

**THE ORGANIZATIONAL EVOLUTION OF OSS DETACHMENT 101 IN
BURMA, 1942-1945**

A Dissertation

by

TROY JAMES SACQUETY

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

May 2008

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ABSTRACT

The Organizational Evolution of OSS Detachment 101 in Burma, 1942-1945.

(May 2008)

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The Office of Strategic Services (OSS), was created during the Second World War to be a central collector, producer, and disseminator of foreign intelligence. Its secondary role of clandestine warfare did not come easily. One OSS unit, Detachment 101, surmounted numerous problems to become a model clandestine and special operations unit able to create its own indigenous army that waged war behind Japanese lines in Burma. This study uses previously unexplored primary source materials from the OSS records held by the U.S. National Archives to examine the unit and its organizational changes from 1942 to 1945.

Detachment 101 succeeded in the China-Burma-India Theater (CBI) for the simple reason that it was able to function independent of immediate control from either the U.S. Army or OSS main headquarters. Source documents reveal that the unit's commander was left on his own to decide how the unit would operate, and how to incorporate various OSS branches and capabilities into its operational matrix. The CBI's lack of resources dictated that the Detachment 101 had to streamline its efforts to be

successful. Its officers needed to get acquainted with the entire operation and then integrate their disparate elements into where they best fit as the whole.

An exploration of the documents reveals that each of the unit's two commanders molded the unit into an organization that reflected their personalities. Colonel Carl F. Eifler, was bold and impetuous and modeled the group to accomplish any task—even if it could not. Colonel William R. Peers, focused the group's efforts on assisting the north Burma campaign. Under his direction, the unit rapidly became a much more cohesive unit able to help the Allies win control of north Burma. His direction was instrumental in Detachment 101's first real test; the Myitkyina Campaign. Examination of the primary documents uncovers that by the end of the war, the unit had become so successful and so flexible that it was the only ground combat unit fighting in north Burma, and was able to adopt a variety of dissimilar missions. Although other OSS combat operations gave exceptional service, none was as central to the conduct of an entire campaign as was Detachment 101.

DEDICATION

To my wife. Thank you for your patience as I refought the Burma Campaign.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my committee chair, Dr. Linn, and my committee members, Dr. Brands, Dr. Bradford, Dr. Krammer, and Dr. Crooks, for their guidance and support throughout the course of this research. Thank you for sticking by me as I slowly plodded through the research.

Thanks also go to my colleagues in the United States Army Special Operations Command History Office. Without your help and support, I would not have finished. In particular, I want to extend my thanks to Dr. Charles Briscoe and Dr. Kenneth Finlayson. Thank you to Mr. Daniel Telles for the map on page 291.

I would be remiss if I did not thank all the veterans and family members of OSS Detachment 101. Your support and help has been instrumental. In particular, I want to thank Dr. Samuel Spector and Mrs. Marje Luce. Without you, I would not have known about Detachment 101.

I extend a warm thank you to my family. Although pacifists, my parents encouraged me in my studies of military history. For this I am forever grateful. Finally, I want to come to closure with my grandfather, Chester R. Wilson. Your stories of the 100th Infantry Division, 399th Infantry Regiment in France/Germany in WWII and 1st Cavalry Division, 8th Cavalry Regiment in Korea kept me spellbound. You are the reason why I developed an unshakable interest in WWII, and what has led me here. Thank you and may you rest in peace.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Strategic Services (OSS), considered a predecessor organization to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and U.S. Army Special Forces, was created during the Second World War as the first United States government organization whose role was to be a central collector, producer, and disseminator of foreign intelligence. However, popular histories have mythologized its secondary role of special operations, and that is why the organization is most misunderstood today.¹ The role of clandestine warfare did not come easily for the OSS. The fledgling organization made remarkable strides in a very short time, but also experienced dramatic failures because of inexperience. However, one OSS unit, Detachment 101, surmounted these problems to become a model clandestine and special operations unit that used indigenous personnel to create its own “army” to wage war behind enemy lines. The flexible nature of Detachment 101 was the key that allowed it to evolve its organization and operating methods to enable its success in a variety of clandestine guerrilla and intelligence-gathering operations against Japanese forces in Burma.

This dissertation follows the style of *The Journal of Military History*.

¹ For the purpose of the operations through 1942, the term COI/OSS will apply. Detachment 101 started off under the Coordinator of Information (COI) and transitioned into the OSS. However, the first contingent of personnel in Detachment 101 did not hear of the OSS transition until months later. Therefore to avoid confusion, the term COI/OSS will apply through mid-1942. Thereafter, OSS will be used exclusively as by that time the COI ceased to exist and there was no confusion that it was the OSS under whose authority Detachment 101 operated.

This flexibility allowed each of its two commanders to mold the unit into an organization that reflected their personalities. Colonel Carl F. Eifler, bold and impetuous, modeled the group into one that believed it could accomplish any task—even if it could not. Colonel William R. Peers, the second commander, scaled back the Detachment’s ambition when he took over command. Instead, he focused the group’s efforts on assisting the north Burma campaign, and rapidly turned the group into a much more cohesive unit that was capable of helping the Allies win control of north Burma.

Detachment 101 would not have succeeded in a similar fashion had it served in any other area. It achieved success in the China-Burma-India Theater (CBI) for the simple reason that it was able to function independent of immediate control from either the U.S. Army in the CBI—under whose tactical authority and overall strategic direction it operated—or OSS headquarters in Washington D. C. All operations, decisions, and organizational changes were under the discretion of the Detachment 101 commander. This “benevolent neglect” from higher echelons allowed the commander of Detachment 101 to independently decide how the unit would operate, and how it would incorporate various OSS branches and capabilities into its operational matrix. The lack of resources in the CBI—it was one of the lowest priority theaters—dictated that from the start Detachment 101 would have to streamline its efforts if it were to be successful. For instance, in contrast to other OSS units, Detachment 101 chose not to follow the OSS standard of branch “compartmentation”—in which in the interests of operational security, separate functional elements were kept unaware of the actions of others. Instead, from its earliest days, Detachment 101’s lack of resources dictated that it had to

encourage its officers to get acquainted with the entire operation and then integrated their disparate elements into where they best fit as the whole.²

Detachment 101 did not remain a static command. The unit evolved from the sabotage and smuggling methods developed by Eifler in 1942-43, to employing a system of combined operations under Peers. In Detachment 101's version of combined operations, the unit had under its own operational control, land, air, and sea elements and every OSS branch that it chose to incorporate into its force structure.³ The success of this unit, when placed in its theater setting and overall importance, was unmatched by any other OSS organization. Detachment 101's operations in the Burma Campaign best achieved OSS creator and leader, Major General William Donovan's vision of how special warfare operators could assist conventional forces. Although other OSS combat operations gave exceptional service, none was as central to the conduct of an entire campaign as was Detachment 101.

The following study looks at Detachment 101's organization and how it contributed to mission success and allowed the unit to conduct limited combined operations. This work does not analyze Donovan's ideas, or to compare and contrast one OSS group's success with that of another. Its purpose is to examine Detachment 101's organizational evolution and describe how that impacted the effectiveness and complexity of its operations. These operations in turn, influenced how the leaders of Detachment 101 chose to organize and direct the unit. It was in part for this reason that

² William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February to 29 February, 1944, inclusive," 29 February 1944, F 52, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

³ Although OSS Detachment 101 used the terms interchangeably, for the purposes of the study, OSS entities as a whole will be referred to as "Branches," while those elements at Detachment 101 will be called "Sections."

the Detachment was able to easily absorb functions that had immediate tactical use into the group's organization, but had difficulty doing so with more "strategic" elements.

No other study has chronicled or analyzed the development and evolution of the unit from that of conducting acts of sabotage to that of a sophisticated coordinated guerrilla and unconventional warfare campaign that integrated propaganda, intelligence gathering, local auxiliaries, and liaison with U.S. and Allied forces. In this way, the author feels he can make the best contribution to the literature of the China-Burma-India Theater and that of the OSS. Most other works focus exclusively on operations. This is the first to explore how the organization of an OSS group contributed to its success.

Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation will trace the history of the Detachment from its formation in 1942 until its dissolution in July 1945. The chapters are broken into segments defined by important events either in the Burma campaign or to the unit. An introductory chapter explains the CBI, as well as Burma, its peoples, geography, climate, strategic situation, and a brief history of the Detachment.

The second chapter describes how the Detachment organized itself from its introduction into the CBI in mid-1942 until February 1943. This was an ad-hoc but formative period for the Detachment, during which the unit's very existence was only of an experimental nature and at risk of cancellation. However, in these early months Eifler made the administrative and command arrangements that would allow the unit to be successful. Despite the Detachment changing dramatically by 1945, several of the principles established in this period remained operational practice.

The third chapter provides the first of three operational case studies, which discuss the operations of Detachment 101 and how its structure affected the unit's mission and focus. It was operations that gave the Detachment its reason for existence and the lessons learned that drove change. This operations chapter examines the early operations of 1943 and detail how the Detachment learned from failure and reinforced unexpected success. In contrast to the other two operational chapters, this one precedes the organizational chapter covering the same period. This is because at this stage, operations drove organizational change, not vice-versa, as would later be the case.

The fourth chapter details from February 1943 until December 1943, in which Detachment 101 better secured its role and place in theater, and was in turn given a change in operational directive in the lead up to the Myitkyina Campaign. This period was crucial for the Detachment. It had experienced many operational failures, but learned from them and incorporated these lessons into its operational structure. The period ends with Eifler's removal from command. His brash nature had helped to force the acceptance of the unit in the CBI. He established a can do attitude in the group and made the administrative connections necessary to permit success. His leadership style, however, could not sustain the group as it moved into 1944 and more complex, sustained, and difficult operations.

Chapter V analyzes from January 1944 to May 1944. These were the first five months of the Detachment under Peers' leadership. He rebuilt the outfit into one that was less cumbersome and that was more suited to serve as an adjunct to conventional forces. It was here that the unit began to recruit an indigenous force in earnest to wage

an insurgent war against the Japanese. With this act, Detachment 101 transformed itself from the role of intelligence gathering and sabotage operations and evolved into a true guerrilla organization.

Chapter VI covers the period of Detachment 101's organization from May through August 1944. By the end of this period, Peers had molded the unit into one that bore little resemblance to the one that arrived in Burma in 1942. During this period, the group began to incorporate many strategic assets into its make-up. These capabilities, such as counter-intelligence and psychological operations, had less of an immediate tactical need. As such, their incorporation into the unit was more troublesome than purely tactical elements had been.

The seventh chapter is the second operational case study and examines Detachment 101's assistance to American, British, and Chinese forces during the Myitkyina Campaign. In these actions, the newly raised guerrilla forces of Detachment 101 played a crucial part in the crowning achievement of the American effort in Burma. However, the secondary and memoir literature has not fully explored the OSS's role, particularly its relationship with Merrill's Marauders. This chapter provides an assessment of how well Detachment 101 had used the elements in its force structure.

Following this case study, Chapters VIII and IX explore the evolution of the organization through the fall of Bhamo in December 1944 and Lashio in March 1945. They discuss how the unit wound down its operations and used its assets to help other OSS groups as the war in Burma closed. The final months of the Detachment are covered in Chapter X. During this period, the unit served as the only ground combat

force available for use in north Burma. It was at this time that the unit best exhibited its inherent flexibility.

Chapter XI is the final operations chapter. Detachment 101 was waging two separate campaigns in the final months of the war in Burma. In the Shan States, the Detachment built upon its ability to improvise and evolve its operations. It assumed a more conventional role and provided the only American ground forces available to halt Japanese forces fleeing from Burma into Thailand. Rather than look at the campaign in the Shan States—since it has received the most attention in published memoirs on Detachment 101—the final chapter will look at Detachment 101’s contribution to the Arakan Campaign. This little-studied campaign involved land, air, and unlike in the Shan States, maritime OSS assets. It shows how, at least organizationally, Detachment 101 was capable of a small-scale version of combined operations and how well the Detachment’s organizational changes allowed it the flexibility to successfully conduct operations. The conclusion recapitulates how the unit evolved from 1942 to 1945 and how its organic flexibility allowed it the freedom to alter its operations to meet the changing situation.

A Note on Sources

A wealth of untapped primary material exists on OSS Detachment 101. By far, the most important of these sources is Record Group 226 (RG 226) in the National Archives II at College Park, MD. This record group is composed of the documents of the OSS’s predecessor organization, the Coordinator of Information (COI) and the OSS, as well as a few post-OSS records of its follow-on organization, the Strategic Services

Unit (SSU). The only OSS records not included in RG 226 are some records from OSS Washington regarding the Research and Analysis (R&A) Branch; however, this has no effect on a theater study of an operational OSS organization.⁴ The records of RG 226 formed the basis of the initial files of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) when it was created under the National Defense Act in 1947. The CIA held these records in its custody, and the Agency only began releasing them to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) beginning in the early 1980s.⁵

The OSS records present a unique group among those held by NARA. They are the only records of any nation's intelligence service open in their entirety. In contrast to many record groups held by NARA, they are also virtually a complete record. When turned over to NARA, the Agency held back only a few reports still deemed of intelligence interest—most of which has been subsequently released—or deemed of having no historical value. This enables one to find a depth of detailed information on the OSS. Regarding Burma and Detachment 101 alone, there were some 2500 boxes of documents. However, the results of the search were mixed. The early frantic period of the unit while under Eifler does not have the same documentation as that of the 1944-1945 years. Fortunately, Eifler was an exceptionally clear and detailed writer, which makes up in part for this deficiency.

⁴ When the OSS was dissolved in 1945, the Research and Analysis (R&A) section and its records went to the State Department, while the other branches deemed worthy of saving formed the Strategic Services Unit (SSU).

⁵ For more on the transition of the records to NARA, see Lawrence H. McDonald "The OSS and its Records" in *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II*, ed. George C. Chalou, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992)

Donovan's personal papers, a subset of RG 226 at the National Archives, proved surprisingly limited, having almost no mention of Detachment 101.⁶ The records of the China-Burma-India Theater (RG 493) also contained virtually no mention of Detachment 101 or the OSS in general.⁷ However, this too was an important discovery. Combined with the detail in RG 226, the lack of material in either RG 493 or Donovan's papers showed how little direction higher commands gave to Detachment 101. Although these commands directed the Detachment in generalities as the strategic situation dictated, they provided little tactical guidance.

Another primary source has been the Detachment 101 veterans' group, which has been in existence since 1946, and the families of Detachment 101 veterans. As a whole, they have been very receptive, and the source of many valuable documents and recollections. This includes hundreds of personal letters, decades of the group's quarterly newsletters, and copies of many original notes, diaries, unpublished memoirs, and other records. The membership also provides a mechanism to double-check official records by being able to contact the participants of a particular incident. In a word, this source has been invaluable.

⁶ An explanation for the lack of correspondence was found in a letter dated 26 May 1943 in which the OSS headquarters area operations officer for the Far East relays to Colonel Eifler that all that Donovan required of him in the way of correspondence was to continue sending in monthly reports. (Carl O. Hoffman to Carl F. Eifler, "Yours of April 21 and 26, 1943" 26 May 1943, F 27, B 191, E 92, RG 226, NARA.) The only direct correspondence to Eifler from Donovan was a 2 June 1943 letter congratulating him on his excellent job. William J. Donovan to Carl F. Eifler, National Archives microfilm, Roll 110, A 3304, E 180, RG 226, NARA. A copy of Donovan's records are also held by the U.S. Military History Institute at Carlisle, PA.

⁷ The only substantial inclusion of the OSS in RG 493 concerned the post-war OSS "Mercy" missions under Detachment 202 to parachute operatives into POW camps in China for the purpose of protecting the prisoners from Japanese retaliation.

These primary sources became even more crucial when one reviews the secondary literature. With few exceptions, the literature of Detachment 101 consists of veteran's memoirs. The most important of these memoirs are the two works co-written by the former commanding officers. Tom Moon and Eifler co-wrote *The Deadliest Colonel* and Dean Breilis and Peers produced *Behind the Burma Road*.⁸ Of these, *Behind the Burma Road* is the most valuable because of its greater scope and frankness. Even so, its primary focus is on operations, though not all of these, like those in the Arakan, are covered in detail. Other broad works include Detachment 101 veteran Richard Dunlap's *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma*.⁹ This work is valuable for the personal accounts that it relates, but, like the other works, focuses on operations. A variety of memoirs of veterans who served in the unit is available, although they are narrower in focus. Examples of these include Thomas Chamales' *Never So Few*, Roger Hilsman's *American Guerrilla: My War Behind Japanese Lines*, and Dean Breilis's *The Mission*.¹⁰ These memoirs provide details of individual participation, but not an overall view of the Detachment's organization and operations. This is also true for limited press books such as Bill Brough's *To Reason Why*, Thomas Baldwin's *I'd Do it All Again:*

⁸ Thomas N. Moon and Carl F. Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel* (New York: Vantage Press, 1975) and William R. Peers and Dean Breilis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963)

⁹ Richard Dunlap, *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1979)

¹⁰ Thomas Chamales, *Never so Few* (New York: Scribners, 1957); Roger Hilsman, *American Guerrilla: My War Behind Japanese Lines* (Washington: Brassey's, 1990); Dean Breilis, *The Mission* (New York: Random House, 1958)

The Life and Times of Tom Baldwin, and Harry “Skittles” Hengshoon’s *Green Hell: Unconventional Warfare in the CBI*.¹¹

Until recently, the OSS has also escaped substantial academic study. There has not been a scholarly work written on Detachment 101. Regarding the OSS in Asia, the only scholarly works are Maochun Yu’s *OSS in China: Prelude to Cold War*, E. Bruce Reynolds’ *Thailand’s Secret War: The Free Thai, OSS, and SOE during World War II*, and Richard Aldrich’s *Intelligence and the War Against Japan: Britain America and the Politics of Secret Service*. None of these works gives much detail on Detachment 101. Although not true scholarly studies, the two volumes of *The War Report of the OSS* by Kermit Roosevelt—the official OSS history—and its British counterpart Charles Cruickshanks’s *SOE in the Far East* are valuable resources, but likewise neither deals exclusively with Detachment 101.¹²

This paucity of secondary sources leaves the way open for this study to offer a contribution to the literature of the OSS, U.S Intelligence and military history, that of the participation of the United States in the China-Burma-India Theater, and that of the Second World War. This study provides an in-depth look at the organizational and operational evolution of a unit faced with an extremely difficult task in an extremely

¹¹ Bill Brough, *To Reason Why* (Whickham, UK: Hickory Tree Press, 2001); Thomas Baldwin, *I’d Do it All Again: The Life and Times of Tom Baldwin* (Tustin, CA: Wambtac, 1996); Harry “Skittles” Hengshoon, *Green Hell: Unconventional Warfare in the CBI* (Huntington Beach, CA: B & L Lithograph, 2000)

¹² Maochun Yu, *OSS in China: Prelude to Cold War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), E. Bruce Reynolds, *Thailand’s Secret War: The Free Thai, OSS, and SOE during World War II* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Richard J. Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War Against Japan: Britain, America, and the Politics of Secret Service* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Kermit Roosevelt, ed. *The War Report of the OSS*. 2 vols. (New York: Walker and Company, 1976), Charles Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

foreign environment. Such a study offers the potential of providing lessons that might prove useful today.

CHAPTER II

A PRIMER ON BURMA, OSS ORGANIZATION, AND OSS DETACHMENT 101

This chapter will serve to acquaint the reader with the topics being discussed in the following chapters. It will first explain General William J. Donovan's vision for the covert action/special operations side of COI/OSS, and then give a brief overall history of Detachment 101. The chapter will conclude with a primer on Burma including the operational environment and the indigenous inhabitants. The intent is to bring the reader to a level of understanding on the China-Burma-India Theater (CBI) and Detachment 101's war that will negate the need to consult outside sources in order to understand the subsequent chapters.

Donovan's Vision

In June 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed World War I hero William Donovan as the first and only chief of the Coordinator of Information (COI). The COI, renamed one year later as the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), was the first United States government organization tasked with the specific role of central collector of foreign intelligence. It also had the secondary mission of being prepared to engage in subversive or "black" activities, otherwise known as clandestine warfare. However, the road to the creation of this capability in the COI was not immediate.¹³

¹³ For the directive assigning OSS its basic functions, see Thomas F. Troy, *Donovan and the CIA: A History of the Establishment of the Central Intelligence Agency* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1981), 428.

Prior to the creation of the COI, Donovan saw a need for a new intelligence organization that would better serve the decision-making process of policy makers, and through covert action, be a force multiplier for combat forces. Secretary of the Navy William F. Knox, Donovan's friend, assisted and influenced his beliefs. It was also Knox who suggested to President Roosevelt that Donovan make an unofficial trip to England to evaluate the war situation and the British intelligence services.¹⁴ During the December to 18 March 1941 trip, Donovan was given unprecedented access to British bases, including those in Africa, and was able to evaluate first hand what the OSS would later consider its counterpart and mentor organization, the British Special Operations Executive (SOE).¹⁵

A Medal of Honor winner from the First World War, Donovan had an intense personal interest in clandestine warfare and extensively studied SOE's sabotage role. He saw such warfare as an important method to support intelligence gathering that would enhance the combat capability of regular military formations. He envisioned that an American special operations element would function in three escalating stages: infiltration and preparation, sabotage and subversion, and finally, direct support to guerrilla, resistance, or commando units. Much in the model of the British Commandos, special operations had the added benefit of performing what one OSS history termed "increasing the enemy's misery and weaken his will to resist." After returning from Europe, Donovan wrote President Roosevelt, "My observation is that the more the battle

¹⁴ Kermit Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS* (New York: Walker, 1976), 5.

¹⁵ [OSS Special Operations branch history], "This Phase of SO," F 4, B 101, E 99, RG 226, NARA. For greater detail on this trip, please see Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, 36-42.

machines are perfected the greater the need in modern warfare of men calculatingly reckless with disciplined daring, who are trained for aggressive action ... it will mean a return to our old tradition of the scouts, the raiders, and the rangers.”¹⁶

When appointed head of the COI, Donovan was tacitly given the mission to prepare for the possibility of using covert warfare methods, but he could do little to recruit for them. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Donovan again called for the formation of an American special operations force and wrote to Roosevelt on 22 December 1941, “... as an essential part of the strategic plan, there be recognized the need of sowing the dragon’s teeth in those territories from which we withdraw ... That the aid of native chiefs be obtained, the loyalty of the inhabitants cultivated ... and guerrilla bands of bold, and daring men organized and installed.”¹⁷ With the U.S. now at war, he could recruit, but getting COI/OSS deployed for overseas missions would be a greater challenge.

In order to prove the value of clandestine warfare, Donovan sought to insert the COI into an active combat theater. He was met with much skepticism. Many senior Army officers could not understand what role COI, and later, the OSS, could play in their areas of responsibility (AOR), and some were even hostile to an OSS presence. For instance, General Douglas McArthur virtually banned the OSS from his South West Pacific AOR throughout the war. However, Donovan found openings in other theaters, such as the North Africa Theater of Operations. The early COI/OSS operations in

¹⁶ OSS Special Operations branch history, NARA; For a brief account of COI/OSS setting up the Special Operations branch, please see Roosevelt, *War Report*, 70-74.

¹⁷ OSS Special Operations branch history, NARA.

NATO proved to be the key needed to allow greater participation throughout the European Campaign. However, this would not be the same situation for the CBI.¹⁸

Detachment 101; 1942-1945

Burma was an active combat theater from 1942 to 1945. This allowed Detachment 101, as the OSS component operating in Burma was called, to build on previous achievements, reflect upon mistakes, and evolve its operations into those of greater complexity. This helped the unit to become the showcase OSS organization in the Far East. The unit performed its functions so well that the official OSS history called it “the most effective tactical combat force in OSS.”¹⁹ It is this length of service—and relative absence of political barriers like the OSS experienced in China—that makes Detachment 101 a unique and valuable organization to study.

In comparison to U.S. participation in other operational theaters, Burma was a backwater. The resource-starved CBI was an unusual theater and merited its nickname, Confusion Beyond Imagination. Later on, to the OSS, however, “the Burma Campaign is probably not going to be the big show, but it is the going show.”²⁰ It was an important aspect of the war mainly because of President Roosevelt’s desire to keep the Chinese in the war, and his insistence on treating the Chinese as an equal ally.

¹⁸ General Douglas MacArthur only allowed OSS into his theater in the closing months of the war after he was made Commander of U.S. Army Forces in the Pacific. Even then, all he allowed into his theater was special OSS equipment and its operators. See Kermit Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets: War Report of the OSS, Vol. Two* (New York: Walker, 1976), 358.

¹⁹ Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets*, xvii; Although a draft of Roosevelt’s work was penned by OSS during the war, the organization’s disbandment on 1 October 1945 prevented its completion. Roosevelt returned decades later to the project to finalize its compilation; Although Detachment 101 was the first COI/OSS unit of its type, one of the early SA/G (the predecessor name of OSS SO) chiefs, Lieutenant Colonel Garland Williams, did not want to reveal that to the British. He chose the name “Coordinator of Information Special Unit Detachment 101” to imply that the unit was one of many. Thomas N. Moon and Carl F. Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel* (New York: Vantage, 1975), 53.

²⁰ Carlton Scofield to Kennett Hinks, 15 March 1944, F Eifler, B 644, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

The CBI was a complex operational theater with many strong-willed and often conflicting personalities. For instance, Army Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell, the senior American officer in the CBI, stubbornly stuck to his belief—until early 1944—that with U.S. assistance, the Chinese could field an effective army. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and his loose confederation of commanders hampered Stilwell in his endeavor. They hoarded American supplies for the post-war period in which they knew that they would have to confront the Chinese Communists. Stilwell had an additional adversary in his subordinate, Major General Claire L. Chennault, who had the ear of President Roosevelt. Chennault believed that air power was the answer to defeating Japan and preached that with a minimum of Chinese-based aircraft and sufficient support, he could win air superiority in China, bomb mainland Japan, and through this, force a Japanese retreat in the Pacific.²¹ The British likewise compounded Stilwell's problems, as Burma was in their sphere of influence and they had the lead in conducting warfare there.

These brief examples of friction out of many among the upper command in the CBI reflect the confliction of effort and corresponding delay in formulating a strategy to remove the Japanese from mainland Asia. It was into this political quagmire that the COI sent its first intact unit to go overseas. However, in one respect the COI/OSS was lucky. Despite the lack of American resources in terms of personnel—or even because of it—the theater became a cornucopia of special operations units. In Burma alone, American special operations units included Merrill's Marauders, MARS Task Force, and

²¹ Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *United States Army in World War II: China-Burma-India Theater: Stilwell's Command Problems* (Washington, D.C: Center of Military History, 1987), 5, 18-25.

the First and Second Air Commandos. British special operations units included the Chindits, Force 136, V-Force, and elements of the Special Boat Service.

Activated on 22 April 1942, Detachment 101 was the first special operations unit formed by the COI.²² The COI gave Detachment 101 commanding officer Major Carl F. Eifler the authority to select a small group of twenty men to go overseas for service somewhere in the Far East. Eifler was a bear of a man. He was tall, muscular, a hard drinker, and intelligent. He was a brash, no-nonsense type who overcame obstacles by sheer will and determination. He did not care how the mission was done—or who got the credit—as long as it was successfully accomplished.²³ Prior to the war, Eifler had been an Army Reservist while in the U.S. Treasury Customs Service, where he worked against smuggling rings. This experience schooled him in the unorthodox methods of criminals and smugglers. It was also through the Army Reserve that he met Stilwell.²⁴ After the war, Eifler struggled to recover from injuries received in Burma, but managed to finish a career in the Customs Service and earn a Doctorate of Divinity. He died in 2002 at the age of ninety-five.

The COI only gave Eifler's group a brief training period. Half went to the newly appropriated former Civilian Conservation Corps camp turned sabotage school of Area B, now known as Camp David, Maryland, while others went to Camp X, the SOE training area in Canada.²⁵ After Eifler spent several weeks trying to find a place for the

²² [Brief Chronology of OSSSU Detachment 101], F 74, B 42, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

²³ Major Carl F. Eifler, "Report of Action to Date and Request for Instructions," to Colonel William J. Donovan, 24 November 1942, Folder 49, Box 39, Entry 190, Record Group 226, 21.

²⁴ Heidi Vion, *Booms from Behind the Lines: Covert Experiences of OSS Detachment 101 in World War II CBI Theater* (MA thesis, California State University: Fullerton, 2004), 284–85, 304–305.

²⁵ For more on Camp X, see Lynn Philip Hodgson, *Inside-Camp X* (Canada: Friesens, 2002)

group in China, Stilwell directed him to settle the unit in India, and prepare to conduct operations against Japanese-occupied Burma. The group was fortunate to find an out-of-the-way tea plantation in Nazira, Assam State, from which to plan their operations. Under the name of the U.S. Army Experimental Station—the cover story being that they were researching malaria—the men quickly enmeshed themselves in their work. They found that their previous ideas of warfare were no longer applicable, but despite Stilwell's initial instructions, the group thereafter had little direction from either the Army or COI/OSS headquarters in Washington. The men had little choice but to simply muddle through and develop their organization and operating methods as they went along. The first undertaking was to establish an agent training school, and then to push what could be called an observer mission into the area near Sumprabum in north Burma.

Despite these minor achievements, Detachment 101 was under intense pressure from Eifler, who wanted to please Stilwell and to produce results that would allow the continued existence of the unit in the CBI. Eifler loathed failure and expected an equally determined effort from his men. The result was long hours and multi-tasking to ensure that everything—and more—was accomplished.²⁶ The British indirectly compounded this pressure. At higher levels, they were extremely wary of having an autonomous American intelligence unit in their sphere of influence, and they tried to subsume Detachment 101's operations under SOE as happened in Europe.²⁷

²⁶ Sam Schreiner, "The Lovable Psychologist," *101 Association Incorporated*, August 1975, 3.

²⁷ Until 1944 and the formation of "P" Division under the South East Asia Command (SEAC), Detachment 101 continued to have problems with the British regarding autonomous operations.

To achieve success, the Detachment attempted a series of long-range penetration operations. Although they were nearly all complete failures, the unit gained valuable experience from the missions and used the lessons to conduct subsequent operations. The unit's overland shallow penetrations in 1943 were much more successful. In particular, Operation FORWARD, the observer mission near Sumbrabum under Captain William C. Wilkinson, would prove to be the success that follow-on operations, such as KNOTHEAD, would build upon. These shallow penetrations were the forerunners of the employment of independent guerrilla columns in 1944-1945. Detachment 101 also established several agent groups, such as under agent "Skittles," which operated some fifty miles or so in front of the American engineering units charged with building the Ledo Road. They provided critical intelligence on the Japanese forces in the area and conducted civil affairs duties to win hearts and minds among the indigenous population.²⁸

The year 1944 brought even more success and proved to be the turning point for Detachment 101. Eifler was no longer the unit's commander. He was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel William R. Peers. A career Army officer, Peers stayed in the military after the war. He served with the CIA during the war in Korea, and had several tours in Vietnam. He retired as a Lieutenant General after thirty-six years of service. One of his final acts in the military was to direct the My Lai massacre investigation.

²⁸ The Ledo Road, so named because it originated from Ledo, India, was a road to link to the Burma Road, which had been cut by the Japanese in 1942. Since the Japanese occupied coastal China, the Burma Road had been the only link to supply China with American arms and supplies. The Ledo Road was intended to take the pressure of supplying the Chinese off the highly inefficient Hump air supply route. Although a remarkable engineering achievement, the Ledo Road was not completed until late in the war. By this time the Japanese were well on their way to losing the war and the Joint Chiefs had decided that mainland China would not be a significant area of operations for the U.S. military.

That the U.S. Army had appointed him to lead the commission is a reflection on his standing in the military and that he had served with distinction and above reproach.

Peers died in 1984 and is considered one of the most influential pioneers of U.S. Army Special Operations.

The unit secured a firm role by finding niches that conventional forces in Burma could not fill. Detachment 101 started to recruit indigenous guerrilla troops, provided strategic and tactical intelligence such as enemy order of battle and ground targets for the 10th Air Force, and guided lost aircrews back to Allied lines. These roles provided a morale boost to the Army Air Forces in the CBI. Not only were their bombing attempts in north Burma now much more successful with Detachment 101 agents securing targeting intelligence and acting as forward observers, but pilots were no longer automatically doomed to starvation, death, or capture should they be forced down.

Another key role for Detachment 101 was to serve as guides for, and to screen the flanks of regular U.S. and British formations. This assistance contributed to the crowning achievement of Allied forces in north Burma, the 1944 capture of Myitkyina. In this campaign, Detachment 101 provided support to the GALAHAD force—the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), commonly known as Merrill's Marauders—troops of the Chinese Army in India (CAI), and the British Chindits. Detachment 101 also provided intelligence and cut Japanese lines of communication around Myitkyina—in an

area roughly the size of Connecticut—thereby sealing off the Japanese garrison from retreat and outside support.²⁹

After Myitkyina fell in August 1944, Detachment 101 continued to support Allied forces as they sought to secure their hold on north Burma. The taking of Bhamo and Lashio effectively ended this campaign. At the same time, Detachment 101 extended liaison to regular British formations of the Fourteenth Army. Following the fall of Rangoon, Major General Daniel I. Sultan, the NCAC commanding officer, ordered Detachment 101 to clear the Shan States and to prevent disorganized Japanese forces from falling back into Thailand. The unit served as the only available ground combat force and had to assume a more conventional role.

While these events were unfolding in north Burma, Detachment 101 was operating a separate campaign in conjunction with the XV Indian Corps along the southern coast of Burma. In late 1944, the Detachment subsumed operations in the Arakan being conducted by the Ceylon-based OSS Detachment 404. Deemed the Detachment 101 Arakan Field Unit (AFU), the group was composed primarily of OSS personnel from the Maritime Unit and Operational Groups, but had representation from other OSS branches. DET 101 AFU finished its mission in June 1945 after the Allies captured Rangoon.

By July 1945, Detachment 101's service was finished and many of the personnel of the unit took their experience and knowledge on to other OSS operations.

Detachment 101 had become the preeminent and one of the largest OSS overseas

²⁹ Anonymous, *Merrill's Marauders* (Washington, D.C: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1990), 19.

organizations. Upon cessation of operations, the unit had created an impressive scorecard of nearly 5,500 known Japanese killed. Detachment 101 was able to accomplish this with a loss of some twenty-nine Americans and 184 indigenous soldiers killed and 86 indigenous personnel captured or missing. The initial twenty-one men of the OSS Special Operations (SO) Branch grew so that at its height Detachment 101 had nearly 9,200-armed guerrillas. Nearly 1,000 OSS and a few attached Allied personnel had served in the Detachment, although the daily complement was a few hundred.³⁰ The group received a Presidential Unit Citation for its actions in the final battles in Burma. This was an honor in OSS shared only by the Operational Groups in the European campaign.

Burma: A Country Study

To the Americans of Detachment 101, Burma and the Indian frontier were wild lands. One newly arrived officer reported on his experience with the local wildlife, “Ray SAW the tiger, which he describes as somewhat smaller than a waterbuffalo, [sic]...”³¹ Despite the wild nature of the local terrain, Detachment 101 would not have been successful unless it had a permissive operating environment. This section will provide the reader familiarity with the Burma faced by the men of Detachment 101.

Burma was then and remains a complex country with multiple and competing ethnic groups. The country had been under British domination since 1885. Until 1937, the British administered Burma as a part of India. However, this was an arbitrary

³⁰ Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets*, 391-392; estimate by author of various rosters of the unit, both from RG 226 in the National Archives and in the Detachment 101 Association papers held by the author.

³¹ Robert T. Aitken to Harry W. Little, 17 January 1943, F 119, B 171, E 199, RG 226, NARA.

administrative pairing as the two countries have little in common with the exception of certain border areas. From 1938 until 1942, the British administered Burma as a separate colony. It was not unified in any great sense, then or now, which is evidenced today in the multiple ethnic insurgencies present within its borders. For instance, the ongoing Karen struggle for independence started in 1949, soon after Burma's independence from the United Kingdom.

Burma, now called Myanmar, is a country about the size of Texas, and has geographical extremes. On the southern coast is the capital city of Rangoon, now called Yangon. Above Rangoon, but still along the swampy mangrove-lined coast, is the Arakan region. As one travels north from the coast, the terrain is increasingly rugged until one reaches the Kachin hill tracts. There begin the mountainous foothills to the Himalayas. These jungle-covered mountains form just past Myitkyina, the capital of Kachin State, and the relatively rolling hills immediately become small steep mountains that increase in size and elevation the farther one journeys north.

The ruggedness of this terrain would prove to both a blessing and a curse for Detachment 101. The mountains provided cover. In many cases the Japanese did not have a significant presence in these areas with the exception of large towns and villages. This allowed the Detachment freedom of movement and ensured that it could operate relatively unseen by the Japanese.

In contrast to Allied thinking early in the war, the Japanese were not the masters of the jungle. As one American OSS officer later noted, the Japanese were so exhausted by the time they reached the mountain passes into India and so short of supplies that

“their mad gallop across Thailand and the flat-lands of southern and central Burma slowed down to little more than a blind stagger at the India-Burma border.”³² But, the terrain also made movement extremely difficult for the Allies. Detachment 101 estimated that it took a man thirty days to walk the same distance that a light plane could fly in one hour.³³ An example of the difficulty in moving over this terrain was chronicled in an early 1944 report: “Tilly got lost in the high grass, had to part the grass and fall on it . . . slashed his arms and trouser legs. He then got to the top of a hill and climbed a tree. He got nearly to the crotch and got his hand caught in a bee hive . . . started off through the pit grass. He went right over the cliff 30 feet.”³⁴ Almost all ground movement had to be on foot, with all supplies either carried by porters or pack animals. As a result, Detachment 101 columns could not carry much in the way of food, ammunition, or heavy weapons. All weapons had to be man-portable, which limited the heaviest weapons to light machine guns, such as the British Bren gun. Artillery was not present in any sense of the word. What would have substituted for this would have been grenades, light mortars, or an occasional bazooka. Detachment 101’s light weaponry ensured that its units were unable to sustain prolonged contact with the enemy.

The terrain made logistics difficult. Roads were few, making overland resupply impossible. Any such effort would have consumed more supplies than it could deliver. The solution was to resupply each guerrilla force every few days or weeks by air. This solved the problem of carrying large amounts of supplies, but also resulted in waste as

³² Martin J. Waters, “The Operations of a Provisional OSS Platoon, Night Reconnaissance Operations, The Arakan Coast, Burma, Oct. 1944-Apr. 1945,” (The Infantry School General History Section Military History Committee Fort Benning, Georgia: Advanced Officers Course, 1946-1947), 4.

³³ Brief Chronology of OSSSU Detachment 101, NARA.

³⁴ “Captain Tilly With the KNOTHEAD Group,” January 1944, F48, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

units tended to shed any excess. This method of supply made dedicated airlift a necessity and greatly increased the cost of Detachment 101 operations. Air resupply, however, ensured mobility, and the guerrilla units could move with little fear of running out of supplies while behind enemy lines.

The ethnic groups in Burma played a huge role in the Japanese invasion, occupation, and liberation. The Burmans are the largest and most dominant ethnic group. They primarily inhabit the most populous areas in southern Burma, make up some 70 percent of the total population, are predominantly Buddhist, and during the war were generally pro-Japanese. Prominent Burmans had even formed a fifth column that aided the Japanese invasion.³⁵ The Burmans' Japanese sympathies made the life of an agent inserted into a Burman region extremely hazardous. Toward the end of the war, the indigenous populations in the south could no longer believe that the Japanese would win the war. Only then did they extend themselves to any degree to help the Allied cause.³⁶

Although other minorities such as the Shan and the Chin helped the Allies to varying degrees, the ethnic groups that would be most important to Allied operations were the Naga, Karens and Kachins. With centuries of strife with the Burmans, they were very willing to side with the Allies, and saw the British, and correspondingly the American forces, as their protectors. Their goodwill towards the Allies did not apply to the Chinese, who like the Burmans, were also a source of ethnic tension. Inhabiting the

³⁵ James R. Ward, "The Activities of Detachment 101 of the OSS" in *The Secrets War: The Office of Strategic Services in World War II*, ed. George C. Chalou, (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), 320.

³⁶ William Slim, *Defeat Into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942-1945* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000), 515-520.

India/Burma border near Assam were the Nagas. Their culture would be considered the most primitive of the ethnic groups, and they were rumored to be headhunters. For this reason, they were greatly feared—at least initially—by the American forces, who did not venture far into Naga-held areas for the fear that they would wind up as trophies.

However, the Nagas were pro-Allied, and provided great service to Detachment 101 and the British-led V-Force, a similar intelligence gathering organization. The Karens were independently minded and many were of the Christian faith, an asset to the Allies in trying to get these indigenous groups to work with them. In a tacit agreement, SOE focused most of its recruiting on Karens, making this group less important to the OSS.³⁷

By far, the most important ethnic group to the operations of Detachment 101 was the Kachins, also known as the Jinghpaw. This group inhabited north Burma, where the majority of Detachment 101's initial operations would occur. In the Kachin, Detachment 101 had the fortune of finding a warlike and willing ally. They were staunchly pro-Allied, more so on account of their relative weakness as a minority than anything else. For generations, the British had taken advantage of this ethnic buffer, and pitted the Kachins against the Burmans and the Chinese. Having endured excesses by the occupying Japanese troops and their Burman auxiliaries, the Kachins were violently

³⁷ Plans were formulated by OSS to try and organize the Nagas along the same lines as the Kachins, but they never took root. A plan to capitalize on the Nagas' headhunting past, and to try to get them to revitalize the practice against the Japanese, can be found in [George?] Devereux to John R. Coughlin, "Assam Headhunters, Immediate Utilization of," 14 April 1944, F 340, B 57, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Nearly every American serviceman who served along the India/Burma border tells tales about the wild "headhunter" Nagas. However, those that actually met a Naga quickly lost their fear and felt quite safe.

anti-Japanese and formed several disorganized guerrilla groups before the Allies arrived.³⁸

The Americans and Kachins developed a true affection for each other. The Kachin did not see Americans as a colonial power that had post-war designs on Burma, nor did Americans generally act in a colonial manner toward indigenous peoples, as did many of the British. The decades-long presence of American missionaries in north Burma also helped Detachment 101's relationship with the Kachin. The missionaries had rendered the language—Jinghpaw—into a written language. Although most Kachins were not Christians—a large portion were animists—the goodwill of the American missionaries had impressed the Kachins.³⁹

The Kachin proved to be ideal guerrilla fighters, as a 1943 OSS report espoused, “a Kachin with a “dah” [traditional knife/sword] can be comparable to a whole panzer division in his own country.”⁴⁰ Being the inhabitants of a predominantly undeveloped jungle environment, many of the Kachins had developed hunting skills from an early

³⁸ James C. Luce, “Background, historical, military and political of the Kachin Hills area,” 28 January 1944, original in author's possession; Regarding Japanese atrocities, see William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, “Report Covering Period 1 February to 29 February, 1944, inclusive,” 29 February 1944, F 52, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Luce reports that the Japanese had raided Kachin villages. In so doing, they looted, carried off two women, and killed seven villagers; The Kachin or Jinghpaw is a term for an amalgamation of several minor tribes, the largest being the Jinghpaw. For an anthropological account of the Kachins, see E.R. Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma: A Study of Kachin Social Structure* (London: Athlone Press, 1970), and U Min Thu, *Glimpses of Kachin Traditions and Customs* (Myitkyina, Burma: U Htun Hlaing, 2002). Small ethnographic background studies done by Detachment 101 personnel can be found in Peter K. Lutken, “Report on Kachin Contribution to the Allied War Effort in Burma,” 1945, F 44, B 37, E 190, RG 226, NARA, and Luce, “Background, historical, military and political”; Although most Kachins were loyal, there are plentiful examples of Kachins who worked or spied for the Japanese. That meant that the OSS always had to keep a wary eye on their indigenous recruits until they had proved their loyalty.

³⁹ For more on missionaries in Burma, see Edward Fischer, *Mission in Burma: The Columban Fathers' Forty-three years in Kachin Country* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980).

⁴⁰ Agent Robey to Wilky [William C. Wilkinson], “Introduction (report on travels)” [early 1943], F 495, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

age. They were at home in the jungle and experts in junglecraft. Their knowledge in this regard far surpassed any that the Japanese had acquired. The Kachins did not fight fair as a westerner would understand it; however, that was perfectly fine for the OSS. For instance, it was not an acceptable fighting practice to the Kachins to hold ground. Rather, hit and run ambushes were the norm. These qualities gave the Kachin what seemed to the Americans as an almost superhuman power to read the jungle.⁴¹

The first style of fighting that the Americans of COI/OSS envisioned they would use in the Far East was in the model of the SOE school of sabotage and subversion. Under Kachin tutelage, however, Detachment 101 combined these methods with extensive use of ambushes. Detachment 101 sections would often stay in a general area with a central command post that would serve as a focal point from which patrols were sent out and supplies cached. These areas could be relatively permanent if the group devoted the time to hack a small aircraft landing strip out of the surrounding jungle. The guerrilla columns moved through the jungle along small game trails or on hidden pathways, often known only to local residents. Only when a suitable place was found from which to ambush a Japanese patrol—and even then, only on their own terms—would the Detachment 101 columns fight the enemy.

The OSS adapted well to this style of warfare because it suited their armament.

In a typical ambush, a Detachment 101 group would stake out a position along a road or

⁴¹ For example, there is a plant that grows in the foothills which visibly shrivels when touched. Whereas an American or Japanese would not notice the plant, the Kachin would and instantly knew that others had recently passed by. When the author traveled to Kachin State, Myanmar in November 2004, he asked about this plant thinking it only a myth. The Kachin guide immediately stooped down and touched a roadside plant, which instantly and very visibly, shriveled at the touch. Knowledge and careful observation of such a plant would indeed provide instant intelligence that something—animal or human—had recently passed.

trail and wait. When an enemy column arrived, a pre-arranged signal would trigger the group to fire. At times, the burst of fire was only long enough to make it through one magazine in their automatic weapons, or just enough time to throw a few grenades. There was no point in conserving ammunition, as the 101 group did not intend to stand to fight. With the Japanese then reeling in confusion, the OSS group would melt back into the jungle. At this point, as one post-war depiction noted, “nobody covered anybody” as until they reached a prearranged rendezvous, it was “every man for himself.”⁴²

The Japanese characteristically reacted by jumping to cover on the sides of the road or trail. Here they encountered another weapon in Detachment 101’s arsenal, the punji. Employed in South-East Asia for centuries, punjis are sharpened fire-hardened stakes of bamboo that have been set on end into the ground at an angle, and in a location where an enemy is likely to step or take cover. Punjis also were an outstanding psychological weapon, further demoralizing Japanese troops in areas where Detachment 101 operated.

Burma was one of the most debilitating environments in the Second World War for military operations because of the climate and endemic diseases. It is a tropical country and can have extremely hot and humid conditions. Temperatures in central Burma reach well over 100 degrees Fahrenheit during the hot months of March through May. From June-September, the monsoon takes hold with the constant moisture leading to rot, decay, and rust of most equipment. Detachment 101 reported in June 1943, “A

⁴² William Boyd Sinclair, *Confusion Beyond Imagination: China-Burma-India in World War II; In a Series of Ten Books; Book Seven* (Coeur d’Alene, Idaho: Joe F. Whitley, 1990), 65.

cleaned pistol will develop rust pits in 24 hours, a pair of shoes not cleaned daily will rot in a week.”⁴³ The majority of the areas where 101 would operate were thick jungle, some of which at the time was unexplored. Leeches, mosquitoes, and corresponding diseases—such as malaria, typhus, and encephalitis—were prevalent. In his memoir, *Defeat Into Victory*, Field Marshall William J. Slim, commander of the British Fourteenth Army, discussed the problem that his forces had with disease:

In 1943, for every man evacuated with wounds we had one hundred and twenty four evacuated sick. The annual malaria rate alone was eighty-four per cent annum of the total strength of the army and still higher for the forward troops ... At this time, the sick rate of men evacuated from their units rose to twelve thousand per day. A simple calculation showed me that in a matter of months at this rate my army would have melted away.⁴⁴

Americans faced a similar situation in north Burma. In 1943, the rate of malaria in the CBI was 206 per 1,000 per year. After much effort to combat the disease, by 1944 it had only dropped to 167 per 1,000 per year. In special circumstances, the rate could become even higher. Merrill’s Marauders, for instance, suffered appalling rates of dysentery, malaria, and scrub typhus during their campaign to seize Myitkyina. By 4 June 1944, they had suffered 1,020 casualties from disease in contrast to 424 reported killed, wounded, or missing.⁴⁵ In just his first month operating behind the lines, medical officer Lieutenant Commander James C. Luce reported treating among the local population one hundred three cases of malaria, ten of dysentery, two of tuberculosis, one hundred of scabies, four of ringworm, thirty of tropical ulcers, and twenty-seven of gonorrhea in

⁴³ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, “Report Covering Period June 1 to June 30, 1943, inclusive,” 1 July 1943, F 1, B 65, E 99, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁴ Slim, *Defeat Into Victory*, 177.

⁴⁵ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell’s Command Problems*, 286, 240; As an aside, in talks with Detachment 101 veterans at their reunions, many relate that they suffered with malaria and its remissions for decades after the war.

addition to numerous other ailments.⁴⁶ For the members of Detachment 101, the struggle with disease was paramount. Unlike other Allied formations in the CBI, they were far behind enemy lines. If one took ill, the only remedy was to either find or build—a lengthy process—a short airfield in which one of the Detachment’s liaison planes could land to extract the ill soldier.⁴⁷ If a Detachment 101 soldier could not be airlifted out, the only alternative was to drop medical supplies and hope for the best.

As it arrived in theater, Detachment 101 faced a monumental task. Not only did it have to try out its unproven operating methods, but it also had to figure out exactly how to apply these methods to a strange environment. The next chapter will detail these initial efforts at deconfliction and attempts to take the war to the Japanese.

⁴⁶ Luce, “Background, historical, military and political.”

⁴⁷ During the first British Chindit expedition, and wounded soldiers were simply abandoned.

CHAPTER III

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK: MID 1942-JANUARY 1943

The initial months for Detachment 101 in the CBI set the stage for the unit's later actions throughout the war. During this early period from mid-1942 to early 1943, Detachment 101 took on an ad-hoc nature, and the group made due with what was available. Despite the lack of resources, however, it made great strides in establishing its operating areas, its command and liaison arrangements, setting up a base of operations, and determining how and when it would wage war on the Japanese in occupied Burma. By early 1943, Detachment 101 had established itself on tentative ground, but was nonetheless emplaced in the American effort in the CBI. Its methods remained unproven, however, as did the unit's relative worth in the China-Burma India Theater. However, like the unit at this time, the entire CBI Theater was in confusion.

The China-Burma-India Theater was among the most remote of the U.S. operating areas and was at the tail end of a limited logistics train. Its confusing command arrangement was compounded by the complexity of coordinating with the British, who had overall supremacy in Burma. As the senior American officer in theater, Stilwell had multiple and often conflicting duties. He was the commander of U.S. forces in the CBI, and oversaw the distribution of lend-lease materials. He was also the chief of staff to Nationalist Chinese Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, and the commanding

general of the Chinese Army in India. His multiple command duties, however, only contributed to problems brought on by the debacle of the first Burma campaign.

By May 1942, the victorious Japanese had run the Allies out of Burma. The war in Burma, then a British colony, began in late January 1942. Japanese forces quickly overwhelmed a mixed force of British, Burmese, Indian, American, and Chinese defenders. By May 1942, the Allied forces—including Stilwell's small staff—had been thoroughly routed and fled to India. With Burma's fall, the Japanese severed the final land route to China. This was important because China had been at war with Japan since 1937 and its coast was under occupation. A furious Stilwell commented, "I claim we got a hell of a beating. We got run out of Burma and it is humiliating as hell. I think we ought to find out what caused it, go back and retake it."⁴⁸ However, at the moment, Stilwell had little with which to accomplish this task.

An Undefined Problem

As Eifler and his group made their way to the Far East, they had little idea how—or even where—they would operate. Their initial instructions from COI/OSS were vague at best; their operating area ill defined and the group itself in extreme disarray. Not only was Detachment 101's very existence on the line, but so was the reputation of the OSS as a whole. Only Eifler's sheer will, the group's sense of purpose, and their intense desire to get into action against the Japanese bonded the group into a cohesive unit.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ This often told quote is repeated in Joseph W. Stilwell, *The Stilwell Papers* (New York: William Sloane), 1948.

⁴⁹ Detachment 101 veterans who knew Eifler all remark on his sheer will to accomplish.

From a March 1942 conversation with Lieutenant Colonel Preston Goodfellow, then the U.S. Army G-2 liaison officer detailed to the COI, Eifler was under the understanding that his Area of Responsibility (AOR) was to be anywhere in China, Korea, Burma, Malay States, Indo-China, Hainan Island, and Japan itself. In addition to planning operations to cover all or part of this great swath, Eifler also had to come up with his own individual operations plan. On the surface, Eifler's plans were relatively simple; however, for the time they were extremely complex and forward thinking. He was laying the groundwork for a completely new type of para-military unit that had no precedent in the United States military. Eifler planned to use:

(1) a small group of officers ... to contact groups in the War Zone and purchase acts of sabotage. (2) To organize and train an organization to penetrate enemy-held territory and conduct a campaign of directed sabotage to harass the enemy ... This organization must be divided into two parts: (1) a section to train agents, (2), an Operations Section ... The undersigned intends to ... contact the Government officials necessary, locate patriotic organizations who have members inside enemy lines, sell myself to the people I intend to use and train them as agents and smugglers ... Lines of communication will be developed. The undersigned not only plans to use existing radio equipment but will attempt to develop a new, small set that will better suit the problem as I now visualize it.⁵⁰

Given his set of operating parameters, Eifler had to choose his personnel with nary a clue as to what—or where—his eventual mission would be. He selected what men he could find that had the necessary language, cultural or technical skills that would encompass the operating location or methods in which he had the possibility of working. Since the group was so small, each man had to fulfill multiple and often non-

⁵⁰ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Report of Action to Date and Request for Instructions," 24 November 1942, F 49, B 39, E190, RG 226, NARA. For Goodfellow's status, see Kermit Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS* (New York: Walker, 1976), 72. Preston Goodfellow was originally the Army's G-2 liaison; however, he later joined COI/OSS and headed the SO branch. At that time this branch was known as SA/G for "Special Activities: Goodfellow."

complementary duties. An example of this is Sgt. Sukyoon Chang, who served as mess sergeant, as an instructor, and as possible liaison to any Korean resistance movements.⁵¹

Given his operating plans to employ smuggling methods to insert groups behind the lines, use radios to stay in contact, and support any type of clandestine mission that the group might encounter, Eifler needed to choose personnel with the skills to cover all these requirements. Fortunately, Eifler was not a novice to smuggling methods. Prior to the war, he had been in the Customs Service and in the Army Reserve in Hawaii. He used the contacts gained during those years to handpick a few men who had experience with smuggling. In regards to recruiting communications personnel, however, he had to rely upon the judgment of others. Radioman Allen R. Richter was brought on board when Eifler and his deputy, Lieutenant Colonel John G. Coughlin (who outranked Eifler at the time, but such was the COI/OSS) visited the Officer Candidate School (OCS) at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. They asked Richter, who had an extensive background in radios, if he would like to drop out of OCS and join the outfit as an enlisted man for a secret mission. Eifler explained the mission as possibly being in the Far East and from which he was virtually guaranteed that he would not return. Richter accepted and three days later was on a train to COI headquarters at “Q” building, Washington D.C.⁵²

All told, the original contingent of what the COI would initially call the “Eifler Mission” was comprised of twenty-one officers and enlisted men. At this early stage, the COI/OSS had not yet formalized the branch structures that would be present in the

⁵¹ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, “Status of O.S.S. Detachment 101,” 16 February 1943, F 49, B 39, E190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵² Email from Allen Richter to Troy Sacquety, 13 January 2006, in author’s possession.

OSS later in the war. Working within this understanding, however, one can extrapolate the branches represented in the initial contingent by examining the duties for which each man was responsible. One each was involved in administration, photography, medical, research and development, secret intelligence, special funds, two in supply, three in training; while five personnel each were assigned to communications, and special operations. It must be stressed again that each of these men performed a multitude of tasks. Their duties represent the first melding of COI/OSS functions in Detachment 101; however, that these men were in reality all from the Special Operations (SO) Branch is significant. This established from the beginning that regardless of a man's branch and training, he performed the duties deemed of the greatest need. This precedent carried through for the remainder of the war.⁵³

This blending of roles was not ordinary practice in the OSS. Observers sent from Washington frequently commented on this unique aspect of Detachment 101.

“It is apparent that in all this description reference to SI [Secret Intelligence], SO, OG [Operational Group], etc., is absent. Such branch divisions simply do not occur in the thinking of this unit. There is work to be done, there is a staff to do

⁵³ Eifler to Donovan, “Status of O.S.S. Detachment 101,” 16 February 1943, NARA. For clarification, the personnel are assigned as follows: Admin: Charles Bruce, Commo; Phillip S. Huston, Allen R. Richter, Jack Pamplin, Donald Y. Eng, Fima Haimson; Field Photo: Irby E. Moree; Medical: Archie Chun Ming; Procurement: Frank Devlin, Harry W. Little; Research & Development: Floyd R. Frazee; Schools & Training: William R. Peers, Vincent Curl, Sukyoon Chang; Secret Intelligence: Chan*; Special Funds: Robert T. Aitken, Special Operations: Carl F. Eifler, John G. Coughlin, William C. Wilkinson, George T. Hemming, John M. Murray, Dave E. Tilliquist. Chan is not considered (by the 101 Association) to be one of the original compliment according to Allen Richter in a 16 September 2006 phone interview. However, in Thomas N. Moon and Carl F. Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel* (New York: Vantage, 1975), 46, a man described as a Eurasian in his fifties was recruited for infiltrating smuggling rings in the Far East. He was known only to Eifler and Coughlin, and later to Peers when he took over command. Since Chan is listed as an undercover agent in Calcutta, it is possible that he is the “mystery man” in Eifler’s book. At this stage of what would become known as Detachment 101, all officers and men assigned to “the Eifler Mission,” were likely classified as SA/G or the SO branch. SO or Special Operations had been set up for the purpose of effecting “physical subversion of the enemy.” This included sabotage operations and support to resistance groups. For more on SO, see Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 206-211.

it, and all are working as OSS/DET. 101 men, doing whatever aspect of the job is feasible, appropriate, and important at the moment.”⁵⁴

Detachment 101’s operational flexibility could create problems. In 1943, 2nd Lieutenant Thomas B. Leonard of the Operational Group (OG) Branch arrived at Detachment 101 headquarters. Leonard was commissioned in the U.S. Army Signal Corps, but had quickly to join the OSS. Despite his lack of expertise with radios, the chief communications officer of Detachment 101, Captain Phillip S. Houston, assigned Leonard to his section. Fearing that Leonard might compromise agents who were behind the lines through his poor radio technique, Peers assigned Leonard to field operations in north Burma immediately.⁵⁵ In contrast to all other theaters in which the OSS operated—including the South East Asia Command and China—Detachment 101’s OGs did not operate independently. Rather, as had happened with Leonard, they slipped into the SO role—a much better fit in his case than Communications. Instead of going in as a group, Detachment 101 detailed individuals out to groups that were already behind the lines. To this day, the existence of OGs in Detachment 101 is still a revelation to those who worked in OGs in other operational theaters.

Deconfliction

Once Detachment 101 arrived in theater, Eifler found out that most of his preconceptions were wrong. Contrary to what COI/OSS Washington had said, they had arranged little. No one in the theater knew of Eifler’s mission or had even heard of the COI/OSS. He even had difficulty in securing transportation. At every turn, Eifler found

⁵⁴ Carlton F. Scofield, “Informal Report on Detachment 101,” 13 March 1944, General Donovan’s personal correspondence, roll 110, A 3304, E 180, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁵ Tom Leonard, “How I Ended Up In Detachment 101,” *OSS-101 Association Incorporated Newsletter*, Summer 1998, 2-3.

U.S. Army organizations that wanted to absorb Detachment 101—just for the personnel the group represented—but did not want to support the COI/OSS unit’s mission.⁵⁶

Eifler quickly found that the skills of specialized warfare were not those most needed. Rather, he needed an experienced staff or liaison officer. One was not available, so Eifler filled the role. OSS headquarters in Washington was of no help and gave very little guidance. This was in part due to the difficulties in communication between India/China and Washington, but mostly because of Donovan’s poor administrative skills.⁵⁷ Not only did Eifler have to win over reluctant officers—both U.S. and Allied—but he had to explain to them the unproven mission of the COI/OSS; to engage in subversive warfare. He succeeded admirably. This was in large part due to his insistence to press forward and to accept what missions he could wrangle for his new command so long as they conformed in some way to the COI/OSS plan of action.

Eifler’s first step was to meet with Lieutenant General Stilwell, the CBI Commanding Officer. Eifler was under the impression that Stilwell had sent for him by name, having picked him to lead Detachment 101. The 20 May 1942 instructions given to Eifler by Preston Goodfellow enhanced this impression. They stated that Detachment 101 was “to carry on in the Theater of Operations with the knowledge and consent of General Stilwell.”⁵⁸ But, Stilwell had not called for Eifler, nor did he want him or his unit. Stilwell relayed that he had been asked by COI representatives—who were trying to find any overseas posting for a special operations unit—who he would like to see lead

⁵⁶ Eifler to Donovan, “Report of Action,” November 24 1942, NARA.

⁵⁷ Troy, *Donovan and the CIA*, 92.

⁵⁸ Eifler to Donovan, “Report of Action” 24 November 1942, NARA.

such a group. Eifler was the officer Stilwell named. What Eifler did not know—and what COI headquarters took for granted, perhaps with an added bit of subterfuge—was that Stilwell had responded in the theoretical. He had meant his reply to be *if* the COI sent a group to his AOR then he wanted Eifler, not *that* he actually wanted such a group.

Despite this misunderstanding, Stilwell remained more receptive to an OSS presence than other theater commanders. He had few other options. In January 1942, Malaya had fallen to the Japanese, and the British surrendered Singapore a month later. Having simultaneously occupied Thailand, the Japanese invaded Burma in late January 1942. By May, Allied forces were in full retreat. Less than a month after his arrival, Stilwell led his small staff out of Burma on foot. Furthermore, the CBI was so resource-starved that Stilwell only commanded a smattering of American aviation units and some poorly led and equipped Chinese troops that had been sent to protect the Burma Road—the Allied lifeline that supplied China. The only Allied intelligence unit in his AOR was the British-led “V-Force” in north Burma.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ In April 1942, the British forces in Burma were crumbling under the Japanese onslaught. At that time General Sir Archibald Wavell, Commander-in-Chief, India, ordered the creation of a guerrilla element to attack Japanese lines of communication should the Japanese decide to continue their advance from Burma into the Assam region of India. This group, recruited from members of the Assam Rifles, Burmese Rifles and Kachin Rifles, “hill tribesman,” former British tea plantation owners and workers in the territorial guard, and some detailed American servicemen, came to be known as V-Force. Since the Japanese did not invade further west until 1944, the unit mission became primarily intelligence gathering, weather reporting, and pilot rescue. They did this by maintaining a chain of forward observation posts from upper Assam to the northern Arakan. They provided protection for the 10th Air Force and Royal Air Force air warning outposts while also serving to maintain an Allied presence in the forward areas. This was important to the pro-British indigenous groups who were suffering under the Japanese occupation. In February 1944, Stilwell requested that the American personnel in “V-Force” be transferred to Detachment 101. The experience that these veterans brought was a boon to the organization and immediately impacted operations, especially when Detachment 101 was ramping up to assist the drive on Myitkyina by Merrill’s Marauders. The memoirs by V-Force veterans are surprisingly many. Included among these are: Ursula Graham Bower, *Naga Path* (London: John Murray, 1952); C.E. Lucas Phillips, *The Raiders of Arakan* (London: Heinemann, 1971); John Bowen, *Undercover in the Jungle*. (London: William Kimber, 1978). For V-Force support to American Air Warning Stations, see Bob Phillips, *KC8 Burma: CBI Air Warning*

Stilwell determined that Eifler's group would not operate in China. The general recognized that Chinese leader Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek would not allow an autonomous and secret para-military unit in his territory. Instead, Stilwell gave orders to Eifler to operate from India into Burma. At first, Stilwell was unclear where he wanted the unit to concentrate its operations. He told Eifler his unit could do the most good by disrupting Japanese shipping in Rangoon. However, this mission was soon cast aside when it proved impracticable, and it was in north Burma that Detachment 101 would commence its first operations. According to Eifler, it was here that Stilwell said that all he wanted to hear were "booms" coming out of the jungle. Although not reflected in the official record—likely, because the order was verbal—Eifler detailed in his memoir that Detachment 101 had ninety days in order to make these "booms" happen.⁶⁰

Stilwell's main concern in the CBI was keeping the Hump route open, and Japanese fighter planes based at Myitkyina airfield were hampering the flights of the

Team, 1941-1942. (Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 1992); For information on Stilwell's walkout see Frank Dorn, *Walkout: With Stilwell in Burma*. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1971), 243; B.C. Case to G-2 section of Stilwell's HQ, "Dinjan Air Raid Warning and Information Net Work," 12 September 1942, F 499, B 68, E 190, RG 226, NARA., illustrates how little Stilwell's HQ knew about the situation in north Burma, where Detachment 101 would initially operate. Case was sent on a fact-finding mission to ascertain the general situation in the area. Case appears to have had no knowledge of what V-Force was, or that it was operating in the area.

⁶⁰ Eifler to Donovan, "Report of Action" 24 November 1942, NARA. While neither Eifler nor Stilwell officially asked Chiang Kai-Shek for permission for Detachment 101 to operate in China, given the problems experience by the Sino-American Cooperative Organization (SACO), a group operating in China made up of U.S. Naval Group, China, and OSS, it is likely that even if Detachment 101 had received permission to operate in China, that it would have experienced extreme supply and liaison difficulties. While the OSS was in China early, with SACO and AGFRTS (Air and Ground Forces Resources and Technical Staff), it was not to reach its full zenith until 1945 and only then after the surrender of Germany in May and the end of the Burma Campaign in July. At this time, the OSS was able to concentrate its full resources—including both personnel from Europe and Detachment 101—into its effort with Detachment 202 (China); Eifler and Moon, *The Deadliest Colonel*, 61. The official record, while not giving an exact figure of 90 days, does imply that Eifler was under extreme pressure to prove himself and the new organization to a skeptical General Stilwell. This often-told story of the "booms" is repeated in Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, 109. For a documentary reference to this, see Carl F. Eifler to Joseph W. Stilwell, 11 November 1942, F 364, B 58, E 190, RG 226, NARA, another copy can be found at F 27, B 191, E 92, RG 226, NARA.

unarmed cargo aircraft. This forced American aircraft to fly a longer route at the cost of greater gas consumption and reduced cargo.⁶¹ Stilwell therefore directed Eifler to cut the lines of communication around Myitkyina to render the airfield ineffective. The mission also had a Machiavellian secondary objective. Such missions might bring about Japanese reprisals on the indigenous population, thereby serving as a brutal form of propaganda that could only help the Allied cause and help dissuade the indigenous population from working with the Japanese.⁶²

Eifler also sought to clarify the command structure with Stilwell. They agreed that Detachment 101 would remain a COI/OSS unit, but would be under the tactical control of Stilwell's headquarters. Initially, Stilwell gave specific directions to Detachment 101, but as it ingrained itself in Burma, his headquarters began assigning strategic objectives and allowed the unit's commanders to figure out the best way to carry out them out. By July 1943, Eifler commented to OSS Washington that Stilwell gave him a "complete hand as far as our unit is concerned. We are practically a little Army on our own. We issue our own orders and, as far as possible, keep care of our own administration."⁶³ In practice, Eifler did not have to directly report to anyone in the CBI outside of the COI/OSS command chain, as long as he maintained liaison with Stilwell's Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC) in Burma. In essence, Detachment 101 served at the behest of Stilwell, but he only gave strategic direction to the

⁶¹ Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *United States Army in World War II: China-Burma-India Theater: Stilwell's Command Problems* (Washington, D.C: Center of Military History, 1987), 9-10.

⁶² "Burma," F 2538, B 192, E 139, RG 226, NARA.

⁶³ Carl F. Eifler to Carl O. Hoffman, 17 July 1943, F 371, B 58, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Copies of Eifler's correspondence from mid 1942-May 1943 to Stilwell's headquarters can be found at F 499, B 68, E 190, RG 226, NARA. In 1942, the instructions given are very specific. Thereafter, they get less so.

Detachment. OSS Washington also continued its benign neglect. It let Detachment 101 run itself with little interference with only the instructions that "... no important operations will be carried out without prior approval" and that the unit was "to operate entirely on your own organizational equipment."⁶⁴ Essentially, Detachment 101 was on its own, an arrangement that would initially prove confusing, but in practice would work remarkably well. Inter-theater COI/OSS command would be a more difficult obstacle.⁶⁵

A joint COI/OSS and U.S. Navy effort that would be formalized in April 1943 as the Sino-American Cooperative Agreement (SACO) was operating in China under the leadership of Commander Milton "Mary" Miles. Since Miles outranked Eifler, then a major, the presumption was that Eifler would report through, and be under the direction of, Miles. However, Detachment 101 was the first unit of its type, and the COI/OSS did not have much of an overseas presence. Eifler had no precedent to follow and despite repeated pleas for clarification, OSS Washington never informed him of whom he was to report to. Miles was also unsure, but eventually solved the bureaucratic issue by telling

⁶⁴ L.B. Thompson to Carl F. Eifler, "Letter of Instructions," 15 September 1942, original in Eifler's papers which are in the author's possession. The author can find little evidence in either the OSS or Army CBI records that Donovan or other OSS Washington authorities tried to manage Detachment 101's activities. Discussions with some of the original cadre of Detachment 101 also lend support to this assumption.

⁶⁵ The lack of direction from Washington had some drawbacks, especially in the early period. The main concern for the fledgling unit was financial. Detachment 101 started with an allotment of \$288,000 for its first year of operations, but OSS Washington did not send the funding when needed. In Eifler to Donovan, "Report of Action" 24 November 1942, NARA, Eifler complained that he had no money with which to conduct operations. To combat the shortfall, the personnel of the Detachment had all dug into their own pockets and contributed their pay to keep the unit running. This situation was cabled to Washington in Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Report of Actions to Date and Request for Instructions," 26 December 1942, F 27, B 191, E 92, RG 226, NARA. Pleas to Washington were unsuccessful. Only a \$50,000 emergency infusion from General Stilwell saved the unit from running out of funding. Documentation of the transfer of the funds from Stilwell to Eifler can be found in Joseph W. Stilwell, "Transfer of Funds for Military Intelligence Purposes," 15 December 1942, F 364, B 58, E 190, RG 226, NARA. As late as February 1943, Eifler was still trying to clarify his command arrangement with OSS, Stilwell, and Miles. See Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Status of O.S.S. Detachment 101," 16 February 1943, F 49, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

Eifler that he was far too busy handling Chinese liaison to also handle liaison with the British. Since Burma was in the British sphere of influence, extensive coordination with them was a necessity. Miles therefore gave Eifler—subject to contrary orders from COI/OSS headquarters—operational control of the Burma AOR, and directed him to report though the arrangement worked out with Stilwell. This meant that with few exceptions from the American military/COI/OSS chain of command, Detachment 101 had a free hand in the running its operations and reporting requirements.⁶⁶

OSS and SOE

In spite of the American command arrangement, Eifler still faced failure if the British did not agree to the type of operations that he had planned. The British viewed the COI/OSS and Detachment 101 with mixed emotions. On one hand, the Detachment, if successful, could offer more teeth to the American effort in north Burma, which the British viewed as virtually nil. Stilwell was focused on keeping the Chinese in the war and had expended the majority of his effort on the Hump route. The British saw this as largely a waste of effort. They did not share Stilwell's assessment that the Chinese, if led well, could provide valuable and disciplined combat forces.⁶⁷ With the British Empire assailed on all fronts, they could ill-afford to spend much in the way of materials on retaking Burma. Therefore, the prospect of having American help, even if it were a secret paramilitary unit, was a tempting one. There was potentially a secondary motive;

⁶⁶ Eifler to Donovan, "Report of Action," 24 November 1942, NARA. For more on SACO, see Roy Olin Stratton, *SACO: The Rice Paddy Navy*, (New York: C.S. Palmer, 1950). From the OSS perspective, SACO was a disaster. As soon as this was apparent, the OSS allowed the effort devoted to SACO to slip, and established Detachment 202 in its stead. For this perspective, see Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets*, 419-428.

⁶⁷ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 56.

the chance of getting increased US assistance. The British were extremely under resourced and sought out increased U.S. assistance in regards to transport aircraft and logistics. Helping the COI/OSS might open up additional future U.S aid.

On the other hand, the British viewed American efforts with suspicion. A large American presence in the former British colony, especially a clandestine special operations group, could undermine Great Britain's status as a colonial power. The U.S. previously had a few colonies, such as the Philippines, but they had been on their way to independence before the Japanese invasion. Moreover, the Americans had nothing in the way of overseas territories as compared to Great Britain's colonial empire. Many Americans were ideologically opposed to imperialism, a sentiment of which the British were not unaware. A second issue was of no less importance. An American clandestine effort might not be under direct British control. From the British perspective, American armed and trained indigenous guerillas posed a potential threat to postwar British rule.⁶⁸

Soon after his arrival in India on 20 June 1942, Eifler met with Colin Mackenzie, the commander of SOE in India. Fortunately, for Eifler, the meeting was positive and the two agreed to a division of responsibilities. As the senior organization in theater, SOE had first choice in the recruitment of suitable personnel.⁶⁹ Mackenzie assigned Major Wally Richmond as the SOE liaison officer to ensure the two organizations

⁶⁸ Richard J. Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War Against Japan: Britain, America and the Politics of Secret Service*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 102-103, 146-147; E Bruce Reynolds, *Thailand's Secret War: OSS, SOE, and the Free Thai Underground During World War II*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 51.

⁶⁹ Eifler to Donovan, "Report of Action," 24 November 1942, NARA. Another copy of the agreement with SOE can be found in F 197, B 23, E 165, RG 226, NARA. Eifler also submitted his operational plans to Mackenzie in writing. This can be seen at Carl F. Eifler to Colin Mackenzie, "Dear Mackenzie," 22 Oct 1942, F 499, B 68, E 190, RG 226, NARA. For a discussion of the activities of SOE in the Far East, see Charles Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).

coordinated their efforts.⁷⁰ Both OSS Washington and Stilwell's headquarters eventually concurred on Mackenzie and Eifler's agreement.⁷¹

The issue of Detachment 101's relationship with the British was not solved at this meeting and it would later be a subject of issue.⁷² When it cropped up again in late 1943, Detachment 101 had already conducted independent operations and both the OSS and Stilwell opposed placing Detachment 101 under British control. Stilwell made it known that if the British insisted, he would discontinue support and ask that Detachment 101 be removed from theater.⁷³ The threats worked and coordination was formalized in 1944 through the establishment of "P" Division, chaired by Lord Louis Mountbatten of South East Asia Command (SEAC). It functioned as a board that discussed Anglo-American intelligence/clandestine operations. In these meetings, deconfliction of OSS

⁷⁰ For more on Richmond's assignment to 101, see Carl F. Eifler to Joseph W. Stilwell, 11 November 1942, F 364, B 58, E 190, RG 226, NARA, "Major Eifler's Mission in Relation to S.O.E. India," [July 1942?], F 499, B 68, E 190, RG 226, NARA. For Richmond's correspondence, see correspondence to Colonel Wally Richmond and correspondence from Colonel Wally Richmond in F 010394, B 270, E 210, RG 226, NARA. Both Richmond, and a later SOE officer, Colonel Ottaway, had known each other from working in Burma before the war. Richmond was involved in the timber extraction industry around Myitkyina while Ottaway was involved in mining operations around Tavoy. Both would be quietly dismissed from the Detachment in late 1944 on account of graft through Army contracts made by Ottaway's company, Leslie and Company. In SOE's defense, they at least partly warned Eifler about Ottaway (Colin MacKenzie to Carl F. Eifler, "Dear Eifler," 3 November 1942, F 197, B 23, E 165, RG 226, NARA). Eifler also made contact with V-Force. See Carl F. Eifler to Joseph W. Stilwell, 11 November 1942, F 364, B 58, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁷¹ Eifler to Donovan, "Report of Action," 24 November 1942, NARA. Colin Mackenzie to Carl F. Eifler, 11 October 1942, F 499, B 68, E 190, RG 226, NARA discusses Donovan's view of the agreement. Donovan expressed reservation that the Mackenzie/Eifler agreement was not in accordance with directives regarding OSS/SOE spheres of influence. These spheres were agreed upon by OSS/SOE on 26 June 1942 and confirmed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) on 26 August 1942 (Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 207.); Frank D. Merrill to Benjamin G. Ferris, "Conference with D.M.O. and D.M.I. on Eifler Group," 16 March 1943, F 499, B 68, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁷² Detachment 101 also faced individual acts of obstruction. On 11 November 1942, Eifler sent a letter to Stilwell detailing such an obstruction. A Mr. Case was to provide Burmese agents for Eifler's consideration. However, upon hearing that the mission would be extremely dangerous, Case sabotaged the effort by telling the agents ahead of time that only the "stoutest" of them should accept. Eifler to Stilwell, 11 November 1942, F 364, B 58, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁷³ Carl O. Hoffman to William J. Donovan, "Far East-Conference with Colonel Merrill" 5 May, 1943, Donovan's personal correspondence microfilm, roll 110, A 3304, E 180, RG 226, NARA.

and SOE operations was the goal, as well as liaison to inform each party of the other's actions. Although Detachment 101 continued to have British and Commonwealth personnel assigned, the organization was always in complete control of its operations.⁷⁴

Finding a Location

With these formalities out of the way, Eifler set out to find a base of operations. Detachment 101 needed an isolated location that was near a railroad and river, near the Burma border, but also relatively near a U.S. Army supply depot.⁷⁵ Following a tip from the British, and with concurrence from Stilwell's headquarters, he located a secluded location on the grounds of the Assam Tea Estate near Nazira.⁷⁶ Detachment 101 and the tea plantation owners worked out a lease agreement. This lease allowed the Detachment use of the extensive geographic expanse of the plantation, including the bungalows, and the nearby virgin jungles—in all dozens of square miles. The tea plantation's extensive area was necessary to allow the Detachment to train agent groups in isolation. This compartmentation was necessary so that agents would not be able to recognize their colleagues. No matter how excruciating the torture, they would be unable to give away any information on other than their immediate group. The Detachment may have drawn this lesson from a Japanese attempt to land saboteurs on the west coast of India. These

⁷⁴ For more on "P" Division see Aldrich, *Intelligence and the War Against Japan*, 178-186. For "P" Division's direct impact on Detachment 101 see F 1421, B 185, E 108B, RG 226, NARA; F 2158, B 119, E 154, RG 226, NARA; F 492-495, B 68 E 190, RG 226, NARA; F 10, B 59, E 99, RG 226, NARA.

⁷⁵ Carl F. Eifler to Joseph W. Stilwell, 11 November 1942, F 27, B 191, E 92, RG 226, NARA

⁷⁶ W. G. Wyman to Chief of Staff U.S.F.C.B.I. [Stilwell], "The Eifler Group," 23 August 1942, F 499, B 68, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

groups were quickly located and destroyed because they trained as one complete unit, and once one agent was broken, he gave information on all the others.⁷⁷

Another benefit to the tea plantation was its relative isolation.⁷⁸ While problematic for liaison with Stilwell's headquarters—nearly one thousand miles away—it was very close to the eventual operating area. Seclusion also meant that the Detachment could go about its business without a great deal of interference from other military units. The tea plantation offered a large number of servants who could work as cooks, guards, housecleaners, or other help. This allowed the elite personnel of Detachment 101 to focus on establishing a school, developing communications, and figuring out how to pay for their clandestine war.

Detachment 101 Sets Up the Jungle School

As it arrived in theater, the Detachment first had to understand the operating environment in Burma. Since the most that many of the men of Detachment 101 would know of Burma had come from the pages of *National Geographic*, an early priority was to learn as much as they could about the country and its inhabitants. They read as much about the area as they could, and were helped by studies put together by people familiar with the region, such as by noted Burma specialist F. Kingdon Ward in September 1942.⁷⁹ However, the Detachment had to perform much of the area familiarization of peoples, geography, and climate themselves as a prerequisite to starting operations.

⁷⁷ Eifler to Donovan, "Report of Action," 24 November 1942, NARA.

⁷⁸ "A History of the Assam Company," *OSS-101 Association Incorporated* (Winter 1995-96): 9.

⁷⁹ F. Kingdon-Ward, "Notes on Hill Jungle For Guerrillas" F 333, B 56, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Another similar type report, compiled from sources in the New York Public Library, can be found in "Notes On Burma," 1 June 1943, F 117, B 72, E 154, RG 226, NARA. In this case, the report deals with the "Nats," spiritual creatures of north Burma Kachin belief.

The next order of business on the Detachment's priority list was to start a school to train agents. By 8 October 1942, fifteen students—several of them being trained for SOE—were under instruction, with the core classes being radio operations, codes and ciphers, signal plans, security, unarmed combat, weapons, demolitions, and junglecraft.⁸⁰ From there, the numbers and effort greatly expanded so that by November 1942 there were five separate camps.⁸¹ To ensure confidentiality, agent trainees were given *noms de guerre*, such as “Skittles,” “Robby,” “Goldie,” or “Parry.”⁸² Within months, Eifler told COI/OSS Washington that he had fully trained agent groups ready for operations.⁸³ The instruction at these camps was understandably brief, however, and Eifler had limited manpower to devote to the groups. He assigned three of his men as permanent instructors, while others would fill in as required. One of his first requests for additional personnel was for instructors.

Yet, there were still instances of concern. Despite cooperation with SOE, other liaison obstacles remained, most notably with British and Indian authorities in the Nazira area. Part of Detachment 101's training program was to send the students out on extended exercises in which they were to recommend ways to infiltrate or destroy Allied installations. These forays familiarized students with the intelligence-gathering process, tested their ingenuity, and let the Detachment see how they would handle themselves

⁸⁰ [Brief Chronology of OSSSU Detachment 101], F 74, B 42, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁸¹ Eifler to Donovan, “Report of Action,” 24 November 1942, NARA.

⁸² Brief Chronology of OSSSU Detachment 101, [late 1944?], NARA.

⁸³ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, “Report of Actions to Date and Request for Instructions,” 26 December 1942, F 49, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

under pressure if caught, as inevitably some were.⁸⁴ This happened to what would become “W” group, whose members British officers questioned after apprehending the group while walking along a road in Assam. The agents were unable to produce any identity documents and placed under arrest.⁸⁵ The British authorities had a strong suspicion that the agents were intelligence officers working for the Americans, but nonetheless grilled them until OSS personnel showed up to ensure their release. Both Detachment 101 and the local British authorities decided that a form of validating agents was necessary and identification passports became a standard set of each agent’s documentation. These would remain at base and, in the event of capture, would be used as a means of affecting the agent’s release.⁸⁶ These identifications did little to preserve the secretive nature of the organization, but they were necessary because Detachment 101’s agent trainees were either Burmese, Anglo-Indians/Burmans, or other locally recruited personnel.⁸⁷ Such agents working on behalf of the Japanese might easily be passed off as OSS students.

One final aspect in regards to documentation was needed for the agents of Detachment 101; determining their legal status. Therefore, Eifler had a contract drawn up between himself, representing the United States Government, and the individual

⁸⁴ [Harry W. Ballard], “Report on Casing of Chabua Aerodrome,” 23 November 1942, Ballard Folder, B 52, E199, RG 226, NARA. Further reports of such test reconnaissance missions, as well as Ballard’s personal file is located in the same folder.

⁸⁵ “Problem Report” undated, but sometime in Dec 1942-January 1943, F “Aikman, John (Jinx), B 52, E 199, RG 226.

⁸⁶ Wally Richmond to Carl F. Eifler, 23 April 1943, F 358, B 57, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁸⁷ Benjamin G. Ferris to Carl F. Eifler, 6 April 1943, F 499, B 68, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

agent.⁸⁸ The document guaranteed monetary assistance to an agent's beneficiaries in the event that the agent died while on a mission. To its credit, Detachment 101 took great pains at the end of the war to honor these ad-hoc commitments.

Detachment 101 was well on the way to becoming established in theater. However, the unit could not ignore the mundane. A way had to be found to pay for everything. Eifler's expenses totaled some \$6,400 monthly, most of which was payroll for the students and helpers at the training camp. Eifler had only brought limited funds from COI/OSS Washington with him. He had tried to take more—\$20,000—but OSS Washington balked at the suggestion, and he only managed to squeeze out \$6,000. Headquarters had thought that all Eifler would have to do was wire for more money and it could then be placed in his overseas account within twenty-four hours. This proved impractical. In the first place, the remoteness of India meant that Detachment 101 had limited and sporadic communications with Washington. In fact, Eifler counted himself lucky when he received an answer in a week, but it was often three weeks or more.⁸⁹ In the second, Detachment 101's bank, Lloyd's Bank Unlimited in New Delhi, was hundreds of miles away.⁹⁰ Even a secondary account established at the Calcutta office did not solve the problem of delayed payments.

Finances were already starting to become a critical problem by the end of 1942. In the interim, Captain Robert T. Aitken, the man thrown into the job of finance officer, devised a temporary solution. He arranged to bring the banking system closer to Nazira.

⁸⁸ Sample examples of these contracts can be found Eifler to Donovan, "Report of Action," 24 November 1942, NARA.

⁸⁹ Eifler to Donovan, "Report of Action," 24 November 1942, NARA.

⁹⁰ "History of Special Funds Branch Headquarters Detachment 101," [May-June 1945], F 1541, B 225, E 199, RG 226, NARA, provides a brief but excellent account of the branch.

To handle the unit's immediate needs, Aitken created subsidiary accounts. These included ones with the Treasury Office in Jorhat, located some fifty miles from Nazira, with the Sibsagar Sub-Treasury, about fifteen miles from Nazira, as well as with the accounting office at the tea plantation. His requirements were diverse. Varying but specific forms of payment, from silver coins to paper bills to opium, were required. Eventually Detachment 101's demands for certain forms of money, such as silver rupees, stripped local locations of their stocks. This led the Detachment to look for other solutions. In the meantime, however, none of the financial institutions involved, from Lloyd's to Assam Company Limited, asked questions as to why the U.S. Army Experimental Station had odd financial requirements. This permitted Detachment 101 to retain at least a semblance of secrecy.

Communications

Communications were perhaps the most important problem that the Detachment faced as it tried to determine how best to conduct operations. The Detachment could, through trial and error, work out methods to train, and then infiltrate personnel and agents into enemy-controlled territory. Without a long-range, reliable, secure, and portable radio system, however, these agents and groups would be unable to communicate back to Nazira. If these groups could not establish communications, they were effectively worthless. They would be unable to pass intelligence back to the Allies, take directions from headquarters, or schedule resupply drops.

The Detachment would have to develop its own radio sets, as they soon discovered that existing military radios were unsuitable. They and their accompanying

power source weighed too much, did not have enough range, or could not withstand the harsh Burmese jungles. The Detachment's radios had to be reliable as there would be few opportunities to repair them once behind the lines. They also had to be compact and easily transportable. Since Detachment 101 was planning to train indigenous troops to be radio operators—many of whom were illiterate and who did not understand English—the radios had to be simple to learn to operate under jungle conditions. An additional requirement was that they had to be constructed of locally procured materials. Very little had yet arrived in the way of supplies and orders from the United States took months to arrive. The Army Signal Corps had priority for production, meaning that COI/OSS requirements were filled last. Commercial parts could not be obtained on the local market as prices were some 2000-6500 percent higher than pre-war prices.⁹¹

Eifler assigned five men, who also had additional duties of handling the coded traffic, to develop the Detachment's radio. What they accomplished was nothing short of amazing. They jury-rigged radios together using tin cans as tuning condensers, made housings from metal plate and lumber, and coils out of scrap wire. They even draped antennas over fences or trees, none of which was "good engineering practice," but the radios worked remarkably well.⁹² Each radio weighted about three pounds, with the accompanying batteries adding another thirty-five pounds. Further refinement would result in an even greater reduction in weight. It would be these locally-produced radios that the first of Detachment 101's groups would take into the field in late 1942 and early

⁹¹ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Detailed Report of My Activities Covering the Period December 26 1942 to date," 6 April 1943, F49, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁹² Eifler to Donovan, "Detailed Report of My Activities," 6 April 1943, NARA.

1943.⁹³ Not only did the sets meet local conditions, but also they were of longer range than had originally been hoped. Eifler reported to OSS headquarters in December 1942 that the radios could even receive stations in the mainland United States.⁹⁴

Once an appropriate set was developed, the Detachment then had to construct a communications network that could handle its envisioned far-flung operations. This network started with liaison contacts that include daily exchanges with U.S. Army and British networks.⁹⁵ On 13 January 1943, Detachment 101 established the first outlying communications hub, radio station “D,” in Calcutta under the direction of Captain Harry W. Little. This station eventually would become a separate OSS unit, Detachment 505, which was in charge of supplies and procurement for Detachment 101. Since no additional qualified personnel were arriving from the United States, Detachment 101 trained the first complements of its agent school as radio operators. These were trained at “Camp O,” which was established on 6 January 1943.⁹⁶ These would be used both to serve on the field teams and in an expanded liaison network.

Moving Toward the First Operations

Eifler’s ambition and ideas soon surpassed the twenty personnel available to him. In February 1943, he wrote back to OSS headquarters requesting personnel with the following specialties: finance, medical, communications, technical (to perform what would later be the work of Research and Development (R&D), photography, and

⁹³ Eifler to Donovan, “Report of Action,” 24 November 1942, NARA.

⁹⁴ Eifler to Donovan, “Report of Actions to Date,” 26 December 1942, NARA.

⁹⁵ Eifler to Donovan, “Detailed Report of My Activities,” 6 April 1943, NARA.

⁹⁶ Eifler to Donovan, “Detailed Report of My Activities,” 6 April 1943, NARA; Since Detachment 505 became a separate entity from 101, it will not be covered in any great detail in this dissertation.

armorers.⁹⁷ With this request for more personnel, Eifler made the first steps of moving Detachment 101 beyond an organization that would rely solely on SO personnel to fill in other roles as needed. As it was, Eifler had already begun the Communications, Special Funds (Finance), and Schools and Training Branches.

Eifler wanted to use his experience in the Customs Service to establish smuggling routes to infiltrate agents deep into enemy territory and to extract potential agents and materials. While Eifler's methods did not work as planned, it is important to keep this concept in mind as one looks at Detachment 101's initial operations. Two types of these early operations are covered, short and long-range penetrations. Both types provided valuable lessons that the Detachment used to shape the organization into 1943-44.

⁹⁷ Eifler to Donovan, "Status of O.S.S. Detachment 101," 16 February 1943, NARA.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST FORAYS INTO JAPANESE OCCUPIED BURMA: MIXED RESULTS

By early 1943, Detachment 101 was established at Nazira and surmounted its immediate bureaucratic problems. The unit now had to concentrate on the very reason why it was in the Far East in the first place, to conduct actions against the enemy. It would be the success or failure of these initial missions that would determine if Detachment 101 would have General Stilwell's blessing to continue operating.

Detachment 101's field operations in 1943 can be classified as either short or long-range penetration operations. The short-range operations were shallow penetrations into enemy territory, usually conducted on foot. In contrast, long-range penetration operations were conducted hundreds of miles behind Japanese lines with personnel inserted by airborne or maritime means. The short-range operations were not of the type that Eifler originally envisioned for the unit, nor the ones that Stilwell had asked for. They would not provide the strategic results requested, but would only serve to enhance a long campaign. They promised little return but delivered far more than the Detachment could have envisioned.

Eifler expended great amounts of effort on the riskier long-range penetration operations. He wanted to give Stilwell the "booms" that he wanted to hear coming from the Burmese jungle. In contrast to the short-range operations, the long-range operations

were nearly all failures and none accomplished the initial directive from Stilwell to Detachment 101 to sever Japanese lines of communication to Myitkyina. By the end of 1943, these missions had accomplished little other than giving the unit extensive lessons learned upon which it would restructure its capabilities. Instead, the short-range intelligence gathering missions would prove to be the key to Detachment 101's success.

William R. Peers, later commander of the unit, wrote in a post-war study that at first Detachment 101 knew nothing about the locale or the operating techniques that they would use. Not having the luxury of experience, they then continuously examined their results and changed their operating techniques to fit the situation. An in-depth view into the early operations will give a roadmap showing why the Detachment's leaders chose to focus their organizational efforts as they did. Since both short and long-range operations occurred simultaneously but had no direct influence upon one another, these operations will be covered thematically instead of chronologically.⁹⁸

The First Short-Range Effort: Operation FORWARD

At the end of 1942, Detachment 101 still had limited means and only had a few more personnel than when it arrived in theater the previous summer. Despite its lack of resources, the unit had to justify its existence and advance operations beyond the setting up of a base and a training school. One way to accomplish this was to provide Stilwell intelligence on the enemy. Little guesswork was involved for the location of where to start. This first group, code-named Operation FORWARD, and operating from Fort

⁹⁸ William R. Peers, *Guerrilla Operations in Northern Burma* (Fort Leavenworth: Command and General Staff College, [date unknown]), 5. Also published in two parts in William R. Peers, "Guerrilla Operations in Northern Burma," *Military Review* 28 (June 1948), 10-16, and William R. Peers, "Guerrilla Operations in Northern Burma," *Military Review* 28 (July 1948), 12-20.

Hertz—the only area in north Burma that the Allies still occupied—would prove to be a crucial success. Based upon its example, Detachment 101 would expand its operations throughout north Burma.

Detachment 101 did not intend the FORWARD group to be a separate paramilitary operation. The original intent was for it to be a forward operational base located at Fort Hertz that was to be an adjunct campus to the agent school at Nazira. The intent was that closer contact with the Japanese near Fort Hertz would allow the agent groups to hone their craft and gain experience, giving them a greater chance of success when behind Japanese lines.⁹⁹

The Detachment could spare few personnel, so the initial complement of FORWARD was small. On 28 December 1942, Colonel Eifler, Lieutenant Colonel John G. Coughlin, Sergeant Allen R. Richter, and a few civilian agents made their way from Assam. From Fort Hertz, they were to go to Sumprabum, which at the time was the furthest point into Burma that was then under Allied control. The group was only to report on local conditions and study how the OSS could use the area to train agents and to try to strike at the Japanese.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Report of Actions to Date and Request for Instructions," 26 December 1942, F 49, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁰⁰ Like many OSS operations, the files in the OSS records at the National Archives for Operation FORWARD are quite detailed. For the reports from FORWARD, see "Operation Wilkie" F 444 and 445, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA. For an account from James C. Luce, see "Report on Tour of Duty With Office of Strategic Services Detachment 101: North Burma and Assam, November 1, 1943 to April 1, 1945," original in author's possession. For the Fort Hertz radio station that operated in conjunction with FORWARD, see F 428, B 28, E 154, RG 226, NARA. For an account of the Japanese POW captured near FORWARD, see "Wires on Japanese Prisoner of War Flown From Major Wilkinson's Area by Colonel Eifler, Japanese Interrogation POWs," F 407, B 61, E 190, RG 226, NARA, and "Testimony of Jap Prisoner Taken Fort Hertz," 19 November 1943, Japanese Interrogation POWs, F 407, B 61, E 190, RG 226, NARA. The first commander also penned a short lessons learned of this experiment in William C. Wilkinson, "Problems of a Guerrilla Leader," *Military Review* 32 (November 1952) 23-28.

The group immediately ran into problems. The rocky relationship with the British military commander at Fort Hertz would prove to be the biggest challenge that would confront Detachment 101 in its first attempts at getting into action. This relationship dramatically shaped the efforts Eifler would take to conduct independent combined operations instead of being dependent on the good graces of the British.

Eifler had previously arranged through his SOE liaison that when his small contingent arrived at Fort Hertz, that its personnel were not to be identified as Americans. They were to operate in British uniform for cover purposes. The British commanding officer of Ft. Hertz, a Colonel Ralph Gamble, had other ideas. Even before the OSS group had arrived, their cover was blown. Everyone the group met knew them as Americans, including “even the coolies in the fields.”¹⁰¹ Eifler immediately had the men switch back into American uniforms and adopt the cover of a 10th United States Army Air Force (USAAF) radio group that had been expected to arrive. The OSS group then made its way to Sumprabum, where Eifler learned that Gamble believed he had operational control over the mission. This left Eifler with the unenviable task on 13 January 1943 of directly informing Gamble that would not be the case. After having given initial cooperation, Gamble then proved to be obstructionist by refusing quarters, equipment, and most other forms of support. In response, Eifler announced to Gamble that his plan was impracticable and that he intended to withdraw his men.

In reality, the threat was a subterfuge because Eifler did not intend to withdraw. He told Gamble that he would leave a small radio team to report on local conditions.

¹⁰¹ Carl F. Eifler to Benjamin G. Ferris, “Report to General Ferris, Deputy Chief of Staff, thru Colonel Merrill, G-3,” 11 February 1943, F 49, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

This team would give Gamble all the required cooperation and Eifler might be able to revisit the original plan should conditions merit. Accordingly, on 4 February 1943, Captain William C. Wilkinson and several agents arrived from Fort Hertz to reinforce the small contingent.

The short visit to Fort Hertz had dramatic repercussions. It was from this trip that Eifler got the idea of recruiting Kachins. He reported to Stilwell, "After surveying the condition in these hills it is my firm belief that the natives in the Kachin Hills ... can be united in an effort against the Japanese. I believe it perfectly possible to raise forces in these hills that will be in a position to continually strike the Japanese from their flanks and from their rear."¹⁰² From the aftermath of a Japanese advance on Sumprabum, checked by the Kachin Levies on or near 8 January 1943, Eifler also learned that value of Kachin soldiers and their unique fighting techniques.¹⁰³

Wilkinson moved his group to Sumprabum, where they could fill a gap in the supply of local intelligence. On 8 January 1943, Eifler cabled Stilwell that if it could be of assistance to the 10th Air Force in reporting weather or other information, his group stood by to act accordingly. The group also used its secure communications to transmit information from the British back to the Americans. This included sending reports from Captain R. W. Reid, the British SOE officer, back to headquarters in India. This simple role filled by the Detachment shaved two to three days off the passing of reports, allowing greater use of the information before it was overtaken by events. The group

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Detailed Report of My Activities Covering the Period December 26, 1942 to Date," 6 April 1943, F 49, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

was able to report on developments in the area, thereby becoming intelligence collectors in their own right. For example, by the first week of February 1943, the group was acting as an impromptu air warning station that supplemented the Army's chain of stations that reported on Japanese air movements. The group also recruited an ever-expanding cadre of indigenous agents who infiltrated through Japanese lines and reported on area intelligence and Japanese dispositions.¹⁰⁴

Another opportunity, that of conducting limited combat operations against the Japanese, had a large impact on Detachment 101. From May to July, the FORWARD group continued to push its operating base ever further south until it reached Ngumla. As early as June 1943, the group conducted limited sabotage operations and recruited Kachins to be sent back to Nazira for training as radio operators.¹⁰⁵ In early August, Eifler told Wilkinson to "hit the [Japanese] any way, shape and form that you want to hit him ... smack him and smack him hard. The more you smack him, the more I'll like it. Use guerrilla tactics on their supply lines and the tactics in which we are supposed to be specialists."¹⁰⁶ By late 1943, FORWARD's operations—compounded by that of the British-led Kachin Levies and the indigenous Kachin resistance—had Japanese troops only traveling at night and made them so nervous that they were randomly firing into

¹⁰⁴ Colin MacKenzie to Carl F. Eifler, "no. 1889," 12 November 1942, F 197, B 23, E 165, RG 226, NARA and N. A. Christopher, "Report: Christopher," 13 March 1943, F 444, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA; Eifler to Donovan, "Detailed Report of My Activities Covering the Period December 26," 6 April 1943, NARA. An example of one such report—including detailed sketch maps of Japanese dispositions—can be found in Agent Mac to Wilkinson, 21 November 1943, F 444, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁰⁵ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period June 1 to June 30, 1943, Inclusive," 1 July 1943, F 1, B 65, E 99, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁰⁶ [Carl F. Eifler] to William C. Wilkinson, 7 August, 1943, F 444, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

trailside vegetation.¹⁰⁷ Through FORWARD, Detachment 101 was beginning to formulate the type of guerrilla tactics that they would perfect by the end of the war.

Operation FORWARD garnered local support by conducting impromptu civil affairs missions. In December 1943, Wilkinson reported that he had begun a “campaign” to provide the locals with unobtainable “luxury goods.”¹⁰⁸ He had items such as salt, cloth, yarn, and clothing airdropped and sold at cost. In the July report to OSS chief William J. Donovan, Eifler noted that the group did not have any medical personnel with them and had suffered from numerous illnesses, including blackwater fever, malaria, and typhoid.¹⁰⁹ In October, Eifler contacted Milton Miles at SACO, who directed Navy doctor Lieutenant Commander James C. Luce to go to Detachment 101.¹¹⁰ Luce quickly set up medical facilities at FORWARD that were available to the indigenous population.

The trade and medical efforts proved very popular, and gained FORWARD trust and goodwill from the Kachins. This was so much so that by August, Wilkinson had ten Kachin headmen (the heads of their villages) on his payroll and by October, employed sixty-two Kachin soldiers.¹¹¹ Just four months later, FORWARD reported that, given

¹⁰⁷ William C. Wilkinson to William R. Peers, “Report Covering the Period October 35 [sic], 1943 to December 31, 1943,” 31 December 1943, F 3, B 78, E 99, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁰⁸ William C. Wilkinson to William R. Peers, “Report for Period October 25, 1943 to December 31, 1943,” 31 December 1943, F 445, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁰⁹ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, “Report Covering the Period July 1 to July 31, 1943, Inclusive,” 1 August 1943, F 1, B 65, E 99, RG 226, NARA.

¹¹⁰ Luce, “Report on Tour of Duty,” Original copy in author’s possession.

¹¹¹ William C. Wilkinson to Carl F. Eifler, “Report for August,” 31 August 1943, F 444, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA; William C. Wilkinson to Carl F. Eifler, [personal letter], 25 October 1943, F 444, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

the word, the locals in the area would revolt against the Japanese.¹¹² Eifler decided to expand upon this idea. Luce was able to help with this directly. When Detachment 101 recalled Wilkinson in December 1943 for another assignment, Luce assumed command. He now had two roles: chief medical officer in the area and guerrilla leader. Luce, a career naval medical officer, previously wounded on the USS *Maryland* at Pearl Harbor, could not have found himself in a stranger environment. However, he fit very well into the role and served with distinction.

FORWARD found yet another role that greatly increased the support that Detachment 101 would get from the Army Air Forces. The group began to rescue downed aircrew and pilots. This mission grew out of the unit's efforts to assist individual Chindits during Orde Wingate's retreat out of Burma in March-April 1943. FORWARD ultimately rescued nine Chindits, one of whom later died.¹¹³ While the Chindit relief mission was limited, the Detachment made it known to the Allied air forces that they now could help rescue downed aircrews, resulting in raised morale and greatly increasing cooperation from the Army Air Forces.

FORWARD continued to experience obstruction from Colonel Gamble, such as a refusal of quarters and airlift priorities. In July 1943, the Detachment headquarters reported, "all we get out of Sumprabum and Fort Hertz is trouble," and Peers had previously written in June "Wouldn't life be sweet if there weren't as many

¹¹² Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period November 1 to December 13 1943, Inclusive," 14 December 1943, F 50, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

¹¹³ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period August 1 to August 31, 1943, Inclusive," 1 September 1943, F 50, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA. See #12 cable, 16 August 1943.

Gambles!”¹¹⁴ Wilkinson also had to contend with an act performed by one of his subordinates that showcased the darker side of clandestine operations. One of the SOE men detailed from the British, “Red” Maddox, executed a Kachin villager suspected of being a Japanese spy. Although the situation appeared not to have caused any untoward reaction from the indigenous population, Wilkinson was quite incensed. Detachment 101’s position in the Kachin hills was not yet on firm ground and Wilkinson faced the distinct possibility that the Kachins might turn against his group.¹¹⁵

FORWARD was originally to be a group of limited goals that was mainly an adjunct to the agent training school. Three unique roles, however, that would be critical for the Detachment came out of this first mission; supplying intelligence on enemy targets, rescuing Allied aircrew and lost soldiers, and the recruitment of Kachins. These add-on missions helped cement Detachment 101 into the American effort in Burma, and defined the unit as it went into 1944. From FORWARD’s example, the Detachment would push similar missions into the field, such as the KNOTHEAD group into the upper Hukawng Valley in August 1943. As 1943 ended, Detachment 101 had several active and successful short-range operations operating in the field.

Long-Range Penetration Operations

While it would be the short-range missions that proved the value of Detachment 101, only long-range penetrations would give Stilwell the “booms” that he wanted

¹¹⁴ [Carl F. Eifler] to Wally Richmond, 17 July 1943, F 010394, B 270, E 210, RG 226, NARA; William R. Peers to Wally Richmond, 16 June 1943, F 010394, B 270, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

¹¹⁵ Although it was unnecessary, OSS/SOE were prepared to defend Maddox’s actions. See [Carl F. Eifler] to Wally Richmond, 8 November 1943, F 010394, B 270, E 210, RG 226, NARA. For Wilkinson’s reaction to the shooting, see William C. Wilkinson to Carl F. Eifler, 25 October 1943, F 444, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

within the allotted ninety days. This placed great stress on the inexperienced and overworked staff. All of the personnel in the Detachment had multiple jobs and faced a herculean task in accomplishing them all well. This problem was compounded by poor to nonexistent area intelligence, and poorly trained operators who were selected—not trained—to fit the mission. While there was a frenzy of effort in the Detachment, it did not necessarily equate to a well-planned operation.

In contrast to the short-range operations, the early long-range penetration missions of Detachment 101 were almost all total disasters, with casualties averaging 70 percent. Only one mission succeeded out of the six attempted. Eifler ignored his group's lack of experience and poor intelligence in his eagerness to show the value of his organization to Stilwell. Although there were some COI/OSS personnel active in North Africa at the same time, these long-range penetration missions of Detachment 101 would execute the first OSS attempts at strategic sabotage.¹¹⁶ In operations of this type, failure equated to the loss of the entire team. These operations, however, also provided some of the most valuable lessons from which the Detachment could use to build itself and its subsequent operations.

“A” Group

The first long-range sabotage mission launched by Detachment 101, was undertaken by “A” Group. This mission created a false sense of operational preparedness, which additional long-range penetration operations subsequently eroded.

¹¹⁶ Kermit Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets: War Report of the OSS, Vol. Two* (New York: Walker, 1976), 361, 11-26; For an account of the OSS operations in North Africa, see Carlton S. Coon, *A North African Story: The Long-Mislaid Diary-Like Account of a Harvard Professor of Anthropology Turned Cloak-and-Dagger Operative for General Donovan and his OSS; 1942-3*. (Ipswich, Mass: Gambit, 1980)

The “A” Group mission was to disrupt Japanese air operations from Myitkyina by cutting rail lines and blowing bridges south of the city, thereby cutting the inflow of supplies to the Japanese fighter base and stopping its interference with American efforts to supply Chinese forces via the “Hump” airlift route.¹¹⁷ “A” Group was composed exclusively of British Commonwealth personnel. Jack Barnard led seven operators: Oscar Milton, Patrick Maddox, Pat Quinn, John Beamish, Aram “Bunny” Aganoor, Dennis Francis, and Saw Egbert Timothy, most of whom had worked in the timber or mining industries of Burma for years.¹¹⁸ Eifler recruited them with the help of Colonel Richmond, the British liaison officer, who knew many of the men personally.¹¹⁹ Most had prior military service. Jack Barnard, John Beamish, and Pat Maddox came from SOE—while Oscar Milton was on loan from the Burma Army. Four Kachins: Ah Khi, Ahdi Yaw Yin, Yaw Yin Naung, and Lazum Naw also accompanied the group.¹²⁰ Many of the “A” Group had made the grueling walkout of Burma with remnants of the Chinese Army in 1942. This prior experience gave the “A” Group members the necessary backgrounds to survive and operate hundreds of miles behind Japanese lines. This

¹¹⁷ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, “Report of Action to Date and Request for Instructions,” 24 November 1942, F 49, B 39, E190, RG 226, NARA. The exact wording of this mission guidance can be found in a letter to Eifler that is in the author’s possession: Joseph W. Stilwell to Carl F. Eifler, “Letter of Instruction,” 15 September 1942.

¹¹⁸ [Jack Barnard], “Report on Secret Operations in Burma,” [post-June 1943], F 448, B 30, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

¹¹⁹ Eifler to Donovan, “Report of Action to Date and Request for Instructions,” 24 November 1942, NARA.

¹²⁰ Eifler to Donovan, “Detailed Report of My Activities Covering the Period December 26,” 6 April 1943, NARA.

included knowledge of the terrain, environment, peoples, and culture, as well as critical language skills.¹²¹

The first major task for “A” Group was a successful infiltration. The initial plan called for the group to move overland into their operating area from Fort Hertz, where FORWARD was getting settled. However, Gamble’s poor operations security convinced Eifler that the Japanese would discover that the clandestine group—accompanied by its necessary porters—was trying to infiltrate. Eifler then decided to parachute the group behind the lines. After only a few hours of ground instruction, the group was deemed ready to jump. On 5 February 1942, Barnard accompanied an aerial reconnaissance mission to review the drop zone. Two days later, Barnard and Timothy parachuted in safely, although the drop destroyed their radio. The remainder of the team dropped in the next day after confirming that the recognition panels indicated the area was safe. Despite this being the first jump for the group, all landed without mishap.¹²²

“A” Group quickly set to its mission of destroying three area railroad bridges. After creating a rally point where the teams would rendezvous for the walk out once

¹²¹ [Jack Barnard], “Report on Secret Operations in Burma,” [post-June 1943], F 448, B 30, E 154, RG 226, NARA. “A” Group is among the Detachment 101 operations most documented in the literature with no fewer than three accounts and one full-length memoir. See William R. Peers and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America’s Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), 68-98; Thomas N. Moon and Carl F. Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel* (New York: Vantage, 1975), 98-99; Richard Dunlap, *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1979), 147-199; and John Beamish. *Burma Drop*. (London: Elek Books, 1958). Oscar Milton has also written an unpublished memoir. Barnard was supposed to have authored a post-war account of the “A” Group operation as well. In the author’s possession is a copy of the April 1979 Detachment 101 Association newsletter. In an article by Dennis V. Cavanaugh, “How You Can Write Our History,” he mentions that Barnard was writing an account called “Attack on the Railroad Bridges.” Numerous inquiries to Detachment 101 veterans have not uncovered a copy, or even recalled that such an account was published by the 101 Association.

¹²² Eifler to Donovan, “Detailed Report of My Activities Covering the Period December 26,” 6 April 1943, NARA.

their bridges were blown, “A” Group split up. Milton, Timothy, and the four Kachins stayed at the rally point. The others began their 40-mile march south. Near their targets, the three teams split up and moved to their respective bridges. Maddox and Francis went to the Namkwin Bridge, Quinn and Aganoor headed for a smaller bridge two miles south, and Barnard and Beamish moved to the Dagwin Bridge. All appeared to be going well. The three teams got to their objectives on the night of 23 February 1943. Once there, they prepared their demolitions for a timed simultaneous explosion.¹²³

However, Maddox and Francis, plagued by faulty timers, dropped the Namkwin Bridge too early. The premature explosion jeopardized the other teams’ efforts. Barnard and Beamish abandoned their mission. Enemy forces discovered Maddox and Aganoor while they were placing their charges. They fired on local police who came to investigate the bridge. Soon, the police and local Japanese occupation troops were in pursuit. Quinn and Aganoor split up to increase their chances of escape. Each intended to independently work his way back to the rally point. Maddox escaped but Aganoor was captured and presumably killed. Fortunately, unbeknownst to the OSS, the first Chindit operation, a large long-range penetration raid led by British Major General Orde Wingate, was also operating nearby. Because the Japanese presumed the Chindits had done the bridge demolitions, they did not expand the search for the scattered teams. The OSS benefited from the confusion but also learned the value of better coordination.¹²⁴

Barnard and Beamish made it to the rendezvous camp on the 24th, after speed marching forty miles in less than a day. They thought that the Japanese had killed or

¹²³ Beamish, *Burma Drop*, 59-60.

¹²⁴ Cable to “RED” from Carl F. Eifler, [March-May 1943], F 447, B 30, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

captured the other two groups, and that enemy forces were in close pursuit. Without pausing to rest, Barnard, Beamish, Milton, Timothy, and the Kachins gathered what supplies they could carry and beat a hasty retreat. Maddox and Francis arrived on the 27th and Quinn showed up the next day. From here, Maddox, Francis, and Quinn—minus Aganoor—started their trek north back to Fort Hertz. Both sections of “A” Group were following the same general trail, but made their way independently to Fort Hertz. They knew that the first outposts of the Kachin Levies, a British-led frontier force, were located on the approaches to Fort Hertz. Maddox’s group arrived on 16 May 1943.

Barnard’s group, in the lead and in contrast to Maddox’s group, had radio contact with Detachment 101 and received some supply drops. On 7 March, the OSS dropped a note ordering them to stay in the area and provide intelligence based on an urgent and critical need.¹²⁵ The Japanese had reinforced the area around Myitkyina in response to the Chindit expedition, and NCAC feared that they would make a push north to take Sumprabum. Barnard’s group lingered in the area and collected intelligence on targets, roads, and the Japanese military, determined which villages were friendly to the Allies, and assessed the general situation in Burma. His group returned to Ft. Hertz on 11 June after eighteen weeks in the field behind enemy lines. Afterward, Barnard and Beamish, elected to return to SOE. Maddox later parachuted in to take charge of the RED group

¹²⁵ Ray [Peers] to JACK [Barnard], 7 March 1943, F 447, B 30, E 154, RG 226, NARA. This is a copy of a letter that was presumably dropped to the Barnard-led section of “A” Group in a resupply bundle.

and Quinn did the same with PAT in November 1943. Milton chose to lead the OSCAR group that was tasked to rescue downed pilots.¹²⁶

“B” Group

Despite the fact that “A” Group was still behind enemy lines, Eifler felt pressured to launch additional—and increasingly ambitious—operations. Thus, the second sabotage team, code-named “B” Group, was launched while “A” Group was still south of Myitkyina. “B” Group parachuted in near Lawksawk, further south of “A” Group, during daylight on 24 February 1943. “B” Group, led by Harry Ballard, was comprised of John Clark, Vierap Pillay, Lionel Cornelius, Kenneth Murray, and Cyril Goodwin. All were either Anglo-Burmans or Anglo-Indians recruited from refugee camps in India.¹²⁷

Peers was part of the drop crew on the aircraft. In his book, *Behind the Burma Road*, he explained his misgivings about the selected drop zone because it was only a few miles from several villages and the local inhabitants would be easily notice the drop aircraft. Assured by Ballard that the group would be fine, Peers approved the parachute drop. Never again would the mission leader have the authority to make the decision to

¹²⁶ “Message from Wilkinson,” 2 June 1943, F 447, B 30, E 154, RG 226, NARA. Wilkinson was then the Detachment 101 officer in charge of the FORWARD group. From March 1944 on, SOE in the Far East was known as “Force 136.”

¹²⁷ Casualty Report, 13 October 1944, F 372, B 58, E 190 RG 226, NARA. Note this file has a mistake, and lists John Beamish of “A” Group as among the missing of “B” Group. In fact, it is John Clark (listed later in the report with the “W” Group personnel) who should be listed in Beamish’s place. For further information on Clark, see F “Clark, John C (John),” B 54, E 199, RG 226, NARA.

execute. The Detachment 101 staff correctly concluded that a group's leader could not be relied on to make an objective assessment when immediate risk had escalated.¹²⁸

Lawksawk was out of the range of Allied fighters based in India. Therefore, a China-based Army Air Corps C-87 and P-40 fighter escort was necessary. In early 1943, Detachment 101 had only the Army Air Corps for air support. Stilwell's priority—and hence that of the 10th Air Force—was to fly as much cargo as possible into China over the Hump route. Thus, the request for a single cargo plane had to go through 10th Air Force command channels to General Clayton L. Bissell before it reached Stilwell. Stilwell denied the request because he wanted Detachment 101 to infiltrate groups overland to avoid taxing his limited airlift. Eifler pointed out that "A" Group had demonstrated that this was not always practical. Stilwell relented when Eifler said that the entire mission—reconnaissance, personnel and supply drop—could be done by a single mission. Eifler also agreed to bomb Lashio on the return flight. His supply bundle kickers would manhandle twenty 30-pound bombs out of the aircraft over the Lashio airfield to disrupt Japanese air operations. Detachment 101 launched "B" Group on 24 February to add to the "booms" that "A" Group was supposedly already making in Burma. Twenty minutes from the drop zone, the drop crew offered the men of "B" Group brandy-laced coffee. At 1530 hours, they jumped. All landed safely although Goodwin had hung up in a tree. As the cargo and escort planes circled overhead after the drop, one man waved goodbye. Unfortunately, the men on the ground could not see what Peers saw from the C-87.

¹²⁸ Eifler to Donovan, "Detailed Report of My Activities Covering the Period December 26," 6 April 1943, NARA; Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 101-102.

As we made our last pass, we could see a discomfoting sight: villagers streaming out in every direction, heading towards the drop zone. I had an aching feeling that the lines looked hostile. I couldn't get it out of my head that they were out to kill. And because of this, I felt it had been a bad decision. As I sat in the plane, I felt miserable about the whole affair and wondered why I had ever got mixed up in this sort of business.¹²⁹

Neither Peers not the rest of Detachment 101 would learn what happened to "B" Group until June 1945.

"W" Group

Yet, without pause for reflection as to what had happened to "A" or "B" Groups, long-range penetration missions continued to be launched. Lieutenant General Noel Mackintosh Stuart Irwin, commander of the British Eastern Army in the Arakan region of Burma, asked Detachment 101 for assistance cutting Japanese supplies on the Prome-Taungup coastal road. Any help that Detachment 101 could provide would aid in recapturing Donbiak (Shinkhali).¹³⁰ Since the Arakan is principally a region of thick mangrove swamp along the west coast of Burma, "W" Group [Operation Maurice to the British] would have to go in by boat. The "W" Group would be operating even farther south than "A" or "B" Groups, and well beyond Detachment 101's area of operations.

Detachment 101 was even less prepared for amphibious insertions than it was for those by air. It would be another first for Detachment 101. Unlike "A" Group, which received some parachute training, "W" Group would get none. The Detachment had no

¹²⁹ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 102; Eifler to Donovan, "Detailed Report of My Activities Covering the Period December 26," 6 April 1943, NARA.

¹³⁰ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Report covering the period April 6 to April 30 1943," 30 April 1943, F 49, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA; William Slim, *Defeat Into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942-1945* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000), 154.

organic boats, and the landing party from Detachment 101 had no experience either.¹³¹ The British naval delivery vessels had to be clear of the area by daylight to avoid detection and possible attack by the Japanese.¹³² The British boats carrying the team and its rubber boats could not carry sufficient fuel internally to support a night reconnaissance of the landing site the night before and return the next night to drop off the team. Eifler requested that the boat carry extra fuel on deck to extend the range of the delivery vessels. The Royal Navy refused the request because carrying fuel externally was against regulations. Eifler asked Vice Admiral Herbert Fitzherbert, the Royal Indian Navy Commander, for a waiver. The British admiral did not feel that there was any situation in the theater that warranted a violation of this regulation.¹³³

Anticipating that the mission could end in disaster, Eifler, who was to be a member of the party putting the group ashore, wrote a blunt memo. Eifler gave the memo to Lieutenant Colonel John G. Coughlin, his second-in-command. Coughlin was to forward the note to Donovan, if Eifler went missing.

In the event that we do not come back, I wish to use this report as a reason to Washington why you should have your own boats ... If I, at the present time, had my own boats, I would not even consider undertaking this project now ... As I stated earlier in this report to you, chances at the present time appear to be against us, but we are going ahead ... I do not feel that it is right to ask our men to take these unnecessary chances which become necessary in an attempt to coordinate or work with other agencies.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Eifler to Donovan, "Detailed Report of My Activities Covering the Period December 26," 6 April 1943, NARA.

¹³² "Operation Maurice," 2 March 1943, F 49, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

¹³³ Eifler to Donovan, "Report covering the period April 6 to April 30 1943," 30 April 1943, NARA.

¹³⁴ John G. Coughlin to William J. Donovan, "Situation as of this date," 10 March 1943, F 49, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

The “W” Group consisted of six Anglo-Burman/Indian agents; Charles Morrell, John Sheridan, Vincent Snadden, John Aikman, Alex D’Attaiades, and Geoffrey Willson.¹³⁵ The team finally got ashore near Sandoway, Burma, on the night of 8 March 1943. They had to move, and hide before daybreak, more than 1,000 pounds of supplies. It took five tries to find a good landing site, but the wild card proved to be Eifler himself.

Because of the time lost in the previous landing attempts, Eifler did not think that the agents would have the time to bury the rafts before dawn. In order to reduce the chances of discovery Eifler decided to accompany them and swim to the motor launch with the rubber boats in tow. After the six agents got ashore with their supplies, Eifler told them to get the stuff under cover. When he shook their hands in farewell, he warned them that if discovered, not to be taken alive.¹³⁶ That was the last time that Detachment 101 saw “W” Group, but the drama was not over.

The pounding surf and darkness proved to be nearly insurmountable even for the brawny OSS colonel. As he struggled to drag the five rubber boats back through the surf, a wave threw Eifler head first onto a large rock. Dazed, he barely managed to tow the rafts back to the launch craft in time. The injury so disoriented Eifler that he only found the motor launch by the sound of the crew pulling up the anchor chain. It had taken so long to get the agents ashore that dawn was soon approaching.¹³⁷ Despite this, “W” Group marked the beginning of the end of Eifler as the commander of Detachment

¹³⁵ Daniel Mudrinich “Report of Investigation: Charles Morrell,” 29 June 1945, B 54, E 199, RG 226, NARA; “Student Questionnaire” [for John Aikman], 30 October 1942, B 52, E 199, RG 226, NARA; a misfiled operational plan for the group can be located in F “Balls” 009505, B 214, E210, RG 226, NARA; Operation plan and summary of mission personnel, undated, F 009505, B 214, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

¹³⁶ Roosevelt, *War Report*, 378.

¹³⁷ Moon and Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel*, 118-119.

101. His head injury was severe. Neither prodigious amounts of alcohol nor self-medicating with morphine could dull the constant pain.¹³⁸ The injury would eventually prove to be the grounds to remove him from command.

The Aftermath

Inserting the long-range penetration teams blind meant that the Detachment 101 staff had no idea as to what happened to “B” or “W” Groups. It was not until June 1945 that Detachment 101 learned the fate of these teams. After Rangoon’s capture in May 1945, Peers, the last commander of Detachment 101, sent Lieutenant Daniel Mudrinich to Rangoon to investigate the fate of their lost agents. Mudrinich had to rely heavily on X-2 (OSS counter-intelligence branch) interrogations of Japanese collaborators and friendly locals. Despite Japanese holdouts taking potshots at him, the OSS lieutenant interviewed villagers who had seen the missing agents. At the end of June 1945, the investigations were over and the Detachment’s financial officer George Gorin and lawyer Charles Henderson then settled the pay and provided restitution to the families of the lost agents. What they discovered was the following.

The drop on 24 February 1943 was the last contact Detachment 101 ever had with “B” Group. Radioman Allen Richter remembered monitoring the radios for a week hoping for the call that never came.¹³⁹ On the premise that “B” Group radios had been damaged in the jump, a B-25 escorted by two P-40s flew up and down the valley on 6 March searching for recognition panels. They were too late. Two days before, the Detachment’s radio operators had heard the following Japanese broadcast:

¹³⁸ Allen Richter, telephone conversation with author, 25 September 2005.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

Rangoon: Unable to take any positive steps in the retaking of Burmese territory, the desperate British Army in India is now resorting to external activities, some of which were frustrated at the very start by the vigilant Japanese authorities in Burma and the loyal attitude of the Burmese towards their reborn country. A recent report revealed that a group of six British spies on 23rd February landed by parachute at a certain point in North-Western Burma. Entertaining the idea that any place was safe where there were no Japanese troops, they were greatly shocked when a group of alert Burmese villagers immediately rushed at them. In the struggle that followed, the brave villagers killed three of the spies and captured the rest and subsequently delivered them to the Japanese troops stationed nearby. This recent incident shows that any and all attempts by Britain to win and cajole the Burmese will end in failure and disaster. All the Burmese people from the humble villager to the patriotic leader, realize the danger of John Bull.¹⁴⁰

According to Mudrinich's 1945 investigation, the villagers led the captured survivors of "B" Group to Lawksawk. On 27 February, the villagers turned them over to the Japanese who imprisoned them in Taunggyi. The captured men provided no information despite being severely tortured for two to three days. In an attempt to convince the rest to talk, the Japanese executed three men—likely Ballard, Goodwin and Hood. The last three prisoners, all in very poor health, were dispatched under heavy guard to Rangoon on 15 March 1943, but there is no record that they ever arrived.¹⁴¹

Eifler's handshakes on the beach were the last contact with "W" Group. Once ashore, the agents hid themselves. The following day, they paid a fisherman to take them to the nearby village of Kyaukpyu. "W" Group then managed to get to Dawmya. Here their luck ran out. Local villagers probably betrayed the group to the Japanese. On 19 March 1943, on a trail near Dawmya, Japanese troops surrounded the agents of "W" Group. Trapped, they followed Eifler's advice and tried to shoot their way out. The

¹⁴⁰ Eifler to Donovan, "Report Covering the Period April 6," 30 April 1943, NARA.

¹⁴¹ "Report of Investigation: Harry W. Ballard," 29 June, 1945, F Ballard, Harry W. (Harry)," B 52, E 199, RG 226, NARA.

group killed one Japanese soldier and wounded another. However, Charles Morrell and John Sheridan lost their lives in the breakout. The remaining four sought cover on a wooded hill nearby. The Japanese forces mortared the hill, killing Vincent Snadden. The last three agents escaped by moving into heavier vegetation. On the run, villagers from Natmaw chased and caught John Aikman, who was shot by the headman on 24 March 1943. Three weeks later, the Japanese captured D'Attalides and Willson. They were taken to the prison at Taungup, tortured, and beheaded around 25 April 1943.¹⁴²

Despite having lost contact with “B” and “W” Groups and not knowing why they failed, Detachment 101 continued throughout 1943 and early 1944 to launch more ambitious long-range penetration operations further and further south. In south Burma, the populations were not willing to help the Allies. Thus, the later BALLS, BALLS #1, and REX missions were complete failures. Unfortunately, for these groups, Detachment 101 had not taken adequate time to reflect why long-range missions were unsuccessful.

The Evaluations

After the consecutive failures of “B” and “W” Groups, Detachment 101 had to reorganize, evaluate the lessons learned, and train for these future missions. Detachment 101 focused on the “A” Group operation and its short-range penetration operations. While it had succeeded in dropping only one bridge as opposed to the three targeted, “A” Group was quite successful. The debriefs from “A” Group provided extensive intelligence on the attitudes of the local population, economic hardships, locations and patrolling schedules of Japanese troops, and familiarity with jungle conditions.

¹⁴² Daniel Mudrinich, “Report of Investigation: John Aikman,” 29 June 1945, B 52, E 199, RG 226, NARA.

Detachment 101 was able to use this knowledge in its subsequent missions as it inserted forces into the Kachin-dominated area prior to the Marauder's advance in mid-1944.¹⁴³

One key lesson learned in the long-range penetration operations was to insert a small pathfinder team into the area of operations to do a ground reconnaissance before the main body. Detachment 101 did not recognize this lesson until "B" Group disappeared. Scarcity of air support, the schedule of the drop plane, and allowing the mission commander to make the execution decision doomed that effort. "W" Group, similar to "B" Group, was shackled to the regulations and operating restrictions of the Royal Indian Navy. There was neither a pathfinder team, nor prior reconnaissance, nor boat training. The post-mission note on "B" Group that called for air reconnaissance of the area of operations beforehand was ignored by "W" Group.¹⁴⁴ These lessons later became standard operating procedure (SOP); however, they were too late to help the remaining long-range penetration operations in 1943, the BALLS, and REX missions, as well as BALLS #1, a mission in February 1944 to establish contact with the BALLS group.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Eifler to Donovan, "Report Covering Period July 1," 1 August 1943, NARA.

¹⁴⁴ Eifler to Donovan, "Detailed Report of My Activities Covering the Period December 26," 6 April 1943, NARA.

¹⁴⁵ For information on these missions, see Daniel Mudrinich, "Report of Investigation: Vincent Darlington alias Vin" 13 June 1945, F "Darlington, Vincent Geo (Vin)," B 53, E 199, RG 226, NARA; William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report covering period November 1 to December 13, 1943 inclusive," 14 December 1943, F 4, B 78, E 99, RG 226, NARA; Eifler to Donovan, "Report covering period August 1," 1 September 1943, NARA. A copy of the mission file is also located in F 412 (Ball Group No 1 (Mellie), B 28, E 154, RG 226, NARA; "Missing Agents-Detachment 101," 31 May 1945, F 398, B 54, E 199, RG 226, NARA; Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Report covering period August 1," 1 September 1943, NARA; John G. Coughlin to Carl F. Eifler, 16 and 7 August 1943, F 93, B 45, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Report covering period September 1 to October 31, 1943, inclusive" 1 November 1943, F 50, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA; An additional copy is located in F 1, B 78, E 99, RG 226, NARA; Kenneth Murphy Pier to Carl F. Eifler "Ball's Plan, Second Echelon," 16 February, 1944, F 002155, B 76, E 210, RG 226, NARA. Copies of this report can be found in F 007282, B 175, E 210, RG 226, NARA and F 411 "Ops Balls Group # II Closed June 22, 1945" B 28, E 154, RG

Detachment 101 also learned by default the very difficult lesson of overextending its capabilities and the necessity for current intelligence. The successful shallow penetrations in 1943, FORWARD and its follow-on KNOTHEAD, established themselves by walking into north Burma. These missions provided intelligence for bombing targets, built enemy order of battle, and kept the Detachment abreast of the general situation in Burma. These north Burma operations benefited from the help of the indigenous pro-Allied Kachin tribes. Of the long-range penetration missions in 1943, only one, "A" Group, was in a Kachin area.

The third and most important lesson learned had a major impact on future operations and helped Detachment 101 grow into one of the largest OSS overseas commands. Eifler realized how critical it was for the Detachment to have its own organic transportation to control the insertion, extraction, and support of teams behind enemy lines. Eifler reported his problems dealing with the Army Air Corps on 6 April 1943. Every Army Air Corps unit—bombers, fighters, and transport—had to have local approvals before Stilwell gave his final approval. Even with permission granted to use Air Corps assets, Detachment 101 operations were still bound by USAAF regulations, or to its officer's indifference or hostility. In trying to insert a team in March, Eifler could not pull the Army Air Force officer away from a cribbage game long enough to get his attention. This is what Eifler told OSS headquarters in Washington:

From the beginning ... I have stated that successful operations should utilize the methods of the smuggler ... We are forced at the present time, however, to use military methods that are all wrong for this kind of work ... The planes we use

226, NARA; "Interrogation of Thra," [June 1945?], F Rodriguez, Joseph E. M (Mellie), B 54, E 199, RG 226, NARA.

are military planes manned by military personnel, operated in a military manner, first thought and consideration being given to equipment ... our first thought should be given our main equipment and that equipment is a trained agent. He is a tool, a very expensive tool, and his life should be guarded jealously as long as it is in our hands. If he is to be flown into enemy territory, he should be given every chance of a successful landing instead of which, flying under military regulations, he is taken over enemy territory in broad daylight, dropped in daylight along with his equipment ... Military planes cannot fly at night. Why, I don't know.¹⁴⁶

Most of the same frustrations could be equally applied to amphibious insertions.

The other crucial element to Detachment 101 was operational security. Agents and operations exposed themselves to unnecessary risks because personnel who lacked the operational need to know were involved in operational insertions, resupply, and extractions. Eifler had a solution. He asked for permission to purchase a small fleet of aircraft that could take off and land on short landing fields and be fitted with pontoons if necessary. As for delivery boats, Eifler, the former Customs Service officer, proposed a fast speedboat like those used by liquor smugglers during Prohibition in the United States.¹⁴⁷ Fortunately, Donovan and the OSS staff agreed. By the end of the war, Detachment 101 had its own small air force—dubbed the “Red Ass Squadron”—of light L-1 and L-5 liaison and artillery spotter aircraft. These planes proved ideal for insertion and extraction of personnel, able or wounded. Detachment 101 also had a small fleet of dedicated USAAF C-47 cargo aircraft to drop supplies. In November 1943, OSS Washington sent a small boat similar to a PT-boat. By 1945, Detachment 101 would

¹⁴⁶ Eifler to Donovan, “Detailed Report of My Activities Covering the Period December 26,” 6 April 1943, NARA.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid; Also recounted in Roosevelt, *War Report*, 378.

have a small fleet of high-powered PT-like boats, as well as a section of OSS Maritime Unit swimmers. But, all this was post-Eifler.

Although these operational failures in 1943 were serious, the Detachment staff learned from the mistakes, changed concepts of operations, developed SOPs, instituted necessary training, and incorporated the Kachins. Detachment 101 learned the necessity for having current area intelligence, organic transportation assets, and the value of working with trusted and capable indigenous populations. Unbridled enthusiasm gave way to more realistic operational plans that yielded results. While Detachment 101 did not successfully apply these lessons to the long-range penetrations of 1943, they did afterwards. They built on the more successful shallow penetrations in north Burma to expand their utility and to justify organic transportation. They increased their probability of success tremendously. By learning these lessons and focusing their efforts in the north where the Kachins could help, Detachment 101 would by May 1944 prove to be an effective intelligence collection unit that could field a strong guerrilla fighting force and become a thorn in the side of Japanese in north Burma. The next chapter will examine the organizational and command changes that Detachment 101 undertook in 1943 to make this a reality.

CHAPTER V

RETHINKING OPERATIONS: THE DETACHMENT EVOLVES: FEBRUARY 1943-JANUARY 1944

The period from February through the rest of 1943 was one in which Detachment 101 went through considerable change. It evolved from a unit focused on conducting sabotage operations behind Japanese lines to one that encompassed a spectrum of intelligence and guerrilla operations. The expansion of Detachment 101's activities required that it pay greater attention to its personnel and support elements, such as the Communications and Finance Sections. It also required far more effective liaison efforts.

After a formal agreement in April, Eifler no longer had to report to Milton E. Miles in China. This made Eifler's job easier, but also left the group unprotected and completely dependent on its standing with OSS Washington and NCAC. By the end of 1943, Donovan was concerned with Eifler's increasingly erratic and risky behavior and recalled him that same December. The recall happened at the very moment that Detachment 101 was starting to gain importance and a definitive role in the north Burma campaign. As this chapter will show, in 1943 Eifler still managed to transform the Detachment into one of greater operational and liaison capacity. These efforts allowed

the group in 1944 to expand upon the fledgling organization and become a potent force. This was important because the situation with conventional forces was disappointing.¹⁴⁸

American strategy in the Burma campaign centered on keeping China in the war. Since the Burma Road was enemy-controlled, the United States Army Air Forces (USAAF) established airfields in Assam, India. From there they flew the hazardous “Hump” air-bridge through the Himalayan mountain passes to help supply the Chinese war effort. This endeavor was costly in terms of aircraft and crews, who often crashed because of adverse weather or from running into cloud-cloaked mountain peaks. The solution was to build a land route to bypass the original Burma Road. In December 1942, U.S. Army engineers started construction on the Ledo Road. It began in upper Assam in India. From there, it would cut across north Burma to link up with the original Burma Road at Lashio, Burma. A ground campaign was necessary to secure this route, but it would require a conventional force.

The majority of Stilwell’s forces, however, were the *Chih Hui Pu*, or Chinese Army in India. This force was composed of the reformed 11,000-12,000 man 38th and 22nd Chinese Divisions and the American-equipped Chinese 1st Provisional Tank Group. The 38th and 22nd had been part of the troops supplied by Nationalist Chinese leader Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek to help the Allies fight the original Japanese invasion of Burma. These two divisions were forced to retreat into India. There they reorganized, rearmed, and trained in American methods at the Ramgarh Training Center. Despite

¹⁴⁸ Carl O. Hoffman to Milton Miles, “Eifler,” 2 April 1943, Roll 78, M 1642, RG226, NARA; Colonel John Coughlin briefly took over command until he was sent to take over OSS operations with the fledgling Detachment 202 in China. Colonel Ray Peers then took command of Detachment 101, and held it until the end of the war.

these troops being under Stilwell's command, however, they were still beholden to the Generalissimo. He often gave orders behind Stilwell's back that countermanded those that he had issued. The result was that Chinese officers often ignored Stilwell's direct orders to push forward and engage the Japanese, unless they had similar orders from Chiang Kai-shek. This resulted in much frustration on Stilwell's part and that of the British, who regarded the Chinese as untrustworthy allies. It also reinforced to Stilwell that he would have to rely heavily upon any American and British forces that might come under his command in north Burma, so that their willingness to engage might shame the Chinese officers into action. This was going to be a problem when the Allied offensive in north Burma began. Detachment 101, however, was laying the groundwork to allow eventual success.

Operation FORWARD, commanded by Lieutenant Commander James C. Luce, had gone into the field in late December 1942 and had its headquarters at Ngumla. Operation KNOTHEAD, commanded by Captain Vincent Curl and emplaced in the upper Hukawng Valley, had been operating since August 1943. These two groups served as headquarters for smaller groups that were led by American, British, or Burmese officers. Each had several Kachins or other local recruits serving as guerrilla soldiers and intelligence collectors.¹⁴⁹ Operation PAT, also in the area of the Allied advance, was led by Pat Quinn. Quinn had been able to place an agent on a hill ten

¹⁴⁹ Vincent Curl would remain in command of KNOTHEAD until 23 March, when Jack Pamplin was placed in charge.

miles from the Myitkyina airfield. By using binoculars, this agent was able to report when Japanese aircraft used the field.¹⁵⁰

The Burmese in the south and the Chinese to the north had subjected the Kachins to generations of depredation, so much so that they had learned to defend themselves. Since they were outnumbered by their opponents, they became experts in guerrilla hit-and-run tactics. Technician Third Grade Tom Moon of KNOTHEAD reported that “Every time they got a chance to knock off a [Japanese] patrol they did it because it was a psychological play.”¹⁵¹ The Kachins also compensated for a lack of modern weapons by exploiting their environment. One OSS member described this, “In a jungle ambush, the Kachins can do terrible things with sharpened bamboos. They fill the bushes on both sides with needle-sharp stakes, cleverly hidden. When a [Japanese] patrol was fired upon, and dived for the timber—well, I hardly like to talk about it. After a few ambushes like that, the [Japanese] never took cover when we fired on them.”¹⁵²

With Kachin help, Detachment 101 groups were conducting limited offensive guerrilla actions by the end of 1943. Some were quite fierce, as based on this 27 December 1943 skirmish near Jaiwa, described in an OSS report.

... the [Japanese] were quite close before our men opened fire. Some [Japanese] fell but they were so close ... that they rushed our men and hand to hand fighting ensued. Six [Japanese] tried to seize our Bren gun and Sai La fought bravely against odds but was left with only the “locking handle” in his hand. He then grabbed a Tommy gun from one of our patrol, shot 2 [Japanese] in an effort to retrieve his Bren gun. The [Japanese] came to grips with him again, he tried to use his weapon hammer fashion on their bodies but struck a tree and was left with only the butt in his hand ... [the Japanese] lost 15 killed and 5 wounded.¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 147-148; SOE was the British equivalent of OSS.

¹⁵¹ Tom Moon interview by Heidi Vion, April 13 1995, Garden Grove, CA. Copy in author’s files.

¹⁵² Ralph Henderson, “Jump-In to Adventure,” *Reader’s Digest*, June 1945, 47.

¹⁵³ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 1 March,” 31 March 1944, NARA.

The Detachment still had a long way to go before it would be able to assist a major conventional offensive.

The Detachment Reevaluates Its Personnel Situation

The main concern facing the Detachment once it had gained General Stilwell's tentative acceptance to remain in theater, was to acquire additional personnel. Through its liaison agreement with SOE, the Detachment had little trouble securing indigenous or Anglo-Indian/Burman recruits. These additional recruits forced the Detachment to increase the capability of its jungle and agent training programs. The Detachment had to expand its training area and by June 1943, Nazira consisted of seventeen camps spread out over a twenty-five square mile area.¹⁵⁴ These camps accommodated an ever-increasing number of students and by September 1943, fifty-seven students were undergoing radio instruction alone.¹⁵⁵ At this time, with some 150 students in training, the Detachment 101 school was at its largest capacity for training indigenous agents than it would be for the rest of the war.¹⁵⁶ The group also had no problem finding workers among the local population. By November, the unit had some fifty Gurkha guards, a like number of cooks and bearers, fifteen to twenty office workers, and six couriers.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period June 1 to June 30, 1943, inclusive," 1 July 1943, F 1, B 65, E 99, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁵⁵ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period September 1 to October 31, 1943, inclusive," 1 November 1943, F 1, B 78, E 99, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁵⁶ "OSS-SU 101: Schools and Training; Report," November 1944, frame 376-393, Roll 88, M 1642, RG 226, NARA. This booklet, now on microfilm at NARA, was produced by the S&T staff at Detachment 101.

¹⁵⁷ George D. Gorin to Douglas M. Dimond, 29 November 1943, F 393, B 53, E 199, RG 226, NARA; Detachment 101 had great success with its local-recruits and in only a few cases did significant problems arise. One such case was Dennis Gomes, who deserted while on leave to Calcutta. He was apprehended, and lest he reveal the identities of those who he had trained with and who were involved in operations

But, these recruits were not enough to meet requirements, which the widespread nature of the Detachment's operations exacerbated. For instance, to facilitate liaison, supply, and operations, in March 1943 the Detachment had nine of its personnel—including its primary officers—spread across the modern countries of Pakistan, Burma, India, China, and Bangladesh.¹⁵⁸ The Detachment 101 staff realized that it would be impossible to undertake numerous and complex operations without an additional influx of OSS personnel. To help the unit, Stilwell approved a table of organization that increased Detachment 101 to 52 officers and 69 enlisted men, or 121 total.¹⁵⁹

The overworked headquarters staff needed these new additions because they had been swamped with work once the unit began putting clandestine personnel into Burma. In February 1943, Eifler's report to OSS Washington relayed that most of his sections were undermanned, the situation was growing worse, and that it was having a negative effect on operations. Given his new requirements in February 1943, Eifler called for personnel for the following sections: finance (3), recruiting (1), school (31), medical (5), communications (21), administration (3), ordnance (1), and miscellaneous (4).¹⁶⁰ By September 1943, the original twenty-one man contingent had only been increased by an additional twenty-nine OSS personnel out of the sixty-nine requested.¹⁶¹ American OSS personnel were also needed for operations. Though thought impossible in 1942, the

behind Japanese lines, was incarcerated for the duration of the war. Supposedly, the OSS continued to pay his salary. See Floyd Frazee to Gavin Stewart, 21 June 1943, F 197, B 23, E 165, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁵⁸ John G. Coughlin to William J. Donovan, "Situation as of this date," 10 March 1943, F49, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁵⁹ Carl O. Hoffman to Carl F. Eifler, "Yours of April 21 and 26, 1943," 26 May 1943, F 27, B 191, E 92, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁶⁰ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Status of O.S.S. Detachment 101," 16 February 1943, F 49, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁶¹ Eifler to Donovan, "Report Covering Period September 1," 1 November 1943, NARA.

efforts of “A” Group had shown that it was possible for non-indigenous personnel to accomplish missions behind Japanese lines.

Eifler had additional problems with the morale of the personnel that he already had. Many officers were concerned that peers in other units were being promoted above them. The specific incident that triggered resentment was the promotion of Captain Frank Devlin, the Detachment 101 supply officer based in Washington, to major. This promotion came at a time when those who were in the field and previously had been senior in grade, had been passed over because slots did not exist in the Detachment for their promotion. Eifler cabled his response to Donovan in the strongest words possible short of insubordination. He said that Devlin’s promotion was unacceptable while others lagged behind and, “you created a condition for me that must be corrected.”¹⁶² The problems of promotion would continue to confront the Detachment.

In addition, many of the new personnel that arrived did not necessarily alleviate the workload. Several new recruits represented new OSS branches, and at least initially, served in those functions. For instance, the first Field Photo personnel, led by the Hollywood director turned Navy officer John Ford, arrived in November after a sixty-one day voyage. This twelve-man contingent was there to record the Detachment’s achievements on film and was already filming operations by early December. Their efforts served to enhance Detachment 101’s reputation with OSS Washington, which

¹⁶² Ibid.

indirectly helped to funnel new recruits from OSS headquarters. Personnel from other specific branches had a much more tangible effect on the unit's daily operations.¹⁶³

Finances

With the increase in Detachment 101's operations and unit structure, its funding mechanisms required more than an officer simply thrown into the role of treasurer. In June, the Detachment asked that the OSS Special Funds Branch designate an officer to handle money for clandestine operations and to pay for locally-recruited agents.¹⁶⁴

Lieutenant George Gorin arrived in August to inherit the Detachment's unique finance requirements and to replace the ad-hoc finance officer, Captain Robert T. Aitken. Gorin immediately discovered the group's unique financial challenges. For instance, in 1942-early 1943, silver rupees were an acceptable form of payment among pro-Allied locals in north Burma. But, by the end of the year, so much silver had "poured" into the area that "the people now have more money than they ever had in their lives. Some of them had made more money in this year than they would in their entire life."¹⁶⁵ At the same time that the area's wealth was increasing, goods were rapidly becoming unavailable. By late 1943, the indigenous population no longer wanted silver as they had nothing to buy with their new-found wealth. Instead, they wanted opium, or even better, cloth or salt.¹⁶⁶ The

¹⁶³ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period November 1 to December 13, 1943, inclusive," 14 December 1943, F 4, B 78, E 99, RG 226, NARA; Theater Commander, Field Photo Unit #23 to Director of the History Project, "Narrative History, Field Photo Unit # 23; Period September 1943 to September 1944," 20 November 1944, F 627, B 70, E 144, RG 226, NARA; Guy Bolte to John Ford, "Activities of Unit 23 for December, 1943," 12 January 1944, F 366, B 22, E 90, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁶⁴ Eifler to Donovan, "Report Covering Period June 1," 1 July 1943, NARA.

¹⁶⁵ William C. Wilkinson to William R. Peers, "Report Covering the Period October 35 [sic], 1943 to December 31, 1943," 31 December 1943, F 3, B 78, E 99, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁶⁶ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period August 1 to August 31, 1943, inclusive," 1 September 1943, F 1, B 65, E 99, RG 226, NARA.

demand for these items could be insatiable. For instance, FORWARD reported that the clothes in one goodwill drop—intended to last a month—were gone within half a day.

Yet, the Detachment still had to be careful using these items as payment. Having an agent wear Indian-made clothing, or use Indian-produced opium while in Japanese territory could amount to a death sentence.¹⁶⁷ Still, by meeting these demands—at least in part—the Detachment enhanced the cooperation they received from the locals.

Gorin's problems were compounded by the Japanese occupation. In places where he could still use silver as payment, only pre-war rupees were acceptable. This was for two reasons. First, an agent could not use newer minted coins while behind Japanese lines as that would immediately give them away as in Allied pay. Second, the populace much preferred prewar coins because of their higher silver content. But, the higher silver content had led the British government in India to withdraw pre-war rupees from circulation and declare them no longer legal tender. Existing reserves were tightly controlled in banks and despite operational needs, Gorin was unable to obtain sufficient quantities. Detachment 101's isolation also hampered Gorin, who found that even if funds existed to pay for operations, the remoteness of the main bank accounts created inevitable delays.¹⁶⁸

It was also Gorin's job to keep track of exactly how much the Detachment was spending. In September, this total was some \$54,000. Gorin warned Washington that this figure would increase "sharply and without advance notice," and that he could

¹⁶⁷ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April to 30 April, 1944, inclusive," 14 December 1943, F 54, B 110, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁶⁸ Carl F. Eifler to Douglas M. Dimond, "Special Funds," 5 December 1943, F. Eifler Procurement, B 148, E 134, RG 226, NARA; Gorin to Douglas Dimond, 29 November 1943, NARA.

estimate costs associated with training, but not those of field operations.¹⁶⁹ By December, the full scale of these operational costs was a reality and Gorin reported that Detachment 101's "expenses were increasing at a much greater rate than is our income."¹⁷⁰ The total was some \$75,000 or an increase of \$21,000 from September.¹⁷¹

In September 1943, Detachment 101 sent the first samples of Japanese money from Burma and Indo-China to OSS Washington. Eifler requested that OSS Washington make counterfeit examples of these, along with samples of Thai money that the group sent back in December.¹⁷² As early as October, Detachment 101 had received counterfeit examples of Japanese occupation money from OSS Washington. Although the results were considered quite good, Detachment 101 still requested that the production facilities of OSS Washington pay more attention to the proper shading of the counterfeit bills.¹⁷³

Communications and Coding

The dramatic growth of Detachment 101's communications network throughout 1943 compounded the over-tasking of the already seriously undermanned Communications Section staff. The Detachment's communications network started with the initial radio stations set up at Nazira, FORWARD, and those that were part of the mobile insertions like "A" and "L" Groups. The Detachment needed, however, to

¹⁶⁹ Eifler to Donovan, "Report Covering Period September 1," 1 November 1943, NARA.

¹⁷⁰ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period November 1," 14 December 1943, NARA.

¹⁷¹ George D. Gorin, "Report of Finance Section for the Months of December/43 and January/44, [late January 1944], F 528, B 71, E 199, RG 226, NARA reports an even sharper increase. He says that the increase for December was \$100,000, a \$60,000 increase from the previous month. For the sake of standardization, the lower increase cited in the monthly report is being used.

¹⁷² Eifler to Donovan, "Report Covering Period September 1," 1 November 1943, NARA; Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period November 1," 14 December 1943, NARA.

¹⁷³ George D. Gorin to Carl F. Eifler, "Report of Finance Section, OSSSU DET 101, for September and October, 1943," 31 October 1943, F 528, B 71, E 199, RG 226, NARA.

expand its network to include daily exchanges with the U.S. Army and the British. Since no additional qualified Communications personnel were arriving from the United States, the Detachment trained the first complements of the Detachment 101 agent school as radio operators. This allowed the group to expand its radio networks to encompass twenty-nine field stations by December 1943.¹⁷⁴

However, a dramatically overworked Communications and coding (or cryptography) staff was soon approaching its breaking point. In one fifteen-day period in March 1943, the radio personnel of the Detachment handled 135 messages composed of 9,377 character groups—jumbled letter groups read as words when decoded.¹⁷⁵ Contact had been established with twenty-seven radio stations.¹⁷⁶ By July, the message traffic had increased to an average of 25 messages and 1,200 groups a day, or for over a fifteen-day period, 375 messages with some 18,000 character groups. Radio contact alone took fourteen-and-a-half hours a day. This was in the most part accomplished by a single person as all the other radio operators were on operational assignments or training perspective agents. Other Communications personnel at Nazira had to make do, and were working a daily schedule of between sixteen to eighteen hours. This presented the potentially serious problem of leaving messages unanswered or a lack of proper

¹⁷⁴ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period November 1," 14 December 1943, NARA; "L" Group was a short-lived intelligence gathering mission headed by Agent Skittles that went into the upper Hukawng Valley in May 1943.

¹⁷⁵ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Detailed Report of My Activities Covering the Period December 26, 1942 to date," 6 April 1943, F49, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁷⁶ "Brief Chronology of OSSSU Detachment 101," [early 1945?], F 74, B 42, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

tradecraft as the Communications and coding personnel sought to cut corners in order to reply to all incoming messages.¹⁷⁷

In August, the group had a respite with the arrival of the monsoon and messages for the month slackened to 710 messages and 31,945 character groups. At this time, the chief of the Communications Section estimated that he would need 145 personnel to handle anticipated post-monsoon operations.¹⁷⁸ Yet, in September, only eighteen personnel—military and civilian—were available to cover the communications needs of Detachment 101 headquarters at Nazira. All were working twelve to fifteen hours a day, seven days a week, and the pace of communications had increased to an average of more than forty messages a day. This made a monthly average of 1,254 messages composed of 67,828 groups.¹⁷⁹ By November, the group had their largest amount of traffic to date with 1,426 messages and 91,927 groups.¹⁸⁰ This produced such a hardship on the Communications personnel that Detachment 101 decided to split its radio hubs. Thereafter, lesser volume transmitters were to transmit to a new training area set up at Gelakey to reduce the impact of the daily schedule on headquarters.

The Detachment continued to improve its homemade radio equipment. Field operations had shown that the ever-present high humidity caused condensation inside the sets. Major Phillip Huston wrote in September 1943, "after a short time of non-use in this climate, [an iron power transformer] is so full of dampness that to turn the

¹⁷⁷ Carl F. Eifler to William J. Donovan, "Report covering period July 1 to July 31, 1943, Inclusive," 1 August 1943, F 1, B 65, E 99, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁷⁸ Eifler to Donovan, "Report Covering Period August 1," 1 September 1943, NARA.

¹⁷⁹ Eifler to Donovan, "Report Covering Period September 1," 1 November 1943, NARA.

¹⁸⁰ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period November 1," 14 December 1943, NARA.

equipment on for use is almost certain to burn out the transformer.”¹⁸¹ Not only did the sets have to be waterproof on the outside, but also as robust as possible on the inside.¹⁸² The group received some valuable feedback from Milton, of “A” Group. He relayed that not only did an operator have to be thoroughly familiar with how to fix their set, but also that the batteries had to be light enough to permit their being carried long distances through rugged terrain.¹⁸³ In November, Detachment also received its first OSS-produced radios, the SSTR-1 and SSTR-5 sets, as well as experimental charcoal burners to supply power.¹⁸⁴

Developing Liaison

As will be recalled from the previous chapter, the personnel of “A” Group were surprised to learn of the Chindit operations already taking place in their operating area. With this experience, the Detachment learned the importance of developing closer liaison in its AOR, and learned that the most important liaison efforts were not necessarily with other special operations units. By far, the most important liaison efforts that the Detachment developed in 1943 were with U.S. Army Air Force (USAAF) units. On the surface, these efforts could be relatively mundane. For instance, in November the 14th Air Force asked if the Detachment was doing anything to report on weather conditions.¹⁸⁵ Eifler took notice and by December, Detachment 101 was using its agent and radio network to report weather information three times daily to the 51st Fighter

¹⁸¹ Eifler to Donovan, “Report Covering Period September 1,” 1 November 1943, NARA.

¹⁸² Eifler to Donovan, “Report covering period July 1,” 1 August 1943, NARA.

¹⁸³ Eifler to Donovan, “Report Covering Period June 1,” 1 July 1943, NARA.

¹⁸⁴ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period November 1,” 14 December 1943, NARA.

¹⁸⁵ John G. Coughlin, “Report of Drop to Ernie on November 26, 1943,” [27 November 1943], F 315, B 56, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

Group. Detachment 101 also had placed an agent with a radio to overlook the Japanese airfield at Myitkyina. This station reported the daily schedule of enemy planes taking off and landing. Not only did this help to warn cargo aircraft flying the Hump, but it also helped ensure USAAF cooperation when a Detachment drop aircraft required fighter escort.¹⁸⁶

Detachment 101 took liaison a step further. Under the direction of Major Aiken and Captain Chester R. Chartrand, the group set up an Intelligence Section that kept track of all the field intelligence reports received.¹⁸⁷ They then routed individual reports to the appropriate end user, and produced a daily intelligence summary. Originally, Detachment 101 intended the summary for outlying OSS groups, such as for what would become Detachment 505, Detachment 101's supply and personnel processing depot in Calcutta, India. The group later made it available to the British 14th Army.¹⁸⁸ The demand for intelligence grew so that by September 1943, Nazira had two regular radio communication schedules with the British, four each with the U.S. Army and Air Corps warning networks, and with naval observers in China and India. Eifler also maintained liaison with Stilwell's headquarters at the Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC).¹⁸⁹

The local liaison efforts with the British continued to function well, but they were problematic at a higher level. Eifler complained in July that while the British had

¹⁸⁶ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period November 1," 14 December 1943, NARA.

¹⁸⁷ Carlton F. Scofield to [Richard Heppner?], "Informal Report on Detachment 101," 13 March 1944, F Eifler, B 644, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁸⁸ Kermit Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets: War Report of the OSS, Vol. Two* (New York: Walker, 1976), 364; [Eifler or Peers] to Wally Richmond, 14 February 1944, F 010394, B 270, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁸⁹ Eifler to Donovan, "Report Covering Period September 1," 1 November 1943, NARA; The correspondence with NCAC can be found at F 499, B68, E 190, RG 226, NARA. RG 493, the Army CBI records, does not have copies.

said that they would stop interfering in the operations of his unit, it was not true: “they were still interfering—the politicals now instead of the military.”¹⁹⁰ The British were concerned with the nature of Detachment 101’s individual liaison efforts with specific British groups rather than through higher headquarters. They reasoned that Detachment 101 was purposefully doing this to divide any potential opposition, but in reality, Eifler did it for the sole reason that it was the most expedient process.

It was left to the upper command to standardize liaison arrangements. This was accomplished with the setting up of “P” Division, the mechanism through which all operations—SOE and OSS—had to be submitted for review. “P” Division gave Detachment 101 greater visibility into what was occurring in theater. The group now had access to the reports and lessons learned of SOE as it attempted to infiltrate agents into Burma. However, there was a downside to “P” Division as it initially represented a desire of the British to bring Eifler’s unit under their control.¹⁹¹

The arrangement of “P” Division was worked out at the QUADRANT conference at Quebec from 19-24 August 1943.¹⁹² According to the agreement, “P” Division was to be a joint Anglo-American panel to deconflict clandestine operations. Both the Americans and British were to have a maximum of three “voters” each and in

¹⁹⁰ [Carl F. Eifler] to Wally Richmond, 21 July 1943, F 010394, B 270, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁹¹ E. L. Taylor to Albert C. Wedemeyer, “Coordination of Intelligence and Sabotage Activities,” 30 October 1943, F 2158, B 119, E 154, RG 226, NARA. Taylor writes that Major General Cawthorn (British Army in India) said that the most “urgent problem fusing his proposed committee was the coordination of the activities of Colonel Eifler’s OSS team in Burma.” In contrast to Detachment 101 who focused on using the Kachin ethnic group, SOE chose to work in the main with the Karen. An example of a report of a Karen agent working for SOE and sent through “P” Division channel can be found in “Report of I.S.L.D. Agent,” presumably late 1943-early 1944, F 010394, B 270, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁹² Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets*, 393-394. For more on QUADRANT, see Charles Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *Stilwell’s Mission to China* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1987), 357-367.

all cases an equal quorum.¹⁹³ There would also be a Staff Officer Special Forces, who would coordinate SOE and OSS operations. This staff officer was to be the British, and his deputy American.¹⁹⁴ Having Detachment 101 subordinate to the British was not acceptable to either the OSS or Stilwell.¹⁹⁵

The initial efforts for “P” Division took place in New Delhi in late 1943. The OSS representative, Lieutenant Colonel Richard P. Heppner, relayed Detachments 101’s operational plan to the assembled members on the “P” Division panel and, at times, the presented information could be very basic.¹⁹⁶ Heppner, unlike the other American representative to “P” Division, took the view that the “P” Division agreement allowed for Detachment 101 to remain autonomous.¹⁹⁷ He reasoned that Stilwell, as the NCAC commanding officer, was not under the direct direction of Lord Mountbatten, the South East Asia Command Commanding officer.¹⁹⁸ The final arrangement was agreed upon when Donovan arrived on a site visit in November 1943.¹⁹⁹ Thereafter, Detachment 101, unlike Detachment 404, which would soon be set up in Ceylon, was not under

¹⁹³ Benjamin G. Ferris to Henry Pownall, “Combined Liaison Committee,” 18 November 1943, F 2158, B 119, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁹⁴ The details of the arrangement can be found at “Integrations of S.O.E. With S.E.A. Command Suggested Procedure For Control and Direction,” [October? 1943] F 2158, B 119, E 154, RG 226, NARA. The OSS found this proposal unacceptable in regards to Detachment 101. Their recommendation can be found in Richard P. Heppner, “Proposed Interim Procedure For Coordination of American and British Agencies in SEAC,” [late 1943] F 2158, B 119, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁹⁵ Stilwell’s formal reservations can be found in “Project Combined Liaison Committee,” 28 August 1943, F 2158, B 119, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁹⁶ An example of this can be found at Richard P. Heppner to “P” Division, SEAC, “Projected OSS Operations in Northern Burma,” 27 December 1943, F 10, B 59, E 99, RG 226, NARA. In this case, Detachment 101’s entire brief for the British on operational plans for early 1944 consists of a single page.

¹⁹⁷ As the OSS representative, Heppner was sent in part to give OSS more control over Detachment 101’s operations. See Francis T. Devlin to R. Davis Hallowell, “Eifler report 2/16/43-New Delhi India,” 12 March 1943, F Eifler, B 644, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁹⁸ Richard P. Heppner to E. L. Taylor, “Coordination of OSS in SEAC,” 14 November 1943, F 2158, B 119, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

¹⁹⁹ Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets*, 393-394

SEAC direction. Detachment 101 would coordinate its operations with SOE, as Eifler had already agreed to do, but it would not be under SOE control. In June 1944, Peers, then commander of Detachment 101, was named the “P” Division Coordinator for Burma, thereby allowing him total operational control over the AOR.²⁰⁰

From Detachment 101’s perspective, the “P” Division arrangement was confusing and far from ideal. Detachment 101—as well as Stilwell—feared that the arrangement was simply a veiled way for the British to control clandestine operations in north Burma.²⁰¹ British actions enhanced this fear in the very first “P” Division meetings. In early November, a senior American representative to “P” Division, Lieutenant Commander R.L. Taylor, wrote to General Wedemeyer about a potential “crisis in OSS relations with the British.”²⁰² In a meeting, the British had not honored the terms of the “P” Division arrangement and, instead, had stacked up the British and Indian government representation to eight as opposed to three Americans.

In this move, the British tried to force the OSS into an uncompromising position. An irate Heppner fired off a letter of complaint in which he called “P” Division a “committee [that] does not represent coordination of OSS but rather its complete subjugation.” He further relayed, “I am a firm believer in team play and cooperation. At the same time I possess a certain amount of pride in nationality which causes me to rebel

²⁰⁰ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, “Report Covering period 31 May to 30 June, 1944,” [30 June 1944], F 136, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

²⁰¹ Carl O. Hoffman to William J. Donovan, “Far East Conference with General Merrill,” 5 May 1943, F Eifler, B 644, E 190, RG 226, NARA has a discussion on Stilwell’s warning to OSS to keep from under British control.

²⁰² E.L. Taylor to Albert C. Wedemeyer, “Memorandum for General Wedemeyer,” 15 November 1943, F 2158, B 119, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

at treatment as manifestly arbitrary as this.”²⁰³ Even at lower levels, the “P” Division arrangement was confusing. As late as December 1943, Peers, then the transitional commanding officer of Detachment 101 wrote, “the thing that is not clear in my mind is who is “P” Division?”²⁰⁴

Despite this, cooperation between the Detachment 101 and the British continued at the local level. The British opened up their arsenals and equipment stores for reverse lend lease. In this manner, a representative from Detachment was able to visit the Small Arms Factory at Ishapore, India, to evaluate British clandestine-operations type weapons. These results were due to the liaison Eifler had already achieved with SOE and its representative with Detachment 101, Wally Richmond, who continued getting additional British and Commonwealth personnel for detached service to Detachment 101.²⁰⁵

Supplies Remain a Problem

As the Detachment continued to expand through 1943, supplies, which had been the critical link in 1942, continued to be tight. To combat this situation, the unit detailed Lieutenant David E. Tillquist to Karachi in present-day Pakistan. Detachment 101 hoped that having a representative in this port city would help prevent losses of supplies intended for Nazira. This was necessary as other units tended to paint out Detachment

²⁰³ Richard P. Heppner to E. L. Taylor, “Coordination of Quasi Military Activities,” 14 November 1943, F 2158, B 119, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

²⁰⁴ William R. Peers to Wally Richmond, 21 December 1943, F 010394, B 270, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

²⁰⁵ Letter to Captain D. Hunter, “U.S. Army Experimental Station Headquarters, Calcutta,” 12 November 1943, F 010394, B 270, E 210, RG 226, NARA. In this instance the weapon being evaluated, the Welrod Mk 2, failed. Wally Richmond’s correspondence and diary of events can be found at F 010394, B 270, E 210, RG 226, NARA; J.Q. Wood to Wally Richmond, “Subject: Employment-Lt. J. Girsham, A.B.R.O.,” 27 September 1943, F 010394, B 270, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

101's identifying mark—Task Force 5405-A—and substitute their own. Peers stated to OSS Washington in July that it was best to ship equipment along with new personnel who could serve as escorts. He wrote, “regardless of how carefully a box is marked, if the identification is ripped off, the box belongs to the first person to claim it.”²⁰⁶ A solution arrived at by the Detachment 101 supply officers was to have OSS Washington mark each crate coming into theater for Detachment 101 with a green diagonal cross.²⁰⁷ This practice was refined and later applied as standard to all OSS shipping.²⁰⁸

OSS Washington still made supply mistakes that were difficult for Detachment 101 to comprehend. For instance, in July 1000 M-1 carbines arrived with only one box of ammunition. This prompted an incredulous Eifler to reply, “The shipment of carbines was gladly received, but thus far, they are of little value as only one box of ammunition has arrived. This ammunition is not available in this theater at present.”²⁰⁹

Using the local economy for supply did not provide much relief either. In June, Peers reported that the mark-up on food items commonly available in the United States was some 300 percent. In the short time the Detachment had been in India, the price of rice had risen from \$1.40 per eighty-pound bag to \$11.50.²¹⁰ In September, Peers reported that despite anticipating future needs, the local merchants' prices “are just one leap ahead of us. Most of their prices are beyond reason, but their attitude is one of

²⁰⁶ Eifler to Donovan, “Report covering period July 1,” 1 August 1943, NARA.

²⁰⁷ Eifler to Donovan, “Report Covering Period June 1,” 1 July 1943, NARA.

²⁰⁸ James W. Kirk to Sidney Wheeler, “Official Code and Color Markings for OSS Overseas Shipments as Approved by Policy Committee,” 30 September 1943, F 313, B 56, E 190, RG 226, NARA; [OSS Washington] to Richard P. Heppner, “Markings for All OSS Shipments,” 30 October 1943, F 313, B 56, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

²⁰⁹ Eifler to Donovan, “Report covering period July 1,” 1 August 1943, NARA.

²¹⁰ Eifler to Donovan, “Report Covering Period June 1,” 1 July 1943, NARA.

indifference, if you don't pay the price, someone else will."²¹¹ The increase in indigenous personnel added to the Detachment's woes, because many recruits had unique dietary requirements.

In August, supply problems had somewhat eased. Captain Harry W. Little, the Detachment 101 supply officer in Calcutta, arranged for the group to draw supplies from U.S. Army Service of Supply (SOS) stocks. While this helped with common food supplies and sundries, it did not alleviate all the Detachment's needs. Vehicles remained a problem and could not be obtained through local SOS connections. By late 1943, the five jeeps that Detachment 101 had managed to bring with them in 1942 were all in need of extensive repairs, but there were no parts available. Lack of communications equipment likewise remained a problem and as late as September 1943, Detachment 101 could only outfit four agents because there were not enough batteries for their radios.²¹²

The SOS connection also could not help Detachment 101 acquire mission-specific items.²¹³ Such items included oddities like .58 caliber model 1861 Springfield muskets, acquired in September 1943 for use by the Kachins, who preferred the single shot muskets to more modern weapons.²¹⁴ Other items included OSS-produced articles developed by the Research and Development (R&D) Branch, whose existence was unknown to Detachment 101. For instance, in September 1943, the unit only learned of a new OSS-produced medical kit after seeing one with a Navy lieutenant enroute to

²¹¹ Eifler to Donovan, "Report Covering Period September 1," 1 November 1943, NARA.

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Eifler to Donovan, "Report Covering Period August 1," 1 September 1943, NARA.

²¹⁴ Eifler to Donovan, "Report Covering Period September 1," 1 November 1943, NARA; Detachment 101 to OSS Washington, "#AG 461 AMMDEL," 9 May 1943, F Eifler Procurement, B 148, E 134, RG 226, NARA.

China. Until this time, Detachment 101 had been producing such kits in an ad-hoc fashion to supply to their agents.²¹⁵ Thereafter, Detachment 101 requested notification of all OSS-produced equipment. Field reports enhanced the need for these notifications. William C. Wilkinson, at FORWARD, said “there were many situations which showed a definite need for OSS special items,” which at the time, the group did not have.²¹⁶

November and December marked a dramatic improvement in the supply situation. Washington was beginning to give the unit priority. In one shipment alone, the group received a sixty-three foot boat and crew, four jeeps, the Field Photo unit and equipment, twenty additional personnel, and fifty tons of communications equipment, arms, ammunition, and rations.²¹⁷ Reflecting on the increased operations tempo and attention from Washington, the unit reorganized the Supply Section into something more simple and efficient. The first improvement was to build four supply warehouses. The Section then categorized supplies into most-used and infrequently used items. They placed the most frequently used items in the primary warehouse, which doubled as the Section office. Another warehouse served as the receiving shed for new supplies, the third used for bulk and infrequently used items, and the fourth as the parachute packing facility. The addition of five new personnel assisted operations and even permitted Peers the time to design and make an improved container for dropping supplies that was then manufactured in Calcutta and shipped to Nazira.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Eifler to Donovan, “Report Covering Period September 1,” 1 November 1943, NARA.

²¹⁶ William C. Wilkinson, “Need for OSS Special Items in Northern Burma,” [1944-45?], F 3997, B 273, E 139, RG 226, NARA.

²¹⁷ Carl O. Hoffman to Richard Heppner, 13 September 1943, F 2119, B 117, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

²¹⁸ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period November 1,” 14 December 1943, NARA; Bud” Banker, telephone interview by author, Fayetteville, NC, 22 March 2007.

New Additions to Detachment 101

The early operational failures in 1943 were most notable for the lack of organic transportation assets. The Detachment had been unable to obtain aircraft for the simple reason that the War Department would not allow the OSS to ship planes directly to Eifler.²¹⁹ Instead, they had to come out of Stilwell's allotment. Since Stilwell's chief concern was to transport supplies over the Hump, the chance that the Detachment could draw an aircraft away from this was virtually nil.

This problem began to be solved in June when the OSS-trained Free Thai group arrived in theater. Originally assigned to Detachment 101, the OSS reassigned them to China just two weeks later.²²⁰ The unit brought three light planes with them, however, none of these planes could attain sufficient altitude to surmount the Hump. The commander of the OSS Free Thai Unit, Lieutenant Nicol Smith, agreed to turn the planes over to Detachment 101 at Eifler's insistence.²²¹ At the end of October, the first dedicated pilot for Detachment 101, Sergeant George W. Stanford, was recruited and on his way from Washington.²²² That month, the Detachment was also fortunate to pick up

²¹⁹ Hoffman to Heppner, 13 September 1943, NARA.

²²⁰ Eifler to Donovan, "Report Covering Period June 1," 1 July 1943, NARA. For more on the OSS Free Thai, see E. Bruce Reynolds, *Thailand's Secret War: The Free Thai, OSS, and SOE during World War II*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005) and Nicol Smith and Blake Clark, *Into Siam, Underground Kingdom*. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1946)

²²¹ Carl F. Eifler to Carl O. Hoffman, "SO," 15 July 1943, F Eifler Procurement, B 148, E 134, RG 226, NARA; Vince Trifletti, "Rocky Reardon's Airforce," *101 Association Incorporated*, 5 (April 1975), 5.

²²² Charles N. Fisher to Carl F. Eifler, "FE-1 Personnel," 23 October 1943, F 371, B 58, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

a circa-1920s Gypsy Moth biplane. This was a lucky occurrence as soon after its procurement, Eifler managed to crash a Piper Cub airplane behind Japanese Lines.²²³

Detachment 101 also received its first boats in 1943. As early as July, Eifler was already discussing his specific needs for a fast “smuggler’s boat” with OSS Washington.²²⁴ In anticipation of receiving small boats, in September 1943, Detachment 101 began construction of a small base at the mouth of the Brahmaputra River in India.²²⁵ The first boat—the *Miami*—a sixty-three foot air rescue boat, arrived on 23 November. It was readied over the next few days and then immediately pressed into use by Eifler in a successful mission to rescue nine crewman of a B-24 downed near Rangoon. This action, though reckless, again ensured cooperation from a very grateful 10th Air Force.²²⁶

Although not an internal capability, Detachment 101 gained one other valuable asset at the end of 1943. Through their extensive liaison efforts with the USAAF and the

²²³ Carl F. Eifler to Carl O. Hoffman, 3 November 1943, F 267, B 16, E 146A, RG 226, NARA; To read about this crash and Eifler’s ten day walkout, see Troy Sacquety, “Behind Japanese Lines in Burma.” *Studies in Intelligence: Journal of the American Intelligence Professional* 11 (Fall-Winter 2001) 67-79.

²²⁴ Eifler to Hoffman, “SO,” 9 July 1943, NARA.

²²⁵ Eifler to Donovan, “Report Covering Period September 1,” 1 November 1943, NARA.

²²⁶ Anonymous, “Sea Rescue,” *101 Association Incorporated*, 5 (August 1975), 7; William B. Shepard, “Report on Rescue Mission,” [November 1943], in Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period 14 December 1943 to 31 January, 1944, inclusive,” 31 January 1944, F 51, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period November 1,” 14 December 1943, NARA. A full accounting of this mission can be read in Thomas N. Moon and Carl F. Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel* (New York: Vantage, 1975), 85-87. Eifler’s faulty accounting has the rescue occurring a year earlier than it actually did. See Harry W. Little to Carl F. Eifler, “Preparation of Motor Boat for Sea Rescue Trip,” 2 December 1943, F 630, B 70, E 144, RG 226, NARA; Richmond, “Preparations for Sea Rescue Trip,” [early December 1943], F 630, B 70, E 144, RG 226, NARA; M.E. Miles, “Rescue Mission Commanded by Colonel Carl E. Eifler, AUS,” 12 December 1943, F2538, B 192, E 139, RG 226, NARA. For the commendation letter from the 10th Air Force, see Howard C. Davidson to Carl F. Eifler, “Commendation,” 6 December 1943, F 3, B 5, E 165A, RG 226, NARA. To rescue the nine airmen, Eifler had the *Miami* loaded down with six crew members, and an additional six passengers, including himself, Wally Richmond, and an indigenous agent. On board, they only had six Thompson submachine guns for anti-aircraft protection. It was the *Miami*’s maiden voyage, the first time that the captain had driven it or a boat of its type, and the gas consumption for a long journey—910 miles—was an unknown.

goodwill generated by the extraction of downed Allied pilots, Detachment 101 acquired increased use of C-47 cargo aircraft for airdropping operations. This had an impact. In September and October, Detachment 101 conducted only two airdrops, both to Operation FORWARD. In November, Coughlin suggested that the Detachment form its own Air Operations Section and the group used the capability to handle an ever-increasing tempo.²²⁷ The addition of parachute-qualified Lt. Thomas Riley further assisted operations. Thereafter, the Detachment also made improvements to handle its supply requirements and tried to ensure that an OSS member was on each drop aircraft.²²⁸

In November-mid December alone, the Air Operations Section of Detachment 101 conducted eighteen airdrops, dropping some 84,000 pounds of supplies. While some airdrops were conducted during the same sortie, this still represented a 900 percent increase over the previous two months. Detachment 101 reported in December, “There is no doubt ... that these services to the Air Corps are recognized ... and the reason why we enjoy [their] full cooperation.”²²⁹ These airdrops, conducted with C-47s and proper drop crews represented a tremendous step for the group and a portent of how it would standardize its operations throughout the war.

²²⁷ John G. Coughlin, “Report of Drop to Ernie on November 26, 1943,” [27 November 1943], F 315, B 56, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

²²⁸ Thomas Riley, “Air Drop to Curl on December 9, 1943-Personnel, Supplies, and Equipment,” 11 December 1943, F 315, B 56, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Riley observed that ATC personnel often were unclear about which supplies went to what group during drops from a single sortie to multiple groups. This resulted in some groups getting more supplies than needed, while others received none. Jim Ward, “My Introduction to 101,” *101 Association Incorporated*, (April 1985), 3. Thomas Riley was later killed while on an air-drop mission to FORWARD. On 18 January 1944, the C-47 in which he was flying was shot down by Japanese fighter aircraft. Lt. Jim Ward, who arrived to become the next Air Drop officer reported in as Riley’s replacement. He was greeted by Peers with a stern warning: “No one can replace Tom Riley! You are not his replacement. You’re his successor.” Peers would keep a portrait of Riley over his desk for the duration of the war.

²²⁹ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period November 1,” 14 December 1943, NARA.

While Detachment 101 was becoming a more reliable organization that was poised to contribute significantly to the American effort against the Japanese in Burma, Eifler's days with the unit were numbered. One Detachment 101 member, in comparing Eifler's leadership style to his successor, William R. Peers, described how each would demolish a building. "Ray [Peers] would carefully remove each brick and end up with neatly stacked piles; whereas, Carl [Eifler] would get a Bull Dozer and level it - NOW. Both would achieve the objective, but in a different manner."²³⁰ This recklessness and impetuosity made Eifler unsuitable to remain in command. As the unit gained more success, it needed its operations to work and to be a counted upon entity. Eifler's lack of success in his pushing the long-range penetration operations gave an indication that the unit needed more careful operational planning. Although Peers was speaking about a compromised mission, he could have been speaking about Eifler's command style, "It seemed to me we were moving a trifle too fast ... We were getting into something we were not yet prepared to do."²³¹

In June 1943, Eifler asked Donovan to come out to evaluate Detachment 101, so that he could get a better understanding of Detachment 101's problems and efforts.²³² Donovan came in November and immediately accepted Eifler's invitation to visit one of the groups that was behind Japanese lines. In a foolhardy move, they flew in the Gypsy Moth to visit KNOTHEAD.²³³ Afterwards, the OSS Chief ordered Eifler to relinquish

²³⁰ Allen Richter to author, email, 29 November 2006.

²³¹ William R. Peers and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), 100.

²³² Eifler to Donovan, "Report Covering Period June 1," 1 July 1943, NARA.

²³³ Anonymous, "The Only Time General Donovan Got Behind the Lines," *101 Association Incorporated*, 5 (August 1975), 8. This article says that Eifler knew that Donovan wanted to go behind the lines as a

command for medical reasons and to return stateside to recover.²³⁴ Donovan briefly placed Coughlin in charge of Detachment 101 before turning it over to Peers.²³⁵

Colonel Eifler had played a critical role in the Detachment. He was impulsive and reckless, but he also set out to succeed regardless of the amount of effort required. His friendship with Stilwell had gained Detachment 101 a place in Burma and had allowed the unit to stay despite its early failures. Largely through his unceasing liaison efforts, he had built the unit from nothing into a group capable of conducting shallow penetration operations and that was beginning to be in control of its own operational assets. Under his direction, the group evolved from a Special Operations (SO) only function into one that was beginning to encompass other capabilities. In particular, the Communications Section became critical to the functioning of the unit, and without it, the group would have been useless. In addition, this Section was responsible for what was at first merely the forwarding of intelligence, to what later became collection. As tactical intelligence became of importance to the USAAF's bombing campaign, Detachment 101's SO function became secondary.

Given that Detachment 101 had stepped into a largely unknown operating environment—and was a pathfinder entity in its own right—ongoing operations shaped the group's direction and it could only react to events as they occurred. Yet, in this

way to build up his credibility. Other sources say the OSS chief did so as not to back down from Eifler's invitation. Either way, the event demonstrates a profound lack of judgment for both parties. Had Eifler been captured, Detachment 101's existence would have been in jeopardy. Had the same happened to Donovan, the existence of the OSS itself would have been at risk.

²³⁴ Peers, *Behind the Burma Road*, 132; "My Dear General Richardson," 11 December 1943, F 2538, B 192, E 139, RG 226, NARA.

²³⁵ Carl O. Hoffman to Richard Heppner, "#62," 21 October 1943, F1053, B 164, E 134, RG 226, NARA. Donovan was already planning in October to remove Eifler—even before he came out to the Detachment. After a partial recovery—Eifler spent many post-war years dealing with his injuries—Donovan placed him in charge of the Field Experimental Unit, in mid 1944.

critical period for Detachment 101, the group learned to capitalize on its strengths. It is a direct result of the lack of direction from either Stilwell or Donovan that Detachment 101, under Eifler's direction, was able to achieve its new direction. This next chapter will detail Peers' initial efforts to meld Eifler's with his own and to expand upon the size, structure, and utility of the Detachment. The early months of Peers' command would be critical as Detachment 101 braced itself for the Myitkyina Campaign.

CHAPTER VI

PEERS TAKES OVER: DETACHMENT 101 COMES OF AGE: JANUARY- MAY 1944

Colonel Eifler's necessary initial audaciousness and recklessness of had gained Detachment 101 a foothold in the CBI, but Colonel Peers was responsible for reforming the unit into an effective organizer that enhanced the U.S. effort in the theater. Like Eifler, Peers was largely left to his own devices in running the Detachment. Colonel John G. Coughlin was the ranking officer in theater and technically Peers should have reported through him to Donovan. But, according to Peers, Coughlin "gave me absolute free rein."²³⁶

Although taking much from his former mentor, Peers quickly phased out Eifler's brash operational style. These methods had left a mark on Detachment 101, but his legacy was not entirely good. One visitor to Detachment 101 remarked immediately after Eifler departed that "Their attitude ... is a bunch of desperados who know that sooner or later they are going to be hunted down but hope to sell their lives as dearly as possible when the time comes."²³⁷ Instead, Peers replaced potentially high return but exceptionally risky operations focused on specific objectives, with ones aimed at four broader goals: secure information on Japanese military movements and intentions; locate

²³⁶ William R. Peers and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), 132.

²³⁷ E. L. Taylor to William J. Donovan, 9 January 1944, F 2728, B 193, E 146, RG 226, NARA.

targets for the USAAF; rescue downed USAAF personnel; and foster guerrilla warfare.²³⁸ Peers transformed Detachment 101 into a far more reliable force that developed a reputation for doing the impossible. This gave Stilwell great confidence in Detachment 101. As one senior OSS observer remarked several months after Peers took over, “I do not think that the OSS could be in a stronger position in any theater than is the 101.”²³⁹

Peers built on the reputation Eifler had established. Although the majority of Eifler’s long-range penetration operations had been failures, the shallow penetrations had been successful. Originally designed to be jumping off points for other operations, these shallow-penetration operations became ones upon which Peers could capitalize. Before he could do so, however, he needed to reform the Detachment’s force structure. Peers accomplished this by strengthening the core areas of personnel, schools and training, liaison, and communications. He also sought to “get the organization decentralized” so that each unit could function more independently. These efforts produced results, especially when supplemented by additional resources.²⁴⁰

In February 1944, Stilwell decreed that the American personnel in the British V-Force transfer to Detachment 101. This gave Detachment 101 a trained cadre of five officers, thirty enlisted men, and forty Kachins. Many of the Americans were on loan from the 988th Signal Service Battalion and were welcomed as additional radio

²³⁸ Carlton F. Scofield to [Richard Heppner?], “Informal Report on Detachment 101,” 13 March 1944, F Eifler, B 644, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

²³⁹ John G. Coughlin to Far East Theater Officer [OSS Washington], 12 May 1944, F 2536, B 192, E 139, RG 226, NARA.

²⁴⁰ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, “Report Covering Period 1 February to 29 February, 1944, inclusive,” 29 February 1944, F 52, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

operators. With the inclusion of the V-Force personnel, Detachment 101 gained much more than additional operational capacity. Former V-Force personnel brought with them a great knowledge of the Burmese jungles and peoples. This coincided with the establishment of an operations center at Nazira that helped coordinate the field groups and increased the utility of Detachment 101's intelligence. As the unit moved to support the Myitkyina Campaign, this cell assumed great importance. First, however, the group had to reorganize before it could undertake an all-out effort in north Burma.²⁴¹

Elsewhere, Detachment 101 kept building its field units to increase their intelligence gathering and eventual guerrilla potential. By January 1944, Operation FORWARD was observing all the roads north of Myitkyina and had agents working in Myitkyina and Bhamo. Through these efforts, Detachment 101 was able to produce a detailed order of battle of the Japanese forces in the Myitkyina area by February 1944. It was important that the unit had the time to learn the area and gain the trust of the local inhabitants, because they were in place to assist conventional Allied forces during the drive on Myitkyina. Beginning in March, the OSS shifted its priority from supplying intelligence on the Japanese, to that of assisting Allied forces as they strove to secure north Burma and the eventual route of the Ledo Road. This involved assisting both British Major General Orde C. Wingate's Chindits and Brigadier General Franklin D. Merrill's GALAHAD force.

²⁴¹ "Theater Officer's Pouch Report," 2 May 1944, F 31, B 75, E 99, RG 226, NARA; Repeated searches have failed to uncover records of the American troops in V-Force prior to their joining Detachment 101. Many were on detached service from the 988th Signals Battalion.

After he returned from his initial Chindit expedition in 1943, Wingate set out to train a second force that he dubbed the “Special Force,” or “Long Range Penetration Groups.” Although officially its six-brigades were known as the 3rd Indian Infantry Division, the force retained the Chindit name. This second Chindit force entered Burma in two phases. Brigadier General Bernard E. Fergusson’s 3,000-man 16th Infantry Brigade began walking into Burma on 5 February 1944. They had a 360-mile march to their rally point at Indaw. The main Chindit body was flown in gliders into a landing strip code-named BROADWAY, south of Myitkyina, during the night of 5 March as part of Operation THURSDAY. Nearly 9,250 Chindits were landed deep behind enemy lines by the USAAF 1st Air Commando, a specially-created unit with fighters, light bombers, transports, liaison aircraft, gliders and helicopters. Lieutenant Colonels John R. Alison and Philip G. Cochran formed the unit to resupply the Chindits and to evacuate their wounded and sick.

Once in Burma, the Chindits met stiff resistance from the Japanese. Shortly after Wingate died in a plane crash near Imphal, India, (24 March 1944) MG William Slim, the British 14th Army commander, transferred the force to General Stilwell. They were to cut the Japanese lines of supply to Myitkyina from the south. The light force took heavy losses but prevented enemy forces from reinforcing Myitkyina. By the time the Chindits were withdrawn to India in August 1944, they had suffered 1,400 killed and 2,500 wounded.²⁴²

²⁴² See Michael Calvert, *Chindits: Long Range Penetration* (New York: Ballantine, 1973) and Shelford Bidwell, *The Chindit War: Stilwell, Wingate, and the Campaign in Burma: 1944* (New York: Macmillan, 1980); Only five of the six Chindit brigades went into Burma. One was used to help blunt the Japanese U-GO offensive into India.

Code-named the GALAHAD force, the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), popularly known by the nickname Merrill's Marauders, was led by Brigadier General Franklin D. Merrill. It was essentially a regiment (about 3,000 personnel) commanded by a brigadier general. It was a lightly armed force formed from volunteers, veterans of Guadalcanal and New Guinea, and jungle warfare specialists. Like the Chindits, mule transport carried ammunition and food supplies. Their airdropped supplies came from the 10th USAAF.

The Marauders began their war in north Burma on 24 February 1944. Their mission was to encircle the Japanese 18th Division because the Chinese divisions who had been fighting in the Hukawng Valley since October 1943, had proved unable—or unwilling—to do so. The Marauders were to infiltrate behind Japanese lines to take them from the rear, while Chinese forces kept the main enemy force occupied. However, disease and combat severely weakened the Marauder battalions as they maneuvered behind enemy lines. Before they captured the Myitkyina airfield on 17 May 1944, they were already down to 50 percent effectives. Marauders volunteers were also under the impression that after ninety days in the field they would be withdrawn. However, when the Chinese failed to capture the city of Myitkyina, Stilwell chose to keep his only American conventional force in the field. By the end of May, the Marauders were evacuating seventy five to one hundred men daily because of disease. Stilwell admitted in his diary on 30 May that “GALAHAD is just shot.”²⁴³ That meant that the majority of the forces encircling Myitkyina were Chinese. Detachment 101's

²⁴³ Joseph W. Stilwell, *The Stilwell Papers* (New York: William Sloane, 1948), 301.

actions in the campaign are the second case study and the subject of the following chapter.

Existing Force Structure

Although no longer commander, Eifler had not cut his ties to Detachment 101. He took his characteristic energy to OSS Washington, where he ensured that Detachment 101 began to receive more personnel than ever before. The additional personnel increased morale in Detachment 101. The personnel most in demand at this stage were administrative, particularly typists, to generate reports, compile plans, and essentially to keep things running at Nazira. Also needed were supply personnel, mechanics, and drivers. Detachment 101 needed these rear-echelon troops to allow headquarters freedom to devote its efforts to driving operations. The recruiting of indigenous agents continued unabated and Wally Richmond's replacement, Major Coffey, recruited Anglo-Burmese agents in Calcutta. The largest remaining need was for medical personnel, with spaces available for twelve doctors and fifteen enlisted medics or pharmacists' mates.²⁴⁴

The operations of three sections in particular, the Maritime Unit (MU), Finance, and Field Photo, expanded rapidly in this period. The fledgling MU Section was flush with their recent success of rescuing the nine aircrew downed deep over Japanese-controlled waters. The Section had ambitious plans and wanted to use the *Miami* as a training vessel and acquire two specially-modified PT boats and a forty-two foot launch

²⁴⁴ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA; [William R. Peers to William J. Donovan] "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, F 12, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Unless Anglo-Burmese were of "definitely outstanding character," they were no longer a target for recruitment on account of the problems that the Detachment had in trying to employ them in north Burma. Various letters between Detachment 101 personnel relay confusion over Eifler's status, and he may have even been under the impression that he would soon return to command of Detachment 101.

to conduct arms resupply, clandestine insertions, attack Japanese coastal traffic, and rescue work.²⁴⁵ But, by April 1944, the group managed to obtain just one other boat.

Undeterred, the MU Section strengthened their relationships with the British maritime component of SOE and with the captains of smaller British naval vessels. These connections helped the OSS crews discover the pitfalls of navigating along the Burma coast and gave them access to current weather reports. The group also discovered that there were no suitable locations for an MU base along the Indian or Burma coast during the monsoon season. Ensign William Shepherd, the head of the MU Section, suggested that the group move to Ceylon, where the OSS was in the process of setting up what would become Detachment 404.²⁴⁶ Peers allowed the transfer, but expected the group to be back operating on the India/Burma coast after the monsoon was over. Even though they would be co-located with another OSS group, the Section was to remain part of Detachment 101.²⁴⁷

The Detachment's Finance Section also saw increased activity and had the additional duty of accounting for the previous period.²⁴⁸ As an example, Gorin estimated the operations of FORWARD—employing 107 OSS and indigenous personnel—as requiring 9,000 rupees of new silver, 4,000 of old, fifty gold sovereigns,

²⁴⁵ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period 14 December 1943 to 31 January, 1944, inclusive," 31 January 1944, F 51, B 39, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

²⁴⁶ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April to 30 April, 1944, inclusive," 30 April 1944, F 54, B 110, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

²⁴⁷ "O.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, NARA. This would become important later, when Detachment 404 began operations along the Arakan Coast. This was still an area that Peers saw as in the area of operations of Detachment 101.

²⁴⁸ John G. Coughlin to Carl [Hoffman?], 29 January 1944, F 2535, B 192, E 139, RG 226, NARA. One aspect of this was to uncover possible fraud on behalf of Harry W. Little, who was thought—wrongly—to have been mixed up in the affairs of Richmond and Ottaway.

and thirty sears [a seer is about two pounds] of opium.²⁴⁹ By May, the cost of operations had raised the cost of running the Detachment to some \$150,000 per month.²⁵⁰

Additional personnel allowed the Finance Section to once again reorganize to improve its efficiency. One sergeant was in charge of being a cashier, another a disbursing agent, and still another, an accountant. Showing a remarkable improvement, the greatest need facing the Finance Section was having enough office supplies.

Field Photo also remained busy. The group shot multiple rolls of film from behind enemy lines. This was the start of a project to document the history of the Detachment. They also began shooting motion pictures to send back to OSS Washington to be made into completed propaganda and training films.²⁵¹

The Detachment's supply situation also improved. One item that the Detachment received was vehicles, which were needed, as Peers claimed he had "probably the oldest running jeeps in India."²⁵² In January four new jeeps, three weapons carriers, two command cars, two trucks, a station wagon, a sedan, and a motorcycle were added to the motor pool.²⁵³ The additional vehicles created another headache, as they required scarce mechanics and non-existent spare parts. Until these resources were available, there was no way to fix the vehicles when they broke down. As Peers wrote to Donovan, "Our transportation is old and these roads simply beat them to death."²⁵⁴

²⁴⁹ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA.

²⁵⁰ "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, NARA.

²⁵¹ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April," 30 April 1944, NARA; "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, NARA.

²⁵² Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA.

²⁵³ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 14 December 1943," 31 January 1944, NARA.

²⁵⁴ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA.

By February, supply problems had eased and the U.S. Army Services of Supply (SOS) provided items every two days by train from Calcutta or by truck from Chabua. Even so, some items remained hard to obtain, including ordnance, photographic materials, spare parts, generators, radio equipment, and specific OSS issue items.²⁵⁵ The acquisition of a warehouse in Chabua in April improved supply by allowing the Detachment to take advantage of the SOS stocks held there. Even though Detachment 101's size and exact activities were a guarded secret, the unit reported that their supply requests to SOS were "deserving of attention and we usually receive their best."²⁵⁶ By May, the chief medical officer at Nazira, Major Archie Chun-Ming, summed it up when he wrote, "We are still able to supply men in the field adequately in spite of the rapid expansion of personnel. Our ability to do this can be credited to good planning."²⁵⁷

Supply at Nariza was one matter, but getting it to the field was another. Captain Sherman P. Joost, newly in charge of the Detachment 101 Air Drop Section, reported that the facilities were "extremely inadequate," but that "in all fairness ... they being a new outfit ... and already overburdened with their so-called regular customers," that the Section was severely overworked.²⁵⁸ He reasoned that if Air Drop reduced its duties to just rigging parachutes to drop loads and preparing staples like rice, salt, and sugar, then the Section would run much more efficiently. The Detachment also moved two officers and a radio operator to Dinjan Airfield to be collocated with the USAAF cargo

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April," 30 April 1944, NARA. One problem that Peers pointed out in William R. Peers to John G. Coughlin, 6 March 1944, F 192, B 23, E 165, RG 226, NARA, was that other OSS units in theater, including what would become Detachment 404, poached on the OSS/SOS arrangement by requesting supplies under the guise of being from Detachment 101.

²⁵⁷ "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, NARA.

²⁵⁸ Sherman Joost, "Situation at Air Drop," [early 1944?], F 314, B 56, E190, RG 226, NARA.

squadrons. These officers were to secure aircraft, arrange flight schedules, brief the aircrews and pilots, put previously packed items on the planes, and accompany the drops. This helped ensure that each group received their correct drop and that constant coordination was maintained with the two main units that helped in the Detachment's dropping operations: the 2nd Troop Carrier Squadron and the Rescue Section of the Air Transport Command.²⁵⁹

The Air Drop Section would soon have other things to worry about. On 18 January, the group experienced Detachment 101's single worst disaster when three C-47 cargo aircraft were lost while on a dropping operation to FORWARD. A flight of Japanese Zeros pounced upon and shot down the aircraft, killing most of the aircrew and all of the OSS personnel. This included a Navy pharmacist mate who was preparing to jump in, a Field Photo photographer, and the head of the Air Drop Section.²⁶⁰ The disaster had immediate consequences. FORWARD did not get another supply drop for nearly a month, forcing them to live off the land.²⁶¹ Even though supplies were low to non-existent, Luce continued providing medical care to the locals, accomplishing, in the words of another war, his best to win hearts and minds. He reported that he was "astounded by the response of the natives to the advent of medical care" because they

²⁵⁹ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report covering period 1 March to 31 March, 1944, inclusive," 31 March 1944, F 53, B 40, E 190, RG 226, NARA; "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, NARA.

²⁶⁰ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 14 December 1943," 31 January 1944, NARA.

²⁶¹ Richard Dunlap, *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1979), 278; interview with Marje Luce (widow of James) by author, Fayetteville, NC, May 2007, notes, "The next drop did not occur until 12 February; Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA.

acted as if it were only natural for the Americans to provide it.²⁶² Additional food and medical drops covered the needs of hundreds of indigenous refugees who were fleeing from the Japanese advance in central Burma and away from the Allied offensive in north Burma.²⁶³

Despite the work Luce was doing, his team could not work without supplies. Although the USAAF helped where and as often as they could, it did not meet all the Detachment's needs. Drops at this time averaged some 85,000 pounds a month with the realization that they would rapidly increase throughout 1944.²⁶⁴ By March, it had already risen to 137,057 pounds; April's total was 200,000 pounds; and it rose to 250,000 in May.²⁶⁵ This increase in available aircraft was helped by the Detachment's contributions to the north Burma Allied offensive and its greater liaison efforts with the USAAF. Peers knew that he could rely on limited cooperation from the USAAF, but that this had the possibility of becoming scarce as the campaign for Myitkyina started in full swing. The Detachment estimated that it needs would be around 500,000 pounds dropped per month by September, so Air Drop became a primary concern.²⁶⁶

²⁶² James C. Luce, "Background, historical, military and political of the Kachin Hills area," 28 January 1944.

²⁶³ Father James Stuart's account of his guiding a refugee column to Allied lines can be found in the KNOTHEAD report in Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April," 30 April 1944, NARA.

²⁶⁴ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA.

²⁶⁵ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 1 March," 31 March 1944, NARA; "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, NARA.

²⁶⁶ "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, NARA; In addition to two USAAF squadrons, the 2nd Troop Carrier and the Rescue Squadron, the Air Transport Corps (ATC), and the 5301st, 5302nd, and 5303rd Air Dropping Platoons assisted; Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 1 March," 31 March 1944, NARA; "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, NARA; For a look at how the USAAF cooperated with OSS in the European theater, see Troy Sacquety, "Supplying the Resistance: OSS Logistics Support to Special Operations in Europe," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, Vol 3, No. 1, 2007, 37-48.

Even with the increased effort, some of the field groups were getting impatient with the Air Drop Section. Complaints, such as this one from the field were common: “It should be logical enough to understand that a man who wears a 9 or 10 canvas shoe can not wear a 5 or 6 ... I further suggest that the supply force try wearing shoes two or three sizes too small ... I think it’s [sic] damn foolishness to drop a bunch of junk in the jungle that cant [sic] be used.”²⁶⁷ Major Raymond T. Shelby, in charge of the Operations Section at Nazira, responded with the following, “Don’t mind speaking your mind when you don’t receive specific quantities of food, equipment and so forth, give us hell ... that is our sole existence to get you people what you need ... so don’t spare us one minute ... we don’t consider any of your requests or wires as complaints but as suggestions so we can more adequately serve.”²⁶⁸ Despite Shelby’s efforts, complaints continued; “every fucking time 30 Cal or .303 ammo is dropped ... the opening shock of the chute rips open the container. And we search the field for loose ammo.”²⁶⁹

In February, Peers requested from OSS Washington the first heavy aircraft for the Detachment. Although the Detachment had an allotment of twelve paneloads per month, the increased Japanese air activity had forced the supply drops to be done at night, and they required increased protection of anywhere from nineteen to seventy-four escort fighters monthly. Peers requested that the OSS permanently assign an armed aircraft capable of dropping supplies to Detachment 101. He wanted a B-25 medium

²⁶⁷ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 1 March,” 31 March 1944, NARA.

²⁶⁸ R.T. Shelby to KNOTHEAD, “Dear Pamplin and Knothead Group,” 12 April 1944, F 453, B 30, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

²⁶⁹ Mike Council to Raymond T. Shelby, 22 April 1944, F 456, B 65, E 190, RG 226, NARA. In Mike Council to Raymond T. Shelby, 17 March 1944, F 456, B 65, E 190, RG 226, NARA, Council reported that his section alone consumed 447 ½ pounds of rice per day—illustrating the large amount of provisions required monthly.

bomber, complete with operating and maintenance crews, and the possibility of a heavy B-24 bomber later. He wrote to Donovan, “This may seem like we are asking a lot but when you are in an unarmed DC [C-47 Skytrain or DC-3] it is no fun, especially when a Zero shows up.”²⁷⁰ Although inadequate, Stilwell’s response was welcome. He attached two USAAF C-47s for the “exclusive use” of the Detachment.²⁷¹ The group also acquired three L-1 and one L-4 light planes, along with three pilots and a mechanic on loan from the 71st Liaison Squadron. To assist airborne insertions, the group also opened a parachute school at Nazira.²⁷²

To get groups into the field, however, liaison was of paramount importance. Throughout early 1944, Detachment 101 continued to strengthen its relationships with other commands. Not only did the Air Transport Command (ATC) give the Detachment credit for the rescue of several airmen, but also the unit managed to score another coup. Through its intelligence network, Detachment 101 uncovered the existence of a Japanese radio station near Sumprabum that had been broadcasting false signals to lure American cargo aircraft off course so that they would fly into mountainsides.²⁷³ The ATC then briefed their pilots to avoid the trap. In a further effort to help the ATC and the 10th

²⁷⁰ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period 1 February,” 29 February 1944, NARA; At the time, Detachment 101 possessed no air assets. Both the Gypsy Moth and one of the Piper Cubs had crashed. A second Piper cub was out of commission with a cracked propeller that could not be replaced.

²⁷¹ “O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report,” May 1944, NARA; The acquisition of the additional liaison planes might have been helped by USAAF General John F. Egan who in March agreed to help Detachment 101 by having additional airplanes assigned to him, for use by the Detachment. See William R. Peers to John G. Coughlin, 24 March 1944, F 93, B 45, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

²⁷² G. Edward Buxton (Acting Director OSS) to Commanding Officer, Detachment 101, “Designation of Parachute Jumping School and Parachute Unit,” 7 April 1944, F 2728, B 193, E 146, RG 226, NARA. Opening a parachute school was not common for OSS, but it was done and other schools included Kunming China and in North Africa.

²⁷³ Robert Baker to William R. Peers, “Cooperation of Detachment 101 with ATC,” 20 August 1944, F 3, B 5, E 165A, RG 226, NARA.

USAAF, in late February, Detachment 101 stood up the OSCAR group, whose primary purpose was the extraction of downed aircrews.²⁷⁴ The OSS's plans to help in the north Burma campaign were finalized during Donovan's earlier visit, after which Detachment 101 sent the plans to "P" Division, the "clearing house" for special operations, for consideration. Upon their clarification, Peers was ready to focus the Detachment's efforts on this one goal by recruiting even more indigenous personnel, constructing more base facilities, and increasing training and liaison efforts.²⁷⁵

While it had little else, Burma was not short of special forces. Peers sought to establish liaison with every other unit of this type that was operating in north Burma.²⁷⁶ The Wingate operation was an example that "P" Division was now functioning as intended. Unlike their ignorance of the first Chindit expedition, Detachment 101 learned ahead of time that Wingate would lead a second expedition as part of a larger Allied campaign. Not wanting to be again surprised, Detachment 101 made sure that they had liaison with Wingate.²⁷⁷ The Detachment also established contact with the 1st Air Commando's commanders, Allison and Cochran. Detachment 101 described the initial meeting with Cochran as "most pleasant and beneficial."²⁷⁸ The unit then arranged

²⁷⁴ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA.

²⁷⁵ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 14 December 1943," 31 January 1944, NARA.

²⁷⁶ See "Plans" in Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 14 December 1943," 31 January 1944, NARA; [Carl F. Eifler or William R. Peers] to Wally Richmond, 14 February 1944, F 010394, B 270, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

²⁷⁷ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA. The officer chosen was Lt. Charles Stelle, previously of the R&A section in New Delhi. Detachment 101 had proposed Operation DEMOS, but it was turned down because Wingate would be operating in the same area. With liaison established, the same men could go in as originally proposed, but under Wingate's direction.

²⁷⁸ [Eifler or Peers] to Richmond, 14 February 1944, NARA; For more on the First Air Commando, see Herbert A. Mason, Jr., Randy G. Bergeron and James A. Renfrow, Jr., *Operation THURSDAY: Birth of the Air Commandos*, (United States: Air Force History and Museums Program, 1994)

meetings with other Special Force commanders like with Colonel Frank Merrill, who had several representatives from Detachment 101 assigned to him.²⁷⁹ Detachment 101 also established good relations with Colonel Joseph Stilwell, General Stilwell's son, the Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC) G-2 officer.²⁸⁰ By March, Peers was able to report, "our present set-up ... is working very well, especially our relationship with Merrill and naturally with Combat Hq."²⁸¹

In April, the unit formed additional relationships with various intelligence organizations, including the British forward interrogation center at Guahati, India, which held refugees and persons taken prisoner in Japanese-occupied territory. This liaison enhanced the Detachment's recruiting efforts. Detachment 101 representatives also made contact with the British intelligence section at Agarapara, where they interred captured Japanese agents; the British Ministry of Information in New Delhi, which was involved in propaganda; and the Burma Police Intelligence section.²⁸² These liaison efforts were some of the most important advances that Detachment 101 made in 1944. Through these connections, the group was able to ensure greater cooperation from other organizations, as well as tailor OSS support to their specific needs.

Regardless of the help received, the Detachment still needed adequate communications. Frustrations remained high with the lack of OSS commitment to the

²⁷⁹ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA.

²⁸⁰ [Eifler or Peers] to Richmond, 14 February 1944, NARA. Cooperation was not acquired from every U.S. Army officer. In late February, Brigadier General Frank Dorn, Stilwell's deputy chief, informed Detachment 101 that he was going to "withdraw any connection with your group," on account of some agents that he thought unsavory characters and possibly Japanese agents. See Frank Dorn to John G. Coughlin, "Memo for Colonel Coughlin," 21 February 1944, F 453, B 30, E 154, RG 226, NARA

²⁸¹ Peers to Coughlin, 24 March 1944, NARA.

²⁸² Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April," 30 April 1944, NARA.

Communications Section. Peers wrote to John G. Coughlin in March that he did not think that OSS Washington understood the difficulties that Detachment 101 was having with its Communication Section, nor was it “interested in finding out.” He went on to add that “I am fairly well perturbed at ... having to do more signal work with less men.”²⁸³ The procurement and supply of radio equipment likewise remained a problem. In January, the lack of radio equipment was once again a limiting factor on how many agents Detachment 101 could place in the field. Communications equipment was so difficult to obtain that Peers suggested that new personnel coming to Detachment 101 not bring with them supplies of personal clothing—which could be obtained in theater—but instead carry light radio equipment.²⁸⁴ By April, some of the communications items that the unit had ordered had not arrived despite a delay of eighteen months.²⁸⁵ The situation had somewhat eased in May, however, spare parts remained problematic. The biggest problem then facing the Communications Section was a lack of suitable generators for field use. This prevented using the OSS-produced SSTR-1 set in the field.²⁸⁶

Compounded with the ever-increasing operational pace, the lack of Communications personnel likewise remained a difficulty. In January, the Section reported that lack of personnel forced it to place half-trained indigenous operators on official circuits and let them finish their training—including in Morse code, “on the

²⁸³ Peers to Coughlin, 24 March 1944, NARA.

²⁸⁴ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period 14 December 1943,” 31 January 1944, NARA.

²⁸⁵ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering period 1 April,” 30 April 1944, NARA.

²⁸⁶ “O.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report,” May 1944, NARA.

job.”²⁸⁷ The next month, Peers was reporting that “our signal personnel is so limited at present time that the units we are furnishing information have assigned personnel to us to relieve the pressure.”²⁸⁸ The pace of the work continued to grow. In December 1943, the Communications Section handled 1,571 messages with a total of 140,471 groups.²⁸⁹ This was a new high for the group. By May, the number of groups had exceeded 200,000, up 24,000 from the previous month.²⁹⁰ To receive these messages, the Communications Section at Nazira had seventeen radio operators that handled the message traffic coming in from ten field operators/cryptographers and from the additional personnel posted in liaison positions. These numbers, however, do not tell the complete story.

In mid-February, KNOTHEAD reported that the group had spent five and half hours trying to pass traffic back to HQ. They were likely the victims of a student trainee on the other end. In exasperation, they asked for another radio operator, but were told, “there were none.”²⁹¹ KNOTHEAD also reported that radio operators at Nazira often sent messages to the field that were undecipherable; and then did not stay on air to receive. All these occurrences led to extreme frustration in the field. This was compounded by new arrivals to the field groups who said that the locally-recruited radio trainees were reluctant to turn over their radios to a more skilled operator, less they

²⁸⁷ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period 14 December 1943,” 31 January 1944, NARA.

²⁸⁸ William R. Peers to Faulkner, “I have just read...” 14 February 1944, F 192, B 23, E 165, RG 226, NARA. Peers further went on to say that “This helps a great deal and proves conclusively to us that our information is highly desirable to the combat units. We have had five men assigned to us by General Merrill with promises of more to come.”

²⁸⁹ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period 14 December 1943,” 31 January 1944, NARA.

²⁹⁰ “O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report,” May 1944, NARA.

²⁹¹ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 1 March,” 31 March 1944, NARA.

suffer embarrassment. Instead, if overwhelmed, the operators would power down and let the follow-on operator receive the message. Such methods were unacceptable.

Despite KNOTHEAD's subsequent recommendations, the Detachment had not solved the problem as late as February 1944. Peers relayed that his Communications and subset Coding Sections were overworked, twenty-four hours behind in answering messages, and had committed a few potentially serious errors in missing replies to cables. Peers understood that his Communications personnel were not lackadaisical, just seriously overworked.²⁹² Regardless of the lack of personnel, the Communications Section had no choice but to transfer four of its radio operators to the Cryptography subsection.²⁹³ The creation of new facilities at Nazira, though an improvement, likewise exacerbated the personnel situation. The increased traffic necessitated a new communications hut complete with improved facilities, receivers, and antennas. The larger building allowed for the installation of new and more powerful transmitters. These in turn required the construction of two large antennas that would be of sufficient height to reach Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Chungking, China. New generators and the laying of telephone and electric cable were also required.²⁹⁴ In an effort to build redundancy into its communications network, the Detachment also looked to older methods. Having reasoned that past operations might have benefited from the capability, the group sought to have OSS Washington recruit a Pigeon Section. This would allow agents to carry carrier pigeons with them on drops. Should their radio not

²⁹² William R. Peers to Harry L. Bearn, 2 February 1944, F 313, B 56, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

²⁹³ "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, NARA.

²⁹⁴ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA. Having no metal or telephone poles available, the group substituted betel nut trees.

survive the insertion, as was often the case, they would theoretically have other means to contact base.²⁹⁵

New OSS Branches Arrive

January 1944 saw the inclusion into Detachment 101's organization of the first non-direct action OSS branches, such as Morale Operations (MO), that represented functions not driven by immediate operational requirements. Originally, under the Special Operations (SO) Branch, the OSS formed MO into a separate branch in January 1943 to create and disseminate "black" propaganda. Although in existence as a branch, the OSS did not finalize MO's directive until later that year. It had a correspondingly slow start and difficult time establishing itself overseas. The Branch was in charge of subversion and psychological warfare activities on a theater-wide scale, and was authorized to conduct tactical propaganda with front-line units.²⁹⁶

Following a plan approved by President Roosevelt on 26 May 1942, in June 1943, the Joint Chiefs of Staff authorized OSS a black propaganda function in Burma that would serve to harass the Japanese, encourage Burmese national resistance, and prepare the way for Allied operations.²⁹⁷ However, the first attempt to add a true MO capability to Detachment 101 was a study paper authored by Lieutenant Commander

²⁹⁵ Charles Fisher to John G. Coughlin, "Personnel and Supplies," 3 March 1944, F 373, B 59, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Peers seems to have been a bit dubious about the utility of pigeons. He wrote in March, "I don't know who ordered them initially if they were ordered or somebody is trying to shove them down our throats ..." See Peers to Coughlin, 24 March 1944, NARA.

²⁹⁶ Kermit Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets: War Report of the OSS, Vol. Two* (New York: Walker, 1976), 212-215. Even when the Morale Operations (MO) branch was represented in the Far East, its growth was very slow. The radio and leaflet sections of the OSS were later transferred back to the Army and used in the Korean War; For more on MO, see Elizabeth P. McIntosh, *Sisterhood of Spies* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998),

²⁹⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff 312/1 (Revised), "Joint Chiefs of Staff Special Military Plan for Psychological Warfare in Burma," 4 June 1943, F 93, B 546, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Also see Carl O. Hoffman to Harry W. Little, "MO Plan for the Far East," 30 October 1943, F 1929, B 143, E 139, RG 226, NARA.

E.L. Taylor, USN, after Donovan sent him to the group on a fact-finding mission.²⁹⁸

Although his proposals were overly optimistic, they made an impression on Peers. He called for OSS Washington to send a dedicated MO officer and staff. Peers envisioned the Branch as a “major unit” within the Detachment, but left it in MO hands to make their inclusion a reality.²⁹⁹ OSS Washington even had sample propaganda products for use in Burma, but could only forward them to the theater and hope that a staff that was untrained in their use or utility might employ them.³⁰⁰

The MO Section of Detachment 101 was marked by the impermanence of its personnel. The first representative of MO intended for Detachment 101 arrived in February, but stayed only long enough to recommend training programs for the jungle school.³⁰¹ The next representative, Lieutenant Charles H. Fenn, intended to stay but higher authorities sent him to work in China.³⁰² But, in the short time that he was at Detachment 101, he was a flurry of activity. He managed to set up a short MO training segment with the school, effected a working arrangement with the Office of War Information (OWI), and made trips to both NCAC and to two OSS groups in the field.³⁰³

²⁹⁸ E.L. Taylor to William R. Peers, “MO Possibilities and Needs at 101,” 2 January 1944, contained in Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period 14 December 1943,” 31 January 1944, NARA, and Taylor to Donovan, 9 January 1944, NARA.

²⁹⁹ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period 14 December 1943,” 31 January 1944, NARA.

³⁰⁰ Edgar Sallinger to Harley C. Stevens, “Burmese Evil Spirits,” 20 March 1944, F 3, B 524, E 92, RG 226, NARA. In this case, the MO product was a sound device that emitted shrieks and wails. The intent was to play on Burmese fears of jungle spirits.

³⁰¹ Carleton F. Scofield to Herbert Little, 24 February 1944, F 24, B 191, E 92, RG 226, NARA.

³⁰² See Charles Fenn, *At the Dragon's Gate: With the OSS in the Far East* (Annapolis MD: Naval Institute Press, 2004) 15-19; Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period 1 February,” 29 February 1944, NARA.

³⁰³ OWI was charged with “white” or overt propaganda, while MO was responsible for “black” propaganda—in which the true source is hidden; Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering period 1 April,” 30 April 1944, NARA, and Charles H. Fenn to Harry W. Little, “MO Operations From 101,” 10 April 1944, F 4, B 192, E 92, RG 226, NARA. A brief account of Fenn’s trip into KNOTHEAD can be found in “KNOTHEAD Group-Report April,” 1 April 1944, F 433, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

In this last capacity, he gave a brief on MO's utility, passed out examples of leaflets, and suggested rumors that groups might spread among the population.

Under the arrangement enacted by Fenn, OWI agreed to begin producing propaganda pamphlets and leaflets for MO, as at the time the OSS had no production facilities of their own.³⁰⁴ MO derived the source material for their products from the debriefing of captured Japanese soldiers. The resulting products aimed at driving wedges between the ethnic groups in Burma and the Japanese.³⁰⁵ One product depicted a Burmese knifing a Japanese soldier in the back. Written in Japanese on the leaflet were phrases telling the Japanese how much they were hated, including "We shall kill you, the ants will eat your flesh, the jungle will swallow your bones."³⁰⁶ Other leaflets told of the depredations the Burmese resistance was inflicting upon Japanese supply lines, even though nothing outside of that set up by the Kachins actually existed. MO sent these products to the groups behind the lines for dissemination. Fenn also used another MO specialty; starting rumors whose sole purpose was to erode enemy morale.³⁰⁷ He also had plans to enlarge MO by five personnel, including direct liaison

³⁰⁴ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period March 1 to 31 March 1944, inclusive," 31 March 1944, NARA. Because of the black nature of MO propaganda, its leaflets could not be printed on the same high quality paper as that used by OWI. Instead, and with difficulty, MO had to find the "worst paper" it could—usually newsprint, to duplicate the effect that the leaflets were being printed by dissident Burmese factions. See Charles H. Fenn to Harry W. Little, "MO Developments," 19 April 1944, F 4, B 192, E 92, RG 226, NARA.

³⁰⁵ "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, NARA.

³⁰⁶ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May to 30 June, 1944," [30 June 1944], F 136, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

³⁰⁷ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering period March 1," 31 March 1944, F 53, B 40, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

with NCAC and OWI.³⁰⁸ Upon Fenn's leaving, however, MO was in essence no longer present in the Detachment.

In January, the first representative of the Research and Analysis (R&A) Branch made his way to Detachment 101 for a familiarization visit.³⁰⁹ This branch was one of the original branches formed by the COI/OSS. It employed personnel with research backgrounds—such as historians—and was designed to collect and analyze information. It would then present these findings in formal reports delivered to senior policy makers. With its inclusion in Detachment 101, R&A made the transition from strategic level intelligence to providing tactical level products for an immediate consumer.³¹⁰

In February, the group established regular contact with the main R&A office in New Delhi.³¹¹ In turn, this office furnished a liaison officer to Detachment 101, Lieutenant Charles Stelle, who the OSS sent to be the liaison officer for Wingate. Before being so assigned, however, he presented a case study for how R&A might be of use to Detachment 101, and in particular, to the Secret Intelligence (SI) Section. Impressed with SI's weekly summary, Stelle saw that it could be improved with the addition of R&A officers who would cross-reference Detachment 101 reports with intelligence from other sources, such as open source materials. The result would be all-source intelligence reports. Stelle saw additional ways that R&A personnel could help

³⁰⁸ Charles H. Fenn to Harry W. Little, "MO at 101," 9 May 1944, F 4, B 192, E 92, RG 226, NARA.

³⁰⁹ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 14 December 1943," 31 January 1944, NARA; Carlton Scofield to Kennett Hinks, 15 March 1944, F Eifler, B 644, E 190, RG 226, NARA; The R&A branch is considered one of the most—if not the most—valuable branches and contributions that the OSS made during the war. When the OSS was dissolved on 6 October 1945, the R&A branch was retained for use by the U.S. State Department. This branch could be considered the founding organization of both the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research and the CIA's Directorate of Intelligence.

³¹⁰ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 14 December 1943," 31 January 1944, NARA; Scofield to Kennett Hinks, 15 March 1944, NARA.

³¹¹ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA.

Detachment 101 better utilize its intelligence collection. He proposed forming an R&A section that could have an impact on a tactical and theater level, by assisting in imagery analysis, cartographic support, compiling thematic intelligence reports, debriefing OSS personnel when they returned from the field, prisoner interrogation, liaison, training personnel in intelligence collection, and operational planning.³¹²

There remained deficiencies at the Detachment. The group had striven so hard to improve its operational capacity that it ignored the mundane. As evidenced in the reduced length of reports following Eifler's departure, there were critical shortages of staff personnel, such as typists, to handle clerical matters.³¹³ The increasing number of intelligence reports also meant that a standardized way of evaluating raw human intelligence was necessary. Many of the intelligence reports came from locally recruited agents, who tended to exaggerate the numbers of Japanese personnel. By January 1944, the Detachment was expecting the arrival of OSS personnel to sift through, evaluate, and compile the reports.³¹⁴

Although merely a renaming of the functions already being performed by Majors Robert T. Aitken and Chester R. Chartrand, the SI Section was first mentioned by name in January.³¹⁵ The Section was to be responsible for providing the first evaluation, analysis, and dissemination of intelligence reports, and secondly, to act as a security manager. In this first role, Detachment 101 made a truly a bold move and employed a

³¹² Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA, see Charles Stelle to Robert Hall, "R & A Possibilities at 101."

³¹³ Coughlin to Far East Theater Officer [OSS Washington], May 1944, NARA.

³¹⁴ Wally Richmond to "John" [Coughlin?], 28 January 1944, F 010394, B 270, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

³¹⁵ It is actually called "Special Intelligence." Apparently, Detachment 101 was not up on the latest terms from Washington. Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 14 December 1943," 31 January 1944, NARA.

practice that is standard today. Although it needed more personnel to accomplish its plans, the group set out in its first attempts to determine the intelligence needs of other organizations, as opposed to merely sending along reports as they came in from the field. The SI Section reorganized the Detachment's intelligence collections into a series of eight geographic areas that allowed the SI Section to determine what intelligence report might best fit which non-OSS end user. The more concise reports were considered so useful and the intelligence so unique that, in addition to receiving the daily radio broadcasts, NCAC detailed a plane each week to pick up the summaries.³¹⁶

Detachment 101 would also hold a conference with these intelligence consumers to find out their specific needs. This enabled the Detachment to avoid forwarding intelligence that would be of little utility to a particular organization while at the same time, trying to focus on that organization's unique requirements. To enhance the usefulness of the intelligence reports, Detachment 101 would use standard U.S. Army classification meanings as opposed to those of the OSS or British.³¹⁷ In an additional effort to increase the utility of its intelligence, the SI Section established a forward radio operator at Fort Hertz who could transfer information back to Nazira immediately. The

³¹⁶ Stelle to Hall, "R & A Possibilities at 101," in Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA; For the first of the weekly intelligence reports that were separated into the eight areas, see "Headquarters Detachment 101: Weekly Information Summary to Jan, 29/44," in William B. Shepard, "Report on Rescue Mission," [November 1943], in Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 14 December 1943," 31 January 1944, NARA. These reports would include such items as Japanese troop movements, as well as traffic tallies for specific roads. In June 1944, the 101 summaries went to the Commanding General USAAF, CBI, Commanding General Chinese Army in India, "Y" Task Force, General Dorn, Chindits, Commanding General S.O.S., Commanding General ATC, ATC Station #6, Forward Area Intel and Security, 3rd Tactical Air Force, 443 Troop Carrier Group, 3rd Combat Cargo Resupply Group, USA Experimental Bureau, Coughlin, 10th Air Force, Heppner, 7th Bomb Group, Burma Government, 8th Photo Group, 1st Air Commando, G-2 CBI, 11th Combat Carrier Group, 12th Bomb Group, and the 2nd Troop Carrier Squadron. Notice the large number of USAAF groups receiving the intelligence reports.

³¹⁷ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 14 December 1943," 31 January 1944, NARA.

SI Section also sought to analyze captured Japanese equipment, examples of which the filed groups sent back to Nazira.³¹⁸

The second role for SI, of security, was a foreshadowing of what the OSS X-2, or counter-intelligence branch, would later perform. Peers cited the lack of physical security as one of his chief concerns when he took command of the unit. Nazira alone had twenty-seven camps spread over an area of forty square miles and only forty-five Gurkhas available as guards. The SI Section proposed a guard, or ground defense force that would supplement the Gurkhas and also conduct regular patrols against enemy agents. They would also have a pure counter-intelligence role in which they would work to uncover any subversion from within Detachment 101 itself. But, in common with other sections, the SI Section's personnel situation would not permit expansion.³¹⁹

As opposed to the SI role, the other main function of Detachment 101 was Special Operations (SO). The element received a makeover in March when the group began to create an Operations Section. Peers had not been pleased with what he thought was disorganization under Eifler.³²⁰ Instead, he wanted a central staff, under Major Raymond T. Shelby, that was responsible for handling each group's needs. Shelby's first action was to meet with the commanders of other units with whom Detachment 101

³¹⁸ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA; In February, the group identified its first Japanese hydrogen cyanide gas chemical grenade. The Japanese used chemical weapons, though rarely, in the Burma Campaign. An example of a chemical grenade use in early July 1944 can be found in Louis J. Allen, *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45* (New York: St. Martin's, 1984), 301-302.

³¹⁹ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 14 December 1943," 31 January 1944, NARA.

³²⁰ Peers to Coughlin, 6 March 1944, NARA; Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA.

had liaison, namely, the aviation units. Their reception was favorable and these groups pledged assistance to Detachment 101 when possible.

Peers also ordered the reorganization of the field operations and the decentralization of Nazira's control. It was, according to Peers, "perhaps the biggest single step taken by 101 toward the improvement and expansion of operations during the entire Burma campaign."³²¹ Instead of staging individual operations, as had been the case under Eifler, Peers split the north Burma area of operations (AOR) into four sub-areas. Each area had a commander, who then had a number of sub-units under their control. Area commanders were responsible for operations in their sub-areas, and served as the first filter for intelligence reports and radio communications. This greatly eased command and control as, in large part, Peers only had to direct Area commanders as opposed to a myriad of smaller groups. In turn, the Area commanders had greater responsibility and latitude in directing operations. Although Nazira still handled the communications from the long-range agents, the new arrangement clearly signaled a shift in Detachment 101's operation to the shallow penetrations as opposed to the long-range operations favored by Eifler. In a nod to the growing importance of the Operations Section, in March Stilwell directed Peers to increase the number of his indigenous troops to 4000. Stilwell also directed that the contingent of Americans in V-Force become part of Detachment 101.³²² This was a boost for the Detachment. Not only did they get experienced personnel, but they also gained from their operating

³²¹ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 138.

³²² Peers to Coughlin, 24 March 1944, NARA. Peers correctly concluded that the directive to increase the number of indigenous troops meant that Stilwell had "a lot of faith in our activities."

methods and information networks. This immediately had an impact as the former V-Force area in which they worked was now codenamed Operation TRAMP, and their operations covered the India/Burma border in north Burma. Combined with FORWARD, KNOTHEAD, and PAT, TRAMP created a fourth operating area for the Detachment.

Conclusion

Peers' spring 1944 reorganization strengthened barely functioning sections, such as Finance and Air Drop, and allowed the group to incorporate new OSS assets. The creation of an Operations Section allowed the unit to coordinate its groups effectively and better develop standard operating procedures. The establishment of a central intelligence staff allowed the group to evaluate, analyze, and disseminate its profuse intelligence collection to the best end user. While some OSS Washington had not yet introduced some of its branches to Detachment 101, others, like MU and MO, remained unproven. Nonetheless, they tried to integrate themselves into the unit. MU in particular, had gotten off to a great start, but weather and a lack of proper staging facilities had slowed its growth. The role of MO, which remained unproven throughout the OSS, was more problematic. While its ideas—and the promises—were great, the results were not. It is important to note, however, that the inclusion of MO meant that the Detachment was able to look beyond its immediate tactical needs and now delved into operations that might not have an immediate return.

The reorganization also allowed greater reflection on the Detachment's role in the Burma campaign. As Major Shelby, the Operations Officer put it in March,

“Colonel Peers has for a long time been forced to run the ‘Show,’ by himself, but now that a few new officers have been assigned to him he is setting the organization up as a Battalion, with different sections and that is going to relieve his mind for the ‘Big,’ picture.”³²³ Peers was moving as rapidly as possible to incorporate new OSS branches into the Detachment 101 force structure to give the unit greater utility.³²⁴ He wrote back to OSS Washington in May, telling a prior visitor who had come to the Detachment when Eifler had been in charge, “You would never recognize the unit at present.”³²⁵ In this, Peers was correct. The next chapter will detail the organization as it moved into the period from June through August 1944.

³²³ R.T. Shelby to KNOTHEAD, “Dear Knothead,” 4 March 1944, F 453, B 30, E 154, RG 226, NARA. Shelby also sent a similar letter to Luce of FORWARD in R. T. Shelby to James C. Luce, 4 March 1944, F 456, B 65, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

³²⁴ R.T. Shelby to James C. Luce, 23 March 1944, F 455, B 65, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

³²⁵ William R. Peers to Carl O. Hoffman, 11 May 1944, F 192, B 23, E 165, RG 226, NARA.

CHAPTER VII

PEERS CONTINUES HIS REFORMS: JUNE-AUGUST 1944

Although the Myitkyina Airfield was now in Allied hands, the Myitkyina campaign had entered an unplanned phase when the Chinese had filed to capture the airfield. This meant that Detachment 101 had to be even more flexible and do all that it could to help. This forced Peers still to envision how to position his unit to keep it relevant. His efforts centered on transforming Detachment 101 into an even more effective tactical intelligence collection and guerrilla warfare organization. Once again, Detachment 101 headquarters experienced the greatest change. The early part of the year had seen the critical reorganization of the core sections of the Detachment, as well as the inclusion of new OSS branches. Detachment 101 could now begin greater integration of the remaining OSS branches present in Washington. In theory, they would improve the unit's ability to wage war against the Japanese in Burma. This was timely because the war was taking a turn for the Allies.

By June, the Allies had the Japanese besieged in Myitkyina. Merrill's Marauders, also known as the GALAHAD force, and the Chinese were doing their best to seal off the Japanese garrison there from outside assistance. The Marauders, like the British Chindits, were one of General Stilwell's few reliable units. Even though they had suffered tremendous casualties just in getting to Myitkyina, Stilwell used them long after they had ceased to be operationally effective. Like the Chindits, the Marauders

never forgave Stilwell. Some 2,600 mostly green replacements with minimal training—derisively dubbed “New GALAHAD”—was flown in to fill out the unit. They too suffered heavy casualties from disease and the Japanese. By the time Myitkyina fell on 3 August 1944, the Marauder battalions were down to company-size. As such, the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) was inactivated on 10 August 1944. At the same time that the Marauders were helping to secure Myitkyina, the Chindits were working south of the city to cut Japanese movement along the rail lines leading north. The light force suffered heavy losses but prevented enemy forces from reinforcing Myitkyina. By the time the Chindits were withdrawn to India in August 1944, they had suffered 1,400 killed and 2,500 wounded out of 12,000 that had gone into the field.

Specifically for Detachment 101, the OSS had aided Merrill’s Marauders in their effort to secure the Myitkyina airfield in May. Since the Allied conventional forces were unable to secure the city, Detachment 101 units slipped south. They did this to get farther behind Japanese lines. There they disrupted the enemy’s rear areas, and cut Japanese lines of communication to Myitkyina. The Detachment’s emphasis on guerrilla warfare meant that the unit’s focus on intelligence decreased. The Detachment’s efforts from February through August 1944 in the Myitkyina Campaign are the second case study, and are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Existing Force Structure

The existing elements of Detachment 101 did not remain static. In the period from May to August 1944, the operational elements underwent some of their most dramatic organizational shifts of the war as they rapidly became a crucial part of the

Allied effort. Other elements were not so readily integrated. Although the Morale Operations (MO) Section made progress, it continued to have significant problems. The OSS chiefs in Southeast Asia (Peers, Colonel John G. Coughlin, Major Harry W. Little, and Colonel Richard B. Heppner) arrived at an agreement in May that the first MO printing press would go to Calcutta, where Detachment 101's supply center was headquartered. Getting the equipment and personnel was another matter. By July, the OSS had identified several officers for the post, but secured none. At that same time, and indicative of the lack of effort shown by OSS Washington, Calcutta learned that they were finally to get MO items ordered more than six months previously. By August, the additional personnel still had not arrived, even though plans were made for groups of Japanese Issei [first-generation Japanese immigrants to the United States] to go to Calcutta for translation work on MO material.³²⁶

While plans—even if delayed—were in place to establish MO at Calcutta, the branch remained nearly non-existent at Nazira. It had not had continuity of personnel or direction. The Detachment 101 MO Section's third director in seven months, Robert Wentworth, had no background in the field. OSS Washington recognized that any MO personnel sent to Nazira needed to be for the duration and not as temporary fill-ins. OSS

³²⁶ Herbert S. Little to Harley C. Stevens, "Answer to your pouch letter No. 3," 26 August 1944, F 1295, B 174, E 108B, RG 226, NARA; Herbert S. Little to Robert Wentworth, 14 July 1944, F 1295, B 174, E 108B, RG 226, NARA. The Calcutta branch later split off from Detachment 101 to form Detachment 505. Detachment 303 in New Delhi, which operated as a rear echelon and administrative base for Detachment 404, did have a small MO staff.

Washington had created a MO unit specifically for Detachment 101 code named the “GOLD DUST team,” but it remained in training. It would not arrive until late 1944.³²⁷

At Nazira, frustrations with MO were high. Wentworth wrote to his Detachment 303 counterpart, Elizabeth P. MacDonald, “Frankly the whole MO show at Detachment 101 has been completely muffed by the powers that be back in Washington in that they neglected to fill all their promises for both men and material.”³²⁸ He later cynically wrote, “Due to a lack of personnel and equipment MO activities at Detachment 101 continue to revolve on the problem of how to get things done with only a typewriter.”³²⁹

The relationship had also soured with the Office of War Information (OWI). While willing to print one or two leaflet products a month for the OSS when they were not busy on another project, OWI was wary of these leaflets being traced back to their source. Even so, just to arrange for the printing of one leaflet, the OSS personnel had to drive some five hours to reach OWI. In an effort to assist, the MO section in New Delhi [Detachment 404] reached out and offered to produce propaganda products for Detachment 101, as long as Nazira told them what the Section needed. Though it could not solve all of the Section’s needs, the offer was one of the first examples of OSS branch inter-theater cooperation.³³⁰

The Detachment 101 MO Section tried to capitalize on sample leaflets and rumor suggestions sent from OSS Washington. This Section sent out questionnaires to the field

³²⁷ Herbert S. Little to John G. Coughlin, “MO-101,” 7 September 1944, F 1295, B 174, E 108B, RG 226, NARA; Little to Harley Stevens, “Answer to your pouch letter No. 3,” 26 August 1944, NARA.

³²⁸ Robert J. Wentworth to Betty MacDonald, 8 August 1944, F 1193, B 116, E 144, RG 226, NARA.

³²⁹ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, “Report Covering period 31 May to 30 June, 1944,” [30 June 1944], F 13, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

³³⁰ Betty MacDonald to Charles H. Fenn, 26 July 1944, F 1193, B 116, E 144, RG 226, NARA; For OWI’s reaction, see Wentworth to MacDonald, “Dear Betty,” 8 August 1944, NARA.

to determine their needs and what kind of products might best work. New personnel arriving to the Detachment were given a one-hour lecture on the utility of MO products.³³¹ This lecture had the alternate purpose of trying to get non-MO personnel to think of possibilities they might encounter that might make for good MO material. The MO staff followed up their previous lecture with another quick briefing just prior to personnel going into the field. In July, the responses came back from the questionnaires sent into the field. The MO Section received requests for specific products only from the groups that the Section briefed on MO methods. The groups that had been in the field longer, like FORWARD, were much slower in responding. Clearly, from the MO perspective, their limited briefing of personnel before they went into the field was having an effect.³³²

The MO Section had to deal with a number of problems. Black propaganda was not too effective in the area where Detachment 101's teams were operating, as the populations were already largely friendly toward the Allies. The MO Section sought additional opportunities to expand its liaison efforts with OWI, because many of the products that could be used in north Burma were white propaganda. An example of this occurred when a field team requested that MO produce a leaflet aimed at trying to keep the local population from moving south with the retreating Japanese. By August, MO's situation was becoming worse. The Section was barely functioning and was not providing much assistance to the field units. Peers was completely disenchanted, and

³³¹ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May," [30 June 1944], NARA.

³³² William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June to 31 July, 1944," [Late July 1944], F 14, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

wrote to Donovan: “the confusion created by this one branch has been greater than all the other branches combined and despite all promises to better the situation it has had a turn for the worse.” He further insisted, “An officer for Morale Operations must be sent to this theater at once if that branch is to be represented at Detachment 101.”³³³

The Secret Intelligence (SI) Section was even worse off than MO. The Section had all but been dissolved and its functions relegated to other sections. Its security function split off in July to form its own section, which assumed the duties of vetting indigenous personnel, counter-intelligence, censoring letters, securing classified material, fire prevention, and physical security of the Detachment’s facilities. SI’s intelligence gathering function had already been absorbed by SO SI’s intelligence function was given over to Research and Analysis (R&A), which was coming into its own as an OSS-unique function embedded in Detachment 101’s force structure. In June, R&A served to edit and route on intelligence material received from the field. The Section then encompassed the reports in the weekly intelligence summaries, used them to make maps of enemy positions, and to brief new arrivals to Detachment 101. Additionally, the team completed surveys of roads in Burma, and passed them to the field. The group also served a strategic function. For instance, in July it answered eleven requests for information and prepared twenty-one maps to send to OSS

³³³ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, “Report covering period 31 July to 31 August, 1944,” [31 August 1944], F 15, B34, E 190, RG 226, NARA. See “Mission Report” and “Monthly Report for August.”

Washington.³³⁴ Other OSS branches also brought Detachment 101 to Washington's attention.

Back in Nazira, Field Photo was hard at work. They were continuing work on several films, including the Myitkyina campaign, and individual photographers were recording multiple aspects of the struggle.³³⁵ To further speed production, Field Photo began work on building a dark room in Myitkyina that would be capable of processing and printing still photographs. Such documentation helped to show OSS Washington the efforts begin put forth by Detachment 101 and the environmental difficulties of operating in Burma. On the operational side, Maritime Unit (MU) and Field Photo jointly conducted Operation SUGARLOAF II in June. It was a seaborne reconnaissance of Simalur Island off Sumatra, their first Ceylon-based mission.³³⁶

Detachment 101 enhanced field supply operations by establishing a supply depot at Taro in the TRAMP area of operations and planned to make Myitkyina a supply base

³³⁴ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 31 July," [31 August 1944], NARA. See "Mission Report.," Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June," [late July 1944], NARA. In Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June," [Late July 1944], NARA, see Charles W. Cox to William L. Langer, "R&A Report," 29 July 1944 and Robert E. Adams to Weston Howland, "Security Branch, July Report" and Robert E. Adams, "Security Office Functions"; Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May," [30 June 1944], NARA. An example of one of Washington's requests for information can be found at McClure to Hollis, "Urgent Request for Information on Burma," 9 August 1944, F 470, B 80, E 106, RG 226, NARA. A R&A compilation report of the strategic situation in Burma can be found at OSS/R&A New Delhi Office, "Burma: Situation Report No. I," [March 1944?], F 1418, B 81, E 154, RG 226, NARA; An example of how the R&A section trained outgoing personnel to report on intelligence matters can be found in Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 31 July," [31 August], NARA. See Intelligence Message Reporting, 25 August 1944.

³³⁵ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May," [30 June 1944], NARA; Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June," [late July 1944], NARA. See George Bolte to FP OSS Washington, "Report of Activities for July"

³³⁶ The SUGARLOAF II mission file can be found at F 489, B 67, E 190, RG 226, NARA. An operational report can be found at John Achelis to William R. Peers, "report on Operation Sugar Loaf II," 20 June 1944, F 465, B 30, E 154, RG 226, NARA. Detachment 101 also had additional inter-theater cooperation with Detachment 404 when Lt. James Tilly was ordered from the field and sent to Ceylon to establish a school and training program similar to that at Nazira. See Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May," [30 June 1944], NARA.

for the storage of radio spare parts. In June, the unit sent two personnel to the airstrip to establish a cache for supplies that could not be dropped into the field because of weather or enemy activity, rather than have full planes return their loads to Dinjan.³³⁷ They were able to enhance the amount of supplies able to be to groups in the field. In July, the USAAF allotted Detachment 101 the daily equivalent of 2.3 planeloads of supplies out of their main airfield at Dinjan.³³⁸ With the Myitkyina arrangement, and if the weather allowed, additional trips—that did not count toward the daily quota—could be conducted. However, since the fighting from May to August 1944 had largely destroyed Myitkyina, a large forward base could not be maintained there. In order to build up stocks of critical items back at Nazira, the group once again resorted to the tactic of having incoming personnel individually carry items that they then turned over to supply. Although ad-hoc, the method worked once again.³³⁹

The increase in the operational tempo since the beginning of the year and the end of the monsoon meant that the pace of airdrops would increase. The number of aircraft allowed the Detachment was not enough to support the growing necessity, leading the group to request more carrying capacity. In July alone, the group dropped 310,000 pounds of supplies into the field, requiring sixty C-47 loads and four from B-25s.³⁴⁰ Despite the monsoon rains, August provided no let-up with 650,000 pounds of supplies

³³⁷ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May," [30 June 1944], NARA.

³³⁸ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June," [late July 1944], NARA. See William H. Cummings to Quinn, "Air Drop and Air Activities," 1 August 1944.

³³⁹ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May," [30 June 1944], NARA; Detachment 101 to Supply, #4387," 8 August 1944, F 1016, B 157, E 134, RG 226, NARA.

³⁴⁰ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June," [late July 1944], NARA. See Cummings to Quinn, "Air Drop and Air Activities" 1 August 1944; The more nimble and faster B-25s were used in locations in which the slower and unarmed C-47s might be subjected to great danger on account of enemy air action or ground fire.

dropped out of Dinjan and another 200,000 out of the advance airbase at Myitkyina. This required 102 C-47 flights and five of B-25s.³⁴¹ As can be seen from this number, the USAAF's commitment to Detachment 101 was not small, nor was the overall cost of the groups operations insignificant. The fast pace of drop operations did have some impact in the field as one man reported that "machine guns were dropped without ammo belts, [submachine guns] without magazines ... valuable equipment was destroyed in drops because of careless packing."³⁴²

Ironically, the tempo of operations and the rapid pace at which the Allies were pushing forward in Burma made the Finance Section's job easier. While they had to pay a much larger number of local recruits, the Allied advance made the previous form of payment, pre-war rupees, no longer as critical a necessity.³⁴³ Nevertheless, the cost of operations had increased by August to 470,000 rupees or nearly \$200,000, and it became necessary to forward base a finance officer at Myitkyina so that the pay of the indigenous recruits could be more effectively and speedily handled.³⁴⁴

In terms of personnel, the Detachment was in better shape than it had ever been. OSS Washington was ensuring that even with the "D-Day pressure on the European Theater" that it was doing everything possible to keep men flowing into the

³⁴¹ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 31 July," [31 August], NARA. See William H. Cummings to Quinn, "Air Drop and Air Activities, August," 1 September 1944.

³⁴² "Personal Field Report of H.H. Ramsey, PHM. 2/C," [December 1944], F 78, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

³⁴³ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June," [late July 1944], NARA. See George D. Gorin to Special Funds Branch, "July report-Finance."

³⁴⁴ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 31 July," [31 August], NARA. See George D. Gorin, "Report of the Finance Section for August," 31 August 1944.

Detachment.³⁴⁵ The personnel situation had so improved that in June, Peers was imploring OSS Washington only to send him men that were adequately trained and physically able to handle the vigor of fieldwork in Burma. This was very different from 1943 when the Detachment was begging for personnel of any type. In parachute-qualified personnel alone, it had twenty officers and nine enlisted men. This was eight more than was available to the entire Detachment for most of 1942. In July, the table of organization and equipment of the unit stood at 124 officers, 322 enlisted men, and 210 civilians serving at headquarters. This does not count the several thousand indigenous troops and agents serving in the field.³⁴⁶ This is a dramatic contrast for a unit that had arrived in mid-1942 with only twenty-one men, but some deficiencies remained.

One significant problem for the Detachment was its lack of pilots for the liaison aircraft. In August, the unit only had two pilots—and seven aircraft. A few additional pilots were on detached service from the 71st Liaison Squadron, but they could be withdrawn at any time, and, as a result, the Detachment continued to press OSS Washington for more pilots.³⁴⁷

Local recruitment netted additional personnel. To better help secure agents, through its liaison efforts, Detachment 101 secured access to intelligence dossiers compiled by the British. The OSS then used the dossiers to vet potential agents for both

³⁴⁵ Carl O. Hoffman to William R. Peers, “Dear Colonel Peers,” 25 May 1944, F 192, B 23, E 165, RG 226, NARA.

³⁴⁶ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 30 June,” [late July 1944], NARA. See “Status of Personnel”; Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering period 31 May,” [30 June 1944], NARA. In July, the group received another thirty-two men, more in one month than they had in all of 1942 and most of 1943. William R. Peers and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America’s Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), 130, relates that the group only had twenty-five Americans in late 1943.

³⁴⁷ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 31 July,” [31 August 1944], NARA. See “Mission Report.”

Detachments 101 and 404.³⁴⁸ The system was first put to use on a large scale in August when Detachment 404 requested that Detachment 101 assist with the recruitment of ninety Gurkha guards and six indigenous personnel for operations. In addition, the group was in the midst of processing seven agents for Detachment 101, nine for Detachment 404, and seven for the Calcutta office.³⁴⁹ Before the OSS even approached these potential recruits, undercover agents had already investigated their backgrounds. They tried to ensure that the potential recruits were not Japanese agents and that they were willing to conduct operational parachute jumps.³⁵⁰

Having more personnel required that the Detachment ensure that they were taken care of properly. In July, the unit requested that it needed ten additional clerks just to cover the administrative needs and the “tremendous amount of paperwork” of the

³⁴⁸ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 30 June,” [late July 1944], NARA. See L. Coffey to William R. Peers, “July Report-Recruiting.” While the system worked relatively smoothly, there were occasional flare-ups with the British, who in some cases did not like the high salaries that the OSS could pay to the indigenous recruits. For an example of this, see L. Coffey to The Governor of Burma, “Major E. Leach, C.A.S.,” 29 August 1944, F 182, B 21, E 165, RG 226, NARA. This incident came right about the same time that an SOE representative showed up at Myitkyina on a “P” Division matter, even though it had not been coordinated through Peers, the NCAC “P” Division lead. This series of letters can be found at F 2152, B 119, E 154, RG 226, NARA. The incident, called the “Dilwyn Plan,” ruffled the feathers of 101, especially when the SOE representative informed the Kachins that anyone who joined the Americans would be “unfavorably regarded” by the British and that any old Burma Rifles veterans would lose their pensions and not receive service credit for the time with 101. Eventually SOE encouraged the Kachins to serve with 101. See Sherman P. Joost, “Report on Field Conditions,” 8 June 1945, F 26, B 74, E 99, RG 226, NARA. SOE also tried one more time to get the SO branch of OSS to integrate with them, as had been done in the ETO. Both Detachments 101 and 404 were adamant that this not happen. For the series of exchanges on this between Peers and other officers, see F 192, B 23, E 165, RG 226, NARA.

³⁴⁹ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 31 July,” [31 August 1944], NARA. The new system was a drastic improvement over the old, where agents were recruited without extensive background checks. The fear was that the Japanese could easily infiltrate an agent into the Detachment 101 training program. See BH/001 to SAINT, “Possible Penetration of OSS at Calcutta,” 6 May 1944, F 1447, B 192, E 108B, RG 226, NARA. The locally recruited Anglo-Indian and Anglo-Burmans, many recruited under Colonel Carl F. Eifler, were almost universally found inadequate. Exceptions were “Skittles” and “Betty.” Although the reports concerning field concerns with these agents are many, see James C. Luce to William R. Peers, 25 April 1944, F 455, B 65, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

³⁵⁰ The number recruited was not small with 1119 students for the Nazira jungle school recruited from 1 January 1944 to 1 December 1944. See Don Callahan, “Major Callahan’s First Report,” 27 December 1944, F 550, B 38, E 148, RG 226, NARA.

incoming personnel. To see that the personnel had their professional needs catered to, the group established a citations and promotions board that held its first meeting in August. This provided a formal way to evaluate personnel and a way to see that individuals received recognition. It was a major improvement as under Eifler's command, the lack of promotion for field personnel was a significant source of poor morale.³⁵¹

The third change needed was for upgraded medical facilities. At the time, Peers estimated that there was a twenty-five percent decrease in efficiency because of illness.³⁵² In July, the group was making plans for the establishment of a fifty-bed hospital facility that had surgical, convalescent, laboratory, dental, and X-ray capabilities. One of the main reasons for this expansion was to better care for the increase in malaria cases that more personnel would create. The lack of medical care already shortened to seven the number of days that the staff could devote to each patient, from the necessary ten.³⁵³ To oversee the building and running of the large facility, Peers recalled James C. Luce from command of FORWARD. Once again, he proved instrumental. Through his connections, he secured several Burmese nurses that the famed Burma surgeon, Gordon Seagrave had previously employed. In the time prior to the hospital's completion, Luce instituted strict methods to prevent malaria infection.

³⁵¹ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June," [late July 1944], NARA. See "Mission Report"

³⁵² Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 31 July," [31 August 1944], NARA. See "Mission Report."

³⁵³ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June," [late July 1944], NARA. See James C. Luce to Sylvester Missal, "Medical Report for July 1944."

This included filling in gullies to eliminate breeding grounds and enforcing greater precautions after dusk to prevent mosquito bites.³⁵⁴

Like operations, the Communications Section was also in a much better position. The Section simplified the ciphering of messages in such a way that receiving and transmitting communications became easier and faster. Even so, the Cryptographic subsection handled 235,000 message groups in August.³⁵⁵ In line with improvements in encryption, the Communications Section as a whole reorganized. It pushed to Gelakey, India, the communications duties of several field stations, as well as reorganizing the way that it handled field communications. The Section installed a larger transmitter at Nazira, which permitted the section to maintain contact with “all stations regardless of conditions.”³⁵⁶ Although there was still a shortage of spare parts for field sets, supply was somewhat alleviated through coordination with the U.S. Army Signal Corps and an arrival of supplies from OSS Washington. The situation had so improved that August was the first month since 1942 that the Communications Section reported that it had enough sets to supply field needs.³⁵⁷ Other sections also tried to improve their utility.

The Schools and Training Section sought a link with Special Operations (SO) by debriefing individuals returning from the field, and where possible, incorporating the results into training.³⁵⁸ Troops arriving from the states were conditioned during a two-

³⁵⁴ For more on Seagrave, see Gordon Seagrave, *Burma Surgeon* (New York: Norton, 1943) and *Burma Surgeon Returns* (New York: Norton, 1946)

³⁵⁵ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 31 July,” [31 August], NARA. See Carl Hook to L. W. Lowman, “Communication August Report.”

³⁵⁶ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering period 31 May,” [30 June 1944], NARA.

³⁵⁷ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 31 July,” [31 August], NARA. See Hook to Lowman, “Communication August Report.”

³⁵⁸ “Interview with Capt. [Thomas] Baldwin,” 29 May 1945, F 46, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

week introduction and field instruction course, which incorporated the lessons that the Detachment had learned in the field. This course gave every new recruit a window into each section of the Detachment 101 organization, the ethnicities of Burma, and a general idea about how to live in the field. A multi-day jungle hike capped off the course, in which students would have to live off the land under field conditions. If possible, the training group arranged a supply drop while out on the hike, thereby doing as much as possible to prepare their students for when they actually went to their respective operations. Detachment 101 considered this course crucial because the staff did not think that the normal OSS training was adequate. Peers wrote to Donovan that he wished to discuss the matter with him when he visited OSS Washington in September. Specifically, he mentioned that a parachute group undergoing training at one of the main OSS bases located at Catalina Island, California, would “be in for a rude awakening when they hit Burma. The terrain at Catalina is no more comparable to the jungles of Burma than Central Park is to a sand lot.” He suggested that the closest one could get to simulate the terrain of Burma in the U.S. was to conduct training in the Everglades or the Mississippi bayous.³⁵⁹

New OSS Branches Arrive

On 30 May 1944, a recovered Eifler briefly returned to Detachment 101, officially for the purpose of showing off newly-produced OSS specialized equipment. In

³⁵⁹ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 31 July,” [31 August 1944], NARA. See “Mission Report.”; also see Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering period 31 May,” [30 June 1944], NARA. The two-week course syllabus can also be found here; Previously, there had been thirteen weeks of instruction with fifty-six courses. Hours of instruction per course ranged from one to one hundred twenty hours each. See Carleton F. Scofield, “Informal Report on Detachment 101,” 13 March 1944, F 1920, B 181, E 136, RG 226, NARA.

reality, he was on a recruiting trip to identify personnel for a new secret mission, the Field Experimental Unit (FEU). This was a new group that was to carry out special assignments under Donovan's direction. Instead of introducing Research and Development (R&D) devices to the Detachment, Eifler took with him some of its most experienced men. It was not until the next month that the first true personnel of the R&D Branch arrived at Nazira.³⁶⁰

Although other branches like Communications and MU participated in the development of their own specialized equipment, R&D was an OSS-specific branch whose purpose was to develop or contract for specialized weapons and equipment for guerrilla warfare, special operations, and clandestine intelligence collection. The Branch was also charged with keeping track of potentially useful equipment developed by non-OSS organizations. This specialized equipment was of most interest to the SO and SI Branches, and, in popular culture, was much like "Q" in the *James Bond* series. It was formed as an independent branch on 17 October 1942, but it was not until April 1944 that representatives first went to overseas positions.³⁶¹

R&D got off to a quick start at Detachment 101. With only a two-man staff, the Section laid plans to assist the field groups. They established a laboratory and used it to

³⁶⁰ [William R. Peers to William J. Donovan] "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, F 12, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Kermit Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS* (New York: Walker and Company, 1976), 230-231. From letters between John G. Coughlin and William R. Peers, it is very apparent that they did not know why Carl F. Eifler was coming back to the CBI; they even supposed that perhaps Eifler was coming to be the theater OSS officer, replacing Coughlin. See John G. Coughlin to William R. Peers, 18 March 1944, F 93, B 45, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Thomas N. Moon and Carl F. Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel* (New York: Vantage Press, 1975), 323. Eifler took some of the original members of Detachment 101, including Aitken, Chang, Curl, Frazee, Huston, and Richmond. They trained on Catalina Island for an infiltration of Korea, with the possibility of conducting operations on the Japanese mainland. The war ended before they could be employed.

³⁶¹ Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 155.

help tackle the problem of how to camouflage radios and equipment so that they might be of more use. In August, the R&D staff was capable enough to develop items for the Air Drop and MO Sections of Detachment 202.³⁶² Items included a booby-trapped exploding parachute container that would appear to have been accidentally dropped to Japanese troops. The R&D Section's only comment on the item was "Won't they be surprised!"³⁶³ Other weapons undergoing testing included an adapter that would allow the M-3 submachine gun to shoot rifle grenades and explosive fake firewood that could be infiltrated into the fuel stocks used by enemy locomotives. The staff, increased to five by August, provided the additional service of teaching a short class to incoming personnel.

Other new branches, such as X-2, the OSS counter-espionage Branch, were not as well received at Detachment 101. Peers wrote back to OSS Washington that "so far" the Section "has done more harm than good."³⁶⁴ The beginning of X-2 was with the British. They had agreed to provide the OSS copies of their counter-espionage files and to train agents. In return, the OSS had to form an organization capable of greater security and stricter handling of classified information. As a result, the OSS established the Counter-Intelligence Division of SI on 1 March 1943. Having counter-espionage under SI was not completely satisfactory, so on 15 June 1943, the OSS established X-2

³⁶² Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June," [late July 1944], NARA. See Lucy to Lovell, "July Report-R&D" The first representative to Detachment 101, Captain Lee Tolman, had the additional duties of instructing students at the jungle camp in the use of OSS devices. He was followed in July by Major Samuel G. Lucy.

³⁶³ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 31 July," [31 August 1944], NARA. See Sam Lucy, "'R&D monthly Report," August 1944.

³⁶⁴ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June," [late July 1944], NARA.

as a separate branch. In part, this separation from SI allowed cooperation with the British without also giving them complete access to SI holdings.³⁶⁵

The newly-founded X-2 Branch was in charge of managing security procedures, uncovering penetrations of OSS by other intelligence services, and ran penetration operations of its own. Of all the OSS branches, X-2 was the most secretive. With few exceptions, X-2 was not a branch that could be molded to fit an operational situation, nor were personnel generally shifted into the X-2 Section as needs dictated. Although the OSS had better established the X-2 Branch in the European Theater, the X-2 station at New Delhi, India, was particularly active. In China, the ubiquitous presence of agents from Chiang Kai-shek's intelligence chief, Tai Li, prevented the X-2 Branch from being very effective. Burma had few such hindrances.

In Detachment 101, X-2's duties primarily revolved around personnel security and uncovering enemy agents. Before the group could concentrate on its eventual role, however, it first had to arrive at how it would conduct business at Nazira. Then it would try to determine how it could best serve the field operators and OSS Washington. Unfortunately, this was not an easy process. Although X-2 had worked out an agreement with the Indian and British governments in February, the actual start of X-2 in Burma was in March.³⁶⁶ An X-2 representative arrived at the Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC) and met with senior members of General Stilwell's staff, including his son. The representative managed to convince NCAC that a serious problem existed

³⁶⁵ Roosevelt, *War Report of the OSS*, 190. Although there had previously been a security function under SI, this was subsumed by the X-2 branch. This was reflected at Detachment 101 as well.

³⁶⁶ The agreement can be found at F 1421, B 185, E 108B, RG 226, NARA.

with enemy agents who were reporting on Allied troop movements. This occurred right at the time that the drive to take Myitkyina was underway.³⁶⁷ NCAC requested immediate assistance, but the X-2 representative had spoken too soon. Although he had discussed possibilities, he had no solutions as X-2 had no plans to provide personnel. All that he had managed to do was to raise Stilwell's fears to a fever pitch. Stilwell feared that enemy reporting on NCAC movements was holding up his units. He thought that X-2 had promised a Special Counter-Intelligence (SCI) team, but the X-2 representative was not aware that he had made such a promise.³⁶⁸ On 30 April, Stilwell asked for a five-man X-2 SCI unit and stated that if the OSS did not respond, he would take the drastic step of asking the British for help.³⁶⁹ When OSS proved unable to provide this team, an exasperated Stilwell turned their mission over to the U.S. Army Counter-Intelligence Corps (CIC). The rivalry created between CIC and X-2 by this move would later prove almost crippling to both services.

Stilwell's move was an embarrassment for Detachment 101. Peers reported to OSS Washington that "had it not been for our own very close personal contact with the General, and his staff plus the success of our other operations, our entire program might have collapsed because of X-2's unwillingness to operate as part of our unit rather than an individual branch." He noted that X-2's conduct was not typical for Detachment 101; "the operation of Detachment 101 depends solely on its operation as a unit rather than

³⁶⁷ HH/001 to SAINT, "SCI Field Units-Northern Burma Front," 5 May 1944, F 1466, B 194, E 108B, RG 226, NARA. HH/001 is an X-2 given code-name and is likely Major Roger A. Pfaff.

³⁶⁸ John J. McDonough to Eric Timm, "Assam Trip," 14 August 1944, F 1421, B 185, E 108B, RG 226, NARA.

³⁶⁹ HH/001 to SAINT, "SCI Field Units-Northern Burma Front," 5 May 1944, F 1466, B 194, E 108B, RG 226, NARA.

operating as branches individually.”³⁷⁰ In May, the Detachment 404 X-2 Section again warned that there were many security threats from loose-lipped Chinese, Tibetans or Afghans who might be working for the Japanese.³⁷¹ This further inflamed fears that there was a critical need for counter-intelligence personnel in Burma and India. At the end of July, the OSS finally named Major George H. White as the X-2 representative to Detachment 101, although he never ended up serving in Nazira.³⁷²

Peers still allowed X-2 an opening in Detachment 101 and in August, placed a substitute officer, Lieutenant Robert E. Adams, in Myitkyina under the cover of an engineering officer. Adams bridged the gap until a true X-2 representative, Major Baird Helfrich, arrived from Washington. Helfrich was given a list of suggestions to follow when he arrived. This included using Kachins to ferret out Japanese agents among refugees, but in reality, the X-2 Section had little idea of how it would operate in Burma, or even in which direction it should go. Even more so than MO, X-2 was off to a poor start. OSS branches without an immediate tactical use were difficult to absorb into a unit that was increasingly focused on combat operations.³⁷³

³⁷⁰ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 30 June,” [31 July 1944], NARA. For more on Peers’ embarrassment, see John J. McDonough to Eric Timm, “Assam Trip,” 14 August 1944, F 1421, B 185, E 108B, RG 226, NARA; Much controversy still surrounds the activities of the head of the X-2 branch in New Delhi, George D. White. After the war, White is alleged to have worked on “Manchurian Candidate”-like substances, such as LSD, on behalf of the CIA. This period remains one of those that continue to attract a number of allegations and conspiracy theories. However, while he was in New Delhi, White, a former narcotic-agent for the FBI, was very concerned with the illegal drug trade.

³⁷¹ BH/001 to SAINT, “Enemy Espionage Operations in Assam,” 6 May 1944, F 1477, B 194, E 108B, RG 226, NARA. Many X-2 reports assigned code names to the personnel writing and receiving the report.

³⁷² McDonough, “Relations of the X-2 India-SEAC (404) with Det. 101,” 29 July 1944, F 1420, B 185, E 108B, RG 226, NARA.

³⁷³ John J. McDonough to Baird Helfrich, “X-2 Possibilities at 101,” 28 August 1944, F 1422, B 185, E 108B, RG 226, NARA; Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 31 July,” [31 August 1944], NARA. See “Mission Report.”

Conclusion

By August 1944, Peers had eight months of command under his belt.

Detachment 101 was barely recognizable as the same organization that Eifler had created. True, some aspects had remained the same. Eifler had instilled a sense of purpose that pervaded the unit until the end of the war of getting the job done no matter what it took. Peers, however, had made the changes that permitted Detachment 101 to take on these tasks. Included in these changes was the addition of virtually all the major specific branches and functions that the OSS had to offer, as well as an organic air and maritime capacity. While there still largely remained a lack of true branch distinctions, at least in the field, the inclusion of various OSS elements had improved the unit's utility. Especially important were the improvements in the core areas of disseminating intelligence and the operations center. These had permitted the centralized acquisition and analysis of both operations and intelligence, which, in turn, allowed headquarters to better manage both functions.

Yet, gone completely was the sense of drama and amateurism that had marked Detachment 101's early days. Instead, Peers had taken the unit as his own and molded it into an organization that had two purposes: to supply intelligence and to conduct guerrilla warfare behind enemy lines. The following chapter, a case study of Detachment 101's contribution to the campaign for Myitkyina, will examine how the unit was able to assist Allied forces from February through August 1944. This campaign will show how far the unit had come from its 1943 operations and how it was at this time regarded as a reliable organization able to accomplish its mission.

CHAPTER VIII

DETACHMENT 101 AND THE CAMPAIGN FOR MYITKYINA: FEBRUARY- AUGUST 1944

The crowning achievement in General Stilwell's north Burma campaign was the hard-fought battle for Myitkyina, which began in late February 1944 and did not end until the provincial capital fell on 3 August 1944. Capture of the city allowed a more direct air route to China, and its use as a major depot along the Ledo Road. The campaign involved American, Chinese, and British forces, but the participation of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), popularly known as Merrill's Marauders, receives the most attention. Detachment 101 also played a significant role. Before the Allied offensive had even begun, the unit had thoroughly infiltrated north Burma and was conducting limited guerrilla attacks and collecting tactical and strategic intelligence for the U.S. Army and OSS Washington. Detachment 101 had achieved excellent rapport with the dominant local ethnic group, the Kachins, and had become the eyes and ears of the campaign. By assisting all of the major Allied organizations involved, Detachment 101 was the only organization that was involved in all facets of the campaign. More importantly, it was Detachment 101's service in this campaign that highlighted the organization's maturity and its indispensable role to the Allied effort.³⁷⁴

³⁷⁴ Myitkyina is the capital of Kachin State, Burma. In 1944, it only had 7,328 people as opposed to 134,950 in Mandalay and 398,967 in Rangoon.

Operations in north Burma still involved the complexity of coordinating the forces of three Allied powers that had to compromise if they wanted to succeed against the Japanese. Nationalist Chinese and American forces were limited to operating in the north under the TRIDENT Conference of May 1943. The British 14th Army (the equivalent of thirteen divisions and seven independent brigades) composed of Indian, British, and Commonwealth units, was in India and the upper Arakan region of Burma preparing for offensive operations in Burma.

Opposing the Allies were nine Japanese infantry divisions and two independent brigades engaged on three fronts.³⁷⁵ While the combined Allied forces were preparing for the offensive in north Burma, the Japanese Army was launching the three-division 15th Army in an attack against India. The Japanese intended for their offensive, Operation U-GO, to capture the British military rail and supply centers in northern India, specifically the towns of Kohima and Imphal. Thus resupplied, the Japanese planned to sustain a further push into the Indian plain to cut the Allied logistical lines to north India and Burma, which included the USAAF airfields used to supply China. They hoped that their success would stimulate the Indian nationalist movement and prompt a general revolt against British rule.

The Japanese offensive began in February 1944 with Operation HA-GO, a diversionary attack in the Arakan by the Japanese 28th Army that the British defeated in the Battle of the Admin Box. Undeterred, the Japanese 15th Army advanced on the central Burma front, but when they did not capture the supply dumps, their offensive

³⁷⁵ Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War: 1941-45* (New York: St. Martin's, 1984), 661.

turned into a battle of attrition that lasted until July. While besieged British and Commonwealth troops relied heavily on aerial supply, the Japanese had paid scant attention to their logistics requirements. Between March and July, the British forces under Lieutenant Generals William Slim and Geoffrey Scoones first halted and then decisively defeated the Japanese at the twin battles of Kohima and Imphal. In tatters, starving, and leaving behind their wounded, they retreated back into Burma. It was a defeat that broke their offensive capability in Burma, and with more than 55,000 casualties, was the largest defeat suffered by the Imperial Japanese Army to date. Lieutenant General Kotoku Sato, Commander of the Japanese Thirty-First Division, signaled to the 15th Army, “our swords are broken and our arrows gone.”³⁷⁶ He retreated contrary to orders. It was against this strategic picture that the Allied offensive in north Burma was taking place.

Although they considered it a tertiary front, the Japanese maintained a substantial presence in north Burma. The most important was the elite battle-tested 18th Japanese Division, headquartered at Myitkyina. It had achieved a long succession of victories; from the sacking of Shanghai and Nanking the late 1930s, to the invasions of Malaya and Singapore in late 1941 and early 1942. These last two campaigns had garnered the largest number of British Empire prisoners of war—some 130,000. Like many Japanese

³⁷⁶ Meirion and Susie Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army* (New York: Random House, 1991), 412. For a biography of Sato, see Richard Fuller, *Shōkan: Hirohito's Samurai; Leaders of the Japanese Armed Forces, 1926-1945* (London: Arms and Armour, 1992), 191-192. For a detailed description of the U-GO offensive, see Allen, *Burma: The Longest War*, 191-314; William Slim, *Defeat Into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942-1945* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000), 285-346. For the Japanese individual soldier's perspective see John Nunneley and Kazuo Tamayama, *Tales by Japanese Soldiers of the Burma Campaign, 1942-1945* (London: Cassell, 2000), 152-212. Unfortunately, this work does not cover the Japanese perspective of the north Burma campaign.

units in north Burma, the 18th Division was severely under strength. In January 1944, it only had some 6,300 men, of which only 3,000 remained by late June 1944. The veteran 56th Division was also present in north Burma, which like the 18th, had fought in the 1942 invasion of Burma. Elements of the 15th, 53rd, and 33rd Divisions, and the 24th. In all, they had more than 50,000 troops in the area.³⁷⁷

Facing this force were an array of Allied units from three nations, that comprised General Stilwell's Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC). The Chinese Army in India contributed the well-equipped and trained, but not necessarily well-led 22nd and 38th Divisions.³⁷⁸ The largest American unit was the GALAHAD force under Brigadier General Franklin D. Merrill. Unlike Detachment 101, the three battalions of the Marauders were not familiar with the operating environment; even though they were primarily formed from jungle trained or tested troops.³⁷⁹ Designed after the British Chindits, the 5307th was lightly armed and mobile; its only heavy weapons were mortars and 75mm pack howitzers. The British Chindits were officially the Indian 3rd Infantry Division and consisted of six brigades.³⁸⁰ Named after the *Chinthe*, the mythical lion-like beast that guards Buddhist temples in Burma, the second British long-range

³⁷⁷ Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *United States Army in World War II: China-Burma-India Theater: Stilwell's Command Problems* (Washington, D.C: Center of Military History, 1987), 130; 220; Louis J. Allen, *Burma: The Longest War 1941-45* (New York: St. Martins's, 1984), 662.

³⁷⁸ Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *United States Army in World War II: China-Burma-India Theater: Stilwell's Mission to China* (Washington D.C: Center of Military History, 1953), 366.

³⁷⁹ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 35. The Marauders were composed of volunteers from combat veterans of Guadalcanal and New Guinea, or from training areas in the Caribbean Defense Command and the United States. They were all supposed to have received jungle training. None had seen combat in Burma.

³⁸⁰ Only five of the brigades participated in Operation THURSDAY; one was held back to assist in a similar role against the Japanese 15th Army in its U-GO offensive.

penetration group was formed around those of the 77th Infantry Brigade under Brigadier General Michael Calvert that had survived the first Chindit expedition of February 1943.

The American 10th Air Force was assigned to support the Allied offensive and provide aerial resupply. Number 1 Air Commando was to infiltrate 9,250 Chindits behind enemy lines, keep them resupplied, and extract wounded personnel. Another 3,000 Chindits of Brigadier General Bernard E. Fergusson's 16th Infantry Brigade, walked into Burma. Stilwell's remaining major Allied unit was OSS Detachment 101.³⁸¹

Prior to the Myitkyina Campaign, Detachment 101 had three main priorities: intelligence collection on Japanese forces and dispositions; rescuing downed Allied pilots; and least important, conducting guerrilla warfare.³⁸² The Myitkyina campaign marked a substantial shift, for thereafter, guerrilla warfare became the unit's most important role. Detachment 101's involvement in the campaign was in three phases: Phase One (May 1943 until February 1944) was the pre-offensive period, Phase Two, (February until May 1944) ended with the Allied capture of the Myitkyina airfield; Phase Three (May to August 1944) ended with the capture of the city and harassing the Japanese retreat.

³⁸¹ Lack of air superiority did not stop the Japanese from conducting near daily bombing and strafing runs on the Chindit stronghold of BROADWAY. On 30 March, and again on the 31st, they even attempted an aerial resupply to their besieging forces. In June, the Japanese shot down eight C-47 and two C-46 cargo aircraft in the vicinity of Myitkyina, although some of this might have been from ground-fire; Even though aerial resupply had already been accomplished with Detachment 101 groups, the first Chindit mission in particular had shown that aerial resupply of large troop formations was possible. For more on the Air Commando, see Herbert A Mason Jr, SSGT Randy G. Bergeron, and TSGT James A Renfrow Jr, *Operation THURSDAY: Birth of the Air Commandos* (Air Force History and Museums Program, 1994); Aerial extraction of wounded personnel was a huge improvement from the first Chindit expedition when the wounded were left behind with "five days rations and a compass." See Pop and Red to John Ford, 28 March 1944, F 627, B 70, E 144, RG 226, NARA.

³⁸² Carleton F. Scofield, "Informal Report on Detachment 101," 13 March 1944, F 1920, B 181, E 136, RG 226, NARA.

The Myitkyina campaign built on the Detachment's previous work in north Burma in 1943 and 1944. In this time, the Detachment had increased its intelligence gathering abilities, which was critical to Stilwell and his planners because it confirmed the state and locations of enemy forces in north Burma. Detachment 101 groups also provided a screen to alert NCAC about pending Japanese counter-offensives. Even in areas where their patrols did not operate, the so-called jungle grapevine provided information on enemy movements and helped to rescue downed Allied airmen. Captain Vincent Curl, in command of the KNOTHEAD group, reported in February 1944 that "We have this whole area pretty well organized and if [the pilots] will tell [the Kachins] that they are Americans there is only one chance in a thousand against their being brought to this Hq, [sic] or to one of our other units."³⁸³ Detachment 101 groups had also blanketed the area north and west of Myitkyina with agents that sent a constant stream of intelligence to Nazira, India, and from there, to Stilwell's headquarters at NCAC. This information ranged from tactical to strategic and included Japanese troop movements and order of battle. The Detachment also radioed map coordinates of targets to the 10th USAAF, who then bombed them through the jungle canopy. The OSS groups reported the adverse affect on Japanese morale.³⁸⁴ This was particularly stinging when the hidden targets could only have been found by ground observation, such as a bridge

³⁸³ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report covering period 1 March to 31 March, 1944, inclusive," 31 March 1944, F 53, B 40, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

³⁸⁴ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report covering period 1 February to 29 February, 1944, inclusive," 29 February 1944, F 52, B39, E 190, RG 226, NARA. The USAAF flew as many as 170 sorties per day in the Hukawng Valley. According to an interview with a Lt. Jenkins, a P-40 pilot who crashed and was picked up by Detachment 101, the pilots often did not know why they were bombing through tree cover and had no idea that they were causing so much damage. In fact, they preferred other missions to such a "dull assignment," so that they would know that they were doing damage to the Japanese. "KNOTHEAD Group-Report April," 1 April 1944, F 433, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

near Myitkyina that was constructed with its roadbed hidden just under the surface of the water.³⁸⁵ The combination of intelligence and bombing crippled Japanese transportation so that by the beginning of the campaign, only three locomotives remained operational west of Myitkyina.³⁸⁶

By recruiting Kachins and other ethnic minorities, Detachment 101 also began to build what would become a considerable guerrilla force of nearly 4,000 by mid-1944. Curl went a step farther by incorporating the *Myihprap Hpuing*, [Lightning Force] of Kachin leader Zing Tawng Naw, to serve as the nucleus for his offensive operations.³⁸⁷ Although Zing Tawng Naw's guerrillas inflicted relatively few casualties on the Japanese by the start of the Myitkyina Campaign, they had a great psychological effect. According to a captured Japanese soldier, Japanese patrols did "not mind working in American or Chinese occupied territory but never volunteered for assignments against the Kachins as casualties were always about 50 percent."³⁸⁸

As soon as he learned of the upcoming north Burma offensive, Lieutenant Colonel Peers tried to demonstrate Detachment 101's utility to other Allied elements in the campaign. He assigned Chief Warrant Officer Robert Rhea and Lieutenant Martin J.

³⁸⁵ "Theater Officer's Pouch Report," 2 May 1944, F 31, B 75, E 99, RG 226, NARA.

³⁸⁶ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA

³⁸⁷ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April to 30 April, 1944, inclusive," 30 April 1944, F 54, B 110, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Under a policy set up by the previous Detachment 101 commander, Colonel Carl F. Eifler, the families of the Lightning Force were to be taken care of by Detachment 101. In a scene much like what would occur later in the Central Highlands of Vietnam, the families clustered around the Detachment 101 main field camp at KNOTHEAD. Food supplies were stretched to the limit and Eifler's successor, Peers, ordered the practice to stop because it interfered with operations. The refugees were given the option of being led to Allied lines. The "care and welfare of the Kachin refugees was not in any way to influence the actions or policy of this unit." "KNOTHEAD Group-Report April," 1 April 1944, NARA. An account of the group making their way to Allied lines can be found at James Stuart, "Detailed Report by Father Stuart in His Attempt to Take Refugees to Shingbwiayang Evacuee Camp, [[March 1944], F 433, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

³⁸⁸ "KNOTHEAD Group," [March-May 1944], F 48, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

Waters as liaison officers to Merrill's Marauders; Lieutenant Charles C. Stelle to the Chindits; and Captain Peter S. Joost to the 1st Air Commando. Peers cited Joost specifically for "doing a magnificent job" and building up "OSS in the eyes of General Wingate and Col. Cochran."³⁸⁹ All groups had Kachin teams to accompany the liaison elements. Captain Chester R. Chartrand of the SI Section, at NCAC headquarters, transmitted Stilwell's specific intelligence requests to the liaison elements.³⁹⁰

On 20 February 1944, Detachment 101 entered Phase Two of the offensive when Curl was ordered to meet with Merrill and offer the assistance of KNOTHEAD.³⁹¹ The slow pace of the Allied advance delayed the meeting and the first direct contact with Allied forces was on 8 March when runners arrived from Chinese units. Not until 15 March did Curl meet with Merrill, whom he briefed on the local situation. Father James Stuart, an Irish Catholic priest working with KNOTHEAD, conducted services for the Marauders. KNOTHEAD was of more immediate assistance when one officer and sixty-seven enlisted casualties were flown out of their improvised airstrip by light plane. Kachin guides were invaluable by pointing out the easiest and most direct paths through the area.³⁹² KNOTHEAD reported that "A group [of Marauders] would be advancing down the trail, when the Kachin out front would spot and point (rather like a bird-dog),

³⁸⁹ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 1 February," 29 February 1944, NARA; Peers advised Merrill not to have the Marauders march 125 miles to their jumping off point, but instead be trucked or fly. Merrill said that he wanted them to march in order to condition his men. Merrill's decision contributed to the Marauders' fatigue and exhaustion, see William R. Peers and Dean Brellis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), 141-142.

³⁹⁰ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April," 30 April 1944, NARA. The Marauders, however, were behind schedule and in the meantime, Detachment 101 still had a representative with the Marauders in the form of Lt. Waters, a liaison officer who had been with the group since 19 February.

³⁹¹ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 1 March," 31 March 1944, NARA.

³⁹² Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April," 30 April 1944, NARA.

since he could not talk to them. They invariably found a [Japanese] position ... which they never would have seen otherwise.”³⁹³ Kachins also had the ability to tell friend from foe as “to the inexperienced eye ... there is no difference in a Burman and a Kachin ... a Japanese out of uniform is almost as difficult to recognize.”³⁹⁴ The Kachins also identified friendly villages, river crossings, and potable water sources. The other KNOTHEAD groups positioned further away reported on Japanese troop movements and concentrations facing the Marauders.

Curl’s strike forces were also stirring up the Japanese, and on 22 February, Stilwell directed that the Lightning Force stop ambushing Japanese patrols so as not to alert them of the upcoming offensive.³⁹⁵ The order was revoked on 5 March. Lieutenant James L. Tilly, the American advisor with the Lightning Force, was told to get into the act harassing the Japanese and to disrupt them “in every way possible.”³⁹⁶ Peers directed Curl to make sure that Tilly had at least a hundred men and to keep Nazira informed when and where the Lightning Force would attack.

On 6 March 1944, a failed attempt at a roadblock by the Lightning Force heightened Japanese awareness of the guerrilla threat. Retaliation came on 10 March when the Lightning Force ran into a Japanese ambush. The entrenched Japanese troops allowed the Lightning Force to enter their kill zone before firing, but their marksmanship was poor and they did not hit one Kachin. With no other option, the Kachins charged the Japanese and sprayed them with automatic weapons fire. The Japanese counter-

³⁹³ “KNOTHEAD GROUP,” [March-May, 1944], NARA.

³⁹⁴ “KNOTHEAD Group-Report April,” 1 April 1944, F 433, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

³⁹⁵ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 1 March,” 31 March 1944, NARA.

³⁹⁶ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering period 1 April,” 30 April 1944, NARA.

attacked. The OSS reported that “One [Japanese soldier] thrust his bayonet into the leading Kachin ... this Myihprap Hpung then smashed his Tommy gun over the [Japanese soldier’s] head, and the man beside him calmly blew off the [Japanese soldier’s] head with a shotgun ... another [Japanese soldier] charged, he was brought down with the other barrel of the shotgun.”³⁹⁷ Then, the Lightning Force withdrew to reorganize.

The next day the Kachins routed the Japanese force. The Kachins crept to within twenty-five feet of the Japanese and so surprised them when they leapt forward to assault that the enemy abandoned their weapons and equipment and fled. The Japanese response was to retaliate on the civilian population. Tilly reported that “One old Kachin was captured ... he was tortured ... to reveal our location ... he did not talk ... and was put to death with the bayonet.”³⁹⁸

Poor communication and the movements of Allied forces were confusing. On 16 March, a Lightning Force patrol was lying in ambush on a trail near Hkawnglaw Hka, when a large body of soldiers (200) approached. Thinking that they were Chinese from a nearby element, the Kachins challenged them using “O.K.,” which was one-half of the sign/countersign for the area. The Japanese soldiers responded by raising their weapons, which was “definitely the wrong password.”³⁹⁹ This fight enabled the Marauders, who were also engaged with this force but who did not yet know of the OSS presence, to disengage and slip around the contested area. Chinese forces later relieved the Lightning

³⁹⁷ Ibid.

³⁹⁸ James Tilly, untitled report, [March 1944], F 433, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

³⁹⁹ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering period 1 April,” 30 April 1944, NARA.

Force and dealt with the remaining Japanese. Unsure of the assistance that Detachment 101 could offer, the Marauders refused to rely upon them at first. Tilly commented that the worse part of this was the “unnecessary nerve strain on the leading American soldiers,” who were blazing their own trails and “sweating out [Japanese] fire at every turn.”⁴⁰⁰ Fortunately, Merrill came to realize the value of working with Detachment 101.

By the end of March 1944, Detachment 101 credited the Lightning Force with 160 Japanese killed. Some 160 Lightning Force Kachins were serving as Marauder guides and scouts. Merrill conferred several times daily with Father Stuart and Zing Tawng Naw. Stuart was especially valuable as he spoke fluent Kachin, and was attached to the Marauder command post. Detachment 101 elements speeded up the Marauder advance by providing so much information on Japanese troop movements that it reduced the necessity of sending out reconnaissance patrols. The Kachin guides became indispensable and each battalion had two point guides, while an additional pool of ten to fifteen guides was maintained at the regimental command post. Detachment 101 patrols operated even farther ahead of the Marauders lead element—itsself a day’s march away from the main body. They improved or cut new trails to allow easier passage for pack animals. Because of their valuable assistance, Peers ordered KNOTHEAD to move further south and to recruit more Kachins.⁴⁰¹

Peers placed Lieutenant Jack C. Pamplin in command of KNOTHEAD after Curl left for another OSS assignment with former commander Carl F. Eifler. Pamplin visited

⁴⁰⁰ James Tilly, “Lt. Tilly’s Report,” [March 1944], F 486, B 67, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁰¹ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering period 1 April,” 30 April 1944, NARA.

Merrill at Nhpum at the end of March and reported to Peers at Nazira that Merrill was “quick to realize the actual and potential value of our Kachins” and lavished praise on Father Stuart and Zing Tawng Naw. Pamplin radioed that the Marauders now had the “greatest respect” for the Kachins and their fighting methods. He often heard them say, “I’m damn glad they’re on our side.”⁴⁰² Pamplin also noted that the American forces have come to realize that the organized Kachins have “... been just as important a factor in their own preservation as it has been in their success against the [Japanese] forces.”⁴⁰³

At the end of March, the Marauder’s 2nd Battalion, one of the three separate Allied columns, barricaded itself at Nhpum Ga to fight a rear-guard action. There the Japanese besieged it for two weeks. The situation became dire and only airdropped supplies prevented them from being overrun. Elements of the Lightning Force led by Father Stuart conducted harassing attacks on the Japanese surrounding the 2nd Battalion and their cumbersome logistics train, distracting the Japanese sufficiently to enable the Marauders to regroup. The 5307th’s acting commander, Colonel Charles N. Hunter, (Merrill had been evacuated after suffering a heart attack) praised Detachment 101’s Kachins for “saving over two-thirds of Merrill’s forces.”⁴⁰⁴

Other Detachment 101 forces made significant contributions to the Myitkyina campaign. Lieutenant Charles Stelle, after meeting with Major General Orde Wingate at Imphal, India, was asked to join the 77th Brigade. Though Stelle’s initial duties were channeling the Chindits’ requests to the 1st Air Commando, Wingate expanded his

⁴⁰² Jack Pamplin to William R. Peers, “Dear Col. Peers,” 30 March 1944, F 453, B 30, E 154, RG 226, NARA

⁴⁰³ “KNOTHEAD Group-Report April,” 1 April 1944, F 433, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁰⁴ “KNOTHEAD GROUP,” [March-May 1944], NARA.

role.⁴⁰⁵ When the first planeload of Kachin guides were lost in a CG-4A Waco glider accident, Stelle arranged to replace them with six Detachment 101 Kachins.⁴⁰⁶ On 19 March, they went into BROADWAY, the Chindit landing zone, and sent on patrol four days later. They identified, apprehend, and brought local Kachin collaborators back to British lines, and helped to repulse Japanese attacks.⁴⁰⁷ Reverting to his original Research and Analysis (R&A) function and using his knowledge of Japanese, Stelle identified several Japanese units and enemy agents from captured documents. These agents were swiftly dealt with: “A five minute scanning ... provided a really definitive translation—definitive by reason of the fact that its bearer was shot ten minutes later.”⁴⁰⁸

Stelle’s most important contribution was liaison between the Chindits and Stilwell. Wingate was loath to send information through channels. In January 1944, Joost, the Detachment 101 liaison officer with the 1st Air Commando, commented that “abysmal ignorance existed regarding Intelligence and Plans between the Americans and British.” Thus, Wingate’s liaison officer at NCAC was never “really up-to-date on the plans and position” of the Chindits.⁴⁰⁹ Stilwell had no liaison officer with the Chindits,

⁴⁰⁵ Stelle was also to provide OSS Intel to Wingate, place OSS equipment and personnel at Wingate’s disposal, find possibilities for Morale Operations, Special Operations and Secret Intelligence work, and perform a tactical Research and Analysis (R&A) function. To perform this mission, Stelle had a crash course in the area that Wingate would go into, as well as familiarization with enemy equipment and the operations of Detachment 101. Charles C. Stelle to Hall, “Activities as OSS Liaison Officer with General Wingate’s Forces,” [June 1944], F 2010, B 109, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁰⁶ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 1 March,” 31 March 1944, NARA. Per Charles C. Stelle, “Report on Operations of Unit A Group,” [March 1944], F 486, B 67, E 190, RG 226, NARA, the code names of the Kachins were Petru, Pom, Htem, Ching, Raw, and Long. For more on the CG-4A, see Troy Sacquety, “the CG-4A Waco Glider,” *Veritas* 3 (No. 2, 2007) 35-37.

⁴⁰⁷ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering period 1 April,” 30 April 1944, NARA. Detachment 101 later occupied BROADWAY in August after it was abandoned by the Chindits, and used it as an operations base and landing strip to infiltrate/exfiltrate personnel.

⁴⁰⁸ Stelle to Hall, “Activities as OSS Liaison Officer,” [June 1944], NARA.

⁴⁰⁹ Sherman P. Joost to Peers, “On or about January...,” 28 May 1944, F 466, B 66, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Another copy can be found in F 2010, B 109, E 154, RG 226, NARA. Joost was the “jack of all

making Stelle the *de facto* link between the two organizations. In turn, Wingate gave him *carte-blanche* access to their message traffic, and encouraged him to forward what messages he saw fit.

The north Burma campaign was in full-swing at the end of March 1944. As the Marauders pressed further into Japanese held-territory, they left KNOTHEAD's area of operations and moved closer to Operation FORWARD's area. Lieutenant Commander Luce, commanding FORWARD was a rare breed. By training, he was a surgeon but he was an equally outstanding guerrilla leader. In an early version of Civil Affairs, Luce conducted a medical clinic and gained the trust of, and recruits from, the local inhabitants. On 5 March, much to the incredulity of the locals, he performed a successful brain surgery on a Kachin soldier under the most primitive of conditions. During the Myitkyina operations, Luce commanded eight guerrilla companies and ten radio operators; in all some 1100 men.⁴¹⁰ They were organized into 154-man companies, and like all the Detachment 101 guerrillas were lightly armed but their large number of automatic weapons allowed great firepower.⁴¹¹ Much like KNOTHEAD had done, these forces screened the flanks of the Marauders and waylaid Japanese forces moving to confront the separate Allied columns.

trades" in Detachment 101 during the Myitkyina Campaign. As liaison officer to the Air Commando, he went into BROADWAY by Glider, was later given command of the DEMOS group and accompanied a Chindit column called the "Dah" force. He later replaced James C. Luce as the Commanding Officer of FORWARD.

⁴¹⁰ [William R. Peers to William J. Donovan] "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report," May 1944, F 12, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁴¹¹ James C. Luce, "Report on Tour of Duty With Office of Strategic Services Detachment 101: North Burma and Assam, November 1, 1943 to April 1, 1945," [April 1945], original in author's possession.

Advancing Allied troops, however, overran several of these Detachment 101 groups. In April, Peers reported to Washington that RED (another element led by “A” Group veteran Patrick “Red” Maddox) and PAT had to “abandon their positions ... or penetrate still deeper into Japanese-held territory.”⁴¹² Moving forward was not a bad strategy. The groups could continue their mission, and as a later Detachment 101 unit found out in 1945, it was a good operational practice.

The closer you got to your own lines, the denser the concentration of regular enemy troops ... What you met deep in enemy territory were police ... trained to fight one on one ... two platoons of regular soldiers could have defeated my whole battalion with no difficulty. But one of our platoons of forty men could have defeated a force of over one hundred policemen. And our battalion could have taken on a police force of close to a thousand for at least several hours.⁴¹³

In PAT’s case, their move south enabled the group to wreck a train on the Myitkyina-Mogaung railway on 24 April.⁴¹⁴

The increased requirements brought on by the Allied moved south meant that the Detachment had to get more personnel into the field as soon as possible. Many were radio operators and medics who were necessary to support the field groups. U.S. Navy Pharmacist’s Mate 1/C Lysle Wilson recalled during his first C-47 trip into Burma; “I realized how much my new job meant. I could visualize one of these very boys in the plane with me, being wounded and everything for his safety on my hands ... I made up my mind at that moment to work hard and do my best.”⁴¹⁵

⁴¹² Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering period 1 April,” 30 April 1944, NARA.

⁴¹³ Roger Hilsman, *American Guerrilla: My War Behind Japanese Lines* (Crawfordsville, Indiana: Brassey’s, 1990), 170-171.

⁴¹⁴ “Operations,” [June 1944], F 486, B 67, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁴¹⁵ “Personal Field Report of Lysle E. Wilson PHM 1/C,” [late 1944], F 78, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

Providing tailored support to the combat forces had drawbacks. In April 1944, Peers relayed to Donovan that intelligence collection took a backseat to the “sharp increase in the actual combat functions of our patrols.”⁴¹⁶ Still, there were some successes. British Brigadier General Michael Calvert asked for two OSS Nisei to help the Chindits exploit the intelligence scored from a tapped Japanese telephone cable.⁴¹⁷ The DAVIS group, operating out of the BROADWAY field, provided such opportune intelligence on Japanese troop movements that NCAC headquarters told the group to treat all messages as urgent and to send some without taking the time to encode them.⁴¹⁸

May 1944 saw Detachment 101 further assisting the Allied offensive. FORWARD commenced clearing villages to the east of Myitkyina and on 10 May, staged a successful diversionary attack east of Myitkyina to shield the Marauders’ advance from discovery. The attack tied down three Japanese battalions to the loss of three Kachins killed. On 15 May, FORWARD’s Kachins directly assaulted the village of Sadon, killing half of the sixty-five defenders and suffering three killed and twelve wounded before withdrawing.⁴¹⁹ The Kachins sniped at the defenders until 29 June, when they took control of the town.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁶ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering period 1 April,” 30 April 1944, NARA.

⁴¹⁷ William R. Peers to “P” Division, “Processing of Current and Future Operational Plans,” 5 April 1944, F 340, B 57, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁴¹⁸ Thomas J. Davis to Operations, “Report of Field Operations for Period April 7 to July 1, 1944,” July 1944, F 415, B 28, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁴¹⁹ Luce, “Report on Tour of Duty,” [April 1945]; Joseph E. Alderdice to Charles S. Cheston, “Casualties and Illness of Personnel,” 31 August 1944, F 209 A, B 26, E 165, RG 226, NARA; A Kachin after-action report of this engagement can be found at Sima Kawng to Major [Sherman P. Joost], 4 September 1944, F 46, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA. The group miscalculated and originally estimated that there were 35 Japanese in the village. See James C. Luce, “Report on Action at Sadon; May 15 to June 24,” [July 1944], F 450, B 64, E 190, RG 226, NARA. The chaotic nature of the campaign troubled FORWARD’s guerrillas. U.S. Navy Pharmacist Mate R.B. Walter reported on 13 May that a large group of Japanese were headed right for the jungle headquarters where he was. However, before the Japanese got to Walter,

Particularly active in Detachment 101's role to take the Myitkyina was a RED subgroup under Lieutenants William J. Martin and William F. Hazelwood. As the Marauders made ready for the final leg of the trek to capture the airfield, Martin's element prepared a resupply drop zone. After that, fourteen year-old N'Naw Yang Nau led the Marauders along a hidden trail to the Myitkyina airfield on the night of 15 May 1944. Along the way he was bitten by a highly poisonous krait, but he was the only one who knew the local trails. Martin pulled out his poncho, and covering himself and the injured Kachin, pulled out a flashlight to examine the wound. "Sure enough there were two fang marks right behind his toes." Martin sent word back that a snake had bitten the scout and then applied a tourniquet to the leg. "But the [scout's] solution for this while the medics were coming up [was] dig a hole, pour silver rupees in it, put his foot in there, and bury it ... And he would sit there till he either lived or died. So we proceeded to calm him down, dig the damn hole, put a bag of rupees in there ... put his foot on top, and start to fill the hole back up."

Meanwhile, Hunter and the medics came to the front of the column, brushed away the dirt, and tried to suck out the poison. After about forty minutes, N'Naw Yang Nau was "woozy," and unable to walk. He was strapped on Hunter's horse and led the Marauders with "bleary eyed directions."⁴²¹ The critically ill Kachin had to walk the last mile but managed to lead the group to their bivouac, which was a mile from the airfield.

they were intercepted by another group under Sgt. Keber who "killed and disorganized them to such an extent that they had to retreat." "Personal Field Report of R.B. Walter," [December 1944], F 78, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁴²⁰ "Interview with Maj. Drown," 16 May 1945, F 46, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁴²¹ William J. Martin interview by James C. Luce, 8 August 1988, Oregon, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files.

Martin's group then left to blow up a Japanese train, but unable to get to the tracks in time, infiltrated to the edge of the airstrip and observed the enemy working at night.

The next morning, 17 May 1944, the Marauders followed the route pointed out by the Kachins, and surprised the Japanese—who did not know Allied forces were so close. They quickly captured the airfield. Martin reported that “C-47’s were landing on the strip by afternoon.”⁴²² In recognition of Detachment 101’s assistance, Hunter, wrote to Peers; “Thanks to your people for a swell job. Could not have succeeded without them.”⁴²³ However, Hunter spoke too soon. The Chinese regiments, given the “honor” of taking the city, bungled the attack. The two attacking columns mistook each other for the Japanese and nearly annihilated one another. This debacle enabled the vastly outnumbered Japanese to pull in reinforcements from the surrounding area. Within days, the Japanese outnumbered the Allied attackers. The siege of Myitkyina had begun.

Martin’s work was far from over. His group of Kachins remained to scout in the vicinity. Two days after the fall of the airstrip, he reconnoitered the Namkwi bridge—site of Detachment 101’s first operational mission in 1943. They managed to surprise a section of Japanese troops eating breakfast before attacking the airfield.⁴²⁴ That same day, Hazelwood was not as fortunate near Charpate, when a Japanese patrol attacked

⁴²² “1st Lieutenant William John Martin,” 11 June 1945, F 47, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Richard Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma* (United States: Rand McNally, 1979), 304-6.

⁴²³ “O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report,” May 1944, NARA; repeated in Kermit Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets: War Report of the OSS, Vol. Two* (New York: Walker, 1976), 386.

⁴²⁴ “1st Lieutenant William John Martin,” 11 June 1945, NARA

them from behind. Well beyond getting assistance, they managed to break contact and after three attempts extricated their wounded.⁴²⁵

Even though the Allied siege lines around Myitkyina were porous, once the Japanese were “bottled up,” they intended to keep them there. Detachment 101 teams covered escape routes all the way south to Bhamo; FORWARD to the east, PAT to the south, and KNOTHEAD to the west. These groups cleared out Japanese garrisons in the outlying towns and covered the Irrawaddy River, which flowed south past Myitkyina. The Japanese tried to evacuate their wounded by floating them down the river, but soon discovered that the Kachins fired at anything suspicious. The sharp-eyed guerrillas even discovered and killed submerged Japanese troops breathing through reeds and those clinging to logs and hoping to pass as driftwood. The Kachin then recovered the bodies to glean for useful intelligence.

To the south, Detachment 101 forces were working with the Chindits. Renamed the Group #10 Operation, that Detachment 101 unit had grown to four radio teams. Stelle, the assigned liaison officer, returned from the field to join the DIXIE mission, the liaison effort to the Chinese Communists. Other Detachment 101 personnel from Stelle’s group remained to recruit locally and formed the MATES, ADAMS, BARNES, and DAVIS groups. These teams reported on Japanese troop movements, engaged in guerrilla warfare, and organized villagers to report on and defend themselves against the

⁴²⁵ Hazelwood was later a possible sufferer of Combat Fatigue, now called Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). He was shipped back to OSS Washington in August because he “broke down completely.” William J. Peers to Carl O. Hoffman, “reference my Cable...,” 20 August 1944, F 192, B 23, E 165, RG 226, NARA.

Japanese.⁴²⁶ The intelligence they gathered alerted the Chindits of anticipated attacks and enabled them to avoid Japanese formations. Chindit decisions, however, had unintended consequences. Because the group could not carry excess supplies, when they moved north from Mawlu in late May they abandoned uniforms and weapons that the Japanese then recovered. As a result, Detachment 101 elements repeatedly encountered Japanese patrols “dressed in these British uniforms.”⁴²⁷ Not all groups got into action. Private Tom Davis, leading the DAVIS group reported on 31 May that he had “shot a mule, a monkey, a squirrel, and a fish, but no [Japanese].”⁴²⁸

After the seizure of the Myitkyina airfield, Detachment 101 began Phase Three, which ended in August when the city was captured and the surrounding area secured.⁴²⁹ Impressed by the results, Stilwell told Peers to raise its number of guerrilla forces from some 4,000 men to 10,000. In order to stay relevant, Peers also ordered his forces further south “to keep our units in positions where they can watch and report on every

⁴²⁶ “O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report,” May 1944, NARA. Also see Charles C. Stelle to William R. Peers, “Operations of Group at Broadway, Group 10, March-May 1944,” [May 1944], F 438, B 29, E 154, RG 226, NARA; Thomas J. Davis to William R. Peers, [28 June 1944], F 415, B 28, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁴²⁷ “Interview with Conley,” 17 May 1945, F 46, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁴²⁸ Thomas J. Davis to William R. Peers, “Situation Report,” 31 May 1944, F 415, B 28, E 154, RG 226, NARA; A brief description of the ADAMS group’s activities in this period can be found in “Personal Field Report of Capt. Alan G. Adams; May to October,” 15 November 1944, F 78, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA.; For more on the DIXIE mission, see David D. Barrett, *Dixie Mission: The United States Army Observer Group in Yen-an, 1944* (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1979); Carolle J. Carter, *Mission to Yen-an: American Liaison With the Chinese Communists, 1944-1947* (Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1997); John Colling, *The Spirit of Yen-an: A Wartime Chapter of Sino-American Friendship* (Hong Kong: API, 1991)

⁴²⁹ “O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report,” May 1944, NARA. Unit records indicate that 207 Japanese were killed and an indeterminate number wounded from 20 April to 31 May. Two supply-carrying elephants also fell to the Detachment’s guns. In return the Detachment had five killed and five wounded.

move of the enemy ... our information is now supplied to twenty-five military branches ... which otherwise could not get this intelligence.”⁴³⁰

Kachin guerrillas, however, only served of their own volition and occasionally, for lack of a better term, deserted. An example of this occurred in June 1944 on the Chinese border to the east of Myitkyina. Japanese troops had withdrawn from the town of Hpimaw because of the pressure at Myitkyina, and Chinese troops had moved in. They were not liked by the Maru, a minor Kachin ethnicity, because of long standing bad relations. To make things worse, the local populace accused Chinese troops of looting. Luce tried to get FORWARD's Marus out of the area, but during the first day's march south, 110 of them deserted with their equipment and weapons. For the next three weeks, these Marus waged their own war against the Chinese. The Chinese reported that seventy-five of their troops killed, although the number is likely much higher.⁴³¹

One of the first groups to move south was FORWARD. The advance party flew by light plane fifty miles south to Kwitu, while the main body made the eight-day trek on foot. They expanded from eight to ten companies. Many new recruits were veterans of the pre-war Burmese Rifles, many of whom had fought against the Japanese in the

⁴³⁰ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May to 30 June, 1944," [30 June 1944], F 13, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Detachment 101 had one other major element in the field: Operation TRAMP, collecting intelligence and harassing Japanese forces attacking towards Imphal. Formed out of the RED group under Pat Maddox, TRAMP had been augmented in April by the DOW and PETE groups (named after their commanders) and composed of Americans that had been in V-Force, a British-led intelligence unit. These V-Force personnel were extremely valuable to Detachment 101. They brought with them a wealth of experience on the operating environment including several, such as Captain Peter K. Lutken of PETE, who had learned to speak Kachin, and was well-respected by the local population. The TRAMP reports can be found in F 438 and 439, B 64, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁴³¹ Luce, "Report on Tour of Duty," [April 1945]; Reports from Detachment 101 officers in the area place the number of Chinese killed at around 400. See "Interview with Maj. Drown," 16 May 1945, F 46, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Relations with the Chinese troops were so poor that members of Detachment 101 were given a standing order that they were to keep themselves and their troops well away from them unless a specific liaison task was given.

1942 invasion of Burma before disbanding. Another 2,300 recruits waited to be armed, but the monsoon rains hampered airdrops and prevented them from being equipped. Throughout June, these forces were active deep behind Japanese lines, and were particularly successful ambushing troops trying to escape down the Irrawaddy. In June, FORWARD claimed nearly half of the Detachment's total enemy killed in action, which was 219 Japanese killed and two captured. Meanwhile, the guerrillas of PAT were busy blowing bridges and cutting rail lines cut south of Myitkyina. Detachment 101's losses for June were five indigenous troops killed and seven wounded.⁴³²

Detachment 101 continued its policy of conducting for the Allied forces what Peers referred to as "all operations which they are not prepared to undertake."⁴³³ Assisting with this task was the Detachment's small air force, dubbed the Red-Ass Squadron, which was formed to conduct observation flights, evacuate wounded, drop supplies, and effect liaison. These planes landed on airstrips hacked out of the jungle or on sandbars and in open fields. They proved invaluable by evacuating forty-nine wounded Chindits from the Mogaung area. Landing these small planes on makeshift airstrips could be harrowing, such as on 6 July in the rescue of the survivors of a B-25 crash some eighteen miles from Myitkyina: "The field was a clearing about 600' long, she looked terrible from the air. There were fox holes on either side (dug by Merrill's Marauders) ... looking over the whole thing [the pilot] said over the radio "Well here goes but were liable to have to walk back to Myitkyina"... on the seventh [pass] we

⁴³² Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 31 May," [30 June 1944], NARA; Despite the rains, the air drop section of Detachment 101 managed to get some 251,000 pounds of supplies in the field; TRAMP operations under PETE were also singularly successful when on 22 June, the group killed 150 Japanese who were floating on rafts down the Namting River.

⁴³³ Ibid.

dropped in so close over the trees I thought the wings would hit.”⁴³⁴ Because of the small carrying capacity of the plane, the pilot required six trips to evacuate the crew. In the midst of the rescue, the pilot had to make a field-expedient repair to a broken tail wheel.

The unit relied heavily on their Stinson L-1 Vigilants. They were ideal for the task because their size and durability, and had a larger carrying capacity than the more common Stinson L-5 Sentinel. Although the U.S. Army considered the L-1 obsolete, the Technical Sergeant Blaine Headrick recalled, “it was a very safe airplane to fly ... it had quite a bit of power ... I even had three guys in the backseat at one time.”⁴³⁵

By July, Detachment 101 was pushing its forces even further south. Stilwell needed information on Japanese dispositions in north central Burma for the Allied push that would resume after Myitkyina’s fall.⁴³⁶ Detachment 101 guerrillas used the cover accorded by the monsoons and the subsequent relative inactivity of regular forces. One unfortunate aspect was that patrols were sometimes mistaken for the enemy and attacked by Allied fighter aircraft.⁴³⁷

The push south coincided with a reorganization of the operational elements when Detachment 101 headquarters simplified its command and control. Instead of five operational areas, the Allied advance allowed the consolidation of KNOTHEAD and

⁴³⁴ [Robert R. Rhea?], “handwritten notes starting with ‘July 5th LT Comdr Pier ...’ ” [August 1944?], F 349, B 21, E 90, RG 226, NARA.

⁴³⁵ Phone Interview by author with Blaine Headrick, Fayetteville NC, 3 June 1945.

⁴³⁶ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, “Report covering period 30 June to 31 July, 1944,” [31 July 1944], F 14, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁴³⁷ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, “Report covering period 31 July to 31 August, 1944,” [31 August], F 14, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA. See William H. Cummings to Carl O. Hoffman, “SO Operations, August Report,” 1 September 1944.

PAT with the teams working in the Chindit area. The groups were redesignated: FORWARD became "Area #1;" PAT and KNOTHEAD became "Area #2;" and TRAMP became "Area #3." The three areas reported directly to the headquarters Operations Section. The Communications Section also followed suit. Before, individual groups and even teams had independently contacted headquarters or their designated subordinate radio substation. During July, the individual elements routed all communications to their Area headquarters. The three area substations then communicated with one forward-based communications section. This reorganization also provided redundancy; the constant relocations of area headquarters forced by enemy action did not sever communications. If any area substation was out of service for more than twenty-four hours, the forward Communications Section could pick-up that area's message traffic in addition to its normal load, until that the area substation came back on line.⁴³⁸ Additionally, the Detachment headquarters set up a chain of aircraft warning stations, as it had done in early 1943 in the Fort Hertz area. This time, instead of providing alerts that Japanese bombers were coming to attack the Assam airfields, the nine stations warned of the presence of Japanese fighter aircraft operating in hunter-killer groups. These stations reported directly to the Allied fighter control center at NCAC.

These organizational changes helped the Detachment increase efficiency. July was even more successful with 259 enemy killed, an indeterminate wounded, and 26 captured. Area #1, under the command of Major Peter Joost after Luce returned to

⁴³⁸ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 30 June," [31 July 1944], NARA.

Nazira to establish a fifty-bed hospital, established two roadblocks south of Myitkyina; Kazu, twenty miles south; and Dumbaiyang, forty miles south. In this period alone, Area #1's "D" company killed 94 Japanese who were attempting to float down the Irrawaddy from Myitkyina. Area #2 was likewise embroiled in the campaign.⁴³⁹

Since much of its former area was now free of the enemy, Area #2 groups moved south and acted as a screening force for the Chinese and Chindits attacking Mogaung.⁴⁴⁰ After receiving a message from the worn-out Chindits that if Chinese troops did not arrive in two days then they would pull out, agent "Skittles," in charge of an Area #2 unit, ensured that the Chinese met the timetable.⁴⁴¹ He led the 114th Regiment of the 38th Chinese Division on a flanking move that completed the encirclement of the town. Since Detachment 101 agents were embedded with both the Chindits and Chinese, they facilitated a link up. Although the Chindits accomplished much of the fighting, on Stilwell's orders the Chinese were officially given the credit for taking the town. In response, Brigadier General Calvert signaled in protest, "The Chinese having taken Mogaung 77 Brigade is proceeding to take Umbrage."⁴⁴² With Mogaung's capture, the

⁴³⁹ Ibid., in particular, see William H. Cummings to Carl O. Hoffman, "S O Operations, July Report," 1 August 1944; Area #1 headquarters were at Sadon.

⁴⁴⁰ [Interview of Ted Barnes], 1 December 1944, F 78, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA, One of these screening groups was the DAVIS group, which had another "A" Group veteran, Saw Judson, as radio operator and interpreter. Davis also armed Kachin villagers to serve as a militia of sorts as well as agents, organized local labor to build and airstrip and to serve as stretcher bearers. These Kachins later served as the nucleus for several new groups. See Thomas J. Davis to Opero, radio message 22, 23 June 1944, F 415, B 28, E 154, RG 226, NARA; Thomas J. Davis to Operations, "Report of Field Operations for Period April 7," [July 1944], NARA.

⁴⁴¹ "Harry S. Hengshoon (Skittles)," [May 1945?], F 46, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Area #2 groups also harassed Japanese stragglers north and south of Myitkyina. A small group of Kachins under Lieutenant Evan J. Parker also killed fifty-four and captured eighteen enemy troops.

⁴⁴² Shelford Bidwell, *The Chindit War: Stilwell, Wingate, and the Campaign in Burma, 1944* (New York: Macmillan, 1979), 274. The legend is that Stilwell's staff then proceeded to ask where on the map the village of Umbrage was located.

last potential link that the besieged Japanese in Myitkyina had to supply, reinforcement, or relief was severed.⁴⁴³

Since the Myitkyina siege lines remained porous, Detachment 101 guerrillas under Lieutenant Lee E. West patrolled the Mogaung-Myitkyina rail line until regular Allied forces secured it in August.⁴⁴⁴ Other Detachment 101 elements, such as that under 1st Lieutenant Ted U. Barnes, remained to “police up” Japanese stragglers who were “badly organized, badly equipped, and trying to get through to the south ... We spent a good deal of our time trying to organize groups to wipe out as many of these Japanese as possible.”⁴⁴⁵ Even further south, PETE had moved in from the west to target the Katha-Mogaung rail line. The group’s self-sufficiency was possible because of the capture of three load-carrying elephants and twenty-five oxen, which enabled PETE to carry large quantities of Japanese supplies captured during raids on enemy supply dumps.⁴⁴⁶

In early August, in the middle of the monsoon, the Allies finally took Myitkyina. Despite washed out roads and trails, Detachment 101 continued to harass the Japanese fleeing south from north Burma. The worn-out Japanese resorted to using the rivers as avenues of retreat, but Detachment 101 covered the east bank of the Irrawaddy as far south as Sinbo. Peers reported to Donovan that this left the enemy “more or less like

⁴⁴³ Romanus and Sunderland, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, 233-236; A Japanese Regimental Combat Team of the 53rd Division was under way to relieve Myitkyina, but was turned back by the Allied advance on Mogaung.

⁴⁴⁴ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 30 June,” [31 July 1944], NARA. See Cummings to Hoffman, “S O Operations, July Report” 1 August 1944.

⁴⁴⁵ [Interview of Ted Barnes], 1 December 1944, F 78, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁴⁶ Interview of Pete Lutken by author, 2 July 2007, Fort Bragg, NC, notes. Also see Reginald Thorlin, “Pete Group,” 28 August 1944, F 439, B 64, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

clay pigeons for our marksmen on the banks.” The situation was almost surreal for First Lieutenant James Ward, who simply occupied a balcony overlooking the Irrawaddy and “sat in it [a chair] with a carbine across the knees, fresh fruit and cigarettes within easy reach, fanned by an attractive native girl, and would take pot shots at the [Japanese] who were trying to escape.” Martin had another experience, when his group of Kachins spotted a Japanese soldier on the banks of the river that they wanted to capture. But, the soldier “didn’t want any part of it” and “fired one round,” hitting a Kachin “right in the head,” killing him. Martin’s Kachins “just blew him [the Japanese soldier] apart. That was the only man I lost in the river blockade.” First Lieutenant Thomas B. Leonard’s group caught a party of 300 Japanese that were either “bathing or sleeping” on 3 August. They “were completely surprised” and “Little return fire encountered,” with thirty Japanese killed for the loss of one Kachin.⁴⁴⁷

The groups in Area #2 accounted for the most damage inflicted in August on the Japanese. Fifteen Allied officers and twenty enlisted men led over a thousand Kachins. Communications were handled by fourteen locally-recruited radio operators. This group managed to kill 350 Japanese and capture another 22 at the cost of just a few Kachins.⁴⁴⁸

As Detachment 101 moved south, some of the region assigned to Area #3 fell outside the Kachin tracts, and was the furthest south that non-air-dropped elements had progressed. This became problematic because the Kachin troops had only agreed to

⁴⁴⁷ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 31 July,” [31 August 1944], NARA. “Mission Report;” “Interview with 1st Lt. James R. Ward,” 28 June 1945, F 46, B 36, E 190, RG 226, NARA; William Martin interviewed by Mrs. Marje Luce, 1995, Oregon, copy in USASOC History office Classified Files.; “Leonard Report on Field Activities,” 16 November 1944, F 78, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁴⁸ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 31 July,” [31 August 1944], NARA. See Cummings to Hoffman, “SO Operations, August Report,” 1 September 1944.

fight in their home region. The move south invalidated their contracts, and some went home, but local recruiting refilled the ranks.⁴⁴⁹ They remained able to attack the defeated Japanese forces retreating from Imphal. Peers told Area #3 in August, “headquarters (at Tailum) will [soon] be out of the war as much as Myitkyina is ... as soon as the [Japanese] flow ceases.”⁴⁵⁰ That meant the groups had to work their way even farther south in the coming months, risking even more Kachins to leave for home.

August was another record month for Detachment 101, with another 396 enemy killed and 33 captured.⁴⁵¹ Although the group only kept a strict tally of enemy casualties from May to August, this still left them with a total of 1081 enemy killed, to a loss of sixteen Kachins and thirty wounded.⁴⁵² They were also the only American or British ground force that participated in the campaign to remain intact and capable of operations as both the Chindits and Marauders were disbanded after Myitkyina fell. The intelligence supplied by Detachment 101 had indirectly led to many more enemy killed through air action, which had also lowered Japanese morale and expedited Allied ground actions. Considering the small number of American personnel involved, Detachment 101 and its Kachins were a significant “force multiplier” for NCAC.

⁴⁴⁹ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 30 June,” [late July 1944], NARA. See Cummings to Hoffman, “S O Operations, July Report” 1 August 1944. When Myitkyina fell, Detachment 101 also received a number of Gurkha recruits. See William R. Peers to Edmund Taylor, 20 August 1944, F2152, B119, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁵⁰ Peers to Laurence F. Grimm, 11 August 1944, F 438, B 64, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁵¹ Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 31 July,” [31 August 1944], NARA. See “Mission Report.”

⁴⁵² Robert Rodenberg to William R. Peers, “Casualties of Detachment 101 Personnel,” 31 August 1944, F 209A, B 26, E 165, RG 226, NARA. At that time, over the course of its entire operation, from 1942 on, Detachment 101 was roughly responsible for killing nearly 2000 Japanese. More than half of these occurred over the months of May-August 1944. Therefore in four months after Peers had taken over command from Eifler, the Detachment succeeded in inflicting more direct damage on the enemy in terms of personnel than in the entire previous year of field operations. It is also possible that these numbers are low. According to “KNOTHEAD GROUP,” F 48, B 38, E 190, RG 226, NARA, Japanese dead were only counted if a body was seen, or if a Japanese was seen to fall after being shot.

With the capture of Myitkyina, the Japanese would thereafter be on the defensive. Although its participation in the Burma campaign was not over, Detachment 101 had demonstrated its value to the Allied effort and received several accolades. Major General Howard Davidson, commanding officer of the 10th USAAF, wrote about the intelligence provided by Detachment 101:

OSS furnished the principal intelligence regarding Japanese troop concentrations, hostile natives, stores and enemy movement. Up to 15 March 1944, some 80% of all combat missions were planned on the basis of intelligence received from this source. Since then the percentage of direct air-ground support missions and missions based upon OSS intelligence now average about 60% of the total.⁴⁵³

The reputation of the Detachment was so good that when the Marauders disbanded, several veterans asked to join Detachment 101. Their experience proved invaluable in the ten bitter months of fighting that laid ahead before the Japanese were finally defeated in Burma in July 1945.⁴⁵⁴

Conclusion

Detachment 101 had made great progress since their early operations in 1943, but how much had Detachment 101's efforts at reform aided in the campaign? The answer is found in what they accomplished in two areas: operations, and command and control. Following several unsuccessful attempts at long-range penetrations throughout Burma, Peers concentrated on the north. These operations involved less risk of valuable

⁴⁵³ Peers to Donovan, "Report covering period 31 July," [31 August 1944], NARA. See Howard Davidson to William J. Donovan, "Contribution of Detachment 101, OSS, to USAAF in Northeastern Assam and North Burma," 1 August 1944.

⁴⁵⁴ Three of the Marauders that joined Detachment 101 were Philip Weld, Roger Hilsman, and Thomas Chamales. See Philip Weld, *Moxie: the American Challenge* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1981); Hilsman, *American Guerrilla*, and Tom Chamales, *Never So Few* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957). *Never So Few* was later made into a feature film starring Frank Sinatra, Gina Lollobrigida, Steve McQueen, and Charles Bronson.

resources and capitalized on collecting tactical intelligence, such as identifying targets for the USAAF and identifying key elements in the Japanese order of battle. Through gaining the trust of and recruiting the Kachins, Detachment 101 was able to ambush Japanese troops, screen the flanks of Allied forces, collect intelligence, and have a ready reserve of guerrilla troops.

The operations in 1943 had benefited Detachment 101. The group was able to thoroughly blanket the area with agents and these teams had months in the field to learn the operating areas and the local peoples. That the conventional troops of other Allied units involved in the planned offensive were mainly unaware of Detachment 101's efforts mattered little. What mattered is that Detachment 101 was in place, was building intelligence nets, and was recruiting and training guerrillas. Detachment 101 was ready to assist these other major conventional forces when the Myitkyina offensive began in February 1944, and in so doing, became the strategic theater asset envisioned by Donovan when sent the group to Burma in 1942.

Detachment 101's impact far outweighed the small numbers of personnel it had committed. This was in large part because of the organizational changes made by Peers after he took command. His creation of a Secret Intelligence (SI)-like evaluation system enabled his staff to ask the pertinent questions, evaluate its intelligence, and then distribute that information in a timely manner to the Allied force that most needed it. The formation of an operations cell to coordinate all the Detachment's offensive operations was likewise a major accomplishment. For the first time, Nazira could accurately measure its effectiveness. This allowed it to make the necessary changes

while maintaining the offensive, such as simplifying the operations and communications command and control. Also, by having dedicated aircraft under its control, Detachment 101 ensured that its operational groups were supplied when and where needed. This function permitted the large-scale raising, training, and employment of guerrilla forces.

Other reforms of 1944, particularly those not of an immediate tactical need, were less critical. Morale Operations (MO) never played a significant role, even though their white-propaganda producing Office of War Information (OWI) counterparts had.⁴⁵⁵ R&D had not been integrated into the unit long enough to make a measurable impact. X-2, the OSS counter-intelligence Branch, had little effect on operations.

Perhaps the most important result of Detachment 101's effort in the Myitkyina campaign was that it validated the OSS mission in Burma and ensured continued support from the U.S. Army and OSS Washington. Peers had calculated well in this regard. Detachment 101 sent detailed monthly reports to both NCAC and to OSS Washington beginning in November 1942. In April 1944, however, Peers further directed his field units to keep a detailed daily log of activities that he then forwarded to headquarters. This hard evidence to OSS Washington revealed how much Detachment 101 was contributing to the success of the offensive.⁴⁵⁶ One thing, however, was impossible as the Field Photo Section reported, "As for action snapshots, action against the [Japanese]

⁴⁵⁵ "Psychological Warfare in the Battle of Myitkyina," [late July 1944], F 1855, B 137, E 144, RG 226, NARA. OWI managed to sow surrender leaflets over Japanese lines beginning in June, and had loudspeaker teams that used Nisei to broadcast news, music, and surrender appeals to the defenders. The result was lowered morale, and at least one successful attempt to surrender. Other possible surrender attempts may have been killed by trigger-happy Chinese and American troops. On other occasion, supply drops were deliberately made to cut-off Japanese forces in the hopes that they might surrender. See William R. Peers to Demas, "Dr. Telburg Letter to Lt. Commander Hinks—Japanese Comment on "101," 29 June 1944, F 373, B 59, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁵⁶ R.T. Shelby to KNOTHEAD, "Dear Pamplin and "Knothead" Group," 12 April 1944, F 453, B 30, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

is-almost without exception-always in the dark and cannot be photographed ...”⁴⁵⁷

Nevertheless, the daylight photography stills and movies gave OSS Washington a taste of the Burmese operational environment, and Peers’s efforts to document Detachment 101’s activities paid off. If Detachment 101 needed any more reassurance about their intra-theater role, it was an understanding with Stilwell to raise the number of Kachin guerrillas from some 3,000 to 10,000.⁴⁵⁸ The next chapter will detail the Detachment’s organizational changes as it moved to support the Allied offensive to secure the Burma Road; through the Bhamo campaign.

⁴⁵⁷ Jack Pamplin to R.T. Shelby, 30 March 1944, F 453, B 30, E 154, RG 226, NARA. Robert W. Rhea had been attached to KNOTHEAD for seven months, and photographed the Marauders as they pushed from Wallabum to Myitkyina. Rhea had the singular honor of having been made an official member of Merrill’s Marauders. See William R. Peers to Donovan, “Report covering period 31 July,” [31 August], F 15, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA. “Mission Report.”

⁴⁵⁸ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 171.

CHAPTER IX

REORGANIZING AFTER MYITKYINA: SEPTEMBER-DECEMBER 1944

With Myitkyina under Allied control, the Allies could congratulate themselves on a hard-fought joint victory, and with the monsoon not yet over, they could momentarily regroup and reflect upon the accomplishment. This was not true for Detachment 101. As the unit charged with gathering intelligence and conducting guerrilla warfare behind Japanese lines, it had to continue pressing the enemy and push deeper into its rear areas. The Detachment could also not allow the new strategic situation to negatively affect its operations. It could not ignore that it needed to reorganize and rebuild. This chapter will examine the administrative and organizational changes of the Detachment's various elements from September 1944 until the end of the year. This coincides with the fall of Bhamo. Because the unit's emphasis shifted from intelligence to operations, sections that were operationally focused are covered first, followed by intelligence functions, then sections that still had to find a role for themselves.

Detachment 101 was not a standardized unit in any sense and had a constantly changing table of organization and equipment (TO&E). Because of this, Detachment 101's various sections could not remain static even though they faced increasingly greater tasks than ever before. They had to improve efficiency while at the same time, help increase the Detachment's overall pressure on the Japanese. As a result, this period

was one of rebuilding existing elements, in which OSS Washington slowly addressed the lack of personnel.

In the field, the unit still had to act on its previous, but unwritten, understanding with General Stilwell, that following the conclusion of the Myitkyina Campaign, it would increase the number of guerrillas to 10,000. In the field, Detachment 101 was the only Allied formation in contact with Japanese forces south of Myitkyina from August until 15 October.⁴⁵⁹ By November, however, Operations Section chief Major William E. Cummings was reporting that the pace of Allied progress was so great that “our units have had difficulty keeping in advance of it.”⁴⁶⁰ This meant that the unit had to work even harder than before to make sure that it stayed deep behind enemy lines. Only in this fashion could Detachment 101 retain the utility that it had demonstrated during the Myitkyina Campaign.

The Japanese forces were reeling from the beatings they had taken in north Burma and from the effects of the failed Imphal offensive. They were no longer capable in holding all of Burma. Their actions in north and central Burma now were designed to buy time so that they could prop up their defenses in southern Burma. For their part, the Allies recognized that they had finally turned the tide of the war in Burma, and sought to exploit their advantage. In the west, the British 14th Army had crossed the Chindwin River. They were advancing against the shattered units of the Imphal/Kohima retreat.

⁴⁵⁹ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, “Report Covering Period 30 September to 31 October, 1944,” [1 November 1944], F 17, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁶⁰ [William R. Peers to William J. Donovan], “O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report November 1944,” [1 December 1944], F 18, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA. See William E. Cummings to Carl O. Hoffman, “SO Operations, November Report.”

By the end of 1944, they were nearing the Irrawaddy River, and had linked with British forces under NCAC.

In north Burma, NCAC briefly paused, but built up its force. It now had five Chinese divisions and the British 36th Division. Merrill's Marauders had been effectively destroyed in the Myitkyina fighting, but a new and much larger long range penetration unit, the 5332nd Brigade, called the MARS Task Force, was formed in its stead. The British began the renewed offensive first. Since the 36th Division was fresh, it moved to take over the Chindits' positions. From there, it pressed south along the rail corridor to Pinwe. In October and to the east of the 36th, the combined American and Chinese forces began to move south along the route of the Ledo Road. Their objective was the city of Bhamo. Although the Japanese briefly resisted, their lack of numbers could not stem the Allied tide. By mid-December, Bhamo was in Allied hands. In this action, the Chinese forces involved had shown a remarkable improvement over their efforts at Myitkyina just six months prior.

The China-Burma-India-Theater was also experiencing great change. On 18 October, at Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's insistence, President Roosevelt recalled Stilwell. With his recall, the China-Burma-India Theater was reorganized into two theaters. The India-Burma Theater, with NCAC intact, was placed under the command of Lieutenant General Daniel I. Sultan. It was his duty was to see that the north Burma offensive continued. Major General Albert C. Wedemeyer was placed in command of the China Theater.

Existing Force Structure

Peers determined that the best way to serve the Allied forces was to have his men push deeper behind enemy lines. This necessitated a mobile headquarters to serve their needs. One of the first to act on this was the Operations Section. Its personnel had taken advantage of the monsoon to infiltrate more deeply into Japanese-held Burma. Since operations were now even farther from Nazira, the headquarters Operations Section relocated on 27 September to Myitkyina. The Operations Section was the pathfinder element; soon followed by the Communications Section and a representative, Sergeant Edward S. Pendergast, of the Finance Section. The Air Section followed suit and by September, had six planes (out of nine total) forward based at Myitkyina. The Research and Analysis (R&A) Section sent a forward party, but did not officially open their Myitkyina office until 24 October. Within months, the only sections remaining at Nazira would be non-combat related, such as the school and the hospital.⁴⁶¹

The move put the headquarters elements closer to the operating area, but it also permitted timely intelligence dissemination. With Myitkyina finally under Allied control, the Operations Section could revisit earlier ideas and incorporate new ones. In October, the Detachment once again tried its hand at an older idea by parachuting three teams of indigenous personnel deep behind Japanese lines, much like the initial operations under the previous commander, Colonel Carl F. Eifler. Not attached to any of

⁴⁶¹ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See Charles W. Cox to Research and Analysis, "R & A Report for October 1944;" William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period 31 August to 30 September, 1944," [1 October 1944], F 16, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA. See "Mission Report;" In September, the Detachment managed to account for 192 Japanese killed and 17 wounded, and five Burmese auxiliaries killed. The number was off from August on account that all enemy forces the Detachment was encountering at the time were stragglers fleeing north Burma.

the operational areas, this time, these teams were mostly composed of experienced agents. They were sent in to become the nucleus of additional operating areas that would expand as the Allied forces moved closer to their areas. Even though most Detachment 101 units were engaged in guerrilla operations, these teams served to reinforce intelligence collection.⁴⁶²

In the field, Stilwell's directive to increase the number of indigenous troops to 10,000 resulted in the rapid growth of individual companies. This was particularly so of Area #1 (former FORWARD) which created five numbered battalions out of its former companies. The drive south resulted in Areas #2 and #3 being combined. This left the operational structure of the Detachment as two areas and a number of agent groups that reported directly to Myitkyina. Conversely, the drive south also forced several Detachment 101 officers to disband their units. The groups were moving away from the Kachin areas, outside of which, their troops had not agreed to serve.⁴⁶³

With the ending of the monsoon, Detachment 101 extended liaison to even more Allied formations. Lieutenants Jacob Esterline and William Martin were assigned to the Chinese First and Sixth Armies, respectively, and Lieutenant Roger Hilsman to the British 36th Division. Further arrangements were made with the British when Detachment 101 agreed that the former TRAMP units would patrol east of the

⁴⁶² William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944," [1 December 1944], F 11102, B 273, E 210, RG 226, NARA. See William R. Peers to Headquarters, India-Burma Theater, "Office of Strategic Services Detachment 101;" The operations section also acquired a new role, when it agreed to become the primary organization responsible for Allied Prisoners of War that were located along the route of advance. In this role, the Detachment worked to secure intelligence on the whereabouts of POWs and attempted to secure them before the enemy could retreat with, or dispose of them.

⁴⁶³ [William R. Peers to William J. Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report December 1944," [1 January 1945], F 19, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA. See Dow S. Grones to Carl O. Hoffman, "SO Operations, December Report."

Chindwin, while the 33rd Brigade of the 14th Army would patrol to the west.⁴⁶⁴ For purely intelligence matters, the R&A Section established liaison with the NCAC G-2 Photo Interpretation section.⁴⁶⁵ By November, the Detachment had officers permanently assigned to liaison duties with the 124th Cavalry Regiment (U.S.); the 475th Infantry Regiment (U.S.); the 5332nd Brigade (U.S.); the First Provisional Tank Group (U.S.-Chinese); the 4th Corps (U.K.); the 36th Division (U.K.); the South East Asia Command, and the First and Sixth Chinese Armies. Detachment 101 also attached groups of Kachins to some of these units. The 124th Cavalry and the First and Sixth Chinese Armies had an attached Detachment 101 Intelligence and Reconnaissance (I&R) platoon while the 36th Division and First Provisional Tank Group also had attached agents and guides.

The liaison efforts increased the awareness and use of Detachment 101's intelligence and guerrilla formations, but also proved to be a severe drain on available officers. These demands in part dictated that officers already assigned to the field groups had to stay behind the lines longer and without replacement. This helped to create what Peers termed a "relatively large number of cases of mental fatigue" because officers and men were in the field "too long according to any and all standards." He noted whereas "Army Combat Units ... rarely remain over two months in continuous combat before being withdrawn," many in Detachment 101 had been in the field for

⁴⁶⁴ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 31 August," [1 October 1944], NARA; The 475th, popularly known as the MARS Task Force, was the follow-on U.S. ground element to Merrill's Marauders.

⁴⁶⁵ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See Charles W. Cox to Research and Analysis, "R & A Report for October 1944." The photos were supplied to Detachment 101 field units and used to grid enemy targets for bombing.

anywhere from seven to twenty months.⁴⁶⁶ Other Detachment 101 sections also had to deal with the high operations tempo.

Previously, Communications had reorganized to increase efficiency and had laid plans to push its elements further into Burma to support operations. After briefing the field commanders, on 30 September the Myitkyina section took over all field radio traffic. The move to Myitkyina left only four communications positions at Nazira; one each to work U.S. Army circuits, traffic from southern India (Calcutta), China, and a backup for communications from Chabua, Dinjan, and Gelakey. The lack of intense operations during the monsoon helped ease the initial impact of the shift. Yet, in September, the Section still handled 217,000 code groups. The move also built in redundancy by having the capacity to cover communications from all field areas, Nazira, the air warning stations, and a backup to take over the communications of any area that might go off the air due to enemy movements. This happened frequently. In September, former Area #3 temporarily lost communications because of a minor Japanese push into the area, and in November, a move south by Area #2 resulted in Myitkyina taking over their schedules for three days. Claude V. Wadsworth, the Communications Section chief said, "It worked so smoothly that that the field [units] were not aware of the change."⁴⁶⁷

The Pigeon Section, a subset of Communications, managed to drop its first birds into the field in late September. They were used for emergency messages, to signal that parachuted agents had landed successfully, or when patrols or agents could not

⁴⁶⁶ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period 31 October," NARA.

⁴⁶⁷ [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report November 1944," [1 December 1944], NARA. See Claude V. Wadsworth to Communication Branch, "Communications Report for November."

communicate via radio.⁴⁶⁸ The use of pigeons entailed some problems as there was a “tremendous temptation” for indigenous troops to “shoot everything that flies [sic] for eating purposes but to date casualties to pigeons from this source has been light.” Despite this, the success rate of the pigeons in returning was quite good at 99 percent. They even experimented by having pigeons fly from Myitkyina to Nazira. The birds had to surmount mountain ranges and fly a distance of 225 miles, but managed it in fourteen hours.⁴⁶⁹ Pigeons proved to have other possible uses. “Below-standard” birds were being considered for use by the Morale Operations (MO) Section. These birds would carry a false message. Not being trained to return, the hope was that they would end up in enemy hands.⁴⁷⁰

It was necessary to have pigeons as the Detachment still did not have adequate field radio sets. Those that arrived from the States were not suited to the climate, as they needed to be nearly waterproof. This meant that the Communications Section still had to build its own transmitters for field operations, something for which the demands of monitoring radio traffic did not permit much time. For October, Communications personnel in Myitkyina handled 1,514 messages (94,152 groups) while Nazira handled 2,030 messages (124,003 groups).⁴⁷¹ November’s load reflected that communications duties were shifting from Nazira; 2037 messages (130,216 groups) at Myitkyina as

⁴⁶⁸ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, “Report Covering Period 31 August,” [1 October 1944], NARA. See Allen Richter, “Communications Report for September;” At the time the Pigeon section had eighty breeding pairs. See Morris Y. Lederman to Carl O. Hoffman, “Activities of the Pigeon Section.”

⁴⁶⁹ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period 30 September,” [1 November 1944], NARA. See Morris Y. Lederman to Carl O. Hoffman, “Activities of the Pigeon Section.”

⁴⁷⁰ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period 31 October,” [1 December 1944], NARA.

⁴⁷¹ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period 30 September,” [1 November 1944], NARA.

opposed to 52,050 groups handled by Nazira.⁴⁷² The increasing level of radio traffic also forced the Communications Section at Myitkyina to alter how the field groups could contact base. Previously, field groups were on schedules of when they could transit to base. Field conditions and emergencies, however, did not always permit the behind the lines groups to communicate on schedule. The solution was to issue a common frequency to the field units and to leave it open for emergency traffic.⁴⁷³

Fortunately, with operational successes came new personnel. The Communications Section was one that greatly benefited from new recruits. Many of the new arrivals had the benefit of training stateside at OSS training Area "C," established for the sole purpose of training communication personnel. By November, numbers of Area "C" trained personnel began to trickle into the Detachment and they "materially relieved pressure" on the over-worked Section.⁴⁷⁴

But, additional personnel brought with them problems with how to have an administration system effective enough to deal with a rapid influx of personnel. Nazira felt the effect, as Peers reported, "There has been a noticeable tightening of regulations and meticulous attention to detail is now required." Nazira also had to reassess how it handled the personnel of other OSS groups. Previously all personnel for Detachment 202 went through Detachment 101 headquarters. With the OSS involvement in China expanding, it was no longer practical for Detachment 101's limited staff to handle the

⁴⁷² Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 31 October," [1 December 1944], NARA.

⁴⁷³ [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report November 1944," [1 December 1944], NARA. See Claude V. Wadsworth to Communication Branch, "Communications Report for November."

⁴⁷⁴ [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report December 1944," [1 January 1945], NARA. See Claude V. Wadsworth to Communications Branch, "Communications Report for December."

influx, and arrangements were being made for Detachment 202 to be in charge of processing their own incoming personnel.⁴⁷⁵

An additional critical need was for medical personnel. In October, Commodore M.E. Miles of SACO/U.S. Naval Group, China, requested that all the U.S. Navy medical personnel in Detachment 101 be released and sent to his command within three weeks. This “could not have come at a more inopportune time,” as the increased combat nature of Detachment 101’s work made medical personnel even more necessary. As units moved deeper into enemy controlled-areas, they found that in order to prevent their own troops from getting ill, they had to treat the local population for such maladies as smallpox. This effort required more medical personnel. While Detachment 101 had asked for them, none had arrived over the previous four months. Demands on the medical department in November were “approximately three times that of any previous month,” making keeping of adequate supplies on hand difficult.⁴⁷⁶ As it was, all the U.S. Navy pharmacists’ mates serving in the field were withdrawn by December and replaced by Army medical personnel who required time to acclimate.⁴⁷⁷ The fortunate recruiting of five nurses who had previously worked for the famed Burma Surgeon, Dr. Gordon Seagrave, eased the burden. Four additional former Seagrave nurses arrived in December. As these nurses were from Burma, they had the additional benefit of helping put indigenous casualties at ease and improving their morale.

⁴⁷⁵ Peers to Donovan, “Report Covering Period 30 September,” [1 November 1944], NARA. See “Personnel Report October.”

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid. See James C. Luce to S.C. Missal, “Detachment Surgeon, Detachment 101.”

⁴⁷⁷ James C. Luce, “Report of Activities of U.S. Naval Group China Medical Personnel Attached to Detachment 101,” [mid-late 1945], F 389, B 60, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

By November, the increased level of operations—and subsequent casualties—had filled the hospital to capacity. The new fifty-bed hospital at Nazira allowed for major surgical procedures. December's hospital records reflect the cost of the increased operational activities and the improvement in the Medical Section's capabilities. Seventy-five personnel were admitted to the hospital and forty-five discharged. There were twelve major surgical procedures ranging from perforated intestines to plastic surgery to treating bayonet, gunshots, and shrapnel wounds. The dispensary treated 186 patients, conducted 131 physical examinations, and performed 481 immunizations, while the dentist saw 216 patients. Medical personnel detailed to the field were likewise busy, with 107 emergency surgeries and 2596 cases of disease treated.⁴⁷⁸

The Schools and Training Section of Detachment 101 also did its best to enhance cooperation with the U.S. Army. In September, it furnished instructors to help train an Intelligence and Reconnaissance (I&R) platoon for the 475th Infantry Regiment of the 5332nd Brigade (Provisional). In October, it established a jungle warfare instruction center in Myitkyina for the 475th and a two-week long OSS course at the forward training area at Taro, formerly occupied by TRAMP. The Section also produced instructional booklets, such as primers on how to pick up foreign languages.⁴⁷⁹

In September, the Section finished a reorganization. At Nazira, it now had twelve different camps that were broken down into the type of personnel they could

⁴⁷⁸ [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report November 1944," [1 December 1944], NARA. See James C. Luce to S.C. Missal, "Medical Report;" [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report December 1944," [1 January 1945], NARA. See James C. Luce to Chief, Medical Services, OSS, Washington, D.C., "Medical Services Report for December, 1944."

⁴⁷⁹ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See Michael P. Georges to Schools and Training, O.S.S., Washington D.C., "Schools and Training Report for October."

handle: including one camp each for Americans, Karens, Burmans, Kachins, Shans, Thai, and females. The reorganization included formulating standard operating procedures for incoming personnel. When an indigenous recruit arrived, they were photographed, given a physical examination, sworn into the unit (under the legal penalties of the India Secrets Act), given dental care, and then sent on to the proper training camp.⁴⁸⁰ Even dental care had to be carefully administered because work on an indigenous agent had to resemble something that would have been done by a local dentist. This meant that the Detachment 101 dentist had to use local materials and attempt to artificially age his work so that it did not appear as new.⁴⁸¹ The photographs and records of the agents were the start of the Detachment advocating for a series of background checks and a central records repository that would prevent the rehiring of employees already deemed unsuitable by other U.S. Government organizations.⁴⁸² New personnel in the field meant that enhanced logistical support was necessary.

The continuation of the monsoon allowed the Air Drop Section a respite over the previous month. Despite the weather, in September, the group dropped 542,384 pounds of supplies, delivered by 120 aircraft.⁴⁸³ To accomplish this feat, the drop planes in some instances had to make twenty attempts at finding a single field group. The respite ended in October when the letup of the monsoon allowed for a greater number of flights.

⁴⁸⁰ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Report Covering Period 31," [1 October 1944], NARA; exit briefings would also relay the penalties under the India Security Act if discharged personnel violated the unit's secrecy.

⁴⁸¹ Robert E. Crowley, "Dentistry for Native Agents at Detachment 101," [January 1945], F 2131, B 118, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁸² Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See "Security Report for October 1944."

⁴⁸³ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 31 August," [1 October 1944], NARA; Seventy-six C-47 and twelve B-25 loads came from Dinjan for a total of 467,384 pounds and thirty-two C-47 loads out of Myitkyina, for a total of 75,000 pounds.

The total weight of supplies dropped topped more than 1,000,000 pounds, requiring 217 flights of C-47 and 18 of B-25's that flew out of four airfields. The Detachment now had seven C-47's reserved for daily flights out of Dinjan and the USAAF allowed one of these to remain overnight at Myitkyina to allow either another flight in the early morning or late afternoon. To save time, supplies were loaded directly from an airfield at Nazira, but it was only an interim solution while the Detachment moved its main supply depots to Dinjan airfield, where it had secured three warehouses.⁴⁸⁴

By forward basing supplies at Dinjan, the Detachment reduced the time needed to transport materials the 110 miles from Nazira. For additional storage, they secured a warehouse at Chalkhoa (eighteen miles from Dinjan), but had other improvements as well. Dinjan had two officers and fifteen enlisted men assigned, while two officers and three enlisted men worked out of Chalkhoa. Eight two-and-a-half ton trucks transported the supplies, a vast improvement over the previous months. The supply situation was so improved that by December, the Section planned to move its Chalkhoa facilities to Dinjan, which had the additional benefit of reducing Detachment 101's workload. Detachment 202 took over the Chalkhoa warehouse. Thereafter, that OSS element worked with Detachment 505 to transit its own supplies over the Hump.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸⁴ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. The total dropped in November was much the same; 942,418 pounds were dropped from 190 C-47 flights, and 4 of B-25s. See [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report November 1944," [1 December 1944], NARA. See William E. Cummings to Quinn, "Air Drop and Air Activities, November."

⁴⁸⁵ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See R.T. Walsh to Procurement & Supply, "Supply Report for October;" [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report December 1944," [1 January 1945], NARA. See R.T. Walsh to Supply & Procurement, "Supply Report for December 1944."

These moves proved beneficial as by December, the total dropped again exceeded 1,000,000 pounds; 198 C-47 flights and from 6 B-25s dropped 1,132,028 pounds, 90 percent of which originated from Dinjan. An extra C-47 was secured (for a total of eight) with another on call for night drops. B-25s were available from the USAAF when necessary for more dangerous missions. As an aside, operations also heavily taxed the Detachment's Red Ass Squadron. With only 7 operational aircraft, they flew a total of 506 hours of combat flying in which they carried 356 passengers, 30 wounded patients, and 24,495 tons of cargo.⁴⁸⁶ They conducted twice-daily flights between important locations that in addition to other duties, brought to Nazira the paper copies of all communications transmissions handled by the Myitkyina station.⁴⁸⁷

Increased operations also meant that the Finance Section had more duties. The larger number of indigenous personnel elevated the Detachment's operating costs to 620,000 rupees for the month of October. Fortunately, newer recruits were more likely to accept either newer minted silver coinage, or even paper script. This lowered the demand for the hard to obtain pre-war coins. As units pressed deeper into Burma, however, the Section had different currency demands placed upon it. New forms of currency required included Japanese occupation rupee notes, examples of which the Section sent to OSS Washington for counterfeiting, and British gold sovereigns.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁶ [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report December 1944," [1 January 1945], NARA. See Dow S. Grones, "Air Drop and Air Activities, December Report;" Francis J. Reardon to William R. Peers, "Air Operations."

⁴⁸⁷ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 31 August," [1 October 1944], NARA; Flights were conducted between Nazira to Dinjan and Chabua; and Myitkyina to Combat Headquarters at Shaduzup.

⁴⁸⁸ [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report November 1944," [1 December 1944], NARA. See George D. Gorin to Chief Special Funds Branch, "Special Funds Report for November 1944."

There remained, however, the problem of having enough personnel to make sure that everyone was paid. To help ease the burden, beginning in November, the Detachment 101 Special Funds Section no longer had to account for Detachment 505 in Calcutta. Instead, an officer there would handle that OSS Sections' accounting. Additionally, the Section sought to ease field payments by forward basing a finance officer in each of the three operating areas.⁴⁸⁹

The way that the Detachment handled intelligence also changed. After having taken over the Secret Intelligence (SI) role, R&A sought to repackage intelligence reports into products that might be better able to assist end-users. Much as the Branch did with OSS Washington, the Detachment 101 R&A Section compiled lengthy reports, including a ninety-four page study entitled the "Namhkam-Hserwi General Area Intelligence Summary." Other useful products included illustrated booklets on Japanese rank insignia that could assist non-English speakers. R&A personnel enhanced the usefulness of their reports by providing oral briefings to senior personnel when requested, such as to the Office of War Information (OWI), the 10th Air Force, NCAC Headquarters, and several British organizations. The briefings, which lasted from one to six hours, were conducted on average every two to three days.⁴⁹⁰ R&A assisted operations by being the conduit from which to obtain maps (produced or secured by Detachment 303), and helped the MO Section by translating captured Japanese documents. In December, R&A was rewarded for its efforts by receiving a 120 percent

⁴⁸⁹ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See George D. Gorin to Chief Special Funds Branch, "Special Funds Report for October 1944."

⁴⁹⁰ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 31 August," [1 October 1944], NARA. See Charles W. Cox to R&A, "R & A Report for September 1944."

augmentation in personnel. With more personnel, however, came more work. In addition to a greater number of oral briefings, the Section wrote fourteen reports that month, several of which came from material supplied by the Detachment 101 X-2 (counter-intelligence) Section. Map orders also had increased by 200 to 430 percent, depending on type, since October.⁴⁹¹

Other branches not yet considered core areas of the Detachment's work were also improved as the group moved toward 1945. One of these was the MO Section, which had little to show at the end of the Myitkyina Campaign. The chief of MO at the Southeast Asia Command (SEAC, and the OSS element was Detachment 404) wrote to OSS Washington that "MO ended the moment Charlie Fenn was drawn out [in early 1944]."⁴⁹² To help remedy the situation, Peers directed Robert Wentworth, Detachment 101 MO Section chief, to travel to New Delhi (Detachment 303) to confer with his colleagues in the hopes that they could assist with production. Wentworth brought with him ideas and examples of products that might be of use to the Detachment 101 field groups. He was assisted by Captain William Cummings, the Operations Section head in Myitkyina. Due to limited resources and its integration into SEAC, Detachment 303's solution was to make use of British facilities to assist with the translation and printing of MO leaflets. Wentworth made the further step of traveling to Detachment 404 at Kandy, Ceylon, where he arranged for a small printing press to be sent to Detachment 101 for the small-scale production of leaflets. Detachment 303 would handle larger production

⁴⁹¹ [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report December 1944," [1 January 1945], NARA. See Charles W. Cox to Research and Analysis, "R & A Report for December 1944."

⁴⁹² Carlton F. Scofield to T.J. McFadden, 8 October 1944, F 2111, B 117, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

efforts. This effort switched the Detachment's reliance on the OWI to OSS facilities. In fact, in quite a reversal from the previous period, OWI now was pushing to place a representative with Detachment 101, so that the OSS could assist in distributing their products. The coordination with OWI also allowed the MO unit to discover what practices best worked for that unit. Weekly liaison meetings with OWI and NCAC facilitated coordination of propaganda in the area.⁴⁹³

In November, the long-awaited five-man GOLD DUST team arrived in Myitkyina from OSS Washington. GOLD DUST was the first "complete and self contained" MO unit for the Far East and served as a sort of pilot program.⁴⁹⁴ OSS Washington put the team together and put it through "the most intensive schedule" of preparation to make them "the best trained unit MO has ever sent to the field." The preparation included training in MO techniques as well as studying the situation in Burma, and also on Japanese vulnerabilities.⁴⁹⁵ They brought with them printing equipment and within a week of their arrival were conducting black operations. Their first product was a pamphlet directed at Burmese soldiers serving with the Japanese forces.⁴⁹⁶ By December, the group had received two Nisei from OSS Washington to assist in translation. Production delays due to a lack of equipment, however, were preventing the group from getting their products printed. But, unlike what had been the

⁴⁹³ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 31 August," [1 October 1944], NARA. See Robert Wentworth to Herbert W. Little, "Morale Operations Report for September;" George H. Boldt, "Report on MO Operations, Detachment 101," [July 1945], F 4, B 552, E 92, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁹⁴ George H. Boldt, "Report on MO Operations, Detachment 101," [July 1945], F 27, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Also see GOLD DUST folder, F 2053, B 151, E 139, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁹⁵ Herbert S. Little to John G. Coughlin, "MO-101," 7 September 1944, F 1295, B 174, E 108B, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁹⁶ [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report November 1944," [1 December 1944], NARA. See Edward B. Hamm to Herbert S. Little, "[MO] Report for November 1944].

case for prior efforts at Detachment 101, they had extensive support from MO Washington, who supplied ideas for use in products and rumor campaigns.⁴⁹⁷

The Research and Development (R&D) Section was also more firmly established and could devote itself to less-time sensitive projects. In October, their two main projects were to develop a way to launch rifle grenades from an M-3 sub-machinegun, and how to use mortars and bazookas as a means of distributing propaganda leaflets. Other projects were parachute locators, bazooka-launched illuminating flares, message self-destruction devices, and ground illumination devices that would alert encamped field groups that the enemy was nearby. As with most of the other sections at Detachment 101, the R&D Section's main obstacle was in having enough trained personnel, but it also lacked laboratory space and tools.⁴⁹⁸ The Section also continued working on previous projects. One that received the most attention was camouflaging explosive devices, so much so that this group became its own subsection at Detachment 101 R&D. This sub-section worked on using water jugs, bamboo, fake rocks and vegetables made of plaster, and a bamboo raft to conceal explosive charges. It also worked on using common items as message concealment devices. Examples of these items included shoes and belts. Other members of R&D busied themselves with the preparation of smoke devices that would identify Detachment 101 units to aircraft flying

⁴⁹⁷ [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report December 1944," [1 January 1945], NARA. See Edward B. Hamm CO/MO FE, "MO/101 Report for December." Several of the MO weekly idea sheets can be found at F 3, B 552, E 92, RG 226, NARA.

⁴⁹⁸ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See Sam G. Lucy to Research and Development, "R&D Report for October;" [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report November 1944," [1 December 1944], NARA. See Sam G. Lucy to Research and Development, "R&D Report for November."

overhead. This last item in particular was useful as Allied aircraft occasionally mistook Detachment 101 patrols for the enemy.⁴⁹⁹

The X-2 Section found itself on firmer ground than in August 1944. Major Baird V. Helfrich had arrived and completed a survey of the area. He noted that although the British had made some efforts at identifying what were termed black (collaborators) and white (friendly) citizens, they had done little to keep the information current. As a result, Helfrich made this an X-2 undertaking and coordinated with Detachment 101 and British forces in the operating area.⁵⁰⁰ He quickly came to understand that this was not going to be an easy task, and noted, "During early October it became apparent that there was no hope of building 'current' blacklists" because the available information was so dated.⁵⁰¹ His solution was to travel behind the lines to a forward operating base, where the information was more readily available. Thereupon, he devised a form to send to the field groups to log information on white and black citizens, known as "hats," so that upon liberation of a town or area, both the friendly citizens and the collaborators could be separated. "Black hats" included Japanese collaborators or those who had turned over Allied soldiers and airmen to the Japanese. "White hats" were those who had not aided or had resisted the Japanese, while "grey hats" were those whose allegiance to the Allied cause was in doubt. Helfrich tried to get the Burma Civil Affairs Service, the

⁴⁹⁹ [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report December 1944," [1 January 1945], NARA. See Sam G. Lucy to Research and Development, "R&D Report for December;" Drawings of camouflaged explosive devices can be found in T.B. Pitman to Watts Hill, "Camouflage Suggestions," 11 December 1944, F 601, B 54, E 134, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁰⁰ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 31 August," [1 October 1944], NARA. See Baird V. Helfrich, "Report on X-2-September."

⁵⁰¹ Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See Baird V. Helfrich, "October Report X-2."

Burma Intelligence Corps, and the Burma Police to help apprehend the black hats. But, due to a lack of manpower, funds, transport, and supplies, these organizations had no means of securing collaborators or making use of the population that had remained friendly toward the Allies. This resulted in little background checking into the indigenous personnel employed by the Allies. Upon bringing this up to NCAC, Colonel Joseph Stilwell, Jr., head of the G-2 section, appointed Helfrich to cooperate with the Counter-Intelligence Corps to supervise the activation and coordination of combat interrogation teams (CITs).⁵⁰²

These teams worked to sort out and detain black hats until authorities of the Burma government took responsibility for them. In the past, and many times even with the CITs, suspected black hats would be taken by Kachins—with or without the knowledge of the OSS—and disposed of before a trial could be held. The first of these five to seven-man CITs was activated at the end of October. By November, two more CITs were operating with plans to acquire additional personnel to fill out three more teams. Additional personnel came from the MO Section, as well as OWI. Operations were quickly underway, and in November, the CITs interrogated 220 suspects and apprehended 39.⁵⁰³ By December, the CITs were able to provide the Detachment 101 R&A Section with between fifty and sixty pounds of captured Japanese and Burmese

⁵⁰² Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering Period 30 September," [1 November 1944], NARA. See Baird V. Helfrich, "October Report X-2;" Examples of interrogations and trial reports of black hats can be found at F 510, B 70, E 190, RG 226, NARA; A memorandum describing the form, utility and structure of a CIT can be found at F 1499, B 192, E 108B, RG 226, NARA; The CIT weekly reports can be found at F 509, B 70, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁰³ [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report November 1944," [1 December 1944], NARA. See Baird V. Helfrich to James Murphy, "X-2 Report for November;" A letter from the wife of a suspected bad hat that was disposed of can be found at Ma Saw Hman to W.F.D. Gebhart, 27 November 1944, F 1366, B 181, E 108B, RG 226, NARA.

documents. The teams uncovered, for the first time in NCAC, the existence of the Burmese Anti-Fascist League (AFL), a widespread underground organization based in Rangoon that was opposed to the Japanese occupation. These teams also uncovered that the British SEAC had been working with the AFL for over a year. Combat Interrogation Team #3 was able to exploit the Allied liberation of Bhamo by searching the city for intelligence just two days after it fell (the delay was because of enemy mines had to be cleared). The CIT was able to procure six Japanese knapsacks full of enemy documents that they sent to the NCAC G-2 section.⁵⁰⁴ Additional CIT duties included reporting on the local situation, as well as collecting weapons back from the indigenous population.

A New Organization ... of Sorts

Supplying intelligence remained a core function of Detachment 101 and by September, thirty-five separate organizations relied upon Detachment 101 intelligence reports.⁵⁰⁵ In November, Major Chester R. Chartrand, who had been the liaison to NCAC during the Myitkyina campaign, in effect reconstituted the SI Section when he returned to Nazira. Much like he had been done before R&A had taken over the role of handling actionable intelligence, Chartrand prepared weekly intelligence reports, handled requests for information, forwarded items of interest to the field groups, and briefed NCAC daily. This was done with the help of a large photomontage of the operating area, upon which was placed intelligence received from the field groups, such as the locations of enemy units. The NCAC G-3 used this intelligence to task the

⁵⁰⁴ [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report December 1944," [1 January 1945], NARA. See Charles W. Cox to Research and Analysis, "R & A Report for December 1944;" Baird V. Helfrich to James Murphy, "X-2 Report for December 1944."

⁵⁰⁵ William R. Peers, "Operating Plans for Detachment 101," September 1944, F 2152, B 119, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

USAAF with their daily targets.⁵⁰⁶ Chartrand was able to report in December that eighty-five percent of the items in the U.S. Army weekly G-2 summaries originated from Detachment 101 intelligence, as did most of the bombing targets for the 10th USAAF.⁵⁰⁷

Conclusion

Although assisting with the fall of Myitkyina was the Detachment's focus in 1944, its actions after were demanding. Not only did the unit have to work in a rapidly changing operating environment, but it also had to rebuild its sections to support the north Burma offensive in such a way that they could contribute to the campaign as efficiently as possible. At the same time, the unit's headquarters sections had to become mobile to best support the operating elements. The Detachment's work in the Myitkyina Campaign had given the unit visibility in theater and from OSS Washington. This had translated into more resources, such as the GOLD DUST team. The unit's flexibility had allowed it to move its base of operations, build on its previous organization, incorporate new assets, and still be able to support a high operational tempo and recruit a larger pool of indigenous troops. The next chapter will focus on how the unit adapted as it supported the NCAC drive for Lashio. It was in this time that the unit transitioned from being a guerrilla organization to almost becoming the equivalent of a U.S. Army division in terms of personnel and impact.

⁵⁰⁶ [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report November 1944," [1 December 1944], NARA. See Chester R. Chartrand to Chief, SI Branch, "SI Report for November."

⁵⁰⁷ [Peers to Donovan], "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report December 1944," [1 January 1945], NARA. See Chester R. Chartrand to Chief, SI Branch, "SI Monthly Report Nov. 25 to Dec. 25, 1944."

CHAPTER X

THE LAST OSS BRANCHES ARRIVE: JANUARY-MARCH 1945

Although the Burma Campaign was nearly at a close, Detachment 101 continued to change its force structure, reinforce its sections, and strove to become more efficient. Those sections with an immediate operational utility, such as the Air Drop Section and the Red Ass Squadron, continued to serve well and became even more indispensable to the Detachment's operations. Others, such as the X-2 and R&D Sections, could not offer the direct support needed to support the Detachment's increasing operational focus. Conversely, the MO Section finally proved to be effective. The operations of this Section were an indication that even at this late stage, a properly led and supported element could—even if had gotten off to a poor start—make an impact. In particular, this period is when the OSS Operational Group (OG) Branch first made its appearance at Detachment 101. At this late stage, this OSS element could not bring with it a mission unique enough to merit the effort required to include it as a separate section within the Detachment. This chapter will discuss the organizational changes of the Detachment through March 1945.

Strategically, the war in north Burma continued to be a hard-fought campaign by a variety of British (and Empire), Chinese, and American forces, that remained on a relative shoestring. General Sultan's multinational force continued to press the Japanese and forced them further south. With the fall of Bhamo, NCAC's goal was now to open

the route of the former Ledo Road to China, now renamed the Stilwell Road. At the start of 1945, some 19,500 Japanese troops lay in the 50 miles of territory that separated NCAC forces from Allied forces in China.⁵⁰⁸ NCAC's force had shrunk, when General Wedemeyer recalled two of its Chinese divisions in December 1944, back to China. Nevertheless, by the end of January, NCAC had the land route to China clear of the Japanese. The first Allied convoys arrived in Kunming in early February.

Now, all that NCAC had left to accomplish was to make sure that the route of the Stilwell Road was secure. Nearby Japanese were still enough of a threat that they had to be eliminated or pushed south. In addition, the threat of having intact Japanese formations in the rear of the advancing British 14th Army necessitated that NCAC clear these forces from the area. General Sultan, the NCAC commander, set his sights on taking Lashio. Capture of this town, on the route of the old Burma Road, would cut the lines of supply to any Japanese forces remaining north of the area. Their inevitable retreat would create a large buffer of liberated territory that would secure convoys going to China from being harassed by the enemy. The MARS Task Force and two Chinese divisions were the forces that Sultan had available to secure the area. Although the Japanese bitterly resisted, they could no longer hold onto the area. Chinese forces secured Lashio on 6-7 March while the MARS Task Force harassed Japanese forces that were trying to retreat in the wake of the Chinese advance. After taking Lashio, the Chinese force drove a further thirty miles south to take Hsipaw. Meanwhile, on the western portion of NCAC's AOR, the British 36th and Chinese 50th Divisions reached east of Mandalay to

⁵⁰⁸ Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *United States Army in World War II: China-Burma-India Theater: Time Runs Out in the CBI*. (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1999), 123.

link up with the British 14th Army. They had also advanced close to Hsipaw. This meant that there no longer remained a gap between the forces of NCAC or the 14th Army. With its mission for NCAC completed, the 36th Division transferred back to the 14th Army's command on 1 April.

The 14th Army was likewise making huge strides in central Burma. An armored column broke out and in a blitzkrieg-like move, penetrated deep within the enemy lines in early March to take Meiktila. This move, the first use of an air-ground-armor combination by the British, surprised the Japanese. They only had some 4,000 defenders to meet a division of regular infantry, an armor brigade, as well as an additional air-lifted brigade. Once the 14th Army took the town, the Japanese had to react because Meiktila's capture cut off the escape route for the bulk of their force in central Burma. Their savage but uncoordinated counter-attacks could not break the Allied hold on the town. The battle for Meiktila was decided in the Allies' favor by the end of March, and with it, the Japanese also lost the crucial battle for central Burma. Further north, other 14th Army forces invested the key city of Mandalay. Unwisely, the Japanese held there. By the time they ordered the retreat, their forces were in confusion. With both these critical areas under Allied occupation, the Japanese no longer could mount an effective defense of lower Burma. The way was open for the 14th Army to drive towards Rangoon.

The Japanese trying to hold Rangoon and southern Burma faced another threat as well. The XV Indian Corps was pressing into the Arakan region along the coast, and, compared to the fighting that had occurred in the region from 1942, made rapid progress. In January, the major town of Akyab fell. By March, the British forces had conducted

an amphibious assault on Ramree Island. They soon secured it for use as a base from which to launch attacks against the mainland.

Through all these Allied drives, Detachment 101 continued to be a crucial element, particularly to NCAC. Peers reported in January that the Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC) relied on the OSS because “practically all strategic and tactical operations are based on our intelligence reports” and that the USAAF derived 80 percent of its targets from Detachment 101 supplied intelligence. In the field, Detachment 101 units had expanded their operations to the south and east and were providing intelligence collection, guides, and forces that protected the flanks of conventional Allied units from the Chinese border to the Chindwin River. For NCAC, this included assisting the American MARS Task Force and the Chinese 30th and 38th Divisions in the eastern part of Burma, and the British 36th and Chinese 50th Divisions in the west. Detachment 101 groups also provided intelligence that supported the 14th Army’s drive. Additional agent groups penetrated the southern Shan States.

Still, the focus of the Detachment at this late stage was on combat operations. Because the Allied advance again placed the Detachment farther south than it had ever operated, many Kachins wanted to go home. Area #1 was particularly hard hit in this respect. Six of its seven battalions disbanded and were transported back to their home areas.⁵⁰⁹ The OSS units consolidated. By encouraging enough seasoned guerrillas to stay, and by recruiting a new mix of Shans, Chins, and even Burmese, the Detachment salvaged four battalions. These combat forces operated in the path of the Allied

⁵⁰⁹ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, “Mission Report, Detachment 101, March 1945,” 25 March 1945, F 002145, B 76, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

advance, and greatly disrupted Japanese efforts to counter the main Allied forces. The Japanese recognized the effectiveness of Detachment 101's guerrillas when they issued orders telling all rear echelon troops that they should consider themselves front line soldiers due to the presence of Allied airborne units—when in fact the only units there belonged to the OSS. Peers estimated in January that with less than 1 percent of the Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC) total strength, Detachment 101 had inflicted 29 percent of the reported casualties.⁵¹⁰

Operations in north Burma were not the group's only focus. In February, the unit took responsibility for OSS operations along Burma's Arakan coast and renamed the former Detachment 404-controlled Operation BITTERSWEET as the Detachment 101 Arakan Field Unit (AFU). Like the effort in the Shan States, Detachment 101 AFU involved a combined operations campaign with organic land and air elements. The Arakan had a maritime component as well. Such was the Detachment's importance that early in the year, it had two high-level visits. Donovan visited in January, as did General Sultan. For the personnel of the Detachment, this period represented a rapidly changing strategic picture. Despite the Allied advance, the OSS still had much to accomplish in Burma, and Detachment 101 still had to evolve to increase its effectiveness.⁵¹¹

⁵¹⁰ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Mission Report, Detachment 101," 28 January 1945, F 20, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵¹¹ Peers to Donovan, "Mission Report, Detachment 101," 28 January 1945, NARA; Charles W. Cox to Research and Analysis, "R & A Report for January 1945," [1 February], F 20, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA; [William R. Peers to William J. Donovan], "Monthly Report February," [1 March 1945], F 21, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA. See Dow S. Grones to Carl O. Hoffman, "SO Operations, February 1945;" John I. Howell to Chief, Secretariat, Office of Strategic Services, "Report on Detachment 101's contribution to the Lashio campaign," 22 March 1945, F 22, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

Existing Force Structure

As happened with the fall of Myitkyina, the rapid pace of the Allied advance once again left Detachment 101 headquarters far behind Allied lines. This forced the group to once again advance its forward headquarters elements. This time the move was to Bhamo, and between 31 January and 1 February, the entire Myitkyina headquarters—including Peers—moved there.⁵¹² The new headquarters was called Detachment 101 BA. To Peers, the move put “all our activities within a forty minute flight to our two Field Area Headquarters.”⁵¹³ The unit even closed the jungle school at Taro in February and moved it to Nazira as it was no longer practical to keep it at its previous location.

The Operations Section had to account for an increasing number of indigenous recruits. By January, two additional battalions were raised in Area #1, leading to a total approximate strength of 5500 indigenous soldiers. But the drive south took some troops away from their home areas, and in the same month some 350 Kachins received discharges in Area #2 and went home.⁵¹⁴

The increased number of discharges meant that the Detachment officers had to have reserves of funds on hand. Prompt payment helped ensure that serving troops remained with their units, or if they did not, that the former troops received honorariums for good service. Both helped maintain good morale. The Finance Section provided the Air Drop Section at Dinjan with a large ready reserve of several different forms of cash, both paper and coin silver. Costs for operations alone in January amounted to some

⁵¹² Peers to Donovan, “Mission Report, Detachment 101,” 28 January 1945, NARA.

⁵¹³ [Peers to Donovan], “Monthly Report February,” [1 March 1945], NARA. See William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, “Mission Report for Detachment 101 for February 1945.”

⁵¹⁴ Peers to Donovan, “Mission Report, Detachment 101,” 28 January 1945, NARA.

470,000 rupees, while in March, the funds owed to the guerrillas disbanding in Area #1 contributed to a monthly operating cost of 764,074 rupees.⁵¹⁵ Paying off these troops was the largest single expense handled by the Finance Section during its existence.⁵¹⁶

The high operational tempo caused an increasing reliance upon the Detachment's Red Ass Squadron. This in turn caused them to take out of service a number of liaison aircraft for maintenance. In January, the lack of servicing facilities left the Detachment with four L-1s and one L-5. The stress placed on the L-1s was particularly severe. The Squadron commander, Francis J. Reardon described some of the planes as having "a total of 7000 hours are on record as far as we can ascertain. That is far above what is termed war weary aircraft ... If no aircraft are forthcoming then it is only a matter of time before our planes become useless." The Section was hoping to secure twelve additional light aircraft as replacements and several more mechanics to keep the ones they already had in service. Despite the problems, in January, the Red Ass Squadron managed to transport 30,450 pounds of supplies to the forward groups, 476 passengers, and 146 wounded, of which 70 were from the 475th Infantry Regiment. These actions required over 421 hours of combat flying. For these actions, the personnel of the squadron received a commendation from Brigadier General John P. Willey, the commanding officer of the MARS Task Force.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁵ George D. Gorin to Chief Special Funds Branch, "Special Funds Report for January 1945," 27 January 1945, F 20, B 34, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁵¹⁶ George D. Gorin to William R. Peers, "Special Funds Report, March 1945," 23 March 1945, F 23, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA; [George D. Gorin], "History of Special Funds Branch Headquarters Detachment 101," [July 1945], F 528, B 71, E 199, RG 226, NARA.

⁵¹⁷ Francis J. Reardon to William R. Peers, "Monthly Report on Air Operations," 27 January 1945, F 20, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA; John P. Willey to William R. Peers, "Commendation," 11 January 1945, F 20, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

In February, the squadron's situation improved. It moved to a new airfield at Bhamo and received new aircraft from Major General George E. Stratemeyer, commander of Army Air Forces in the China Theater. The Bhamo airfield had seven aircraft, there were two aircraft at Nazira, two L-1's undergoing maintenance, one airplane due to arrive from India, and an unserviceable Spitfire. The Section was getting enough replacement pilots that reliance upon the USAAF liaison squadrons ceased. By the end of February, the squadron flew nearly 413 combat hours, carried 508 passengers, evacuated 43 casualties and three prisoners, and flew 31,275 pounds of cargo.⁵¹⁸

March was a particularly busy month for the Red Ass Squadron as they assisted in the drive to take Lashio. The planes flew in ammunition and equipment, carried out captured documents and wounded personnel, and flew Joost to his various battalion headquarters. This ability was fortunate because in one case, it allowed Joost to warn two battalions that were out of radio communication that a Chinese unit would soon shell the area they were in with 155mm guns. The battalions withdrew ahead of time, saving them numerous and unnecessary casualties. In the course of conducting these and other operations, the Section reached another all-time high by flying 519 combat hours, carrying 573 passengers, evacuating 38 wounded and carrying 40,845 pounds of cargo. Joost, commanding officer of Area #1, said that the light aircraft were indispensable to his actions.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁸ [Peers to Donovan], "Monthly Report February," [1 March 1945], NARA. See Francis J. Reardon, "Monthly Air Operations Report."

⁵¹⁹ Francis J. Reardon to William R. Peers, Air Operations Monthly Report, March 1945," 24 March 1945, F 23, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

The Air Drop Section likewise operated at full capacity. The total tonnage dropped in January again exceeded a million pounds, with 1,009,674 pounds dropped out of 200 C-47s, three B-25s, and a solitary B-24. At the same time, the planes transported 334 personnel and parachuted 47 into the field. Nineteen drops were conducted at night to infiltrate teams or agents under the cover of darkness. During these missions, Detachment 101 assumed the responsibility of navigating the aircraft to the selected location and supplied the personnel to kick the cargo out of the airplane. The OSS assumed operational control of the assigned aircrews from the time the airplane took off until it had landed. Prior to taking off, the crews—all selected from volunteers based on their experience and skill—were given a security brief and told never to reveal the location, cargos, or personnel dropped. These flights originated from Myitkyina and accounted for a quarter of the total tonnage dropped to Detachment 101 groups that month.⁵²⁰

February provided no let up with 168 personnel transported, 21 parachuted, and 1,482,989 pounds of supplies dropped to the field groups from 261 C-47s, one B-25, five B-24s, and two C-45s.⁵²¹ With the increase in dropping supplies to the forward groups, Detachment 101 also had to improve upon its logistics facilities. In January, the group moved from the three warehouses that it had at Dinjan to six of better construction that were co-located together so that they could be more isolated. Of these warehouses, the Supply Section used one for packing chutes and containers, two for arms and

⁵²⁰ Dow S. Grones to Quinn, "Air Drop and Air Activities, January Report," 30 January 1945, F 20, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵²¹ [Peers to Donovan], "Monthly Report February," [1 March 1945], NARA. See Dow S. Grones to Quinn, "Air Drop and Air Activities, February Report."

ammunition, and the rest for other supplies. This arrangement allowed the Detachment to have extra stocks of material on hand. To help move the supplies they now had ten two-and-a-half ton trucks, five personnel at Dinjan and two at Nazira.⁵²² By March, the number of warehouses available to the Detachment at Dinjan increased to sixteen. This left the group with a reserve of 2,225,925 pounds of rations and 1,000,000 pounds of ordnance and quartermaster supplies. This was about a two month reserve, as in March, the total amount dropped into the field was 1,476,942 pounds and 56 personnel parachuted. The Detachment had ten dedicated C-47s at this time, with other specialized aircraft on call when needed. The drops in March required 249 C-47 sorties, 7 B-24s, and 9 B-25s. Most drops originated from Dinjan.⁵²³

Like many other elements, in January the Communications Section was preparing to move from Myitkyina to Bhamo, where it had already constructed a series of four sixty-three foot steel towers arranged in a square. All that was necessary for their use was to drive a transmitter truck underneath them, hook it up, and transmit. Meanwhile, the communications sub-section at Nazira handled an average of 4,640 letter-code groups per day. Field sections were equally busy, with Area #1 handling a daily average of 4,390 groups and Area #2, 3,605 groups. The Cryptographic subsection was particularly hard hit. Myitkyina handled 3,699 messages composed of 231,687 groups; Nazira had 1,329 messages with 62,675 groups, Area #1 headquarters handled

⁵²² R.T. Walsh to Supply and Procurement, "Supply Report for January 1945," [1 February 1945], F 20, B 34, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁵²³ R.T. Walsh to William R. Peers, "Supply and Air Drop Monthly Report," 24 March 1945, F 23, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA; D.V. Cavanaugh to William R. Peers, "Operational Summary, Air Drop Monthly Report, March 1945," 25 March 1945, F 23, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA. A breakdown of the pounds dropped per group can be found at Wesley S. Bogdan to William R. Peers, "Air Drop Monthly Report, March 1945," 24 March 1944, F 23, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

1,398 messages and 89,579 groups, and Area #2 headquarters dealt with 1,123 messages and 58,467 groups.

Despite the increased operational responsibilities, however, the supply situation for the Communication Section greatly improved and became, as the Section chief reported, “the best it has ever been.” Quantities of the improved OSS-supplied SSR-1H receiver arrived, making it possible for Nazira to stop the production of field radios, thereby removing their “main headache.” The wide distribution of one-time pads, a cryptographic device that was very secure as the key remained at base while the code was used once and thrown away, saved time on the sending and deciphering of messages.⁵²⁴ A trained cryptographer using a one-time pad could encode or decode a short message faster than using an electric code machine, and almost as fast as a code machine on a longer message.⁵²⁵ The level of traffic from the field only increased in February. Area #1 sent 2,053 messages composed of 114,567 groups, while Area #2 sent 1,344 composed of 66,286.⁵²⁶ The pace increased again on 9 March, when Bhamo took over the communications duties of Area #1 when that organization disbanded six of its seven battalions.

On 4 January, the Pigeon Section established a loft in Bhamo in preparation for the time when other Detachment 101 elements would move there from Myitkyina. Pigeons were dropped with several agents and supplied to the pilots of the Red Ass

⁵²⁴ Claude V. Wadsworth to Communications Branch, “Communication Report for July,” 26 January 1945, F 20, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Prior to January 1945, the cryptographic section’s workload had not been broken down in the monthly reports.

⁵²⁵ John W. Brunner, *OSS Weapons, Second Edition* (Williamstown, NJ: Phillips, 2005), 243.

⁵²⁶ [Peers to Donovan], “Monthly Report February,” [1 March 1945], NARA. See Claude V. Wadsworth to Communications Branch, “Communications Report for February, 1945.”

Squadron in case their planes went down, and they were left with no other method of contacting base. On 10 January, the Section scored a success when several birds returned from an agent who stated that he could not find his dropped radio or food, was starving, and that the area was free of Japanese. This opened the way to send the eighteen-man JACKO combat team on 19 January.⁵²⁷ The importance of pigeons to the Detachment rose as the operational level increased. When a radio was down, the pigeons could deliver a message in a little more than a half hour what would take a human messenger to cover in three to four days.⁵²⁸

Increased operations and larger numbers of indigenous personnel also meant that the Medical Section had to expand in order to meet the potential rise in casualties. The first step was to make arrangements with the 200-bed 44th Field Hospital at Myitkyina, which was responsible for the care of Chinese and indigenous troops. The 44th agreed to set aside a separate ward to take care of less-critically sick or wounded Detachment 101 personnel whose care did not require moving them to Nazira. This represented a vast improvement. It reduced the number of casualties coming back to Nazira, and permitted treating of those who did not normally receive medical care because of the minor nature of their condition and the distance necessary to transport them. To help expedite the transfer of indigenous troops to the hospital, the Medical Section received the help of the 821st Air Evacuation Squadron, which assisted the Red Ass Squadron.⁵²⁹ With the

⁵²⁷ M.Y. Lederman to Carl O. Hoffman, "Activities of the Pigeon Section," 28 January 1945, F 20, B 34, E 154, RG 226, NARA; Grones to Hoffman, "SO Operations, January Report," 25 January 1945, NARA.

⁵²⁸ [Peers to Donovan], "Monthly Report February," [1 March 1945], NARA. See M.Y. Lederman to Carl O. Hoffman, "Activities of the Pigeon Section."

⁵²⁹ James C. Luce to Chief of Medical Services, OSS, Washington D.C., "Medical Services Report for January, 1945," [1 February 1945], F 20, B 34, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

inclusion of Arakan operations into the scope of Detachment 101, the Medical Section also arranged to use the 142nd General Hospital in Calcutta, India, for the care of wounded OSS and indigenous troops on that front.⁵³⁰

The hospital at Nazira nonetheless remained busy. In January, there were sixty-five admissions, twelve surgical procedures; with the laboratory, X-ray facility, dispensary, and dental clinic being correspondingly active. Field medical personnel handled at least 346 surgical cases and cared for at least 6,500 instances of illness. The majority of the cases treated, whether among indigenous troops or the local population, were for malaria. These numbers do not tell the full story of the workload of the medical personnel assigned to the field. Since medical personnel were scarce, the Detachment only had the bare minimum to make sure that all groups were covered. This meant that in troop strength alone, medical personnel assigned to Area #2 had to care for an average of 150 men, while those in Area #2 cared for 750 men. This does not count treating the local population.

Such heavy workloads and a lack of replacements meant that medical personnel were becoming greatly fatigued and increasingly recognized as requiring rest.⁵³¹ The remaining medical personnel from former Area #1 who had stayed in the field were having a “strenuous time keeping up with the marked increase in work” during March.

⁵³⁰ Douglas J. King, “Medical Services Monthly Report March, 1945,” [1 April 1945], F 23, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵³¹ Luce to Chief of Medical Services, OSS, Washington D.C., “Medical Services Report for January, 1945,” [1 February 1945], NARA; These cases were not a full accounting for the field groups, but represent an estimate of the cases treated.

⁵³² Due to an increased combat role for the guerrilla battalions, they dealt with seventeen severe battle wounds, one of which was fatal. Only six out of the fourteen field groups reported their medical load. However, this still amounted to 281 surgeries, and treating 1,192 instances of disease. The Section was disturbed to find that much of this disease was due to soldiers not using mosquito nets and to poor sanitation, particularly in the preparation of food.⁵³³

On the intelligence side of the operational spectrum, the R&A Section received new personnel and increased their liaison contacts with other organizations. Relatively few of their personnel, however, had been supplied as true R&A personnel from Washington (in February, it was three out of eighteen). Rather, Detachment 101 assigned them to the Section in an ad hoc fashion, but this did not greatly affect the group's performance. By January, the Section was in communication with twenty separate organizations, among them several in NCAC, the USAAF, the Counter-Intelligence Corps (CIC), The Office of War Information (OWI), and American, Chinese, British, and Indian combat units. These liaison contacts increased the number of required oral briefings to a point that the Section chief reported that it was "impossible to keep a record for the month." In January alone, the Section wrote thirteen intelligence reports, many of which concerned the location and status of roads

⁵³² Robert B.C. Franklin to Noah B. Levin, "'Area 1 Medical Report, 1 February to 11 March 1945,'" 25 April 1945, F 24, B 25, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵³³ [Peers to Donovan], "Monthly Report February," [1 March 1945], NARA. See James C. Luce to Chief of Medical Services, OSS, Washington, D.C., "'Medical Services Report for February, 1945,'" Lyman D. Burtch, "Malaria Control."

and trails in enemy-controlled areas, and filled numerous requests for map and aerial reconnaissance photographs.⁵³⁴

In February, an arrangement with the SI Section clarified R&A's duties. Thereafter, R&A was responsible for processing "incoming intelligence and produces intelligence through interrogation, translation of documents, photo interpretation, and research."⁵³⁵ The Section compiled the reports into finished products that the SI Section distributed. Much of the R&A material focused on intelligence of immediate tactical use. Even longer-range studies at this point concerned NCAC requirements, such as the inadequacies of the Japanese logistic system.⁵³⁶ The R&A Section also obtained the services of one of the Air Drop kickers to take aerial photography when requested, which was then turned over to Lieutenant Alger Ellis, the newly-arrived photo-interpreter, Lieutenant Alger Ellis.⁵³⁷ A further utility for the R&A Section was operational support. The Section defined no-bomb areas for the USAAF. Once it received notification that a Detachment 101 unit was in a certain location, the Section plotted the information and sent it to the A-2 officer. The Section also established a display room to exhibit captured enemy material.⁵³⁸

The small SI Section was anticipating becoming a larger entity in Detachment 101's force structure. Peers recognized that the Section was woefully short of personnel

⁵³⁴ Cox to Research and Analysis, "R & A Report for January 1945," [1 February], NARA.

⁵³⁵ Charles W. Cox to Research and Analysis, "R & A Report for February 1945," [1 March 1945], F 21, B 34, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁵³⁶ G.H. Owen, "DET 101 R&A Serial Report #39," 1 March 1945, F 1329, B 79, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁵³⁷ [Peers to Donovan], "Monthly Report February," [1 March 1945], NARA. See Charles W. Cox to Research and Analysis, "R & A Report for February 1945."

⁵³⁸ Charles W. Cox to William R. Peers, "R & A Monthly Report, March 1945," 20 March 1945, F 23, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

and wrote to Donovan in January that although the unit furnished about 90 percent of the intelligence used by the USAAF and 85 percent of that used by NCAC, it had “only one SI man from Washington during the entire period.”⁵³⁹ The lack of personnel did not go unnoticed in the field. The Arakan section chief complained, “not one item was transmitted to this Hqs between 21 February and 10 March except in the form of weekly summaries which arrive by pouch so late that most of the information has lost its value.”⁵⁴⁰ By March, minor personnel additions were helping SI. They helped to sort through the more than 500 intelligence reports that it disseminated to various end-users, as well as assist in a new project of preparing a short history of Detachment 101.⁵⁴¹ This final project would become the focus of the Section after March, when the Section was mainly in place merely to summarize operational results and to interview personnel returning from the field. Section head Chester Chartrand received assistance in this endeavor from a newly created element called the Reports Section. The single reports officer that composed the Section compiled lists of accomplishments for OSS Washington’s benefit. Even in the limited time that he was at Detachment 101, the reports officer became frustrated with OSS Washington’s lack of direction. When the Detachment disbanded in July, he wrote in his final report, “Since I have been here, I

⁵³⁹ [Peers to Donovan], “Monthly Report February,” [1 March 1945], NARA. See Peers to Donovan, “Mission Report for Detachment 101 for February 1945.”

⁵⁴⁰ E.L Taylor to John G. Coughlin, “Monthly Report of SI Branch,” 13 March 1945, F 2753, B 161, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁴¹ Chester R. Chartrand to William R. Peers, “SI Monthly Report, March 1945,” 24 March 1945, F 23, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

have received no word from Washington as to whether the reports were fulfilling requirements or any criticisms that might help to improve them.”⁵⁴²

Intelligence dissemination improved in February when a direct teletype line was laid to the 10th Air Force A-2. This enabled Detachment 101 to pass “‘hot’ information to them within minutes” upon receipt, and, increased the actionability of Detachment 101-supplied intelligence.⁵⁴³ A Detachment 101 officer was also sent to the 1st Tank Provisional Group, and further liaison was established in March with the British 14th Army, the 19th Indian Division, and the 62nd Brigade.⁵⁴⁴

The operations of X-2 finally paid operational dividends. In January, the Section selected five members of the Burmese Anti-Fascist League (AFL), the existence of which had been uncovered in December, for insertion as agents into south central Burma. The group’s work continued on creating black lists, and in January, the X-2 Section busied itself with a 3,000-name list covering all of north and central Burma. The X-2 Section also moved to Bhamo. Although they had an office located with the Detachment 101 headquarters Section, the secrecy of their work necessitated that the main element be located in a separate area. This separation from the rest of Detachment 101 underscores the inability of the Section to integrate itself into the Detachment.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴² John I. Howell to William R. Peers, “Reports Section Final Monthly Report, June-July 1945,” 6 July 1945, F 1, B 33, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁴³ [Peers to Donovan], “Monthly Report February,” [1 March 1945], NARA. See Peers to Donovan, “Mission Report for Detachment 101 for February 1945;” Hugh R. Conklin to Russell Livermore, “OG Report, February 1945,”

⁵⁴⁴ Peers to Donovan, “Mission Report, Detachment 101, March 1945,” 25 March 1945, NARA; Chartrand to Peers, “SI Monthly Report, March 1945,” 24 March 1945, NARA.

⁵⁴⁵ Baird V. Helfrich to James Murphy, “January Report,” 1 February 1944, F 20, B 34, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

The Section was operating with considerable difficulty in its relations with the CIC. Though amicable on the outside, there was a power struggle between the two entities in large part because two top officers in each did not get along. Peers' influence had an effect and an X-2 observer related that it was "most gratifying to observe that Colonel Stilwell (NCAC G-2) appears to be backing Colonel Peers and Major Helfrich in placing the responsibility for running the CIT teams [with] X-2."⁵⁴⁶ On 17 February X-2 scored a victory when during a meeting with CIC it established firm control over the loosely organized Counter Intelligence Teams (CITs). This was necessary because the CIC was operating under the understanding that the CITs were under their control. As such, on 10 February, CIC personnel had removed all intelligence files from the CIT headquarters. The CIC stance was that while "Detachment 101 had admittedly furnished four officers, eleven interpreters, sixty native police with rifles, uniforms, equipment and munitions, critical clothing; equipment and supply needs for the teams; radio communications in all isolated areas; plane transport on any essential occasion," that it was still their function and "CIC could and would be glad to carry on alone." Thereafter, the CIC personnel assigned to the CITs were supposed to report through and take direction from X-2. In turn, X-2 was to report directly to Colonel Stilwell. With renewed vigor, the Section also established a CIT with the British 14th Army as it moved to liberate Mandalay.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁶ FB/001 to DH/001 and DH/005, 23 January 1945, F 1362, B 181, E 108B, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁴⁷ [Peers to Donovan], "Monthly Report February," [1 March 1945], NARA. See Baird V. Helfrich to James Murphy, "February Report;" Helfrich to William R. Peers, 15 February 1945. Both the CIC head and X-2 head that did not get along were removed from the CIT program.

Yet, not all felt that the X-2 mission was entirely worthwhile. One member wrote, “To put it bluntly, I do not feel that I have contributed anything of any value since I arrived at 101.” His concern was mainly over the limited nature of X-2 work. The CITs were entirely subservient to the Operations Section, and all recruitment oriented toward that purpose. “The 101 show is a unified one and everything is controlled by Operations ... in actuality all X-2 can do is advise ... the agents we have recruited ... primarily to gather combat intelligence or to further guerrilla [sic] fighting ... and no one can complain of this since that is the basis for 101’s existence.” Part of the reason for the lack of being able to accomplish more intelligence gathering was because of the tentative nature that the OSS had in regards to the AFL. The British were extremely wary of the possibility of having the Americans aid any political groups in Burma. As a result, X-2 limited their interactions with the AFL to one of a purely military nature against the Japanese occupation.⁵⁴⁸

Although it was not as tied into operation as other section were, the R&D Section furthered their work with camouflage items. The first item for January was a device called War Paint, which was a kit for individual soldiers to camouflage their faces so that they could better blend in with the foliage, or to darken skin so that one could pass as a local inhabitant. These kits were also being considered as an escape and evasion tool for downed Allied airmen.⁵⁴⁹ Still, the Section was difficult for Detachment 101 to evaluate. Peers wrote Donovan, “Sometimes it appears questionable whether or not the

⁵⁴⁸ Jim Wilcox to “Mac,” 1 March 1945, F 1445, B 191, E 108B, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁴⁹ San G. Lucy, “R&D Report January 1945,” 16 February 1945, F 20 B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Newton J. Jones to Ray Kellogg and Sam Lucy, “Summary of Progress on Personal Camouflage Assignment in CB&I,” [February 1944], F 20 B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA; More on War Paint can be found in F 2260, B 1298, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

expenditure of personnel and equipment is truly justified ... [they] are all industrious and hard workers ... the only point in question is whether or not there is actually a field of employment for them here.”⁵⁵⁰

Like the X-2 and R&D Section, the MO Section was trying to contribute to Detachment’s 101 operations. Unlike them, however, it had an edge in the well-prepared GOLD DUST team that had arrived in November 1944. In January, the Section reorganized. Its head was thereafter responsible for field operations and intelligence collection, and accordingly, based himself forward. The Section deputy, emplaced at Nazira, was in charge of administration, editing, and the production of propaganda products. The Section also created a five-person panel, with representatives from MO, Operations, SI, R&A, and Detachment 101 headquarters, to evaluate its propaganda products. Additionally, daily meetings of MO personnel also contributed to the Section working more effectively. With these efforts, the GOLD DUST team rapidly integrated itself into Detachment 101. This was a welcome development because throughout most of 1944 the Section had been unorganized and had contributed little to Detachment 101’s mission.⁵⁵¹ By February, the MO Branch at OSS Washington had ensured that the MO Section received enough equipment, personnel, and supplies that it was self-sufficient.

On 17 February, the first true evidence of MO’s operational utility became evident. By cooperating with the SI Section, an agent wearing a Burma Defense Army

⁵⁵⁰ Peers to Donovan, “Mission Report, Detachment 101, March 1945,” 25 March 1945, NARA; Thomas H. Daugherty to William R. Peers, “R&D Monthly Report, March 1945,” 24 March 1945, F 23, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁵¹ G.H. Boldt to Commanding Officer, MO/FE, “MO/101 Report for January, 1945,” [1 February 1945], F 20, B 34, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

uniform turned over a briefcase to the Japanese military police headquarters at Maymyo. The agent claimed that he had found it beside a wrecked vehicle on the Mandalay-Maymyo road. In reality, the briefcase contained MO forged orders that reversed the Japanese no-surrender policy. It declared that soldiers could surrender if they were cut off, without ammunition, or incapacitated. Agents slipped another copy of these false orders into the headquarters of a Japanese infantry regiment. The MO Section followed this with a rumor campaign and an airdrop of leaflets over the Allied lines that purposefully fell on Japanese positions, outlining to Allied troops that they were to treat Japanese prisoners of war well. OWI followed up with another white leaflet drop showing the surrender order and assuring Japanese troops that they would receive good treatment. The British 14th Army was also given copies and thereafter, saw a noticeable rise in surrenders after the program's initiation. The surrender order program was not MO's only work in February. That month, the MO Section included items in every drop to the field, in total being responsible for sending out 24,000 items. In the field, however, MO's utility was not universally recognized. One field operator struggled with this as he wrote back to Nazira, "I think it will get better as ... MO prestige increases. It has been a struggle even to convince the officers here that MO can do some good."⁵⁵²

⁵⁵² Norman R. Sturgis, Jr. to Chief, S&T Branch, OSS, Washington, D.C., "Monthly Report," 21 February 1945, F 1565, B 147, E 136, RG 226, NARA, another copy is at F 2121, B 159, E 139, RG 226, NARA; Harold Gullixson, "Report of Experiences Encountered While Procuring A Mobile Reproduction Unit for Detachment 101," 1 February 1945, F 27, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA, another copy is located at F 1295, B174, E 108B, RG 226, NARA; George H. Boldt to William J. Donovan, "MO/101 Operations," 1 July 1945, F 3027, B 175, E 154, RG 226, NARA; More on the surrender order can be found at K.D. Mann to William J. Donovan, "False Surrender Order," 26 March 1945, F 2042, B 151, E 139, RG 226, NARA; F 2053, B 151, E 139, RG 226, NARA.

The MO Section was becoming increasingly effective in part because it was working hard to establish liaison with as many units—OSS or otherwise—as it could, and was putting its printing equipment at the disposal of other elements. These efforts bore fruit. Within Detachment 101 itself, MO had good relations with SI, R&A, and R&D. This last Section helped to produce items, such as stamps, to assist MO's work. The MO Section also produced a small weekly newsletter called *The Jungle News* that went out to all the field groups. This was on its own an effective way to get the MO message across. Outside of the OSS, MO secured the assistance of the 10th Air Force, which made available a night fighter for an MO operation.⁵⁵³

The Section became even more useful when, in addition to Nisei and indigenous translators, they gained the assistance of six Japanese prisoners of war (POWs) that served as consultants.⁵⁵⁴ The Section head reported that the POWs were “either writing the original Japanese material produced by the unit, or are criticizing Japanese work produced in the shop.”⁵⁵⁵ They may have assisted with the effectiveness of the Front Line Soldier Campaign, a series of anti-officer leaflets supposedly produced by Japanese non-commissioned officers. Copies of these leaflets, found on the bodies of dead Japanese soldiers near Lashio, gave MO the impression that their presence was an indicator of low Japanese morale, for to be caught with them might have been a capital

⁵⁵³ [Peers to Donovan], “Monthly Report February,” [1 March 1945], NARA. See George H. Boldt to Commanding Officer MO/FE, “MO/101 Report for February, 1945.”

⁵⁵⁴ Boldt to Commanding Officer, MO/FE, “MO/101 Report for January, 1945,” [1 February 1945], NARA.

⁵⁵⁵ [Peers to Donovan], “Monthly Report February,” [1 March 1945], NARA. See George H. Boldt to Commanding Officer MO/FE, “MO/101 Report for February, 1945.”

offense.⁵⁵⁶ By March, the situation had so improved that the head of MO Washington visited the Detachment and described the operation as having had considerable problems getting started but having “achieved considerable success in the field. This mission is considered the purest black operation that has been observed in any theater.”⁵⁵⁷

New Branches Arrive

Although individual members had previously arrived at the unit, OSS Washington tried to establish an OSS Operational Group (OG) at Detachment 101. The OG Branch had been very active in the European theater, but was just starting to establish itself in the Far East. The multi-faceted mission of the OGs was to organize, train, and equip local resistance organizations, and to conduct hit and run missions against enemy-controlled roads, railways, and strong points, or to prevent their destruction by retreating enemy forces. Donovan believed that qualified soldiers with the required language skills and cultural background could be found among the many ethnic groups in the United States. These soldiers could then be inserted as a team into enemy-occupied territory and successfully operate as small guerrilla groups. Unlike OSS Special Operations (SO) teams in other theaters, the Operational Groups (OGs) always operated in military uniform. They were trained in infantry tactics, guerrilla warfare, foreign weapons, demolition, were generally airborne qualified, and had

⁵⁵⁶ George H. Bolte to Commanding officer MO/FE, “MO/101 Report for March, 1945,” [1 April 1945], F 23, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁵⁷ K.D Mann to William J. Donovan, “Report of Trip to China, India-Burma and SEAC Theaters,” 28 March 1945, F 2042, B 151, E 139, RG 226, NARA.

attached medical and communications personnel. A typical OG Section had four officers and thirty enlisted men. Individual teams were often half that size.⁵⁵⁸

Their entrée into Detachment 101 would not be as easy as operations in Europe even though they had been sent to Burma for the same purpose: to be a hard-hitting group behind enemy lines. The only difference with the Asia groups, in contrast to the European groups, however, was in the lack of language skills and parachute training. The OGs in Detachment 101 were officially known as Unit D, Fourth Contingent, and initially consisted of nineteen officers and seventy-two enlisted men. From there, the Detachment 101 OG was to form two combat teams, each further broken into two squads. Immediately, the Section ran into difficulties. The greatest was that the Medical Section deemed nearly 10 percent of the OGs as physically unsuitable for field operations. They either filled in with other Sections or were sent back to the United States.⁵⁵⁹

On 18 January 1945, Detachment 101 headquarters announced that the OGs would not serve in the field as a unit on the grounds that such a large group behind enemy lines might lead to excessive American casualties. Moreover, the OG personnel needed jungle warfare training and most were not parachute-qualified. As a result, Detachment 101 parceled out its OGs to groups already in the field, until conditions

⁵⁵⁸ Target studies for the employment of OSS Operational Groups in Burma can be found at F 1420 and F 1421, B 81, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁵⁹ Hugh R. Conklin to Russell Livermore, "Report of O.G. Group, Det. 101," 28 January 1945, F 20, B 34, E 190, RG 226, NARA. See organizational chart attached to the report; Hugh R. Conklin to Russell Livermore, "OG Report, February 1945," F 21, B 34, E154, RG 226, NARA; Michael P. Georges to Schools and Training, O.S.S., Washington D.C., "Schools and Training Report for January 1945," [1 February 1945], F 20, B 34, E 154, RG 226, NARA; Charles G. Hutter to William R. Peers, "A Critical Analysis of the Medical Problems of O.S.S. Unit 101," 29 May 1945, F 27, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

existed that permitted a formation of OGs to go as a group. Meanwhile, the Communications Section received the nine OG radio operators and three radio technicians.⁵⁶⁰ Other OGs filled in with other sections—sometime with unharmonious results. The personnel officer who had received some OGs to serve as administrative personnel, described their assignment by calling them, “bloated with promises and dreams of glory in the field.”⁵⁶¹ Despite not having served as a team, however, the OG personnel assigned to Detachment 101 gave exemplary service and suffered several personnel killed in action.

Another new element in Detachment 101s arsenal was the Office of the Coordinator of Native Affairs. The large number of Kachin troops mustering out of the organization made the addition necessary. Lieutenant Julian Niemczyk, the officer assigned, was in charge of making sure that discharged soldiers were paid in full, properly decorated, and given an appropriate mustering-out festival.⁵⁶²

The increased operational level also required that the Operations Section rethink how it was conducting itself. Previously, it had been in charge of formulating its own plans, but realized that this arrangement was not the most effective. Separate elements barraged headquarters with various plans in the hopes that one would be approved. The solution was to create a Plans Section, or in military terms an S-3, to which groups submitted potential plans for consideration. This unit was assisted by a weekly meeting

⁵⁶⁰ Hugh R. Conklin to Russell Livermore, “OG Report, February 1945,” F 21, B 34, E 154, RG 226, NARA; Wadsworth to Communications Branch, “Communication Report for July,” 26 January 1945, NARA.

⁵⁶¹ Douglas J. King to William R. Peers, “Personnel Report,” 12 July 1945, F 1, B 33, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁶² Grones to Hoffman, “SO Operations, January Report,” 25 January 1945, NARA.

in which NCAC would brief Detachment 101 on their future areas of operation and request certain items of information. The Section then developed plans for how to obtain this, while the R&A Section also searched their files to see if they might already have information that would be of use.⁵⁶³

Other final important changes for the Detachment involved its force structure. In February, the Detachment 101 base at Calcutta was detached from the unit and renamed Detachment 505. This change eased Nazira's efforts, as it no longer had to account for incoming and outgoing personnel. The second administrative change was the formation of the Arakan Field Unit (AFU) in February. The AFU was composed of OSS units operating in conjunction with the Indian 15th Corps that had been set up under the direction of Detachment 404 as it was in the South-East Asia Command (SEAC). Because of the confusion with having two OSS elements operating in Burma, Detachment 101 received authority for OSS operations north of Rangoon. As a result, the AFU was detached from Detachment 404 and given to Detachment 101. Its operations will be the final case study. By February, the Schools and Training Section of Detachment 101 was sending newly-graduated agents to the Arakan for operations.⁵⁶⁴

Conclusion

By the end of March all elements that would make up Detachment 101's force structure were in place. The lack of attention from OSS Washington was apparent. The

⁵⁶³ Howell to Chief, Secretariat, Office of Strategic Services, "Report on Detachment 101's contribution to the Lashio campaign," 22 March 1945, NARA.

⁵⁶⁴ [Peers to Donovan], "Monthly Report February," [1 March 1945], NARA. See Douglas J. King to Personnel Officer, "Personnel Report, February 1945;" Michael P. Georges to Schools and Training, "Schools and Training Report for February, 1945."

OSS focused on the war in Europe so much so that operations in Burma—or even the Far East—were an afterthought. Only the success of Detachment 101's operations in 1944 had brought attention from Washington. By this time, however, the new arrivals to Detachment 101, such as the OGs, could not bring with them a mission warranting the effort of trying to accommodate their particular specialty as a distinct entity. Other Sections, such as R&D and X-2 were falling even farther behind. While their inclusion did further the mission, it only did so tangentially. This was because by the time they arrived—or organized themselves in such a way to be able to contribute—the Detachment's mission was so focused on guerrilla warfare and intelligence gathering that unless sections could directly impact those core functions, they were of little utility. A surprise element, however, was the MO Section. After a long period of inexcusable ineffectiveness due to lack of attention on the part of MO Washington, the Detachment 101 MO Section was making big payoffs. The intense training and preparation of the GOLD DUST team before they arrived was the reason why this element was able to contribute to Detachment 101's core missions. Even at this last stage in the Burma Campaign, a section focused on achieving effective liaison and coordination, that did not have internal squabbles, and which wanted to assist combat operations, could have a measureable impact on Detachment 101's ability to wage war on the Japanese. With Lashio having fallen to the Allied advance, the OSS effort in Burma was nearing an end. The next chapter will detail how these final months had an impact on the separate elements in Detachment 101's force structure, and how, at the same time, the Detachment itself was disbanded.

CHAPTER XI

THE LAST MONTHS: APRIL-JULY 1945

By April 1945, Detachment 101 had taken a central role in the Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC). It was now the sole remaining combat forces available to General Sultan. Despite its new role and the impending defeat of the Japanese in Burma, the unit still went to great efforts to work as efficiently as possible by streamlining its organization and gearing itself to support the increased operational role. At no other point in the war did Detachment 101 better demonstrate its inherent flexibility. It undertook numerous and disparate missions while simultaneously planning for its own demise. This chapter will examine the organizational changes made by Detachment 101 and how the unit dismantled itself while still maintaining a high operational tempo.

By April, the war in Burma was going very well for the Allies. Lashio has fallen to Chinese forces in March, as had Mandalay and Meiktila to the British. British forces in the Arakan and Central Burma were making a two-pronged drive for Rangoon. NCAC's forces had reached the end of their operational area, and also no longer had to cover the rear of the British 14th Army. Beginning in March and completed in May, the entire MARS Task Force was withdrawn and sent to China. The British units in NCAC had already reverted to 14th Army control. The main Chinese forces in NCAC were recalled to serve as elite units in the National Chinese Army. This left the OSS as the only ground combat unit, American or otherwise, operating in Burma.

Although Peers was planning to move Detachment 101 to China to serve in the Chekiang area, General Sultan had other ideas.⁵⁶⁵ He wanted Detachment 101 to protect the Stilwell Road by clearing the Shan States, which were a haven for Japanese troops fleeing Burma. NCAC feared that at least 10,000 troops from the Japanese 18th and 56th Divisions would be able to retreat to Thailand. There, they could regroup and once again threaten the Allies when they moved to attack that country after Burma's liberation.⁵⁶⁶ Clearing them would require that the Detachment function more like a conventional force. Not only was this a new mission for Detachment 101, but it was done under less than ideal conditions. Many of the remaining Kachins refused to go any farther, requiring that the unit demobilize many of its guerrilla formations. The Detachment had to consolidate its battalions and to recruit where it could, including large numbers of Shans, Karens, and Burmese—some still wearing the uniform of the Japanese-sponsored Burmese Independence Army. Peers reconfigured the Detachment. Instead of Area #1 and Area #2, it now had four battalions (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 10th).

Intelligence collection became even less important to Detachment 101 as the unit adopted a new mission: in Peers' words, to "kill and capture as many [Japanese] as

⁵⁶⁵ William R. Peers to Strategic Services Officer, OSS, China Theater, 21 April 1945, F 3027, B 175, E 154, RG 226, NARA; To account for the fact that Detachment 101 was still operating south of Lashio, the NCAC AOR for clandestine operations was extended to 250 miles south of the city.

⁵⁶⁶ The OSS had already prepared for the invasion of Thailand, which would be conducted by the British South-East Asia Command. OSS Special Operations (SO) and Secret Intelligence (SI) teams had infiltrated as early as December 1944, with the assistance of politicians high in the Thai government and whom had formed a quasi-resistance group. The OSS trained nascent Thai guerrilla groups, but the war ended before they rose up. Thailand, a nominal Japanese Ally, had played their political cards well. See E. Bruce Reynolds, *Thailand's Secret War: OSS, SOE, and the Free Thai Underground During WWII* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005) and Nicol Smith and Blake Clark, *Into Siam: Underground Kingdom* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1946)

possible.”⁵⁶⁷ The groups still had several long-range groups that had parachuted in, and numerous agent groups. They were, however, becoming less valuable as the need for their intelligence ceased or as Allied movements bypassed them. By the end of May, only seven groups remained in the field in north Burma. As the unit had demonstrated previously, it was highly adaptable. However, its last assignments were costly. The group suffered more casualties, comparatively, during these final months than at any other time of the war. Indeed, as one veteran noted, “With less experienced leaders or without the intimate knowledge of the Burma-style campaign gained through three years of similar operations, the hazards of such an undertaking might have been disastrous.”⁵⁶⁸ At the same time, the Detachment 101 Arakan Field Unit (AFU) was supporting an intelligence mission for British forces. Despite the operational focus, the Detachment had to devote an even greater administrative effort to ensure that the unit ran smoothly in its last months.

The Detachment

Although operations were beginning to wind down, this did not mean that Detachment 101’s force structure and sections remained static. This included the elimination of an entire Section. Peers came to believe that “it is very difficult to draw a line between which is OG and is SO, and anything reported by either of the individual branches is purely eye-wash.” He also felt that a separate Operational Group (OG) Section resulted in an unnecessary duplication in communications, supply,

⁵⁶⁷ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, “Mission Report, Detachment 101, May 1945,” 24 May 1945, F 26, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁶⁸ Robert B. Moore to William R. Peers, “SO Monthly Report, April 1945,” 25 April 1945, F 24, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

administration, and other entities such as medical.⁵⁶⁹ In an effort to resolve this problem, in April he transferred OG personnel into the Special Operations (SO) Section.

To no surprise, Detachment 101's air elements continued to be of great importance. The Red Ass Squadron moved forward to Bhamo to provide greater support to the field groups. Although operations had slowed since the previous month, in April it flew 655 hours, evacuated 24 wounded, and carried 368 passengers and 22,910 pounds of cargo. Three planes even flew a mission eighty-six miles into hostile territory—the farthest the squadron had yet penetrated—to bring back three Japanese prisoners. The squadron had an additional problem when seventeen new pilots arrived and there were only fifteen aircraft available, including those under repair.⁵⁷⁰ Operations in May declined significantly. It flew 464 hours, evacuated thirty-nine casualties, carried 177 personnel, and just 8,645 pounds of cargo.⁵⁷¹ This included, however, a strenuous period from 8-10 May when a Japanese force attacked a Detachment 101 unit. The Red Ass Squadron reacted quickly and evacuated twenty-five casualties from a makeshift airfield under attack by the Japanese. In June, the squadron moved from Lashio to an airfield at Lai Hka where its aircraft were used by battalion commanders to coordinate operations of their far-flung companies, to conduct reconnaissance on Japanese positions, and even to mark enemy positions for air strikes. This enabled even closer support to the field units because the aircraft were now only a half hour's flight away.

⁵⁶⁹ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Mission Report, Detachment 101, April 1945," 20 April 1945, F 24, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁷⁰ Francis J. Reardon to William R. Peers, "Air Operations Monthly Report, April 1945," F 24, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA. In all, the Squadron evacuated nineteen Japanese and Burman auxiliary troops in April for interrogation back at Detachment 101 headquarters.

⁵⁷¹ Francis J. Reardon to William R. Peers, "Air Operations Monthly Report, May 1945," 24 May 1945, F 26, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

Indicative of its high level of efficiency is the following report; “an enlisted man was shot at 1020 ... through the rapid and well coordinated evacuation system ... the soldier was evacuated and met at Bhamo airstrip at 1700 hours ... about 300 air miles from the site of his injury.”⁵⁷²

Likewise, in April, the Air Drop Section operated at a reduced level with the group allotted only seven C-47s allotted—and the distance of the dropping zones from the main airfield at Dinjan meant that many could only fly one sortie per day as each flight took a seven-hour round trip. Still, the Section dropped 1,196,447 pounds of supplies and parachute twenty-nine personnel into the field, requiring 229 C-47 sorties and thirteen B-25 special missions that were flown out of the newly finished all weather airfield at Bhamo. The Section recorded its first losses since January 1944 when two C-47s crashed with the loss of four OSS personnel.⁵⁷³ By May, Air Drop operations were noticeably winding down and the Section only dropped 837,487 pounds of supplies requiring 183 C-47 sorties and 5 B-25s that parachuted six personnel into the field. This represented the same levels seen in November 1944. This meant that the Detachment only utilized an average of six had seven C-47s available to it.⁵⁷⁴ In June-July, the Section only dropped 841,963 pounds, some of which was clothing, food, and supplies

⁵⁷² Francis J. Reardon to William R. Peers, “Monthly Report of Air Operations, June 1945,” 5 July 1945, F 1, B 33, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Charles G. Hutter to William R. Peers, “Report of the Medical Services of Detachment 101 for June 1945,” 7 July 1945, F 1, B 33, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁷³ R.T. Walsh to William R. Peers, “Supply and Air Drop Report, April 1945,” 27 April 1945, F 24, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA; D.V. Cavanaugh to William R. Peers, “Operational Summary, Air Drop Monthly Report, April 1945,” 25 April 1945, F 24, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁷⁴ D.V. Cavanaugh to William R. Peers, “Operational Summary, Air Drop Monthly Report, May 1945,” 25 May 1945, F 26, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

to thank villagers for their assistance. On their return, the drop aircraft stopped at collection points and picked equipment and arms to bring back for turn-in.⁵⁷⁵

Communications experienced a minor reorganization when the section at Bhamo took over communications duties from Area #2 when that organization disbanded. The disbanding produced a surplus of radios that were reconditioned and redistributed. This eliminated any shortages. The timesaving laying of a cable from Lashio to Bhamo also allowed sending messages in the clear without encoding, thereby facilitating communications duties at Bhamo. This was fortunate as the section also began to handle communications from the Arakan Field Unit, resulting in a combined daily total of some 175 messages and 11,000 groups.⁵⁷⁶ May's total showed the same general level with 5388 messages composed of 326,894 groups. The general pace, however, was decreasing as stations closed and liaison officers returned from their assignments.⁵⁷⁷ The totals for June and July combined reflected the reduction in traffic; 328,566 groups for a total of 6,309 messages.⁵⁷⁸ Although the Section had adequate radios and receivers, they still worked to develop new and smaller equipment. Future items of supply to the field groups were a miniature transmitter and receiver of less than a pound in weight, and the Eureka portable radar beacon, that would to allow planes to hone in on groups and drop

⁵⁷⁵ Earl E. Walker to William R. Peers, "Air Drop Monthly Report, June 1945," 22 June 1945, F 1, B 33, E 190, RG 226, NARA; J.M. Garrett to William R. Peers, "Air Drop Final Report," 12 July 1945, F 1, B 33, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁷⁶ Leroy Thompson to William R. Peers, "Communications Monthly Report, April 1945," 25 April 1945, F 24, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁷⁷ Claude V. Wadsworth to William R. Peers, "Communications Report as of 25 May 1945," 25 May 1945, F 26, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁷⁸ Claude V. Wadsworth to William R. Peers, "Communications Monthly Report for Period 26 May 1945 to 8 July 1945," 8 July 1945, F 1, B 33, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

during poor visibility.⁵⁷⁹ Other sections also focused their efforts in the tactical situation.

The MO Section saw increased utility. As the Detachment moved into the Shan States, it managed to distribute 30,730 copies of some twenty-one different leaflets. Many of these exploited the low Japanese morale and revolved around surrender themes. They appear to have produced results. Although MO reasoned that although they could not prove the link, the Section's black propaganda efforts may have influenced the surrenders. In particular, some Japanese soldiers who surrendered under a white flag had in their hand the MO-produced modification to the no-surrender order. The Section reported that one Japanese soldier urgently "sought to bring out that he came within the provisions" of the no-surrender order and "was therefore entitled to the good treatment promised in the leaflet." Because of this possible success, the MO Section decided that its best course was to refine the surrender leaflets.⁵⁸⁰

Although the Detachment's function was now more of supporting tactical combat operations rather than strategic intelligence—such as determining enemy order of battle—there remained some successes. During the last month of operations, the long-range agent teams scored a penetration through the cooperation of a Shan official who had his own police force with Japanese-furnished passes that allowed them to move

⁵⁷⁹ Thompson to Peers, "Communications Monthly Report, April 1945," 25 April 1945, NARA.

⁵⁸⁰ George H. Boldt to William R. Peers, "MO/101 Report for April, 1945," [I May 1945], F 24, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA. Peers to Donovan, "Mission Report, Detachment 101, April 1945," 20 April 1945, NARA. The 14th Army wished to have MO products, but did not want MO personnel operating in their areas. The Detachment took eleven Japanese prisoners of war in April and British 14th Army had numbers of Japanese soldiers surrender to them in the Mandalay area (where Detachment 101 propaganda products were also used).

about in enemy territory.⁵⁸¹ With the war winding down in the NCAC area, the R&A Section turned its analytical attention to the Arakan, and in particular, Rangoon. Still, reports came at a hurried pace from the groups under NCAC; 515 reports in total came into the R&A Section during April and the initial interrogations of Japanese prisoners of war and Burmese collaborators kept the interrogators and translators busy. The Section also revamped how it would present its reports. Instead of the weekly intelligence summary, the Section substituted a daily edition beginning on 18 April. Additionally, the Section reorganized by cross-referencing its files to ensure that they were readily available for the numerous analytical subjects that might present themselves.⁵⁸² Peers commented to Donovan on Detachment 101's unique arrangement regarding intelligence collection and dissemination.

The lack of intelligence personnel ... has resulted in a change from the OSS conception of collection and dissemination of information ... SO has been and is responsible for the collection of all information, guided in part by requests from one of the dissemination agencies ... Previously, with one intelligence officer [Chester R. Chartrand of the SI Section], we were able to disseminate all of our tactical information ... As a result the R&A section has been developed to handle the dissemination of all information, regardless of type. Therefore, the situation stands, SO collects, R&A disseminates. We would never have had the means to accomplish our intelligence mission if this procedure had not been adopted.⁵⁸³

These comments reflect upon the very beginning of Detachment 101, when a lack of personnel forced the unit to use whomever it had to fill new roles that came along. The

⁵⁸¹ Chester R. Chartrand to William R. Peers, "Final Monthly Report, SI Branch," 11 July 1945, F 1, B 33, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁸² George H. Owen to William Peers, "R & A Monthly Report, April 1945," 20 April 1945, F 24, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁸³ Peers to Donovan, "Mission Report, Detachment 101, April 1945," 20 April 1945, NARA.

OSS did not create Detachment 101 to gather intelligence, but it evolved into a core area, that to its end users was perhaps the most useful.

The X-2 Section expanded its Counter Intelligence Teams (CIT) throughout Lashio and the surrounding region, but recognized that the mission was coming to an end. Contacts continued with the Burmese Ant-Fascist League (AFL). The BARK team, made up of AFL members, was parachuted by X-2 into Pinyinmana on 30 March. It supplied tactical information on Japanese forces and movements that X-2 liaison officer Stuart Power then gave to the British 14th Army. X-2 also planned to infiltrate personnel and agents to the Arakan region to kidnap selected enemy personnel and to be of use during and after the securing of Rangoon. CIT teams continued to have success, and in the Katha area alone, arrested 152 Black hats [Japanese collaborators] of which Burma government authorities convicted thirty-seven.⁵⁸⁴ On 25 May, however, the CIT program was considered complete. The teams disbanded. Many of the X-2 personnel transferred to the Arakan. There, the Section organized into two small groups. One section joined the amphibious assault on Rangoon, while the other joined the British 14th Army in the event that that element first reached the city.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸⁴ Baird V. Helfrich to William R. Peers, "Combat Interrogation Reports for week ending 30 April," 1 May 1945, F 1470, B 194, E 108B, RG 226, NARA; Baird V. Helfrich to John J. McDonough, "Specific Target Information for X-2 agents operating in Lower Burma," 7 April 1945, F 61, B 8, E 110A, RG 226, NARA. Instructions to AFL X-2 agents can also be found in this folder; an initial report on the BARK group can be found at Baird V. Helfrich to William R. Peers, "April 1945 Report on X-2," 25 April 1945, F 512, B 70, E 190, RG 226, NARA; the BARK Group mission file can be found at F 413, B 28, E 154, RG 226, NARA; Evelle J. Younger to David Hunter, "Comparison of X-2 and CIC Mission," 7 May 1945, F 1445, B 191, E 108B, RG 226, NARA; Baird V. Helfrich to William R. Peers, "X-2 Monthly Report, April 1945," 25 April 1945, F 24, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁸⁵ John D. Maharg to William R. Peers, "X-2 Monthly Report, May 1945," [1 June 1945], F 26, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Baird V. Helfrich to David Hunter, "Experience with British, 17 March-1 July 1945," 29 June 1945, F 15765, B 434, E 210, RG 226, NARA; "X-2 Combat Interrogation Teams, Burma," 15 June 1945, F 007335, B 193, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

Detachment 101 Disbands

July 1945 was officially the last month that Detachment 101 was active, but the process of disbanding began long before. The first moves of disbandment occurred in May. By then it had become readily apparent that Nazira was too far away from the action and that the unit would not need to train additional agents for operations. The Detachment started to shut the base down. The first sections to close at Nazira, such as MO, R&D, the School, the Pigeon Section, and the hospital, were those that had little effect on tactical combat operations. Detachment 101 took advantage of the fact that the U.S. Army Services of Supply (SOS) in India had numerous vehicles that it needed to get to China, but no drivers. As a result, SOS turned vehicles over to units that needed to transport personnel and equipment, so long as the vehicles ended up in an Army depot in China. The MO Section packed up its facilities—to include the Field Photographic laboratory—and departed for China. This was the first of four Detachment 101 convoys to travel the Stilwell Road from May to July. The remaining personnel and sections from Nazira not sent to China, transferred to quarters near Dinjan. There, sections still needed to support operations, such as a skeleton medical element, continued working.⁵⁸⁶

After Nazira, the next bases to close were Detachment 101 BA at Bhamo and Detachment 101 AFU in Rangoon. They both closed on 6 June and transferred their assets to Detachment 404. The last Detachment 101 field radio station went off the air on 7 July and thereafter, Force 136, [SOE in the Far East] accepted responsibility for

⁵⁸⁶ Claude Constable to William R. Peers, "Field Photographic Monthly Report, May 1945," 21 May 1945, F 26, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Peers to Donovan, "Mission Report, Detachment 101, May 1945," 24 May 1945, NARA; R.T. Walsh to William R. Peers, "Supply and Air Drop Monthly Report, April 1945," 22 May 1945, F 26, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Charles G. Hutter to O.S.S. Headquarters, "Monthly Medical Report," 23 May 1945, F 26, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

remaining agents. Only Detachment 101's headquarters at Dinjan remained. This was soon turned over to Detachment 206, a supply organization for Detachment 202.

Detachment 101 officially closed on 12 July 1945. By mid-July all that remained were mostly administrative functions, such as the Finance Section and legal representatives, who ensured the unit finalized its debts and obligations to its indigenous personnel. This included making final restitution to the families of the thirty-eight missing or deceased indigenous agents.⁵⁸⁷

The Medical Section gave returning field personnel examinations for fatigue, disease, and parasites before sending them to their new assignments. Thirty percent of Detachment 101's personnel had enough time in theater, or a medical reason, to return to the United States. Those that did not went to other OSS organizations in the Far East. The SO and OG personnel were sent to Detachment 202. There, they formed the nucleus of several SO teams, such as BABOON 2, GNU, and COW. Several former 101ers also served in the post-war Mercy Mission teams that parachuted into Japanese-held POW camps in China to prevent any harming of Allied prisoners. The eleven teams operated at great peril since many Japanese commands were unaware that the war was over. The teams arranged for food, medical care, and the evacuation of the POWs. Many of the Detachment 101 Nisei served as translators on these teams, including for teams CANARY, MAGPIE, and PIGEON. Other former Detachment 101 personnel served on teams ALBATROSS, CARDINAL, DUCK, and RAVEN. In all, 50 percent

⁵⁸⁷ Charles P. Henderson to John G. Coughlin, "Report of the Theater Counsel for July 1945," 26 July 1945, F 1, B 83, E 99, RG 226, NARA; George D. Gorin to John G. Coughlin, 1 November 1945, F 25, B 3, E 140, RG 226, NARA.

of Detachment 101's former personnel went to China. The remaining 20 percent of Detachment 101's former personnel went to Detachment 404 where they were involved in operations in Thailand, and post-war intelligence missions in the SEAC AOR.⁵⁸⁸

Conclusion

Despite the war in north Burma being almost over by mid-1945, the Detachment once again reinvented itself when it undertook the role of conventional warfare. The role did not suit the clandestine organization, yet it still worked. According to one of the American battalion commanders, it only succeeded because the Japanese by then were beaten and had poor morale, "If the Japanese in this area had been the same [Japanese] we fought in northern Burma our force would not have lasted for two days."⁵⁸⁹ Yet, it was also the cohesiveness of the Detachment's various sections that allowed for success. Without effective Communications, Air Drop, or liaison aircraft Sections, the Detachment never could have completed the mission change.

As it was, the Japanese could still be quite determined and in many cases were better armed than the OSS units were and backed with artillery. This caused the Detachment to suffer during this period its highest casualty rate of the war. In May and June alone, it suffered forty-four killed, thirty-four wounded, nine missing, and twenty captured. The toll was also hard on the American personnel—considering the previous

⁵⁸⁸ Team rosters for several of the Detachment 202 teams and the Mercy Missions can be found in Francis B. Mills, Robert Mills, and John W. Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China* (Williamstown, NJ: Phillips, 2002) 491-532; William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Mission Report, Detachment 101, 1 June 1945 to 12 July 1945," 12 July 1945, F 1, B 33, E 190, RG 226, NARA; The numbers of personnel transferred; 325 to China, 101 to Detachment 404, and 123 to the U.S. can be found in William R. Peers to John G. Coughlin, "Sitrep," 12 July 1945, F 2481, B 141, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁸⁹ Hale H. Knight, "The Operations of a Guerrilla Company (OSS DET 101) at Lawksawk, Burma 6 May-12 May 1945," 1948-1949, Advanced Infantry Officers Course, The Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia.

light casualties—with five killed and three wounded in June and the beginning of July. The damaged inflicted on the enemy was far greater. From May to June, Detachment 101 units were responsible for killing 1,246 Japanese troops and they liberated 13,600 square miles of territory.⁵⁹⁰ A unit in the process of tearing its own structure apart conducted these exceptional accomplishments. It is a reflection of Detachment 101's inherent flexibility that it could adopt a new operational role, that of conducting heavy combat operations and a new mission in the Arakan, while simultaneously disbanding. The next chapter will be the final case study. It will examine an ad-hoc mission that Detachment 101 picked up from Detachment 404, the Arakan Field Unit.

⁵⁹⁰ Robert B. Moore to William R. Peers, "Operational Report, 23 May - 8 July 1945," 8 July 1945, F 1, B 33, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Robert B. Moore to William R. Peers, "SO Monthly Report, May 1945," 25 May 1945, F 26, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA; Douglas J. King to William R. Peers, "Personnel Report," 12 July 1945, F 1, B 33, E 190, RG 226, NARA; William E. Cox to Daniel I. Sultan, "Commendable Operations of O.S.S., Detachment 101," 16 July 1945, F 1, B 33, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

CHAPTER XII

THE ARAKAN FIELD UNIT: FEBRUARY-JUNE 1945

Detachment 101 was known throughout OSS as an organization that ignored branch distinctions and amalgamated its various functions to serve common goals. This allowed the group to slowly become a combined operations unit that was without peer in OSS.⁵⁹¹ In 1945, Detachment 101 was best able to demonstrate the flexibility that had characterized its operations throughout the war. In the Shan States, Detachment 101's intense operational focus meant that the unit there became more focused on intelligence of immediate utility as opposed to integrating a long-range intelligence collection effort into the combat elements as had the case in 1943-1944. In the Arakan, however, the integration of tactical and strategic intelligence collection became reality. The sort-lived Detachment 101 Arakan Field Unit (AFU) was dubbed with the derogatory name "All Fucked Up," just as the China-Burma-India Theater had been called "Confusion Beyond Imagination." In practice, the name was a misnomer as the AFU represented a true test of Detachment 101's way of war. It integrated its various sections into a single autonomous unit, and represented a pioneering use of maritime, land, psychological, and intelligence components.

⁵⁹¹ Kermit Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets: War Report of the OSS, Vol. Two* (New York: Walker, 1976), 358, 381, 398-399.

While AFU operations did not involve the large guerrilla formations prevalent in north Burma, it reflected Detachment 101's flexibility to adapt its role to the mission placed before it. In so doing, Detachment 101 took OSS assets already in the battle area and added others to give the unit a new mission and direction. The result was that Detachment 101 demonstrated its ability to take over a pre-existing unit of limited utility, and to mold it into one with a much broader operational scope. In north Burma, the fall of Lashio to combined American/Chinese forces to the east and Mandalay and Meiktila to the British in the west, was near. In the south, the Indian XV Corps was pushing through the Arakan region to its goal of liberating Rangoon. The Arakan offered a different operating environment for Detachment 101. Despite working more closely with the British than had been the case in north Burma, relations were not always harmonious. OSS personnel were extremely wary of the attempts that they saw by the British either to spy on them, or to sway the local public opinion away from the Americans. One of the most blatant examples of British-inspired anti-American propaganda was newsletters printed by the *Rangoon Liberator*. This daily began publication on 13 May and contained a number of articles that praised the British war effort against Japan while downgrading that of the United States.⁵⁹² Some of this behavior could be understood. Most Burmans hoping for independence looked to America for help. As had happened in north Burma, the residents in the south did not see the Americans as having colonial designs on the country. The Burmese often asked OSS personnel when the Americans were going to help them gain independence from

⁵⁹² Stanley S. Brotman to [Warren L.?] Barnette, "Anti-American Propaganda," 9 October 1945, F 1404, B 81, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

the British.⁵⁹³ As one OSS operator noted, the British could not help to see that the local population was “pleased” with their liberation by the British, but would have been “wildly enthusiastic” if their liberators had been American.⁵⁹⁴

Another issue that had the potential to split U.S.-British relations was the arming of Burmese political groups, like the Anti-Fascist League (AFL). The AFL was a Marxist-leaning group composed of Burmese who had initially supported the Japanese invasion. In their own words, the AFL was “not pro-British, but we prefer the Allies. We are against Fascism.”⁵⁹⁵ The group articulated the Burmans’ anti-colonial sentiments, which had gotten so bad that Americans were warned not to go into certain areas because they might mistakenly be shot because “hatred for the British had reached that point.”⁵⁹⁶ In discussions with “P” Division, Peers and OSS Chief Donovan took the stance that Detachment 101 followed throughout the war, that despite the assistance they might offer, Detachment 101 did not arm politically motivated groups. The OSS’s only interest was in forming guerrilla groups to fight the Japanese, not in creating a post-war independence movement. Detachment 101 only wanted the intelligence that such groups might offer. The decision to arm the AFL was left to Force 136.⁵⁹⁷

The OSS also had to contend with an entirely different operating environment than north Burma. The Arakan region itself consists of a coastal plain lined with

⁵⁹³ Solon to William J. Donovan, “Additional British Opinions on Burma,” 3 July 1945, F 9658, B 228, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁹⁴ Manly Fleischmann to Cora DuBois, “Notes on the First Two Weeks of the British Reoccupation of Akyab, Burma,” 13 February 1945, F 1176, B 74, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁹⁵ [Gregory?] Bateson and Carleton F. Scofield to David G. Mandelbaum, “Report on Expedition to Sat Tha Village,” 26 January 1945, F 9058, B 231, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁹⁶ Maurice P. Coon to Charles J. Trees, 29 March 1945, F 905, B 231, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁹⁷ Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia Supreme Allied Commander’s Meetings, 30 January 1945, F 492, B 68, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

mangrove swamps that were frequently pierced with tidal creeks, or *chaungs*. Numerous ethnicities lived in the region, and with their religion being primarily Buddhist or Muslim, had little in common with the Americans. The area itself has dense foliage and an OSS observer called it one of the “world’s worst battlefields—a combination of jungle, paddy fields [rice], and mountains.” A patrol might “come within ten yards of a Japanese patrol without ever detecting it.”⁵⁹⁸ It was this strategic and tactical picture that Detachment 101 faced in the Arakan.

The Arakan Field Unit (AFU)

The roots of the AFU predate Detachment 101. Although it had responsibility for the Andaman Islands, India, Indonesia, Malaya, Sumatra, Thailand, and parts of Burma and French Indo-China (Vietnam), the primary mission of the British Southeast Asia Command (SEAC), and its subordinate OSS element [Detachment 404], was to see to Burma’s liberation. Churchill himself issued this directive.⁵⁹⁹ To help accomplish the task, OSS Detachment 404 would operate as an intelligence unit in conjunction with the XV Indian Corps. Prior to that, the only intelligence organizations available in the region were the British V-Force and scattered SOE elements.⁶⁰⁰ To help accomplish the task, OSS Detachment 404 was to assist the XV Indian Corps by long-range intelligence and reconnaissance patrols, while V-Force did the same closer to the main battlefield. The OSS was not able to accomplish its long-range mission until Detachment 101 took

⁵⁹⁸ James H. Mysbergh, “Report on the Arakan Front,” 11 November 1944, F 1495, B 200, E 108B, RG 226, NARA.

⁵⁹⁹ Guy Martin to Harry L. Berno, “Planning Developments,” 28 November 1944, F2010, B 106, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁶⁰⁰ Harriet W. Sabine, “History of Detachment 404 Operations,” [21 September 1944], F 1, B 64, E 99, RG 226, NARA.

control, but it performed better at short-range intelligence gathering missions than V-Force had. Because of this, Detachment 404's operational elements focused on surveying places in the Japanese rear for the XV Indian Corps to amphibiously assault, while the intelligence component focused on gathering information about Japanese organizations and dispositions.⁶⁰¹

The Arakan Field Unit (AFU) began on 10 December 1944 as the Detachment 404 AFU, but the OSS also called it by its code name, Operation BITTERSWEET. The initial joint Maritime Unit (MU) and OG that made up BITTERSWEET set up headquarters at Cox's Bazar, now in modern-day Bangladesh. BITTERSWEET moved to 'Camp Ritchie' at Akyab, Burma, in January. There, it conducted underwater and shore reconnaissance missions in support of the British advance.⁶⁰² Its teams were under strict orders to fire only in self-defense and followed the guidance that the "most successful penetration group is one which never fires a shot."⁶⁰³

Other OSS elements followed. In December, a MO Section of seven personnel arrived that in January, attempted to print a Burmese language newsletter called the *War*

⁶⁰¹ A good general survey on the Arakan Field Unit can be found in Martin J. Waters, "The Operations of a Provisional OSS Platoon, Night Reconnaissance Operations, The Arakan Coast, Burma, Oct. 1944-Apr. 1945," (The Infantry School General History Section Military History Committee Fort Benning, Georgia: Advanced Officers Course, 1946-1947).

⁶⁰² For clarification, the time of the AFU under Detachment 404 will be denoted as BITTERSWEET, while under 101, it will be referred to as the Arakan Field Unit (AFU). Many of the BITTERSWEET mission files and directives can be found at F 2480, B 141, E 154, RG 226, NARA. The Detachment 404 MU section was originally under Detachment 101 and had been set up by former commanding officer Colonel Carl F. Eifler.

⁶⁰³ David G. Mandelbaum, "Notes on Penetration Groups in the Arakan," 24 December 1944, F 2135, B 118, E 154, RG 226, NARA. Prior to its inclusion in Detachment 101, the MU section conducted thirteen operations along the Arakan Coast. See "MU Operations From the Arakan," F 3525, B 238, E 139, RG 226, NARA; Lloyd E. Peddicord to Amos D. Moscrip, "Situation Report," 1 March 1945, F 2482, B 141, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

Mirror.⁶⁰⁴ MO personnel then regularly infiltrated behind enemy lines and gave the newsletter to Allied sympathizers for distribution. This continued for the duration of operations. Although the Section recognized that it was on the operational side as opposed to intelligence, it also assisted X-2 personnel.⁶⁰⁵

As early as December 1944, Peers was discussing sending an officer of X-2 to the project.⁶⁰⁶ Originally, the BITTERSWEET X-2 element was going to mimic the operations of Detachment 101's X-2 Section by forming two Combat Intelligence Teams (CITs). The Section soon deemed this impractical because the pace of the Allied advance was too fast. The X-2 Section decided to retain all personnel in one unit and to follow the combat operations as closely as they could by incorporating into the headquarters of the British 25th Division. There, they were in place to join the OG Section in the unopposed amphibious assault of Akyab Island. Once on Akyab, the group began apprehending black hats and conducting interrogations.⁶⁰⁷ In many cases, the X-2 teams found that their best informants were those who were on the black lists, but who wished to ingratiate themselves to the Allies now that the Japanese were being

⁶⁰⁴ Carleton F. Scofield to James R. Withrow, 31 December 1944, F 2111, B 117, E 154, RG 226, NARA; Bateson and Scofield to Mandelbaum, "Report on Expedition to Sat Tha Village," 26 January 1945, NARA; [Gregory?] Bateson to Carleton F. Scofield, "Weekly Report Jan 7-Jan 14," 14 January 1945, F9059/008, B 231, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

⁶⁰⁵ Evelle J. Younger to John J. McDonough, "Weekly Report 24-31 December 1944," 31 December 1944, F 1431, B 187, E 108B, RG 226, NARA; Another copy is located at F 2145, B 119, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁶⁰⁶ Herman H. Harjes to William R. Peers, 22 December 1944, F 2444, B 138, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁶⁰⁷ Evelle J. Younger to John J. McDonough, "Weekly Report-1-7 January 1945," 7 January 1945, F 1430, B 187, E 108B, RG 226, NARA.

forced out.⁶⁰⁸ Meanwhile, personnel from the Special Operations (SO) Section worked with the British V-Force so that they could familiarize themselves with the operations.⁶⁰⁹

The Schools and Training (S&T) Section—long held in rear areas—also moved forward. They set up a school for the purpose of training indigenous agents close to the areas in which they would work. After briefly setting up on Akyab, they moved to Ramree Island on 23 January. There, they assessed and recruited several men to address the problem of such work being “considered secondary to operations instead of integral to operations.”⁶¹⁰

Intelligence was handled by a fledgling SI Section headed by Anglo-Burmese agent Edward Law Yone, and an R&A element. The SI element functioned differently than with Detachment 101 in north Burma. SI personnel accompanied the XV Indian Corps on operations, particularly amphibious ones. Once the Allied presence was established, SI personnel contacted local headmen and influential persons, as well as conducted interrogations and recruited indigenous agents to establish intelligence networks. The OSS gave perspective agents a summary training course, after which they were sent on short-range missions to acquire specific information, such as the number and location of enemy personnel. One of their first actions under Detachment 101 was to apprehend a known collaborator, Tun Lin, and make him a double agent.⁶¹¹ The SI

⁶⁰⁸ Evelle J. Younger to Joseph P. McCarthy, “Informants, AFU,” 31 March 1945, F 1436A, B 189, E 108B, RG 226, NARA.

⁶⁰⁹ Lloyd E. Peddicord to Commanding Officer, BITTERSWEET MISSION, “Operations Report for the Period 6-11 February, 1945,” 11 February 1945, F 2140, B 118, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁶¹⁰ L.H. to Isadore Burstein, “Mobile Assessment and Training Unit in the Arakan,” 26 January 1945, F 554, B 38, E 148, RG 226, NARA.

⁶¹¹ Evelle J. Younger, “Operation ‘Charlene,’” 22 February 1945, F 90601010, B 231, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

Section also infiltrated agents by indigenous watercraft. They succeeded in penetrating the lines and gathering much intelligence on Japanese forces. Because of these successes, the OSS became the primary organization to furnish intelligence on the area of the Prome-Taungup Road. This was the same area that the failed W Group had entered in late 1943.⁶¹² By the end of AFU operations, the SI Section was able to send into the field forty-nine named operations. These teams were mostly composed of indigenous personnel recruited and trained to gather intelligence near Rangoon. Five were complete failures, as they had no contact with base.⁶¹³

Meanwhile, operational responsibility for Burma north of Rangoon was given to Detachment 101, while areas south of Rangoon were given to Detachment 404.⁶¹⁴ On 16 February, Detachment 101 activated the Detachment 101 Arakan Field Unit. During his visit there, Peers placed Major Richard L. Farr in command of the AFU and he established his headquarters at Akyab. The forward section at Kyaukpyu was placed under the command of OG Major Lloyd E. Peddicord and his deputy, MU Lieutenant Commander Derek Lee. Detachment 101 BA (the Detachment 101 element at Bhamo) would handle administration and coordination. Another minor Detachment 101 headquarters to handle administration, supplies and parachute packing, was established in Calcutta at the same location as Detachment 505. Operations themselves would be

⁶¹² Sabine, "History of Detachment 404 Operations," [21 September 1944], NARA.

⁶¹³ Trimble C. Condict to Daniel I. Sultan, "Semi-Monthly Operational Report, 1 May 1945 to 15 May 1945," 15 May 1945, F 2140, B 118, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁶¹⁴ Philip K. Crowe to John G. Coughlin, "SI Plan for Burma," 12 December 1944, F 2010, B 109, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

coordinated through Allied Land Forces South East Asia (ALFSEA).⁶¹⁵ Major Charles J. Trees later replaced Farr in command.

When Peers arrived, he found an “utter lack of coordination between branches.”⁶¹⁶ Detachment 101 had long been known as an organization that lacked distinction or compartmentation between operational branches. Peers transferred responsibility for airdrop from Force 136 to OSS control. Representatives of other Detachment 101 elements trickled into the AFU. In March, Detachment 101 detailed an officer, who coordinated through Detachment 101 BA (Bhamo), to handle the AFU’s financial needs.⁶¹⁷ The R&D Section at Nazira assisted the AFU by working on requests from Petticord to improve upon items like sub-machinegun magazines or methods to carry additional ammunition.⁶¹⁸

The R&A contingent on the other hand, handled much of the tactical intelligence. As the Detachment 101 elements at Nazira and Myitkyina had before, the Detachment 101 AFU R&A Section compiled weekly summaries for their intelligence consumers. Research and Analysis personnel based themselves near the combat elements to be able to provide requested information as quickly as possible. This included participating in all major actions and amphibious landings. In late March, XV Indian Corps commander

⁶¹⁵ William R. Peers to Strategic Services Officer Headquarters India Burma Theater, “Monthly Report,” 25 February 1945, F 002141, B 76, E 210, RG 226, NARA; Target studies for the employment of OSS Operational Groups in southwest Burma, that were most likely put together by the R&A section, can be found at F 1420, B 81, E 154, RG 226, NARA

⁶¹⁶ William R. Peers to John G. Coughlin, 17 February 1945, F 228, B 20, E 110, RG 226, NARA.

⁶¹⁷ Don S. Packer to Commanding Officer, Detachment 404, 28 March 1945, F 1367, B 203, E 199, RG 226, NARA.

⁶¹⁸ T.H. Daugherty to Sam G. Lucy, 4 April 1945, F 2255, B 129, E 154, RG 226, NARA; F.R. Loetterle to T.H. Daugherty, 16 March 1945, F 2260, B 129, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

Lieutenant General Philip Christison, commended the AFU for the value of its intelligence.⁶¹⁹

Now under Detachment 101, the MU and OG Sections of the AFU made several long-range reconnaissance missions on behalf of the XV Indian Corps. The MU Section later reported that the sections operated together with a “minimum of friction, each pulling their own weight on operations.”⁶²⁰ An example is Operation BOSTON, a reconnaissance mission conducted on 20 February 1945 at Foul Island. Two MU P-boats (Pursuit) took the joint team to the island. Seven MU swimmers in kayaks then conducted a shoreline reconnaissance to see if Japanese troops were near the beach. Once deemed secure, a fifteen-man OG team went ashore for a more thorough investigation. The OSS determined that Foul Island was unoccupied, but that it would not be of military use other than for a coast watcher, weather, or radio station.

The MU Section, however, suffered from poor environmental conditions and a lack of supplies. The MU Branch had trained its swimmers for underwater swimming with the LARU rebreather, an underwater recirculating breathing device invented by MU Captain Christian Lambertsen. It permitted a swimmer to remain underwater for an extended period and emit no telltale bubbles. The *chaungs* that the MUs were to reconnoiter, however, were murky and crocodile infested. This forced the swimmers to conduct their reconnaissance missions on the surface. Several other items that they had trained with and which were of use, such as enough kayaks, remained at Detachment 404 headquarters at Kandy. They only arrived at the AFU when operations were

⁶¹⁹ Intelligence debriefs and reports can be found at F 76, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁶²⁰ “Maritime Unit Arakan,” [June 1945], F 13, B 549, E 92, RG 226, NARA.

beginning to wind down, and in the meantime the MU had to borrow equipment from the British, or make due as they could. Because of this lack of material and the inability to perform their mission, the MU personnel at times were used for operations other than what they had been trained for, such as operating a maritime ferry service and refueling Catalina PBY aircraft at sea. Without adequate kayaks and unable to use the LARUs, it was left for the MU P-boats to infiltrate up the *chaungs* to detect an enemy presence or for depth readings to be conducted from their decks as opposed to letting the underwater swimmers do it covertly. This new method brought with it the added danger of detection and risk if one of the P-boats grounded in uncharted enemy-controlled waters.⁶²¹

In March, the AFU began preparations to assist in the invasion of Rangoon, because there was very little in the way of intelligence being supplied from the city or from lower Burma. It was here that the shift from support to combat operations to a strategic intelligence mission occurred. This is exactly opposite of what the Detachment was doing for NCAC. Tactical operations continued, but became of less utility. The MO Section continued to distribute the *War Mirror*, and at times had to go to great lengths to ensure that the locals helped. One MO soldier wrote headquarters, "I am the first American in this village ... it is a custom in a Chin village for every visitor to chew beetle [nut] at the headman's house-I am trying to get out of it-no luck ... I have to take it." Other times, the distribution of the newsletter required bribing local headmen with rupees or opium.⁶²² The MO Section made improvements in its ability to print

⁶²¹ "AFU DET 101 and the Arakan Campaign," [May 1945?], F 76, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁶²² James H. Mysbergh to Herbert Avedon, "Diary March 15-23," 24 March 1945, F 905, B 231, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

newspapers in multiple languages.⁶²³ However, after five weeks of this, the work came to naught because the British clandestine services were under the impression that MO actions were fanning the flames of Burmese nationalism. This forced MO to give up their agent chains at the end of March. They were forced to use pre-existing Force 136 chains.⁶²⁴ Thereafter, MO material would come from Calcutta vice the MO forward Section at Akyab.⁶²⁵ These actions greatly reduced MO's utility in the campaign.

Still, MO had other projects. One of these was SWAMP ISLAND, which was an attempt to get bypassed Japanese personnel to surrender. Many were still living in the mangrove swamps, and their eradication was difficult. As with any MO operation in the Arakan, this had to be cleared with the British. Information for these programs came from both the British and from the R&A Section. Once approved, SI agents helped in the distribution of the leaflets. That Section had placed village headmen on their payroll for fifty rupees per month. For this payment, the headmen notified the OSS when strangers arrived in their villages, and they distributed MO propaganda. This arrangement also greatly facilitated the X-2 Section in its efforts to root out suspected Japanese agents.⁶²⁶

In line with the focus on intelligence operations, in late March the MU and OG Sections were withdrawn. This included the P-boats that had been so instrumental in

⁶²³ Herbert Avedon to Charles J. Trees, "Morale Operations in the Arakan and Sothern Burma," 29 May 1945, F 76, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA. A clandestine radio broadcast, JN27, which had begun under BITTERSWEET was kept in operation. However, since its target was the Malayan Peninsula, it will not be covered.

⁶²⁴ Charles J. Trees, "Conference Noted P Div., HQ. XV Corps," 30 March 1945, F 905, B 231, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

⁶²⁵ Herbert Avedon to Charles J. Trees, "Monthly Report-March 1945," 28 March 1945, F 2050, B 151, E 139, RG 226, NARA.

⁶²⁶ D.B. Higgenbottom to E.J. Younger, "Monthly Report, X-2 Branch, AFU," [1 May 1945], F 1470, B 194, E 108B, RG 226, NARA.

infiltrating OG, SI, and MU personnel. The majority of the OG Section went to China to train parachute units under the CARBONADO Plan, which was the potential seizure of the China coast as a method of inching closer to Japan itself. The AFU OG had been unique in that it had never received parachute training in the United States, so the British granted permission—with Donovan’s prodding—for the Section to undergo parachute training at the school at Chakala.⁶²⁷

At the beginning of April, after leaving behind liaison with the XV Indian Corps, the AFU moved its headquarters forward from Akyab to Kyaukpyu to consolidate personnel and administration. Detachment 101’s influence was beginning to take effect and the AFU reported that “branch consciousness has been submerged in favor of the main mission of this unit. The entire unit is beginning to work together as a team.”⁶²⁸ Work to support the required infrastructure to support clandestine intelligence operations was underway. The U.S. Army Engineers created a camp for the OSS that they then turned over to the S&T Section for the establishment of another agent training school. At the same time, the OSS attached Communications personnel to the camp to assist in training agents in signal plans and code. Additional assistance was offered by the USAAF when liaison was established with the 2nd Air Commando Group, thereby securing the use of two L-5 light aircraft.⁶²⁹ This was fortunate as in 10 April, the AFU received word that on 15 April they would take over all V-Force operations in the

⁶²⁷ Alan F. Laidlaw to John G. Coughlin, “Parachute Training for Operational Group,” 19 April 1945, F 90, B 45, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁶²⁸ “Det 101, Arakan Field Unit Report April 26, 1945,” [27 April 1945], F 1919, B 181, E 136, RG 226, NARA.

⁶²⁹ Amos D. Moscrip to William R. Peers, “Monthly Report [OSS Detachment 101 BA], 29 April 1945, F 400, B 60, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

area.⁶³⁰ This was due in part to V-Force having been operating in the area since 1942, but having never made very deep penetrations into enemy territory nor developing much intelligence on Japanese forces.⁶³¹

In April, the AFU extended their informant networks and sought to interrogate locals who had knowledge of the Japanese military. The X-2 Section worked with local headmen to help uncover local black hats. This information helped the SI and R&A elements verify that their intelligence had some credibility, and helped ensure that the indigenous informants/agents were not fabricators. Those that were found to be black hats and who were unwilling to help the Allies, were removed from the operating areas so that they could not inform the enemy on Allied clandestine methods. In all, during the month the AFU interrogated ninety-seven locals. They were each paid anywhere from five to fifteen rupees for their information. The AFU estimated that some 50 percent of these interrogations resulted in usable intelligence. The OSS paid regular agents on a scale of two rupees per day with bonuses for mission completion or important intelligence supplied. Much as it had done in north Burma, the SO Section also worked to supply intelligence. Under Operation ANNE, it set up a network of village headmen in Japanese-occupied areas that helped to recruit local agents to report on the Japanese. These contacts enabled the OSS to uncover more intelligence in eight days than the "British 'V' Force had gotten out of the same area in the course of two

⁶³⁰ Trimble C. Condict to Charles J. Trees, "Semi-Monthly Operational Report; 1 April to 15 April 1945," 15 April 1945, F 2140, B 118, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁶³¹ "AFU DET 101 and the Arakan Campaign," [May 1945?], NARA.

months.” With these information sources, the AFU was able to submit forty-nine intelligence reports, as well as daily situation reports that it supplied to the British.⁶³²

These agent chains became a standard operating procedure for the AFU through early May. For instance, in early April, the SI Section had eight operations in the field. They also sent out dozens of short-range penetration teams as well. Unlike Detachment 101 operations in north Burma, there was little time to properly train these agents. These were typically one or two man teams of locally recruited personnel to which the OSS had given a short course in intelligence operations at the S&T camp before infiltrating them into Japanese-occupied areas. Like the intelligence-specific missions of Detachment 101 in north Burma, these teams focused on intelligence, not combat operations. Their combined total of Japanese killed was minor. Because of their limited training, the intelligence they produced was not as strategic or central to the campaign as had been produced by similar agent groups in north Burma. However, the sheer number of teams going behind Japanese lines helped to ensure that some of these teams produced usable information.⁶³³ By late February, however, the Japanese started to realize the effectiveness of the OSS’s agents and instituted a 5,000-rupee reward for any Allied agent turned over to them.⁶³⁴

In April, the MO Section mirrored Detachment 101 programs from north Burma for use in the Arakan. EVERYBODY’S DOIN’ IT was an adaptation of the false

⁶³² “Det 101, Arakan Field Unit Report April 26, 1945,” [27 April 1945], NARA.

⁶³³ Trimble C. Condict to Charles J. Trees, “Semi-Monthly Operational Report; 1 April to 15 April 1945,” 15 April 1945, F 481, B 66, E 154, RG 226, NARA. The number of agents in the field added to the AFU Communications duties. In March, the number of coded groups received stood at 101,138 groups. See Fred A. Chastain, “History of Commo AFU,” 26 May 1945, F 76, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA

⁶³⁴ “AFU DET 101 and the Arakan Campaign,” [May 1945?], NARA.

surrender order that MO had used with success in the Bhamo-Lashio campaigns. As in north Burma, this purported to be an order from higher headquarters telling Japanese troops that they could surrender if there was no other option. A follow-on campaign called THE WATER'S FINE emphasized that the Allies would treat Japanese prisoners of war well. Other programs aimed at getting Burmese collaborators to stop helping the Japanese.⁶³⁵ The surrender campaigns were of such importance in part, because in an initial survey of the Arakan front, an MO representative reported in November 1944 that a "brisk trade is going on in 'surrender leaflets.' Through a middleman, informant purchased his surrender leaflet very secretively and paid about five rupees for it. The nearer one gets to the front, the higher the price." In April, the AFU could report that they had six Japanese soldiers surrender to them.⁶³⁶ Both "P" Division and Mountbatten approved a new program, the "Dah" Plan, in late March. The plan called for stenciling a picture of a Dah—a type of Burmese sword—on Japanese killed and at the sites of destroyed infrastructure and vehicles. The intent was to goad the Japanese into believing that the multiple minorities in Burma had organized against the occupation and had finally "found a common basis for cooperation."⁶³⁷ Still other themes concentrated on the shoddy construction of Japanese war material. This was reinforced with Project NATTERJACK, a Force 136 project to infiltrate Japanese ammunition into the enemy logistic system that would explode upon use.

⁶³⁵ Herbert Avedon to Charles J. Trees, "Proposed Operations," 14 April 1945, F 1117, B 107, E 144, RG 226, NARA; Another copy is located at F 2050, B 151, E 139, RG 226, NARA.

⁶³⁶ "Det 101, Arakan Field Unit Report April 26, 1945," [27 April 1945], NARA.

⁶³⁷ K.D Mann to William J. Donovan, "Report of Trip to China, India-Burma and SEAC Theaters," 28 March 1945, F 2042, B 151, E 139, RG 226, NARA.

Rangoon

The capture of Rangoon was the main goal of the British. To the OSS, it represented a valuable intelligence target, as well as a possible staging area from which to launch operations into Thailand.⁶³⁸ To uncover intelligence on the city itself, SO began parachuting agents in the region.⁶³⁹ The X-2 Section had a group of two radio operators and three agents training at Nazira to parachute into Rangoon. There, they would meet up with a group of thirty men for the purpose of abducting a “top Ranking” Japanese intelligence officer.⁶⁴⁰ The group, dubbed Operation WINEGLASS IV dropped west of the city on 30 April. They were too late because Japanese intelligence personnel had already fled six days prior. But, the team was still of use. The group made it into Rangoon and provided military intelligence to the British 26th Division as it approached the city. The OSS supplies some of this information to the Royal Air Force (RAF) who used it to bomb Japanese targets ahead of the Allied advance.

Much as they had in Europe, the OSS decided that to fully exploit the city’s capture would require the formation of a City Team. In this case, the Rangoon City Team would exploit targets for their intelligence value by securing known collaborators, documents, and prisoners from Japanese military, police and intelligence facilities. They also sought out intelligence in such locations as government buildings, police stations, telegraph offices, newspaper offices, libraries, universities, and banks. The function of a city team was purely that of intelligence, requiring a heavy concentration of X-2, SI, and

⁶³⁸ John G. Coughlin to Charles J. Trees, 4 May 1945, F 2140, B 118, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

⁶³⁹ William R. Peers to John G. Coughlin, 1 May 1945, F 228, B 20, E 110, RG 226, NARA.

⁶⁴⁰ Baird V. Helfrich, “Special Snatch Unit Arms,” 25 April 1945, F 490, B 67, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

R&A personnel. Other OSS elements were also required, such as communications, Field Photo to copy documents, and OGs for security. Although the British knew that the teams were OSS, an attempt was made to keep the purpose a secret. In this case, the Rangoon City Team was to adopt the cover of a Combat Interrogation Team (CIT) like X-2 had formed in the north Burma campaign.⁶⁴¹

The test for the Rangoon City Team came on 3 May 1945. On that day, they rendezvoused twenty-five miles out in the Bay of Bengal from the Rangoon River, to take part in Operation JEAN or in British parlance, Operation DRACULA; the occupation of Rangoon. The group was a mixed lot of MO, OG, and X-2, and landed in the city proper at 1630 hours. This was several hours ahead of the British invasion forces. Once in Rangoon—which the Japanese had abandoned—the City Team spread out and began to exploit the area for intelligence. The Detachment 303 R&A Section assisted in this endeavor by providing area maps marked with the suspected locations of intelligence targets. The OSS sent reinforcements to the Rangoon City Team ten days later. The AFU headquarters moved into the city at the same time.⁶⁴²

The Japanese had destroyed many of their documents, but some remained scattered throughout locations they had formerly occupied. In the time between their withdrawal and the Allied invasion, locals had ransacked and looted the former-Japanese buildings. They inadvertently scattered documents, making it harder for the AFU to sort and compile them. One of the OSS officers described the situation, “When our men

⁶⁴¹ “Directive for organizing a Rangoon City Team,” 21 March 1945, F 390, B 60, E 190, RG 226, NARA; The U.S. Army had followed a similar intelligence exploitation program in Europe with “S-Forces,” (Italy) and “T-Forces,” (Northwest Europe).

⁶⁴² Trimble C. Condict to Daniel I. Sultan, “Semi-Monthly Operational Report, 1 May 1945 to 15 May 1945,” 15 May 1945, F 481, B 66, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

arrived ... the papers were usually in ragged heaps, amply intermixed with old bandages, toilet articles, discarded Japanese socks and other miscellaneous rubbish.” Despite the added difficulty, by 16 May the AFU had scoured the city and collected numerous documents, including those that concerned Japanese business and industry, and military manuals. The work remained for them to sort, classify, and microfilm their intelligence take. To assist in the translation of captured enemy documents, Detachment 101 had provided two of its Nisei from north Burma, Lieutenant Ralph Yempuku and Sergeant Richard Hamada.⁶⁴³

The MO Section set up a production office and arranged with local printers and civilians to start production of a newspaper, and secured local printing equipment and typeset. The State Department, however, soon announced the U.S. considered the Burma campaign over. With little utility seen in keeping MO in operation, the contingent was withdrawn. Only one representative remained to conduct operations into occupied southern Burma.⁶⁴⁴

The X-2 Section transferred to Rangoon from Kyaukpyu and reinforced their element in early May. They wanted to scour the city to learn more about how Japanese intelligence worked in Burma; their operating procedures, agents, and recruiting

⁶⁴³ David G. Mandelbaum to Charles J. Trees, “Preliminary Report City Documents Team-Operation Jean,” 16 May 1945, F 76, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA; David G. Mandelbaum to Charles J. Trees, “Final Report, City Documents Team, Op. Jean,” 25 May 1945, F 76, B 43, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁶⁴⁴ “MO Report on Operation JEAN/DRACULA,” 15 May 1945, F 6315, B 137, E 210, RG 226, NARA; Herbert Avedon to Charles J. Trees, “Monthly Report, Morale Operations Branch, May 1945,” 26 May 1945, F 2050, B 151, E 139, RG 226, NARA; Avedon to Trees, “Morale Operations in the Arakan and Sothern Burma,” 29 May 1945, NARA.

methods.⁶⁴⁵ The X-2's coverage of the Japanese intelligence system was thorough and uncovered the existence of sleeper agents of the *Minami Kikan* (Japanese intelligence organized for the Burma National Army), as well as information on the more well known *Kempeitai* (Japanese military police, which also had an espionage function). They were able to accomplish this even faster than the British intelligence organizations could establish themselves in Rangoon. This did little to help Anglo-American relations. Embarrassed, the British then required an arrangement in which the X-2 Section passed primacy on to the British. Thereafter, X-2 needed to secure permission before they could conduct interrogations. In turn, the British provided the information they had on the Japanese intelligence network. X-2 determined the Japanese intelligence system in Burma was of poor utility and extremely underdeveloped.⁶⁴⁶

The seven-man X-2 Section also had several other intelligence coups. Chief among this was the acquisition of Japanese diplomatic codebooks.⁶⁴⁷ The Section also discreetly maintained contact with the AFL and used them to help further intelligence collection. One of the chief X-2 officers considered the AFL "a gold mine if we are courageous enough to dig for the ore." X-2 considered these contacts so worthwhile that

⁶⁴⁵ Baird V. Helfrich to William R. Peers, "14th Army X-2 Team for Rangoon," 6 May 1945, F 490, B 67, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁶⁴⁶ Baird V. Helfrich to Commanding Officer, Br Hq, Det 404, "X-2 Monthly Report, June 1945," 20 June 1945, F 24794, B 6, E 214, RG 226, NARA; John J. McDonough to John G. Coughlin, "Rangoon Trip," 22 June 1945, F 1393, B 184, E 108B, RG 226, NARA. The only example that the OSS uncovered of the Japanese trying to send indigenous agents behind Allied lines can be found in Evelle J. Younger to John J. McDonough, "Jap Espionage Attempt, TAUNGUP to SANE," 21 February 1945, F 2141, B 118, E 15, RG 226, NARA. For more on Japanese intelligence see Stephen C. Mercado, *The Shadow Warriors of Nakano: A History of the Imperial Japanese Army's Elite Intelligence School* (Washington D.C., Brassey's, 2002)

⁶⁴⁷ Baird V. Helfrich to Joseph P. McCarthy, "Weekly X-2 Report, Det. 101 AFU, 21-28 May 1945, 28 May 1945, F 1470, B 194, E 108B, RG 226, NARA.

they planned to keep a representative in Rangoon.⁶⁴⁸ Meanwhile, the X-2 Section terminated the WINEGLASS IV operation, after it had provided valuable intelligence on the disposition of Japanese forces fleeing Rangoon.

Reactions to the Rangoon City Team were mixed. Peers thought the unit did a commendable job but relayed that several Detachment 404 personnel told him of their unfavorable impression of the group's work. Peers' immediate superior, John G. Coughlin also thought the unit performed well.⁶⁴⁹ However, the intelligence production of the Rangoon City Team was impressive. The R&A Section alone managed to secure and process 1750 enemy documents, over 1000 Japanese books, and take 10,000 microfilm frames.⁶⁵⁰

Conclusion

Detachment 101 transferred the AFU back to Detachment 404 on 5 June, thus ending the 101 presence in southern Burma. Only the units in the lower Shan States awaited their disbandment. The impressions of the AFU were mixed. Peers was generally pleased with the group, but had the following to say;

“I will have to admit that from the day I took over 101 AFU ... it was somewhat of a bugaboo, but I do believe that in the latter phases their work was good. From an operational and intelligence point of view, they were producing good intelligence ... From an administrative point of view, it was somewhat fouled up to the very end ... simply caused by every detachment in the IBT either assigning

⁶⁴⁸ Baird V. Helfrich to Charles J. Trees, “X-2 Monthly Report, May 1945,” 20 May 1945, F 1470, B 194, E 108B, RG 226, NARA; Baird V. Helfrich, “Memorandum on Conference,” 1 July 1945, F 2011, B 109, E 154, RG 226, NARA; At the time, the cost of X-2 operations in Rangoon was \$1500.00 per month, FB/001 to JJ/001 and DH/005, 19 July 1945, F 1471, B 194, E 108B, RG 226, NARA.

⁶⁴⁹ John G. Coughlin to William R. Peers, 22 June 1945, F 228, B 20, E 110, RG 226, NARA.

⁶⁵⁰ David G. Mandelbaum to Cora DuBois, “Accomplishments of R&A Branch, Arakan Field Unit, 14 December to 14 June 1945,” 2 July 1945, F 2142, B 118, E 154, RG 226, NARA; Mandelbaum to Trees, “Final Report, City Documents Team, Op. Jean,” 25 May 1945, NARA

or attaching personnel to 101 AFU at will ... this, coupled with the distance between Akyab and Nazira, created a very bad administrative set-up.”⁶⁵¹

Regardless, the results of the individual OSS Sections in the AFU were impressive. The R&A Section managed to (from December 1944 to June 1945) produce 360 reports totaling 783 pages, while at the same time providing 1910 map sets for use in the field.⁶⁵² The MO Section as well managed to produce several publications. More importantly, however, the individual Sections functioned very closely and relatively cohesively. Most notable of this was the coordination between the OG and MU Sections. These two groups—while having different specialties—were nearly seamless in their joint operations. Like other OSS operations, the group also had the flexibility to adapt to the local situation and to take missions as they came along. The British recognized this, and the OSS reported that they “do not hesitate to say that the results obtained by the AFU surpass by far those of V Force, the work of whom has been absorbed by our unit.”⁶⁵³

However, there were faults with the AFU. Much of this came from the previous command, Detachment 404, who had in particular poorly managed the MO and MU Sections. MO suffered from a lack of equipment, and then had to curtail its operations due to British political sensibilities. The MU Section had it worse. Detachment 404 sent it to Burma to perform a job for which it was unprepared. Its equipment had not arrived, and what had was inadequate. An example of this is the MU P-boats. These boats only had a short range of 500 miles, and because of their noisy, dual 1320 horsepower V-12

⁶⁵¹ William R. Peers to John G. Coughlin, 18 June 1945, F 228, B 20, E 110, RG 226, NARA.

⁶⁵² Mandelbaum to DuBois, “Accomplishments of R&A Branch, Arakan Field Unit,” 2 July 1945, NARA.

⁶⁵³ Waller B. Booth to John G. Coughlin, “Visit to AFU,” 2 May 1945, F 2134, B 118, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

engines, they had to carry enormous quantities of high-octane gasoline. This left the possibility, as one MU report said, that “a single incendiary bullet would convert one of these craft into a 70-ton funeral pyre with all hands on board.” This was not an unlikely scenario. Using them to slip into an enemy position undetected was “almost out of the question,” due to muffled roar of their motors. Yet, necessity dictated that they be used in this fashion. As it was, MU representatives made it to Rangoon to look for a base from which they could conduct operations further south. This was as far as the Section got. On 15 June the OSS ordered the MU Section in the Far East to disband. Detachment 404 had grossly mismanaged what could have been one of the most useful OSS elements in the Far East.⁶⁵⁴

More importantly, however, the AFU represented the flexibility of Detachment 101 as an organization. The Detachment’s main focus at the time was supporting NCAC, in which it was undertaking a new role for itself, that of switching from guerrilla warfare to a more conventional role. It was less than six months away from total disbandment. The Arakan mission was one that was nearly out of the Detachment’s operational range, and was far away from its main bases. Yet, the Detachment was able to undertake this new mission in a detached area, while at the same time coordinating with the numerous OSS branches and commands involved. It was also able to establish an entirely different type of organization, a City Team, with which it had no experience. That Detachment 101 had the flexibility to juggle concurrent but dissimilar missions is a testament to the unit’s ability to fill roles that other units could not.

⁶⁵⁴ “AFU DET 101 and the Arakan Campaign,” [May 1945?], NARA.

CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSIONS

From its beginning in mid-1942 until its inactivation in July 1945, Detachment 101 had the longest period of service of any OSS group. It was consistently able to change its operational focus and adopt new missions to assist conventional forces. More than any other OSS unit, Detachment 101 fulfilled OSS Director William J. Donovan's image of clandestine units that aided conventional operations through intelligence collection and sabotage. To fulfill Donovan's vision, the unit itself evolved. The initial contingent of twenty-one men that arrived in the China-Burma-India Theater in June 1942, little resembled the group that grew to almost 1,000 OSS personnel and 10,000 indigenous troops in the India-Burma Theater by July 1945. That the group could make the transition from a small band to a major combat formation in a little over three years is a tribute to the unit's adaptability. Yet, there are several reasons why Detachment 101 achieved success, as the study of the unit's organization has shown.

First, the unit's inherent flexibility allowed it to constantly alter its force as the situation—and where success—dictated. Colonel Carl F. Eifler, Detachment 101's first commanding officer, wanted to use sabotage operations against the Japanese forces. His long-range penetration operations, while having the potential of being strategically significant, were beyond Detachment's limited abilities in 1943. Instead, and with little other choice, Eifler focused on shallow penetrations, such as the FORWARD and

KNOTHEAD missions, that allowed Detachment 101 to fill roles that other units could not. These groups' focus on intelligence operations became one of Detachment 101's core missions and greatly improved the unit's utility to other formations. When he assumed command from Eifler in December 1943, Colonel William R. Peers took a more pragmatic approach. He reinforced missions like FORWARD and encouraged them to develop a guerrilla capacity. His command style became evident during the Myitkyina campaign when Detachment 101 greatly assisted the Allied effort far beyond what their relative lack of numbers would suggest would be possible in a conventional situation. When the Allies kicked off the Myitkyina offensive, Detachment 101 was ready to support their specific intelligence needs and to become an effective guerrilla force that devastated the Japanese in their rear areas. By the end of the Myitkyina campaign, the guerrilla warfare mission became Detachment 101's main role in the Burma Theater until the end of the war. By this time, Detachment 101 was flexible enough to support two separate campaigns—in the Shan States and in the Arakan—while simultaneously being in the process of disbanding.

The second factor contributing to the success of Detachment 101 was its freedom to change its command structure to meet its evolving mission roles and duties. Much of this was due to the lack of direction from higher authorities. At first, this was a severe detriment. It caused great confusion and helplessness in 1942 as the unit searched for a mission. Once Detachment 101 established its role in the Burma Campaign, the lack of oversight became a hidden strength. With no one looking over the Detachment, its commanders could determine how to best formulate its organization and operational

methods, and could adopt its lessons learned more quickly. From the moment it arrived in the CBI in 1942, Detachment 101 received little guidance from OSS Washington. India was half a world away and the communications infrastructure at Nazira was rudimentary at best. Detachment 101, then under the Coordinator of Information (COI) was the first unit of its type under the umbrella of an organization that was likewise, the first of its type. As such, Detachment 101 was a pathfinder element with no previous example to follow. Moreover, Detachment 101 did not interest OSS Washington to the point that it would give the unit direction. This fault can be laid at the feet of COI/OSS director Donovan, who was a poor administrator and in any case, focused on the war against Germany, and ignored Burma. On the U.S. Army side, General Stilwell's NCAC Headquarters was only interested in results, not in how the unit operated. As Peers commented in mid-1945, "Stilwell and Lt. Gen. Sultan, have always issued clear-cut mission orders, leaving planning, direction and operation entirely to this unit. With this we have been able to fully employ the imagination and ingenuity of every officer and enlisted man in this entire organization."⁶⁵⁵

Under Peers' direction, Detachment 101 became a more proactive, effective, and reliable organization. He reorganized the unit, strengthened critical but undermanned sections, and incorporated new OSS assets. He created an Operations Section to effectively coordinate its elements and established a central intelligence staff to evaluate, analyze, and disseminate intelligence collection to its best advantage. These changes allowed Peers to focus his attention less on running the Detachment and more on

⁶⁵⁵ William R. Peers to Raymond A. Wheeler, 5 July 1945, F 383, B 59, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

developing it into a larger asset for the north Burma campaign. Under Peers' direction, the unit developed a strategic focus by incorporating OSS elements, such as psychological warfare, that did not provide immediate operational returns. Operations were no longer the sole force driving administrative change. Once established, the unit was able to change its methods at will to those that were most effective.

One of these was to ignoring OSS Branch distinctions. Detachment 101 was the only unit within OSS to do so, making it unconventional even within the OSS. This lack of compartmentation enabled Detachment 101 to better absorb disparate functions into its operations. Yet, Detachment 101 at first did not plan to follow this model. In 1942 and 1943, Eifler's ambition surpassed his resources. Although all his men were from the Special Operations Branch, the group had the beginnings of the Communications, Special Funds, and Schools and Training Sections. Several long-range mission failures encouraged the unit to evaluate its lessons learned, and focus on realistic missions, that in turn, increased the unit's need for personnel.

Increased operational duties, however, again meant that the Detachment had to virtually ignore OSS Branch distinctions and assign personnel in an ad-hoc fashion to where they were most needed. Although end of mission reports from many of the Detachment 101 sections relate concerns with the practice, it allowed the unit to better integrate its separate elements into one operational focus in a coordinated and uncompartmented fashion.⁶⁵⁶ This was not a pre-planned process, as Detachment 101 could only make due with what was available. If OSS Washington ignored pleas for

⁶⁵⁶ The reviews can be found at F 27, B 35, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

personnel, there was little that the Detachment could do. This was especially true of staffing OSS-specific branches, several of which arrived too late or without enough support to contribute much to the Detachment's operations. Organizationally, all elements that would make up Detachment 101's force structure were in place by March 1945. But, the lack of attention from OSS Washington remained apparent. New arrivals, such as the OG, did not have a mission unique enough to merit the effort of trying to accommodate their particular specialty as a distinct entity. Other late-arriving sections, that were mission-specific such as R&D and X-2 only assisted tangentially. One X-2 member put it even more succinctly, calling his Section "ornaments on a tree not producing much light ... insofar as original intelligence X-2 would get a D or an F."⁶⁵⁷ Only an element such as MO, which could integrate its efforts into operations, had the potential to grow into a main part of the unit's force structure.

Third, by concentrating on the unglamorous mission of building liaison with other organizations, Detachment 101 was able to become far more influential and effective than would have been the case for a force of a similar size. Like Eifler before him, Peers encouraged liaison with other units. For instance, in the Myitkyina campaign, Detachment 101 was the only element that was keeping the American and British forces in communication. Peers later commented on the benefits that Detachment 101 received from its liaison arrangements "... it is believed that one of the outstanding reasons for the assistance and cooperation rendered this Detachment has

⁶⁵⁷ Phone interview with Richard Kranstover by Troy Sacquety, 20 November 2007, Fort Bragg, NC.

been through ... liaison."⁶⁵⁸ Detachment 101 also used its unconventional forces to achieve liaison in other ways. By adopting the role of helping downed Allied pilots and providing the USAAF with target data, Detachment 101 achieve extraordinary cooperation and secured scarce airlift that enabled Detachment 101 to expand its forces and area of operations. Detachment 101 became so important to the USAAF that by the end of 1944 it boasted that the unit "has rescued so many pilots from the jungle that the total 'dollar value' of such pilots ... exceed the cost of all Detachment 101 operations."⁶⁵⁹

Fourth and lastly, any study on Detachment 101 would be remiss if it did not acknowledge the tremendous assistance offered by the indigenous peoples of Burma, particularly the Kachin. Without their indispensable help, the unit would not have been able to acquire its intelligence or carry out guerrilla warfare. In so doing, the Detachment became a model in the post-war period for clandestine operations using indigenous personnel—even extending to post 9/11 operations.

Yet, the Detachment's success did not come easily, and not without mistakes. The intense operational focus led the group to under develop—or even ignore—important areas, such as administration. One of the Detachment's ranking officers put it succinctly; "a unit of the size and scope of Det. 101 requires a staff ... willing to devote their time to prosaic, dull administrative duties to further the success of the 'glamorous' field operator, to relieve the Commanding Officer of meddlers and irrelevant minor

⁶⁵⁸ William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, "Mission Report, Detachment 101, 1 June 1945 to 12 July 1945," 12 July 1945, F 1, B 33, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁶⁵⁹ Thomas J. Davis, "OSS Plans for Burma," 29 November 1944, F 2010, B 109, E 154, RG 226, NARA.

problems, and to be actively interested in the welfare of the unit as a whole.”⁶⁶⁰ The lack of administrative personnel produced some negative results. At times, the unit suffered from low morale in part because its lack of staff personnel to submit reports caused soldiers to not receive awards or promotion. As one officer noted, “Many of those righteously, justifiably, and deservedly, have not received recognition because of this deficiency. The theory that units operating in the field do not require a full staff is entirely irroneous [sic].”⁶⁶¹

Peers was aware of the problem, but could do little because of the lack of attention from OSS Washington. He commented, “For a unit to function effectively it must have competent administrative personnel. This Detachment actually handles the administration of what would normally be expected of a Division, with the personnel that would normally service a Company, or at most, a Battalion.”⁶⁶² Yet, not all was the fault of OSS Washington. As a new civilian agency with detailed military personnel, the OSS had difficulty getting their personnel promoted. Field personnel felt the effect most because officers and men at OSS Washington were most likely to receive promotions. OSS Headquarters did not have visibility over those in the field and they often were forgotten.

Yet, despite the unit’s problems, by 1945, the Detachment’s accomplishments were considerable. The OSS credited the unit with

American airmen rescued

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⁶⁶⁰ S.B. Joost to Chief, SI, “Report on Field Conditions,” 8 June 1945, F 26, B 74, E 99, RG 226, NARA.

⁶⁶¹ Douglas J. King to William R. Peers, “Personnel Report,” 12 July 1945, F 1, B 33, E 190, RG 226, NARA.

⁶⁶² William R. Peers to William J. Donovan, “Mission Report, Detachment 101, March 1945,” 25 March 1945, F 002145, B 76, E 210, RG 226, NARA.

Other Allied personnel rescued	342
Known enemy killed:	5,447
Enemy killed or seriously wounded (estimate):	10,000
Enemy captured:	64
Bridges destroyed:	51
Railroad trains destroyed:	9
Military vehicles destroyed:	277
Supplies destroyed (estimate):	2,000 tons
Supplies captured (estimate):	500 tons
Intelligence furnished to NCAC:	90 percent
Targets designated for air action:	65 percent, resulting in 11,225 killed and 885 wounded ⁶⁶³

The unit had been able to mold its disparate OSS Sections into a force that was capable of utilizing land, air, and sea elements for intelligence collection, conducting Civil Affairs, and waging guerrilla and psychological warfare. These abilities gave the unit direction and control over its operations, resulting in a unit that was preeminent in OSS. Although other OSS combat operations gave exceptional service, such as the OSS Operational Groups in Europe, and SO missions in France and China, none was as central to the conduct of an entire campaign as was Detachment 101 in Burma. Although the situation Detachment 101 faced in Burma in WWII was unique, the group's organization challenges, solutions, and method of warfare offers lessons that can be adapted to today's Special Operations forces.

⁶⁶³ Kermit Roosevelt, *The Overseas Targets: War Report of the OSS, Vol. Two* (New York: Walker, 1976), 391-392; William R. Peers and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963), 217.

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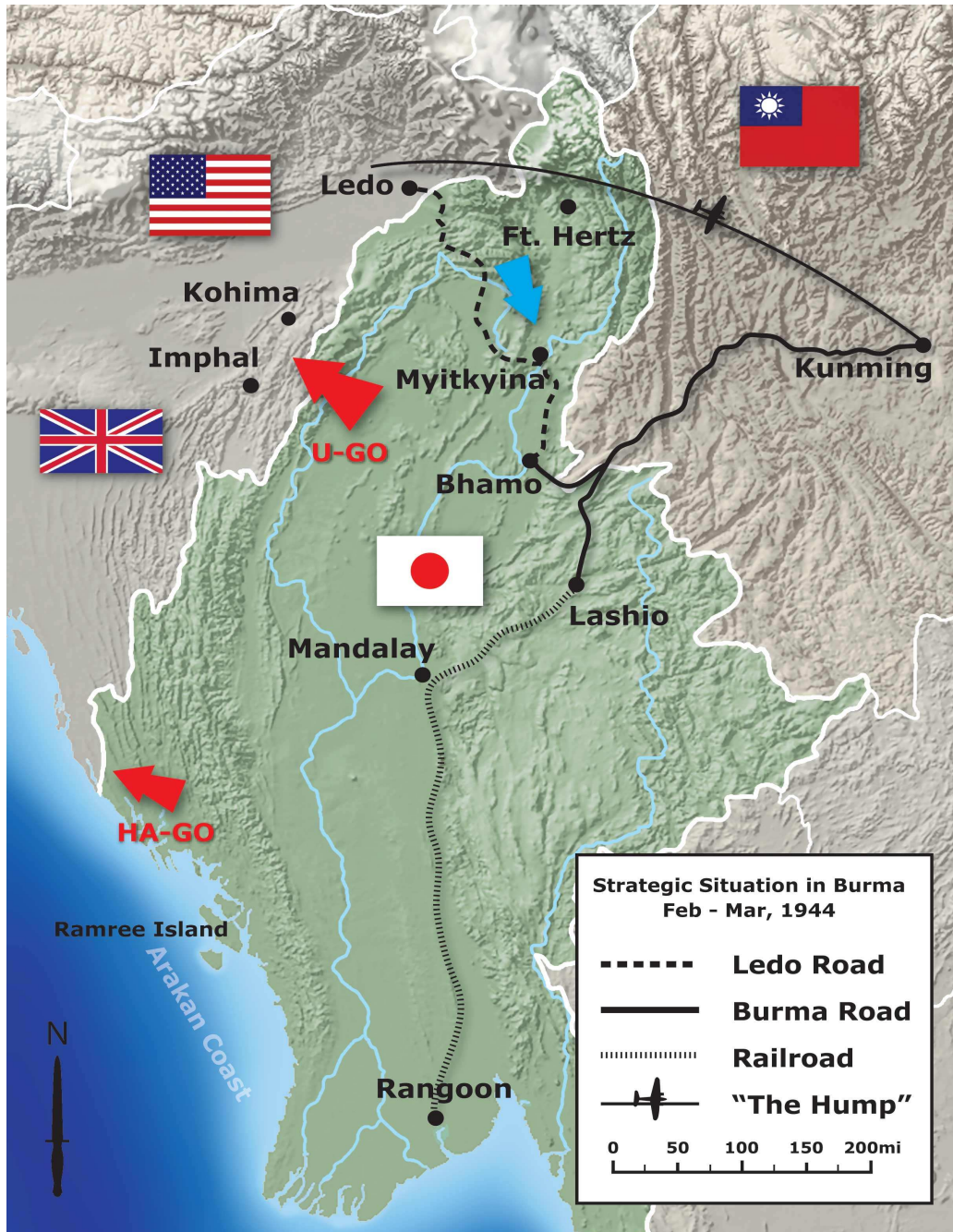
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