

# Detachment 101 in the CBI: An Unconventional Warfare Paradigm for Contemporary Special Operations

A Monograph  
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## **Abstract**

DETACHMENT 101 IN THE CBI: AN UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE PARADIGM FOR CONTEMPORARY SPECIAL OPERATIONS by Major Randall D. Wenner, U.S. Army Special Forces, 82 pages.

Detachment 101 of the Office of Strategic Services' development of unconventional warfare doctrine in the China-Burma-India Theater of World War II presents the practitioner of unconventional warfare a worthy model of consideration for our contemporary special operations forces. However, Detachment 101's approach to unconventional warfare operations does not serve as the approved template from which to dogmatically execute unconventional warfare operations. Detachment 101's approach was tailored specifically for conditions present in the China-Burma-India Theater of World War II and the policies driving U.S. involvement during the period of 1942 – 1945.

The study identifies several areas that, if considered by contemporary Special Operations Forces, could improve the efficiency of operations currently conducted in Afghanistan. Specific areas included the need for the more adequate fusion of intelligence efforts, the nesting of operational commands within the existing structure, the more adequate resourcing of guerrilla operations, and finally adjusting the operational scope of Special Forces within the current campaign in Afghanistan.

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## Introduction

Detachment 101 (Det. 101) of the Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.) operated in the China-Burma-India (CBI) Theater of World War II from April 14, 1942 until July 12, 1945. The unit established its headquarters at Nazira in northern Assam, India, and started planning for the operations they were about to embark upon. Beginning in 1943, Detachment 101 began its unconventional warfare operations by parachuting behind Japanese enemy lines and establishing contact with the Kachin villagers of Northern Burma. Once the Kachin Rangers, as they were called, were equipped and proficient enough in small unit tactics they began conducting various missions including ambushing Japanese patrols, repatriating pilots that were shot down in enemy territory, clearing landing strips in the jungle, and acting as reconnaissance elements for larger echelon forces such as Merrill's Marauders.

Detachment 101 of the O.S.S. developed a detailed intelligence network and trained large guerrilla forces to conduct operations deep in enemy territory. The unit began operations on April 14, 1942, to perform espionage, sabotage, guerrilla warfare, propaganda, and escape-and-evasion operations in support of U.S. military objectives in the Republic of China.<sup>1</sup> Det. 101 was truly a unique fighting force that pioneered the art of Unconventional Warfare (UW) that has become fundamental to Army Special Forces (Green Berets) in the modern Army. To this day the Detachment has been credited with the highest 'kill/loss ratio' in American military history.<sup>2</sup>

Recently, UW became a proponent of Irregular Warfare (IW). After this shift there has been a confusion regarding who retains the requisite skills to execute UW and how it is defined. Many military leaders do not understand the differences between the two. Fierce debates surround

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<sup>1</sup> Retrieved August 16, 2009 from <http://oss-101.com/history.html>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

defining unconventional warfare within the context of its meaning and who is qualified to execute UW.

Special Forces (SF) heritage evolved from the operations conducted by Det. 101 and the Jedburgh Teams conducting operations in the CBI, Pacific and the European Theaters of World War II. In other words, Special Forces were created specifically to conduct unconventional warfare operations. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), the lead proponent for the execution of unconventional warfare, has taken great interest in the defining of UW so that it can be nested within a Combatant Commander's (COCOM) campaign objectives and a clear delineation is made between who is organized and equipped to execute UW and how it should be supported.

The war in Iraq and Afghanistan began unconventionally with Special Forces in the lead. Several years later SF is marginally successful (in Afghanistan) in their efforts to create a force that has the capability to oust these enemy organizations effectively. A need exists to review the operations conducted in the CBI by Det. 101 that were so successful. By doing this, leaders in the Special Forces community may be able to extrapolate some of the lessons that will prevent further misapplication by the contemporary Army.

The ongoing conflicts in both Afghanistan and Iraq have placed a huge emphasis on the development of counterinsurgency operations (COIN) doctrine and the intricacies therein. Not surprisingly, there is very little information on the precedence of unconventional warfare in the CBI Theater of World War II and its application to contemporary unconventional warfare operations. Slight references to the development of Special Forces from the exploits of O.S.S. and Detachment 101 are mentioned in literature but not expounded upon.<sup>3</sup> Review of the available

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<sup>3</sup> Aaron Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets: The Birth of Special Forces* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1986), 143. Brief mention by Aaron Bank of the exploits of Det. 101 in Burma combined with the actions of the Jedburgh Teams in Europe are discussed as the basis for the establishment of Special Forces.

literature points to early doctrinal manuals of the O.S.S. dated 1944 that were recently declassified in 1963. Still, these manuals are very vague and indiscriminate in their approach to unconventional warfare doctrine. Much of the material lessons of the O.S.S. and Detachment 101 were never captured on paper out of a fear of disclosure when captured by the enemy. As one historian has written, "Detachment 101 made mistakes, but also learned a great deal from these mistakes and tried not to repeat them. Unfortunately, the Detachment was instructed to keep no records while behind enemy lines because of a fear at O.S.S. headquarters that such records might be used by the Japanese to justify torture in the event Detachment 101 members were captured."<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of this monograph is to research and analyze Detachment 101 of the Office of Strategic Services' approach to conducting unconventional warfare in the China-Burma-India Theater of World War II to determine if it offers a model for U.S. Special Forces unconventional warfare operations in future conflicts. To present itself as a useful tool the methodologies presented must support the grand policies and strategy as set forth in national strategy documents, promote legitimacy in the eyes of the international community, and be executable within the resource capabilities of both the host nation and the United States Military.

This monograph will examine aspects of planning and integration at the operational level as they developed during the CBI campaign and contrast them with current methodologies that exist in the contemporary environment. Gaining a contextual appreciation of how operations conducted by Det. 101 of the O.S.S. were nested into the CBI campaign conducted under the command of General Joseph "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell will facilitate understanding of the methodologies executed by planners of Det. 101 and will provide a basis for analysis. To frame this inquiry a review of unconventional warfare doctrine developed by Detachment 101 in Burma

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<sup>4</sup> George C Chalou, *The Secret's War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II* (Washington, DC: NARA, 1992), 327.



will serve as a departure point for analysis. A discussion of the differences between the developed doctrine and current practices will frame the environment for the unconventional warfare case study analysis. The historical case study will focus on the relationship between operational headquarters (both command and support relationships), types of relationships between strategic leaders as well as indigenous partners, intelligence capabilities and capacity, and the appropriateness of the scope of operations conducted.

This monograph determines that Detachment 101 of the Office of Strategic Service's activities during the preparation and execution of the campaign in the China-Burma-India Theater of World War II provide operational level leaders with a suitable model worthy of consideration for conducting unconventional warfare operations with a partner nation, operating in rugged terrain in a committed socio-political environment. Describing the strategic setting in the CBI Theater of World War II will serve as a departure point for the contextual understanding of the complex command relationships established before a U.S. military commitment to the region.

## Foreign Relations and Strategic Context - Setting the Stage for U.S. Involvement

The Second Sino-Japanese War set the stage for a possible US intervention in the Pacific.<sup>5</sup> China and Japan were involved in several intermittent struggles leading up to the war that centered on Japanese imperialistic desires to dominate the Chinese politically and militarily. China became a republic in 1912 after the Xinhai Revolution ousted the Qing Dynasty. However, it was a republic in name only. Chinese Warlords became the ruling power and a lack of unification amongst the provinces provided the weakness Japan needed to extend its influence. Acting out of a sense of pan-Asiatic imperialism, Japan invaded and captured Manchuria after the Mukden Incident in September of 1931.<sup>6</sup> Japan's invasion did not come without challenges. Chinese resistance was building in the captured provinces and allegations of harsh treatment provided more fuel for a fledgling insurgency. Chiang Kai-shek (Chairman of the Nationalist Government from 10 October 1928 – 15 December 1938, later the Generalissimo, Allied Commander-in-Chief in the China Theater from 1942-1945) realized that if he were to secure assistance from outside powers he must prove his resolve. Chiang's stand during the Battle of Shanghai provided the necessary context for increased Chinese morale and proof of resolve. The second Shanghai Incident began after Chiang Kai-shek declared war on Japan in 1937 after a series of encroachments on Chinese sovereignty. According to historian Donald Jordan, the Generalissimo communicated China's resolve:

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<sup>5</sup> The Second Sino-Japanese War was a conflict fought between the Republic of China and the Empire of Japan from the 1930s until September 9, 1945. During this conflict, China received support from Germany, the Soviet Union, and the United States until the conflict merged into World War II.

<sup>6</sup> Jonathan Fenby, *Chiang Kai-shek: China's Generalissimo and the Nation He Lost* (New York: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2003), 202. The Mukden Incident was named after an act of sabotage to Japan's South Manchurian Railway in Mukden (currently Shenyang in Southern Manchuria) The act was blamed on Chinese dissidents and served as a platform from which to launch an invasion. Speculations exist that Japanese militarist staged the incident to provide justification for the invasion.

On January 30, Chiang Kai-shek communicated to the world through the press that it had been the policy of his government to “avoid bloodshed and bear insults” in order to “preserve the national resources.” However, the more that “we endure, the more aggressive the Japanese become,” and therefore the Nineteenth Route Army was already fighting the Japanese in “self-defense.” Chiang called for “all government armies to similarly rise up in defense of the national honor and the existence of the Chinese people” and “be *prepared* to fight and to make sacrifices rather than yield to the Japanese.”<sup>7</sup>

Chiang’s call for support from the territorial armies was a step in the unification of China against a common enemy, the Japanese.<sup>8</sup> Fears that Japan would create a sense of pan-Asian unification in India, China, and other states in the Far East became very realistic. The Australian Minister in Chungking, Sir Frederick Eggleston, wrote in 1943:

Namely that the Asiatic peoples might band together [after the war] to forward their mutual interests; in fact a Pan-Asiatic movement. India might be able to come to an arrangement with Japan; China might then join in and with her millions, she would be a tremendous asset to the combination... The idea has an attraction to the Asiatic mind and I feel it must be watched. In my opinion, the possibility is such that we should do our best to come to a working arrangement both with China and India before the [peace] conference.<sup>9</sup>

The post-colonial world was host to many calls for independence, making the prospect of pan-Asian unification a very real threat to American national security. The call was not answered swiftly. The trenches of World War I imbued as a painful reminder of the cost of such endeavors. The Chinese turned to Germany, Italy, and Russia first, as the United States possessed an unimpressive military in the 1930s. Germany was viewed as superior and was sought after for military advice and training. The German Military Mission lasted for ten years (1928-1938) and

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<sup>7</sup> Donald A. Jordan, *China’s Trial by Fire* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 75.

<sup>8</sup> There was a period of tension between the United States and Great Britain over whether it was in the best interest of the United States to protect European colonial possessions in East Asia. Although US involvement in the Pacific became an eventuality, it was always a lesser cousin to the realization of the war efforts in Europe against Germany.

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Thorne, *Allies of a Kind: The United States, Britain and the war against Japan, 1941-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 8. In Part One: The Setting Before Pearl Harbor Thorne describes his belief that racial tensions are responsible for the Second Sino-Japanese War and consequently World War II.

produced roughly thirty divisions for the Generalissimo. After ten years of training and preparation, China was ready to begin a more staunch resistance. The first true test for Chiang Kai-shek's new force came during the battle for the lower Yangtze Valley. The Japanese effectively cut off the lines of communication, seaports, and the capital (Nanking) before forcing the Chinese back to the interior. In 1939, the Japanese began to consolidate operations in preparation for continuing the attack but were thwarted by a series of defensive moves by the Generalissimo to create a buffer between himself and the Japanese. Although the Chinese lost the battle, they again proved their resolve and both parties entered into a period of diplomatic maneuvering that would enlist more support to their respective campaigns.

Japan's pursuit of Southeast Asian raw materials to supply the homeland with more adequate resources remained Japan's highest objective. However, the Japanese Cabinet wanted to achieve this goal while avoiding war with the United States. Historian Christopher Thorne explains:

In July 1940, the Cabinet had aimed to solve both the struggle in China and the need to obtain raw materials from Southeast Asia without becoming involved in a new conflict; in September 1940, the Navy was still emphasizing that 'every conceivable measure will be taken to avoid war with the United States', and that 'the Southward advance will be attempted as far as possible by peaceful means'; it was late June to early July, 1941, before it was decreed that 'preparations for war with Great Britain and the United States will be made', and it was accepted that such a price would be paid if necessary in order to achieve Japan's designs in Southeast Asia.<sup>10</sup>

Japan was determined to maintain its dominance in the region and moved to secure relationships with both Hitler and Mussolini. The signature of the Tripartite Pact in September of 1940, recognized the prospect of a unified Greater East Asia allied with the new world order in Europe and established the World War II Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, and Japan).<sup>11</sup> Japan's belief in

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<sup>10</sup> Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 51.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 52. The Tripartite Pact, also known as the Three-Power Pact, Axis Pact, Three-way Pact or Tripartite Treaty, signed by Hitler in Germany, Galeazzo Ciano (Italian Foreign minister), and the Japanese Ambassador Saburo Kurusu, established the Axis Powers during World War II.

Germany and Italy's ability to produce a 'new world order' in Europe led to the decision to seek this alliance. Hitler, in return, recognized that Japan would control "Greater East Asia" and collaborated with what he believed to be the emergent power in the east. The resulting alliance declared their primary targets to be Britain, the United States, and the Netherlands at an Imperial Conference in Tokyo on September 6, 1941.<sup>12</sup> Japan understood that counting on a limited intervention or an expected non-committal by the United States or Britain would prove unrealistic and foolish. Counting on the successes in Europe by the Germans, Japan hoped that Americans would push for a peaceful negotiation of terms amenable to the Japanese strategic and economic position in East Asia. Britain's position was similar in every facet. The inevitable war in Europe led to the realization initially by Britain, that the resources in Southeast Asia would be paramount to success in Europe.

Before 1941, Britain's position in the Pacific was delicate. Winston Churchill wished to maintain a certain degree of transparency in Southeast Asia. The status quo in China, if maintained, would be in the best interest of the British Empire, so long as the Japanese did not continue efforts further south. The United States and Britain already began extensive fiscal and military support to China through the Lend Lease Act in lieu of war.<sup>13</sup> Diplomatically, the relationship between the United States and Britain was strained. Churchill realized that a war in East Asia without the United States was not feasible for the already overstretched imperial interests. International opinion surrounding the Sino-Japanese Conflict called for 'America' to lead the efforts to thwart Japanese aggression in China. Increased pressure by the coalition

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<sup>12</sup> Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 53.

<sup>13</sup> The Lend Lease Act was a program adopted by the United States between 1941 and 1945 that supplied war materials to allies such as the UK, Russia, China, and France in exchange for basing rights within allied held territories. The Act presumably ended the ability of the United States to remain neutral during international events leading to the initiation of World War II with the Polish invasion by Germany on September 1, 1939.

resulted in the eventual embargo by the United States of Japanese resources from Southeast Asia under the Export Control Act of 1940.<sup>14</sup> The Export Control Act exacerbated tensions between the U.S. and Japan, which consequently set the conditions for Japanese retaliation. U.S. diplomatic jockeying with the UK and China over commitments to the region would lead to an American policy in the country that was amorphous, possibly leading to challenging command relationships that existed at the start of American military commitments in Southeast Asia. Sir Robert Craigie's callous report in February of 1943 to the British Parliament reflects this opinion, "the United States' final proposal in the negotiations had not had the slightest chance of acceptance, and must have been based on either a total misreading of the situation in Japan, or a readiness for war."<sup>15</sup> Churchill wanted to find a softer approach to war in the Pacific and criticized the American approach to diplomacy in the region. Although the United States had effectively painted Japan into a corner, the Empire's momentum toward inevitable war seemed unstoppable.

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<sup>14</sup> Department of State, *Peace and War, United States Foreign Policy 1931-1941* (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), 97. Retrieved 2010-1-02 from <http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/paw/>. The Export Control Act of July 2, 1940 had two purposes: to avoid the scarcity of raw materials in the event of a war and to prevent the export of war-material (airplanes, parts, machine tools, and gasoline) to Imperial Japan prior to the commencement of World War II.

<sup>15</sup> Thorne, *Allies of a Kind*, 74. Sir Robert Craigie was the British Ambassador in Tokyo from 1937 until 1941.

## Roosevelt, Donovan, MacArthur, and Stilwell – Intramural Spy Wars

To say the command relationship that existed in the CBI Theater of World War II was a challenge would be an understatement. There are entire books written about the topic. The relationships between President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR), William “Wild Bill” Donovan (Office of the Coordinator of Information) which became the O.S.S. under President Roosevelt on June 13, 1942, General Douglas MacArthur, and General Joseph “Vinegar Joe” Stilwell led to a series of intramural spy wars at the strategic level and a confusing chain of command. In Joseph E. Persico’s book, *Roosevelt’s Secret War*, he describes the president:

Few leaders have been better suited by nature and temperament for the anomalies of secret warfare than FDR. “You know I am a juggler, and I never let my right hand know what my left hand does,” he once confessed. “I may be entirely inconsistent, and furthermore I am perfectly willing to mislead and tell untruths if it will help me win the war.” His style of leadership bears out this admission. FDR compartmentalized information, misled associates, manipulated people, conducted intrigues, used private lines of communication, scattered responsibility, duplicated assignments, provoked rivalries, held all the cards while showing few, and left few fingerprints. His behavior, which fascinated, puzzled, amazed, dismayed, and occasionally repelled people, parallels many of the qualities of an espionage chief.<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps Roosevelt’s nature as the ‘espionage chief’ is partially responsible for the success that Donovan was able to realize during the campaign. Roosevelt understood Donovan’s motives. He and Donovan, classmates at Columbia Law School in 1907, shared a mutual admiration of each other. Donovan was a star on the Columbia football team and Roosevelt was an avid sports fan. Frank Knox, then a newspaper reporter from the *Daily News* in Chicago, called FDR on the suspicion that he was going to appoint another Republican into the cabinet after FDR’s election. Based on the positive recommendation from Knox, who incidentally was a close political ally of Donovan, Roosevelt made the decision to bring Bill Donovan on board. “Bill Donovan is also an

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<sup>16</sup> Joseph E. Persico, *Roosevelt’s Secret War: FDR and World War II Espionage* (NY: Random House Inc., 2001), xi.

old friend of mine – we were in law school together – and frankly, I should like to have him in the Cabinet, not only for his own ability, but also to repair in a sense the very great injustice done him by President Hoover in the winter of 1929.”<sup>17</sup> Roosevelt continued to be enamored by Donovan after his exploits in World War I as a member of the “Fighting 69<sup>th</sup>.” The resulting relationship continued to blossom and Donovan, frequently tasked by Roosevelt as the president’s intelligence agent, began his career in espionage. Roosevelt understood and was intrigued by intelligence and espionage activities. Understanding the importance of intelligence, Roosevelt issued a presidential directive creating the Office of the Coordinator of Information (COI) on July 11, 1941. Before its creation, each branch of service ran its own intelligence operations.

Bartholomew-Feis explains how this complicated relationship affected intelligence efforts:

When Donovan’s office, collectively known as the COI, was established, there were eight separate intelligence gathering entities within the U. S. Government: Army G-2, the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), the FBI in the Justice Department, the State Department’s representatives abroad, customs inspectors for the Department of Commerce, Treasury’s Secret Service, the Labor Department’s Immigration and Naturalization inspectors, and the agents for Federal Communications Commission. The problems with such a system were obvious: Although an enormous amount of raw material could be gathered, it was subject to at least eight different interpretations.<sup>18</sup>

Donovan and Roosevelt had numerous candid conversations about the capabilities of the United States when it came to intelligence. One afternoon while they were discussing the matter Donovan remarked to the president, almost as if the thought had just occurred to him, “We have no intelligence service.” Donovan realized that it was just a question of time before FDR would take the necessary action and it would most likely be himself who would be asked to create the

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 64. Roosevelt was known for his meticulous memory and frequently impressed people with his uncanny ability to recall details. Roosevelt was speaking of the situation in 1929 where Donovan found himself shunned by Hoover. During the Coolidge administration, Donovan was the acting attorney general and it was assumed that he would fulfill this position in the Hoover Administration. He was not appointed, which was a severe disappointment to Donovan.

<sup>18</sup> Dixee R. Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh: Unexpected Allies in the War against Japan* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 55.



service.”<sup>19</sup> Roosevelt recognized the need for a coordinated effort and appointed William Donovan to be the director. During Donovan’s tenure as the director, he began building an empire, but his efforts were questioned at every turn. It was no secret that many of the president’s influential advisors, such as Joseph Kennedy (American Ambassador to Britain) had misgivings about Donovan and would not hesitate to express them to the president. The Joint Chiefs of Staff questioned Donovan’s motives and took measures to place his office under the auspices of the War Department. “The JCS reluctantly agreed to accept Donovan and the O.S.S. in hopes of controlling both the man and the organization.”<sup>20</sup> Donovan objected and campaigned the president to expand his secretive operations. The resulting adjudication by Roosevelt was to disband the COI on June 13, 1942 and create the Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.). Roosevelt understood that he needed to unleash Donovan in a manner that would satiate his espionage desires, but would allow him to control the scope of his activities. Clearly, Roosevelt felt that Donovan, although controversial, would continue to be a valuable asset to the administration and would need to be used in a manner that would be mutually beneficial by such interested parties as the Department of State and the War Department. Many did not share this sentiment; General Douglas MacArthur, commander of United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE), was among them.

Understanding the relationship between Donovan and MacArthur will provide the reader a contextual background for the reasons the O.S.S. would become involved in the CBI and not in the Pacific Theater.<sup>21</sup> Following World War I, General Douglas MacArthur became the

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<sup>19</sup> Richard Dunlop, *Donovan: America’s Master Spy* (New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1982), 282.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>21</sup> The relationship established between Donovan and MacArthur caused MacArthur to deny the O.S.S access and support to operations executed in the Pacific. MacArthur did not trust Donovan and wanted to create an intelligence force of his own. Det. 101 would compete for critical resources between

superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point until accepting a mission to the Philippines in 1922. After commanding on two separate occasions in the Philippines, MacArthur was elevated to the position of Chief of Staff of the Army on November 21, 1930. Subsequently, on October 1, 1935, after his tenure as the Chief of Staff, he was asked to return to the Philippines by President Manuel L. Quezon and assume the position of Field Marshall of the Philippine Army. MacArthur established a lasting relationship with the president and felt compelled to return and assist him with the training of his Philippine army. MacArthur was allowed to remain on active duty under the approval of FDR and assumed the title of Allied Commander in the Philippines. Based upon the impending threat of Japanese pan-Asian imperialism, MacArthur was returned to active duty in July of 1941. MacArthur would spend the ensuing days in command of the United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) consisting of the Philippine Department, the Philippine Army, and the Far East Air Force (FEAF). The struggle to prevent the Japanese from conquering the Philippines became strained to the point that MacArthur's headquarters on Corregidor Island became a consistent target of Japanese air attacks. He was finally ordered by FDR to relocate to Melbourne, Australia so that the U.S. would not lose one of its essential leaders needlessly. MacArthur was infuriated and left the island vowing to return.<sup>22</sup>

After the attack on Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7 1941, it would be inevitable that the United States would enter the War against Japan. What was not agreed upon is how to command and control forces that would embark upon this campaign. "Unbeknownst to the frustrated general and his Bataan Gang, guerrilla warfare had erupted in Washington over which service – army or navy – would carry the ball in the Pacific. Crusty Admiral Ernest J. King, who

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Nimitz, MacArthur, and the Generalissimo. Interestingly, MacArthur would later employ Colonel Russ Volckmann, an O.S.S. operative, in the Philippines to create an enormous guerilla force that would help oust the Japanese from Luzon.

<sup>22</sup> William B. Breuer, *MacArthur's Undercover War: Spies, Saboteurs, Guerrillas, and Secret Missions* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995), 24.

had recently been appointed Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), argued vehemently that because the conflict against Japan would be largely conducted on the seas, it would be foolish to name an army officer – that is, Douglas MacArthur – as overall commander.”<sup>23</sup> Despite the aggressive lobbying against MacArthur by members of opposing services, FDR brought MacArthur back on active duty and assigned him the rank of Lieutenant General in July of 1941 because of his extensive service and knowledge in the Pacific. Logic dictated that MacArthur, who developed plans in defense of the Philippines, understood that the Japanese would have to conquer much of the Philippines to extend their operational reach sufficiently enough to threaten the United States with invasion. Breuer asserts that:

King put forth a candidate for Allied Supreme Commander in the Pacific – white-haired, unassuming Admiral Chester Nimitz, who had taken command of the U.S. Pacific Fleet ten days after Uncle Sam was bombed into global war at Pearl Harbor. Outside of navy professionals, the capable Nimitz was virtually unknown, and his rank was junior to MacArthur. For his part, General George Marshall had no intention of entrusting large numbers of army troops that would eventually reach the Pacific to an admiral, meaning Nimitz.<sup>24</sup>

Washington continued to squabble over the command relationship in the Pacific and it was not until April 18 that a consensus was reached. The Joint Chiefs-of-Staff (JCS) decided to create two separate theaters of operations. Despite the controversial nature of the command structure, Admiral Chester Nimitz would command forces in the Pacific as Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas (CinCPOA), consisting of North (NORPAC), Central (CENPAC), and South Pacific (SOPAC) areas (retaining CENPAC for himself). General Douglas MacArthur would take command as the Supreme Commander of the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA), reporting directly to the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff. This created a division of labor in the Pacific that produced tensions over a resource-constrained region.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 24-25.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 25.

MacArthur, much like FDR, knew the importance of intelligence in operations, and the lack thereof. “Since the outbreak of the shooting war in the Pacific, MacArthur had been grossly handicapped by an almost total lack of combat intelligence. “You can’t fight ‘em if you can’t see ‘em!” the general was fond of saying.”<sup>25</sup> The need for a clandestine intelligence collection capability was paramount in the Pacific and MacArthur knew he was lacking. Much of the intelligence to this point in the war had been gathered under programs called ULTRA and MAGIC.

MAGIC was an allied cryptanalysis project developed to decipher Japanese diplomatic traffic during World War II. Initially, Japanese traffic was intercepted and labeled as the Japanese ‘Red’ Codes. FDR had been reading about Japanese diplomatic secrets for a considerable amount of time before the Japanese switched to ‘Purple Codes’. Cryptanalyst Frank B. Rowlett had been working on Purple for some time before cracking the code on September 20, 1940. Major General Joseph Mauborgne referred to Rowlett’s team as a bunch of magicians and coined the programs name “MAGIC.”<sup>26</sup> Access to these programs was very secretive and selective. Only those in close diplomatic circles surrounding FDR were privy to the information in these ciphers. Donovan knew that if he were to be successful in the espionage business he would need access to these programs. Preventing the disclosure of MAGIC to Donovan would allow FDR to control Donovan’s ambition to rule the intelligence market and he was temporarily denied access. General George Veazey Strong was personally selected by General George C. Marshall to head the Army’s Military Intelligence Division and was entrusted with the distribution of both ULTRA and MAGIC.

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<sup>25</sup> Breuer, *MacArthur’s Undercover War*, 32.

<sup>26</sup> Persico, *Roosevelt’s Secret War*, 103

MacArthur was one of the individuals privy to these intelligence reports and was able to benefit enormously from the information. Four events help highlight the success of ULTRA and the need for further intelligence. These events uncovered the Japanese plans to sail to Lae, New Guinea. The second event facilitated the destruction of Japanese air power over New Guinea. The third event was a series of code breaking successes that led to the discovery of the Japanese cipher system. Finally, the fourth event that highlighted ULTRA's success was the discovery of the complete cryptographic library of the 20<sup>th</sup> Japanese Infantry Division.<sup>27</sup> The resulting realization was that MacArthur needed his own intelligence network to operate successfully in the Philippines. When MacArthur approached Washington for this capability he was recommended to use Donovan's O.S.S., "Washington recommended that he utilize the Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.), a clandestine outfit that had been founded from scratch a year earlier by its leader, a dynamic Irishman and World War I hero, Colonel William J. 'Wild Bill' Donovan."<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately for Donovan, his reputation in Washington had preceded him. MacArthur had heard that Donovan was not very good at keeping things confidential and the suggestions made by Donovan regarding the operations in the Southwest Pacific were bizarre. MacArthur's distaste for Donovan did not quell the need for an intelligence network in Southwest Asia.

Perhaps the resulting disdain for Donovan's exploits were responsible for landing his forces in the care of General Joseph "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell in China. Every turn Donovan made found him facing a brick wall. The two theaters in the Pacific were not conducive to a supporting relationship in which the O.S.S. could flourish in their sabotage and espionage activities. FDR had changed Donovan's mission and scope of activities and MacArthur had limited his access to the Pacific Theater. This would soon change under Stilwell.

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<sup>27</sup> Edward J. Drea, *MacArthur's ULTRA: Codebreaking and the War Against Japan, 1942-1945* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 62.

<sup>28</sup> Breuer, *MacArthur's Undercover War*, 33.

Soon after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, it was decided by a bilateral coalition between the British and the United States that a unified effort would need to be established in China in preparation for launching attacks against Japan. The Generalissimo had made several requests for assistance up to this point, but they were not considered strongly until the incident on December 7, 1941. "Immediately after the outbreak of war, Churchill and Roosevelt agreed it was necessary to examine strategy and policy anew in the awful light cast by the now world-wide conflagration. The ARCADIA Conference of the two statesmen and their service advisers convened in Washington on 22 December. There they formed a committee of the British and American Chiefs of Staff, henceforth to be called the Combined Chiefs of Staff, or CCS, to advise them on the conduct of the war."<sup>29</sup> The primary role of the conference was to establish a unified command in the Southwest Pacific and Southeast Asia. Both the United States and Britain developed a mutual interest in creating a coalition that could combat the threat established by the Axis powers. One of the results of the conference included the establishment of a unified command called the Australian-Dutch-British-American (ABDA) Command and the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS). Matloff and Snell assert:

By the time the planners were at work on their study for the Chiefs, the ARCADIA Conference had taken under consideration a proposal for establishing "unified command" in the Southwest Pacific and Southeast Asia. The conference finally adopted this proposal, setting up the Australian-British-Dutch-American (ABDA) Command, whose jurisdiction comprehended the Philippines, the Netherlands Indies, Malaya, and Burma. The allied commander in the ABDA Theater, Lt. Gen. Sir Archibald Wavell, received for guidance the same comprehensive declaration of Allied aims that the Chiefs had approved, together with an even more hopeful statement of the strategic concept.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stillwell's Mission to China; United States Army in World War II; China-Burma-India Theater* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984), 61.

<sup>30</sup> Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare: 1941-1942, Chapter VI: Army Deployment and the War Against Japan*, Center of Military History United States Army (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990), 123. The 'Strategic Concept' included retaining as much key terrain and locations as possible to further offensive operations against Japan.

Although the agreement was initially part of General Marshall's agenda, the concept would be instrumental in fostering future bilateral relationships between the United States and Britain. Arguably, the bilateral relationship between Britain and the United States created during the ARCADIA conference was more instrumental to success in the CBI, and later the European Theater, than the interests of China.<sup>31</sup> Diplomatically this bond between contributing members was important, but what is not addressed here is the initial force and resource allocation. This is an instance where the United States entered into a political agreement and did not initially follow through by committing adequate resources to the problem. There was considerable consternation over the rapidly approaching threats by Germany and Italy that would bear heavily on the amount of initial resources committed to the theater, as well as the United States distaste over the importance of British colonial claims to the empire. After very short deliberation, General Marshall indicated that Lt. Gen. Sir Archibald Wavell was the logical choice to command forces under this new coalition. Matloff and Snell explain the logic behind choosing Lt. Gen. Wavell as the commander:

As he explained during the debate that followed, his immediate aim was to place on a single officer responsibility for initiating action to be taken in Washington and London with reference to strategic deployment to and within the area. According to 'Marshall, Wavell was the "logical man," since he knew India, was "used to moving troops," and had "been engaged in active operations which included both a successful operation and a setback." What was no less important, the choice of Wavell served to overcome the fear of the Prime Minister that British forces might be diverted from the defense of Singapore and "wasted" on the Philippines or Borneo.<sup>32</sup>

Although General Marshall's nomination and recommendations seemed to meet British interests in the region, it was still met with skepticism by the Winston Churchill. The Prime Minister did not agree that a single commander could command such a vast territory and that national caveats

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<sup>31</sup> A step in the right direction, the ABDA would eventually become short lived and absorbed into MacArthur's command in the Pacific and would be recognized as the shortest 'unified command' during World War II.

<sup>32</sup> Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare*, 124.

prevent such a commander from exercising authority. General Wavell could only request support or changes in support of his campaign objectives from those participating nations, namely the United States. Although this was a less than desirable command relationship, Marshall believed it was the best way he could provide the requisite forces to assist the British and remain in control.

Matloff and Snell posit:

Marshall agreed that the limitations were drastic, but pointed out that what he proposed was all that could then be done, and declared that "if the supreme commander ceded up with no more authority than to tell Washington what he wanted, such a situation was better than nothing, and an improvement over the present situation." It was this restricted authority that General Wavell was given over the vast ABDA Command.<sup>33</sup>

The command structure would suffice until the rapid fall of Singapore and Malaya caused the command to reevaluate its position in Southeast Asia. Based on the recommendation of General Wavell new strategic importance fell upon Burma and Australia. Wavell recommended a shifting of forces to Burma because it was in Burma that a ground campaign against the Japanese would be possible in the very near future. Therefore, the impending threat to Formosa and the possibility of the capture of Australia was very real and instrumental in the assignment of the American 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division to Australia. Before the reallocation of forces to the region, Dwight D. Eisenhower (then Deputy Chief of Plans War Division) advised General Marshall that any commitment of ground forces to the region would be against directed policy and that the only support provided should be in support of air operations. Despite this policy, a new direction was required to thwart the Japanese Imperial expansionism in Southeast Asia. FDR knew that Australia held geopolitical importance as it related to the United States national security. The capture of Australia would extend the operational reach of Japanese forces close enough to threaten the United States. FDR assured the Prime Minister that it was in the vital interest of the United States for Australia and New Zealand to remain protected from Japanese aggression. FDR

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 125.



also explained that the United States had taken precautionary measures to prevent the fall of Australia. The initial help sent by the United States to Australia in an effort to aid the British in their struggle to contain the Japanese was welcomed, but the fight quickly turned to a call for more air power. General Wavell's losses in Java continued to grow and a lack of reliance on the British's ability to prevent Java's capture made the United States reluctant to send more aircraft to support the empire. The closest place from which to aid the British with the requisite amount of air power would be Burma and India. A strategic bombing campaign could be launched from Burma to assist the British as well as provide the necessary resource base from which to ship materials via air and land if necessary. The request from Wavell nested with American plans to establish a foothold close enough that a strategic bombing campaign could be launched against mainland Japan. With the necessary access requested, the United States could begin shifting its focus to propping up the aerial capabilities in the China Theater.

Interestingly, China was not asked to join the CCS or the ABDA as a contributing member. Chiang Kai-shek would never allow his forces to be subjugated to a foreign command; therefore establishing a separate theater was necessary, and the Generalissimo would be invited to serve as the Supreme Allied Commander for the China Theater. According to historian Clayton Newell, "Roosevelt, a long-time China booster, convinced Churchill to appease the Generalissimo by inviting him to serve as supreme commander of Allied forces in a separate China theater. The offer was somewhat hollow, since there had never been any plan to put British or American forces into China and there would be no Chinese participation in the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff. Nevertheless, the Generalissimo accepted the offer and even requested an American officer to head the Allied staff."<sup>34</sup> Stilwell was not the first one nominated to take

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<sup>34</sup> Clayton R. Newell, *Burma, 1942: The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II (Pamphlet)* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office. 1995), 10. The Combined Chiefs of Staff was

the lead in this ambiguous situation in China. Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson originally selected Lieutenant General Hugh A. Drum to head up the mission in China. Drum was a senior general and one of the few generals who had actual combat experience as a general officer during combat. The mission should have been an honor to the senior general, however, when he was called to Washington, Drum thought he would assume command in the European Theater. To his dismay, he was offered the China Theater posting. Drum did not turn the mission down immediately and initiated efforts to create a greater understanding of the intricacies of the situation facing China. A staff had already been assembled to begin assisting the general in his transition, so Drum set them to work analyzing the mission. Drum found out a few key things very early in his study of the situation that would plague the command structure throughout the campaign. The command structure was the first thing that Drum noticed.

Before U.S. involvement, Winston Churchill named Lord Louis Mountbatten as the Supreme Allied Commander of the South East Asia Command (SEAC) to oversee operations, primarily in India, Ceylon, Malaya, Burma, Sumatra, Siam, and French Indochina. The British had developed a lack of trust for the Chinese and requested that they stay out of Burma. The creation of a China Theater further degraded a unified approach against the Japanese. Now there were two Supreme Allied Commanders, Lord Louis Mountbatten and the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. In this situation, Drum would have to work closely with Lord Mountbatten and as the deputy to the Generalissimo in command of all Chinese forces in the Theater, as well as reporting to General George C. Marshall and Secretary of War Stimson. These issues would only marginally improve later under Stilwell and the creation of the CBI. Secretary of War Stimson

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created in February 1942. Key members included General George C. Marshall and General Sir Alan Brooke, Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

explained to General Drum that he “saw two great objectives: (1) to secure China as a base for operations against Japan; and (2) to keep China in the war.”<sup>35</sup>

Drum was receiving mixed guidance from his leaders. He believed that the strategic guidance he was receiving from Stimson was oriented towards a theater campaign and the instructions received from Marshall were fashioned to read more like a temporary mission and assistance to the development of air power. Before a meeting with Stimson, Eisenhower (then Deputy Chief of Plans War Division) handed him a list of notes taken on the situation in China that was drafted by the War Department. The War Department’s intentions were: “(1) To provide equipment to the Chinese Army to enable it to continue operations against the Japanese. This includes assistance to the maintenance of communications. (2) Instigating the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek to intensify Chinese effort and to restore the waning spirit of the Chinese in carrying on the conflict. (3) To secure, maintain, and operate air bases for air operations against the Japanese. (4) To organize various types of American units by enlistment in the American Army to carry on guerrilla warfare.”<sup>36</sup> Although it closely mirrored a British staff study, the recommendation that guerilla warfare be executed in support of the campaign was at odds with the war department’s assistance to China, as was the commitment of the 41<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division to Australia. This was the first mention of the possibility of an unconventional warfare operation in support of operations conducted in China.<sup>37</sup> Romanus and Sunderland assert the detailed staff work that was commissioned by Drum proved to be conclusive:

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<sup>35</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stillwell’s Mission to China*, 64.

<sup>36</sup> Aide-Mémoire, Notes on China, Brig Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower, WPD, for Lt Gen Hugh A. Drum, 2 Jan 42. History of CBI, Sec. III, App. III, Item 2.

<sup>37</sup> It is key to note that the War Department mention of unconventional warfare or more specifically guerilla warfare in this context during the discussion of responsibilities for the method of involvement in China was identified early, although it was brushed off because of the importance of the Thirty Division Plan and the Lend-Lease Act.

After surveying the current situation in China, Burma, and India, Drum's paper characterized the objective of the proposed mission as "nebulous, uncertain, and indefinite." He felt that sending one more mission would be an empty gesture. Drum suggested instead that the government "decide on a policy and arrange the means" before sending him to China. Though he did not ask for troops or tonnage, Drum still felt that the officer sent should be able to hold out a definite indication to the Chinese of what the United States would do. He suggested that first priority be given to improving the Burma Road and that the main effort in China should be toward building up a strong air force.<sup>38</sup>

Drum had identified the fact that there was a nebulous chain of command, resources were not allocated to set the conditions for success, and the scope of the mission was confusing. Drum understood that a separate China Theater would not take into consideration the fact that China relied heavily on the Burma Road supply route and the established theater should account for this limitation. The War Department was hamstrung by a series of conditions that did not lend themselves toward a solution that would foster a more unified command until later in the campaign. Unfortunately for Lieutenant General Drum his adversarial correspondence and meetings with both Secretary of War Stimson and General Marshall eroded his stature and were instrumental in his reassignment. Drum's lack of support and commitment for the campaign left the JCS wanting for a Theater Commander who would be willing to serve two masters and make the best out of an ambiguous situation.

When it was deemed that LTG Drum would not take command of the mission in China, General Stilwell was the next logical choice. According to Romanus and Sunderland, "The Chief of Staff had the highest regard for Stilwell's ability as a tactician and a trainer of troops, and his star had risen with Marshall's."<sup>39</sup> Stilwell was an intelligent and articulate leader with previous experience in China as the attaché. He studied and analyzed the Chinese Army and was familiar with its strengths and weaknesses. Romanus and Sunderland also posit that, "Stilwell had served in China during the interwar years, knew the country, and could speak its language fluently, but

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<sup>38</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stillwell's Mission to China*, 66.

sloppiness as an administrator and planner, along with a sharp tongue, ill suited him for his largely diplomatic responsibilities. He blamed British defeatism and Chinese incompetence for the loss of Burma and made snide comments on other Allied leaders, notably Chiang Kai-shek, to whom he referred in his diary as ‘Peanut.’”<sup>40</sup> Stilwell, having walked out of Burma after the defeat of the British, had a unique perspective of the Burmese people and British politics. Keeping China engaged in the war with Japan would prevent Japan from reallocating forces in support of German operations in the European Theater, supporting the combined goals of Britain and the United States. It was under these auspices that Stilwell was to go to China and use his skills as a soldier and trainer of troops to restore the confidence of the Chinese Army so they could keep the Japanese decisively engaged in Asia.

Stilwell’s inability to serve as a diplomatically correct commander would make him an ideal choice for the mission in General Marshall’s eyes. Marshall did not want a commander who may have competing interests in affecting policy and strategy at the national level in Asia. This was General Marshall’s territory and a commander who threatened his sphere of influence would make things difficult for General Marshall. “There was, moreover, a great advantage, from the point of view of the War Department, in Stilwell’s disinclination to be a ‘political general,’ since it was an expression of his complementary determination to be a ‘military general,’ whose main aim would be to serve rather than to influence the purposes of General Marshall.”<sup>41</sup>

Marshall, Stimson, and Stilwell engaged in strategic discussion between the 14 and 23 January that oriented on the situation in Burma and China. Japanese advances were increasing

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>40</sup> David W. Hogan Jr., *India-Burma: The U.S. Army Campaigns of World War II (Pamphlet)* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1995), 5.

<sup>41</sup> Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare: 1941-1942, Chapter VI: Army Deployment and the War Against Japan*, Center of Military History United States Army (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1990), 140.

and threatening the overland supply route to China. Japanese air superiority had made resupply efforts under the Lend-Lease act virtually impossible and a greater degree of emphasis was now placed on the Burma Road as the sole means for supply China. Therefore, it was vital to U.S. interests to secure a base of operations in Burma from which to launch air operations and resupply efforts in support of the Lend-Lease Act. Little was discussed about his role as the Chief of Staff under the Generalissimo, but after receiving Marshall's request, T.V. Soong (then Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs) concurred with the General's recommendation and on January 21, 1942 General Stilwell became the Chief of the Generalissimo's Staff with influence over British, American, and Chinese units in theater. Stilwell's command authorities were discussed and agreed upon by the Chinese Foreign Minister and the Secretary of War. Generally both agreed upon an initial mandate that included: "To supervise and control all United States defense-aid affairs for China; under the Generalissimo to command all United States forces in China and such Chinese forces as may be assigned to him; to represent the United States on any international war council in China and act as the Chief of Staff for the Generalissimo; to improve, maintain, and control the Burma Road in China."<sup>42</sup> The letters, shared between the United States and China (known as the Soong-Stimson letters), would be instrumental in the coordination of diplomatic efforts congruent with Stilwell's operations in China. Stilwell's responsibilities to the Chinese were summarily clear, but that was only one set of command rules Stilwell found himself juggling at any given time. Stilwell was also to heed the orders of the CCS and that of General Wavell at ABADACOM. As General Stilwell found, he would serve as an intermediary between the British-American command and the Chinese.

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<sup>42</sup> Romanus and Sunderland, *Stillwell's Mission to China*, 73.

CHART 1—DIVISION OF ALLIED COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: MARCH–APRIL 1942

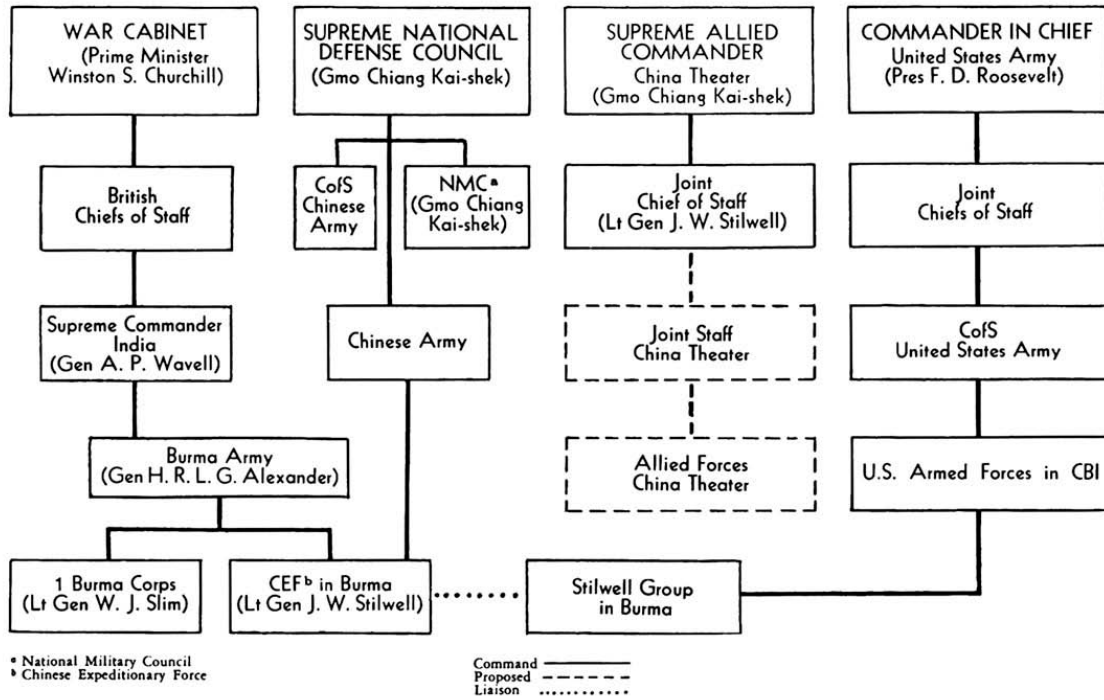


Figure 1: Division of Allied Command Responsibilities in Southeast Asia, March –April 1942<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 88.

CHART 1—STILWELL IN THE CBI CHAIN OF COMMAND:  
DECEMBER 1943–JUNE 1944

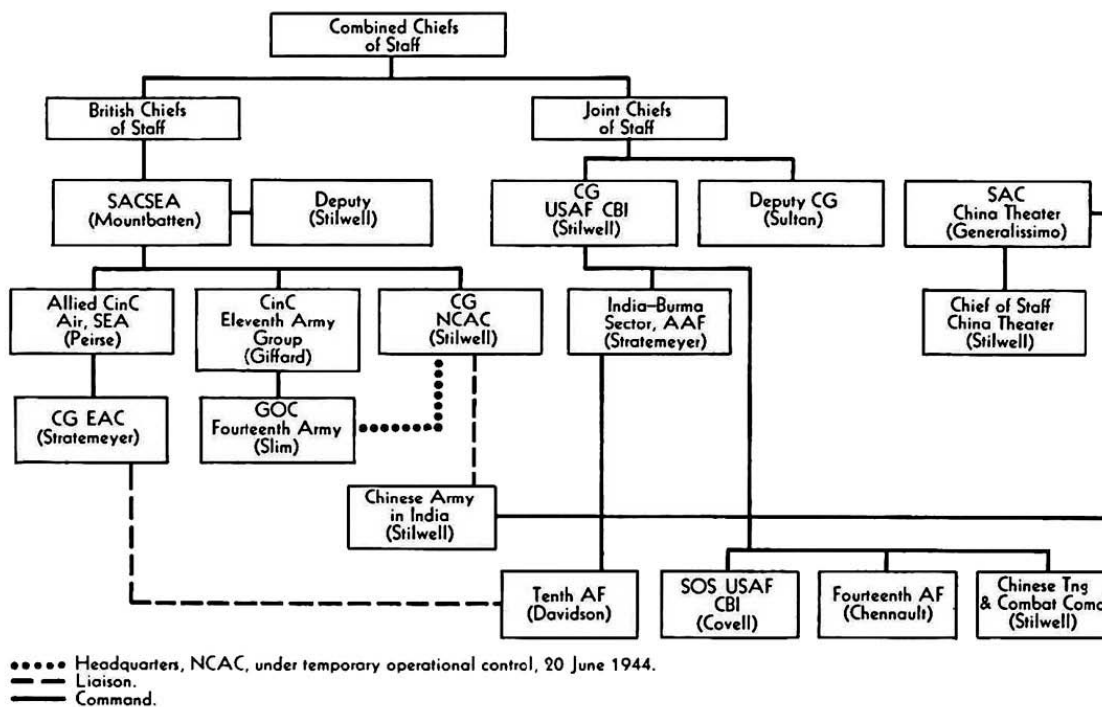
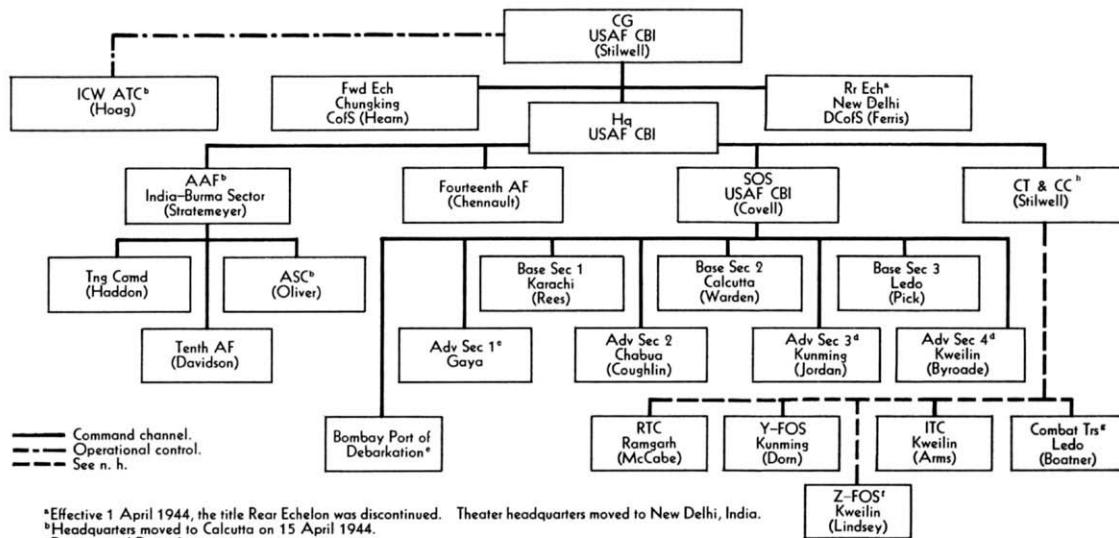


Figure 2: Stilwell in the CBI Chain of Command: December 1943-June 1944.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems; United States Army in World War II; China-Burma-India Theater* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984), 6.



CHART 2—ORGANIZATION OF U. S. FORCES, CHINA, BURMA AND INDIA: NOVEMBER 1943—APRIL 1944



\*Effective 1 April 1944, the title Rear Echelon was discontinued. Theater headquarters moved to New Delhi, India.  
 †Headquarters moved to Calcutta on 15 April 1944.  
 ‡Discontinued December 1943.  
 §Inactivated 31 January 1944; consolidated into Advance Section No. 1, headquarters at Kunming.  
 ¶Effective 31 December 1943, Bombay Port of Debarkation established as an exempted station under Commanding General, Transportation Service, SOS, CBI.  
 ††Established 1 January 1944.  
 ‡‡Discontinued 31 January 1944; Headquarters, NCAC established at Ledo on 1 February 1944.  
 †††Chinese Training and Combat Command, a troop pool providing officers for the organizations indicated.  
 Source: Organization Chart, Asiatic Sec, OPD, Nov 43. OCMH.

Figure 3: Organization of U.S. Forces, China, Burma and India: November 1943-April 1944.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 7.

## Enter Detachment 101 of The Office of Strategic Services

*It was all perfectly plain. O.S.S. was the United States intelligence agency engaged in espionage, counter-espionage, sabotage, subversion, black psychological warfare, and guerrilla operations. O.S.S. covered the globe. Its agents were everywhere. They listened to Hitler's ranting; they whispered into Hirohito's ear; they decoyed the enemy generals into making false moves; mingling with the common hordes they spread slanderous rumors to bring about political revolutions; in the armaments factories of the enemy they tossed the right parts into the right bins but without cotter pins holding the parts of the parts together. What an outfit!*<sup>46</sup>

- William J. Morgan

Although there were other units before World War II which conducted operations that could be considered “unconventional” in nature, Detachment 101 of the Office of Strategic Services was the first unit in American history to be created specifically for the “purpose of conducting unconventional warfare behind enemy lines.”<sup>47</sup> In William Peers book, *Behind the Burma Road*, Peers and Breilis explain that the unit conducted a wide variety of clandestine operations that would encompass espionage, sabotage, guerilla warfare, escape and evasion, and other operations.<sup>48</sup> General Donovan, diligently searching out ways in which he could extend his intelligence influence into the war effort, began establishing himself in key positions to shape operations in China. Donovan did not find a sympathetic ear until the situation in China escalated and General Stilwell was appointed to command the American forces in China. The dismal situation Stilwell inherited early on in the campaign placed him in command of mostly Chinese forces without a real capability or capacity to conduct the operations required to slow down the conquest of the Japanese. Historian George Chalou describes Stilwell's situation:

General Stilwell faced many problems. He was about to get his third star, but he had no American ground combat forces under his command, and there was no likelihood that he would get American units for at least another year. The U.S. Pacific Fleet was badly damaged at Pearl Harbor, the Japanese Navy had complete command of the western Pacific, and the Japanese Army was in the process of conquering and occupying all of the

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<sup>46</sup> William J. Morgan, *The O.S.S. and I* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1957), 15.

<sup>47</sup> Chalou, *The Secret's War*, 318.

<sup>48</sup> William R. Peers and Dean Breilis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963), 27.

Far Eastern countries rimming the Pacific Ocean. Also, the European and Pacific theaters had higher priorities than the China-Burma-India Theater. The only ground forces General Stilwell would have under his command for the next year or two were Chinese, but the Japanese were moving fast to close the Burma Road, the only supply line Stilwell had for those Chinese troops.<sup>49</sup>

Donovan knew of the difficulties in Asia and the impending situation that would lead to an expanded intelligence effort in the region. Several studies were commissioned by Donovan to learn all that was possible of the relationships and intelligence shortfalls in China.

Since Donovan's reach had been cut short in the Pacific by MacArthur, Donovan began searching for other areas to continue his sabotage, and espionage activities. The CBI presented him with this opportunity and he began work on gaining access. General Stilwell soon received a recommendation to employ Donovan's forces in the CBI in order to help Stilwell create the space and time necessary to establish successful operations in China that would prevent the Burma Road from being severed. Early on, General Stilwell received a staff study from Colonel Preston Goodfellow of the COI. Colonel Preston's findings suggested that a small detachment of operatives could infiltrate behind Japanese enemy lines, link up with indigenous forces and begin extending Stilwell's intelligence and unconventional warfare operations in support of Chinese efforts to stop the Japanese conquest of China. "General Stilwell welcomed the proposal that Detachment 101 be created, but he refused to accept the army officer initially proposed as commander of Detachment 101. Stilwell said the unit would need a leader who would not be deterred by the difficulty of the mission. When Colonel Goodfellow asked General Stilwell to recommend someone, Stilwell proposed Carl Eifler, who had previously served as a lieutenant in a reserve unit Stilwell once commanded."<sup>50</sup> Carl Eifler was the first commander of Detachment 101 and was afforded the opportunity to build the Detachment from scratch. Detachment 101 was

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<sup>49</sup> Chalou, *The Secret's War*, 319.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 319.

given the name “101” because it was believed that the unit would gain more respect if the identifier was of a higher number, and since the 101 Airborne Division was a good unit with a prestigious history, it was posited that “101” would be a great number for the new group.

Eifler went to work recruiting leaders who would fill the unconventional role in the years to come. Eifler was a reserve officer in the 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment out of Hawaii. Serving with Eifler at the time was Captain John Coughlin, another unassuming infantry officer with the requisite skills necessary to succeed in China. Eifler would name Coughlin as his deputy and allowed him to recruit Captain William R. Peers (Later Lieutenant General Peers). Together they would begin training the first members of Detachment 101 over the next few months. Eifler intuitively understood that the men he selected would need special skills to execute operations in the CBI. Clandestine operations in the CBI would require the men to win the admiration of locals that were willing conduct operations in support of General Stilwell’s Chinese forces. Peers and Brelis describe the character traits necessary to serve in Detachment 101:

After his discussion with General Donovan, Carl, a man of practical bent, realized that men of ingenuity and extraordinary enthusiasms were what he wanted. Since he had no idea, no certain knowledge where in the Far East they would begin, ingenuity, to a remarkable degree, must be shown in picking his recruits. He compiled a list of the basic talents he needed. He decided that before 101 could engage in successful guerrilla warfare, he would need men who knew military science and tactics, engineering, explosives, radio and other communications, basic medicine, precision machinery, and photography; and men who possessed language aptitude.<sup>51</sup>

Much of the selection of the members of the first few groups in Det. 101 was made on intuition and reputation alone. Eifler and his new group would use the British Commando tactics as their basis and began learning the ways of Winston Churchill’s Commandos. Although the training was hard and fast, a large degree of the actual learning occurred “on the job” in the CBI. It was not until later that Det. 101 was able to capture some of these early lessons and incorporate

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<sup>51</sup> Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 27.

them more holistically into their selection and training of operatives. “Unfortunately, the Detachment was instructed to keep no records while behind enemy lines because of a fear at O.S.S. Headquarters that such records might be used by the Japanese to justify torture in the event Detachment 101 members were captured. As a result, they wrote no after-action reports covering each guerilla warfare operation. Such reports would have been invaluable in recording for historical purposes the lessons they learned through trial and error.”<sup>52</sup> Still, the lessons that did come from the early preparation of “A” Group (the founding members of Detachment 101), as it was called, would be instrumental in the near future. Although the Detachment had been formed and trained, the unit would not deploy with much of the equipment that was necessary for guerilla warfare in the CBI. The purchase of the equipment necessary for the mission was initially procured through civilian companies, and mostly through catalogue orders that were to be shipped to the port of debarkation. This plagued the Detachment’s initial capabilities to get the necessary equipment purchased, staged and loaded on the ships scheduled for the theater.

Once the Group finally arrived in at the CBI Headquarters in New Delhi, they observed an already overworked staff. The staff at the CBI Headquarters had almost as many officers as were in the Detachment and used both surreptitious and overt means to cajole the “new blood” into the existing staff. There was an immediate lack of understanding for the types of missions the Detachment would embark upon by the conventional staff members at the CBI Headquarters. Historian George Chalou explains, “They had absolutely no appreciation of the potential of resistance forces, espionage, sabotage and other clandestine operations. Their thinking was along conventional military lines, and anything to the contrary was sacrilegious. Diplomacy and tact of the subtlest kind were required to say ‘no’ without giving offense. Clearly, they could use our

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<sup>52</sup> Chalou, *The Secret’s War*, 327.

manpower, and it was equally as clear that if we became one of them 101 would cease to be.”<sup>53</sup>

To the contrary, it seemed the British working in New Delhi had a better appreciation for the work that was needed and they began sharing intelligence almost immediately. The British were willing to share every snippet of information if it helped the combined efforts to defeat the Japanese. The more of us involved in it, the merrier would be the espionage accounts to be filed away in the top-secret files.”<sup>54</sup>

The Detachment spent a considerable amount of time in the CBI Headquarters getting to know the intricacies of the staff processes at work. They helped where they could and as time passed it became increasingly evident that Burma would be where the majority of the heavy lifting would occur. After considerable waiting, General Stilwell gave the Detachment an audience in which he restored a sense of mission in the men. He issued the following guidance: (a) Establish a base camp in northeast India and from there be prepared to (b) conduct operations to deny the Japanese the use of the Myitkyina airport and the roads leading into it from the south, and (c) closely coordinate operations with the British authorities (XVI Corps) to ensure that there would be no mutual interference and that effective liaison be established.<sup>55</sup> According to Brown, the Detachment was also charged with disrupting “Japanese communications, shipping, and to bring about Japanese reprisals on the native population which will result in discouraging native aid to the Japanese” – a brutal, heartless assignment no soldier could have relished.<sup>56</sup> The Detachment had its marching orders and the next item of business was to determine where they would set up shop.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>56</sup> Anthony C. Brown, *Wild Bill Donovan: The Last Hero* (New York: Times Books, 1982), 412.

Selecting a base from which to launch operations against the Japanese was a delicate task. The Detachment wanted the base to be far enough away from British and American forces so as not to cause any trouble with the conventional forces, but close enough to requisition supplies when needed. The British played a pivotal role in the initial selection, of not only the location of the base camp, but also the natives that would supply agents to execute sabotage operations deep inside Burma. Historian Anthony Brown elaborates why the British recommended Nazira, Assam as the ideal location to set up camp.

At first glance, it was clear that Nazira was the right place. Among the vast acres of tea fields, an approaching man or vehicle could be sighted easily. The English people working the plantations were pleased to see us; they had been cut down to a small group overseeing the battalions of native laborers. Sometimes there were long periods when they did not see a white man, so they looked at us with interest and anticipation. They were eager to do everything possible for us.<sup>57</sup>

The camp at Nazira was ideal because it possessed several beneficial features that would support the type of operations that would be conducted in the near future. The proximity to jungles, rivers and mountains would be necessary to support final training exercises before infiltrating into Burma by either walking, parachuting or flying. Several buildings existed that could simultaneously support different groups of agents. This would be beneficial in the event that they were captured, they would not have any information about the other operations that were being executed.

Once the camp was selected and the necessary arrangements were made to sustain the camp, the Detachments focus transitioned to recruiting and training the new “A” Group. The detachment infiltrated with the latest secret espionage techniques used in Europe. The limited utility of these techniques were immediately discounted, as some of the techniques used in Europe would not be applicable in the jungles of Burma. Still, the Detachment began collecting

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 59.

tidbits of information that would lay the foundation for its successful espionage and sabotage activities that were as of yet unrealized. Simple things collected included the relationships in the nearest villages, what types of roots and plants could be used as medicine, and what types of items the local peddler sold. Understanding the local culture and customs would enable the members to begin establishing rapport, a skill that would prove vital to success in Burma.

“Detachment was fortunate for so many reasons. Its members had time to experiment, to learn through trial and error and to build an intelligence base before having to undertake guerrilla warfare activities. By early 1944, they had built a very efficient support organization, without which they would not have been able to support by air the guerrilla force they had created.”<sup>58</sup>

Concurrently, during discourse sessions on the information collected, they would continue to execute practical exercises in demolitions, radio transmissions, and the sabotage techniques that would serve them in the months to come. The Detachment knew that if they were to be successful they must have the capability to communicate in excess of 1,000 miles, the approximate distance from Nazira to Rangoon. Unfortunately, there was no radio with such a capability in the Army’s inventory. In order to fill this capability gap two of the members of Det. 101, Sergeants Allen Richter and Donald Eng, set out to build a new radio from locally procured pieces of technology. After some scrounging in places all over India, they were able to piece together a radio that weighed only twenty-three pounds and could transmit over 1,200 miles. The ability to communicate was essential to gathering intelligence about the enemy and obtaining critical support when things got a little hectic. Without the ability to communicate, Det. 101 would not have been able to accomplish its mission. The ability to operate in the “gray” areas that some would consider unethical or immoral would also allow the men of Det. 101 to operate

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<sup>58</sup> Chalou, *The Secret’s War*, 326.



successfully in the CBI. Forms of printed currency in Northern Burma were essentially useless.

Peers and Brelis describe how the Detachment addressed bartering methods in Burma:

Simply stated, paper currency even silver was often useless, as there was nothing to buy with money; opium, however, was the form of payment, which everybody used. Not to use it as a means of barter would spell an end to our operations. Opium was available to agents who used it for reasons, ranging from obtaining information to buying their own escape. Any indignation felt was moved by the difficulty of the task ahead. If opium could be useful in achieving victory, the pattern was clear. We would use opium.<sup>59</sup>

The stage was set, Det. 101 and “A” Group was prepared to conduct operations deep in Japanese-occupied territories of Northern Burma. The Detachment decided that in order to infiltrate into the enemy held territory they would begin by moving from Nazira to Fort Hertz in Northern Burma. Fort Hertz was occupied by a British contingent that was guarded by Northern Kachin Levies reached by traversing the Naga Hills. Det. 101’s “A” group would soon learn that infiltrating via foot, as an eight-man element in conventional military attire through hostile native terrain would not allow the type of secrecy required for successful guerilla operations. “And right there and then the cardinal rule of our operations came into being. Guerrillas essentially require surprise. As they travel to their target area they should not be seen, known, heard, or identified. Any identification, even the most fleeting, by the enemy, of a guerrilla potential poised against him severely limits the guerrilla’s chances for realizing his full mission.”<sup>60</sup> The Detachment learned that success to a guerrilla meant that he remains uncompromised and that he should choose to engage the enemy on grounds favorable to his choosing. When a guerrilla has the advantage in a battle, he can achieve victory and fade into the terrain to fight another day. This lesson, learned and passed down from such nefarious characters as MaoTse-tung, would need to be relearned by Det. 101. In Samuel Griffith’s translation of Mao Tse-tung’s, *On Guerrilla War*, he asserts that Mao described the guerrilla situation that existed in China: “Because Japanese

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<sup>59</sup> Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 69.

military power is inadequate, much of the territory her armies have overrun is without sufficient garrison of troops. Under such circumstances the primary functions of guerrillas are three: first, to conduct war on exterior lines, that is, in the rear of the enemy; second, to establish bases; and last, to extend the war areas. Thus, guerrilla participation in the war is not merely a matter of purely local guerrilla tactics but involves strategical considerations.”<sup>61</sup> This is precisely what Det. 101 set out to accomplish with the help of the Kachins.

The Kachin tribesmen were uniquely qualified to serve the Detachment. Accustomed to life in the mountains, the Kachins survived off the land, and required little in the way of compensation for their services. They hated the Japanese. Fiercely loyal, physically tough, and mentally astute, the Kachins were an ideal choice as a partner against the Japanese. According to historians Ford and MacBain, their services would be used on multiple occasions until the end of the war.

Kachins trained by this secret O.S.S. unit formed the advance screen for General Wingate’s Chindit strike in February of 1943. They guided Merrill’s Marauders on their famous trek to seize the Myitkyina airport early in 1944. They spearheaded the advance of our engineers along the route of the Ledo Road through Burma to China. Their patrols preceded General Willy’s “Mars Force” that broke the final Jap grip on North Burma. They furnished the intelligence on which almost a hundred percent of all Tenth Air Force combat missions were based. In two and a half years, their cat-footed scouts killed over five thousand enemy, disrupted his transportation, cut his communication lines, struck wild unreasoning panic into his heart. “Without your organization,” General Stilwell was forced to admit to Col. Eifler, “it would have been impossible for us to proceed.”<sup>62</sup>

With the knowledge that these tribesmen would make all the difference in the fight against Japan, the Detachment set out to establish their first area command. The initial infiltrations were meant to set up a base camp near Myitkyina from which they would launch

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>61</sup> Samuel B. Griffith II, *Mao Tse-tung: On Guerrilla Warfare* (Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1961), 94.

<sup>62</sup> Lt. Col. Corey Ford and Maj. Alastair MacBain, *Cloak and Dagger; The Secret Story of OSS* (New York: Random House, 1945), 86.

espionage and sabotage operations to disrupt the Japanese 18<sup>th</sup> Division. Their first mission was to disrupt supply operations coming from the south into Myitkyina by destroying several sections of the railroad and the Myitkyina airfield. The Myitkyina airfield was being used to host Japanese fighters that would destroy coalition aircraft flying supply missions over the “Hump.”<sup>63</sup>

Although Det. 101 had a certain degree of difficulty in their efforts to reach their first operational area in Myitkyina, they learned some valuable lessons. The terrain was not suitable for lengthy overland infiltrations. They would risk detection and capture if they choose to infiltrate by foot. The realization was that they would need to execute a vertical *penetration*, or infiltrate by parachute. “The trek into the mountains of North Burma and the probing of Japanese lines south of Fort Hertz had taught us that a first operation such as our into an enemy-occupied country must be a vertical penetration – that is, that we must reach our target area by parachute.”<sup>64</sup> The use of parachutes and aerial platforms would prove to be an invaluable asset to the guerrillas. Det. 101 immediately began requesting the use of aircraft to support their missions. The limited availability of aircraft in theater initially prevented them from securing their own, but not for long. Every aircraft was crucial in linking China, America, Britain and Australia. In the mean time, they established a working relationship with Air Transport Command (ATC). ATC, under the command of General Henry H. Alexander, began supporting Det. 101 missions into Burma in exchange for critical survival training and the guarantee that if they were shot down in enemy territory, the members of Det. 101 would repatriate them back to India. The fact that the pilots could rely on Det. 101 to repatriate them into friendly territory boosted the comfort level of the pilots flying the hump and established a critical working relationship that would serve the detachment well. Before the end of the war, the Detachment would be responsible for repatriating

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<sup>63</sup> The Himalayan Mountains were called the “Hump” because pilots had to travel over it, like a speed bump, to bring critical supplies into China.

<sup>64</sup> Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 68.

232 to 425 Allied aviators to safety. Chalou describes the Detachment's successful repatriation operations:

Reports on the success of the escape and evasion operations vary from a total of 232 to 425 Allied airmen rescued. The Detachment built trails and cache sites along the Hump run, and the higher figure may include those who parachuted to the ground and used these trails and cache sites to escape. It may also include airmen who were brought to safety by Kachins who were influenced to help by 101, but were not directly under the control of Detachment 101 personnel. The lower figure, 232, was taken from the Northern Combat Area Command's historical account of the northern and central Burma campaigns and does not include those who may have been rescued during the last four months of the war.<sup>65</sup>

Not only did the techniques for the repatriation of downed pilots evolve, but the methods to drop cargo were experimented on and perfected as well. The Detachment identified the potential for mission essential, emergency, and routine supplies that could be dropped from C-47 cargo planes. These and other techniques would be practiced repeatedly in Northern Burma.

The Detachment soon learned that they would be most successful if they broke into two man elements and infiltrated as much as 200 miles in any given direction to establish other bases. By 1943, the Detachment had established six similar bases and was now providing critical intelligence on Japanese movement as well as sabotage missions that caused the Japanese to commit more forces to protect infrastructure and lines of communication. Peers and Brelis describe the logic behind the decentralized command in Burma:

The theory of placing operational control with the four area commanders was perhaps the biggest single step taken by 101 to toward improvement and expansion of operations during the entire Burma campaign. It meant that I, as 101's commander, no longer had to deal directly with eighteen or more field stations; I now directed the activities of the four area commanders and they in turn were my means of communication with the rest of the men in the field. The rewards were initiative and flexibility such as we had never known. Moreover, our enlarged radio net provided more rapid and efficient radio schedules, at the same time greatly reducing the excessive load on the Nazira base station.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Chalou, *The Secret's War*, 326.

<sup>66</sup> Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 139.

Once the initial operating capacity had been established, the Detachment would branch out to co-opt other guerrillas in different areas and extend their influence throughout the country. The result was a well-coordinated intelligence network that provided General Stilwell with a more detailed understanding of the battlefield, enabling him to make timely decisions that would affect the outcome of the war.

General Stilwell was beginning to reap the benefits of his new capability. In December of 1943, General Donovan visited the Detachment and placed Colonel Peers in command of the Detachment. Colonel Coughlin would command the O.S.S. Strategic Operations in the China-Burma-India Theater, and Colonel Eifler would head back to the United States to tell the tale of the O.S.S. to authorities in Washington. "Captain Carl Eifler's health had deteriorated. He had been involved in an accident during an intelligence mission at sea off the coast of Burma: piloting the unit's two-seater L-5, he had crash-landed. Malaria and other tropical diseases had taken its toll of his huge physique, and the pressures and responsibilities had caught up. He suffered a breakdown and General Donovan had to face the issue and make a decision, which he did by relieving Carl "for physical and medical reasons."<sup>67</sup> General Stilwell was so enamored by the success of the detachment that he requested Colonel Peers to grow his guerrilla forces to 3,000 men (eventually the numbers would crest 10,000). Detachment 101 would assist the newly formed Merrill's Marauders (5307<sup>th</sup> Composite Unit (provisional), also known by its code named Galahad) in their drive across the Hukwang Valley, down the Mogaung Valley and on to capture the Myitkyina airfield. Perhaps some of the most famous battles during operations in the CBI, the Marauders were to conduct an envelopment of Japanese forces near Walawbum while Chinese forces maintained the front against the Japanese. This operation would set the conditions to

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<sup>67</sup> Edward Hymoff, *The OSS in World War II* (New York: Richardson & Steirman, 1972), 148.

capture Myitkyina. Merrill's Marauders were the first American force assigned to General Stilwell's command.

Galahad was hugely successful, but suffered numerous casualties, both from combat and from the environment. Despite the casualties, part of the success of Galahad was a direct result of the shaping efforts by Det. 101 and its guerilla agents. During conventional operations to capture the airfield in Myitkyina, Det. 101 conducted numerous unconventional attacks against the Japanese. Historian George Chalou asserts, "Detachment 101 provided them with intelligence, at times scouted for them on the march, patrolled their flanks, and occasionally served to screen their movements so that the Japanese would think that only a guerrilla force was on the move in their area."<sup>68</sup>

Det. 101 was created out of the need for an unconventional capability that could support the expansion of intelligence efforts in Burma as well conducting espionage, sabotage, guerrilla warfare, propaganda, and escape and evasion missions. Unfortunately, as the unit became more successful their mission and scope increased. Initially the campaign in Burma was to follow in three phases. In the first phase the Detachment would be instrumental in assisting conventional efforts to capture the Myitkyina airfield, reestablish air superiority over the hump and set the conditions for phase two, the continued attack south into Lashio, Maymyo, and Mandalay. The final phase of the operation would secure the Burma Road all the way from Rangoon through China. In the final phases of the operation, Det. 101's scope would change and they were assigned the conventional mission of clearing a 10,000 square mile stretch of terrain in the Shan States to assist in the securing of the Burma Road. Although the Detachment was successful, it suffered the more casualties during this period of the campaign than any other of the operations it

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<sup>68</sup> Chalou, *The Secret's War*, 324. Mao Tse-tung posits that the basic staple of guerrilla tactics is to hit the enemy where he least expects it and where it will hurt the most. Secrecy and the ability to use shock

conducted. As Peers and Brelis assert, “A large percentage of the 101 casualties were sustained during the final phase when the detachment had to combine its guerrilla tactics with conventional tactics. There are undoubtedly many explanations why Detachment 101 casualties were so light, but perhaps the outstanding reasons were our mobility and hit and run tactics; the Kachins’ intimate knowledge of the area and of the jungles; the simple, light, rapid-fire weapons; and of course, air supply, which gave the guerrillas a maximum of mobility and flexibility.”<sup>69</sup>

The unconventional warfare operations conducted by Det. 101 in support of the campaign in the CBI were instrumental in defeating the Japanese. Detachment 101 caused the Japanese to reallocate more resources to protect lines of communication and command structures, causing a drain on troops and supplies that could be used against the allies. Stilwell was able to benefit from these operations and make decisions with greater accuracy and clarity under more favorable conditions.

In 1945 the unit received orders that they were to be inactivated and the guerrillas were to disband and return to their homes. “On 12 July 1945 an order was published inactivating O.S.S. Detachment 101. We had a life-span of approximately three and a half years, of which nearly three years involved actual guerrilla combat.”<sup>70</sup>

The operations conducted by Detachment 101 would later become precedence for the development and conduct of unconventional warfare doctrine executed by Special Forces in Korea, Vietnam, and our contemporary operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>71</sup> Although, the initial

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and awe to execute surprise attacks and confuse the enemy before melting into the terrain is a vital tactic of the successful guerrilla force.

<sup>69</sup> Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 221.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>71</sup> Although the Korean War was declared in 1950 and members of the unit that would later be called Special Forces did participate, they did not do so as a member of Special Forces. The unit had not been created yet.

benefit mostly assisted in the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Special Operations (SO) branch of the O.S.S. would evolve into what we now call Special Forces.

## Analyzing the Det. 101's Approach in Burma

When reviewing the doctrine for unconventional warfare it is interesting to note that the publications focus on the tactical employment of unconventional warfare to achieve strategic effects.<sup>72</sup> “The intent of United States (U.S.) UW operations is to exploit a hostile power’s political, military, economic, and psychological vulnerability by developing and sustaining resistance forces to accomplish U.S. strategic objectives.”<sup>73</sup> Detachment 101 was instrumental in developing this capability during the period of 1942 – 1943 in the CBI. Through the conduct of unconventional warfare – encompassing guerrilla warfare, sabotage, subversion, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery operations (UAR), Det. 101 was able to influence the strategic actions of the Japanese.

JP 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 30 November 2004, defines unconventional warfare as, “A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes, but is not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery.”<sup>74</sup> The Joint Publication defined unconventional warfare in the military classic sense, as it was developed and

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<sup>72</sup> There is very little written about operational level approaches to unconventional warfare and how they supported conventional campaigns. Such instances as the Spanish War of Independence against Napoleon and the guerrilla campaign executed by Colonel Russ Volckmann in the Philippines under the command of MacArthur are examples of large-scale guerrilla operations that could be used as a basis to further study large scale or operational level unconventional warfare.

<sup>73</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-05.201, Special Forces Unconventional Warfare Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006), 1-1.



refined after the exploits of Det. 101 in Burma and other campaigns. The Special Operations community has continually attempted to create a better understanding of the capabilities of UW as well as assisting the contextual understanding by conventional mindsets. Generally, operations may be classified as unconventional warfare if executed by indigenous forces that have been trained, advised, and equipped by Special Operations Forces. According to Admiral Eric T. Olsen, “The initial stages of the Afghanistan campaign are a great example of UW. Fewer than 600 SOF enabled indigenous Afghan forces to suppress and evict the Taliban government.”<sup>75</sup> Although successful, the conditions to execute an unconventional warfare campaign must be present or it will not elicit the conditions desired.

Understanding the development phases of an insurgency provides the practitioner of unconventional warfare a method to bound action. Typically an insurgency passes through three development phases, (1) the latent or incipient phase, (2) guerrilla warfare, and (3) mobile warfare or war of movement.<sup>76</sup> Detachment 101 was able to slowly move through what is now consider the seven phases of a U.S. sponsored insurgency. According to Field Manual 3-05.201, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare Operations*, the seven phases are preparation, initial contact, infiltration, organization, buildup, combat employment, and demobilization. These phases directly align with the developmental phases of an insurgency. During Phase I, the latent or incipient phase, activities such as preparation, initial contact, infiltration, and sometimes organization will be conducted in preparation for the transition to Phase II. During the guerrilla warfare phase surrogate forces are recruited, organized, trained, equipped, and prepared for

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<sup>74</sup> Department of Defense, *Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2004), 554.

<sup>75</sup> David H. Gurney USMC (Ret.) and Jeffrey D. Smotherman, “An Interview with Eric T. Olson,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, no. 56 (1st Quarter 2010): 60-63.

combat employment. During combat operations in the CBI, a need to transition to Phase III did not exist because the aspect of guerrilla warfare complemented conventional operations. This example tends to lean toward unconventional support to conventional operations, but it is important to note that it does not necessarily always happen in this manner. Conventional forces can be introduced to support an unconventional campaign by denying the enemy access to key areas on the battlefield. For the purposes of this monograph, a discussion of Phase I – Latent or Incipient Phase will serve as a departure point for analysis.

## **Phase I – Latent Or Incipient Phase**

Field Manual 3-05.201, *Special Forces Unconventional Warfare Operations* - 30 April 2003, describes the actions that encompass Phase I:

During this phase, the resistance leadership develops the movement into an effective clandestine organization. The resistance organization uses a variety of subversive techniques to psychologically prepare the population to resist. These techniques may include propaganda, demonstrations, boycotts, and sabotage. Subversive activities frequently occur in an organized pattern, but no major outbreak of armed violence occurs. In the advanced stages of this phase, the resistance organization may establish a shadow government that parallels the established authority.<sup>77</sup>

When Detachment 101 deployed to India, the insurgency against the Japanese was in its latent or incipient phase. This allowed the unit plenty of time to study all aspects of the insurgency to develop a comprehensive plan. Although no shadow form of government was established, the focus became establishing subversive capabilities against the enemy. Detachment 101 began conducting psychological warfare operations through its Morale Operations (MO) division. According to O.S.S. doctrine, morale operations consist of, “physical activity for MO effects; the subversion of important individuals; the distribution of subversive pamphlets, posters, or the

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<sup>76</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-05.201*, 1-1. FM 3-05.201 describes the phases of an insurgency in detail. The key to understanding the phasing and timing of an insurgency is to recognize that the insurgency does not have to progress through these phases in order.

marking up of slogans; the creation of riots and disturbances; the work of agents provocateur; the spreading of rumors; incitement to resistance; and countering the effects of enemy morale operations.”<sup>78</sup> The early stages of Det. 101 activities required the members of Det. 101 to execute morale operations without external expertise or support. Detachment 101 learned that there was not enough time to devote to morale operation activities and their benefits were desired. Therefore, during the evolution of doctrine in the years to follow, Special Operations Forces (SOF) was developed to focus specifically on these types of operations. General Donovan and General McClure were instrumental in understanding the need for this capability and helped set the conditions for the creation of the Psy War Department during the years following World War II. Fortunately for 101 the Burmese people already harbored a special hatred for the Japanese and were willing participants, making their MO simple and effective.

The purpose of subversion is to separate, ideologically, the people from the aggressors. Detachment 101 learned much of their lessons by trial and error. During infiltration to Nazaria, Assam the Detachment learned that they could not pass through the Naga Hills wearing uniforms because the local tribesmen were hostile to their efforts. Ideologically, the tribesmen did not support the Japanese, however, they felt threatened by strangers transiting their lands who were not welcome. Adjustments were made and lessons were learned, eventually the Detachment made it to their operational area in Northern Burma.

Once on the ground in Nazaria, 101 began its operations to recruit additional members and establish relationships that would be needed during the execution of their guerilla activities. Practitioners of unconventional warfare understand that they must rely on others to accomplish their mission. “Perhaps more than any of the other O.S.S. elements, Detachment 101 developed a

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 1-7.

<sup>78</sup> Office of Strategic Services, *Special Operations Field Manual No. 4 – Strategic Services (Provisional)*, (Washington, D.C.: Office of Strategic Services, 1944), 15.

firm appreciation for the complexities of establishing credibility, winning trust and confidence, and organizing guerrillas into effective fighting units. The experiences and lessons learned by Detachment 101 became fundamental to later UW doctrine.”<sup>79</sup> The credibility established with General Alexander and his Air Transport Command (ATC), is an example of one of these relationships that would later prove beneficial in the execution of Unconventional Assisted Recovery (UAR) of an estimated 232 pilots during Phase – II Guerrilla Warfare. The most important relationship developed by Detachment 101 was with the Kachin Rangers.

A common mistake is to believe that surrogates are much less proficient. In many instances, they have far superior skills in things such as hunting or tracking that Americans could never hope to master. A true unconventional warfare practitioner will try to learn as much about the surrogate’s culture and language as humanly possible. Not only will it help to understand them, but also it will provide insight into how to motivate them during times of extreme danger. During Det. 101’s exploits, they understood that it would be more appropriate to place the Kachins in charge and merely provide resources, purpose, direction and motivation. Det. 101 intuitively knew they could not learn the language fluently enough to pass themselves off as native. Therefore, a small two-man cadre was kept secret and used to advise the local leader on operations, not lead the patrols. The host nation must take responsibility and lead operations or they will never be proficient enough to take the responsibility for their own internal security. Det. 101 conducted operations ‘by, with, and through’ the Kachin Rangers in order to set the conditions for eventual transition of authority to the Burmese people.

Detachment 101 could have collaborated with anyone in Burma, but the Kachins displayed the most potential for the type of operations they were about to execute. The Kachins

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<sup>79</sup> Paul A. Ott, *Unconventional Warfare in the Contemporary Operational Environment: Transforming Special Forces* (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, KS: United States Army Command and General Staff College - AY 01-02), 11.

were tough, resourceful people that had a sense of nationalism and a strong will to fight, the ideal selection for a guerrilla force. Fortunately for Det. 101, the British had established contact with the Kachins, much like the way the CIA does today.

The CIA had not been established yet and the Detachment had to execute both the espionage and subversive activities to establish the force. Det. 101 understood that in order to be successful they would require both espionage and subversive activities for the insurgency to succeed. This is inherently difficult to accomplish and should not be executed overtly. Det. 101 understood that it would require 'non-standard' methods to accomplish these goals. The use of clandestine intelligence networks that operated by, with, and through native agents to accomplish dangerous tasks would evolve into the tactics, techniques, and procedures used by the CIA today. During Detachment 101's exploits its Special Operations Branch (SO) played the role of the CIA. Special Operations Field Manual No. 4 describes handover operations:

Normally before OG's enter a territory contact must have been established with resistance elements, and their potentialities and needs for supplies and equipment ascertained. This can be accomplished by use of O.S.S. clandestine agents, primarily SO, or by representatives abroad of resistance elements who are brought out for this purpose. Such resistance elements range from small, loosely organized and poorly equipped bands of individuals to large quasi-military organizations with insufficient equipment.<sup>80</sup>

Unfortunately, there is no doctrinal answer about how to conduct this link up. In many instances, it is adhoc. "During contact, SF personnel assess the resistance potential in the area of operations (AO) and the compatibility of U.S. and resistance interests and objectives. This also allows assessment planners to make arrangements for the reception and initial assistance of the SFOD."<sup>81</sup> Det. 101 was provided this information by the British early in their operations to secure a base camp in Nazaria. Not only was this handover a dangerous operation, but also as they

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<sup>80</sup> Office of Strategic Services, *Special Operations Field Manual No. 4 – Strategic Services (Provisional)*, (Washington, D.C.: Office of Strategic Services, 1944), 15.

<sup>81</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-05.201*, 1-14.

would later discover, completely crucial to the development of a successful clandestine intelligence network.

Another aspect of the latent or incipient phase is the development of intelligence networks. Until the initial relationships were cultivated and the capabilities/capacity bolstered, the Kachins would be incapable of establishing this network. In developing the understanding of capabilities that would be required to establish an intelligence network, the members of Det. 101 invented a radio that was capable of transmitting and receiving over a distance of approximately 1,200 miles. Without the capability to pass information over large distances the efforts of Detachment 101 would have been irrelevant. Once the capability was established to pass on the intelligence, reports became almost unmanageable. The quality and detail of the intelligence pouring into Stilwell required the full time dedication of staff members to specifically sort and prioritize the information received. Det. 101 created the concept of the 'area command' to help minimize the influx of manageable information. These area commands were lead by trusted Kachin Rangers who would not only pass vital information up the chain of command, but also coordinate intelligence driven, precision operations against the Japanese as a direct result of this crucial intelligence sharing. Often, the natives that were empowered with this information were more cognizant of the environment than their counterparts.

Operational Security (OPSEC) becomes the biggest issue when collaborating with surrogate forces. A lack of trust can destroy rapport and challenge resolve in a guerrilla warfare situation. Creating a coalition willing to fight along side the guerrillas and share intelligence is the best way to achieve lasting results.

Finally, during the latent and incipient phase, the practitioner of unconventional warfare must establish the external support required to execute the guerrilla warfare campaign. Understanding the scope your guerrilla warfare campaign is an integral aspect of determining not only what support requirements will be necessary, but also the type and size of combat operations. Detachment 101 had a great deal of difficulty, not only procuring the necessary

resources, but in determining the ceiling of capabilities for the guerrilla force. Initially, the detachment relied heavily on external resources to equip and feed the guerillas. After some careful planning, they determined that the best methods were to supply the force both internally (food and clothing) and externally (ammunition and weapons). Resource methods must be endemic to the environment in which the practitioner operates. In an effort to establish a surrogate force, do not supply them with technology or resources that cannot be sustained without external support when it is time to demobilize the surrogate force.<sup>82</sup>

After the first successful operations conducted against the Mytikiyina airfield, the guerrillas began to establish the capabilities and capacity to expand their operations to other areas. This is an example of the first transition to guerrilla warfare and combat employment. We have learned many lessons on how to assess the capabilities of surrogate forces to transition to this phase of unconventional warfare that have produced excellent results in both Afghanistan and Iraq. Complete Programs of Instruction (POIs) have been developed that serve as a guideline on how to prepare surrogate forces to make this transition. Much of the POI developed takes into account the training and organization started by Detachment 101 in Burma.

What is not often understood is how to establish and maintain training programs for the surrogates that can be self-sufficient once the U.S. led unconventional warfare efforts cease. Special Forces have begun to develop these capabilities in Afghanistan through the establishment of the Commando Training School that is being filled with cadre from the host nation to fill this gap. Detachment 101 was never fully capable of developing this lasting capability, however many of their instructors were indigenous and could have developed a lasting capability. “The fellow

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<sup>82</sup> The Afghan National Army (ANA) was outfitted with Canadian C7 Rifles. These are derivatives of the old U.S. M16. The expectation is that the ANA will have the requisite maintenance programs and supply systems placed into long term operation if they are expected to maintain this capability in the long term. The author posits that it would have made more sense to increase the output of AK-47s, a weapon already in the Afghan system.

who gave the survival course for 101 was an Anglo-Burmese of better than average size, six feet one and about a hundred and eighty pounds, whom we called Rocky. His ability with guns, rifle or shotgun, was uncanny... He did an outstanding job of organizing and running our survival course, perhaps a better job than anyone else could have done, and he was the source of numerous letters of appreciation and commendation.”<sup>83</sup>

Additionally, the appropriate scope of operations must be considered. Guerrillas, trained and recruited to execute conventional warfare should not be used in a conventional capacity. Det. 101 learned this the hard way during operations in the Shah States areas. They were required to conduct a conventional clearing of almost 10,000 square kilometers that cost them many casualties. Guerrillas are meant to conduct hit and run operations, not stand toe-to-toe with a conventional force. Without the requisite capabilities and capacity, a guerrilla force will not be able to transition to Phase II, Guerrilla Warfare.

## **Phase II – Guerrilla Warfare**

Current doctrine for Special Forces Unconventional Warfare describes the differences between urban and rural guerilla operations:

The guerrilla in a rural-based insurgency will normally operate from a relatively secure base area in an insurgent-controlled territory. In an urban-based insurgency, the guerrilla operates clandestinely using cellular organization. Subversive activities can take the form of clandestine radio broadcasts, newspapers, and pamphlets that openly challenge the control and legitimacy of the established authority. Recruiting efforts expand as the people lose faith in the established authority and decide to actively resist it.<sup>84</sup>

Guerrilla warfare is the act of overt military action by a surrogate force against a superior force in hostile enemy-held terrain. Initially, a surrogate force is unlikely to be capable of executing guerrilla activities until they have both the capability and capacity. By infiltrating and

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<sup>83</sup> Peers and Brellis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 126.

<sup>84</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-05.201*, 1-17.



establishing a relationship with the Kachin Rangers in Northern Burma, the Detachment made the first step towards realizing this goal. Typically, guerrilla warfare is the second phase of an insurgency before a mobile warfare or war of movement. The mobile warfare phase signals the transition from guerrilla warfare to conventional warfare. During operations in support of conventional forces in the CBI, Detachment 101 operated from bases in remote mountainous regions of Burma and India. This allowed for the concentration of forces and facilitated the training and employment of surrogate forces. Detachment 101 was able to establish base camps in separate regions of Burma under the construct of an 'area command' structure. An area command structure allows for a greater degree of centralized control and decentralized execution. Each area command controlled several teams that operated in a particular geographic region of the command. This area command would then coordinate and report these activities to a central command. By establishing this kind of command, Detachment 101 was able to limit the amount of time spent to each individual operation and more time organizing operational level activities across Burma. Det. 101's operations conducted throughout Burma under the construct of the Area Command were the first instance of operational level unconventional warfare missions producing strategic effects. The Kachin Rangers could conduct simultaneous operations against Japanese lines of communications (LOC) as well as command and control (C2) structures that would affect the synchronization and effects of Japanese operations. Det. 101's area command structure in mountainous terrain facilitated their abilities to operate undetected. In an urban setting, the Kachin Rangers would not be capable of executing these large operations without becoming compromised or decisively engaged.

An urban insurgency must rely more heavily on a cellular structure, auxiliary support, and underground clandestine actions for operations, limiting the initial scope and capabilities to transition to Phase II – Guerrilla Warfare. Fortunately, Det. 101 was conducting operations in the rugged mountainous region of Northern Burma, which facilitated centralized training and execution of operations. This allowed the Kachin Rangers to be supervised and trained in a

method that would allow a gradual expansion of capabilities into other areas of Burma. When operating in an urban environment it is more difficult to operate in a clandestine manner and the scope of your operations must be reduced so that you do not compromise the members of the guerrilla movement. Although, the capability to blend with the populace is easier in an urban setting, the scale and synchronization of operations must be considered carefully if the guerrilla truly intends to live and fight another day.

Another critical skill pioneered by Detachment 101 during Phase II was their Unconventional Assisted Recovery (UAR) operations to repatriate downed pilots who were shot down flying over the 'hump'. UAR operations are complicated and the methods used require both coordination and synchronization for the successful execution of UAR. The major difference between UAR and Personnel Recovery (PR) is that UAR is executed in denied territories through a surrogate channel. When executing personnel recovery operations, the losing unit uses techniques to recover him or her in friendly held territory. The execution of UAR is considered an advance skill in the Special Forces community and few Battalions are fully trained in this aspect of unconventional warfare.<sup>85</sup> During operations in Burma, 101 had a unique opportunity to develop and enhance techniques to repatriate pilots. Not only did this provide a critical capability for the conduct of unconventional warfare in the future, but also it reassured the pilots flying in support of Det. 101 operations that they had a chance of surviving if they were shot down during operations to support 101.

During this brief analysis several factors were identified that indicate that there are lessons to be learned from Det. 101 that could serve contemporary Special Forces. Det. 101 was placed in an ambiguous command structure that made securing resources and the satiation of

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<sup>85</sup> This comment is based on the author's personal experiences in a SOTF Pre-Mission Training (PMT) exercise to establish a Special Forces Battalion with a "T" rating in this area as part of its Mission Essential Task List (METL).

competing agendas difficult. However, operating within this construct Det. 101 was afforded the time necessary to select members to serve in the Detachment who had unique capabilities. This would foster an environment of creativity and drive to accomplish difficult tasks in dangerous environments. The founding members were provided the necessary time to learn about the organization and test methods that would assist their efforts in planning and executing complex operations. Psychological operations were developed to support ongoing efforts to defeat the Japanese, and methodologies were identified that aided in the realization for the need to compartmentalize operations for greater efficiency. This realization helped shape the methods Det. 101 used to recruit new members and establish mutually beneficial relationships throughout the coalition and within the country. By establishing these critical networks, they were able to obtain great amounts of intelligence through both covert and overt methods that would be so beneficial that Stilwell himself proclaimed the war would have been unwinnable without Det. 101's contributions. Det. 101 was highly successful, but not without a cost. The inappropriate scope of the operations conducted in the Shah States area would lead to the greatest number of casualties suffered by Det. 101 to date. Another aspect of their successful operations was the development of different recovery mechanisms used to repatriate downed pilots.

Although the conduct of guerrilla warfare was hugely successful in Burma, several issues hindered operations throughout the entire campaign. It is these lessons that provide the unconventional practitioner with the tools necessary to challenge doctrine and improve upon existing practices. Special Forces have come a long way in implementing the lessons learned by Det. 101 in the CBI, but more improvement is necessary to maintain proficiency and relevance in the fights that are coming.

## Conclusions

### **Command and Control**

Establishing a command in any theater of operations is an inherently difficult task. Although Americans have had considerable practice in establishing commands since World War II, the establishment of the CBI was very difficult. Priority for the resourcing the campaign, from a U.S. perspective, was somewhat of an issue. Germany was the primary threat, but if left unchecked, the Japanese would also achieve hegemony in Southeast Asia, and that was a threat to national security. The result was limited commitment to the CBI and a squabbling over resources that was split between three different operational commanders who all reported directly to the JCS, who consequently controlled no resources. General Stilwell was the veritable stepchild in the east. Both MacArthur and Nimitz would retain more priority over the operations conducted by Stilwell in Southeast Asia.

Perhaps Det. 101 was a success as a direct result of the amorphous chain of command. Det. 101 was unique in the fact that they worked for two bosses, one with limited influence, and the other with strategic influence. Det. 101 reported to General Stilwell, who in turn reported to the JCS and the Generalissimo, however, Det. 101 also reported to Donovan, who had a direct line to FDR. Under these conditions, Donovan was able to support operations conducted in the theater dictated by the JCS and Chiang Kai-shek. If Donovan did not like the way things were going he could change them by influencing FDR into issuing a directive to the JCS. A mutual understanding between General Stilwell and Det. 101 became conducive to a beneficial working relationship between himself and Det. 101. Although the relationship worked, it was a non-unified command and is what we would call a supporting/supported relationship in contemporary operations.

The non-unified command in the Pacific and East Asian areas fell directly under the JCS – an entity that did not resource any assets for the campaign. Viscount Slim describes the situation as he observed it at the headquarters:

Sixteen months before, in the Sudan, I had learnt a sharp lesson on the necessity for the headquarters of the land forces and of the air forces supporting them to be together. I was, therefore rather dismayed to find that for the Burma campaign Air Headquarters at Calcutta and Army Headquarters at Maymyo, near Mandalay, were to be five hundred miles apart by air and unconnected by land. Even the Burwing at Magwe was about two hundred miles from army Headquarters, and until 1945 this pull between the defense of Calcutta and the Burma Campaign continued. It was with paucity of resources, unavoidable, but it hampered the free movement of air support in the theater, and air commanders were compelled to keep looking over their shoulders.<sup>86</sup>

Despite the lessons learned by Slim, the command structure established in the CBI by the JCS and the Generalissimo was not conducive to mutual support within the Pacific Theater. Competition for resources alone should have propelled the JCS to relook command relationships

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<sup>86</sup> Viscount Slim, *Defeat into Victory: Chapter 1, Into Burma* (Finland: Cassell & Company Limited, 1956), 8

established and then restructure that command based upon unity of command. Factors such as the location of headquarters and methods to communicate mission orders and support requirements should have been more strictly scrutinized. Additionally, more emphasis should have been given to the placement of Chiang Kai-shek within the unified command structure. A similar situation exists in Afghanistan where the RC-SOUTH commander has been given no actual authority over his command. The British and Chinese faced the same command situation that the United States suffers in Afghanistan under International Security Assistance Forces – Afghanistan (ISAF) in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. ISAF's struggle to conduct unified combat operations is rife with national caveats that hinder cooperation and degrade the authority of the Commander of ISAF (COMISAF).<sup>87</sup> A parallel structure exists, but on several occasions coalition members have led operations that should have been led by Afghans.<sup>88</sup> The quicker this lesson is learned, the quicker Afghans can begin taking back control of their country. The establishment of a Combined – Joint Task Force CBI, controlled by PACOM, with representative branches of service, would have been more apropos.

## **Intelligence**

Detachment 101 was instrumental in the establishment of an intelligence capability within Southeast Asia. Collaborative efforts by 101 in Burma can serve as a framework from which to further develop contemporary capabilities and relationships. Unconventional warfare

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<sup>87</sup> This comment is based upon the author's personal experiences in Afghanistan working closely with the members of Regional Command – South (RC-South) during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM XI as the S35 - Future Operations Officer (FUOPS), a member of the Special Operations Task Force (SOTF).

<sup>88</sup> On multiple operations, both with conventional and Special Forces units, coalition members have been witnessed by the author to be leading operations that should have been led by Afghans. Either out of fear or competency these soldiers took control. If the leaders of the Afghan unit were not proficient enough to be placed in a position of authority during a combat patrol, they should not be allowed to leave the wire until they are proficient. Using a left-seat, right-seat patrol mentality should only be used during low-risk patrols, not on a continuous basis as observed.

campaigns cannot be successfully executed without the placement and access to intelligence within the operational area and across national boundaries. Both the CIA and Special Forces have learned a great deal about the importance of intelligence driven precision operations. Some of the shortfalls identified by 101 during the CBI campaign have led to established practices by both the CIA and Special Forces. National competition for intelligence hegemony within the United States has consistently plagued the U.S.'s ability to act. Decades have passed since World War II and leaders continue to squabble over who should have the rights to act on and collect specific kinds of intelligence. Bartholomew-Feis asserts the British recognized that the U.S. had this problem long ago.

In a fact-finding mission designed ultimately to “draw America into Britain’s intelligence web.” Admiral John Godfrey, director of British Naval Intelligence, and Commander Ian Flemming (later of James Bond fame) met with intelligence agents representing the U.S. Army, Navy, State Department, and FBI. Although Godfrey and Flemming found the various departments eminently cooperative, they marveled at both the lack of interagency cooperation and the high degree of competition among them.<sup>89</sup>

The CIA has helped establish a more centralized approach to intelligence, but the rivalry still exists with intergovernmental agencies and within the different military services. The CIA relies on its operative’s intuition and training to select the best method or manner to conduct the handover, but the Special Operator has no guideline on how to execute this process.<sup>90</sup> This remains a challenge and tensions often exist during handover of operation between the CIA and Special Forces. Although the level of cooperation in contemporary operations in Afghanistan is

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<sup>89</sup> Bartholomew-Feis, *The OSS and Ho Chi Minh*, 54.

<sup>90</sup> During Robin Sage training, the candidates receive training on how to execute a link up between the guerrilla element and the detachment, but the CIA role is not played. The methods would be similar, but up to the author’s participation in this exercise in 2003, there was no established method to train this in the course.

getting better, there still exists a need at the operational level to fuse intelligence across the coalition.<sup>91</sup>

Today, Special Forces have become much better at ‘sorting’ the intelligence, but there are difficulties with dissemination and collaboration. The compartmentalization of intelligence activities made the ‘sorting’ easier, but the technological advances hinders intelligence efforts, making them difficult to pass to our surrogate forces. NATO and U.S. platforms for intelligence sharing, even at the secret level, are incompatible. The methods used in Afghanistan include placing large bits of data on ‘thumb drives’ and walking a ‘soft copy’ over to our coalition partners. Trust is a significant issue, and the coalition has developed ‘quick fixes’ to the systemic issue. Elements such as the Kandahar Intelligence Fusion Cell (KIFC) are a step in the right direction. The KIFC was established in 2007 as an initiative to share intelligence with our coalition partners that would be beneficial in planning, coordinating, and executing operations within RC South.

Intelligence capabilities are reliant on the technology and the proficiency of the gathering entity to deliver the correct message. Both are developed based upon the characteristics present in the theater of operations. No theater is exactly alike and intelligence activities must be adjusted to meet these different challenges. Det. 101 understood that they could not operate unilaterally and expect to gather enough intelligence to be beneficial. Special Forces still struggle with this in Afghanistan. No matter how effective the camouflage, an American will be incapable of passing him or herself off as a native of Afghanistan. This is why there must be a more concerted effort to empower the host nation to develop a more adequate intelligence capability. The Afghan people are quite capable of establishing networks, much like those established in Burma, for the

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<sup>91</sup> This comment is based on the author’s personal contact with members of the CIA and the witnessed efforts of coalition intelligence integration within RC South.



collection of actionable intelligence. A review of collaborative efforts should be required to establish a more cohesive strategy towards 'combined-jointness' within the intelligence sharing community.

## **Bridging the SOT Gaps**

The O.S.S. in Burma had a unique situation that placed them working for different masters. When executing unconventional warfare operations a clear chain of command must be established and maintained. Special Forces are heavily reliant on outside sources to provide them with the necessary support that will aid in mission success. If there is not a solid command structure, they will have difficulties establishing credibility to conduct operations outside anything other than the tactical level. Det. 101 was quickly able to establish credibility by providing the Kachins with rice, demolitions, weapons, ammunition and other supplies. Most of these supplies were secured by outside sources that were established by 'drug deals' with other O.S.S. operatives. This allowed them to expand the scope of their operations beyond the tactical realm and into the operational through the creation of area commands and the execution of decentralized operations. In Afghanistan, there are several examples of operations that have been coordinated across the provinces in RC South that have produced strategic effects, a lesson learned from early pioneers such as Detachment 101. However, it would have been much easier if there had been an adequate chain-of-command in the beginning to assist 101 in pushing supplies to the necessary outstations. Interestingly, Donovan had established relationships that placed the 101 directly under the theater commander, but also directly under FDR as well. This is a difficult relationship at best. Contemporarily Special Forces work in an Operational Control (OPCON) role to the Combined-Joint Task Force (CJTF) in both Afghanistan and Iraq. This is not necessarily the most conducive relationship for conducting an unconventional warfare campaign. Possibly a more appropriate relationship for COIN, but in an unconventional role, Special Forces need to retain the freedom of action to execute missions as they unfold. The bureaucracy that has

established itself over the operators in Afghanistan has hamstrung the effectiveness an SFOD-A to influence the area. Det. 101 was free to essentially conduct operations as needed within the scope of the larger campaign. To maintain relevance, Special Forces need to return to this method of conducting operations.

## **Operational Scope and Support to Operations**

Sometimes Special Forces fall victim to their own successes. It was no different for Det. 101 in Burma. The level and accuracy of intelligence that they delivered to General Stilwell steadily rose until almost eighty-five of the intelligence that was acted upon in the CBI came from the agents in the field trained and controlled by Det. 101. “In the performance of its espionage task, Detachment 101 provided 75% of all the intelligence from which the 10th Air Force chose its targets and 85% of all the intelligence received by Stilwell's Northern Combat Area Command.”<sup>92</sup> Unfortunately, these accolades were a direct result of mission creep. Not long after General Stilwell authorized 101 to expand the guerrilla force to 3,000 men, they began taking on increasingly more conventional missions. The guerrillas were proficient in conventional tactics such as raids and ambushes, but they were not established or trained to conduct conventional missions. This eventually led to the receipt of missions such as the clearing of 10,000 square acres of enemy-held territory in the Shah States area. The result would be a large increase in casualties suffered. In Afghanistan, Special Forces are destined to relearn this lesson from Det. 101. As partnership dwindles because of competing requirements, Special Forces have found themselves conducting more operations with less indigenous support, resulting in an increase in the casualties suffered by American Special Forces in Afghanistan. Although training is one

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<sup>92</sup> James R. Ward, *Detachment 101 Office of Strategic Services Burma April 12, 1942 – July 12, 1945 “The American – Kachin Rangers”*. Retrieved March 21, 2010 from <http://oss-101.com/history.html>

method to minimize these casualties, correct employment is the best method to prevent these losses.

## **Summary**

The organization and scope of contemporary Special Forces has evolved over the last fifty years and will continue to change as new asymmetric threats emerge. Each situation the United States becomes involved in will have unique military, social, and political considerations that will shape the type of warfare in which we engage. Political will has always been the driving factor behind the level of military commitment acceptable to the American people. Special Forces will usually be an economy of force choice that is more palatable to Americans. Unconventional warfare capabilities are what make Special Forces capable of maintaining relevancy as the 'low cost' choice to enforce national security policies worldwide.

Without a doubt, the operations conducted by Detachment 101 in support of the China-Burma-India Theater of World War II serve as the precedent for the conduct of unconventional warfare by contemporary Special Forces and should be used as a basis to conduct unconventional warfare in the future. No other American unit up to this point in history had been organized, equipped, and employed to execute unconventional warfare. Detachment 101 applied ingenuity, charisma, and a sense of duty to pioneer concepts in an uncertain environment to aid in the defeat of imperialistic Japan. The lessons learned by Detachment 101 in Burma have been integrated into doctrine and learning mechanisms since World War II. However, several concepts that were learned during that campaign have slipped our memory and should be revisited to increase our effectiveness in other campaigns such as the one executed in Afghanistan. Some of these lessons included the establishment of the appropriate command relationships under which the scope and resourcing of missions, and fusion of intelligence can be addressed adequately.

Consequently, it would be foolhardy to surmise that the methods used in Burma between the period of 1942-1945 by Detachment 101 are 'the way' to conduct unconventional warfare.

Each situation has unique characteristics that must be considered. Michael Howard and Peter Paret's remind us that Clausewitz discussed precedent by stating, "it is simply not possible to construct a model for the art of war that can serve as a scaffolding on which the commander can rely for support at any time."<sup>93</sup> The methods, tactics, techniques, and procedures executed in the CBI by Detachment 101 were developed as understanding of the operational environment evolved. Each environment presents unique challenges and the approach used to solve these difficult problems cannot be applied in a dogmatic manner.

## Appendix A – Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.) Organization

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<sup>93</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1976), 161.

## Organization O.S.S. in China Theater

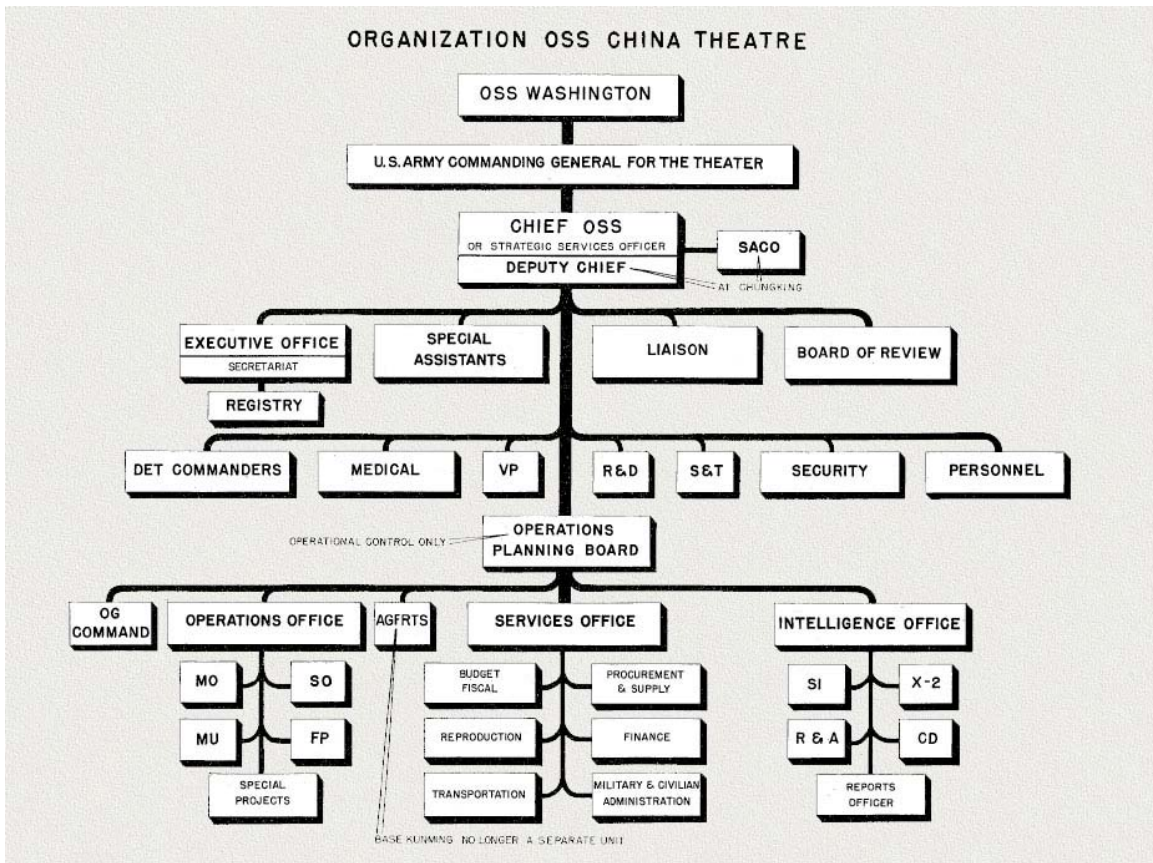


Figure 4: Organization of O.S.S. in China, 1945<sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Organization and Functions* (LaCrosse, WI: Brookhaven Press, 2004), 30. This is a picture taken of the original document created by Brookhaven Press.

## O.S.S. Special Operations Branch (SO) Organization

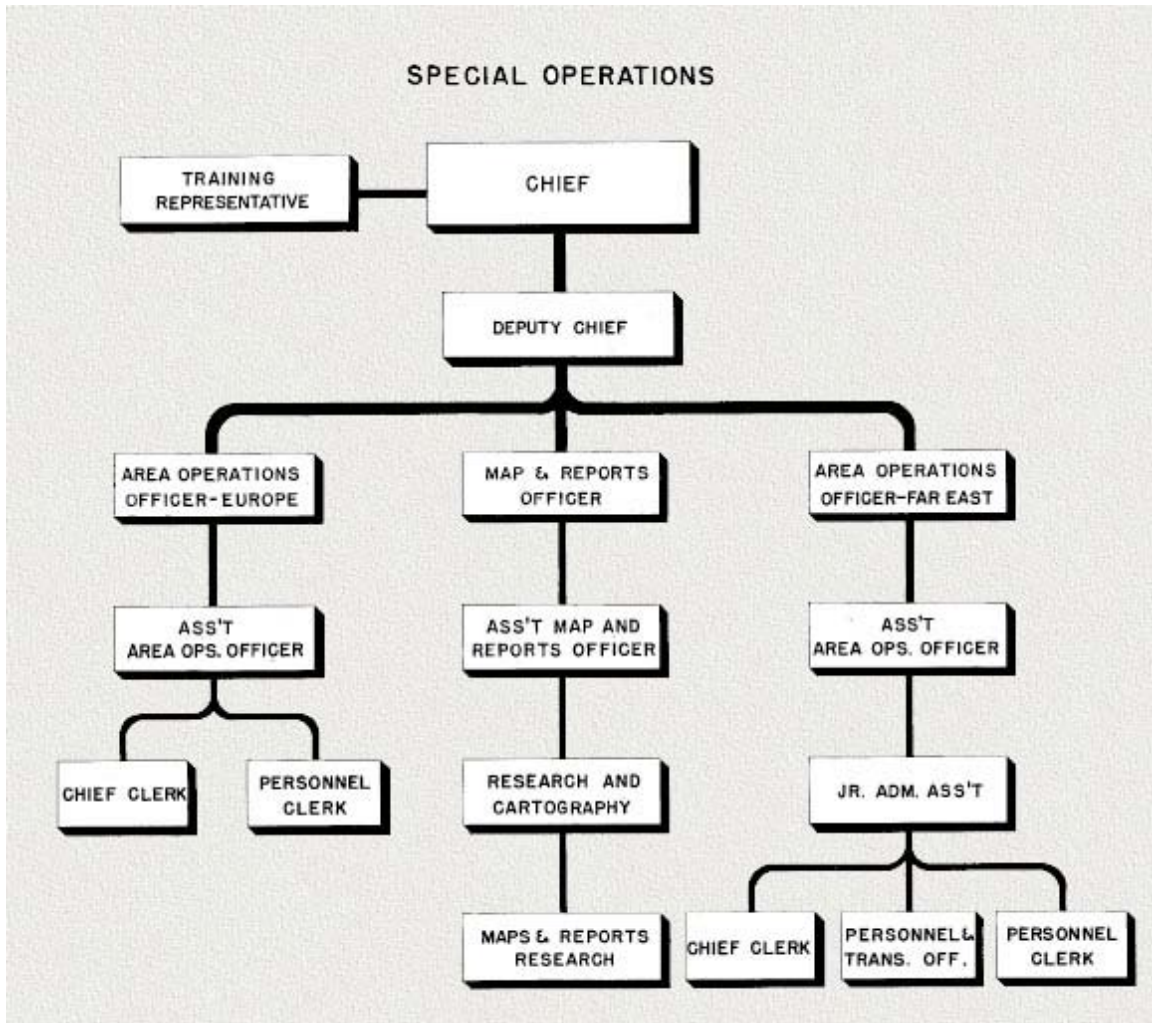


Figure 5: Organization of O.S.S. in China, 1945<sup>95</sup>

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 15.

# O.S.S. Operational Group (OG) Organization

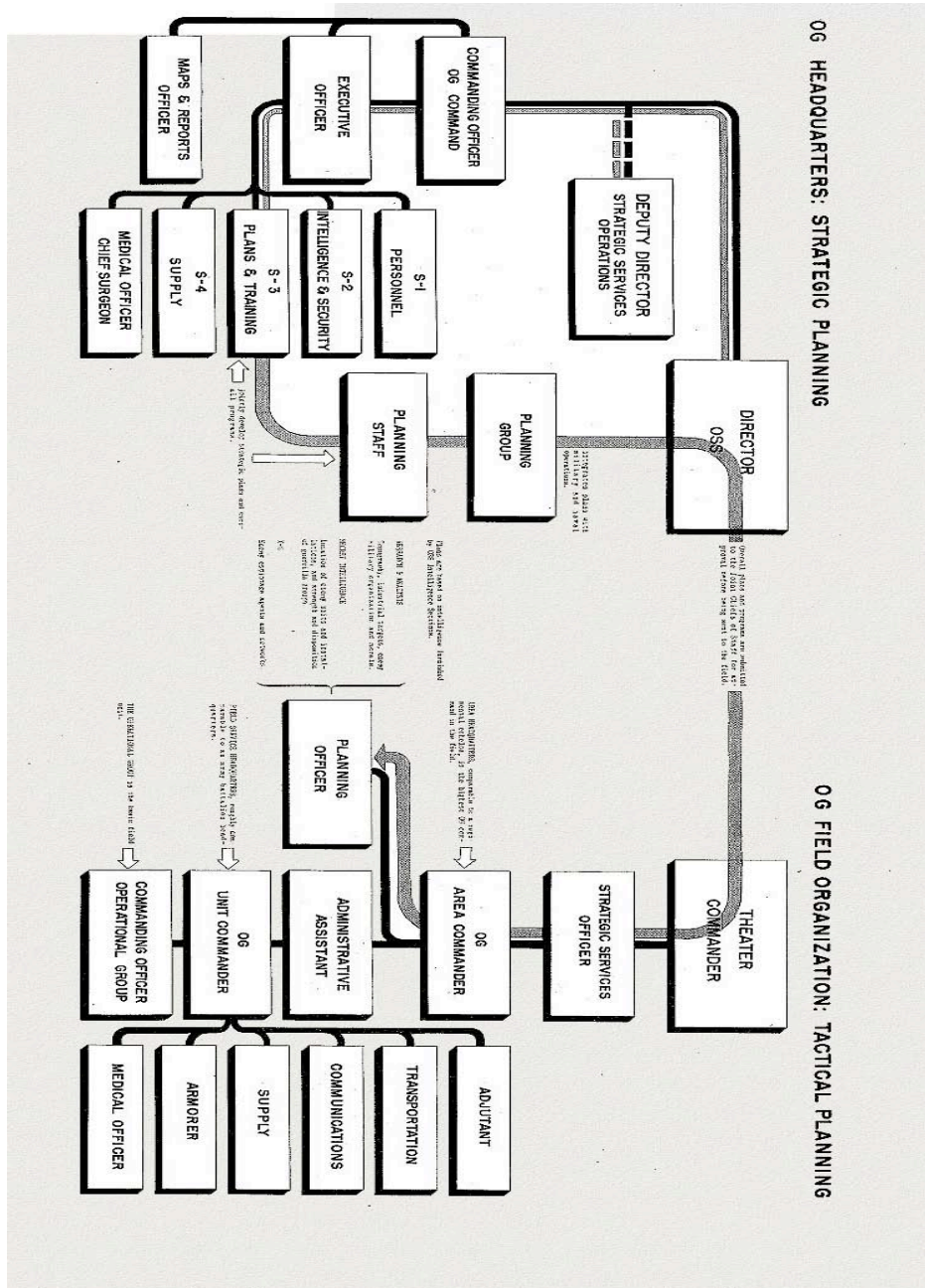


Figure 6: Organization of O.S.S. in China, 1945<sup>96</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 18.

## O.S.S. Morale Operations (MO) Organization

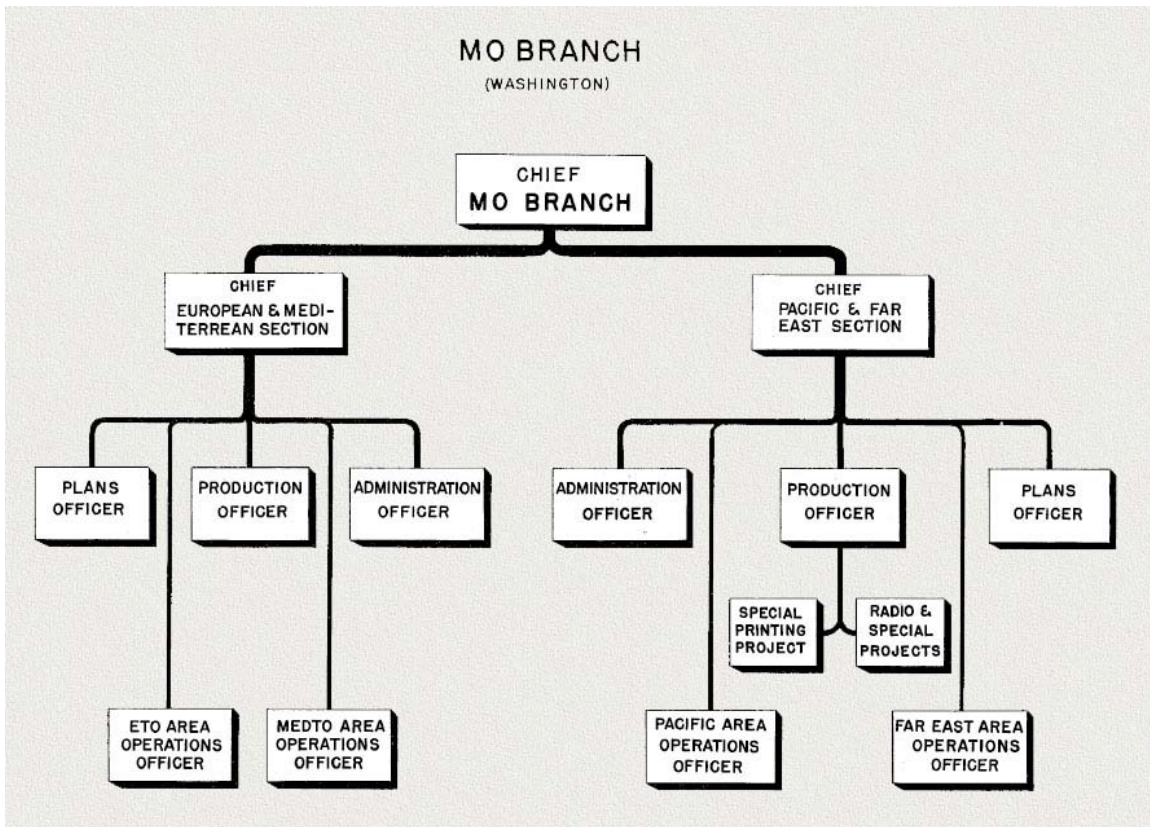


Figure 7: Organization of O.S.S. in China, 1945<sup>97</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 17.



## Appendix B – Office of Strategic Services (O.S.S.) Principals & Methods

### **O.S.S. Special Operations Branch (SO)<sup>98</sup>**

#### **SECTION I —PRINCIPLES AND METHODS**

##### **1. THE MISSION, OBJECTIVE, AND IMPLEMENTS**

The mission of the O.S.S. is to plan and operate special services, (including secret intelligence, research and analysis, and morale and physical subversion) to lower the enemy's will and capacity to resist, carried on in support of military operations and in furtherance of the war effort. The mission of the Special Operations Branch is to carry out that part of the O.S.S. mission, which can be accomplished by certain physical subversive methods as contrasted with the operations of the Morale Operations, the Operational Groups, and the Maritime Unit. The primary objective of the Special Operations Branch is the destruction of enemy personnel, materiel, and installations.

##### **2. METHODS**

The methods to be used by Special Operations are all measures needed to destroy enemy personnel, materiel, installations, and his will to resist. The major classifications of SO methods are;

- a. Sabotage.
- b. Direct contact with and support of underground resistance groups
- c. Special operations not assigned to other govern- mental agencies and not under direct control of theater or area commanders.

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<sup>98</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *Office of Strategic Services, Special Operations Field Manual No. 4 – Strategic Services (Provisional)*, (Washington, D.C.: Office of Strategic Services, 1944), 1-5.

## O.S.S. Operations Group (OG)<sup>99</sup>

**DEFINITION:** a small, uniformed party of specially qualified soldiers, organized, trained, and equipped to accomplish the specific missions set forth below.

### 1. THE MISSION, OBJECTIVE, AND IMPLEMENTS

a. The mission of Operational Groups is:

(1) To organize, train, and equip resistance groups in order to convert them into guerrillas, and to serve as the nuclei of such groups in operations against the enemy, as directed by the theater commander.

(2) In addition, under authority granted to the theater commander by the JCS Directive, Operational Groups may be used to execute independent operations against enemy targets as directed by the theater commander.

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

## Appendix C – Special Forces Organization

### U.S. Army Special Forces Command (Airborne) (USASFC)<sup>100</sup>

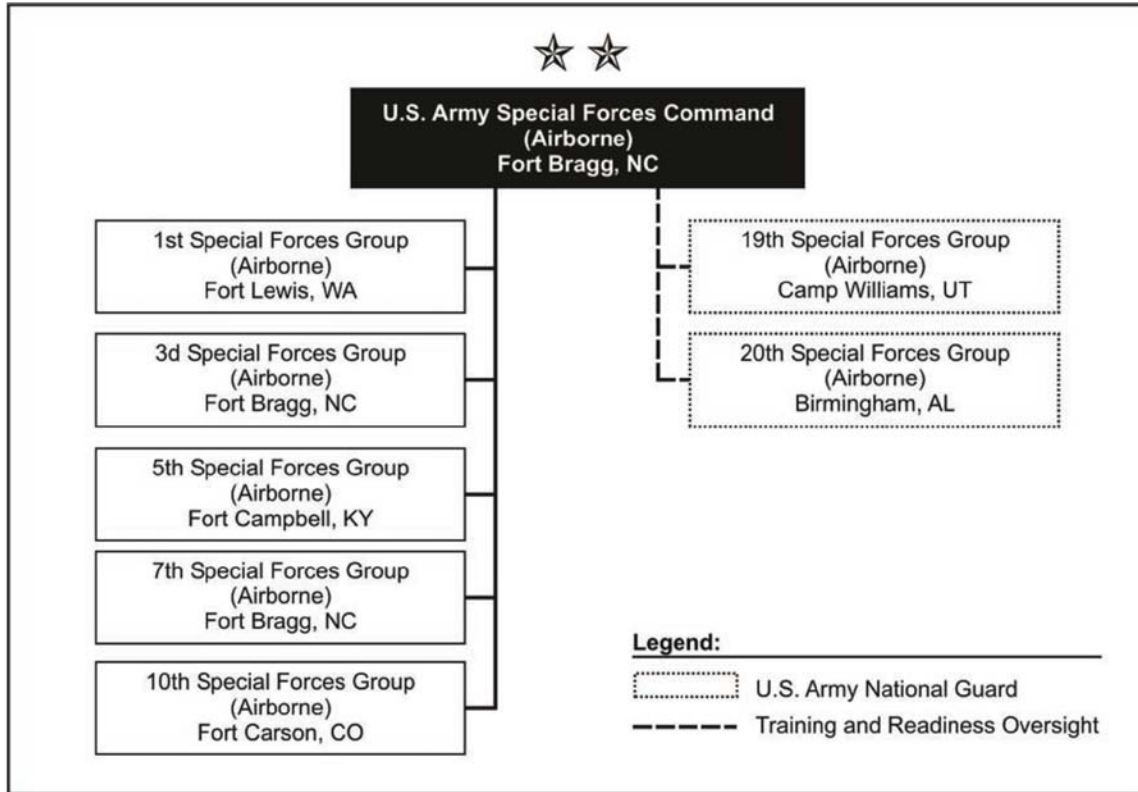
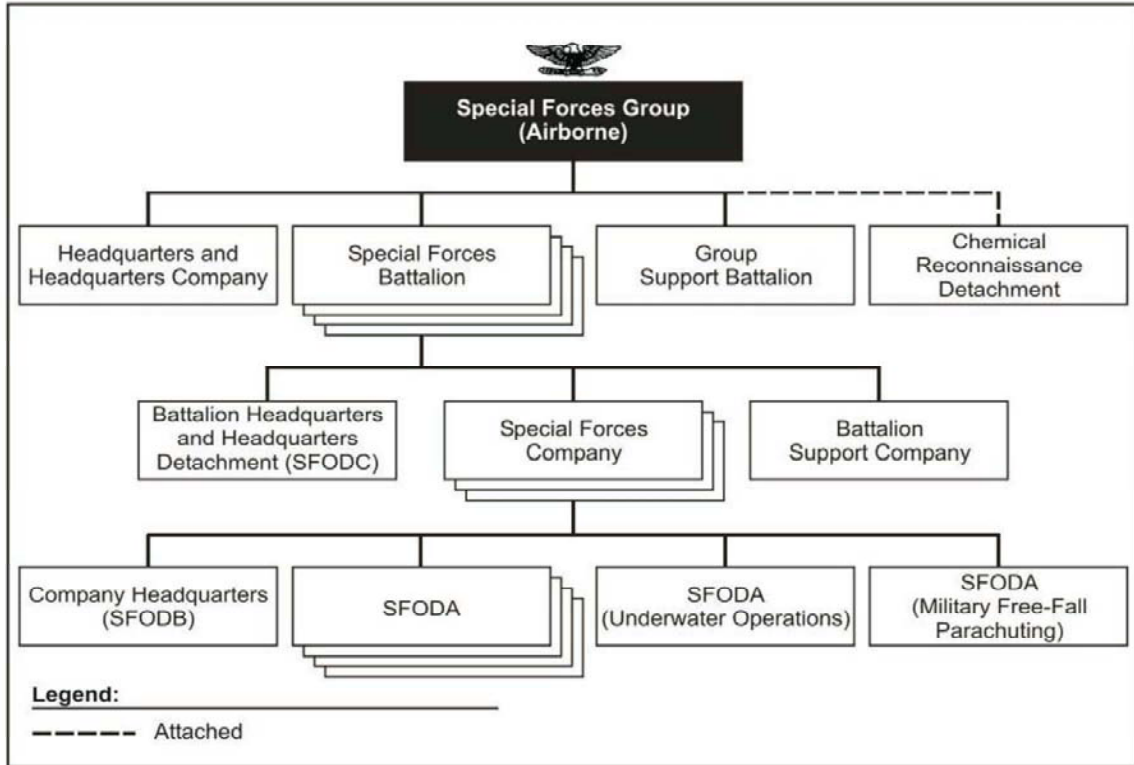


Figure 8: U.S. Army Special Forces Command (Airborne) (2006)<sup>101</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-05 (FM 100-25), Army Special Operations Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006), 3-2.

**Special Forces Group (Airborne) (SFG)<sup>102</sup>**



**Figure 9: U.S. Army Special Forces Group (Airborne) (2006)<sup>103</sup>**

<sup>102</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, *Office of Strategic Services, Special Operations Field Manual No. 4*, 1-5.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-3.

## Appendix D – Special Forces Core Tasks<sup>104</sup>

Unconventional Warfare (UW). “JP 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, approaches the defining of UW in a “classic” sense. ARSOF broadens the definition by defining UW operations as “a broad range of military and/or paramilitary operations and activities, normally of long duration, conducted through, with, or by indigenous or other surrogate forces that are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and otherwise directed in varying degrees by an external source. UW operations can be conducted across the range of conflict against regular and irregular forces. These forces may or may not be State-sponsored.” This expanded definition includes the use of surrogates and the implementation of UW operations against non-State actors. These aspects are important for ARSOF to meet emerging threats.”<sup>105</sup>

Foreign Internal Defense (FID). JP 1-02 defines FID as participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency.<sup>106</sup>

Direct Action (DA). JP 1-02 defines DA as short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments and which employ specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets. Direct action differs from conventional offensive actions in the level of physical and political risk, operational techniques, and the degree of discriminate and precise use of force to achieve specific objectives.<sup>107</sup>

Special Reconnaissance (SR). JP 1-02 defines SR as reconnaissance and surveillance actions conducted as a special operation in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to collect or verify information of strategic or operational significance, employing military capabilities not normally found in conventional forces. These actions provide an additive capability for commanders and supplement other conventional reconnaissance and surveillance actions.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-05.20 (FM 100-25), Army Special Operations Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2006), Chapter 2.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-1.

<sup>106</sup> Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2001), 214.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 498.

Counterterrorism (CT). JP 1-02 defines CT as operations that include the offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, preempt, and respond to terrorism.<sup>109</sup>

Psychological Operation (PSYOP). JP 1-02 defines PSYOP as planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of psychological operations is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives.<sup>110</sup>

Civil Affairs Operations (CAO). JP 1-02 defines CAO as designated Active and Reserve component forces and units organized, trained, and equipped specifically to conduct civil affairs activities and to support civil-military operations.<sup>111</sup>

Counterproliferation (CP) of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). JP 1-02 defines CP as those actions (e.g., detect and monitor, prepare to conduct counterproliferation operations, offensive operations, weapons of mass destruction, active defense, and passive defense) taken to defeat the threat and/or use of weapons of mass destruction against the United States, our military forces, friends, and allies.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> JP 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, 130.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 432.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 129.

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