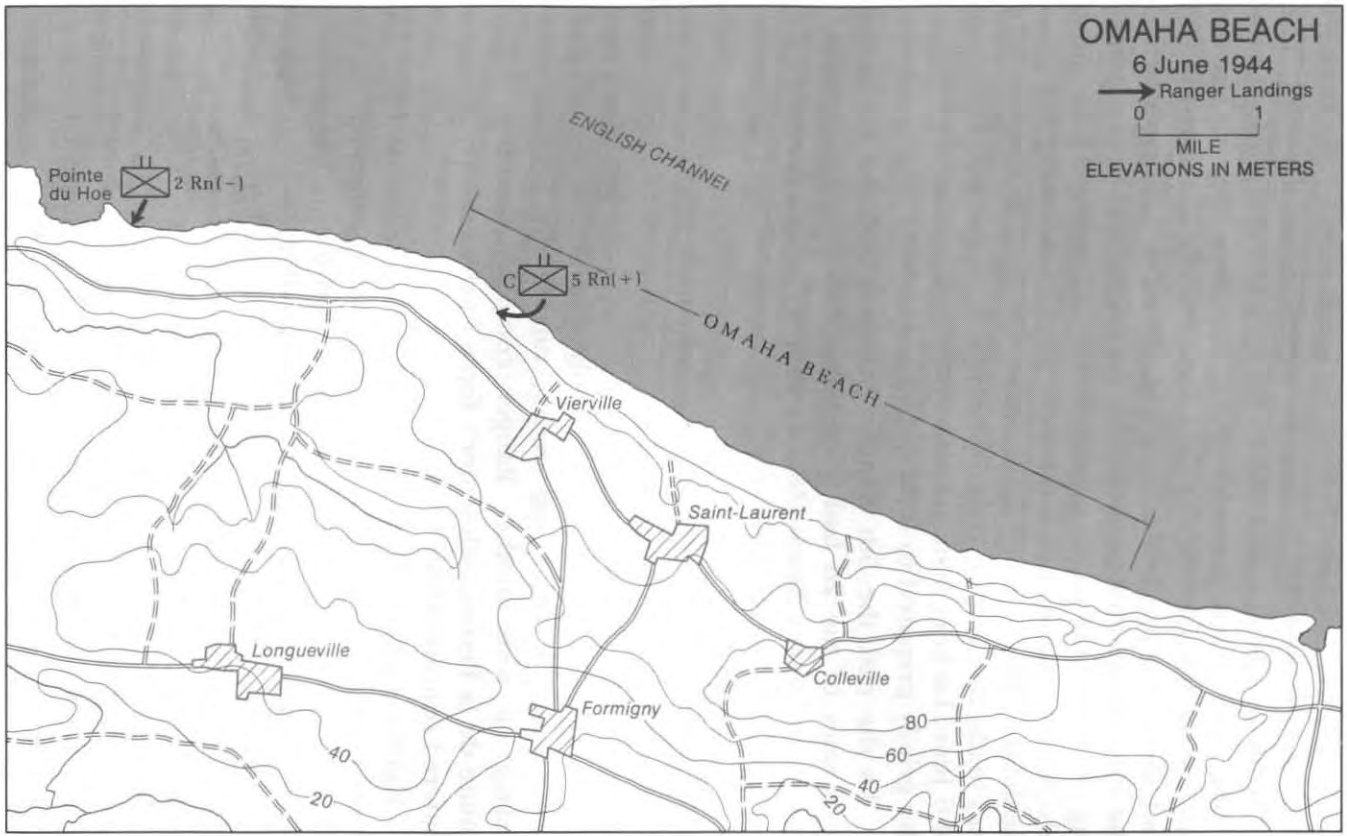
consisting of three companies of the 2d Battalion under Rudder's personal leadership, pounded through heavy Channel seas toward the Normandy coast. After a course error that put them about thirty-five minutes behind schedule, Rudder's force

finally landed at 0710. Covered by naval gunfire, the Rangers used ropes fired by rockets to scramble up the cliff. The incredulous German defenders kept up a withering fire, cut the ropes, and tossed grenades down the slope, but within ten minutes of the landing the first Rangers had reached the top and secured a precarious foothold. As more soldiers reached the summit, Rudder expanded his perimeter and began sweeping the area. One patrol quickly found and destroyed the guns, which the Germans had hidden for protection during the bombardment. The cost had been heavy. Of the 230 Rangers who had made the assault, only 70 remained by the late afternoon of 6 June. Lacking men, supplies, and ammunition, the remainder grimly prepared to hold out against enemy counterattacks.

To the east the 5th Ranger Battalion and the remaining companies of the 2d had joined the 29th Infantry Division's assault on OMAHA Beach *(Map 4)*. Heavy German fire raked the beachhead, pinning the Rangers and troops of the 29th behind a seawall. At this point, according to legend, Brig. Gen. Norman D. Cota, the assistant division commander of the 29th, roared, "We have to get the hell off this beach. Rangers, lead the way!" Whether under Cota's inspiration or not, small parties of Rangers and infantry scrambled over the seawall and, under cover of the rising smoke, carried the heights. After linking up with another Ranger company that had seized Pointe de la Percee, Schneider's force finally relieved Rudder's battered contingent on 8 June.[10]

Having accomplished the task that had been the basis for their creation, the two Ranger battalions spent much of the rest of the war in search of a purpose, performing few missions which line infantry could not have handled. Both battalions had lost heavily on D-day, and Rudder, as senior battalion commander, unsuccessfully petitioned for their return to Great Britain for reorganization and the training of replacements. Instead, the Rangers trained their new personnel as adequately as possible while guarding prisoner cages and acting as a reserve against a German attack from the Channel Islands. In August the two battalions supported the campaign in Brittany, securing the flanks of the American advance, filling gaps in the line, and assaulting minor strongpoints. In the assault on the forts and pillboxes surrounding Brest a four-man patrol from

MAP 4


OMAHA BEACH
6 June 1944
Ranger Landings
0
1
MILE
ELEVATIONS IN METERS
ENGLISH CHANNEL
Pointe du Hoe
2 Rn(-)
C
5 Rn(+)
OMAHA BEACH
Vierville
Saint-Laurent
Longueville
Colleville
Formigny
80
60
40
20
40
20

the 2d Ranger Battalion infiltrated the Lochrist Battery and forced the German commander to surrender the position. After a two-month respite following the fall of Brest on 18 September, the 2d Ranger Battalion joined the bitter struggle to clear the Huertgen Forest. Holding a defensive position in the snow and mud, a role ill suited to their organization as a light assault force, the Rangers suffered heavily from enemy artillery and exposure.[11]

When Rudder complained to higher headquarters about the misuse of his Rangers, he received orders to move the battalion to the outskirts of Bergstein and assault Hill 400, also known as Castle Hill. Troops and tanks of the 5th Armored Division clung to a tenuous position in Bergstein under heavy fire directed from the hill, which commanded the village and surrounding region. After a Ranger patrol reconnoitered the height in the predawn darkness of 7 December, one company took position to provide fire support, while two others charged up the slope. Catching the Germans by surprise, the Rangers seized control of the crest and captured twenty-eight prisoners with only light losses. Almost immediately, however, they were hit by enemy shellfire and two counterattacks. By late afternoon only twenty-five Rangers remained on top of the hill. Reinforced by a platoon and supported by artillery fire, they managed to hold until a battalion relieved them on the evening of 8 December. In the end, the battle for Bergstein cost the 2d Ranger Battalion over half its strength, most of which was expended in defense of the hill.[12]

To the south the 5th Ranger Battalion performed the only deep infiltration mission assigned to the two battalions after D-day. Under a new commander, Lt. Col. Richard P. Sullivan, the 5th had joined Third Army's drive into the Saar-Moselle region in late November and had covered a division-size sector in Third Army's front during the German counteroffensive in the Ardennes. In late February 1945 Lt. Gen. Walton H. Walker's XX Corps was attempting to expand its bridgehead over the Saar River in the vicinity of Trier. To weaken German resistance, Walker directed Sullivan's Ranger unit to penetrate the German front and attack the enemy's communications. On the night of 23–24 February the Rangers, using the woods and hills of the region as concealment, silently moved through



Patrol of the 2d Platoon, Company C, 2d Ranger Battalion, moves down a road near Heimbach, Germany *(U.S. Army photograph).*

German lines. Despite occasional clashes with enemy parties and the separation of two platoons from the main body, by the morning of 25 February the battalion had reached a position on high ground dominating the Irsch-Zerf Road, the enemy's main line of retreat. Aided by a battery of field artillery firing from American lines, the Rangers withstood repeated attacks by the withdrawing Germans. Although advance elements of the 10th Armored Division bypassed the Ranger positions on 26 February, it was not until 5 March that the 180 remaining Rangers could finally withdraw to a rest area. Their stand contributed directly to the collapse of German defenses in the area and the advance of XX Corps to the Rhine.[13]

After these two Ranger-type missions, the remainder of the war in Europe proved anticlimactic for the two battalions. The 2d had barely begun to train replacements following its ordeal at Bergstein when the German Ardennes offensive compelled First Army to throw the unit into the line at Simmerath in an effort to shore up the northern flank of the growing "Bulge."

Following the repulse of the last German offensive, the 2d conducted patrols in preparation for Allied crossings of the Roer River. Once the Allies breached the German defenses along the Roer and the Rhine, the two Ranger battalions, operating in conjunction with mechanized cavalry forces, joined the rapid final advance of Allied forces across Germany, mopping up the last pockets of resistance prior to the surrender on 8 May.[14]

There were many reasons for the consistent use of the Rangers as line infantry during the campaign in France and Germany. The Army had created the two battalions for one mission: the seizure of key points in support of the cross-channel invasion. Once on the Continent the U.S. Army fought a war of mass and firepower, a war in which small, light commando units seemed to have little place. Although the rapid pace of the campaign left little time to plan special missions, the very fluidity of the situation did present opportunities for infiltration and the seizure of river crossings, road junctions, and prisoner-of-war camps in advance of Allied spearheads. An abortive attempt by an armored task force to free prisoners at Hammelburg furnishes one example of a mission where a mobile Ranger unit might have proved useful. In fact, with their attachment to the cavalry during the closing months of the war, the Rangers had acquired the operational mobility to perform such operations in open terrain.[15] American tactical commanders, however, shied away from using the Rangers in this manner, perhaps because they viewed such activities as too risky. Furthermore, no doctrine, staff section, or command existed to guide field commanders in the use of Ranger units. Given the lack of knowledge on the proper employment of the Rangers, the shortage of combat manpower, and the resulting pressure on commanders to keep every unit on the front line, the assignment of the Rangers to line duty was perhaps inevitable.

The Jedburghs and Operational Groups in France

If the Army showed only a fleeting interest in raids and other Ranger tasks, it showed even less in partisan operations, generally leaving that field to the Office of Strategic Services. As in the Mediterranean, the OSS effort in northern Europe initially suffered from inexperience, lack of respect, and a

shortage of resources. One British observer recalled the first six OSS operatives in London in early 1943, "arriving like jeune filles en fleur straight from finishing school, all fresh and innocent, to start work in our frowsty old intelligence brothel." [16] Although the Special Operations office in London and the Special Operations Executive soon concluded an operational pact and created a combined Special Forces Headquarters (SFHQ), the more established British clearly overshadowed their American partners. As late as March 1944 the British were launching ten times as many supply sorties into France as the Americans, largely because of the Roosevelt administration's lukewarm attitude toward the Gaullist resistance and the U.S. Army Air Forces' desire to concentrate on the bombing offensive.[17]

Fortunately, the Office of Strategic Services found support for its efforts from the supreme commander of the cross-channel invasion. In an "ultrasecret" memorandum on 22 March, General Eisenhower remarked, "We are going to need very badly the support of the Resistance groups in France." [18] His Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), perceived in the resistance a means of delaying, or even preventing, a German counterattack against the future invasion beaches. SHAEF's plan for the invasion called for the partisans to destroy railways, to harass German troop movements, to cut road communications and telephone lines, and to attack other targets of opportunity, such as enemy headquarters, fuel and ammunition dumps, and even German aircraft on the ground. Through Eisenhower's headquarters, personnel of the Special Operations Branch were able to obtain a larger allocation of aircraft and by May were starting to match the British effort in shipments of agents and supplies.[19]

In their dealings with the French underground, Allied headquarters and the Office of Strategic Services soon found that they could not ignore politics. While General Charles de Gaulle's adherents claimed authority over the entire resistance, the rightist Armee de l'Armistice and the Communist Francs Tireurs Partisans, who frequently clashed with the Gaullist Armee Secrete, also possessed sizable followings. The OSS encountered disagreements, both with the Special Operations Executive and within its own ranks, over how to handle these differences. In general, the British preferred to divert supplies

away from any elements which might act against British postwar interests, while the Office of Strategic Services, in line with the U.S. policy of postponing political considerations until after the war, was willing to aid any group willing to fight the Germans. To ensure Gaullist support for OVERLORD, Eisenhower, on the eve of the invasion, created the Etat Major, Forces Francaises de l'Interieur (EMFFI), an administrative headquarters under a Gaullist general to supervise resistance activities, but he resisted subordinating Special Forces Headquarters to this organization until late June. This chaotic, improvised command structure would later cause numerous difficulties for OSS operatives in the field.[20]

To serve as a link with the resistance, Eisenhower's headquarters and EMFFI planned to use liaison teams known as Jedburghs, named after guerrillas in the Jedburgh region of twelfth century Scotland. Formed into three-man cells consisting of a British or American officer, a French officer, and a radio operator, the Jedburghs were to parachute into France and provide radio communications between the resistance and Allied headquarters, to coordinate partisan operations with the main Allied force, to arrange for deliveries of supplies, and, if necessary, to organize, train, and even lead the partisans in guerrilla warfare. Beginning in August 1943, the Special Operations Office in London canvassed American units and bases in the European theater, the Mediterranean, and the continental United States for physically fit volunteers with skill in communications, an ability to speak French, and a willingness to volunteer for a hazardous mission behind enemy lines. In response, it received a tough, gregarious, and often unruly collection of characters, including a few ex-paratroopers, prewar adventurers, and assorted intellectuals. In contrast to the freewheeling American and British volunteers, the French officers, including many professionals haunted by the memory of 1940, seemed grim and austere. Nevertheless, the three groups adapted well to each other as they prepared for the task ahead.[21]

The Jedburghs received the bulk of their training at a number of installations in Great Britain. At a commando training camp in the highlands of Scotland they studied demolitions, practicing their craft on unused railroads, tunnels,



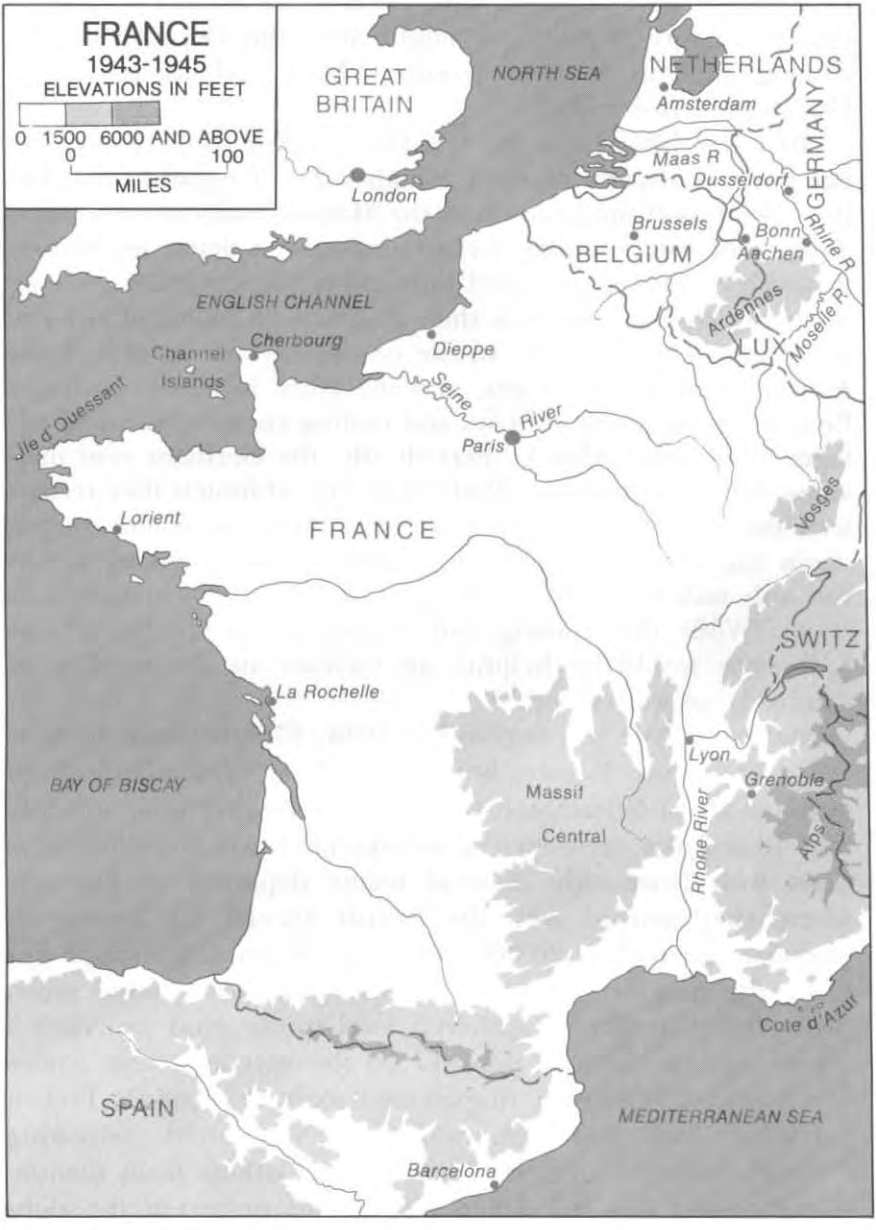
Main wing, Milton Hall *(National Archives)*

bridges, roads, and isolated buildings in the area. They also learned hand-to-hand combat from two former officers of the Shanghai Police Force and endured three days of severe psychological and physical testing. The graduates who passed these tests then proceeded to the British parachute school at Ringway. In contrast to the American airborne school at Fort Benning, Georgia, the Jedburgh training schedule permitted only three days of instruction, during which the prospective infiltrators made three practice jumps from aircraft flying at an altitude of 500 feet. Following this abbreviated instruction, their final training took place at Milton Hall, the estate of an old, aristocratic English family. Amidst the brick buildings and gardens the trainees endured further physical conditioning and received instruction in guerrilla tactics, sabotage and evasion techniques, codes and communications, weapons, and fieldcraft. Left to form their own teams, they chose partners on the basis of professional respect and personal friendship. After three-day maneuvers as teams the Jedburghs were ready for

deployment by late April, but, because of SHAEF's concern that premature deployment might alert the Germans to the coming invasion, the first Jedburgh teams did not jump into France until D-day.[22]

By early June 1944 the resistance, aided by SOE and SO agents, had already reached a high state of organization, but the French partisans, known as the Maquis, badly needed arms, equipment, and supplies. Urban areas and a dense population in much of France provided little cover for guerrillas, forcing them to disperse and limit their activities to sabotage and the gathering of intelligence. In the mountains and forests of the Massif Central, the Vosges, and the Alps, however, partisans flourished, harassing convoys and raiding enemy-controlled villages and towns *(Map 5)*. Periodically, the Germans sent divisions into guerrilla-controlled areas, but, although they terrorized the local population, the troops rarely were able to pin down the elusive Maquis. Nevertheless, the partisans lacked not only military items of all types, but also such essentials as shoes. While the training and organizational abilities of the Jedburghs would be helpful, an increase in the number of supply drops was critical.[23]

Between June and September 1944, 276 Jedburgh personnel jumped into France, Belgium, and the Netherlands from bases in Great Britain and North Africa. During June and July they joined the resistance in attacks on German communications with Normandy. Several teams deployed to Brittany, where they worked with the British Special Air Service to organize more than 20,000 partisans. When U.S. troops entered the province in August, these guerrillas guided units, protected their flanks, gathered intelligence, and provided a screen against German patrols. To the east as Allied armies raced across France in August and early September, French partisans with Jedburgh assistance ambushed retreating German columns, preserved major installations from demolition, rescued downed Allied pilots, and protected the right flank of Third Army's rapid advance. Jedburgh officers also gathered valuable intelligence, including plans for German defenses at Lorient and La Rochelle, and information on the V–4, a new German secret weapon that used the blast from compressed air against infantry. In southern France Jedburgh-


FRANCE
1943-1945
ELEVATIONS IN FEET
0 1500 6000 AND ABOVE
0 100
MILES
GREAT BRITAIN
NORTH SEA
NETHERLANDS
Amsterdam
GERMANY
London
Maas R
Dusseldorf
Rhine R.
Brussels
Bonn
Aachen
BELGIUM
ENGLISH CHANNEL
Ardennes
LUX
Moselle R.
Cherbourg
Channel Islands
Dieppe
Seine River
Paris
Jle d'Ouessant
Lorient
FRANCE
Vosges
SWITZ
La Rochelle
Lyon
Grenoble
BAY OF BISCAY
Massif Central
Rhone River
Alps
Cote d'Azur
SPAIN
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Barcelona

MAP 5



A Jedburgh with full operational equipment *(National Archives)*

aided partisans supported the Allied landings on the Riviera coast and Seventh Army's subsequent drive to the Rhine Valley, liberating hosts of jubilant French towns in advance of Lt. Gen. Alexander M. Patch's Allied forces.[24]

One of the teams operating in advance of Seventh Army was Team Packard. Deploying from Algiers on the night of 31 July, Packard, under Capt. Aaron Bank, jumped into the Lazare Department, a region of forested mountains and small cities near the Rhone Valley. Caught in the middle of various political squabbles between Communist and Gaullist partisans, they provided assistance to both groups but worked more closely with the non-Communist elements, initially arming and training them, and then accompanying them on occasional forays against railroad bridges and tunnels. When the Germans began to withdraw following Patch's breakout from the ANVIL beachhead on 19 August, the partisans stepped up the tempo of their operations, harassing the Germans with roadblocks and ambushes and providing intelligence and all possible assistance to the advancing Allied forces. To the end the various resistance factions continued to compete with one another, each attempting to be the first to liberate the French cities and towns. Exuberant Frenchmen feted Bank's team with wine and food and even offered free service at a local bordello. By 3



Team Packard with members of the French Resistance. Capt. Aaron Bank is third from left *(Courtesy of Col. Aaron Bank, U.S. Army, Retired).*

September few Germans remained in the area, and the team drove to Grenoble to await further orders.[25]

Team Gorin's experience in Brittany proved more frustrating. After an alert on 10 July a nervous French officer from EMFFI hurriedly briefed the team, which included American 1st Lt. William Dreux, a French officer, and a French radio operator. The team's mission was to organize and train the Maquis in the St. Malo region, harass enemy communications, and, on signal from London, demolish six local bridges. Both Gorin and another team assigned an identical mission jumped into a pasture about seventy-five miles east of the objective area. The open terrain of the region and heavy German activity precluded a strong Maquis, but the two groups were able to contact a local party of Communist guerrillas and make their way toward their assigned area, hiding in churches and barns along the way. On one occasion a German patrol stopped their car, but the German guard was too confused to recognize the

Allied officers. The two teams finally reached their operational area about the same time as Patton's spearheads, rendering senseless any attempt to destroy the bridges. Although the teams were able to organize local partisans to help reconnoiter and to screen the subsequent American advance, they ultimately returned to London feeling they had made no more than an insignificant contribution to the battle.[26]

Where a more sizable American presence than a Jedburgh team was necessary, the Allied high command employed the OSS's operational groups. Based in London and Algiers, about 355 personnel in twenty-two groups parachuted into France between June and September 1944. Most were French-speaking, but in the absence of plans to invade Norway, some Norwegian operational groups also participated. Working alone or in cooperation with Jedburghs and partisans, the groups ambushed enemy columns, cut communications, attacked railroad lines, blew up bridges, and helped supply and arm the resistance. They also preserved two important hydroelectric plants from destruction by the retreating Germans.[27]

In Brittany Operational Group Donald performed a typical counterscorch mission, capturing and preserving a small bridge until relieved by advancing American forces. Landing in a field near Guimilieu in the early morning of 6 August, Donald, consisting of about thirty-five men under Lt. Col. Serge Obolensky, quickly secured the span, which proved to be only a short walk from its landing zone. Over the next few days the group, with partisan assistance, gradually strengthened its tiny perimeter around the bridge and found time to participate in a local parade. Patrolling the surrounding countryside, Donald's patrols even bluffed a 100-man German force into surrendering. After finally linking up with elements of the Third Army, the section flew to London on 18 August, its mission accomplished.[28]

While most OG missions were successful, the operational groups and the resistance received a bitter lesson in the Vercours of the dangers of a partisan stand against conventional forces. Located in the Alpine foothills southwest of Grenoble, the Vercours region, a plateau surrounded by sheer cliffs and approachable by only a few roads, seemed a natural fortress. In early June the area's Maquis, responding to SHAEF's call to



Colonel Obolensky and his OGs in a dressing area before departure for France *(National Archives)*

arms, attacked German communications all along the Rhone Valley. Allied headquarters sent an operational group and two Jedburgh teams with instructions to train the Maquis but discourage a large-scale uprising. The advice came too late. Confident of their ability to defend the plateau, the partisans, with ranks swelled by recruits to almost 3,200 men, proclaimed a Republic of Vercours. On Bastille Day the Allies carried out a massive supply drop to the insurgents, who appeared eager to face the regular German troops in a standup battle.

The German response to this clear challenge was swift. Within thirty minutes of the airlift, the German Air Force began round-the-clock bombing of the plateau. Having surrounded the region with 6,500 men, the Germans attacked in converging columns on 18 July and later landed airborne troops on the plateau. Under heavy pressure from within and without, the partisans and OSS men split into small groups and fled to the forests. After eleven days of hiding from German patrols, the OSS elements managed to escape the

pocket, eventually reaching American lines, but the resistance lost 600 to 700 killed, not including the victims of German atrocities against civilians in the region.[29]

As the varying accounts would indicate, evaluation of the Jedburghs and operational groups is a difficult task, Eisenhower later equated the worth of the resistance to fifteen divisions, but the degree to which American operatives contributed to this success is impossible to estimate. The Maquis obviously benefited from the instruction in weapons and sabotage provided by Jedburgh and OG teams. In addition, the OSS men performed valuable services in gathering intelligence and providing needed liaison between the resistance and Allied commanders in London and in the field. The sight of Allied officers in uniform behind German lines elated the French populace, who knew that Allied armies could not be far behind. Jedburgh officers who accompanied the Maquis in the "liberation" of small towns and villages were treated to tumultuous receptions as conquering heroes. Children offered candy and flowers, women competed to kiss the OSS liberators, and champagne flowed freely. Although some in the Allied high command had estimated that the Jedburghs would lose as much as 40 percent of their personnel, casualties were relatively low. Of the 84 American Jedburghs, 6 were killed, 7 were wounded, and 2 survived capture.[30]

While the Jedburghs and operational groups could boast of many concrete accomplishments, a number of problems also plagued their operations. Reflecting in some cases a contempt for rear echelon personnel, Jedburghs complained of unrealistic planning, inadequate briefings, confusing command and liaison arrangements, and an embarrassing lack of response to repeated requests for supplies. One Jedburgh team, assured by a briefing officer that it would be deployed to an area free of Germans, landed in the middle of an enemy parachute division. Reflecting a lack of policy toward the resistance, the OSS men received little guidance in handling different political factions. When Capt. Stewart Alsop's Jedburgh team jumped into southern France, the French officer who accompanied him insisted that they ignore orders to cooperate with a Communist group and instead work with the Gaullist partisans. In addition, most OSS personnel found that Allied tactical commanders had little grasp of their work and missions and often

ignored their intelligence reports and offers of assistance. While trigger-happy partisans often proved long on enthusiasm and short on actual fighting ability, too many American officers ignored their real value and adopted the views of one infantry lieutenant, who called the French Forces of the Interior the "damndest bunch of clowns I ever saw in my life. . . . Foolish French Idiots we used to call them." [31] The most common complaints of OSS personnel revolved around their late deployment to the Continent. By the time of their arrival the resistance had been fairly well organized, and Allied forces were often only a few days' march away.[32]

The unanticipated speed of the Allied advance through France was one of the major factors inhibiting the establishment of an effective program of special operations in the European theater. Although mountainous and forested areas provided some cover for guerrilla and commando activities, the critical terrain over which the armies fought up to the German border was usually characterized by open plains and highways, which were more conducive to mobile conventional units. Another problem was the lack of acceptance and prior planning by the Army on the subject of special operations. While planners of the cross-channel attack foresaw the need for special assault units fairly early, it was not until March 1944 that Eisenhower directed a major emphasis on the organization and supply of French partisans by the Office of Strategic Services. Once on the Continent the pace of the Allied advance, along with the lack of doctrine, further hampered the systematic employment of commandos and partisans. As Eisenhower later admitted, the Maquis proved a great help to Allied operations, but their success came in spite of improvisation and administrative confusion, and owed more to the work of the partisans themselves and to the British, who had worked laboriously to establish the resistance network since 1940. Consequently, the American experience with special operations in northern Europe, while a success in many ways, served mainly to indicate the possibilities of such activities in the future.

Notes

1. Quote from Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943–1944*, U.S. Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 363.

2. Memo, Lt Col C.E. Lundquist, ETO, for Commanding General, II Corps, 30 Sep 42; Rpt, Capt Cleaves A. Jones, Liaison Section, to Brig Gen Norman D. Cota, 18 Mar 43; and Rpt, Jones to Col Claude E. Stadtman, Feb 43. All in Perlmutter Collection, Roll 8. Jerome J. Haggerty, "A History of the Ranger Battalions in World War II" (Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1982), pp. 129–30; Joseph H. Ewing, *29 Let's Go! A History of the 29th Infantry Division in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Infantry Journal Press, 1948), pp. 18–19.

3. Ewing, *29 Let's Go!*, pp. 19, 25–26; Haggerty, "A History of the Ranger Battalions in World War II," pp. 131–35.

4. Memo, Maj Richard P. Fisk, Asst Adj Gen, ETO, for the Adjutant General, 2 Dec 42, Perlmutter Collection, Roll 8; Memo, Maj James D. Tanner, Asst Grd Adj Gen, Army Ground Forces, for Asst Chief of Staff, Operations Division, 4 Jan 43, AG 320.2 (12–2–42), and Memo, Col Claude B. Fehrenbach, Chief, European Section, Theater Group, OPD, for Adjutant General, 21 Apr 43, AG 320.2 Ranger Battalions for ETO (March 12, 1943), both in U.S. Army, Adjutant General, Classified Decimal File, 1943–1945, RG 407, NARA; Weigley, *History of the U.S. Army*, pp. 466, 470. The European Theater of Operations wanted to grant permanent status to the 29th Ranger Battalion, but the War Department preferred to form new units in the United States rather than adopt any existing provisional formations.

5. Ronald L. Lane, *Rudder's Rangers* (Manassas, Va.: Ranger Associates, 1979), pp. 16–24; Alfred E. Baer, Jr., *D for Dog: The Story of a Ranger Company* (1946), p. 1.

6. Lane, *Rudder's Rangers*, pp. 15–55; Bell I. Wiley and William P. Govan, *History of the Second Army*, Army Ground Forces Histories 16 (Washington, D.C.: Army Ground Forces, 1946), pp. 154–55.

7. Henry S. Glassman, *"Lead the Way Rangers": A History of the 5th Ranger Battalion* (Markt Grafing, Bavaria: Buchdruckerei Hausser, 1945), pp. 2, 10–13; Wiley and Govan, *History of the Second Army*, p. 155.

8. Quote from Lane, *Rudder's Rangers*, p. 68.

9. Lane, *Rudder's Rangers*, pp. 55–68; Narrative History of the Second Ranger Infantry Battalion, 1944, pp. 1–8, WWII Ops Reports, INBN 2–0.3, RG 407, WNRC; Glassman, *"Lead the Way Rangers"*, pp. 12–13; Normandy Landings, 2d and 5th Ranger Battalions, June 6–8, 1944, Perlmutter Collection, Roll 7.

10. Lane's *Rudder's Rangers* has a good account. See also Normandy Landings, 2d and 5th Ranger Battalions, June 6–8, 1944, Perlmutter Collection, Roll 7, and After Battle Report, 2d Ranger Battalion for June 1944, 22 Jul 44, WWII Ops Reports, INBN 2–0.3, RG 407, WNRC; Glassman, *"Lead the Way Rangers"*, pp. 20–24; Cota quote from Haggerty, "A History of the Ranger Battalions in World War II," p. 218.

11. See After Battle Reports for the 2d Ranger Battalion in WWII Ops Reports, INBN 2–0.3; Glassman, *"Lead the Way Rangers"*, pp. 28–38, 42–43; Haggerty, "A History of the Ranger Battalions in World War II," p. 227; Baer, *D For Dog*, pp. 48–58, 63–69.

12. Baer, *D for Dog*, pp. 75–86; Charles B. MacDonald, *The Siegfried Line Campaign*, U.S. Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, Government Printing Office, 1963), pp. 461–63.

13. King, *Rangers*, pp. 43–54. See reports of Sullivan and his executive officer, Maj. Hugo W. Heffelfinger, in Perlmutter Collection, Roll 7. Glassman, "*Lead the Way Rangers*", pp. 56–70.

14. See After Battle Reports for the 2d Ranger Battalion, in WWII Ops Reports, INBN 2–0.3, and Glassman, "*Lead the Way Rangers*", pp. 71–73. Baer, *D for Dog*, pp. 87–88, 101.

15. On Hammelburg, see Charles B. MacDonald, *The Last Offensive*, U.S. Army in World War II (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, Government Printing Office, 1973), pp. 280–84.

16. Quote from Smith, *OSS*, p. 163.

17. Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: 3–7, 144–45; Smith, *OSS*, p. 166; Arthur L. Funk, "Churchill, Eisenhower, and the French Resistance," *Military Affairs* 45 (February 1981): 29–30; Brown, *The Last Hero*, pp. 524–26.

18. Quotes from Peter Lyon, *Eisenhower: Portrait of the Hero* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), p. 280.

19. Ltr, Maj Gen Walter B. Smith to Gen Sir Henry M. Wilson, 21 May 44, and Plan for Coordination and Use of Resistance Movements in Connection with Operation OVERLORD, both in MS, AFHQ, History of Special Operations, Mediterranean, pp. 160–70; Brown, *The Last Hero*, p. 526.

20. Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: 197–98; MS, AFHQ, History of Special Operations, Mediterranean, pp. 151, 170; Smith, *OSS*, pp. 168–69.

21. Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: 199; Functions of Staffs and Jedburgh Teams Under SOE/SO Plan, 30 Aug 43, OOS, Algiers SO–OP–9, Entry 97, Box 40, RG 226, NARA; MS, Stanley N. Cannicott, Journey of a Jed, pp. 21–22, held by Dr. Samuel J. Lewis, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, Kans.; Dreux, *No Bridges Blown*, pp. 18, 50–56; Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets*, pp. 6, 13–15, 22; Smith, *OSS*, p. 175; Alsop and Braden, *The OSS and American Espionage*, pp. 143, 146–49. The Jedburghs also included some Belgians and Dutch for operations into the Low Countries.

22. Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets*, pp. 8–25; Dreux, *No Bridges Blown*, pp. 26–69; MS, Cannicott, Journey of a Jed, pp. 22–25; Alsop and Braden, *The OSS and American Espionage*, pp. 141, 146–49.

23. Call for Arms for French Patriots, in MS, Cannicott, Journey of a Jed, pp. 13–14; Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets*, p. 25; Alsop and Braden, *The OSS and American Espionage*, pp. 130–35.

24. See reports on Jedburghs in OSS, Special Forces, Entry 103, Boxes 2–3, RG 226, NARA; Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: 199–204; Marten, Report on Jedburghs, 6 Oct 44, OSS, Caserta SO–OP, Entry 154, Box 56, RG 226, NARA.

25. Team Packard's report in OSS, Special Forces, Entry 103, Box 3, RG 226, NARA; Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets*, pp. 32–62.

26. See Dreux, *No Bridges Blown*.

27. Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: xii, 204–07, 219; operational group reports in OSS, London OG–OP–1, Entry 148, Box 83, RG 226, NARA; progress reports in Folder 4, OSS, History Office Files, Entry 99, Box 2, RG 226, NARA; MS, AFHQ, History of Special Operations, Mediterranean, pp. 219–20.

28. Report of Operational Group Donald in OSS, London OG–OP–1, Entry 148, Box 83, RG 226, NARA.

29. Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: 194–96; MS, AFHQ, History of Special Operations, Mediterranean, pp. 153, 205–10.

30. M.R.D. Foot, *SOE in France* (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America, 1966), pp. 401, 441–42; Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets*, p. 135; Smith, *OSS*, pp. 188–90; Alsop and Braden, *The OSS and American Espionage*, pp. 183–84.

31. Quotes from Alsop and Braden, *The OSS and American Espionage*, p. 171.

32. Marten, Report on Jedburghs, 6 Oct 44, OSS, Caserta SO–OP; reports on Jedburghs, OSS, Special Forces, Entry 103, Boxes 2–3, RG 226, NARA; operational group reports, OSS, London OG–OP–1, Entry 148, Box 83, RG 226, NARA; Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets*, pp. 43, 54, 57, 66–67; Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: 200, 204, 207; Theater Report, 15 June 1944, Folder 3, OSS, History Office Files, Entry 99, Box 2, RG 226, NARA; MS, AFHQ, History of Special Operations, Mediterranean, p. 344; Foot, *SOE in France*, pp. 401–04; Alsop and Braden, *The OSS and American Espionage*, pp. 122–27; Smith, *OSS*, pp. 186, 190–93.

CHAPTER 4

Special Operations in the Pacific

Before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor thrust the United States into World War II, American and British planners had agreed that in the event of a two-ocean war the Allies would defeat Germany before concentrating against Japan. Nevertheless, by late 1942, American forces had seized the initiative in the Pacific, landing on Guadalcanal and advancing into the South, Southwest, and Central Pacific. The generally subordinate role of the Army to the Navy in the war against Japan, along with the availability of marines for many missions performed by Rangers in Europe, precluded similar operations by the Army except in the Southwest Pacific (SWPA). There, General Douglas MacArthur, the imperious theater chief, and Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger, commander of the U.S. Sixth Army, made extensive use of guerrillas, scout units, and commando forces, particularly in support of the effort to recapture the Philippine Islands.

The Office of Strategic Services never played a major role in the Pacific. Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the overall commander of the Central and South Pacific theaters, limited OSS activities to an intelligence and liaison office in Honolulu. Donovan's envoys were even less successful in their negotiations with the Southwest Pacific Theater. MacArthur and his staff intended to conduct their own brand of special operations in the theater without any interference from a semi-autonomous organization that had its own command channel to Washington. Although the OSS periodically attempted to "penetrate" the theater, MacArthur was able to close his command to Donovan's agency until the last days of the war.[1]

Despite his coolness to the OSS, MacArthur was generally receptive to special operations. Perhaps the most dramatic and controversial general of World War II, the charismatic SWPA



General Douglas MacArthur (right) talks with Maj. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright *(U.S. Army photograph).*

chief possessed a quick, brilliant mind and cosmopolitan outlook; his prewar experience and broad intellectual background gave him a deep appreciation of political and social considerations in the Far East. Emotional and romantic in temperament, MacArthur viewed warfare more in spiritual and moral terms than as a struggle of numbers and resources. His strategic outlook for most of World War II was dominated by a sense of moral obligation, approaching obsession, to regain the Philippines, where he had spent much of his career and had developed many close ties. All of these factors contributed to his outlook on special operations, which he viewed not only as useful supplements to conventional military efforts, but also as a way of maintaining his army's will to fight. A keen student of military history, he was well aware of numerous instances where small units had defeated larger ones and where guerrillas had eroded the ability of conventional forces to fight. His own father had experienced the frustrations of counterguerrilla warfare while leading American troops in the Philippines at the turn of the century.[2]

Guerrillas in the Philippines

Even before Pearl Harbor MacArthur, as commander of the forces defending the Philippines, considered the possibility of waging a guerrilla war. Under existing war plans his forces were expected to hold off a Japanese attack for several months before an American relief expedition could reach them. As part of his strategy for such a contingency, MacArthur established an embryo underground intelligence service among the numerous American businessmen, miners, and plantation owners on the islands and also contemplated the withdrawal of some Filipino reservists into the mountains to serve as guerrillas. These initial ideas, however, amounted to little more than tentative proposals. The U.S. Army's lack of a doctrine for guerrilla warfare militated against such a course of action, as did MacArthur's own overestimation of the time available before the Japanese attack and the ability of his regulars and Filipino troops to stop or at least delay the enemy on the invasion beaches. His overconfidence was shared by many American officers in the islands, one of whom boasted that he could whip the Japanese with a company of Boy Scouts.[3]

When the Japanese invaded the Philippines in mid-December 1941, their rapid advance not only dispelled American delusions of superiority but also left little time to organize guerrilla warfare. By 23 December MacArthur's beach defense plan lay in ruins, and his remaining forces were withdrawing into the Bataan peninsula. Cut off from Bataan, Col. John P. Horan near Baguio, Capt. Walter Cushing along the Ilocos coast, Capt. Ralph Praeger in the Cagayan Valley, and Maj. Everett Warner in Isabela Province formed guerrilla units from the broken remnants of Filipino forces in northern Luzon, and MacArthur sent Col. Claude A. Thorp to organize partisans in central Luzon *(Map 6).* To meet the need for intelligence from behind enemy lines, Brig. Gen. Simeon de Jesus organized a network of about sixty agents who infiltrated by foot or by boat across Manila Bay and reported by radio to a central station in a Manila movie theater, which forwarded the data to MacArthur on Corregidor. Meanwhile, MacArthur directed Maj. Gen. William F. Sharp in Mindanao to intensify preparations for guerrilla warfare in the southern islands. When he made his dramatic escape to Australia in March, he hoped to retain control over his remaining units in the Philippines from


NORTHERN PHILIPPINES
1941-1945
ELEVATIONS IN FEET
0
3500 AND ABOVE
0
50
MILES
ILOCOS NORTE
CAGAYAN
ABRA
Luzon I
ILOCOS SUR
MOUNTAIN
ISABELA
LA UNION
Baguio
NUEVA VIZCAYA
PANGASINAN
NUEVA ECIJA
Guimba
TARLAC
Cabanatuan
PHILIPPINE SEA
PAMPANGA
BULACAN
ZAMBALES
Polillo I
MANILA BAY
RIZAL
Manila
BATAAN
Corregidor I
LAGUNA DE BAY
CAVITE
CAMARINES NORTE
LAGUNA
BATANGAS
TAYABAS
Catanduanes I
CAMARINES SUR
MARINDUQUE
Marinduque I
ALBAY
MINDORO
Burias I
MINDORO STRAIT
Mindoro I
SIBUYAN SEA
SORSOGON
Romblon I
Sibuyan I
ROMBLON
MASBATE
SAMAR
Tablas I
Masbate I
Samar I
Busuanga I

MAP 6

his theater headquarters, forcing the Japanese to defeat each force in turn. Through this command structure he also wanted to encourage a prolonged guerrilla resistance, paving the way for his return.[4]

The improvised arrangements for guerrilla warfare soon fell apart in the confusion of the surrender. Unaware of the reasons for MacArthur's command structure, Marshall designated Lt. Gen. Jonathan M. Wainwright as the new commander of all U.S. forces in the Philippines. When Wainwright requested terms for the capitulation of Corregidor in May, the Japanese refused to accept his surrender unless he agreed to order all of the American troops in the Philippines to follow suit. Rationalizing that the guerrillas could do little, Wainwright submitted, sending staff officers to ensure compliance with his orders. Caught in a dilemma between surrender and insubordination, most commanders reluctantly complied, although many permitted their more recalcitrant subordinates to escape. In Mindanao Sharp, fifty-five and lacking the physical and mental stamina for active duty, had little enthusiasm for waging a guerrilla campaign, particularly against the wishes of Wainwright. Despite MacArthur's hopes that he could keep alive the torch of resistance from the southern islands, the American commander of Mindanao and the bulk of his forces thus laid down their arms.[5]

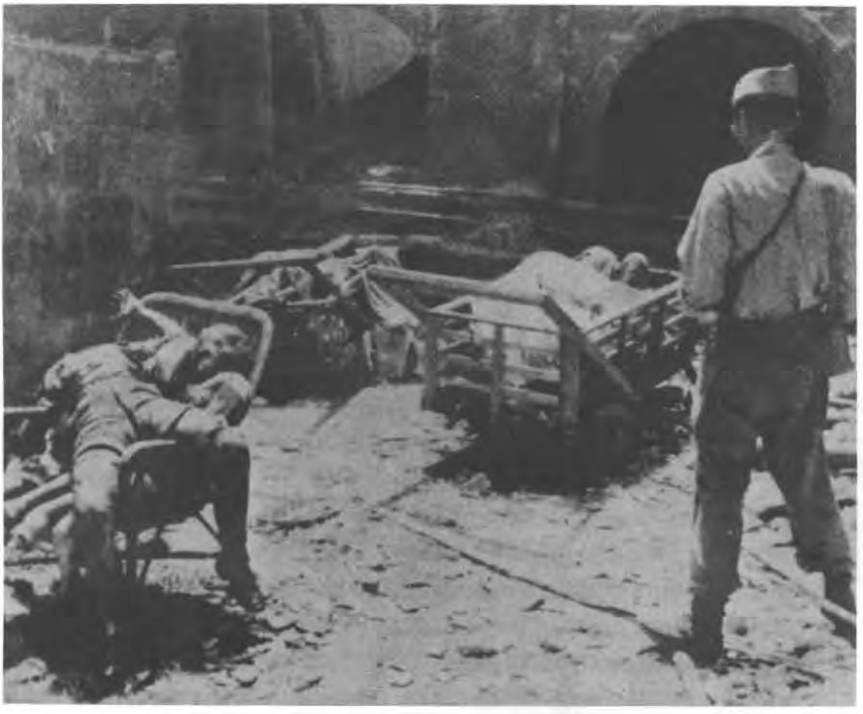
Those Americans who did not surrender faced a major battle to survive, let alone form a viable guerrilla movement. In addition to Japanese patrols, they had to cope with the tropical climate, disease, low morale, and lack of food, equipment, and other supplies. Col. Russell W. Volckmann noted later that the fugitives tended to fall into three categories: some gave up all hope and merely waited to die; a few resorted to stealing, cheating, and even murder to survive; others seemed to flourish, gaining in strength and determination with each successive challenge. In their wanderings they often found sanctuary at hidden camps deep in the interior, including the Fausett camp in central Luzon and the Deisher camp in the Lanao Province of Mindanao. They also received help from friendly Filipinos, who served as guides and cared for sick Americans who appeared at their doors.[6]

In this atmosphere of defeat and despair guerrilla chiefs faced a major challenge to their leadership and resourceful-

ness. Some, including Horan and Warner, had been uncomfortable with their role and were happy to obey Wainwright's orders to capitulate. The rest, often confused and demoralized about their status, faced the prospect of increased enemy patrols. In October 1942 the Japanese caught and executed Thorp, whose arrogance had alienated many potential supporters. Praeger, unable to care for prisoners, naively released some who subsequently led a patrol to his hiding place. Two other officers who had escaped to northern Luzon, Cols. Martin Moses and Arthur K. Noble, launched a series of hastily arranged ambushes against enemy outposts in October. While meeting some success, the raids aroused the Japanese, who flooded the area with troops and informers. For months the guerrillas found it nearly impossible to obtain food and supplies from frightened civilians. In June 1943 Japanese forces captured the two colonels and subsequently executed them. Not long afterward, an enemy unit in Isabela killed Cushing, and throughout the archipelago Japanese control seemed secure.[7]

From the ashes of the early guerrilla organizations a new, native Filipino movement arose. Initially, many Filipinos, bitter at their apparent abandonment by the American government, had collaborated with the Japanese. One American naval lieutenant pessimistically estimated that in the spring of 1942 only about 20 percent of the Filipinos supported the Allied cause. With time, however, Filipino loyalty to the United States reasserted itself. Most Filipinos retained an attachment to Western institutions, including democracy, as well as a familial, almost mystic sense of obligation to America. This attraction to the United States found expression in the idolization of MacArthur, whose dramatic flair, embodied in his promise to return, captured the Filipino imagination. Furthermore, Filipino faith in American promises of independence enabled the United States to draw on the rising strength of Filipino nationalism.[8]

The brutality of the Japanese occupation policy also aided the growth of the Filipino resistance. At first the Japanese attempted to convert the Filipinos to their cause. A puppet government proclaimed its "independence," while Japanese propaganda invoked Oriental solidarity and lectured the natives on the benefits of membership in the Greater East Asia



Remains of victims of Japanese atrocities in Manila *(U.S. Army photograph)*

Co-Prosperity Sphere, a Japanese-dominated trade federation. Through a network of "Neighborhood Associations" the Japanese sought to keep an eye on strangers and to make village leaders responsible for the actions of their people. Such measures enjoyed only limited success. Filipinos readily perceived that the authority of the puppet government extended only as far as the reach of the Japanese Army and police, and the puppet police force often cooperated with the resistance. More important, Japanese promises of prosperity and brotherhood contrasted sharply with the local economic depression and deplorable treatment of Filipinos by the occupation force. With time, Japanese occupation policy grew more vicious, particularly as U.S. forces drew closer. Unable to bring the guerrillas to battle, Japanese soldiers and secret police took out their frustrations on the populace, mistreating civilians, burning villages, seizing hostages, and torturing and murdering captives. By the time of the American invasion in 1944 atrocities had become

widespread, and hatred of the Japanese throughout the islands was almost complete.[9]

As Filipino sentiment hardened against the occupation, guerrilla bands formed spontaneously. Many traced their origins to vigilante groups formed by communities to preserve order in the lawless aftermath of the Japanese victory. After suppressing local bandits, they often turned their arms against the occupation forces. Some minority groups, such as the Hukbalahaps in central Luzon, sought political and social reforms in addition to freedom from the occupation. Others, led by a variety of adventurers and desperadoes, plundered civilians rather than fight the Japanese. The strength and character of each band reflected its leadership, the local strength and activities of occupation forces, and the terrain in which it operated. Scattered randomly along the coasts and interior valleys, they all faced nearly insurmountable communications and supply problems, which, in turn, exacerbated the question of command. Although in theory almost all submitted to SWPA direction, they quarreled incessantly over questions of local authority, often maintaining competing intelligence nets within each other's jurisdiction.[10]

In the prevailing anarchic situation many groups turned for leadership to those Americans, both military and civilian, who had somehow managed to escape capture by the Japanese. Although many Americans were perfectly content to remain in hiding for the rest of the war, others accepted such roles with alacrity. Those who did faced a major task in maintaining control and keeping a force in the field, let alone fighting the Japanese. While Americans played a major role in guerrilla movements on Cebu, Leyte, Marinduque, and in central Luzon, the two most influential American guerrilla leaders were Lt. Col. Wendell W. Fertig on Mindanao and Col. Russell W. Volckmann in northern Luzon.[11]

On Mindanao Fertig used geography and a relatively early contact with MacArthur's headquarters in Australia to build the largest guerrilla organization in the Philippines *(Map 7)*. Although Mindanao's large area, rugged terrain, and limited road net made centralized command difficult, these factors also hampered punitive operations and tended to confine the small Japanese garrison to a few coastal cities and towns. Leadership

was also essential, and in Fertig the movement found a chief with the magnetism, political skills, and flexibility necessary to survive and grow. A former mining engineer and Army Reserve officer, the lanky, red-bearded, somewhat aloof Coloradan possessed courage, a sense of mission, and a keen sensitivity to the Filipino point of view. From the beginning he recognized the need for the Filipinos to provide the foundation of the movement without outside coercion. After the surrender he had remained in the interior of Lanao Province while rival groups formed around the island. In September 1942 Capt. Luis Morgan, a former police officer who had become a guerrilla chieftain, offered the command of his forces to Fertig on condition that he become chief of staff with command in the field. Fertig accepted and established his base in the province of Misamis Occidental.

Once in command Fertig displayed an instinct for consolidating and expanding his control over the movement. After sending Morgan on a liaison mission to neighboring guerrilla commanders, Fertig negotiated an alliance with Morgan's Moslem rivals, the fierce Moros of Lanao, and with the Catholic Church. Taking the rank of brigadier general to impress the Filipinos, he recruited and trained a force that even included an engineer corps, a commando school, and a makeshift navy. He installed a civilian government, drafted labor, and built a communications network. While consolidating his own organization, he also contacted other guerrilla leaders on Mindanao and nearby islands and, through persuasion and his assumed rank, brought many under his authority. Fertig frequently clashed with other equally ambitious chiefs, particularly Macario Peralta on Panay, but his leverage was greatly strengthened by the establishment of radio communication with the Southwest Pacific Theater in February 1943 and by MacArthur's subsequent recognition of him as the military commander on Mindanao. As he received and distributed supplies, his authority expanded, and he divided Mindanao into geographic divisions, each under an American chief. By May Fertig's army and government were operating openly to such an extent that life in the province had returned to prewar normality, except for the presence of fully uniformed guerrillas in the streets of Misamis City and on the waters of Panguil Bay.


VISAYAN SEA
CAPIZ
Panay I
ANTIQUE
ILOILO
NEGROS OCCIDENTAL
CEBU
Cebu I
SAMAR
Samar I
LEYTE
Ormoc
LEYTE GULF
Suluan I
Homonhon I
Leyte I
Dinagat I
BOHOL
Bohol I
Negros I
NEGROS ORIENTAL
MINDANAO SEA
SULU SEA
SURIGAO
MISAMIS ORIENTAL
AGUSAN
MISAMIS OCCIDENTAL
Misamis
LANAO
BUKIDNON
ZAMBOANGA
DAVAO
Davao
Mindanao I
COTABATO
CELEBES SEA
SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES
1941-1945
ELEVATION IN FEET
0
3500 AND ABOVE
0
50
MILES

MAP 7



Moro guerrillas from Mindanao *(Courtesy of the Douglas MacArthur Library)*

Faced with an open challenge to their authority, the Japanese attacked in June, landing troops at several points along the Misamis coast and advancing from Panguil toward Pagadian Bay in an attempt to cut off Misamis Occidental from the rest of Mindanao. Although Fertig had laid plans for his troops to give ground and use hit-and-run raids against the Japanese flanks and rear, his forces quickly broke and ran in the face of the enemy onslaught. Fertig himself fled to Lanao Province, where he found refuge with the Moros and began rebuilding his guerrilla force. He maintained his support among the opportunistic Moro tribes in part through distribution of a *Life* magazine article in which King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia allied Islam with the United States. While with the Moros, Fertig had a final showdown with his chief of staff. Jealous of Fertig's power and prestige in the movement, Morgan had been acting increasingly mutinous since the Japanese attack on Misamis. Fertig finally removed him from the picture by sending him on a seemingly prestigious mission to Australia.

The American guerrilla leader had little chance to savor his

victory. For over a year he repeatedly moved his headquarters, always managing to stay ahead of Japanese patrols. From Lanao he moved east to the Agusan Valley, established a base, and supervised the distribution of material from Australia to guerrillas on Mindanao and the surrounding islands. Seeking to cut off the flow of supplies, the Japanese launched an offensive up the Agusan in December. The guerrillas lacked the arms, ammunition, and training to do more than delay the Japanese, and Fertig moved his headquarters farther upstream. By April 1944 Japanese reinforcements were pouring into Mindanao, and enemy commanders were laying plans to wipe out the guerrillas before the anticipated U.S. invasion of the island. Cut off from supplies and forced into the barren highlands of Bukidnon Province, Fertig and his followers faced extinction. When American bombers began their raids on Mindanao in August, however, the Japanese withdrew from the interior and concentrated on preparation of beach defenses, permitting the guerrillas to regain control of most of the island.[12]

Compared to those on Mindanao, the guerrillas of northern Luzon enjoyed little communication with MacArthur's headquarters, but they also benefited from favorable terrain, resourceful leadership, and popular support. The cool, healthful climate, pine-covered mountains, few roads, and self-sufficient native villages of the region proved conducive to guerrilla operations. Like Fertig, Volckmann, an energetic, personable West Pointer and former instructor of the Philippine Army's 11th Infantry Regiment, displayed political skills essential for success. In retrospect, his achievements seem all the more impressive since, like other American officers, he had never been exposed to the techniques and policies of guerrilla warfare. Accompanied by Capt. Donald D. Blackburn, Volckmann had escaped from Bataan and joined the guerrilla movement of Colonels Moses and Noble in northern Luzon. Following the abortive uprising in the fall of 1942, Volckmann and Blackburn had hidden among friendly natives in Ifugao Province, where they assembled a band of renegade Filipino soldiers and gradually reestablished contact with other groups.

After the capture of Moses and Noble in June 1943, Volckmann assumed command of the movement in northern Luzon and soon demonstrated that he had learned much from their mistakes. In accordance with orders from MacArthur's head-



Col. Wendell W. Fertig *(Courtesy of the Douglas MacArthur Library)*



Col. Russell W. Volckmann *(U.S. Army photograph)*

quarters, he concentrated on the development of an organization and intelligence net, avoiding major clashes with the Japanese. To gain public confidence and support, he brought rival tribes and factions together through personal diplomacy and instituted a crackdown against bandits who were looting and plundering the natives. Faced with an extensive Japanese network of spies and informers, he and his subordinates also launched a ruthless counterespionage campaign to eliminate the collaborators. Guerrilla agents infiltrated the Neighborhood Associations and the constabulary to identify the informers. Within six months those not executed had fled to the protection of Japanese garrisons. Once it became safe to support the guerrillas, Volckmann noted that "the so-called 'fence-sitters' began toppling in the right direction." [13]

Having ensured popular support, Volckmann and his officers could develop the guerrilla organization, which they kept separate from the intelligence net. Dividing northern Luzon into seven districts, he placed each under a commander who was responsible for maintaining popular support and for organizing a unit along the lines of a Philippine Army regiment. For his officer corps he relied heavily on escaped American

and Filipino officers and on American miners from the region. Keeping their units in camps at a safe distance from the villages to maintain discipline, these officers trained their recruits in ambushes, demolitions, and night operations. Although they obeyed the SWPA directive against large-scale clashes, they periodically conducted a series of small ambushes to capture supplies and to build confidence among the troops. With time, the guerrilla fighting organization became quite elaborate, including engineer and hospital units and even artillery. However, Volckmann usually kept heavier weapons from his units to preserve their mobility. The guerrillas also developed a communications network of courier stations and even built a series of airstrips for future liaison with U.S. forces.[14]

Volckmann tried but failed to extend his organization into central Luzon. Here the guerrilla movement continued to be plagued by internecine rivalries that prevented it from achieving its full potential. In central Luzon the guerrillas had to cope with more open terrain, a more extensive road network, and a much larger Japanese presence than was the case in northern Luzon and Mindanao. Consequently, they kept their activities at a low level, concentrating on sabotage and intelligence when they were not battling one another. After Thorp's capture, Col. Hugh Straughan attempted to unite the various groups but was betrayed by jealous rivals and captured in August 1943. In Tayabas and Bulacan provinces Capt. Bernard Anderson and 1st Lt. Edwin Ramsey built a large organization that stressed psychological operations, intelligence, and sabotage. To the north Capt. Robert Lapham, a dashing young cavalry officer who had led the remnants of Thorp's forces in Nueva Ecija and Pangasinan provinces, rejected Volckmann's attempts to extend the authority of the northern Luzon command over his area.[15]

The guerrilla movement on Cebu also had to overcome major obstacles. Long, narrow, and almost completely deforested, Cebu hardly furnished an ideal environment for guerrilla operations; even in peacetime the island imported food for its large population. Nevertheless, by mid-1942, a movement had emerged under Lt. Col. James Cushing, a former mining engineer, and Harry Fenton, an ex–radio announcer with a burning hatred for the Japanese. The two agreed to a joint



Americans and Filipinos who fought with the Filipino guerrillas. Left to right: Lt. Hombre Bueno, Lt. William Farrell, Maj. Robert Lapham, Lt. James O. Johnson, Lt. Henry Baker, and Lt. Gofronio Copcion *(U.S. Army photograph).*

command under which Fenton handled administration and Cushing commanded in the field. By mid-1943, however, Fenton's paranoia and indiscriminate executions of suspected collaborators had turned the public against him and in favor of the more charismatic Cushing. While Cushing was visiting Negros in September 1943, his subordinates mutinied and executed Fenton. When Cushing returned, he suppressed the mutiny and rebuilt the organization, despite a lack of food and Japanese punitive operations. By April 1944 he had assembled a force of about 5,000 men and developed an effective intelligence network. He also demonstrated a sensitivity to the population, releasing a captured Japanese admiral rather than expose the natives to the reprisals of search parties.[16]

While the guerrillas struggled to survive and build their organizations, their constant appeals for help had been reaching SWPA headquarters, 3,500 miles to the south in Australia. In July 1942 SWPA technicians picked up a weak signal from the remnants of Warner's force in northern Luzon. During the

autumn further radio signals from Praeger in northern Luzon and Peralta on Panay confirmed the existence of an incipient guerrilla movement. According to Col. Courtney Whitney, MacArthur's confidant, "Probably no message ever gave MacArthur more of an uplift." [17] Obsessed with his "second homeland," the SWPA chief closely followed developments and personally interviewed American refugees who began to arrive in the autumn of 1942. In October Capts. William L. Osborne and Damon J. Gause, who had escaped from Corregidor, arrived off northern Australia in a small fishing boat. Two months later 1st Lt. Frank H. Young, an emissary from Thorp, and Capt. Charles M. Smith of Fertig's organization brought information on the guerrillas in central Luzon and Mindanao. Thus, by early 1943, MacArthur's headquarters knew that a movement existed but possessed little information on the leading personalities and Japanese counterguerrilla methods.[18]

In late 1942 and early 1943 MacArthur's theater command dispatched liaison parties into the Philippines to establish direct contact with the guerrillas and to obtain more information about their organization. Most of these activities were supervised by the Allied Intelligence Bureau, which was established under the SWPA intelligence section to collect information through clandestine operations in enemy territory. In December 1942 Capt. Jesus A. Villamor, a Filipino pilot with a distinguished record in the early days of the war, landed from a submarine on Negros with instructions to organize an intelligence net throughout the islands. As a national hero, Villamor could not appear publicly without recognition, but from a secret retreat he created a network that extended through Luzon and the Visayas. Meanwhile, Lt. Cmdr. Charles "Chick" Parsons landed in Mindanao in March 1943 to contact Fertig and evaluate his organization. On the same trip he installed a coastwatcher station on Leyte and helped unify the guerrillas on that island under Col. Ruperto Kangleon. Other SWPA emissaries established radio stations in Mindanao, and one even traveled to Manila to reach the underground there.[19]

Having established liaison with the guerrillas, MacArthur's headquarters now had to decide how to use them. As a command structure for the movement, the theater used the old Philippine Army districts, each under a guerrilla chief who had demonstrated his authority in the district, as well as the sincer-

ity and resources for effective operations against the Japanese. In March 1943 theater headquarters further directed that the guerrillas "lie low" and concentrate on organization and intelligence. While this order seemed sensible at the time, it created problems for guerrilla commanders who found it hard to remain idle in the face of popular demand for action against the brutal occupation. In part, the directive reflected continuing uncertainty over the eventual role of the movement. Col. Charles Willoughby, MacArthur's domineering intelligence chief, discounted the value of the guerrillas except as providers of information. On the other hand, Whitney, a former Manila lawyer and the new director of the Philippine Regional Section (PRS) within the intelligence staff, argued for an expanded supply program and more aggressive exploitation of the guerrilla potential. More often than not, Whitney's view prevailed, largely due to MacArthur's emotional commitment to the guerrillas. Indeed, through Whitney's influence with MacArthur, the section achieved an almost autonomous status.[20]

Under Whitney's leadership the Philippine Regional Section acquired and trained personnel to penetrate the islands, expanded intelligence nets, and arranged for the shipment of supplies to the guerrillas. From Filipino regiments stationed in the United States Whitney selected about 400 men, who received training in communications, intelligence, and sabotage and formed parties to penetrate the Philippines. Many helped man the network of 134 radio stations that the section established throughout the islands by October 1944. The section also tried to complete SWPA's intelligence network in the Philippines. Perhaps because of American reluctance to trust a Filipino-run network, Whitney's agency neglected the Villamor operation in favor of American-run nets, using personnel from Australian bases. In November 1943 the section dispatched Smith to Samar and Maj. Lawrence H. Phillips to Mindoro to install radio stations and intelligence nets. A Japanese patrol killed Phillips, but in July 1944 Lt. Cmdr. George Rowe reestablished the station on Mindoro.[21]

Because of lack of communication with Luzon and lack of material support to networks in the southern Philippines with contacts on Luzon, MacArthur's headquarters did not develop the vast intelligence potential of the island until late 1944. With the capture of Praeger's radio in early 1943 the guerrillas

in Luzon had lost contact with Australia. Nevertheless, remnants of the old de Jesus organization remained intact, and Villamor, Fertig, Parsons, and Peralta all established intelligence nets with extensive contacts on Luzon, including the highest levels of the puppet government. The Philippine Regional Section, however, went ahead with its own plans to establish nets through the radio stations on Mindoro and Samar. In April 1944 Smith, on Samar, sent 2d Lt. William Ball to install a radio station in the central Luzon province of Tayabas. Ball contacted guerrilla leaders in central Luzon and, through Lapham, got in touch with Volckmann in the northern part of the island. To help develop these contacts, the section dispatched specially equipped and trained parties of officers to various guerrilla leaders on the island.[22]

One of the liaison parties dispatched to Luzon by the Philippine Regional Section included Maj. Jay D. Vanderpool. While serving in the 25th Infantry Division's intelligence section on New Caledonia, he had responded to an SWPA request for each division to nominate an officer of field grade rank for a hazardous mission. After an intensive briefing by Whitney, Vanderpool, Capt. George Miller, and a number of experts in demolitions, communications, and meteorology boarded a submarine in October 1944 for a trip to Volckmann's area in northern Luzon. When they encountered heavy Japanese activity off the rendezvous, their superiors in Australia diverted them to Anderson in east central Luzon. While Miller joined a large band of guerrillas under an ex-policeman who took the pseudonym of Marking, Vanderpool weathered a hazardous journey, hiding in churches and slipping past Japanese patrol boats on Laguna de Bay, to reach the ROTC Hunters, a Filipino-led guerrilla force in the region south of Manila. Perceiving his role to be more a coordinator than a commander, Vanderpool arranged the flow of supplies from Australia and worked to bring the feuding guerrilla groups in the area into an alliance against the Japanese. His stature grew to such an extent that Japanese intelligence soon concluded that he was a major general.[23]

By the time Vanderpool arrived on Luzon the supply effort had already grown to major proportions. The guerrillas had improvised skillfully, distilling alcohol for fuel, making bullets from curtain rods, and printing currency on the back of wall-



USS *Narwhal,* a submarine that ran supplies to the Filipino guerrillas *(U.S. Navy photograph)*

paper, but they desperately needed a regular source of supplies. Through his influence with MacArthur, who continued to take a personal interest in the effort, Whitney obtained carbines, ammunition, radios, medical supplies, and such propaganda items as chocolate, cigarettes, gum, pencils, and newspapers, each bearing MacArthur's pledge, "I shall return." To transport this material to the Philippines, Whitney turned to Lt. Cmdr. Charles "Chick" Parsons. Since running away to the Philippines at age nineteen, the colorful Parsons, an officer in the Navy Reserve, had dabbled in several different businesses and developed a large network of contacts throughout the islands. Using submarines detailed from Seventh Fleet, including two cargo-carrying monsters, his "Spy Squadron" began smuggling supplies into the island by night under the noses of Japanese patrol boats. In all, nineteen submarines delivered 1,325 tons of supplies to the guerrillas between 1943 and 1945.[24]

The Alamo Scouts

While Whitney's section built up the guerrilla forces in anticipation of the day of liberation, Krueger's Sixth Army was

forming special units to aid its drive through the Southwest Pacific to the Philippines. Faced with a need for specific, reliable information in the dense jungles of the theater, Sixth Army in November 1943 activated the Alamo Scouts to obtain strategic intelligence and to perform other covert operations within Sixth Army's operational area. At Krueger's direction volunteers selected for courage, stamina, adaptability, and intelligence assembled at Fergusson Island off the southeast tip of New Guinea; reflecting anticipation of future operations, they included several Filipino-Americans. For four weeks they endured long marches, swimming tests, weapons training, and instruction in communications, navigation, rubber boats, and hand-to-hand combat; they then participated in two weeks of field exercises, including landings from PT boats under live fire. Survivors of this regimen, through secret ballots, named the fellow trainees with whom they would most like to serve. On this basis, Sixth Army formed teams of one officer and six or seven enlisted men.

Beginning in February 1944, ten teams carried out about sixty covert missions without the loss of a single man. Operating under Sixth Army's intelligence section, they reconnoitered beaches, observed enemy movements and garrisons, spotted for air strikes, and organized and trained guerrillas. Infiltrating by seaplane, parachute, submarine, or PT boat, they generally stayed in the field for three to five days, although they often remained in the field for longer periods when operating with guerrillas. They avoided combat, except when essential to their mission. In October 1944, for example, two scout teams landed in darkness from PT boats to rescue thirty-two natives from a prison camp at Moari, New Guinea. Within thirty minutes, they rescued the captives and eliminated the Japanese garrison without losing a man.[25]

The 6th Ranger Battalion

For larger-scale special operations, particularly amphibious raids and diversions, Sixth Army, at MacArthur's direction, formed the 6th Ranger Battalion in January 1944. Elite Marine Raider formations, which conducted raids and spearheaded amphibious landings in the South Pacific, may well have inspired the creation of the unit, but Sixth Army based its orga-



A party of Alamo Scouts lands from LCVs on the rocky shore of Kwokeboh Island in Tanahmerah Bay, Dutch New Guinea *(U.S. Army photograph)*.

nization on that of the Rangers in Europe. To form the unit, Krueger converted the 98th Field Artillery Battalion, a pack outfit which had been idle since its arrival in the theater in January 1943. The artillerymen, restless from their long inactivity, were given the choice of Ranger duty or the replacement depot; most elected to stay, and volunteers from the depots soon filled out the unit. To command the battalion, Krueger chose Lt. Col. Henry A. Mucci, a 33-year-old West Pointer and former provost marshal of Honolulu. Short and stocky, with a trim mustache, piercing eyes, and a personal magnetism undiminished by a receding hairline and professorial pipe, the new commander demonstrated that he could more than keep up with his troops in the rigorous training program that followed.[26]

Although the new Rangers may well have been impatient for action, they still faced over nine months of training before combat. In a sparse camp among the hills near Port Moresby,



Lt. Col. Henry Mucci, commander of the 6th Ranger Battalion, confers with his personnel officer, Capt. Vaughn Moss *(U.S. Army photograph).*

New Guinea, Mucci whipped his new charges into shape with a series of five-mile runs before breakfast, twenty-mile hikes, and races up a rather aptly named "Misery Knoll." Games, swimming, mass exercises, and an obstacle course completed the conditioning regimen. The Rangers also received instruction in weapons, communications, patrolling, scouting, and night operations. In June they moved to Finschhafen for unit and amphibious training, stressing night landings and the use of rubber boats. By the time of the battalion's official activation in September 1944 it was fully ready to participate in MacArthur's return to the Philippines.[27]

The Liberation of the Philippines

On 17–18 October the 6th Ranger Battalion seized three islands that guarded the entrances to Leyte Gulf, clearing the way for Sixth Army's invasion of Leyte on 20 October. Encountering little opposition on Dinagat and Homonhon is-



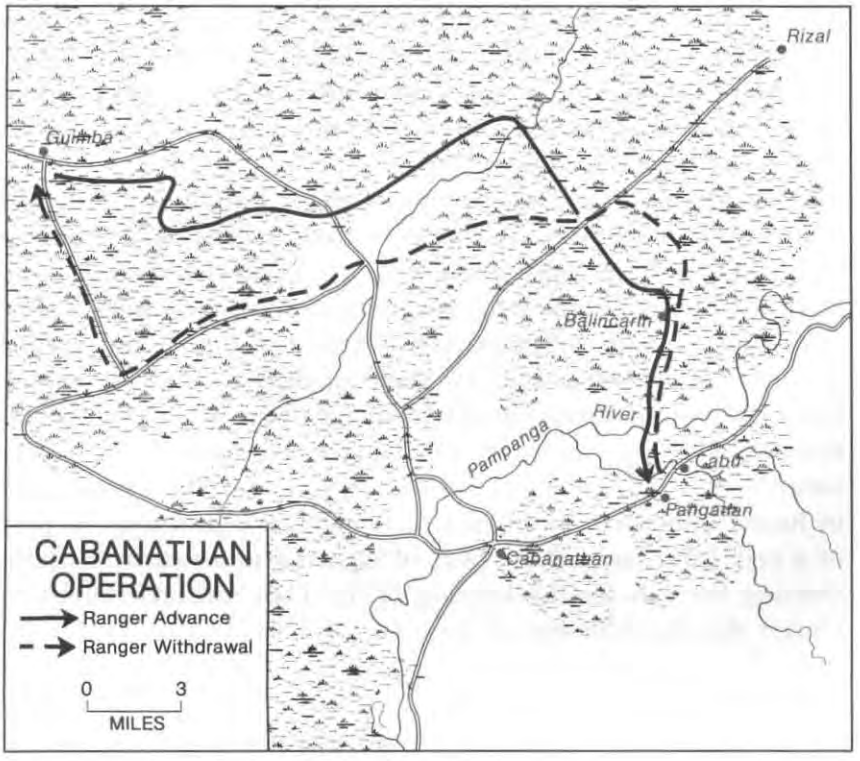
A patrol of Company F, 6th Ranger Battalion, investigating a native hut on Dinagat Island in the Philippines *(U.S. Army photograph).*

lands, the Rangers installed beacons to guide the invasion fleet through the channel between them. On Suluan Island Capt. Arthur D. "Bull" Simons, commanding Company B, found the Japanese in a lighthouse surrounded by imposing cliffs on three sides and a steep trail on the fourth. In a daring night attack part of the company cut off a security detachment at the foot of the trail while the other Rangers climbed the cliffs, struck the surprised garrison from the rear, and annihilated them. Having accomplished its mission, the battalion moved to Leyte where it patrolled rear areas and served as a guard for Krueger's headquarters.[28]

In its advance across Leyte Sixth Army received invaluable aid from the guerrillas and Alamo Scouts. Reflecting SWPA's perception of their primary role, Kangleon's guerrillas operated under the intelligence section of Sixth Army, but they contributed much more to the success of the invasion. Prior to

the American attack, they moved civilians from the landing areas to safety, and they later ambushed Japanese troops retreating inland from the invasion beaches. Once American forces had landed, the guerrillas provided intelligence, served as guides, harassed Japanese units, and mopped up bypassed detachments, releasing American troops for other duties. While the guerrillas vented their pent-up hatred for the enemy, the Alamo Scouts performed long-range reconnaissance of Japanese positions on Leyte and the surrounding islands. Scout teams landed on Samar, Masbate, and the Surigao peninsula of Mindanao to reconnoiter beaches, to watch enemy coastal traffic at key straits, and to organize guerrillas. One team landed on the north coast of Poro Island to establish a radio and coastwatcher station overlooking the sea approaches to Ormoc, the last Japanese stronghold on Leyte. Although bypassed Japanese detachments continued to fight for some time, the fall of Ormoc on 10 December freed MacArthur to turn his attention to Luzon.[29]

Following Sixth Army's unopposed landing on Luzon on 9 January 1945, American forces raided the Japanese prison camp at Cabanatuan *(Map 8)*. The attack marked the high point of cooperation between Rangers, guerrillas, Alamo Scouts, and conventional American combat units. Ever since Lapham had notified Sixth Army of the camp's existence soon after the landing on Luzon, Krueger and his staff had been concerned about the situation of the prisoners there. When Sixth Army's spearheads were within twenty-four miles of the camp, Krueger's intelligence chief, Col. Horton White, called in Mucci and three scout team leaders and assigned to them the mission of freeing the prisoners. After the scouts went ahead to reconnoiter the position, a reinforced company of 107 Rangers infiltrated Japanese lines near Guimba in the early afternoon of 28 January. Guided by the guerrillas, the Rangers hiked through forests and open grasslands, narrowly avoiding a Japanese tank on the national highway by following a ravine that ran under the road. At Balincarin on the twenty-ninth, 1st Lt. Thomas Rounsaville and 1st Lt. William Nellist of the scouts notified Mucci of heavy traffic around the compound, causing the Ranger chief to postpone the raid until the evening of the thirtieth. While the Rangers rested at the village



MAP 8

of Platero, the scouts conducted further reconnaissance from a nipa hut across the road from the camp.

The skillful reconnaissance and careful planning paid off in a swift, well-executed attack. In the early evening of the thirtieth the Rangers began their approach march, crawling across the last mile of open rice fields to take up a position on two sides of the camp. While one platoon, on signal, eliminated the guards in the rear and on one side of the stockade, another broke through the main gate to rake the garrison's quarters with automatic fire, and a third broke into the prisoners' section and liberated the astonished captives, most of whom had to be carried to freedom. Within half an hour the Rangers had destroyed the installation, killing about 200 Japanese guards and rescuing over 500 prisoners at the cost of two dead and seven seriously wounded. Covered by the guerrillas, who stopped an enemy relief effort northeast of the camp, the column of Rangers and liberated prisoners finally reached

friendly lines by the following morning. The feat was celebrated equally by MacArthur's soldiers, Allied correspondents, and the American public, for the raid had touched an emotional nerve among Americans concerned about the fate of the defenders of Bataan and Corregidor.[30]

For the rest of the war the 6th Ranger Battalion performed a variety of necessary, if unspectacular, military odd jobs in Luzon. Operating in groups of platoon, company, or task force size, they conducted long-range reconnaissance and a few raids, mopped up bypassed pockets of resistance, and served as a headquarters guard. In their operations behind enemy lines they often received aid from partisans and friendly natives. Near Baguio in March two companies worked with Volckmann's guerrillas in a reconnaissance of enemy rear areas, and in June Company B and some of Blackburn's guerrillas, as part of a task force, seized the port of Aparri and a nearby airfield, clearing the way for the landing of the 11th Airborne Division. Under the watchful eye of Krueger and Col. Clyde D. Eddleman, Sixth Army operations chief, the Rangers never performed line infantry missions, but their concept of proper Ranger tasks was so broad as to defy definition.[31]

Following Cabanatuan, the Alamo Scouts continued their collaboration with the guerrillas. In February Lieutenant Nellist's team landed on the Legaspi peninsula, south of Manila, to obtain information on beaches and enemy movements in the area. Taking command of the guerrillas in the Sorsogon region, Nellist and his scouts organized and equipped the partisans, who harassed the Japanese until the landing of the 158th Regimental Combat Team in early April. Two other scout teams deployed to Tayabas Province in March to establish radio stations and observe the retreat of Japanese units attempting to escape from southern Luzon before the advance of the 1st Cavalry Division cut the island in two. Both teams called in numerous air strikes on the withdrawing enemy and his supply dumps in the region. To the north Lieutenant Rounsaville's team reconnoitered the Ilagan area, called in air strikes on Japanese positions, and helped to complete the roadwatcher network of the partisans after arriving at a guerrilla airfield in mid-April.[32]



Filipino guerrillas in combat with the 1st Cavalry Division in Batangas Province *(U.S. Army photograph).*

In addition to their work with the Rangers and Alamo Scouts, Volckmann's guerrillas in northern Luzon were not only providing intelligence but also proving their value as combat troops. Prior to the landing on Luzon Volckmann had notified MacArthur's headquarters that the assault would meet no opposition. As Sixth Army came ashore Volckmann's guerrillas went into action, blowing bridges, cutting telephone wires, and attacking isolated garrisons. Faced with pressure from Krueger's conventional forces, the Japanese could not counter this threat to their communications and soon began to feel the lack of supplies. By June each of Volckmann's five regiments had largely cleared its district of enemy forces, and the guerrillas turned to more conventional tactics to root out the remaining Japanese defenders. After a tough fight among mountain peaks against entrenched positions, three guerrilla regiments, aided by a battalion of U.S. field artillery, captured

Bessang Pass on 14 June, opening the way into the interior of northern Luzon where the Japanese were preparing for a final stand. The guerrillas joined the final assault on the Japanese mountain strongholds, fighting alongside American units up to the surrender on 15 August. Their performance won praise from American commanders, and MacArthur later equated their contribution to that of a frontline division.[33]

Few other guerrillas matched the performance of Volckmann's men. In central Luzon Marking's guerrillas overran a number of prepared positions in support of the 11th Airborne Division's drive toward the Ipo Dam, but such performances were rare. Most guerrilla organizations were plagued by internal rivalries and lacked the heavy equipment, leadership, training, and combat experience to perform conventional combat missions. Their inability to attack fixed positions sometimes confirmed the prejudices of more skeptical officers, who grumbled that the guerrillas would rather eat than fight. On the other hand, the guerrillas performed a wide variety of secondary tasks, guiding U.S. forces, harassing Japanese movements, assisting downed pilots, guarding captured areas, and eliminating bypassed enemy detachments, actions that released badly needed U.S. troops for other duties. On Mindanao, for example, Fertig's guerrillas seized the beaches at Macajalar Bay and Malabang in advance of Eighth Army's landings and guarded the 24th Infantry Division's communications in the drive on Davao; on Cebu, Cushing's 8,500 guerrillas helped mop up Japanese units. While guerrilla reports were often exaggerated and unreliable, they did constitute the single most important source of intelligence for U.S. forces. In short, they made a major, if not decisive, contribution to the eventual victory.[34]

Despite the collapse of MacArthur's early plans for guerrilla warfare and the lack of enthusiasm among many of his subordinates for such a program, the cooperation and coordination between guerrillas, commandos, and conventional forces was much more effective in the Southwest Pacific than in Europe. In both Europe and the Pacific popular support, intensified by the enemy's repressive occupation policies, created the proper climate for special operations. The need for troops to spearhead amphibious landings was also evident in both theaters. In the Southwest Pacific, however, unity of command and the



Lt. Gen. Robert L. Eichelberger, *left,* commanding general of the Eighth U.S. Army, and Filipino guerrillas near Manila *(U.S. Army photograph)*

personal interest of the commander, along with favorable terrain, combined to produce a remarkably favorable environment for special operations. The Southwest Pacific Theater was thus able to integrate the efforts of the Filipino guerrillas with those of the Alamo Scouts and to achieve better results in terms of their support of the invasion and ensuing U.S. ground campaign. The same factors enhanced the performance of the Ranger battalion, and the Rangers were able to undertake a variety of missions, which varied according to the demands of the tactical situation. Special operations thus played a much greater role in combat operations in the Pacific than in Europe, and the entire experience pointed the way toward a future operational doctrine that made more effective use of these types of military efforts.

Notes

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8. Steinberg, *Philippine Collaboration in World War II,* pp. 2, 4, 14–16, 38, 57, 71, 104, 167, 174; James, *The Years of MacArthur,* 2: 91.

9. Steinberg, *Philippine Collaboration in World War II,* pp. 4, 56–60, 94–95; Schmidt, "American Involvement in the Filipino Resistance Movement," pp. 31–32; documents in HRC Geog. S. Philippines 370.64 Guerrilla Warfare—Leyte, Historical Records Branch, CMH; John Keats, *They Fought Alone* (New York: Lippincott, 1963), pp. 80, 221, 345–46, 349–50; Ira Wolfert, *American Guerrilla in the Philippines* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945), pp. 146–47;

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11. U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, The Guerrilla Resistance Movement in the Philippines, vol. 1; see also Schmidt, "American Involvement is the Filipino Resistance Movement," p. 82; Keats, *They Fought Alone*, p. 77; Wolfert, *American Guerrilla in the Philippines*, p. 244; HRC Geog. S. Philippines 370.64 Guerrilla Warfare—Nueva Ecija, Historical Records Branch, CMH; 1st Lt J.H. Manzano for Chief, Claims Service Division, 9 Sep. 48, in Folder BMA (Bulacan Military Area), PA, Guerrilla Records, Box 246, RG 407, NARA.

12. Keats, *They Fought Alone*, and Schmidt, "American Involvement in the Filipino Resistance Movement," are the standard sources for information on the guerrilla movement in Mindanao. See also U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, The Guerrilla Movement in the Philippines, 1: 83–101; Eighth Army's report on the Mindanao operation, p. 14, PA, Liberation, Box 1475, RG 407, NARA; Robert L. Eichelberger, *Our Jungle Road to Tokyo* (New York: Viking Press, 1950), p. 217; Royce Wendover diary, USAMHI.

13. Volckmann, *We Remained*, p. 126.

14. In addition to Volckmann's *We Remained*, see the Blackburn article, "War Within a War," and the interview, as well as Philip Harkins, *Blackburn's Headhunters* (New York: Norton, 1955) and After Battle Report, United States Army Forces in the Philippines, North Luzon Operations, PA, Liberation, Box 1477, RG 407, NARA.

15. U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, The Guerrilla Resistance Movement in the Philippines, 1: 9–22; HRC Geog. S. Philippines 370.64 Guerrilla Warfare—Nueva Ecija, Historical Records Branch, CMH; Memo, Manzano for Chief, Claims Service Division, 9 Sep 48; Guerrilla Activities in the Philippines, CNO, Dept. Navy, 14 Sep 44, pp. 12–13; Volckmann, *We Remained*, pp. 77–78; Cable, Volckmann to MacArthur, 30 Sep 44, Russell W. Volckmann Papers, USAMHI; Forrest B. Johnson, *Hour of Redemption: The Ranger Raid on Cabanatuan* (New York: Manor Books, 1978), p. 95.

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18. U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, Intelligence Activities in the Philippines During the Japanese Occupation, 1: 5–6, 12: Villamor, *They Never Surrendered*,

pp. 69–70; Charles A. Willoughby and John Chamberlain, *MacArthur, 1941–1951* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1954), pp. 210–11.

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20. Whitney, *MacArthur: His Rendezvous With History,* pp. 91, 133; Keats, *They Fought Alone,* pp. 202, 339; Schmidt, "American Involvement in the Filipino Resistance Movement," pp. 108–09, 189–91, 202; Volckmann, *We Remained,* pp. 120–21; U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, Intelligence Activities in the Philippines During the Japanese Occupation, 1: 7, 15, 31–32; Wolfert, *American Guerrilla in the Philippines,* p. 209; MS, Robert Ross Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, pp. 43–44.

21. U.S. Army Forces, Pacific, Intelligence Activities in the Philippines During the Japanese Occupation, 1: 23, 30, 34–42, 45, 57; Villamor, *They Never Surrendered,* pp. 219, 243; Whitney, *MacArthur: His Rendezvous With History,* pp. 132, 135–36, 145.

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27. See Ranger file in U.S. Army, Sixth Army, G–3 Section, Decimal File, 1943–46, Box 36, RG 338, WNRC; Garrett interview; The Sixth Ranger Battalion, Louis F. Lisko Papers, USAMHI; Historical Data, 6th Ranger Battalion, in Ranger Battalions of World War II (now in 1st Special Forces), Organizational Histories Branch, CMH.

28. History of the 6th Ranger Battalion in KING II Operation, and Operational Rpts of the 6th Ranger Battalion, both in WWII Ops Reports, INBN 6–0.3, RG 407, WNRC; Rpt, Simons to G–3, Sixth Army, 19 Mar 45, WWII Ops Reports, INBN 6–0.4, RG 407, WNRC.

29. See reports of Sixth and Eighth Armies on the Leyte operation, in PA, Liberation, Boxes 1477–78, RG 407, NARA; MS, Robert Ross Smith, The Hukbalahap Insurgency, p. 43; Ingham, *Rendezvous by Submarine,* pp. 204, 219;

M. Hamlin Cannon, *Leyte: The Return to the Philippines*, U.S. Army in World War II (Washington, DC.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, Government Printing Office, 1954), p. 313.

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31. See Operational Rpts of the 6th Ranger Battalion in WWII Ops Reports, INBN 6–0.3, RG 407, WNRC; Garrett interview.

32. Sixth Army's report of the Luzon campaign, PA, Liberation, Box 1477, RG 407, NARA.

33. Sixth Army's report on the Luzon campaign and After Battle Report, United States Army Forces in the Philippines, North Luzon Operations, PA, Liberation, Box 1477, RG 407, NARA; Volckmann, *We Remained*, pp. 179–220; Blackburn interview, pp. 184–86, 194, 200–206; Blackburn, "War Within a War," pp. 149–53; MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, p. 241; James, *The Years of MacArthur*, 2: 688.

34. See Eighth Army's report on the Mindanao operation, Box 1475, and Sixth Army's report on the Luzon operation, Box 1477, both in PA, Liberation, RG 407, NARA; Jay Luvaas, ed., *Dear Miss Em: General Eichelberger's War in the Pacific, 1942–45*, Contributions in Military History 2 (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1972), pp. 204, 209, 228, 234–38, 245, 270, 295; Keats, *They Fought Alone*, pp. 410, 416; Eichelberger, *Our Jungle Road to Tokyo*, pp. 203, 212, 217–19, 237, 252; Schmidt, "American Involvement in the Filipino Resistance Movement," pp. 230–31, 242–46; Harkins, *Blackburn's Headhunters*, p. 305; Volckmann, *We Remained*, pp. 216–17; Willoughby and Chamberlain, *MacArthur*, p. 231; James, *The Years of MacArthur*, 2: 679, 746.

CHAPTER 5

Special Operations in the China-Burma-India Theater

While American troops advanced across the European continent and the vast reaches of the Pacific, they were also fighting and dying in a remote theater viewed as a sideshow by Allied leaders. When the United States entered World War II, President Roosevelt and his advisers had regarded Nationalist China as a possible base against Japan, as well as a major belligerent and future great power. Although American leaders continued to hold lofty expectations regarding China's postwar role, they had adopted by mid-1944 a more realistic estimate of Chinese military prowess and were limiting American efforts on the Asian mainland to the minimum necessary to maintain Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist regime. The main task in the theater from the American point of view was to reopen China's overland communications with the outside world. In this theater of limited resources, great distances, challenging terrain, and byzantine politics, American military leaders thus intended to commit few if any conventional forces, yet needed to secure northern Burma to ensure the flow of supplies to the embattled Nationalists. Here, as well as in China itself, the opportunities for a large program of special operations appeared evident. Yet the Army was slow to turn to such activities, again largely leaving the field to the British and the Office of Strategic Services.

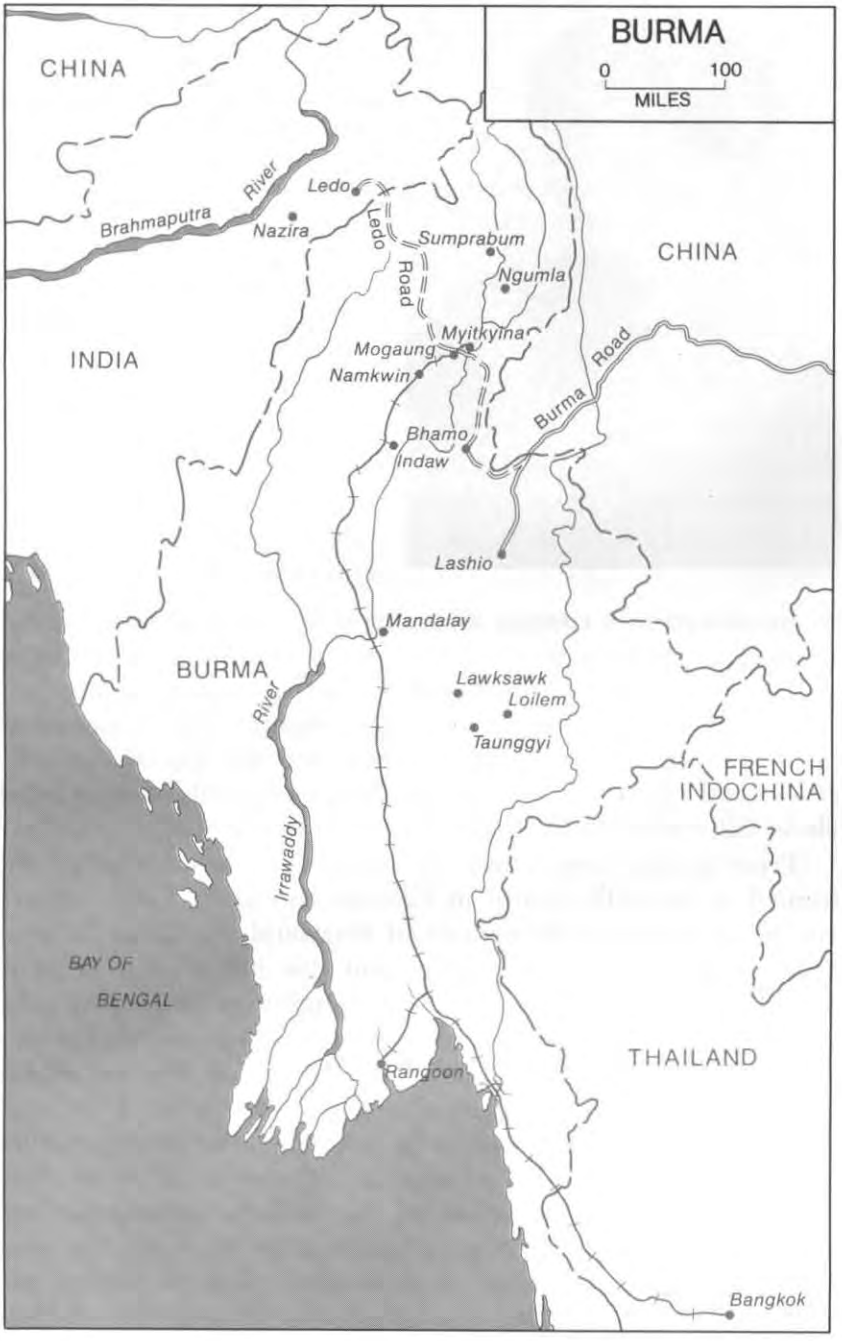
For the Americans most of the fighting in the theater would take place in Burma, a land that offered uniquely favorable conditions for unconventional warfare. In the rugged mountains, narrow river valleys, monsoons, and dense tropical vegetation of Burma units on both sides relied heavily on the few existing roads and railways to move troops and supplies. These routes appeared vulnerable to operations by well-trained light

infantry or by guerrillas operating in the thick jungles. To operate in this difficult region, assistance from the natives was imperative. A number of different national groups, each with its own customs and dialect, inhabited the area. The Kachins offered the best prospect of cooperation. Living in the hills along the northern border, these primitive tribes had benefited for many years from British support against the Shans and Burmese. To gain independence from British rule, the latter had aided the Japanese invaders, who, in turn, joined them in burning and plundering Kachin villages. Full of resentment, the Kachins, if provided with equipment and leadership, were more than ready to fight the Japanese. Around them, the Office of Strategic Services would build perhaps the most successful guerrilla organization of World War II.[1]

OSS Detachment 101

In early 1942 Donovan was searching for a way to establish his untested agency in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater *(Map 9)*. He sent representatives to the CBI Theater and later personally conferred with Lt. Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell, the acerbic theater commander, but found Stilwell to be noncommittal. Nevertheless, Donovan interpreted his response as approval and proceeded to organize a special detachment under Capt. Carl W. Eifler, a former customs agent who had once served in a reserve unit under Stilwell. Eifler, a 250-pound mountain of a man who seldom spoke more softly than a loud roar, would prove to be a dynamic, imaginative leader. In the beginning, however, neither he nor Donovan had any clear idea of the detachment's mission or capabilities once it arrived in the theater.[2]

After submitting a rough plan for sabotage by agents behind Japanese lines in the Far East, Eifler rushed to deploy a unit to the theater before Stilwell changed his mind. Using tips from acquaintances, he sought volunteers with intelligence, good health, and "a serious disposition" as well as skills in such areas as demolitions, communications, medicine, and Asiatic cultures. From his former regiment, the 35th Infantry, he recruited Capt. John Coughlin, a former baseball star at West Point, and his own first sergeant, Vincent Curl. At Fort Benning 1st Lt. William R. "Ray" Peers received an urgent message from his old friend Coughlin, inquiring whether he would


BURMA
0
100
MILES
CHINA
Brahmaputra River
Ledo
Nazira
Ledo Road
Sumprabum
Ngumla
CHINA
INDIA
Myitkyina
Mogaung
Namkwin
Burma Road
Bhamo
Indaw
Lashio
Mandalay
BURMA
Irrawaddy River
Lawksawk
Loilem
Taunggyi
FRENCH INDOCHINA
BAY OF BENGAL
Rangoon
THAILAND
Bangkok

MAP 9



Col. Carl F. Eifler *(Courtesy of Carl F. Eifler)*

be interested in a combat assignment in the Southwest Pacific. Peers agreed but might have had some second thoughts when he reported to OSS headquarters in Washington. He was greeted by Eifler, who then "took a stiletto type dagger and drove it a good two to three inches into the top of his desk. He looked pleased." The young lieutenant could only wonder about the nature of the organization he had joined.[3]

Prior to their departure, the recruits of "Detachment 101" trained at an SOE school in Canada and at an OSS training site in the Catoctin Mountains of Maryland. At Camp X, near Lake Ontario, Eifler, Coughlin, and five other trainees practiced demolitions and hand-to-hand fighting, developed a familiarity with Allied and foreign weapons, and received instruction in guerrilla tactics. Meanwhile, Peers and the rest of the contingent went to the Catoctins, where they studied cryptography, demolitions, and hand-to-hand combat. Unfortunately, most of the techniques taught at the two institutions were derived from the operations of the British commandos and consequently had only limited applicability to Asia. To compensate, members of the detachment collected books and talked to every available expert on the Orient. On 19 May Eifler and Curl left for the field. After a chaotic assembly and sorting of supplies, the rest of the detachment left a week later

from Charleston, South Carolina, for the Far East.[4]

Upon his arrival Eifler found that Stilwell had little inclination to use the detachment at all. A conventional soldier and a passionate admirer of infantry, Stilwell disparaged guerrilla tactics as "illegal action" and "shadow boxing." To complicate the situation, Navy Capt. Milton E. Miles, head of the U.S. Navy Group in China, had already reached an agreement with General Tai Li, Chiang's sinister director of internal security, to train 50,000 Chinese guerrillas. Alerted to Detachment 101's arrival by the suspicious Tai Li and determined to preserve his exclusive control, Miles took his case to Stilwell, who claimed with some irritation that the War Department had pulled a "squeeze play" on him. Consequently, when Eifler appeared at theater headquarters in July, Stilwell remained aloof, informing him that "I didn't send for you and I don't want you." [5]

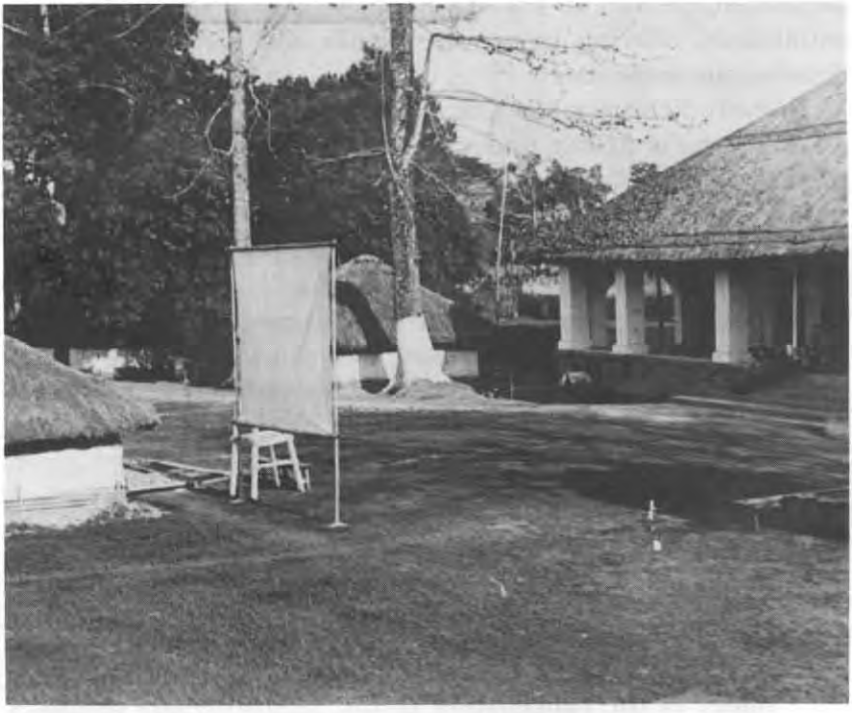
In the end the CBI Theater commander, possibly at Miles' suggestion, relented enough to permit Eifler's detachment to gather intelligence and conduct guerrilla warfare in Burma. The Japanese occupation of the country had cut the Burma Road, the main supply line to China from the outside world; to replace it, American engineers were constructing a new route from Ledo, on the India-Burma border. Japanese control of the north Burmese city of Myitkyina and the surrounding region blocked completion of the road, and enemy aircraft from an airstrip near the town were continually harassing American transports flying supplies to China. Given the limited resources available, Stilwell needed any help he could obtain to drive the enemy out of the area. At a minimum he hoped that the detachment could prevent Japanese use of the airfield, informing Eifler that "all I want to hear are booms from the Burma jungle." [6]

Lacking men, equipment, funds, a clear directive from Washington, and current intelligence on the situation in Burma, Eifler faced an immense task in building a clandestine organization. Although the unit successfully resisted minor staff assignments from the overworked CBI Theater headquarters, it still had only twenty men. Since American agents in Burma would attract attention, the detachment canvassed the British-led Burma Army for Anglo-Burmese volunteers. Sup-

plies and equipment were a more difficult problem. Communications would be critical to operations; yet the radios available in the Pacific theater were woefully inadequate in range and adaptability to the damp Burmese climate. Funds were so tight that Eifler paid for many of the detachment's initial expenses out of his own pocket. Finally, a Japanese air raid destroyed the detachment's warehouse, aggravating an already grim supply situation.[7]

At a tea plantation near Nazira in the northeastern Indian province of Assam, the detachment established a base camp under the guise of a center for malarial research. Using the services of a former district forester in Burma, Detachment 101 recruiters found about fifty refugees and Burmese military personnel anxious for the pay or the opportunity to fight the conquerors of Burma. Divided into small groups to preserve security, the prospective agents endured lengthy conditioning hikes into the rugged Naga Hills along the India-Burma border. They also received instruction in demolitions, weapons, communications, junglecraft, ambushes, and unarmed combat. Information often flowed in the opposite direction as well, since so many of the methods and training manuals of the detachment were based on Europe and were inappropriate for Asia. Lacking language capabilities of its own, the detachment had to rely almost exclusively on recruits who had at least a rudimentary knowledge of English. The trainees also provided their instructors with much information on local traditions, customs, and dress. While training continued, technicians, using parts from standard signal equipment and the local market, improvised a portable, self-powered, waterproof radio set with a range of over 500 miles. Through great effort and considerable improvisation, the detachment was ready for operations by mid-November.[8]

For the detachment's initial operations Eifler planned to stress sabotage, intelligence collection, and the establishment of agent nets while laying the foundation for guerrilla activities. At first Detachment 101 planned to establish a base at Sumprabum near the Allied front lines; from there it could collect intelligence and infiltrate small groups by foot through Japanese lines. Nevertheless, when the eight agents of Group A deployed to Sumprabum in early December to begin operations, they found their arrival, with baggage and porters, to



Detachment 101's training camp at Nazira *(U.S. Army Military History Institute)*

be about as clandestine as that of a circus entering a town. Once installed, their bad luck continued. Every attempt at infiltration was skillfully blocked by the Japanese. To complicate matters further, the local British commander demanded control over all operations in his area, an impossible condition for the detachment to meet. The mission appeared to be dead before it had even started.[9]

Frustrated in his attempts to infiltrate agents by foot, Eifler negotiated a deal with Brig. Gen. Edward H. Alexander, the chief of Air Transport Command. The general's planes were suffering heavily from Japanese fighters in their attempts to fly supplies over northern Burma and the Himalayas to China. Those crews that survived crashes in the primitive mountains of northern Burma faced little chance for survival in a region full of tigers, snakes, and Japanese. In a conference with the general, Eifler pointed out that if Detachment 101 personnel could reach the region and contact the friendly Kachin inhabitants, they could organize them into a network to help the

airmen escape back to friendly lines. Alexander responded with enthusiasm, offering to provide planes and parachutes to the detachment immediately.[10]

In early February 1943 Group A, now consisting of twelve Anglo-Burmese agents under Capt. Jack Barnard of the Burma Army, parachuted into the Kaukkwe Valley of central Burma. The team was supposed to cut the Mogaung-Katha Railroad in conjunction with an Allied offensive and then organize guerrillas south of Myitkyina. To check the landing zone and make certain that the area was clear of Japanese, Barnard and a radioman jumped on 7 February, one day in advance of the rest of the group. Although the two landed safety and found the area clear, their radio was badly damaged due to a faulty chute, leaving them without communication with their base. After a long night without any word from the group leader, Eifler decided to go ahead and at least fly over the site with the remainder of the team. Fortunately, the pilots were able to spot Barnard and his assistant, and the transport dropped the rest of the team, along with a new radio.

Shortly after the drop theater headquarters notified the detachment of the cancellation of the offensive, but Group A went ahead with its mission. Leaving six men to watch the base camp, Barnard and the remaining five agents began a 37-mile trek to the railroad, reaching the Namkwin area on 20 February. After reconnoitering in the dark, Barnard divided his party into three groups; each was to demolish a bridge on the railroad. Before 1st Lt. Patrick Quinn and his partner could finish placing explosives on their target, they were discovered by a patrol of Burmese militia. Quinn's partner was killed, and the lieutenant barely escaped. Hearing gunshots, Capt. Patrick "Red" Maddox and his companion fled after demolishing a span of the Namkwin Bridge. The third team, consisting of Barnard and his partner, abandoned their mission and returned to a prearranged rendezvous. When none of the others appeared, the two men hurried back to the base camp. Receiving orders to collect as much information as possible, Barnard's slightly enlarged party conducted several nightmarish marches east toward the Irrawaddy River, relying heavily on the few supply drops for which the detachment could find aircraft. When Japanese patrols east of the Irrawaddy became too numerous, the party headed north, walking into one of the

detachment's forward outposts on 30 May. Not long afterward Maddox, his partner, and Quinn arrived at Fort Hertz. While the group's efforts to organize guerrillas proved premature, it had put one railroad bridge out of action, contacted some friendly Kachins, and provided detachment headquarters with fresh information on Japanese activities behind the front lines.[11]

The success of the initial operation was partially obscured by the complete failure of two missions that followed. Eager to expand the unit's operations into southern Burma, Eifler overrode Coughlin's and Peers' concern that Detachment 101 was trying to do too much too soon. The U.S. Fourteenth Air Force, based in China, agreed to provide a transport for Group B's drop in the Lashio area as long as the C–47 transport bombed Lashio on the return flight. While flying over the drop zone, Peers felt misgivings about the proximity of a village of unknown loyalty but went ahead with the jump; while flying over Lashio on the return, he and Coughlin kept their promise to the Air Force by shoving bombs out of the side door of the transport. Peers' earlier worries were justified. The six Anglo-Burmese agents were attacked almost at once by Burmese natives, who killed three and turned the others over to the Japanese for execution.

One month later disaster struck another Detachment 101 mission. The commander of the British Eastern Army had requested that the OSS operatives conduct a raid against Japanese communications along the Burmese coast. After numerous delays due to rough weather and the limited availability of boats from the Royal Navy, Eifler, on a stormy March night, personally landed a party of six Anglo-Burmese on a beach near Sandoway. Once ashore, however, the men vanished without a trace. Eifler blamed this latest debacle on poor security and lack of equipment; thoroughly frustrated, he warned that the unit's dependence on the regular military for transport and other necessities was compromising its efficiency. Yet Eifler's own eagerness to prove the worth of his unit to Stilwell and his superiors in Washington, resulting in deployment of his teams without sufficient reconnaissance or knowledge of the operating areas, had also contributed to these failures.[12]

Despite the two setbacks, Stilwell was impressed with the results of the initial missions and approved an expansion of

Detachment 101's strength and activities. By the end of January the detachment, largely through use of the "jungle grapevine," was already providing Stilwell's headquarters with valuable intelligence on developments behind Japanese lines. The American theater commander directed Eifler to expand his contacts with the Kachin natives, to gather more information, and ultimately to provide the Kachins with arms and equipment for guerrilla operations against the Japanese. The focus of Detachment 101's activities was changing from sabotage to guerrilla warfare.[13]

To perform its new mission, Detachment 101 soon developed a general operating scheme that it used repeatedly in support of the Allied advance into Burma. Before the detachment could organize guerrillas in a given area intelligence and prior contacts were essential. From forward bases near the combat zone the unit infiltrated, by air or foot, small teams of advance agents behind Japanese lines to reconnoiter and locate friendly natives. For the most part, the detachment arranged reception committees for the agents; only rarely did they enter an area blind. Once the agents reported favorable conditions, combat cells, including Americans, parachuted into the areas and established operating bases to recruit and train guerrilla bands and to undertake a series of hit-and-run attacks against Japanese installations and outposts. After conventional or guerrilla operations had finally driven the enemy from the area, the forward headquarters advanced into the region, and the process repeated itself. The guerrillas generally operated from 50 to 150 miles behind enemy lines; advance agents deployed about 100 to 200 miles beyond the guerrillas. Meanwhile, the forward base coordinated their operations with the main Allied forces.[14]

These operational methods only evolved through considerable trial and error as throughout 1943 the detachment infiltrated agents and guerrilla cadres into the steamy jungles and mountains. In February Capt. William C. Wilkinson and four agents arrived in Sumprabum and began to contact Kachins in the area. A Japanese advance on the town soon forced them to flee, but in April Wilkinson, operating from Fort Hertz, infiltrated Japanese lines by foot to establish an operating base at Ngumla, where he raised a small guerrilla force, harassed the Japanese, and gathered intelligence from as far south as Man-



Lt. Vincent Curl engages in some "civic action" with a Kachin villager *(U.S. Army Military History Institute).*

dalay. Communication with the Kachins presented a serious problem until the team obtained the services of Father Dennis MacAllindon in August; the Kachin-speaking Catholic missionary proved an adept recruiter. Some of the new members returned to Assam for training as agents, and others joined the guerrillas. Despite a lack of radios, medical personnel, and supplies, Wilkinson, by his departure in January 1944, had built a force of 700 guerrillas and a network of agents, one of whom was a general contractor to the Japanese in the Myitkyina area. He was succeeded as commander of the project, code named FORWARD, by Lt. Cmdr. James Luce, a Navy doctor who won friends among the Kachins with his medical skills.[15]

West of Myitkyina, Vincent Curl, now a second lieutenant and proud owner of a magnificent flowing auburn beard, formed a small guerrilla army in the steep mountains near Naubum. In early March 1943 Eifler had sent three groups of

agents into the upper Hukawng and Taro valleys to reconnoiter the area between Japanese patrols and the engineers who were constructing the Ledo Road. One month later Curl received command of the consolidated groups, jokingly code named KNOTHEAD after he misplayed a pop fly in a unit baseball game. Infiltrating through enemy lines from Fort Hertz, Curl crossed the Kumon Range into the Hukawng Valley, where he joined Zhing Htaw Naw, a Kachin leader who had been fighting his own guerrilla war against the Japanese. Zhing Htaw Naw would serve as combat leader and supply the soldiers and guides, while Curl agreed to provide equipment, supplies, and overall coordination. Assisted by KNOTHEAD, the Kachins gathered information, harassed Japanese detachments, provided targets for the Tenth U.S. Air Force, aided downed Allied flyers, and even constructed a makeshift airstrip, which they camouflaged with movable huts when not in use. By February 1944 Curl's group had helped to assemble about 600 guerrillas.[16]

In addition to these two main bases, Detachment 101 by the end of 1943 had infiltrated several other intelligence and operating groups into northern Burma. Group Pat, code named after its commander, Lieutenant Quinn of Group A, established itself in the Myitkyina area, organized a small guerrilla force, and helped downed Allied flyers to escape. One of Pat's agents watched Myitkyina airfield with a telescope from a nearby hill and reported traffic directly to the Tenth Air Force. To the west at Taro, Group Red, under Captain Maddox of Group A, trained 500 guerrillas and reported Japanese activities on the right flank of the Allied forces preparing their advance into Burma. Other groups penetrated even farther behind Japanese lines. By December 1943 Detachment 101 had eleven radio stations reporting regularly from behind enemy lines.[17]

Despite vastly different cultural backgrounds, Kachins and Americans, on the whole, got along quite well. Although the members of Detachment 101 found the local diet barely palatable and were repelled by the Kachin practice of collecting the ears of the dead, they appreciated the courage, loyalty, and honesty of the tribesmen. When a payroll bag containing $500,000 in rupees ruptured in a supply drop, for example, local natives returned all but $300 of the missing money. OSS



Squad of Kachin Rangers *(U.S. Army photograph)*

operatives participated in Kachin festivals, watched their musical processions, and joined their games, foot races, and feasts. Even U.S. military personnel not belonging to Detachment 101 came to appreciate the Kachins as "friendly, open faced, natural mannered, [and] smiling. . . . In an exchange of glances with a Kachin, you felt a rapport you might not achieve with your Indian bearer for years, if ever." [18]

The Americans found the Kachins to be natural guerrilla fighters. They showed great care in the planning and preparation of an ambush, particularly in their use of the pungyi stick, a smoke-hardened bamboo stake of one to two feet in length. In preparing an ambush, the Kachins camouflaged the site to appear as natural as possible, placed their automatic weapons to rake the trail, and planted pungyis in the foliage alongside the path. Once the Japanese entered the area, the fire of the automatic weapons drove the surprised enemy troops into the undergrowth, where they impaled themselves on the pungyis. Having inflicted losses, the lightly armed Kachins usually left the area quickly, avoiding prolonged engagements. In contrast,

the Americans often displayed too much readiness to stand and fight, not recognizing a guerrilla's responsibility to minimize his own casualties while maximizing those of the enemy.[19]

The Kachins proved their value in a number of other ways. While Kachin agents initially estimated enemy numbers at roughly three times their actual strength, intensified training gradually resulted in extremely accurate reports. The Japanese skillfully used the dense jungle foliage of Burma to keep their movements and key installations invisible from the air. Consequently, the Tenth Air Force relied heavily on the detachment-sponsored guerrillas to find targets and evaluate air strikes. On one occasion, the detachment, carefully examining photographs from the diary of a Japanese pilot captured by the Kachins, discovered that the enemy at a particular airfield were hiding planes in holes covered with sod. It was thus able to pinpoint targets at the seemingly vacant installation. By late 1944 the Tenth Air Force was acquiring 80 percent of its bombing targets from detachment reports. In addition, the morale of Allied airmen flying over the northern Burmese mountains to China improved markedly as OSS teams and agents rescued downed crews and brought them back to friendly lines. In all, Detachment 101 rescued about 400 Allied flyers.[20]

As theater headquarters and the Air Force became more aware of the value of the detachment's operations, the group found it easier to obtain supplies, equipment, and other support. In the detachment's early days, it had been forced to beg or bargain for supplies within the theater, and some of its field personnel tried unsuccessfully to live off the land. Even later in the war, the unit's position in a low priority theater at the end of the supply line resulted in delays of three to six months in filling requisitions made through OSS headquarters in Washington. However, as theater resources became more available and Detachment 101's procurement and distribution of supplies became more systematic, the situation eased somewhat. By the end of 1943 the Air Force was providing C–47 cargo aircraft and some B–25 bombers to Eifler on a regular basis, and the detachment had even put together its own squadron of light aircraft for liaison and reconnaissance tasks. A general



Col. W. R. "Ray" Peers *(Courtesy of Mrs. Joseph Hicks)*

shortage of skilled personnel, especially military cadre and communications technicians, continued to be a serious problem. Headquarters staff worked grueling hours, and some cadres stayed in the jungle for as long as twenty months because of the lack of personnel to relieve them.[21]

By the end of 1943 the growth of the detachment and preparations for the coming Allied offensive made necessary a major reorganization. In December Donovan visited and assessed Detachment 101's progress, even flying in one of the unit's liaison planes to an operating base behind enemy lines. While at Nazira, he decided that Eifler must be replaced. Already prone to rages, the burly colonel had been plagued with severe headaches ever since he had struck his head against a rock while landing the ill-fated Sandoway party. In the ensuing shakeup, Coughlin received command, under Miles, of all OSS activities in Asia. Peers, formerly the operations and training officer of the detachment, took over the command, which was reorganized to encompass the entire scope of OSS activities, including psychological operations and research and analysis. Donovan also promised more resources, for Stilwell was about to direct an increase in the detachment's partisan force to 3,000 guerrillas. To ensure better coordination of the unit's expanded operations, Peers created four area commands and



Maj. Gen. Orde Wingate *(U.S. Air Force photograph)*

arranged for his operations section to travel with Stilwell's field headquarters in the forthcoming drive on Myitkyina, the key to the Japanese position in northern Burma.[22]

GALAHAD

Plans for a major Allied offensive in northern Burma had been discussed by U.S. and British leaders throughout the latter half of 1943. At the Quebec Conference in August Prime Minister Churchill had invited Maj. Gen. Orde C. Wingate, a brilliant if eccentric British officer, to discuss his concept of "long range penetration operations" behind enemy lines. The magnetic Wingate had already organized a mixed brigade of British, Indian, Gurkha, and Burmese troops. Operating in small groups for weeks at a time, these Chindits, as they were called, raided Japanese communications in Burma, including the critical north-south railroad. In the theater and within the British armed forces the value of such efforts had been hotly disputed by traditionalists who wanted to see the autonomy of the Chindits curtailed and their activities tied closer to conventional operational efforts. Nevertheless, at Quebec Wingate's concepts and energy impressed the American chiefs, who were anxious to launch the long-delayed campaign in Burma. An intrigued Marshall agreed to form a special U.S. commando

unit of jungle-tested veterans who would operate with the Chindits in the coming campaign.[23]

When the new unit assembled, it proved to be a far cry from the elite formation of picked troops that Marshall had envisioned. Despite the best efforts of recruiters in the South and Southwest Pacific, the Caribbean, and the continental United States, few jungle veterans showed any inclination to volunteer for an unspecified "hazardous" mission, and many of those who did suffered from malaria. In a number of cases, commanders seized the opportunity to unload personnel who, for various reasons, did not fit in with their units; when the troops from the Caribbean and the United States gathered at San Francisco, one officer remarked, "We've got the misfits of half the divisions in the country." [24]

Initially, the men of the new unit, code named GALAHAD, had little information on their destination or mission. Although no official word had been issued, rumors had circulated to the effect that the unit would be withdrawn from action after an unspecified operation of about three months' duration. Under the temporary command of Col. Charles N. Hunter, a dour professional who had been an instructor at the Infantry School, two battalions departed San Francisco in mid-September. En-route to the Orient, they added a battalion from the Pacific areas, bringing the total strength to about 3,000 men.[25]

Arriving in Bombay, India, on 31 October, the GALAHAD troops trained in long-range penetration tactics under Wingate's direction. At Deolali, 125 miles outside Bombay, the troops endured both physical conditioning and close-order drill. After moving to Deogarh in central India, they received instruction in scouting and patrolling, stream crossings, weapons, demolitions, camouflage, small-unit attacks on entrenchments, evacuation of wounded, and the novel technique of supply by airdrop. In December GALAHAD conducted a week-long maneuver with the Chindits. From the beginning, the unit was hard to handle; when it moved by rail from Deogarh to the Ledo area, for example, one officer found his men shooting out the windows at Indians as if they were riding through the Wild West in the 1870s. Nevertheless, for all its disciplinary problems and Hunter's belief that it needed more training, theater headquarters decided that GALAHAD would be ready for combat by February 1944.[26]



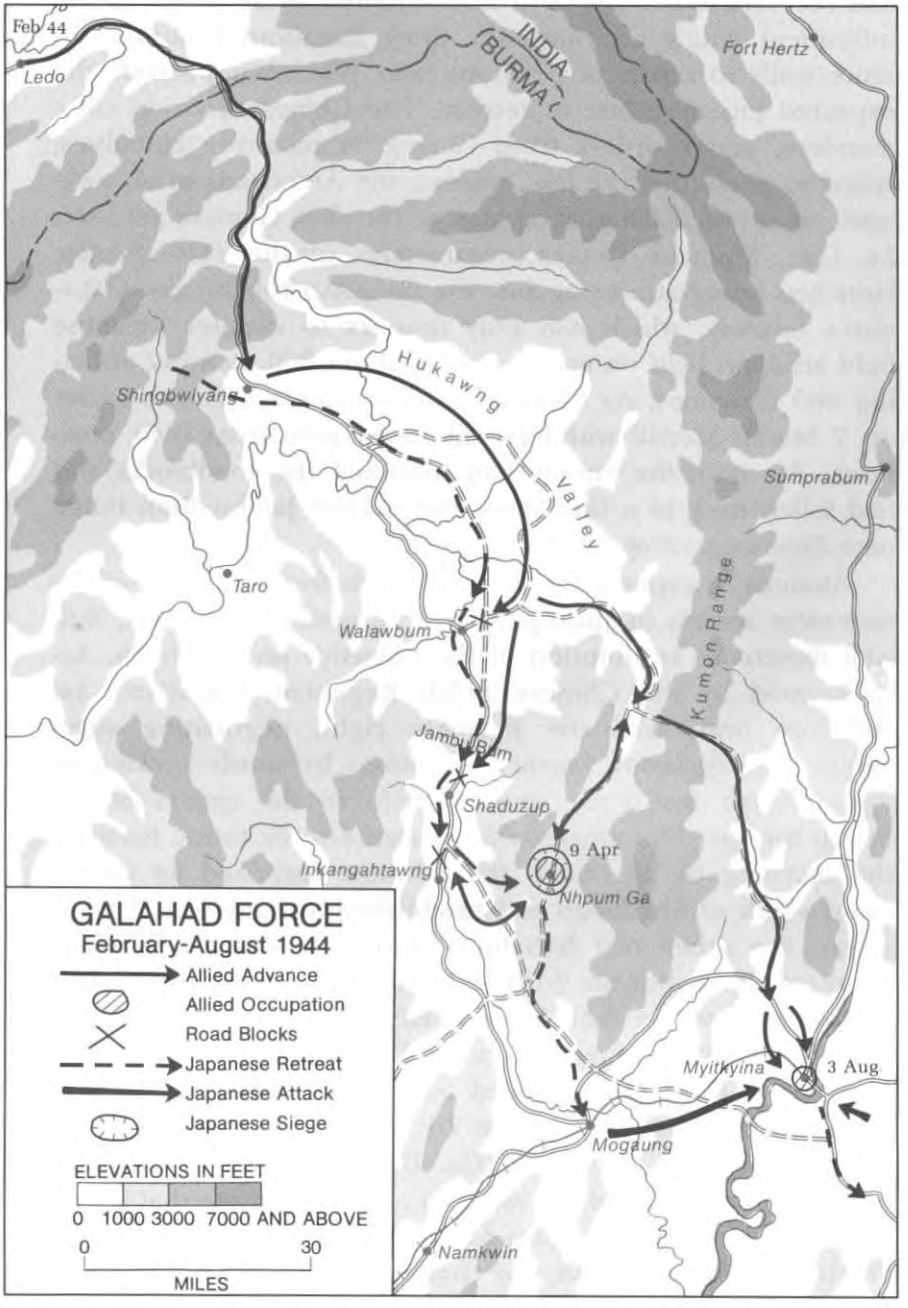
Brig. Gen. Frank D. Merrill and Lt. Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell meet near Naubum, Burma *(U.S. Army photograph).*

On the eve of GALAHAD's debut on the battlefield the unit found that it would not operate under Wingate. Determined that the only U.S. combat troops in the theater would not serve under a British officer, Stilwell had prevailed on Mountbatten, chief of the new Southeast Asia Command, to place GALAHAD under his control. To command GALAHAD, Stilwell chose one of his intimates, Brig. Gen. Frank D. Merrill, leading American correspondents to dub the unit "Merrill's Marauders." In contrast to Wingate's concept, the two American generals envisioned GALAHAD's proper role as strategic cavalry, conducting envelopments deep into the Japanese rear while Stilwell's two Chinese divisions advanced on the enemy's front. Their opponent was the veteran Japanese *18th Division,* which had conquered Singapore.[27]

After a 140-mile march from the Ledo area to their jump-off point near Shingbwiyang, the Marauders enveloped the right flank of the *18th Division.* Screened by three intelligence

and reconnaissance platoons and supplied by air drops in the infrequent jungle clearings, the three battalions followed obscure trails to a pair of positions near Walawbum, astride the expected Japanese line of retreat. The Chinese division commanders, under orders from Chiang to minimize casualties, failed to press their attacks, putting the Americans in an awkward situation. Taking advantage of the slow Chinese advance, Lt. Gen. Shinichi Tanaka, commander of the *18th Division,* launched heavy attacks against the GALAHAD roadblocks. GALAHAD's infantry, which had only mortars to counter Japanese field artillery, held on grimly, losing about 200 men but inflicting 800 casualties. As Chinese reinforcements began to arrive on 7 March Merrill withdrew his weary men from their positions. By then, the enemy had bypassed the roadblocks and had fallen back to a line along the rugged Jambu Bum range near Shaduzup *(Map 10).*[28]

Anxious to capture the Jambu Bum before the onset of the monsoon season in June paralyzed offensive operations, Stilwell directed a resumption of the offensive on 12 March. Accompanied by the Chinese 113th Regiment, GALAHAD's 1st Battalion outflanked the Japanese right, negotiating steep slopes and bypassing Japanese positions by slowly hacking its way through the dense undergrowth. In the course of the march the battalion crossed one stream fifty-six times. Early on the morning of 28 March the advance surprised an enemy camp south of Shaduzup and established a roadblock. Farther south, the other two battalions moved to cut the road at Inkangahtawng, but the 2d Battalion had no sooner established a blocking position than both battalions received orders from Stilwell's headquarters to head off a major Japanese drive against the flank of the Allied advance. Abandoning its prepared positions under fire, the 2d Battalion moved east to an isolated ridgeline at Nhpum Ga. Up to this point, Stilwell's headquarters had used GALAHAD as a flanking force that would only hold blocking positions for brief periods of time. As the official history points out, the change to a static defensive role at Nhpum Ga represented a radical change in the concept of GALAHAD's employment.[29]


Feb 44
Ledo
INDIA
BURMA
Fort Hertz
Shingbwiyang
Hukawng
Valley
Sumprabum
Taro
Walawbum
Kumon Range
Jambu Bum
Shaduzup
9 Apr
Inkangahtawng
Nhpum Ga
Myitkyina
3 Aug
Mogaung
Namkwin
GALAHAD FORCE
February-August 1944
Allied Advance
Allied Occupation
Road Blocks
Japanese Retreat
Japanese Attack
Japanese Siege
ELEVATIONS IN FEET
0 1000 3000 7000 AND ABOVE
0
30
MILES

MAP 10

For eleven days the 2d Battalion, isolated and surrounded at Nhpum Ga, withstood heavy attacks and shelling, while the 1st and 3d attempted to break through to them. Within the perimeter, lack of water and the pervasive stench of mule carcasses tortured the defenders; only a few supply drops made their position tenable. The defense was aided by the presence of Nisei (Japanese-American) interpreters, who overheard enemy orders and frequently confused the enemy by shouting directives in Japanese. Meanwhile, Merrill had been evacuated after suffering a heart attack, leaving Hunter in command of GALAHAD. Supported by artillery airdropped to them, the 1st and 3d Battalions finally reached the 2d on 9 April, and the Japanese withdrew south.

With the Jambu Bum in Allied hands, the 1,400 surviving Marauders anticipated a lengthy rest. But Stilwell had other ideas. He ordered the unit, accompanied by Chinese regiments and some Kachin irregulars, to seize the airfield at Myitkyina. The American commander recognized the poor condition of the Marauders but believed he had no alternative if the Allies were to capture Myitkyina before the monsoon. He promised to evacuate GALAHAD without delay "if everything worked out as expected." [30]

Revived somewhat by Stilwell's pledge, GALAHAD began a 65-mile march over the 6,000-foot Kumon Range to Myitkyina. As 1st Lt. Charlton Ogburn later wrote, "We set off with that what-the-hell-did-you-expect-anyway spirit that served the 5307th [GALAHAD] in place of morale, and I dare say served it better. Mere morale would never have carried us through the country we now had to cross. . . . The saw-toothed ridges would have been difficult enough to traverse when dry. Greased with mud, the trail that went over them was all but impossible." [31] Mules fell off ledges to their deaths in the crevices below. Marauders left their packs by the side of the trail; straggling was rampant. Despite all the obstacles, the Marauders and their allies surprised the defenders of the air base on 17 May, seized the strip, and probed toward Myitkyina itself. Lacking a plan to follow up its initial success and reliable intelligence on the strength of the Japanese defense, the task force faltered in its attempts to take the city.



Crew of transport plane stands by, ready to drop supplies to the troops of GALAHAD; *below,* GALAHAD troops rest along the jungle trail near Nhpum, Burma *(Both U.S. Army photographs).*



As the Japanese recovered from their shock and rushed reinforcements to Myitkyina, the exultation over the capture of the airfield dissolved in the gloom of a siege, a task for which GALAHAD was ill suited. Physically exhausted, the Marauders desperately needed to be replaced by rested, more heavily armed, line units, but Stilwell lacked fresh troops and, politically, could not afford to remove the Americans from the battle while other nationalities continued to fight. The results were inevitable. By 25 May the Marauders were losing 75 to 100 men daily to malaria, dysentery, and typhus, and Merrill was evacuated after his second heart attack. Morale, already low, plummeted when desperate staff officers, trying to hold down the rate of evacuation, pressed into service sick or wounded troops who could still walk. Along with broken promises of relief, the episode confirmed GALAHAD's self-image as the maltreated stepchild of higher headquarters. A bitter Hunter was relieved from command on 3 August, the same day that Myitkyina finally fell to the Allied forces.[32]

While the Marauders cursed Stilwell, they were grateful for the aid received from the Kachins. When GALAHAD had first marched into northern Burma, the Kachins in Curl's Area III provided information, guided patrols, and screened American movements from the Japanese. Kachin villages even placed their cargo-bearing elephants at the disposal of the Marauders. Later, Kachin patrols served as flank guards for the advance on Myitkyina. Despite a dangerous snakebite, a young Kachin guided the Marauders to the edge of the airstrip, making a surprise attack possible. During the siege of Myitkyina, guerrillas in Luce's Area I cut communications between the city and the Japanese *56th Division* on the Chinese border, forcing the enemy to divert a battalion to that region. Other Kachins ambushed Japanese troops attempting to flee the city by floating down the Irrawaddy River on rafts. With the support of the Kachins, the U.S. troops could feel that the jungle was on their side. Many Marauders would later volunteer for service with the Kachin guerrillas following the campaign, and Hunter wired Peers his "thanks to your people for a swell job," estimating that GALAHAD "could not have succeeded without them." Already the detachment, with Stilwell's approval, was

expanding its guerrilla force to 10,000 partisans, reorganized into three large area commands.[33]

The Final Campaigns in Burma

From August to December 1944 Detachment 101 aided the Allied advance to a phase line from Katha to Bhamo. In Area III Maddox's partisans filled a 200-mile gap between Chinese and American forces to the north and the British Fourteenth Army to the west. Meanwhile, Kachin guerrillas in 2d Lt. Bill Martin's Area II conducted ambushes and protected the flanks of the British 36th Division in its drive on Katha. In Area I OSS cadres under Capt. Peter Joost, Luce's successor and former captain of a college boxing team, were arming and training five battalions of partisans with the aid of the Kachin chieftain Lazum Tang. From their nearly impregnable base in the Sinlum Hills east of Bhamo, they raided Japanese outposts and harassed enemy troops on the roads leading into the city. Their communications cut by raids and ambushes, the Japanese evacuated Bhamo on 15 December.[34]

The fall of Bhamo opened the way for an advance to the old Burma Road. As the detachment left the familiar Kachin highlands and entered the more open terrain inhabited by the Shans and Karens, its leaders expressed some concern that local support would evaporate. However, a combination of Allied victories and Japanese misrule enabled the detachment to work with the local tribes and even recruit several Shan and Karen guerrillas. Nevertheless, the detachment still relied on its Kachin units for most of the fighting. Maddox, commanding a consolidation of Areas II and III, led his partisans in a series of raids against Japanese communications to support the Fourteenth Army's advance south. In Area I Joost's force, now comprising six battalions of 5,500 Kachins, harassed traffic along the Hsenwi-Wanting segment of the Burma Road and provided a security screen for the advance of the Chinese 50th Division. In some cases, the guerrillas even attacked fixed positions. With only .8 percent of the strength available to the Allies in the north, the Kachins inflicted 29 percent of the Japanese casualties in the course of the campaign.[35]



Left, troops of the 475th Infantry on the march into the Japanese rear; *right,* convoys ascending a famous 21-curve stretch along the Burma Road *(Both U.S. Army photographs).*

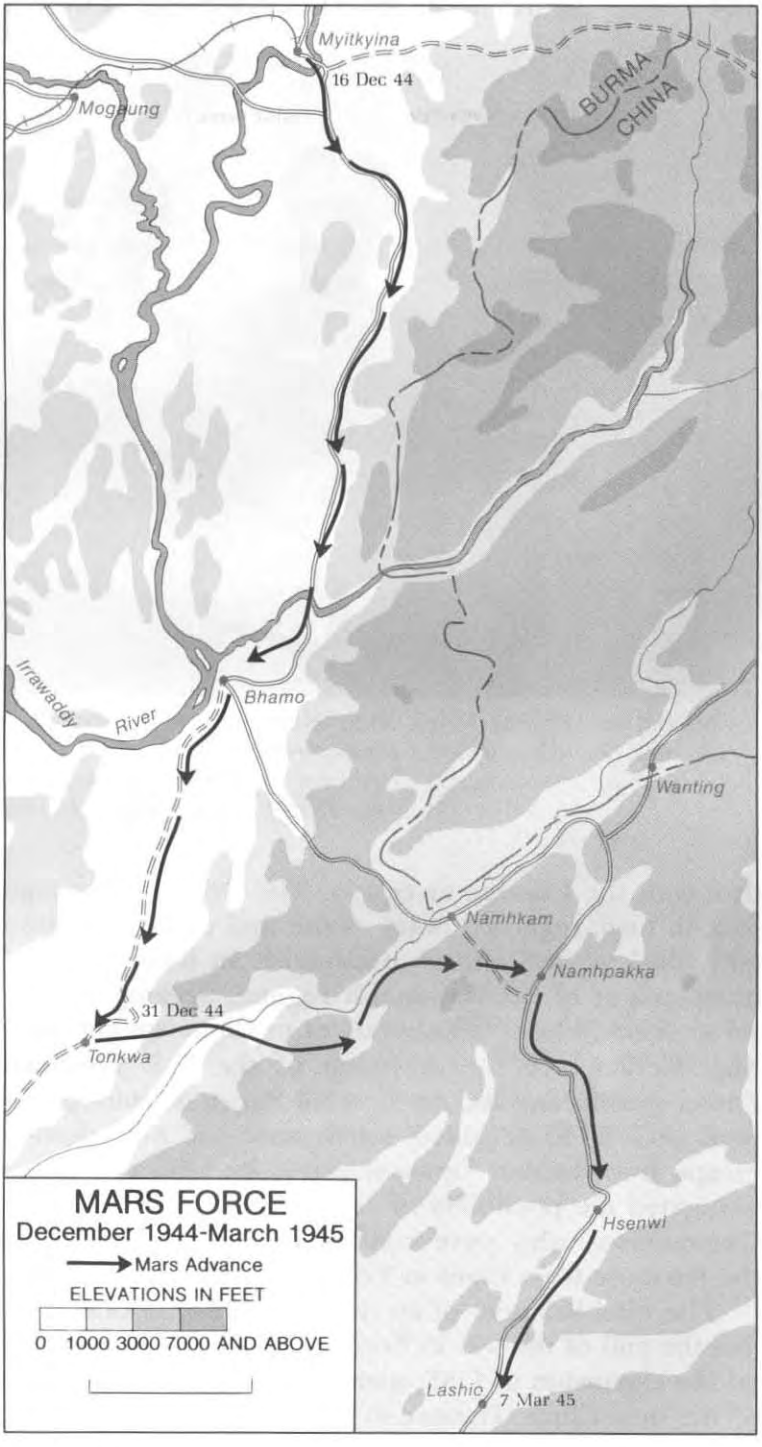
While the guerrillas struck at Japanese communications, remnants of GALAHAD joined the advance of the main Allied force to the Burma Road. In August 1944 Stilwell reorganized the survivors of Merrill's Marauders into the 475th Infantry and then combined the new formation with the 124th Cavalry and supporting units to form a new long-range penetration group, the Mars Task Force. After repelling a Japanese counterattack near Tonkwa in December 1944, the unit made a killing hike south and east through mountainous terrain to outflank Japanese positions along the Burma Road near Lashio *(Map 11).* By 17 January 1945, advance patrols of Kachins and task force personnel were clashing with Japanese outposts along the legendary Burma Road. Hoping to encourage the Chinese to greater efforts while avoiding heavy casualties in his own unit, Brig. Gen. John P. Willey, commander of the task force, avoided the main road, instead placing his men on the adjacent high ground. From there, they could interdict the road with patrols and artillery. Their communications cut by the guerrillas and Mars Task Force, the Japanese evacuated

Lashio on 7 March, enabling the Allies to link the Ledo Road to the Burma Road and reopen the land route to China.[36]

Although Peers had originally planned to deactivate Detachment 101 once the Burma Road had been reached, the critical situation in China and the diversion of Chinese and U.S. troops to that front caused theater headquarters to request that the Kachin battalions be retained. By this time many of the tribesmen were already hundreds of miles from their homes, some of which were threatened by Chinese bandits, but about 1,500 volunteered for a final offensive to secure the Burma Road by a general advance south. Joined by about 1,500 Karen, Gurkha, Shan, and Chinese volunteers, the Kachins, beginning in April 1945, infiltrated again into Japanese territory, established bases, and harassed Japanese communications, particularly the Taunggyi-Kentung Road along which Japanese troops were trying to escape to Thailand. By this time the remaining Japanese in the area were in poor condition, but their rear guards still fought hard in defense of fixed positions. In desperate fighting at Loilem, Lawksawk, and Pangtara, the Kachins, despite some air support, suffered their heaviest losses of the campaign. By mid-June, however, they had inflicted 1,200 casualties on the Japanese and had driven them from the Taunggyi-Kentung region, an achievement for which Detachment 101 later received the Distinguished Unit Citation. With the deactivation of the detachment on 12 July the native troops at last returned to their homes, and the Americans joined the growing OSS organization in China.[37]

The Office of Strategic Services in China

In the summer of 1945 the OSS effort in China was only beginning to become effective. During the first three years of the agency's involvement there, it had made little progress due to lack of resources, bureaucratic infighting, and the complexities of Chinese politics. Chiang's government, suspicious of any clandestine agency outside its control, limited its support to the joint Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO) under Tai Li, with Miles as deputy director. To gain entry into the theater, Donovan initially placed OSS activities in Asia under Miles, but the partnership never worked well. Miles was determined to be independent of Donovan's agency, which he perceived to be staffed with "old China hands" who could not


Myitkyina
16 Dec 44
Mogaung
BURMA
CHINA
Irrawaddy River
Bhamo
Wanting
Namhkam
Namhpakka
31 Dec 44
Tonkwa
Hsenwi
Lashio
7 Mar 45
MARS FORCE
December 1944-March 1945
Mars Advance
ELEVATIONS IN FEET
0 1000 3000 7000 AND ABOVE

MAP 11



Commodore Milton Miles, U.S. Navy, *left,* and General Tai Li, *right,* with an unidentified Chinese general *(Reprinted with permission of Macmillan Publishing Co. from* Into Siam *by Nicol Smith and Blake Clark, first published by The Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc. Copyright 1948 by the authors, renewed 1973).*

deal with the Chinese as equals. The Office of Strategic Services, in turn, regarded Miles as the tool of Tai Li, who repeatedly blocked OSS efforts to establish an intelligence presence independent of the Nationalist regime. Seeking to free themselves from Miles, OSS operatives in China sought a patron in Maj. Gen. Claire L. Chennault of the U.S. Fourteenth Air Force, establishing the Air-Ground Forces Resources Technical Staff (AGFRTS) to collect intelligence and help downed fliers escape from behind Japanese lines. An OSS mission even investigated the possibility of supplying arms to Mao Tse-tung's Communists, who were conducting guerrilla warfare against the Japanese from bases in Yenan.[38]

The establishment of an independent OSS branch in China and the end of the war in Europe in early 1945 greatly facilitated the expansion of OSS operations. After assuming command of the new China Theater in October 1944, Maj. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer pushed hard for control over all U.S. clandes-



Officers and men of the OSS who instructed Chinese commandos in parachute jumping and commando tactics at the commando training camp in Kunming, China *(U.S. Army photograph).*

tine operations in China. His arguments before the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Donovan's constant complaints to President Roosevelt of Chinese obstructionism finally resulted in the creation of an OSS agency independent of the Sino-American Cooperative Organization and under Wedemeyer's control. Meanwhile, the end of the war in Europe enabled the OSS to shift materiel, supplies, and personnel, including trained operational groups, to the Far East. By the summer of 1945 four-man OSS teams were training and leading large groups of Chinese partisans in operations against Japanese communications in southern China.[39]

Even before the end of the war in Europe, OSS personnel had been attempting to organize Chinese commando forces for operations behind enemy lines. The idea apparently drew its inspiration from Wedemeyer, who, as a staff officer, had been involved in the formation of Darby's Rangers. Given the gener-

ally deplorable performance of Chiang's regular army in the field, the American theater commander hoped that smaller Chinese units, with intensive American training and guidance, might fight more effectively than the standard Chinese divisions. After some opposition, Chiang's government grudgingly agreed in February 1945 to provide about 4,000 troops, food, clothing, and equipment for a force of twenty commando units. Almost immediately, the project encountered problems. The Chinese soldiers failed to arrive at the training area in Kunming until mid-April, and the quality of those who finally came varied greatly. Not surprisingly, Chiang's generals gave little support to the effort. Nevertheless, with the Office of Strategic Services in China providing most of the supplies and equipment, the OSS instructors began a hurried eight-week course in weapons training, guerrilla tactics, and parachuting. By July three commando units, each containing about 150 Chinese and 20 American advisers, were ready for the field.[40]

On balance, the program was a success but came too late in the war to have much of an impact. Under the operational control of the Chinese military command, the commandos were to attack communications, to capture significant operational objectives, to gather intelligence, and to protect key facilities from destruction by retreating Japanese forces. Although the commandos later suffered severe losses in the field, they exhibited a fighting spirit rare in the other Nationalist combat units, but lack of coordination and their subsequent misuse as line infantry were major problems. For example, during an assault by three commando units and the Chinese 265th Regiment on Tanchuk airfield, the OSS-trained forces seized high ground overlooking the airfield but took heavy casualties and were forced to withdraw when the 265th failed to arrive in time to support them. An attack on Taiyuanshih by another commando unit and local guerrillas also failed for similar reasons. Nevertheless, by the time the Japanese finally surrendered in August 1945, the commandos appeared to have become an effective fighting force. The Chinese Nationalist high command, however, continued to mistrust these American-inspired units and showed little grasp of their proper employment.[41]

The Office of Strategic Services in Southeast Asia

In Southeast Asia, as in China, OSS plans to organize guerrillas were just reaching fruition when the war ended. Great distances, difficult terrain, unpredictable weather, native apathy, and U.S. ignorance of local conditions presented formidable obstacles. Furthermore, the British and French, with major colonial interests in the region, viewed with suspicion efforts to establish an independent intelligence service there. Nevertheless, after an OSS lieutenant reached Ho Chi Minh in Tonkin in May 1945, OSS headquarters in China sent a team under Maj. Allison Thomas to arm and train the Viet Minh guerrillas of Ho and Vo Nguyen Giap for service against the Japanese. The OSS men held training sessions for 200 of Giap's best troops and supplied the Viet Minh with rifles, mortars, machine guns, and grenades. An OSS medic even cured Ho of a near fatal bout with malaria and dysentery. At the time of the Japanese surrender the Viet Minh were only beginning to establish their control over what later became Vietnam. Within twenty years they and the United States would meet again, under less auspicious circumstances.[42]

Thailand represented an especially complex challenge for the Office of Strategic Services. Early in the war the Japanese had forced the Thai government into an alliance against the United States. At the time the Thai minister in Washington renounced the action and supported an OSS program training Thai students studying in the United States as a nucleus of agents to be infiltrated into Thailand. The Office of Strategic Services instructed the young Thais in radio, weapons, demolitions, and close combat and assigned Lt. Col. Nicol Smith to serve as their finance officer and quartermaster. Arriving at Chungking in the summer of 1943, the contingent soon encountered obstructionism from Tai Li and the Chinese secret service. By April 1944 OSS leaders were frantic to reach the Thai resistance ahead of the British, suspecting that the British would attempt to establish a protectorate in Thailand after the war. Smith hired a Chinese Catholic priest to guide his men across the border, but two were killed and the remainder vanished. In October, just as Smith and the remaining Thais were about to give up hope, one of the agents contacted them

by radio from Bangkok. He had reached the Thai underground and found a substantial network of agents already in place. In response to a Thai request for U.S. officers to train guerrillas, the Office of Strategic Services in early 1945 parachuted personnel into the country and laid plans to train 10,000 guerrillas in twelve operating areas. Although the Thais expressed eagerness to fight the Japanese occupiers, their American advisers counseled them to wait until the Allied invasion of Thailand, scheduled for December 1945. Thus, the war ended before the Thai guerrillas saw action.[43]

As in the Philippines American forces in the CBI Theater demonstrated the potential of special operations, particularly in Burma. Facing a shortage of manpower and supplies, U.S. commanders turned to such activities as a means of maximizing their available forces. Lacking resources or even a clear initial concept of operations, Detachment 101 through improvisation and trial and error proved its value. Providing intelligence, reconnaissance, and, finally, a powerful guerrilla army, its efforts were vital to the Allied success in northern Burma. U.S. commanders at first underestimated the potential of the detachment's efforts but quickly revised their judgments. An evaluation of the performance of GALAHAD is more difficult. Although technically no more than light infantry, the Marauders served as line units and suffered heavy losses. Given the lack of American combat forces and the extreme caution of the Chinese, Stilwell had no choice but to use them past the point of endurance to accomplish his mission. GALAHAD's true raiding potential was never tested. The same might also be said of the OSS's belated attempts to organize guerrillas in China and Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, special operations, particularly those of Detachment 101, played a major role in the successes achieved by Allied arms in the China-Burma-India Theater.

Notes

1. Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: 369, 373; William C. Wilkinson, "Problems of a Guerrilla Leader," *Military Review* 32 (November 1952): 23; William R. Peers, "Guerrilla Operations in Northern Burma," *Military Review* 28 (June 1948): 10–11; William R. Peers and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963), pp. 47–49; Jack Barnard's report in Eifler to Donovan, 1 Jul 43, OSS, History Office Files, Entry 99, Box 49, Folder 400, RG 226, NARA.

2. William R. Peers, "Guerrilla Operations in Northern Burma," *Military Review* 28 (June 1948): 11; Richard Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1979), pp. 65–69; Rpt, Eifler to Donovan, 24 Nov 42, OSS, History Office Files, Entry 99, Box 49, Folder 400, Modern Military HQ Branch, RG 226, NARA. Donovan's original organization, the Office of the Coordinator of Information, became the Office of Strategic Services in June 1942.

3. Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, pp. 27–29; Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, pp. 76–80; Rpt, Eifler to Donovan, 24 Nov 42, OSS, History Office Files. Peers later rose to the rank of lieutenant general and commanded the 4th Infantry Division and II Field Force in Vietnam.

4. Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, pp. 83–87, 90; Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, pp. 30–35; Rpt, Eifler to Donovan, 24 Nov 42, OSS, History Office Files; USAMHI, Senior Officers Debriefing Program: Conversations Between Lieutenant General William R. Peers and Lieutenant Colonel Jim Breen, Lieutenant Colonel Charlie Moore, 5 secs. [Carlisle, 1977] (hereafter cited as Peers interview), 1: 13.

5. Quote from Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, p. 109; see also Milton E. Miles, *A Different Kind of War*, ed. Hawthorne Daniel (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), pp. 76, 86, 90; Smith, *OSS*, pp. 244–45.

6. Rpt, Eifler to Donovan, 24 Nov 42, and Ltr, Maj L.B. Thompson, Asst Adj. General, CBI Branch Office, to Eifler, 15 Sep 42, both in OSS, History Office Files, Entry 99, Box 49, Folder 400, Modern Military HQ Branch, RG 226, NARA; Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: 360–61, 369–71; Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, p. 109; Peers, "Guerrilla Operations in Northern Burma," *Military Review* 28 (June 1948): 12; Miles, *A Different Kind of War*, p. 90.

7. Rpt, Eifler to Donovan, 24 Nov 42, OSS, History Office Files; Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, pp. 111, 126: Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, p. 38; Peers interview, 1: 11.

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9. Dunlop. *Behind Japanese Lines*, pp. 142–43; Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, p. 67; Rpt, Eifler to Donovan, 24 Nov 42, OSS, History Office Files.

10. Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, p. 70; Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, pp. 147–48.

11. See Jack Barnard's report, in Rpt, Eifler to Donovan, 1 Jul 43, and Eifler's monthly reports, both of OSS, History Office Files, Entry 99, Box 49, Folder 400, RG 226, NARA; Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma*, pp. 92, 96.

12. Rpt, Eifler to Donovan, 6 Apr 43, OSS, History Office Files, Entry 99, Box 49, Folder 400, RG 226, NARA; History of Detachment 101, in Rpt, Peers to Donovan, Nov 44, OSS, History Office Files, Entry 99, Box 50, Folder 403, RG 226, NARA; Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: 376–78; Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, pp. 100–101; Peers interview, 1: 2, 17; Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, pp. 204, 209–11.

13. Rpt, Eifler to Donovan, 6 Apr 43, and Rpt, Eifler to Donovan, 30 Apr 43, both in OSS, History Office Files, Entry 99, Box 49, Folder 400, RG 226, NARA; Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: 370, 376; OSSSU Detachment 101: A Brief History of the Detachment for NCAC Records, Mar 45, OSS, History Office Files, Entry 99, Box 51, Folder 408, RG 226, NARA.

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15. Wilkinson, "Problems of a Guerrilla Leader," pp. 23–28; Rpt, Eifler to Donovan, 6 Apr 43, OSS, History Office Files; Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, pp. 191–92, 208, 368–70; Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, p. 13; Rpt, Wilkinson to Peers, 31 Dec 43, OSS, History Office Files, Entry 99, Box 50, Folder 402, RG 226, NARA; Rpt, Peers to Donovan, Nov 44, OSS, History Office Files.

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25. Ibid., pp. 9, 29–43, 271; U.S. War Department, *Merrill's Marauders, February–May 1944,* American Forces in Action series (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1945), pp. 8–11.

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27. Ogburn, *Marauders,* pp. 16, 59–60, 64, 70; War Department, *Merrill's Marauders,* pp. 8, 16; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems,* p. 131; Riley Sunderland comments relating to "Common Man, Uncommon Leadership: Colonel Charles N. Hunter with GALAHAD in Burma," *Parameters* (Summer 1986), pp. 6–7 in Scott R. McMichael Papers, USAMHI.

28. Ogburn, *Marauders,* pp. 85–134; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems,* pp. 149–54, 212; Hunter, *GALAHAD,* pp. 19–46. Hunter claimed that march to Shingbwiyang was necessary to condition the troops, but Peers stated later that he warned Hunter that the march would use up stores of energy which would be essential in the coming campaign. See Hunter, *GALAHAD,* pp. 19–20; Sunderland Comments to "Common Man, Uncommon Leadership," p. 6; Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines,* p. 300.

29. Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems,* p. 182.

30. Ogburn, *Marauders,* pp. 135–41, 177, 188–228; Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems,* pp. 175–91, 223–25; Hunter, *GALAHAD,* pp. 52–89.

31. Ogburn, *Marauders,* pp. 229–30.

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37. Peers, "Guerrilla Operations in Northern Burma," *Military Review* 28 (July 1948): 14–16; Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: 390–92; Peers interview, 2: 9–10; Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, pp. 193–211; Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, pp. 430–33, 435–36. The Mars Task Force was deactivated in China at about the same time. See John H. Randolph, *Marsmen in Burma* (Houston: Gulf Publishing, 1946), pp. 218–19.

38. Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: 359–64, 415–17; Miles, *A Different Kind of War*, pp. 85, 91, 111, 117, 160, 436; Smith, *OSS*, pp. 250, 257, 260–65, 268, 284.

39. Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: 364, 417–18, 440–47; Miles, *A Different Kind of War*, pp. 433–41, 455, 476; Smith, *OSS*, p. 266; Albert C. Wedemeyer, *Wedemeyer Reports!* (New York: Holt, 1958), pp. 252–53, 271.

40. Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 2: 417, 443, 454–55; see OSS/China monthly reports in OSS, History Office Files, Entry 99, Boxes 65–66, RG 226, NARA; Memorandum of Information to the JCS, 10 Aug 45, OSS, History Office Files, Entry 99, Box 68, Folder 218, RG 226, NARA.

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CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

In the end, large conventional ground armies, vast naval fleets, and great air armadas won World War II. The ability of the Allies, especially the United States, to successfully mobilize the total resources of the nation-state to support a global conflict proved decisive. With the collision of mass armies overshadowing finesse and small-unit maneuver, special operations could do little more than provide support to the conventional forces that dominated the battlefield.

Although special operations played a secondary role in Allied miltary efforts throughout the war, they made significant contributions to the final victory. In some cases the Army turned to such activities in response to unforeseen needs. Partisan activities aided amphibious landings by slowing the enemy's response, and commando units seized key beachhead defensive positions, paving the way for the main assault. To meet the critical need for on-the-spot intelligence in the dense jungles of Burma and the Pacific, the Army used partisans, advised by liaison teams, and special reconnaissance units, including the Alamo Scouts and the 6th Ranger Battalion. In other cases the Army resorted to special operations to compensate for its shortage of conventional combat units, effectively employing guerrillas and commando forces in both the Philippines and Burma. Partisans not only provided timely operational and tactical intelligence but also interfered with the ability of the enemy to supply and communicate with his units on the battlefield. Although guerrillas and commando formations lacked the armament and staying power to serve as line units, they did fill gaps and screen the flanks of conventional Allied armies, as in the case of Patton's drive across France, Krueger's conquest of the Philippines, and Stilwell's

advance across northern Burma. While difficult to quantify, the value of the guerrillas, as well as the Ranger-type commando units, was acknowledged by Eisenhower, Patton, MacArthur, and Stilwell.

Wherever Rangers and guerrillas operated, certain factors proved essential to their success. Rangers succeeded best in mountainous or forested terrain, which obstructed larger, heavier units and left gaps in an enemy front for infiltration. Provided mobility through amphibious lift or motor vehicles, they could conduct operations against enemy-held coastlines and across deserts. Successful execution of commando-type missions by Rangers depended on surprise, boldness, and the ability to strike fast and hard at a clearly identified objective. Ranger forces thus needed to be carefully selected, well-trained, and highly cohesive units, led by inspirational and resourceful officers. Although their missions demanded careful planning and rehearsals, their leaders also had to be prepared to respond quickly to rapidly changing situations. Ranger-type units also needed superiors who understood their capabilities and limitations and recognized that their employment as line infantry should be a measure of last resort. The actions at Sened, Pointe du Hoe, the Irsch-Zerf Road, and Cabanatuan provide examples of successful Ranger operations, just as the fighting at Cisterna and the experiences of GALAHAD at Myitkyina demonstrate the danger of exposing such units to prolonged combat without reinforcement or support.

Some of the factors contributing to the success of Ranger missions also applied to guerrilla operations. Rough terrain often nullified the occupying force's superiority in heavy equipment and made it difficult either to locate the guerrillas or to bring them to battle. Charismatic and resourceful leadership proved critical to the success of the guerrillas, just as divided command, as in the case of the Filipino resistance, was sometimes fatal. Guerrilla movements needed time to establish themselves, and few could sustain their activities effectively without outside assistance. Such innovations as the airplane and the radio helped overcome obstacles to outside support and made possible a greater degree of coordination of guerrilla operations. Lacking the organization, training, and equipment of more conventional forces, the guerrillas avoided pro-

longed clashes, favoring the mobile hit-and-run tactics that had been used successfully by such forces since earliest times. Most critical of all, partisans needed the support of the population to obtain food, clothing, information, and moral support. Fortunately for the guerrillas, the brutality of the German and Japanese occupational forces greatly strengthened native resistance movements. Psychological operations helped turn popular sentiment against the Germans and Japanese, but a more enlightened occupation policy would probably have weakened the guerrillas no matter what the Allies might have done.

Despite their success, American special operations in World War II still fell far short of their full potential. A better-organized Ranger or commando program against German communications in Italy might have provided greater direct assistance to the slow Allied push up the peninsula. Given mechanized vehicles, Rangers in France could have taken advantage of German disorganization to seize key points, such as bridges, and conduct raids on supply dumps and prisoner-of-war camps in advance of the Allied columns. In the Pacific the Filipino guerrillas constituted a nuisance to the Japanese occupation, provided support to American units, and maintained the morale of their people, but they lacked the resources and organization to force the Japanese to divert large numbers of troops to occupational duties. Whatever the merits of Wingate's scheme of long-range penetration groups, GALAHAD never had the chance to conduct such operations and instead performed deep flanking marches in support of the Chinese offensive into Burma. In northern Italy and France the Office of Strategic Services did not provide active support for resistance movements until the eve of offensives into those regions. While political complications furnish part of the explanation for the inability to exploit the potential of special operations, particularly in the case of the OSS, the lack of prior planning and allocation of resources, resulting from a basic Army disinterest in commando and guerrilla activities, was the main culprit.

The Army's initial hesitancy to become involved in special operations is easily explained. Prior to Pearl Harbor, U.S. military and political leaders had never envisioned that such activities would play a major role in any future war and thus never

attempted to establish a doctrine or overall concept for their use. Following the outbreak of war, the Army created provisional commando units, the Rangers, to meet certain temporary contingencies, such as the need to gain combat experience through raids and requests from theaters for elite units to spearhead amphibious landings. Once those units performed those tasks, they generally lingered on without a purpose, serving as line troops attached to corps and divisions until their dissolution. Except in the case of the Philippines, the Army left the mission of guerrilla warfare, with all of its political complications, to the OSS, in effect surrendering an entire area of military operations to the new agency.

Although OSS programs in theory came under the theater commands, American special operations in practice suffered from a general lack of coordination with conventional Allied military efforts. Unity of command in the area of special operations existed only in the Southwest Pacific, where MacArthur's headquarters took direct responsibility for the command of the Alamo Scouts, the 6th Ranger Battalion, and the Filipino guerrilla movement. A similar unification also took place in northern Burma, where Stilwell's headquarters after some misgivings operated closely with the OSS's Detachment 101. Where unity of command existed, the results indicated its importance to the maximum effectiveness of special operations in the future.

The problems resulting from lack of unity of command were only a few of the symptoms reflecting the unfamiliarity of U.S. Army officers with the field of special operations. Marshall proved to be more receptive to special operations units than most, but he had only a cursory knowledge and appreciation of such activities. In any event, he had little time or inclination to force his views on more orthodox subordinates. McNair, who was mass-producing large numbers of versatile standard formations for big-unit warfare, had little use for specialized commando units or guerrilla-organizing teams. Eisenhower quickly recognized the potential value of partisan operations to OVERLORD, but largely because of political complexities at his Allied headquarters, he did not create an effective headquarters to coordinate resistance activities in France until a few days before the invasion. He and Bradley appreciated the fighting

qualities of Ranger units but saw little need for them other than as amphibious assualt troops. Even Patton, a firm believer in the importance of morale and spiritual factors in warfare, thought more in terms of large formations and mass tactics than special operations. Among the high-ranking U.S. officers in other theaters, Clark appreciated the value of special operations conducted by the Office of Strategic Services in his area, but he misused Ranger units and the 1st Special Service Force in line operations. Stilwell, a conventional infantryman, turned to guerrilla warfare only with reluctance and insisted on using both GALAHAD and the Mars Task Force as line units.[1]

In contrast to the established U.S. tendency to overwhelm opponents with the superior firepower generated by American industry, dire circumstances had forced the British to take a different approach. Confronted by a continental opponent with greatly superior ground forces, Churchill and his military chiefs relied on Britain's traditional "Blue Water," or peripheral, strategy. They sought to wage a war of attrition against Germany through economic warfare (the blockade), diplomacy (supporting the Russian war effort), an aerial bombing campaign, guerrilla warfare (the resistance), and a program of amphibious raids against the enemy-held coastline. Always searching for the bold stroke that might catch the enemy off balance, Churchill personally supported the establishment of the British commando force and later backed Wingate's measures in the CBI Theater. The British prime minister's "dislike of the drab personality of contemporary warfare went hand-in-hand with his distaste for democratic or mass warfare as a whole."[2] His views reflected his bitter memories of the bloody stalemate of World War I as well as Britain's difficult military position during the first half of World War II.[3]

Due to political and topographical conditions, special operations played a smaller role in Europe and the Mediterranean than in the Pacific and Asia. While all four theaters possessed subject populations anxious for liberation, northern Europe's broad, open plains and good roads proved more conducive to big-unit warfare. Although special operations would have been more appropriate to the rugged terrain and slower pace of warfare in the Mediterranean, U.S. commanders were slow to take advantage of opportunities there. Several factors contrib-

uted to this lethargy: the lack of resources; the complicated political situation in Italy and the Balkans; and the lack of interest in a theater that, to American planners, existed only to tie down German troops. Except for some isolated instances, conventional U.S. generals discarded special operations in Europe and focused almost totally on conventional warfare once their forces had consolidated beachheads in North Africa, Italy, and France.

In the Pacific and Asia conditions proved more favorable for special operations. Americans campaigned in jungles and mountains, terrain that channeled all conventional military operations and greatly lowered the operational level at which the war was fought. Here the battles were waged by regimental, battalion, and company commanders, while those at division headquarters and above rarely entered the tactical arena. Largely because of these conditions, commanders in the Pacific and CBI theaters, particularly MacArthur, proved more amenable to the use of special units, such as the 6th Ranger Battalion, the Alamo Scouts, and OSS Detachment 101. Feeling a sense of obligation to provide some assistance to the Filipinos who awaited his return, MacArthur was elated by the growth of the guerrilla movement in the islands and eager to provide direct assistance. Thus, favorable terrain, support from the population, and inspirational leadership, along with the appreciation of higher-level commanders in the Pacific and the lack of alternatives in the CBI Theater, contributed greatly to the success of special operations in the war against Japan. Yet even in the Pacific and the CBI theaters, the chronic lack of manpower caused field commanders to use GALAHAD and the guerrillas as line infantry with predictably heavy casualties, and in China the lack of politico-military unity at the top made it exceedingly difficult for U.S. Army and OSS representatives to accomplish anything concrete throughout the conflict.

The decisive role of conventional operations in World War II confirmed the Army's orientation toward big-unit warfare in the postwar period. Although some veterans of special operations, notably Volckmann, Fertig, and Aaron Bank of the Office of Strategic Services, managed to persuade the Army to develop a guerrilla warfare capability, the effort necessitated a long struggle. In 1952 the Army finally established an organi-

zation simply called Special Forces and modeled it largely on the experiences of the OSS wartime Jedburghs and operational groups. But command interest in the new force was lacking. Most officers continued to believe that if the Army remained prepared for a large-scale conflict, it could handle lesser contingencies, including guerrilla warfare, with ease. The Army's later experiences with limited war in Asia, South America, and Africa led many to question that judgment. The result was a surge of interest in special operations forces, first in the early 1960s and then again in the early 1980s. Nevertheless, many questions regarding doctrine, command and control, roles and missions, and organization in this field remain unanswered, and the Army can still learn much from its experiences during World War II.

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