

## Chapter 5

### Transforming Prince William Forest Park into Military Camps

The hilly, forested lands in the large northern part of Prince William Forest Park near Quantico, Virginia, became the site of training camps for the OSS Special Operations and the Communications Branches in 1942. In a 5,000 acre section of the park, Donovan's organization set up Training Area A for advanced paramilitary work in sabotage and guerrilla activity and other aspects of unconventional warfare behind enemy lines. Additional acreage in the northern part of the park was subsequently designated Training Area C and was assigned as the radio operators school. Within Areas A and C, the OSS converted the five National Park Service summer cabin camps and one of the Civilian Conservation Corps work camps into sub-camps capable of training several hundred men. The U.S. Marine Corps base at Quantico was located adjacent to the park, and the Marines used the acreage in the southern part of the park, where there were no summer cabin camps, for their own type of field training. The wartime military facilities in the 14,000 acre park played an important part in OSS and Marine Corps training. They also led to important changes at the park

#### **Area A (Advanced Special Operations School)**

Three officers from Donovan's headquarters were the first to arrive at the park, which was then known as Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area. On the last day of March 1942, they drove down U.S. Route 1 about 35 miles south of Washington to meet Park Manager Ira Lykes and to inspect the facilities. Lieutenant Colonel Garland H. Williams, executive officer of the Special Operations Branch, the man in charge of SO training, headed the group. Accompanying him were Captain William J. Hixson, an engineer, who would become the first commanding officer at Training Area A, and Lieutenant Rex Applegate, a military police officer soon to become a noted instructor in combat pistol shooting, first at Area B in Catoctin and later at other OSS stateside training camps. Accompanied by Lykes, the three officers inspected Cabin Camps 2 (Mawavi) and 5 (Happy Land) in the western section of the park. Williams told Lykes that the organization would begin occupation the next day, April 1, 1942. As

commanding officer of Detachment A, Hixson would establish his headquarters in Cabin Camp 5, which was renamed Area A-5.<sup>1</sup>

Williams emphasized that as a military facility, the park would be closed to the public. The War Department planned to use the large part of the park that lay north of Joplin Road (today County Route 619). That road, which ran from the towns of Quantico and Triangle northwest toward Manassas, could remain open, but between it and Dumfries Road (today Route 234) the secret training camp would be guarded from intruders by sentries and military police patrolling the perimeter.<sup>2</sup> Lykes later recalled that everything the OSS did was covered with the “greatest secrecy.” Even Lykes had to pass through military checkpoints to enter and leave the park.<sup>3</sup> Guard houses were built at the two main gates, the one for Area A on Joplin Road and the one for Area C on Dumfries Road. In addition, as sub-camps were created in other cabin camps, they often had guard houses at their entrance.<sup>4</sup> The area was patrolled by mounted soldiers and armed guards with dogs, and barbed wire fences may have been erected in some sectors of the park, perhaps toward Batestown.<sup>5</sup> In converting the facilities to military use, the colonel told the park manager that the War Department would provide the needed workers—carpenters, plumbers, electricians—to recondition the camp, and that in accordance with the use permit, Lykes would be consulted about the work.

Within two weeks after that visit, the Army Engineers had come up with a construction plan for altering Chopawamsic to the needs of Donovan’s organization. The Civilian Conservation Corps and its youthful workers would do much of the construction as a national defense project. The National Park Service concurred and recommended that a CCC unit in the park which had been scheduled for termination, be maintained and assigned the job. Its personnel had been working on projects in the park for some time

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<sup>1</sup> Ira B. Lykes manager Chopawamsic RDA, to Conrad L. Wirth, Assistant Director of NPS, confidential memorandum, 31 March 1942, in National Park Service Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General, 201 National Defense, Chopawamsic, Project CHO-IV-1&1A, Box 73, Folder 201, National Archives II, College Park, Md.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ira B. Lykes, interview with Susan Cary Strickland, historian for NPS, 4 September 1985, quoted in Susan Cary Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park: An Administrative History* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1986), 27.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to the guard houses at the two main gates, there were 8 by 8-foot guard houses erected at A-2, the initial headquarters for the OSS camp, and at A-4, a former CCC work camp, which ultimately served as the headquarters for the entire Area A from fall 1942 until the closure of Area A in January 1945. Lt. Col. Ainsworth Blogg, executive officer, schools and training branch, Strategic Services Unit [formerly OSS], to General Counsel Office, SSU, 16 October 1945, subject: Liquidation of Areas “A” and “C,” in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 8, Folder 199, National Archives II. In addition to the main gate at Area C-1, for example, there was also a guard house at the entrance to Area C-4.

<sup>5</sup> Lee Lansing, historian for the town of Dumfries, Va., interview with Susan Cary Strickland, 15 July 1985, in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 27. Robert A. Noile, 68, who grew up on Joplin Road near the park headquarters, said his father told him that the perimeter of the park had been patrolled by men on horseback. Noile who, as a youth played in the park, at least the part north across Joplin Road, said he never saw any fences. Perhaps wire fences were erected on the Batestown side on the east. Robert A. Noile, Triangle, Va., telephone interview with the author, 27 April 2007.

and were quick familiar with the area and local resources.<sup>6</sup> The Army's new projects included construction of roads and trails, extension and correction of sanitary systems and water supply systems, grading and landscaping for unidentified military purposes, obliteration of some buildings and roads, and other incidental work necessary for the maximum utilization of the area by the military.<sup>7</sup> "It is estimated," Lykes' supervisor wrote in late April 1942, "that it will take a full 200-man company [of the CCC] approximately 72,000 man-days to complete the work outlined," in other words, nearly a year.<sup>8</sup> The CCC, however, was terminated by Congress in 1942, and subsequently, most of the construction work done for OSS in Areas A and C of Prince William Forest Park was performed by the larger workforce of a private firm, Kent and Company of Richmond, Virginia.<sup>9</sup>

Simultaneously, the War Department moved quickly to acquire land within the park by the OSS training area that was still in private hands. A representative of the Corps of Engineers had arrived at Chopawamsic at the end of March with copies of the Army's property acquisition plan. Ira Lykes spent the morning with him going over the acquisition status for the private properties. The park manager called in John T. Gum, the NPS representative and acting manager for all the CCC facilities in the Chopawamsic RDA, both those still existent and the CCC work camps that had already been abandoned.<sup>10</sup> Gum lived in the nearby town of Dumfries with his wife and three children.<sup>11</sup> Having worked as liaison with CCC and the Resettlement Administration for several years before Lykes arrived, Gum had an intimate knowledge of the land owners and land prices in the Chopawamsic RDA, and he shared that personal information with the Army's representative. Because the OSS project remained secret, Lykes did not at that time inform Gum about the specific nature of the planned military use of the park. But John Gum, in his dual capacity of representative of CCC and NPS, would soon learn

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<sup>6</sup> The CCC operated in the park until February 1943. Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 17.

<sup>7</sup> NPS had for some time sought to have the supervisors of Prince William County officially abandon a number of the old dirt roads, overgrown with brush, within the park that were considered unsafe and often impassable. William R. Hall, project manager, Chopawamsic RDA, to Board of Supervisors, Prince William County, 25 November 1939, and clipping, "Roads May Be Closed," [Manassas?] *Star*, 12 November 1939, both in NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 47, Box 126, Folder 630, National Archives II.

<sup>8</sup> Conrad L. Wirth, Memorandum for the Departmental Representative on the Advisory Board, CCC, 24 April 1942, and referring to Major General James A. Ulio's letter of 11 April to the Director of CCC, requesting the allocation of a national defense project on the Chopawamsic RDA, in NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 47, Box 126, Folder 621, National Archives II. General Ulio, was the War Department representative on the Advisory Council of the Civilian Conservation Corps from 1940-1943.

<sup>9</sup> Stan Cohen, *The Tree Army: A Pictorial History of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942* (Missoula, Mont.: Pictorial Histories, 1980), 129; for Kent and Company's work since 1942, see Lt. Col. Ainsworth Blogg to Charles S. Cheston, via A. William Asmuth, Jr., Legal Division, 5 May 1944, subject: new sewer field at Area A-2, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II.

<sup>10</sup> On the role of John T. Gum [whose name was sometimes misspelled as John E. Gum or Gun], as manager of the CCC facilities at Chopawamsic RDA before the during the war, see Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 17, although she misspells Gum's name as Gun.

<sup>11</sup> Robert A. Noile, Triangle, Va., telephone interview with the author, 27 April 2007.

the details. In fact, Gum would supervise most if not all of the construction work performed by the CCC work crews for the OSS. Subsequently, John T. Gum was recruited into the OSS and given the rank of Army Technical Sergeant. He remained assigned to OSS Detachment A until it was closed down and was held in stand-by status from November 1944 through July 1945. At that point, Gum was transferred to OSS Area C in the eastern part of the park.<sup>12</sup> In the meeting of 30 March 1942, with Lykes and Gum, the representative of the Army Engineers told them that he planned to give full attention to acquiring the privately held tracts of land located within the area.<sup>13</sup> Lykes had emphasized to the importance of including Batestown in the Army's acquisition plans. "This so-called community is a hot-bed of bootleggers, thieves and vice," Lykes said he told the Army "and is likewise a potential health hazard to the adjoining Camps 1 & 4 and the Quantico Creek Watershed."<sup>14</sup>

Although the Roosevelt Administration had insisted that the people in the Chopawamsic RDA needed the help of the U.S. government to escape poverty, many of the local people did not consider themselves to be poor and did not want to be forced out of their homes. These people, whites and blacks, resided in small houses scattered throughout the wooded area or in a few tiny settlements. One of them, Batestown, a scattering of houses, a country store and a church, just east of the park boundary, was a largely black community. It had been founded after the Civil War by ex-slaves and free blacks who were members of the family of Betsy Bates, the matriarch. By the 1930s, Batestown had a population of around a hundred persons.<sup>15</sup>

Under the New Deal programs, the Department of the Interior had obtained title through purchase or condemnation of most of the lands within the new park. The developing agencies had been gradually moving the residents from these lands out of the park. But U.S. entry into the war and the designation of Chopawamsic RDA as a military facility dramatically altered the situation. With the secret training camp going into operation in April 1942, the War Department moved swiftly to remove remaining residents and acquire additional in-park tracts. Residents within the park area who had not moved were now quickly evicted. Some of them moved just outside the park; others moved farther away. Many of the longtime residents did not want to sell their land, and

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<sup>12</sup> For John T. Gum's supervision of construction, position as sergeant in Detachment A, and eventual transfer to Detachment C, see Capt. Stanley H. Lyson, S-4 [Supply], OSS Schools and Training Branch, to Lt. Warner, undated [February 1945], subject: Data on Detachment A, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658, National Archives II.

<sup>13</sup> Ira B. Lykes to Conrad L. Wirth, confidential memorandum, 30 March 1942 [a separate memo from the one of the same date cited above], in NPS Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General, 201 National Defense, Chopawamsic, Project CHO-II-1, Box 81, Folder 201, National Archives II.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Patricia Parker, *The Hinterland: An Overview of the Prehistory and History of Prince William Forest Park, Virginia* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1986); and Arvilla Payne-Jackson and Sue Ann Taylor, *Prince William Forest Park: The African-American Experience* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2000).

the government's negotiations were often acrimonious.<sup>16</sup> The village of Hickory Ridge with its houses, church and country store, was abandoned, and during the war, its empty buildings were destroyed in OSS field exercises including demolition practice. Today the site of Hickory Ridge village is marked only by the Virginia pine trees near the park's Parking Lot D and Pyrite Mine Road, and by the nearby small cemeteries containing the remains of generations of Hickory Ridge residents who died before the park was created.

The War Department did not purchase the Batesville land outside the park, but incursion into the eastern sector of the park was impeded by the security that the military established. Batestown continues to the present day, although in recent years, the park has acquired some of its properties. In contrast, in the southern part of the park, the village of Joplin, which consisted of a number of houses, a grocery store, school, and a church at Joplin Road around the intersection with Breckenridge Road, no longer exists.<sup>17</sup>

When the United States entered the war, Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area included 14,466 acres, both north and south of Joplin Road, but the government did not yet have complete ownership or possession of all that property.<sup>18</sup> There were leases, options to purchase, and deeds not yet conveyed. Many residents were still in their homes within what would become the military training camp. When Donovan's organization took over the park north of Joplin Road, however, the process of acquisition speeded up. During the war, indeed mostly by the end of 1942, the War Department purchased 44 additional tracts of land within the park north of Joplin Road. They comprised a total of 1,139 acres. The price paid was \$54,890, an average of about \$48 an acre. They were privately-owned tracts that were acquired for security and demolition purposes. Two munitions storage magazines and three demolition areas were later constructed on them. After the war, in accordance with the usage permit, these tracts, plus the CCC camp lands, were turned over to the Department of the Interior and made part of the Prince William Forest Park.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> For example, in 1942-43, the Richard W. Wheat family did not want to sell their 20 acres for construction of a new entrance road to the Chopawamsic RDA. For a reference to their resistance and to negotiations being "acrimonious," see Olinus Smith, engineer, memorandum for the Chief Counsel of NPS, 19 October 1942, NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 47, Box 126, Folder 630, National Archives II.

<sup>17</sup> Robert A. Noile, Triangle, Va., telephone interview with the author, 27 April 2007. Mr. Noile's mother taught at the Joplin school.

<sup>18</sup> Ira B. Lykes to F.F. Gillen, December 1941, NPS Records (RG 79), File Number 1460/3, National Record Center, Suitland, Md., cited in Susan Cary Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park: An Administrative History* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1986), 28, n.99. These records are believed to have been subsequently transferred to the National Archives, but cannot be found.

<sup>19</sup> Lt. Col. Robert H. Fabian, Army Service Forces, Corps of Engineers, for the Chief of Engineers, completed form for Declaration of Surplus Real Property, 23 January 1946, Recommendation for Disposal to the U.S. Department of the Interior, located in the Park Archives, Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.; see also Lt. Col. C.J. Blair, Jr., Chief, Real Estate Division, Middle Atlantic Division, US Army Corps of Engineers, to National Park Service, 3 December 1945, subject: Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area, NPS Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General, 201, National Defense "C," Box 73, Folder 201, National Archives II.

### Transformation at Area A

Even as workers began to convert the northern part of the park into a Special Operations school, the first advanced training class began in the early summer of 1942. Members of one of the initial classes at the Basic Special Operations course at Catoctin arrived for the Advanced Course at Area A in Chopawamsic RDA the second week in May. Private Edgar Prichard, a journalist from Tulsa, Oklahoma, was one of them. He had joined the Army and become bored as a company clerk before being recruited by Donovan's organization. "We arrived there in later afternoon, but it was still broad daylight," Prichard, now a Virginia lawyer, recalled fifty years later. "The camp we were taken to appeared to have been a scout camp. There was a cluster of cabins beside a lake and a Mess Hall. The cabins had no window sashes, just screened openings, but there were Army cots in place. We were told to pick out a place in one of the cabins. I walked into a cabin which hadn't been inhabited for a while and a big rat ran across the floor. I was carrying a .38 [caliber pistol] in a shoulder holster. I fired at the rat. I think I wounded him. Anyway, he took off squealing. And about that time, the Captain I had just met came storming down the hill and confiscated my .38."<sup>20</sup>

That facility was either Area A-2 or A-5, the first two training camps established by the OSS at Area A. The captain, who confiscated the pistol from Prichard, may have been the commanding officer, Captain Hixson, or the chief instructor, George H. White. Like Garland H. Williams, White was a veteran agent in the Federal Bureau of Narcotics [FBN], who had been recruited by Donovan's organization. In March, White had been sent Canada to attend the British SOE school at Camp X. After graduating from what he called the "Oshawa School of Mayhem and Murder," White helped teach the first Basic Special Operations class at Area B-2 in Catoctin in April. He was then assigned as chief instructor at A-5 at Chopawamsic RDA.<sup>21</sup> White was an inspiring instructor, but his countenance belied his lethal skills. Five feet, seven inches tall and weighing 179 pounds, the roly-poly agent reminded his boss of a Buddha statue. But behind that innocent, round face with the disarming smile, the short, plump White was, as one OSS official recalled,

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<sup>20</sup> Edgar Prichard, OSS veteran, SO Branch and in the postwar an Arlington, Virginia, lawyer, "Address to Historic Prince William, Inc.," 16 January 1991 [sic, actually 1992], typescript and accompanying newspaper clipping, Denyse Tannenbaum, "Veteran Recalls Learning to Spy in the Park," *Potomac News*, 18 January 1992, both in White Binder, OSS, Park Archives, Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.

<sup>21</sup> On George White, see John C. McWilliams, "Covert Connections: The FBN, the OSS, and the CIA," *The Historian*, 53/4 (Summer 1991): 665-69; Harry J. Anslinger with J. Dennis Gregory, *The Protectors: Narcotics Agents, Citizens and Officials against Organized Crime in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, 1964), 79-80; William R. Peers and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963), 30; Nicol Smith and Blake Clark, *Into Siam: Underground Kingdom* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1946), 49-50; David Stafford, *Camp X* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1987), 82. White kept a diary, which included his service in the OSS. It is part of the Douglas Perham Collection, one of the largest collections of electronic related historical materials in the United States. Unfortunately, the diary cannot be located at present because the Perham Collection is currently in two hundred, unsorted, unmarked boxes as a result of its transfer from Foothill College, Mountain View, California to History San Jose in San Jose, California in 2003. Telephone interview James Reed, archivist of the Perham Collection, San Jose, Calif., with the author, 4 October 2005.

“the most deadly and dedicated public servant, I have ever met.”<sup>22</sup> By late summer 1942, White had transferred to OSS counter-intelligence first as an instructor and subsequently in the field overseas, achieving considerably notoriety, in one case for personally identifying and assassinating the head of Japanese espionage system in Calcutta, India. In 1943, the former narcotics agent collaborated with Stanley Lovell, OSS director of Research and Development, in an unsuccessful search for a “truth drug” that would lead enemy agents or prisoners to disclose secret information. White was, according to one account, “probably the most dynamic, flamboyant and prolific agent in the FBN’s history.”<sup>23</sup>

From Prichard’s description of his cabin, the work on preparing the military camps had just begun. His hut had not yet been fitted with window sashes nor had it been winterized as it would be later, but the Army cots had been delivered. During the war, the OSS did not remove or destroy any of the buildings in the NPS summer cabin camps, but it did make significant changes to some of them, and it erected additional structures and training facilities related to its military mission. Most importantly on a permanent basis, key buildings in all the cabin camps in the park were made suitable for operation during winter. The NPS camps had been designed for occupancy only during the summer months. The OSS training camps would operate year round. The occupants found them cold and damp in the winter months. To make them habitable at that time, the OSS installed pot-bellied, cast-iron Franklin stoves, and hot water tanks first and subsequently put in insulating wall board inside and creosoting outside many of the buildings. The pit-latrines were augmented or replaced by Army latrine/washhouses often with hot water showers. The kitchens in all of the mess halls were upgraded with new wiring and the addition of an array of new electrical equipment for food preparation and storage, including standard Army gas ranges, electric potato peelers, deep fryers, and dishwashers, plus large refrigerators.<sup>24</sup>

In general, in addition to winterizing and upgrading the NPS summer camps at Prince William Forest Park, the OSS made a number of changes it deemed necessary for the operation of the areas as military training camps. As on any military base, that meant the allocation of more individual accommodations for officers than enlisted men on the staff (in contrast, the trainees were all treated alike regardless of their rank, which was unknown because the students dressed alike and had fictitious names). It also meant the creation of post exchanges, or PX, that is shops on a military post selling items of food, clothing and sundries, guard houses and sentry boxes, armories for weapons and

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<sup>22</sup> The quotation is from the director of OSS Research and Development, Stanley P. Lovell, *Of Spies and Stratagems* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963), 57-59.

<sup>23</sup> Lovell, *Of Spies and Stratagems*, 57; McWilliams, “Covert Connections: The FBN, the OSS, and the CIA,” 665-69.

<sup>24</sup> Capt. Stanley H. Lyson, S-4, Schools and Training, to Lt. Warner, undated [February 1945], subject: Data on Detachment A, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658, ; and Estimate #3, Estimated Prices Prepared by T. Sgt. John E. [sic] Gum, both attachments to Col. W.L. Rehm, Acting Assistant Director for Services, Strategic Services Unit (SSU), for the Director, to Commanding General, Army Service Forces, Mobilization Division, 19 October 1945, subject: Chopwamsic National Recreational Demonstration Area, Attachments #1, #2, and #3 in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 8, Folder 199, both in National Archives II.

ammunition, and magazines for storing explosives. It meant the creation of firing ranges, indoor or outdoor, for various types of weapons: pistols, rifles, submachine guns, which were a favorite among OSS Special Forces and Operational Groups, as well as areas to practice throwing hand grenades. There were demolition areas for instruction in the use of various types of explosives and fuses for blowing up samples of wood, steel, or iron, to simulate bridges, buildings, or railroad tracks. Extensive areas of woods and fields were designated for day and night exercises in map reading and deployment and for practice in field craft, that is the ability to operate stealthily and effectively regardless of weather or terrain, to “see without being seen,” either for attack or for evasion or escape from the enemy.

Detachment A was ultimately divided among four sub-areas in the park. Three of them, Areas A-2, A-3, and A-5, had been NPS cabin camps previously used for summer camping by various charitable or social service youth groups. They had a common pattern. Each camp consisted of several circles of huts, each cluster grouped around a recreation all. In the center of each camp, for use by the occupants of the various clusters, was a large central dining hall as well as some smaller structures: an administrative office, arts and crafts building, and an infirmary. Unlike these three former summer camp areas, OSS Area A-4 had been a year-round work camp for the Civilian Conservation Corps. With its already winterized facilities for a headquarters, barracks, motor pool, workshops, and communications building, the former CCC work camp fit the OSS needs for an administrative headquarters, supply facilities and motor pool for the entire military training camp at Area A.<sup>25</sup> Area A-4 served primarily as the headquarters of Detachment A, but because of the CCC barracks, it also served as a training area. When the military conversion of the entire Area A was complete, each of the sub-camps had its own small headquarters. At each sub-camp, an executive officer was responsible for the administrative staff and the running of the facility; a chief instructor had authority over the instructional staff, the curriculum and the training of the students. The entire Area A was the responsibility of the central headquarters of Detachment A located at A-4. That former CCC work camp housed the commanding officer and his staff as well as the motor pool and other facilities for furnishing supplies and services to all the sub-camps. It was also the location for the chief instructor for Area A and his assistants. The total staff at all four sub-camps plus Detachment A headquarters numbered approximately 280 officers and enlisted men. At capacity, Area A could hold some 600 trainees, giving a total of nearly 900 personnel that could be handled by OSS Training Area A.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> It is not absolutely certain which CCC work camp in Prince William Forest Park became Area A-4. By location, the evidence (CCC flagpole, parade ground and CCC era buildings currently numbered 3-32, 3-35, 3-36, 3-36A, and 3-39) suggests that it may have been the CCC work camp located at what is currently the Maintenance Area of the Orenda Historic District, about one to two miles from current Cabin Camp Number 3. That was CCC work camp S.P. 26. Judy Volonoski, museum technician at PWFP, email correspondence with the author, 20 March and 7 June 2006, the latter enclosing Map of Chopawamsic RDA showing CCC Camp Locations, c. 1935-39 [but not 1941-43], source: Civilian Conservation Corps Activities in NPS National Capital Region, HABS NO. DC-858, p. 146.

<sup>26</sup> Statistics computed from the figures listed on the maps for each sub-camp in Area A, undated [October 1943, date on similar map for Area B], in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, National Archives II.



### Area A-5: First Headquarters, and SO Waterborne Infiltration School

As the first commander of Area A, Captain Walter J. Hixson had indicated to Ira Lykes on 30 March 1942 that he intended to begin by occupying Cabin Camp 5 in the western end of the park, which he did within the next few days.<sup>27</sup> Hixson set up the headquarters for OSS Detachment A there until the main headquarters was moved to the old CCC camp at what became A-4 in November 1942. Before the war, the NPS summer camp, known as “Happy Land,” had been used by needy children from Washington, D.C., brought to the park and supervised by the Salvation Army. Now it was converted to much different purposes. Beginning in mid-May 1942, the first class of trainees for Advanced Special Operations, arrived to learn more about sabotage, guerrilla leadership, armed and unarmed close combat technique, including silent killing, and other aspects of unconventional warfare.<sup>28</sup> These first groups of trainees were housed at A-5 and A-2. Later, between 1943 and 1944, Area A-5 served as a “finishing school,” basically a holding area for OSS personnel finished with their training and awaiting assignment overseas. The purpose of the finishing school was largely to keep the graduates in top physical and mental condition. Consequently, much of the activity was in physical exercise, weapons use, and field exercises.<sup>29</sup>

Smaller than many of the camps, Cabin Camp 5 included only two subunits, A and B, each a cluster of cabins and a few other buildings. Depending on their size, the cabins slept four or eight trainees. OSS used two buildings as classrooms, one capable of holding 70 men for lectures or training films, the other accommodating 40 students for Morse code practice, map exercises, or other interactive training. An outdoor demonstration area seated 50. Later more classroom space was added through temporary buildings. Existing structures were converted to create officers’ quarters, a cabin for staff enlisted men, an armory, and a combination recreation hall and post exchange. Beginning in the winter of 1943-1944, key buildings in A-5 were winterized.<sup>30</sup> Area A-5 had a

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<sup>27</sup> Ira B. Lykes manager Chopawamsic RDA, to Conrad L. Wirth, Assistant Director of NPS, confidential memorandum, 31 March 1942, in NPS Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General, 201 National Defense, Chopawamsic, Project CHO-IV-1&1A, Box 73, Folder 201, National Archives II.

<sup>28</sup> Edgar Prichard, OSS veteran, SO Branch and in the postwar an Arlington, Virginia, lawyer, “Address to Historic Prince William, Inc.,” 16 January 1991 [sic, actually 1992], typescript and accompanying newspaper clipping, Denyse Tannenbaum, “Veteran Recalls Learning to Spy in the Park,” *Potomac News*, 18 January 1992, both in White Binder, OSS, Park Archives, Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.

<sup>29</sup> Course A-5 (Specialist Course) SO Finishing Course, undated, unsigned document, located in White Binder, entitled, “OSS,” Park Archives, Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.; plus Lt. Col. Henson L. Robinson, “Schools and Training,” report, October 1943, p. 1, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1723, both in National Archives II.

<sup>30</sup> Capt. Stanley H. Lyson, S-4 [Supply], Schools and Training, to Lt. Warner, undated [February 1945], subject: Data on Detachment A, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658; and Lt. Col. Ainsworth Blogg, executive officer, Schools and Training Branch, Strategic Services Unit [formerly OSS], to General Counsel Office, SSU, 16 October 1945, subject: Liquidation of Areas “A” and “C,” in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 8, Folder 1999, National Archives II.

capacity to hold 8 officers and 10 enlisted men in the station complement, and a maximum of 112 trainees in double-decked bunks, a total capacity of 130 men.<sup>31</sup> Normal housing, however, was for about 60 rather than 112 trainees.<sup>32</sup>

A number of military facilities were constructed near Area A-5. A 275-yard firing range with 20 silhouette targets of the advanced, pop-up type was constructed for practice with rifles and submachine guns, the latter a favorite with the OSS. Farther away were demolition ranges for testing explosives. For outdoor and indoor pistol practice, students from A-5 had access to the pistol house and outdoor firing ranges erected at A-2 only half a mile away. To the east of A-5, an extensive area was set aside for practical exercises in map reading and in field craft.<sup>33</sup>

For maritime use, a small boat house and dock were constructed near Area A-5 on a lake on the South Fork of Quantico Creek. Arthur F. (“Art”) Reinhardt, whose group of radio operator trainees was kept briefly at Area A in 1944 until space became available for them at the Communications School at Area C, recalled that there was also a pylon type structure with rope ladders. “The idea was to practice jumping off—supposedly in full battle gear—and tread water in case, if you went by ship, it was torpedoed, you would be able to tread water and survive.”<sup>34</sup> For the Special Operations trainees, the lake was used for practice in clandestine seaborne landings or river crossings.<sup>35</sup> It was the initial site for instruction in OSS waterborne operations before responsibility was transferred from Special Operations to the new Maritime Unit (MU) and instruction was

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<sup>31</sup> “Area A-5,” map and capacity list, undated [October 1943, date given on similar maps for Area B] located in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, Folder 249, National Archives II.

<sup>32</sup> Capt. Don R. Callahan, commanding officer, Detachment A, to Col. H.L. Robinson, executive, Schools and Training Branch, OSS, 13 March 1944, subject: Housing and Training Facilities, Detachment A, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658, National Archives II.

<sup>33</sup> Capt. Don R. Callahan, commanding officer, Detachment A, to Col. H.L. Robinson, executive, Schools and Training Branch, OSS, 13 March 1944, subject: Housing and Training Facilities, Detachment A, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658, National Archives II.

<sup>34</sup> Arthur F. (“Art”) Reinhardt, OSS Communication Branch veteran, who was at Area A for a few days and then trained at Area C-4 for ten weeks from April to early July 1944 before being sent to China. Mr. Reinhardt, toured Cabin Camp 4 (the former OSS Training Area C-4), with the author and Prince William Forest Park Museum Technician Judy Volonoski on 13 December 2004. The author tape recorded and transcribed Mr. Reinhardt’s commentary and the current identification by Ms. Volonoski of the building numbers and usage today at Prince William Forest Park.

<sup>35</sup> The location of the Boat House is given variously as at A-2 and at A-5; however, A-5 seems the most probable. Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park: An Administrative History*, 36, states that the Army Corps of Engineers relocated the Boat House from Camp 5 to Camp 2. The Boat House location at A-2 and its dimensions are given in Capt. Stanley H. Lyson, S-4 [Supply], Schools and Training, to Lt. Warner, undated [February 1945], subject: Data on Detachment A, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658. But it is cited at A-5 in Estimate #1, Estimated Prices Prepared by Quartermaster Depot Office, Ft. Belvoir, Va., and again at A-5 in Estimate #3, Estimated Prices Prepared by T. Sgt. John E. [sic] Gum, both attachments to Col. W.L. Rehm, Acting Assistant Director for Services, Strategic Services Unit [formerly OSS], for the Director, to Commanding General, Army Service Forces, Mobilization Division, 19 October 1945, subject: Chopwamsic National Recreational Demonstration Area, Attachments #1, #2, and #3 in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 8, Folder 199, all in National Archives II.

moved to Area D on the Potomac River. So the lake near A-5 served a variety of purposes including amphibious and aquatic training in numerous exercises from evacuating from sinking ships to clandestine waterborne landings in kayaks or rubber rafts.<sup>36</sup> It may also have served for recreation for the OSS personnel if the photos taken of Technical Sergeant Louis J. (“Luz”) Gonzalez and his fiends horsing around at the lakeside dock in July 1942 are indicative.<sup>37</sup>

### **Area A-2: First SO Training School**

One of the first two camps opened by the OSS in Area A was sub-camp A-2, located only half a mile from A-5 where Hixson had set up his headquarters. Formerly NPS Cabin Camp 2, known as Mawavi, it had been used by the Girl Scouts before the OSS took it over and employed it first for an Advanced Special Operations course. Subsequently, A-2 was used for a variety of wartime purposes: a holding area for incoming personnel awaiting security clearance, a training area for Operational Groups in 1943-1944, and a holding area for already trained OG or SO personnel awaiting further assignment. Beginning in the spring of 1944, it offered basic military training for OSS personnel being sent overseas who had for some reason not already undergone such training.<sup>38</sup> The OSS retained all the NPS buildings in Cabin Camp 2. It was one of the larger camps and included four subunits: cabin camps A, B, C, and D, each clustered around a recreational hall. The OSS put four to eight enlisted men or trainees in each cabin and 12 men in each of three recreational halls. In the center of A-2 was a dining hall, infirmary, a central shower building and an office. In addition to upgrading these, OSS converted two other buildings into classrooms for lectures and code work. For military purposes, the OSS built a small guard house, an armory and an ammunition storage building. It also erected a “pistol house,” actually a “mystery house” or “house of horrors” like the one created at Area B-2 at Catoctin under the direction of William (“Dan”) Fairbairn.. Outside in a neighboring area of A-2, the Army Engineers constructed a pistol range, a submachine gun range, and a jogging-type obstacle course that extended 150 yards. A map-reading and field craft exercise area were nearby.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Capt. Don R. Callahan, commanding officer, Detachment A, to Col. H.L. Robinson, executive, Schools and Training Branch, OSS, 13 March 1944, subject: Housing and Training Facilities, Detachment A, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658, National Archives II. Callahan reported that at least in March 1944 the Boat House was at Area A-5.

<sup>37</sup> Photographs of Louis J. Gonzalez, Bill Dyck, Bill Messina, and Jerry Lapid at a lake in Chopawamsic in July 1942, provided by his son, Ron Gonzalez, to the author, 16 January 2008.

<sup>38</sup> Lt. Col. Henson L. Robinson, “Schools and Training,” report, October 1943, p. 1, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1723, National Archives II.

<sup>39</sup> Material on OSS building usage and construction at A-2 is primarily from two documents: Capt. Stanley H. Lyson, S-4, Schools and Training, to Lt. Warner, undated [February 1945], subject: Data on Detachment A, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658 ; and Lt. Col. Ainsworth Blogg, executive officer, Schools and Training Branch, Strategic Services Unit [formerly OSS], to General Counsel Office, SSU, 16 October 1945, subject: Liquidation of Areas “A” and “C,” in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146,

Beginning in late fall 1943, the cabins and other accommodations at A-2 were winterized because of the heavy usage by the Operational Groups. In the spring of the following year, the basic training course had filled the camp to such an overcapacity that a new sewer field had to be installed.<sup>40</sup> Area A-2 was able to hold 44 officers, a large number probably because for the first six months, it served as the headquarters for Detachment A. In addition to the staff officers, it had the ability to accommodate 22 enlisted men in the station complement, and in an emergency, 206 trainees or holdees, in which case many of them were bunked in the mess hall, a total capacity of 274 men.<sup>41</sup> Under normal conditions, however, A-2 held a much smaller staff and housed 78 students or 98 holdees.<sup>42</sup>

### Area A-3: Parachuting and Training

In the southeastern corner of the park, Cabin Camp 3 became OSS Area A-3. The NPS camp known first as Goodwill and later as Orenda had been used before the war by several different social service organizations. When Donovan's organization first took it over, A-3 became the OSS Parachute School. Lieutenant Colonel Garland H. Williams had planned that after basic and advanced Special Operations training, students would then learn infiltration by sea or by air. The lake and then Area D were where waterborne infiltration was taught. Most of the OSS Parachute training was provided at the U.S. Army's new Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia, but during a brief period in 1942 the OSS had a Parachute School in at Area A-2 in Prince William Forest Park. Captain Lucius O. Rucker, Jr., a dedicated career soldier and an avid paratrooper, from Jackson, Mississippi, was in charge. He brought a group of personnel qualified in parachute rigging and jumping from Fort Benning to the OSS camp in Virginia in June 1942 to establish the OSS Parachute School. The training equipment was primitive, but it did provide for landing training.<sup>43</sup> According to friends like SO instructor Captain Jerry

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Box 8, Folder 1999. In March 1945, Fairbairn remembered his "indoor mystery house" as having been at A-3, but the above cited reports indicate that it was at A-2. It is possible that Fairbairn misremembered; a less likely possibility is that the structure was moved between A-2 and A-3. Lt. Col. William E. Fairbairn, British Army, to Director of Office of Strategic Services, 23 March 1945, memorandum, subject: Resume of service of Lt. Col. William E. Fairbairn, p. 3, in OSS Records (RG 226), Director's Office Files, Microfilm 1642, Roll 46, Frames 19-20, all in National Archives II.

<sup>40</sup> Lt. Col. Ainsworth Blogg to Charles S. Cheston, via A. William Asmuth, Jr. of the Legal Division, 5 May 1944, subject: new sewer field at Area A-2, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II

<sup>41</sup> "Area A-2," map and capacity list, undated [October 1943, the date given on similar maps for Area B] located in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, Folder 249, National Archives II.

<sup>42</sup> Capt. Don R. Callahan, commanding officer, Detachment A, to Col. H.L. Robinson, executive, Schools and Training Branch, OSS, 13 March 1944, subject: Housing and Training Facilities, Detachment A, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658, National Archives II.

<sup>43</sup> Harry F. Belfry, "Office of Strategic Services (OSS)," in *U.S.A. Airborne: 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: A Commemorative History* (Atlanta, Ga.: Turner Pub. Co., 1997), 350.

Sage, “Ruck’s” slow, southern drawl contrasted with the speed with which he volunteered to jump out of airplanes. He had done well over three dozen jumps by November 1942. “We always said he could jump out of a plane faster than he could talk,” Sage recalled.<sup>44</sup> Rucker was often assisted in instruction by Sergeant John Swetish, who once set a record for the most jumps in twenty-four hours.<sup>45</sup>

Air travel was not common until after World War II, and in the early 1940s few people had even ridden in an airplane, let alone jump out of one. Parachuting, however, was the fastest and most efficient way to infiltrate behind enemy lines, and paratrooper training also gave agents a further sense of self-confidence, courage, and pride and a feeling of belonging to an important, elite group. At parachute school, whether at Area A or at Fort Benning, trainees spent the first two days at Parachute School doing ground exercises of body control—jumping from a platform and learning how to tumble, practicing in a suspended harness—and also how to control the open parachute upon landing. They also learned how to pack their parachute and containers and how to dispose of both afterward so they would not be discovered. Finally, trainees had to make a total of five jumps in order for certification and award of the winged parachute insignia.<sup>46</sup>

At the OSS Parachute School at A-3, candidates would board a plane at the nearby U.S. Marine Base at Quantico, fly low over Prince William Forest Park and parachute into clearings, simulating the manner in which agents and equipment would be airdropped into partisan areas behind enemy lines. They would walk back to the Marine base and jump again. Among SO instructors and trainees a tradition emerged by late 1942 of earning their winged paratrooper insignia by doing the ground preparation and all five required jumps in a single day.<sup>47</sup> In December 1942, OSS headquarters decided to transfer Rucker and the parachute school to North Africa, and, thereafter, if OSS trainees received parachute training in the United States, most of them did it at Fort Benning, Georgia. When the OSS went overseas, Rucker established and ran the OSS parachute training school in Algiers from December 1942 through August 1944, after which he was sent to China to help prepare the first Chinese paratroopers being trained and led by the OSS, including former Area B instructor Charles M. Parkin, Jr. Rucker left behind in Algeria some inadequate financial records, which the head of OSS finances subsequently

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<sup>44</sup> Jerry Sage, *Sage* (Wayne, Pa.: Miles Standish Press, 1985), 53, 55.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>46</sup> “History of the Schools and Training Branch, Office of Strategic Services,” typescript history prepared in 1945, but not declassified until the 1980s; for handiest reference, see the published version, William L. Cassidy, ed., *History of the Schools & Training Branch, Office of Strategic Services* (San Francisco: Kingfisher Press, 1983), 33.

<sup>47</sup> Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 9 May 2005; and interviews with Gleason and Charles M. Parkin, veteran instructors from Area B, interview during tour of Catoctin Mountain Park arranged by the author, 18 May 2005.

excused, noting “Lt. Col. Rucker with the other officers that worked with him are typical parachute men, quite casual about everything except jumping. This is to be expected.”<sup>48</sup>

Beginning in October 1943, A-3 became the site for advanced training for members of Special Operations and Morale Operations (psychological warfare). An “E-type” course developed at Area E, the basic SI school north of Baltimore, the course was designed to give an overall idea of all the various tasks by OSS personnel in the field so they could better coordinate with others and even do the others' work if required. At the end of the two-week course, three days were allotted when students could be sent out of Area A on practical problems related to their specialization, mock exercises of espionage, sabotage, or the spreading of disinformation. There are reports that at various times before the OSS formal assessment program began in 1944, A-3 had been used for weeding out the unfit or unsuitable and determining those who would be sent on for advanced training for missions behind enemy lines.<sup>49</sup>

OSS took over the NPS Cabin Camp 3 pretty much as it was. In three subunits, A, B, and C, it had clusters of cabins around recreation halls, several of which were turned into classrooms holding 40 men. Enlisted men and trainees slept six to a cabin and 12 in each barrack. One building was retained as a combination recreational hall and post exchange; the dining hall and infirmary were maintained but improved, as were the central showers. One small building was converted to a code room, a larger structure was retained as the headquarters for A-3. Of course, like the others, this cabin camp had to be winterized with insulation and hot water as well as enhanced utilities, water and sewage system. That did not occur, however, until well into the winter of 1943-1944. Meanwhile, pot-bellied, cast-iron heating stoves were installed to provide warmth. At A-3, a 25-man latrine/washroom was the only new building constructed by the Army.<sup>50</sup> Outdoors, the Army Engineers created firing ranges for rifle and submachine gun practice and a Demolition Area for using explosives in sabotage training.<sup>51</sup> Area A-3 had a capacity to

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<sup>48</sup> Col. W.L. Rehm, 13 June 1944, notation at the bottom of Lt. Col. Lucius O. Rucker, Jr., to Col. W.L. Rehm, 12 June 1944; as well as other documents in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 169A, Washington-SFB-Personnel, Box 23, Folder 1014, National Archives.

<sup>49</sup> Lt. Col. Henson L. Robinson, “Schools and Training,” report, October 1943, pp. 1-2, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1723, both in National Archives II.

<sup>50</sup> Capt. Stanley H. Lyson, S-4 [Supply], Schools and Training, to Lt. Warner, undated [February 1945], subject: Data on Detachment A, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658; and Lt. Col. Ainsworth Blogg, executive officer, Schools and Training Branch, Strategic Services Unit [formerly OSS], to General Counsel Office, SSU, 16 October 1945, subject: Liquidation of Areas “A” and “C,” in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 8, Folder 1999, both in National Archives II.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, both Lyson’s and Blogg’s letters. The Demolition Area near A-3 is also referred to in Estimate #3, Estimated Prices Prepared by T. Sgt. John E. [sic] Gum, attachment to Col. W.L. Rehm, Acting Assistant Director for Services, Strategic Services Unit (SSU), for the Director, to Commanding General, Army Service Forces, Mobilization Division, 19 October 1945, subject: Chopawamsic National Recreational Demonstration Area, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 8, Folder 199, National Archives II.

hold 6 officers and 20 enlisted men in the station complement, and 162 trainees, for a maximum capacity of 188 men.<sup>52</sup>

#### **Area A-4: Permanent Headquarters and Basic SO and OG Training**

Although sub-camp A-4 replaced A-5 as the headquarters for all of Detachment A in November 1942, it also sometimes served as a training camp for basic or advanced Special Operations and Operational Group training. One of the new trainees there in 1942 was Prince Serge Obolensky, a royal Russian émigré and New York socialite, who had been an officer in the Czarist Army and leader of White Russian guerrillas against the Reds after the Revolution. After Pearl Harbor, Obolensky enlisted in the American Army, was commissioned a major and was soon ordered to report to Donovan's headquarters in Washington. Donovan assigned him to Col. M. Preston Goodfellow, head of Special Operations for training of commando units to jump behind enemy lines. This was part of Goodfellow's plan for a Strategic Services Command, an idea put forward in the fall of 1942, which was rejected by the Joint Chiefs of Staff but which ultimately was adopted in a smaller scale in the Operational Groups. Obolensky trained first at Area B.<sup>53</sup> Then as he later recalled, "I was sent immediately to a commando school in Virginia [Area A]. None of us had names. We were all given nicknames, which were printed on badges. Nobody knew who we were. My name was Sky. This was a physical toughener as well. We got up early and went to bed late, training in special tactics, shooting at sounds at night, guerrilla tactics, memory tests of small and configurations of places in total darkness, and especially demolitions work."<sup>54</sup> After graduation, Obolensky reported to Goodfellow's office to help write a proposed training schedule for the groups of foreign nationals and first generation American citizens into military units in the proposed Strategic Services Command. A variation of these would become the OSS Operational Groups (OGs).<sup>55</sup> Subsequently, as will be shown in a later chapter, Obolensky would use his skills and training effectively behind enemy lines in Italy and France.

Subsequently, a course was developed called the A-4 course because it was given over such a long period at that facility. It was, in fact, SO basic training, designed for men who were going to perform the rougher kinds of missions overseas. Many SO trainees went first to Area B-2 or sometimes Area E for their basic training and then to A-

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<sup>52</sup> "Area A-3," map and capacity list, undated [October 1943, the date given on similar maps for Area B] located in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, Folder 249; another report indicated that the classes of 33 men each were staggered so that a new class arrived each week. Lt. Col. Henson L. Robinson, "Schools and Training," report, October 1943, p. 2, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1723, both in National Archives II.

<sup>53</sup> Jerry Sage, 30-31.

<sup>54</sup> Serge Obolensky, *One Man in His Time: The Memoirs of Serge Obolensky* (New York: McDowell, Obloensky, 1958), 342-343, and 352-391.

<sup>55</sup> "Major Obolensky's Training Schedule, Outline of the Strategic Services Command," OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 61, Box 11, Folder 121, National Archives II.

4, but many reversed that process and went first to A-4. The course lasted about three weeks and comprised such subjects as field craft, map reading, demolitions, weapons, Morse code, close combat and physical training. Students were taught how to make a few basic types of demolition charges adequate for the sabotage of industrial establishments, rail lines, and bridges. They were taught how to use small arms most effectively for rapid firing in daylight or at night. Practical problems assigned to the students at the end of the course included night map and compass problems, problems in reconnaissance, and problems in the placing of demolition charges on mock targets. A-4 courses were given not just at Area A, but also at various times at Areas B, D, F, and on the West Coast on Catalina Island.<sup>56</sup>

Because it had been a CCC work camp rather than an NPS summer cabin camp, A-4 in the southeastern part of the park had a rather tenuous relationship during the war with the National Park Service. It was located not far from the park headquarters, but the CCC camps did not become the property of the NPS until after the war. Consequently, OSS concluded that the National Park Service “had nothing to do with the buildings and equipment” there. Indeed, John T. Gum, who worked there as liaison between the Civilian Conservation Corps and NPS, served as the CCC liaison with OSS in the park until CCC was terminated in the winter of 1942-1943. Thereafter, Gum worked as liaison between the NPS liaison and the OSS. Later, Gum recalled that in the prewar period the National Park Service had no definite plans for using the CCC work camp site as a summer camp.<sup>57</sup>

Twenty-four buildings at the work camp of the Civilian Conservation Corps were taken over by the OSS. There, as at the NPS cabin camps, the use made of the structures by the two organizations was often similar. The CCC headquarters became the OSS Area A headquarters, five CCC barracks holding 80 young men each in double-deck bunks, remained barracks for the OSS enlisted men of the cadre or for trainees. The CCC supply warehouses, gas house, storage shed, and water tower continued to function in the same manner for their new tenant. Sometimes, however, buildings were put to new use: The CCC infirmary became the OSS Guard House, a CCC structure listed only as “Building,” became the OSS Post Exchange (PX) and Recreation Hall. Two-thirds of one CCC barrack became a gymnasium complete with parallel bars, punching bags, rowing machines, and place for instruction and practice in knife fighting and unarmed, close combat. The dining hall was retained as the mess hall, but the kitchen was completely remodeled and upgraded.

Nearly a dozen new buildings were constructed for OSS and remained in Area A-4 at least until the end of the war. They included an auto and truck washing building, carpenter shop, commissary, armory, code room, storage shed, a small guard house and a

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<sup>56</sup> “Types of Training,” p. 4, document attached to L.B. Shallcross, deputy, STB/TRD [CIA] to John O’Gara, 1 February 1951, subject: information on OSS schools and training sites, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 61, Box 7, Folder 76, National Archives II.

<sup>57</sup> Estimate #3, Estimated Prices Prepared by T. Sgt. John E. [sic] Gum, attachment to Col. W.L. Rehm, Acting Assistant Director for Services, Strategic Services Unit (SSU), for the Director, to Commanding General, Army Service Forces, Mobilization Division, 19 October 1945, subject: Chopawamsic National Recreational Demonstration Area, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 8, Folder 199, National Archives II.



sentry box. Most expensive was a ten-room, bachelor officers' quarters (BOQ), which cost \$13,000. A-4 also had two large classrooms, each of which could accommodate 50 students, where the trainees heard lectures and watched films about field craft, weaponry, and demolitions, plus a smaller classroom where code work was taught and practiced.<sup>58</sup> Area A-4 had a capacity for 15 officers and 128 enlisted men as part of the cadre and instructional staff, plus the ability to hold 76 trainees if necessary, a total capacity of 219 men.<sup>59</sup>

For use in the military training courses at A-4, the Army Engineers built three indoor firing ranges, one each for pistols, .22 caliber rifles, and submachine guns. Outdoors in a neighboring area, they installed another pistol and submachine gun range. About a mile west-northwest of A-4, an M-1 rifle range with ten standard target frames was created. Not far away, in the same general area, engineers constructed two standard cinder block magazines for storing ammunition or up to 50 tons of explosives between them.<sup>60</sup> For physical training, the engineers erected an obstacle course as long as a football field and which included various difficult, optional objects to be overcome. Farther from the camp, there were practice areas for field craft and stalking the enemy, and a demolition area for practicing with various types of explosives on the kinds of wood, iron and steel fixtures used in bridges, railroads, and buildings.<sup>61</sup>

The capacity of Area A overall, including all four sub-camps when they all had been winterized, equipped with extra temporary classrooms, and completely operational in early spring 1944 was 550 men—trainees or holdees. This was in addition to the 130 men assigned as the station complement for Detachment A.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Material on OSS building usage and construction at A-4 is derived primarily from Capt. Stanley H. Lyson, S-4, Schools and Training, to Lt. Warner, undated [February 1945], subject: Data on Detachment A, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658; and Lt. Col. Ainsworth Blogg, executive officer, Schools and Training Branch, Strategic Services Unit [formerly OSS], to General Counsel Office, SSU, 16 October 1945, subject: Liquidation of Areas "A" and "C," in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 8, Folder 1999, National Archives II.

<sup>59</sup> "Area A-4," map and capacity list, undated [October 1943, the date given on similar maps for Area B] located in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, Folder 249; plus Lt. Col. Henson L. Robinson, "Schools and Training," report, October 1943, p. 1, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1723, both in National Archives II.

<sup>60</sup> Capt. Stanley H. Lyson, S-4, Schools and Training, to Lt. Warner, undated [February 1945], subject: Data on Detachment A, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658, National Archives II.

<sup>61</sup> Capt. Don R. Callahan, commanding officer, Detachment A, to Col. H.L. Robinson, executive, Schools and Training Branch, OSS, 13 March 1944, subject: Housing and Training Facilities, Detachment A, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658, National Archives II.

<sup>62</sup> Capt. Don R. Callahan, CO at Detachment A, to Col. H.L. Robinson, Executive, Training, OSS, 13 March 1944, subject: Housing and Training Facilities Detachment A, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136 Schools and Training Branch, Box 153, Folder 1658, National Archives.

### Teaching Effective Use of Violence at Area A, including the “Mystery House”

Overall at Area A, a variety of firing ranges, demolition areas, pistol houses, and other facilities were installed by the military for instruction in the effective use of violence in pursuit of OSS objectives. A list of what was available in Area A and environs in the spring of 1944 began with ten target ranges for practicing with pistols, carbines, rifles, and submachine guns, including a 200-foot rifle range with ten, 6 by 6 frame sliding targets, a 400-yard mortar range, a range for the use of hand grenades, rifle-propelled grenades and M-1 rocket launchers. Also listed were two booby trap areas and tactical problem houses; four objective tactical areas, a proposed infiltration course, three map and reconnaissance areas, a marine dock at Quantico for use of amphibious tactics on the Potomac River, and fifteen thousand acres of all various types of terrain for tactical problems. Plus outside the area, the commanding officer of Area A reported, there were numerous civilian facilities available for exercises involving simulated capture or demolition—from the Manassas Power Dam and Control Tower to the bridge at Woodbridge, Virginia for the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad.<sup>63</sup>

Demolition areas, where explosives were used against wooden, iron, or steel objects, mock bridges, towers, buildings, or railroads, were extremely hazardous areas. There were three of them, ranging from one to four acres, and two magazines for storing explosives and other munitions had been erected on lands acquired by the War Department in 1942 for that purpose.<sup>64</sup> Because of the danger from the use of explosives, the Army convinced Prince William County officials in April 1944 to close old Route 644 which ran through the park near the demolition areas and to abandon several sections of secondary roads in and around Chopawamsic RDA until six months after the end of the war.<sup>65</sup> A number of the OSS field exercises involving weapons and live ammunition and explosives took place in a large corner area of the park formed by old Route 644 and the Joplin Road.<sup>66</sup>

Within Area A, there were several specialized houses built for OSS. They included two or three “Problem Houses” and a “Mystery House.” The Problem Houses

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<sup>63</sup> Capt. Don R. Callahan, commanding officer, Detachment A, to Col. H.L. Robinson, executive, Schools and Training Branch, OSS, 13 March 1944, subject: Housing and Training Facilities, Detachment A, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658; and Maj. Robert C. Wright, Schools and Training Branch OSS, to Commanding Officer, Detachment C, 29 January 1945, subject: memorandum from Military District of Washington, SPWTD 471.6, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658, both in National Archives II.

<sup>64</sup> Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 30, citing “6.5-64, 1946 source,” and “6.5-56, 56A, 1946 source.”

<sup>65</sup> Worth H. Storke, clerk, Minute from the Prince William County Board of Supervisors Meeting of 6 April 1944, copy attached to Lt. Col. Ainsworth Blogg to A. William Asmuth, Jr., Legal Division, 4 May 1944, subject: closing of roads and highways, Chopawamsic Area, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II.

<sup>66</sup> See maps of number of field exercises/problems located in White Binder entitled “OSS,” in the Park Archives, Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.

involved field exercises. Trainees might be required to recognize and dismantle booby traps or making a nighttime rendezvous, or message drop, at a “safe” house, or they might assault it as part of an enemy outpost. What Fairbairn called the “Mystery House” at Area A, like the similar structure at Area B at Catoctin Mountain Park, was created for indoor weapons training and testing reaction time.<sup>67</sup> It contained sounds of gunfire and visual props such as pop-up targets, resembling armed enemies soldiers to test the trainee’s nerves and skill in instinctive pistol firing as he proceeded, gun drawn, through the rooms and corridors of what many students called the “House of Horrors.”

At Area A, like Area B, there was a Mystery House or House of Horrors. It was constructed by the CCC work crews under the supervision of the OSS and the NPS Park Manager Ira Lykes. Years later, Lykes, after a career of preserving the forest and its wildlife while fostering healthy recreation in nature, recalled, still with some concern, the brutal elements involved. “I remember we built a little place we called Little Tokyo<sup>68</sup> in which we had one building, and [they] had to train the men to get through the door of that thing and walk down a labyrinth in a blue light, a very, very dim light while they were being fired at [and were firing back] in order to protect themselves. They taught them such delicate things as when they burst into a room of German staff officers which one to shoot first. The one that stood up was the one that got shot first and the one that had the wild look and stare on his face got shot last because he hadn’t collected himself yet and he didn’t know what to do. This was the fine shadings in murder. Of course, we had to do it because we had to fight fire with fire and it was a really justified program.”<sup>69</sup>

Normal ethics were put aside and the idea of a fair fight rejected in the OSS training program that emphasized the need for an agent behind enemy lines to use any effective means available to accomplish their mission and avoid capture. As an example of such training, two former OSS Special Operations officers, writing immediately after the war, informed the public with barely concealed relish about what a typical recruit would learn at an OSS training camp. “Here he would be taught to meet the enemy on the enemy’s terms. He would park all idea of clean sportsmanship along with his name, and learn to fight barehanded, gutter-style, with all the dirty tactics of gutter fighting: a knee

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<sup>67</sup> On the number and functions of the pistol houses (he reported three pistol houses, some other sources indicate two) and the one mystery house in Area A, see Lt. Col. Ainsworth Blogg, executive officer, schools and training branch, Strategic Services Unit [formerly OSS] to General Counsel Office, SSU, 16 October 1945, subject: Liquidation of Areas “A” and “C,” in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 8, Folder 199, National Archives II.

<sup>68</sup> Lykes may be confusing two different houses here, or he may be describing a cluster of houses. In a 1985 interview with historian Susan Carey Strickland, the retired park manager told her that a “Little Tokyo” was built in the woods and regularly assaulted in training practice, which sounds more like a Problem House. Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 27-28, n. 96. But in the 1973 interview quoted here with Herbert Evison, his former supervisor at NPS, Lykes although using the term “Little Tokyo,” spends the rest of his statement taking about what appears to have been one of Fairbairn’s Mystery Houses with dummies representing German soldiers and officers inside. Ira B. Lykes, oral history interview, 23 November 1973, by S. Herbert Evison, page. 42 of transcript made from Tape Number 261, at NPS’s Harpers Ferry Center Library, Harpers Ferry, W. Va.

<sup>69</sup> Ira B. Lykes, oral history interview, 23 November 1973, by S. Herbert Evison, his supervisor at NPS, page. 42 of transcript made from Tape Number 261, at NPS’s Harpers Ferry Center Library, Harpers Ferry, W. Va. I am indebted to David Nathanson there for responding to my request for a copy of the transcript.

in the groin, a savage slash with the side of the hand across an Adam's apple, a jab at the eyes with fingers stiffly hooked in a tiger's claw."<sup>70</sup>

### **Destruction in the Park**

During the OSS training exercises a number of buildings within the park were destroyed. Most were old structures—farmhouses, barns, outbuildings, sheds and shacks—which had been abandoned or whose owners had been evicted. They were destroyed in exercises involving booby-traps, explosives, or mortar shells. During a demolition exercise in March 1943, the OSS blew up an uninhabited, dilapidated old house in the western border of the park. But a few weeks later, they learned that the house and its two-acre site on County Route 619 were not owned by the government, but had remained the property of the Stark family, which complained about their destruction. As Captain Eliot N. Vestner, current chief instructor, reported to OSS headquarters, he and the then chief instructor, Captain Arden Dow, were operating on the basis of a map showing a training area that included the property and the unoccupied house. “We have been accustomed to maneuver all through this [park] land and have likewise demolished other houses in the immediate vicinity,” Vestner reported. It was only on investigation, presumably by conferring with Park Manager Ira Lykes, that Vestner learned three months later that the two-acre plot was only under option to buy and not yet been purchased by the War Department. The National Park Service had been anxious to acquire the property for the park, and the government had originally offered \$1,000 for the property, which they, but apparently not the owner, considered a fair price.<sup>71</sup> The entire Stark property, all ten acres, on Route 619 was eventually purchased for the park.

### **Building and Maintaining Roads**

The National Park Service had established five cabin camps in Chopawamsic RDA, but the camps were not connected by any system of internal roads. They had been used by separate civilian, non-profit organizations, and the Park Service did not have the funds for the expensive work of constructing an interconnected road network through the forest. This meant that one had to drive around the periphery, nine miles over state roads, for example, to get from Cabin Camps Numbers 1 and 4, in the northeast section to Cabin Camp Number 3 near park headquarters in the southeastern sector of the park. In 1942, Superintendent Ira Lykes hoped that the “Army occupation” of the park would provide a “splendid opportunity” to build “at least temporary connecting roads between the

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<sup>70</sup> Lt. Col. Corey Ford and Maj. Alastair MacBain, *Cloak and Dagger: The Secret Story of OSS* (New York: Random House, 1945), 24-25.

<sup>71</sup> Capt. Eliot N. Vestner to Director of Training, OSS, 28 June 1943, subject: demolition of unacquired property, with attached hand drawn map of “General Area Used for Training,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II.

organized camps, particularly camps one and four and the central road.”<sup>72</sup> But Lykes saw little chance that this would happen, because during the first few months after the military had occupied the park in April 1942, he had run into major difficulties trying to get “the Army to stop unnecessary auto traffic,” the volume of which Lykes believed was counter to sound conservation and indeed ultimately harmful to the preservation of the park.<sup>73</sup>

The effects of the heavy military vehicles on the roads within the OSS training area, plus the deterioration accelerated by the weather during the winter of 1943-44, led Corps of Engineers to agree that it was imperative that the roads in Training Area A be repaired. Furthermore, the engineers recommended that culverts be installed and other drainage be put into place before the fall of 1944 and even greater damage created in the following winter. The Army Engineers furnished the labor, but the material would have to be purchased. The commanding officers of both Areas A and C agreed that the first priority was for the roads leading to the OSS constructed magazine for storage of ammunition and explosives, as the dirt road had become almost impassible in the winter. Second priority went to repairing roads which connected existing camp areas. The third priority was for repairing roads classified as secondary roads within the training area and which were used mainly for training purposes and in connection with field exercises. The roads were in such poor condition that they were inflicting undue wear and tear upon military motor vehicles, which consequently were frequently in need of repair. OSS concluded that under the agreement between the War Department and the Department of the Interior, “we are required to maintain existing roads and, of course, maintain any roads we ourselves constructed.”<sup>74</sup> By 1945, Superintendent Lykes could report that the Army did maintain “certain roads in good condition.”<sup>75</sup>

### Closure of Area A

Recruiting and training of paramilitary personnel in the United States for the European Theater of Operations ended in the summer of 1944, and consequently Area A was closed down as a training area in November 1944. Most of the OSS training in 1945 for the war against Japan was done in West Coast camps. Area A was declared officially closed effective 11 January 1945 with the exception of normal maintenance and safeguarding of property, and was held in stand-by status until it was permanently closed in July 1945. When the OSS personnel vacated Area A, responsibility for the facility was

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<sup>72</sup> Ira B. Lykes to Irving Root, NPS, 20 October 1942, NPS Records (RG 79), File 1460/3, Federal Records Center, Suitland, Md., cited in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 28, n.100. These records have disappeared.

<sup>73</sup> Ira B. Lykes, Monthly Report, July 1942, in *ibid.*, 28, n. 101.

<sup>74</sup> Lt. Col. Ainsworth Blogg to Charles S. Cheston, through William Asmuth, OSS legal division, 5 May 1944, subject: repair of roads—Areas “A” and “C,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II.

<sup>75</sup> Ira B. Lykes, Monthly Report, August [1945], NPS Records (RG 79), File 1460/3, Federal Records Center, Suitland, Md., cited in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 29, n. 102. These records have disappeared.

transferred to the commanding officer of Area C, Major Albert Jenkins.<sup>76</sup> Of course, the two NPS officials at Chopawamsic RDA, Ira Lykes, the park manager, and John T. Gum, the NPS liaison person, first with CCC and then with OSS, also maintained responsibilities for the preservation of Area A as well as for all of the park. Area C remained in operation until October 1945.

### OSS Maritime Training (at Areas A and D)

Special Operations had initial responsibility for training OSS agents, especially from SO and SI, in techniques of clandestine infiltration by water—from the sea or across a lake or river into enemy territory. The original training for such waterborne landings began in May 1942 using a boat house on a lake near Area A-5 and sometimes a dock at the nearby Marine Base. About the same time, Special Operations had begun that same month to create a maritime training camp on the east bank of the Potomac River, a few miles from Quantico. It was subsequently designated OSS Training Area D.<sup>77</sup> The precise location of Area D is still the subject of debate among some veterans, but the CIA records indicate that it was at Smith's Point, in Charles County, Maryland.<sup>78</sup> That would

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<sup>76</sup> Col. H.L. Robinson, chief, Schools and Training Branch, OSS to Lt. Col. James A. Hewitt, Post Engineer, Fort Belvoir, Va., 6 January 1945, subject: Closing of Detachment A, OSS in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658, National Archives II.

<sup>77</sup> On the use of the lake near A-5 and also the dock at Quantico, see Capt. Don R. Callahan, commanding officer, Detachment A, to Col. H.L. Robinson, executive, Schools and Training Branch, OSS, 13 March 1944, subject: Housing and Training Facilities, Detachment A, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658, National Archives II. On the establishment of a maritime school at Area D, see *War Report of the OSS (Office of Strategic Services)*, with a new introduction by Kermit Roosevelt (New York: Walker and Co., 1976), 81, 225-26, a commercially published, declassified version of the original "War Report of the OSS," prepared by the History Project, Strategic Services Unit, Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, 5 September 1947 (hereinafter cited as, OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*).

<sup>78</sup> For the Smith's Point, Charles County, Maryland location, see L.B. Shallcross, deputy, STB/TRD [CIA] to Mr. John O'Gara, 1 February 1951, subject: Information on OSS Schools and Training Sites, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 61, Box 7, Folder 76, National Archives II. This document has proven accurate in the location of every other OSS training and assessment site. All sources agree that it was located on the Potomac River a comparatively short boat ride from the U.S. Marine Corps Base at Quantico. Some place it down river. The President of the UDT-SEAL Association seeking to commemorate the founding of the American frogmen wrote in 2000 that Area D, "was located south of Quantico, VA on the Potomac River, and is discussed extensively in the MU history to be presented. We have not yet located it on the map." Tom Hawkins, "OSS Maritime: We Have Looked into the Past, and It is Us!," *The Blast*, (2000), 10-11. Frank A. Gleason, who was at Area D recalled it as north more than 10 to 20 miles south of Quantico on the eastern shore of the Potomac River. Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 3 April 2008. Some think it was upriver from Quantico. Jerry Sage, *Sage*, 50-51, called the location Indian Head, Maryland, which is today the location of the U.S. Navy's Naval Surface Warfare Center and was then the Naval Ordnance Station. OSS radio operator James Ranney located it in what is now Smallwood State Park, Maryland, just south of Indian Head; James F. Ranney, "OSS Training Areas," in James F. Ranney and Arthur L. Ranney, eds., *The OSS CommVet Papers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Covington, Ky.: James F. Ranney, 2002), 119. OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 80, says only that it was on "1,400 acres of wooded terrain on the Potomac River across from Quantico."

place it just below what is today Purse State Park on Wade's Bay, a half a dozen miles down river from Quantico, and about three miles west of the village of Grayton, Maryland. OSS. The temporarily obtained property included a long stretch of river frontage and 1,400 acres behind it.<sup>79</sup> After a few yards of river bank, the area was covered with light woods interspersed with open fields. The camp site was about 50 feet from the river. Three or four miles away there were some scattered dwellings, including a tavern, sometimes frequented by the OSS staff.<sup>80</sup> Temporary prefabricated buildings, possibly CCC-type portable structures, had been secured from the Army and used for housing the students and the equipment.<sup>81</sup> When expansion of Area D was completed by the summer of 1943, and by that time was used mainly by Special Operations, it had a station complement of 75 officers and enlisted men and could house an additional 180 trainees, for a total capacity of 256 OSS personnel.<sup>82</sup>

The initial development of the maritime infiltration school at Area D was by OSS personnel from the U.S. Navy under the supervision of a commando experienced Royal

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The most contemporaneous document indicating location of Area D is by the then new head of Schools and Training Branch who stated only that it was "located on the Potomac River about 40 miles from Washington [which would put it around Smith's Point]. It is a CCC type camp, situated on the river bank." is Lt. Col. Henson L. Robinson, "Schools and Training," report, October 1943, p. 4, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1723. A typescript history of the Schools and Training Branch apparently written at the end of the war, indicates only that Area D was "located on the Potomac River in an isolated section comprising fourteen hundred acres. This area, like Areas A, B, and C, had formerly been a summer recreation area." "History of Schools and Training Branch, OSS," p. 12, received by Col. E.B. Whisner, 7 January 1949 from W.J. Morgan [a former OSS officer], OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 176, Box 2, Folder 13, both in National Archives II.

In an attempt to find any indication of OSS Area D located at a summer recreation area that might have become one of the Maryland state parks along the Potomac, or a CCC camp, most of whose buildings were easily portable and were moved from place to place as needed, the present author conducted telephone interviews with the following individuals. From the Maryland Park Service: Ross Kimmell, 22 May 2007; William Moffat, 5 June 2007; William Farrall, 21 June 2007; from the Maryland Forest Service, Craig Henderson, 1 April 2008; a letter to Frank Owens, local historian, 3 April 2008, which went unanswered; and telephone interviews with two OSS veterans of Area D, Jonathan Spence, former MU frogman, 28 January 2005; and Frank A. Gleason, former SO instructor, 3 April 2008; plus a search of the CCC records for Charles County, Maryland, by Eugene Morris, archivist, National Archives II, 14 April 2008. The result was inconclusive in regard to locations at a state park or CCC camp. It should be noted that Purse State Park is located just north of Smith's Point, and also that one of the typescript histories of the Schools and Training Branch, the one edited by William L. Cassidy, indicates that the temporary housing for Area D was obtained from the Army, but it does not reveal whether this housing had been from CCC camps supervised by the U.S. Army or directly from the Army. The mystery remains unresolved.

<sup>79</sup> OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 80.

<sup>80</sup> Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 3 April 2008.

<sup>81</sup> *History of the Schools and Training Branch: Office of Strategic Services*, ed. William L. Cassidy (San Francisco: Kingfisher Press, 1983), 135. This is largely a reprint of the typescript official history of the S&T Branch of the OSS prepared by Schools and Training, probably Maj. Kenneth P. Miller, in 1945 and obtained by William Cassidy in 1983 from the CIA through Freedom of Information Act requests. On the possibility that they were CCC structures, see note 77 above.

<sup>82</sup> Map of layout of buildings with statistics on capacity of Area D, undated [October 1943, the date given on similar maps for Area B] located in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, National Archives II.

Navy officer, Lieutenant Commander H. G. Woolley of British Combined Operations. Among the American naval officers assisting him were Lieutenant Jack Duncan, who had trained with the U.S. Marines' Raider Battalion and with the British commandos in England, and Lieutenant John ("Jack") Shaheen, later chief of special projects for Donovan, and who the following year would run a small boat mission, the McGregor mission, to obtain information about Nazi weapons development from Italian naval officers. Instruction in clandestine waterborne landings had begun at Area D for SO and SI agents in August 1942. In October, OSS planned to expand use of the area to include not just for small craft amphibious landings but full blown field exercises, including airborne infiltration by parachute drops and small planes from the Marines' airstrip at Quantico.<sup>83</sup> Army Lieutenant Jerry Sage, an instructor from Area B-2 who had just returned from SOE training in Britain, arrived in the late autumn of 1942.<sup>84</sup> He became executive officer for Major Albert B. Seitz, commanding the SO training exercises. (Within a year, Sage would be trying to escape from a German prison camp after having been captured in North Africa, and Seitz would be parachuting into Yugoslavia as a member of the first U.S. military mission to the Chetnik partisans fighting under General Draza Mihailovich.)

In the autumn of 1942 at Area D, however, Sage's assignment was to build an earthen landing strip at the camp in woods to experiment with short takeoffs and landings by light planes. Obtaining a bulldozer from the Corps of Engineers, Sage used it to tear up trees and stumps and to scrape an even landing surface. The first test landing went off perfectly, but when the pilot tried to take off, the unencumbered strip was not quite long enough. Suddenly confronted with the camp flagpole, the pilot banked sharply, lost control of the plane and crashed, fortunately without sustaining serious injury.<sup>85</sup> Another near fatal mishap occurred during a major field exercise in November, Sage was leading the simulated attacking force coming down a road in Army trucks. Lieutenant Frank Gleason, Corps of Engineers, a fellow instructor from B-2, was leading the simulated guerrilla force setting up an ambush including explosives. Someone else had set a booby trap with a wire, pull switch, and two blocks of TNT, about half a pound of explosive. When Gleason pulled the pin, the trip wire had been wound too tight and instead of triggering the time fuse, it set off the explosive, which was only four or five feet away from him. "I almost bought the farm that day," he recalled. "Fortunately I had a helmet and heavy back pack on. The blast knocked me off my feet and onto the ground. When I came to, I couldn't hear. I couldn't hear for a week."<sup>86</sup>

In one of the waterborne exercises in the Potomac River off Area D in 1942, one of the trainees accidentally drowned. earlier that year. Seaman John Pitts Spence, an instructor who became the Navy's first frogman, remembered that during the autumn

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<sup>83</sup> *War Report of the OSS*, 81, 226; and Commander H. Woolley [Royal Navy] to Colonel M.P. Goodfellow, 9 October 1942, subject: Guerrilla Notes—Rough Notes and Suggestions, M. Preston Goodfellow Papers, Box 4, Folder 4, Hoover Institute, Stanford, Calif.

<sup>84</sup> Sage, *Sage*, 50, 55.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 51, 443.

<sup>86</sup> Frank A. Gleason, telephone interviews with the author, 16 December 2007, and 3 April 2008.



while the weather was still mild, the men trained in underwater demolition and the use of small rubber boats which were launched from a converted yacht, the *Marsyl*. It was during one of those exercises that one of the trainees in underwater demolition apparently became disoriented in the murky waters or was trapped in debris, was carried downstream by the current and drowned.<sup>87</sup>

Underwater swimmers from Italy had been sinking British ships, and Donovan's organization decided to initiate a group of underwater warfare swimmers (later called combat swimmers or "frogmen). Spence, was one of the first chosen. Beginning in November 1942, he tested a new self-contained underwater breathing device that re-circulated the oxygen and left no telltale bubbles on the surface.<sup>88</sup> This was the Amphibian Breathing Apparatus or Lambertsen Respiratory Unit, named after Christian J. Lambertsen, a physician, who invented it in 1940. The underwater combat swimming groups began training in May 1943 at Annapolis. Meanwhile, in January 1943, OSS designated maritime activities the Marine Section of Special Operations Branch, and in March 1943, that section assumed complete control of Area D. The emphasis was still on waterborne infiltration rather than underwater sabotage, but the combat swimming groups did proceed from Annapolis to Area D for training in small boats and the use of limpet explosive devices for use against ship's hulls. The Marine Unit (MU) of OSS was established as a separate branch on 9 June 1943, and it did emphasize the use of "frogmen" for underwater demolition work. Polluted water in the Potomac and ice in winter prevented effective underwater combat swimming training, and as a result, training for the "frogmen" was shifted to Silver Springs, Florida, and in 1944 to Nassau in the British Bahamas as well as Catalina Island and the Camp Pendleton Marine Base near San Diego, California. Dr. Lambertsen transferred from the Army Medical Corps to the OSS Maritime Unit in 1943 and remained with it until the end of the war.<sup>89</sup>

When the Maritime Branch was created in June 1943 and vacated its training camp on the Potomac for bases in the Caribbean and on the Pacific Coast, Area D, still under control of Special Operations Branch became available as an adjunct to SO's Area A. In October 1943, for example, the overflow of students at A-4 basic SO training was

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<sup>87</sup> John Pitt Spence, telephone interview with the author, 28 January 2005. Spence remembered the name of the yacht at the *Maybelle*, but Commander Woolly listed it in October 1942 as the *Marsyl*. Commander H. Woolley [Royal Navy] to Colonel M.P. Goodfellow, 9 October 1942, subject: Guerrilla Notes—Rough Notes and Suggestions, p. 2, M. Preston Goodfellow Papers, Box 4, Folder 4, Hoover Institute, Stanford, Calif. In 2005, the 85-year-old Spence recalled that a group of men went to Quantico Marine Base by boat every Sunday to get the newspapers; he recalled that Area D was on the east side of the Potomac, but he could not remember whether it was north or south of Quantico.

<sup>88</sup> Tom Hawkins, "OSS Maritime: We Have Looked into the Past and It Is Us!" *The Blast*, newsletter of the UDT [Underwater Demolition Team]-SEAL Association, (Third Quarter, 2000), p. 10; plus materials on the OSS combat swimmers reunion at the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md., 27-29 March 2001, and the memorial plaques to the OSS MU operational swimming units at Fort Bragg, N.C., and the UDT-Seal Museum at Fort Pierce, Fla., sent to the author by John Pitt Spence, 5 February 2005.

<sup>89</sup> OSS, *War Report of the OSS*, 226-27; Kenneth Finlayson, "Key West: Home of ARSOF Underwater Operations," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, 3/1 (2007): 3-4; Francis Douglas Fane and Don Moore, *The Naked Warriors* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1956), an account by Commander Fane of the origins and accomplishments of the Underwater Demolition Teams of the U.S. Navy, and the OSS, in World War II.

briefly sent to Area D for Special Operations training there. Area D also served as a holding area for already trained SO and OG personnel awaiting assignment overseas. The SO role continued until April 1944, when Area D was closed, its staff moved to Area A-5 at Prince William Forest Park, and the property in Charles County, Maryland, returned to its owner.<sup>90</sup>

### Area C: the Communications School

In the hilly, wooded northeastern corner of Prince William Forest Park, Donovan's organization established Area C as a site for training in clandestine radio operations and equipment, probably in June 1942.<sup>91</sup> At that time, communications was part of the Special Operations Branch, and the initial purpose of Area C, then called the SO-SI Communications School primarily to train agent-operators for the Special Operations and Secret Intelligence Branches. They were taught a smattering of International Morse code, secret cipher and radio techniques and equipment operation and repair.<sup>92</sup> It was initially a very small facility, part of one of the two National Park Service summer cabin camps there.

To create a secure, rapid, global communications system connecting agents in the field with regional bases and ultimately with the OSS message center in Washington, Donovan established a new and separate Communications Branch (CB) of OSS on 22 September 1942. It replaced the separate communications systems that SO and SI had been creating, at least at the higher, central level.<sup>93</sup> The Communications Branch was

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<sup>90</sup> "Chief Instructors by Training Area," a list, 1942-1945, included in Lt. Col. Henson L. Robinson, "Schools and Training," report, October 1943, p. 15, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1723; on Area D, see also Gregory Gluba, NWDT2, National Archives to Christina J. Snyder, Prince William Forest Park Visitor Center, 16 October 1997, located in the PWFPP Library. He indicated that his information was from the OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 174, both in National Archives II.

<sup>91</sup> Lawrence L. Hollander, "A Brief History of Area C," in Ranney and Ranney, eds., *The OSS CommVet Papers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 11. Hollander, like James Ranney, was a veteran of the COI/OSS Communications Branch and a member of the CommVet alumni association. Hollander indicated that Area C was established in mid-1942; the biography of R. Dean Cortright, p. 190, declared it had been set up by COI. COI was succeeded by OSS in mid-June 1942.

<sup>92</sup> The Training Directorate to All Geographic Desks and Administrative Officers, SI-SO, n.d., [winter 1942-43?], subject: Training Procedures, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Misc. Washington Files, Security Office Files, Box 223, Folder 3106, Schools and Training, National Archives.

<sup>93</sup> OSS, *War Report of the OSS*, 136. For the background to this decision, see Col. William J. Donovan to Colonel Buxton, Colonel Goodfellow, and Major Bruce, 3 July 1942, subject: a study of the question of communications. OSS Records (RG 226), Records of the Director's Office, Microfilm M-1642, Roll 42, Frame 1122. For recommendation that for security purposes, SI eschew joint communication operations at least at the agent to supervisor level, but cooperate with a central communications branch at higher levels, see Robert Cresswell to Major Bruce, 20 July 1942, subject: communications problem: survey and recommendation, a six-page report attached to David Bruce to William J. Donovan, 20 July 1942, *ibid.*, Frames 1125-1131. Under the prodding of Donovan and C.W. Horn, his technical adviser for communications, Bruce at SI and Goodfellow at SO agreed, apparently in late July 1942 to the creation of a central communications officer; Lawrence Lowman was chosen to head the new branch when it was

headed by Lawrence (“Larry”) Wise Lowman, longtime vice President in charge of operations at the Columbia Broadcasting System in New York, who had been recruited despite the opposition of CBS chief William S. Paley. Lowman soon became one of the few full colonels in the OSS.<sup>94</sup>

The Communications Branch combined all previous OSS signal and traffic facilities, was charged with developing a global communications network, and most relevant to this study, in October 1942, it was given responsibility for all communications training in OSS. The CB or “Commo” Branch, as it was informally called, had responsibility for recruiting and training staff and field personnel, both civilian and military, and providing instructors for communications courses in all the OSS training camps, not just its own communications school at Area C but at the other camps as well.<sup>95</sup> Despite an attempt in November 1942 by the newly centralized Training Directorate of Kenneth Baker, Lawrence Lowman, and British SOE advisor Bill Brooker to move the communications school from Area C to a country house near Area F, the former Congressional Country Club, the main CB training center remained at Area C for the duration of the war.<sup>96</sup> Although all training at Area C, including the selection of the trainees and the instructors and the course of instruction, was the responsibility of the Communications Branch, the camp itself and the cadre who ran it remained for administrative purposes in the Special Operations Branch. Schools and Training Branch never obtained much authority in regard to Area C, which remained primarily the responsibility of the Communications Branch. More than 1,500 communications personnel were trained at Area C between 1942 and 1945 in highly technical courses that ran from nine to thirteen weeks and included telegraphy, short-wave radio, codes and ciphers, OSS equipment operation and maintenance, weaponry, and demolition work, as well as physical and mental conditioning, field craft, and close combat skills.<sup>97</sup>

Around November 1942, when Lowman was considering moving the Communications School closer to Washington, he sent one of his staff to spend a week at Area C and report on conditions there. R. Dean Cortright, a civilian engineer for the Navy and like many of the “Commo” people an amateur, short-wave radio operator, a “HAM,” as they were called, had joined OSS in October 1942, becoming perhaps the third person

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created in September. C.W. Horn to Colonel Donovan, 23 July 1942, subject: Communication System for the OSS, *ibid.*, Frame 1132, all in National Archives II.

<sup>94</sup> On Lowman’s recruitment, see exchange of letters, 18 May to 22 June, 1942 between Lowman and Lt. Cmdr. William H. Vanderbilt, great-grandson of the railroad tycoon and himself a former governor of Rhode Island who was one of Donovan’s main advisers and who handled Lowman’s recruitment. OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 92A, Box 45, Folder 736, National Archives II.

<sup>95</sup> OSS, *War Report of the OSS*, 136.

<sup>96</sup> From B.M. Brooker, Kenneth H. Baker, and L.W. Lowman to Maj. David Bruce, Lt. Col. E.C. Huntington, memorandum, 16 November 1942, subject: proposed change for communications school, OSS Records (RG 226), Records of the Director’s Office, Microfilm M-1642, Roll 42, Frames 1175-1176, National Archives II

<sup>97</sup> Arthur Reinhardt, “Deciphering the Commo Branch,” *OSS Society Newsletter*, Fall 2006), 6.

to be assigned to the new Communications Branch.<sup>98</sup> Years later, he recalled his visit to the Communications School at Area C. “Upon arrival, I found that there was a building housing the code room. There were a few ‘agent operators’ in training; from Thailand, I recall.<sup>99</sup>” There was a housekeeping group [cadre] in place, with supply arrangements capable of handling a few operators. There was no commo [communications] equipment for practicing, other than a couple of British agent units. I can’t remember the officer in charge at the time, but later on it was Maj. Albert Jenkins.”<sup>100</sup>

After the decision was made in November 1942 to retain Area C as the main school for the new Communications Branch, Cortright was sent back there with orders to redesign the technical program and establish the kind of training necessary to produce the large numbers of communications personnel that would be needed for OSS’s global operations. Winter was imminent, and the first priority was to get the NPS summer camp cabins and dining halls winterized. They were soon provided with insulation and cast-iron stoves that could burn local coal or wood. As in Area A, the mess hall was equipped with improved kitchen facilities. Major Jenkins arrived in December and quickly set up areas for physical training, an obstacle course, and pistol, rifle, hand grenade ranges. Jenkins and Cortright obtained vehicles, set up a motor pool, and also made arrangements to purchase food supplies from the nearby Marine Corps base at Quantico. Area C was soon in full operation and would continue so until the end of the war.<sup>101</sup>

Major Albert H. Jenkins remained commanding officer of Detachment C from December 1942 until February 1945. A reserve Marine captain who served in World War I, Jenkins and had been recalled to active duty in World War II, he had been recruited by the OSS, in June 1942 to be an instructor on small arms, mapping and field craft at the Secret Intelligence school at RTU-11 (“The Farm”). In July, he was promoted to major and made executive officer of that training facility.<sup>102</sup> Five months later, when the new Communications Branch began its school at Chopawamsic RDA, Jenkins began the commanding officer there. He was “quick and snappy, not a man for small talk,” recalled Army Lieutenant Allen R. Richter, a Commo veteran from Detachment 101 in the China-Burma-India Theater. “If you met him on the street, you would know he was a Marine,

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<sup>98</sup> “Richard Dean Cortright, W9IRY/5,” in Ranney and Ranney, eds., *The OSS CommVet Papers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 190.

<sup>99</sup> These were Thai students in the United States who, through the Thai Embassy, had offered their services to Donovan’s organization. The first group of 21 Thais, from what was then called Siam, were trained at B-2, A-2, and other areas, including Area C, before being sent to the China-Burma-India Theater in the spring of 1943. They were led there by SO officer and former Far Eastern travel writer, Lt. Nicol Smith, see Nicol Smith and Blake Clark, *Into Siam: Underground Mission* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1946), 1-28, 44-45, 49.

<sup>100</sup> R. Dean Cortright, “Early Days of Area C,” in Ranney and Ranney, eds., *The OSS CommVet Papers*, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> *History of the Schools and Training Branch: Office of Strategic Services*, ed. William L. Cassidy (San Francisco: Kingfisher Press, 1983), 47-49.

the way he looked, walked, and talked.” Jenkins was approximately 6’ 1” tall, slender, and although slightly balding, he was fit at about 150 pounds.<sup>103</sup>

Like most of the other officers, Lieutenant James Ranney, a radio instructor at Area C from August 1943 to January 1944, remembered Jenkins fondly. “Major Jenkins was in charge. He was a very fine gentleman. Everybody liked him.... He was a Marine reservist. I don’t think he had anything to do with radio or communications. He was a nice guy, easy-going.” One incident showed how imperturbable Jenkins was. “I remember while we were there,” Ranney said. “they issued us our side arms, our .45s, and we were all looking at them....and wiping them off and checking the trigger pull. And the Officer of the Day wandered in, and he was carrying a side arm. He pulled his side arm out without remembering it was loaded, and he said: “This has a very good trigger pull.” And BANG, he shot a big hole in the floor. Major Jenkins came rushing in. He said: “Anybody hurt?” They said, “No, just the floor.” He said, “O.K., carry on.” And that was that.”<sup>104</sup>

While members of the cadre were familiar with the commanding officer, the trainees had little to do with him. They saw mainly the instructional staff: commissioned officers and NCOs. Private Marvin S. Flisser from the Bronx spent three months in the winter of 1943-1944 at Area C as an OSS Commo trainee, and was struck by how informal things in the OSS. “We hardly ever saw him [Major Jenkins],” Flisser recalled. “It was as if there was nobody there. There was no saluting or anything along that line. It was very informal. There was a basketball court, and we were all playing basketball, officers and men, all together, first name [code name] basis. Once in a while, Major Jenkins would come out to play basketball....When he came out to play, he wanted to win. So we always let him win.”<sup>105</sup> Timothy Marsh, a civilian instructor in Morse code there from December 1943 to December 1944, remembered Jenkins as the senior officer and camp commander but had little interaction with him. Like other members of the instructional staff, Marsh dealt mainly the chief instructor, then Army Air Corps Captain Paul M. McCallen, who had his own office across from the mess hall and who, Marsh said, “more or less ran the Communications School.”<sup>106</sup>

To many of the Commo men who came from cities or suburbs or directly from a standard Army base, Area C at Prince William Forest Park was a blissful, wilderness setting. Lawrence L. (“Laurie”) Hollander, was a Chicago lawyer and amateur “HAM” operator, when he was recruited by OSS, commissioned a captain and sent to Area C in

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<sup>103</sup> Allen R. Richter, telephone interview with the author, 25 March 2005.

<sup>104</sup> James F. Ranney, telephone interview with the author, 8 January 2005.

<sup>105</sup> Marvin S. Flisser, telephone interview with the author, 27 January 2005. Similarly, John W. Brunner, who admittedly was there only for one week in October 1944, said he only saw two officers and those very briefly, and he never saw Major Jenkins. Like Flisser, Brunner emphasized the informality of the OSS. “Everything that I experienced was very informal. No military routine. No marching or parading. We simply got up when we were told. An enlisted man would come down to our hut to wake us up, and we went to the mess hall. Then we went out to our assignment for the day. There was no marching there. We just walked.” John W. Brunner, telephone interview with the author, 21 March 2005.

<sup>106</sup> Timothy Marsh, telephone interview with the author, 18 January 2006.

early 1943 to organize instruction in International Morse Code.<sup>107</sup> Years later, he recalled the natural beauty at the camp in the Virginia woods. “The complete area was about three quarters of a mile square. It is, and was, a beautiful area with its many shade-tolerant oak, hickory and pine trees. It also had its share of snakes and small animals. Located about 35 miles from Washington, with its entrance off Highway No. 1 on a dirt side road, it became a top secret installation, its location and purpose known only to those with a need to know.”<sup>108</sup>

OSS Training Area C was composed of two cabin camps some 400 yards apart in the northeast section of park between Quantico Creek and the Dumfries-Manassas Road (Route 234). The main gate was off the Dumfries Road, and no one was allowed to enter without proper authorization. When taxicabs from Triangle, the nearest bus stop on Route 1, when they brought trainees or staff back to the camp, they were not allowed to go past the main gate, and most of them did not even want to drive into the park up to the armed guards at the gate of the secret camp.<sup>109</sup> Roger Belanger, a trainee from Portland, Maine, who returned from England after D-Day as an experienced instructor, recalled that ‘if we took a cab, the driver would let us out at the little white church on the Manassas Road. The cab drivers were reluctant to take us any closer.’<sup>110</sup>

As at Area A, the OSS made alternations in many of the NPS summer camp buildings for year round operation and military training purposes. The layout of the camps at Area C was similar to those in the western park of the park, clusters of huts in sub-groups and the whole camp organized around a lodge, a dining hall, an office and other buildings. Most of the accommodations were quickly provided with insulation, heating stoves, and hot water facilities. Most dramatically, in 1943, the OSS upgraded the kitchens, adding a 500-gallon hot water tank and heater, gas ranges, a heavy-duty, electric baking oven, gas-heated, hotel-type steam tables, as well as electric coffee grinders, gas-heated coffee urns, plus ice boxes, refrigeration units, and an electric meat slicer, electric food mixer, and an electric-powered dishwashing machine.<sup>111</sup> Following the termination of the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1942, most of the work was done, as in Area A, by Kent and Company of Richmond, Virginia.<sup>112</sup> But the existing cabins

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<sup>107</sup> “Lawrence L. Hollander, N4JYV,” in Ranney and Ranney, eds., *The OSS CommVet Papers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 196.

<sup>108</sup> Lawrence L. Hollander, “A Brief History of Area C,” in Ranney and Ranney, eds., *The OSS CommVet Papers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 11.

<sup>109</sup> Arthur F. (“Art”) Reinhardt, during a tour of former OSS Training Area C-4 arranged by the author, 13 December 2004.

<sup>110</sup> Roger L. Belanger, letter to the author, 28 December 2004.

<sup>111</sup> Col. W.L. Rehm, Acting Assistant Director for Services, Strategic Services Unit (SSU), for the Director, to Commanding General, Army Service Forces, Mobilization Division, 19 October 1945, subject: Chopwamsic National Recreational Demonstration Area, Estimates #1, #2 and #3, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 8, Folder 199, National Archives II.

<sup>112</sup> Lt. Col. Ainsworth Blogg, executive officer, OSS headquarters, to Charles S. Cheston, through A. William Asmuth, Jr., legal division, 6 May 1944, subject: floor covering for kitchen at Detachment “C,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II.

did not prove adequate for the rapidly expanding numbers of radio operators being trained, and it became necessary to set up several dozen tent-roofed wooden huts to handle the overflow, particularly among the trainees. That gave Area C a housing capacity of 26 officers, 84 enlisted men in the cadre and instructional staff, plus 247 trainees, with 125 of the trainees living in temporary tent-roofed cabins, for a total occupancy of 357.<sup>113</sup> In the summer of 1944, the OSS also approved the construction of a swimming pool at Area C, if it were required for water-borne instruction and practice for Asian Special Operations agents, Communications Branch radio operators, and Operational Group members scheduled for training in Area C in 1945 as part of OSS's expanding mission in the Far East.<sup>114</sup>

### **“Commo” Camp Headquarters: Area C-1**

Before the war, National Park Service Cabin Camp 1 (Goodwill) had been a boys' camp used by African-American youths from what was then called the Negro YMCA in Washington. It had four clusters of huts, labeled A, B, C, and D, plus the central dining and administrative area. During the war, the OSS designated it Area C-1, and it served primarily as the headquarters, accommodations, and maintenance facilities for Major Jenkins and the cadre of officers and enlisted men who operated Training Area C. When necessary, however, C-1, which was separated from the main training camp at Area C-4 by nearly a mile, was also used for a variety of training purposes. These included brief communications training for agents in operational branches such as SO, SI, or MO, or basic Army training for OSS personnel going overseas who had not yet fulfilled that requirement. At other times, it was used as a holding area for men awaiting further assignment, including graduates awaiting shipment overseas or veterans returning from abroad. In 1945, C-1 served as an area for training Koreans and perhaps other Asians as well for OSS operations in the final offensives planned for 1946 against the Japanese Army in China, Korea, and Japan itself.

In addition to winterization and other alterations in existing buildings at the cabin camp, the OSS erected several new wooden structures at C-1. A radio repair shop was the largest, a portable, plywood building measured 16 by 16 feet and may have served as a classroom. Smaller new structures included a radio transmitter building and two guard houses, one at the main gate and one at the northern end of Area C-1.<sup>115</sup> As completed for

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<sup>113</sup> Capacity listed on building layout map, “Area C,” undated [October 1943, when similar map of Area B was prepared], OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, Folder 249, National Archives II.

<sup>114</sup> Charles S. Cheston, acting assistant director OSS to chief, schools and training branch, 25 May 1944, subject: repairs and improvements at Areas A and C; Cheston to chief, schools and training branch, 5 June 1944, subject: swimming facilities at Area C; and Cheston to Col. H.L. Robinson, chief, schools and training branch, 19 June 1944, subject: construction at Area A and E, all in OSS Records (RG 226) Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II.

<sup>115</sup> Col. W.L. Rehm, Acting Assistant Director for Services, Strategic Services Unit (SSU), for the Director, to Commanding General, Army Service Forces, Mobilization Division, 19 October 1945, subject:

use by OSS's Communications Branch, Area C-1 included an administration building, two buildings serving as quarters for 16 officers, a drivers' quarters holding six enlisted men, a garage, a work shop, five washroom/latrines, a mess hall, a lodge, and a series of huts as well as two, 12-man barracks for enlisted men on the staff. In addition, there was a radio transmitter station in a building in the D cluster of cabins. There was also another transmitter station, perhaps the main radio transmitter, in what was identified as an old CCC camp (probably the abandoned CCC work camp SP-22) across the road and a little more than 100 yards east of administration building at the entrance to Area C-1.<sup>116</sup> Both the transmitters and the receiver stations were powered by electrical generators and were equipped with sizable antennas, long poles with radio antenna aerials on them.<sup>117</sup>

### Communications School: Area C-4

Nearly a mile south of C-1, the main Communications School of the OSS was located at Area C-4. In the years before the war, it had been NPS Cabin Camp 4, known as Camp Pleasant, and it provided a healthy respite of wholesome outdoor summer recreation for African-American girls and young women from Washington, D.C. Now it was the primary training facility of the OSS Communications Branch. Beginning in the winter of 1942-1943, it was transformed into an intensive training center where young men in Army fatigues spent two to three months learning to be clandestine radio operators behind enemy lines or more often operators and other technical personnel at OSS regional base stations in war zones and theater headquarters around the world. They learned and practiced repair and maintenance of the OSS's specialized radio and wireless telegraphy equipment as well as how to code and decode and send and receive telegraphed messages rapidly and accurately.

Area C-4 was larger than C-1. The NPS Cabin Camp had five sub-clusters of huts, A, B, C, D, and E, each with a lodge, plus there was a central dining hall and administrative area for the entire camp. Winterization of the entire facility was accomplished during the winter of 1942-1943, and the kitchens at the mess hall were modernized, as at the other cabin camps. Many of the NPS buildings continued to be used in the same manner, but some, such the nursery, today Building 78, was the OSS code room, where students learned and practiced becoming faster and more accurate in Morse code.<sup>118</sup> Perhaps because of the demand for communications personnel and the

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Chopwamsic National Recreational Demonstration Area, Estimates #1, #2 and #3, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 8, Folder 199, National Archives II.

<sup>116</sup> Map of "Area C," OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, Folder 249, National Archives II.

<sup>117</sup> Arthur F. ("Art") Reinhardt, OSS Communication Branch veteran, who trained at C-4 from April to early July 1944 before being sent to China, interviewed during a tour of Area C with the author and Judy Volonoski, museum technician at Prince William Forest Park, on 13 December 2004. The author recorded and transcribed Mr. Reinhardt's commentary and the identification by Ms. Volonoski of the numbers of the buildings and their current usage at Prince William Forest Park.

<sup>118</sup> Arthur F. Reinhardt, during a tour of former Area C, Prince William Forest Park, 13 December 2001.



comparatively long time it took to train them in their highly technical skills, new construction at C-4 was much more extensive than at C-1, or Areas A or B. In the summer of 1943, Donovan personally approved the construction of a new multi-purpose building, which at \$24,000 was the most expensive structure built by the OSS at any of East Coast training camps.<sup>119</sup> The cavernous building, today the Theater/Recreation Hall, Building 250 at Prince William Forest Park, was used by OSS as a theater to show training and entertainment films, for indoor assemblies by the entire camp such as when General Donovan came to speak, and for basketball and other spots during the winter months.<sup>120</sup> Other new structures built at C-4 included a Bachelor Officers Quarters, a 100-man latrine/washroom, three portable plywood buildings, probably used as classrooms, an addition to the mess hall, a guard house, and a metal Quonset Hut.<sup>121</sup>

By mid-1943, the Communications School had grown to 250 trainees, which meant that more housing had to be provided.<sup>122</sup> To handle the overflow, OSS created a “tent camp” at C-4. There were more than two dozen “tents” or more accurately, “cabin-tents,” since each of them combined a canvas peaked roof with a plywood floor and four wooden sides, one with an entrance, the other three with screened openings and hinged plywood flaps. They measured 16 by 16 feet, and most held four trainees. Although primarily for summer use, cabin-tents were eventually fitted with cast-iron heating stoves that provided warmth in winter. The tent camp, which held up to 125 trainees, was erected at a cost of \$5,500.<sup>123</sup> Various groups of these cabin-tents, often in sets of six or more were located between NPS cabin sub-clusters A and C in Area C-4, but the cabin-tents were only occupied when the regular cabins in the camp were filled.<sup>124</sup>

Each of the sub-camps, A, B, C, D, and E in C-4 had a wood cabins sleeping four and some of the sub-camps had wooden barracks for ten men each. The barracks were divided into three rooms with wooden bunks, an Army field telephone in a leather case hung from the wall beside the door. If it rang, you cranked it up to hear; it was for

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<sup>119</sup> Capt. Duncan C. Lee to Brig. Gen. William J. Donovan, 11 and 15 June 1943, subject: new building for Area C; Lee to Commanding Officer Hq. and Hq. Detachment, 16 June 1944, subject: erection of multi-purpose building at Area C, 16 June 1944, all in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II.

<sup>120</sup> Arthur F. Reinhardt, during a tour of former Area C, Prince William Forest Park, 13 December 2001.

<sup>121</sup> Col. W.L. Rehm, Acting Assistant Director for Services, Strategic Services Unit [formerly OSS], for the Director, to Commanding General, Army Service Forces, Mobilization Division, 19 October 1945, subject: Chopwamsic National Recreational Demonstration Area, Estimates #1, #2 and #3, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 8, Folder 199, National Archives II. A Quonset hut was a pre-fabricated metal structure in which a semi-circular, corrugated steel roof curved down to form the main walls. Portable and quickly installed, it was widely used by the Army and Navy in World War II.

<sup>122</sup> OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 137.

<sup>123</sup> Col. W.L. Rehm, Acting Assistant Director for Services, Strategic Services Unit [formerly OSS], for the Director, to Commanding General, Army Service Forces, Mobilization Division, 19 October 1945, subject: Chopwamsic National Recreational Demonstration Area, Estimates #1, #2 and #3, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 8, Folder 199, National Archives II.

<sup>124</sup> Map of “Area C,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, Folder 249, National Archives II.

communication only within the base. The washroom/latrines were outdoors and trainees remembered that it was cold going there on winter nights. Most of the sub-camps also had a classroom building.<sup>125</sup> Often the lodges were converted into a post-exchange and a “Day Room” for relaxation and recreation. In sub-camp C, the “Day Room,” was in what is today Building 12, the lodge. There was a ping-pong table and a big table where six or eight men played cards. Poker was the main game and the men played openly for money, while others watched. Other men read or listened to the radio.<sup>126</sup>

For training in weapons and hand grenades for its communications personnel, OSS built target ranges about 200 yards east of sub-camp C of Area C-4. A pistol range with six silhouette stationary targets, was constructed first, then relocated when it proved to be in the way of the rifle range with eight targets.<sup>127</sup> Both were pointed away from the camp, with shooters firing at targets mounted in front of an earthen embankment across Quantico Creek. A “utility range,” apparently the site of the grenade range and perhaps demolitions as well, was over a ridge and in a valley formed by Quantico Creek about another 200 yards southeast of the rifle range.<sup>128</sup> Communications veterans Arthur Reinhardt from near Buffalo, New York, who spent ten weeks training at C-4 from April to early July 1944, before being sent to China, identified the old pistol range on a return visit to the area sixty years later. “We were encouraged to come down here and shoot our [Colt] .45s,” he said. “I used to come down virtually every day and shoot.”<sup>129</sup>

Harry M. Neben, an amateur radio operator (“HAM”) from Illinois, had been recruited to help with install radio equipment at Area C. He arrived in December 1942 and helped clear trees and brush for the firing ranges and an obstacle course as well as assisting in electronic installation for radio training. In addition to the obstacle course, he also remembered that trainees at Area C-4 “practiced on a landing net on a small lake near [Sub-]Area B.”<sup>130</sup> This would be a lake on the north fork of Quantico Creek a quarter of a mile from C-4 and presumably involved some of the same kind of aquatic activities that trainees at Area A remembered undergoing at a similar lake across the park near OSS Area A-5.

Unlike the Special Operations paramilitary field exercises with firearms, mortars, bazookas and explosives in Area A, the OSS Communications Branch focused on radio

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid., plus Marvin S. Flisser, telephone interview with the author 27 January 2005.

<sup>126</sup> Marvin S. Flisser, telephone interview with the author, 27 January 2005; Arthur F. Reinhardt, during a tour of Prince William Forest Park, 13 December 2004.

<sup>127</sup> Col. W.L. Rehm, Acting Assistant Director for Services, Strategic Services Unit [formerly OSS], for the Director, to Commanding General, Army Service Forces, Mobilization Division, 19 October 1945, subject: Chopwamsic National Recreational Demonstration Area, Estimates #1, #2 and #3, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 8, Folder 199, National Archives II.

<sup>128</sup> Map of “Area C,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, Folder 249, National Archives II.

<sup>129</sup> Arthur F. Reinhardt, on a tour of former Area C, Prince William Forest Park, arranged by the author, 13 December 2004. Shooters probably had to pickup the spent brass cartridges and turn them in to get a new box of shells, because, as Mr. Reinhardt remembers, the camp was kept pristine.

<sup>130</sup> “Harry N. Neben, W9QB,” in Ranney and Ranney, eds., *The OSS CommVet Papers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 202.

training with merely some marksmanship training at firing ranges. Consequently, none of the deserted houses or other structures was deliberately demolished in Area C. However, one NPS cabin was inadvertently destroyed. The cause was a fire in a cast-iron heating stove with a loose ash dump door. When the trainees returned from an afternoon of field radio training away from the camp on a winter day, the cabin had caught fire and burned to the ground.<sup>131</sup> In a separate incident involving fire, one part of the former NPS building used by OSS for the motor pool burned down. In both cases, OSS rebuilt the structure.<sup>132</sup> These were apparently, the only NPS buildings destroyed by the OSS during the occupancy of Prince William Forest Park.

For any kind of maintenance work at the camp, the OSS cadre turned to John T. Gum, the National Park Service employee who previously had been the NPS liaison with the Civilian Conservation Corps that had worked in Prince William Forest Park. During the war, Gum had been drafted into the Army, and was recruited by the OSS. He held the rank of Army technical sergeant, and a roster listed him as post engineer and the sergeant in charge of utilities at both Area A and Area C.<sup>133</sup> The friendly, six-foot-tall Gum visited the camp every day, always accompanied by his big black dog. Corporal Joseph Tully, a member of the cadre at Area C from November 1944 through October 1945, remembered Gum well. “He was in charge, the enlisted man who ran the entire camp. There were guys who rated higher than him. But if you wanted any kind of maintenance, he was the one you went to.”<sup>134</sup>

### **Area M in Illinois and W-A in California: Adjuncts to Area C**

So large were the numbers of communications trainees in the winter of 1943-1944—the Communications Branch estimated that 430 Commo personnel would be trained by December 1943, exclusive of SO, SI and other agents being trained in communications<sup>135</sup>—that even with the cabin-tents Area C could not handle them all. Consequently, OSS acquired an adjunct Communications Training Area near Napierville,

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<sup>131</sup> “Notes from the 1996 OSS CommVets Reunion,” in “OSS,” white binder, Park Archives, Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.

<sup>132</sup> R. Dean Cortright, “Early Days of Area C,” in Ranney and Ranney, eds., *The OSS CommVet Papers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 10.

<sup>133</sup> Listing in Headquarters Detachment A, “Standard Operating Procedures,” 13 April 1944, p. 5; and *ibid.*, “Pass and Furlough Policy,” 24 April 1944, p. 2, which lists Gum as a “S/Sgt,” a Staff Sergeant, which is higher than Technical Sergeant; both documents in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658, National Archives. Gum lived in Dumfries with his wife, young son and two daughters. Robert A. Noile, Triangle, Va., who knew the family well, telephone interviews with the author, 27 April and 16 May 2007.

<sup>134</sup> Joseph J. Tully, telephone interview with the author, 23 March 2005.

<sup>135</sup> The Communications Branch also supervised the preliminary radio and code training given by SO, SI, MO, and MU branches of OSS for their agents at Areas A, B, E, D, F, and RTU-11 and elsewhere. Areas C and M were where CB trained its own personnel.

Illinois in October 1943.<sup>136</sup> It was designated Area M because it was located at Camp McDowell, which had previously served as a radar training school for the Army Signal Corps. Captain Lawrence L. “(Laurie”) Hollander, a lawyer and amateur radio operator from Chicago, headed Area M, which was used, during its brief existence in 1943-1944 for training recruits from the Midwest and Far West, including a number of Japanese Americans who volunteered for hazardous duty as radio operators with Donovan’s organization.<sup>137</sup> Graduates probably served with the OSS against the Imperial Japanese Army in China.<sup>138</sup> Instructors at Area M offered a more elementary and simplified course than at Area C.<sup>139</sup>

In January 1944, when OSS turned increased attention to preparing increased numbers of personnel to be sent to the Far East, a West Coast Training Center, Area W-A, was established on Catalina Island off the California coast not far from Los Angeles. There the Communications Branch coordinated Commo instruction with training by the SO, SI, and MU Branches. By mid-1944, almost most of the OSS training in the United States for SO, SI, and MU had shifted to the West Coast, Area C continued to be the main training center for the Communications Branch until the end of the war.<sup>140</sup>

### **The Marine Corps and Prince William Forest Park**

From the inception of Prince William Forest Park in 1935, much of its southern border adjoined the U.S. Marine Corps Base at Quantico, Virginia. The original plan of the National Park Service was to acquire much of the land west of U.S. Route 1 that was in the drainage areas of Quantico Creek north of Joplin Road (today County Route 619), and Chopawamsic Creek to the south of it, that were not already held by the Department of the Navy for the Marine Corps.<sup>141</sup> But lack of adequate funding prevented the purchase

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<sup>136</sup> OSS, *War Report of the OSS*, 137; Lt. Col. Henson L. Robinson, “Schools and Training,” report, October 1943, p.4, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1723, National Archives II.

<sup>137</sup> Biographical sketch of “Lawrence L. Hollander, N4JYV,” in Ranney and Ranney, eds., *The OSS CommVet Papers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 196. In addition, the OSS communications base station from Mackinac Island was transferred to Area M.

<sup>138</sup> Biographical sketch of “Lawrence L. Hollander, N4JYV,” in Ranney and Ranney, eds., *The OSS CommVet Papers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 196, indicates that the Japanese-American radio operators were sent to Italy. But it seems unlikely that the OSS would train radio operators for the Nisei Regimental Combat Team in the regular Army. Since the OSS was indeed training Asians and Asian Americans and deploying them in the China-Burma-India Theater, it seems more probable that the Far East was the destination of these Japanese Americans working for OSS.

<sup>139</sup> OSS, *War Report of the O.S.S.*, 137.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 137, 241.

<sup>141</sup> Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 53.

of the Chopawamsic watershed property, and it also limited recreational development there. In practice, the park developed cabin camps and other organized recreational activity only north of Route 619 in the Quantico Creek watershed. The area south of that road, the area of the Chopawamsic Creek watershed, was preserved solely as a wilderness area with no organized recreational facilities. In that southern sector, NPS maintained only a temporary, one-room, park office and an undeveloped maintenance area just south of Joplin Road.<sup>142</sup>

Given its proximity to the U.S. Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Virginia, Prince William Forest Park has had a continuing relationship with the Marine Corps and its parent organization, the Department of the Navy. The Marine Base dated back to World War I.<sup>143</sup> When the Department of the Interior acquired the adjoining lands in the mid-1930s, the Marines expressed interest from the beginning in finding ways that were “mutually advantageous” for using what they called the “contiguous areas under Federal control.” In the park area south of Joplin Road, the Corps wanted to build a dam and water reservoir on Chopawamsic Creek to augment the water supply for the base. They also wanted to clear areas within the southern section of the park for field exercises in which “weapons may be used in field firing and musketry training,” and they sought to use the dirt roads and abandoned buildings there for military training purposes.<sup>144</sup> In 1938, the Department of the Interior granted the Department of the Navy the right to build the dam and what became known as Breckenridge Reservoir.<sup>145</sup> Beginning in 1938, the National Park Service began to grant use permits to Marine commanders to conduct specific field maneuvers in the southern portion of the park.<sup>146</sup>

After the declaration of war in December 1941, Lykes was as diplomatic as possible in dealing with the Marines. He complained to his superiors that the Marines’ field maneuvers in the southern park of the park had become so frequent that they “have assumed the right to enter upon the area without advising or even consulting this office.”<sup>147</sup> But Lykes continued to maintain a cooperative relationship with the personnel of the Marine base, emphasizing to the Marines the park’s recreational value to military

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<sup>142</sup> Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 54; Robert A. Noile, Triangle, Va., telephone interview with the author, 27 April 2007.

<sup>143</sup> On the development of the Marine base at Quantico, see Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps*, rev. ed. (New York: Free Press, 1991), 284, 291, 323-24.

<sup>144</sup> Lt. Col. K.E. Rockey, USMC, to Charles H. Gerner, NPS, 24 June 1935, pp. 2-3, NPS Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General 201 National Defense, “C,” Box 81, Folder 201, National Archives II.

<sup>145</sup> Acting Secretary of the Interior E.K. Burlew to Secretary of the Navy, 27 May 1941, copy in the Park Archives, Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.

<sup>146</sup> Arthur Demaray, National Park Service, to Lt. Col. R. Valliant, 31 August 1938, NPS Records (RG 79), Box 121, Folder 110, National Archives II.

<sup>147</sup> Ira Lykes, Monthly Report, May 1942, NPS Records (RG 79), File Number 1460/3, Federal Records Center, Suitland, Md., cited in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 25, n. 84. These records have disappeared.

personnel, including fishing in its well stocked streams, ponds and lakes.<sup>148</sup> In the hot, dry summer of 1942, Lykes voluntarily taught Marines the latest techniques in fighting forest fires so they could more effectively control fires when they began in the woodlands of their reservation.<sup>149</sup>

The following year, the commander of the Marine base, Major General Philip H. Torrey, offered, and Lykes accepted, a commission as a first lieutenant and a position at the base.<sup>150</sup> During his active duty in the Marines, from April 1943 to December 1945, Lykes was assigned as a security officer, particularly responsible for the forestry program and the prevention and control of fires on some 94,000 wooded acres of the expanded wartime Marine Base.<sup>151</sup> That included some 5,000 acres of the park land south of Joplin Road that the Marines used as an extension of their base. That included, Lykes later recalled, what the Marines called the “Guadalcanal Area,” a reference to the Pacific island which was the site of the first jungle fighting between the Marines and the Japanese. In that area, the Marines erected 13 firing ranges as well as pistol houses, mockup villages, and other installations for field exercises using live ammunition and other munitions.<sup>152</sup> The little village of Joplin, a hamlet with a general store, a schoolhouse, and a church, located near the intersection of Joplin and Breckenridge Roads, was demolished, only a concrete slab foundation of the old school house remaining.<sup>153</sup> Lykes reported directly to the commanding general of the Marine base. The National Park Service officially put Lykes on furlough due to his military service.<sup>154</sup> But because the base and the park were adjacent, Lykes, as he later recalled, could and did “serve two masters.”<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Ira Lykes, Monthly Report, 1941, NPS Records (RG 79), File Number 1460/3, Federal Records Center, Suitland, Md., cited in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 26, n. 87. These records have disappeared.

<sup>149</sup> Ira Lykes, Monthly Report, November 1942, cited in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 25-26, n. 86. These records have disappeared.

<sup>150</sup> Ira B. Lykes, oral history interview, 23 November 1973, by S. Herbert Evison [who had been Lykes’ last superior at NPS], pp. 42-43, tape number 261, NPS’s Harper’s Ferry Center, Harper’s Ferry, W.Va.

<sup>151</sup> Lykes said General Torrey’s offer was made in January. Lykes’ NPS personnel file indicates that he was assigned to active duty with the USMC on 8 April 1943; he was relieved from active duty with the Marines on 3 December 1945, put on leave and was honorably discharged on 21 January 1946. Documents in the Ira B. Lykes, Personnel File, National Archives and Records Administration, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Mo., obtained by the author, 26 April 2007.

<sup>152</sup> Ira B. Lykes, oral history interview with S. Herbert Evison, 23 November 1973, pages 42-43, transcript in NPS’s Harpers Ferry Center Library, Harpers Ferry, W.Va.

<sup>153</sup> Robert A. Noile, Triangle, Va., telephone interview with the author, 27 April 2008.

<sup>154</sup> Frank Gartside, Assistant Superintendent, National Capital Parks, National Park Service, to Ira B. Lykes, 13 September 1943, subject: Furlough (military duty), copy in Ira B. Lykes, Personnel File, obtained by the author 26 April 2007 from the National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Mo.

<sup>155</sup> Ira B. Lykes to Susan Cary Strickland, 8 September 1985, quoted in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 26.

Lykes remained at his new duties with the Marines on weekdays during the war, but on weekends, he continued his role as manager of the park. Lykes remained in the park manager's house just south of Joplin Road for the duration of the war, and he maintained social and professional relations with the commanding officers of the OSS training camps, such as Captain Walter Hixson and his successors at Area A and Major Albert Jenkins at Area C. Lykes kept an eye on the park property being occupied the the OSS north of Joplin Road and being used by the Marine Corps south of there. Weekdays, the only administrative employee of the park on duty was Lykes's secretary, Thelma Williams. She worked in a one-room temporary headquarters for the park off Joplin Road. Sharing the small office with her was a clerical employee of the OSS, a secretive man, who Lykes reported was given to drink. Late in the day on Fridays, when the Lykes came by the park office, Thelma Williams would fill him in on developments in the park during the past week.<sup>156</sup>

### **Complicated Relationships: USMC, OSS, and NPS**

The Relationship among the U.S. Marine Corps, the OSS and the National Park Service at Prince William Forest Park during the war was often intricately interrelated and sometimes complex. The Marine base provided many services for the OSS. Area C, and probably Area A as well, purchased much of its fresh food supplies from the Marine commissary at Quantico.<sup>157</sup> The Maritime Unit at Area D sent a boat every Sunday to get a variety of supplies.<sup>158</sup> Representatives at Areas A and C drove over for similar purposes. The airfield at the Marine base was utilized by Donovan's organization. The OSS Parachute School used it for two-engine planes for parachute jumps at Area A in Prince William Forest Park and Area D across the river. Practice runs by the single-engine light planes that the OSS also employed for inserting or removing agents and carrying messages also flew in and out of the Marine airstrip when necessary.<sup>159</sup> The relationship between the National Park Service and the Marine Corps could be especially complicated.

Park Manager Ira Lykes sought the Corps' aid in obtaining 1,900 acres west of the park that would secure the Quantico Creek watershed and help round out the borders of the park. In 1941, Lykes reported that Major General J. McCarthy Little, the base

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<sup>156</sup> Susan Cary Strickland interview with Thelma Williams Hebda, 15 July 1985 (Williams had married another park employee, Joseph Hebda); also Ira B. Lykes to Frank Gartside, 31 May 1943, both cited in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 26-27.

<sup>157</sup> "We made arrangements with the Marines at Quantico to go shopping from their food supplies." R. Dean Cortright, "Early Days of Area C," in Ranney and Ranney, eds., *The OSS CommVet Papers*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 9.

<sup>158</sup> John Pitt Spence, telephone interview with the author, 28 January 2005.

<sup>159</sup> Frank A. Gleason and Charles M. Parkin, interview at Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md., on a tour of the park with the author, 18 May 2005, and Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 3 April 2008.

commander, had suggested that the Navy might be able to purchase those that acreage with the idea of transferring them to the Park Service in exchange for a comparable amount of land on the Chopawamsic watershed in the southern part of the park that could be transferred to the Marine Reservation. The Secretary of the Interior followed up with a request to Secretary of the Navy proposing that the two agencies draft legislation for such a transfer.<sup>160</sup> On its own, the Navy announced in October 1942 that it was going to expand the 6,800-acre Marine Base at Quantico by adding 50,000 acres west of the base.<sup>161</sup> The Marines included the southern part of the park as well as private holdings in that plan.<sup>162</sup> In conversations with Major General Philip Torrey, the new commanding officer at the base, Lykes expressed concern about the impact of the Marines' acquisition on the western part of Quantico Creek upon the quality of water flowing into the cabin camps in the northern part of the park and that the park lands "not be used for maneuver purposes when the Marines Acquisition Program is completed."<sup>163</sup> Lykes later said that he had a very friendly relationship with General Torrey, who had proven helpful and cooperative. When the OSS occupied the park north of Joplin Road, Lykes and his family moved from the park manager's residence (today the park headquarters) into a park building on the south side of Joplin Road. Lykes used part of this residence as an office. Although the building was in the southern sector used by the Marines during the war, General Torrey not only allowed Lykes to live there but the Marine base winterized the dwelling, furnished the heating oil, and paid the electric bill. General Torrey may have had other ideas for its eventual use. One day while touring the area, Torrey walked into the building and looked around. "The first thing he said was, what a damn good officers' club this would make," Lykes recalled. "I didn't know how to respond to that so I didn't respond." The park manager's coolness put the damper on the general's enthusiasm. "They never did turn it into an officers' club," Lykes said.<sup>164</sup>

With the Marines already using the southern part of the park due to wartime needs and in anticipation of an exchange of land and permanent agreement, the Secretary of the Interior issued a temporary permit in June 1943 for the Department of the Navy (the Marine Corps) to use the 4,862 acres of park land on Chopawamsic Creek south of Joplin Road for the duration of the war and six months afterward.<sup>165</sup> So while the OSS Special

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<sup>160</sup> Acting Secretary of the Interior E.K. Burlew to Secretary of the Navy, 27 May 1941, copy in the Park Archives of Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.

<sup>161</sup> "Marines to Add 50,000 Acres to Quantico Reservation," *Washington Evening Star*, 6 October 1942, clipping with Conrad L. Wirth, NPS, to Ira B. Lykes, 7 October 1942, in NPS Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General 201 National Defense, "C," Box 81, Folder 201 National Archives II.

<sup>162</sup> Ira B. Lykes to Conrad L. Wirth, 9 October 1942, with map attached, NPS Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General 201 National Defense, "C," Box 81, Folder 201, National Archives II.

<sup>163</sup> Ira B. Lykes to Superintendent National Capital Parks [Irving Root], 4 February 1943, Memorandum, , National Park Service Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General 201 National Defense, "C," Box 81, Folder 201, National Archives II.

<sup>164</sup> Ira B. Lykes, oral history interview, 23 November 1973, by S. Herbert Evison, p. 44, tape number 261, NPS's Harper's Ferry Center, Harper's Ferry, W.Va.

<sup>165</sup> Newton B. Drury, Director NPS, to Mr. Demaray, 28 June 1943, Memorandum; Acting Secretary of the Interior Abe Fortas to Acting Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, 21 June 1943; Forrestal to Secretary



Operations and Communications Branches were doing their training in the northern part of the park, the Marines conducted their field exercises in the southern part.<sup>166</sup>

What Lykes believed to have been a consensus on transferring Navy purchased lands on the western border of the park to the National Park Service in exchange for park lands south of Joplin Road to be transferred to the Marine Reservation broke down between 1943 and 1946. The joint Navy-Interior committees formed to draft legislation for the permanent transfer could not reach agreement. In Lykes' opinion, he had a verbal commitment from Marine leaders at the base for the Navy to purchase 1,900 acres on the west in exchange for nearly 5,000 acres of the park in the south. It was with such an understanding, Lykes said, that the Marines had been allowed to use the land south of Joplin Road for major field maneuvers, including changes in the landscape for their training purposes that in the park manager's words had left the area "no longer...in any way suitable for recreational development."<sup>167</sup> By 1944 with Allied victory only a matter of time, NPS was concerned cutbacks in defense spending would eliminate the funds necessary for the Navy Department's purchase of the land and the transfer. Attempts to get a transfer agreement were blocked by the Navy which wanted to wait for a determination of the peacetime size of the Marine Corps which had been increased from 19,000 Marines in 1939 to 475,000 during the war.<sup>168</sup> The matter of the transfer of lands and the status of the Marine usage of the southern part of Prince William Forest Park remained unresolved when the war ended in September 1945. Although the 1943 temporary use permit for the Marines was technically terminated in 1946, the entire southern tract of nearly 5,000 acres appeared to have become a fixture of the Marine Corps base. That expansion led to a longstanding controversy about control over the southern area of the park that would continue until its final resolution in 2003.<sup>169</sup>

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of the Interior, 12 June 1943, requesting transfer of jurisdiction of 4, 862 acres in the park lying south of Road No. 626 and west of road No. 619 to Navy Department "for the period of the present national emergency and for a period of six months thereafter," all in NPS Records (RG 79), Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General 201 National Defense, "C," Box 81, Folder 201, National Archives II.

<sup>166</sup> Ira B. Lykes, oral history interview, 23 November 1973, by S. Herbert Evison, p. 43, tape number 261, NPS's Harper's Ferry Center, Harper's Ferry, W.Va.

<sup>167</sup> Ira B. Lykes to Superintendent, 12 April 1946, NPS Records (RG 79), File Number 1460/4, Federal Records Center, Suitland, Md., cited in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 57, n. 164. These records have disappeared.

<sup>168</sup> Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes to Acting Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, 5 August 1944, and Forrestal to Ickes, 18 September 1944; on other hand some Marine officers thought that the Quantico base might be expanded to a takeover of the entire Chopawamsic Recreational Demonstration Area after the war, Lt. Col. M. B. Twining, USMC, executive officer, to Post Quartermaster, 4 December 1944; all in NPS Records (RG 79), File Number 1460/4, Federal Records Center, Suitland, Md., cited in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 58, n. 165-167. These records have disappeared.

<sup>169</sup> The negotiations and final resolution in 2003 are described in Chapter 10 of the present work.

