

Chapter 2

A Wartime Organization for Unconventional Warfare

On a clear and brisk afternoon on Sunday, December 7, 1941, William J. Donovan was enjoying an exhibition football game at the New York's Polo Grounds, when unexpectedly he heard an announcement on the stadium's loud speaker system that he had an important phone call. He soon learned that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor and that the President wanted him right away. He took the next train to Washington. "It's a good thing you got me started on this," Roosevelt told the Coordinator of Information that night at the White House. Then they talked about getting Donovan's agency ready for war and about America's will and ability to fight.¹ Within a few days, the United States was officially in the war against all three Axis powers—Japan, Germany, and Italy.

U.S. entry into the Second World War soon led to major changes in Donovan's fledgling organization. In June 1942, its name was changed from the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). It was placed under the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), but Donovan, now the Director of OSS, reported directly to the President.² The change also involved a reorganization and a redefinition of its mission. Donovan lost his authority to conduct counter-espionage in the Western Hemisphere to the FBI, and his Foreign Information Service, COI's propaganda branch, with nearly half of Donovan's 2,300 personnel, went to the new Office of War Information.³ The loss of his overseas propaganda branch was most disappointing to Donovan because that unit was key to his concept of psychological warfare encouraging

¹ Roosevelt's quotation is from "Notes from WJD—April 5, '49," Donovan's notes on a postwar interview [presumably with William vanden Heuvel], cited in Thomas F. Troy, *Donovan and the CIA: A History of the Establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency* (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America, 1981), 116. For the Polo Grounds episode, see the *New York Times*, 8 Dec. 1941, 32.

² The Organization of Strategic Services (OSS) was created on 13 June 1942. By Executive Order, Roosevelt first moved the Foreign Information Service to the newly created Office of War Information (OWI). Then by military order, he transformed the reduced COI into the new Office of Strategic Services and placed it under the jurisdiction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He appointed Donovan as Director of the OSS. The Military Order of 13 June 1942, establishing the OSS is reprinted in Franklin D. Roosevelt, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt*, comp. Samuel I. Rosenman, 13 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), 11: 283.

³ OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, with new introduction by Kermit Roosevelt (New York: Walker and Co., 1976, orig., 1947), 18-27, 188-90. On the deleterious effects on counterespionage of the FBI rivalry with the COI/OSS/CIA, see Timothy Naftali, *Blind Spot: The Secret History of American Counterterrorism* (New York: Basic Books, 2005). Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, 120-50; on the transfer of Robert Sherwood and the FIS to the OWI, see Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Robert E. Sherwood: The Playwright in Peace and War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007), 245-50.

captive peoples to rebel.⁴ Despite his losses to the FBI and OWI, Donovan saw his organization's secret operations—espionage, counter-intelligence, disinformation, and guerrilla leadership—expanded. Under the auspices of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the protection of President Roosevelt, the OSS grew in size and stature to become America's primary espionage and unconventional warfare agency during the war.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff, composed of the heads of the armed services, had been created in February 1942 to coordinate the American armed forces and to expedite cooperation with the British chiefs of staff.⁵ At the urging of British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and with the concurrence of the President, psychological warfare, subversion and sabotage behind enemy lines had been added to the planning agenda of the U.S. military. Previously, the American armed forces had largely ignored such unconventional warfare. Since Donovan's civilian agency was the American authority in that area, the Army and the newly formed JCS decided that it might be useful to include the Donovan's group under their authority.⁶ With Donovan's free-wheeling style clashing with the military's inherent belief in the sanctity of the chain of command, Lieutenant General Dwight D. Eisenhower, head of the War Plans Division, recommended that he be made directly responsible to the JCS.⁷ But Donovan was able to reach an agreement under which his organization would come under JCS jurisdiction but still retain its autonomy instead of being subsumed under Army Intelligence (G-2). Both organizations benefited: Donovan's group gained military support and resources, and the armed forces acquired a useful agency in intelligence gathering and analysis, psychological warfare, and special operations, in short, for unconventional warfare.⁸

⁴ As the President told Sherwood in making the change, "I strongly felt that your work is essentially information and not espionage or subversive activity among individuals or groups in enemy nations. I know Bill Donovan does not agree with this, but the rest of the C.O.I., including himself, belongs under the Joint Chiefs of Staff." FDR to Dear Bob [Robert E. Sherwood], 13 June 1942, Official File 4485, OSS, Box 2, Folder OSS 1942-1945, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N.Y., hereinafter, Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, Hyde Park, N.Y.

⁵ On the creation of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and strategic planning with the British Joint Chiefs of Staff, see Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 64-67. For most of the war, the JCS included General George C. Marshall, U.S. Army; Admiral Ernest J. King, U.S. Navy; and General H.H. ("Hap") Arnold; U.S. Army Air Forces; together with Admiral William D. Leahy as the President's personal representative.

⁶ For interest by the Army's War Plans Division as early as February 1942 in active liaison with COI in regard to the Army's new mission of "subversive activities," see, "W.P.S., Draft Memorandum for General Gerow, Subject: Subversive Activities—Planning," n.d. [February ? 1942], and W.P.S. [of the War Plans Division], Memorandum to General Lee [probably Brig. Gen. Raymond E. Lee, chief of Army G-2, Intelligence], n.d. [February? 1942], Wash-OSS-Op-21 (COI Subversive Activities), photocopies in CIA Records (RG 263), Thomas F. Troy Files, Box 2, Folder 19, National Archives II.

⁷ Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower: The War Years*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 253-54.

⁸ On the key negotiations were between Donovan and JCS secretary Brig. Gen. Walter Bedell ("Beatle") Smith, see Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, 129-37, 143-50.

OSS and the Army

Still, the relationship between military leaders and Donovan's organization remained strained throughout the war. The head of Army Intelligence, Brigadier General George V. ("George the Fifth") Strong, led an effort to stymie the OSS, until Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall forged a compromise that limited overt interference with the OSS.⁹ Most of the professionals continued to be suspicious of Donovan's citizen-soldiers, their neglect of normal military routine, and their unorthodox methods. There was also resentment about "direct commissions," for civilians in the OSS with military ranks from lieutenant to colonel, without any previous training or service in the military, and pressures to appoint prominent civilians as generals, "political generals," Marshall called them. Because the General Staff considered him an amateur not a professional soldier, Donovan did not get the general's stars that Roosevelt had promised him until midway through the war. The Army recognized Donovan as an active duty colonel, but General Marshall resisted promoting him to flag rank until March 1943 when Donovan became a brigadier general and November 1944, when he received his second star as a major general.¹⁰ Despite such difficulties, Donovan put a good face on the creation of the OSS, crowing to a senior British general, about his success "in having our Joint Chiefs of Staff do something which has never been done in our military history. That is to take in as part of their organization a civilian unit. There had been great neglect of the new elements in modern warfare and we have succeeded in getting them set up and all under one tent, including special intelligence, special operations, and psychological warfare."¹¹

Donovan's organization grew dramatically during World War II to fulfill those missions. The COI, which had only 100 persons working for it in September 1941 had reached 2,300 in June 1942.¹² OSS reached 5,000 personnel by September 1943.¹³ At its

⁹ Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, 173-91, 431-34..

¹⁰ JCS Directive 67 of 21 June 1942, approved 22 June 1942, recognized Donovan as having the military rank of colonel. For the dates of Donovan's promotions, 24 March 1943 and 10 November 1944, see Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, 514n. See also Diary entry of 14 November 1942 in James Grafton Rogers, *Wartime Washington: The Secret OSS Journal of James Grafton Rogers, 1942-1943*, ed. Thomas F. Troy (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America, 1987), 21.

¹¹ William J. Donovan to Gen. Archibald Wavell, 6 July 1942, job 66-595, Box 1, Folder 48, Donovan Papers, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle, Pa. The JCS's Joint Psychological Warfare Committee reported sabotage and guerrilla as the OSS's military functions to be placed under theater commanders. See Joint Psychological Warfare Committee, memorandum to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, subject: Functions of the Office of Strategic Services in Relation to Secret Operations, 21 July 1942, and subsequent drafts of 24 and 28 July 1942, copies in OSS Schools and Training Branch; Schools, Functions of OSS in Relationship to Special Operations; Records of the Director's Office of OSS (RG 226), microfilm number 1642, roll 64, frames 952-968, National Archives II, College Park, Md.

¹² OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 87.

peak strength in late 1944, it had almost 13,000 men and women on its rolls, although the number of people who served at various times with COI and OSS between 1941 and 1945 may have totaled 21,600 or even 24,000.¹⁴ In the spring of 1945, of the approximately 13,000 OSS personnel, nearly three-quarters, some 9,000 were uniformed members of the armed forces. Of those, 8,000 were in the Army, 2,000 of them officers.¹⁵ Of the total of 21,640 persons who served in COI/OSS at one time or another, 4,000, or nearly one-quarter, were women. Most of these college-educated women served in the United States, the majority working in Washington, but 700 women went overseas, and a few served behind enemy lines.¹⁶

Those women who did serve overseas were primarily at the organization's main base stations—London, Cairo, Naples, Kunming, China and Kandy near Colombo, Ceylon/Sri Lanka. Most of them continued to do much of the kind of paper, communications, and linguistic work they had done in Washington. After graduating from Smith College, Barbara Hans was living in Mount Kisco, New York with her mother, when she was hired by OSS's Communications Branch in 1942. "My mother said, 'Oh, how can you leave me?' I said, "'There's a war on. I'm going.' It was quite exciting for a young woman."¹⁷ OSS decided that since she and her group of "Smithies"

¹³ Reported in James Grafton Rogers, diary entry of 6 September 1943, *Wartime Washington: The Secret OSS Journal of James Grafton Rogers*, 141.

¹⁴ A figure of 12,718 OSS personnel is provided in Lawrence H. McDonald, "The OSS and Its Records," in *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II*, ed. George C. Chalou (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration 1992), 81. See also Michael Warner, *The Office of Strategic Services: America's First Intelligence Agency* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 2000), 9. That apparently was the number of personnel at its peak. The total number of 21,600 people who had worked for COI or OSS at one time or another in civilian or military capacity is provided in Elizabeth P. McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies: The Women of the OSS* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1998), xi, 11. In August 2008, CIA released OSS personnel files suggesting 24,000 persons. Brett J. Blackledge and Randy Herschaft, Associated Press, "Newly Release Files Detail Early US Spy Network," 14 August 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/14/August>; Spy Files Include a Justice, a Baker, and a Filmmaker," Newark (N.J.) *Star-Ledger*, 15 August 2008, A4.

¹⁵ Figures provided in Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan to Adjutant General of the Army, 15 May 1945, subject: Recommendation for Promotion [of Col. Millard P. Goodfellow], p. 3, located in Millard Preston Goodfellow Papers, Box 2, Folder: Biographical Material, in the Millard Preston Goodfellow Papers, Hoover Institution, Stanford, Calif.

¹⁶ Elizabeth P. McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies: The Women of the OSS* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1998), xi, 11; Katherine Breaks, "The Ladies of the OSS: The Apron Strings of Intelligence in World War II," Senior Thesis in History, Yale University, 1991, cited by Robin W. Winks, "Getting the Right Stuff: FDR, Donovan, and the Quest for Professional Intelligence," in *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II*, ed. George C. Chalou (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration 1992), 24. But as Elizabeth McIntosh wrote in the late 1990s: "Discrimination against women in government service during the war was obvious. The women in X-2 [counter-espionage], for example, were as well educated as the men, they spoke the same number of foreign languages, on average were the same age (early thirties), and most had traveled abroad. But in X-2 they were generally secretaries, filing clerks, or translators. There was one decoder; two were listed as associate head and administrative assistant. None achieved executive positions in X-2." McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 97-98.

¹⁷ Barbara Hans Waller, telephone interview with the author, 19 March 2005.

were good in math and cross-word puzzles, they would be trained in coding and decoding.¹⁸ She accompanied eight other women to Ceylon. “I spent half my time in Kandy locked up in a cage on night duty, receiving and sending cable traffic to and from the Arakan [coast of Burma], OSS drops and Detachment 101.”¹⁹

Organizationally, OSS during the war had several main branches: operational, supportive, and administrative in nature. Although Donovan’s organization was divided into more than a dozen different branches, plus other divisions and sections, the two largest categories were intelligence and special operations. Intelligence gathering and analysis had several different components: Secret Intelligence, Counter-Intelligence, Foreign Nationalities, and Research and Analysis, but all together at the peak strength of OSS in October 1944, the intelligence branches amounted to over 3,000 persons, representing 25 per cent of the people in Donovan’s organization. Special Operations had the same number and percentage at that time. Technical operations, which included a variety of support services from Communications Branch to Research and Development and the like, amounted to just over 2,000, representing 18 percent of the OSS in October 1944, and Administrative Services had the same numbers and percentage. Administration included about 1,800 persons and represented 14 percent of Donovan’s organization at that time.²⁰

By October 1944, 65% of OSS personnel were serving overseas. That percentage remained relatively constant, but the theater distribution changed. The initial buildup was for the Mediterranean Theater and then the European Theater, especially for the invasion of France in 1944. By the end of that year, with the *Wehrmacht* being driven back into Germany, the OSS was shifting many of its assets to the Far East. The percentage of the agency’s personnel in the China-Burma-India Theater expanded from 14% in October 1944 to 36% (more than 4,000 persons) in June 1945. It remained at that level until the war ended in September 1945.²¹

Main Branches of OSS

Secret Intelligence

Most of the glory was won by the operational branches, especially the bold and daring agents of the Secret Intelligence and Special Operations Branches and the commando-style military units of the Operational Groups. Most mysterious were the

¹⁸ Barbara Hans Waller, telephone interview with the author, 19 March 2005. They were trained at the OSS Administration Building in Washington, D.C. She had no knowledge of the Communications Branch radio operation school at Area C.

¹⁹ Barbara Hans Waller quoted in McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 215-16.

²⁰ “OSS Personnel: By Branch,” Table in McDonald, “The OSS and Its Records,” *The Secrets War*, 96.

²¹ “OSS Personnel: By Theater” Table in McDonald, “The OSS and Its Records,” *The Secrets War*, 92.

“cloak and dagger” operatives of the Secret Intelligence Branch (SI).²² These were the men and some women who ran intelligence operations and rings of indigenous spies primarily in enemy or enemy-occupied countries. Intelligence gathering and analysis was a major function of OSS.

“The information came in from agents. We never called them spies,” recalled Dorothy Hayes Stout, who typed up incoming coded messages.²³ The military was particularly interested in obtaining intelligence about the enemy, and the main supplier of military-related intelligence in the OSS was the Secret Intelligence Branch. SI played its first important role in helping ensure the success of the American invasion of Vichy French North Africa in November 1942. As early as June when planning for the operation had begun, a female SI agent, Amy E. Thorpe (code-named “Cynthia”), a 32-year-old socialite, seduced a Vichy official and copied valuable naval codes from the French Embassy in Washington.²⁴ In North Africa itself, OSS agents like diplomat Robert Murphy, World War I war hero and American professor at Cairo University William Eddy and Harvard Arabist and anthropologist Carleton Coon worked successfully to minimize resistance to an Allied landing by the colonial forces of Vichy France which was collaborating with the Nazis. The OSS may have had some complicity in the assassination of Vichy French commander Admiral Jean Darlan.²⁵ SI continued its work throughout the Mediterranean and in Western and Central Europe. On the other side of the world, in China, SI networks behind Japanese lines provided information on bombing targets for U.S. Army Air Forces and on Japanese shipping for the U.S. Navy.

The majority of SI personnel worked in Allied or neutral countries, from which they made contacts with informants or, more frequently, sent foreign speaking Americans or indigenous agents, into enemy areas by night parachute drops or submarine landings to carry out their missions of obtaining information directly or through paid or unpaid informants about military, economic, political, and morale conditions. Among SI station chiefs, none was more successful than Allen Dulles, whose headquarters was in Bern in neutral Switzerland. This scion of a family of international lawyers and diplomats, Dulles had served as an intelligence agent in Switzerland in the First World War, returning in 1942, he built a ring of more than one hundred agents in Germany, including lawyers, businessmen, labor leaders and socialists, and learned about the development sites for V-1 and V-2 weapons, the organization of opposition to Hitler within the German officer

²² For a brief summary of the organization and operation of the Secret Intelligence Branch, see OSS, *OSS, War Report of the O.S.S.*, 179-87; and Warner, *Office of Strategic Services*, 21-24. David K.E. Bruce headed SI until 1942 when he was appointed OSS chief in London and was succeeded by Whitney H. Shepardson, international lawyer and business executive, who headed SI until the end of the war. See David K. E. Bruce, *OSS against the Reich: The Wartime Diaries of Colonel David K.E. Bruce*, ed. Nelson Douglas Lankford (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1991).

²³ Lou Mumford, “Her Secret Life was Working with Spies. It Wasn’t Like James Bond Movies, but World War II Era Job Was Intriguing,” *South Bend [Indiana] Tribune*, 27 May 2005, reprinted in *OSS Society Digest* No. 1044, 28 May 2005, ossociety@yahoo.com, accessed 28 May 2005.

²⁴ McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 21-31.

²⁵ Stephen Ambrose, *Ikes’ Spies: Eisenhower and the Espionage Establishment* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981), 39-56.

corps prior to their attempt to assassinate him in July 1944, and other valuable information. Dulles also became the contact for the most valuable single human intelligence source of the war, Fritz Kolbe, an anti-Nazi bureaucrat in the German Foreign Office with liaison to the German General Staff. British intelligence rejected him, but Dulles trusted him, and from 1943 to 1945, Kolbe smuggled to the OSS station chief in Switzerland some 1,600 valuable military and foreign policy documents providing important insights into military, economic, and political conditions in wartime Germany. Donovan included summaries of that information in the intelligence reports he gave regularly to President Roosevelt.²⁶ Dulles later became Director of the Central Intelligence (DCI) under President Dwight Eisenhower. The SI chief in London in the later part of the war, William J. Casey, became DCI under President Ronald Reagan. In World War II, Casey, then a young New York lawyer who joined the OSS, underwent close combat and demolitions training at OSS Training Area B in Catocin Mountain Park, became the last chief of SI in London. In the final five months of the war in Europe, Casey, using parachuted German agents, achieved a penetration of Hitler's Third Reich by infiltrated spies, something British intelligence said could not be done.²⁷

Although the Secret Intelligence Branch produced some valuable information during the war, OSS was excluded by both the U.S. and British military from the most important signals intelligence source of the war—the intercepted and decoded Axis radio communications (code named Ultra and Magic). However, beginning in 1943, Donovan was able to persuade the British intelligence services to share some of the Ultra intercepts for the purpose of counter-espionage, the identification of German spies and their elimination or conversion to “doubled” agents, who would report deceptive information to Berlin for the Allies. Headed by James Murphy in London and with station chiefs like the brilliant but ultimately controversial James Jesus Angleton in Rome (Angleton had taken his OSS basic training course at Area B at Catocin before his more specialized training at SI and X-2 schools in Maryland and Virginia), the Counter-Intelligence Branch (X-2) was the most secretive of the OSS branches because of its access to some of the Ultra intercepts; it was also one of the most powerful, as its access enabled it to cancel SI or SO operations without explanation.²⁸

²⁶ Peter Grose, *Gentleman Spy: The Life of Allen Dulles* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994); Christof Mauch, *The Shadow War against Hitler: The Covert Operations of America's Wartime Secret Intelligence Service* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). In January 2008, the CIA released in digitalized form nearly 8,000 formerly classified documents in the Allen W. Dulles Papers, 1939-1977, some of it heavily redacted. See, for example, information on Double Agent Lummy, in Switzerland and France, August 1943 through October 1944, in image 194308L7000029249; and reports from contacts about political and military developments in Germany's ally, Bulgaria, February 1943 through April 1944, image 19430210_0000029247; Sub-Series D, Correspondence General, English, 1942-1947, Allen W. Dulles Digital File Series, 1939-1977, Seeley Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.

²⁷ William J. Casey, *The Secret War against Hitler* (Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, 1988); Joseph E. Persico, *Casey: From the OSS to the CIA* (N.Y.: Viking, 1990).

²⁸ OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 188-98; Warner, *Office of Strategic Services*, 8, 29. Caricatures of Angleton have appeared in numerous spy-thriller books and films, most recently, Robert DeNiro's film, *The Good Shepherd* (2007), starring Matt Damon as the Angleton character. On Angleton, see David C. Martin, *Wilderness of Mirrors* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980), 12, for his basic training at Area B; Timothy J. Naftali, “ARTIFICE: James Angleton and X-2 Operations in Italy,” *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II*, ed. George C. Chalou (Washington, D.C.: National Archives

Like the majority of women who enlisted in the OSS, Aline Griffith, from Pearl River, New York and a tall, statuesque Hattie Carnegie model, was assigned to the office in Washington. But in December 1943, after a month's secret intelligence training at Area RTU-11, "the Farm," the adventurous, 21-year-old woman, codenamed "Tiger," was sent overseas to Madrid to work in the capital of neutral, if pro-Axis Spain. In addition to coding and decoding, her mission was to counter-espionage, initially to learn the identity of a top German agent there. The bright and beautiful young woman proved a great success, gaining access to information while dining and dancing in an international social circle that included diplomats, attachés, businessmen, undercover agents and the like. On weekend visits to country mansions, she was not above rummaging through drawers and cracking safes and photographing documents. She became a top counter-espionage agent. After the war, she remained there and married a Spanish nobleman, becoming the Countess of Romanones.²⁹

Only a relative handful of OSS women were trained for Secret Intelligence or Special Operations behind enemy lines. Most of them attended one of the OSS parachute classes taught at Fort Benning, Georgia or in North Africa or China by Colonel Lucius O. Rucker, U.S. Army paratrooper and a veteran of 119 jumps himself. The 38 women he instructed as parachutists represented only 1 percent of the 3,800 people he trained to jump out of airplanes, including Americans, British, French, Italian, Chinese and Thais. Rucker supervised more than twenty thousand jumps in his career, and he reported that only 50 trainees had refused at the last minute to jump out of the plane. None of those who refused was a woman. The women jumped, but they complained that their breasts were badly bruised by the severe snap back of the harness when the parachute opened.³⁰

A number of American women in SI worked just behind the Allied lines, among them Betty Lussier, who set up an extensive double-agent network in southern France after the Americans had liberated Nice, and Wanda Di Giacomo, who had started in the Personnel Division of the OSS in Washington but ultimately served in SI in Italy. She received her overseas espionage training at a converted warehouse in Roslyn, Virginia. "After my work in Personnel, this was the pits," she recalled, contrasting the quiet, comfortable facilities in OSS headquarters with the hurly-burly of a temporary OSS training site. "Bathroom facilities were terrible. I had to share them with men. And what a collection! The place was always full of agents: Chinese, Arabs, French, even Germans, coming and going."³¹ She was taught clandestine entry, safe-cracking, steaming letters

and Records Service, 1992), 218-45; for contrasting views of Angleton and the Cold War, see the favorable view of Robin W. Winks, *Cloak and Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939-1961* 2nd ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 322-437, 539 (p. 340 on Angleton's recruitment and training); and the more hostile view of Angleton as an ideologue in Tom Mangold, *Cold Warrior: James Angleton: The CIA's Master Spy Hunter* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), passim (p. 42 for the Angleton's Legion of Merit Award from the U.S. Army in 1945 citing the capture of a thousand enemy agents).

²⁹ Aline, Countess of Romanones, *The Spy Wore Red: My Adventures as an Undercover Agent in World War II* (New York: Random House, 1987), 18-44, 56-57, 148-49, and passim; and *The Spy Went Dancing: My Further Adventures as an Undercover Agent* (New York: Putnam, 1990), 13-14.

³⁰ McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 13.

³¹ Wanda Di Giacomo quoted in McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 17.

open. However, neither Lussier nor De Giacomo was allowed to operate behind enemy lines. The only American OSS women who were sent behind enemy lines were apparently those who had already been in German-occupied countries before they joined the OSS.³²

The women who served behind enemy lines were the heroines of the OSS. Often they were indigenous agents, such as H el ene Deschamps (code named “Anick”), who joined the French Resistance as a teenager and who reported to the OSS on German mines and camouflaged weapons, and helped downed fliers and persecuted Jews to escape. She was interrogated and beaten and suffered hearing loss from a bomb explosion, but she survived the war, married an American officer, and moved with him to the United States. Her advice for spies: “You have to think. If you look scared, you’re dead. So smile.”³³

The most famous woman spy for the OSS was Virginia Hall, an American socialite from Baltimore, known to the Gestapo in France as the limping lady, because of her wooden leg. Fluent in French and living in Paris when the Nazis invaded in 1940, Hall served first as a volunteer ambulance driver until the French surrendered. Then she fled to London where she was recruited by the British Special Operations Executive (SOE). They sent her to Lyons, where she launched an operational resistance unit. Her unit was betrayed to Klaus Barbie, the “Butcher of Lyons,” but she escaped across the Pyrenees Mountains. When SOE declined to send her back to France as too dangerous, Hall joined the OSS, which smuggled her into northern France, disguised as an elderly peasant. Becoming a major Resistance leader, Hall (now code named “Diane”) directed espionage and guerrilla operations that established “safe houses” for intelligence agents and downed airmen, located drop zones for supplies for the Resistance. After the Allied invasion of France, her teams helped impede German reinforcements by blowing up bridges and supply trains, and ambushed truck convoys. They killed more than 150 German soldiers and captured nearly a thousand. After the war, Virginia Hall was awarded the French *croix de guerre*, the Order of the British Empire title, and in September 1945, the U.S. Army’s Distinguished Service Cross “for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against the enemy.” She was the first woman and civilian awarded that medal, the highest after the Medal of Honor. She married a French-born, former OSS agent, Paul Goillot in 1950, joined the CIA the next year, and served in the agency until her retirement in 1966.³⁴

³² Elizabeth P. (“Betty”) McIntosh, telephone interview with the author, 12 March 2005; on Di Giacomo and Lussier, see also McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 16-17, 145-152.

³³ H el ene Deschamps, *Spyglass: An Autobiography* (New York: Henry Holt, 1995); *OSS Society Digest*, Number 2078, 16 June 2008, ossociety@yahoo.com, accessed 16 June 2008; see also Margaret L. Rossiter, *Women in the Resistance* (New York: Praeger, 1986).

³⁴ Judith L. Pearson, *Wolves at the Door: The True Story of America’s First Female Spy* (Guilford, Conn.: Lyons Press, 2005); McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 113-128. Despite the title of Pearson’s book, Virginia Hall was hardly the first American female spy since their use dates back to at least the American Revolutionary War.

Special Operations and Operational Groups

If OSS SI aimed at intelligence information, OSS Special Operations Branch (SO) aimed at destruction. Its members were trained to blow up bridges and railroad lines and to lead guerrilla attacks on enemy outposts and lines of communication and supply. Initially, the Army did not view Special Operations as useful, in contrast to the Secret Intelligence Branch, which proved its effectiveness in the North African invasion of November 1942. "Our endless trouble child," one top OSS executive, labeled SO in his diary in June 1943.³⁵ The Army was not yet convinced of the usefulness of SO's planned guerrilla and sabotage campaigns. Later, between 1943 and 1945, Special Operations Branch would prove its value in Europe and in Asia, but it took time.³⁶

Like the U.S. Army paratroopers and rangers, there was a high degree of *sang froid*, and a gutsy, cocky, devil-may-care attitude among many OSS special operations agents. They were serious about their business and the risk of fighting behind enemy lines, but there was also a swagger to men who saw themselves as part of an elite unit, physically and mentally at top form, ready to jump out of airplanes into the dark behind enemy lines, risking capture and death in daring, hazardous secret missions that as far as they knew the public would never hear about, but which, they believed, might help win the war. Some of the people in Secret Intelligence derided the SO operatives, with their emphasis on explosives and automatic weapons, as the "Bang-Bang Boys."³⁷ Unlike SI's spies, who were usually civilians, male or female, and often worked alone, Special Operations combat operatives were uniformed, military personnel, men who worked in teams.

Those American Special Operations teams generally consisted of an SO officer and an enlisted radio man trained by the Communications Branch (CB). But beginning in May 1943, OSS augmented SO by establishing an Operational Group Branch (OG).³⁸

³⁵ James Grafton Rogers, diary entry of 8 June 1943, *Wartime Washington: The Secret OSS Journal of James Grafton Rogers*, 107-8. See also entry of 20 February 1943, p. 57, for similar.

³⁶ The SO branch went through several chiefs. See OSS-USA Organizational Chart November 1944, attached to H.C. Parton, Jr., Chief, Presentation Branch, to Lt. E.R. Kellogg, subject: Attachment, 2 Nov. 1944 in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 133, Box 163, Folder 1384, National Archives II.

³⁷ Bang-Bang Boys, phrase from "History of Schools and Training, OSS," p. 25, a 55-page-typescript, copy accompanied by a 7 January 1949 memorandum by Col. E.B. Whisner stating "Received this date from W[illiam]. J. Morgan the following report: History of Schools and Training, OSS, Part I thru Part VI," OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder 13, National Archives II.

³⁸ One of Donovan's ideas had been to create American commando military units of foreign-speaking immigrants or second-generation Americans. This went so far as a proposal to the JCS for a Strategic Service Command and the formation of significant units in an independent corps. Although the JCS rejected the plan, something of it survived, via the broad authorization in JCS 155/4/D of 23 December 1942, in the full-fledged guerrilla companies of ethnic or foreign-speaking American troops, which became the OSS's different nationality Operational Groups. Wallace R. Deuel, "The History of the OSS," typescript, 1944, II:52, summarized in CIA Records (RG 263), Thomas Troy Files, Box 2, Folder, 19, National Archives II. Wallace R. Deuel, *Chicago Daily News* correspondent for Rome and Berlin in the 1930s, joined COI in 1941 as a special assistant to Donovan. He remained with OSS throughout the war

The Operational Groups differed from commandos in that they were recruited by language. They also usually operated far behind enemy lines on a sustained basis working with indigenous resistance groups. Donovan's idea was to recruit among various nationality groups in America's multi-ethnic society, individuals who knew the culture and language of their forbearers' country, and were willing to fight against its occupiers. Such ethnic soldiers in American military uniforms parachuted behind enemy lines, would be welcomed, Donovan believed, by indigenous resistance groups. By 1944 the OGs included ethnic Norwegians, Frenchmen, Italians, Greeks and other ethnic groups. Each consisted of about half a dozen officers and about 30 enlisted men.

Like the two- to three-man Special Operations teams, but in larger units, the Operational Group units were trained to work with local resistance forces and to engage in sabotage, hit-and-run raids, and other guerrilla operations to disrupt enemy lines of communication and supply in conjunction with directives from the Allied theater commander to assist the invasion or other offensives of the main Allied forces.³⁹ In the Mediterranean and European theaters of operations, OSS Special Operations and Operational Groups were infiltrated by submarine, small craft, or parachute drop into North Africa, Italy, Yugoslavia, Albania, Greece, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Norway far in advance of the main Allied forces. In 1944, as a prelude to the Allied invasion of Normandy and subsequently the South of France, dozens of SO and OG teams were dropped behind German lines there with instructions to link up with indigenous guerrillas and impede German resistance through sabotage and hit-and-run raids. Among them were nearly one hundred multi-national SO teams, usually American, British, and French, code named Jedburghs.⁴⁰ The "Jeds" were a handpicked, colorful, capable, and adventurous lot, who received considerable publicity after the war. Most of the Americans picked to be "Jedburghs" had initially trained at Catoctin Mountain Park before undergoing Jed training in Britain. By August 1944, in addition to the "Jeds" and the other SO teams, approximately 1,100 Americans were operating in OG units throughout Europe.⁴¹

and later worked for the CIA until his retirement in 1972. His typescript history of the OSS, written in 1944, has remained with the CIA. The present author requested its declassification in 2008.

³⁹ The OSS Operational Groups (OGs) were created as 13 May 1943 as a separate tactical combat units under JCS Directive 155/7/D, 4 April 1943, Article 7, relating to Operational Nuclei for Guerrilla Warfare. The initial authorization was for 120 officers and 384 enlisted men. William J. Donovan, Special Order No. 21, issued 13 May 1943, effective, 4 May 1943; and Col. Ellery C. Huntington, Jr., C.O. Operational Groups, to Lt. Cmdr. R. Davis Halliwell, Chief of S.O., 22 June 1943, subject: Operational Groups, OSS—Organization and Functions, both in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 140, Folder 1460, National Archives II. Unlike SI, R&A, and even the Jedburgh teams of SO, there is, as of this writing, no overall history of the Operational Groups. A start has been made with a special OG section in *OSS Society Newsletter*, Winter 2007, 5-8; and the website www.ossog.org.

⁴⁰ After the war, the legend emerged that the term "Jedburgh" came from a Scottish town where the teams trained. Although there is a town of Jedburgh in Scotland it is 250 miles north of Milton Hall in Peterborough, England, the main training site. A recent student of the subject has concluded that the name Jedburgh was given operation by being randomly selected from a list of town names in the U.K. Will Irwin, *The Jedburghs: The Secret History of the Allied Special Forces, France 1944* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), 37-38.

⁴¹ OSS, *War Report of the OSS*, 225; Warner, *Office of Strategic Services*, 16-17.

In all, there may have been up to 2,000 members of OSS Operational Groups.⁴² This was in addition to the 1,600 operatives that Special Operations sent behind enemy lines.⁴³ During the war, almost all the American Special Operations teams received most of their training at the OSS Training Area B at Catoctin Mountain Park in Maryland or Training Area A at Prince William Forest Park in Virginia. The radio operators who accompanied the SO officers and the Operational Groups received their training area Area C at Prince William Forest Park. The Operational Groups themselves generally received their initial OSS training at Area F, the former Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Maryland, but they usually then were sent on to Area B, or sometimes Area A, for further training, before being shipped overseas.

The first Special Operations unit sent into the field was Detachment 101, which was sent to northeastern India in the middle of 1942 to begin guerrilla operations against the Japanese in Burma. The group of some two dozen Americans had received their training for the mission in the spring of 1942. Their commander, Colonel Carl F. Eifler, and half of the initial contingent was trained at Camp X founded by British SOE on the edge of Lake Ontario outside of Toronto, Canada. The other half of the contingent, under Lieutenant William R. (“Ray”) Peers, trained at Area B in Catoctin Mountain Park. Detachment 101, a group that never exceeded 120 Americans in the field, recruited and directed nearly 11,000 native Kachin and other Burmese tribesmen. Operating as guerrillas deep behind Japanese lines in the jungles of Burma from 1942 to 1945, they harassed and weakened the Imperial Japanese Army and Air Force.⁴⁴ Later in the war, other OSS units operated in Thailand and eventually in Japanese-occupied French Indochina.⁴⁵ Beginning in 1943, OSS special operations forces in conjunction with SI agents also operated in China, providing target information for U.S. General Claire L. Chennault’s “Flying Tigers” pursuit planes and ultimately his bombers. SO and OG officers working with Chinese troops, the first Chinese OGs, as well as Chinese guerrillas sought to impede Japanese advances by blowing up supply depots, railroads and bridges. After Tokyo surrendered in 1945, flying SO rescue teams into POW camps to prevent Allied prisoners from being harmed by fanatical Japanese militarists.⁴⁶

⁴² “The Story of OSS OGs Worldwide,” *OSS Society Newsletter*, Winter 2007, 5. Albert Materazzi, an OG veteran, believes there may have been 2,000 OGs. Albert Materazzi, “OGs get to tell their story,” *OSS Society Digest* Number 1313, 26 March 2006, ossociety@yahoo.com, accessed 26 March 2006.

⁴³ Harry Howe Ransom, *The Intelligence Establishment* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), 70.

⁴⁴ Warner, *Office of Strategic Services*, 37-39. Richard Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1979); Roger Hilsman, *American Guerilla: My War Behind Japanese Lines* (Washington, DC: Brassey’s, 1990).

⁴⁵ E. Bruce Reynolds, *Thailand’s Secret War: OSS, SOE, and the Free Thai Underground* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Dixie R. Bathrolomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh: Unexpected Allies in the War against Japan* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006).

⁴⁶ Maochun Yu, *OSS in China: Prelude to Cold War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996); Ronald H. Spector, *In the Ruins of Empire: The Japanese Surrender and the Battle for Postwar Asia* (New York: Random House, 2007), 9-21, 32-33, 44-47, 106-33.

Because OSS teams became involved in a number of seaborne projects in which operatives would be infiltrated by boat or which would involve the demolition of ships, harbor facilities, or landing obstacles, the OSS in June 1943 established a Maritime Unit (MU). Earlier, some seaborne infiltration training took place on a lake at Prince William Forest Park, but most of such training occurred at a Maritime training camp (Training Area D) established in late April 1942 at Smith Point on the eastern bank of the Potomac River in southern Charles County, Maryland. Members of SO and SI continued to receive seaborne landing instruction there, but the OSS Maritime Unit emphasized for its own personnel training not just in small craft handling and underwater explosives, but also sustained underwater combat swimming. Since the Potomac proved unsatisfactory for various reasons (lack of surf to simulate sea landings, iced over in winter, too murky and polluted for underwater swimming), MU moved its facilities to the Caribbean and California (Area D continued to be used by for advanced SO training until it was closed in April 1944). In the meantime, the Maritime Unit produced underwater explosive devices such as the Magnetic Limpet that saboteurs could use to blow a hole in a ship's steel hull. It also developed specialized boats, such as collapsible kayaks that could be launched from submarines, and it was a pioneer in the invention of underwater, self-contained breathing devices, like the Lambertsen Unit, which did not leave any tell-tale trail of bubbles on the surface. The Maritime Unit also developed the flexible swim fins used by the combat swimmers or "frogmen" of the OSS and the U.S. Navy. The Maritime Unit deployed and supplied Special Operations teams and Operational Groups by small craft across the Adriatic Sea to Yugoslavia, over the Aegean Sea to Greece, and across the Bay of Bengal to the coasts of Burma, Thailand and Malaya. In the Pacific, OSS frogmen assisted the Navy in scouting the shores and defenses of Japanese held islands prior to invasion by the Marines.⁴⁷

Other Operational Branches

In regard to psychological warfare, having lost the Foreign Information Service to the Office of War Information in spring 1942, Donovan used the distinction between regular information, so-called "white" propaganda, and disinformation, "black propaganda," and created a Morale Operations Branch (MO) in January 1943. Its mission was to use "black" propaganda to spread confusion, dissension, and disorder among enemy troops and civilians. It was most effective if such rumors at least appeared to originate in the enemy territory; consequently, MO units operated in the war zones, albeit behind Allied lines, as well as in regional headquarters. Some of the men in MO were trained at Area A in Prince William Forest Park, Virginia; the women and some other men of MO received their training at Areas F or E in Maryland. Defeatism among enemy troops and encouragement among captive populations were encouraged through material

⁴⁷ OSS, *War Report of the OSS*, 225-28; John W. Brunner, *OSS Weapons*, 2nd ed. (Williamstown, NJ: Phillips Publications, 2005), 161-63; Francis Douglas Fane and Don Moore, *The Naked Warriors* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1956), 133; see also John B. Dwyer, *Seaborne Deception: The History of U.S. Beach Jumpers* (New York: Greenwood, 1992).

stressing the deteriorating position of the occupiers, inciting internal dissension and suspicion of leaders. Leaflets and radio programs, mingling lies, rumors, and deceptions with truth, were the most common media for such disinformation cued to recent developments and often to regional conditions. In Italy, Barbara Lauwers, a private in the Women's Army Corps, stationed with the MO unit in Rome, helped develop "Operation Sauerkraut," an innovative psychological program that temporarily dispatched disaffected German POWs back behind enemy lines to persuade their fellow soldiers to surrender. Initiated following the July 1944, German officers' attempt to assassinate Hitler, the project's propaganda declared that Germans were in revolt against the Nazis. Hundreds of German soldiers did surrender as a result. Later, the Czech-born Lauwers created a program that induced 500 Czech soldiers conscripted into the Germany Army to give up to the Western Allies. She was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for her achievements.⁴⁸

In China, when civilian MO operative Elizabeth McDonald (later Elizabeth McIntosh) arrived in Kunming in early 1945, she reported that the crude printing presses using hand-carved characters that MO field units were using to wage psychological warfare were being effectively replaced by new lightweight aluminum offset presses developed in OSS in Washington. She was assigned to a project providing leaflets for Chinese and Korean agents with instructions on how surreptitiously to place OSS incendiary devices shaped like a piece of coal into railroad coal bunkers so that they would be shoveled into a locomotive's firebox and explode at the proper time, thus disrupting the transportation of Japanese troops.⁴⁹ The primary MO role in China, however, was directed by socialite and media man Gordon Auchincloss, who arrived from the European Theater in August 1944. MO set up a powerful radio transmitter and beamed programs in various dialects to different regions of China encouraging guerrilla action by Chinese against Japanese occupiers and providing discouraging news to Japanese soldiers.⁵⁰

One of the most respected and successful units of OSS was the Research and Analysis Branch (R&A).⁵¹ Headed for most of the war by noted Harvard historian William L. Langer and supported by a large staff, it consisted of more than 900 scholars who used materials in the Library of Congress—and other facilities abroad—to collect and analyze economic, political, social, and military information about Axis or Axis-occupied nations or countries or regions for which the military needed information, such as North Africa prior to the Allied invasion.⁵² Its Enemy Objectives Unit in London analyzed the German economy and war production, recommended particular targets and ultimately helped convince Allied air commanders that the key objectives of the bombing

⁴⁸ Barbara Lauwers Podaski, "Infiltrating Nazi Front Line with Morale Op's Disinformation" *OSS Society Newsletter*, Winter 2006, 3; and McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 59-70.

⁴⁹ McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 233-234; and see her memoir, Elizabeth McDonald, *Undercover Girl* (New York: Macmillan, 1947).

⁵⁰ Soley, *Radio Warfare*, 172-89.

⁵¹ Wink, *Cloak and Gown*, 114.

⁵² Bary M. Katz, *Foreign Intelligence: Research and Analysis in the Office of Strategic Services, 1942-1945* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

campaign should be first, German aircraft factories and second, German oil and synthetic oil production facilities.⁵³ R&A reports from World War II on crucial targets as well as other aspects of the industrial and transportation systems of particular countries in Europe, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and the Far East, continued to prove useful to the American military even during the Korean War and the Cold War.⁵⁴ OSS R&A was later described by McGeorge Bundy, head of the Ford Foundation, as the first great center of area studies “not located in any university.” For the government, it proved that scholarly research and analysis could produce important even vital information unavailable by espionage.⁵⁵

Communications Branch

“The importance of communications to secret activities cannot be over-stated,” declared the OSS official report at the end of the war.⁵⁶ It was essential that OSS operatives in the field be able to send and receive secure, coded, radio messages. Thus, the Communications Branch (CB or “Commo”) included cryptography as well as communications operations. Indeed without secure and effective communications, the entire process of planning, coordinating, and implementing OSS operations, whether involving espionage, counter-espionage, covert operations, or psychological warfare, would have been jeopardized. As OSS Communications Branch veteran Arthur (“Art”) Reinhardt expressed it: “Commo underpinned everything OSS did.”⁵⁷

To deal efficiently and securely with a global network serving initially primarily the SI, SO, and R&A branches, Donovan created a unified OSS Communications Branch on 22 September 1942.⁵⁸ Lawrence (“Larry”) Wise Lowman, vice President in charge of

⁵³ OSS, *War Report of the OSS*, 48-69; Warner, *Office of Strategic Services*, 12. Examples of OSS R&A Reports include Report No. 1756, 27 January 1944: Development of German Pattern of Occupation; Report No. 232, 22 September 1944: South Germany: An Analysis of the Political and Social Organization, the Communications, Economic Controls, Agricultural and Food Supply, Mineral Resources, Manufacturing and Transportation Facilities of South Germany; Report No. 1844, 3 October 1944: Concentration Camps in Germany; Report No. 1999, 19 August 1944: The Belgian Underground; Report No. 2229, 15 June 1944: Burma: Enemy Shipping, October 1943-April 1944; Report No. 2993, 31 March, 1945: The Contributions of the Italian Partisans to the Allied War Effort; Current Intelligence Study No. 31, 20 July 1945: Japan’s “Secret” Weapon: “Suicide.”

⁵⁴ R&A reports and estimates were used by Army intelligence in the Korean War and in Europe in the Cold War; they were “good and still valuable,” according to Lt. Col. Elbert B. O’Keefe (U.S. Army-Ret.), former G-2 officer, conversation with the author at Catoctin Mountain Park annual dinner for park volunteers, 17 November 2007.

⁵⁵ Edward Hymoff, *The OSS in World War II* (New York: Ballantine, 1972), 342,

⁵⁶ OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 135.

⁵⁷ Arthur Reinhardt, “Deciphering the Commo Branch,” *OSS Society Newsletter*, Fall 2006, 6-7.

⁵⁸ OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 90-91, 135-43. The new Communications Branch consolidated all the previous COI and OSS signal and traffic communications operations into one branch. There had been a difference of opinion over the desirability of lines of communication for SO and SI, but Donovan insisted that the organization be done through the headquarters unit. William J. Donovan to Colonel Buxton,

operations at the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), with fifteen years experience in handling the technical aspects of that radio network, was named Chief of the Communications Branch.⁵⁹ The “Commo” Branch had an engineering section that built and operated the main message center and the regional relay base stations, purchasing and development sections that supplied specialized equipment, and a training section that developed a supply of operators for field and relay base work as well as code clerks for cryptography.⁶⁰ OSS communications agents in the field required both linguistic skills, particularly in foreign languages, as well as, as Donovan expressed it, “a higher degree of self reliance than those assigned to a normal military operation, due to the autonomous nature of each mission.”⁶¹

The Communications Branch developed a system capable of rapid and secret communication among OSS locations around the globe. OSS headquarters was able to maintain wireless and cable communication with fixed and mobile relay base stations located in secure areas behind Allied lines in almost every major theater of operations. Those base stations communicated with agents in the field, whose transmissions were restricted in range by the limitations of their small, portable equipment. The relay stations, therefore, were necessary to interact between those field agents and OSS headquarters, forwarding coded instructions from headquarters and receiving and decoding information and requests from the agents. The primary coding system used in the field was the “one-time pads,” a double-transposition system, based on random key text printed on the back and a memorized Vigenere Square.⁶²

Given its highly specialized needs, the Communications Branch recruited and trained technical personnel in the skills required for its communications and its cryptography. The “Commo” branch radio operators, all of whom were ultimately

Colonel Goodfellow and Major Bruce, Memorandum, 3 July 1942, OSS Records (RG 226), Director’s Office Files, microfilm M1642, Roll 42, Frame 1122, National Archives II.

⁵⁹ Lt. Cmdr. William H. Vanderbilt to Lawrence W. Lowman, 18 May 1942; Lt. Col. M. Preston Goodfellow to the Surgeon, Army Dispensary, 21 May 1942, subject: Physical Examination [of Lawrence Wise Lowman]; Lowman to Vanderbilt, 3 June 1942; “Check Slip,” Security clearance 16 June 1942; all in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 92A, Box 45, Folder 736, National Archives II.

⁶⁰ On the detailed plans for such a Communications Branch, see Robert Cresswell to Major Bruce, 20 July 1942, subject: Communications Problem: Survey and Recommendation, attachment to David K.E. Bruce to William J. Donovan, 20 July 1942, in OSS Records (RG 226), Director’s Office Files, microfilm M1642, Roll 42, Frames 1125-1131, National Archives II.

⁶¹ William J. Donovan to Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1 [Personnel], 10 June 1943, subject: Request for Priority to Procure Communications Personnel from the Signal Corps, OSS Records (RG 226), Director’s Office Files, microfilm M1642, Roll 42, Frames 1319-1321, National Archives II.

⁶² The one-time pad had on the cardboard backing numerous alphabets, arranged in what seemed to be nonsensical order, especially when, as the agent would, use them in conjunction with the randomly generated key text printed on the pages of the one-time pad. The key was to know how to position the text (the clear text to be encoded or the enciphered text to be decoded) to the pad’s key text using the Vigenere Square, referred to as “triads.” Operators needed to memorize the 676 combinations possible in the square and then apply them. See, for example, W. Scudder Georgia, Jr., “It’s All Greek to Me: And Other Stories,” in James F. Ranney and Arthur L. Ranney, eds, *The OSS CommVets Papers*, 2nd ed. (Covington, Ky.: James F. Ranney, 2002), 158.

military servicemen, underwent training at the Communications Branch's Training Area C at Prince William Forest Park, Virginia. (CB cryptographers, men and women, were trained in Washington, D.C., but men going into the war zone were sent to Area C for close combat and weapons instruction.) Living in tents and cabins there in the woods, the radio trainees became familiar with OSS communications equipment, its operation and maintenance, codes and ciphers, direction finding, and they learned or improved their telegraphy using International Morse code. Between 1942 and 1945, perhaps as many as 1,500 Communications Branch personnel (plus numerous other OSS personnel taking shorter radio and code courses) trained for generally three-month periods at Area C in Prince William Forest Park.⁶³

The OSS's global communications network included base stations in Washington and around the world that operated twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. The "Commo" men and women at those stations had to code and decode quickly and accurately messages and ensure their duplication and distribution. Indicative of the enormous volume of radio and cable traffic handled by OSS, the Communications Branch, which in addition to Washington, D.C., maintained message centers in some 25 major locations in 15 countries, handled 60,500 messages comprising 5,868,000 code groups in the single month of April 1945.⁶⁴ Despite the enormous number of OSS messages during the war, there was no known compromise of OSS's secure coding system or its cable traffic.⁶⁵

Although the Communications Branch purchased most of its equipment from the civilian market or the Army Signal Corps, it had its own Research and Development Division. It developed wiretap devices, "Eureka" electronic beacons to identify drop sites, direction finding set, early "squirt" technology, and highly effective portable radios. Most widely used was what would be known as one of the most outstanding long-range, clandestine field radio sets of era, the SSTR-1 (for Strategic Services Transmitter/Receiver Number One). It was a transmitter, receiver, spare parts kit and a power supply compact enough to fit into a small and innocuous looking suitcase. OSS purchased 8,000 of these wireless telegraphy (WT) sets. Even more innovative was the so-called "Joan-Eleanor" communications system that OSS got into the field in the Netherlands and Germany by late 1944. The new equipment employed for the first time the Very High Frequency (VHF) band operating at 200 to 300 MHz, a frequency much more difficult for the enemy to monitor (most radio equipment worked under 100 MHz). With a small hand-held radio (an SSTC 502/ nicknamed "Joan"), an agent on the ground could talk with a radio operator in a plane circling in the dark six miles above and equipped with a substantial transmitter/receiver (an SSTR-6, nicknamed "Eleanor"), expediting the transmittal of information because the voice communication replaced

⁶³ The figure is from Arthur Reinhardt, "Deciphering the Commo Branch," *OSS Society Newsletter*, Fall 2006, 6. Because of the temporary expansion of training in 1943, the Communications Branch also established an additional if smaller training facility in 1943 at a former Signal Corps Radar Training School at Camp McDowell, near Napierville, Illinois, which was designated Area M. *OSS, War Report of the O.S.S.*, 137.

⁶⁴ *OSS, War Report of the O.S.S.*, 141.

⁶⁵ Arthur Reinhardt, "Deciphering the Commo Branch," *OSS Society Newsletter*, Fall 2006, 6.

telegraphy and the VHF obviated the need for coding and decoding.⁶⁶ The Joint Chiefs of Staff credited the OSS' Joan-Eleanor communication system one of the "most successful wireless intelligence gathering operations" of the war.⁶⁷

OSS Research and Development Branch

For their war of insurgency, sabotage, and espionage, OSS operatives needed a number of highly specialized weapons, explosives and other deadly devices. The OSS had its own workshops and laboratories in its Research and Development Branch headed by Stanley P. Lovell, a chemist and former business executive from Boston.⁶⁸ Among the specialized weaponry were silenced, flashless pistols and submachine guns, dart guns, even hand-cranked crossbows, as well as various styles of knives and clubs. The OSS also adapted the "Liberator" pistol or \$2 "Woolworth" gun, a cheaply made, one-shot .45 caliber pistol, that was distributed to indigenous guerrillas, especially in China and the Philippines (the single shot was to be used to kill an enemy soldier and obtain his rifle or pistol). For demolition work, OSS adopted some existing explosives such as Torpex, and a plastic explosive, Composition C, paradoxically a moldable, gelatin-like substance that was also much more stable than TNT and which exploded so effectively that it could blow a hole through one-inch steel. It also developed "Aunt Jemima," an explosive powder disguised as flour that could be baked as biscuits without exploding (although poisonous if eaten), but when ignited by a timed or contact fuse was powerful enough to blow up a bridge. For espionage, OSS R&D developed a variety of devices from 16mm cameras hidden in matchboxes or even jacket buttons to maps concealed in playing cards, plus a variety of invisible inks as well as faked identification cards, passes, and counterfeit currency.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Warner, *Office of Strategic Services*, 32-33; for a detailed description, see John W. Brunner, *OSS Weapons*, 2nd ed. (Williamstown, NJ: Phillips Publications, 2005). While the transmitter used by the agent on the ground spread to about a 60 mile circle at 40,000 feet, the cone narrowed to only a few feet at ground level with little chance that the Germans would detect it. Marvin R. Edwards, "Joan and Eleanor: Radio Transmissions Aboard the Mossie [Mosquito bomber]," *OSS Society Newsletter*, Fall 2006, 8.

⁶⁷ Reinhardt Krause, "Inventor of Portable Radio Developed Joan-Eleanor Project," *OSS Society Newsletter*, Fall 2006, 7.

⁶⁸ Stanley P. Lovell, *Of Spies and Strategems* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963), a memoir filled with details as extraordinary and often as harrowing as the lethal products of Lovell's laboratory.

⁶⁹ John W. Brunner, *OSS Weapons*, 2nd ed. (Williamstown, NJ: Phillips Publications, 2005); H. Keith Melton, *The Ultimate Spy Book* (New York: DK Publishing, 1996), 28-41, 149, and passim. Many of these devices are on display at the International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C. and the Airborne and Special Operations Museum, Fayetteville, N.C., the latter which houses Brunner's extensive collection.

Beginnings of OSS Training

During the first six months after U.S. entry into the war, Donovan and his staff also worked to establish training schools that would prepare personnel to carry out the new clandestine missions, particularly those in intelligence and special operations. Part of the justification for this elite organization was that special skills, self-confidence, initiative and ingenuity were needed in the unconventional warfare that Donovan envisioned. Consequently there was a great emphasis on the kind of training that would provide agents with the skills and the spirit required for success in operations behind enemy lines.

In early January 1942, M. Preston Goodfellow hired Garland H. Williams to help organize military style training camps to produce agents who would work undercover in enemy occupied territory as spies, saboteurs, or guerrilla leaders. Reflecting the civilian orientation of Donovan's organization, Garland H. Williams was a career law enforcement official. By 1942, he had spent a dozen years with the Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN), rising to become director of the bureau's New York office, one of its top positions. He had been one of the first agents that FBN Commissioner Harry J. Anslinger had hired when the drug control agency was established in 1930.⁷⁰

Besides his civilian law enforcement career, Williams was also a longtime Army reservist. He had joined the National Guard of his native Louisiana as a 2nd lieutenant in 1928, later transferred to the Army Reserves and was a major by 1936. When the Army decided to create a "Corps of Intelligence Police" (later designated the Counter-Intelligence Corps) to identify any narcotics peddlers, criminals, or enemy agents who operated in Army camps or other facilities, Williams was chosen to organize such a unit and prepare its training school.⁷¹ Called to active duty in January 1941, Major Williams quickly accomplished this assignment, and subsequently, at his request, served as an instructor at the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia and then the Chemical Warfare School at Aberdeen, Maryland.⁷² Preston Goodfellow, working in early 1942 with both Military Intelligence and COI, was impressed with Williams' performance in establishing the new military intelligence organization and school and with his long experience in police, intelligence and undercover work, which it was assumed would be applicable to Donovan's clandestine operatives. Williams joined Donovan's organization in early

⁷⁰ Harry J. Anslinger with J. Dennis Gregory, *The Protectors: Narcotics Agents, Citizens and Officials Against Organized Crime in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1964), 76-80, one quarter of the FBN agents went into this wartime unit; Charles Siragusa, *The Trail of the Poppy: Behind the Mask of the Mafia* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966), vii, 58-59; John C. McWilliams, "Covert Connections: The FBN, the OSS, and the CIA," *The Historian*, 53/4 (Summer 1991): 660-72.

⁷¹ *History and Mission of the Counter Intelligence Corps in World War II* (n.p., n.d.), 1-5.

⁷² "Military Record of Garland H. Williams, Major, Infantry," attached to William J. Donovan to Secretary of War, 2 March 1942, [subject: promotion of Williams to lieutenant colonel], OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 92, Box 32, Folder 33, National Archives II.

January 1942, and he and Goodfellow immediately set to work to establish training schools and instructors and to obtain and train a force of special operations troops.⁷³

By the second week in February, they had ready for Donovan's signature a letter to Secretary of War Henry Stimson, requesting authorization for recruiting 2,000 men at the rank of sergeant, staff sergeant, technical sergeant and master sergeant. Most of these would be the trainees for the foreign-speaking units Donovan envisioned, but some would help to staff the training schools. For the main instructional and camp staff at the COI special operations training camps, Donovan requested slots for 48 commissioned officers. The War Department would help with obtaining the training camps and their staffs, but it was slow in giving Donovan the large numbers of troops he had requested.⁷⁴

Mysterious Camp X

Meanwhile, early in 1942, Williams and a number of the other men joining the new wartime special operations or secret intelligence components of Donovan's organization underwent periods of hands-on training at a secret British training camp newly established for that purpose just across the border in Canada. While the United States had been official neutral, Donovan had been reluctant to recruit and prepare special operations commandos. This changed after the U.S. entered the war. But as early as September 1941, the British, with Donovan's encouragement, had agreed to build a secret, paramilitary training camp out side of Toronto to replicate SOE schools in Great Britain. It had a dual purpose. "A really efficient training school would impress the Americans," an SOE official reported in October 1941. "It would also provide us with valuable propaganda in obtaining their cooperation in the realm of subversive activities."⁷⁵ Camp X, as the facility was called, was erected behind an isolated shoreline of Lake Ontario, an hour from Toronto. On 275 acres of rolling, sparsely settled farmland between the lake not far from the villages of Oshawa and Whitby, the half dozen buildings and other training facilities were completed by the first week of December 1941. Local residents were informed that it was a military storage depot; its true purpose,

⁷³ William J. Donovan to Secretary of War, 31 December 1941 and 2 March 1942, the latter with three-page attachment, "Military Record of Garland H. Williams, Major, Infantry," OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 92, Box 32, Folder 33. Williams was promoted to lieutenant colonel in March 1942.

⁷⁴ Maj. Garland H. Williams to Lt. Col. M.P. Goodfellow, 14 February 1942; William J. Donovan to Secretary of War, 14 February 1942; Donovan to Secretary of War, 17 February 1942; all in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1721, National Archives II. On the difficulties in securing the allotment of 2,000 non-commissioned officers from the War Department, see OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 82, 100.

⁷⁵ Tommy Davis, Report for the Special Operations Executive on visit to the United States, 15 Oct. 1941, Special Operations Executive Archives, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London; quoted in David Stafford, *Camp X* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1987), 31. The decision for the SOE camp in Canada had been made at a meeting in William Stephenson's apartment in New York City on 6 September 1941, *ibid.* 17-20.

the training of special operations agents, commandos, remained undisclosed for the next forty years.⁷⁶

Camp X opened on December 9, 1941, the day after the United States declared war. It was ready to provide expertise to “the commandos,” a new type of combatant that the British had been developing since 1940. “The Commandos,” a British training document declared, “started free of all the conventions which surround a traditional [military] Corps. From the very beginning, the aim was to combine all the essentials of irregular bands [of guerrillas] with the superior training, equipment, and intelligence of regular troops. With his Bren [gun], his grenades and his Tommy gun, the Commando soldier had to be able to scale a cliff like a Pathan [in Afghanistan], to live like a Boer [in South Africa] with no transport columns or cookhouses, and to disperse and break away like an Arab before the enemy could pin him to his ground.”⁷⁷

The first group of about a dozen Americans from Donovan’s organization arrived at Camp X in February 1942, for the basic four-week course. Garland H. Williams was among them. By April, Camp X would be training not just COI administrators and instructors but American SO agents who would be sent out into the field—to India, Burma, China, North Africa and Europe.⁷⁸ More from both SO and Secret Intelligence would follow over succeeding months. The basic special operations course lasted four weeks, although some Americans attended for shorter periods, some administrators even attending for only a weekend. In small groups of a dozen or fewer, the main training classes learned the principles of special operations warfare: infiltration, field craft, concealment, the use of various Allied or enemy weapons, hand-to-hand combat, guerrilla leadership and sabotage. A stiff British professional soldier ran the camp and, like him, many of his regular officers were formal and reserved. More appealing to the Americans was the chief instructor, Major R.B. (“Bill”) Brooker, a businessman before the war, whose open and outgoing personality, dismissal of pomp and pretension as well as his eloquent and convincing lectures, made him “a born salesman.”⁷⁹ The SOE knew of American resistance to the strict discipline and rigid class system of the British Army, but Brooker was able to win over many of the “Yanks” by speaking to them enthusiastically as equals and emphasizing camaraderie in a vital cause.

In its first year of operation, Camp X turned out dozens of American agents and instructors, SO and SI alike, and helped to make OSS a partner of SOE in covert warfare.

⁷⁶ Lynn Philip Hodgson, *Inside Camp-X*, (Oakville, Ontario: L.P. Hodson, 1999); and Hodgson and Alan Paul Longfield, *Inside Camp-X, Part II*, forthcoming 2008). See also the Camp X Historical Society’s website: www.campxhistoricalsociety.ca. The official name was Special Training School #103 (STS 103).

⁷⁷ OSS, Strategic Services Training Unit, “[British] Commando Tactics” July 1942, typescript binder, p. 2, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 165, Folder 1804, National Archives II.

⁷⁸ Stafford, *Camp X*, 81-82; George White’s Diary, 1942, cited in McWilliams, “Covert Connections,” 665 [the diary itself has subsequently been lost]; Anthony Moore, British Liaison, “Notes on Co-Operations between SOE and OSS,” January 1945, pp. 1-2; OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1722, National Archives II.

⁷⁹ The quotation is from one of Brooker’s SOE colleagues, Bickham Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular* [SOE headquarters in London was on Baker Street] (London: Methuen, 1965), 143. On Brooker and the rest of the staff, see Stafford, *Camp X*, 10-12, 55-56.

Beginning in May 1942, Brooker would make frequent advisory trips to OSS headquarters in Washington, and in the winter of 1942-1943, he would be instrumental in reorganizing the entire OSS training program. But although many in the OSS found him colorful, engaging and experienced, others considered him showy, aggressive, and dogmatic. Brooker's critics were also put off by his casting of himself as a highly successful commando and spy, when in fact he had never had any actual operational experience behind enemy lines.⁸⁰

The British role in shaping COI and OSS, especially in molding training, went beyond Camp X.⁸¹ British officers advised the COI/OSS in establishing its own training and then loaned to the Americans, experienced British instructors, manuals, course outlines, and lecture books, as well as British acquired equipment, weaponry, and explosive devices for training in covert operations. They also made available SOE advanced training schools in Great Britain.⁸² The postwar report of OSS's Schools and Training Branch concluded that: "Too much credit cannot be given to the aid received from British SOE at this [early] stage of the game. British SOE played a great part if not the greatest in the planning of the new SA/G [Special Activities/Goodfellow, i.e. Special Operations] schools."⁸³

Establishing Secret Training Camps in the United States

Initially, the American training program consisted of a general curriculum that provided preliminary, basic, and advanced training courses to both SO and SI operatives

⁸⁰ Stafford, *Camp X*, 87.

⁸¹ Most of the training of Americans at Camp X occurred in 1942 and early 1943; thereafter, it trained mainly European guerrillas, until it closed as a secret agent training school in March 1944. www.campxhistoricalsociety.ca.

⁸² Anthony Moore, British Liaison, "Notes on Co-Operations between SOE and OSS," January 1945, pp. 1-6; OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1722, National Archives II. There was, of course, self-interest involved. In accepting more than a dozen OSS instructors for a month-long visit to SOE schools in Britain in the summer of 1942, SOE commended the idea of having even more OSS officers involved as "extremely desirable" because "this will not only serve as a means of training for the individuals concerned but will be a most powerful factor in insuring unity of doctrine and effort in the future operations of the two national S.O. organisations." "Record of Discussion regarding Collaboration between British and American S.O.E. [sic]," 23 June 1942, copy in papers of M. Preston Goodfellow, Box 4, Folder 3, Hoover Institution, Stanford, Calif.

⁸³ *History of the Schools and Training Branch, Office of Strategic Services*, William L. Cassidy, ed. (San Francisco, Calif.: Kingfisher Press, 1983), 28-29, which is primarily a reproduction, without the extensive appendices, of the original 1945 typescript, "History of the Schools and Training Branch, OSS," completed in August 1945, probably by Maj. Kenneth P. Miller and most of the text of which was declassified by the CIA in 1981 as a result of a Freedom of Information Act request from William Cassidy (and fully declassified in 1985). Hereinafter cited as *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*. A copy of the original typescript is the OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 99, Box 78, among other locations in the OSS Records in the National Archives II. But for readers' convenience, citation in the present work will be to pages in the version published in 1983.

before they were subsequently prepared for their different missions. The program provided elasticity and allowed for varying the instruction according to a person's previous experience, special qualifications or mission. Williams believed that the preliminary two-week, "toughing up" course of demanding physical exercise, obstacles, night marches, and tryouts in close combat and weapons skills would "weed out" the unqualified and help to classify accepted individuals for future instruction and assignment. This was followed by two weeks of basic SO training drawing on more intellectually demanding skills taught by the SOE at Camp X, including identification of targets of opportunity, observation, intelligence gathering, and sabotage. In addition to learning new skills, Williams explained, "the students will also be physically and mentally conditioned during these two courses for the aggressive and ruthless action which they will be called upon to perform at later dates."⁸⁴

After completing these, the student would go on to either parachute or seaborne infiltration training and then one of the Advanced Schools in intelligence work, propaganda, sabotage or guerrilla leadership. Throughout all of the training, the emphasis was not only to impart skills and build physical condition and confidence but to develop the student's individual initiative, personal courage, and resourcefulness. Williams emphasized that all instruction should be as practical as possible. Theory should be deferred to practical application. Lecture periods should be short; rather, instructors should employ the "discussion or conference method of instruction" and use "interest-provoking equipment and materials." (Indeed, OSS did ultimately produce several hundred training films.⁸⁵) Classroom instruction should alternate with outdoor instruction. As Williams summarized the pedagogical philosophy, "Whenever possible, the system of instruction will follow the principles of explanation, demonstration, application, and examination."⁸⁶

Later, the advanced courses for saboteurs, for example, included assigning some students to conduct mock demolition exercises against nearby facilities: placing imitation explosives under railroad bridges or radio towers, or for spies or saboteurs, infiltrating defense plants in nearby cities from Baltimore to Pittsburgh. There were special courses for American ethnic groups or foreign nationals who would be infiltrated into enemy occupied countries⁸⁷ Each Special Operations training camp was run along military lines,

⁸⁴ Maj. Garland H. Williams, "Training," eight-page, typed memorandum, undated [but January or February 1942 before Williams was promoted to lieutenant colonel in March] with attachments on details of proposed courses (the quotation is from page 2), located in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 161, Folder 1754, National Archives II.

⁸⁵ Training films as well as films documenting OSS operations in the field were produced by the Field Photograph Branch, which included Hollywood director John Ford. Training films, included those on close combat techniques, clandestine communications, foreign weapons, uniforms, and insignia. OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 161-62. Many of these OSS films are located in the Visual Branch of National Archives II; copies of shooting scripts and narration are in the records of various OSS branches, for example, "Gutter Fighting," OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 133, Box 151, Folder 1258; "Short Range Intelligence," Entry 146, Box 220, Folder 3054, National Archives II.

⁸⁶ Williams, "Training," 7.

⁸⁷ Williams, "Training," 4. The draft of a memorandum in August 1942, indicates that Goodfellow's office was thinking of nearly a dozen different foreign guerrilla groups, each comprised of about sixty men and

with a commanding officer in charge of both the instructional staff with its chief instructor and the camp complement with its responsibility for the administration, supply, maintenance and security of the facility. Williams stressed that the emphasis was on the individual:

“Constant thought will be given to the building of a high state of morale and a high esprit de corps. However, the military indoctrination will be so handled as to develop to the maximum extent his individual initiative, personal courage and resourcefulness. Emphasis will be constantly placed on the development of this agent as an individual and not as a fighter who is only effective when under close leadership. The guerrilla concept of warfare will be the guiding principle.”⁸⁸

Locating the First U.S. Training Camps in the National Parks

Since British SOE had established its training camps in isolated country estates in Scotland and England, Williams scouted out a number of country estates not far from Washington, D.C., but he rejected these mansions and their grounds as training sites for American Special Operations. He was looking for locations “situated in the country[side] and thoroughly isolated from the possible attention of any unauthorized persons” with plenty of land, at least several hundred acres, and located “well away from any highway or through-roads and preferably far-distant from other human habitations.” The plan was to locate the training schools within a radius of about 50 miles from Washington, D.C. in order, in Williams’ words, to “facilitate inspection and supervision by higher authority.”⁸⁹ Most readily available were sites in two nearby National Parks, what were then called Recreational Demonstration Areas (RDA) operated by the U.S. National Park Service.

Catoctin Mountain Park: Training Area B

Catoctin Mountain Park, north of Frederick, Maryland, a mountainous, forested region of some 9,000 acres about 75 miles north of Washington, was selected as the

four officers who could be from the U.S. Army or foreign armies. The list of groups included “Norwegians, French, Italians, Austrians, German, Dutch, Hungarians, Spaniards, Poles, Czechs-Slovaks, Yugoslavs, Greeks, Chinese, Korean, Thai.” Handwritten draft of a memorandum [written by M. Preston Goodfellow?], Joint Psychological Warfare Committee to Joint Chiefs of Staff, 31 August 1942, subject: Organization, Strategic Service Command [reference JCS 83/1 of 19 August 1942, further study as to training, type of men and organization of the Strategic Service Command,” in M. Preston Goodfellow Papers, Box 4, Folder 4, Hoover Institute, Stanford, Calif.

⁸⁸ Williams, “Training,” 5-6.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

initial site for OSS basic paramilitary training for SO and SI personnel. It was designated Training Area B because the basic paramilitary course would be given there. With existing cabins, dining halls and kitchens, and other facilities in several rustic cabin camps built by the New Deal's Works Progress Administration (WPA) in the late 1930s, plus a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) work camp, the site for Area B already had a capacity of handling some three hundred trainees, plus a station cadre of staff and instructors of seventy five.⁹⁰ The War Department obtained a lease on the property from the Department of the Interior in March 1942, and in early April, Area B opened to receive SO trainees.⁹¹ The first group represented half of the original contingent of Detachment 101 which would leave shortly for India and Burma (the other half were training at Camp X in Canada). Area B thereby became the first operative training camp for Donovan's organization in the United States. During the next two years, Area B would go through many phases, including several temporary hiatuses in training, when only the camp staff remained. Although established as a basic SO training camp, Area B courses were attended not only by SO and, in 1943-1944, OG trainees, but various numbers of men (there were no female staff or students there) from the other operational branches of COI/OSS: especially Secret Intelligence and the Operational Groups.⁹²

Prince William Forest Park: Training Area A

The second National Park selected was Prince William Forest Park, then called Chopawamsic RDA, near Quantico, Virginia, 35 miles south of Washington, D.C. The park consisted of some 9,000 acres of hilly, forested land in what was then a sparsely settled rural area west of the Potomac River. Scattered around the wooded park were a Civilian Conservation Corps work camp and five summer cabin camps. The wooded, rugged terrain was judged well suited for paramilitary training.⁹³ The large western sector of the park, consisting of about 5,000 acres, was chosen as the site for advanced SO training and was designated Training Area A. It contained a CCC work camp and three cabin camps (OSS sub-camps A-4, A-2, A-3, and A-5 respectively). Although Area A, like Area B opened in early April 1942, advanced students were not immediately available, so instruction in Advanced Special Operations did not begin until late April or

⁹⁰ For student capacity at the training areas, see Lt. Col. H. L. Robinson to Major Teilhet, 27 Nov. 1943, subject: Report on Training Areas, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 162, Folder 1757; for the station complement, see L.B. Shallcross, deputy Staff Training Branch/TRD, [Central Intelligence Agency], to John O'Gara, chief, Staff Training Branch, 1 February 1951, subject: Information on OSS Schools and Training Sites, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 7, Folder 76, both in National Archives II.

⁹¹ OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 81.

⁹² "History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS," pp. 7-8, attached to W[illiam] J. Morgan to Col. E.B. Whisner, 7 January 1949, pp. 10-11, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder, 13, both in National Archives II.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 10.

early May. Like Area B, the use of OSS Area A would go through several phases, including handling both basic and advanced courses for SO personnel and beginning in 1943 for the new OGs, and also serving as a holding area. Occasionally paramilitary instruction would be given there for members of Secret Intelligence, Morale Operations, the Maritime Unit, and Counter-Intelligence (X-2). Area A was composed of three rustic cabin camps, plus a CCC work camp, which eventually became the Area A headquarters. It had a station complement of 130 and with the capacity to handle about five hundred trainees at a time. It sometimes also served as a holding area for personnel who were waiting assignment either before or after training.⁹⁴

Prince William Forest Park: Training Area C

Within the northeastern sector of Prince William Forest Park, Goodfellow and Williams established training for clandestine radio operation in the two cabin camps there beginning in mid-April 1942.⁹⁵ Because it was the site for communications training, and because it was the third camp to be founded, it was designated Area C. The two cabin camps (sub-camps C-1 and C-4), located comparatively close to each other were surrounded by 4,000 wooded acres in the eastern section of the park. Although not ideal for communications training, the area offered a great degree of security because it was isolated and all approaches to it could be kept under 24-hour guard.⁹⁶ At this time, before the Communications Branch was established in September 1942, the organization of the area was informal, and communications (“commo”) courses were offered Morse Code, secret ciphers, and the operation of clandestine wireless telegraphy equipment. After the Communications Branch (CB) was established, it ran the communications training at Area C. For most of the war, Area C had a station complement of about 75 and a capacity of about two hundred students. (The demand for clandestine radio operators became so great by the fall of 1943, that the Communications Branch temporarily opened another, but much smaller, communications school, Area M, at Fort McDowell, Illinois.) Administration of Area C remained under the Special Operations Branch until January 1943, when the new Schools and Training Branch was created and soon assumed responsibility for administration. Nevertheless, Special Operations periodically used some of the Area C facilities as a holding area or to train foreign nationals, such as Thais and Koreans, for special operations activities in the Far East. Communications instruction at Area C, however, remained under the Communications Branch for the duration of the war.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 81.

⁹⁶ “History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS,” p. 10, attached to W[illiam] J. Morgan to Col. E.B. Whisner, 7 January 1949, pp. 7-8, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder, 13, both in National Archives II.

⁹⁷ OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 81.

“We got three camps from the Department of Interior for a dollar a year [lease],” Goodfellow recalled in 1945, “provided we’d clear up [purchase] the farm areas which they contained. We had the War Department real estate people condemn them, then bought them up.”⁹⁸

Obtaining Instructors and Trainees

In recruiting instructors as well as prospective SO agents, Garland Williams began by working through law enforcement officers he knew and trusted, men experienced in the use of firearms and undercover work. They came initially not only from his own agency, the Federal Bureau of Narcotics but also from the Customs Service, the Border Patrol, and other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. As Williams wrote to one prospective instructor early in his planning, the training, as he envisioned it, would involve “...the use of various types of weapons, including pistol, Tommy gun [Thompson submachine gun], rifle, bayonet, knife, and black jack” plus boxing, jujitsu and various forms of physical toughening.⁹⁹ For other skills, however, Williams drew from the military: The Corps of Engineers for instruction in explosives and demolition work; the Military Police for pistol shooting and close combat techniques; Infantry officers for map-reading, tactical maneuvers and other field craft, and the use of rifles, hand grenades, machine guns, mortars, and later bazookas; the Signal Corps for wireless telegraphy, coding and decoding; the Medical Corps for first aid; Airborne units for parachute instructors; and the Navy for small craft handling and seaborne landing instructions.

There were some problems particularly with the use of law enforcement officers, however. Despite their applicable qualifications for weaponry and undercover work, law enforcement officers were deeply imbued with a respect for the law and a belief that lawbreakers and fugitives should and would be apprehended. But the aim of Donovan’s organization working behind enemy lines was to break the law and not get caught. Donovan himself recognized this by frequently recruiting daring individualists, including, bold risk-taking, rule-bending or breaking journalists, adventurers, professionals, entrepreneurs or others. One OSS recruiter remembered looking for activists such as trade union organizers. “What seemed liked faults to rigid disciplinarians of the regular services often appealed to us as evidence of strong will power and an independent cast of mind.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ H. Preston Goodfellow, interviewed for the OSS official history in 1945, and quoted in *History of Schools and Training Branch*, OSS, 29.

⁹⁹ Lt. Col. Garland H. Williams quoted in *History of the Schools and Training Branch*, OSS, 28; see also 31-32, 47. For similar, see Maj. Garland H. Williams, COI, to Joseph Green, supervising customs agent, Seattle, Washington, 12 January 1942, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 92, Box 32, Folder 33, National Archives II.

¹⁰⁰ Anonymous OSS recruiter, quoted in Russell Miller, *Behind the Lines: The Oral History of Special Operations [SOE and SO] in World War II* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2002), 57.

Beginning in early summer 1942, after the creation of OSS under the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recruiting for Special Operations drew almost entirely upon the military—not so much career military as former civilians now in the wartime armed forces. Recruiters from the OSS's newly formed Personnel Procurement Branch scoured training camps and advanced schools of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Army Air Corps looking for daring, intelligent, able recruits who were willing to volunteer for unspecified challenging and hazardous duty. Instructors in small arms and close combat skills often came from the Military Police, demolitions teachers from the Corps of Engineers. The Operational Groups (OGs) initiated in 1943 were secured entirely from the military and mainly from among individuals with particular ethnic backgrounds, particularly in the Infantry or Engineers. Radio operators came largely from the Signal Corps. Qualifications for OSS special operations service included mental and physical ability, linguistics, and the capability to operate under considerable stress.

OSS procurement officers first checked personnel records, then called men for personal interviews. In the interest of security, potential recruits were not given details, often not even the name of the OSS. They were asked if they were willing to volunteer for “hazardous duty behind enemy lines.” (Such duty was made more hazardous by the fact that although most Special Operations teams and Operations Groups operating behind enemy lines were soldiers in uniform, Hitler refused to accord them POW status if captured and ordered that they be shot as “spies.”) Only an estimated 10 per cent of the initial, potential recruits who were interviewed subsequently volunteered to join the OSS.¹⁰¹ “The type of individual who was recruited for the saboteur teams can best be described as a complete individualist,” an OSS report concluded at the end of the war. “When he volunteered to do this work, it was with the expectation of giving up his life, if need be, to accomplish his project. These men unquestionably represented some of the bravest men in the entire war effort of the United States.”¹⁰²

Training Sites outside the Parks: Areas D, E, F.

Donovan's organization also acquired a number of other properties for training purposes in or not far from the nation's capital but outside of the National Parks. Secret Intelligence Branch's assistant director of training Kenneth H. Baker, a former psychology professor from Ohio State University who had first been in Research and Analysis Branch, had begun training a handful of students in undercover work, intelligence gathering, security and reporting in a room at OSS headquarters in Washington. He started with one student in January, four in February and half a dozen in March 1942. Given the pressure for major expansion of the SI training program, Baker and his superior, J.R. Hayden, a former political science professor at Michigan who had also served as vice-chancellor of the U.S. territory of the Philippines, met with Garland

¹⁰¹ OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 223-24.

¹⁰² OSS Security Office, “History of the Security Office,” [1945], 4-5, 12, typescript, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 99, Box 77, Folder 4, National Archives II.

Williams at the end of March and asked to what extent his Special Operations Schools, then ready to open, could help train SI personnel. Williams concluded that the paramilitary SO training could help SI agents with certain useful skills and would also build up a feeling of self-confidence, and he agreed to include SI trainees in the SO training program, albeit in a manner in which their identity or branch would not be disclosed (all the trainees were given fictitious names and told not to discuss their affiliation or missions). Meanwhile during the first two weeks in April, Dr. Baker was sent to the British training school at Camp X in Canada, from which he returned with the complete lecture book, which would play an important role in the future SI curriculum as it had in the SO training program. Hayden and Baker also decided that in addition to using the SO camps, they should establish an independent SI training school in a country estate on the British model.

Lothian Farm, an estate of about 100 acres in the Maryland tobacco-growing countryside near Clinton, about twenty miles south of the nation's capital, was recommended by Garland H. Williams. He had scouted it earlier but rejected it for SO training. SI Branch liked the site, and the secluded private estate with manor house and out buildings was quickly leased from its owner, a Pittsburgh industrialist. Designated RTU-11, but known informally as "the Farm," the SI school opened on 5 May 1942, for its first class of eight students.¹⁰³ Ultimately, it had a staff complement of nine and was capable of handling about 15 students.¹⁰⁴ The cover story to local residents was that it was the headquarters for a small military unit testing new equipment. In reality, however, espionage students were, in an informal civilian atmosphere quite different from the military-oriented SO camps, took classes over a three- to four-week period dealing with observation, concealment, cover stories, safecracking, bribery, recruiting and handling agents, communication and ciphers, and some use of weaponry and unarmed combat. Beginning in June 1942, SI members began attending the SO schools as well, and ultimately most of the SI graduates would also attend special operations training. Also in June, Marine Captain Albert Jenkins was assigned to the SI School at RTU-11 to teach the use of pistols and other small arms as well as map reading and field craft. A month later, when Hayden was replaced as director of the SI training school by Baker, Jenkins became his executive officer, the only military professional on the staff.¹⁰⁵ Later in 1942, Jenkins would be assigned as commanding officer of OSS Training Area C in Prince William Forest Park, a position he would hold for more than two years. RTU-11 ("the Farm") continued to be the main SI training school until its closure in July 1945.

Williams also played the key role in creating a OSS Training Area D, the fourth created by Special Operations Branch. It was first established to instruct SO teams or agents from SI, MO, or other operational branches, on seaborne infiltration on enemy

¹⁰³ OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 76-77, 241; *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 42-43, 47.

¹⁰⁴ For location and the station complement, see L.B. Shallcross, deputy, Staff Training Branch/TRD, [Central Intelligence Agency], to John O'Gara, chief, Staff Training Branch, 1 February 1951, subject: Information on OSS Schools and Training Sites, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 7, Folder 76, National Archives II. "The Farm" of the OSS training was *not* the same site as "The Farm" later used by its successor, the CIA, which is located in southeastern Virginia.

¹⁰⁵ *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 47-49.

shores. Some similar instruction was done on a lake in training Area A, but Williams decided that a more specialized facility was required. Consequently in late April 1942, the Special Operations Branch leased some 1,400 acres on and back from the east bank of the Potomac River some 40 miles south of the capital, probably on Smith's Point at Clinton Beach, bordered to the north by what is today Purse State Park, in Charles County, Maryland.¹⁰⁶ A British naval officer, experienced in clandestine landings Commander H. Woolley, who had been loaned to Donovan's organization in February, directed the establishment of the facility, assisted by U. S. Navy personnel led by Lt. Jack Taylor. Some of the initial naval personnel were sent to OSS Training Area B for testing and training.¹⁰⁷ Temporary prefabricated building had been obtained from the Army (possibly one of the CCC work camps that the War Department had supervised) and erected on the property. Eventually, these included seven wood frame and tarpaper barracks, plus officers' quarters, mess hall, classrooms, infirmary, latrines, garages and motor shop. The first class of eighteen SO and SI students learning small rubber boat, raft, canoes and kayak handling for clandestine landings and transfers of equipment began at Area D in August 1942. In the fall the facility was expanded and winterized.¹⁰⁸ In January 1943, a Marine Section of SO was created. Its subsequent development of new specialized equipment such as magnetic mines to put on ship's hulls, undetectable underwater breathing devices (the Lambertsen Unit and collapsible eight-man kayaks for use from submarines) and of underwater swimming units ("frogmen") led OSS to designate it as an independent branch, the Maritime Unit (MU) in June 1943. There were two sub-camps there for SO as well as MU with a total station complement of 50.

Area D had the advantage of being not too far from Washington and even closer to OSS Areas A and C and the Marine Base at Quantico, the latter of which was only half a dozen miles up and across the river. The isolated wooded area provided good security. But being on a river location it did not have the surf and beach conditions comparable to those MU personnel would face in actual theaters of operation. Furthermore the murky

¹⁰⁶ Although it is clear that OSS Training Area D was on the east bank of the Potomac River, the precise location is still disputed, in part because there are no remains of the facility and the OSS records regarding it are so sparse. Some veterans believe that it was at Indian Head, some contend Smallwood State Park, and other put it farther south. A contemporary reference by the Schools and Training chief in 1945, places it about 40 miles south of Washington, D.C., which would correspond to the identification of Smith's Point made in a 1951 CIA document which precisely and accurately identifies the sites of all the other OSS training schools. L.B. Shallcross, deputy Staff Training Branch/TRD, [Central Intelligence Agency], to John O'Gara, chief, Staff Training Branch, 1 February 1951, subject: Information [designation, location, type of training, and station complement] on OSS Schools and Training Sites, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 7, Folder 76, National Archives II.

¹⁰⁷ John P. Spence, considered by the UDT-SEAL Association as the "First Frogman," to be one of the initial sailors assigned to Area D beginning in 1942 and who eventually served in OSS Maritime Unit L, telephone interview with the author, 28 January 2005.

¹⁰⁸ Commander H. Woolley [Royal Navy] to Col. M.P. Goodfellow, 9 October 1942, subject: Guerrilla Notes—rough notes and suggestions [regarding use of Area D], M. Preston Goodfellow Papers, Box 4, Folder 4, Hoover Institution, Stanford, Calif.; *History of Schools and Training*, OSS, 135, which says portable buildings obtained from the Army; John P. Spence affidavit included in Tom Hawkins, "OSS Maritime," *The Blast*, (3rd Quarter 2000), 10-11, magazine of the UDT-SEAL Association; and layout of buildings in Area D, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, Folder 249, National Archives II.

and polluted nature of the Potomac and cold and ice in the winter hindered training of the frogmen. Consequently, in November 1943, MU moved its staff, students, and training activities first to Florida and then to Nassau in the Bahamas and in the summer of 1944 to Marine Camp Pendleton and to Catalina Island in California. Meanwhile Area D was also used by Special Operations Branch in 1942-1943 as an additional Advanced SO training site, when Area A-4 was filled, and in 1943-1944 it served as one of the holding areas for SO teams and Operational Groups that had completed their training and were awaiting shipment overseas. Area D was closed in April 1944 and the property returned to its owner.¹⁰⁹

When it became clear in late 1942 that OSS was going to expand, new training areas were acquired. Area E was opened in November 1942 to provide basic Secret Intelligence Training (and later Counter-Intelligence). RTU-11 (“The Farm”) then became the advanced SI school. Again reflecting the British influence, Area E consisted of two country estates and a former private school, each with considerable grounds. They were located near Towson and Glencoe in the rolling Maryland countryside about thirty miles north of Baltimore.¹¹⁰ Beginning in 1944, a basic, two-week course for all OSS operational personnel—SI, SO, MO and X-2—was developed and taught at Area E, which in all had a station complement of nearly 50 persons and could handle 165 trainees.¹¹¹ The Schools and Training Branch later sought with mixed success to have this so-called “E-type” basic course taught by the various branches of OSS at their own training facilities. Like the other SI schools, but unlike the SO and CB schools in the parks, women as well as men received instruction there. Dissatisfaction by the operational branches to the E-type basic course led to the closure of Area E in July 1944.¹¹²

In April 1943, faced with a dramatic expansion of the OSS, particularly with the creation of Operational Groups for the planned invasion of France the following year, Donovan’s organization obtained its final training area in the East, Area F. It was the

¹⁰⁹ OSS, *War Report of O.S.S.*, 225-227. The West Coast MU/SO training area at Tonyon Cove, 2 1/2 miles from Avalon on Catalina Island, reached its peak in 1944-1945 training teams for landings in the Pacific and the Far East.

¹¹⁰ “History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS,” p. 10, attached to W[illiam] J. Morgan to Col. E.B. Whisner, 7 January 1949, pp. 7-8, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder, 13, both in National Archives II.

¹¹¹ The Area E facilities included E-1, the Inverness estate owned by Leslie Kieffer near Towson, which could handle 24 trainees; E-2, Oldfields School, Inc., owned by Maj. Watts Hill, near Towson, with a capacity of 77 trainees; and E-3, the Nolting estate, owned by Harry C. Gilbert, one mile east of Glencoe, Maryland, which had room for 64 trainees. For location and the station complement, see L.B. Shallcross, deputy Staff Training Branch/TRD, [Central Intelligence Agency], to John O’Gara, chief, Staff Training Branch, 1 February 1951, subject: Information [designation, location, type of training, and station complement] on OSS Schools and Training Sites, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 7, Folder 76; for trainee capacity, see layout of buildings, Areas E-2, E-2, E-3, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, Folder 249, both in National Archives II.

¹¹² Col. H.L. Robinson, Schools and Training Branch Order No. 1, issued 21 July 1944, effective 17 July 1944, OSS Basic Course, OSS Records (RG 226), Directors Office Files, Microfilm No. 1642, Roll 102, Frames 1120-1121, National Archives II.

least isolated and the most spectacular of the OSS training camps. For Donovan had leased the clubhouse, golf course, and the more than 400 acres of grounds of the Congressional Country Club located only 13 miles northwest of Washington in Bethesda, Maryland.¹¹³ Since the OG military units would be training in uniform, like other soldiers in the Washington region, Donovan did not think they needed to be so isolated. Furthermore, this proved much more accessible than Area B or A for taking visiting dignitaries to see the rough and tumble training of OSS SO and OG teams.¹¹⁴ A former watering hole for the Washington power elite, the club had fallen onto hard times as a result of the depression and the war, and its board of directors was happy to lease it to the OSS for the duration. The lease required a monthly rental, which more than met the mortgage payments, and full restoration of the property when the OSS relinquished it.¹¹⁵

For two years, the formerly manicured grounds and golf links were used by Operational Groups, along with some Special Operations agents, for their initial paramilitary training. Most of them spent two weeks or more at Area F before going on to Area B, or Area A, for final training before being shipped overseas. “The water holes and sand traps made excellent areas for demolition training, especially for the OGs,” veteran Joseph Kelley recalled. “And of course, the beautiful greens were also targets.”¹¹⁶ The mission of the OGs and SOs was to create mayhem behind enemy lines, and they trained at it on the once glorious grounds. An obstacle course was erected from the swimming pool to the first tee. Submachine gun and pistol ranges and a concrete bunker for observing the effect of new weapons and munitions were built across River Road on the north 80 acres. A mock fuselage of a C-47 used for parachute training sat on the putting green in front of the clubhouse. Inside, the ballroom was converted into a lecture hall, the elegant dining room into an Army mess hall. Near the fifteenth tee, machine guns fired live ammunition over the heads of trainees crawling forward. During the two year period, three trainees were killed in accidents at Area F. Two were felled by machine gun bullets on the range, one when he bolted up when he came upon a snake. Another was mortally wounded when in a nighttime mock attack on a bridge, a trainee playing a guard backed into the razor sharp stiletto of the attacking trainee who had taken him prisoner.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Congressional Country Club, *The Congressional Country Club, 1924-1984* (n.p., n.d.; [Bethesda, Md., c. 1985]), 12, 26. I am grateful to Maxime D. Harvey, director of the club’s membership services for supplying me with a copy of this volume.

¹¹⁴ “History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS,” p. 10, attached to W[illiam] J. Morgan to Col. E.B. Whisner, 7 January 1949, pp. 12-13, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder, 13, in National Archives II; the report explained also that additional factors leading to the decision to lease the club was its housing facilities, kitchen and dining room equipment, and grounds for tents or huts and the fact that a search had failed to obtain any other comparable facility available.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 26, 33; see also A. William Asmuth, Jr., OSS Legal Division, to Col. Ainsworth Blogg, Schools and Training Branch, 26 April 1944, subject: Provisions of Lease with Congressional Country Club, Inc., OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II.

¹¹⁶ Joseph Kelley, an OSS veteran and member of the Congressional Country Club since 1949 quoted in “Society’s Annual Meeting Held at Country Club Where OSS Trainees Once Blew Up the Greens,” *OSS Society Newsletter*, Summer 2005,

¹¹⁷ Congressional Country Club, *The Congressional Country Club*, 27-31; Roger Hall, *You’re Stepping on My Cloak and Dagger* (New York: Norton, 1957), 23-33; on the fatality on the bridge training exercise in

The officers and enlisted men of the Operational Groups were housed in tents with wooden floors, more than seventy of them, each holding five men and, for warmth in winter, a pot-bellied stove. They stretched in parallel rows, accompanied by latrines, along entrance road between the clubhouse and the main entrance on River Road. Area F could hold more than 400 trainees in tents, plus the OSS staff of 80, whose quarters were mainly in the clubhouse.¹¹⁸

Area F was also used to train other OSS branches. Morale Operations used it as well as Area A, and because of its closeness to the OSS headquarters as well as its hotel-like facilities in the red-brick main building, the former Congressional Country Club was used to house most of the female members of OSS who received instruction in weaponry and other basic military training before being sent overseas. “With a real gun, yes,” affirmed Elizabeth MacDonald, a civilian OSS employee in the Moral Operations Branch who was sent to Ceylon and then China.¹¹⁹ OSS women in MO, SI, Communications Branch, or other operational OSS units, received their stateside training at OSS Headquarters complex, the clubhouse at the Congressional Country Club or the country estates at Area E or RTU-11 (“the Farm”). Apparently no women trainees were sent to the tents and cabins of the OSS Special Operations training camps in the forests at Catoctin Mountain Park or Prince William Forest Park.¹²⁰

Early Problems and Reorganization

Despite a promising start in the spring of 1942, OSS training soon ran into difficulties. The Joint Chiefs of Staff at first took a skeptical view of Donovan’s request for more than 2,000 sergeants’ and officers’ positions for men who would be recruited and trained for the Special Operations Branch. Since JSC waited until almost the end of 1942 before approving that many positions, many graduates of the SO training program could not be given missions and sent overseas. This was demoralizing to the graduates and also caused a problem of what to do with them in the meantime. Area A, for example, was converted in May 1942 to a holding area for them; SO cut back on

July 1943, Albert Materazzi, veteran of the OSS Italian OG, telephone interview with the author, 26 January 2005.

¹¹⁸ Building and tent layout for Area F as of 5 Oct. 1943, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, Folder 249, National Archives II.

¹¹⁹ Elizabeth P. (“Betty”) McIntosh, oral history interview, 2 May 1997, pp. 5-6, conducted by Maochun Yu, OSS Oral History Transcripts, CIA Records (RG 263), Box 2, National Archives II.

¹²⁰ Elizabeth P. (“Betty”) McIntosh, telephone interview with the author, 12 March 2005. None of the male OSS veterans from Areas A, B, and C, in the two National Parks, whom the author interviewed, remembered ever seeing any OSS women, or any women at all, at those forested training areas, except for one dance held at Area C in 1945.

recruiting, and classes at Area B were shut down temporarily.¹²¹ Many of the instructors initially brought in from law enforcement for both SO and SI instruction were returned to their agencies in this period, and in SO instruction, more reservists and career soldiers were brought in to replace them. A debate emerged within Donovan's organization over the suitability of longtime soldiers as instructors. Critics argued that many of these regulars were too rigid and rule-bound to be effective instructors in this new, innovative, and developing form of non-conventional warfare. Supporters, including the JCS, asserted that they had the necessary military and technical skills.¹²² Differences also emerged about the degree to which SO and SI could benefit from any common basic training course. Some thought the differences between the goals and operations of the two branches were so great as to negate any common training. There were also philosophical differences. SI favored preparing individuals for particular missions, but in SO, the predominant view was that the global war effort and the mass mobilization of sixteen million members of the armed forces necessitated mass production of OSS agents as well. Consequently, after some initial cooperation, SI and SO had each set up its own training program. Yet, there were commonalities—in some of the subject areas, in the need for training materials, curricula, instructors, security, food and other basic supplies—and the fact that they were both part of a single organization—the OSS. Most disturbingly, the SO emphasis on quantity over quality, as its critics in SI put it, had led to temporary overproduction of SO operatives, given that the JCS and many theater commanders were not yet convinced of the effectiveness of such agents and the consequent delay in approval of military slots or authorization of transportation overseas meant that the supply provided by the initial SO training system had not been accurately aligned with demand. Despite its earlier start, SO lagged behind SI in organization, coordinated training and overseas deployment.

Concerns within the OSS itself over the nature and effectiveness of the initial training efforts led to major reorganizations and a continuing effort to establish more centralized and effectual direction for OSS training. Instigation for a more coordinated program came especially from the Secret Intelligence branch advised by Maj. Bill Booker and others in British SOE.¹²³ The first reorganization came in August 1942. M. Preston

¹²¹ *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 29-31; see the dissatisfaction expressed in Lt. Col. Garland H. Williams to R.W. Billingham, 28 April 1942, Goodfellow Papers, Box 3, Folder OSS Correspondence, January to May 1942, Hoover Institution, Stanford, Calif.

¹²² After JCS was given supervision of the OSS in June 1942, a subcommittee of the Joint Psychological Warfare Committee of the JCS studied the issue of training saboteurs and commandos. It questioned SO training officers, observed the operation of one of the SO camps (presumably Area B), and compared OSS training with accounts of British SOE training and with a report on saboteur training in Germany based on interrogations of several captured Nazi saboteurs who had been landed by U-boat on the East Coast and quickly captured. The subcommittee reported that OSS training seemed suitable for saboteurs and their organizers, but given the type of training and missions involved, Army and Navy instructors should be used in the military and technical fields. Enclosure, "Functions of the Office of Strategic Services," JPWC 21/2, pp. 2-4, enclosed with Lt. Col. A.H. Onthank, secretary, to the subcommittee of the Joint Psychological Warfare Committee of the JCS, 28 July 1942, OSS Records (RG 226), Directors Office Files, Microfilm No. 1642, Role 64, Frames 952-958, National Archives II.

¹²³ See *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 34-35, 48-49; Anthony Moore, British Liaison, "Notes on Co-Operations between SOE and OSS," January 1945, p. 2; OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136,

Goodfellow's reputation had fallen considerably by then. Donovan still considered him an effective liaison with the military if not always a good judge of character, remained his friend and even promoted him to head of a new OSS unit called the Strategic Services Command, which both hoped would become a worldwide commando organization, independent of military theater commanders.¹²⁴ (The JCS ultimately rejected such a sweeping proposal, but in 1943 it would accept a greatly reduced version in the Operational Groups, which, however, would be outside Goodfellow's purview.¹²⁵) Despite Donovan's friendship, Goodfellow was in effect pushed aside by the group of planners and administrators who largely ran the organization on a daily basis.¹²⁶

Although Goodfellow remained with the OSS for the duration of the war, Garland H. Williams, his right-hand man, was pushed out entirely, accepting reassignment to the U.S. Army's Airborne Command, where he provided advice on establishing its paratrooper training program.¹²⁷ Williams had brought talent, vision, and enthusiasm for the creation of an elite special operations force and unified preliminary training, his impatience with military routine and his tendency to cut corners and use unorthodox methods to expedite action caused problems, particularly when, after June 1942, the military had begun to dominate the special operations side of the organization. Looking back at the end of the war, the OSS Schools and Training Branch was gracious in its appraisal of his contribution. "It could be said that he was one of the early sacrifices to

Box 158, Folder 1722; and a highly critical report by the newly named acting chief training officer, Capt. George E. Brewer, Jr., to Lt. Col. E. C. Huntington, Jr., 31 August 1942, subject: Problems Confronting the Training Unit, six typed pages, copy in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 161, Folder 1754, National Archives II.

¹²⁴ On the reorganization, see memoranda from Colonel Donovan to All Branch Heads, 10 Aug. 1942; for Colonels Buxton, Goodfellow, Huntington, and Captain Doering, 17 Aug. 1942; and for Colonel Buxton, 23 Aug. 1942, all in OSS Records, Washington Directors Office-Op. 266, No. 519 (.S.O.); and on Goodfellow's naiveté in sometimes misjudging character, see William J. Donovan to "Dear Preston," 28 April 1942, Washington Director's Office Op-266, file No. 656; copies in CIA Records (RG 263), Thomas Troy Files, Box 2, Folder 19, National Archives II.

¹²⁵ Wallace R. Deuel, "History of the OSS," typescript, 1944, Vol. 2, chapt. 30, p. 52ff. Deuel stated that the OSS guerrilla operations, particularly the OGS, outgrew the limitations set forth in JCS 155/4/D, 23 Dec. 1942 because theater commanders began in mid-1943 to ask SO chief Ellery Huntington to provide not merely organizers, fomenters and operational nuclei, which the JCS directive had authorized, but also full-fledged guerrilla companies. Plus a Norwegian general wanted Norwegian-speaking American soldiers for his forces. Deuel worked as one of Donovan's special assistants. This section of his typescript history was summarized by CIA historian Thomas Troy in the CIA Records (RG 263), Thomas Troy Files, Box 2, Folder 19, National Archives II. Deuel's typescript history remained classified by the CIA at the time the present study was completed. The present author utilized the Deuel Papers at the Library of Congress and filed a request in 2008 for its declassification.

¹²⁶ *History of Schools and Training, OSS*, 51. One of them, James Grafton Rogers, a former Assistant Secretary of State then chief of the OSS's Planning Group for covert action, belittled Goodfellow in his diary, as "a sort of promoter character, who ... is as irresponsible as a blue-bottle fly." James Grafton Rogers, diary entry of 3 August 1942, *Wartime Washington: The Secret OSS Journal of James Grafton Rogers, 1942-1943*, ed. Thomas F. Troy (Frederick, Md.: University Publications of America, 1987), 9.

¹²⁷ John C. McWilliams, *The Protectors: Harry J. Anslinger and the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, 1930-1962* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), 161, 214n.

the order which was deemed necessary for an ultimately successful organization. Certainly it can be said that he was a year and a half ahead of his time.”¹²⁸

In the change in command, Goodfellow was succeeded as head of the Special Operations Branch by Ellery C. Huntington, Jr. Replacing Williams in charge of training was his former assistant, Philip G. Strong, one of the first American graduates of Camp X.¹²⁹ Strong, 41, was an eminent banker, the son of Benjamin Strong, governor of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. He had also been a reserve Marine officer since 1926, and had been recruited from the Marines in 1942 by Donovan himself.¹³⁰ The 49-year-old Huntington was an old friend and squash partner of Donovan’s. Born and raised in Tennessee, Huntington had become an All-American quarterback at Colgate University, earned a law degree from Harvard, served in France in World War I, and became a highly respected Wall Street lawyer. Widely traveled and fluent in half a dozen languages, he joined the COI hoping for overseas adventure. Instead he was assigned first as chief of Security and subsequently as Goodfellow’s successor as head of Special Operations.¹³¹ Associates recalled Huntington as an able, highly personable man, with “gung-ho” enthusiasm and a sense of daring that fitted him for Special Operations and also made him highly compatible with Donovan (later he would get the overseas assignments he desired in Italy and Yugoslavia).¹³² Major Strong, in contrast, disagreed with much of the civilian leadership of the OSS and its training program, and returned to the Marine Corps, where served as an intelligence officer with two Battleship Squadrons.¹³³

Faced with the difficulties in SO, the OSS began what would be a long process of trying to establish an effective centralized training system that would ultimately emerge under a separate Schools and Training Branch (S&T). But it took several steps to get there, and even with the establishment of the Schools and Training Branch in 1943, there was a struggle for control over training between S&T and the operational branches for the rest of the war. In August 1942, Donovan created the first combined training office, the Strategic Services Training Unit (SSTU), and appointed Huntington to head it. Advised by Bill Brooker of the British SOE, Huntington supported the idea of a unified training program with a common syllabus and the linking of individual trainees with geographical desks in their branches so that their training could be geared toward their future missions. In September, SSTU was officially superseded by a new Training Directorate. It was headed by Dr. Kenneth H. Baker. A native Vermonter, Baker had been a professor of

¹²⁸ *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 35. Lt. Col. Garland H. Williams left OSS and was assigned to the U.S. Army’s Airborne Command on 11 August 1942.

¹²⁹ *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 51.

¹³⁰ Robert E. Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger: Marines of the OSS*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Marine Corps Headquarters, History and Museum Division, 1989, 109-II. Mattingly ignores Williams.

¹³¹ On Huntington’s background, see McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies*, 21; Rogers, *Wartime Washington*, 14n.

¹³² Edwin Putzell, Oral History Interview, 11 April 1997, p. 13, CIA Records (RG 263), OSS Oral History Transcripts, Box 3, National Archives II.

¹³³ Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger: Marines of the OSS*, 112-13.

psychology at the Ohio State University and a reserve Army officer. Donovan recruited him for the Research and Analysis Branch in 1941 where he served for several months, but in 1942, this educator was appointed chief of training for the SI Branch. Baker headed the new Training Directorate as well as remaining chief of SI training. The Directorate also included the chiefs of the SO and Communications Branches, as well as Bill Brooker.¹³⁴

Under the new plan, all SO and SI resources including instructors were to be pooled and a combined instructional program adopted by the new Training Directorate. The plan called for a Preliminary or Basic School, where all agents would be given physical conditioning as well as introduced to the rudiments of espionage and sabotage. Undercover and other techniques would be detailed at Advanced School. Finally, there would be different Specialist Schools (for SO, SI, MU, or Communications).¹³⁵ The plan sought for the first time to tailor the training of individual students to their ultimate assignments by seeking to have geographical desk officers coordinate with instructors to tailor training to particular missions.¹³⁶ The lack of such specific linkage had been a major complaint by the students, many of whom did not have the slightest idea of the role their training would play, because they did not know their ultimate assignment. "I don't see what this has to do with me, especially since I am not certain that I will ever be using it," was how one instructor summarized the students' complaint.¹³⁷ The Training Directorate's plan represented the first major step in the evolution of OSS training from its early phase where each branch wound up largely training its own agents but with considerable overlap to a more coordinated, centralized, standardized approach. The aim was flexible, yet standardized type training to accommodate all needs, which the budding OSS training establishment believed would be a more effective use of the organization's resources.

The Training Directorate did try to coordinate schooling and the roles of current and planned training areas. In its plan of November 1942, Area A, actually sub-camp A-4 in Prince William Forest Park, was designated as the Basic SO Training Area; Area B, in Catoctin Mountain Park, would be made available as a holding area for unassigned SO graduates, and for training SOs' new Operational Groups (OG) combat teams, when they were created beginning the following year.¹³⁸ Area C, in Prince William Forest Park,

¹³⁴ The Training Directorate thus included Baker from SI, Huntington from SO, Lawrence W. Lowman from Communications Branch, and Brooker from SOE. *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 55-56. Baker had immense faith in Brooker's approach to training. Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular*, 143.

¹³⁵ *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 53.

¹³⁶ Lt. John A Bross, "Notes of Meeting with Geographic Desks, dated September 3, 1942," two page memorandum, 7 September 1942, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 161, Folder 1754, National Archives II.

¹³⁷ Lt. Louis D. Cohen to Kenneth Baker, 18 December 1942, in response to "Student" to Baker, 8 December 1942, both in Appendix III, "Part Two of the History," OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1722, National Archives II.

¹³⁸ The OGs were to be combat units behind enemy lines. Obtained from the Army, the men already had basic training. They were to be assembled primarily according to foreign language groups, then they would spend four to six weeks being trained as a unit by SO/OG instructors and by the officers who would lead

would remain the site of the Communications School for the duration of the war. When established in 1943, Area E, north of Baltimore, would serve, the Training Directorate hoped, as the Advanced School for SI and SO training. Area F, the former Congressional Country Club, it was expected, would provide training for the new Operational Group combat teams as well as some SO, SI, and MO personnel.¹³⁹

Planning was one thing, implementing was another. Suspicious of the value of putting their students under training geared at least in part toward information and skills unrelated to their mission as saboteurs and guerrilla leaders on one hand or spies on the other, SI and SO continued to do most of their own training and in their own training areas. There was occasional crossover, mainly by SI sending its spies in training to a few weeks of SO's basic course with its introduction to physical toughening, close combat skills, and demolition work.

Creation of the Schools and Training Branch (S&T)

Because each of the branch chiefs in the Training Directorate had equal authority, the inter-branch rivalry prevented effective coordination. Consequently, Baker and Brooker convinced Donovan to replace it with a new unit, one with branch status equal to the operational branches, and whose chief would report directly to Donovan himself. In January 1943, Donovan established the Schools and Training Branch (S&T); Baker, its chief, would report directly to Donovan.¹⁴⁰ Baker did not last long in his new position, however, and even Brooker, his British advisor and champion of combined training, was soon dispatched to an SOE assignment far away in Algiers. There were a number of problems. The fundamental one was essential policy differences between Baker and the operational branches, which continued to resist his attempts at standardization and centralization of training for their agents. But Baker also alienated the military, particularly by his informal record keeping and irregular, out of channels methods for rapidly procuring supplies. In the end, the showdown came over military procedures and control, which Baker had resisted. Even Donovan's obtaining of a commission as a lieutenant colonel for the former psychology professor did little to help Baker's tenuous relations with the Army. Adding to these difficulties was the fact that Baker and the new Schools and Training Branch were simply overwhelmed by the massive influx of SO and SI recruits beginning in the spring of 1943, and then by the OGs, all in

them. OSS, *Operational Groups Field Manual—Strategic Services (Provisional)*, *Strategic Services Field Manual No. 6*, issued 25 April 1944, pp. 7-13, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 140, Folder 1465, National Archives II.

¹³⁹ *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 66-68.

¹⁴⁰ OSS General Order No. 9, establishing the Schools and Training Branch, was issued on 3 January 1943; *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 62.

preparation for the Allied offensives in the Mediterranean that year and the invasion of France in 1944. In late June 1943, Baker was forced out.¹⁴¹

Even without Baker, OSS training faced significant problems in the summer of 1943. The remnants of Baker's use of informal requisition procedures continued to rankle the military. The operational branches continued to complain about unsatisfactory attempts at centralized direction. Baker's departure left the Schools and Training Branch under temporary leadership at a time when OSS faced dramatically increased demands caused by a flood of new recruits. He had sent many of the best instructors overseas to establish OSS schools in North Africa, England, and the Far East, which helped the OSS effort in those regions, but weakened instruction in the United States. This made it difficult for the remaining instructors and staff to handle and train the vastly increased numbers of recruits who descended upon the American training camps in 1943.¹⁴² These developments all contributed to a series of internal investigations by OSS headquarters in the summer and the reorganization of the Schools and Training Branch in September 1943.¹⁴³ The branch was put under direct supervision of OSS headquarters, and as its new chief, Donovan appointed Lt. Col. Henson L. Robinson, a career Army officer from the field artillery, who had been serving as commanding officer of the OSS Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment. Robinson would head the Schools and Training Branch for the next two years, until the end of the OSS.¹⁴⁴ Subsequently, an advisory board was established composed of the heads of the geographic area desks but under Dr. John L. McConaughy, a former college President who had successfully headed a nationwide United China Relief effort. McConaughy was also appointed a Deputy Director of OSS for Schools and Training to add to his authority and that of Schools and Training Branch.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 62-63; see also Minutes of the OSS Executive Committee, June 23, 1945, p. 5, in black bound volume, "Minutes of Executive Committee, OSS, 19th meeting, May 11, 1943 through 43rd meeting, Oct. 19, 1943," in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 139, Box 221, Folder 3097, National Archives II. Taking an indefinite leave from OSS, Baker was reassigned to the Army's Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He subsequently returned to OSS duty and wound up in southern France in late 1944, heading Special Forces Unit 4, the advance unit of Special Project Operations Center (SPOC), Algiers, and representing SPOC with the U.S. Seventh Army and the 6th Army Group. Erasmus H. Kloman, *Assignment Algiers: With the OSS in the Mediterranean Theater* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 34-35.

¹⁴² Possibly due in part to that stress, Knox Chandler, a former journalist and college professor and the chief instructor at RTU-11, "The Farm," the SI finishing school, committed suicide in July. Chandler had sustained a head injury, and it may have contributed to his action. *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 63.

¹⁴³ On the investigations of the OSS training schools see, for example, Minutes of the OSS Executive Committee, June 21, 1945, p. 2, and July 1, 1943, p. 4, in bound volume, "Minutes of Executive Committee, OSS, 19th meeting, May 11, 1943 through 43rd meeting, Oct. 19, 1943," in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 139, Box 221, Folder 3097, National Archives II.

¹⁴⁴ Table of organization for OSS Schools and Training Branch and OSS, in Lt. E.R. Kellogg to Chief, Presentation Branch, 2 November 1944, subject: Attachment, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 133, Box 163, Folder 1384, National Archives II. See also *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 62-63, 85.

¹⁴⁵ *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 85.

A recurring problem in OSS training had been the friction between military and civilian viewpoints. The kind of irregular training characteristic of most OSS instruction did not lend itself to a strictly military approach. The new leadership of Schools and Training Branch proved a workable arrangement, because Robinson, the career soldier, chose as his executive officer, an Army officer with a civilian background. The new training executive was Lt. Col. Ainsworth Blogg, a former insurance executive from Seattle and a longtime reserve officer in the Military Police, who had served as commanding officer at Area B in Cactoctin Mountain Park from its founding in the spring of 1942.¹⁴⁶ Soon Blogg came to deal primarily with administrative matters, personnel, transportation, supply and the like, and an executive for instruction was appointed to deal with the instructors and the curriculum of the training schools. The latter was Phillip E. Allen, who had begun as an instructor in the Secret Intelligence Branch and then served as chief instructor at Area E near Baltimore from June to October 1943, before his appointment in charge of instruction for Schools and Training Branch.¹⁴⁷

From this arrangement in September 1943, things began to improve in the Schools and Training Branch, in part because Blogg was able to work satisfactorily with both former civilians and the professional military. Robinson and Blogg oversaw the “militarization” of Schools and Training that Baker had resisted. This was probably inevitable because the basic directive for the OSS decreed that its wartime functions were to be in support of the military, and the military, of course, was the largest and most important customer for OSS’s intelligence, sabotage, and guerrilla operations. In the field, most of the OSS personnel had to work with the military and were often part of the military. There were, in fact, a number of advantages to the militarization of the training program. In the United States, it solved problems of supply at a time of civilian shortages and a cumbersome civilian rationing system of allocation. The military simply had priority over civilian needs. Furthermore, OSS trainees and instructors were now largely drawn from the military, which had a practical monopoly on young, able-bodied men. However, the militarization of training also had a number of disadvantages according to its critics in the OSS. Complaints continued about inflexible, rulebook attitudes by some career officers. The use of instructors from the military also caused turnover and consequent instability in the training program when they were suddenly reassigned overseas. There was dissatisfaction about dual control in the training areas between the commanding officer and the chief instructor, particularly when the two men were of

¹⁴⁶ Blogg had also attended SOE schools in Britain in the late summer and early fall of 1942. On his background, see Ainsworth Blogg, Personnel File, CIA Records (RG 263), Accession #92-745, Box 10, National Archives II; Col. H.L. Robinson to Director, Strategic Services Unit (successor to OSS), 20 February 1946, subject: Recommendation for Citation [for Ainsworth Blogg], OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 133, Folder 814; Maj. John J. Sullivan to Col. William J. Donovan, 24 April 1942 [recommendation for Ainsworth Blogg], in OSS Records (RG 226), Director’s Office Files, microfilm roll 36, frames 325-27, National Archives II; and Mrs. Dorothea (“Dodie”) Dow, widow of Capt. Arden Dow, one of the instructors at Areas B and A, letter to the author, 6 August 2005.

¹⁴⁷ Col. H.L. Robinson to Director, Strategic Services Unit, 20 Feb. 1946, subject: recommendation for citation [for Lt. Col. Philip K. (sic) Allen], OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 133, Box 105, Folder 814; and “History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS,” pp. 7-8, attached to W. J. Morgan to Col. E.B. Whisner, 7 January 1949, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder, 13, both in National Archives II.

different rank or if the commanding officer were a military officer and the chief instructor a civilian.¹⁴⁸

Militarization and effective leadership of the training program expedited the mass production of OSS agents required in the massive build up of 1943-1944, a doubling of the total size of Donovan's organization.¹⁴⁹ These increases in production led to major alterations in training. The changes usually incorporated, but sometimes overrode, the desires of the different OSS branches. They enabled courses to become more standardized to satisfy what Schools and Training considered the common requirements of all OSS branches. The names of the courses seldom changed, but their content was revised by the instructors or by the Schools and Training Branch as a result of new information from the field or new missions (such as the expanded role in the China-Burma-India Theater in 1944-45). The following course titles remained fairly constant, despite the changing course outlines and training manuals of the OSS:

Intelligence Gathering and Reporting Techniques
 Order of Battle [the enemy's military units]
 Enemy Identification [of rank, unit, branch, etc.]
 Agent Material (Undercover Techniques, Recruitment & Organization
 of Indigenous Agents]
 Enemy Organizational Background
 Foreign Background [of the country in which the agent might serve]
 Weapons Instruction [in enemy as well as Allied weapons; plus unarmed combat]
 Demolition and Special Sabotage Devices
 Fieldcraft, Tactics, Scouting, Reconnaissance
 Mapping and Map Interpretation
 Radio Training [wireless transmitting and receiving, coding and decoding]
 Police Methods [understanding them so as to avoid detection and capture]
 Morale Operations and ["Black"] Propaganda Composition and Dissemination¹⁵⁰

In addition, the SO and SI schools often capped their training courses with a field problem or "scheme." This involved sending a trainee or a team of trainees into a nearby city—Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, or Baltimore were the most utilized—with the assignment of infiltrating major industrial defense plants and obtaining inside information about them (by SI students) or arranging a plan for sabotaging them (by SO trainees).

¹⁴⁸ *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 4, 77-78, 100, including the criticism from Joseph Anthony Kloman, former chief instructor at Area E, who had been moved to Area A-3. .

¹⁴⁹ In October 1943, OSS had 5,000 members and asked for 6,000 more. James Grafton Rogers, diary entry of 6 September 1943, *Wartime Washington*, 141.

¹⁵⁰ *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 83; see also Kenneth H. Baker to Col. Edward Buxton, 13 March 1943, subject: Curriculum of Basic Training Course, reprinted as Exhibit A in *ibid.*, 169-71. For an example, see *Operational Groups Field Manual—Strategic Services (Provisional)*, Strategic Services Field Manual No. 6, April 1944, Section IV, Training, pp. 10-13, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 140, Folder 1465, National Archives II.

Remembering Training

Recollections of veterans of the OSS training camps provide differing perspectives and judgments. Some, like University of Michigan graduate John Waller, who went into counter-espionage (X-2), recalled the series of different OSS training courses in 1943, as “quite entertaining and remarkable good” with the dynamics of the situation creating a sense of camaraderie, “a feeling of loyalty to the OSS [and] an esprit de corps.”¹⁵¹ John K. Singlaub, an ROTC infantry lieutenant from UCLA who had volunteered for hazardous duty with the OSS, and later became part of Jedburgh team in France and a leader of a mission rescuing POWs in China, recalled his SO training at Area B. By the end of the month, he said, it “had become a grueling marathon. We crawled through rain-soaked oak forest at night to plant live demolition charges on floodlit sheds. We were introduced to clandestine radio procedure and practiced tapping out code and encrypting messages in our few spare moments. Many mornings began with a run, followed by a passage of an increasingly sophisticated and dangerous obstacle course. The explosive charges under the rope bridges and wire catwalks no longer exploded to one side as exciting stage effects. Now they blasted directly below, a moment before or after we had passed.”¹⁵²

Lt. Albert Materazzi, a 26-year-old Italian American with a chemistry degree from Fordham University who was being prepared for Operational Group action in Italy, remembered night exercises around Area A at Prince William Forest Park in late April 1943. One was planting dummy demolition charges on the main railroad bridge over the Rappahannock. “There was a poor night watchman. We scared him half to death. Nobody had told him.” Another field exercise was to sabotage a dam. A third problem seemed ridiculous to Materazzi. “They put us on a truck, dropped us a hundred yards apart on a straight stretch of road adjoining a woods, pointed and said ‘that’s where the camp is, go find it.’ It was a dark night. It was late April, the trees were covered with leaves. There were no stars. We couldn’t have seen them if we had tried.... [When the instructors left], we said ‘this is crazy.’ We hopped a ride into Triangle [the nearest town], found a bar. We shot pool, drank beer until about midnight. We took cabs within a half a mile [of the camp], went in and signed in—coming from different directions, of course—and went to sleep. We never heard any more about it. We had expected that we would be chastised for it, but we weren’t.”¹⁵³

Lt. Col. Francis B. (“Frank”) Mills, an Oklahoma City native and an officer in the Field Artillery, had been recruited by Special Operations and trained in Area A and other camps in 1942 before being sent behind enemy lines in France in 1944 and then China in

¹⁵¹ John Waller, Oral History Interview, 27 January 1997, pp. 4, 6, CIA Records (RG 263), OSS Oral History Transcripts, Box 4, National Archives. Waller retired from the CIA as inspector general.

¹⁵² Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub, US Army (Ret.), with Malcolm McConnell, *Hazardous Duty: An American Soldier in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Summit/Simon & Schuster, 1991), 32-33; also John K. Singlaub, telephone interview with the author, 11 December 2004.

¹⁵³ Albert Materazzi, telephone interview with the author, 26 January 2005.

1945. He remembered that at those camps they had been trained “primarily in self-defense combat. We were not trained in any way in the intelligence gathering activity. We were in special operations, fighting with sympathetic forces behind enemy lines. We knew that. We were given very marginal, almost no real training in how guerrillas were supposed to operate. So we were given what little training the Army or OSS had to offer.”¹⁵⁴

In contrast, Raymond Brittenham of SI, who went to various training schools in the summer of 1943, found the instructors, particularly those teaching the use of weapons and explosives to be what he called “real pros.” He also commended the ability and perseverance of his fellow students in the training program. “You were there with a bunch of . . . very bright, able people,” he recalled. “It was a pretty pressured deal. . . . In almost all of these [training] camps, a few people would just drop out by the wayside.”¹⁵⁵

OSS women going overseas also had to take a basic training type of course including the use of weapons. Elizabeth (“Betty”) MacDonald (later McIntosh), who would work with Morale Operations in India and China, remembered that at Area F, the Congressional County Club, she had “learned how to handle weapons and throw grenades out on the golf course. . . . The members were furious [after the war] because we ruined the greens. I don’t remember the training being particularly rigorous. There was a lot of writing stuff and sometimes we had to trail people, so that we would not lose track of them when we were in cars. . . . There were a lot of drinking parties which I think were deliberate, to see how we acted in social situations and how we behaved after drinking alcohol. We figured this out, because we were plied with liquor. You had to be pretty smart, on your toes and know what you were doing.”¹⁵⁶

Assessing Recruits to Avoid Disasters in the Field

As the Allies expanded their offensives in 1943, a growing demand for OSS personnel overseas led to a massive recruiting effort to sustain the agency’s rapid expansion. Overall, the expansion was successful, but the accelerated recruitment program produced problems. A significant number of the recruits proved unfit to handle the training or slowed down the training due to their limitations. More importantly, some who made it through training, proved psychologically or emotionally unsuited for

¹⁵⁴ Frank Mills, Oral History Interview, 19 November 1996, p. 2, CIA Records (RG 263), OSS Oral History Transcripts, Box 3, National Archives II; on his background and deployment, see Francis B. Mills with John W. Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China* (Williamstown, NJ: Phillips Publications, 2002).

¹⁵⁵ Raymond Brittenham, Oral History Interview, 27 February 1997, pp. 13-14, 16, CIA Records (RG 263), Oral History Transcripts, Box 1, National Archives II.

¹⁵⁶ Elizabeth McIntosh quoted in Miller, *Behind the Lines*, 59-60; see also Elizabeth McIntosh telephone interview with the author, 12 March 2005.

dangerous field operations overseas.¹⁵⁷ By the middle of 1943, OSS headquarters began to receive worrisome complaints of incompetence in the field. There were even reports of a few dramatic mental breakdowns.¹⁵⁸

To deal with this problem, Colonel Robinson, the new chief of the Schools and Training Branch, requested a plan in November 1943 for assessing prospective OSS personnel as to their physical, mental and emotional capabilities for their intended assignments. This would be done in separate assessment areas, so that the unsuited could be weeded out before they became a part of OSS and learned about its secret operations. Seeking assessment methods that would reveal the guts, savoir-faire, and intelligence desired for OSS agents, psychologists on the OSS planning staff led by Dr. James A. Hamilton and Dr. Robert C. Tryon, both from the University of California, rejected the military's written tests as inadequate and concluded that a pragmatic and holistic approach was required. They drew upon the system employed by the British Officer Selection Boards, which used observation and testing of officer candidates during an intensive, three-day, military house party at a country-estate.¹⁵⁹ In January 1944, Hamilton and his associates opened the first OSS assessment school, designated Station S (for Secret), in a manor house on a 100-acre private country estate leased from the Willard Hotel family in Fairfax, Virginia, thirty minutes west of the nation's capital.¹⁶⁰

Groups of 15 to 20 recruits would spend three and a half days there being observed by a team of psychologists and others as they underwent a series of tests and situational problems designed to evaluate mentality, personality, emotional stability, and aptitude. It proved so successful that Donovan soon ordered assessments for all OSS personnel going overseas, and an additional location, Station W, a house at 19th and I Streets in Washington was acquired to provide a condensed, one-day evaluation for the majority of the OSS personnel going abroad who would not be facing hazardous duty.

¹⁵⁷ "History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS," p. 35, attached to W[illiam] J. Morgan to Col. E.B. Whisner, 7 January 1949, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder, 13, National Archives II.

¹⁵⁸ A 1943 memorandum, for example, cited reports from China that "we have had at least eight men, who for various quirks in their make-up, have to be pulled from the field...should never have been sent to the field....Others simply won't fit anywhere. One was definitely a psychiatric case." OSS Assessment Staff, *Assessment of Men: Selection of Personnel for the Office of Strategic Services* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1948), 4, 12-13.

¹⁵⁹ W[illiam] J. Morgan, *The O.S.S. and I* (New York: Norton, 1957), 20-23, asserts that in developing these Selection Assessment Boards at the beginning of the war, the British combined the best features of German psychology, especially the techniques of a *Wehrmacht* psychologist named Simoneit, with the scientific, psychometric approach of American psychology. The Americans then developed this assessment system even further. A Yale trained psychologist, Morgan was sent by OSS in the summer of 1943 to observe the British SOE apply it to its agents, which he did for a year before parachuting into France in an SO mission in August 1944. See also *OSS, War Report of the O.S.S.*, 238-39.

¹⁶⁰ "A Good Man is Hard to Find: The O.S.S. Learned How, with New Selection Methods that May Well Serve Industry," *Fortune*, 1946, 92-95, 218-19, 223. Station S was run first by Dr. Henry A. Murray of the Harvard Psychological Clinic, and subsequently by Dr. Donald W. MacKinnon, a Harvard trained psychologist from Bryn Mawr College. On the faculty at Station S in 1944 was a 31-year-old psychologist with a Ph.D. from Berkeley, John W. Gardner, later President of the Carnegie Corporation, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, and head of the consumer advocacy organization, Common Cause.

Working at these stations, and at Area F, where veterans returning from western Europe were evaluated, the assessment teams processed nearly 4,000 men and women in 1944 alone.¹⁶¹

A number of techniques were employed to analyze a candidate's ability to perform highly demanding assignments under stressful conditions. Candidates for the OSS arrived anonymously, were given cover names and identical Army fatigue uniforms, and told not to reveal their real identities to the other candidates. Each then underwent routine written tests providing a general index of their intellectual capabilities and aptitudes. Over the next three days, while they lived at the house, they were constantly being tested, observed, and evaluated by the staff. "They had these characters around all the time that were watching you all the time. This was the most tedious part about it," recalled Raymond Brittenham, a Harvard Law School graduate and fledgling Chicago lawyer. "Then, you'd be sitting in the dining room and the guy would come back and drop a whole plate of trays right behind you. Then, if you jumped, he would write that down. I mean, it was kind of kooky, you know."¹⁶²

The most famous or infamous problem was designed to test capacity for leadership and self-control under stress and how they would deal with frustration. The candidate was told to direct two assistants in setting up a complicated wooden frame construction, a kind of giant tinker-toy. It had to be done in ten minutes, and a bell would ring every minute to indicate the passage of time. Unknown to the candidate, however, the assistants were staff members whose job was to impede and frustrate him or her. The task was, in fact, made impossible. Reactions to this frustrating situation varied widely. Some candidates tried to discipline the assistants, others relinquished authority to them and followed their suggestions, a few completely lost control and beat the assistants or tried to construct it themselves. Others like John Waller, soon realized after initial frustration, that a "ringer" had been planted to sabotage them and just relaxed and chuckled about it.¹⁶³ In another test, a candidate was told to assume he or she had been caught riffling through secret files in a government office and would be interrogated in ten minutes. Then, facing a spotlight in a dark cellar room, the accused spy would be cross examined by an expert (at Station S that expert was the sole attorney on the staff, Sidney L. Harrow, a Philadelphia trial lawyer who had been recruited by the OSS after being drafted as a private).¹⁶⁴ There were also numerous tests of identification and instant and accurate memory recall of specific sequential or random images or spoken or written

¹⁶¹ "OSS Assessment Program," pp. 15-16, Appendix IX, Part Three, Section F, of the "History [of the OSS]," typescript in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1727, National Archives II.

¹⁶² Raymond Brittenham, Oral History Interview, 27 February 1997, pp. 14-15, CIA Records (RG 263), OSS Oral History Transcripts, Box 1, National Archives II.

¹⁶³ "History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS," pp. 39-41, attached to W[illiam] J. Morgan to Col. E.B. Whisner, 7 January 1949, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder, 13; and John Waller, Oral History Interview, 27 January 1997, p. 4, CIA Records (RG 263), OSS Oral History Transcripts, Box 4, both in National Archives II.

¹⁶⁴ "A Good Man is Hard to Find," *Fortune*, 1946, 94-95. As an OSS recruit, Sidney Harrow spent ten weeks at Area A in 1943 before being assigned to Station S. Mrs. May K. Harrow, Sidney Harrow's widow, telephone interviews with the author, October 17 and 27, 2005.

data. At the end of the process came a clinical interview that in addition to the results of the previous three days played a decisive role in the assessment of a candidate.¹⁶⁵

OSS's assessment program proved most effective in providing a psychological evaluation of the candidate; it was less effective in determining the individual's suitability for a particular job. There were several reasons for the latter difficulty: one was because until the end of the war, few members of the assessment staff knew field conditions firsthand; another was that too often men were sent overseas fitted for one assignment but then were shifted to another assignment for which they were not suited.¹⁶⁶

The data from the assessment program provides a rough profile of the kind of people the OSS obtained, at least in the last year and a half of the war. From January 1944 to July 1945, the OSS assessment schools evaluated 5,300 men and women, both recruits and candidates for overseas service. They scored above average on intelligence tests. Approximately half had visited foreign countries; one-eighth had visited two or more continents. Twenty percent had spent at least five years abroad, as many were foreign born or political refugees. One out of every four spoke a foreign language fluently. Many had college degrees, some held doctorates, at a time when only 40 percent of Americans had gone past elementary school.¹⁶⁷ The profile with its emphasis on college education and foreign travel, reinforced the perception that many in the organization came from middle or upper socioeconomic backgrounds.

The official history of the OSS concluded that the assessment program screened out the 15 to 20 percent of recruits who were obviously unfit for the stressful missions overseas. Of the first 300 candidates who passed the assessment, completed training, and then were sent to OSS assignments overseas, only 6% proved unsatisfactory and only one of those 18 individuals was found to be psycho-neurotic and yet had gotten through the assessment program.¹⁶⁸ During the war, 52 emotional breakdowns occurred among OSS personnel, but of those, only two had gotten through the screening process at assessment Station S.¹⁶⁹

The effort to assess an individual's total personality had never before been attempted in the United States. The psychologists and psychiatrists, who developed and

¹⁶⁵ "History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS," p. 39, 41-42, attached to W. J. Morgan to Col. E.B. Whisner, 7 January 1949, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder, 13, National Archives II. The report indicated that at these three day assessments, "a surprising number of psycho-neurotics was found."

¹⁶⁶ "History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS," p. 42, attached to W[illiam] J. Morgan to Col. E.B. Whisner, 7 January 1949, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder, 13, National Archives II.

¹⁶⁷ OSS Assessment Staff, *Assessment of Men: Selection of Personnel for the Office of Strategic Services* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1948), 58-202.

¹⁶⁸ *War Report of the OSS*, 240-41; "The Test at Station S," *Time*, 21 Jan. 1946; "History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS," p. 42, attached to W[illiam] J. Morgan to Col. E.B. Whisner, 7 January 1949, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder, 13; and "OSS Assessment Program," pp. 18-68, Appendix IX, Part Three, Section F, of the History [of the OSS], typescript in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1727, National Archives II.

¹⁶⁹ Edward Hymoff, *The OSS in World War II* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972), 83. Hymoff, a Corps of Engineers' private from Boston, served briefly with the OSS in Italy and Yugoslavia, *ibid.*, 10-13, and later became a newspaper reporter and author of several books on military history.

ran the assessment program for the OSS -- appraising the personality of individuals and predict that person's performances on unpredictable jobs, particularly those involving considerable stress-- employed the methodology after the war for other government agencies, including the Veterans Administration. Aspects were also applied by businesses.¹⁷⁰ *Assessment of Men*, a book resulting from the OSS program, became a classic, employed in the private and public sectors. It has been reprinted many times, most recently as *Selection of Personnel for Clandestine Operations: Assessment of Men*. The armed forces continue to use some of its principles and even its techniques—the construction situation, the stress situation and the like—in making assessments of candidates for junior officers, the special forces, or other positions requiring clear judgment under pressure.¹⁷¹

Continuing Differences about Standardized Training

Colonel Henson Robinson instituted other changes as well as he sought to improve Schools and Training Branch's performance. In addition to the assessment program, he sought increased coordination between the training program and the geographic desk officers of the operational branches. Most controversially, at least with the operational branches, Robinson continued the effort toward standardization and centralization. Schools and Training Branch developed a common, basic OSS agent course. Labeled the "E-type" course, because it began at Area E north of Baltimore, it was designed to give every agent some familiarity with the skills and methods of the other operational branches, a combination of spy saboteur, and psychological warfare training. It was firmly established by the fall of 1944, and by the following spring, two thousand agents of various branches had taken the basic E-type course.¹⁷²

Nevertheless, there remained continual resistance from the operational branches to S&T's centralized training. SI, SO, and X-2 argued bitterly in 1944 and 1945 that Schools and Training Branch remained frozen into a 1942 standardized, centralized training model that had become badly outdated. For example, SI and SO had established field offices and additional training schools overseas, which recruited indigenous nationals in the occupied countries. Consequently, they already knew specific conditions and could recruit and train new agents there. With SI, since only a few of its agents who

¹⁷⁰ "A Good Man is Hard to Find," *Fortune*, 1946, 220-23.

¹⁷¹ OSS Assessment Staff, *Assessment of Men: Selection of Personnel for the Office of Strategic Services* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1948); reprinted in paperback as Donald W. Fiske, Eugenia Hanfmann, Donald W. MacKinnon, James G. Miller, Henry A. Murray [OSS assessment professionals], *Selection of Personnel for Clandestine Operations: Assessment of Men* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Aegean Park Press, 1996). For its continued impact, see Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., *U.S. Army Special Warfare, Its Origins: Psychological and Unconventional Warfare, 1941-1952* (Washington, D.C./Fort McNair: National Defense University Press, 1982), and Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger: Marines of the OSS*, 107.

¹⁷² *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 84; Col. H.L. Robinson, chief, Schools and Training Branch Order No. 1, issued 21 July 1944, effective 17 July 1944, subject: OSS Basic Course, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 133, Box 163, Folder 1401, National Archives II.

went through the S&T programs, had gone into enemy territory by spring 1944 (the majority of its spies in occupied lands already resided there), there was less need for training in the old “Cloak and Dagger approach” in the OSS schools in the United States.¹⁷³

Most importantly, the operational branches claimed Schools and Training’s program had become woefully inadequate because it did not incorporate important changes in skills, and methods recommended by agents returning with experience from the field. As a result, the branches did much of their own training both in the United States and abroad. Special Operations Branch, for example, considered S&T’s basic E-type course such a waste of time that it sent very few of recruits to take it at Area E. Instead, Special Operations taught its own basic course at the SO school in Area A-4 in Prince William Forest Park. So frustrated were SO, SI, and X-2 with the resistance of Schools and Training to respond to their complaints that in June 1944, training representatives of the three operational branches held a highly unusual joint meeting on their own. They learned that each was dissatisfied with S&T’s program at Area E, “its curriculum, its method of teaching, and its misplaced emphasis on unwanted subjects.” Most disturbingly, the three discovered that “each [operational] Branch had been blocked in its efforts to win changes by being told that the other Branches would tolerate no revision.”¹⁷⁴ Consequently, in an angry memo, SI urged “strong action” to remove “the stranglehold that Schools & Training has been able to exercise to prevent the various Branches from making the schools serviceable instruments.”¹⁷⁵

With Schools and Training Branch under such intense criticism and still plagued with problems, John McConaughy, the deputy director and head of the Schools and

¹⁷³ Minutes, 3rd Meeting of [SI Advisory] Training Committee, 11 May 1944, p. 1; Minutes, 6th Meeting of the Training Committee, 29 May 1944, p. 2; see also Maj. Louis D. Cohen, Chief, SI Training, to Mr. Whitney H. Shephardson, S.I., 24 July 1944, subject: Training Program Washington; all in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 229, Folder 3239, National Archives II. In its defense, Schools and Training Branch complained that the operating branches retained their own ideas and programs for training their agents, resisted common training, and often failed to inform Schools and Training of their precise needs or how its training programs related to changing conditions and performance in the field overseas. *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 81-86.

¹⁷⁴ Minutes of the [Eighth Meeting] of the [SI Advisory] Training Committee, 14 June 1944, p. 2, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Misc. Washington Files, Box 229, Folder 3239, “Advisory Training Committee,” National Archives II.

¹⁷⁵ Draft of Memorandum from SI, [June 1944], OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 229, Folder 3239, National Archives II. Only three pages from the middle of this unsigned and undated draft memorandum remain in this folder; they are located between documents dated 24 May 1944 and 20 July 1944. The memo itself refers to the 14 June committee meeting. It is not clear that this memorandum was ever sent; nevertheless, it is certainly indicative of the existence of bitter condemnation of Schools and Training Branch at least in SI. Given the report from the conference on SI, SO, and X-2 representatives referred to in the Minutes of the Eighth Meeting of the SI Training Advisory Committee, 14 June [1944], it reflected similar sentiments in SO and X-2 as well. For additional evidence of the friction between the branches and Schools and Training, but also the ability of the branches to achieve at least a compromise from S&T, see Minutes of the 11th Meeting of the [SI Advisory] Training Committee, 6 July 1944, “a joint meeting of representatives of S.I., S.O., M.O., X-2 and personnel of S & T to discuss the [operating branches’] proposed changes in training,” in *ibid.*

Training Board, wrote an apology and explanation in July 1944 to Colonel Ned Buxton, Assistant Director of the OSS:

Many of our difficulties stem from the haste with which OSS was organized, the fact that the concept of training followed a program of operations (ideally, it should have preceded it). Schools and Training was the “tail” of the OSS “dog.” For a long time, it was not given strong leadership, it did not achieve Branch status until recently, etc. Not very long ago, the “chief indoor sport” of some persons in some Branches was to pick on Schools and Training—and our record probably justified their doing so.¹⁷⁶

Donovan wanted a unified OSS Basic Course to be attended by all new male OSS personnel, but changes had to be made to bring training into line with the field experience and demands of the operational branches. Consequently, Area E was closed down, in July 1944, and its instructors transferred to other training areas. S&T Branch agreed to an OSS Basic Course that adopted, with some modifications, the basic SI training course.¹⁷⁷ The new two-week OSS Basic Course was given at Area A-3 in Prince William Forest Park beginning 24 July 1944. It was accepted immediately by SI, X-2, and MO, but SO agreed to send its personnel only after the curriculum had been substantially modified meet the needs of Special Operations recruits.¹⁷⁸

Increased Demands on Schools and Training Branch

During the big OSS buildup between the summer of 1943 and the fall of 1944, the training camps had operated at a breakneck pace as field activities of Donovan’s organization expanded along with the U.S. military effort, first in Europe and then in Asia. Increased demands were imposed on Schools and Training Branch. S&T’s staff at its headquarters numbered some 50 men and women and its instructional and other staff at the more than a dozen schools and training camps in the United States amounted to nearly 500 men.¹⁷⁹ Schools and Training Branch did not have authority over the training

¹⁷⁶ James L. McConaughy to Col. [G. Edward] Buxton, 20 July 1944, subject: Report of Mr. O’Gara, 15 July [a 10-page critical analysis of Schools and Training’s program, by J.E. O’Gara of OSS Secret Intelligence Branch]. Both are in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 229, Folder 3239, National Archives II. John E. O’Gara was deputy director of OSS in charge of personnel. In civilian life, O’Gara had been general manager of Macy’s Department Stores.

¹⁷⁷ R. Boulton, vice chairman, S.I. Training Advisory Committee, to chief, S.I., 17 July 1944, subject: OSS Basic Two Weeks Course, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 229, Folder 3239, National Archives II.

¹⁷⁸ R. Boulton, S.I., for the Training Representatives of SI, X-2, SO and MO Branches, to Col. H. L. Robinson [Schools and Training], 7 July 1944, subject: Meeting with Schools and Training Personnel, 6 July 1944; Training Board Meeting, 7 July 1944, “Notes on Discussion Regarding Area `E’ S.I., X-2, Basic Course Changes,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 229, Folder 3239, National Archives II.

¹⁷⁹ *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 157-58. The Washington headquarters of Schools and Training Branch had initially occupied part of Q Building in late 1943, but in early 1944, it moved to the

of every unit of the OSS, but it was increasingly used even by units outside its jurisdiction, like Research and Analysis and OSS Services Branch, for example, particularly for their personnel who were being sent overseas.¹⁸⁰ In August 1944, at the insistence of OSS headquarters, S&T was given authority over the numerous overseas schools that the operational branches had established mainly to train indigenous agents. These included SO and SI schools and an SO parachute school in Algeria, SO and SI schools in England, Italy, France, India, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and China as well as the SO parachute school transferred from Algeria to China in late 1944.¹⁸¹ Within the United States, the number of OSS training facilities more than doubled to sixteen in the last year of the war, as the original training areas and assessment stations in Maryland and Virginia, were augmented by the establishment of eight new training and assessment facilities on the West Coast including Santa Catalina Island, Newport Beach, Camp Pendleton and other sites to handle the increased OSS presence as the focus of the American war effort shifted to the Far East.¹⁸²

On the West Coast, Phillip Allen, Training Executive for S&T Branch, who was made chief of training there in late 1944, established a training program that S&T called “probably the most efficient that was given by Schools and Training, since it combined the best features of the training that had been given in the East and eliminated some of the weaknesses that experience had brought to light.”¹⁸³ In addition, by the time the OSS training camp on Santa Catalina Island near Los Angeles was established, a significant number of veterans with experience in the field were available as instructors who could provide realism and information on current conditions to the courses. Allen’s program

North Building and finally to the first floor and basement of the Toner Building, a former public school in the District of Columbia, which it shared with the OSS Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment.

¹⁸⁰ A number of OSS units were excluded from S&T’s jurisdiction over training at least until late 1944. These included highly specialized technical units like the Communications Branch, the Maritime Unit, Counter-Espionage Branch (X-2), and the OSS Services Branch (reproduction, budget and procedures, procurement and supply), although some of them drew on S&T for supplies and school administration. By 1944 a number of them, such as Research and Analysis Branch, also sent their personnel for the OSS Basic Course, particularly when they were sending personnel overseas. *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 68-69.

¹⁸¹ OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 242-43; “History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS,” pp. 44-50, attached to W[illiam] J. Morgan to Col. E.B. Whisner, 7 January 1949, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder, 13, National Archives II.

¹⁸² On the West Coast, Area WP was set up at the Marine Base at Camp Pendleton near San Onofre north of San Diego. By the end of 1944, training Area WA on Santa Catalina Island off Los Angeles could handle 200 trainees (the sites on the island included Tonyon Cove for Maritime training, the largest facility; Howlands Landing for SO and MU; and 4th of July Cove for SO and MU training. An assessment station (WS) was opened at the Capistrano Beach Club in San Clemente on the mainland; a West Coast Training Center (WN) responsible for maritime, Far Eastern Background, and assessment activities was set up in Newport Beach, connected through communications wire to the OSS West Coast headquarters in San Francisco. L.B. Shallcross, memorandum for John O’Gara, 1 February 1951, subject: Information on OSS Schools and Training Sites, OSS Record (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 7, Folder 76, National Archives II.

¹⁸³ “History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS,” pp. 31-32, attached to W[illiam] J. Morgan to Col. E.B. Whisner, 7 January 1949, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder, 13, National Archives II.

included a basic two-week course, a modification of the E-type course, which was followed by an advanced course in SI, SO, or MO, or a combination of them. Maritime Unit had its own training on the island. Last came field problems. Advanced SI students, for example, were sent with radio operators into southern California with the mission of obtaining information about activities in northern Mexico and relaying it to their base station. Advanced SO men were sent on survival problems, dispatched into desolate areas with only a minimum of food and forced to live on what they could hunt, to test how well they could survive while at the same time preparing an effective plan to sabotage a bridge, railroad, utility tower or other facility.¹⁸⁴

As OSS veterans returned from Europe in late 1944 and early 1945, many of them were lodged, at least temporarily, in the East Coast training camps, which became holding areas where the veterans were processed, assessed, or simply held pending decision on their future use. In January 1945, there were 1,700 such veterans in stateside camps run by Schools and Training Branch.¹⁸⁵ With the end of the war in Europe only a few months away, most of these men were simply being held in those areas. Only 330 men were actually being trained in the United States at that point. Nearly half of them were in East Coast schools like Training Area C, the Far Eastern Background School at Georgetown University and the Japanese Language School at the University of Pennsylvania. The other half, composed to a great extent of Korean or Chinese nationals, or Japanese Americans, were being trained in the West Coast camps.¹⁸⁶ In terms of sheer numbers, most of the OSS trainees in 1945 were the hundreds of Chinese commandos being trained at the OSS schools in China.

Like the OSS itself, the Schools and Training Branch, was without precedent in the American experience. It was conceived in haste, created from whole cloth, experimental, and subject to change without warning. Efforts at standardized and centralized training had been resisted or given lip service by key operational branches of

¹⁸⁴ In the one year of operation of the West Coast schools, nearly 1,000 men were given the Basic OSS Course, approximately 250 given Advanced SO training, 200 Advanced SI, and 100 Advanced MO. "History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS," pp. 31-32, 52, attached to W[illiam] J. Morgan to Col. E.B. Whisner, 7 January 1949, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder, 13, National Archives II.

¹⁸⁵ *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 81-82,84.

¹⁸⁶ At the peak activity, six training areas and two assessment stations in California were turning out 100 students a month, including special groups of Chinese, Indonesians, Koreans, and a class of Japanese Americans (code named "Irish"). *History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS*, 13-24; *War Report of the OSS*, 251-53. In the one year of operation, the West Coast schools trained and dispatched 985 persons to the Far East. Col. H.L. Robinson to Director Strategic Services Unit, 20 Feb. 1946, Recommendation for Citation [for Philip K. Allen], p. 3, OSS Records (RG 226), Box 105, Folder 814, National Archives II. The Training Report for 23 January 1945 showed 132 enrolled in schools in the Washington, D.C. area and 199 enrolled in the West Coast training center as of 17 January 1945, reported in Minutes of the OSS Training Board Meeting of 25 January 1945, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 133, Box 164, Folder 1414, National Archives II

OSS, such as Special Operations, Secret Intelligence, and Counter-Intelligence. Even though they finally accepted a common basic, two-week introductory OSS course the operational branches, with their different missions and diverse personnel, continued to retain substantial control over the bulk of their own training, preliminary and advanced, throughout the war.¹⁸⁷

Yet, the logic of a centralized supply, administration, and coordination for the schools and training camps of what was after all a single organization, despite its diverse branches, led to increased authority and jurisdiction for the OSS's Schools and Training Branch. By the end of 1944, S&T gained complete authority, in principle if not always in practice, over the training schools at home and abroad of the main operational branches, SO and SI. It had at least divided control over the training of operational personnel in highly specialized technical units such as the Communications Branch and the Maritime Unit. It provided at least preliminary training for the most secret unit, the Counter-Intelligence Branch. By the last year of the war, even those units which remained outside of S&T's jurisdiction because of their different experience, like the Research and Analysis Branch, often drew upon it for certain needs, such as the Basic OSS Training Course for their personnel being sent overseas. By the end of the war, S&T's training programs in the East and West Coast schools for the OSS efforts against Japan in the Far East demonstrated an effective maturity: A common basic course, a combination of advanced specialized courses, and practical field problems, with instructors who had personal experience in the field.

The path to effective coordinated training had been as difficult as crossing a minefield. The journey had been filled with unexpected dangers and obstacles. It had also been filled with frustration. At the end of the war, Schools and Training Branch compared the task it had been given with the frustration test with the giant tinker-toy apparatus and the uncooperative "helpers" given to prospective OSS personnel. Like those candidates, S&T was "assigned the construction problem which was nearly impossible to achieve, were heckled from the sidelines, annoyed by meaningless bells, observed by critical reporters, and discouragingly limited as to time."¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ OSS Schools and Training Branch existed from January 1944 through the end of the war. During that period its Basic Espionage Schools graduated more than 1,800 trained men and women as operatives in gathering, analyzing and disseminating information. Its Paramilitary Schools, concerned with training saboteurs and guerrilla leaders, trained 1,027. "The Farm," which specialized in advanced intelligence training, graduated more than 800 men and women between May 1942 and December 1944. These figures cover only those trained for European operations, and they do not include specialized groups over which the Schools and Training Branch had little or at most divided control, such as Communications, Operational Groups, and the Maritime Unit. During the operation of the West Coast training facilities in California, close to 1,000 personnel were given basic OSS training. Approximately 250 were given advanced SO training, some 200 had advanced SI training, and approximately 100 received Morale Operations training before being sent to the Far East. In addition to all of the above, countless other operatives, foreign or American, were given instruction in various OSS branch training programs in Europe, North Africa, or the Far East. OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 242-43.

¹⁸⁸ History of Schools and Training, OSS," n.d. [1945-1947?], pp. 53-54, a 55-page-typescript, copy accompanied by a 7 January 1949 memorandum by Col. E.B. Whisner stating "Received this date from W[illiam]. J. Morgan [former OSS psychologist and SO team member] the following report: History of Schools and Training, OSS, Part I thru Part VI," OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder 13, National Archives II.

“Many things would be done differently,” the Schools and Training Branch concluded after the war, if it had to be done again. But the reference was mainly to the timing rather than the final result. The lessons drawn were that centralized control of training would be established from the very beginning. There would be from the beginning one head of training and that person would be, in effect, a staff officer of the Director of the entire organization. Similarly, the assessment program would be set up at the beginning and would apply to everyone recruited for the organization from top to bottom. Overseas training would come under the jurisdiction of the Washington training headquarters, and that training headquarters would be organized as S&T ‘s was after 1943 with a director and deputy directors for administration and for training, and in each school a commander responsible for the smooth running of the service functions necessary in the school, such as supplies, food, and transportation, and a chief instructor, who was responsible for all of the training at the school.¹⁸⁹

“If we ever have to do it again,” the final report of Schools and Training Branch concluded, “it is hoped that the experiences of OSS training will be exhumed from the Archives along with the old training schedules, lecture notes, training films, and the rest, even though another war will be fought much differently. Much remains that could be modified and used as an example for training in an agency similar to the OSS.”¹⁹⁰ Indeed, that is exactly what happened, as the successors to the OSS—the CIA and the Special Forces—drew in subsequent years upon the training lessons of the OSS in World War II.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 54, 7-8; for other examples, see OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 243.

¹⁹⁰ History of Schools and Training, OSS,” n.d. [1945-1947?], pp. 54-55, typescript accompanied by a 7 January 1949 memorandum by Col. E.B. Whisner stating “Received this date from W[illiam]. J. Morgan [former OSS psychologist and SO team member] the following report: History of Schools and Training, OSS, Part I thru Part VI,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder 13, National Archives II.

