

Chapter 9

OSS in Action: The Pacific and the Far East

Although the most publicized achievements of the OSS occurred in Europe and North Africa, Donovan's organization also contributed to the war against Japan in the Far East. That contribution was mainly in the China-Burma-India Theater (CBI), which American veterans of the CBI often call the "forgotten war" of World War II. But it was an important war and one in which the OSS made significant achievements. In the beginning, after the Japanese had pushed through most of Southeast Asia, they were finally stopped at the border of India. With the Burma Road severed, the Americans turned to an airlift and astonishingly supplied the Chinese by making thousands of flights "over the Hump," across the Himalaya Mountains. OSS-led guerrillas, 10,000 Kachin tribesmen, helped undermine Japanese control in Burma, and the OSS established contact with other resistance movements in Thailand and Indochina. Most importantly, the fighting in China itself tied down the bulk of the Japanese Army throughout the war. Most of the members of OSS Special Operations, Operational Groups, and Communications, and many in Secret Intelligence, who served in the Far East had obtained at least part of their training at Training Camps A, B, or C in Catoctin Mountain Park and Prince William Forest Park.

OSS Director William J. Donovan had a long and strong interest in the Far East, dating back to his prize-winning senior thesis at Columbia on Japan's emergence as a world power. In the interwar years, he made several trips to Asia, and a month after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Donovan established an office in Honolulu for liaison with the Army and Navy in the Pacific.¹ Within three months, he dispatched a representative to China to "improvise an underground apparatus."² Donovan hoped his organization would play an important role in the war against the Japanese Empire.

General MacArthur Snubs the OSS

OSS tried but failed to gain significant access to the island-fighting war in the Pacific. General Douglas MacArthur, commander in the Southwestern Pacific, would have nothing to do with the OSS. He sneered at Donovan's offers of assistance, insisting

¹ OSS, *War Report of the OSS*, Volume II, *Overseas Targets*; originally written 1947 by the OSS's immediate successor, the Strategic Services Unit of the War Department, declassified and with a new introduction by Kermit Roosevelt (New York: Walker and Company, 1976), 365. Hereinafter OSS, *War Report of the OSS: Overseas Targets*.

² For the representative's memoir, see Esson Gale, *Salt for the Dragon* (East Lansing: Michigan State College Press, 1953), 215.

on exclusive control of all forces under his command and holding Donovan's collection of amateurs in disdain. Whether MacArthur's 1942 decision was made for practical or personal reasons, or both, it effectively excluded the OSS for most of the war.³ Donovan was not even able to outflank MacArthur, at least initially. In April 1943, the OSS chief sent an agent to try to convince Vice-Admiral William F. ("Bull") Halsey, whose naval forces assisted MacArthur, to allow OSS into the Southwest Pacific Area. But Halsey was not persuaded and finally told the man to "Get the hell out of here!"⁴

In the winter of 1944-1945, some OSS personnel, most of them trained in the National Parks in Maryland and Virginia, were sent to the Philippines as MacArthur's forces landed first on Leyte and subsequently on the main island of Luzon. Some of these may have been with MacArthur's authorization, others perhaps not. Delivered at night by submarines, they were deployed under the authority of Admiral Chester Nimitz, commander of the U.S. Navy in the Pacific. Army First Lieutenant Donald V. Jamison, a Native American, was put ashore on Luna, La Unión, in the Philippines in the fall of 1944. An OSS Special Operations officer, undoubtedly trained at the SO camps at Areas B and A, the 22-year-old Jamison was directed to engage in reconnaissance and demolition work behind Japanese lines. Later recalling the fierce battles in the Philippines, he said that he had first learned guerrilla skills as a boy on the Rincon Indian Reservation near San Diego. His father was a Seneca-Cayuga Indian from upstate New York, but his mother was a member of the Luiseno Band of Mission Indians in California. There he learned marksmanship, riding, and hunting in the wild. Recruited and trained in World War II first by the Army and then by the OSS, he was landed by submarine in the Philippines. He worked with Filipino resistance groups to hinder Japanese lines of communication and supply and impede the enemy's opposition to the landings and advance of the U.S. Army. Afterwards, Jamison received several medals from the Philippine government and began a lifelong friendship with Ferdinand Marcos, a wartime guerrilla leader, who later became President of the Philippines.⁵

³ Many of Donovan's supporters remain convinced that MacArthur never became reconciled to the fact that Donovan and not MacArthur, his division commander in World War I, had been awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism in France. Robert Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 250-51; Richard Dunlop, *Donovan: America's Master Spy* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1982), 402-414; Corey Ford, *Donovan of OSS* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970), 253. MacArthur's defenders support his judgment: Charles A. Willoughby and John Chamberlain, *MacArthur, 1941-1951* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1954), 144-145; D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur*, Vol. II, 1941-1945 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 510-11; and William B. Breuer, *MacArthur's Undercover War: Spies, Saboteurs, Guerrillas, and Secret Missions* (New York: John Wiley, 1995), 32-35, 226-227, who asserts that MacArthur was influenced by rumors from Washington that the OSS was filled with left-leaning liberals, fuzzy-thinking amateurs, and eager "cowboys" playing "cops and robbers."

⁴ William F. Halsey, *Admiral Halsey's Story* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1947), 170; and for a different account, Richard Dunlop, *Donovan: America's Master Spy* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1982), 403.

⁵ Lillian Cox, "San Diego Paper Reports on OSS American Indian in Philippines," *OSS Society Newsletter*, Fall 2005, 16.

Admiral Nimitz Welcomes OSS Frogmen

In the Pacific Ocean Area, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, the theater commander and commander-in-chief of the Pacific Fleet, was less rigid than General MacArthur, although he too was reluctant, at least initially, to include the OSS. In 1943, Donovan offered OSS personnel for espionage, sabotage and “black propaganda” against Japan and its outposts in the Pacific, but neither Nimitz nor the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) was interested.⁶ The next year in April 1944, when Donovan met with Nimitz at Pearl Harbor and showed him the list of the OSS’s specially trained units, the only group that interested the admiral was one from the Maritime Unit. Nimitz told Donovan, “I can use your swimmers.”⁷

The OSS operational swimmers, or “frogmen,” were part of the Maritime Unit that Donovan had established in 1942 with its training facilities first at Area A and then Area D on the Potomac River, and finally in the Bahamas and off California. Navy veteran and deep sea diver, John P. Spence from Tennessee, had been recruited by the OSS in 1942 for training in small boat handling and underwater demolition. He underwent SO paramilitary training at Area B and then combat swimming and demolition training at Area D. He remained at D as an OSS/MU instructor through the end of 1943. Spence was subsequently sent to the Bahamas where he trained frogmen for deployment in the Pacific. He is recognized by the OSS and by the Navy as “one of the first combat swimmers in the United States,” and in 2001, the Naval Academy celebrated him as “the last surviving member of the original five OSS combat swimmers.”⁸

When OSS established its West Coast schools in California in 1944 to prepare members from the various branches, SI, SO, MO, and MU, for service in the Far East, Marine Lieutenant Elmer (“Pinky”) Harris, the Washington State alumnus from Ketchikan, Alaska who was one of the original SO instructors at Areas B and A, was assigned temporarily as an instructor at the Underwater Swimming School at Catalina Island near Los Angeles. An able instructor, regardless of the subject, Harris had taught paramilitary techniques at Area B, then parachute skills at Area A before being sent in SO units to North Africa and Corsica. Afterwards, in early 1944, he was transferred to Brindisi, Italy to establish a parachute training school. Following medical treatment in the

⁶ OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 365-366. Earlier, Nimitz allowed John Ford and the OSS Field Photographic unit to photograph the damage to the naval base at Pearl Harbor in December 1941 and later to accompany the fleet for a prize-winning wartime documentary, *The Battle of Midway* (1942).

⁷ Francis Douglas Fane and Don Moore, *The Naked Warriors* (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, 1956), 133; and John B. Dwyer, *Seaborne Deception: The History of U.S. Beach Jumpers* (New York: Greenwood, 1992).

⁸ John P. Spence, telephone interview with the author, 28 January 2005; and supporting material, including a commemoration of Spence, from which the quotations were taken, at a conference, “Naval Forces Under the Sea: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow,” U.S. Naval Academy, 29-29 March 2001, mailed by Spence to the author, 4 Feb. 2005.

United States for severe abdominal pains, Harris was sent as an underwater demolitions instructor to the OSS school at Catalina Island in the summer of 1944.⁹

The OSS Maritime Unit had developed splayed, rubber swim fins for its swimmers and adopted a self-contained underwater breathing apparatus, SCUBA, invented by Dr. Christian Lambertsen, who subsequently joined OSS. Donovan lent OSS Maritime Unit Group A to the Navy's Underwater Demolitions Team Number Ten (UDT-10), and the two teams served together in the Pacific with Nimitz's approval in 1944 and 1945. The OSS frogmen of MU-Group A, trained by John Spence, Elmer Harris, and others, participated jointly with Navy UDT-10 in pre-landing inspections and obstacle destruction in more than half a dozen Japanese held islands.¹⁰

Operational swimming was a dangerous business. Three members of a five-man OSS/Navy frogman team were lost in one of their first Pacific missions, the exploration of the Japanese fortified island of Yap in the western Carolines in August 1944. In the middle of the night, the submarine *USS Burrfish* launched the swimmers in two rafts from about two miles out, but paddling in, the men found a reef a quarter mile from shore. While two men held the rafts at the reef, the other three swam in to reconnoiter. The three had not returned when dawn approached and their comrades, believing them captured, returned to the submarine which submerged and left. The Japanese had captured them and transferred them by ship to the Philippines, but they were never located by the Allies. All five members of the team were awarded the Silver Star Medal, the military's third highest decoration for bravery, three of them posthumously.¹¹

Before going to Yap, the ill-fated swimming team had already explored the Japanese defenses on Peleliu, and the Navy chose that island as the target for the Marines invasion in mid-September 1944. Nineteen-year-old Marine Sergeant Patrick Finelli from Newton, Massachusetts, had already been trained in demolitions and booby traps when the OSS obtained him as an operational swimmer in the summer of 1944. Recruited in California, he may have been trained first by Lieutenant Elmer Harris at Catalina Island. Beginning on 12 September, three days before the scheduled invasion of Peleliu, dressed only in swim trunks, sneakers and leather gloves, young Finelli and other OSS and Navy swimmers spent several days setting off more than a thousand demolition charges to clear entryways through the coral reef. "It was hot, thirsty, itchy, and terrifying work," Finelli recalled. "The Japanese had their own swimmers hiding explosives in the coral reefs." While in shallow water close to the beach, the men were shot at from shore. Most of the work was done during the day, but the Americans made one dive on a moonlit night. "That's about the most frightening thing I've ever done," Finelli said. "Your every movement creates phosphorescence, and every time you rub up against something you think it may be a big fish that wants to eat you or a Jap swimmer who wants to kill you."

⁹ Robert E. Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger: Marines of the OSS* (Washington, D.C.: History and Museum Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1989), 176.

¹⁰ Fane and Moore, *Naked Warriors*, 132; Kenneth Finlayson, "Key West: Home of ARSOF Underwater Operations," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, 3:1 (2007): 3.

¹¹ OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 366; Fane and Moore, *Naked Warriors*, 133-37, and the declassified report of 24 August 1944 from the commanding officer of the *USS Burrfish* to the commander of submarine force, Pacific fleet, <http://www.missingaircrew.com/yap2.asp>, accessed 26 July 2006.

On the day of the invasion, 15th September 1944, the swimmers used demolitions on the reef and also on shore. Several Japanese, armed with knives and bayonets, made a suicidal banzai charge at them. In the knife fight, Finelli suffered a number of cuts but survived and was treated for his wounds at a naval hospital in Hawaii. After the war, Finelli worked for Polaroid until his retirement in 1993, and he continued to swim regularly at 83 years of age.¹²

Over the next several months, the OSS swimmers, working jointly with the Navy's UDT-10, participated in several other important campaigns, including the seizure of Ulithi, the invasion of the Philippines at Leyte and Luzon. In all sixteen of the combat swimmers in the joint OSS/Navy team were killed in action.¹³ The OSS "frogmen," plus the Navy's Underwater Demolitions Teams along with two or three other naval special operations units of World War II, are officially recognized as the forerunners of today's Navy SEALs.¹⁴

Reginald Spear: OSS Agent Extraordinaire

One of the most extraordinary OSS Officers to serve in the Pacific, as an operational swimmer as well as a secret agent, was Reginald G. ("Reg") Spear, a precocious young inventor and bold adventurer from California. After OSS training, Lieutenant Spear eagerly went on missions including frogman operations against Japanese fortified islands, penetrating a prisoner of war camp in the Philippines, and searching behind enemy lines in China for a missing espionage agent. Some of his missions were ordered personally by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Although born and raised in California, Spear was descended from a prominent family in England and Canada.¹⁵ At 18, Spear enlisted as a private in the U.S. Army. His high test scores and technical ability led to his being sent to Officers' Candidate School at the Army Ordnance facility at Aberdeen, Maryland. In 1943, as a second lieutenant in the Ordnance Corps, he was recruited by the OSS, and then underwent training at Area F, the former Congressional Country Club, and RTU-11 ("the Farm"); he concluded his OSS

¹² Carole LaMond, "Parade Marshal, WWII Vet, A Quiet Hero," unidentified newspaper story, Sudbury [Massachusetts], 22 May 2008, reprinted in *OSS Society Digest*, Number 2063, 27 May 2008, www.ossociety@yahoo.com, accessed 27 May 2008.

¹³ Fane and Moore, *Naked Warriors*, 168-69; OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 366.

¹⁴ Official U.S. Navy SEAL Information Web Site, <http://www.sealchallenge.Navy/seal/introduction.aspx>, accessed 24 September 2007.

¹⁵ Reginald G. Spear's paternal grandfather, Sir Richard Spear, owned coal mines in Newcastle. In the late 19th century, he immigrated to Nanaimo, Victoria Island, British Columbia, Canada, and started exporting coal from there. Reginald Spear's aunt, Mary Ellen Smith, was the first woman government minister in the British Empire. His father, an officer in a British Columbia regiment, fought and lost an arm at the Battle of Vimy Ridge in France in World War I. Spear's mother was a volunteer nurse with the Canadian Expeditionary Force. After the war, the Spears moved to California, where Reginald G. Spear was born in January 1924. Reginald G. Spear, telephone conversation with the author, 27 May 2005.

training at Area B at Catoctin Mountain Park in January and February 1944.¹⁶ His British and Canadian connections—Winston Churchill knew of his family—and his own talent and abilities led young Spear to be summoned several times to meet with President Franklin Roosevelt, sometimes at “Shangri-La,” the Presidential retreat at Catoctin Mountain Park. Roosevelt sent him on secret missions to work with the U.S. Navy and the British in the Pacific and in Asia.¹⁷ “I had a reputation,” Spear recalled. “They sent me for intelligence in the Pacific to work between the Americans and the British.”¹⁸ After his training concluded at Area B, the 20-year-old Spear and a fellow OSS Army officer arrived at Nimitz’s headquarters in Hawaii. The Admiral thought they should be in Navy uniforms if they were going to work for him. So he made them naval lieutenants. But according to Spear, Edward Layton, Nimitz’s intelligence chief, said, “If this young man gets caught by the Japanese in his activities, they will cut his head off. However, if he has an extremely high rank for someone so young, then they will believe that he must be someone special and treat him with more consideration.” So they gave Spear a naval captain’s uniform, equal in rank to an Army colonel, with eagles on his lapels.¹⁹

President Roosevelt swore Spear to secrecy about the missions he gave him, and Spear has maintained his silence on those to the present day.²⁰ But Spear was willing to discuss operations he undertook for Nimitz. In late summer 1944, following training in operational swimming off Maui, Spear made a clandestine inspection of Japanese occupied island of Peleliu, long before the planned invasion. A submarine put him ashore one night, and from native residents and from his own observations, he learned that the Japanese had heavily fortified the island with tunnels, caves, and concealed weapons bunkers. Spear returned with this information and its implication that it would be a very difficult assault.²¹ But the invasion of Peliliu proceeded on schedule, nevertheless, and the Americans suffered more than 7,000 casualties, making Pelilu one of the costliest invasions in the Pacific, foreshadowing the dug-in defenses and high casualties the following year on Iwo Jima and Okinawa.²²

Spear also took part in a nighttime reconnaissance of Yap. The first mission to Yap in August, which had cost the lives of three swimmers, failed to produce useful intelligence. This time, the submarine commander hove to only a mile out, and Spear and

¹⁶ Ibid., telephone interviews with the author, 21 December 2004, 6 January and 25 March 2005.

¹⁷ Reginald G. Spear, interviewed by the author during an OSS veterans’ tour of Area B. Catoctin Mountain Park, arranged by the author 18 May 2005, and telephone interview with the author, 27 May 2005.

¹⁸ Reginald G. Spear, telephone interviews with the author, 26 and 27 May 2005.

¹⁹ Ibid., 24 June 2005.

²⁰ Ibid., 7 January 2005.

²¹ Reginald G. Spear conversation with the author while returning to Tyson’s Corner, Vienna, Va. from an OSS veterans’ tour arranged by the author of Catoctin Mountain Park, Md., 18 May 2005; plus telephone interview 3 July 2008.

²² Alan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps*, rev. ed. (New York: Free Press, 1991), 419-423.

his entire team paddled all the way to shore. They were soon discovered by a couple of Japanese sentries. But when one of the sentries used his rifle for a stranglehold and broke the trachea of a captive swimmer, the other Americans quickly killed the sentries with barehanded techniques Dan Fairbairn had taught them. Stacking the Japanese uniforms neatly in a pile and shoving the corpses into the outgoing tide so it would look like suicide, the OSS team moved out and surveyed the small island's defenses. Well before dawn, they returned to their injured comrade and paddled back to the submarine. The pharmacist mate could not save the wounded frogman, who subsequently died and was buried at sea.²³ Nimitz canceled the invasion of Yap as unnecessary, and the bypassed island remained a harmless, isolated Japanese outpost until the end of the war.

Nighttime reconnaissance on Japanese-fortified islands was dangerous enough but walking into a Japanese internment camp for Allied prisoners of war in broad daylight, as Spear would do in December 1944, called for even steadier nerves. Only a few weeks before MacArthur's forces were scheduled to land on Luzon, the Allies feared that the Japanese might massacre POWs and other internees rather than let them be liberated and possibly testify about war crimes. In mid-December, Japanese guards had indeed murdered nearly 150 Americans at a POW camp on Palawan, crowding them into wood-covered, air-raid ditches, pouring and igniting gasoline, and killing most of the prisoners.²⁴ Spear's assignment on Luzon was to determine the possibilities of an impending massacre of the civilian and military prisoners at the Santo Tomas facility in Manila and whether the prisoners were fit enough to assist an attempt to liberate the camp by American paratroopers and Filipino guerrillas.²⁵

On the night of 4 December 1944, shortly before MacArthur's forces began to land on Luzon, Spear paddled ashore from an American submarine to learn about the conditions of the prisoners at Santo Tomas.²⁶ The spy's cover was to pose as a junior assistant mining engineer from Canada working for a British-run, Filipino company in Luzon that was mining gold the Japanese wanted. There was a problem in the mine and the British manager was one of the internees at Santo Tomas. The American labels in Spear's civilian seersucker suit had been replaced by ones from Victoria, Canada. He carried falsified identification cards and he wore a red armband that indicated that he was a friendly civilian authorized to visit the camp. When Spear arrived at the entrance, he found the guards at the gate busy with a large number of Filipino women. Spear joined the line and when he reached the gate, a harried Japanese guard looked quickly at his identification, glanced at his red armband, and then peered into Spear's bag, which

²³ Reginald G. Spear conversation with the author while driving back to Tyson's Corner, Vienna, Va. from an OSS veterans' tour arranged by the author of Catoctin Mountain Park, 18 May 2005; and telephone interview 3 July 2008.

²⁴ Gavin Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese* (New York: William Morrow, 1995). Eleven American prisoners escaped, eventually reached American lines and told their story to Army intelligence officers.

²⁵ Reginald Spear, telephone interview with the author, 27 May 2005.
Robert Ross Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1963); William B. Breuer, *Retaking the Philippines: America's Return to Corregidor and Bataan, October 1944-March 1945* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986).

²⁶ Reginald Spear, telephone interview with the author, 25 March 2005.

contained a packet of rice and twelve packs of cigarettes. “The guard reached in and took them all,” Spear said. “I argued with him. I got two packs back and went into the camp.”²⁷ There were three thousand American and other internees and prisoners of war in the camp. Because of his red armband, Spear was allowed to walk unhampered over to their area. For forty-five minutes, he talked with members of the POW executive, committee, including the mining company manager, and was able to get answers to the questions he had been given. Now he had to get that information back to the OSS.

The nearest clandestine radio station was deep in the rugged mountains north of Manila in a guerrilla hideout called “Victory Hill” operated by Filipinos and some American servicemen who had escaped when the U.S. forces in the Philippines surrendered in May 1942. Spear took a train to a town at the base of the mountains. From there, two guerrillas accompanied him on the long hike up the mountain, first along a narrow trail, then sloshing two miles up a shallow river, and finally up another trail until, behind some large boulders, they reached the guerrillas’ camp. Arriving around midnight, Spear was so exhausted that he laid down and fell asleep. In the morning, he wrote out his report on the POW camp. He went through the list of questions, including the key ones. Was it believed that the Japanese would murder the prisoners? Answer: No. Was the condition of the prisoners critical? Answer: Yes. The radio operator sent them out immediately.²⁸

His mission accomplished, Spear and his guide walked back down the mountain and from town, he was taken by truck to the coast where the submarine was supposed to wait for him. Spear was a little late. The submarine was not there. Its skipper had been unwilling to remain any longer. “We radioed the sub, and it came back, but farther up the coast,” Spear said. “I had to run three or four miles up the beach to reach it.”²⁹ Two months later, the prisoners at Santo Tomas POW camp were successfully rescued on 16 February 1945 by the U.S. Army and Filipino guerrillas.³⁰

Later in 1945, Reginald Spear was sent on a secret mission behind Japanese lines in northern China. A Chinese businessman in New York City, Dr. Konrad Hsu, an authority and an entrepreneur in radio technology, had been selling equipment to the British clandestine services in China and India, and the British wanted to recruit him and tap the influential Hsu clan in northern China as an agent network. The British Secret Intelligence Service initially planned to run the operation using one of the Canadian government’s communications networks rather than those of the British or Americans, perhaps to deceive the Chinese spy network. In the end, however, SIS needed the

²⁷ Ibid., 27 May 2005.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 27 May 2005, and 2 July 2008. Mr. Spear delivered a videotaped talk on his experience in the Philippines at a 60th anniversary commemorations held in February 2005 in San Diego and Las Vegas of the liberation of the Japanese prison camp at Santo Tomas in Manila. For accounts of the rescues at the Luzon camps at Cabanatuan, Santo Tomas, Biblibad, and Los Baños, see Gavin Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese* (New York: William Morrow, 1995); Anthony Arthur, *Deliverance at Los Baños* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1985); and Hampton Slides, *Ghost Soldiers: The Epic Account of World War II’s Greatest Rescue Mission* (New York: Doubleday, 2001).

³⁰ Reginald Spear, telephone interview with the author, 2 July 2008.

financing that only Donovan's organization could provide. But although OSS funded the "Oyster" project (code-named after Konrad Hsu's fondness for shellfish), SIS alone coordinated the operation and maintained direct contact with Hsu in regard to it.³¹ Reg Spear was called when one of SIS's Chinese contacts lost contact with his wife, who was serving as a top British agent. "They sent me into China to find her," he explained.³² And he did find her.³³ Once again, mission accomplished.

For his extraordinary service during World War II, Reginald Spear was awarded the Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, and the Legion of Merit.³⁴

China-Burma-India Theater (CBI): The "Forgotten" War

In the Far East, World War II began in 1937 with the Japanese invasion of China. Over the new few years, Tokyo expanded its control over most of the urban-industrial areas of the coast and along the main rivers. The occupied areas of China were forced to supply Japan with foodstuffs, raw materials, and industrial goods. Beginning in December 1941, when Japan attacked America, British, and Dutch territories, Tokyo rapidly extended its empire south and west in the Pacific and through Southeast Asia to the India-Burma border. Despite these widespread conquests and their subsequent defense against counterassaults launched by Anglo-American forces, the bulk of the Japanese Army remained engaged in China throughout the war.

The Western Allies gave priority to defeating Nazi Germany. The campaign against Japan received fewer resources. There Roosevelt's strategy emphasized island-hopping Army and Navy offensives through the Pacific toward the Japanese home islands. He viewed China's main role as tying down and grinding up as many Japanese Army divisions as possible, as the Soviet Union did to the German Army. That would result in fewer Japanese soldiers to fight the Americans in the Pacific.³⁵ The United States would supply China with loans, weapons, material, and advisers, but not many American troops. There was considerable fighting in China, but it usually saw the Chinese on the defensive.³⁶ For most of the war, the Chinese were reluctant to suffer the heavy casualties generated by offensive operations. Primarily through conscription of

³¹ Richard J. Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War against Japan: Britain, America and the Politics of Secret Service* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 129, 409 note 72; David Stafford, *Roosevelt and Churchill: Men of Secrets* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1999), 261-262.

³² Reginald Spear, telephone interview with the author, 27 May 2005.

³³ *Ibid.*, telephone interview with the author, 2 July 2008.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, telephone interview with the author, 3 July 2008.

³⁵ Louis Morton, "Germany First," in Kent Roberts Greenfield, ed., *Command Decisions* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960); Michael Schaller, *The U.S. Crusade in China, 1938-1945* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979).

³⁶ Hsi-Sheng Ch'i, *Nationalist China at War* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984).

young peasants, the Chinese maintained armies totaling between three and four million men. Inadequately supplied, trained, and led, they still, by their very presence, tied down about 1.2 million Japanese troops.³⁷

Even in areas still under Chinese control, power remained fragmented. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Government had to contend with various personal factions, regional warlords, and Mao Tse-tung (Zedong) and his band of communists.³⁸ The communist forces had sought refuge in the mountains of the North, but like Chiang's government had spies everywhere. Jockeying for position while the Americans defeated Japan in the Pacific, both Chiang and Mao sought primarily to strengthen their forces for their inevitable postwar struggle for control of China.

With the China-Burma-India Theater (CBI) designated as of secondary importance and thus not receiving comparatively few Americans troops, Donovan believed it was ripe for unconventional warfare. With the Japanese empire overextended, the OSS would seek to harness the latent opposition to the conquerors. Much of the areas to be contested in the CBI, particularly in Southeast Asia, were either sparsely populated or actual jungle, and this, together with thinly spread occupation forces, made the situation conducive for guerrilla warfare by indigenous groups, organized, armed, and directed by the OSS.³⁹ Donovan found some grudging acceptance from Lieutenant General Joseph Stilwell, the top American commander in the China-Burma-India Theater. A crusty old soldier, "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell had the unenviable task seeking to get Chiang Kai-shek to use the support the United States was providing for offensive action against the Japanese instead of allowing it to be dispersed through corruption or rivalries or stockpiled for postwar use.⁴⁰

Detachment 101: OSS Success in Burma

In the dark days of early 1942, as the Japanese drove back the Allies everywhere, Donovan sought out Stilwell about a role for the OSS in the Far East. The result was OSS Detachment 101, the first composite SO/SI group, which ultimately proved to be one of the greatest successes of Donovan's organization. Its activities in Japanese-occupied Burma between 1942 and 1945, resembled, perhaps more than those of any other OSS detachment, the mission and capability of the modern Special Forces of the U.S. Army.⁴¹

³⁷ Merion and Susie Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army* (New York: Random House, 1991).

³⁸ Mao Zedong in current spelling. The present work will use the World War II spellings concerning China.

³⁹ OSS, *War Report of the OSS: Overseas Targets*, 357.

⁴⁰ Barbara Tuchman, *Sand against the Wind: Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945* (New York: Macmillan, 1971); and David Rooney, *Stilwell the Patriot: Vinegar Joe, the Brits, and Chiang Kai-shek* (London: Greenhill, 2005).

⁴¹ Troy J. Sacquety, "The OSS," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, 3:4 (2007); 48. Dr. Sacquety is currently writing a history of Detachment 101. The first OSS Special Operations force sent overseas was called Detachment 101, because Donovan's headquarters decided that calling it Detachment 1

It is often cited as the first unit in U.S. military history created specifically for conducting unconventional warfare operations behind enemy lines.⁴²

Detachment 101 began in April 1942 with Major (later lieutenant colonel) Carl Eifler and two dozen men. A barrel-chested, no-nonsense, law enforcement and reserve Army officer, Eifler was the son of an oil field worker in Los Angeles. A high school dropout, he served in the Army as a private, then later worked for the Los Angeles Police Department and subsequently the U.S. Customs Service, doing undercover work to catch smugglers on the Mexican border. In 1940, he was appointed chief Customs Inspector in Hawaii. He had become a reserve Army officer, and was called to active duty in 1941. He first commanded a company in the 35th Infantry Regiment in Honolulu and after the Pearl Harbor attack, a military police unit guarding enemy alien detainees in Hawaii. Six-feet, two-inches tall and weighing 250 pounds, Eifler was an imposing figure in his early forties. Strong as a bull, he had a bellowing voice, gruff demeanor, and fierce temper. His energy and enthusiasm had impressed Stilwell who responded to Donovan's request by recommending Eifler to head the unit being sent to him in the China-Burma-India Theater.⁴³ The rest of the cadre was quickly chosen, mainly through personal acquaintance. From the 35th Regiment, Eifler picked his First Sergeant, Vincent Curl, a tall Midwesterner, and his executive officer, Captain John Coughlin, a West Pointer. Coughlin chose several others he knew and trusted, including Lieutenant William R. ("Ray") Peers, an infantry officer and a UCLA and ROTC graduate. At Fort Meade, Maryland, outside Washington, D.C., Eifler and Coughlin were guests of General M.B. Halsey and his wife. Mrs. Halsey, later called the "Mother of 101," took an interest in the fledgling detachment and recommended several promising recruits, including Lieutenant Floyd R. Frazee, who had been a jeweler and worked with small tools; and Jack C. ("Jack") Pamplin, a civilian attorney, who subsequently volunteered for the Army was made a sergeant and was assigned "detached duty" to Eifler's Detachment 101. While in Washington Eifler also recruited four other lieutenants, Bill Wilkinson, Frank Devlin, Harry Little, and Phillip Huston, plus Sergeant Allan Richter and some other sergeants, and a Chinese American named Chun Ming.⁴⁴

The initial group of Detachment 101 was split into two sections for training. Eight men went to SOE's Camp X outside Toronto. That section included Eifler and most of the other officers, Coughlin, Devlin, Frazee, plus Sergeant Curl, Chun Ming, and a man from Donovan's headquarters identified only as "Ben." They trained for two weeks under

did not suggest enough weight or experience William R. Peers and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerilla Force* (Boston: Little Brown, 1963), 27.

⁴² For example, James R. Ward, "The Activities of Detachment 101 of the OSS," in George C. Chalou, ed, *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), 318; and Detachment 101 veterans' website, <http://www.oss-101.com>.

⁴³ "'Deadliest Colonel' Dies at Age 95," *U.S. Customs Today*, August 2002, <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/CustomsToday/2002/August/other/colonel.xml>, accessed 30 December 2007; Thomas N. Moon and Carl F. Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel* (New York: Vantage Press, 1975), 1-25; Eifler was not Donovan's first choice, Maochun Yu, *OSS in China: Prelude to Cold War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 24-25.

⁴⁴ Tom Moon, *This Grim and Savage Game: OSS and the beginning of U.S. Covert Operations in World War II* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2000), 44-46, 51.

British instructors at Camp X. Meanwhile, at OSS Area B at Catoctin Mountain Park, nearly a dozen other members of Detachment 101 went through two weeks training under American instructors headed by Charles Parkin. The Catoctin trainees included a couple of Detachment 101's officers, including Lieutenant William ("Ray") Peers, plus nine sergeants. Among the sergeants, many of whom would later become officers, were Vincent Curl, John C. ("Jack") Pamplin, Irby E. Moree, George T. Hemming, and Donald Eng. Allen Richter was off buying radio equipment in New York City, but augmenting the trainees was an officer who was not a member of Detachment 101, Lieutenant Nichol Smith, who would be sent to France and subsequently to Thailand. This was apparently the first group to be trained at Area B.⁴⁵

Reunited after their separation at the two camps, Eifler's two dozen men departed from Norfolk, Virginia in May and arrived in India in July 1942. The original objective of the group had been to conduct intelligence and paramilitary operations in China, but when Stilwell flew down from Chiang Kai-shek's wartime capital in Chungking (Chongqing), he directed Eifler to set up a base in northern India, learn how to operate in the jungle, and penetrate Japanese occupied Burma. Stilwell had only minimal resources, and he needed help in preparing a campaign to retake the Burma Road, the main overland supply route across the mountains to China. Meanwhile, supplies were being airlifted from Assam, India to Kunming, China by hundreds of transport planes flying through the mountain passes of the Himalayas (over "The Hump" as it was called).⁴⁶ The Japanese were attacking the transport planes from their airbase at Myitkyina (pronounced "MITCH-in-aw") in northern Burma. Go in behind enemy lines and blow up the road and railroad bridges that enable the Japanese to supply the Myitkyina airbase, Stilwell ordered. A man of few words and short temper, "Vinegar Joe" allegedly dismissed the Detachment 101 commander by stating, "Eifler I don't want to see you again until I hear a boom from Burma."⁴⁷

Detachment 101 would ultimately give him those "booms." After a shaky start, it established itself as "the most effective tactical combat force in the OSS."⁴⁸ But first it faced formidable obstacles in the Burmese tropical jungles and the victorious Japanese

⁴⁵ Ibid., 50-51; and Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 26-34, 63, 109-10, 188. Hemming, the demolition expert, was later injured in Burma when his jeep rolled over on him; Moree was the photo expert; Pamplin and Eng had some communications expertise.

⁴⁶ OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 369; Otha C. Spencer, *Flying the Hump: Memories of an Air War* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1994). Kunming, pronounced "Cue-en-MING."

⁴⁷ Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911-1945* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 340. Stilwell's alleged remark appears in various versions in different works. Tuchman cites as her source, "China-Burma-India Theater History, OSS Narrative, Annex B, Section 2." Other sources cite Carl Eifler to M. Preston Goodfellow, OSS headquarters, 28 Sept. 1942, Goodfellow Papers, Hoover Institution, Stanford, Calif. The present author has been unable to locate this document in the Goodfellow Papers. The memoir by Moon and Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel*, 60-61, recounts Stilwell's orders to Eifler, but has "booms" remark coming from Eifler as a way of summarizing what Stilwell wanted to hear. Ray Peers, who was there, does not use Stilwell's quote at all in his own memoir, *Behind the Burma Road*, 42-43.

⁴⁸ Kermit Roosevelt, "Introduction to the 1976 Edition," OSS, *War Report of the OSS; Overseas Targets*, xvii.; Troy J. Sacquety, "The Failures of Detachment 101 and Its Evolution into a Combined Arms Team," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, 3 (2006).

Army. Northern Burma, an area larger than New England, contained rugged hills, mountains and thick, largely unexplored jungle. Movement on the ground was torturously slow, trails had to be cut through the thick vines and underbrush. For much of the year, the weather was a major impediment. In the spring temperatures soared above 100 degrees with high humidity. The summer brought torrential rains of the Monsoon, producing rot and rust. Diseases—malaria, dysentery, cholera—were rampant.⁴⁹ Ubiquitous mosquitoes, blood-sucking leeches, and deadly snakes were constant hazards. Nicol Smith, an Area B graduate who would stop at Detachment 101 Headquarters on his way to China with a contingent of Free Thais, recalled being awakened at night by the deep roar of a tiger and the high-pitched shrieks of gibbons and of finding a coiled and angry King Cobra under the table.⁵⁰

Without combat experience and with only their prior training, the initial group set up a secret base in an old tea plantation near Nazira in northern Assam, India just across the border from Burma. They recruited and trained some Anglo-Burmese and native Burmese to serve as intelligence agents, radio operators, and saboteurs. At the Detachment 101 training school at the secret base, American and native instructors offered at minimum a basic three-month course before the agents went into the field. As in the United States, longer training was required for more specialized skills such as radio operation.

Detachment 101: Communications in the Jungle

With agents being infiltrated over thousands of square miles of mountainous jungles, Detachment 101 faced the problem of establishing a communications network. In the signal unit, Donald Eng and Allen R. Richter solved the problem. Eng had been at Area B, but Richter, alone among the two dozen, had been at neither Area B nor Camp X. Instead, while the paramilitary training was going on, Richter, who had been in the communications industry, had been assigned to purchase radio supplies directly from stores in New York City. By the time the others had graduated from the training schools, Richter had assembled the materials—tubes, wires, another components—that they would need.⁵¹

From the OSS base at Nazira, the target area, Myitkyina airfield was 150 air miles away by air or 400 miles by land. Richter and Eng set up a base station at Nazira, but what was needed were relatively lightweight portable wireless radios that the agents could carry and that could transmit and receive messages over the mountains. The two of them designed a prototype by December 1942; it weighed 50 pounds including the battery and carrying case. The transmitter was a straightforward crystal oscillator and

⁴⁹ “Reports from 101,” Maj. Archie Chun-Ming [medical officer], Schools & Training Branch, “Interviews with Returned Men,” OSS Records (RG 226) Entry 161, Box 2, Folder 31, National Archives II.

⁵⁰ Nicol Smith and Blake Clark, *Into Siam: Underground Kingdom* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Bobbs-Merrill, 1946), 46-47.

⁵¹ Allen Richter, W4PHL, “Burma Homebrew,” James F. Ranney and Arthur L. Ranney, eds., *The OSS CommVets Papers*, 2nd ed. (Covington, Ky.: James F. Ranney, 2002), 95.

amplifier, usually a pair of 6V6s; radio tubes depended on what they had on hand; the receiver was a three-tube regenerative design using assorted materials. They built the containers for the prototype radios out of materials they scrounged from local airports. “We used the aluminum belly skins from crashed planes,” Richter recalled. “It still needed to be put into something strong, yet lightweight, so it could be carried. The manager of the tea plantation came to the rescue by supplying us with boards used to make wooden apple crates. It worked out fine.”⁵² “We called it the Burma Radio,” Richter said proudly, “and it could transmit 1,500 miles!”⁵³

The forerunner of the OSS SSTR-1, “suitcase radio,” it made Detachment 101 self-sufficient. Natives and Americans were trained how to use it, but one of the complaints that instructor Jack Pamplin had when he returned to Washington was that although most of the “commo” operators being sent from Area C were fast enough, they were not adequately trained in how to repair and maintain the equipment in the harsh jungle environment. “Stress [the] fact that a fast operator is not necessarily a good one,” Pamplin advised OSS “commo” instructors, “for the Far East, a resourceful operator is the ideal.”⁵⁴ At the same time, the chief of the OSS Communications Branch, Colonel Lawrence (“Larry”) Lowman, praised the work of the “commo” men in Burma for their innovation and for the delivery of intelligence and other information even in the most adverse conditions. “Our work has, we believe, played a unique, successful and important part in the realization of the overall OSS objectives in this war.”⁵⁵

Detachment 101: Taking on the Japanese in Burma

Beginning early in 1943, Detachment 101 made a series of long-range penetrations deep into the jungle in Japanese occupied North Burma by airdrop, the first airdrops made by the OSS. One of these teams blew up the railway leading to Myitkyina in eighteen places, but one member of the team was killed by a Japanese patrol, another captured, and in a premature explosion, a Burmese saboteur blew up himself as well as a bridge.⁵⁶ Soon the detachment became more proficient. In August 1943, the “Knothead” mission, commanded by now Captain Vincent Curl, assisted by now Lieutenant Jack Pamplin, dropped into the upper Hukawng Valley, less than a hundred miles from the Japanese airfield. By the end of 1943, OSS had six such permanent, if mobile, bases in the North Burma area, one of them positioned an agent atop a hill only ten miles from the

⁵² Ibid., 96.

⁵³ Allen R. Richter, telephone interview with the author, 25 March 2005.

⁵⁴ Jack Pamplin, [& Eifler] “Two Report from 101,” [1944], p. 4, Schools & Training Branch, “Interviews with Returned Men,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 2, Folder 31, National Archives II.

⁵⁵ Colonel Lowman to General Donovan, 14 November 1944, subject: OSS Communications, pp. 3-4, copy in CIA Records (RG 263), Thomas Troy Files, Box 12, Folder 98, National Archives II.

⁵⁶ OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 375-76.

Myitkyina and overlooking and reporting on activity at the airfield. Each base was staffed by a combat nucleus of eight or ten Americans. These Detachment 101 teams learned the region and recruited indigenous people as guides, spies, and guerrillas.

The OSS teams also served the 10th Air Force, rescuing downed aviators and providing detailed locations of targets that the Japanese had carefully hidden in the jungle: key bridges built just under the river surface, munitions and petroleum depots covered by camouflage netting or the jungle canopy, and underground bunker and aircraft hangers.⁵⁷ By the end of 1943, 80 percent of 10th Air Force's targets in the area resulted from OSS information.⁵⁸ "The target designation by our men has been most accurate, and the Air Force [pilots] are finding these targets without ever seeing them," Peers reported. "We receive a message that four furlongs from X road junction along the Kamaing Road, 60 yards in, there is a group of 300 Japs and 15 supply *bashas*, these all in the jungle. This is given to the Air Force who plot it and designate it by aerial photo. Their flights go over and thoroughly bomb and strafe this area, and as a result, huge clouds of black billowy smoke issue forth, showing the presence of petrol and various other stores. The Japs know that these cannot be seen from the air and know they must be designated by somebody on the ground, and as a consequence, our people are very much sought after by the armed forces of the Mikado. However, not only do we designate the targets, but we also give them [the Air Force] their results. The best one we have had thus far is one target designated southeast of Kamaing in which 30 cart loads of dead Japs were hauled away."⁵⁹

Crucial to the success of Detachment 101's missions was the recruitment, organization, arming and direction of indigenous agents and guerrillas. In Northern Burma, the OSS recruited primarily Kachins ("Kah-CHINs"), fiercely proud and able mountain people. They despised the Japanese invaders, and the Americans drew on that hatred. Some OSS officers, like Jack Pamplin explained that the Kachins' loyalty to the OSS reflected the fact that the Americans treated them with respect, unlike their previous overlords, the British.⁶⁰ Others, like Carl Eifler believed that the OSS purchased their loyalty by supplying with what they wanted: food, weapons, medicine, silver coins, and

⁵⁷ "O.S.S. Detachment 101: A Brief History of the Detachment for NCAC Records," p. 2, OSS Records, Wash-Dir-Off, OP-108 (Det. 101), April 1945, copy in CIA Records (RG 263), Thomas F. Troy Files, Box 4, Folder 30, National Archives II.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Lt. Col. W.R. Peers to Brig. Gen. William J. Donovan, 29 February 1944, subject: report covering period 1 February to 29 February 1944, inclusive, pp. 5-6, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 99, Box 66, Folder 402, National Archives II.

⁶⁰ "Reports from 101," Lt. Jack Pamplin, [1944], Schools and Training Branch, "Interviews with Returned Men," OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 2, Folder 31, National Archives II.

opium.⁶¹ Whatever the reasons, the OSS was able to mobilize eleven thousand guerrillas, whom they called the “Kachin Rangers.”⁶²

Small, wiry tribesmen who were natural hunters, Kachins served as guides, spies, and warriors. They could follow invisible tracks through the jungle or across towering mountains. In keeping with tradition and for hacking through the jungle and other purposes, each warrior carried a long curved sword called a *dah*. But they now also learned to use the weapons the Americans supplied: rifles, submachine guns, and grenades. They had their own aggressive way of fighting the Japanese. When Stilwell expressed skepticism to one Kachin tribal leader about how many Japanese he had killed. The Kachin emptied a bamboo tube he carried and out spilled a pile of human ears. “Count them and divide by two,” he told the startled general.⁶³

The Kachins showed the Americans how to survive in the jungle and how to surprise and kill the enemy there. They constructed home-made booby-traps with trip wires and crossbows. OSS in Washington devised a diabolic anti-personnel device, a small hollow spike topped with a .30-caliber rifle cartridge and a pressure detonator. The device was buried below the surface on a trail used by the enemy; when stepped upon, it fired the bullet straight up through the foot and possibly the rest of the body.⁶⁴ The Kachins also used dagger-sharp, pointed bamboo sticks several feet long, called *panji*, which they implanted at an angle in the jungle undergrowth on either side of a trail where they planned an ambush. When the Kachins, using submachine guns supplied by the Americans, attacked the front and rear of a column, the Japanese soldiers in the middle would dive for cover, impaling themselves on the deadly, spear-like *panji*.

Among the OSSers who witnessed such an ambush was Lieutenant John C. Hooker, Jr., from Atlanta, Georgia. Hooker had trained at Areas A and F in 1944, and taken part in Maritime Unit raids along the Arakan coast of southern Burma, before being assigned briefly to Detachment 101 in early 1945. For several weeks, Hooker participated in airdrop supply missions, and then in March 1945, he jumped near Lashio and spent nearly three weeks with a field team and their native guerrillas. As the Kachins prepared an ambush, Hooker watched them cut and plant “panji” stakes along side. Then, Kachin teams with British Bren submachine guns hid themselves at each end of a 200 yard stretch of trail. “The action was quick,” Hooker recalled. “The Japanese platoon-size force of about fifty men entered the site, and in five minutes all were dead. The advanced guard of the element was picked off by Kachin snipers a half mile south of the ambush. When the smoke cleared I had emptied both twenty round magazines of my gun. The

⁶¹ “Interviews with Colonel Eifler, Some of Colonel Eifler’s View on Training; Based on Talks en route to and at Areas A-4, E, and F, July 1944,” p. 4, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 2, Folder 28, National Archives II.

⁶² Moon and Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel*, Appendix, 312. Moon served under Eifler in Burma, and related his own experiences in *This Grim and Savage Game* (New York: Burning Gate Press, 1991).

⁶³ Roger Hilsman, *American Guerrilla: My War Behind Japanese Lines* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s, 1990), 124. The more aggressive Kachin tribes also had a tradition of torturing prisoners before killing them, and they resisted American attempts to stop this practice.

⁶⁴ Donovan Webster, *The Burma Road: The Epic Story of the China-Burma-India Theater in World War II* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 159-60; Peers and Brellis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 95.

[Kachin] Rangers went among the dead clipping off ears....Each man had a bamboo tube on a cord slung around his neck where he stored his trophies.”⁶⁵

Donovan Lands behind Enemy Lines

Both Donovan and Eifler were strong-willed, self-assured, competitive men, who enjoyed the thrill of danger. Eifler did not take criticism easily, so when on a visit to Detachment 101 Headquarters in December 1943, the OSS chief chastised him about ambiguities in his operational reports, Eifler bristled and replied with a challenge: “Would the General like to go behind the lines and see for himself?” Donovan paused, smiled tightly and snapped, “When do we leave?” “First thing in the morning, sir,” Eifler replied.⁶⁶

The trip in a small unarmed, unescorted plane would carry the two men 150 air miles behind Japanese lines. Normally senior officers were not sent behind enemy lines for fear of their being captured and tortured to provide high-level information. In accepting Eifler’s challenge and indulging his own sense of honor and adventure, Donovan, who knew many of the highest operational plans and secret intelligence sources of the Allies including the breaking of the Japanese and German codes, was taking an enormous and unjustified risk. His capture by the Japanese would have been a disaster for the Allies.

The night before the flight, Donovan shared quarters with Lieutenant Colonel Nicol Smith, a former author who had trained with Ray Peers at Area B, served in France, and was currently escorting a group of Free Thais to China. Smith wondered why the OSS director was risking so much. “General, aren’t you risking your life?” Smith asked at last. “Everything is a risk,” Donovan replied. “My boys are risking their lives every day.” Years later, one of his biographers, Richard Dunlop asked Donovan the same question, and the general told him that he had been carrying an L pill, one of OSS’s lethal cyanide tablets⁶⁷ In the morning, Donovan asked Smith to hold his wallet and identification papers until he returned. “If anything goes wrong, it’ll be just as well if I’m incognito,” Donovan explained. “That’s an understatement, General,” Smith replied.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Col. John C. Hooker, Jr., (U.S. Army-Retired), “Biography,” typescript, 1945 Chapter. I am grateful to Colonel Hooker for sending me a copy of his manuscript. John C. Hooker, email to the author, 27 June 2008.

⁶⁶ Moon and Eifler, *Deadliest Colonel*, 170-72; Richard Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1979), 255-61, provides a longer account by a 101 veteran. A straight forward narrative without quotations is in Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 130-32.

⁶⁷ Richard Dunlop, *Donovan: America’s Master Spy* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1982), 423. The L (for lethal) pill was a capsule filled with deadly potassium cyanide. Agents were directed to put the pill under their tongue if they were in danger of immediate torture. The hard shell of the capsule was insoluble and would not dissolve in the body, but if the agent could no longer stand the pain of torture, he (or she) was told to chew the pill, which would then break open, release the cyanide, and cause almost instantaneous death.

⁶⁸ Smith and Clark, *Into Siam*, 56. The account by Smith, who was there, differs somewhat from Dunlop’s. Smith indicates that when Donovan arrived along with director John Ford, the general had hardly stepped

After breakfast, Donovan at first refused the parachute Eifler offered. "I'll ride the plane down if we crash," he said. "I can't afford to be captured." To which the boastful Eifler retorted, "General, if we land within fifteen feet of the enemy, I will bring you back. Please put on your chute."⁶⁹

With both wearing parachutes, Eifler flew the little two-seat plane over the dense jungle, past Japanese outposts, and in about two hours landed at the short camouflaged airstrip of OSS camp Knothead, on the opposite side of a mountain range from Myitkyina airfield. On the ground, Donovan spent several hours talking with Captain Vincent Curl and his men and, through an interpreter, some of the Kachin. The visit over, Donovan and Eifler left in a hair-raising takeoff, as the little plane, overloaded by a combination of new fuel and the burly Eifler and Donovan, each weighing over 200 pounds, barely cleared a gap in the trees at the end of the airstrip. Elated, Donovan returned to Nazira in a jubilant mood, but Lieutenant Colonel John Coughlin, executive officer of Detachment 101, who had been away, pulled him aside and demanded: "General, what were you thinking about to go in there with Carl?" Donovan replied simply, "I had to." "You should have considered more things than your damned honor," Coughlin snapped. "If I'd been there, I would have reminded you of every one of them."⁷⁰ Subsequently, citing medical reasons, Donovan sent Eifler back to the United States and replaced him with Lieutenant Colonel Ray Peers.⁷¹ The burly Eifler returned to Washington in 1944 a legend as a successful jungle commander and the "deadliest colonel." He gave lectures at OSS training camps in the United States and then was given a series of important assignments by Donovan for missions, including training teams of Korean and American saboteurs to be sent into Korea and Japan itself, but the war ended before Eifler's teams, trained in the United States, could be deployed to the Far East.⁷²

Detachment 101: Driving Back the Japanese

Beginning in 1944, Detachment 101 went beyond intelligence gathering, sabotage, and harassment of the enemy to provide direct assistance to a major Allied offensive to capture Myitkyina airfield and drive the Japanese out of Burma. The main

out of the plane when he announced "I'm going behind Jap lines." Unlike Detachment 101 Executive Officer, John Coughlin, Smith said that with that trip into danger, Donovan "earned the lifelong loyalty of everyone at 101."

⁶⁹ Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, 257.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 260.

⁷¹ For some time, Eifler had shown signs of physical and emotional fatigue, probably the result of a head injury suffered on an amphibious operation on the south Burmese coast in May 1943. Moon and Eifler, *Deadliest Colonel*, 118-20; and Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 132. John Patton Davies of the U.S. Foreign Service and chief political adviser to Stilwell reported that although Eifler was still "outstanding" as a "lusty killer and saboteur," he was beginning to display a "lack of mental and emotional stability." John P. Davies to William J. Donovan, 6 October 1943, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 139, File 2548, Box 193, National Archives II.

⁷² Moon, *This Grim and Savage Game*, 258-70.

Anglo-American offensive included Merrill's American "Marauders" and the Wingate's British "Chindits" but their received valuable assistance from the OSS and their Kachin tribesmen. The few hundred Americans and their indigenous guerrillas ambushed enemy troops, severed their lines of communication and supply, undermined Japanese resources and morale, and provided scouts to guide the spearheads of the attack,"⁷³ Under Peers command, Lieutenant Vincent Curl's team in the jungle and other field units began to organize attack groups of Kachins to coordinate with the conventional forces. Kachins also were assigned to provide intelligence about Japanese deployments and to guide and assist the advancing columns of Brigadier General Frank D. Merrill. By April 1944, Peers reported to Donovan that the collection of intelligence had been surpassed by the "sharp increase in the actual combat functions of our patrols."⁷⁴

Among those leading such combat-oriented Kachin patrols was Lieutenant Joseph E. Lazarsky from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. The former sergeant and demolitions instructor at Area B had graduated from OCS and been sent to China in 1943, but after six months there, he was summoned by Peers to Burma. Lazarsky speaks modestly and in short and somewhat elliptical sentences when he describes his role. "A plane got shot down. Ray Peers got left with no one to take over the drops into the jungle....I taught some Americans how to run a drop into the jungle. We dropped throughout Burma, 45 agents—Anglo-Burmese, Kachin....Once in the Burma jungles, we tied up with the Kachins. I had demolitions. I recruited Kachins and was made commander of the 1st Kachin Battalion. I had seven Americans and five Britishers with me. My sergeant major was a top Kachin. He spoke English. He had been in the Kachin Rifles in the British Army. But earlier in the war, before I got there, he had been captured by the Japanese, who tortured him to try to make him talk. They gave him the hot water treatment. They poured scalding hot water down his throat. He lost his voice almost completely. Only a whisper. We were going to lay an ambush, and he and I discussed it. We ambushed the Japanese at Lashio and many other places in Burma."⁷⁵

OSS and its indigenous guerrillas went behind hit and run tactics to stand and fight engagements against regular troops in the final Allied campaigns against the Japanese in Burma in 1944 and 1945. Under Peers, Detachment 101 expanded the recruitment and training of the Kachins, and it organized them into virtually a small Army, nearly 10,000 tribesmen in ten battalions directed by officers like Lazarsky, Pamplin, and Curl. Through the use of mobilized indigenous guerrilla forces and the provision of combat assistance as well as intelligence information to the spearheads of advancing conventional forces Detachment 101 was instrumental in the first major Allied military success in North Burma, the defeat of an elite Japanese division and the capture

⁷³ Troy J. Sacquety, "A Special Forces Model: OSS Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign, Part I," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, 4:1 (2008): 30-47.

⁷⁴ Lt. Col. W. R. Peers to Brig. Gen. W.J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 April to 30 April, 1944, inclusive," 30 April 1944, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 190, Box 40, Folder 54, National Archives II.

⁷⁵ Joseph Lazarsky, telephone interview with the author, 11 February 2007; in fact, Lazarsky's guerrillas repeatedly ambushed Colonel Maruyama and his troops as they evacuated Myitkyina airfield; only a small number of them reached Bhamo. Peers and Brellis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 30, 168.

of Myitkyina airfield in August 1944. The role continued as additional Allied conventional troops pressed forward to capture Bhamo and Lashio.⁷⁶

In the attack on Lashio, the key to the Burma Road, Lazarsky, of the 1st Kachin Battalion, led off, attacking Japanese infantry and motorized columns on the Burma Road itself. The Japanese chased him with infantry, artillery and tanks. Although withdrawing, he continued to ambush his pursuers. When Lazarsky reached his re-supply airfield, his unit dug in and beat the Japanese back in a three day battle.⁷⁷ The heaviest prolonged fighting by Detachment 101, and some of the heaviest fighting in all of Burma, was done by the 3rd Kachin Battalion. Among junior officers was Lieutenant Roger Hilsman, a West Pointer, who had arrived with Merrill's Marauders, been wounded, and subsequently joined Detachment 101.⁷⁸ At Lawksawk, facing a thousand Japanese in a fortified position, the 3rd Kachin Battalion of roughly equal size surrounded the field fortifications. The Kachins first attacked directly amidst withering enemy fire and hurt but did not overcome the enemy. The OSS called in air support, but although the fighter bombers damaged the fortifications and inflicted many casualties, the Japanese remained entrenched if still surrounded. Finally in desperation, the Japanese defenders counter-attacked in a banzai charge against one segment of the Kachin line, 700 Japanese soldiers against 400 Kachin Rangers and Hilsman and the other American officers. But showing extraordinary discipline and courage, the Kachin tribesmen from their positions in the jungle withstood repeated charges over several hours by the Japanese soldiers, and the Kachins eventually gained a costly but important victory in the siege at Lawksawk.⁷⁹ The campaign to reopen the Burma Road was complete with the capture of Lashio in March 1945. Thereafter, the OSS unit and its guerrilla battalions attacked scattered enemy forces in eastern Burma and sought to block the flight of the Japanese into Thailand. The Japanese Army in Burma surrendered in Rangoon on 28 August 1945.

Detachment 101 amply demonstrated the possibilities of unconventional warfare that Donovan advocated and the multiplier effect of innovative, energetic, well-trained special operations leaders. It had begun with only two dozen Americans in 1942 and part of 1943 before the dramatic expansion of 1944 and 1945. Even at its peak strength, Detachment 101 had only 131 officers and 558 enlisted men, with 120 Americans serving out in the jungles at any given time. A dramatic multiplier, they mobilized, armed, supplied, and directed an indigenous guerrilla force of 10,000 men. They played an important role in defeating the Japanese in Burma.⁸⁰ In addition to their role as guides,

⁷⁶ Sacquety, "A Special Forces Model: OSS Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign." 46. While Stilwell's Chinese and American units pressed south, British General William Slim's Indian, British and other troops fought up the Burmese peninsula, defeated the Japanese and took the capital at Rangoon.

⁷⁷ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 184-85. Joseph E. Lazarsky, telephone interview with the author, 9 July 2008, who noted that Peers had misidentified Lazarsky's unit, it was the 1st Kachin Battalion not the 3rd Kachin Battalion.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 205-7; Roger Hilsman, *American Guerrilla: My War Behind Japanese Lines* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey's, 1990), 49, 65-92, 119-127.

⁷⁹ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 204-6. See also Hilsman, *American Guerrilla*, 153-95.

⁸⁰ "O.S.S. Detachment 101: A Brief History of the Detachment for NCAC Records," pp. 2, 9, April 1945, copy in CIA Records (RG 263), Thomas F. Troy Files, Box 4, Folder 30, National Archives II, which

rescuers, intelligent agents, and guerrillas, the men of Detachment 101 killed 5,500 Japanese soldiers, killed or seriously wounded and estimated 10,000 other Japanese soldiers; blew up 51 bridges, derailed 9 trains, destroyed or captured 277 trucks or other vehicles, and demolished 2,000 tons of ammunition, gasoline or other Japanese supplies.⁸¹ The cost was 27 Americans, 338 indigenous guerrillas, and 40 native espionage agents killed.⁸²

Early in the final campaign, Carl Eifler told instructors at Areas A, E, and F that the most important part of OSS training was to inspire students with the organization's mission and the need for flexibility and innovation to achieve it. He stressed the importance of "aggressiveness and a driving energy to get the OSS's job done." Given the current urgent demand for men in the field, Eifler explained in July 1944, "the selection of the right men for the jobs, aggressive men with drive and determination, is more important than the training we can give them." Peers, who had succeeded him as Detachment 101 commander, disagreed with the latter part. While Eifler did not consider providing trainees with background knowledge of a country, its society, politics, and culture, to be very important, Peer saw it as essential and recommended increased background, a kind of area studies, be provided by to American trainees in OSS schools in the United States.⁸³

For its heroic and effective action in clearing northern Burma, Detachment 101 received a Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation. The citation, issued by General Dwight D. Eisenhower, as Army Chief of Staff in 1946, represented particularly high

quotes high praise from the chief of staff and head of G-2 of the U.S. Northern Area Combat Command headed by Stilwell and then by Gen. Daniel Sultan. See also 101 Veteran James S. Fletcher, "Kachin Rangers: Fighting with Burma's Guerrilla Warriors," *Special Warfare*, 1:2 (July 1988): 19-27; and Charles H. Briscoe, "Kachin Rangers: Allied Guerrillas in World War II Burma," *ibid.*, 15:4 (December 2002): 35-43. Although the Allied victory in Burma was, in sheer manpower, due primarily to the Indian Army under the leadership of General Sir William Slim and other British commanders, the victory was a coalition achievement involving troops from throughout the British Empire, as well as Americans, Chinese, and indigenous peoples. Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War, 1941-1945* (New York: St. Martin's, 1984).

⁸¹ For the statistics, see OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 391-92; Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 217-19; and "O.S.S. Detachment 101: A Brief History of the Detachment for NCAC Records," pp. 7-8, copy in CIA Records (RG 263), Thomas F. Troy Files, Box 4, Folder 30, National Archives II. In addition, the detachment's agents provided 75 percent of all the targeting intelligence used by the US 10th Air Force and 85 per cent of intelligence received by the U.S. Northern Combat Area Command. Between 200 and 400 downed Allied airmen were rescued by Detachment 101.

⁸² Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 220. On page 126, Peers states that about 50 per cent of all the agent personnel who were lost were Anglo-Burmese, who Peers praises as extraordinarily brave. OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 391, written in 1947 lists the number of Americans killed at 15. A newspaper account of a reunion of Kachins and Americans from Detachment 101 at Lake Arrowhead, California in 2005, gave the strength as 1,000 Americans and 10,000 Kachin Rangers, the results as 5477 Japanese killed and 10,000 missing, at a cost of 18 Americans and 184 Kachins dead. Joe Vargo, "Burmese Remember American Help in WWII," *The Press-Enterprise*, 30 May 2005, www.pe.com, reprinted in *OSS Society Digest*, 31 May 2005, www.ossociety@yahoo.com.

⁸³ William Ray Peers, June 1944 report quoted and Carl Eifler quoted in "Interviews with Colonel Eifler, Some of Colonel Eifler's View on Training; Based on Talks en route to and at Areas A-4, E, and F, July 1944," pp. 1-3, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 2, Folder 28, National Archives II.

praise from the head of the Regular Army: “The courage and fighting spirit displayed by the officers and men of Service Unit Detachment No. 101, Office of Strategic Services, in this successful offensive action against overwhelming enemy strength, reflect the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States.”⁸⁴

OSS Detachment 404 Raids the South Burma Coast

While OSS Detachment 101 fought in the mountainous jungles of northern Burma, OSS’s Arakan Field Unit of Detachment 404 sent its nearly 200 OG, SI, and MU personnel on more than three dozen missions from 1944 to 1945 on raids along the mangrove filled Arakan coast of southern Burma.⁸⁵ Detachment 404 was headquartered in Kandy, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) as was the Allies’ Southeast Asia Command under British Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, with which it coordinated its actions. With eventually 595 personnel in Ceylon Detachment 404 was responsible for OSS operations the southern Burma coast, Thailand, southern French Indochina (Cambodia and southern Vietnam), Malaya and the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia). Headed first by Col. Richard P. Heppner, Detachment 404 included not simply the Arakan Field Unit, but personnel from most of the OSS branches. Its Research and Analysis Unit, responsible for finding information about industrial targets for bombing in Japanese occupied countries in its region, was headed by Cora Du Bois, a specialist in Southeast Asia, who had been an instructor at Sarah Lawrence College with degrees in anthropology from Columbia and the University of California when the OSS recruited her.⁸⁶

The Operational Group section of the Arakan Field Unit of Detachment 404 had trained at Areas F and A. Headed by Major Lloyd E. Peddicord from Dotham, Alabama, with Captain George H. Bright as its operations officer, the OG included 19-year-old Lieutenant John C. Hooker, Jr., from Atlanta, Georgia, and Lieutenant Louis A. O’Jibway, a full-blooded American Indian from Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. The entire team had trained at Areas F and A in the early summer of 1944.⁸⁷ Subsequently, from December 1944 to February 1945, first from Ceylon and later from Akyab, Burma, they were transported in Maritime Unit fastboats. These were similar to Navy PT (Patrol Torpedo) boats but shorter and without torpedo tubes. From these fastboats, the OSS teams were put ashore in their rubber boats and searched the shoreline and nearby

⁸⁴ Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General Orders, 17 January 1946, The Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation is reprinted in Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 208-209.

⁸⁵ Troy J. Sacquety, “The OSS...Detachment 404: 1944-1945,” *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, 3.4 (2007): 49.

⁸⁶ Elizabeth P. McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies: The Women of the OSS* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1998), 34-5, 212-3.

⁸⁷ Col. John C. Hooker, Jr., (U.S. Army-Retired), “Biography,” typescript, chapter for 1944. I am grateful to Colonel Hooker for sending me a copy of his manuscript. John C. Hooker, email to the author, 27 June 2008.

villages in advance combat scouting groups before the main units arrived by landing craft. On some of their nighttime reconnaissance trips, their mission was to determine if Japanese troops were in force on or near the beach. Sometimes they were. At Ramtree Island, on the night of 19 January 1945, Bright's team killed two Japanese sentries on the beach, and enemy mortar shells soon started raining down on them. Bright, Hooker, and O'Jibway and their teams quickly paddled out to the waiting fast boats and sped away. The OSS men returned the next night in a 110-foot, heavily armed, British motor launch to a nearby river. Bright was in charge. Hooker's team, armed with Browning Automatic Rifles and M-3 submachine guns, was scattered around the forward deck. With muffled engines, the launch moved up the narrowing river through the jungle. About 3 a.m. they reached an area so narrow the tree branches scrapped the sides of the boat. "Suddenly all hell broke loose. Unseen enemy were firing on the boat from both sides of the stream," Hooker recalled. "Small cannon, possibly 37 millimeters, fired into the bow and twice more into mid ship. All aboard the boat opened fire, while the British guns [six Lewis machine guns] swept the sides of the river, and we concentrated on the areas where there were flashes. Putting the boat in reverse, we backed down the river. The stream was too narrow for us to turn around until we were about a mile down stream and out of range of the ambush."⁸⁸ One of Hooker's men was mortally wounded when a canon shell exploded in his face. He was the only married man in Hooker's team. The first sergeant's ear drums were burst by the blast. Captain Bright was hit in the chest by a rifle bullet. Several British gunners were hit and two other Americans suffered surface wounds from bullets and shrapnel. It took them five hours to get back to a hospital ship that was part of the British invasion force. Hooker, O'Jibway, and several of the others on the teams were later sent to fight first with Ray Peers in the Burma jungles and then to train and lead OSS OG Chinese commandoes against the Japanese in China.

Penetrating the Tangled Situation in Thailand

Situated between the British colonies of Burma and Malaya and the French colony of Indochina in 1941, Thailand (previously known as Siam), was the only independent nation in Southeast Asia at the outbreak of the war. The Bangkok government under Premier and Field Marshal Phibun Songkhram officially allied with Japan and declared war on Britain and the United States. The Japanese Army used the country as a springboard to invade the British colonies of Burma to the west and Malaya to the south. Because of Bangkok's alliance, Tokyo kept only a small number of troops there and allowed Thailand to retain nominal independence.⁸⁹ While Great Britain reciprocated by declaring war on Thailand, the United States did not. Instead, the State

⁸⁸ Col. John C. Hooker, Jr., (U.S. Army-Retired), "Biography," typescript, chapter for 1944. I am grateful to Colonel Hooker for sending me a copy of his manuscript. John C. Hooker, email to the author, 27 June 2008.

⁸⁹ Judith A. Stowe, *Siam Becomes Thailand: A Story of Intrigue* (London: Hurst, 1991).

Department chose to view Phibun's as a puppet regime and Thailand as an occupied rather than a belligerent nation.⁹⁰

In Washington, officials at the Thai Legation rejected the Phibun government's capitulation and collaboration with Japan. Members of the legation declared themselves to be "free Thais," committed to continuing the struggle against the Japanese. Secretary of State Cordell Hull supported their position and referred them to Donovan's organization.⁹¹ On 12 March 1942, the legation submitted a proposal to have a group of young Thai nationals in the United States trained and infiltrated into their homeland for subversive operations. Lieutenant Colonel Kharb Kunjara, the air attaché at the legation, met with Lieutenant Colonel Garland H. Williams of Special Operations, to arrange for the young Thai student volunteers to be trained, equipped and deployed by Donovan's organization. The first group of thirteen Thais began OSS training on 12 June 1942, first SO training at Areas B and A, then radio training at Area C, followed by Parachute training at Fort Benning, and Maritime training at Areas A or D.⁹² The Free Thai legation, angry at the collaborations policies of the Phibun government, declared that the larger goal of these trainees was to penetrate "into Thailand proper to organize subversive works and to pave the way for the final push of the United Nations Armed Forces, to drive the Japanese back to their own little islands."⁹³

Although Thailand had little if any strategic military importance to the U.S. War effort in Asia, and there were no major battles fought there, the OSS paid considerable attention to it and developed extensive operations there during the final year of the war. In some respects this was due to the OSS's need for a significant role against Japan, but more influential was the U.S. political effort to avoid British imperial expansion into the country in the postwar era and to achieve an independent pro-American Thailand. The OSS mission in Thailand, taken in coordination with the State Department, was primarily a political mission of U.S. foreign policy.

Heading that mission was Captain Nicol Smith, formerly a successful author of adventure travelogues and who had pre-war experience living in the Far East as well as other areas around the world. Smith joined the OSS in early 1942 and trained with Ray Peers and the Detachment 101 group at Area B in April 1942.⁹⁴ After further SI training, Smith had been sent on an espionage mission to Vichy France. Returning in December 1942, he was assigned to equip and lead the first and second groups of OSS trained Thai nationals, 21 in all, to China for eventual clandestine deployment in Thailand.⁹⁵ The

⁹⁰ E. Bruce Reynolds, *Thailand and Japan's Southern Advance, 1940-1945* (New York: St. Martins, 1994).

⁹¹ Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War against Japan*, 194-200, 424n, from a British perspective.

⁹² William J. Donovan to U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 18 August 1942, memorandum [regarding the Free Thai contingent], OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 256, Folder 3553, National Archives II.

⁹³ The Royal Thai Legation, Washington, D.C., "Project of the Free Thai Movement," undated [summer 1942], typescript, p. 7, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 256, Folder 3553, National Archives II.

⁹⁴ Smith, who had traveled extensively in the Far East, had written a book on the Burma Road. For Smith's OSS training, see Smith and Clark, *Into Siam*, 13-15, 48-50; Peers and Brellis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 31.

⁹⁵ "OSS in Thailand," "Major S__" [Nicol Smith], 24 April 1945, p. 1, Schools and Training Branch, "Interviews with Returned Men," OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 159, Folder 1729; and Donovan

young Thais, who had been graduate students at Harvard, M.I.T. and other leading American universities, had completed their training by mid-January 1943, as plans for the mission had evolved, and were in a holding area in or near Prince William Forest Park.⁹⁶ In March 1943, Smith and two OSS instructors from Area B, Frank Gleason and Joseph Lazarsky, took the new Thai agents to India and over the “Hump” to China.⁹⁷

From China, these agents were to be infiltrated to help what appeared by spring 1943 to be a growing anti-Japanese underground in Thailand, some of it encouraged by dissident members of the government in Bangkok. The primary Allied contact was Phibun’s main rival, the pre-war Finance Minister, Pridi Phanomyong. He, like most Thais, had opposed collaboration with the Japanese. Obstacles resulting from the frustratingly complex political situation in China precluded Smith from dispatching agents into Thailand until June 1944, but even then, two of the infiltrated agents were killed and six others captured and imprisoned.⁹⁸

Advances in Thailand

The next month, July 1944, with the Japanese being driven back in Burma and the Pacific, Pridi was finally able to topple the collaborationist Phibun government through political maneuvering. OSS parachuted two new Thai agents into their country. Although one was captured, the other, who had close family ties with Pridi, met the new head of the government. Shocked, the agent learned that not only was Pridi now head of the government, but he had long been and still was in fact the head of the underground and clandestinely leading the “Free Thai” movement within Thailand.⁹⁹ He had kept that subversive role secret in order to avoid repressive measures by the small, but well armed

to JCS, 18 August 1942; Adm. William D. Leahy, for the JCS to Director, Office of Strategic Services, 11 September 1942, subject: Mission of Thai Nationals for Far East, both in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 256, Folder 3553, all in National Archives II.

⁹⁶ Although contemporary documents are more precise, Smith’s postwar account is vague as to which of what he calls, the “alphabet resorts” the 21 Thais went to for their OSS training. He is clear that they began their training at Area B in early 1942 but confuses the location of their holding area when they had completed all their training, stating that by mid-January 1943, “the twenty-one Thais were isolated at Area D, thirty miles from Washington in the Virginia woods, to wait for the date of departure.” Since Area D was in Maryland, across the Potomac, the holding area in the Virginia woods south of Washington must have been Area A or C in Prince William Forest Park. Smith and Clark, *Into Siam*, 25, 28, 45, 48.

⁹⁷ “OSS in Thailand,” “Major S__” [Nicol Smith], 24 April 1945, p. 1, Schools and Training Branch, “Interviews with Returned Men,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 159, Folder 1729, National Archives II; plus Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 31 January 2005; and Joseph Lazarsky, telephone interview with the author, 11 February 2007.

⁹⁸ Smith and Clark, *Into Siam*, 69; “OSS in Thailand,” “Major S__” [Nicol Smith], 24 April 1945, p. 1, Schools and Training Branch, “Interviews with Returned Men,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 159, Folder 1729, National Archives II.

⁹⁹ E. Bruce Reynolds, “Opening Wedge: The OSS in Thailand,” in George C. Chalou, ed, *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), 331-35.

Japanese force in Thailand. Donovan met a Thai delegation in Ceylon in January 1945, and with Pridi's approval, an OSS mission of two American officers, one from SI and the other from SO, soon arrived in Bangkok by seaplane and fast boat.¹⁰⁰ To counter British postwar claims based on the country's alliance with the Japanese, Pridi suggested a Thai uprising supported by an invasion by two U.S. Army divisions. The Joint Chiefs of Staff did not want to divert such large numbers of troops, numbering up to 30,000, but under OSS prodding, they agreed to have Donovan's organization arm the Thai underground and use them for intelligence gathering. Such efforts would enhance the U.S. foreign policy goal of an independent, pro-American Thailand and help prevent the British from absorbing Thailand as a colony. In June 1945, when JCS approved the plan, several American OSS officers and enlisted men were parachuted into Thailand. One was killed by the Japanese and some of the others were captured by Thai police. But the remainder established bases in the northern and southern parts of the country to run intelligence networks and to arm and train Thai guerrillas. The OSS goal was not to prepare them to fight the Japanese as in Burma, but to "retain and increase the good will of Thailand toward America in this politically critical area."¹⁰¹

Delays in JCS approval meant the expanded program was never fully implemented, but OSS made a start. By mid-August 1945, OSS had only seven fully effective SO guerrilla bases. Marine Lieutenant William Butts Macomber, Yale graduate, who received his SO training in Maryland and Virginia in early 1944, before being sent to England and then parachuting into France as part of an SO/SOE to reinforce the "Freelance" circuit, may have headed one of these. He had reported to OSS Detachment 404 headquarters in Kandy, Ceylon, in 1945 and subsequently participated in combat operations along the Burma-Thailand border.¹⁰²

Near Prae, at one of the OSS SO camps established in the summer of 1945 to train Thai guerrillas, OSS Sergeant Steve Sysko, 20, a Polish American from Springfield, Vermont, who had been trained at Areas A, B, C and F, noted in his diary that his SO team had trained and outfitted 300 guerrillas in three weeks, but they did run into some unusual problems. On the way to one of the drop zones for supplies, Sysko noted, "We ran into some wild elephants. In order to escape from them, we ran down the hill. Elephants cannot go down hill very fast because they have to feel with their front feet. We escaped and returned to camp. We did not get the drop." Later the four-man team and

¹⁰⁰ The OSS officers were John Wester, a businessman in Thailand before he joined OSS/SI and Richard Greenlee, a tax lawyer in Donovan's firm before the war. Greenlee was Chief of SO in Detachment 404, and OSS unit with headquarters in Ceylon, whose area of responsibility extended from India to Indochina.

¹⁰¹ Memorandum, "Background of Thailand Operations for OPD [Operations and Plans Division of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff]," n.d., OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 154, File 2297, Box 131, National Archives II.

¹⁰² Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger: Marines of the OSS*, 160, although Mattingly apparently erred in indicating Macomber was with Peers' Detachment 101 in these operations. Peers and Breilis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 228-29. does not include Macomber in his roster of Detachment 101. The area was instead under the jurisdiction of Detachment 404.

its Thai hosts rode elephants carrying them and their equipment to new campsites, one step ahead of the Japanese.¹⁰³

Many of the young Thais trained at the various OSS camps in Maryland and Virginia in 1942, were parachuted into Thailand in 1944 and 1945 for espionage work, and they organized networks and sent back useful intelligence. They also helped rescue downed aviators. One of the most dramatic rescues was of one of the P-40 pilots on Major General Claire Chennault's "Flying Tigers." Lieutenant William ("Black Mac") McGarry, an ace with 10 victories, had been shot down during a daring raid on a Japanese airfield in northern Thailand in March 1942. His squadron mates had seen him bail out and wave to them from a clearing in the jungle, but that was the last seen or heard of him.¹⁰⁴ In late 1944, as Nicol Smith began to move his agents into Thailand, Chennault asked the OSS to find out if McGarry were still alive. Within four days, Smith's agents learned that he being held in a small POW compound, and Smith launched an operation to rescue him. Put in charge was Wimon Wirayawit, a Thai national and M.I.T. graduate student, who had enlisted in the Free Thai movement in the United States in March 1942, coincidentally the very month that McGarry was shot down. Now, on the night of 9 September 1944, the former M.I.T. graduate students parachuted near the POW camp, becoming the first OSS-trained Free Thai to be successfully infiltrated into Thailand. Working with local Thais and the camp commander, who willingly told the Japanese that McGarry had died, Wimon Wirayawit rescued the American aviator and escorted him to a safe house near Bangkok. By arrangement, two OSS PBV "Catalina" seaplanes flew at night from Ceylon to the Gulf of Siam for the retrieval. Wimon obtained a Thai Customs Patrol boat to take McGarry, two OSS officers, and five Free Thai agents, down river and out to meet them. One of the OSS men was feverish and frequently shouted deliriously in English as the boat moved down river that night. To prevent the Japanese from hearing him, whenever an enemy patrol boat would come near, the Free Thais would go on deck and exuberantly sing and dance traditional Thai songs. Moving out into the gulf, Wimon's boat delivered McGarry and the others to the PBVs, which flew them back to Ceylon. The rescue mission was a complete success, and McGarry was soon back in China flying with Chennault's airmen again against the Japanese.¹⁰⁵

Like many other OSS officers who served in Southeast Asia, Nicol Smith emphasized the need to deal fairly and with respect with indigenous people recruited and

¹⁰³ "Behind Enemy Lines by Steve Sysko," [diary excerpts], *OSS Society Newsletter*, Summer 2004, 9; Bruce Edwards, "With the OSS, Steve Sysko Helped Liberate Thailand from the Japanese," *Rutland [Vermont] Herald*, 11 August 2008, reprinted in *OSS Society Digest*, Number 2125, 12 August 2008, ossociety@yahoo.com, accessed 12 August 2008.

¹⁰⁴ Bob Bergin, "Pearl Harbor Payback: The AVG's Surprise Raid on Chiang Mai," *Flight Journal* (April 2005); see also <http://thaiaviation.com>. The American Volunteer Group's surprise attack and destruction of 15 to 30 Japanese planes on the ground provided an uplift in a dismal period and was headlined by the *New York Times*. McGarry parachuted out; 2nd Squadron leader and ace John ("Scarsdale Jack") Newkirk was killed when his plane was shot down and crashed with Newkirk aboard after strafing a Japanese convoy.

¹⁰⁵ Bob Bergin, "Claire Chennault and the OSS: A Favor Done—and Returned," *OSS Society Newsletter*, Winter 2004-225, 2; and "OSS in Thailand," "Major S__" [Nicol Smith], 24 April 1945, pp. 3-4, Schools and Training Branch, "Interviews with Returned Men," OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 159, Folder 1729, National Archives II.

trained to work for the OSS. He attributed the success of the overall OSS mission in Thailand the ability of OSS personnel to operate diplomatically with an increasingly wider circle of influential people and to exhibit patience, tact, and respect in leading the Free Thais. “Never, in the months of isolated comradely association with this small group,” Smith said, could he “afford for one minute to treat them as anything other than brothers-in-arms and full equals.” He slept in the same room with them, ate the same food. Any hint or small suggestion evident in his words or behavior that he considered himself superior, would have meant failure to his mission.¹⁰⁶ A summary of OSS Achievements prepared by OSS Schools and Training Branch in 1945 concluded that “operations in Thailand have been brilliantly successful.”¹⁰⁷

The contributions of Pridi and the Free Thai movement, as well as U.S. pressure, led to the recognition by the Allies of wartime Thailand as having been an occupied nation rather than a Japanese ally. At the end of the war, OSS officers advised Pridi to delay signing the Anglo-Thai peace treaty as unduly harsh (Britain had abandoned demands for annexation of Thailand’s Kra Peninsula leading to Malaya, but insisted on

¹⁰⁶ “OSS in Thailand,” “Major S__” [Nicol Smith], 24 April 1945, p. 5, Schools and Training Branch, “Interviews with Returned Men,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 159, Folder 1729, National Archives II. A similar report about the need to treat the indigenous people working for OSS with respect came from Ray F. Kauffman, an OSS SO training and operations officer in Detachment 404, who dealt mainly with indigenous people on Sumatra, formerly part of the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), which was occupied by the Japanese in World War II. Scion of an affluent family in Des Moines, Iowa, Kauffman, like many members of the OSS, had already demonstrated initiative and daring as a civilian. In his case at age 28 in 1935, he began a three-year circumnavigation of the world on a 46-foot ketch, *Hurricane*, sometimes single-handed, sometimes accompanied by a friend from Des Moines, and sometimes with hired natives, a story he told in a 1940 book, *Hurricane’s Wake*. Ray F. Kauffman, *Hurricane’s Wake* (New York: Macmillan, 1940). Joining the OSS at age 35, Kauffman, attended a number of the training schools in 1942-1943, including Area D, the Maritime School; Area C, where he took the full communication course at Prince William Forest Park; and RTU-11 (“the Farm”), where he studied Secret Intelligence. He worked in conjunction with a group of Malayan trainees at those camps, and in the fall of 1943, Kauffman and the Malayan agents set out of Detachment 404 headquarters in Kandy, Ceylon. On Ceylon, Kauffman was assigned as a training instructor for Maritime operations out of the port of Trincomalee on the Bay of Bengal in northeast Ceylon. He also led two seaborne penetration operations himself. Back in Washington in November 1944, Kauffman told Schools and Training Branch that ingenuity and common sense were keys to successful training and operations. In all his work, Kauffman said he kept to “one Golden Rule for handling natives... ‘live with them and become their friend.’ Already, he believes, that this policy has proved its efficiency in the Far East.” Unlike Carl Eifler, Kauffman believed that loyalty was a more important motivation than money. “The formula for making successful operatives out of reluctant natives,” Kauffman said, “is 90% friendship and 10% money.” What would motivate a local person to take life and death chances “for our side,” Kauffman asked. His answer was the “friendship policy.” Instead of ordering people to do things in training or in the field, Kauffman sought ways to establish interesting goals in which the training would be incidental, for example, sending them on a pigeon hunt as a way of teaching them compass use to plot a course or a fishing expedition as a way of learning how to launch small boats in the surf while keeping the equipment dry. Kauffman emphasized consulting with the natives about problems. Whether field stripping a weapon or repairing a radio set, he asked the native his opinion. Sometimes the trainee would prove to be an able mechanic, but whether he was or not, Kauffman had won the respect of his students by making them feel that he respected them. “Training the Native,” Ray Kauffman, 11 November 1944, p. 1, Schools and Training Branch, “Interviews with Returned Men,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 2, Folder 31, National Archives II.

¹⁰⁷ OSS, Schools and Training Branch, “Office of Strategic Services (OSS), Organization and Functions,” June 1945, p. 28, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 141, Box 4, Folder 36, National Archives II.

the right to have British bases there). Pridi did reopen negotiations, and with the support of the State Department, his successor, the former Free Thai envoy, obtained a treaty in 1946 that maintained complete Thai sovereignty. The OSS effort on behalf of an independent Thailand had been a success.¹⁰⁸

OSS, the Japanese, the Viet Minh and the French in Indochina

During World War II, French Indochina—today Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia—was still governed as a colony by collaborationist Vichy France while occupied by the Japanese Army. Discontent arising from the occupation and the starvation caused by exportation of most of Vietnam's rice to Japan, provided an opportunity for Vietnamese anti-colonial nationalists to mobilize against the French as well as the Japanese. President Roosevelt's wartime policy favored decolonization and independence for former colonies even if in phases, such as U.N. trusteeships. But Britain and France wanted to re-establish control over their colonies in the Far East. By early 1945, with victory assured and attention focusing more clearly on the postwar order, the Roosevelt administration's fervent opposition to restoring Europe's colonies began to wane.¹⁰⁹ When Roosevelt died in April 1945, just as the European war was ending, the Allies were experiencing increased friction with the Soviet Union. Roosevelt's successor, Harry Truman, and the State Department were more interested in Europe and China than Southeast Asia. At the founding of the United Nations in San Francisco in May 1945, the Secretary of State reassured the French that Washington had never officially questioned Paris's sovereignty over Indochina.¹¹⁰

In the Far East, much of the OSS was largely unaware of these gradual and unofficial shifts in U.S. policy. Official U.S. policy toward Indochina, which had been governed by a Vichy French regime that collaborated with the Nazis and the Japanese, was for independence. While the war continued, OSS operatives in the field focused on fighting the Japanese. But at the same time, they were suspicious of the French, both the colonial administrators, police, and soldiers of Vichy and the Free French representatives of de Gaulle's new government being sent out from Paris to re-establish French control throughout Indochina as Japan was defeated. But Japan still needed to be defeated, and American civilian and military authorities in China, including the OSS, had difficulties working with the French, because de Gaulle's representatives argued over command and because the Vietnamese would not cooperate with the former colonialists. That left

¹⁰⁸ Reynolds, "Opening Wedge," 335-43; OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 407-14; Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War against Japan*, 323-30.

¹⁰⁹ Mark Atwood Lawrence, *Assuming the Burden: Europe and the American Commitment to War in Vietnam* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 19-26. On Churchill's resistance to trusteeship and decolonization, see Peter Clarke, *The Last Thousand Days of the British Empire: Churchill, Roosevelt and the Birth of Pax Americana* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2008).

¹¹⁰ Lawrence, *Assuming the Burden*, 74; Scott L. Bills, *Empire and Cold War: The Roots of U.S.-Third World Antagonism, 1945-1947* (New York: Macmillan, 1990).

primarily the Viet Minh, a nationalist, anti-colonialist organization, that since 1944 had been actively leading resistance to the Japanese in Vietnam and helping to rescue downed American aviators.¹¹¹ The Viet Minh was headed by Ho Chi Minh.

Ho Chi Minh and the OSS

The OSS connection with Ho Chi Minh, longtime communist and Vietnamese nationalist leader, has remained controversial. Ho wanted American support against the French as well as the Japanese. His motivation in seeking U.S. support in 1944-1945 has been much debated as has the OSS motivation in working with him.¹¹² The OSS had worked with communist partisans in Italy, France, Yugoslavia and other countries. Donovan took a pragmatic view about working with the communists, accepting a broad range of allies in support of the OSS goal, which, he said, was “the earliest possible defeat of the Axis.” In Vietnam, many of the OSS officers saw Ho as the main leader of a resistance movement that included both communist and non-communist nationalists. It was an insurgency against both the French colonialists as well as against the Japanese occupiers, and seemed supportive of the official U.S. policy of decolonization. Indeed, Ho and the Viet Minh were far more valuable in creating agent intelligence networks, rescuing downed aviators, and fighting the Japanese than were the French, who suspected that the United States was trying to replace them in Indochina, and whose primary interest was less in defeating the Japanese than in getting in French troops to restore Paris’s control of Indochina.¹¹³

From its regional headquarters in Kunming, China, OSS began to penetrate northern Indochina. This was deemed necessary after the Japanese took control from the Vichy French in the spring of 1945 and previous sources of intelligence from Hanoi were cut off. SI officer Marine Lieutenant Charles Fenn, a British-born, American journalist, who had joined the OSS in 1943 and been trained in Maryland and Virginia, met in March 1945 with Ho Chi Minh, who agreed to allow OSS agents and radio operators in Vietnam in exchange for arms and medicines for the Viet Minh.¹¹⁴ In April, a new and ultimately

¹¹¹ Ronald H. Spector, *Advice and support: The Early Years of the U.S. Army in Vietnam, 1941-1960* (New York: Free Press, 1985); Dixee R. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh: Unexpected Allies in the War against Japan* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 1-33.

¹¹² For differing views of Ho’s motivation in trying to enlist the Americans in his cause, see Jean Lacoutre, *Ho Chi Minh: A Political Biography* (New York: Random House, 1968); Peter M. Dunn, *The First Vietnam War* (London: Hurst, 1985), 50; Charles Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh: A Biographical Introduction* (New York: Scribners, 1973), 74-76, Archimedes L.A. Patti, *Why Viet Nam? Prelude to America’s Albatross* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 43-47; and William J. Duiker, *Ho Chi Minh* (New York: Hyperion, 2000). On the OSS relationship with Ho and the Viet Minh, see most recently, Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, which provides a detailed account generally sympathetic to the OSS.

¹¹³ Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 300-320;

¹¹⁴ Charles Fenn, *At the Dragon’s Gate: With the OSS in the Far East* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2004), 4-11; Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh*, 78-82; Bartholomew-Feis, *OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 154-155; Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War against Japan*, 292-93.

highly controversial OSS officer arrived in Kunming to head SI operations in Indochina. Army Air Corps Captain Archimedes L. A. Patti, a 31-year-old Italian American, had attended training camps in Maryland and Virginia, and in January 1944 had landed at Anzio when the Allies thought the landing would lead directly to Rome. Returning to Washington, he was put in charge of SI's Indochina Desk. Now in Kunming, the Army and the Air Corps wanted him to get information about Japanese military units and installations as well as to conduct sabotage missions against key railroad lines. Patti met with Ho Chi Minh, who with his Viet Minh agents and guerrillas already well established and in control in several provinces inside the country, seemed to offer the fastest way for OSS to set up operations there. Like many others, Patti's sympathy for the Vietnamese and disdain for the French would intensify as the Vietnamese courted the Americans while the French berated them.¹¹⁵

General Albert Wedemeyer, Stilwell's successor in China, approved the dispatch of two OSS/SO missions into Indochina in July 1945 to sabotage railroads, gather enemy target and deployment information and work with and each train some 50 Vietnamese guerrillas. Although composed mainly of Americans, they would include a few European Frenchmen as well. The teams were code-named Deer and Cat. The main SO mission, the Deer Team, parachuted into a jungle village about 75 miles northwest of Hanoi in mid-July. The commander was Major Allison K. Thomas. A native of Lansing, Michigan, who had lived in France for a while before the war and knew French well, had become a lawyer in Michigan. He joined the Army, became an officer, and because of his knowledge of France had been recruited from the Army by OSS. He served with distinction in X-2 Counterintelligence with Patton's Third Army in France and Germany, then transferred to China in the spring of 1945. He was then about 30 years old. His second in command was Lieutenant René Défourneaux, an American who grew up in France. The enlisted men included Sergeant Lawrence Vogt, the weapons instructor; Sergeant William Zielski, the radio operator; Sergeant Alan Squires, photographer; Private Paul ("Hoagy") Hoagland from Romulous, New York, the medic; and Private Henry ("Hank") Prunier, the interpreter.¹¹⁶ He 21-year-old Prunier, son of a Worcester, Massachusetts family of Franco-American descent, who spoke fluent French and had a working knowledge of Vietnamese, or Annamese as it was called in French, because he had studied it at Berkeley for a year. Most of these men had trained at SOE camps in Britain and then at the West Coast OSS camps at Catalina Island and Newport Beach, California.¹¹⁷ Hoagland had received medical training at other facilities and Zielski, who had been OSS "commo," probably had received some training at Area C. In July of the previous year, Zielski had been part of an OSS team that parachuted into northern France. His team had sneaked into the occupied city of Brest by hiding in empty wine barrels

¹¹⁵ Patti, *Why Viet Nam?*, 6-7, 28-31, 83-88

¹¹⁶ Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 188-89; and Henry Prunier, telephone interview with the author, 15 August 2008.

¹¹⁷ René Défourneaux, email to the author, 7 August 2008. Défourneaux was trained by SOE in Britain and then by OSS SO on Catalina Island, California. Henry Prunier spent a day or two at Area F, then was trained at Catalina Island and Newport Beach. Henry Prunier, telephone interview with the author, 15 August 2008.

alongside full casks being delivered to the German garrison. Despite the dangers, Zielski radioed important intelligence information to London while moving around behind enemy lines during the following two months. For his heroism, Zielski had been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross by General Eisenhower.¹¹⁸

In Vietnam, the Deer Team parachuted into the jungle camp of Ho Chi Minh, Vo Nguyen Giap, his military chief, and other Viet Minh leaders, who received them with open arms and a banner in English, "Welcome to our American Friends."¹¹⁹ Ho, who was not at the reception, was ill, possibly suffering from malaria, dengue fever, and/or dysentery. Hoagland, the American medic, gave him quinine, sulfa drugs, and other medicines, and he soon recovered.¹²⁰ The Viet Minh turned over some POWs they had liberated in an attack on a Japanese garrison and they provided enemy target and deployment information that Zielski radioed back to Kunming. Thomas, like Patti,, concluded that the Viet Minh were the most effective force aiding the Americans in obtaining intelligence and in fighting the Japanese. So at the end of July and beginning of August, the Deer Team brought in American weapons, built a small training facility with barracks, assembly hall, radio room, and firing range, and began training some 40 guerrillas, that the Viet Minh labeled the "Vietnamese-American Force."¹²¹ They showed them how to use grenades, mortars, bazookas, and primarily how to shoot the M-1 rifle and the American carbine.¹²² Although Thomas eagerly pursued the training and all the Americans participated in it, some of the team members were discontented. Many of them agreed with Sergeant Vogt who complained that he "had volunteered to kill Japs, not to be a drill sergeant." Lieutenant Défourneaux distrusted the communists and disagreed with Thomas's leadership. Nevertheless, they continued to train the Viet Minh until 15 August 1945 when Tokyo accepted the Allied terms of surrender.¹²³

Closely linked to them was the Cat Team consisting of SO personnel, Captain Charles M. ("Mike") Holland and two sergeants, John Burrowes and John L. Stoyka, the radio operator. They had parachuted to Ho Chi Minh's camp on 29 July several days after the initial Deer Team had arrived. There they met Ho, Giap and the other Viet Minh leaders. Moving out into the jungle and setting up their own camp to pursue their own mission, they were captured in mid-August by the Japanese. Stoyka, who had served with a Jedburgh mission in France and then with an SO team in North China, managed to escape. Viet Minh villagers guided him to the Deer Team. Possibly because Stoyka had escaped with news that Holland and Burrowes were prisoners, the Japanese released the

¹¹⁸ Sergeant William Zielski, Distinguished Service Cross Citation, March 10, 1945, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 92A, Box 118, Folder 2553, National Archives II.

¹¹⁹ Allison Thomas, "Welcome to Our American Friends," in *Strange Ground: Americans in Vietnam, 1945-1975: An Oral History*, ed. Harry Mauer (New York: Henry Holt, 1989), 29-30, 33.

¹²⁰ René Défourneaux, "A Secret Encounter with Ho Chi Minh," *Look* magazine, 9 August 1966, 32-33; William Broyles, Jr., *Brothers in Arms: A Journey from War to Peace* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 104.

¹²¹ Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 160, 176-188, 193-208; Patti, *Why Viet Nam?*, 29-30.

¹²² Thomas, "Welcome to Our American Friends," 35.

¹²³ Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 209-215.

two Americans unharmed in Hanoi on 31 August, and Ho had welcomed them warmly as representatives of the United States.¹²⁴

After the Tokyo's Surrender

Tokyo's acceptance of the Allied terms of surrender on 15 August 1945, led to the dispatch of OSS missions to rescue POWs and interned civilians from Japanese internment camps. Immediately after the news from Tokyo, OSS in Kunming had sent a nine-man SO/SI rescue team to the border area of northern Indochina under Major Aaron Bank, graduate of OG training at Areas F and A, who had served as a Jedburgh in France in 1944. He had arrived in China in June 1945, and been scheduled to lead a team into Laos in August to disrupt Japanese lines of communications, but it was cancelled at the last minute.¹²⁵ Bank's new assignment was to search for hidden POW camps in the jungle, investigate possible war crimes, and report on general conditions in the area.¹²⁶ Tokyo's decision to surrender had left a power vacuum in Indochina. It also provided an unprecedented opportunity for Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh. Ho announced the formation of the National Liberation Committee of Vietnam and on 20 August, the Viet Minh took over Hanoi. On 22 August 1945, Patti and the Quail Mission were sent to Hanoi to rescue prisoners and assess the situation there. Bank was waiting at Gai Lam airport outside Hanoi when Archimedes Patti and the Quail Mission arrived. Patti had immediately freed the POWs in an adjacent prison camp, and then linking up with Bank's team, they drove into Hanoi. The Americans, the first Allied "force" to arrive in Hanoi, were welcomed, but the Viet Minh and the unruly crowd denounced the French. Patti was a controversial figure, later accused of overreaching his authority and he was eventually recalled. "He was very volatile, a glory seeker," recalled Henry Prunier a member of the "Deer" Team under Allison Thomas that had parachuted into Ho Chi Minh's jungle camp several months earlier. "We were not glory seekers. In his book, he wrote that the 'Deer' Team was just an experiment. I could have shot the son-of-a-bitch. He was experimenting with our lives!"¹²⁷

Ho Chi Minh, the charismatic, fatherly-looking, nationalist and communist leader of the Viet Minh sought to use the presence of American OSS officers, like Allison Thomas, Archimedes Patti, Aaron Bank, and Mike Holland, to indicate U.S. support for the Viet Minh' anti-colonialist movement. Thomas had his unit accompany Viet Minh

¹²⁴ Ibid., 179, 204-6, 218, 368n; Will Irwin, *The Jedburghs: The Secret History of the Allied Special Forces in France, 1944* (New York: Public Affairs Press, 2005), 252.

¹²⁵ Aaron Bank, *OSS to Green Berets: The Birth of Special Forces* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1986), 100-104.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 105-14; Patti, *Why Vietnam?*, 566. Bank located more than 150 French civilian internees.

¹²⁷ Henry Prunier, telephone interview with the author, 15 August 2008; Patti, *Why Viet Nam?*

guerrillas parading through jungle villages behind a Viet Minh flag.¹²⁸ Holland had allowed Ho to portray him as a representative of the United States in Hanoi, and in September, Holland and Bank, eventually finding themselves in Hanoi with no transportation back to their camp, accepted Ho's offer of his car and accompanied him as he drove south, stopping at towns and cities, speaking to cheering crowds, each time gesturing to the two OSS officers in their American military uniforms as evidence of U.S. support for the goal of Vietnamese independence. He left them after a rally at Hué, the old imperial capital but provided them with a car and driver to take them back to their camp in Laos.¹²⁹

Patti, believing that he was still following Donovan's order in April not to help the French restore control, favored the Viet Minh and sought to mediate between them and the French. But times had changed. Not all OSS officers agreed with Patti or favored the Viet Minh over the French. Paris-born, American Jedburgh, Lieutenant Lucien E. Conein, who had OSS training at Areas F and B, had spent much of the summer of 1945 providing similar guerrilla training to French troops along the Indochinese border and arrived in Hanoi shortly after Patti, but was entirely supportive of the French.¹³⁰ More importantly, OSS headquarters in Kunming by the end of August had reprimanded Patti for not offering more help to the French members of the team and their efforts to re-establish French control. The next day, 31 August, the French met with the Viet Minh and began to inform them of France's demands. Ho responded on 2 September 1945, the day Japan formally surrendered aboard the *USS Missouri* in Tokyo Bay, by quoting the U.S. Declaration of Independence and proclaiming the establishment of an independent, Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The Communists also started outlawing their rivals and eliminating, by imprisonment or execution, many of their opponents. The U.S. Government did not recognize Vietnamese independence, in fact it followed a neutral and then supportive stance toward French sovereignty. Ho and the Viet Minh had sought to use the OSS support in the fight against the Japanese in 1945 to solidify their position in Vietnam as well as to obtain recognition from the United States. But the key to the August 1945 Revolution, the seizure of Hanoi, Saigon and many provinces, as well as Ho's declaration of independence was not the OSS but the fact that the Viet Minh seized the opportunity in the power vacuum when the Japanese suddenly surrendered.¹³¹ By the end September, the Chinese government had recognized French sovereignty in Indochina and on 28 September 1945, the Japanese commander formally surrendered to the Chinese, the Americans—and to the French

¹²⁸ Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 218. See also Thomas's "Report on the Deer Mission," September 1945, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 154, Box 199, Folder 2277, National Archives II.

¹²⁹ Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets*, 116-29.

¹³⁰ Obituary, Tim Weiner, "Lucien Conein, 79, Legendary Cold War Spy," *New York Times*, 87 June 1998; Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 245, 251, 377n.

¹³¹ Lawrence, *Assuming the Burden*, 81-82, 90-96, 134, 144; Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 312-320; Maochun Yu, *OSS in China: Prelude to Cold War* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 232-233.

“Cochinchina is Burning”

Cochinchina, the area of Vietnam south of the 19th Parallel, was, under the Potsdam Agreement of July 1945, to be occupied temporarily by the Anglo-American South East Asia Command, headed by the renowned Lord Louis Mountbatten. It was to accept the surrender of the Japanese and maintain order there until the future of Indochina was determined. Using Indian troops, the British were in charge of the occupation, but their first priority seemed to be the facilitating the deployment of French forces to reassert Paris's control over its former colony, as the British were doing in Burma and Malaya. In the midst of this, a small OSS/SI team began arriving in Saigon on the first week in September 1945 to rescue POWs and report on political developments. “Operation Embankment,” was headed by Major A. Peter Dewey, 28, scion of a prominent Republican family. Dewey's father was a congressman, and Thomas E. Dewey, New York governor and 1944 Presidential candidate, was a relative. As a youth, Dewey had been educated in Switzerland and studied French history at Yale. He served as a secretary to the U.S. ambassador in Berlin, and then became a Paris correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News*. During the German invasion of France in 1940, Dewey worked with an ambulance unit, then supported the Free French under Charles deGaulle.¹³² He returned to the United States, and according to Capt. Charles Parkin, Jr., an instructor at OSS Area B in Catoctin Mountain Park, Dewey served as a civilian instructor there for a while in 1942.¹³³ In the fall, Dewey enlisted as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army and subsequently served on intelligence missions in Africa and the Middle East. Dewey joined the OSS in Algiers in 1943. In August 1944, he parachuted into southern France, heading a team that with the local *maquis* gathering intelligence and then during the invasion, captured 400 Germans and destroyed three tanks. Returning to Washington in October, he worked in OSS headquarters for several months, until he was chosen for deployment to Saigon after the Japanese surrender.¹³⁴

Dewey and his team arrived in Saigon the first week in September, but by the middle of the month, they had run into severe difficulties with the British and the French. Dewey had been meet with the Viet Minh, and he vigorously objected to the British commander's policy of evicting the Viet Minh from the government offices, police stations and military barracks they had seized from the Japanese and Vichy French. Most of the American team was disgusted when the British allowed the French, whom they had

¹³² Ronald H. Spector, *In the Ruins of Empire: The Japanese Surrender and the Battle for Postwar Asia* (New York: Random House, 2007), 124; Patti, *Why Viet Nam?*, 480-81. Dewey's actual rank was major, but he elevated himself to lieutenant colonel to have more influence with those with whom he dealt.

¹³³ Charles M. Parkin, interview after a tour arranged by the author of former OSS Training Area B, Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md., 18 May 2005.

¹³⁴ Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 268-291; R. Harris Smith, *OSS: The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 337-338; “Captain Albert Peter Dewey, AC [Air Corps],” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 92A, Box 29, Folder 421, National Archives II.

rearmed, to take over Saigon and inflict brutal reprisals on the Vietnamese. In retaliation, the Vietnamese across the political spectrum joined in a general uprising and open guerrilla warfare throughout the city.

Under pressure from the British and French, OSS headquarters ordered Dewey back from Saigon. In the midst of the bloody uprising against the French, local guerrillas ambushed and wounded OSS Captain Joseph Coolidge of the OSS Research and Analysis Branch. The next day, 26 September, the day Dewey was scheduled to leave, he was killed when guerrillas with machine guns opened fire on his jeep. The Vietnamese guerrillas had apparently mistaken him for a French officer. In Hanoi, when Ho Chi Minh learned about Dewey's death, he rushed to U.S. commander, General Philip Gallagher, and expressed his deep sorrow. He sent letters of condolence to Dewey's parents and to President Harry Truman.¹³⁵ Although there were no more OSS casualties in Indochina, by January 1946, when the British Army handed over full authority in southern Vietnam to the French and departed, the brutal guerrilla war around Saigon, involving assassinations on both sides, had caused more a thousand casualties, Vietnamese and French. In Dewey's final report to OSS, written the day before he was killed, he had concluded: "Cochinchina is burning, the French and British are finished here, and we ought to clear out of Southeast Asia."¹³⁶

OSS and the Tangled Web in China

From the time the U.S. entered the war in December 1941, Donovan's headquarters in Washington had high hopes for a major role in China. But the situation in China was a tangled web of competing interests, among both the Chinese and the Americans. Viewing OSS as a threat, rivals managed to limit its operations for most of the war. Not until the final year of the war did OSS achieve a breakthrough in China and begin to contribute significantly to the defeat of Japan.

Despite numerous entreaties and emissaries, Donovan was unable to obtain an effective foothold in China for his organization until 1943. CBI Theater Commander General Joseph Stilwell allowed Detachment 101 in Burma, but declined to permit Donovan's autonomous, centralized intelligence and special operations agency to operate in China unless it was approved by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang would not

¹³⁵ Patti, *Why Viet Nam?*, 320-23 Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 265-299, Ho Chi Minh reference on p. 298; Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War against Japan*, 346-49; Bills, *Empire and the Cold War*, 124-26; The official OSS history barely mentions French Indochina. OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 414. Nancy Dewey Hoppin, Peter Dewey's daughter, who was an infant at the time of her father's death, visited Vietnam in 2005 and was told that her father had been mistaken for a French officer and that his body, which was never found, had been thrown into a river at Go Vap near Saigon. Seymour Topping, "Vietnamese Historian Recalls Untold Story of Tragic Murder of Peter Dewey," *OSS Society Newsletter*, Summer 2005, 3-4.

¹³⁶ Peter Dewey quoted in Patti, *Why Viet Nam?*, 320.

approve it without the recommendation of his intelligence chief, General Dai Li, who headed a combined intelligence and secret police organization with perhaps 300,000 agents, and who jealously sought to prevent any independent intelligence operations in China.¹³⁷ Since Chiang and his generals were using American military and economic assistance for domestic purposes or stockpiling it for the postwar civil war with Mao Tse-tung and the Communists rather than using those weapons and supplies to help defeat the Japanese as the Americans wanted, Chiang Kai-shek did not look favorably upon an independent American intelligence agency reporting directly to Washington about his government and Army.¹³⁸

When Army intelligence had refused in late 1941 to allow Donovan's organization or the Office of Naval Intelligence to be part of its mission to China, the Navy had made its own arrangement, directly with Chinese spymaster, Dai Li. The head of the Navy's mission was Captain Milton ("Mary") Miles, a veteran of the Yangtze River patrol in the 1920s.¹³⁹ His assignment was to gather intelligence about Japanese air and naval bases, coastal shipping, and the weather moving eastward across China toward the ocean, all of which would aid the U.S. Navy in the Pacific. Miles arrived in April 1942, established a working relationship with General Dai Li and, since both Donovan and the Army's Intelligence Mission had been rebuffed, Miles' "U.S. Naval Group, China," became the only American intelligence organization initially allowed into China by Chiang Kai-shek.¹⁴⁰

Donovan originally tried to work with Miles and Dai Li, by designating Miles as head of the OSS in China, but he had to go further to win over Dai Li. It was the millions of dollars that OSS had available, much of it in "unvouchered funds" for clandestine operations, which did not require accounting, that made Donovan's organization so attractive to Dai Li.¹⁴¹ In a friendly gesture in December 1942, Donovan got Miles and Dai Li to agree to his plan for sending OSS Special Operations (SO) teams to China to arm and instruct Chinese guerrillas. Unknown to Dai Li and Miles, Donovan and Alghan R. ("Al") Lusey, an American businessman with much experience in China who later

¹³⁷ Barbara Tuchman called Dai Li, "China's combination of Himmler and J. Edgar Hoover," *Stilwell and the American Experience*, 334; for an attempt at a balanced view, see Yu, *OSS in China*, 31-32, 286n, and Frederick Wakeman, Jr., *Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), xiii-xv, 1-11, 355-358, 365. There are various English spellings of Dai Li's name (e.g. Tai Li). I have used Wakeman's spelling.

¹³⁸ Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 290-91.

¹³⁹ Milton Miles, *A Different Kind of War: The Little Known Story of the Combined Guerrilla Forces Created in China by the U.S. Navy and the Chinese During World War II* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967). His nickname "Mary," resulted from a Hollywood star, Mary Miles, having the same last name.

¹⁴⁰ Dai Li's decision to establish a partnership with Miles and the Navy may have been caused by recent bureaucratic setbacks he had suffered domestically over cryptography and the discovery that his intelligence center was penetrated by a half dozen communist agents who were reporting directly to Mao's Chinese Communist Party headquarters in Yen-an. Yu, *OSS in China*, 38-58.

¹⁴¹ In October 1942, for example, OSS had deposited \$50,000 in half a dozen Asian banks for Miles, as titular head of OSS in China, to draw upon in helping to obtain agreement. OSS also purchased and distributed 500 gold wristwatches as gestures of good will. Yu, *OSS in China*, 84.

became head of the Secret Intelligence Branch (SI) in China, secretly planned to use the SO men eventually as SI spies, connected by a clandestine radio network what would also be set up under the rubric of Special Operations. Even the American SO operatives themselves did not know of Donovan's and Lusey's ulterior motives. The idea was to give the Chinese as many SO men and materials as possible, in exchange for, what was to be kept secret: a foothold in China for future intelligence operations.¹⁴²

OSS's new position in China was formalized in April 1943 in a secret treaty establishing the Sino-American Special Cooperative Organization or SACO (pronounced "SACKO"), among the U.S. Navy, Army, OSS and the Nationalist Chinese Government. The United States agreed to provide weaponry for 85 Chinese Special operations units and establish 13 SO Schools to train the Chinese recruits. In return, the Americans would be allowed to establish several weather monitoring stations, some W/T broadcasting units, and four intelligence stations along the southeastern coast of China. But to get his foothold in China, Donovan had to agree that Dai Li was head of SACO and Miles was his deputy; Dai Li retained control over the activities of the Chinese SO units that were to be trained, armed, and deployed by the Americans.¹⁴³ However, despite Dai Li's goal of closely regulating OSS operations in China, the SACO agreement in the long run actually enabled Donovan to maneuver among the Navy, Army and the Chinese Government and ensure that OSS would survive and even expand in China.¹⁴⁴

OSS and the SACO Training Camps in China

Under the SACO agreement, more than a dozen training camps were established in 1943 to prepare Chinese recruits for special operations with indigenous guerrillas behind Japanese lines. Both the Americans and the Chinese provided instructors, but the bulk of the instruction was done by the U.S. military personnel. Not many of the Americans spoke Chinese, or at least more than a few words or phrases, so interpreters, usually local Chinese but sometimes Chinese Americans, translated their instructions. The United States delivered all the weapons, munitions, and other materials. Miles later claimed that the SACO force totaled 97,000 Chinese and 3,000 Americans and that it killed 71,000 Japanese troops. This was a dubious assertion. The official number of graduates was 26,800, and the number of Japanese casualties they inflicted may well have been fewer than their own numbers. Later some of them, particularly those recruited

¹⁴² Yu, *OSS in China*, 77-83, 90, 296n. In his recommendation after his China visit, Lusey confided to Donovan., "none of the [SO] men sent to china as instructors [for Dai Li's guerrillas] should be told they will eventually be used as SI men, or that they will be used for anything except instructing the Chinese SO people; when the time comes for them to do SI work, we will work them in." "This would have to be handled very carefully, as our whole show would blow up if the Chinese ever found out we were doing anything like this." Alghan R. Lusey to William J. Donovan, 14 September 1942, Secret Memorandum, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 139, Box 267, Folder 3934, National Archives II.

¹⁴³ Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 290-293. OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 424-27.

¹⁴⁴ Yu, *OSS in China*, 94-98.

from Dai Li's intelligence and secret police forces were used for internal control. But recruits from the occupied areas of eastern China had seen the suffering the Japanese had caused in their locales, and they were eager to strike back at the invaders.¹⁴⁵ Most of the 2,500 Americans who worked with SACO were from the Navy because of Miles, but a few were from the OSS, because of Donovan.

At least three of the SACO special operations training camps included former instructors from OSS stateside schools, especially Area B in Catoctin Mountain Park and Area A in Prince William Forest Park. SACO training camp known as Unit 1, the Xiongcun Ban in Chinese, was established in Xiongcun, Xiu xian, Anhui, in the mountains five miles south of Huizhou (Shexian), about 200 miles west of Shanghai. Because of Captain Miles, the commanding officer and most of the dozen American instructors were naval personnel, sailors or Marines.¹⁴⁶ The instructor in demolitions and subsequently apparently chief instructor and possibly eventually camp commander, was Major Charles M. Parkin, Jr., 28, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and OSS.¹⁴⁷ Parkin had been with the OSS since early spring 1942 when he had been assigned as an instructor at Area B in Catoctin Mountain Park.¹⁴⁸ He arrived in China in June 1943 and served at SACO camp Unit 1 through February 1945.¹⁴⁹ The American instructors, through interpreters, taught weaponry, close-combat, demolitions, intelligence gathering and cryptography, sabotage and guerrilla warfare. The Chinese instructors were assigned for political indoctrination. The headquarters, classrooms and accommodations were located in a small rural temple and pagoda, but because this was the first SACO training camp, it took six months to get it set up and start classes.¹⁵⁰ The training cycle lasted three months for each class. The graduates did conduct several successful sabotage operations. One unit raided the Shanghai airport, destroying five fighter planes and a number of fuel tanks. Another unit, consisting of nearly 100 men, sent out in September 1943, reported

¹⁴⁵ Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 294-295.

¹⁴⁶ Miles, *A Different Kind of War*, 149-50; Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 379.

¹⁴⁷ Description of duties in China in Lt. Col. Charles M. Parkin, to Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, WD General Staff (through channels), 6 June 1945, subject: Request to Enter Army and Navy Staff College, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 92A, Box 47, Folder 785, National Archives II. It is possible that Parkin was the commander of the instructional staff rather than the commander of the unit staff, as he listed himself as former commanding officer of Area B, when he had been the chief instructor. Frederick Wakeman lists Maj. John H. ("Bud") Masters, USMC, as commander of the U.S. personnel at SACO Unit 1; but like Parkin, Wakeman reports that the trainees conducted several sabotage raids including wrecking trains. Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 379.

¹⁴⁸ Charles M. Parkin, telephone interview with the author, 10 May 2005;

¹⁴⁹ Lt. Col. Jacque B. deSibour, to Commanding General, Rear Echelon, HQ, USF, China Theater, 10 February 1945, subject: Promotion of Office [Major Charles M. Parkin to Lieutenant Colonel], OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 92A, Box 47, Folder 785, National Archives II. The report provides dates of service and describes Parkin as a "young, energetic" officer of "superior" quality and in the upper third of all officers of his relative rank. See also Parkin's OSS personnel file transferred to CIA Records (RG 263), Box 31, National Archives II.

¹⁵⁰ Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 379.

that they had wrecked a train, assassinated a “puppet” collaborationist Chinese provincial governor and chief of secret police.¹⁵¹ Parkin later reported that the camp had trained 7,000 Chinese guerrillas and that in five operations, its graduates were responsible for providing valuable intelligence, severing the Hangchow-Kinhwa Railroad in 250 places, rolling up 600 kilometers of telephone/telegraph wire, wrecking 3 trains and 5 pillboxes, and killing some 100 Japanese soldiers.¹⁵²

The SACO camp known as Unit Two, Hongjian Ban in Chinese, was established in June 1943, near Changsa in Hunan Province, south central China. Naval officers and chief petty officers made up the majority of the American staff, but later that year two OSS Army officers arrived. Recently commissioned following Officers’ Candidate School, they had formerly been sergeants and instructors at Area B, now Lieutenants Leopold J. (“Leo”) Karwaski and Joseph E. (“Joe”) Lazarsky, both from the coal mining region around Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania. They were assisted by 14 enlisted men. The aim, as in the SO camps in Maryland and Virginia, was to recruits in American and other weaponry and demolitions, field craft, sabotage, and guerrilla operations. Unit Two handled 300 Chinese recruits at a time, and, even though Karwaski and Lazarsky later left for more hazardous duty, it had established a reputation as the most productive of the SACO training centers. It produced 2,200 SO graduates between 1943 and 1945.¹⁵³

“I was there for six months training Chinese soldiers in central China,” Lazarsky recalled. “Leo and I saw that these Chinese from the Chinese Army divisions we were training didn’t know anything. They didn’t have much of a training program [in the Chinese Army]. We started from scratch. Anything we taught them was new to them. At first they got rather obsolete weapons, the Springfield ’03 rifle, then later the M1, Garand. After I left [for Burma], Leo was teaching the Chinese about plastic explosives—looked like flour. [It could be stored in flour sacks to deceive the Japanese] He baked a cake with it. You could eat a touch of it, but not much. Four or five of the Chinese ate the cake and died.”¹⁵⁴

OSS officers, Major Arden (“Art”) Dow, from Washington State, who had been an instructor at Area B and chief instructor at Area A-4, and Captain Frank Gleason from Pennsylvania, who had instructed in demolitions at Area B, were in charge at SACO Unit Three or Linru Ban. It was located just south of Loyang in Honan Province in east central China. Dow, 27, was the camp commander and Gleason, 25, his executive officer. They had come highly recommended. In February 1943, a key officer attached to the staff of Admiral Ernest O. King, chief of naval operations, wrote enthusiastically to Miles about the OSS men coming to China and described Gleason, an Army Engineer, instructor at Area B, and a graduate of SOE’s sabotage schools in England, as “the best grounded

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Lt. Col. Charles M. Parkin, to Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, WD General Staff (through channels), 6 June 1945, subject: Request to Enter Army and Navy Staff College, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 92A, Box 47, Folder 785, National Archives II.

¹⁵³ Miles, *A Different Kind of War*, 157; Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 380.

¹⁵⁴ Joseph Lazarsky, telephone interview with the author, 11 February 2007.

man in the U.S. on industrial espionage [and sabotage].”¹⁵⁵ From Assam, India, Dow and Gleason had flown over the Hump, arriving at Kunming, in Yunan Province, the OSS China headquarters in July 1943. From there, they had flown to the wartime capital the Chinese Nationalist Government in Chungking (Chongqing), a city of three million on the Yangtze River in Sichuan Province in west central China. Chungking was also the site of Stilwell’s headquarters, OSS’s liaison, Miles’s Navy Group, and the U.S. Embassy.

In late August, Dow and Gleason had left Chungking by Army truck convoy and six weeks and nearly two thousand miles of dirt road later, they arrived at the site of the training camp in early October. It was in an area around an old, abandoned Buddhist temple in the mountains of Fengxue si. Although several Chinese officers were assigned, primarily to observe the Americans and to provide ideological indoctrination for the Chinese trainees, the Americans ran the instruction. “It was just we two Army officers and eighteen Navy petty officers,” Gleason recalled.¹⁵⁶ The Navy NCOs were there because Captain Miles. The school’s mission was to train “armed special services units” to destroy Japanese lines of communication and supply in the area between Pinghan, Longhai, and Jinpu. The men were trained to be infiltrated and blow up railroads, bridges, and airfields. Given the rough and ready training, the camp commander gained the sobriquet “Rowdy” Dow, and he called the SACO camp, “Pact Rowdy.”¹⁵⁷

At the Training Camp of “Rowdy Dow”

“When we arrived on the scene in early October [1943],” Gleason later reported, “we found that we had to convert our training camp from a site which had been one for the monks, to one which could be considered an American type military establishment.” It took them about a month to construct two rifle ranges, each with 30 targets, plus two grenade ranges, four demolition ranges, a combat firing range, a pistol range, and an arsenal. As Gleason put it in his report when he had returned to the United States nearly two years later, “Surprisingly, this work was interesting to us newcomers to China, for we were already learning the necessity to improvise when the required material could not be procured locally or in China. Our supply lines were over two thousand miles long and practically inaccessible. When we needed gasoline and oil for our generators, we found it

¹⁵⁵ Yu, *OSS in China*, 84, who cites Capt. Jeffrey C. Metzel to Lt. Cmdr. Milton Miles, 7 February 1943, Records of the Chief of Naval Intelligence, Foreign Intelligence, the Far East Desk (RG 38), Miles Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, National Archives II.

¹⁵⁶ Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 9 May 2005.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, Miles, *A Different Kind of War*, 158. On Dow’s name for the camp, “Pact Rowdy,” see Maj. Arden W. Dow to M.E. Miles, Captain, USN, U.S. Naval Observer, 8 January 1943 [1944], subject: Complete Training Program at S.A.C.O. Number 3, Pact Rowdy, a 14-page report, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 256, Folder 3550, National Archives II.

much easier to buy the material *from the Japanese* [who sold it on the black market]. In fact, it would have taken months by any other manner.”¹⁵⁸

The first class at the camp consisted of some 400 Chinese trainees. They were recruits supplied by various Nationalist Army generals in what was called, the “First War Area.” Daily and weekly training schedules were modeled after the training at Areas A and B in Maryland and Virginia. In the six weeks course, students would receive a total of 35 hours practice with a submachine gun, 29 hours with a carbine, 14 hours with a .38 caliber revolver, 16 hours practice throwing hand grenades, 18 hours of unarmed, close combat instruction, and 24 hours of demolitions and sabotage, plus lesser amounts for aircraft identification, observation, and reporting. In addition there were 42 hours of field problems in daylight and 15 hours of night problems, a total of 267 hours of instruction and practice.¹⁵⁹ Each class lasted between six and twelve weeks. In all, five classes graduated from the training school, Unit Three, between 1943 and 1945. In the early summer of 1944, the school had to move westward because of a major Japanese offensive. It re-located in the next province, Shaanxi, first in Hu county and later in a place called Ox Winter (Niudong). It was at that time in the summer of 1944 that the first class of Chinese guerrillas graduated from the camp went into action against the Japanese.¹⁶⁰

OSS instructors had mixed reactions to the Chinese recruits at their training camps, as Dow indicated in March 1944. Although many of the recruits were not in good physical condition when they arrived at the camp—large numbers suffered from scabies, conjunctivitis, and ulcerations—the recruits had strong legs and great physical endurance. They could march for more than thirty miles a day and even climb mountain trails without becoming exhausted. They were tough and ferocious fighters when they wanted to be, Dow wrote. They were in their element at night. While many were eager to learn and eagerly engaged in field exercises such as ambushes, they took a cavalier attitude toward classroom instruction.¹⁶¹ Many of the Chinese recruits, Dow complained, “seemed to think it was all a big joke.” The students skipped classes at will and when they did attend, frequently slept through the lectures. Many openly cheated on written exams. They carelessly disassembled their weapons without permission or supervision. In the process, they often lost springs, firing pins, and other small but essential parts, with the result that the weapon became inoperable. Language was a problem because of the shortage of interpreters and the numerous local dialects. But the Americans did try to teach the Chinese trainees the technical skills to fight the Japanese—close combat,

¹⁵⁸ Maj. Frank A. Gleason, “Summary of the Activities of Major Frank A. Gleason with the Office of Strategic Services in the China Theater from March 16, 1943 thru and including March 20, 1945,” p. 1, ten-page typed report accompanying, Gleason to Director of OSS (through Chief, SO Branch), 7 June 1945, subject: Report of Activities of Major Frank A. Gleason in China Theater, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 256, Folder 3550, National Archives II. Emphasis added.

¹⁵⁹ Maj. Arden W. Dow to M.E. Miles, Captain, USN, U.S. Naval Observer, 8 January 1943 [1944], subject: Complete Training Program at S.A.C.O. Number 3, Pact Rowdy, a 14-page report, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 256, Folder 3550, National Archives II.

¹⁶⁰ Wakeman,, *Spymaster*, 380-381.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 294-298.

weapons usage, demolitions, radio communication. The instructors drew upon their own training and courses. “Our OSS training was very effective,” Gleason said later. “We blew those bridges. We did it with what we learned in our training here [in the United States] and in England [at SOE school]. In China, we had classes where I taught Chinese how to destroy mechanical equipment. I felt fully prepared.”¹⁶²

Chinese recruits were proud of the new American weapons, which gave them great status, and they learned to shoot them well. However, the Americans sometimes became disillusioned and discouraged. After a visit by Dai Li to the Unit Three SACO training camp in February 1944, Dow was convinced that “General Dai and the men of his organization are interested in just one thing—getting all the arms and equipment they possibly can. I believe the training by we Americans is merely a cover to get more equipment.”¹⁶³ Dai Li had assigned Chinese agents from his organization at Units Two and Three and other camps to provide compulsory political indoctrination for the guerrilla trainees to keep them loyal to him and Chiang Kai-shek. The indoctrination was originally scheduled for a full month of the three-month training cycle, but under protest from the Americans, it was reduced to certain afternoons. Maintaining their distance between the two types of training—the practical and the ideological—the Chinese political instructors were forbidden by Dai Li to fraternize with the Americans. At Unit Three, the Linru Ban training camp, the Chinese instructors lived in the Buddhist temple, while the Americans lived in a nearby twelve-room, Western-style house they had constructed.¹⁶⁴

The Americans planned to launch the Chinese trainees on some simple guerrilla operations behind enemy lines after their graduation, but Dai Li’s organization never provided proper clearance while the Americans were there. Nevertheless, with Dai Li’s authority, Dow and Gleason did accomplish two missions from the camp against the Japanese in late 1943 and early 1944. But because of Dai Li’s orders, they had to special Chinese groups supplied from around Loyang rather than graduates from the camp. In the first mission behind Japanese lines, they successfully destroyed a steam turbine power plant of the Chiao Tzoa Mines located some 75 miles north of Loyang. In the second mission, in January 1944, a raiding party of nearly 300 Chinese guerrillas and saboteurs, blew up a long railroad bridge across the Yellow River between Kaifeng and Sinsiang in Honan Province. Frank Gleason later reported to Washington, the raid “was a definite indication that the Chinese could operate successfully, if the word would be given from Chungking.”¹⁶⁵ Gleason’s was a familiar American complaint; Chiang’s government

¹⁶² Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 9 February 2007.

¹⁶³ Maj. Arden Dow to Director of OSS, CBI Theater, Report, 20 March 1944, pp. 9, 19, in OSS Records, quoted in Wakeman, 500n 12, 17.

¹⁶⁴ Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 299, citing a memoir published in 1981 of four months experience at the Linru camp by one of the Chinese political instructors there, Zhong Xiangbai.

¹⁶⁵ Maj. Frank A. Gleason, “Summary of the Activities of Major Frank A. Gleason with the Office of Strategic Services in the China Theater from March 16, 1943 thru and including March 20, 1945,” p. 4, ten-page typed report accompanying, Gleason to Director of OSS (through Chief, SO Branch), 7 June 1945, subject: Report of Activities of Major Frank A. Gleason in China Theater, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 256, Folder 3550, National Archives II.

simply did not want to risk of major offensives, when they could sit and wait until the Americans had defeated Japan in the Pacific. Gleason later told OSS officials back in Washington, D.C. that at least in late 1943 when the Japanese were preparing for their big offensive in 1944, the Chinese forces were “not doing much outside of a few ‘Rice Campaigns.’ These brief expeditions were more economic than punitive, and were organized at harvest time to penetrate Jap lines, collect as much rice as possible, and retreat at once.”¹⁶⁶

Expanding with the help of Chennault’s Air Force

Although the some of the SACO Chinese guerrillas made successful raids, restrictions by Dai Li and other Chinese generals precluded it from becoming a vehicle for OSS expansion, which, even while it frustrated Donovan and his operatives, did not upset Chungking. Through Donovan and Lusey’s secret plan, the OSS did begin to set up a communications network in China and some of the SO operatives were eventually converted into SI agents. But SACO was a failure for the OSS in terms of establishing an independent intelligence network and the kind of SO and OG teams and missions that had proved so effective in Europe and the Mediterranean. For a larger OSS role in China, authorized by President Roosevelt at the Cairo Conference in November 1943, Donovan, after an explosive meeting with Dai Li in Chungking in December, turned next to Air Force General Claire Chennault.¹⁶⁷ The 14th Air Force was the main instrument of U.S. offensive action in China. Like OSS, it had the dual role of enhancing the defensive and offensive power of the Chinese Army and of participating in the blockade of Japan—by attacks on enemy shipping in Chinese waters. Donovan had also heard rumors that Stilwell might be recalled because of his disputes with Chiang Kai-shek, and that provided a further reason for offering the OSS’s intelligence gathering potential to Chennault, an old rival of Stilwell’s. Chennault saw Donovan’s connection with the White House as a way of further undermining Stilwell.¹⁶⁸ So while in China in December

¹⁶⁶ Maj. Frank G. ___ [Gleason], interview, 30 April 1945, p. 1, Schools and Training Branch, “Interviews with Returned Men,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 159, Folder 1729, National Archives II.

¹⁶⁷ At a banquet on Donovan’s arrival in Chungking, 2 December 1943, Donovan bluntly told Dai Li that if he would not cooperate, OSS would establish itself in China on its own. The Chinese spymaster bridled and threatened to kill any OSS agents operating outside of SACO. Donovan shouted, “For every one of our agents you kill, we will kill one of your generals!” The two men shouted at each other for a minute before regaining their composure. The next day, when Donovan met with Chiang Kai-shek, the generalissimo reminded him that China was an ally and a sovereign country and Donovan as a high U.S. representative was expected to remember that and act accordingly. “You do not expect a secret service from another country to go into the United States and start operations,” Chiang explained. “You would object seriously.” Milton E. Miles, “On SSU Organization in China,” postwar report dated, 17 May 1946, in Milton E. Miles Personal Papers, Box 3, Folders 1-2, Hoover Institution, Stanford, Calif.

¹⁶⁸ Claire L. Chennault, *Way of a Fighter: The Memoirs of Claire Lee Chennault*, ed. Robert Hotz (New York: G.P. Putnam’s, 1949); Martha Bird, *Chennault: Giving Wings to the Tiger* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1987).

1943, Donovan met with Chennault and began a plan for a special, joint OSS/Air Force unit to gather intelligence about tactical targets of opportunity for the 14th Air Force.

By secret agreement in April 1944, Donovan and Chennault created the 5329th Air and Ground Forces Resources and Technical Staff, AGFRTS (or, as it was informally known to its members, “Agfarts”). The group was composed of both Air Force and OSS personnel with the latter including large numbers of SI agents, some of them derived from Chennault’s own intelligence officers. Operating outside of the restrictions imposed by SACO, the AGFRTS agents infiltrated behind Japanese lines. Through networks of coastal shipping watchers as well as through interrogation of enemy prisoners of war, they produced immediate and valuable target information which they supplied to OSS, to the 14th Air Force, and to the U.S. Navy in the Pacific.¹⁶⁹

Major Arden (“Art”) Dow played an important role in the expansion of the OSS activities under the cooperative agreement between Donovan and Chennault. After six months training Chinese guerrillas, Dow left SACO Unit Three, “Pact Rowdy,” in April 1944. Accompanied by Sergeant Anthony (“Tony”) Remineh, an OSS radio operator and code clerk trained at Area C, Dow went on a special mission to the forward echelon headquarters of the 14th Air Force. Up in the war zone, Dow had been instructed to explain to the airmen how OSS could work behind enemy lines generating sabotage and guerrilla activities as well as obtaining intelligence about weather and target selection. Upon Dow’s return to Kunming, he was expected to draw up a plan for implementing such joint operations between OSS and the 14th Air Force. The plan was to include OSS personnel from Special Operations, Secret Intelligence, Morale Operations, Research and Analysis, and Communications, and include the establishment of “a powerful radio station to be used in relaying such intelligence and weather reports as they would turn over to us.”¹⁷⁰ Upon completion of the mission, Dow did draw up such a plan, Chennault accepted it, and from 1944 to 1945, OSS provided widespread tactical intelligence to pinpoint enemy targets for the American airmen. By infiltrating behind Japanese lines and by studying all sources of information, they helped American bombers and fighter-bombers locate and strike Japanese troop concentrations, supply depots, and rail and road traffic, river and coastal shipping. More than two-thirds of the tactical intelligence received by Chennault’s headquarters came from OSS. As for the OSS in China, Donovan’s strategy was, in his words, “using Chennault air raids as cover for our operations.”¹⁷¹

Eventually, AGFRTS became the center of OSS China operations not simply for Secret Intelligence and Special Operations, but for Morale Operations and Research and Analysis as well.¹⁷² As it expanded beyond the operational branches, it included women

¹⁶⁹ Wakeman, *Spymaster*, 319; Dunlop, *Donovan: America’s Master Spy*, 427; OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 430-37, which includes a copy of the OSS agreement with the 14th Air Force.

¹⁷⁰ Col. John G. Coughlin [head of OSS/ SO in China] to Maj. Arden W. Dow, 3 April 1944, subject: Special Mission, pp. 2-3, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 92A, Box 39, Folder 611, National Archives II.

¹⁷¹ Smith, *OSS*, 258-62; Ford, *Donovan*, 267-68; Yu, *OSS in China*, 153-157; OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 418.

¹⁷² In April 1945, AGFRTS and all of its original members (Air Force and OSS) came under jurisdiction of the OSS Zhijian (Chihkiang) Field Unit, which still under the leadership of Air Force Lt. Col. Wilfrey

as well as men. Most of the American OSS women working in China were preparing “black” propaganda in Morale Operations or working as clerks or secretaries in administrative sections. Most of them had worked first in Kandy, Ceylon. The number of American OSS women in China probably did not exceed twenty, most of them at OSS headquarters in Kunming or at the OSS office in the China Theater headquarters in Chungking.¹⁷³ Among the numerous MO members in Kunming was Elizabeth (“Betty”) Peet MacDonald (later McIntosh), former war correspondent in the Pacific, who had joined the OSS in 1943 and received training at Area F, the former Congressional Country Club. Now she produced forged orders, wrote fictitious Japanese newspaper reports and other documents to undermine enemy morale. (Male artist William Smith, also in MO there, prepared anti-Japanese cartoons and rumors and printed leaflets.) Tens of millions of pieces of MO disinformation were airdropped by Chennault’s planes in occupied areas. At Kandy, Ceylon, and later Kunming, China, Julia McWilliams, a Smith College graduate, was in charge of the registry where intelligence and other reports were filed. She later married Paul Child, chief of the OSS’s small, graphics and presentation branch in the China Theater, and after their postwar transfer to Paris, became famous as Julia Child for teaching Americans about French cooking.¹⁷⁴

OSS and the 1944 Japanese Ichi-Gō Offensive in China

In the debate between Chennault and Stilwell over the proper U.S. strategy in China—whether the priority should be for an air or a ground campaign—Stilwell had argued that as soon as American airpower began to have serious impact, the Japanese Army would simply march in and occupy its forward airbases—unless there was a strong American supplied and trained Chinese Army to oppose them. Stilwell’s pessimistic prediction came true in the middle of 1944. That spring Tokyo launched the last and largest Japanese offensive in the war in China. Involving nearly half a million Japanese troops and lasting from April to December 1944, Operation *Ichi-Gō* cut a broad swath southwards across central and southern China. The Japanese quickly captured the southeastern airbases from which American airmen had been harassing Japanese forces, sinking Japanese ships, and bombing the Japanese homeland. By pushing the Chinese Army back, the Japanese also opened a land route directly to French Indochina. The

Smith, became responsible for OSS SO operations in the vast area between the Yangtze and West rivers. Yu, *OSS in China*, 156-67.

¹⁷³ Francis B. Mills with John W. Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China* (Williamstown, NJ: Phillips Publications, 2002), 468.

¹⁷⁴ Elizabeth P. McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies: The Women of the OSS* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1998), 197-198, 204-207, 216-222, 233-236.

Emperor's Army then pressed westward toward the inland airbases, Kunming and the Nationalist capital of Chungking.¹⁷⁵

The collapse of the Nationalist Army and its failure to impede the Japanese advance shattered Washington's hopes that China would play an active role in the defeat of Japan. Instead, China's wartime importance was now seen as limited to its ability to tie down a million Japanese troops. If Nationalist China survived and the American forces from the Pacific were in 1945 or 1946 able to achieve beachheads on its coast, China might also serve as a staging ground for U.S. bomber attacks and an amphibious invasion against the Japanese home islands. Meanwhile, U.S. policy was to ensure that China did survive the *Ichi-Gō* offensive.

Chiang Kai-shek pressured Roosevelt into replacing Stilwell in October 1944. A fighting general not a diplomat, "Vinegar Joe" had become a bitter foe of the Chinese Nationalist President and commander-in-chief. Stilwell's successor was Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer, a military planner and a more tactful officer. His command was reduced to China and northern Indochina, with Burma, Thailand, and southern Indochina assigned to a separate command. Wedemeyer pulled the OSS under his command as an independent agency. This removed a major part of it from Chinese control and Dai Li's domination through SACO, even if it did not end Dai Li's spying upon OSS and its agents. Consequently, there were three OSS agencies opening in the China Theater: Detachment 202, based in Chungking, to coordinate OSS operations in China and northern Indochina; SACO; and AGFRTS, but increasingly all OSS personnel were brought under Wedemeyer's command, and Detachment 202 was empowered to create independent new operations behind enemy lines, as it would do extensively by 1945.¹⁷⁶

OSS, like other American agencies, did all that it could to help block the Japanese *Ichi-Gō* offensives. Despite all efforts, by November 1944, the Japanese had rammed through Hunan and Kwangsi Provinces in southeast China and headed inland toward Kweilin and Liuchow. Chiang's government expected the Japanese to be deterred by the mountain ranges. But the emperor's troops loaded up mules and surged from the low rice paddies of Kwangsi through the Natan Pass onto the high plateau of Kweichow Province south of Chungking. The Japanese had pushed hundreds of miles westward, and they now pointed directly at the provincial capital at Kueiyang in Kweichow Province and the heart of Chiang's government's communications system. General Wedemeyer had arrived expecting to hold and strengthen eastern China, but he quickly learned that Kweilin and Liuchow were being abandoned, and panic was sweeping Chungking several hundred miles away. The U.S. embassy was advised to evacuate dependents. Wedemeyer insisted that the OSS be given the opportunity to use its demolition and sabotage skills to try to block, or at least slow down, the Japanese advance.

Consequently, OSS-trained teams aided Chinese efforts to defend the Nationalists' capital. They constructed obstacles to help block the enemy advance and set

¹⁷⁵ Lloyd E. Eastman, *Seeds of Destruction: Nationalist China in War and Revolution, 1937-1945* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1984); David P. Barrett and Larry N. Shyu, *China in the Anti-Japanese War, 1937-1945* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001). *Ichi-Gō* translates as "Operation One."

¹⁷⁶ OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 440-43.

booby-traps in buildings abandoned by the Chinese. One OSS team severed telephone and lines in 156 places, dynamited seven bridges, and halted rail traffic by tearing up 524 sections of track. Two OSS enlisted men in the field radioed in a message, first in code and then more urgently in clear text, that a large enemy force was crossing the river near Yiyang, and 14th Air Force fighter-bombers hit the Japanese soldiers in the open, causing hundreds of casualties. A few days later, the same two OSS sergeants called in the airmen to destroy two dozen sampans carrying Japanese troops across the Siang River.¹⁷⁷

Before Wedemeyer arrived, the OSS had for some time been tied up in what Major Frank A. Gleason called “enough red tape to throttle a cow.”¹⁷⁸ Every OSS action was required to be approved up the Chinese chain of command, but approval was often not forthcoming. But OSS increasingly gained leeway. Because of tensions between the OSS and Dai Li and Milton Miles, the OSS instructors had been recalled from the SACO training schools in the spring of 1944, and transferred to OSS SO and SI operations out of Chungking. In early May, plans for SO operations under the SACO-OSS Agreement were drawn up by Dow, Gleason and the others for training small groups of Chinese agents, no greater than twenty five, for operations in large cities in occupied China.

Gleason’s OSS Advanced Base 21 was established at Kweilin in Kwangsi Province in southern China and twelve Chinese agents trained in special operations were deployed in the area of neighboring Canton. Three targets for sabotage were selected, and in mid-August 1944, Major Gleason, commander of the base, sent Captain Leo Karwaski and two other Americans went down to Shuihing to set up a forward operating base. A week later, the Chinese agents were sent to Shuihing and then dispatched in three groups to their targets. Nothing was heard from them until late December 1944, when they radioed back that they had been successful in their sabotage.¹⁷⁹

Toward the end of August 1944, the Japanese pushed forward their Corridor Campaign, driving toward Luichow in Kwangsi in several different columns. Like the Chinese Armies and the 14th Air Force, the various OSS teams, including the one led by Gleason and Karwaski were forced to retreat. Working through AGRFSTS, Gleason’s unit, Advanced Base 21 of Detachment 202, was given the opportunity to show what a small, skilled and dedicated OSS team could do. With the blanket approval of General Wedemeyer and with the cooperation of the 68th Air Wing of Chennault’s 14th Air Force, Gleason obtained permission from the Chinese Commander in the Fourth War Area, Marshal Chiang Fa Kwei, to destroy all the railroad networks emanating from the key cities of Kweilin and Luichow in an attempt to halt or at least slow down the rapid Japanese advance.¹⁸⁰ Gleason’s new superior at AGFRTS, a Colonel Bowman, was an

¹⁷⁷ Ford, *Donovan of OSS*, 273.

¹⁷⁸ Maj. Frank G. ___ [Gleason], interview, 30 April 1945, p. 1, Schools and Training Branch, “Interviews with Returned Men,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 159, Folder 1729, National Archives II.

¹⁷⁹ Maj. Frank A. Gleason, “Summary of the Activities of Major Frank A. Gleason with the Office of Strategic Services in the China Theater from March 16, 1943 thru and including March 20, 1945,” pp. 8-9, ten-page typed report accompanying, Gleason to Director of OSS (through Chief, SO Branch), 7 June 1945, subject: Report of Activities of Major Frank A. Gleason in China Theater, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 256, Folder 3550, National Archives II.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.

old Regular Army officer who was direct and frank and without sugar coating, gave Gleason “the first direct and uncomplicated picture” of the situation, which was disaster. Equally important, Bowman gave Gleason his assignment and then “from that time on we were left strictly alone.”¹⁸¹

With little more than a dozen Americans, Gleason’s OSS unit carried out extensive operations over an area of some 250 square miles between 20 September 1944 and December 1944, when the Japanese curtailed their offensive. Sometimes operating only a few miles away from the advancing enemy lines, the little SO team never lost a man, although, as Gleason recalled, in blowing one of the bridges “we didn’t get far enough away. The rocks came pouring down on us. We quickly scurried underneath the jeep, or we would have been killed.”¹⁸² During four months in the field, the unit blew up more than 150 bridges, erected more than 50 road blocks, and destroyed three dozen river ferries, blew up one tunnel, and smashed an assortment of locomotives, railroad cars, trucks, Army barracks, and machine shops. They also eliminated stockpiles of munitions and gasoline supplies to prevent them from falling into enemy hands. One such episode produced perhaps the biggest explosions in south China.

Setting off the Biggest “Booms” in South China

Amidst a frigid cold snap at the end of November 1944, *Time* magazine reporter Theodore White drove south from Chungking to get a first hand look at the panic in front of the Japanese advance. As he drove 500 miles south, a never-ending stream of refugees trudged past his car fleeing north. Arriving at Kueiyang amidst the disorganized, routed Chinese troops, White found what he called the only military unit that “had any real coherence and purpose.” It was the OSS group of 15 American officers and enlisted men commanded by Frank Gleason, a young, red-headed major from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.¹⁸³ With Gleason now in this OSS demolition team, which Gleason unilaterally designated “Detachment 21,” were Lieutenant Leopold (“Leo”) Karwaski also from the Wilkes-Barre area, Captain Stanley A. Staiger of Klamath Falls, Oregon, Sergeant Graham Johnston, an ex-jockey from New Canaan, Connecticut and Sergeant Paul Todd from Kalamazoo, Michigan. The 16 members of the team soon learned that the Chinese were impressed by rank and title, and they often elevated themselves to “colonels” when they needed help from Chinese soldiers or civilians.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸¹ Maj. Frank G. ____ [Gleason], interview, 30 April 1945, p. 4, Schools and Training Branch, “Interviews with Returned Men,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 159, Folder 1729, National Archives II.

¹⁸² Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 31 January 2005. In destroying the first nine bridges, Gleason used 1,000-pound naval mines obtained from the Navy in Luichow, and which had been destined for harbors along the coast to destroy enemy shipping. email to the author, 28 May 2005.

¹⁸³ Theodore H. White and Annalee Jacoby, *Thunder Out of China* (New York: William Sloane, 1946), 195-196. White’s original account appeared in *Time Magazine*, 8 January 1945, 57-58.

¹⁸⁴ Lt. George C. Demas to Lt. Col. O.C. Doering, Jr., et al., 23 January 1945, subject: Excerpt from *Time Magazine* of 8 January 1945, pp. 57-58, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 139, Box 195, Folder 2584; see

Gleason, Karwaski and the rest of the OSS team had stopped teaching explosives and were now exploding them, doing what they could to hamper the Japanese. OSS officials later described the 24-year-old Gleason as “a boyish, aggressive, courageous and intelligent young officer...with enthusiastic impulsiveness.”¹⁸⁵ Using his ingenuity since he had been given no funds, Gleason managed to expand his convoy from three to nine trucks. He used local Chinese interpreters, including a street-wise, 12-year-old orphan boy who had originally joined the team as a kind of mascot. With their help, Gleason recruited Chinese peasants to assist him as needed. Gleason’s mission was one of scorched earth, to do whatever possible to impede the Japanese advance. In addition to destroyed bridges, roads, telephone lines and the like, Gleason sought to deny the enemy food and equipment, by authorizing peasants to pick up the weapons and other equipment abandoned by the fleeing Nationalist soldiers, and by encouraging them to forage for food and other supplies in the towns soon to be occupied by the Japanese.¹⁸⁶

In early December 1944, only 20 miles from the spearhead of the advancing Japanese Army, Gleason heard rumors when he arrived at Tushan, 140 miles south of Kueiyang, of a large supply of weapons and ammunition in the nearby hills. A preliminary reconnaissance revealed three enormous ammunition depots, each one made up of 20 to 30 giant warehouses, with each warehouse some 60 yards long, nearly two-thirds the length of a football field. Every warehouse was stacked to the rafters with weapons and munitions, much of it American made. The hoard included pistols, rifles, machine guns, mortars, fifty artillery pieces, plus millions of rounds of small arms ammunitions, thousands of mortar shells and artillery rounds, and 20 tons of explosives. The regional authorities had been storing these for domestic use in the postwar civil war. With bureaucratic inefficiency, the Chinese staff had continued to horde the weapons and munitions even as the local Nationalist troops ran out of ammunition and left the area. Now those staffs, like the Chinese Army, were in full retreat, and the enemy was only 20 miles away. The Japanese would soon capture what Gleason estimated to be 50,000 tons of valuable military supplies.¹⁸⁷

Rather than let this treasure fall into the hands of the enemy, Gleason decided to blow it up. It was a painful decision. Gleason came to it reluctantly. He realized that “this was our material, painstakingly flown over the ‘hump,’ laboriously hauled over poor roads by thousands of coolies.” As he said later, “The tragedy was that this was our material, but it would have been a grater tragedy had it fallen into the hands of the Japanese.”¹⁸⁸ Gleason sought authorization from Chungking to destroy the giant cache if

also Maj. Frank G.____ [Gleason], interview, 30 April 1945, p. 3, Schools and Training Branch, “Interviews with Returned Men,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 159, Folder 1729, National Archives II. Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 15 July 2008.

¹⁸⁵ Interviewer’s Report on Maj. Frank A. Gleason, 27 April 1945, Washington, D.C., Frank A. Gleason, OSS Personnel File, CIA Records (RG 263), Box 22, National Archives II.

¹⁸⁶ Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 31 January 2005.

¹⁸⁷ White and Jacoby, *Thunder Out of China*, 196.

¹⁸⁸ Maj. Frank G.____ [Gleason], interview, 30 April 1945, pp. 6-7, Schools and Training Branch, “Interviews with Returned Men,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 159, Folder 1729, National Archives II.

necessary, but by the time the authorities authorized him to prepare to destroy it, the enemy was less than a day away. Gleason and his men spent most of that day placing charges and fuses all around the three depots. About 4:00 p.m., with the Japanese advance patrols only a couple of hours away, Gleason finally received permission to blow up the warehouses.

Lighting the fuses, Gleason and his men set off explosions in the warehouses, one right after another. Each blast rocked the countryside. Jammed with munitions and explosives, the buildings quickly erupted in fiery red and yellow. Inside, the crackling heat “cooked” the ammunition, popping off thousands of bullets and sending artillery shells whistling through the air. Flames and smoke surged into the sky. As the Americans left in their trucks, Gleason and the others turned back for a final look. “When the last dump went off, there was a single column of black smoke that went straight up, with the most terrific sound you ever heard. . . a black column 100 yards thick holding up the overcast like a pillar.”¹⁸⁹ It was, Gleason said, “like Dante’s ‘Inferno.’”¹⁹⁰

On the way out of town, the Americans stopped to blow the bridge across the Fung River, furthering impeding the advance of the enemy column. The Japanese a few hours after Gleason left. The warehouses continued to burn and explode for the next three days. The enemy could merely watch as the precious munitions, weapons, and other supplies were lost to them.

“My mission was clear,” Gleason recalled, “‘To block the Japanese advance for 90 days,’ this came from Wedemeyer himself. We accomplished the mission and stopped the Japanese advance into the interior of China.”¹⁹¹ Indeed at Tushan, the Japanese Army, for a variety of reasons, did come to a halt. They held the city for a week, then turned around and picked their way back across the scorched area that Gleason and his team had helped deny them. Contracting their lines, the Japanese dug in for the winter at Hochin, half halfway between Kweiyang and Liuchow.¹⁹² Gleason was recommended for the Legion of Merit and the rest of his team for the Bronze Star medal, the fourth highest military decoration of the U.S. Army.¹⁹³ Theodore White continued to praise Gleason and his team, including an account of Gleason’s mission in his 1946 non-fiction account of the war, *Thunder Out of China*, and used it for the basis of a 1958, novel, which Hollywood made into a film, *The Mountain Road*, in 1960, starring James Stewart.

¹⁸⁹ Lt. George C. Demas to Lt. Col. O.C. Doering, Jr., et al., 23 January 1945, subject: Excerpt from Time Magazine of 8 January 1945, pp. 57-58, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 139, Box 195, Folder 2584, National Archives II.

¹⁹⁰ Frank A. Gleason, email to the author, 28 May 2005.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² White and Jacoby, *Thunder Out of China*, 196-97.

¹⁹³ Lt. George C. Demas to Lt. Col. O.C. Doering, Jr., et al., 23 January 1945, subject: Excerpt from Time Magazine of 8 January 1945, pp. 57-58, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 139, Box 195, Folder 2584, National Archives II.

Although Gleason was one of the advisers on the film, he says that most of the movie is “pure fiction.”¹⁹⁴

Building an Expanded Communications Network in China

Crucial to expanded, independent OSS operations in China was the further development of its communications networks. The distances were vast compared to countries in Europe, and although the Army and Navy trunk lines were used when possible, most of the coverage, especially with the proliferating field teams and sub-stations, were maintained by the OSS itself. The Communications Branch had to maintain the lines of communication, staff the base and sub-base stations, furnish radio operators for field missions, and supply and maintain communications equipment.¹⁹⁵ “Commo” personnel came in from Area C in the United States, flown in along with the equipment, “over the Hump,” but to train indigenous radio operators, the Communications Branch established a radio operator and code training school in Kunming. In late 1944, with more independence, OSS in China was able to abandon the time-consuming double-transposition coding system that the Army had required and replace it with its own more efficient system of “one-time” pads. Demonstrating the importance of the communications network, communications gear made up the majority of equipment sent out by air from headquarters in Kunming to OSS units in the field: 50 percent of shipments as contrasted to 30 percent in the form of demolitions and 20 percent in rations, weapons, and field equipment.¹⁹⁶

From Washington, Colonel Lawrence Lowman, chief of the Communications Branch, reported real progress: “In the Far East...OSS communications networks are operating directly with the 14th Air Force in China.... Operating out of Kweilin, OSS communications teams were continually responsible for furnishing vital target information and weather data and for activating timely air missions against enemy ground troops and river and coastal traffic. Established many times deep behind enemy lines in China, these OSS communications teams have been directly responsible for the destruction of thousands of Japanese troops and substantial quantities of enemy material and support....The clandestine communications networks of the Office of Strategic Services have been set up without duplicating established Army, Navy or commercial facilities. We have concentrated on developing the specialized equipment and techniques

¹⁹⁴ Frank Gleason, email to the author, 28 May 2005; Theodore H. White and Annalee Jacoby, *Thunder Out of China* (New York: William Sloane, 1946), 195-196; Theodore H. White, *The Mountain Road* (New York: W. Sloan, 1958); and *The Mountain Road* (US: Columbia Pictures, 1960), 102 minutes, starring Jimmy Stewart as “Major Baldwin” and directed by Daniel Mann. Gleason says *Thunder Out of China* provides an accurate account of his team’s activities.

¹⁹⁵ OSS Schools and Training Branch, “Office of Strategic Services (OSS): Organization and Functions,” June 1945, pp. 32-33, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 141, Box 4, Folder 36, National Archives II.

¹⁹⁶ Excerpts from Monthly Report of OSS, SU, Detachment 202, CBI, 1 November 1944, from Ensign Gunnar G. Mykland, executive officer, located in Donovan’s “Black Book” copy in CIA Records (RG 263), Thomas Troy Files, Box 4, Folder 30, National Archives II.

of operation required of clandestine radio activity. Our work has, we believe, played a unique, successful and important part in the realization of the overall OSS objectives in this war.”¹⁹⁷

OSS communications also played a role in the brief extension of U.S. military assistance to the Chinese Communists in North China. From the south, Chiang Kai-shek had forbidden U.S. contact with Mao Tse-tung and his Communists in the mountains of Yen-an in Shensi Province. But while the Nationalist Armies were disintegrating in front of the Japanese advance, Mao’s Communist guerrilla armies established effective control in various rural areas of the country. In late 1944, the new U.S. ambassador to China, Patrick Hurley, a Republican stalwart and former diplomat, endorsed Roosevelt’s effort to get the Communists and Nationalists to work together against the Japanese.¹⁹⁸ A U.S. military mission, the “Dixie” Mission of 18 men, headed by Colonel David D. Barrett of Army Intelligence (G-2), arrived at Yen-an in July 1944.¹⁹⁹ The OSS was in charge of communications, and Captain Paul Domke and Sergeants Tony Remineh and Walter Gress, both trained at Area C, quickly established radio contact with Chungking, a thousand miles to the south. Initially transmission was in Morse code, but later they were given a sophisticated, lightweight, radio transmitter-receiver developed by OSS, and they could utilize voice radio.²⁰⁰ The American Yen-an radio station, codenamed “Yensig,” also received data about weather flow from Siberia to the Pacific from U.S. Navy personnel stationed in the Gobi Desert. The radio men at Yen-an also tried to determine whether there was radio traffic between the Moscow and the Communists in Yen-an, but given the Dixie Mission’s relatively poor equipment, they failed in that regard. However, Remineh did determine that the Communists had a second radio station some ten miles away from the headquarters. When Americans went out behind Japanese lines, Remineh created special machine codes for them. He forwarded their encoded messages from the field to the main relay station in Chungking.²⁰¹ As the Yen-an radio transmissions could be widely intercepted, the most sensitive material was coded and sent by messenger.

While providing the Americans with access to their intelligence and guerrilla networks behind enemy lines in other parts of China, the Chinese Communists also made major requests, particularly for communications equipment from the OSS. Some lightweight radio sets were delivered, but the major requests went unfulfilled and the entire communications project collapsed after OSS ran into major problems with Mao

¹⁹⁷ Colonel Lowman to General Donovan, 14 November 1944, subject: OSS Communications, pp. 3-4, OSS Records, Wash-Dir-Op-27, “Accomplishments of OSS,” copy in CIA Records (RG 263), Thomas Troy Files, Box 12, Folder 98, National Archives II.

¹⁹⁸ Kenneth E. Shewmaker, *Americans and Chinese Communists, 1927-1945: A Persuading Encounter* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971).

¹⁹⁹ David D. Barrett, *Dixie Mission: U.S. Army Observer Group in Yen-an, 1944* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970); Carolle J. Carter, “Mission to Yen-an: The OSS and the Dixie Mission,” in George C. Chalou, ed., *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Service, 1992), 303-4.

²⁰⁰ Carter, “Mission to Yen-an, 305.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 305-6.

and the Communists.²⁰² Mao's guerrillas in the field had seized and detained members of a demolitions team that had parachuted into the East Shansi area and arrested the OSS "Spaniel" Team, a five-man SO unit, airdropped near Fuping in Hopei (Hebei) Province. The Spaniel Team was headed by Major Frank L. Coolidge, who had been with Peter Ortiz, when Ortiz was captured in France, and then had taught for a while at Area A. With Coolidge in China was an American captain and two enlisted men, plus a Chinese or Chinese-American agent. The Spaniel Team had parachuted into the Fuping area with the purpose of using the local Communists' contacts with collaborationist Chinese "puppet" generals to provide intelligence and help conduct sabotage against the Japanese. Angered, Mao decreed that all future OSS missions into Communist areas would also be detained until they obtained prior clearance from Communist headquarters in Yen-an. Despite U.S. protests, the Spaniel Team was held by the Communists for four months and only released in at the end of the war. Unauthorized OSS missions could prove highly embarrassing to Mao, because they could begin to expose the Communists' myth that they were more aggressively fighting the Japanese than the Nationalists.²⁰³

OSS "Commo" Men in the Field

The experiences of the Communications, or "Commo," men in China varied as much as the topography of that vast country. It depended on where you were, what you were doing, and when you were doing it. John W. Brunner, 21, from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, had been trained in cryptography in Washington and Area C, in the summer of 1944. He arrived in Kunming in February 1945, was assigned to the OSS headquarters as a cipher clerk, and remained there until the end of the war. He worked

²⁰² Yu, *OSS in China*, 166-67, 224-25. The Dixie mission of the U.S. Army and the OSS became controversial after the war, when Republicans blamed the "loss of China," the defeat of the Nationalists by the Communists in 1949, on allegedly Communist sympathizers in the Roosevelt and Truman Administrations, the State Department, the OSS, and the Democratic Party. It was one of the issues Republicans used to end nearly twenty years of Democratic control of the White House in 1952. But although some OSS planners saw American operations in Yen-an as a possible basis for major victories against the Japanese and a way to expand the role of the OSS in North China, these operations were not a major concern of the OSS outside of China. Furthermore, the OSS's reputation with the Communist leaders in Yen-an was not good, partly due to mutual suspicion and mistrust and partly because most of the promised arms and supplies were not delivered. Most OSS operations behind enemy lines in Communist-infiltrated areas in China were seen by the Communists as hostile to their aims and interests. The main American criticism during the war against the U.S. Army and OSS for "working with the Communists" came from Donovan's rival there, Lt. Cmdr. Milton Miles, who was closely linked to Nationalist spy chief, Gen. Dai Li. Most American leaders in China urged cooperation with the Communists as well as the Nationalists in 1944-1945. In the spring of 1945, irregardless of their later postwar anti-Communist rhetoric, American civilian and military leaders in China, including Ambassador Patrick Hurley and Generals Albert Wedemeyer, Claire Chennault, and Curtis LeMay, praised the Chinese Communists for their alleged help against the Japanese. Carter, "Mission to Yen-an, 312-13. The official history, OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 419, 437-438, devotes only three pages to the Dixie Mission.

²⁰³ Yu, *OSS in China*, 221-22; Maj. Frank L. Coolidge to Colonel Heppner, 13 September 1945, Report on the Spaniel Mission, OSS Records (RG 226) Entry 148, Box 6, Folder 87, National Archives II.

with other cryptographers, all enlisted men, in a locked code room on the second floor of the communications center. "I hardly ever saw an officer," he said later. "There was a captain downstairs, who was in charge. I saw him only a couple of times. I worked upstairs, coding and decoding. Only a couple of people were allowed in there. We were told that even if General Donovan arrived, he would have to have permission of the officer in charge to enter. We should not let him in without the captain's permission."²⁰⁴

Coding and decoding messages between Kunming and Washington, Brunner saw many very important documents. "I personally saw two top secret 'eyes only' messages from Truman to MacArthur," he said. "MacArthur had been sending advance teams into China. But he was not allowed to send his people here before the invasion [the Army's projected amphibious landings and capture of Canton and other ports on the south China Coast planned for the winter of 1945-1946]. We were arresting them. Truman's messages cautioned him against sending his teams into China before the invasion. Truman sent a copy to the OSS, which is what we got....In the cables I saw, Truman sent MacArthur a cable saying that he was not authorized to operate on the mainland of China. MacArthur disregarded this and sent another team into China. We caught them and arrested them. We sent them to Washington. Truman sent another cable to MacArthur stating, 'I am your commanding officer, and you will obey orders.' This was in April or May 1945. So the Truman-MacArthur conflict began long before the Korean War. This, however, is never mentioned anywhere in any of the books. But I was in charge of the message center and had access to the 'eyes only' correspondence, and I saw these."²⁰⁵

A new major OSS communications base station was established in April 1945 at a 14th Air Force base at Chihkiang between Kunming and Chungking. AGFTS was absorbed by the OSS, and this OSS Chihkiang Field Unit was given responsibility for communications with all the old AGFTS installations south of the Yangtze River. OSS also created a new Field Unit at Hsian (Xian), and that new base station assumed former AGFRTS responsibilities north of the Yangtze. Among the half dozen OSS "Commo" personnel sent to staff the new Chihkiang, base station in 1945, were Lieutenant James F. Ranney from Akron, Ohio, and Private First Class David A. Kenney from Encampment, Wyoming. After being recruited by the OSS in 1943, Ranney had spent a week at Area B, then served for several months as an instructor at Area C before being sent to Egypt and then Italy in 1944.²⁰⁶ Kennedy, who had shared a cabin at Area A with a Sioux/Lakota Indian named Iron Moccasin, and a Greek American named Jerry Codekas, had been trained at Area C and then sent to Base Station Victory in London in the summer of 1944. In 1945, both volunteered for service in China. Ranney and Kenney worked at the Chihkiang base station until the end of the war, Ranney as second in command and Kennedy as an operator.

²⁰⁴ John W. Brunner, telephone interview with the author, 21 March 2005.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ James F. Ranney, telephone interview with the author, 8 January 2005. At Chihkiang, Maj. James O. Swenson was the commanding officer; Capt. Richard S. Buchholz was in charge of communications, Lt. Ranney was his second in command. PFC Elmer Schubert, helped operate the transmitter station; David Kenney helped operate the receiver station.

“I did a lot of radio operating,” Kennedy recalled. “We had very heavy radio traffic between agents in the field. We would contact people in forward areas behind Japanese lines. We would print it out and then sent it back to headquarters in Kunming.”²⁰⁷ As at most OSS radio installations, the transmitter and receiver stations were located some distance from each other to avoid interference. The receiver station and some of the officers’ billets were located in a former civilian building on the outskirts of Chihkiang near the long runways for the big cargo planes of the Military Air Transport Service. The transmitter station, which contained a powerful BC-160 and four smaller transmitters, was in a small frame building near a shorter airstrip used by P-51 “Mustang” fighter planes of the 14th Air Force. In order to repair and maintain their communications equipment, the “Commo” men, being thousands of miles away from their main sources of supply, often scavenged for wire, aluminum, and other parts from the remains of aircraft that crashed on landing.²⁰⁸ At Hsian (Xian), Robert L. (“Bob”) Scriven, who had been an instructor at Area C, and who then helped construct Base Station Victor in London, headed a “Commo” group which established the new Hsian base station in spring 1945. When the Japanese surrendered and the war ended, Scriven and his team was flown to Peking (Beijing) and directed to install a new base station within three days. They did, and it was on the air in by the end of the third day.²⁰⁹

Many “Commo” men worked out in the field, close to or even behind enemy lines. Nineteen-year-old Private Arthur (“Art”) Reinhardt from near Buffalo, New York, had such a position. Having trained as a radio operator at Area C in the summer of 1944, he arrived in Kunming in October 1944. At the Kunming communications center, he worked briefly doing decrypting with a Hagelin M209 machine, a Swiss designed portable rotor cryptographic machine system. Soon, however, he was sent into the field to establish a sub-base radio station at Suich’uan airbase, Kiangsi Province, southeastern China. In the wake of the Japanese *Ichi-Gō* offensive, this had become the most forward airbase of the 14th Air Force. At the sub-base station, Reinhardt and the other operators would receive coded information sent in from behind enemy lines by OSS SO and SI teams. Three times a day, these field team operators with their SSTR-1 “suitcase” radios, would send coded messages providing information on local weather conditions, on Japanese forces, and on targets for the planes of the 14th Air Force in China or of the Navy in the Western Pacific. At the sub-base, the communications men would decrypt the messages using the M209 machine and send them in enciphered Morse code to OSS China headquarters in Kunming. From there, the most important information would be forwarded to OSS headquarters in Washington, D.C. As the Japanese *Ichi-Gō* offensive continued, however, the Suich’uan airbase came under regular bombardment by enemy planes from Canton. “They used to bomb us two or three times a week,” Reinhardt recalled. “They would bomb the airfield, dropping 500 pounders and also cluster ‘banana

²⁰⁷ David Kenney, telephone interview with the author, 11 April 2005.

²⁰⁸ James F. Ranney, W4KFR, “OSS Radio Station WLUR—Chihkiang, China,” in James F. Ranney and Arthur L. Ranney, eds., *The OSS CommVets Papers*, 2nd ed. (Covington, KY: James F. Ranney, 2002), 33-34.

²⁰⁹ . “R.L. (“Bob”) Scriven, K5WFL,” in *ibid.*, 212.

bombs,' which were antipersonnel....In December of 1944, Suich'uan was bombed thirty times, thirty straight nights."²¹⁰

When the Japanese Army came down and overran the Suich'uan and other U.S. airbases in the area in January 1945, the OSS contingent moved east and established a new sub-base station at Ch'angt'ing in Fukien Province. From there, Reinhardt's new assignment was with a three-man field team that included Robert Bell from Secret Intelligence Branch as the commander, Reinhardt as radio operator/cryptographer, and Maurice Mao, as interpreter. They operated near a village called Ningtu not far from the Japanese lines, and they reported their findings three times a day to the sub-base station at Ch'angt'ing. Reinhardt lived in the field doing this for five months, but by June he had become so seriously ill and plagued by high fevers, that he was sent back to Ch'angt'ing for a few weeks to recuperate. Afterwards, in late June 1945, Reinhardt was dispatched to another sub-base station, considerably northeast near Shang-joa, south of Shanghai. From that sub-base station, located in an old abandoned Chinese temple in a very isolated and remote locale, Reinhardt and his comrades received radioed reports from a network of coast watchers, Chinese agents, recruited, trained in radio operation and a special code, and equipped with OSS agent radios. The Chinese agents sent information on the assembly of Japanese convoys in massive Hangchou Bay south of Shanghai. Their communiqués were recoded and radioed to Kunming, which, in turn, forwarded summaries to the U.S. Navy, whose submarines, ships, and planes would attack the convoys. Admiral Chester Nimitz, naval commander-in-chief in the Pacific, issued a commendation for their work, including the sinking of every ship in a twenty-six ship Japanese convoy. But for Reinhardt, as for numbers of others who served in rural China, there was a price in ill health. For five years, Reinhardt suffered from recurring high fevers and diseases caught in China until these were finally successfully diagnosed, and he was cured in 1950.²¹¹

All the OSS teams that went out into the field had their radio operators, whose job, like Reinhardt's, was to maintain communication, no matter what the difficulties—technical, atmospheric, or tactical—with their base stations. The head of Special Operations in northern China in 1945, Lieutenant Colonel Frank B. Mills, a career Army officer and leader of OSS SO teams in Europe and the Far East, later wrote of them: "The radio operators provided the essential communications link between the operational teams and the supporting base, and they were not only superb radio operators, but were some of the best combat soldiers we had in France and China."²¹²

Expansion of OSS missions in China in 1945

²¹⁰ Arthur Reinhardt, interview with the author at Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va., 14 December 2004, with additions made to the transcript by Mr. Reinhardt on 23 February 2007.

²¹¹ Ibid., for a published account of running a network of coast watchers, see Dan Pinck, *Journey to Peking: A Secret Agent in Wartime China* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2003). Pinck's youngest son, Charles T. Pinck, was President of the OSS Society in 2008 when the present volume went to press.

²¹² Francis B. Mills with John W. Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China* (Williamstown, NJ: Phillips Publications, 2002), 20.

When General Wedemeyer replaced General Stilwell as Theater Commander in China in the wake of the failure of the Chinese Armies to stop the Japanese *Ichi-Gō* offensives, he took a much more favorable view toward the OSS than his predecessor. Wedemeyer also sought to improve the Chinese Armies through increased supplies, retraining, and a greater American role in training and command. Chiang Kai-shek agreed to this, and he similarly consented to give OSS at least some authority to conduct comparatively independent intelligence and combat operations behind enemy lines. Consequently, Wedemeyer authorized an expanded role for the OSS. He included OSS/China chief Colonel Richard P. Heppner, 37, a Princeton man and one of Donovan's law partners, in theater policy meetings, and he agreed that OSS could prepare for major efforts to undermine the Japanese Army. With the war in Europe nearing its conclusion in the winter of 1944-1945, many veteran Jedburghs, SO teams, OG detachments, SI agents and other OSS personnel there were given the choice of returning to regular military service or volunteering for OSS missions in China. As a result, OSS/China received not just newly-trained operatives from the United States but large numbers of experienced OSS veterans.²¹³ OSS/China would grow dramatically in 1945, from a mere 106 agents in late October 1944 to a peak of 1,891 in China in July 1945.²¹⁴ Along with the rapid growth, Heppner and Wedemeyer in early 1945 reorganized OSS/China into a solid branch structure.²¹⁵ The Secret Intelligence (SI), Special Operations (SO) Branches as well as the Operational Groups (OGs) assigned to Detachment 202 began immediately to train and deploy and ultimately to demonstrate their capabilities under the new authority and additional resources.

SI Expansion and a Dangerous Mission on the China Coast

²¹³ Yu, *OSS in China*, 185, 210; OSS, *War Report of the OSS: Overseas Targets*, 440-45.

²¹⁴ Figures on OSS strength in China are from Yu, *OSS in China* (1996), 226, who cites Capt. J.W. Kruissink, adjutant officer, to HQ investigation boards, US Forces, China Theater, 9 October 1945, memorandum, subject: Strength Report of OSS taken from Morning Reports, in Records of Allied and US Army Commands in the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations (World War II) (RG 493), Records of the China Theater of Operations, U.S. Army, Records of the General Staff, G-5 (Civil Affairs) Section, formerly classified report—special agencies in China, Section V, OSS, Box 61, National Archives and Federal Records Center, Suitland, Md.

²¹⁵ In addition to Heppner as OSS chief in China, Detachment 202 in early 1945 included, Lieutenant Colonel Willis Bird as Deputy Chief; Colonel William P. Davis as Operations Officer; Colonel Paul L. E. Helliwell, chief of SI Branch; Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas W. Willis, chief of SO Branch; Lieutenant Colonel Charles A. Porter, chief of the Communications Branch; Captain Eldon Nehring, formerly from Area A in Prince William Forest Park, chief of the Schools and Training Branch; plus others in charge of the Morale Operations, Research and Analysis, Counterespionage, Field Photographic, and Administrative branches Yu, *OSS in China* (1996), 226, citing Investigating Boards, US Forces, China Theater, undated, subject: Report on OSS, in Records of Allied and US Army Commands in the China-Burma-India Theater of Operations (World War II) (RG 493), Records of the China Theater of Operations, U.S. Army (CT or Wedemeyer), Record of the General Staff, G-5 (Civil Affairs) Section, formerly classified report—special agencies in China, Section V, OSS, Box 61, National Archives and Federal Records Center, Suitland, Md.

The main strategic intelligence mission of OSS did not get under way until General Wedemeyer established OSS as an independent command with full authority over its own personnel in China at the beginning of 1945. This gave the SI Branch freedom of action. New forward bases were established as well as the development of an intelligence network in north-central China rivaling the former SACO-AGFRTS-OSS chains in the south. An OSS headquarters for North China was established at Hsian (Xian) in Shensi Province, which was also the site of a forward airbase for the 14th Air Force. Lieutenant Colonel Gustav Krause, SI, former administrative assistant to Colonel Heppner, was the commanding officer, responsible for OSS as it moved for the first time into North China. Representatives of all OSS operational branches were there in Hsian, Secret Intelligence, Special Operations, Morale Operations, Counter-intelligence, Services and Supplies, two Communications Officers, Captains Allen Wooten and Benjamin Adams, and a representative of Schools and Training. Captain Eldron Nehring, who had been a chief instructor at Area A at Prince William Forest Park, was in Hsian to advise SO and SI teams on how to train saboteurs, guerrillas, and spies.²¹⁶

Combination SO/SI teams were to be sent out from Hsian into half a dozen northern provinces to recruit, arm, train and direct Chinese guerrillas behind enemy lines. But there was also a even more secret part to this operation, devised by OSS Headquarters in Washington, it was for Chinese or Korean agents to be included with SO teams parachuted behind enemy lines in northern China. But from there, these agents would leave the teams and gradually work their way up into the Japanese Empire's "Inner Zone," providing intelligence from Manchuria, Korea, and eventually Japan itself. Supported by the local Nationalist commanders and other anti-Japanese Chinese, the OSS unit in Hsian soon sent the first OSS field teams to operate in north China since the beginning of the war.²¹⁷ In addition to its cooperation with SO, SI had its own missions, sending its agents directly as SI teams to obtain tactical information about Japanese Army deployments, collaborators, prison camps, and such. The "Phoenix" and other operations were so successful in North China, and even Manchuria, that they returned with bags of military files from various Japanese headquarters in those areas.²¹⁸ The "Chili" Mission provided target information for American airmen. Half a dozen OSS SI teams went out into Shansi and Anhui provinces, one of them led by Captain George S. Wuchinich, a Pittsburgh native of Serbian ancestry who had trained at every OSS camp in Maryland and Virginia in 1942, and then been sent as a liaison officer with Tito's partisans in Yugoslavia. Along with Captain William Drummond, Wuchinich obtained considerable

²¹⁶ Francis B. Mills with John W. Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China* (Williamstown, N.J.: Phillips Publications, 2002), 38-39.

²¹⁷ Yu, *OSS in China*, 215-16.

²¹⁸ Yu, *OSS in China*, 216-19, 227, 315n. Much assistance was provided by the extraordinary network of Chinese Roman Catholics operated by Bishop Thomas Megan, a 44-year-old, Irish-American clergyman, known as the "Fighting Bishop," who inherited them from the legendary Father Vincent Lebbe, a Belgian priest who arrived in China in 1895 and in the 1920s and 1930s, organized Catholic Christian groups as alternatives to Communism and Confucianism. For that and aiding wounded Chinese soldiers and providing intelligence information to the guerrillas, Lebbe was kidnapped by Chinese Communists in March 1940. The Communists tortured him so badly that he died soon after being released.

intelligence in Anhui (Shaanxi) Province. After the Japanese surrender in mid-August 1945, Wuchinich, an old left-winger, decided on his own, without orders from headquarters, to make contact with the Chinese Communists. Wuchinich believed he had an ideological affinity with them, having fought with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War and later alongside Tito and his Communist partisans. But when he and his three teammates arrived and camped at a Buddhist temple, they found themselves in a disputed area, amidst a battle among Communists, Nationalists, and former Japanese puppet forces. The Communists won, seized Wuchinich's team and their radio. Their signal to OSS headquarters went dead. Held captive by the Communists, it would be weeks before they would be heard from again and even longer before they were released unharmed.²¹⁹

In the South China, after MacArthur's troops had taken Manila in February 1945, General Wedemeyer ordered his intelligence assets, including the OSS, to make an intensive survey of the South China coast in preparation for possible future capture of Canton (Guangzhou) and the other ports of Guangdong Province in South China and then a drive north toward Shanghai. The plan, code-named "Operation Carbonado," was for American amphibious landings there from the Philippines. Such an invasion by the Americans combined with guerrilla operations and an eastward thrust of rejuvenated Chinese Nationalist Armies, it was hoped, would divert Japanese troops from being taken back to the home islands and would also provide closer airbases for B-29s to bomb Japan.²²⁰

OSS-trained Chinese commandos, the plan envisioned, would parachute behind Japanese lines along the coast and pave the way for MacArthur's amphibious invasion. Preliminary to these operations a detailed survey of Japanese emplacements in the coastal and immediate inland areas was needed. Chosen to head this SI survey of the south Chinese coast from Hong Kong to Hainan Island, a mission, code-named "Akron," was now Lieutenant Colonel Charles M. Parkin, an Army Engineer, OSS/SO officer who had been an instructor at Area B and most recently at SACO Training Camp Unit 1. Parkin had earned his American parachutist wings at Quantico and Area A and his British parachutist insignia at an SOE jump school in England.²²¹ The Navy had earlier sent in several coastal reconnaissance teams from the sea, but all of them had been killed or captured. The OSS decided to parachute in behind Japanese lines. It was the first such airborne operation in China. Parkin divided the area into three zones. Each would be reconnoitered by a four-man team composed of an OSS officer, a radio operator, a photographer to take photographs of the beaches, obstacles, fortifications and other relevant infrastructure, and a Chinese interpreter.²²² In the spring of 1945, Parkin and his

²¹⁹ Yu, *OSS in China*, 227, 241; contrast with Wuchinich's own later account in Smith, *OSS*, 281.

²²⁰ On Operation Carbonado and the Akron Mission, see OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 444-445, 455-456.

²²¹ Charles M. Parkin, telephone interview with the author, 10 May 2005.

²²² Charles M. Parkin, discussion with the author at dinner following a tour of former Area B in Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md., 18 May 2005. Colonel Parkin told the author that it was a three-man team—himself, a photographer and an interpreter. He must have forgotten the radio operator. OSS Communications Branch cipher clerk John W. Brunner told the author subsequently that he knew Parkin's

team parachuted into the area south of Macao. In twenty days behind enemy lines, the OSS teams covered 400 miles of coast and the immediate hinterland.²²³ Picked up by Navy PBY seaplanes at prearranged points along the coast, the three teams returned safely with their valuable information, maps and photographs. Parkin prepared the “Akron” Mission report and delivered it personally to General Wedemeyer in Chungking. The OSS won high praise from the theater commander for the speed, accuracy, and thoroughness with which this task had been carried out.²²⁴ Wedemeyer then ordered Parkin to take the report directly to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington. Parkin flew from Chungking to Washington with the top secret report in a locked briefcase, chained to a handcuff on his wrist. The planned invasion of the South China coast never occurred, of course, Japan surrendered in August. But Parkin’s courage and success in the “Akron” mission led to his being awarded the Bronze Star and Legion of Merit when he had returned to Washington.²²⁵

Special Operations Missions behind Japanese Lines

The Special Operations Branch in China obtained, trained, armed and led hundreds of Nationalist Chinese guerrillas. Small teams of SO officers and enlisted men led guerrillas deep behind enemy lines in attacks on Japanese garrisons and in sabotage operations against bridges and other vital points in the major rail and road systems used to transport enemy troops and supplies. During the final year of the war, OSS deployed 33 SO teams, a few of them almost 500 miles behind Japanese lines in China. With daring and ingenuity, these American leaders, most of whom were graduates of OSS training camps in Maryland and Virginia and veterans of guerrilla operations in the

radio operator, who roomed with Brunner in Kunming when the radioman was sent back on leave after the Akron mission. John W. Brunner, email to the author, 14 June 2005.

²²³ Description of duties in China in Lt. Col. Charles M. Parkin, Jr. to Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, WD General Staff (through channels), 6 June 1945, subject: Request to Enter Army and Navy Staff College, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 92A, Box 47, Folder 785, National Archives II.

²²⁴ OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 418.

²²⁵ Charles M. Parkin, discussion with the author at dinner following a tour of former Area B in Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md., 18 May 2005. The August invasion envisioned in Carbonado was never implemented. By the summer of 1945, it had become clear that the operational emphasis had shifted from China to the Japanese home islands, and the original plan was reduced merely to seizing the Hong Kong-Canton port area for use as a base against the Japanese. Even that plan was abandoned with the sudden end of the war in mid-August 1945. OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 455-56.

European Theater, did important damage far beyond the number of OSS men involved to impede Japanese in 1945.²²⁶

Commanding SO Operations in northern China from Hsian in 1945 was Major Francis Byron (“Frank”) Mills, an Oklahoman, field artillery officer, graduate of OSS Area A, who had participated in the D-Day invasion, and then, as head of the SO section with the U.S. 1st Army, coordinated SO agents with the French *maquis* as the 1st Army pushed across France to the German border.²²⁷ In late 1944, he returned to the United States and at the OSS West Coast training camp on Catalina Island near Los Angeles, he received more SO training geared to the Far East.²²⁸ He flew over the “hump” and arrived in China early in 1945. Arriving at the U.S. airbase and OSS headquarters in Kunming, Mills was confronted by a sign American personnel had installed. It read “China is No Place for the Timid.”²²⁹

With the *Ichi-Gō* offensive still in progress, Mills was immediately put in charge of an SO combat unit of nearly twenty men, and told to take them and their supplies by truck convoy more than 1,000 miles north and destroy the U.S. airbase at Laohokou before it could be overrun and utilized by the Japanese. Most of his team were also OSS veterans, mostly from Europe but a few from Burma. They were given pistols, carbines, submachine guns, grenades, mortars, and enough explosives to blow up the airfield. They also had to carry their own gasoline, since their route, the main north-south highway in western China, was a two-lane dirt and gravel road with no gas stations along it. Most of the traffic consisted of Chinese peasants traveling on foot or by cart and a few Chinese Army trucks. Mills recalled that the Americans, as they drove slowly through the twisting rural road over mountains and valleys, were often the first “white-colored people” that many of the peasants had ever seen (“white devils” they were sometimes called).²³⁰ Finally after ten days, having crossed twelve mountain ranges, Mill’s convoy arrived at n Chengtu in Szechwan Province, a forward base of the 14th Air Force. There, they learned that the Japanese had shortly earlier overrun and captured the U.S. airbase at Laohokou.

Mills proceeded to the new OSS regional headquarters in Hsian (Xian) in Shensi Province, site now of a U.S. fighter-bomber base. Mills would oversee some nearly 30 SO teams being created to conduct guerrilla and sabotage operations in the Japanese-occupied area north of the Yangtze River, an area that included Peking (Beijing) and was as large as Europe. The OSS compound at Hsian was located in a former Seventh Day Adventist mission about a mile outside the city. Several hundred yards square, it was surrounded by a stone and clay wall, about eight feet high. Inside were several rather simple one-story structures. OSS had brought gasoline generators to provide electricity for lights and radios. There was no running water, it had to be brought from wells and boiled and sterilized. There were only outdoor toilets and showers. The men slept in

²²⁶ Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 14-15.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 435.

²²⁸ Obituary, Francis Byron Mills, *Washington Post*, 1 October 2005.

²²⁹ Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 17.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

sleeping bags on canvas Army cots in large, squad-sized Army tents. Mosquito nets helped protect against insects, lizards, and scorpions. At first they ate canned Army food, but later they hired Chinese cooks to combine their rations and local foodstuffs. Outside the compound there was a path several yards wide with rows of life-size stone statues of ancient figures presumably guarding an important tomb. Years later, the tomb of the First Emperor was discovered with 6,000 life-size terra cotta warriors buried under a huge mound of earth not far away from the OSS compound in Hsian (Xian), which was the old imperial capital and the end of the famous “silk road.”²³¹

Among the SO or SI teams were many men who had trained at Maryland and Virginia and who had served in Europe. Major James G. (“Jim”) Kellis, had led the “Chicago” mission that destroyed major railroad bridges in Greece and Bulgaria and impeded shipments of chrome from Turkey to Germany. Major Paul Cyr, a member of Jedburgh Team “George,” had parachuted into Brittany just before D-Day and spent two months with the French Resistance attacking railways, bridges, and German troop columns. Captain George Wuchinich had led team “Alum” into Tito’s camp in Yugoslavia.

Like Mills, many of these SO officers brought their radio men with them from Europe to the China. These OSS radio operators had trained at Area C in Prince William Forest Park. Among them were William H. Adams, who had served in Jedburgh Team “Graham” in the Basse Alps; Arthur Gruen, with Jed Team “Miles” in Gers Province; and John S. Stoyka, with Jed Team “Basil” in Doubs Province in eastern France. In the Far East, Sergeant Stoyka would served first in North China and then be sent to Indochina, as a radioman for the “Cat” Team. After they were captured by the Japanese in Vietnam, Stoyka had escaped, found another American team and reported the location of the other prisoners, an act that saved their lives. Mills praised these veteran communications men. “The radio operators,” he later emphasized, “provided the essential communications link between the operational teams and the supporting base, and they were not only superb radio operators, but were some of the best combat soldiers we had in France and China.”²³²

Herbert R. Brucker, one of the OSS radiomen in France, had served with such distinction there with a British SOE team on the “Hermit” project of organizing a new circuit of local agents in central France from May to September 1944 that he had been promoted to lieutenant and received the Distinguished Service Cross.²³³ Volunteering for a new SO assignment in the Far East, Brucker was sent briefly to Peer’s Detachment 101 and then to Detachment 202 in China. With his Alsatian accent, his beret and his new goatee and mustache, he quickly became known as “Frenchy.” In China, he was assigned to Captain Leon Demers and Team Ibex. Working in Colonel Mills’ region, they trained fifty Chinese warrant officers as guerrillas and as the 4th Marauders, they led them behind Japanese lines. Their ultimate objective in August 1945 was to obtain Japanese records in Kaifeng, Henan Province, but the city was guarded by two enemy divisions and tanks,

²³¹ Ibid., 40, 43.

²³² Ibid., 20.

²³³ Charles H. Briscoe, “Major Herbert R. Brucker, SF Pioneer, Part II: SOE Training & ‘Team Hermit’ into France,” *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, 2:3 (2007):72-85.

and it was not until after Tokyo's decision to surrender on 15th August that the mission was accomplished.²³⁴

China was a very foreign country and culture for most of the OSS, and indeed for most of the members of the U.S. military who served there in World War II.²³⁵ Except for a few OSS men who been missionaries or the sons of missionaries in China, almost none of the Americans could speak any of the different Chinese dialects, which varied widely from Cantonese in the South to Mandarin in the North. Aside from a few words or commands, they had to rely upon hired interpreters, usually local Chinese but sometimes Chinese Americans, to communicate with the Chinese. Nor, of course, did they know Japanese. The OSS recruited Japanese Americans for the Secret Intelligence Branch to work as translators of Japanese radio messages or for captured documents or prisoners. Captain Chiyoki Ikeda, for example, was with the SI Branch at Hsian. China was, as Mills said, a strange new country to them, but what was exciting was the many unknowns they faced, learned from, and coped with.²³⁶

Because the areas in China were so much larger than the European countries, the SO teams there were expanded to generally at least four officers, SO and SI, and a handful of enlisted men who served as weapons and demolitions experts, a radio man, and a medic. Added to these were one or two Chinese interpreters and the Chinese guerrillas, the team would recruit, train, arm, and lead. In China, the SO teams were code-named after creatures, like "Elephant," "Dormouse," and "Spaniel," and they were given a great deal of freedom in their training of indigenous guerrillas and in their operations behind enemy lines. The commander of each team was given an area of operations, intelligence on Japanese or Communist forces in the area, and most importantly, contact information about local commanders of the Chinese Nationalist Army who had been performing some guerrilla operations. It was hoped that those commanders would provide guerrillas, who the OSS would arm, train, and direct in more aggressive and effective special operations against Japanese targets.²³⁷

Like many others, Mills eventually became rather cynical about the Chinese guerrillas. They knew that the combat experienced Americans were good fighters and effective in sabotage and guerrilla warfare. But "what they really wanted," Mills wrote, were "weapons, supplies, equipment and money—preferably gold—for their own purposes. Patriotic? No, not by our standards. What the Chinese guerrilla leaders were after was power—weapons, ammunitions, and food, in that order.... This was the only politics in China. The U.S. had these instruments of power, and the Chinese naturally wanted all they could get. As we learned, it was the only way the guerrillas could be persuaded to do anything at all. Human lives meant little to them. There was an

²³⁴ Charles H. Briscoe, "Major (R) Herbert R. Brucker, DSC, Special Forces Pioneer," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, 2:2 (2006): 33; Banks, *From OSS to Green Berets*, between 62-63, and 104. The spelling of the name of the commander of Team Ibex is spelled variously as Demers or de Meis.

²³⁵ The author's father, John McCausland Chambers, U.S. Army Medical Corps, 1944-1946, served in Chungking for most of 1945.

²³⁶ Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 29.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 38-40.

overabundance of people in China who had none of these power resources, and who could be exchanged for U.S. support.”²³⁸ This support and other resources were largely stored for later use in the civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists for control in China, a war which both sides seemed to see as inevitable after the Japanese were defeated.

Destroying the Main Yellow River Bridge

For the top priority target in North China, the main railroad bridge across the Yellow River, Major Mills selected a six-man team, headed by Major Paul Cyr, A 24-year-old Vermonter, who had trained at OSS Areas F and B. Mills had known him in England and then in France, where Cyr had become the first of the OSS Jedburghs to have been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest military decoration of the U.S. Army, after the Medal of Honor.²³⁹ Now the mission of Cyr’s Team “Jackal” was to blow up the key bridge on the main north-south railroad line from Peking to Hankow, a line that transported Japanese soldiers and supplies from Manchuria to South China and even Southeast Asia. It was a railroad line the Japanese had constructed, and its most vulnerable point was the Yellow River bridge they had built at Kaifeng. If that bridge were destroyed, Japanese troop trains would have to detour hundreds of miles and many days to the east to get across the river. The Japanese had built a sturdy new bridge of steel and concrete, and they guarded it well, positioning antiaircraft batteries at several points along the bridge and at each end and garrisoning 10,000 troops in the area. The 14th Air Force had tried had tried many times to take out the bridge in low level daylight attacks, but despite losing many planes, they had been unable to destroy it. Even the bombs that hit the sturdy span created relatively minor damage that Japanese engineers had repaired within a few days. As Mills later put it “I decided to put the first OSS [SO] team into this area to knock out the bridge for a longer period of time. It was a high priority target and we were competing in a sense with the 311th Fighter/Bomber Group to see who could get there first and do a good job of blowing the bridge up.”²⁴⁰

The initial drop of Team “Jackal” included Major Cyr; his second in command, Lieutenant Albert Robinchaud; radio operator Sergeant Berent E. Friele, who had been the radioman on Jedburgh Team “Gerald” in Brittany; photographer Navy Specialist Jerry Welo, who would provide photographs of the mission and of other targets for the air force, and Boris Chu, the Chinese interpreter. This would be the most dangerous kind of infiltration, because little was known about the area or the Chinese reception group, who would either protect or betray them. “The best thing we had going for us,” Mills wrote, “was the sympathetic and supportive attitude of the Chinese people, mostly the peasant

²³⁸ Ibid., 31.

²³⁹ Ibid., 46-47.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 45.

farmers and villagers. In any guerrilla war these are the people who must be convinced that your cause is just, and they must also believe that if they support you their lives will somehow be better....the Chinese people...hated the Japanese invaders intensely for the barbaric treatment of the people.... rape, torture, mutilation and decapitation were common, and the people knew that the U.S. fight against this enemy was just.”²⁴¹

After more than a month of making radio and messenger contact through Chinese channels, the team was flown 500 miles east along the Yellow River on the moonlit night of 22 May 1945, and when the six fires in a “T” formation were seen, the men jumped into the darkness. Photographer Jerry Welo was the only one injured; he broke his ankle, was treated and later returned to Hsian. The reception group was friendly and a base camp was established in the countryside near Changti. Hidden in a closed horse cart, Cyr was driven into Hsinhsiang, the center of a Japanese force of 10,000, to meet his main contact, a Chinese puppet regime general, who was playing a double game, pretending to be a Japanese puppet but really responding to orders from the Nationalist government. A second group of four OSS men including Captain Edward B. Zarembo, second in command, another photographer and another interpreter were parachuted in a week later, together with more supplies to arm the Chinese guerrillas.²⁴² Lieutenant Robichaud set up a firing range and a training schedule and began the instruction of several hundred Chinese peasant soldiers and officers supplied to them by the puppet general. For some of the Chinese, it was the first time they had used firearms, and they flinched when firing the carbines and rifles. Cyr was ready to begin operations in late July, but the local Chinese Nationalist commander did not want any offensive operations in his area. Nevertheless, the Chinese guerrillas trained by Team “Jackal” made hundreds of cuts in local railroad lines.²⁴³

Despite the reluctance of local Chinese leaders to make a major attack, Major Cyr insisted on attacking their main target, the Yellow River Bridge at Kaifeng. Cyr, Zarembo, Friele, and Chu set out on 24 July with a group of seventeen Chinese guerrillas. “These seventeen picked men I had were river thieves,” Cyr told Mills later, “as tough a breed as I ever hope to see.”²⁴⁴ The team arrived and set up a temporary camp twenty miles upriver from the bridge. Down around the bridge were some 8,000 Japanese troops garrisoned around the southern end of the bridge, 1,500 at the north end and 200 on a sand island in midstream. The bridge itself was defended by heavy machine guns and anti-aircraft guns. Cyr’s Chinese guerrillas had lived in the area so they knew the guard routine on the bridge. The plan was to build a wooden boat which would float the saboteurs and their demolitions downstream at night. The Americans, and the Chinese guerrilla leader, Major Tien, surveyed the bridge and the area, sketching routes to approach and escape. On 6 August, as they prepared for the attack, Major Tien insisted that the Americans stay behind, as once the bridge was blown and the Japanese searched

²⁴¹ Ibid., 49.

²⁴² Ibid., 49-66.

²⁴³ Ibid., 49-66, 187-190, 197.

²⁴⁴ Paul Cyr quoted in Ibid., 193.

for the perpetrators, the westerners would stand out in the population and make it easy for the Japanese to capture everyone involved.

It was rainy and windy on the night of 9 August, providing perfect cover. Major Tien and the guerrillas shoved the heavily laden boat off into the dark and drifted downstream. When they arrived at the bridge, the rain and wind muffled any noise as the men scrambled up the bridge supports. Each man took his 72 pounds of explosives to one of the six columns—steel tubes filled with concrete—that made up each pier of the long bridge. Silently, they inserted the fuses, 50 feet in length, which would burn for 25 minutes, even underwater. When all were in place, Major Tien ordered his men to swim ashore as he personally inspected and lit each fuse. Half an hour later, a Japanese troop train arrived. The locomotive was almost across when the first charges exploded. A section of the bridge collapsed, six cars went down with it and the locomotive slid backwards into the river with a giant hiss of steam. As Japanese soldiers began to clamber out of the remaining cars, the second charge exploded, followed by a series of charges, one after another. Entire sections of the bridge collapsed into the river, and the whole troop train of twenty cars containing some 2,000 enemy soldiers plunged into the swirling black waters. On shore, the troops of the Japanese garrison ran around in confusion, shouting and screaming, and in the chaos the saboteurs escaped. Team “Jackal” and its guerrillas had accomplished its mission in a spectacular fashion, destroying the most important bridge on the Yellow River and a Japanese troop train as well.²⁴⁵

OSS Special Operations in South China

As spectacular as the destruction of the Yellow River bridge was, the majority of the SO operations in North China had not been as effective as the SO Teams in South China. The Chinese guerrillas and even the Chinese high commands in the Nationalist Army War Zones in North China obstructed the SO teams, seeking American training, supplies, funds and prestige, but impeding through petty evasions and delays most major American-led operations. The bulk of SO accomplishments in China in 1945 were in the South China, along the Changsha-Hengyang-Kukong Corridor where they received the overall support of the regional commanding officer General Hsieh Yueh. Still, most of the commanders of SO teams in the South as in the North felt frustrated despite their achievements.

One of the first SO missions in South China in the last year of the war was that of the “Muskrat” team headed by Marine Captain Walter R. Mansfield, 32, a Boston native, Harvard graduate and former member of Donovan’s law firm, Mansfield had been trained by the Marines but also took OSS training in Maryland, Virginia and England.²⁴⁶ In Europe, Mansfield was air dropped into Mihailović’s Chetnik camp in Yugoslavia. Now Mansfield directed the “Muskrat” operations of four SO sub-teams against Japanese line of communication and supply in Hunan Province in south central China from February to

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 193-203; see also OSS, *War Report of the OSS; Overseas Targets*, 447.

²⁴⁶ Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger: Marines of the OSS*, 73-75.

May 1945. Although they trained nearly 800 Chinese guerrillas, Mansfield was quite unhappy with the results. He found them poor marksmen and unwilling to fight. As he reported about the third Chinese colonel sent to him, "Colonel Tan proved to be a pleasant, mild mannered leader but like all guerrilla leaders I have met, he thought only of capturing Jap goods and kept postponing operations until he could find a spot where he could isolate a small group of Japs and destroy them."²⁴⁷ In three months in the area, Mansfield reported that the major accomplishment had been in training Chinese guerrillas. In operations, most of the fighting had been done by the Americans. The "Muskrat" team had staged 11 ambushes or clashes with Japanese troops, caused 277 casualties to the enemy, sent 27 prisoners back for interrogation, destroyed 2 bridges, 2 sampans, 3 artillery pieces, 22 trucks, and 2 Japanese warehouses and captured a large amount of miscellaneous Japanese equipment.²⁴⁸

Beginning in May 1945, however, with the war in Asia and the Pacific moving towards its conclusion, the Chinese Armies, both Nationalist and Communist, began in many areas to go on the offensive. Nationalist support for OSS operations increased during the summer, and by July 1945, nearly two dozen SO units were conducting guerrilla warfare in the south of the country. They cut railroad lines, destroyed bridges, harassed enemy troop movements, and guided aerial attacks by the 10th U.S. Air Force fighter-bombers on trains and truck convoys. This guerrilla activity forced the Japanese to divert significant numbers of troops from their front lines in China or from being sent to fight the Americans in the Pacific.²⁴⁹

The "Elephant" Team was the most effective SO field unit in South China. Its commander was Captain Walter C. ("Clark") Hanna, Jr., a former artillery officer who had been recruited by the OSS in 1943, and trained as an SO agent in Maryland and Virginia, and as a Jedburgh in England. He had been parachuted into the French Alps region with Jed team "Sceptre" in August 1944.²⁵⁰ Team Elephant, included Captain Hanna, three lieutenants, two radio operators, Sergeants R.E. Baird and H.V. Palmer, and two American interpreters, who could speak Chinese.²⁵¹ They spent a month trekking by foot through the mountains and by early June reached their destination, a mountaintop headquarters of the regional National guerrillas, five miles northeast of Kiyang in central China. They were welcomed by the guerrillas with the freshly severed heads of two Japanese soldiers. Torture for information and then beheading were all too common for captives obtained by either the Chinese or the Japanese.²⁵² Hanna and his men established

²⁴⁷ Field Report of Capt. Walter R. Mansfield, 22 May 1945, reprinted in Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 321.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 275-277.

²⁴⁹ OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 446.

²⁵⁰ Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 346, which also recognizes Team Elephant as "the most effective SO unit in the field."

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 345-346.

²⁵² Field Report of Capt. Walter C. Hanna, Jr., 25 September 1945, reprinted in Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 351-352.

a base there, a site to receive supplies by airdrop, and a training camp. They needed food, medical supplies, weapons and demolitions, but for several weeks they received no airdrops and then the first drops in late June included no weapons, ammunition, money or radios. In his final report on the mission, written in September 1945, Hanna expressed frustration and bitterness toward the OSS headquarters hierarchy in Kunming, which had repeatedly failed to re-supply his team during its months of active guerrilla operations in the field.²⁵³

Nevertheless, Hanna's Team "Elephant" and the Chinese guerrillas it trained engaged the Japanese and indeed were in continuous aggressive contact against the Japanese troops in their area throughout the summer. They were credited with killing 764 Japanese soldiers, destroying 501 rails, three locomotives, 22 trucks, five bridges, 70 barrels of gasoline, numerous phone and telegraph lines cut or destroyed, six warehouses burned, 200 bombs destroyed and one airfield put out of commission. Its intelligence led to 250 air strikes on various Japanese emplacements. Some of the Americans were wounded but none killed. A doctor parachuted in to perform an appendectomy on one of the Americans. Among the 756 Chinese guerrillas trained by the Americans, several dozen were killed or wounded in the engagements with the Japanese.²⁵⁴ Hanna was promoted to major and awarded the Army's Legion of Merit; the other American members of Team "Elephant" received the Bronze Star Medal.²⁵⁵

Silver Stars for Team Dormouse's "Mice"

For extraordinary gallantry and effectiveness in blowing up a key Japanese railroad in South China, three officers in SO Team "Dormouse," received Silver Star Medals. They were Captain Raymond E. ("Ray") Moore, Lieutenant Jack Matthai, and Lieutenant James Fine from Monongahela, Pennsylvania. As SO officers, all three had been trained at the SO schools in Maryland and Virginia. Captain Moore, 26, from Plainfield, New Jersey, had left Georgetown University enlisted in the Army, became an officer and a paratrooper, was recruited by OSS and trained at Areas F and B. After further training in England, he went on two Jedburgh missions in France in 1944. Returning to the United States in November, he married his hometown sweetheart, and in February 1945 arrived in China.²⁵⁶ After sitting around in OSS headquarters in Kunming for a month, Moore and several other SO officers complained about the delay in getting

²⁵³ Field Report of Capt. Walter C. Hanna, Jr., 25 September 1945, reprinted in Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 347; see also Hanna's bitter messages to headquarters, 27 May, 11 June, 23 June 1945, pages 348-356.

²⁵⁴ Field Report of Capt. Walter C. Hanna, Jr., 25 September 1945, reprinted in Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 358-359.

²⁵⁵ Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 359.

²⁵⁶ Lt. Cmdr. Richard Kelly, "Operation Dormouse," *Blue Book Magazine* (October 1945), 64, copy in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 7, Folder 7, National Archives II.

into action. “Do you fellows want to wait a few weeks and parachute in, or would you rather walk three hundred miles to your target area?” the colonel asked. “We’ll try going overland, sir,” they answered. “That seems to be the quickest way to get there.”²⁵⁷

Team “Dormouse” was commanded by acting Major Benton McDonald (“Mac”) Austin of Savannah, Georgia, who had commanded Jedburgh Team “Ammonia” in southwest France. Captain Moore was his second in command. The other Americans on the initial team included Captain Everett T. (“Ev”) Allen of New York City, a former Jed in southern France, and as radioman, Sergeant Vincent M. Rocca from New York City, the radioman. Rocca had served with Moore on Jedburgh missions in France. The original Chinese interpreter for the team was “Casey” Wong.²⁵⁸

It took the “mice” of the “Dormouse” mission five weeks by primitive railroad, truck, and on foot to get to their combat zone in Hunan Province. Captain Allen and Sergeant Rocca both came down with malaria and had to be sent to the nearest U.S. Army field hospital. The team continued with a Burmese/Chinese radioman, nicknamed “Chicago,” and a Mr. Chu, 51, a highly educated Chinese man who had studied at Columbia University and traveled widely. There were Japanese all around the area and one day, Moore himself was operating the new “Joan-Eleanor” VHF radio system for ground-to-plane voice communication when an American voice suddenly came on the same frequency from nearby to ask who and where they were. Moore told him only that they were waiting for a drop. He said he was too and asked if he could be of assistance. As Moore later recalled, “I replied ‘No, thanks.’ To which he said, ‘Roger, good luck. I’ll be seeing you, kid.’ It wasn’t until later that I realized I had been talking to an American-speaking Jap who was trying to find out where we were.”²⁵⁹ The drop went off successfully on 9 July and brought three new SO team members: Lieutenant Jack Matthai a civil engineer from Baltimore, who had spent several months with just his interpreter, the two of them alone surveying the area; Lieutenant James Fine from Monongahela, Pennsylvania, who had done SO work in Burma and Thailand; and Sergeant. Tom Tracey from Jersey City, “a crack radioman” to replace their Burmese/Chinese operator.²⁶⁰

With a civil war going on between two neighboring Chinese warlords, Generals Chiang and Wang both of whom appeared more interested in eliminating each other than fighting the Japanese, the rebuilt Team “Dormouse” gained support from them because the Americans had the ability to produce supply drops of new weapons and ammunition. On 28 July 1945, the Americans and their Chinese guerillas launched their first attack on their main target, the key Japanese railroad between Hengyang and Kweilin. While one section attacked a Japanese guard garrison, two other sections blew up 900 feet of track around the curve, but Japanese engineers rebuilt it within two days. Knowing Americans were in the vicinity, the Japanese placed a price of \$500,000 in Chinese Nationalist

²⁵⁷ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 64.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 64, 66; “Team Dormouse,” in Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 361-364.

²⁵⁹ Capt. Raymond Moore quoted in Lt. Cmdr. Richard Kelly, “Operation Dormouse,” *Blue Book Magazine* (October 1945), 69-70, copy in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 7, Folder 7, National Archives II.

²⁶⁰ Lt. Cmdr. Richard Kelly, “Operation Dormouse,” *Blue Book Magazine* (October 1945), 70, copy in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 7, Folder 7, National Archives II.

currency (equal to U.S. \$1,000) on the head of every OSS man brought in dead or alive, sent out special teams after them, and reinforced their protective garrisons along the railroad. The average Japanese soldier was in deadly fear of the Americans' submachine guns and bazookas and was afraid to leave their protected posts and pillboxes. The Americans and their Chinese guerrillas continued a series of smaller raids, while planning a major attack on the railroad. One of the new arrivals, Lieutenant Jack Matthai, who had been a civil engineer in civilian life, planned a major explosion that would shower down an estimated 300 tons of dirt and rock onto the tracks where they cut through a hill. He calculated that it would take two weeks for the debris to be taken out of the narrow passageway. Because of heavy Japanese patrols at night, it would have to be a daylight attack. Matthai and Fine, another new arrival, led the demolition party of ten men in planting 400 pounds of explosives along sides of the hill, with two rifle squads to cover them. Major Austin, the C.O., and Captain Moore headed separate groups with rifles, light machine guns and bazookas to pin down the approximately 400 Japanese troops dug in at both entrances to the cut. When the firing started, all but one of Matthai's ten native demolition carriers ran away, so Matthai, Fine and the one of the remaining native laborers, personally hauled the 400 pounds of explosives into final positions. Meanwhile, Moore's section was pinned down by heavy mortar and machine gun fire while advancing across broken country within two hundred yards of the Japanese positions.²⁶¹ Moore's Silver Star citation reported what happened next.

"Captain Moore tried to maneuver his men into firing positions, but failed due to accurate enemy fire. Seeing his men were helpless, he crawled back to his machine guns, through enemy fire; while bullets kicked around him, and led them to the enemy's right flank. In order to place effective fire on the enemy, it was necessary for him to set his section of machine guns in plain view, so that the pressure on the rest of the team would be released. A mortar shell knocked out one machine gun and Captain Moore put it back into position and effectively manned the gun while mortar and small arms fire searched for him. His accurate fire forced the enemy to keep low and only return a weak and inaccurate fire. His personal bravery, tactical skill and devotion to duty were responsible for the withdrawal of his section with few casualties and were immediately responsible for the success of the team's mission."²⁶²

Then as Moore later described it, "the earth was shaken by the most terrific blast I'd ever heard. I looked over toward the cut, and it seemed as though the earth were heading skyward. All I could see was a great filthy black umbrella-shaped cloud that must have been a hundred feet high. When the dirt and rocks fell, a great swirl of dust hung over the area. . . . We beat it back to the village rendezvous, and there I was delighted to see Mac, Jim and Jack—the latter two covered from head to foot with dirt from the blast."²⁶³ The blast was even more successful than they had hoped. Although almost a

²⁶¹ Ibid., 71-74.

²⁶² Citation for Silver Star Medal for Capt. Raymond E. Moore, reprinted in Lt. Cmdr. Richard Kelly, "Operation Dormouse," *Blue Book Magazine* (October 1945), 76, copy in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 7, Folder 7, National Archives II.

²⁶³ Capt. Raymond E. Moore quoted in Lt. Cmdr. Richard Kelly, "Operation Dormouse," *Blue Book Magazine* (October 1945), 74, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 161, Box 7, Folder 7, National Archives II.

dozen of the Chinese guerrillas had been killed in the attack, the blast had buried the tracks under more than 450 tons of debris. It would and did take more than two weeks to cart it away and reopen the railroad line. The regular Chinese Nationalist Army was drawing near and the Japanese would be denied the vital transportation line when they needed it most.

It was not until the next day, 12 August 1945, that radioman Tom Tracey learned from OSS Kunming that the Japanese government was offering to surrender, which it did on 14 August 1945. The next message was to be ready for evacuation. "It's hard to describe the emotions of our small group of Americans hundreds of miles from anywhere when we received this news that it was all over," Moore said later. "More than anything else, it meant going home to love and peace and all the things we had been longing for and dreaming about night and day. Surprisingly enough, we did very little celebrating. From that minute on, all of us were mentally at home, and we began to hate every minute that kept us from being there."²⁶⁴ Returning back to OSS headquarters in Washington, D.C., Moore, Matthai and Fine were each awarded a Silver Star Medal; Radioman Tracey the Bronze Star; and Captain "Mac" Austin the Legion of Merit for the success of the "mice" of Team "Dormouse."²⁶⁵

OSS Chinese OG Commandos

An important OSS attempt to create elite fighting units among the Chinese Nationalist Forces, particularly after the failure of the Chinese Armies in the face of the Japanese Ichi-Gō offensive, was Donovan's plan to create units of OSS Chinese Operational Groups (OGs) of American trained commandos. The belief was not simply that properly trained and armed and with American veterans as leaders and advisers, these commandos could wreck havoc with Japanese lines of communication and supply as the European OGs had done behind German lines. There was also a hope that such units would encourage the Chinese Nationalist Army as a whole and fight more effectively. Although approved in January 1945, the program did not get started until the first Chinese OG commando training camps were established in April. The goal was 20 company-size commando units within the OSS Chinese OG, a total of 3,000 Chinese paratroopers, led by about 400 Americans. But actual cooperation by the Nationalist Chinese Army was slow and strained and only six of the approximately 180-man, Chinese commando units, totaling about 800 Chinese soldiers, had been fully trained and begun to conduct combat operations by the end of the summer when the war suddenly ended.²⁶⁶

²⁶⁴ Capt. Raymond E. Moore, quoted in Kelly, "Operation Dormouse," 74.

²⁶⁵ Kelly, "Operation Dormouse," 75.

²⁶⁶ By the time the war ended, the number of Chinese being trained as commandos had grown to 3,000 and the American personnel with them had reached 390. The plan was for each commando unit to include 154 Chinese soldiers, 8 interpreters, and 19 Americans. Each had three rifle sections, a 60 mm mortar section, a light machine gun section, and a demolition section, plus an advance team of an SI officer and a radio operator who would precede the unit into the field and prepare for its arrival. "Chinese Operational

Most of the 160 American officers and 230 enlisted men assigned to the OSS Chinese Operational Groups were veterans who had parachuted into German-occupied France in the summer of 1944.²⁶⁷ A few had staged amphibious raids from Ceylon against the coast of Japanese-occupied Burma. In addition, officers and enlisted men were recruited from OSS replacement centers in the United States. Almost all of the American personnel in the OSS Chinese OGs had received their stateside training at Area F and then either Area B or Area A in Maryland and Virginia. Many of them received additional training on Catalina Island on the West Coast. They served as leaders, advisers, radio operators, medics and other specializations with the OSS OG Chinese commando units. Since very few spoke Chinese, there were half a dozen interpreters assigned to each 180-man unit. In overall command of the Chinese OGs was Lieutenant Colonel Alfred T. (“Al”) Cox, who had been one of the original OSS OG leaders in 1943. He and then fellow Lieutenant Joseph Alderdyce had helped Serge Obolensky write the OG curriculum and field manual, basing it on translations of European manuals as well as their own observations of SO and OG training at the OSS camps in Maryland and Virginia.²⁶⁸ In 1944, Cox, working from OSS Mediterranean Headquarters in Algiers, and then with Team “Lehigh,” Cox had been responsible for the successes of the more than a dozen OSS French and Italian OG teams parachuted into southern and central France in the summer of 1944.²⁶⁹

After the success of the clandestine units working with the Resistance in France, most of the American Jedburghs, SO and OG teams, were given the choice in late 1944 of remaining with the OSS and being sent on similar missions in China or leaving the OSS and being assigned back to regular duty in the service, Army, Navy, Air Corps or Marines, from which they came. “I don’t know how many opted not to say in OSS,” said Captain Arthur P. (“Art”) Frizzell from Fort Huron, Michigan, who had been commander of the first OG section in France in June 1944 and who became commander of a battalion of three Chinese OGs, the “Blackberry” Mission. “My own personal point of view is that it was the greatest group of guys ever assembled.”²⁷⁰ Private Emmett F. McNamara from Boston, who had been a member of French OG Section Lindsey in France and then served with Chinese OG 1st Commando, recalled “All volunteered to go to China. No one

Group[s],” <http://www.ossog.org/china.html>, accessed 23 September 2007. OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 454-55.

²⁶⁷ For a list of American personnel in the Commando Units of the Chinese Operational Groups, see “Office of Strategic Services Operational Groups,” “Personnel Chinese Operational Group,” <http://www.ossog.org/personnel.html>. Accessed 23 September 2007.

²⁶⁸ Serge Obolensky, *One Man in His Time: The Memoirs of Serge Obolensky* (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1958), 347-349.

²⁶⁹ Operational Report, Company B, 267th Special Reconnaissance Battalion (Provisional), Narrative History of the French OGs, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 99, Box 44, National Archives II.

²⁷⁰ Arthur P. Frizzell, Excerpt of Remarks at 1997 Chinese OG Reunion, http://www.ossog.org/china/blackberry_frizzell.html, accessed 23 June 2008.

would look at the other guy and say, 'I'm not going. Are you going? Yeah, I'm going.' So we all got over to China."²⁷¹

Under Colonel Cox, the American veterans set up the OSS Chinese OG training camp at Iliang, some thirty miles east of Kunming. The eight-week training course was modeled after the OG courses in Maryland and Virginia, Areas F, B, and A, tailored to conditions in China. Cox got instructors from the OSS camps in the states, particularly those who had previously received Army training or taught at the Infantry School at Fort Benning. The course was completed with parachute training at the separate OSS Airborne School at Kunming airfield under the command of Marine Captain Elmer ("Pinky") Harris, the Ketchikan, Alaskan native, who had by January 1945, arrived in China after OSS service at Areas B and A, the Mediterranean Theater, and MU instruction in California. His chronic abdominal pains had finally been identified as the result of intestinal ulcers, and after an operation in California, he was deemed fit for full service and dispatched to Kunming as C.O. of the new OSS Air Operations Unit and Parachute School. For his service in the Mediterranean Theater and the China-Burma-India Theater, Harris was later awarded the Legion of Merit.²⁷² Chief instructor at the parachute school in China was airborne veteran, Lieutenant Colonel Lucius O. ("Ruck") Rucker from Mississippi, who taught OSS paratroopers at Area A and at Fort Bragg in 1942 at Algiers, in 1943 and 1944, and now at Kunming in 1945. Rucker trained the first Chinese paratroop units in that country's history.²⁷³

The first commando recruits sent by the Chinese Nationalist Army to the OSS presented a problem. Only about one-quarter of the ill-nourished, peasants conscripted into the Nationalist Army and sent to the OSS school at Iliang were physically qualified or otherwise prepared for the demanding paratrooper and commando training. For recruits they accepted, OSS replaced their ragged uniforms with American combat uniforms and boots, and built up their physical condition with extra rations, good food, and physical exercise. Ellsworth ("Al") Johnson, medic with the 2nd Chinese Commando Unit, who had served in the Patrick Unit under Serge Obolensky in the French OG, recalled how instead of one lean meal of rice a day that they received in the Chinese Army, they were fed three good meals a day by the Americans with plenty of meat and vitamins.²⁷⁴

When the Chinese recruits reached good physical condition, they began their paramilitary training with American weapons and equipment. Americans accompanied them and had Chinese interpreters, but most of the orders were conveyed and issued to the Chinese soldiers by their own Chinese NCOs and commissioned officers. Most of the recruits had never had basic training in the Chinese Army. Setting up a rifle range, the

²⁷¹ Emmet F. McNamara, Excerpt of Remarks at 1997 Chinese OG Reunion, http://www.ossog.org/china/apple_mcnamara.html, accessed 23 June 2008.

²⁷² Mattingly, *Herringbone Cloak—GI Dagger*, 176.

²⁷³ Ford, *Donovan of OSS*, 272-73.

²⁷⁴ [Ellsworth] Al Johnson, "One Small Part," typescript recollection, of France and China, <http://www.ossog.org/france/patrick.html>, accessed 21 June 2008. See also, OSS, *War Report of the OSS: Overseas Targets*, 454.

OSS instructors trained the recruits first in the use of Springfield '03 bolt-action marksmen's rifles. This was difficult for those Chinese whose arms were too short to hold the weapon properly, and the kick of the fired weapon was so strong that some Chinese would be knocked down. After about four weeks, the Chinese soldiers were introduced to the infiltration course in which they had to crawl along the ground while machine guns fired live ammunition over their heads. Lieutenants John C. Hooker, Jr., along with Larry A. O'Jibway and four other member of the OSS amphibious unit that had been trained at Areas F and A and served along the Burma coast, had been assigned to the 10th Chinese Commando in April 1945. After four weeks of training the Chinese, Hooker, was surprised when it came to the infiltration course. "There we found that Chinese soldiers really do not want to die, and, therefore, we Americans had to crawl with them and jab them in the butt with rifles to get them through the course."²⁷⁵

Most of the peasant conscripts in the Chinese Army could neither read nor write, so compass and map-reading was quite difficult. Al Johnson reported that when a group of the trainees went out on such a field exercise, "invariably a scouting party had to be sent to find them."²⁷⁶ Parachute training came at the end. By then they were toughened up through running, push-ups, and calisthenics. The instructors built a jump platform, and the men learned to jump and roll when they hit the ground. Finally, they were taken to an airfield outside of Kunming and made their four jumps to earn their Chinese jump wings. It was the first time they had been in an airplane. Eight weeks of OG training produced Chinese commandos, who seemed proud and self-confident in their ability to fight.

Some of the Americans had their doubts. The situation in China was completely different from that in Europe. In France, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, or Norway, the OG sections or SO teams parachuted into an existing and already functioning underground Resistance network. OSS simply helped it operate more effectively and coordinate with the Allied armies. But in China, OSS had to start from scratch and recruit, train, and operate underground guerrilla and espionage groups behind enemy lines. Sergeant Ellsworth ("Al") Johnson was one of the skeptics. Son of an Army sergeant of Swedish descent who married a young woman from Michigan, young Johnson had grown up near Grand Rapids. At 19, he was drafted into the Army in early 1943, went through basic training and then medical and surgical training in Texas. OSS recruited him as a medic for the French Operational Group. He trained with them at Area F and then Area B. The group received parachute training in North Africa, then additional training in England.²⁷⁷ In August 1944, Johnson was part of Serge Obolensky's OG Section Patrick that operated successfully with the *maquis* in central France for a month. Afterwards, most of the group, except the over-age Obolensky, volunteered for OG duty in China. They arrived in Kunming in early 1945, and in combination with some other former French OGs were

²⁷⁵ Col. John C. Hooker, Jr., (U.S. Army-Retired), "Biography," typescript, chapter for 1945. I am grateful to Colonel Hooker for sending me a copy of his manuscript. John C. Hooker, email to the author, 27 June 2008.

²⁷⁶ [Ellsworth] "Al" Johnson, "One Small Part," typescript recollection, of France and China, <http://www.ossog.org/france/patrick.html>, accessed 21 June 2008.

²⁷⁷ Ellsworth ("Al") Johnson, telephone interview with the author, 17 June 2008. I am indebted to Nancy Moseler, Mr. Johnson's daughter, for putting me in touch with her father and helping with his materials.

designated the 2nd Commando. In mid-summer, they flew deep behind enemy lines, as part of the “Blueberry” Mission to interdict Japanese lines of communications and supply. Looking around at the men in his C-47, “I could not help but wonder what I had gotten into again,” Johnson wrote later. “I kept telling myself we had trained these Chinese as best we could. We had provided them with arms and food, and put all we could into making them a viable force. Nevertheless, as I surveyed the 30 some men around me, I could not help but feel that any fighting we might get into would be done in large part by the Americans.”²⁷⁸

In July 1945, half a dozen OSS OG Chinese Commando units were parachuted behind Japanese lines to impede the enemy’s lines of communication and supply, including cutting off river-born rice shipments to Japan, and provide intelligence from various provinces in South China.²⁷⁹ The missions were code named after a fruit. The first airborne mission in the history of the Chinese Army was the “Apple” Mission of the OSS OG 1st Commando Unit, commanded by Captain Vernon G. (“Vern” and “Hop”) Hoppers from Spartansburg, South Carolina, who had been head of OG Section Justine in France, the second French OG to deploy. He and Captain Arthur P. (“Art”) Frizzell from Fort Huron, Michigan, had drawn lots in June 1944 to determine which would lead the first OG to jump into France. Frizzell won, so in China, it was Hoppers’ turn to lead the first mission.²⁸⁰ The Apple Mission parachuted from 14 C-47 transports into an area near Kai Ping, south of the West River (Xi Jiang) to interdict road and river traffic. One Chinese paratrooper broke his arm when it became tangled in the static line of the man in front of him, another landed in a pond and drowned. Learning from informants of the arrival of the 180-man unit, the Japanese immediately dispatched 500 troops and pursued them relentlessly for four days until the unit reached a more defensible position in Loting. Hoppers organized an intelligence network and started destroying cargo sampans along the West River. On 5 August, the 1st Commando launched an attack on Japanese fortified positions at the junction of the West and Namkong Rivers. The after action report indicated that in this, the commandos’ first engagement, they displayed “courage and fearlessness” driving out the Japanese and inflicting 25 casualties upon the enemy while suffering only 10 casualties of their own.²⁸¹ Private Emmett F. McNamara from Boston, radio man who had been on the “Lindsey” Team in France, recalled the battle years later. “When we attacked, most of the Chinamen held back, but a few went up with us. One of our Chinamen got hit. The others left him there, but Cahill [Private John A. Cahill of Victor, New York] got up and ran down the hill toward the Japanese, picked him up,

²⁷⁸ [Ellsworth] “Al” Johnson, “One Small Part,” typescript recollection, of France and China, <http://www.ossog.org/france/patrick.html>, accessed 21 June 2008.

²⁷⁹ Ford, *Donovan of OSS*, 272-73; “Chinese Operational Group[s],” <http://www.ossog.org/china.html>, Accessed 23 September 2007.

²⁸⁰ Arthur P. Frizzell, Excerpt of Remarks at 1997 Chinese OG Reunion, http://www.ossog.org/china/blackberry_frizzell.html, accessed 23 June 2008.

²⁸¹ “Chinese Operational Group, Commando Unit Apple, Summary of Lt. Col. Cox,” <http://www.ossog.org/china/apple.html>. Accessed 23 September 2007; also OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 456.

threw him over his shoulder and carried him back to safety. He got a Silver Star [medal] for that.”²⁸²

The 8th, 9th, and 10th Commandos, had been formed into a provisional battalion on the “Blackberry” Mission. Captain Frizzell was in overall command. The C.O. of the 10th Commando (“Banana”) was 6’6”-tall, 200-pound, Captain George Gunderman, an approximately 35-year-old, OG officer, recruited from paratroop school at Fort Benning and then trained at Area F and A before being sent to China.²⁸³ Six of the 17 Americans, who accompanied the 154 Chinese soldiers, were from an OG amphibious unit that had trained at Areas F and A and that had served in Detachment 404’s crash boats along the south Burma coast. In the 10th Commando, Lieutenant Hooker was assigned to the 60 mm mortars; Lieutenant O’Jibway to a machine gun unit and then to a rifle section.

The Blueberry Mission was flown into an old U.S. airfield at Liuchow, nearly 400 miles east of Kunming. The members of the mission subsequently sailed down the West River (Xi Jiang) for nearly 200 miles in sampans and junks. Their initial assignment was to assist the Chinese Nationalist Offensive. Specifically, they were to support an attack by the Chinese Nationalist Army’s 265th Regiment of the 89th Division to capture Tanchuk airfield from the Japanese. Thereafter, they were to move eastward along the West River ahead of the advancing Chinese Nationalist armies. The commandos planned a coordinated attack with the commander of the Chinese regiment. On the morning of 3 August, the 10th Commando together with the 8th Commando, headed by Capt. William H. McKenzie, who had helped lead OG Section Louise in France, attacked and captured the high ground overlooking the airfield. The 9th Commando was held in reserve. But when the commandos then fired a flare signal for the regular Chinese regiment to advance to support them, the Chinese soldiers and their officers ignored the agreed upon signal and remained in their secure positions in the rear. Hooker recalled that Chinese officers in the commando units also disappeared as soon as Japanese mortar shells began to fall.

In the 10th Commandos’ sector, Hooker’s mortars battered the enemy from his hilltop position, while O’Jibway’s rifle teams stormed a further hill. The Americans had taken the high ground. In mid-afternoon, a Japanese officer with a Samurai sword led two dozen soldiers in a suicidal “Banzai” charge toward Hooker’s mortars. Hooker’s Chinese commandos killed or wounded all but the leader. “The officer was charging directly at my position,” Hooker remembered, “and I watched a Chinese soldier shoot him three times with an American carbine. He never slowed down. I threw my ’03 Springfield to my shoulder and hit him in the center of his chest when he was twenty yards from me. The bullet slammed him back down the hill. The Chinese soldier looked at me and should ‘Ding How, Ding How,’ which translated means ‘Very Good, Very Good.’”²⁸⁴ The Americans continued to fire on the Japanese from the two hills until they began to run out of ammunition.

²⁸² Emmett F. McNamara, telephone interview with the author, 2 September 2008.

²⁸³ John C. Hooker, email to the author, 3 July 2008. As an OG, he would have been trained at Area F and then Area B or A, but B was closed by that time.

²⁸⁴ Col. John C. Hooker, Jr., (U.S. Army-Retired), “Biography,” typescript, chapter for 1945. I am grateful to Colonel Hooker for sending me a copy of his manuscript. John C. Hooker, email to the author, 27 June 2008. He provided further details in an email to the author of 3 July 2008.

After holding their own position for several hours under heavy enemy rifle, machine gun, mortar and artillery fire, awaiting the support that never came, the commandos had to withdraw. The losses were high: 22 killed in action and 31 wounded, some of them mortally. Ultimately the death toll reached 38. Many of the Chinese commandos had performed honorably. The Japanese, who had lost 164 killed and an unknown number wounded, withdrew during the night. The Chinese regular regiment occupied the town and the airfield the next day. As a result of this action, it was decided, as it had been in North Africa, that OSS units should not be used for spearhead frontal attacks to encourage regular infantry units, but rather should be utilized as intended for the kind of clandestine interdiction and harassment behind enemy lines for which they had been trained.²⁸⁵

Meanwhile, the “Blueberry” Mission by the 2nd Chinese Commando was assigned to interdict road and river traffic along in the Paoching-Hangyang-Chansha area of Hunan Province. It launched its offensive before the decision at headquarters not to have OSS spearhead attacks. Its 160 Chinese and 20 Americans were commanded by 40-year-old Captain John E. Cook, who had been Obolensky’s second in command in Section Patrick in France. In China, most of the Americans on this mission had been OSS French OGs, who had trained at Areas F and B in 1943. Half of them had been with Cook in Section Patrick. Now in late July 1945, they parachuted near Chakiang, deep behind Japanese lines. There were a few injuries but no fatalities, and the group was met by their advance party, headed by Captain Roy K. Rickerson from Bossier City, Louisiana, formerly with OG Section Louise, which had captured 3,800 Germans in France. A few days before the 2nd Chinese Commando parachuted in, Rickerson and his small team had run into a small patrol of Japanese soldiers led by an officer. “We killed the entire squad except the officer,” Rickerson explained. “I was about to take a bead on him, when my M-1 [rifle] jammed. The Jap raised his Samurai sword to try and sever my head from the rest of me, so I raised my rifle to ward off the blow. This did the trick, but the tip of his sword came down and caught me in the back. The fortunate part was that the blow unjammed my gun, and I was able to finish him off.”²⁸⁶

As Rickerson had arranged, the 2nd Chinese Commando established their camp in an old Buddhist Temple in a village some 50 miles east of Hengyeng. Sergeant James E. Gardner, from Ogdensburg in upstate New York, was the radioman. He had been trained in the Army Signal Corps, been recruited by OSS and taken Communications Branch training at Area C before joining the French OGs for training at Areas F and B.²⁸⁷ Gardner had accompanied Section Patrick in France. Now as one of the two American radio men of the 2nd Chinese Commando, Thomas F. McGuire from Lakewood, Ohio, was the other, he established contact with Kunming. Two Chinese members of the unit worked the hand cranks to generate electrical power for his transmitter/receiver. Since

²⁸⁵ “Chinese Operational Group, Commando Unit Blueberry, Summary of Lt. Col. Cox,” <http://www.ossog.org/china/blueberry.html>. Accessed 23 September 2007; and OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 456.

²⁸⁶ Rickerson quoted in [Ellsworth] “Al” Johnson, “One Small Part,” typescript recollection, of France and China, <http://www.ossog.org/france/patrick.html>, accessed 21 June 2008.

²⁸⁷ Ellsworth (“Al”) Johnson, telephone interview with the author, 27 June 2008.

they had to live off the land, the unit carried a million yen with them to purchase, food, lodging, information and intelligence. Many of the streams were polluted with human and animal waste used as fertilizer, so the team medic, Sergeant Ellsworth (“Al”) Johnson, purified the drinking water with chlorine tablets. Meats in the outdoor markets were often fly covered, so the Americans relied upon chickens and pigs kept penned in their own compound. Villagers often stared at the Americans in disbelief, having never seen an American soldier, whom they called “Megwo-Ping.”

Captain Cook met with General Wong the commander of local Chinese guerrilla force and General Chiang, head of the 10th Chinese Army, and they chose as the first target a garrison reported to contain some 300 Japanese soldiers. But the Japanese commander had learned all about the Americans from informants and obtained a thousand reinforcements. The outpost’s defenses included snipers, machine guns, mortars, and artillery, distributed in pillboxes, trenches, and caves. The Chinese and American plan was for the 2nd Commando to assault the heaviest defenses in the front, while 200 of General Wong’s guerrillas attacked the flanks. General Chiang’s soldiers operated on the flanks to provide assistance where needed and to repel any Japanese counterattacks or reinforcement from a larger Japanese garrison four hours away.

At dawn on 5 August 1945, the 2nd Commando began the attack, with the advance elements led by Lieutenants Larry A. Drew from Los Angeles and Burke E. Whitney from Tenafly, New Jersey. Whitney took the Chinese mortar and demolitions men, and several American sergeants, off from the main body and established their position on the reverse slope of a rise overlooking the garrison. A Japanese sniper in a tree sent a bullet into the lungs of Sergeant Hasbrouck B. (“Hob”) Miller of Gloversville, New York, who was to target the mortars. Lieutenant Drew rushed up, grabbed Miller by the legs, and dragged him to the safe side of the hill. Staff Sergeant David G. Boak and his .50 caliber machine gun teams, set up on another hill. The 2nd Commando was supposed to hit hard and fast, but when the Japanese began firing mortars, the Chinese troops left the line sought huddled there for protection. The whistling shells hit a number of them. Medic “Al” Johnson was hurrying there when a shell exploded 100 feet in front of him; one of the Chinese commando was hit and bounced 10 feet into the air.

Because of heavy enemy fire, Captain Cook could not get his troops in the main frontal position to make their attack. So he sent Lieutenant Drew, and Sergeants Roy Gallant and James Gardner, the radioman, along with several Chinese commandos around to take out the machine gun nest. That meant going over a dune-like hill, across a small valley and attacking the concrete pillbox on the next rise. Despite the loss of at least one Chinese commando, they got to a small shack about 150 feet from the pillbox. Lieutenant Drew told Gallant “That pillbox has to go. It’s causing us too much trouble.” Roy Gallant was a lumberjack of French-Canadian ancestry from Athens, Maine, a quiet, gentle person, but a man of great courage and enormous physical strength, his chest was as big as a barrel and his upper arms as wide as tree trunks.²⁸⁸ He had been in combat with the Patrick Mission in France. Now hunched in the shack in China, he reflected for a few moments, looked at the pillbox, and said quietly, “if Jim [Gardner] goes with me, and

²⁸⁸ [Ellsworth] “Al” Johnson, telephone interview with the author, 27 June 2008. He pronounced his name “Gal-ANT.”

about four other Chinese commandos, I figure I could get the job done.” What happened next was later recounted by Gallant, Gardner and Drew to “Al” Johnson who wrote it:

“Jamming a full clip of rounds into his Thompson [submachine gun], and looking over at Jim, Roy left Larry standing at the shack and headed out to complete the task. Before Roy tried to take the pillbox, he circled around behind it to see how many Japs were in the area. To his great surprise, he saw a goodly number had dug foxholes and many were beginning to advance toward us. After determining the strength of the enemy, Roy and Jim took their Chinese [commandos] and crawled up as close to the pillbox as they could get without being seen. Because the slits were so small, Roy was afraid he could not slip a grenade inside. Just as Roy was about to make his first attempt, a Jap face appeared staring at Jim through the slit. Capt. Cook had been watching the whole action of Roy and Jim from back at the dune where I was attending the wounded. When he noticed the face in the slit, he placed an accurate shot, killing the Jap and saving Jim’s life. All of this confusion allowed Roy to sneak close enough and drop the grenade inside the pillbox. After a few seconds, he heard a muffled thud. Just to make sure, he slid another one in. This took a few seconds too long, and Roy received a shot from a sniper’s gun. Those [snipers] that we had killed before were replaced by others. Roy was hit in the shoulder, but the sniper was killed by Jim Gardner, who was near Roy at the time. Lt. Raf Hirtz [an Argentine-born American who had served in France and joined the 2nd Chinese Commando] had come upon the scene, and between him and Jim, they were able to bring Roy back to where I was standing.”²⁸⁹

While Johnson treated the wounded, giving them morphine, patching up their injuries, and having them carried to the rear, Drew returned to the mortar position, finished setting them up, and started arching rounds over the hill into the Japanese emplacements. The shells landed with loud, “whumps,” causing much havoc and destruction. But the Japanese mortar rounds were getting closer, and the outnumbered Americans and their Chinese commandos, without any support from the Chinese regulars or guerrillas, decided to withdraw. Captain Cook, using his “walkie-talkie,” a portable two-way radio, gave the order, and the groups slogged the 25 miles back to their base at the Buddhist Temple.

They had received no help from their Chinese allies. General Wong’s guerrillas started out on their flanking maneuver when the 2nd Commando began its attack, but when the first enemy mortar rounds began to explode, the guerrillas stopped, retreated and simply watched the battle from a hill about a mile away. General Chiang and his conscript troops from the Chinese 10th Army never even moved from their secure positions far out of range. Even some of the American-trained Chinese commandos refused to advance. “I witnessed Capt. Cook holding a .45 Cal[iber]. pistol to the head of several Chinese commandos,” “Al” Johnson said, “forcing them to get into battle.” Cook yelled at them: “Get out and fight, or you’ll get shot.”²⁹⁰

²⁸⁹ [Ellsworth] “Al” Johnson, “One Small Part,” typescript recollection, of France and China, <http://www.ossog.org/france/patrick.html>, accessed 21 June 2008.

²⁹⁰ [Ellsworth] “Al” Johnson, “One Small Part,” typescript recollection, of France and China, <http://www.ossog.org/france/patrick.html>, accessed 21 June 2008; and Cook quote in Remarks of Ellsworth (“Al”) Johnson, Excerpts from 1997 Chinese OG Reunion [in New Hampshire],” http://www.ossog.org/china/chineseog_reunion_1997.html, accessed 23 September 2007.

The attack had been a failure, and Cook was furious with the Chinese. He later reported that the maps they provided had been completely inaccurate and that in the predawn darkness, their local Chinese guide had moved them to point 3,000 yards from the Japanese lines when they wanted to be only 800 yards away. Worst was the refusal of many of the Chinese to fight. “Chinese officers will not lead or command during enemy fire,” Cook reported angrily. “Americans try to command, lead and browbeat soldiers to get up close for attack without much success. This position could have been taken easily with a forceful assault.—Col[onel] Chiang—completely scared when nearing the enemy.” This last was a reference to the Chinese colonel of one Commando unit, who had refused from the beginning of the battle to order his troops forward.²⁹¹ Unsupported by the Chinese guerrillas or the regular Chinese Army, the 2nd Commando’s attack had been repulsed. Four Chinese commandos had been killed in action and nine wounded, several of whom later died; two Americans, Miller and Gallant, had been wounded but survived. More than 30 Japanese bodies were observed, before the 2nd Commando withdrew, and it was later estimated that nearly 100 of the enemy had been killed. Nevertheless, the assault was a bitter failure.

Next day, August 6, as the OG made plans to evacuate the wounded. But while radioman James Gardner was contacting Kunming, the news came in that an atomic bomb had been dropped on Japan. “The war is over—the war is over,” he kept saying, and the team was ready to celebrate until they learned that they were instructed to remain in position for another 30 days, because it was feared that the Japanese in the interior of China were not ready to surrender. “Wouldn’t you know it?” “Al” Johnson recorded. “Our war is to last an additional 30 days longer than everyone else. We could be killed during a time when peace was established. None of us were extremely happy.”²⁹²

Later, after news arrived of Tokyo’s offer to surrender, the 2nd Commando was ordered to proceed to Hengyang, where the Japanese troops from the area were assembling for a formal surrender. On the way, the OG was harassed by Chinese guerrillas, many of them like General Wong, turned out to be Communists, and by bandits, all of whom wanted the Americans’ weapons and equipment. At Hengyang, they learned about promotions for some of them as well as awards. Sergeant Ellsworth (“Al”) Johnson, the medic, received the Bronze Star, and the Chinese Memorial Badge, to add to the Liberty Medal he had earned in France and eligibility for the French Legion of Honor.²⁹³

Quite a few of the OSSers who had trained Chinese Commando units never got to take them into action. Arne I. Herstad and the other OSS Norwegian OGs, who had served in France and then trained the 7th Chinese OGs, had the 7th Commando ready for its first assigned mission, when the war ended. As Herstad wrote from China to his sweetheart, Andi Kindem, whom he had married when he returned from France the

²⁹¹ James E. Cook quoted in “Chinese Operational Group, Commando Unit Blueberry, Summary of Lt. Col. Cox,” <http://www.ossog.org/china/blueberry.html>. Accessed 23 September 2007. For a brief, diplomatic summary of the engagement, see OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 456-57.

²⁹² [Ellsworth] “Al” Johnson, “One Small Part,” typescript recollection, of France and China, <http://www.ossog.org/france/patrick.html>, accessed 21 June 2008.

²⁹³ Ellsworth (“Al”) Johnson, telephone interview with the author, 27 June 2008.

previous year, "...the end of the war stopped everything. I was alerted for 43 days and never got to go anyplace. I was scheduled to go to Shanghai Disappointing to say the least."²⁹⁴

The OSS Chinese OGS were now disbanded. The Chinese soldiers were sent to the Chinese Commando Command established in the Nationalist Army. The American OGS were to make sure that their own weapons, munitions, radio, medical and other equipment, went to the Chinese Nationalist Army and were not taken by the Chinese Communists. This they did and the Americans were flown back to Kunming in late August. After nearly a year in China, for some even after six months, many of the men suffered from dysentery and yellow jaundice and other ailments; malaria was common, but kept largely under control through the use of Atabrine tablets. John Hooker recalled that Captain Gunderman was so afflicted that he could no longer walk. The 21-year-old Hooker was offered a promotion to captain, but was too debilitated to accept it. He was 40 pounds underweight and debilitated by malaria and dysentery. "I was quite yellow, my teeth were all loose, and I felt like hell," he recalled."²⁹⁵ He and O'Jibway were treated in Kunming and Calcutta and traveled all the way back to the Congressional Country Club together. In China, not long after the exiting Americans' arrival in Kunming, their weapons were confiscated and the men were confined to the OSS compound outside the city. The civil war between the Nationalists and the Communists had resumed. There was much confusion and killing, and at night, they could hear gunfire and artillery fire in the distance. "We were at their mercy and none of us felt at ease," "Al" Johnson recalled. "When the news came that we were to leave, we were all happy to go. We had had enough of war and all the stupid things that go along with it."²⁹⁶

OSS and Korea

In August 1945, OSS also began to expedite a long held goal of establishing intelligence agents in Korea. As a result of OSS expansion in China in 1945, Colonel Heppner reorganized the organization's regional structure on 1 August 1945, creating three new commands. OSS Southern Command would be headed by Lieutenant Colonel William R. ("Ray") Peers, a graduate of OSS Training Area B, C.O. of Detachment 101 in Burma since late 1943. The Hsian (Xian) Field Unit in northern China, under Lieutenant Colonel Gustav Krause became the OSS Central Command.²⁹⁷ Entirely new

²⁹⁴ Arne I. Herstad to "My dearest wife," 15 September 1945, *OSS Society Digest*, Number 2061, 25 May 2008, ossociety@yahoo.com, accessed 25 May 2008.

²⁹⁵ Col. John C. Hooker, Jr., (U.S. Army-Retired), "Biography," typescript, chapter for 1945; John C. Hooker, email to the author, 27 June 2008.

²⁹⁶ [Ellsworth] "Al" Johnson, "One Small Part," typescript recollection, of France and China, <http://www.ossog.org/france/patrick.html>, accessed 21 June 2008.

²⁹⁷ Yu, *OSS in China*, 236.

was the OSS Northeastern Command, based in Tsuchao, and headed by Captain Clyde B. Sergeant. Its sole mission, code named "Eagle," was to train and dispatch OSS/SI agents into Korea. Those agents were 100 Koreans living in China, who had been selected by Kim Ku, head of the so-called Korean Provisional Government, based in Chungking and recognized and largely controlled by Chiang Kai-shek.²⁹⁸ Korea had been conquered and maintained as part of the Japanese Empire since 1895. The Japanese forced Koreans to work as laborers and other menial positions in Japan and their empire. The leaders of the Korean nationalists in exile were Kim in China and Syngman Rhee in the United States.

As early as January 1942, Donovan had written to Roosevelt of his hope to use Koreans to operate against the Japanese in Manchuria, Korea, and Japan itself. Most influential with the OSS was Kim's rival, Syngman Rhee, an ardent nationalist, formerly imprisoned by the Japanese, who had studied at Harvard and earned a doctorate at Princeton, converted to Christianity and would eventually become President of the Republic of Korea.²⁹⁹ Lobbying in Washington for U.S. support for an independent Korea, Rhee, had received little support from the State Department or the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Consequently, in 1942, he had gone to the OSS, establishing what would become a lifelong friendship there with one of Donovan's deputies, M. Preston Goodfellow, a former newspaper publisher. It was Goodfellow, in charge of Special Operations, who had authorized OSS training camps at Catocin Mountain Park and Prince William Forest Park. The 66-year-old Rhee allegedly began his interview by suggesting that he be given parachute training and be dropped into Korea to raise a resistance Army against the Japanese. Goodfellow demurred but asked Rhee to help recruit young Koreans living in the United States and abroad who could be trained by OSS for resistance in Manchuria and Korea.³⁰⁰ Rhee agreed and Colonel Carl Eifler, organizing Detachment 101 which he believed in March 1942 would go to China, was flooded with applications from Korean Americans. He had to turn them down when his mission was changed to Burma.³⁰¹ Furthermore, Chiang and Dai Li, supported by the US Army and State Department, opposed the idea. Goodfellow apparently ignored JCS and State in early 1942 and sent a group of Korean Americans up to Toronto to be trained at SOE's Camp X.³⁰² A year later, Rhee had renewed his plea, arguing not only that the Koreans living in China and the United States could be trained and infiltrated as spies and guerrilla leaders,

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 236-237.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 15-17; and for a fuller background, Allan R. Millett, *The War for Korea, 1945-1950: A House Burning* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2005), 16-38.

³⁰⁰ On Rhee's first interview with Goodfellow in early 1942, see M. Preston Goodfellow, "Personal Experience Article," undated [after 1950] typescript in M. Preston Goodfellow Papers, Box 2, Folder "Biographical Material," Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, Calif.; on the Chinese rejection, see Smith, *Shadow Warriors*, 130.

³⁰¹ Moon and Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel*, 48.

³⁰² Bickham Sweet-Escott, *Baker Street Irregular* (London: Methuen & Co., 1965), 142. Sweet-Escott was an SOE representative in Washington.

but that they could help rescue downed American aviators as the aerial bombardment of Japan escalated from airbases in China and the Pacific.³⁰³

OSS training camps at Catoctin Mountain Park and Prince William Forest Park trained some groups of ethnic and native Koreans. In May 1943, there were a few Korean-American trainees at Area B. OSS recruit Peter Sichel remembered playing poker with them in the evenings. They were excellent poker players, he said, and always won.³⁰⁴ The U.S. Army and Marines captured a number of Koreans in the Pacific or the Far East who had been conscripted into the Japanese Army mainly to work as laborers. Many of these Korean prisoners of war were brought to the United States and held in a POW facility at Camp McCoy in Wisconsin. In 1944-1945, the OSS, using a Korean American, recruited a number of volunteers from among the Korean POWs interned at Camp McCoy for infiltration and subversion of the Japanese in Korea or Japan itself. Men with sufficient patriotism, intelligence, and hatred of the Japanese to become good agents were, if they were accepted, sent to the OSS secret, secluded training facilities on Catalina Island, which was declared off limits for tourists for the duration.³⁰⁵ Captain Robert E. Carter, 26, from Alexandria, Virginia, who had been with the OSS German OG at Areas F and B in late 1943 but then was reassigned for advanced training in Britain, was put in charge of two of the Catalina training camps, Howland's Landing and 4th of July Cove, in 1945 (the main training camp was at Tonyon Cove, 3 miles from the town of Avalon, but it and its Korean trainees were kept strictly separated from the other two). Under the supervision of Major Vincent Curl, Colonel Carl Eifler's representative, Carter and his staff spent seven months providing intensive training and field exercises for nearly two dozen Koreans, who Carter described as "dedicated, serious students." "They were to go back into Korea for sabotage, espionage, communication, and opposition to the Japanese."³⁰⁶ A different group, non-English speaking Koreans, but probably Korean exiles approved by Syngman Rhee, rather than the POWs, underwent paramilitary training at Area C-1 in Prince William Forest Park in the summer of 1945. Many of these men later went on to become high officials in Rhee's postwar government of South Korea.³⁰⁷

³⁰³ See correspondence between Goodfellow and Syngman Rhee, 1943-1945, in M. Preston Goodfellow Papers, Box 4, Syngman Rhee, Subject file, Hoover Institution Archives, Stanford, Calif.

³⁰⁴ Peter F.M. Sichel, telephone interview with the author, 9 July 2008.

³⁰⁵ Moon and Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel*, 48-49, 215-227, 232-33, 323.

³⁰⁶ Robert E. Carter, telephone interview with the author, 28 August 2008.

³⁰⁷ Joseph J. Tully, telephone interview with the author, 23 March 2005, who said in June and July 1945, there were about thirty to fifty Korean Army officers given two months training in special operations, intelligence, and radio operation at Area C-1 while he was there. R. Harris Smith, *OSS*, 26, says most of the Korean agents selected by Rhee and trained by the OSS were "never used." Smith probably refers to their nonuse during the war. The widow of Maj. Howard Manning, the last commander of Area C, said that her husband told her that some of the Koreans he trained at Area C later served as high government officials in the Republic of Korea. Betty Bullard (Mrs. Howard) Manning, telephone interview with the author, 4 March 2005.

Meanwhile in China, the OSS had to accept Chiang Kai-shek's backing of Rhee's rival, Kim Ku, and began training Koreans selected by Kim Ku in the early spring of 1945 for the "Korean Provisional Army" under General Li Bum Suk, and, as part of the Eagle Project, to send Koreans as guerrillas and intelligence agents into Manchuria, Korea, and even Japan.³⁰⁸ The training camp was a small village near the Yellow River by Hsian (Xian) in Shensi Province. The force was primarily composed of Koreans who had escaped or been captured from the Japanese armies and labor battalions. Early in the project, OSS SI chief Colonel Paul L. Helliwell, 30, an attorney and banker, had sent a new OSS recruit up to report on General Li and the project. Helliwell's representative, this brand new arrival from the United States, was a 27-year-old lieutenant from upstate New York, a Brown University graduate, who had trained at Area E and Catalina Island. When after his inspection, the young lieutenant reported to Helliwell that Li was neither receiving intelligence from Korea nor had any operational plans to infiltrate his supporters there, Helliwell outraged with the young lieutenant sent him away. The young lieutenant soon came down with dysentery and may or may not have subsequently engaged in some combat missions, as his memoir written years later asserts. By the time he wrote that memoir in 1974, E. Howard Hunt had completely lost his credibility as well as his reputation. Two years earlier, in 1972, ex-CIA officer Howard Hunt, the author of several works of fiction as well as actual perpetrator of several "dirty tricks," helped organize the Watergate break-in that led to the downfall of President Richard Nixon.³⁰⁹

At least one of the American members of the OSS unit training Koreans near Hsian (Xian) for the Eagle Project, that Hunt had denigrated in 1945, had gone on to a distinguished career. Chester L. Cooper, a Bostonian, who left graduate school at Columbia to enlist in the Army as a private, had joined OSS in India out of boredom with his Army service as a sergeant there. At the Eagle project training base, OSS gave Sergeant Cooper a lieutenant's uniform to impress the Koreans. On a visit to the training camp at the beginning of August 1945, Donovan who had seen Cooper as a sergeant two weeks earlier in Kunming, recognized him but wondered at the lieutenant's uniform. "We did this for the Koreans, Sir," Cooper answered. "Well, you've made a lot of progress over the past two weeks," Donovan replied with a wink. "Keep up the good work!" So began Chester Cooper's long and distinguished career in intelligence and diplomacy—with the OSS, the CIA, State Department, and the White House.³¹⁰

³⁰⁸ Yu, *OSS in China* (1996), 15-17, who cites "History of the SI Branch, Office of Strategic Services, China Theater," October 1945, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 154, Folder 3333, National Archives II. The Soviet Union also trained some Korean expatriates during the 1940s in military tactics and Marxist-Leninist ideology for possible deployment in Korea at a later date. By 1945, the main leader of that group was a partisan named Kim Il Sung who would later become the head of the Communist regime in North Korea. Millett, *The War for Korea*, 39.

³⁰⁹ E. Howard Hunt, *Undercover: Memoirs of an American Secret Agent* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1974), 32-45; Tim Weiner, "E. Howard Hunt, Agent Who Organized Botched Watergate Break-In, Dies at 88," *New York Times*, 24 January 2007, C13. Hunt's memoir has been likened to the novels he wrote.

³¹⁰ Chester L. Cooper, "Remembering 109—Recollections of OSSers," *OSS Society Newsletter*, Summer 2005, 11; see also Chester L. Cooper's memoir, *In the Shadows of History: Fifty Years Behind the Scenes of Cold War Diplomacy* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2005). Cooper later became a consummate government insider, serving in key positions with the CIA, the State Department, and the National Security

Donovan was enthusiastic about the Eagle Project for OSS penetration of Manchuria, Korea, and Japan. He also had other plans for infiltration of Japan. One was the Napko Project, a clandestine operation to train Korean Americans and Korean POWs to be deployed into Japan for intelligence and sabotage in advance of the planned U.S. invasion of the Japanese home islands at the end of 1945. Eifler later said that Donovan had in the summer of 1944 assigned him the Napko Project, to train at Catalina, ten groups of Koreans, drawn from POWs from Camp McCoy, to have them return to Korea led by himself and thirty American officers, foment rebellion there, and finally penetrate Japan, where millions of Koreans worked in an impressed labor force. Eifler's representatives, like Vincent Curl and Robert E. Carter, continued to train such Korean teams through the summer of 1945. The majority of these Koreans were trained at Catalina Island in 1945, although it is possible that some may have been among the Koreans trained at Area C that year.³¹¹ One controversial and unsupported account contends that Donovan had already infiltrated agents into Japan, a six-man OSS team, presumably Koreans, Japanese or Korean or Japanese Americans, into Honshu, the main island in July 1943.³¹² Colonel Carl Eifler claimed that his ten units of OSS trained Korean POWs turned SOs, were ready to leave their Catalina Island training camps, led by himself and thirty American OSS officers in August, and head for Japan itself. However, the mission was cancelled when the Japanese surrendered.³¹³ OSS Army Captain Howard Chappell, the German-American paratrooper who headed the SO Tacoma Mission in the Italian Alps with Sergeant Fabrega and Corporal Silsby, in 1944 and returned to the United States with a Silver Star Medal, claimed that he had a similar mission, but with Japanese Americans. According to Chappell, Donovan appointed him commander of a secret unit that was training a group of Japanese Americans on Catalina Island to parachute into Japan in the fall, establish a base, transmit intelligence and then wreck havoc behind enemy lines when U.S. Army and Marines landed on the beaches of the southern home island of Kyushu, an invasion that had been scheduled for 1 November 1945. Chappell said after the war that given the rivalry between MacArthur

Council. Joe Holley, Obituary, "Diplomatic Insider, Chester L. Cooper, *Washington Post*, 3 November 2005, B8.

³¹¹ Moon, *This Grim and Savage Game*, 233, 259-70, 295-96; Greg Schulte, "Were Five OSS Agents Hanged in Japan in 1944?," *OSS Society Digest*, Number 1251, 17 January 2006, osssociety@yahoo.com, accessed 17 January 2006; and Chong Lee, Korean Broadcasting System, Seoul, Korea, "Media Inquiry—Napko Project," *OSS Society Digest*, Number 1973, 6 February 2008, osssociety@yahoo.com, accessed 6 February 2008.

³¹² The agents allegedly parachuted in during a B-29 mission. With transmitters, weapons, rations, and currency, they soon began to report on shipping, particularly troop transports, which were then sunk by the Americans. Japanese search teams eventually caught five of the agents, took them to Sugamo Prison in Tokyo, interrogated and executed them in November 1944. The sixth agent was never caught and allegedly became part of the U.S. occupation forces after the war. The author provides no sources for this assertion, and there has been no collaboration of the account John L. Ginn, *Sugamo Prison, Tokyo: An Account of the Trial and Sentencing of Japanese War Criminals in 1948, by a U.S. Participant* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 1992), 4; see also Greg Schulte, "Were Five OSS Agents Hanged in Japan in 1944?," *OSS Society Digest*, Number 1251, 17 January 2006, osssociety@yahoo.com.

³¹³ Moon and Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel*, 232-33, 323.

and Donovan, he often fantasized how great it would have been after sabotaging behind Japanese lines, for him to meet MacArthur as he stepped off the landing craft, “we could have said, ‘General, we’d like to deliver Japan to you courtesy of Wild Bill Donovan.’”³¹⁴

The Japanese, of course, surrendered before the planned invasion took place. Donovan was at Hsian (Xian), China, on 7 August, the day after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. The next day, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and invaded Manchuria. As the Red Army surged south, Donovan told Wedemeyer that the Eagle Project must move forward quickly. “If we are not in Korea and Manchuria when the Russians get there, we will never get in.”³¹⁵ The Air Force dropped an atomic bomb on Nagasaki the following day. On the 10th, the Japanese cabinet offered to surrender if the emperor was retained. Donovan was on his way to Washington when Tokyo accepted unconditional surrender on 15 August in the Far East (14 August in the United States, V-J Day). Gen. Douglas MacArthur and U.S. forces began occupying Japan on 27 August, and the surrender ceremony was held on the Battleship *U.S.S. Missouri* in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945.

Rescuing POWs

The sudden Japanese capitulation and the quick end of the war in mid-August 1945 caught the OSS by surprise. Donovan’s organization had made significant contributions in the jungle warfare in Burma. But in China, the OSS was just beginning to stage a number of coordinated major projects—in Manchuria, Korea, and South China—that promised important results. But they had not yet been launched, and now with the surrender, they would not have any significant impact on the defeat of Japan. Still the OSS hoped to obtain some recognition of its important work in China. With the news of the sudden Japanese decision to surrender, OSS/China chief, Richard Heppner

³¹⁴ Howard Chappell, remarks at reunion of OSS members in Washington, D.C., quoted in Donnie Radcliffe, “Intelligence Gathering, Bush Honored at OSS Reunion,” *Washington Post*, 24 October 1991, C1, C13; Albert R. Materazzi, “Training at Catalina,” *OSS Society Digest*, Number 991, 31 March 2005, ossociet@yahoo.com, accessed 31 March 2005. His son indicated that he believed that his father at some period had trained on Catalina Island. Jack R. Chappell, email to the author, 5 October 2007. Robert E. Carter, in charge of two camps on Catalina Island where Eifler’s Koreans were being trained, said he never saw Chappell on the island in 1945, but he added that he and Chappell and the German OGs had trained there in 1944 after being at Areas F and B. Robert E. Carter, telephone interview with the author, 28 August 2008.

³¹⁵ Yu, *OSS in China*, 230, citing William J. Donovan to Albert C. Wedemeyer, 10 August 1945, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 154, Box 192, Folder 3285 “OSS Wash/ Donovan Trip, August 1945,” National Archives II.

cabled Donovan “Although we have been caught with our pants down, we will do our best to pull them up in time.”³¹⁶

Heppner immediately asked General Wedemeyer to airlift OSS commando and intelligence teams into key areas throughout Japanese-occupied China, Manchuria, and Korea. The OSS teams would raid various Japanese headquarters and seize vital documents and individuals, Japanese as well as “puppet” collaborators, some of whom would be charged as war criminals. They would safeguard American and National Chinese Government interests in China. They would land in strategic spots in Manchuria “in order that we may be on ground before arrival of Russians,” and in Korea “in order that our interests may be protected before the Russian occupation.”³¹⁷ On 12 August, Heppner ordered OSS teams into strategic spots in Mukden (Shenyang) and Harbin in Manchuria and Weixian (Weihsein) in China’s Shandong Peninsula. They included OSS personnel from SO, SI, Medical Branch, and the Communications Branch.³¹⁸

Major James G.L. Kellis from Illinois, who had spent the winter of 1942-1943 at SO training camps at Areas F, B, and A, and in 1944 had led the SO “Chicago” mission blowing up bridges in Greece, had joined SO China in 1945 along with two of his Greek-American radio operators, George N. Psinos and Michael T. Angelos (Spiro Cappony had returned to the United States). Kellis had been training SO Team “Greyhound” in the mountains around Hsian in June and July waiting to be sent to the area around Peking (Beijing). Now with Tokyo’s surrender imminent, Kellis, the two radio operators, and two Chinese interpreters were dispatched to Peking to arrange for the surrender of the Japanese forces there and the entry of the Allies. They parachuted into an area about fifty miles east of the city on the night of 12 August 1945. Dodging Japanese and puppet troops for several days, they entered the heavily guarded city on 16 August clad as Chinese puppet soldiers. Given refuge by a Chinese puppet general, the team negotiated through him with the head of the Japanese garrison for its pending surrender. Kellis also negotiated with the leader of the Soviet Army then marching on the city. His radio operators relayed vital intelligence information as well as the proceedings of the negotiations to the OSS base in Hsian (Xian). For their actions, Kellis received a second Legion of Merit, the Silver Star and Bronze Star Medals; Psinos and Angelos received Bronze Star Medals.³¹⁹

On 15 August 1945, the day Tokyo announced it would surrender, Wedemeyer ordered all agencies in his theater to give top priority, to locating and rescuing Allied Prisoners of War and civilian detainees held by the Japanese in camps.³²⁰ Rescuing

³¹⁶ Yu, *OSS in China*, 231, citing Richard Heppner to R. Davis Halliwell, 10 August 1945, Urgent cable, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 154, Box 192, Folder 3285, “OSS Wash/Donovan Trip, August 1945,” National Archives II.

³¹⁷ Yu, *OSS in China*, 231-32, citing Richard Heppner to W.P. Davis, 10 August 1945, Top Secret Cable, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 90, Box 3, Folder 30, “Jap Surrender—in and out, Aug. 1945,” National Archives II.

³¹⁸ Yu, *OSS in China*, 232.

³¹⁹ Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 391-393.

³²⁰ There was concern everywhere about whether Japanese soldiers would react to the surrender with revenge on their captives or simply withdraw and leave the prisoners and internees to perish without food

POWs posed more of a problem in Asia than in Europe as not only were the distances so much greater but rescuers would be flying into relatively unknown territory far behind enemy lines and might be confronting enemy forces that were prepared to kill the prisoners and their would be rescuers. There were intelligence reports in the days after 15 August that kamikaze planes were still attacking the U.S. Navy, that the emperor was unable to enforce his own cease-fire order, and that some fanatical Japanese officers had vowed to continue the war. It was uncertain, to say the least, whether rescue teams would meet resistance from prison camp commanders and guards when the teams parachuted or flew in to demand their surrender and the release of their prisoners. In revenge against the U.S. bombing of Japanese cities, the emperor's troops had been executing Allied prisoners for several months during the summer. Intelligence reports reported a recent increase in atrocities against Allied POWs, including public executions in Malaya, Thailand, and Taiwan. The Allies feared that the Japanese might try to massacre prisoners so they could not testify against earlier atrocities.³²¹ Although other agencies would assist, there was really only one U.S. military organization in Asia that was trained, ready, and equipped to carry out such missions: the OSS.³²² OSS carried the brunt of the operation with the Air Force transporting the rescued people out after the OSS had found them, gave them food and immediate medical treatment, and secured their release. OSS teams were well suited for parachuting into camps behind enemy lines and taking control before reinforcements arrived. In addition, these missions provided a cover for OSS intelligence and other operations in areas OSS was already seeking to penetrate before their takeover by the Russian or Chinese Communists.³²³

OSS organized nearly a dozen of these "Mercy Missions." Each was code-named after a bird. The initial missions were in North China. The "Magpie" Mission, headed by Major Ray Nichols flew into Peking (Beijing) on 17 August under arrangements made by Major Kellis and his team. They found 624 Allied POWs, among them the Navy commander who had headed the American forces on Wake Island captured by the Japanese on 8 December 1941, and four airmen from the Doolittle raid on Tokyo, who had been kept in solitary confinement almost continuously since their capture in April 1942. All four airmen were in serious condition, and one of them was almost dead with beriberi.³²⁴

Unlike the mission to Peking, most of the rescue missions did not have a prearranged reception committee and flew in not knowing what to expect. The "Duck"

or medical supplies. There were some 20,000 American and other Allied POWs and some 15,000 internees held in Japanese-run camps throughout Asia and the Pacific in late summer of 1945. Ford, *Donovan of OSS*, 297.

³²¹ William Craig, *The Fall of Japan* (New York: Dial Press, 1967); E. Barlett Kerr, *Surrender and Survival: The Experience of American POWs in the Pacific, 1941-1945* (New York: William Morrow, 1985); and Gavin Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese* (New York: William Morrow, 1995);

³²² Spector, *In the Ruins of Empire*, 8-9.

³²³ OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 457-58.

³²⁴ Ford, *Donovan of OSS*, 298. Although OSS was able to rescue some of the Doolittle fliers, the Japanese had after the 1942 raid executed four of the fliers and deliberately starved another to death.

Team flew to the Shantung Peninsula on 17 August, arriving at a landing strip near a prison camp not far from Tsingtao, where 1,500 civilian Allied internees, men, women, and children, including 200 Americans, were held in a former Presbyterian mission surrounded by barbed wire. Heading the “Duck” Mission was Major Stanley A. Staiger, 24, an infantry officer from Klamath Falls, Oregon, who had undergone OSS SO training at Areas B and A and then served with Frank Gleason’s “Detachment 21” in its successful mission helping to stop the Japanese advance by blowing up all the ammunitions and weapons warehouses in front of it in January 1945.³²⁵ Now at the camp near Tsingtao, the sullen Japanese guards let the Americans into the camp and, as the Office of War Information press release described the scene, a “surging mass of prisoners,” flocked around Staiger and his team, “wringing their hands, embracing them, pounding their shoulders, kissing them.”³²⁶

Rescuing Allied POWs on massive Hainan Island off the south China coast was the goal of the “Pigeon” Mission. The Japanese there were still firing on American reconnaissance planes. The mission was led by Major John (“Jack”) Singlaub, a paratrooper from Los Angeles, who had trained at Area F and B, been a Jedburgh in France and then volunteered for duty in China. He spent several months preparing an SO Chinese guerrilla team to impede a possible advance into China by a Japanese Army division in Vietnam. Now he was sent to Hainan Island. With only two day’s notice, he put together a nine-man team, including his regular radioman, 1st Sgt. Anthony J. (“Tony”) Denneau from Green Bay, Wisconsin, who had been with him since France, and an interpreter, Lt. Ralph Yempuku, a young Japanese American soldier from Honolulu, who had served with OSS Detachment 101 in Burma.³²⁷ On 27 August 1945, a C-47 from the 14th Air Force flew them across the South China Sea, and at midday, they jumped from 500 feet and landed less than a mile from one of the military compounds. Confronted by a Japanese lieutenant and two truckloads of soldiers, Singlaub took a haughty, conquering attitude and through his interpreter, Lieutenant Yempuku, commanded the Japanese officer to halt his men and to take Singlaub to the commander of the Hashio POW camp. “We are here to help the Allied prisoners,” Singlaub declared summarily. “The war is over.”³²⁸

The Americans spent the night in quarters surrounded by armed Japanese guards. In the morning, when the Japanese colonel arrived and said he had just received word of the pending surrender, Singlaub treated him brusquely and demanded to see the senior officers among the POWs. When they arrived, “we had trouble containing our emotions,” Singlaub recalled. The Australian colonel and the two Dutch officers were “little more than skeletons.” Flesh and bone, no muscle tone at all. Deeply sunken eyes, milky and unfocused, stared from skulls that looked like death’s heads. The Dutch colonel’s neck

³²⁵ Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 15 July 2008.

³²⁶ Spector, *In the Ruins of Empire*, 16, citing an OWI News Dispatch, attached to Gustav Krause to Richard Heppner, 22 Aug. 1945.

³²⁷ OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 458; and John K. Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty: An American Soldier in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Summit/ Simon & Schuster, 1991), 71-101.

³²⁸ Singlaub with McConnell, *Hazardous Duty*, 89.

and arms were scarred from repeated beatings. “I became aware of a faint, sweet-sour odor, something like fermentation, which I soon realized as the stench of starvation.”³²⁹

The OSS rescue team found hundreds of Allied POWs on Hainan Island, many of them in terrible physical condition. There were 500 Australian and Dutch POWs in the Hashio prison camp. The Americans learned that nearly 200 had died of malnutrition, malaria, dysentery, beriberi and beatings since they had arrived in 1942. The team found that at least eight American airmen had been captured at Hainan after being shot down. At a Japanese naval facility at Sanya, three American airmen had been held since March 1945. They had been badly injured when their planes were shot down, and the Japanese had refused to treat their wounds and burns. Their guards had beaten them systematically in revenge for the bombings of Japan. They were put on starvation rations, and two of the American airmen had died as a result. Five American airmen had been publicly executed after being paraded through streets of island towns that had been bombed.³³⁰

The Pigeon Team’s radio had broken in the parachute drop, and radioman Tony Denneau had to jury-rig a setup using the OSS crystal in a Japanese set to contact OSS headquarters in Kunming on an emergency frequency. Because the Japanese transmitter was so powerful, Kunming initially thought it was hoax, and only after a lengthy procedure of prescribed challenges and responses did they accept the team’s coded message. After OSS and Army reinforcements arrived, Singlaub recovered two dozen additional Allied prisoners, including one American airman, who had been holed up in a mountain camp of Chinese Nationalist guerrillas and another American aviator with Chinese Communist guerrillas on the island. A few days later, a British destroyer arrived to begin evacuating the first contingent of rescued POWs to safety.

Manchuria: Rescuing General Wainwright; Clashing with the Soviets

With the surrender of Japan, one of OSS’s first assignments was to get teams into Manchuria ahead of the Russians.³³¹ Initially this was done through Mercy/Rescue Missions flown in to rescue Allied POWs. The “Flamingo” Mission was to be dropped into the city of Harbin, deep in Manchuria, but the Soviets arrived before the scheduled drop, refused clearance, and the mission was cancelled. However, the “Cardinal” Mission

³²⁹ Ibid., 91; for a detailed account of the treatment of the Allied POWs on Hainan Island, see Courtney T. Harrison, *Ambon, Island of Mist, 2/21st Battalion AIF (Gull Force), Prisoners of War, 1941-45* (North Geelong, Australia: T.W. and C.T. Harrison, 1988), 186-259.

³³⁰ Singlaub with McConnell, *Hazardous Duty*, 100-101; see also Lawrence J. Hickey, *Warpath across the Pacific: The Illustrated History of the 345th Bombardment Group during World War II*, 2nd ed., rev. (Boulder, Colo.: International Research and Publishing Co., 1982), 289-300.

³³¹ Yu, *OSS in China*, 242, citing Richard Heppner to Gustav Krause, for information John Magruder and Whitney Shephardson, 10 August 1945, cable, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 90, Box 3, Folder 30, “Jap Surrender—in and out, August 1945,” National Archives II.

under Maj. James T. Hennessy was parachuted near Mukden, the industrial center of Manchuria on 16 August 1945. An angry and suspicious Japanese patrol captured them when they parachuted into a field outside the POW camp, disarmed and beat them, most savagely the Japanese-American interpreter, Sergeant Fumio Kido.³³² But the beatings stopped when an officer arrived, and two days later, the Japanese commander surrendered and the Americans liberated 1,321 Americans, 239 Britons, and a few Australian, Canadian, and Dutch. On 27 August Hennessy and his men finally located a small camp at Sian, a hundred miles north of Mukden and rescued ten captured Allied generals and other high officials, including British Lieutenant General Sir Arthur E. Percival, former commander at Singapore and U.S. Lieutenant General Jonathan M. Wainwright, who had surrendered American forces in the Philippines in 1942. A week later, the gaunt 62-year-old Wainwright sent a grateful tape recorded message to the OSS commander, which began: "This is General Wainwright speaking. Greetings, General Donovan. I am speaking from Hsian, China, where I have just eaten my first good American breakfast since the war."³³³ With the "Cardinal" Mission was Captain Roger F. Hilsman from OSS Detachment 101 in Burma. His father, a career Army officer, had surrendered the U.S. command on Negros Island in the southern Philippines two months after Wainwright had given up on Corregidor. Young Hilsman had joined the "Cardinal" Mission hoping to find his father. He did locate Colonel Hilsman at Hoten prison camp in Manchuria, where he had shrunken to 100 pounds, and his hair had turned completely white.³³⁴

The OSS rescue missions were a tremendous success. As historian Ronald Spector has so aptly express it: "A small number of determined young Americans, launched into the vastness of Asia, had performed notable feats of courage and improvisation that would be long remembered by those whose lives had been saved or imprisonments ended by the appearance of a lone B-24 bomber and a handful of parachutes."³³⁵

³³² Hilsman, *American Guerrilla*, 232. Hilsman arrived on a second plane two days later.

³³³ Yu, *OSS in China*, 243; quoting a letter from Gustav Krause to Betty MacDonald [later MacIntosh], 6 November 1946. Colonel Krause was head of the OSS base in Hsian [Xian], where Wainwright was brought from Manchuria. See also Hal Leith, *POWs of Japanese Rescued!: General J.M. Wainwright* (Trafford Publishing, 2004). Leith, then a sergeant, was a member of the rescue team.

³³⁴ Hilsman, *American Guerrilla*, 234. In 1990, Hilsman wrote that his father recognized him right away and walked over and embraced him. This is in sharp contrast to the account in Corey Ford, *Donovan of OSS*, 300, who reported that young Hilsman found his father lying on a wooden cot amidst filth and suffering, and looking up at him blankly, and to convince his father that he was not delirious, Hilsman began recounting his own experiences in Burma and said his Kachin guerrillas had killed 300 Japanese without one casualty. "When Dad sat up and contradicted me," Ford has young Hilsman saying, "I knew he was all right."

³³⁵ Spector, *In the Ruins of Empire*, 20. Having rescued the Allied POWs, the OSS began covert operations to establish a intelligence network in Manchuria, parachuting in a large number of agents, many of them Chinese members of Bishop Megan's Catholic network. OSS reported the secret entrance of thousands of Chinese Communist soldiers into Mukden on 7 September, the capture of Henry Pu Yi, the puppet head of Manchukuo and the last emperor of China, as well as the Soviet seizure of not just Japanese but also western properties such as the British-American Tobacco Company. The Soviets barely accepted the American rescue mission in Manchuria, which they saw as their sphere of influence occupied by the Red Army, but when the POWs and internees had been evacuated by mid-September, the Soviets commander in

OSS casualties in China

Remarkably, there had been few American OSS combat casualties in China. Of course, there were not many OSS personnel in China until the final months of the war. The OSS contingent there had grown slowly, from 144 in December 1943 to 300 in February 1945. After Wedemeyer authorized expansion and independent action, OSS grew rapidly from 800 in April 1945 to nearly 2,000 four months later at the end of the war.³³⁶ According to some OSS China veterans, probably no more than half of these, some 1,000, ever came near the Japanese.³³⁷ Many of OSSers in China came down with various diseases, some bad enough to be sent home. Some died in accidents, and at least two were killed in Canton after the end of the war in an altercation with a fellow officer.³³⁸ But the combat fatalities among the perhaps 1,000 American OSS agents engaged with the enemy numbered only five, although probably several hundred of the Chinese Nationalist guerrillas trained by the OSS were killed in action, and unknown numbers of Chinese spies employed by OSS, who simply stopped reporting, had either fled or been found out and executed.³³⁹

Among the five OSS men killed in action, four died fighting the Japanese. Two of them Captain Thomas C. Blackwell and Lieutenant John Allen—died as a result of a bizarre accident. As Special Operations officers and paratroopers, both had been trained at OSS schools in Maryland and Virginia. A salesman before the war, “Blackie” Blackwell had joined the OSS in 1943. His perseverance had gotten him through OSS training; his engaging personality and good humor won him many friends; and he had been served in Special Operations in France. Arriving in China in April 1945, he was sent in a convoy from Kunming to the OSS station in Chihkiang, an airport city and one of the

Mukden ordered the OSS team out of Manchuria by 5 October, an order they followed under protest. Yu, *OSS in China*, 242-47.

³³⁶ Figures for December 1943 and February 1945 from OSS, War Report of the OSS: Overseas Targets, 442-443; for April 1945 from OSS Theater Reports, S&T Branch Excerpts, China, 30 April 1945, p. 13, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 159, Folder 1729, National Archives II; for August 1945, General Orders No. 27, Headquarters, U.S. Forces, China Theater, by order of General Wedemeyer, 1 February 1946, reprinted General Orders No. 27, Headquarters, U.S. Forces, China Theater, by order of General Wedemeyer, 1 February 1946, reprinted in Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 432-433.

³³⁷ John W. Brunner, telephone interview with the author, 21 March 2005.

³³⁸ Maj. Leonard Clark, a noted explorer and author of a book about Hainan Island before the war, was assigned to Secret Intelligence in China. In October 1945, after returning to Canton from an intelligence mission in Taiwan, he became involved in an argument with two other OSS officers and killed them with his pistol. Clark was imprisoned by Chinese authorities and only released in 1949 with Donovan's personal intervention. Ever an adventurer, Clark resumed his explorations looking for gold in Nicaragua, a mountain higher than Everest in Nepal, and a treasure in the Amazon where his travels came to an end with two native arrows in his back. Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 18-19.

³³⁹ Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 15, 426.

routes to Chungking. There he waited while his unit, Team “Ermine,” was being formed. On 26 June 1945, Blackwell and another OSS officer, Lieutenant John Allen, the latter who had originally been scheduled for the Dormouse Mission, volunteered to accompany a Morale Operations air drop of thousands of propaganda leaflets over Japanese held area. Flying over the city of Changsha, the C-47 suddenly veered to evade anti-aircraft fire, and the two men who had been sitting in the open doorway tossing out leaflets suddenly plunged out into the air. They parachuted to the ground, but the Japanese surrounded them. It was later learned that Blackwell had pulled out his pistol and been killed in a shootout with the Japanese. Allen was captured, dragged through the streets and tortured. Later, still badly battered, having been put on a Japanese troop train headed for regional headquarters; he was killed along with many of the Japanese soldiers, when the train was attacked by American fighter-bombers.³⁴⁰

Most well-known among the OSS fatalities in China was Captain John M. Birch. In the closing days of the war, the most successful, yet also the most tragic, OSS mission operating out of Hsian was the R2S mission led by this 27-year-old intelligence officer from the 14th Air Force, who had been assigned to OSS Secret Intelligence beginning with the AGFRTS group in Kunming. Birch spoke Chinese, knew China well, and had earned many friends there. He was also an ardently evangelical young man, a fervent Baptist, with a hatred of the Japanese and what they were doing to the Chinese. Since the summer of 1945, working out of Hsian (Xian), Birch had established and obtain excellent information from a dozen intelligence nets, reporting in by radio from Peking [Beijing] the Yellow River basin and the Shandong Peninsula. The Shandong Peninsula, which stretches out from northern China like a finger pointing at Manchuria and Korea, was geographically and strategically important for transportation and communication among China, Manchuria and Korea, and the Chinese Communists wanted to deny it to the Chinese Nationalists or their American ally.³⁴¹ After the Japanese surrender, when the OSS rescue and intelligence missions began, OSS/Hsian ordered Birch to go to Shandong Province to seize enemy documents and to obtain information on airfields from which American POWs could be flown. Birch and his team, which consisted of four Americans, seven Chinese, and two Koreans, set out on 20 August for the Shandong Peninsula.³⁴² The Communist 8th Route Army was ordered to intercept Birch’s team and its patrols stopped them several times. Finally on 25 August, at Huang-kou station in the Xuzhou [Suchow] area, a group of Communist soldiers surrounded Captain Birch and Lieutenant

³⁴⁰ Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 409-410, 426, 453, 473, 484-486; the two others who died fighting the Japanese were Specialist First Class Dean A. Cline, U.S. Navy Reserve; and a Flight Officer Evans, U.S. Army Air Force. David Kenney, an OSS Communications man, was at Chihkiang when the falling out of the plane incident occurred. He remembered that one of the men, about 30 years old, had become so excited that the Air Force would let him go along on the mission. David Kenney, telephone interview with the author, 11 April 2005.

³⁴¹ Yu, *OSS in China*, 235-36; *Smith, OSS*, 281-82.

³⁴² The Americans included Captain Birch, Lt. Laird M. Ogle, Morale Operations; Sgt. Albert C. Meyes, Communications Branch, and civilian Albert C. Grimes, Counter-Espionage Branch, reported in H. Ben Smith, chief, intelligence division, Strategic Services Unit [successor of the OSS], China Theater, to Commanding General, AAF/CT, 7 November 1945, subject: Additional Report on Death of Capt. John Birch, Alfred Wedemeyer Papers, Box 87, Folder 87.2, the Hoover Institution, Stanford, Calif.

Dong Qinsheng (Tung Chin-sheng), who had been separated from the others, and ordered them to give up their weapons. Birch became increasingly irritated, emphasized that the war was over, denounced the Communists as “bandits,” and claimed that he was on a peaceful mission simply to survey airfields for POW rescue, not to interfere in any struggle between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. The soldiers opened fire and both Birch and Dong were hit and fell to the ground. Despite the pain, Dong lay there, was left, and survived, although he lost a leg and an eye, but Birch continued to resist. Birch’s hands were tied behind his back. He was dragged away, murdered and mutilated almost beyond recognition.³⁴³ General Wedemeyer protested directly to Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai, demanding a response and also the release of all the other OSS personnel the Chinese Communists had detained. At the beginning of September 1945, the Communists released the remaining members of Birch’s team, who had been captives for two weeks and four OSS officers of the Spaniel team, who had been held for four months. The fate of Captain George Wuchinich and his team from the Chili Mission was unknown, and it was not until late September 1945 that Communists finally released them.³⁴⁴ Birch’s murder and the detention of the other OSS men was powerful evidence of the increasingly aggressive policy of the Chinese Communists.³⁴⁵

In the Far East, OSS produced some of its most impressive results of the war. Most importantly, in Burma, Detachment 101 played a crucial role in harassing and sabotaging enemy supply lines when the Imperial Japanese Army controlled that country, and later, it helped guide Merrill’s Marauders and the Allied advance into Burma. Some

³⁴³ Details on John Birch’s murder from Yu, *OSS in China*, 235-40; Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War against Japan*, 372; Smith, *OSS*, 280-81; Testimony of Tung Chin-sheng, a.k.a. Tung Fu Kuan, Entry 148, Box 16, Folder 225; OSS Investigation report, “Account of the Death of Captain John Birch,” 14 September 1945, by John S. Thomson to Headquarters Central Command, OSS, Entry 148, Box 6, Folder 87; William Miller’s report to General Alfred Wedemeyer, 1 September 1945, Entry 168, Box 16, Folder 225, “Death of Capt. John Birch,” all in OSS Records (RG 226), National Archives II. Lt. Col. Jeremiah J. O’Connor, Deputy Theater Commander Judge Advocate, China Theater, to Chief of Staff, 13 November 1945, subject: Death of Captain John Birch, copy in Alfred Wedemeyer Papers, Box 87, Folder 87.2, the Hoover Institution, Stanford, Calif.

³⁴⁴ Yu, *OSS in China*, 240-41.

³⁴⁵ Years later, an ultra-conservative California businessman, Robert H.W. Welch, Jr., formed a right-wing political organization in the United States and seized upon Birch’s slaying by the Chinese Communists for the name of his group. He called it the John Birch Society, and in 1954, Welch published a book, *The Life of John Birch: In the Story of One American Boy, the Ordeal of His Age* (Los Angeles, Calif.: Western Islands Press, 1954), which although ostensibly a biography is primarily a political diatribe. There is no evidence, however, that John Birch himself had such an extremist anti-Communist ideology as Robert Welch enunciated. Yu, *OSS in China*, 235; Ford, *Donovan of OSS*, 300, Smith, *OSS*, 280-81.

500 Americans in OSS Detachment 101 mobilized 9,000 Kachin and other native peoples in Burma. They were credited with directly inflicting 15,000 casualties on the enemy, including the known deaths of 5,447 Japanese soldiers and another 10,000 enemy soldiers believed to have been killed or seriously wounded. In addition, another 12,000 enemy casualties resulted from air attacks instigated by Detachment 101.³⁴⁶ In other areas of Southeast Asia, OSS played smaller if still important roles. It was influential in linking Thai patriots from the United States with anti-Japanese resistance forces within Thailand. In French Indo-China, OSS officers continued to follow the original global aims of supporting the most active resistance movements against the enemy, even if they included communist partisans, and not encouraging re-colonization by former imperial powers. The result of such actions by officers in the field in the last year of the war was that the OSS was initially brought into open support for Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh in their efforts against the Japanese and subsequently, if temporarily, Indochinese resistance against French reassertion of control of the former colony. Since the French did re-establish control for another decade (ultimately the Viet Minh triumphed in Vietnam), the OSS legacy in Indochina was a mixed one, disdained by the French, for example, but offering the possibility of a pro-American relationship with the Independence Movements and ultimately independent nations. In Vietnam, as in India and Burma where many members of the OSS missions were sympathetic to the movements for independence from British rule (as well as Thailand where the United States opposed British designs on the country), the OSS established a very positive reputation among the ultimately triumphant nationalists.

OSS's role was limited for much of the war in China by politics within the Nationalist Chinese government as well as service rivalries within the American armed forces there. But in the final year of the war, OSS experienced the beginning of a dramatic growth and impact in that theater. With the end of the war in Europe in the spring of 1945, American military efforts shifted to the Far East. As the OSS reported in June 1945, "the activities of OSS China are expanding rapidly as the strategic picture in that theater unfolds. Because of the fluid 'lines' throughout China there are almost limitless opportunities for effectively organizing and supplying resistance behind the Japanese."³⁴⁷ All of the OSS branches were at work: Special Operations teams conducting raids and sabotage on enemy supplies and supply lines and providing target information for the U.S. Army Air Forces, Chinese Operational Groups being trained and equipped, Secret Intelligence Branch extending intelligence chains; Research and Analysis Branch also supplying intelligence information, Communications Branch building extensive communications networks, and Morale Operations Branch expanding operations to undermine enemy morale. All of these conditions in China, OSS headquarters in Washington concluded "present OSS with perhaps its best opportunity for large-scale operations, particularly since the American Army is so far not engaged there in any important numbers. With the lessons learned in Europe, and at Detachment

³⁴⁶ OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 391-392.

³⁴⁷ OSS Schools and Training Branch, "Office of Strategic Services (OSS): Organization and Functions," June 1945, p. 31, in a 37-page booklet designed to supplement lectures on OSS organization; OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 141, Box 4, Folder 36, National Archives II.

101 [in Burma], OSS in China will be able to coordinate all its weapons against the enemy as never before and will operate through the air, on water, and on land...the scope of the OSS effort in China is already impressive.”³⁴⁸

That buildup was cut short by the sudden emperor’s decision in mid-August 1945 to surrender. But in the Allied victory, the OSS received due credit from the American military commander in China, Lieutenant General Albert Wedemeyer. In General Orders issued from his headquarters in Chungking, Wedemeyer praised OSS personnel for the “outstanding performance of duty in their vital missions” and said their achievements constituted “a record of extraordinary heroism, resourcefulness, initiative and effective operations against a ruthless enemy in the Orient.” There were fewer than 2,000 OSS people in China in 1945, but this small force was officially credited with direct responsibility for killing more than 12,000 Japanese troops.³⁴⁹

OSS in China proved important in numerous other ways. It helped rescue downed American aviators there as in Southeast Asia. OSS intelligence information directed American Air Forces to mobile tactical targets in China and provided the U.S. Navy with enemy shipping information that enabled American submarines and carrier planes to sink thousands of tons of shipping bound for Japan. The OSS was also credited with a successful sabotage campaign behind enemy lines against bridges, railroad lines and other transportation facilities, telephone and telegraph lines, which hindered enemy reinforcements and supplies and which required re-deployment of significant numbers of Japanese forces from the frontline to rear areas in attempts to eliminate the OSS-led guerrilla activities. OSS-trained Chinese paratroop commando units had had begun actively to engage the Japanese. At the end of the war, OSS SO parachute teams located, airdropped in, and protected Allied POWs from possible massacre in Japanese prison camps. As General Wedemeyer concluded “the record of the achievements of the officers and enlisted men of the Office of Strategic Services will constitute a chapter beyond parallel in the history of the accomplishments of the United States Armed Forces in their successful prosecution of the war against the Japanese on the Asiatic Continent.”³⁵⁰

The sentiment of many OSSers was perhaps best summarized by Sergeant “Al” Johnson, a medic who had served with OG teams in France and China. Looking back at their experience in World War II, he concluded: “We had been given a job and had done it well...not just an ordinary assignment, but one that brought a small group of men together to penetrate the enemy lines many hundreds of miles. We learned to live under the noses of the enemy to create an organization that could work underground, to live off the land, and to cause large-scale damage, not only to material things but also to

³⁴⁸ OSS Schools and Training Branch, “Office of Strategic Services (OSS): Organization and Functions,” June 1945, p. 31, in a 37-page booklet designed to supplement lectures on OSS organization; OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 141, Box 4, Folder 36, National Archives II.

³⁴⁹ Totals, 2,000 and 12,348 are from General Orders No. 27, Headquarters, U.S. Forces, China Theater, by order of General Wedemeyer, 1 February 1946, reprinted in Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 431-432; see also subtotal figures by branch and area in OSS, *War Report of the OSS: Overseas Targets*, 440-447.

³⁵⁰ General Orders No. 27, Headquarters, U.S. Forces, China Theater, by order of General Wedemeyer, 1 February 1946, reprinted in Mills with Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, 432-433.

psychologically impair the enemy so that he was unable to function effectively. We were ordinary men with ordinary backgrounds doing an extraordinary job under very difficult circumstances.”³⁵¹

³⁵¹ [Ellsworth] “Al” Johnson, “One Small Part,” typescript recollection, of France and China, p.70, <http://www.ossog.org/france/patrick.html>, accessed 21 June 2008.