

THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

**Special Operations Forces
in Large-Scale Combat Operations**

Edited by Robert Toguchi and Michael Krivdo



**LARGE-SCALE COMBAT
OPERATIONS SERIES**

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Cover image: US Special Forces are extracted from a mountain pinnacle in Zabul province, Afghanistan, by a US Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 82nd Aviation Regiment, 82nd Combat Aviation Brigade after executing an air assault mission to disrupt insurgent communication. (US Army photo by S. Sgt. Aubree Clute)

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The Competitive Advantage: Special Operations Forces in Large-Scale Combat Operations

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Edited by
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and
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Editor
Michael L. Hogg

Foreword

Since the Soviet Union's fall in 1989, the specter of large-scale ground combat against a peer adversary was remote. During the years following, the US Army found itself increasingly called upon to lead multinational operations in the lower to middle tiers of the range of military operations and conflict continuum. The events of 11 September 2001 led to more than 15 years of intense focus on counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. An entire generation of Army leaders and Soldiers were culturally imprinted by this experience. We emerged as an Army more capable in limited contingency operations than at any time in our nation's history, but the geopolitical landscape continues to shift and the risk of great power conflict is no longer a remote possibility.

While our Army focused on limited contingency operations in the Middle East and Southwest Asia, other regional and peer adversaries scrutinized US military processes and methods and adapted their own accordingly. As technology has proliferated and become accessible in even the most remote corners of the world, the US military's competitive advantage is being challenged across all of the warfighting domains. In the last decade, we have witnessed an emergent China, a revanchist and aggressive Russia, a menacing North Korea, and a cavalier Iranian regime. Each of these adversaries seeks to change the world order in their favor and contest US strategic interests abroad. The chance for war against a peer or regional near-peer adversary has increased exponentially, and we must rapidly shift our focus to successfully compete in all domains and across the full range of military operations.

Over the last two years, the US Army has rapidly shifted the focus of its doctrine, training, education, and leader development to increase readiness and capabilities to prevail in large-scale ground combat operations against peer and near-peer threats. Our new doctrine, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations*, dictates that the Army provide the joint force four unique strategic roles: shaping the security environment, preventing conflict, prevailing in large-scale combat operations, and consolidating gains to make temporary success permanent.

To enable this shift of focus, the Army is now attempting to change its culture shaped by over 15 years of persistent limited-contingency operations. Leaders must recognize that the hard-won wisdom of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars is important to retain but does not fully square with

the exponential lethality, hyperactive chaos, and accelerated tempo of the multi-domain battlefield when facing a peer or near-peer adversary.

To emphasize the importance of the Army's continued preparation for large-scale combat operations, the US Army Combined Arms Center has published these volumes of *The US Army Large-Scale Combat Operations Series* book set. The intent is to expand the knowledge and understanding of the contemporary issues the US Army faces by tapping our organizational memory to illuminate the future. The reader should reflect on these case studies to analyze each situation, identify the doctrines at play, evaluate leaders' actions, and determine what differentiated success from failure. Use them as a mechanism for discussion, debate, and intellectual examination of lessons of the past and their application to today's doctrine, organization, and training to best prepare the Army for large-scale combat. Relevant answers and tangible reminders of what makes us the world's greatest land power await in the stories of these volumes.

Prepared for War!

Michael D. Lundy
Lieutenant General, US Army
Commanding General
US Army Combined Arms Center

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Introduction

Special Operations Forces in Large-Scale Combat Operations

We must preserve our legacy of courage, commitment, and combat effectiveness, grounded in professionalism, honor, and valor. Our reputation is forged in battle through the deeds of humble warriors, some of whose names are etched in granite. We are entrusted with a legacy that demands we maintain the highest standards and discipline in everything we do; that we embody quiet professionalism; and that when called upon to serve the Nation, our deeds reflect this organization's creed: Sine Pari—Without Equal.¹

—Lt. Gen. Francis M. Beaudette, CG, US Army Special Operations Command

The special operations legacy is without equal, as the Army's Special Operations Forces Vision clearly depicts. This volume in the Army University Press' *Large-Scale Combat Operations Series* provides historical case studies that illustrate the special operations forces (SOF) legacy through their participation in large-scale combat operations. These case studies encompass operations from 1916 to 2003. The units conducting the operations were organizations with SOF-like characteristics and functions, though some were not called "SOF" in their time. Eight of the 12 chapters describe US SOF operations, and four chapters depict SOF operations of other nations. All address the roles and activities of special operations in division and higher level operations.

This book is a collection of 12 historical case studies of special operations during large-scale combat. It is organized chronologically, using the period encompassing World War I as a starting point. From then to today, the reader will observe how the idea of special operations formed into organizations that have now become a key part of our fighting doctrine. While the discreet, sensitive, and often spectacular missions are informative themselves, the real lessons to observe are how divisions, corps, and armies combined their conventional effects with those of the special operators. *Those instances of synergy—the operational synergy that resulted from those combined arms teams—generated powerful dynamics for maneuver that could be applied to future maneuver warfare.*

Other themes that emerge from these chapters include the value of SOF operating in areas where the conventional forces had not or could not access, such as going deep on the battlefield or in denied areas. From these

denied areas, SOF created compelling dilemmas for enemy commanders to confront that subsequently led to situations that friendly forces were able to exploit. Additionally, special operations brought a unique mixture of capabilities that frustrated enemy plans. Those capabilities—*indigenous approaches, developing understanding and wielding influence, precision targeting operations, and crisis response*—are the pillars upon which SOF prepares for today and upon which it fights tomorrow.

The Indigenous Approach—this is a means to address challenges to regional stability with and through populations and partner forces empowered by persistent ARSOF engagement. Through this approach, ARSOF leverage nascent capability within populations, transforming indigenous mass into combat power.

Developing Understanding and Wielding Influence—these are essential aspects of the value ARSOF capabilities provide joint force commanders and the nation. The SOF network of culturally attuned personnel, assets, and international partnerships represents the means to obtain early understanding of emerging local, regional, and transregional threats and where opportunities exist for advancing US objectives. The SOF network provides capabilities needed to influence outcomes in all campaign phases and especially in conflict short of overt war.

Precision Targeting—these operations involve direct action and counter-network activities enabled by SOF unique intelligence, targeting processes, and technology, such as ARSOF rotary wing capabilities and armed unmanned aerial systems. Precision targeting operations are employed against difficult target sets that may require operating in uncertain or hostile environments, careful and focused application of force, and significant intelligence and operational preparation.

Crisis Response—this is provided through CONUS and OCONUS stationed alert forces and persistently deployed and dispersed units. It provides national decision makers with agile, tailorable, and rapidly employable special operations formations necessary to respond to emergencies.

This historical case study comes at an opportune time as the Army's newest concept, *The US Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028*, reveals the relevance of large-scale combat operations to prevail over rising peer and near-peer competitors. Success will come from creating operational synergy across multiple domains, much like the synergy achieved between conventional forces and SOF as depicted throughout these historical cases. The value of this study, therefore, is that by looking through the lens of the past, we might distill powerful implications for the future of operations.

The authors were asked to look at special operations in terms of their roles in large-scale combat. How did they fit into the broader maneuver schemes, and how did their operations contribute to the conventional fight? We also asked the authors to factor the uniqueness of SOF capabilities relative to those of the conventional forces. While these short chapters are historical in nature, we welcomed the author's own insights into the implications of SOF in large-scale combat, so that we might learn how to apply them effectively in the future.

Chapter 1 by George W. Gawrych, "T.E. Lawrence, Military Theory, and Coalition Warfare," begins the chronology with a look at how T.E. Lawrence grasped the power embedded within a culture and created a coalition of non-traditional fighters that would succeed against traditional armies. This chapter is necessary for setting the stage with a backdrop of theory, namely of irregular warfare, as a theoretically viable approach to the campaigns in war. Gawrych depicts Lawrence as one who purposefully dug into his repertoire of history for theories that he later turned into warfighting practice.

Michael Barr draws us from theory to practice as he examines Lawrence's efforts from a different angle in "Hammer and Anvil: Lawrence and Allenby Coordinate Conventional and Asymmetric Forces in the Megiddo Campaign of 1918" as Chapter 2. Here we begin to notice how the concept of combined arms can take advantage of indigenous mass from insurgencies as a form of combat power. Barr provides a case analysis of Lawrence's operations in conjunction with General Edmund Allenby's Egyptian Expeditionary Forces. Their combination of regular, professional soldiers with irregulars—largely Bedouin and Arab peasants—demonstrated powerful effects when they worked together.

Chapter 3 by Kenneth A. Hawley, "Special Operations in the Spanish Civil War," exposes the reader to the idea of special operations as implemented by other countries. Hawley examines the role of guerrillas in warfare by looking at their use in the 1939 Spanish Civil War. In this chapter he discusses timeless lessons of integration and interdependence between irregular and regular forces that carry forward to today's synergy between conventional forces and special operations forces.

Chapter 4 by Joseph Royo is titled, "Special Operations in Operation Overlord: Go Deep, Cause Problems, and Frustrate Plans." It is the book's first full look at a named large-scale operation, and it specifically emphasizes the combined arms character of conventional forces and special operations forces in combination with one another. Those combinations created greater

freedom of action for Allied forces while limiting Germany's freedom to maneuver. They also presented Allied forces with options to create second fronts and turn German resources away from the invasion. Synchronizing activities such as air bombing and ground sabotage, combinations of conventional force movement and unconventional force screening, and combinations of intelligence gathered from military intelligence and indigenous populations formed an array of dilemmas that the German defense schemes had to confront.

Benjamin F. Jones takes the World War II experience to the European front with an examination of Jedburgh teams in Chapter 5, "What Works? Jedburgh Team Operations Supporting Conventional Forces." With the Jedburghs we begin to see the formation of units that look and function similar to today's US Army Special Operations Forces (AR-SOF). Jones shows us two of those teams who were operating in different parts of France, deep behind enemy lines. The story of these two teams is important because one was a success, and the other tragically was destroyed. These examples demonstrate two dynamics for future planners: the difficulty of these kinds of operations in denied areas, and the critical task of supporting them.

Stephen E. Ryan takes us into World War II with Chapter 6, "Alamo Scouts in the Pacific." This is the first of four chapters devoted to the World War II experience. The authors analyzed this tide-turning moment as different varieties of unorthodox units penetrated deep into the European and Pacific theaters of operation. Ryan introduces us to precision-style operations as small "commando" teams penetrate deep into Japanese-controlled areas of New Guinea, Leyte, and Luzon. As the eyes of the organization, they located enemy units. As raiders they went after high-value targets. As highly mobile teams, they coordinated with guerrilla forces behind enemy lines. These Alamo Scouts demonstrated how nimble, small teams could add tremendous value to the intelligence picture and enabled large-scale combat operations by operating deep in enemy territory.

Chapter 7 by Richard E. Killblane titled, "Guerrilla Operations on Luzon," continues the Pacific campaign focusing on the guerrilla effort used on Luzon. Killblane details how the Allied 6th Army used guerrillas to attack the Japanese in a particularly hard to reach area—deep in the jungle mountains of Northern Luzon. Here, Killblane describes to the reader how an indigenous mass in guerrilla forces could be transformed into combat power. Fighting as a maneuver element, the allied-led insurgents reduced the effects that Japanese forces would have had on MacArthur's army.

Jason A. Byrd and Michael E. Krivdo jump forward a few years to the Korean Conflict with Chapter 8, “Partisan Operations in the Korean War.” They show us that by organizing an indigenous force of approximately 25,000 partisan anti-Communist guerrillas in North Korea, Eighth US Army (EUSA) planners were able to disrupt and divert up to 500,000 regular North Korean troops from their normal duties. Communist forces that were necessary to conduct their own large scale ground combat operations. This ability to transform indigenous mass into combat power is one the key distinctions of ARSOF capabilities today.

Chapter 9 by Luke C. Guerin and Eugene G. Piasecki address a complicated subject from a complicated conflict in their piece titled “Civilian Irregular Defense Group in Vietnam.” They detail the evolution of a program established in Vietnam to create combat power from marginalized, local populations. Converting untrained and unarmed volunteers into fighting forces is no small military let alone political task. This chapter shows the sensitivity of the denied military and political environments in which SOF must operate. These civilian irregular elements show examples of shaping the battlefield for large-scale combat operations through deep understanding and influencing of local populaces, the collection of operational intelligence, precision targeting, interdicting infiltration routes, and engaging with enemy forces.

Tal Tovy authored Chapter 10, “Special Forces in the Yom Kippur War,” giving us another alternative angle view of special operations in other countries. The aim of this chapter is to examine how the armies of Egypt, Syria, and Israel used their special forces during the war. This is especially helpful as Tovy shows how in some cases special operations units demoralized and greatly disrupted their enemy systems; in some cases they did not have as significant effect on ground maneuver. Nevertheless, their support to the tactical ground battles is noticeable and instructive for the way ground forces can integrate SOF into future maneuver schemes.

Chapter 11, written by James Stejskal is called, “If the Cold War Goes Hot: Special Forces Berlin and Planning for Operations in East Germany, 1956-1990.” This chapter has a particular resonance given today’s national security context. Stejskal chronicles the training, skills, and assigned missions for a unique and little-known special operations unit. This classified, clandestine unit operated through much of the cold war. Its mission was for six SF teams to conduct direct-action missions against rail, road, and canal infrastructure in and around Berlin before beginning unconventional warfare (UW) operations. Although large-scale combat

never ensued, the lessons we can glean from the purpose, planning, and role of special forces in Berlin are above all timely.

Daniel E. Stoltz concludes the chronology with one of the most recent examples of SOF in large-scale operations. Chapter 12 titled, “Task Force Viking: US Army Special Operations Forces and the Indigenous Approach through Long-Term Partner Engagement,” wraps up the discussions emphasizing the value of SOF ability to garner long-term partnerships with indigenous forces. This chapter outlines the importance of gaining synergy between conventional forces, SOF, and indigenous forces at all levels of warfare. Using coalition operations in Northern Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Stoltz describes how Task Force Viking integrated the 52,000-man-strong Kurdish Peshmerga to effect the liberation of Kirkuk and Mosul in 2003.

From unconventional warfare and raids against vital adversary nodes, to opening second fronts; from combining with indigenous forces to disrupt and fix enemy armored and mechanized divisions, to clandestine actions of sabotage and intelligence gathering; SOF’s role in large-scale combat through history is clearly evident. It is without equal, and this volume aims to depict that. By describing the past to discover implications for the future, this eighth volume in the *Large-Scale Combat Operations Series*, conveys SOF’s significant contributions and roles within the broader context of land warfare.

It illuminates the themes of synergy, operating behind enemy lines, the power of indigenous forces, and precision targeting. This volume comes at an opportune time as the joint force addresses the rising threat of peer and near-peer adversaries with SOF as an integral element of warfare. The current *US Army Special Operations Command Vision* describes its soldiers as those who “excel across the broad spectrum of operations in the most demanding, complex and uncertain environments imaginable, and possess invincible will, utmost professionalism and exceptional competence.”² The soldiers’ characteristics, and the environments where SOF operate, as reflected in each of these chapters are as applicable now as they were over the previous century.

Notes

1. United States Army Special Operations Command, *Army Special Operations Vision*, 20 August 2018.
2. United States Army Special Operations Command, *Army Special Operations Vision*, 20 August 2018.

Chapter 1

T. E. Lawrence, Military Theory, and Coalition Warfare¹

George W. Gawrych

If there were a hall of fame for modern military theorists, Thomas Edward Lawrence (1888-1935) would deserve a place in it. In working effectively with the leaders of the Arab Revolt in World War I, he saw extended combat in one of the harsher environments of the world, the Arabian desert, but he clearly played an important role in military operations. Also, the keen observer and a gifted writer, Lawrence left a body of military literature, modest in quantity, but certainly impressive in quality. His *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1926) stands out among all his writings. Unlike most military memoirs, which are mainly a record of personal challenges and triumphs, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* can be read as an insightful study of Arab tribesmen and their way of war. Lawrence also left for future generations of officers a significant article entitled “The Evolution of a Revolt,” published in 1920.² In only 15 pages, Lawrence succinctly articulated his theory of guerrilla warfare, one that also appears in expanded form in *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. In addition, in 1917, while on his assignment in Arabia, Lawrence filed “Twenty-seven Articles,” a report in which he offered principles for working effectively with Arab Bedouins in coalition warfare.³ Together, these three writings constitute excellent professional reading for the intellectual development of officers in the art of irregular and coalition warfare.

The Makings of a Foreign Area Officer

Upon his arrival in the Arabia in October 1916, T. E. Lawrence was intellectually well-prepared to carve for himself a place in modern military history. Around the age of 15, Lawrence began reading books on military history and theory. He entered Jesus College at Oxford University in 1907 with of view of studying modern history. His studies included a solid foundation in both military history and military theory. “In military theory, I was tolerably read,” Lawrence once remarked.⁴ This statement is quite modest, but his professional reading was quite impressive by the standards of any day. Lawrence was familiar with the works of Carl von Clausewitz, Antoine-Henri Jomini, Maurice Comte de Saxe, Helmuth von Moltke, Ardant du Picq, Colmar von der Goltz, and Ferdinand Foch.⁵ These theorists were all noted for their insights into conventional warfare, but not exclusively.

In addition to intellectual preparation, Lawrence also acquired field experience and language ability. His passion for military subjects led him in 1909 to spend four months in Syria and Lebanon conducting research on Crusader castles. After returning to England, he completed his bachelor thesis in 1910, entitled *The Influence of the Crusades on European Military Architecture—to the End of the XIIIth Century*, which was eventually published as *Crusader Castles*.⁶ From 1910 to 1913, Lawrence conducted archeological research in the Middle East at Carchemish on the Upper Euphrates during which time he mastered the Arabic language. With war in Europe on the horizon, the British Army enlisted his service in helping map the Sinai Peninsula that resulted in the publication of a book entitled *The Wilderness of Zin*.⁷ This project required Lawrence to conduct a systematic evaluation of the military value of terrain.

The outbreak of World War I found Lawrence fully engaged in London completing his study of the Sinai. Upon its completion, Lawrence joined the army as a lieutenant. Because of his experience in the Middle East, within a short time, the British Army assigned him to its intelligence branch in Cairo. There, he renewed his acquaintance with Getrude Bell (1868-1926), whom he first met in May 1911. This English woman came to Cairo to work in the British intelligence service because of her extensive experience of living and travelling in the Middle East. She proved an invaluable source for firsthand knowledge of Arab tribes and tribal chiefs, no doubt providing Lawrence with useful insights into Bedouin society for his future assignment in Arabia.⁸ Her information complemented that which Lawrence had gained from his own readings on Arab history and society, including the famous work by Charles Montague Doughty (1843-1926), *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, originally published in 1888. Doughty has been regarded as the greatest of all English travelers in Arabia.

Lawrence's assignment to the intelligence branch in Cairo proved an excellent final step in preparation for work among the Arabs. Here, for almost two years, Lawrence was able to amass "an encyclopedic knowledge of the Ottoman Empire, and also of the Turkish Army and its dispositions. Each day an immense amount of military and political information passed through his hands."⁹ This steady flow of information attuned Lawrence to the higher issues of warfare, the interplay of policy and military operations, especially beginning in August 1915 when Sharif Hussein, the Emir (commander) of the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina, first offered the British an Arab alliance against the Ottomans. On 5 June 1916, after months of negotiations, Hussein finally raised the standard of revolt for Arab independence and then on 2 November assumed the title "King

of the Arabs.” The British in Cairo, for their part, provided Hussein with money, weapons, supplies, and advisors while at the same time promising to recognize him after the war as an Arab ruler, but with duplicity as to what territory this would encompass.

By October 1916, Lawrence was well prepared for his role as British liaison officer to the Arab Revolt. As a result of serious study, extensive travel, and extensive residence in the Middle East, Lawrence possessed an impressive knowledge of Arab society and the Arabic language that served him well in Arabia as a British liaison and advisor to the Arabs in revolt against Ottoman rule. His intelligence work gave him a good understanding of the strategic background for the British-Arab alliance. As a citizen-soldier, he found it easier to transcend the general conservatism of professional officers and to coordinate Arab military operations with the British campaign in Palestine and Syria. Well-read in military literature, Lawrence possessed the intellectual sophistication necessary to articulate his military experiences and observations into a coherent theory of irregular warfare and coalition warfare.

When Lawrence landed in Jeddah on 16 October 1916, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force was slowly moving through the Sinai toward Palestine, eventually capturing Jerusalem on 11 November 1917, and the Arab Revolt was in full swing. Sharif Hussein had revolted with British and French assistance against Ottoman rule in Arabia. Most of the Hejaz, including Mecca, had fallen under Hussein’s control. Medina, however, remained in Ottoman hands garrisoned by some 16,000 troops, supplied by the Hejazi Railway. For his army, Hussein relied heavily on tribes, but he did manage to develop a core of 4,000 to 5,000 Arab regulars, either POWs or volunteers, and commanded by a small number of ex-Ottoman Arab officers. By March 1918, for example, the Arab Revolt could raise between 25,000 and 30,000 regular soldiers and tribesmen. Feisal, one of Hussein’s sons, commanded the forces heading north. The regulars played a key role in fixed battles.

Initially, British command in Cairo sent Lawrence to Arabia to gather intelligence on the revolt. Rather quickly, however, he gained the confidence of Feisal and remained in the Hejaz to serve as his British liaison. Feisal encouraged Lawrence to don Arab attire and carry a golden dagger strapped to his belt, thus giving the appearance of a British officer who had gone native. Yet, Lawrence remained clean-shaven unlike the Arab tribesmen with their beards. He thus maintained his identity as a foreigner. Effectively advising the Arabs demanded an understanding and appreciation of their culture and warfighting. As a military advisor, Lawrence, now a

captain, faced more than a tactical problem. As the Arab Revolt developed during his tenure, Lawrence had to link the Bedouin style of warfare with the Allied goal of defeating the Ottoman Army in Palestine and Syria. This task required him to strike harmony between discordant interests and strategies, a formidable undertaking even for a regular officer. Yet, Lawrence proved up to the task.

Military Theory and Irregular Warfare

Initially, Lawrence had little time to reflect seriously and critically about his theater of operations. Upon arriving in the Hejaz, Lawrence saw “a crying need for action;” so he uncritically relied too much on instinct in developing his initial courses of action. However, in March 1917, a combination of boils, dysentery, and malaria laid him up in a tent for some ten days.¹⁰ During this rather lengthy convalescence, Lawrence turned to serious thought and critical analysis. He searched, in his own words, “for the equation between my book-reading and my movements.”¹¹ He sought to connect theory with practice; the abstract with the concrete. Only then could a compass be found with which to negotiate through the Bedouin world of warfare.

Lawrence had to appreciate the Arab way of war as underscored by Clausewitz nearly a century earlier:

The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish...the kind of war on which they are embarking, neither making it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive.¹²

Lawrence fulfilled this need admirably, especially with regard to grasping *the role of culture* in warfare.

Maurice de Saxe (1696-1750) provided Lawrence the theoretical foundation for his own theory of guerrilla war. Writing nearly two centuries earlier, in 1732, de Saxe found generals too preoccupied with tactics, marches, and formations and they, therefore, ignored the intellectual aspects of war: “very few men occupy themselves with the higher problems of war. They pass their lives drilling troops and believe that this is the only branch of the military act.”¹³ Like Lawrence, de Saxe had difficulty finding time for serious thought and self-reflection. And like Lawrence, de Saxe had to suffer illness to gain the time necessary for serious reflection and writing. During the 13 days of his convalescence, de Saxe wrote much of *My Reveries Upon the Acts of War*, a treatise on

war that remains a classic today.¹⁴ This work provided Lawrence with a theoretical framework for gaining a deep appreciation of the Bedouin way of war.

To support effectively the Allied war effort in Arabia, Lawrence needed to understand the nature of guerrilla warfare as practiced by Arab tribesmen for centuries. Here, he embraced de Saxe as his military mentor. Lawrence regarded the eighteenth-century Austrian general and theorist as “the greatest master of this kind of war.” De Saxe offered a theory of war based on the model of a general who practiced the dictum that “a war might be won without fighting battles.”¹⁵ Whether Lawrence was aware of this or not, others had presented a similar ideal. Some 2,500 years earlier, Sun Tzu, the most famous Chinese theorist of war, wrote that “the highest excellence is to subdue the enemy’s army without fighting at all.”¹⁶ By arguing for a military strategy based on maneuver rather than battle as the ideal, De Saxe provided Lawrence with a theoretical framework for negotiating the Arab world of war with purpose and direction.

Lawrence could see direct application for de Saxe’s theory of avoidance of battle to the unconventional warfare of Arabia in the 20th century. In Bedouin society, battle carried an importance markedly different from that of European mass armies waging war on the continent. Bedouins generally nurtured a sensitivity to high casualties. Europe’s bloody battles of World War I waged over weeks or months made no sense in an environment where the population was scarce, the desert vast, and the organization tribal. Here in Arabia, seizing fertile ground, maintaining personal honor, or capturing prize booty often carried more weight in developing military strategy than the conventional aim of defeating an army in bloody engagements.

De Saxe’s theory of war without battle as a centerpiece of military strategy gave Lawrence a theoretical base from which to analyze and appreciate the Bedouin way of war. Inspired by de Saxe, Lawrence developed his own concept of a “war of detachment.”¹⁷ Avoid seeking the enemy’s strength in battle; instead, conduct a strategy based on raids of 100 to 200 tribesmen against targets designed to unbalance the adversary. “Our tactics were always tip and run, not pushes, but strokes.”¹⁸ To deny the Turks lucrative targets, the Arabs naturally resorted to the principle of employing “the smallest force, in the quickest time, at the farthest place.”¹⁹ In other words, the Arab strength lay in employing a raiding strategy. Battle should be engaged in only under the most favorable conditions. This was the essence of Bedouin warfare.

The main elements in Lawrence's theory of irregular warfare may seem obvious and simple today. In his day, Lawrence experienced an institutional bias in the British Army toward conventional strategy and tactics: "We all looked only to the regulars to win the war. We were obsessed by the dictum of Foch that the ethic of modern war is to seek for the enemy's army, his center of power, and destroy it in battle."²⁰ Sharif Hussein lacked the ability to capture Medina against a well-entrenched and led Ottoman Army. The Bedouin Arabs could not be transformed into a Western army, for they rejected formal discipline and the training programs designed to break individuality for forming cohesive combat units. Instead, the tribes preferred to fight under their own *shaykhs* (tribal chiefs) as individual warriors and as members of tribes. Even an adept Arab leader such as Feisal could not easily mix tribes together. Arab regular units could experience various degrees of friction when employed alongside tribal fighters in military operations.

Lawrence understood these limitations and was frustrated by them at times. In August 1917, he wrote in a letter to Clayton: "Of course it would be nice and much simpler for us if the Arab Movement emerged from the bluff-and-mountain pass stage and become a calculable military problem: but it hasn't yet and isn't likely to."²¹ Despite all the Arab military weaknesses, Lawrence still found much to be admired in the Bedouin way of war:

Do not try to trade on what you know of fighting. The Hejaz confounds ordinary tactics. Learn the Bedu principles of war as thoroughly and as quickly as you can, for till you know them your advice will be no good to the Sharif. Unnumbered generations of tribal raids have taught them more about some parts of the business than we will ever know.²²

Where others were distracted by weaknesses, Lawrence respected the Bedouin character and strategy in warfare. And the Arab tribes proved capable of conducting larger scale operations augmented by regular troops, foreign advisors, sufficient war material and foodstuff, and money.

By its nature, irregular warfare has its advantages against conventional forces. As noted by Lawrence in perhaps his most famous dictum, "*to make war upon rebellion is messy and slow, like eating soup with a knife.*"²³ In developing his own theory of irregular warfare, Lawrence identified three key elements for analysis: the algebraic, the biological, and the psychological for analyzing messy rebellions.²⁴ In understanding the interplay of these three elements, he was able to

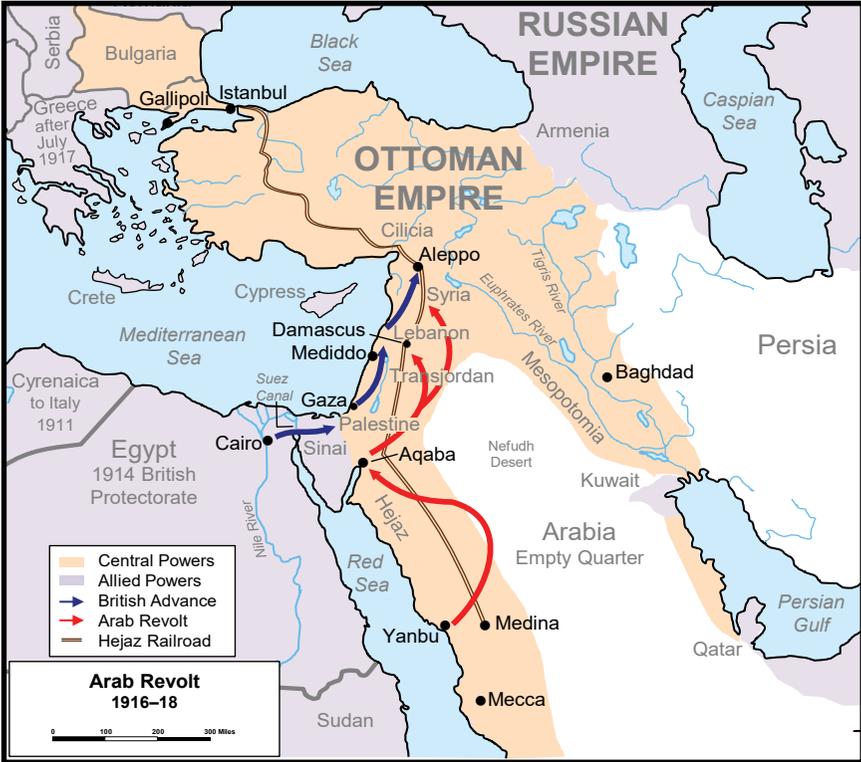


Figure 1.1. The Arab Revolt, 1916-1918. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

appreciate the strategy and tactics that would allow the Arabs to play a complementary role in the British effort to defeat the Ottoman Army in Palestine and Syria.

“The algebraic element of things” refers to the physical environment that has shaped warfare in the Hejaz. For Lawrence, this was the decisive element. Here war is part science, depending on mathematical calculations with which to analyze the fixed condition of time, space, and terrain. Using simple math, Lawrence calculated the size of territory held by the Arabs in relation to the number of Ottoman troops in theater. The Ottomans had only 16,000 troops in Arabia and with a shortage of staunch allies among the tribes, lacked enough combat power and local support to quell the Arab uprising. Geography, the vast desert, thus gave the Arab Revolt safe havens and ensured a protracted struggle. They received critical assistance from the British in gold, foodstuff, military supplies, and small fighting units. Foreign assistance and a distracted enemy proved a window of opportunity for the revolting Arabs.

After analyzing geography, Lawrence next addressed the human dimensions of warfare, which he called “the biological element of lives.” Here, war is part art, for human beings are involved in waging it. Intangibles such as genius, fear, heroism, and morale lay outside the domain of quantitative analysis. The irrational exerts its own powerful influence over military operations. Biologically speaking, Arab tribesmen were masters of the raid, capable of employing strategic mobility across vast stretches of desert. However, unlike the Vietnamese or the Afghans, the Bedouins were disinclined to wage bloody battles with heavy casualties in a total war effort.

Yet the art of war includes both the human and the material. The Ottoman Empire was beset with economic woes so that, according to Lawrence, the loss of material proved a greater drain on resources than the loss of soldiers. The Arabs could turn the Ottoman material weakness into their own strength. Without a heavy reliance on a base of operations for logistics, Bedouin warriors could easily disappear into the vast desert, only to appear suddenly elsewhere to destroy a bridge, cut the railway, seize a supply train, or overrun an outpost. In a bolder move, the Arabs could, through a strategic maneuver, suddenly attack and defeat a small Ottoman garrison.

Such was the case when, much to the surprise of the British, slightly over 500 Arabs seized Aqaba on 6 July 1917, after having traversed inhospitable desert to attack the port city from an unexpected direction. The Arabs could move with stealth through the desert, appearing at the appropriate time for an attack. The result was, in the words of Lawrence, “a vapor, blowing where we listed.”²⁵ Strategic mobility was an Arab strength, offsetting their weakness in sustaining casualties. “Our cards were speed and time, not hitting power, and these gave us strategical rather than tactical strength. Range is more to strategy than force.”²⁶ For his leadership in the capture of the port of Aqaba, Lawrence received a promotion to the rank of major from the British Army and the *Croix de Guerre avec palme et citation a l'ordre de l'Armée* from the French government. The Ottomans, for their part, offered a 5,000-pound reward on his head.

But against what specific target or targets should these raids focus? In Cairo, Lawrence had spent much of his time analyzing the Ottoman Army in Arabia. Initially, he viewed Medina as the locus of Ottoman military power whose conquest would give Sharif Hussein a decisive victory. But a well-entrenched Ottoman garrison defended the second holiest city in Islam, and the Arabs lacked the conventional power and will to seize this prize at a price of heavy human loss. Instead, the rebellious Arabs shifted

their main effort to the Hejaz Railway, the only communication and supply link between Palestine and the Ottoman garrison at Medina. Some 500 miles of railway separated Medina from Ma'an in Transjordan. The Hejaz Railway thus served as the lifeline of the Ottoman Army in Arabia, a lifeline vulnerable to attack.

In order to protect his only line of communication, the Ottoman commander had to divide his force in two: one to protect Medina and the second to guard the railway. By this decision, he effectively lost a maneuver force to challenge the Arab tribes with offensive operations. The desert thus became an even greater sanctuary for the Arabs as the strategic initiative now clearly passed to Sharif Hussein. As Lawrence noted at this juncture of the war effort, "perhaps the virtue of irregulars lay in depth, not in face."²⁷ The mere threat to the railway, backed by with sporadic raids, was enough to pin down the Ottomans into a defensive strategy. The Ottomans thus saw their military power immobilized as they placed their sole effort on defending Medina with its religious significance and on maintaining the railway.²⁸ The Ottoman garrison at Medina held out past the end of the war, left to wither on the vine of the Hejaz Railway.

Finally, the third element in Lawrence's military theory was "the psychological element of ideas." Initially, Lawrence failed to grasp this dimension: "I had not seen that the preaching was victory and the fighting a delusion...as Feisal fortunately liked changing men's minds rather than breaking railways, the preaching went better."²⁹ Here was the imperative of gaining and maintaining legitimacy for a rebellion through spreading the word. The use of force or threats to convince tribes could only lead to internecine tribal warfare. Propaganda, whenever appropriate, was a more effective tool. According to Lawrence, psychological warfare had to target three main audiences: one's own troops, those of the enemy, and the civilian population, in this case the townspeople and the tribes. Their guerrilla warfare had to be presented as a struggle based on a noble cause: Arab independence from Turkish rule.³⁰ Propaganda helped forward the Arab Revolt; the printing press served as a useful instrument in this regard. But negotiations were also important in gaining the allegiance of neutral tribal chiefs. In a rebellion, ideas are important in the quest for legitimacy and loyalty.

In irregular warfare, the importance of national will, or, in this case, tribal honor, is hard to exaggerate. Lawrence thus came to understand and appreciate the importance of this psychological element. After all, war is a social phenomenon, and irregular warfare takes on the dimension of a struggle for the hearts and minds of leaders and their people. Lawrence,

however, was under no illusions. He understood that the Bedouin tribes were often won over to the cause not so much by words, as by the money provided by the British to the tribal chiefs.³¹ Primary loyalty remained with the tribe, and its collective action could often be bought for a price.

In developing his theory of irregular warfare, Lawrence embraced the Bedouin world unlike his peers. The tribes taught him much about warfare in the desert. He came to understand the limited nature of his conflict and avoided trying to transform the Arab Revolt into something alien to its nature. He learned to appreciate the interaction of the material, the human, and ideas in such warfare. He gave proper attention to the factors of safe havens, foreign assistance, a dispersed enemy, and a friendly population. In the end, Lawrence proved quite successful in articulating essential features of guerrilla warfare.

Coalition with Irregular Warfare

In addition to warfighting, Lawrence gave serious thought to his mission within a British-Arab coalition. He came to admire the Bedouin warriors and recognized their character and strategy. Many British officers, however, failed to share his admiration for the Bedouin and instead affected a superior attitude and behavior. Others were willing to learn, but needed instruction. To address this general problem, Lawrence felt compelled to offer advice on bridging the cultural gap between the British world and that of Arabia. On 20 August 1917, he filed a report, “Twenty-seven Articles,” in which he offered practical wisdom for those British officers assigned to Arabia.³² He published this report a month and a half after the Arabs had captured Aqaba. The underlining message was quite clear: the Bedouins were worthy of admiration for their unique way of war. Despite circumstances, many of his principles for dealing with the Bedouin serve as excellent advice for officers assigned to work in any coalition.

In his report, Lawrence underscored the necessity of openness and flexibility. His introduction cautioned that “handling Hejaz Arabs is an art not a science, with exceptions and no obvious rules.”³³ One could make the same statement for any coalition partner. There are no easy answers or short cuts to gaining an understanding of a foreign society. To be effective in Bedouin society involved acquiring as much information as possible about the region’s leaders and the tribes themselves. Near the end of the report, he emphasized that “the beginning and ending of handling Arabs is unremitting study of them... *Your success will be just proportional to the amount of mental effort you devote to it.*”³⁴ Lawrence stressed the importance of learning power relationships among the Bedouins. British of-

fficers, for example, had to appreciate the difference between a *sharif*, a descendent of the Prophet Muhammad, and a *shaykh*, tribal chief, in Bedouin society.³⁵ In this regard, Sharif Hussein and his sons, including Feisal, possessed prestige as direct descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. And Lawrence remained true to his own advice. As late as June 1918, he was hard at work gathering and analyzing material on the political loyalties and history of the northern tribes as the Arab Revolt moved north from Aqaba to Damascus.³⁶

Military commanders generally do not carve out time and effort to acquire such knowledge, though publicly all would champion its value. Over 80 years later, for example, Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, the commander of Western forces in Desert Storm, would fall short on this score. Khaled bin Sultan, who commanded the Arab coalition in the Gulf War, wrote of the American general, perhaps a bit too harshly: “the people, the leading personalities of Arab politics, the families, the customs, attitudes, language, history, religion, way of life—indeed all the complexities of our Arab world—were as foreign and unfamiliar to him as they are to the average American.”³⁷ As commander of United States Central Command responsible for the Middle East, Schwarzkopf should have possessed some depth of knowledge on these subjects, at least enough to impress his Arab hosts.

In addition to political and cultural knowledge, Lawrence argued for a proper attitude toward one’s ally in order to avoid unnecessary friction and problems. He counseled patience, respect, tact, and even a good dose of humility. The foreign officer had to take time to ingratiate himself into the inner circle of a tribe in order to gain its trust. He had to resist the temptation to give orders or to seek the spotlight at the expense of his hosts. Tribes would naturally resist following foreigners, and it took effort and skill to have them coordinate their military action with that of a Christian nation. To help maintain the coalition, Lawrence advised the sharing of glories with an ally, if possible: “*Strengthen his prestige at your expense before others if you can.*”³⁸ He championed common courtesy in dealings with the Arabs: “*If we are tactful, we can at once retain his goodwill and carry out our job.*”³⁹

Writings years later, Khaled bin Sultan unknowingly confirmed much of Lawrence’s advice. The Saudi general found some fault with Schwarzkopf’s attitude and behavior in dealing with Arabs during DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM: “I believe he never fully grasped my overriding concern to ensure that we did nothing during the war that might compromise our postwar future.”⁴⁰ For instance, there could be no hint that Saudi sovereignty was in any way compromised in deference to American

power. As Khaled noted, “My public appearance as the Saudi commander had to be as impressive as his, down to the smallest detail.”⁴¹ Meetings between the two commanders, for example, had to take place in Khaled’s office. Schwarzkopf could not have more bodyguards or vehicles in his entourage than possessed by his Saudi counterpart.⁴² Such seemingly little things mattered much to the Saudis. They were deeply concerned about legitimacy of the Saudi regime, which already had been compromised, to some degree, by the king inviting Western troops into his country. Had Schwarzkopf read Lawrence’s “Twenty-seven Articles,” he would have better prepared for dealing with Saudi leaders.

No doubt, many of Lawrence’s insights into the nature of coalition warfare derived from direct observation. Feisal was attempting to organize a coalition of Arab tribes who failed to see themselves as a single nation. Tribal chiefs guarded their independence fervently. In reality, Feisal lacked unity of command. Rather, he commanded by the consent of the Bedouin tribal chiefs. In such a fragile coalition of Arab tribesmen, Feisal had to be more of a diplomat than a commander. He had to be careful not to alienate tribal leaders with orders but rather to coordinate military operations through verbal persuasion, often laced with monetary and material incentives. He was, in fact, attempting to lay the foundations for a future state as well as waging a war against the Ottomans. Maintaining this all-important coalition proved his main effort.

Arab tribesmen expected Feisal to play the traditional role of super tribal *shaykh*. In this regard, Lawrence merely depicted that ideal for his patron. According to Lawrence, Feisal gave access to all, never cut short petitions, showed extreme patience and self-control, demonstrated goodwill and humor, and exhibited tact by never allowing anyone to leave his presence “dissatisfied or hurt.”⁴³ Yet Lawrence’s description conformed to the tribal leader idealized by the Bedouins themselves. Moreover, this style of leadership makes sense in coalition warfare. Dwight D. Eisenhower practiced it to some degree as supreme Allied commander in Europe during World War II. He, for example, demanded collegiality and courtesy from subordinates and staff, tried to reach decisions by consensus, and devoted most of his time to coalition politics. To avoid unnecessary friction, American soldiers received a booklet instructing them on British customs and habits.⁴⁴ For demanding deference to the British, Eisenhower received criticism from fellow Americans for catering, in some instances, to the British at the expense of the Americans.

Lawrence approached his assignment with a mindset similar to that of Eisenhower in World War II. He also stressed flexibility, adaptability, and

collegiality in dealing with the Bedouin. His guidelines, however brief and focused on Bedouin society, remain a valuable source for addressing proper attitude and behavior in any coalition. National arrogance and cultural insensitivity remain sources of friction and antagonism in any multinational war or peace support operation. American officers, as they study the nature of coalition warfare, should give serious thought to Lawrence's insights on the subject.

After capturing the port of Aqaba in July 1917 and thus opening a supply route by sea, the Arab Revolt slowly inched its way north as the British moved the army through the Sinai to Palestine. Lawrence meanwhile became more engaged in military operations. Promotion to lieutenant colonel and the Distinguished Service Order came in recognition of his leadership at the Battle of Tafileh on 23 January 1918. By the summer 1918, the Ottomans had put a hefty monetary reward for his capture. Then came the final campaign that drove the Ottomans out of Palestine and Syria. Lawrence, for his part, helped coordinate operations between the British and the Arab Army as well as saw combat. But before the commencement of the offensive, a crisis suddenly emerged in Arabia about two weeks before the campaign. Regular Arab officers resigned over a dispute with Sharif Hussein; no less than Feisal himself joined the rebels. These resignations paralyzed the Arab Army. Because of the trust he had gained, Lawrence handled the cables between Hussein and his son Feisal. He resorted to "subterfuge" when handling communications back and forth, removing offensive sections until eventually the father made a half-hearted apology to the son and Feisal returned to command along with the regular officers.⁴⁵ All was ready for the Bedouin contribution to the final campaign.

On 16 September 1918, Gen. Edmund Allenby (1861-1936), commander of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, employed the Arabs in a diversionary strategy that helped in drawing German and Ottoman attention to east of the Jordan River by attacking Deraa. Lawrence participated in this battle. To strengthen their combat power, the 450 camel-mounted Arab regulars gained three British armored cars, several mountain guns under French command, and even air support for reconnaissance and bombing. Feisal personally received a Vauxhall motor car. Several Arab tribes also joined in the fighting.

At first, the Arabs cut railway and telegraphic communication, creating confusion at enemy headquarters in Palestine. Deraa, however, proved a more difficult nut to crack; the Ottoman defenders held out to 27 September. Meanwhile, on 19 September, Allenby launched his major offensive with some 70,000 troops against 35,000 soldiers. The infantry advanced

7,000 yards within the first two and a half hours of its attack, creating a hole for the cavalry's exploitation. Almost immediately the Ottoman army either collapsed or began a hasty withdrawal, and its commander, the German Gen. Liman von Sanders, just barely escaped capture. On 1 October, an Australian cavalry squadron entered the undefended town of Damascus followed by the Arab Army led by Feisal.⁴⁶ The campaign ended Ottoman participation in World War I.

There was a darker side to the British-Arab coalition, resulting from competing interests and goals, coupled with duplicity by the Allies. Sharif Hussein sought a large, independent Arab kingdom while the British and the French in the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 19 May 1916 divided much of the Middle East between these two major powers. On this score, Lawrence served British interests. Then with the Allenby campaign, Lawrence championed the Arab cause by encouraging Feisal to reach Damascus before the Allies. After the war, he tried to help Feisal in the peace negotiations in Paris. Yet, Lawrence felt duplicitous for his part in negotiating the labyrinth where these two worlds—British and Arab—intersected politically and militarily. The effort left Lawrence with guilt. He came to believe that he had failed the Arabs.⁴⁷ In the case of the Arab Revolt, competing interests in multinational operations could not be bridged. Britain created mandates for itself in Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq; France did the same for Lebanon and Syria. To accommodate the Arabs for their effort, London placed Feisal on Iraq's newly created throne and made his brother Abdullah the emir of Transjordan.

Conclusion

Lawrence played a key role in the Arab Revolt in support of the Allied effort in Palestine as a leader and afterward as a military theorist. His military career demonstrates the importance of wedding military theory to practice, as well as the active to the reflective in war. Knowledge of military classics gained in peacetime provided the fruitful ingredients for Lawrence's intellectual development in war. A sincere but realistic respect for Bedouin society and its way of war helped Lawrence break down traditional and narrow parameters for thought and analysis. Empathy played its productive role. Reading Lawrence's military theory provides timeless insights and a mental framework for appreciating the strategic, operational, and tactical domains of irregular and coalition war. Lawrence gained a resurgence in notoriety during the war in Iraq where his influence was in evidence in the writing of *FM 3-24: Counterinsurgency*. The US Army needs to be familiar with military theory and the military classics so as to be prepared intellectually to fight the unexpected wars.

Special operations demand a unique institutional training and educational program. Before deploying to Arabia, T. E. Lawrence had travelled and lived in the Middle East and thus brought with him language fluency and a rudimentary knowledge of the region's history, culture, and politics. Empathy gave him an ability to understand and appreciate the Arab tribal way of fighting. Moreover, Lawrence walked the walk of his Arab warrior partners when he participated in combat operations. The last phase of the Arab Revolt witnessed coordination with the British Army and Feisal's forces attacking into Palestine. Lawrence gained recognition for his efforts from different sources. Starting as a captain, Lawrence ended his adventures in World War I as a full colonel and in possession of the Distinguished Service Order and the Companion of the Order of Bath from the British and the Knights of the Legion of Honor and *Croix de guerre* from the French. More importantly perhaps, Feisal accepted Lawrence as a partner in coalition war when he asked him to wear tribal attire. This gesture speaks to the differences between conventional warfare and special operations. Clausewitz wrote of the need of strategic *coup d'oeil* to negotiate through the new complexities of Napoleonic warfare. Special operations, for their part, require a unique institutional training and education based on regional knowledge and language expertise to develop an intellect and temperament for cultural *coup d'oeil* in helping build partnerships in war.

Notes

1. I published earlier versions of this piece as "T. E. Lawrence and the Art of War in the Twenty-First Century" in *The Waking Dream of T. E. Lawrence: Essays on His Life, Literature, and Legacy*, edited by Charles M. Stang (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 161–178 and "T. E. Lawrence and the Art of War at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century," *Journal of the T. E. Lawrence Society* X/2 (Spring 2001): 43–59.
2. T. E. Lawrence, "The Evolution of a Revolt," *Army Quarterly* 1 (October 1920): 55-69.
3. T. E. Lawrence, "Twenty-seven Articles," *The Arab Bulletin: Bulletin of the Arab Bureau in Cairo, 1916-1919*, Volume II, 1917 (London: Archive Editions, 1986), 347-353 For a recent reprint see Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia*, 960-965.
4. Lawrence, "Evolution," 57; T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (New York: Penguin Modern Classics, 1962), 193.
5. Lawrence, "Evolution," 57-58; Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, 193.
6. T. E. Lawrence, *Crusader Castles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988). The thesis was first published in 1936.
7. C. L. Wooley and T. E. Lawrence, *The Wilderness of Zin* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1936).
8. Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia: The Authorized Biography of T. E. Lawrence* (London: Heinemann, 1989), 232.
9. Wilson, 197.
10. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, 193.
11. Lawrence, 193.
12. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 88-89.
13. Maurice de Saxe, "My Reveries Upon the Acts of War," in *Roots of Strategy*, edited by Thomas R. Phillips (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1985), 296-297.
14. de Saxe, 300.
15. Lawrence, "Evolution," 68.
16. Sun Tzu, *Sun-Tzu: The Art of Warfare*, translated by Roger T. Ames (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), 111.
17. Lawrence, "Evolution," 61.
18. Lawrence, 64.
19. Lawrence, 64.
20. Lawrence, 65.
21. Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia*, 439.
22. Lawrence, "Twenty-seven Articles," 351.
23. Lawrence, "Evolution," 60.
24. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, 197-202 and "Evolution," 59-62. For a detailed treatment of Lawrence's military career and thought, see James Schneider, *Guerrilla Leader: T. E. Lawrence and the Arab Revolt* (New York: Bantam,

- 2011) and Basil Liddell Hart, *T. E. Lawrence in Arabia and After* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1934).
25. Lawrence, "Evolution," 59.
 26. Lawrence, 63.
 27. Lawrence, 57.
 28. Lawrence, 57, 58, 61
 29. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, 178.
 30. Lawrence, 180.
 31. Michael Asher, *Lawrence: The Uncommon King of Arabia* (New York: Overlook Press, 1999), 262-263.
 32. Lawrence, "Twenty-seven Articles," 347-353. A full copy of this report also appears in Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia*, 960-965.
 33. Lawrence, "Twenty-seven Articles," 347.
 34. Lawrence, 352-353.
 35. Lawrence, 351.
 36. Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia*, 514-516.
 37. Khaled bin Sultan, *Desert Warrior: A Personal View of the Gulf War by the Joint Forces Commander* New York: Harper Perennial, 1995), 208. The author has his own biases, including stereotypes of Americans.
 38. Lawrence, "Twenty-seven Articles," 348.
 39. Lawrence, 348.
 40. Khaled bin Sultan, *Desert Warrior*, 208.
 41. bin Sultan, 204.
 42. bin Sultan, 192.
 43. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, 125-128. Lawrence wrote several uncomplimentary remarks about Feisal. Friction certainly existed between the two men, and both used each other for political ends.
 44. David Eisenhower, *Eisenhower: At War, 1943-1945* (New York: Random House, 1986), 158-161.
 45. Philip Walker, *Behind the Lawrence Legend: The Forgotten Few Who Shaped the Arab Revolt* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 194-195.
 46. Walker, 198-200.
 47. Lawrence is quite candid about this dilemma in the opening pages of his book. See *Seven Pillars*, 21-24.

Chapter 2

Hammer and Anvil

Lawrence and Allenby Coordinate Conventional and Asymmetric Forces in the Megiddo Campaign of 1918

Michael Barr

Great victories often appear to be inevitable in retrospect, when in fact they were a near thing. Such is the case with the Megiddo Campaign. The conventional Egyptian Expeditionary Forces (EEF) under Gen. Edmund Allenby and the asymmetric Northern Arab Army (NAA) commanded by Emir Feisal and advised by Maj. T.E. Lawrence faced the same opponent but had different goals, different force structures and different strategies. In order to understand this evolving relationship, this study will provide an historic overview of the events between March and Z-Day, the start of the Megiddo Campaign, on 21 September 1918. It will then look at the conflicts the two forces faced, outline the successful NAA techniques, and the specific strategic focus that allowed for the successful coordination of the two forces which forced the Ottoman Empire to sue for peace on Z-Day + 51. The final section will abstract *Eight Pillars of Wisdom* that can be applied by regular and irregular operators in the 21st century.

Background

By February 1918 the success of Allenby's EEF at the 3rd Battle of Gaza in November 1917, had allowed the capture of Beersheba, Jerusalem, and Jericho in Palestine. Lawrence's capture of Aqaba for Emir Feisal in July 1917 allowed direct coordination between the two forces. After the huge British losses at Passchendaele and the collapse of Russia as an ally, the success in Palestine and the romanticized press about Lawrence in Syria convinced Prime Minister Lloyd George of an "eastern strategy" of toppling Germany by defeating her allies. He pressed the Supreme War Council of the Allies to accept remaining on the defensive everywhere in Europe while pursuing a decisive campaign to force Turkey's surrender.¹

The EEF front stretched across Palestine from roughly the Nah el Auja River just north of Jaffa on the Mediterranean, tracing the Wadi el Jib in the Judean highlands to the Wadi el Auja 10 miles north of the Dead Sea, which was the EEF's logistical limit (see Figure 2.2). The NAA "front" was wherever Lawrence and Feisal had their forces. By March 1918, small elements of the new Arab Regular Army's (ARA) logistical range from

Aqaba went as far as Ma'an. The irregular tribal forces operated and influenced the Arab population as far north as Deraa and the Hauran, south as far as Mudauwara (south of Sham on Figure 2.1), as far east as the Jordan River and as far west as the Wadi Sirhan (see Figure 2.1).

Both the EEF and the NAA faced Turkish Army Group F led by General Otto Liman von Sanders. In Palestine the Turkish 8th Army was concentrated along the coast, east to the Judean highlands where the Turkish 7th Army took over the front to the Jordan Valley. In Syria, facing the NAA, the Turkish 4th Army was thinly spread across the Moab plateau, at Es Salt and Shunet Nimrin Pass, which guarded the western edge of the plateau. Garrisons held key stations along the Hejaz railroad primarily at Ma'an, Amman, Deraa, and Damascus (see Figure 2.1). Deraa was the key logistical depot that linked Army Group F with Constantinople, Palestine, Syria, and Arabia. The NAA allowed limited Turkish access to the railroad south of Ma'an making it an inexpensive internment camp for 12,000 Turks.² Adding in garrisons along the Hejaz railroad there were 20,000 Turkish troops between Amman and Medina in Arabia.³

Allenby's EEF consisted of XXI Corp along the coast and XX Corp inland totaling seven infantry divisions and three divisions in the Desert Mounted Corp, including the Anzac Mounted Division and the Imperial Camel Brigade.⁴ By March 1918, these men, numbering over 200,000, were all veteran troops.⁵ Allenby requested 16 divisions, more than double his present force, just to establish a line from Haifa to Tiberias by June or July. After that the planning got hazy. A further advance with an objective of Aleppo would move along the coast taking the ports of Tyre, Sidon, and Beirut and possibly Homs and Tripoli. A smaller column would coordinate with the NAA to advance into the Hauran north of Deraa. Even with these forces, an advance would be limited by rails, roads, water, weather, and Arab cooperation. East of Jericho the ground would not support rails and attacks on the Hejaz railroad would depend on the NAA. General Smuts from the Imperial War Council agreed with Allenby's staged advance but would only give him two veteran infantry divisions and one Indian cavalry division.⁶

The Arab insurgency entered a new phase after the capture of Aqaba. From Aqaba, Feisal could support the nascent, ARA led by former Turkish Army officers and trained by the British military mission only as far as Ma'an. The NAA was no longer a "wild man show," but a part of a joint operation with the EEF.⁷ Lawrence was wise enough to allow the NAA to evolve with the demands of war, but this meant first integrating Arab regulars with Arab insurgents. This meant combining men who saw

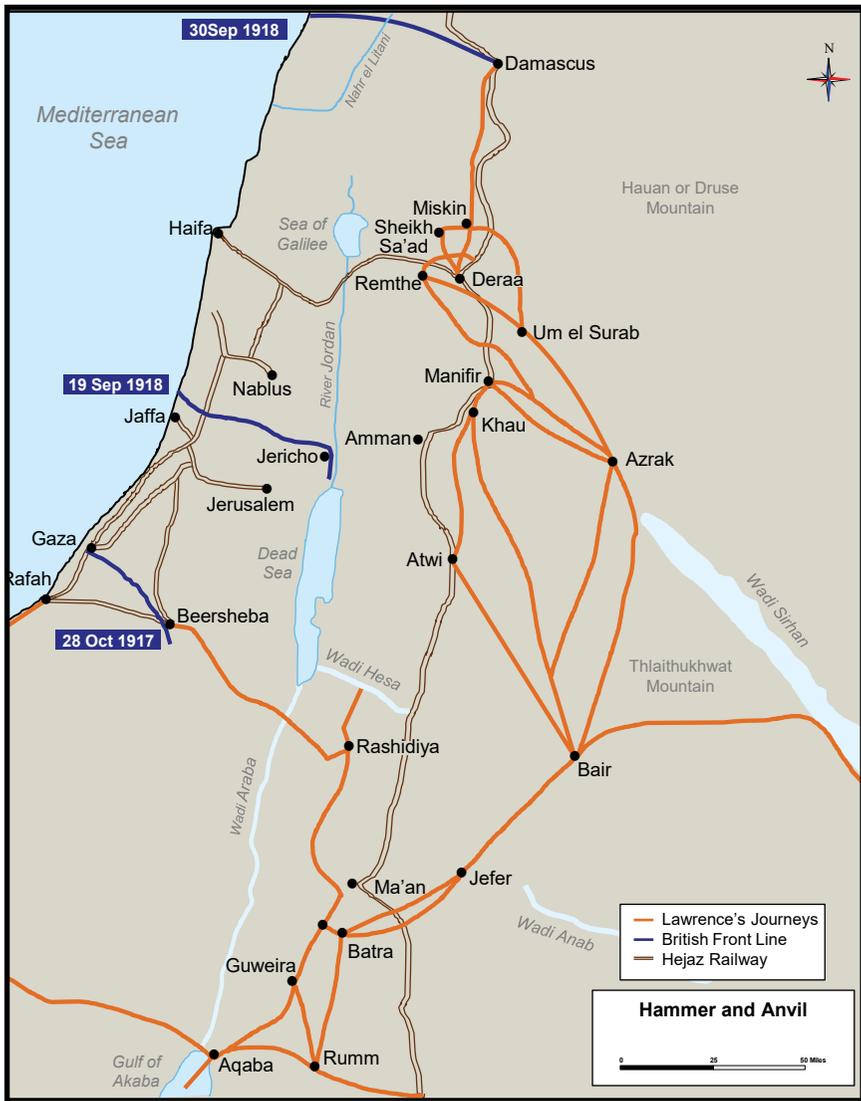


Figure 2.1. Hammer and Anvil. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

themselves as professional soldiers with men whose warrior culture was based on tribal loyalties and personal honor. Arab regulars had a chain of command, uniforms, loyalty to Feisal, and the need for logistics. The Arab insurgents were limited only by the range of their camels: their obligations were to tribe and self. Rank was useless, but reputation was everything. “Logistics” consisted of each man carrying a 45-pound bag of flour which made up his rations for six weeks.⁸ Integrating such a force within itself, let alone with the regular EEF, created complications not only of organi-

zation but use.⁹ In March 1918, the NAA consisted of 2,000 men in the ARA spread across an infantry brigade, a mule-mounted battalion, a camel mounted battalion, and eight small guns commanded by Ja'far Pasha.¹⁰ Another approximately 6,000 men were Bedouin and Arab peasant irregulars raised and directed by Lawrence in various quantities for operations in their own tribal areas.¹¹ The core of the insurgents consisted of Lawrence's elite bodyguard of about 30-100 men, half of which were armed with Lewis guns, giving the unit the firepower of a 1914 battalion.¹²

The British military mission to the NAA was called Operation Hedgehog commanded by Col. Alan Dawnay. Hedgehog provided the Hejaz Armored Car Battery: three Rolls Royce machine gun-mounted armored cars, two Talbot cars with 10-pound guns, a company of the Egyptian Camel Corps, four aircraft, and transport and labor detachments.¹³ Small detachments of specialists came through Operation Hedgehog either as trainers or as temporary units assigned to the NAA and usually from Egyptian, Indian, and even Gurkha units.¹⁴ The French military mission was commanded by Captain Pisani and consisted of two mountain guns, four machine guns, and ten Lewis guns.¹⁵

Lawrence estimates that there was no more than one British advisor per thousand insurgents.¹⁶ Training was kept simple. Insurgents were instructed in operating machine guns, Lewis guns, snipers, mortars, and explosives, but they were deliberately kept ignorant of how the weapons worked so if they failed to operate they simply threw the weapon away and used another.¹⁷

While waiting for the promised troops for the planned spring offensive, Allenby coordinated a limited action with Lawrence, the 1st Transjordan Operation (1st TJO), with the objective of permanently cutting off the 20,000 Turkish troops south of Amman. The British cavalry would seize Moab and create a permanent base at Es Salt, then destroy the Kissir tunnel and bridge complex south of Amman. One thousand NAA regulars would take Ma'an then move north to Es Salt. This action would split the Turkish 7th and 4th Armies and allow direct support of the NAA from Jericho.¹⁸

The EEF failed in this operation due to poor intelligence liaison with the NAA. Had the EEF sourced Lawrence's local intelligence and kept to its time table, a mixed Turco-German force of roughly 1,000 men would have faced the British 60th Division, the Anzac Mounted Division, and the Imperial Camel Brigade.¹⁹ Unusually wet weather put off a Jordan crossing and "Moab mud" slowed the effort afterwards. No permanent base was created at Es Salt which allowed the Turks to reinforce Ma'an.

Meanwhile, the NAA's regular troops failed at Ma'an. While Lawrence was taking supplies north to Es Salt, Arab officers insisted Emir Feisal allow a direct attack, turning a tactical decision into an issue of Arab sovereignty.²⁰ Rails in and out of Ma'an were destroyed but a direct attack failed to capture the town. Lawrence secured the most important objective by permanently destroying 80 miles of track south of Ma'an to Mudauwara, isolating 12,000 Turkish troops in Medina.²¹

Lawrence went to confer with Allenby about their next move and found that ten days after the 1st TJO a second TJO was underway. With no coordination of effort with the NAA and based on a promise from some unreliable sheiks of the Beni Shakr tribe, the EEF retook Es Salt in another attempt to isolate the Turks in Amman. The 60th Division pinned the Turks at Shunet Nimrin Pass, while the British cavalry took Es Salt, then swung south to attack the Turks at Shunet Nimrin from the rear. Lawrence had just left the Beni Shakr who were headed south to attack Jerf and were nowhere near Moab. Liman von Sanders had placed an active response force of the 3rd Cavalry and 24th Assault Division trained in *stosstruppen* tactics in hiding near Ed Damije.²² These troops cut off the British at Es Salt. Without the Beni Shakr to block the paths across Moab from Amman, the Turks were able to reinforce the 8th Army Corps at Shunet Nimrin and the British mounted forces at Es Salt barely avoided disaster with the entire force retreating west of the Jordan a second time.²³ The NAA was able between 1 May and 19 May to destroy 14 miles of track, and prevented a Turkish advance toward the Ma'an. These demolitions also took pressure off the EEF retreat.²⁴

The effect of these two failed TJOs, the success of the German offensive in France beginning 21 March, and Lawrence's absence due to burn out, between May and 28 July 1918 reduced the NAA's effectiveness. At the same time, the EEF lost 60,000 veteran troops to the Western Front from April to June 1918 while having to train and integrate nine Indian battalions with three veteran battalions in each division. Many of the Indian units were understrength, and lacked skilled officers and specialists.²⁵

With Allenby indicating he could do nothing for the time being, Lawrence created an ambitious plan in May 1918. All of the ARA troops would be brought from Hejaz giving Feisal 10,000 regulars. This force would impress the Bedouin and Syrian tribes with the NAA's commitment and draw irregulars for an attack in September. The largest and least mobile force would contain the Turks at Ma'an. Meanwhile, another force of two to three thousand of the best Arab Regulars would occupy Moab, threaten Amman, and solidify the wavering support of the Beni Sakhr. This ac-

tion would protect Allenby's eastern flank, create a more direct source of supply for the NAA, and force the Turks to retreat to the Yarmuck River bridges east of Deraa (see Figure 2.2). Finally, a third highly-mobile force of 1,000 men would strike deeply at targets around Deraa and Damascus.

These actions, would force the Turks to withdraw one or two divisions from Palestine, to defend the rail system. Using his present troops, Allenby could then advance along the coast and force the Turks to concentrate north of Amman and yield effective control of the lower Jordan.²⁶ Lawrence's plan was to use Allenby's regular forces' lack of mobility to "destroy the Turkish Palestine Army between my hammer and Allenby's anvil."²⁷

Although accepted, Lawrence abandoned his plan when he saw Allenby's Megiddo plan, which employed present EEF forces and a well-coordinated deception operation with the NAA. A short, devastating artillery barrage, followed by an infantry advance at an angle would sweep away Turkish coastal defenses. Four cavalry divisions would flood the rear of the 8th and 7th Turkish Armies cutting off their retreat. The RAF would provide ground support. Allenby needed the NAA to sell an attack on Deraa not more than four nor less than two days before 19 March 1918 as the apparent prelude to a main attack in the Jordan. Lawrence said, "His [Allenby's] word to me were that three men and a boy with pistols in front of Deraa on September the sixteenth would fill his conception; would be better than thousands a week before or a week after."²⁸ The plan was simple but it was the deception operations that would make it possible. The main goal of the NAA in the Megiddo campaign was to cut the rails around Deraa and keep them cut for at least a week.²⁹ The coordinated deception plan worked leaving most of the Turkish forces concentrated in the Jordan Valley. The result would be the capitulation of Turkey by Z-Day + 51.

Shared objectives; different goals

The EEF and NAA shared a similar objective, the defeat of the Ottoman Turks, but different goals. The Allies fought Turkey because it was an ally of Germany. To the EEF, objectives in Palestine and Syria were military objectives with a goal of defeating the Turks. To Lawrence, Feisal, and the Arab Revolt, the goal was Damascus, and the creation of an independent Arab kingdom. The NAA didn't have to defeat Turkey *per se*, but only get it to remove itself from the area the Arabs wished to claim as their own.³⁰ There was substantial friction between each force regarding longer term strategic goals and how to achieve them. Some of this was related to differences in culture and force structure which in turn created different

strategic responses. The EEF and NAA relationship required careful monitoring and near constant negotiation.

Differences in strategy created differences in perceived outcome. Early on, Lawrence recognized the Arabs needed a strategy appropriate to their resources, culture, and geography. He arrived at a practice of indirect asymmetric warfare that emphasized force dispersal, attacking things rather than people, minimizing casualties, and using the Bedouins' traditional raiding skills.³¹ But once the EEF and NAA were connected geographically with the seizure of Aqaba, the differences were more pronounced by proximity. What might satisfy the NAA was completely unacceptable to the EEF and vice versa. Lawrence was acutely aware that unless these differences were settled it could cost lives on both sides.³²

These differences took on alarming form. In early August 1918 the Turks began negotiating with Feisal who told of a great British coastal attack and promised to take over Syria and allow the Turkish 4th Army to move to the coast in exchange for an independent kingdom. Liman Von Sanders requested Enver Pasha in Constantinople allow for all the desired guarantees.³³ Lawrence discovered and checked the negotiations by complimenting Feisal on his clever ploy. Once the negotiations were known they went nowhere. Given the conditions of the war in Europe, the two failed TJOs, and Britain's secret negotiations with the Turks in Switzerland regarding a separate peace, Lawrence thought it only fair that Feisal not close off negotiations. The Arabs could be fighting alone if the Allies failed or Britain settled with the Turkish Nationalists.

The Soviets had made public the Sykes-Picot Agreement dividing the Ottoman Empire between Britain, France, and Russia. Lawrence convinced Feisal that his best option was to make himself indispensable to the British so the Arab cause could not be ignored. The Balfour Declaration promised the Jews much the same in Palestine. At the time this seemed of minor relevance to Arab nationalism since there were no independent Jewish troops fighting like the Arabs.³⁴

Both the EEF and the NAA felt let down by the other in one of the TJOs. Lawrence writes of the failure of the 1st TJO, "Allenby's plan had seemed modest, and that we should fall down before the Arabs was deplorable. They never trusted us to do the great things which I foretold."³⁵ Lt. Gen. Sir Henry Chauvel felt that the British, whom he led in the 2nd TJO, had been abandoned by Feisal, who had approved the Zebn sheiks of the Beni Sakhr tribe.³⁶

Due to the two failures in Moab, the Syrian tribes in the North were less willing to stake their future on the British. These tribes were more set-

bled and had more contact with and fewer ways to escape the Turks. They represented the next group of tribes Lawrence and Feisal had to influence if the NAA were to find the fighters needed to attack Amman and Deraa.

Allenby wisely provided compensations to smooth over differences such as the gift of 2,000 camels, giving the NAA unlimited mobility and the ability to win their war in Syria when and where they liked. Air attacks substituted for troops to disrupt Turkish rail movements.³⁷ These actions helped repair relations with the NAA and elevate Feisal in the eyes of those he sought to sway. These compensations helped to restore confidence and focus attention on the EEF and NAA's common objective: the defeat of Turkey.

The German offensive in France had drained the EEF of 60,000 veterans.³⁸ It had to integrate 54 partially-trained, under-strength Indian infantry battalions and 13 Indian cavalry regiments.³⁹ Many English and Indian officers had no combat experience with many of the Indian officers only being recently promoted. There was a lack of specialists such as signaleers, Lewis gunners, bombers and teamsters.⁴⁰ That Allenby succeeded in so short a time in creating an army capable of the victory at Megiddo was quite a remarkable achievement. It required intensive training in practically every modern warfighting skill including the most recent lessons from the Western front and dangerous live-fire exercises.⁴¹

Lawrence's organizational issues were of a different nature. Lawrence had to integrate the Arab Regulars into the irregular NAA asymmetric strategy but he also had political and intertribal problems. On the eve of preparations for the NAA role in the Megiddo offensive, Feisal and the entire Arab Regular officer corps threatened to resign over a perceived insult from King Hussein. The officers agreed to move as far as Azrak, (see Figure 2.1) approximately 60 miles west of Amman. There they would await Hussein's apology—an apology Lawrence carefully edited to satisfy Feisal and the officers' honor.⁴²

Lawrence and Feisal had to constantly engage in tribal diplomacy, building tribal support in the next area of operation because tribes disliked or distrusted each other and no man would fight on another tribe's ground.⁴³ Feisal had to negotiate agreements so the offensive could proceed northward and even these did not deal with all the many personal blood feuds that might be triggered. For example, the support of the Beni Shahr was essential for the NAA's role in Megiddo but it was difficult to tell exactly who was in control and whom to trust. After meeting with the head of the Beni Shahr, Lawrence had to escape after being warned that Turkish troops had been sent to take

him.⁴⁴ Given these conditions the Arab Regular officers were unwilling to lend guns or support to Bedouins who had the habit of never returning either.⁴⁵

Although the example dates from September 1917, it gives an idea of the daily negotiations needed by Lawrence to keep irregular indigenous troops together for a simple raid on Rum with only one tribe:

At Rum were collected a raiding party of Howeitat. Though the very pick of the fighting men of Arabia, they were the most cranky, quarrelsome collection imaginable. In six days there had to be settled 14 private feuds, four camel thefts, one marriage party, two evil eyes, and a bewitchment. It takes longer than making out company returns in triplicate.⁴⁶

Without resolving their own structural issues neither force could have fulfilled its role in the Megiddo campaign. Each force's issues created significant drag and friction not only within their own organization but would have created larger obstacles to inter-force coordination. By creating an offensive that concentrated on the enemy's strategic concept—the protection of the Hejaz railway and maintaining all of Palestine—the EEF and NAA were able to find a common focus that was within their capacity to achieve. The EEF would achieve its military goal through the Megiddo Campaign and the NAA would succeed in taking as much of the Ottoman Empire as its small force allowed. The result was three independent Hashemite kingdoms, only one of which has survived. The situation might have been very different had it been Lawrence's plan that defeated Turkey rather than Allenby's.

NAA Techniques

Lawrence was confronted by an apparently insolvable problem: How to win a war when your troops were both unable to defend against or effectively attack conventional forces? Lawrence shaped his methods to reflect the strengths and weaknesses he observed.

1. Weaponize time and distance in a strategy of fighting without fighting: Lawrence followed De Saxe's dictum that, "the whole secret of war rests in the legs, not the arms" and weaponized time and distance. Battles were an imposition on such a small and individualistic force. The NAA irregulars had nothing material to lose and therefore would defend nothing and shoot at nothing. The role of regular troops was to lay claim to the physical real estate that the irregulars had gained access to by conquering the minds of those who held it. "Our cards were time, not hitting power, and these gave us strategical rather than tactical strength. Range is more

to strategy than force.”⁴⁷ By fighting a war of detachment and then only attacking material, logistics and communications, Lawrence followed another De Saxe rule of waging war without being compelled to do so. The Arabs could not win set piece battles nor endure the casualties. “Our ideal was to make action a series of single combats” in themselves insignificant but as cumulative iterations very effective.⁴⁸ Small actions were used to create the perception of a larger force. The Germans reported in August 1918 that the NAA numbered 50-60,000 when at most it could rally 3,000.⁴⁹

“Our aim was to seek its [Turkish Army’s] weakest link, and bear only on that until time made the mass of it fall.” The NAA was always on the offensive. The Turks lacked the skills and resources to inoculate the population against the insurgents and could only defend physical locations.

2. Simplicity creates mobility: “Tactically we must develop a highly mobile, highly equipped type of army...and use it successfully at distributed points of the Turkish line.”⁵⁰ The NAA maintained a technical superiority in some critical area like Lewis guns or explosives that would increase the fighting quality of each man but not burden them. Each man was self-contained and was fully provisioned for six weeks, with just 45 pounds of flour, some rice, and a pint of drinking water, 100 rounds of ammunition or two men for a Lewis gun. Such a force had a range of roughly 1,000 miles. Later armored cars and aircraft were added for support, but their use was always kept simple.

3. Tip and run by small units:

Our tactics were always tip and run, not pushes, but strokes. We never tried to maintain, or improve an advantage, but to move off and strike again somewhere else. We used the smallest force, in the quickest time, at the farthest place. If the action had continued till the enemy had changed his disposition to resist it, we would have been breaking the spirit of our fundamental rule of denying him [the enemy] targets.⁵¹

The NAA aimed only to fight in indirect actions and only when they could be the better fighter. Lawrence used precise intelligence to make short but repeated strikes using different tribes at different times. The successful addition of a small core of Arab regulars occurred when they were used to block Turkish regulars and fought indirectly like the irregulars. This arrangement worked at Tafilah but broke down at Ma’an during the 1st TJO when the Arab officers insisted on a direct attack. The tactical use of regulars and irregulars was expanded into Lawrence’s Fall Offensive and became the essence of “hammer and anvil.”

4. Plans with Branches: Lawrence was a disciple of Bourcet, a little known French theorist who wrote the *Principes De La Guerre De Montagnes*, wherein he spoke of “plans with branches.” Every plan has an alternative way of reaching the goal or an alternative goal. Every plan is a trap, a deception so that no matter how an opponent responds it is just another way for you to win. A feint can become a full attack if the original attack fails. Bourcet’s influence is most notable in Lawrence’s deceptions for Meggido. A projected attack with Hornsby and the Beni Shakhr sheiks to seize Madeba and roll up Moab from the south was created with landing fields and supplies while Lawrence was gathering forces at Azrak to strike at Amman or Deraa. Lawrence had the guns, gold, supplies, troops, explosives, air support, mobility, and striking power to turn the Madeba deception into reality should Deraa fail. He had his original offensive to pursue should Allenby fail in Palestine. Underlying these plans was always the principle of variability.⁵²

7. Pay: Gold was used freely to get the Arabs to fight. In 1918 over 220,000£ in gold was paid a month to the Hashemites as a war subsidy.⁵³ Lawrence personally spent 490,000£; in today’s dollars, approximately \$34 million.⁵⁴ This gave him considerable leverage with Arab leadership. If a move was unwise he would say “We won’t pay for this show.”⁵⁵ This much gold had a longer term effect of undermining the Turks economically. The German Counsel General complained to Berlin in an August 1918 report, “I know of numerous cases of persons traveling safely from there to Jerusalem. The journey to Cairo is offered for 50 pounds gold, that to Aqaba for eight pounds. There is a great demand for English banknotes, etc.” and he goes on to indicate how this open trade was undermining the Turks.⁵⁶

Meggido: Successful Coordination of the EEF and NAA

The Megiddo Campaign was based on the “hammer and anvil” principle with Allenby being the hammer. The job of the NAA was to keep the railroad around Deraa inoperative for at least a week.⁵⁷ Allenby wanted the NAA to begin operations not more than four, or less than two, days before 19 March 1918. If this was all that was accomplished the NAA would be successful. Allenby and Lawrence came to an understanding about the prudent use of regular and irregular forces in combined operations:

The truth was, he [Allenby] cared nothing for our fighting power, and did not reckon us part of his tactical strength. Our purpose to him, was moral, psychological, diathetic; to keep

the enemy command intent upon the trans-Jordan front. In my English capacity I shared this view, but on my Arab side both agitation and battle seemed equally important, the one to sense the joint success, the other to establish Arab self-respect, without which victory would not be wholesome.⁵⁸

The Palestine sector would become active with a short devastating artillery barrage along the coast, followed by an infantry advance at an angle sweeping away the Turkish defenses. Four cavalry divisions would flood the area behind the 8th and 7th Turkish Armies cutting off their retreat. Chaytor's Force, which consisted of the Anzac Mounted Division, and Indian infantry brigade and two battalions of Jewish troops and two battalions of West Indian troops, would support the appearance that there was a significant attack driving north up the Jordan Valley which would keep the Turkish 4th Army in place.⁵⁹

The success of Megiddo depended on the Turks not retreating in Palestine nor advancing in Syria. A retreat in Palestine of seven to eight miles would have undermined the offensive. The joint NAA and EEF plan was focused on an elaborate deception operation aimed at the very heart of Army Group F's strategic concept: The need to maintain the Hejaz railway and the belief that the Turks would have sufficient defensive power on the coast to stop or slow an advance.⁶⁰ During August-September 1918 the EEF and NAA carried out the following coordinated deception operations:

- 1.) The Imperial Camel Corps was sent with 300 men to attack Madauara and Amman providing the illusion of a coming larger operation in the Jordan with a substantial force.

- 2.) Units moving to the coast did so at night. If the march was not completed the units concealed themselves during daylight.⁶¹

- 3.) Camps were built double in size so reinforcing units didn't show any unusual increase.

- 4.) South of the Yarkon River the cavalry was hidden in citrus groves and watered using the irrigation system.

- 5.) Artillery positions were dug along the coast during August, camouflaged then inspected from the air.

- 6.) To conceal extra bridging, "bridge training centers" were created where the enemy became used to seeing bridges built and dismantled.

- 7.) Vacated camps in Samaria and Jordan were occupied by soldiers unfit for duty. New camps were created with skeleton staffs and condemned tents.

8.) 15,000 dummy horses were placed in vacated cavalry camps in the Jordan Valley which were convincing enough to fool ground observation at a distance.

9.) Dust clouds were raised between Jericho, the Dead Sea, and the Jordan to simulate large force movements.

10.) Two infantry battalions marched every day between Jerusalem and Jericho entering new camps using different routes. They were trucked back at night.

11.) Routine supply vehicles were organized in convoys to make them look conspicuous.

12.) Mounted Corps headquarters continued wireless operation from the Jordan station even though the unit had moved west.⁶²

13.) Chaytor's Force took measures on Z-Day to reinforce the NAA perceptions of attacks both east and west of the Jordan.⁶³

14.) Air superiority was achieved eight weeks prior to Z-Day to prevent Turkish air reconnaissance.⁶⁴

15.) The coastal front lines were not continuous, allowing enemy agents to infiltrate and gather enough information to prevent the deception from being exposed. Ground camouflage was used to facilitate erroneous identification to better exploit the deception.⁶⁵

16.) The Turks received reports about British intentions for months and they didn't develop or were only localized attacks, accustoming the Turks to early and useless warning.⁶⁶

17.) A hotel in Jerusalem was taken over with the rooms marked out and phone lines installed for a rumored movement of GHQ to the east.

18.) Normal rotation of forces in and out of the Jordan Valley accustomed the Turks to large troop movements.⁶⁷

19.) Lawrence purchased all the grain from the threshing floors from the Hauran for gold. He specifically asked certain unreliable Beni Sakhr chiefs not to mention he would need it in a fortnight for the British.

20.) Lawrence had a census taken of all available sheep through four local agents and made provisional contracts for camp delivery.

21.) Lawrence marked out large landing strips near Madeba, southwest of Amman, just before the offensive and hired Arabs to operate them, making sure to choose men known to have a foot in both camps.

Turkish Estimates for frontline (F), reserves (R), and totals (T) by Coastal, Central, and Eastern sectors:			
	Coastal	Central	Eastern
F	2-3 Divisions	2 Divisions	2 Divisions with additional Cavalry Support
R	2-3 Divisions, one of which would be Cavalry	0	2 Divisions, one of which would be Cavalry
T	5 Divisions	2 Divisions	Over 4 Divisions
The Actual distribution was:			
	Coastal	Central	Eastern
F	7 Divisions, 3 of which were Cavalry	3 Divisions	1 Division with additional Cavalry Support
R	0	0	0
T	7 Divisions	7 Divisions	1 Division with additional Cavalry Support

Based on Yigal Sheffy, “Institutionalized Deception and Perception Reinforcement: Allenby’s Campaign in Palestine,” *Intelligence and National Security*, 5:2 (1990): 223.

22.) Lawrence contacted Arab staff officers in the Turkish 4th Army, “I warned them of a thunderbolt shortly to fall on them at Amman from east and west, and conjured them to so dispose their troops as to be ineffective on the day, both ways.” He even warned them not to be in Amman if they could avoid it.

23.) Lawrence arranged a projected attack on Madeba by Hornsby and the Beni Sakhr sheiks again letting unreliable people know that the plan was to roll up Moab from the south.⁶⁸

The effectiveness of these coordinated operations can be measured by comparing real dispositions compared with Turkish estimates taken from maps captured from Sanders headquarters.

The distribution of the Turkish forces on Z-Day prove Liman von Sanders had not expected a large scale British offensive of any kind until

it was actually launched. The surprise is marked by the 35,000 infantry and 7,000 cavalry supported by 384 artillery pieces that moved across the line of departure on 21 September along the coast on Z day, which was opposed by only 8,000 Turkish infantry and 113 artillery pieces.⁶⁹ By Z-Day + 2 Allied casualties were 3,500 and Ottoman POWs were 10,000. By Z-Day + 7 all Palestine had fallen with 50,000 prisoners. The pursuit continued and Aleppo fell on Z-Day + 30, 350 miles north of the line of departure. By Z+39 the pursuit ended with the capture of Damascus and Syria with 5,666 Allied casualties including 853 dead in exchange for 75,000 Ottoman, German, and Austrian prisoners. Of the original 100,000 Turkish soldiers in Palestine and Syria only 17,000 escaped north. On Z-Day + 51, 30 October 1918, the drive forced Turkey to sign a separate armistice.⁷⁰

Eight Pillars of Wisdom for the 21st Century

1. Success will be a complementary relationship: Regulars and indigenous irregulars may have a common objective but different goals. Different force structures will create different strategic responses which may not work for the other. Military outcomes may not achieve the long term strategic objectives of either party. Putting the two forces together in the same operating areas can be like “mixing oil and water” as Lawrence observed.⁷¹ Success has to be constantly negotiated between the two forces. SOF advisers must strike an ethical balance if they are to be trusted by indigenous irregular leaders and troops and their own countries. Intelligence needs to be shared and policy changes from both sides need to be communicated so that a true understanding of the entire strategic picture can be grasped. Liaison officers need to be active between both forces. Regular forces should not treat irregulars as strategic disposable wipes to be discarded when they are through.

2. Using asymmetry is not the same as practicing asymmetry: Every conflict, whether it involves two people or two armies, will exhibit the use of asymmetry and display an unbalancing for one of them to win. But regulars *using* asymmetry is *not the same* as irregulars who daily eat, live, and breathe asymmetric strategy as a *practice*. The EEF failures in the two TJOs were related to the belief that using mobility and speed would get the results similar to Lawrence’s NAA. What it revealed was the weaknesses of asymmetric strategy when misunderstood and misapplied. Using algebra doesn’t make you a mathematician. Each force should stick to what it does best.

3. Work toward a complementary strategy that uses each force’s strengths: Conventional and irregular force structures and strategies both

have strengths and weaknesses. Regular forces are more stable, linear in action, and can control real estate. Irregulars are more flexible, non-linear, and can control the mental real estate of people. Coordinated as complements you can get a hammer and anvil result. Let each force do what they are best at in the context of the operations. Using a force to achieve what the other is best at is like using a hammer to rake gravel. Complementary operations also allow for more variability in using a “plan with branches.” Such an approach maximizes the forces at hand and provides fertile ground for deception operations.

4. Remember the diathetical element: Lawrence’s contribution to military studies was that strategy is a theory of communication. The most valuable real estate for a military force to control is the six inches between the ears of people. First you master your own mind, then you communicate what is to be done to subordinates and by effect you direct the mind of the opponent. Lawrence explains that diathetics considers, “the capacity for mood of our men, their complexities and mutability, and the cultivation of whatever in them promised to profit our intention. We had to arrange their minds in order of battle just as carefully and as formally as other officers would arrange their bodies.”⁷² The mind is both weapon and target. The power of the media and the emphasis by competitors on influence operations aimed at the US confirms this.

5. Hammer and anvil complementarity is a lever that works both ways: Allenby’s Megiddo had the conventional force playing hammer to Lawrence’s anvil through the Deraa deception and the demonstrations of Chaytor’s Force in the Jordan Valley. But an examination of Lawrence’s plan shows that irregular forces could operate as a hammer using a conventional force as an anvil, when the latter is perhaps under-strength for a full offensive. Either way the approach can greatly multiply the effect of the other.

6. Advising and using indigenous irregulars requires a unique skill set: You do not have to be as well read as T.E. Lawrence...but it would help. Advisers need to live, eat, sleep, and fight with the irregulars. They must have a deep understanding and respect for the culture. They must be able to influence through suggestions and entreaties rather than by command. They must be smart enough to get what is needed by working from behind and at the behest of local authorities.

7. Deception beats bleeding: Manipulation and deception are the ever present weapons system that depends on good intelligence, and is inexpensive to use. If presence can obtain a response without casualties

then why fight? Deception beats bleeding. Lawrence's irregulars were not eager to die so what did it cost to be thrifty with their lives by giving them points of attack that were attainable? Lawrence used the media of his time and realized that it belonged to those who manipulate it. Every skirmish became a great victory to be trumpeted to those tribes he had yet to influence as well as those fighting for him and influenced decisions as far away as London. The use of deception is valuable by itself but its value increases when it falls on fertile minds that are excited by anticipation or crushed by desperation. Where people and information can flow freely and the opportunity for manipulating the flow of information as well as the content is great, coordinated regular and irregular forces gain an unstated but vital edge. US forces tend to see strategy in terms of new technology. Technology is just a tool to accomplish deception. Deception is the ever present weapons system that only requires a sharp, creative intellect and is not necessarily dependent on multimillion dollar cutting edge technology. Deception both reveals and conceals. Either end can be used to manipulate an opponent. Successful deception operations are layers of deception built up to create doubt and confusion about what the opponent thought was going to happen and when. Successful deception uses the opponent's own strategic concept to manipulate him. Essentially you let the opponent tell you the direction and timing in which he wants to lose. Deception is the most underdeveloped weapons system in the US arsenal today.

8. Providing direction for Multi-Domain Operations (MDO): The EEF and NAA preparations for the Megiddo Campaign provide tangible examples of convergence and integrating systems between regular and irregular force across domains. Early tactical and organizational setbacks became catalysts wherein not only was more done with less but also doing less achieved more, e.g. deception operations. Air strikes substituted for artillery or mining of railroads. Bombers transported supplies instead of camels or trucks. Information warfare took the shape of propaganda leaflets and word of mouth among tribes and Turkish officers acted as "social media." The EEF and NAA's most valuable mounted force might have been the "Cavalry of St. George" (British gold sovereigns) used to finance the Arabs and undermine the Turkish economy. The NAA, in particular, succeeded due to dispersion, mobility, striking power, and not necessarily size. The "front" was wherever the NAA had its feet at the time. Each force functioned as a participant not as just a consumer of the other's actions. The Megiddo preparations created multiple dilemmas in a unitary plan of attack.

Special operations forces by nature break across the eight domains available in the twenty-first century battlefield (land, sea, air, space, cy-

berspace, electromagnetic, information, and cognitive) albeit on a smaller scale. MDOs do not ask “What force does the job?,” but “What is the most functional way to project power in the place and time?” SOF already operate at this level. The question now is how can the free flow of information be scaled up in larger more complex power projections in the twenty-first-century? History appears to be offering us clues if we are willing to look for them.

Perhaps the best way to sum up this chapter is with Lawrence’s own observation:

If your book could persuade some of our new soldiers to read and mark and learn things outside of drill manual and tactical diagrams, it would be a good work. So please if you see me that way...please use me as a text to preach for more study of books and history, a greater seriousness in military art. With 2,000 years of examples behind us we have no excuse, when fighting, for not fighting well.⁷³

Notes

1. B.H. Liddell Hart, *Colonel Lawrence* (New York: Halcyon House, 1937), 224.
2. Liman von Sanders, *Five Years in Turkey* (Nashville, TN: Battery Press, 1928, reprint), 208.
3. Sir Archibald Wavell, *Allenby* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), 241-242.
4. Cyril Falls, *Official History of the War, Egypt and Palestine Volume I* (Nashville, TN: Battery Press, 1996), 16
5. Falls, 14.
6. Hart, *Colonel Lawrence*, 224.
7. T.E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1966), 461.
8. T.E. Lawrence, "Evolution of a Revolt," *Army Quarterly and Defense Journal*, (October 1920): 14-15.
9. James J. Schneider, *Guerrilla Leader* (New York: Bantam Books, 2011), 218.
10. David J. Murphy, *The Arab Revolt* (New York: Osprey Publishing, 2008), 23. Hart, *Colonel Lawrence*, 232.
11. Murphy, 26; Hart, 232.
12. Hart, 382.
13. Hart, 232.
14. Murphy, *The Arab Revolt*, 26.
15. Hart, *Colonel Lawrence*, 232.
16. Lawrence, "Evolution of a Revolt," 17.
17. Lawrence, 19.
18. Hart, *Colonel Lawrence*, 232-233. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, 461.
19. Sanders, *Five Years in Turkey*, 210-211; Hart, *Colonel Lawrence*, 229.
20. Hart, 232-233.
21. Cyril Falls, *Official History of the War, Egypt and Palestine Volume II* (Nashville: Battery Press, 1996), 347.
22. The Germans introduced their *stosstruppen*, or storm troop tactics, and weapons to the Turkish Army. These assault units began as platoons and then companies and battalions of 300-350 men. Because both men and equipment were limited, the result was 20 percent of the cream of divisional strength went to the assault battalion at the overall weakening of the regiment. See Edward J. Erickson, *Ottoman Army Effectiveness in World War I* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 133, for more specifics about Ottoman assault forces. For a detailed development of German *stosstruppen* tactics see Timothy T. Lupfer, "The Dynamics of Doctrine: The Changes in German Tactical Doctrine During the First World War" *Leavenworth Papers #4*, Fort Leavenworth Kansas, Combat Studies Institute, July 1981 and Bruce I. Gudmundsson, *Stormtroop Tactics* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 1995).
23. Erickson, 134-135. Sanders, *Five Years in Turkey*, 215-216.

24. Sanders, 233.
25. Jonathan Q.C. Newell, "Learning the Hard Way: Allenby in Egypt and Palestine, 1917-19" *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, 14:3 (1991): 377.
26. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, 486.
27. Hart, *Colonel Lawrence*, 246.
28. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, 493.
29. T.E. Lawrence, *Revolt in the Desert* (New York: George H. Doran, Co., 1927), 265.
30. Newell, "Hardway," 381.
31. In Chapter 33 of *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, Lawrence gives one of the fullest explanations of the development of this strategic thinking.
32. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, 461.
33. Sanders, *Five Years in Turkey*, 262.
34. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, 507-508.
35. Lawrence, 468.
36. Newell, "Hardway," 375-376.
37. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, 479-480.
38. Newell, "Hardway," 377.
39. Falls, *Official History of the War, Egypt and Palestine Volume II*, 421.
40. Falls, 419.
41. Erickson, *Ottoman Army Effectiveness in World War I*, 139-140.
42. Lawrence, *Revolt in the Desert*, 260-261.
43. Lawrence, "Evolution of a Revolt," 14 and 18.
44. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars*, 485.
45. Hart, *Colonel Lawrence*, 243.
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52. Hart, *Colonel Lawrence*, 267.
53. O'Brien Browne, "Creating Chaos: Lawrence of Arabia and the 1916 Arab Revolt," *The Quarterly Journal of Military History*, (August 2010): 34.
54. Hart, *Colonel Lawrence*, 169.
55. Hart, 255.
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57. Lawrence, *Revolt in the Desert*, 265.
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59. Wavell, *Allenby*, 282.
60. Sanders, *Five Years in Turkey*, 261. Hart, *Colonel Lawrence*, 227.
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69. Sheffy, "Institutionalized," 224.
70. Barton Whaley, *Stratagem* (Boston: Artech House, 2007) 221-222.
71. Hart, *Colonel Lawrence*, 228.
72. Lawrence, "Evolution of a Revolt," 11.
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Chapter 3

Special Operations and the Spanish Civil War

Kenneth A. Hawley

In 1939, Germany's invasion of Poland sparked one of the most horrific wars in human history, namely World War II. By the time Germany invaded Poland, the precursor to World War II in Europe had just ended on the Iberian Peninsula. The Spanish Civil War pitted two Axis powers against an Allied power using Spain as a proxy in which most outside of Spain saw the conflict as a battle of fascism against communism. The reality was an attempted *coup d'état* by the Nationalists to overthrow the democratically elected, but socialist leaning, Spanish Second Republic. This attempted *coup* devolved into a three-year war in which the Nationalist rebels fought against the Republic's Loyalist Army. The Nationalists received support from Italy, Germany, and Portugal, while the Soviets supported the Loyalists. Each of these foreign nations, with the exception of Portugal, sent their own forces and key military weapon systems to influence the war in their favor.

The Spanish Civil War began with roughly 250,000 men under arms, but would quickly balloon to over one million men on each side as foreign intervention, international volunteers, and the full mobilization of the Spanish populace took effect. In the background of the conventional war that killed hundreds of thousands of Spaniards was an unconventional fight being waged by special operations forces. The Nationalists had the Spanish Foreign Legion, *El Tercios*, as their highly trained, elite force to very effectively shape operations as well as execute direct action alongside the conventional forces. The Nationalist Army would integrate these specialized forces into every operation to maximize their effectiveness. The Loyalists, on the other hand, employed guerrillas to primarily draw Nationalist troops away from the main operations. The Loyalist Army never developed a cohesive strategy to use the guerrillas either to shape their conventional fight or integrate special operations into the overall operational concepts throughout the conflict. The difference in the employment of unconventional forces ultimately contributed to the overall success of the Nationalists and failure of the Loyalists.

Prelude to a Rebellion

General Mola, a key Nationalist conspirator, sent a message on 12 July 1936 to the other leaders of the conspiracy to begin the rebellion on 17 July.¹ By the next day, the elite Spanish Foreign Legion controlled the

garrisons in Morocco while rebel officers on the mainland seized control of the military garrisons of Pamplona, Burgos, Segovia, Avila, Salamanca, and several other small towns.² The military rebels, however, failed to assume control of key garrisons in Madrid, Barcelona, and the Spanish industrial heartland. By July 19th, one of the rebel leaders, Gen. Francisco Franco who would eventually lead the Nationalist Army to victory, returned from a posting in the Canary Islands to take command the Army of Africa. He then gained the support of the Caliph, Mulay Ben Medi, for the Moroccan troops to fight alongside the Nationalist troops. General Franco then ordered the rapid movement of the Legionnaires to the Spanish mainland to begin the conquest of Spain.³

This rebellion was many years in the making. In 1931, the Spanish monarchy under King Alfonso XIII fell due to mass poverty and disenfranchisement of workers throughout Spain.⁴ The new Spanish government, led by Prime Minister Manuel Azaña and President Zamora, declared itself the Second Republic where it sought to correct the ills brought to the Spanish people believed to be caused by the monarchy. The next five years were a tumultuous time due to labor strikes, agrarian worker strife, and economic hardship that was widespread throughout the nation. As a result, the leading left-wing coalition defeated its conservative rival in the election of 1936. That coalition assumed power and immediately instituted several bold reforms that included outlawing many conservative political parties leading to the *coup*.⁵

Azaña, the leader of that coalition, continued his assault on the Catholic Church that began with the establishment of the Second Republic in 1931. Azaña had delivered a speech in the Cortes in 1931 where he proclaimed Article 26 of the new Constitution which mandated Church property belonged to the State, barred religious orders from taking part in industrial and trading activities, and barred religious orders from teaching.⁶ This was in direct contrast to the way Spain educated its populace as most schools were operated by the Catholic Church. In 1933, Azaña was able to get the Religious Confessions and Congregations Act passed and ordered the expansion of the separation of government from the Catholic Church; including closing many Catholic schools. Despite the intent of the closure of the schools to protect them from radical arsonists, many conservatives believed it was an attack on their faith and history.⁷ Fortunately for the church, the government would change hands prior to the actual implementation of that act.⁸ The conflict between the government, radical Republicans, and the Catholic Church would continue for the next three years, serving as a key issue between the Republicans and the Nationalists.

The elections in February 1936 put a leftist leaning government in place to lead an even more fragmented society that included communists, socialists, anarchists, a disgruntled Catholic Church, and unhappy conservatives with a military that did not support the reform efforts of this new government.⁹ In fact, Azaña, again the leader of the government, transferred several senior military leaders away from mainland Spain in an effort to reduce potential right wing military opposition. Finally, the murder of the monarchist opposition leader José Calvo Sotelo by pro-government guards on 13 July irreversibly divided the nation.¹⁰ The perceived failures from the leftist government, the murder of Sotelo, and the government transfer of senior military commanders were the final straw that caused the military officers to call for the coup on 17 July 1936.

The Belligerents

At the start of the civil war, the Spanish military (army, navy, and air force combined) consisted of approximately 254,000 men garrisoned throughout the Iberian Peninsula, the Spanish islands, and Africa. Of those 254,000, approximately 120,000 supported the rebels.¹¹ The Army consisted of three organizations, the Regular Army, the Spanish Foreign Legion, and the Moors (Moroccan Army).¹² Within the Army itself, 120,000 were located on the peninsula and another 34,000 in the Army of Africa garrisoned in Morocco.¹³ It was the Army of Africa, including the Spanish Foreign Legion, which were the most battle-hardened and well-trained.¹⁴ The Nationalist Army would initially consist of a majority of the Army of Africa (the Spanish Foreign Legion and the Moroccan Army) and approximately 25,000 from the peninsular Army. The Loyalist Army consisted of the remaining 95,000 Army forces, large numbers of untrained militia, and eventually several international brigades formed from volunteers from various European countries and the United States. A large majority of the navy and almost all of the air force kept their loyalties with the Republican government creating a significant challenge for the Nationalists early in the conflict.¹⁵ A critical strength of the Nationalists, despite having fewer forces initially, was the strong leadership and well-trained, battle-tested Army of Africa.

Several European nations directly supported each of the belligerents. The Nationalists received key support from Germany, Italy, and Portugal. By the end of July, the Nationalists employed German-provided aircraft, arms, munitions, and other supplies. Included with the aircraft were the crews to operate them. The Luftwaffe aircraft and crews were critical to the initial shuttling of personnel and equipment from Africa to the peninsula to counter the Republican Naval Fleet in the Straits of Gibraltar.¹⁶ Ultimately,

the Germans would create a Condor Legion consisting of a bomber group, fighter group, reconnaissance, anti-aircraft, and support personnel, as well as a ground force that included tanks and anti-tank systems.¹⁷ The Italian support, which would far surpass that of German manpower, occurred concurrently with German support. Italy provided significant numbers of infantry, light tanks, artillery, fighters, and bombers. German qualitative support, however, was much more important to the Nationalists. The quality of German heavy artillery, anti-aircraft weapons, heavy bombers, fighters, and other arms with the expertise to operate that equipment was much more impactful than that of the Italians.¹⁸ Finally, Portugal was the last country that fully supported the rebels. Key elements of Portuguese support included the use of Portuguese ports, railroads, and other facilities to transport the German and Italian war materials into Spain. In addition to the diplomatic and moral support, Portugal sent arms and volunteers to serve with the Nationalist Army.¹⁹ Without the rapid involvement of these nations, the Nationalists would not have had their early successes and may have ultimately impacted their ability to prevail in the end.

The Second Republic received its support primarily from the Soviet Union. While initially hesitant to provide military support, Stalin realized he had to act once he learned of the fascist men and materiel going to the Nationalists. Spain made the initial request for support to Stalin on 25 July 1936. The Soviet government fulfilled that request by conducting a series of drives requesting donations from the Soviet people, not quite what the Republic had in mind.²⁰ However, the two nations did not have formal diplomatic relations creating a challenge to formally support the Spanish request. By August, Spain and the Soviet Union established formal relations overcoming that diplomatic issue. Stalin fully committed to military support the next month with the initiation of Operation X.²¹ Operation X included a four-part strategy to support the Republic:

Major direct military participation in the form of Red Army weapons and personnel.

Major internal political participation through the COMINTERN and the PCE.

Major collateral political, propaganda, and material assistance through worldwide activities of the COMINTERN, its parties, and innumerable front organizations, as well as through the provision of food and other nonmilitary supplies from the Soviet Union, with other Soviet collateral assistance from a variety of international dummy companies.

Active diplomatic support for the Republic, particularly in the Non-Intervention Committee, as well as through bilateral diplomacy with the Western powers.²²

Under Operation X, Soviet support surpassed that of Germany and Italy combined by October. The Soviet direct military participation included the newest tanks and aircraft (mostly manned by Soviet pilots) developed under the five-year plans as well as arms, artillery, ammunition, and significant advisors. Those advisors would be key in the formation of a special group of international volunteers that would be organized into brigades initially led by Soviet intelligence and Red Army officers. As payment for that military support, the Soviets received a majority of the remaining gold from the Bank of Spain.²³

The major Western nations remained generally neutral. Britain, France, and the United States focused on diplomatic solutions to resolve the conflict. Britain and France were concerned with preventing this war from spilling over to the rest of Europe. The United States, on the other hand, took on an isolationist stance focusing on internal policies to recover from the Great Depression. France was the first to propose a diplomatic solution by recommending a policy of non-intervention on 2 August 1936. The policy became a formal treaty signed by all European nations except Switzerland soon thereafter. Included with the treaty was the establishment of the Non-Intervention Committee chaired by the British to administer the tenants of the document.²⁴ Overall, the committee and treaty were highly ineffective as the nations supporting the belligerents disregarded the treaty and supplied the sides as they saw fit.

The Three-Year War

The civil war itself lasted three years, even though it appeared the Nationalists would rout the Loyalists within the first few months. General Franco and his forces pressed his attacks from the initial landings in the south at Cadiz on 19 July 1936 with his Army of Africa rapidly moving north to Sevilla, Mérida, and Cáceres. His forces then moved west to Toledo with the intent of quickly capturing the capital of Madrid. The Nationalists were very successful in reaching the outskirts of Madrid by November. The Nationalists with the Spanish Foreign Legion in the lead crushed the ill-trained and poorly-led Republican regular forces and supporting militia. Defenses quickly evaporated under the relentless attacks by the highly trained Nationalist forces. The Battle for Toledo was to be a Republican success story as the Loyalists chose to make a determined, prepared defense to stop the onslaught of Nationalist victories. Franco had other plans, securing the city in four days.²⁵



Figure 3.1. Initial Republican and Nationalist Zones of Control. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

From September 24 to September 28, three columns of a combined force of Legionnaires and *Regulares* conducted multiple attacks while fending off numerous counter-attacks to capture the city of Toledo and prepare for the final march on Madrid. The Loyalists' primary defenses were located on the heights and approaches to the city supported by artillery and air. The Nationalists utilized its own supporting artillery and air to much better effect.²⁶ It took through the 26th to secure the heights and approaches to the city defeating the primary defenses before the Na-

tionalists began the attack to secure the city on 27 September. In the end, the Nationalists secured the city on 28 September, ultimately suffering over 100 killed and wounded. This victory left the road to Madrid open for the next major operation. The Republican forces paid a much heavier price having lost over 400 casualties and 700 prisoners in addition to huge stockpiles of stores, winter clothes, 20 cannon, thousands of rifles, crates of ammunition, and other weaponry.²⁷ The Nationalists used this battle as a propaganda tool to demonstrate their strength, emphasizing the continued failures of the Loyalist Army. Madrid, however, would not fall as easily as Toledo.

In the north, the Nationalists began operations in late August and along the border with France to isolate the Republic from potential support by France and ultimately capture key Republican strongholds of San Sebastián (Spain's traditional summer capital) and Irún. The Nationalists forces in the north were able to employ naval gunfire and daily air support to defeat the Loyalists.²⁸ Those key cities would ultimately be captured by the Nationalists by the middle of September. The Nationalists continued to press the attack through Aragon for the remainder of 1936, seizing key area cities throughout the region. Simultaneously, the Nationalists were able to launch offensives throughout Asturias, an area believed to be a Republic stronghold. Col. Antonio Aranda Mata, the commander of the army garrison in Oveido, along with Col. Antonio Pinilla Barceló, commander of the 40th Mountain Infantry Regiment in Gijón, declared their support for the rebels on 19 July, giving the Nationalists a foothold in the region. Between the significant Loyalist Army and militia presence, the going was difficult for the Nationalists. The Loyalists conducted a siege and assault on Colonel Pinilla's forces from July-August leading to the destruction of those Nationalist forces and the death of Colonel Pinilla, but did buy time for Colonel Aranda. By late October, the main Nationalist force sent in relief reached Colonel Aranda in Oviedo, but significant fighting continued for the next few months as the Loyalists continued to attack to cut off Nationalist supplies lines to Oviedo and re-secure the Asturian territory.²⁹

The Nationalist successes soon slowed by October 1936 as Franco's bid to capture Madrid came to a halt. Significant Soviet support coupled with the formation of the International Brigades gave the Republican forces the boost they needed. As the war progressed, both sides continued to increase its manpower while the battles became more conventional pitting larger and larger formations against each other. The Nationalist forces generally remained undermanned as compared to the Loyalists until the end of

1937 when the armies equaled each other's strength (between 650,000 and 700,000 on each side).³⁰ The critical northern regions also began to finally fall to the Nationalists in late 1937 allowing Franco to gain access to munition factories, coal, and iron ore mines that could be used to support their war effort. By the spring of 1938, the Republic's military crisis spilled over into the political arena as well as creating such turmoil that it began to effect the management of not only the war effort, but everyday life in the Republican-controlled areas. The populace in the Republican zones faced hyperinflation, food shortages, and defeatism.³¹ The inevitable finally occurred with the formal surrender of the Second Republic to Franco on 27 March 1939 at 1100 hours. The war was over.

The Spanish Civil War ultimately included over one million belligerents on each side using some of the most advanced as well as antiquated weapons of the time. Within each of those million man armies were two smaller groups that had a role in the overall operations during the Spanish Civil War. These groups can be considered special operations forces by today's standards. On the Nationalist side, the Spanish Foreign Legion was the elite force of the Spanish Army at the time of the rebellion. The second group, the guerrillas with Soviet advisors, supported the Loyalists in their effort to win the war.

The Spanish Foreign Legion

At the start of the Spanish Civil War, the Spanish Foreign Legion, or *El Tercios*, consisted of 3,758 men organized in six battalions (*banderas*), or the equivalent of a regiment.³² The Spanish Foreign Legion was unlike its French counterpart in that *El Tercios* were predominately Spanish while the French Foreign Legion was a conglomeration of many different nationalities. The Spanish government formed the Spanish Foreign Legion in response to the poor performance of the Spanish Army in Morocco in the 1920s. *El Tercios* adhered to principles of strict discipline, toughness, and ferocity in battle creating a small, elite force that became the battle-hardened force for the Nationalists that would staunchly resist any threats of defeat in battle.³³ Lt. Col. Millán Astray founded the Legion in 1920 and put Francisco Franco in charge of the first 200 recruits. Astray was also responsible for developing the Legion's Creed that included lines such as "The spirit of combat: The Legion will demand always, always, to fight" and "The spirit of death: To die in combat is the greatest honor", as well as the simple battle cry, "*Viva la Muerte!*"—Long Live Death!³⁴ These simple phrases highlight the almost fanatical nature of the Legionnaires. In several instances early in its formation, the Legion executed guerrilla-type operations, although that was not the original intent for tactical employ-

ment of the force mainly because using a force in that manner went against the European chivalric code. Instead, they were a highly-trained force, educated in the tactics of the enemy, to decisively defeat those enemies.³⁵

This elite unit was chosen to lead the Nationalists fight when the Spanish Civil War broke out deploying from Africa on 19 and 20 July. A small force of Legionnaires embarked on three vessels, the destroyer *Churraca*, the steamer *Ciudad de Deuta*, and the *Cabo Espartel*, to make the short trip from Morocco to the Iberian Peninsula. Because the Spanish Navy remained largely loyal to the Republic, further transport was halted for fear of engagements by the Republican-controlled fleet.³⁶ There was also a small contingent of Legionnaires that crossed the strait in small fishing trawlers. This perilous voyage was nearly discovered by the Republican battleship *Jaime I*. So relieved were the men making the successful voyage that they carried their commander on their shoulders to the chapel and thanked God for their safe passage.³⁷ Franco then had to enlist the aid of several Nationalist and German Breguet I aircraft to transport the 5th *Bandera* from Africa to the city of Seville when sea travel became too perilous. Two platoons from that unit became the first forces to conduct an aerial assault on Spain on 20 July. The Legion was so critical to the initial battles that air and sea transports would make several perilous journeys over the coming weeks to ensure these elite troops were available.³⁸ Without the Legion on the peninsula, the success of the Nationalists was surely in doubt.

One example of the pivotal role the *Tercios* played is during the attack to seize the city of Badajoz, 13-15 August 1936. The Legion sent a company of 90 men to conduct the final assault to capture the city, but they had to pass through an 11-foot gap at the Trinity Gate wall that became known as “breach of death” due to the density of enemy machine-gun fire. Despite the company infiltrating close to the gap and using hand grenades to create a smoke screen, the enemy “mowed down” Legionnaires with devastating machine gun fire. It took the employment of two machine guns from the Legion’s machine gun company to reduce some of the attackers’ fire before the infantry company could maneuver through the breach by individual and squad movements. The company finally got personnel close enough to the defenders to use hand grenades, securing the breach with only fourteen men remaining. It took that decimated company, the *bandera’s* staff, and remnants from two other companies fighting hand-to-hand, shooting and bayoneting Republican defenders with a heretofore unseen ferocity that ultimately carried the battle. The breach company’s standard bearer was heard shouting, “Long Live Death!” the battle cry of



Figure 3.2. The Relief of Oviedo, October-December 1936. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

the Legion, as he fell with so many of his companions. When his company commander secured the final objective, he reported to his commander, “Have crossed the breach. I have 14 men. I do not need reinforcements.”³⁹ This one battle was indicative of the esprit, capability, and fanaticism of the Legionnaires.

A second example of the criticality of these elite forces came in the North of Spain, Asturia, following the impassioned calls from Colonel Aranda in Oviedo and Colonel Pinilla in Gijón.⁴⁰ The leadership of the Nationalists dispatched the third *Bandera* with other Nationalist *Regulares* in October 1936 to break through that Republican stronghold to resupply those two units. In the final assaults to open a corridor to Colonel Aranda, the Legionnaires fought through multiple Republican positions securing key terrain. These small units then had to fend off numerous Republican counter attacks as the Loyalists attempted to prevent the Nationalists from linking up with the besieged force in Oviedo. On 14 October, the Legionnaires found themselves surrounded with only a few men remaining. The Legion leaders consolidated and reorganized while forming a defensive perimeter to repel the expected Republican counter attack. When that at-

tack came, those remaining from the *Bandera* fought bravely, fending off attack after attack. Stretcher bearers, clerks, and even cooks were rushed to the line to plug any holes. In fact, a squad of ten Legionnaires attacked the *Regulares*, catching them by surprise and inflicting heavy losses which temporarily halted the enemy attack. That attack created a brief respite for the Legionnaires, but ultimately cost the lives of all ten men. The next day, the Legionnaires received reinforcements allowing the Nationalists to go on the offensive and break the Republican encirclement. All told, the Legionnaires experienced 80-percent casualties, but were successful in completing the breakthrough to Colonel Aranda.⁴¹

Throughout the war, the elite nature of the Legion eventually became diluted. As casualties mounted, the need for additional Legionnaires grew. There was a need for additional Legionnaires as the conventional army expanded as well. Volunteers were the only individuals accepted into the Legion. In fact, the Legion expanded with the formation of 12 new *banderas* through April of 1938.⁴² This expansion allowed the Legion to actively participate in nearly every major battle, making an impact wherever they fought. Generally employed as shock troops, the Legion fought in every offensive, experiencing extremely high casualty rates. Despite those casualties, the Legion never wanted for volunteers. The Legion ultimately experienced 37,393 casualties; of those 7,645 were killed and 776 were missing when the war ended.⁴³ The elite Spanish Legion rarely fought together in greater than *bandera* size, focusing on small unit tactics to make a huge impact with few numbers.

The Republican Guerrillas

In contrast to the Spanish Foreign Legion, the Loyalist Army did not have an elite force. They came to rely on Soviet advisors for their expertise to create a guerrilla force because one was not readily available, unlike the Legion for the Nationalists. As early as October 1936, Soviet intelligence officers penetrated up to the highest levels of the Republican government and army to provide advice and guidance to the Spanish leaders and subordinate units while also keeping the Soviet leadership informed of all aspects of the war.⁴⁴ The Soviets also provided critical training and leadership to many of the international brigades supporting the Republic. These advisors would accompany many of the units into battle providing advice at key times in planning for and the execution of many of the battles. Additionally, Soviet advisors provided the expertise necessary for the employment of the new equipment the Spanish government purchased to fight the rebellion. Each of these missions allowed the Loyalist Army to continue to resist and stop the onslaught of the Nationalist Army early in the war. In

total, no more than 3,000 Soviet personnel were in the country at any given time, but they had a tremendous impact.⁴⁵ The Soviet development and support to the guerrillas was essential to the actual employment of those unconventional forces as the Republican leadership did not believe in the need to utilize those types of forces during the war.

Spain was the birth place of the term “guerrilla;” coining that term during the Peninsula War of 1808-1814.⁴⁶ Several individuals, including Stalin, recommended to Premier Largo Caballero to engage in guerrilla warfare early in the war as the Nationalists were rapidly moving towards Madrid with little stopping them. The premier insisted, however, that the Loyalist Army did not have the men to train a guerrilla force or the spare material to arm that force.⁴⁷ An inventory of weapons within the Republican force would have clearly demonstrated that was not the case. In fact, in the numerous battles won by the Nationalists yielded huge caches of weapons and ammunition as the Republican forces and militia were either destroyed outright or retreated from the battlefield. Had the premier fully understood that a force of that type utilized minimal men and material to be effective, the guerrillas could have had an earlier impact on the fight.

The inability of the Loyalist Army to realize the value of the guerrilla force created an opportunity for the Soviet advisors. They chose to create a guerrilla force. The Soviet secret police operatives would serve as the initial leaders of that force operating independently of many of the regular advisors. Aleksander Orlov was the Soviet charged with creating, training, and directing Spanish guerrilla units for the Soviets among his many other requirements. The initial process in developing the guerrilla force included establishing guerrilla warfare schools where they trained the first 200 in Madrid and 600 in Barcelona.⁴⁸

Despite the formation of guerrilla training by the Soviets early in the war, it was not until 1937 that those formations started to conduct guerrilla actions. An example is in the Seville Mountains. Reprisals by the Nationalists in the Seville area created a group of 300 disgruntled civilians who decided to respond through guerrilla actions. The “civilian” guerrillas sent a party to the Loyalists lines to garner support, returning six weeks later with Soviet guerrilla warfare instructors. These Soviet trained guerrillas became such a problem for the Nationalists that they had to execute deliberate operations against these guerrillas to neutralize their effectiveness. In fact, the Nationalists eventually employed 4,000 troops supported by tanks, artillery, and aircraft to find and kill the problematic guerrillas. The guerrilla force retreated over 20 days when they recognized the massive

effort by the Nationalists to destroy that small band of men. After safely reaching the Loyalist lines, they would continue the fight for the remainder of the war.⁴⁹

Some of the most impactful guerrilla operations for the Republic occurred in the Asturias Region. After the defeat of many of the Republican forces in battle in October 1937, half the force refused to surrender and retreated into the mountains to begin a ferocious guerrilla campaign that lasted five months.⁵⁰ These guerrilla operations created a significant delay in Franco's plans for a final offensive against Madrid. In fact, the Nationalists would never fully reduce the guerrilla force there requiring a constant presence of troops to patrol and respond to the partisan actions. The Nationalists would dedicate eight battalions of infantry and 15 *tabors* (battalion-like organizations) of *Regulares* to hunt down those guerrillas.⁵¹

In Aragón, the Loyalist Army did use guerrillas to specifically support their conventional operations. The Battle of Teruel in the winter of 1937-1938 is the perfect example. The Loyalist battle plan called for the employment of guerrilla teams to conduct raids just prior to the attack to enable the Loyalist offensive. The Loyalists brought forward members of the newly established 14th Guerrilla Corps from 200 miles away. The guerrillas were to infiltrate the Nationalist lines the day before the attack to mine roads, blow bridges, and disrupt communications throughout the Nationalist sector. One such ten-man team highlights the effectiveness of a well-trained small unit. This team crossed the lines on the frigid night of 13 December 1937 guided by a local peasant. Evading multiple Nationalist patrols, the team successfully located their target, a bridge over the Guadalaviev River. The unguarded bridge was blown along with nearby communication lines. The raiding party then returned to friendly lines, chased the entire way by Nationalist cavalry.⁵² These raids coupled with the decision not to conduct a massive artillery bombardment prior to the attack allowed the Republican force to catch the Nationalist by complete surprise. By 22 December 1937, the Loyalists declared victory with Teruel's capture.⁵³

Guerrilla activity continued throughout the war. Unlike in Teruel, however, the Loyalists continued to employ the guerrillas, not in support of conventional operations, but in diverting Nationalist forces. The Republican leaders failed to recognize that the best chance for success came in integrating unconventional guerrilla forces in attacks in the enemy rear and quick-strike raids on lightly defended areas of the front during conventional operations. Those few successful raids were not enough to convince the Loyalists of the value of that tactic.⁵⁴ The blend of conventional



Figure 3.3. The Battle of Teruel, December 1937. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

and unconventional warfare would have allowed the Loyalists to hold out until the European war broke out in earnest, diverting Axis and Allied support from the Spanish theater. Unfortunately, the Loyalists continued to fight using the methods that produced failure after failure, presenting large targets for the superior Nationalist artillery and air support, ultimately leading to their defeat. With the end of the war in March 1939, so too did a majority of guerrilla operations as Soviet support and key advisors withdrew from Spain.⁵⁵

Application to Operations Today

Lessons from the Spanish Civil War can be applied to today's operational environment during large-scale combat operations. As the civil war progressed, each belligerent experienced their greatest success with the integration and interdependence of the special operations forces with conventional forces. Whether the utilization of the Spanish Legion with the

Regulares during the initial phase of the war through early 1937 or the Republican guerrillas executing shaping operations in support of conventional forces, if operations were integrated, each force was likely to experience success. Field Manual 3-0 states regardless of the level of integration of Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) with conventional forces, there is also an interdependence tied to the objectives special operations forces and conventional forces each support. Each may be conducting shaping activities simultaneously or sequentially and must account for the actions of the other and their impact on the operational environment.⁵⁶ Failure to account for the actions of the other can counter the objective of the joint force commander negating the operation of one or the other.

The United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) commander recognizes the importance of integrated and interdependent operations with the articulation of the commander's third of three priorities outlined in the ARSOF campaign plan (CAMPLAN), "*Communicate the ARSOF Narrative*—to achieve special operations force and conventional force integration, interoperability, and interdependence (SOF/CF I3), develop and strengthen joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) partnerships, and build the ARSOF brand—nests within FM 3-0."⁵⁷ ADRP 3-05, also identifies the importance of integrated and interdependent operations. ADRP 3-05 defines joint interdependence as "the purposeful reliance by one service on another service's capabilities," and further expands to include application to ground forces by stating "SOF and conventional forces may rely on each other's capabilities to maximize the complementary and reinforcing effects of both."⁵⁸ The most effective means of employing each force in support of operations is when each fulfills the role for which it was designed.

Special operations forces increase the options available to the commander when executing irregular warfare. ARSOF today are trained in several missions, such as unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, and direct action, while conventional forces are trained to conduct decisive action.⁵⁹ Each force executing those tasks in an integrated and interdependent manner is much more powerful and likely to lead to operational success. The guerrilla actions at Teruel is a perfect example of the importance of each force executing the tasks they were trained to accomplish. The guerrillas executed raids and direct action tasks while the Republican conventional force executed the decisive operations to secure the town. The ability of both conventional and special operations forces to integrate operations through each of the domains leads to a powerful capability that the enemy will find hard to counter.

The Spanish Civil War provides a significant number of lessons in the wrong application of special operations forces as well. ADRP 3-05 emphasizes the point that ARSOF is not the ideal solution to all military problems and should be employed on missions for which it is optimally designed, taking into consideration its unique capabilities and skills.⁶⁰ The early employment of the Spanish Foreign Legion was absolutely the right force for the mission requirements. Their expertise, combat experience, and elite capabilities were essential to achieving the initial objectives that likely would not have been attained without that special force. As the war progressed, and casualties within the Legion mounted, the Nationalists leaders grew the Legion in size and employed them in a more conventional manner. As a result, the Nationalist's rapid and decisive victories became fewer and fewer as the civil war became a large-scale, protracted war.

Conclusion

The Spanish Civil War started as a small-scale internal conflict in the summer of 1936 that rapidly expanded to large-scale combat operations where division and corps formations maneuvered against each other supported by significant artillery, tanks, and aircraft. The artillery, tanks, and aircraft eventually became exclusively provided by foreign nations. Those same foreign nations would provide critical advisors and combatants to counter the support of the other. The war was fought, however, by predominately Spanish combatants. Each side initially leveraged the strengths their leadership believed would bring the conflict to a rapid conclusion. The Republican forces had an initial advantage in numerical superiority with a fully supportive air force and a large naval contingent. The Nationalists, on the other hand, had the advantage of the most experienced and competent military leaders, the experienced Spanish Foreign Legion, and German and Italian military support from the start of hostilities. The Nationalists recognized the importance of integrating and applying all aspects of those advantages from the start, while the Republicans wrongly believed the rebel forces would quickly fall to the strength of the ruling forces.

The inability of the Republicans to recognize their shortcomings is one of the key reasons leading to their downfall. On the Nationalist side, the leaders identified their strengths and fought using those strengths. One of the key strengths was *El Tercios*, the highly-trained and experienced Spanish Foreign Legion. The elite force was used independently as well as integrated with the rest of the conventional army. The Legionnaires would lead the Nationalists into battle on many occasions. In fact, they were the lead Nationalist element tasked to execute the first battles against

the Loyalist Army to start the rebellion. The Legion would eventually grow beyond that specialized force later in the war having less impact on battles towards the end of the conflict. In contrast to the Nationalists, the Loyalist Army did not have that elite force. It relied on conventional forces to fight its battles. Its benefactor, the Soviet Union, recognized the need for special operations forces and developed a guerrilla element that would conduct unconventional warfare operations against the Nationalists. Unfortunately, the formation of trained guerrillas came after the initial battles where the Loyalists found themselves on their heels. The employment of guerrillas would never have the same impact on the Nationalists as the Legion had on the Loyalists. Had the Republican leadership recognized the importance of employing guerrillas in integrated operations with the conventional force early and often, the outcome of the war may have been different. One only need to look to the Battle of Teruel to see what could have been.

As the complexities of conflict increases today, employing joint forces in an integrated manner takes on greater importance. Multi-domain operations recognizes the interdependence of not only ARSOF with Army conventional forces, or even the services within the joint force, but the whole of government. We must apply our national power during pre-conflict, conflict, and post-conflict phases to meet the national strategic objectives. Failure to do so could lead to catastrophic results.

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Chapter 4

Special Operations in Operation Overlord

Go Deep, Cause Problems, and Frustrate Plans

Joseph Royo

Introduction

The large scale of operations in World War II provided a unique environment as many new capabilities converged for combined effects. That environment, and the new problems it introduced, pushed specialized activities to come together into a more cohesive component of ground operations. During World War II, a transformation occurred from special operations as an activity to special operations as an organization. The enormity of the war created demands to integrate those organizations and the potential of their capabilities into combined arms schemes. Operation Overlord is one such example of an operational scheme that converged all elements of combat power, conventional and unconventional, to ultimately disintegrate German forces. The emphasis on this chapter is on the operational art of combining multiple domains of operations. By combining conventional land, air, and special operations, the Allied command was able to penetrate deep into enemy territory. They created dilemmas that affected German interior lines. Those dilemmas contributed to the disintegration of German decision options.

This case study looks at special operations and conventional force operations in combination with one another, rather than as separate features of warfare. The prototyping of those combinations that occurred during Operation Overlord are scaffolding to frame future warfighting concepts. Future tacticians should think about how to extend operational reach by penetrating into deep areas through indigenous approaches. They should factor how to force the enemy to deal with dilemmas—problems that will sap him of energy and resources. Tacticians should develop new concepts of tactics that combine special operations with conventional force operations to frustrate the enemy's plans by disintegrating his decision options. The implications of combining conventional and special similar to what occurred in Operation Overlord can give large-scale operational designers a menu of options to seize, retain and exploit the initiative.

Operation Overlord provides a good case to examine implications for how both special operations and operational art can generate conventional

force and special operations force operational synergy. As will be seen from the Operation Overlord case, *the combined effect of conventional and special operations give large-scale operational planners options to go deep, cause problems, and frustrate plans.*

World War II is an enormous topic, as is Operation Overlord. Therefore, this chapter will look primarily at a narrow slice of how some of the unorthodox activities coincided with the ground attack between May-September 1944. It will concern itself with some of the planning considerations concerning German interior lines. It will look at the challenge of gaining access to the deep maneuver areas—getting behind enemy lines. The study will take particular note of how combinations were a key feature of the Allied fight. This includes combinations of air bombing and ground sabotage, combinations of conventional force movement and unconventional force screening, and combinations of intelligence gathered from military intelligence and indigenous populations in deep areas and close areas.¹

Operational Context

On 6 June 1944, one of the most incredible undertakings of WWII—the liberation of Europe from Nazi Germany began. Operation Overlord was the name given to that effort. Although shaping operations had already been softening German defenses in the months prior, the invasion itself began early that Tuesday morning. More than 150,000 men would rush ashore along 60 miles of the Normandy coast. The British 3rd Infantry and 50th Infantry Divisions; the Canadian 3rd Infantry Division; the US 1st Infantry and 4th Infantry Divisions would all attack the beach from the sea. The US 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions, along with a division of British paratroopers, would secure objectives inland, behind shoreline defenses. By the end of the day more than 2,500 men died as Allied forces seized a foothold onto the European continent. That experience was one among the many visible aspects to defeating German forces. There was another aspect, though, that was not as visible but that contributed to the Allies' ability to strike directly at the heart of Germany. That aspect was the variety of special kinds of operations working behind enemy lines and with citizens to torment the German military's interior lines.

As planning took place for Overlord, the military attitude for fighting reflected a propensity for large-scale combat, or “big-unit warfare.”² Fair treatment of the subject of balancing conventional forces with special operations demonstrates a reluctance to weigh any reliance on special methods, especially regarding the use of partisans.³ In spite of that propensity or

possibly because of it, the vacuum of interest in waging warfare with discreet capabilities created a condition for experimentation with special operations activities.⁴

Special operations took many forms. There were a wide variety of specialized individuals and units engaging in acts of sabotage, subversion, espionage, and guerrilla activities. Histories place their origins across British and US collaborative efforts with many resistance movements throughout Europe. Elements include organizations such as the Special Operations Executive (SOE), of British origins. The US variation was the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Other specific elements include Operational Groups (OG) and Jedburghs. The etymology of special operations origins is helpful for understanding this warfighting capability's policy development. However, placing emphasis on particular contributions by British and US offices will unnecessarily complicate the broader implications this chapter intends. In order to limit complications about all the types of elements engaging in "unorthodox warfare," this paper will refer to them all generally as "special operations."

Background on Special Operations in Overlord

Special operations activities came in many forms throughout the Second World War. A need arose to attempt some degree of organization and coordination of underground and resistance movements. These movements, in France in particular, emerged naturally under a watchful German occupation.⁵ The introduction of small teams and individuals, such as the 15-man operational groups and three-man teams called Jedburghs was one way to establish a coordination and control mechanism between Allied operating forces and resistance elements.⁶ Such special operations organizations provided those direct links to resistance forces.

Special operations added a variety of options to harass the enemy. Sabotage, subversion, intelligence gathering, guerrilla warfare, assistance with escape and evasion, precision targeting—these were broadly the scope of actions that special operations elements provided by working with resistance groups.⁷ As noted about one of the special operations elements, the Jedburgh teams, "no single Jedburgh operation could be regarded as wholly typical of the miscellaneous functions performed by these units."⁸

The now declassified report of OSS activities in WWII recognized that "British agencies stressed the almost prohibitive difficulty of direct penetration without the assistance of resistance groups and friendly local populations." Also from the footnote related to this, "Special Operations (SO) were not conducted in Germany because of the absence of resistance groups, and

because material destruction could well be accomplished by air, when civilian lives were not considered as important as in friendly territory.”⁹

The specified tasks described in one of Operation Overlord’s operational planning documents reveal that SHAEF’s planners did have clear expectations for resistance groups as part of the combined arms team. These forces were to create confusion and affect decision options available to German commanders.¹⁰ One decision in particular that resistance groups could have an impact on was German commanders’ decisions to employ reserves and reinforcements. The degree to which such disruptions would cause quantifiable effects to Allied freedom of action was acknowledged to be uncertain. However, the expectation remained necessary from a combined arms perspective: “cause the maximum confusion in the enemy’s rear.” Key tasks for resistance groups outlined in the Overlord order included:

- Destruction of railway communications to impede German reinforcement moves

- Guerrilla warfare to interfere with road traffic, small headquarters, isolated small enemy groups, ground aircraft and crews, and supply installations

- Interruption of telecommunications on order

- Aid to paratroops as reception committees and guides in the interior

- Impairment of movements of German armoured divisions that impose short delays on their movement

- Prevention of enemy demolitions and preservation of installations for forward movement of troops in the interior

The literature is mixed in terms of what special operations organizations did relative to their impact on the overall Allied fight. Depending on the sourcing, one could deduce that special operations’ impacts were either marginal or substantial. Generic and official histories along with archival material related to major operations do demonstrate some nominal impacts. They seem nominal when compared to the massive size and scale of multi-army Allied maneuvers against Axis armies of similar size and scale. However, a more relevant perspective to deriving future implications is to see the interaction of an overall combined arms team. Implications from the combined arms team in Overlord are instructive for how special operations should be viewed in context with the overall large-scale ground combat operation. In that context the formation of a warfare doctrine that

combines complementary effects of various formations providing unique capabilities begins. That doctrine is one of operational synergy between conventional and special operations.

One of the main means through which special operations carried out their unorthodox activities was through an assortment of French citizens. To the extent that they could, these French citizens resisted occupying German forces. The French resistance was in today's context, the maneuver unit advised and assisted by various special operations teams. Estimates of their strength vary from as low as 100,000 to as high as 500,000.¹¹ The official OSS war record suggests as many as 300,000 Frenchman served with OSS teams.¹² Granted, the accuracy of those estimates are sometimes tinged with exaggeration or skeptical conservatism. However, the actual number of Frenchman risking their lives is not entirely germane to a more important observation about the fact of their existence. Regardless of the range of estimates, the reality was that a substantial force of power existed in the French population that constituted a form of indigenous mass. Special operations teams and coordinating headquarters helped to organize that mass into some semblance of cohesiveness for coordinated combat purposes. In effect, SFHQ and special operations teams working through their indigenous partners transformed that mass into a kind of combat power that reinforced Allied ground troops.

Since the variety of studies on this period and this topic are varied, this chapter will anchor its ideas primarily in the Center for Military History's "Green Books" series on World War II. These provide the broadest general history of the moment from a generally conventional warfighting perspective. The chapter will also anchor its ideas in the declassified *OSS War Report, Volumes 1 and 2*. These provide the broadest general history of special operations activities from an "unorthodox" warfighting perspective that is not conventional. Operational reports from both SHAEF and OSS will add further texture related to the ways in which special operations were integrated into the overall Allied approach. Additionally, this chapter will draw from a limited source of German directives, given by Hitler himself and other German military leaders. The aim with these kinds of references is to render a fair treatment of how special operations contributed to overcoming some of the operational challenges that Allied forces faced.

Operational Challenges

What follows is a discussion of three challenges that Allied forces faced during the months surrounding D-Day. The first challenge was penetrating the denied areas of France that were controlled by Germany. The

second challenge was to turn some of the attention of German forces away from the main Allied effort. Third, the Allied forces needed to spoil an expected German counterattack. Included in these overarching challenges were such operational requirements as shaping the deep fight; extending operational reach, freedom of action and maneuver for both friendly and enemy forces, creating dilemmas, mass, and consolidating gains. For each of the overarching challenges, a short synopsis will introduce an example from the fight. Then a discussion will characterize how the combination of special operations with conventional operations helped Allied forces gain and maintain an advantage over German forces.

Go Deep—Penetrate Enemy Denied Areas

Allied forces faced difficulties penetrating into the interior lines of German defense operations by ground. Coordinated with air power, special operations gave allied forces the ability to reach deep into enemy territory. Operations requiring specially trained individuals waging “unorthodox warfare,” such as propaganda, sabotage, and subversion through partisan elements, guerrilla forces, and popular movements, delivered a variety of discrete means to soften German defenses. Organized special operations formed under the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). They designated a headquarters—Special Forces Headquarters (SFHQ)—to support the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEP) with European resistance movements. Special operations elements provided material support to over 100,000 French resistance participants. They orchestrated sabotage and subversion operations in combination with air bombing operations and conventional disruption operations to contain German freedom of action.

Shape the Operational Environment

Through SFHQ, Allied forces shaped operational areas deep in enemy territory. In the months leading up to June, 1944, Special Operations Headquarters made efforts to supply French resistance groups operating underground. Those efforts to supply resistance groups were intended to put some fighting capabilities directly into the hands of willing French fighters. The aim was to build a contingent of indigenous mass, able to deliver a degree of military-like effectiveness against German forces. Part of that build-up process involved getting supplies to the French resistance groups. Special Operations Headquarters packed containers and packages with supplies in London and then delivered those materials by air directly to French fighters. Elements of British and US special operations teams provided the assistance with

Delivery of Materiel to French Resistance Groups

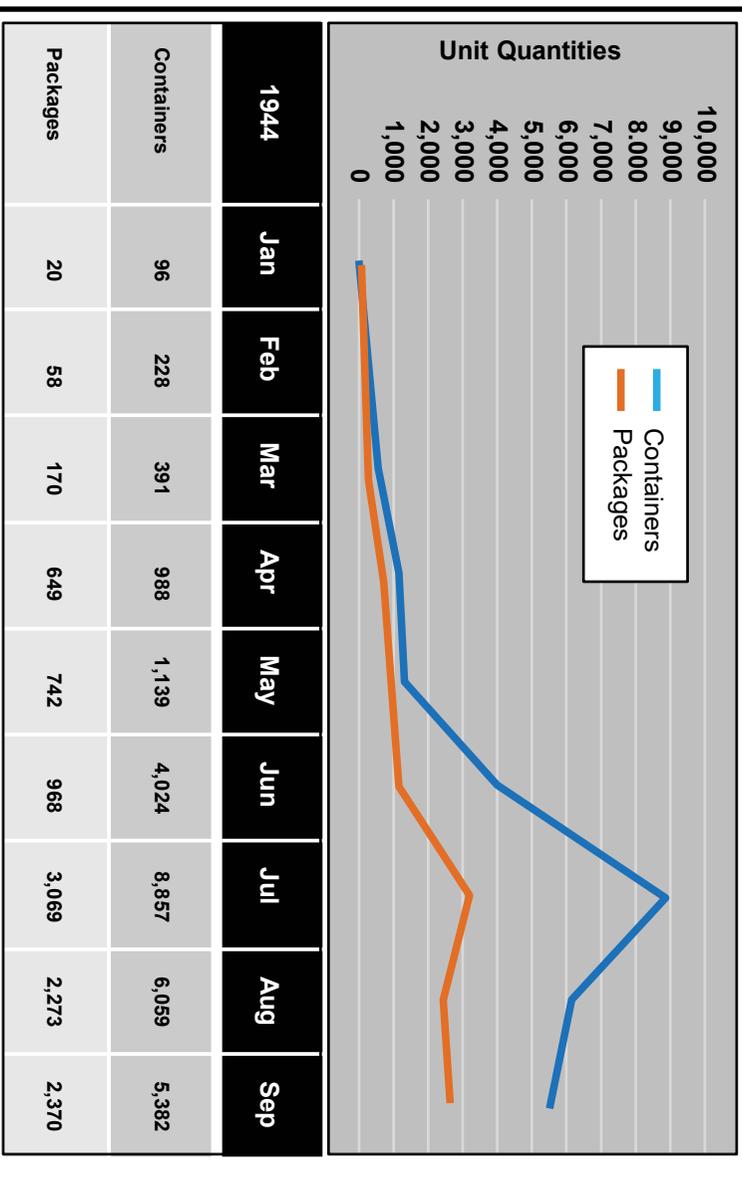


Figure 4.1. Materials to the French Resistance. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

communicating those material needs, delivering them to French underground groups, and training them on ways to employ them in a military manner. Containers were packed with warfighting supplies that various special operations elements helped deliver to French underground movements. An example detailed in the OSS war history shows a rapid build-up of those material quantities leading up to the start of Overlord and continuing through the operation.¹³

Implication—Shape environments for greater freedom of action by coordinating indigenous approaches

Through the early months leading up to D-Day, the Allies learned how to maximize effects of rail sabotage by coordinating them with upcoming military operations. This was initially a challenge that may not have been fully realized in these early special operations efforts. However, as the effects of both the scale and preciseness of rail and other transportation damage became more apparent, the coordinated approach to combining conventional tactics with special operations tactics created a dilemma related to the tempo with which Germany could counteract.

Implication—Extend operational reach by penetrating deep areas by, with, and through partisan forces

The ability to penetrate into enemy occupied areas was a particular challenge suitable for special operations solutions. They could penetrate French air space since Germany lacked sufficient air support to deny persistent intrusions by bombers and fighters. However, penetration into the rear areas by land was a wholly different matter. Prior to D-Day and after the invasion, OSS capabilities provided allied commanders at several echelons with an ability for different kinds of penetration. Shallow penetration gave corps and division level commands access to intelligence capabilities that delivered information about enemy front lines. At higher echelons, special operations teams embedded with their resistance elements conducted deep penetration operations. Those deep operations put pressure on enemy commands by attacking them from inside their interior lines of operation.¹⁴ To do this, SHAEF, in cooperation with the SOE and SO, placed headquarters components, such that, “Directly under SHAEF command, SFHQ was given responsibility for coordinating all underground resistance in France in direct support of the forthcoming Allied invasion.”¹⁵

By the time Operation Overlord began, 93 Jedburgh teams had been deployed deep behind enemy lines. Their task was to contact French resistance elements and coordinate the delivery of war supplies

tlefield. Field forces must look at how they penetrate strategic fires and deep maneuver areas. In the example of the Balkans, Allied forces were looking at that deep fight. In today's lexicon, the Balkan example presents implications for getting into the deep maneuver and strategic fires areas.

Cause Problems—Mass the Effects of Dilemmas

The phasing of Overlord included a preliminary phase in which Allied plans to use air support and resistance support to soften German defenses. Resistance forces, guided by a variety of special operations elements conducted sabotage, propaganda, limited harassing attacks, and some coordination with the air bombing operations.¹⁷ Evidence of SHAEF's vision for resistance efforts as part of the Allied plan was to "obtain the maximum amount of chaos behind the enemy lines at the moment of landing."¹⁸ Based on estimations by the OSS regarding sabotage against the Germans, results of special operations cooperation with resistance groups had remarkably positive results (See Figure 4.3).¹⁹

Generate Dilemmas for Enemy Decision Making

The impacts of these kinds of chaos were seen when Allied forces seized control of their first major objective. Shortly after Allied forces seized an initial foothold along the Normandy beaches, they set out for one of Overlord's first major objectives: Cherbourg. Located on the end of the Cotentin peninsula, Cherbourg was a port city that would open a more efficient line of communication to supply the offensive. It would also give the Allied command a stronger hold onto the continent from which to continue its advance toward Germany. German commands recognized this reality. They also recognized the advantage Cherbourg and the peninsula offered for supplying the war effort. They also saw the peninsula as a place to contain Allied forces. Tactically, they could use the peninsula to trap the Allies.²⁰

Beginning a week after D-Day, the Allies made their move. Forces under VII Corps and VIII Corps, on the Allies' western flank, began their drive to capture Cherbourg. In the process they would split the German line, which, in that sector of Normandy, fell under the control of the German Seventh Army. Cutting a portion of the Seventh Army from itself and from the peninsula would give VII and VIII Corps time and space to push quickly west to the port. For the next three weeks, they applied direct pressure against four built-in German divisions, seizing one intermediate objective after another along two axes of advance: across the neck and through the middle of the peninsula.

This move would involve combining the movement of ground forces with rolling barrages of both air bombings and artillery. The progress was at times slow, but the movement forward was steady. Allied forces maintained constant pressure on the German peninsular defense. They also maintained constant pressure on rear areas, as air bombing operations combined with sabotage operations from French resistance interrupted reinforcement flows.

German forces were somewhat well prepared to match the Allied forces. They had had an advantage of time to lay in a line of fortified defensive positions that extended across the peninsula. More than four divisions of infantry comprised much of the fighting force. The garrison at Cherbourg itself also held upwards of 20,000 men. They were reinforced with substantial artillery capabilities.

However, what they critically lacked throughout the period of engagement was a viable capacity to sustain a positive rate of supply reinforcements. The capacity to support the fight from interior lines was a center of gravity thrown off balance by persistent interdiction from the air and from targeted attacks by the resistance. German forces wanted to counterattack against the beach invasion; they wanted to counterattack the progress being made against Cherbourg. They even tried delivering reinforcements, but the Seventh Army efforts to reinforce General von Schlieben, the commander overseeing the peninsula fight, occurred only in piecemeal form.²¹ In effect, the Allies succeeded in disintegrating the structure of their reinforcement capacity.

By 18 June, divisions from VIII Corps had pushed west across the peninsula, cutting off the four German divisions from the rest of German Seventh Army. Subsequently, two divisions from VII Corps advanced along the center axis, reaching Cherbourg by 27 June.

Implication—Turn Enemy Toward Multiple Fronts by Creating Dilemmas through Material Support to Resistance Movements in the Enemy’s Rear Areas

Coordinated efforts that occurred in conjunction with strategic bombing generated more impactful effects on German rail transportation than either method separately.²² The combination of air attacks and sabotage frustrated movement of German cargo and supplies by seven fold from the beginning to the end of March 1944.²³ Aside from material losses, this dilemma created throughput issues to German replacement and resupply efforts during the main thrust of the invasion.²⁴ They could not replace frontline materials rapidly enough to keep pace with the rate at which Allied forces built combat power.

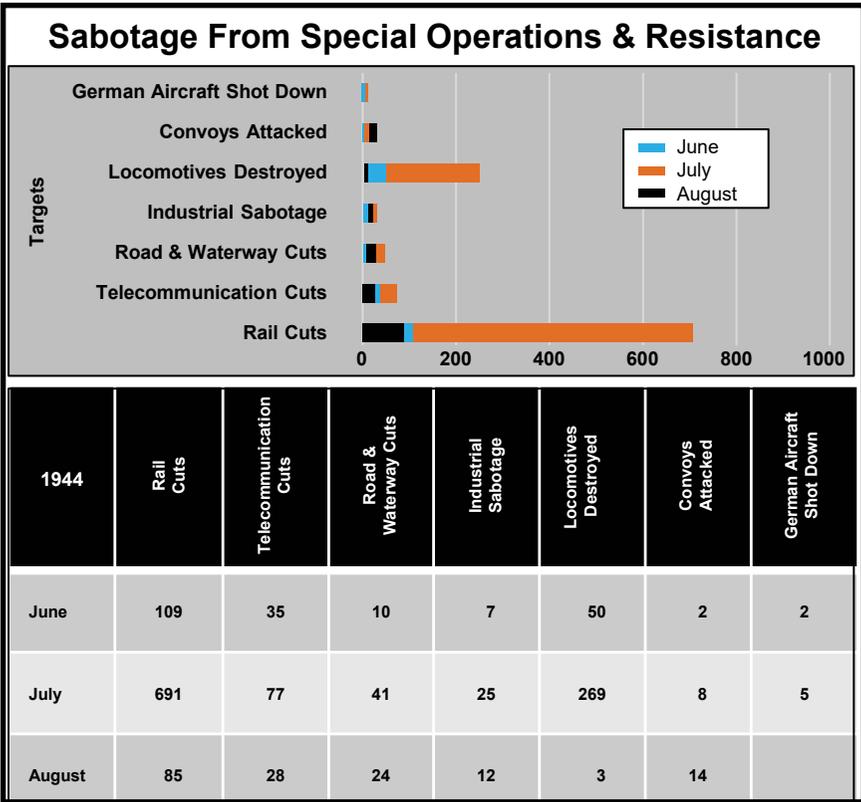


Figure 4.3. Sabotage from Special Operations and the Resistance. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

As Allied forces began closing in on the heart of Germany, German commands prioritized their fighting resources against four military fronts. In the east, a Soviet force was pushing westward. In the west, an Allied offensive was pushing eastward. In the south, an Allied offensive was pushing northward through Italy. In the midst of these directional lines of advance was an internal front from partisan warfare in the Balkans.²⁵

Allied aims initially ceded control of the Balkans to Germany. This was an opportunity more so than a loss because their operational approach was to keep as much German force that was already present in the Balkans, in the Balkans. Rather than commit Allied forces to that effort, their strategy relied on Balkan guerrillas to keep Germany occupied there and to give Germany a reason to keep a portion of its force committed to the Balkans. Guerrillas provided a means to gain and maintain contact with German forces. The hope was that by keeping German forces occupied they could limit the repositioning of those forces elsewhere. This was a form of deep

fight that planners considered during one of the early Overlord planning conferences—the Quadrant Conference. As they shaped the operational approach, planners considered: “Therefore, our strategy should be to supply the Balkan guerrillas by air and sea, with the object of enabling them to compel the Germans to maintain not only present forces of 12 divisions in that region, but also to provide additional divisions to replace the 30 Italian divisions now there.”²⁶ To account for this deep fight, the Allies needed ways to penetrate deep into the enemy’s areas of influence.

Implication—Generate Mass in Deep Areas by Transforming Indigenous Mass into Combat Power

One war factor that suddenly compounded the German force’s ability to manage their fight was a mass of resentment borne out in aggressive action taken by many French citizens against the German military. As noted by the OSS, “Their secret circuits, developed in France for more than a year prior to D-Day, would serve as nuclei for an eventual uprising of resistance at the time of the invasion.”²⁷ The accounts of total French resistance capacity vary, but they are consistent in showing that well over 100,000 people actively participated in fighting against Germans. Nevertheless, the sheer number of people willing to resist added the equivalent of seven German divisions-worth of people power to the battlefield.²⁸ They presented a quality of indigenous mass by themselves alone. The impact of that mass proved useful to advancing Allied corps and divisions when special operations teams organized them, supplied them, and coordinated their employment. In effect, special operations elements *transformed indigenous mass into combat power*.

Special operations elements took French civilians, mostly young men, who had practically no organized military training, and turned them into fighters. Those French civilians were contacted. They were given equipment including communications, weapons, munitions, explosives, clothing, food, and medicine. They were given training how to use those various materials. They were given training how to employ their supplies against a German enemy with greater firepower and maneuverability. They were advised in tactics to identify and exploit German military weak spots—weak spots in their formations; in their organizations; in their logistics trains; in their supply facilities; in their field headquarters. They were given a structure of organization and purpose.

Figure 4.1 shows one disposition of one kind of special operations element: the Jedburgh teams. These three-man teams combining British, American, and French servicemembers were specifically tasked with organizing resistance groups.²⁹

Frustrate Plans—Disintegrate Enemy Decision Options

Operationally, the combined arms effect of special operations coordinating resistance activities in combination with air operations frustrated the German ability to counterattack. Strikes against their lines of communications disrupted their ability to move freely about their rear areas.

Gain Freedom of Action by Limiting the Enemy's Freedom of Maneuver

In several appendices the Operation Overlord order, planners compare and contrast operational factors for an appreciation of the French coast, from the Pas de Calais area through the Cotentin Peninsula areas. These feasibility assessments frame considerations as to whether they would support large-scale operations. One of the critical factors that these assessments consider is the enemy's ability to employ their mobile reserves to reinforce defenses and counterattack Allied formations. This was an assessment of the feasibility of German forces to demonstrate a likely tactical plan. The value of these assessments was in determining the better options to frustrating that counterattack plan.

Of importance to Allied forces was the ability to quickly build up combat power on the continent, expand the lodgment, and initiate further offensive operations. If allied forces could not gain that foothold and quickly begin to seize the initiative, then the Overlord plan would face real frustration. Consequently, of the two feasibility assessments, the assumption was that the northern Pas de Calais area provided German forces greater use of rail and communication lines. The ability to mobilize reserves for reinforcements and counterattack was advantageous to Germany in the northern French coast areas. Moreover, the more heavily defended Pas de Calais region was thought to effectively neutralize the impacts of any efforts to delay German reinforcements by combined air bombing and resistance groups. Ultimately, the plan presumed that the ability of Allied forces to rapidly build up combat power was likely to be limited in part because German reserves could not be appreciably contained.

The Cotentin Peninsula, on the other hand, offered some alternative with respect to German reserves. While the rail, road, and communications lines reaching the peninsula were not as extensive as those around the Pas de Calais, there was the matter of geography. German reinforcements could trap Allied forces on the peninsula as they consolidated initial assault gains. As long as there was time to get reserves to the peninsula, German forces could have an easier task of containing the Allied force than the Allied forces had of breaking out. Thus, any invasion of the peninsula

would be a race against time: Allied forces racing to breakout; German forces racing to block. However, this fact of time was an important one related to the broader challenge of dealing with the German interior lines. It mattered in selecting the right invasion area that would enable supporting plans to frustrate German counterattacks. Any delays or limitations to German freedom of maneuver could favor the tempo of Allied movement. That is why “the number of offensive divisions which the enemy can make available for counter attack [sic]” was one of the main limiting factors, according to an overview of the Overlord plan.³⁰

Consequently, SHAEF chose the area around Caen for the invasion site. It afforded better potential for beach landing and resupply in terms of topography and sea-land conditions. It also presented better options regarding disruptions to the enemy’s inland network of rail, roads, and communication. The enemy’s inland network of rail, roads and communications would give them an advantage in employing their reserves. That is why the matter of the German reserves was one of five conditions necessary for Overlord’s success.³¹ In SHAEF’s estimation:

divisions in reserve should be so located that the number of first quality divisions which the GERMANS [Sic] could deploy in the CAEN area to support the divisions holding the coast should not exceed three divisions on D-day, five divisions by D plus 2, or nine divisions by D plus 8.³²

Incidentally, the German estimation was very similar. They fully anticipated using their reserves for counterattacks to stop a breakthrough. Important to the German plan was the ability to “immediately counterattack.”³³ The ability to immediately counterattack was directly tied to those German interior lines of communication. Such a vulnerability urged Hitler to warn his force that the threat of sabotage “by constantly destroying traffic installations [could] not only disrupt our communications but could also make troop movements entirely impossible in an emergency.”³⁴ Since he considered the impact of sabotage to be “extremely grave,” he ordered that “all sabotage troops will be exterminated to the last man without exception.”³⁵

Implication—Disrupt Enemy Freedom of Maneuver through Precision Targeting Operations such as Sabotaging Interior Lines of Operation

One of the difficulties that air bombing operations presented was an impact on French civilian casualties. SHAEF recognized this risk and accepted that some level of French civilian casualties was unavoidable. However, they also recognized that a large number of civilian casualties

could be counterproductive to shaping efforts. They risked demoralizing the overall population so as to upset any potential gains through the ground offensive. This was a particular concern of French resistance leaders and political figures who would likely assume political roles following liberation. Special operations activities provided an alternative disruptive means to minimize civilian casualties. They precisely targeted objectives for sabotage behind enemy lines, limiting casualties to near negligible levels.³⁶

Caution was the attitude that best described how planners felt about factoring resistance forces into the total mix of combat power.³⁷ They initially regarded it as a “bonus” more so than a required capability.³⁸ Although there was some reluctance to relying on “unorthodox” methods, the character of this particular conflict was such that it would require a combination of any capability that could create chaos against a powerful enemy. If anything, Allied planners used indigenous movements in a prototyping manner, as an economy of force to gain some initial time and space in denied enemy areas.

Operational planners did factor resistance groups in as a means to frustrate German reinforcement plans. The challenge they were forced to balance was in prioritizing resources needed to support the main thrust of the Allied fight and resources needed to support an unknowable program of underground resistance. They thought that reinforcements by road would be negligibly impacted, but reinforcements by rail could be impacted by days.³⁹ Delays in terms of days were a factor that would make a difference in Allied efforts to expand the lodgment rapidly. The interference of rail systems, therefore, was a prime objective for both air operations and resistance groups. By air, the Allied command could destroy broad sections of rail. By ground, they could rely on resistance groups, directed by special operations teams, to inflict damage with more precision. The combination of broad air effects and precise indigenous effects, according to the plan, could create depth to the degree of rail destruction.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, despite the relative newness of special operations as an organizational component of large-scale operations, SHAEF planners did incorporate special operations activities into the plan. Additionally, field commanders, such as the 12th Army Group, First Army, and Third Army used their liaison relationships with Special Force Headquarters to take advantage of operations done with and through French resistance.

Future Applications

The study of future military art and science will gain insights into how to design operations that combine effects that are both unique to spe-

cial operations and unique to conventional forces. One way to learn from operations is to look at different kinds of forces separately. Many assessments of future conflict warn of warfare's almost seamless, multidimensional character. This chapter looked at special operations and conventional force operations in combination with one another. The prototyping of those combinations that occurred during Operation Overlord provide scaffolding to frame future opportunities might combine the complementary effects of these two capabilities. Future tacticians should think about how to extend operational reach into deep areas with indigenous approaches. They should factor how to converge different forms of mass such the mass of power in populations. Tacticians should develop new concepts of maneuver tactics that join special operations effects with the effects of conventional force power. Finally, large-scale ground combat operational designers should reflect on how to force enemies to make decisions that limit their freedom of action by generating dilemmas from multiple directions and dimensions.

Conclusion

The quantifiable degree to which special operations created additional freedom of action for Allied forces is neither entirely germane nor entirely necessary to prove for the point of this chapter. The point of this chapter was to show that a concept for the combination of special operations and conventional force capabilities began to cohere during WWII. The coherence of that combination continues today, and much like the 1940s may be on the verge of a revival in form and function. A synergy existed between the way conventional ground force operations and unorthodox special operations interacted together. They created greater freedom of action for Allied forces while limiting Germany's freedom to maneuver.

In a letter to director OSS after the war, Dwight Eisenhower noted, "In no previous war...have resistance forces been so closely harnessed to the main military effort."⁴¹ While special operations were not a new concept during World War II, the magnitude of the conflict encouraged the convergence of capabilities. That convergence brought together special war-related activities into a more active element of operational schemes. The activity of special operations evolved into an organization that orchestrated special operations in coordination with the theater campaign. Integration of special operations into those large-scale conventional movements demonstrated a broader potential of a different kind of combined arms planning.

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Chapter 5

What Works?

Jedburgh Team Operations Supporting Conventional Forces

Benjamin F. Jones

The Jedburgh teams have entered into US Army Special Forces legend. Their veterans, now nearly gone, comprise men such as William Colby, John Singlaub, Lucien Conein, Stewart Alsop, and Aaron Bank who all developed practices, tactics, policies, and strategies for the war in Vietnam and the Cold War. The experiences they had in occupied France influenced their thoughts about unconventional warfare for the rest of their lives. Those decisions, and the events that followed, influenced many facets of special forces practices today. With the establishment of allied special operations capacities in Afghanistan and in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the return of Jedburgh units to US Special Forces, it is a good time to take stock and revisit our assumptions about their real impact during the Second World War. What exactly did the Jedburgh teams accomplish in France, Belgium, and Southeast Asia? There seems to be an acceptance that their work had a large and positive impact on the war. They empowered enfeebled underground movements to action. Their operations achieved grand results, such as successfully covering hundreds of miles of Gen. George S. Patton's southern flank in his eastward drive across France.

The real story is somewhat less than the legend, and far more complicated. The bottom line is that the teams who got into France early, who found mature and well-organized resistance groups, maintained reliable communications, received sufficient air support, and operated in areas occupied by German troops unprepared for guerrilla warfare, tended to be effective. If more than one of those characteristics were missing, their missions were often fruitless, or worse yet, the Jedburgh teams were destroyed. It is consistent with the "indigenous approach," highlighted in USASOC 2035. Had better coordination been allowed and fostered between the British and American special operations forces and their Free French allies, greater synergy between conventional forces and the Maquis would have resulted. The dormant power within the Maquis would have manifested itself in far more effective ways supporting the conventional forces led by British Gen. Bernard Montgomery and American Generals Omar Bradley and George S. Patton. As it happened, the German and collaborationist

French did consume resources they would not otherwise have expended in order to put down the “*terroristen*” (as the German Army referred to them), behind their lines.

Below is a description of two Jedburgh teams that operated in different parts of France. The teams were selected for this chapter because they operated in similar environments and had similar missions to organize a region, but the outcomes were drastically different due to a sliding mix of the characteristics described above. Team Giles deployed to the Brittany region in western France and operated into early August arming Maquis groups, linking different Jedburgh and allied special forces to different tasks in their region and supporting the arrival of conventional forces into their area. Brittany is a model to be studied further regarding how today’s special forces could collaborate to conduct an unconventional warfare campaign in a key region to the commander’s aims. The second team discussed below, Team Jacob, deployed to a region in eastern France three weeks later than Giles when their commander believed they would have the time to establish themselves with the area’s resistance. However, Team Jacob failed to find its stride. In Jacob’s area, the Jedburghs could not overcome the volatile dynamics created from the rapid pace of desperate German main combat units transiting their area. Nor could they overcome the lack of airlifted weapons to their drop zones.

Due to a variety of issues driven by alliance politics and the British and American allied planners’ lack of faith in the French resistance, the Jedburgh teams were held from deploying until Operation Overlord’s D-Day on 6 June 1944.¹ Jedburgh Teams Hugh, Isaac, George, and Frederick were to parachute into key areas in western, central, and eastern France all on the night of 4 and 5 June, but weather forced teams George and Frederick to deploy as much as four days later. Their early arrival, which should have facilitated greater effectiveness due to having time to understand their environments, turned out to be consumed in sorting out command relationships with units they had not trained with before deploying and evading effective German army counter-insurgency sweeps. Teams George and Frederick spent nearly all of June and most of July evading enemy capture. Team George’s effectiveness was nearly zero for its entire mission in Brittany. But team Frederick’s ability to survive and establish an operating foothold re-energized French Gen. Pierre Koenig, the new allied commander for unconventional warfare in France, and his Special Force Headquarters staff. The Giles mission, which had been held up, was back on for the Finistère region, east of where Frederick was operating. Moreover, as a part of a larger plan, six other teams were put on alert

for deployment to Brittany. After being delayed by weather on their first attempt and by a lack of a confirmed drop zone signal on their second, Team Giles arrived to much celebration and champagne, despite the early morning hour and the proximity of the enemy.² Special Forces Headquarters believed that in Finistère, the Brittany department assigned to Giles, there were 9,600 German soldiers along with the 5,000 paratroopers of the 2nd Parachute Division and 9,000 naval, marine, and anti-aircraft or Flak troops for a total of 37,000. But Free France's military delegate to the region, Maurice Barthélemy's most recent rushed cable led them to believe there were 30,000 French waiting to join the Maquis. Such information, along with the imperative from Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower to control Brittany, pushed General Koenig to begin a more comprehensive plan. It consisted of sending more Jedburgh Teams to Frederick and ended with sending in an inter-allied command and control element led by Free French Col. Albert Eon and seconded by none other than the Free French Intelligence chief, Col. Andre Dewavrin.³ However, American Capt. Bernard Knox and French Capt. Paul Grall of Team Giles seemed to be oblivious to their team being a part of this larger effort. Probably left out of the broader plan for security reasons, Giles' ignorance proved costly. Specifically, their point of confusion seemed to center around the directive to not take "offensive action" until directed to do so.⁴ By the end of June, with 13 teams scattered around France, reports of sabotage, spectacular numbers of people joining the *Résistance*, and the belief that armored divisions such as the 2nd SS *Das Reich* had been effectively delayed, the Allies began to believe that the Maquis' effectiveness was real. But as the scale began to tip and as numbers in the Maquis grew throughout France, the impact of such enthusiasm and passion altered the role of the Jedburgh teams. Now instead of inspiring, provoking, and leading the Maquis to action, the teams' presence was to dampen and pass along the Allied directive to wait. Instead of providing the fuel, they had to put on the brake. The Jedburghs who had been in France before the end of June had experience and had matured along with their Maquis and could temper their passions better than new teams, such as Giles now parachuting in. These late-coming teams did not have sufficient time to establish rapport and develop the necessary trust needed with the resistance groups in their areas of operations.

Team Giles Deploys

American Capt. Bernard M. Knox, French Capt. Paul Grall using the *nom de guerre* Paul Lebel, and British Sgt. Gordon H. Tack comprised the seventh team dispatched from Britain to France. On 16 June, Special Force

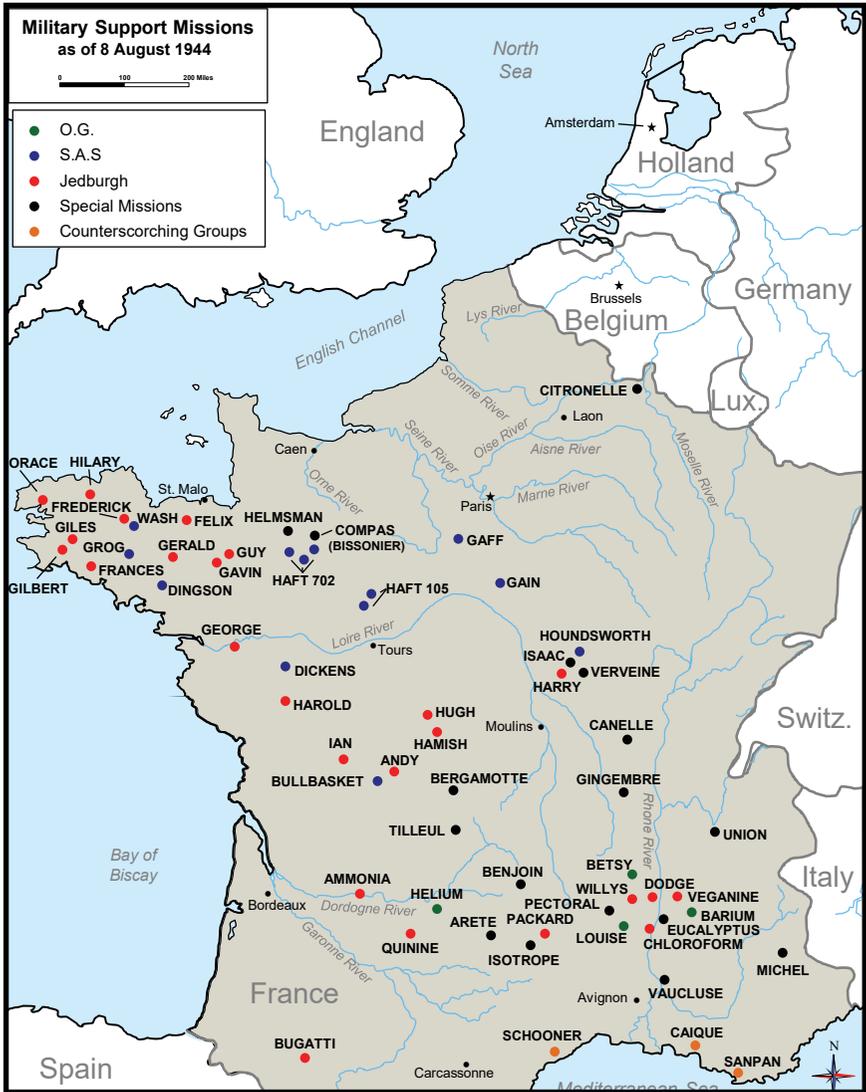


Figure 5.1. Military Support Missions as of 8 August 1944. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

Headquarters (SFHQ) alerted and briefed team Giles' members of their mission to deploy to the Finistère region of eastern Brittany and organize and arm *Résistance* forces. SFHQ knew very little about the region's Maquis, and prior to the team's departure General Koenig, recently named by Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower to command the resistance in France, briefed them personally, emphasizing the region's importance and how vital it was to learn more about the Maquis' potential for combat. Koenig also stern-

ly warned Knox to act like a gentleman and behave himself as a good guest of France should. Evidently, he thought Americans chased women too much and would be parachuting into France with stockings and chocolates.⁵ Immediately before the team left for France, Captain Grall went back to London to agree on the BBC signal for the Brittany large-scale attack that would be voiced in the clear. Grall suggested, "*Le chapeau de Napoleon est-il toujours a Perros-Guirec?*," ("Is Napoleon's hat still at Perros-Guirec?") which was accepted. After an unsuccessful attempt to insert the team on July 4, Giles finally parachuted into the French night on 8-9 July from an American "Carpetbagger" B-24.⁶ Their mission flew in on a night that saw 15 other sorties, from two airfields, to four drop zones now under the control of Maquis coordinating with Team Frederick.⁷

Captain Knox parachuted first out of the "Joe hole." Born in England and educated in languages at St. John's College, Cambridge, Knox had joined the International Brigade and fought in the Spanish Civil War. After he was wounded, he left Spain for Paris and fell in love with an American writer. They moved to Connecticut, and Knox became a naturalized citizen in 1943. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, he joined the US Army where he was trained as an air defense officer. At the beginning of 1944 he was stationed in England, and when he heard about the Office of Strategic Services he volunteered, hoping to see some action. He served as an explosives and French instructor at the Jedburgh training facility of Milton Hall, and after some parachute training, he was assigned to deploy on a team. Knox acted as team commander for Team Giles. Capt. Paul Grall joined the Jedburghs from the Free French Jedburgh recruiting drive in North Africa. The Germans had captured Grall in 1940 and held him as a prisoner in Poland. He escaped and somehow got to Morocco. A member of the French Colonial Army, Grall was a well-built man with a large scar down his cheek from an automobile accident. Sergeant Tack served as the wireless telegraphy (W/T) operator and Captain Knox considered him a first-class radioman. Tack followed Knox down the "Joe hole" with Grall exiting last.⁸

The drop went well, with Knox and Tack landing close together and despite the darkness they found Captain Grall within two or three minutes. Excited young Frenchmen welcomed them almost immediately, greeting them with kisses. The reception party gathered up their gear and much to the Jedburghs' delight had vehicles to transport them to a safe area. Riding in cars and a truck carrying their equipment, the team members hoped to get to their base before dawn, but the distance was so far that the team did not make it there until daylight. At the base, the members found

not quite fifty men whose leader was in Côtes du-Nord, who was in Team Frederick's area attempting to acquire weapons. Captain Grall organized the defenses and distributed their weapons, giving instruction as he went along. Later that afternoon, the team heard the BBC message informing them of another drop on the same ground as the previous night. Although they were leery about making the trip back to the drop zone, the Giles team decided to risk it in order to retrieve the weapons. They also sent word to London stating that the *Résistance* situation was different from the one they had been briefed on since Gestapo and the French collaborationist police, the Milice, had recently arrested and shot local leaders. Giles radioed, "situation at Finistère is not as informed," requested three more Jedburgh teams to work other parts of the region, and asked for an additional one million francs.⁹

The team realized later they had retrieved their supplies from the drop zone just in time. They discovered the next afternoon, that the 2nd Parachute Division had an estimated 300 troops going through farms searching for *Résistance* forces. The suspicious Germans heard the aircraft and arrived on the drop zone just five minutes after team Giles and their reception team left. After the near miss, Giles distributed the arms to another Maquis group and met the returning Maquis leader, Yves Legal, who led the most active group in Brittany. Team Giles and Legal quickly came to an agreement on dropping grounds and the strategy that Giles should remain in Brittany's center while letting the next Jedburgh teams work the coastal areas.¹⁰

On the night of 9-10 July, two more Jedburgh teams parachuted onto one of Giles' drop zones without its knowledge, and the next day Special Force Headquarters radioed Giles of the arrival of Teams Francis and Gilbert. These two teams proceeded to the villages of Quimper and Quimperlé and by the time the ground received a drop of weapons for Giles' Maquis four days later, their cover was "blown." Hearing the noise four nights previously, the Germans suspected something was going on in the area and attacked the Maquis as they finished their work at the drop zone. However, the French Maquis put up stiff resistance, surprising the *Wehrmacht*, and Captain Knox thought the Germans sustained so many casualties that attacking the drop zone was not worth their effort.¹¹

On 12 July, the Free French chief visited Giles' command post and discussed *Résistance* operations. Giles team members established a professional relationship with him at first and related their respective goals, agreeing to stay in contact with each other via Yves Legal. Unfortunately, this leader had just recently taken over from the previous leader, an

arrested *Libération-Nord* leader, just before Jedburgh team arrived, and lacked the quality and quantity of the organization they enjoyed with Legal. While meeting with him, one of the Maquis recognized a man in his car as a spy, and Giles' report coldly stated, "we had to shoot one of the men in his car, who was a known Gestapo agent."¹²

The next day, "large German forces were in the area looking for us," using a map with "red marks against the name of the farm where we were taking our meals." Hurriedly, Team Giles packed up camp and moved that night with its now 100-man company of Maquis. Traveling by foot for the next two nights, they arrived at a high plateau near St. Thors where they set up operations and managed to stay for a week. While at St. Thors, they met with more *Franc-Tireurs et Partisans Français* (FTP) departmental chiefs anxious to begin offensive actions. But Koenig's order to avoid open warfare remained and Giles worked to convince the Maquis that they fell under Koenig's and Eisenhower's command, and their orders were to wait until the correct time. After a long discussion, the Maquis chiefs agreed they would follow Allied orders.

Meanwhile, Giles received the Jedburgh Horace and Hilary teams and three other French parachutists at one of its drop zones. Giles arranged for them to take up positions on the north Brittany coast, and sent them off to their areas. To add to the confusion, one of the prisoners suspected of belonging to the French Milice escaped, forcing Giles to relocate again. The Jedburgh team crossed the Aulne canal and set up camp in a valley three kilometers from the village of Lennon. Here Giles increased their number by one with Canadian Flight Lieutenant Brown. Shot down over Brest, Brown wandered into the team's area and remained with them as the normal escape routes closed when the Allies invaded Normandy. Brown spent nearly three weeks with the team helping Sergeant Tack handle the radio traffic. At this point, five Jedburgh teams worked in Finistère but the enemy parachute division soldiers still controlled major roads and aggressively sought to ferret out the Maquis.¹³

Team Giles also coordinated with Maj. Colin Ogden-Smith and Capt. Guy Leborgne of Team Francis and clarified each team's operating area. They discussed policy regarding the *Résistance* and Brittany's political groups. Presumably they delineated each team's operating area and exchanged information on the Maquis. Agreeing on every point, they parted and Knox lamented, "This was the last time I ever saw Colin."¹⁴ Team Francis had parachuted near Quimperlé on 10 July. Leborgne, and radio-man British Sgt. A. J. Dallow landed on their drop zone at approximately 0230 hours. The team proved effective at arranging for arms, working drop

zones, and attracting the Maquis in their area. By 24 July they claimed to have armed 500 men near Carhaix, another 500 near Sear and 300 near Guisgriff. Establishing a company near the coast presented a problem as there were fewer men there to recruit, and the enemy's concentration was greater; nevertheless, they claimed to have armed approximately 200 there. They had also been joined by one of the stray French SAS soldiers, Sgt. Maurice Myodon. As to the overall plan for Brittany, Team Francis seems to have understood the overall nature of the Allied aims in the region for they wrote that they were storing up arms for later operations and worked to coordinate their operating areas and share communications not only with Giles but with Team Gilbert.¹⁵

Ogden-Smith now led the augmented team of Leborgne, Dallow, Myoden, and two Maquis that helped keep guard and operate the radio. They made their headquarters at a farm in the village of Querrien, 12 kilometers north of the small port of Quimperlé. But on 29 July, they found themselves surrounded by approximately 100 *Feldgendarmes*, led directly to their location by a neighbor. A burst of machine gun fire and a grenade was their first warning that Germans were nearby. Unfortunately, Ogden-Smith and Myoden were wounded immediately while Leborgne fired back and by chance killed the officer leading the operation. In the confusion that followed, Leborgne was able to escape. Sergeant Dallow, who had been about 100 yards away, grabbed his carbine and some of the radio equipment and ran toward the house where his teammates were exchanging fire. As he was climbing up out of the ditch, he fell into some bushes and could not get out of them. Lying there unable to move and unseen by the enemy he watched helplessly as the firefight ensued. Ogden-Smith lay wounded but managed to give himself morphine and fire his weapon at the enemy, putting down some of the Germans. Myoden, wounded from the grenade, defended himself, exhausting four magazines of rounds before calling out, "you need not be afraid, I have got no more ammunition." Lying there in the open, firing at the Germans, he had enabled Leborgne and the two Maquis to escape. The Germans carefully approached and then shot Ogden-Smith dead. Another *Feldgendarme* walked up to Myoden warily but killed him with a burst of machine gun fire and finally a bullet to the temple. Dallow remained in the bushes the entire time with nothing but his pistol, unable to help. After two hours, with the Germans gone, he managed to climb out and depart the area.¹⁶ Fire fights like this only continued to impassion the situation toward more violence.

By late July, the *Franc-Tireurs et Partisans Français* (FTP) Maquis rank and file, but especially the FTP leadership sought to take the fight to

the Germans. But orders allowing this still had not arrived. Giles informed London of the difficulty of keeping some groups in check and complained, “FTP getting very hard to control and we may not be able to do it much longer...FTP are reaching a boiling point and explosion may occur if Boche continues to hunt them.” But apparently Team Giles misunderstood a key aspect of their orders. SFHQ wanted the Maquis to refrain from general open activity but to engage in systematic and persistent guerrilla activity. In other words, small-scale harassment and well-planned guerrilla attacks were fine. But Giles, believing all such activity was off limits, worked hard to convince the Maquis to refrain from any type of engagement while London wished only to stop open warfare. In their exchange of messages, Giles and the special forces leadership in the UK, increasingly staffed by French planning officers, seemed to be talking past one another to the extent that Grall and Knox responded to it at all in their longest message yet saying,

You did not answer our question at all. We are not thinking of our own skins but of success of operation. We repeat in words of one syllable, if Boche attacks Maquis in this area, no power on earth can stop a general explosion. They can only attack if they have precise information...It may be already too late. Information this morning Boche about to install 25 companies between Callac and Chateauneuf. At least 500 at Chateauneuf. Our liaison is being completely cut...Messengers are arrested, tortured and shot every day. In these circumstances our work is becoming almost impossible. Central Finistère a powder magazine which needs only a spark and the Boche is going to provide the spark. As for moving when we are in danger, we have moved five times since our arrival. But 15 armed companies in the center. Cannot keep moving all the time. We have managed to keep Maquis quiet until now but if they are attacked, nothing can stop open fighting in Finistère.¹⁷

London radioed Giles on 30 July:

We quite agree about action by small groups against field gendarmerie. Only mistake in interpretation made you interrupt all operations. Must keep enemy in danger everywhere ceaselessly by guerrilla [sic] action, that is to say, generalized mobile offensive action by surprise and refusing large-scale battle.¹⁷

Aggressively continuing the weapon supply drops, Giles kept warning London they needed the message about “Napoleon’s hat,” otherwise they

would not be able to control the FTP. Now, London gave them a way to relieve the pressure caused by the misunderstanding but they still seemed not to understand the nuances of their mission.¹⁸

Moving for the last time on 31 July, GILES found its last headquarters back in its first headquarters, the village of Plessis. They carried out reconnaissance on the chateau recently attacked by the Royal Air Force. Piles of rubble and the odor of decaying bodies greeted them and they reported killing seventeen more Germans. The Germans evacuated the ruins the next day and Giles intensified the drop zone activity hoping the wait would not be long until they were given the order for all-out action. On 2 August, Team Francis radioed Giles with the news of Ogden-Smith's death and Giles radioed London that all Francis' drop zones were blown as Ogden-Smith had the locations on him when he died.¹⁹

But on the evening of 2 August, the BBC transmitted the desired message: "*Le Chapeau de Napoleon est-il toujours a Perros-Guirec,*" and team Giles quickly set up an attack on columns of Germans moving east. As the German 2nd Parachute Division moved toward the Allied forces now around Dinan in eastern Brittany, Giles brought the guerrillas to bear while sending London the message, "Lack arms and ammo. Going over to offensive tonight." Giles and the Maquis could press the fighting, but they continued to require more arms. The next day London obliged, and the Maquis received four loads on one drop zone and one load on another. Giles succeeded at getting arms and orders to the northern part of their sector and also succeeded at penning in the Germans by blowing up a bridge on the main east-bound road while running ambushes on the roads to the east where the Germans were attempting to head toward the front. The Germans, now forced to travel cross country rather than by road, slowed down considerably and took out their frustration on the French villages and farms by burning, looting, and other vicious actions. Team Frederick radioed that it had 2,000 men ready for work along the road to be used by the Americans as they came toward Brest.²⁰ Their work made the progress of the American tanks along the road from Dinan to Brest much quicker as the team worked to preserve bridges while staging hit-and-run attacks on the Germans as they fled the advance of American conventional troops, led by Maj. Gen. Troy Middleton's VIII Corps. In all the chaos, Giles and the Maquis captured enemy prisoners and Captain Knox questioned them, reporting that:

All of them were Hitlerites to a man. They admitted to the atrocities they had committed, refused to believe that the

Americans had taken Rennes, refused to discuss the Hitler regime and refused to explain why they had French jewelry, money, and identity cards on them.

Knox added that the prisoners amounted to a “considerable number” and “were all subsequently shot by the FFI.”²¹ The Jedburghs could not stop the Maquis from killing the prisoners even had they tried, due to the tremendous pent-up hostility over the four-year occupation punctuated by the recent wave of repression and reprisals.

Jedburgh Teams Felix, Guy, and Gavin in eastern Brittany received orders to preserve bridges the First US Army needed to advance and to relay information on the Maquis who could perform reconnaissance for leading elements of the conventional forces. Felix radioed the SF liaison detachment assigned to the First US Army that it believed it had 4,000 to 6,000 men partially armed and organized just ahead of their front and provided their location to the American operations planners. By 4 August the special forces detachment in General Patton’s Third Army radioed that they had also contacted Felix and that the Jedburghs had organized the protection of the bridges and roads they intended to use from Dinan all the way to Guincamp and Morlaix in western Brittany. They also confirmed contact with the Inter-Allied mission led by Colonel Eon and Dewavrin on 7 August.²² Team Felix had parachuted into Brittany east of Team Frederick and consisted of French Maj. Jean Souquat who used the nom de guerre Jean Kernevel, British Capt. John Marchant, and British W/T operator P. Calvin. Having had less than a month to establish themselves, they were probably at their most effective in explaining the FFI to the conventional forces who were abysmally ignorant of key issues. “In fact,” Marchant wrote in his final report, “we met one civil affairs captain at Dinan who did not know the name of General Koenig or what the initials FFI stood for. However, we found him very cooperative.”²³ On the same night the action messages went out, Koenig’s command in the United Kingdom deployed the Aloes mission to act as its leading element in advance of Koenig’s intended arrival in France. Colonel Eon’s men numbered about 30 as they deployed into Brittany to set up their headquarters. With them was a Jedburgh liaison officer who hoped to build a healthy liaison between Aloes and the area’s Jedburgh teams. On 6 August, SFHQ notified Giles about the imminent arrival of Aloes and directed Giles to contact them, placing Giles under the command of Aloes as it was doing with all the other Jedburgh teams. Because Giles was in a central position, Aloes appointed them to be their main liaison to the Maquis throughout Finistère. Captain Grall concentrated on this new mission that put him in a key position regarding Brittany’s *Résistance*. Captain Knox

also made reconnaissance trips with the Aloes commander and organized mopping up operations as the German army clung to scattered positions. Knox also met with American commanders entering the area, advised them on local conditions, and assigned French scouts to their headquarters.²⁴

With the arrival of Middleton's VIII Corps, the Jedburgh teams' role shifted to liaison work assisting the conventional forces. Crozon, a town on the end of the Brittany peninsula, served as the last German holdout in Giles' area. The German headquarters had directed the 2nd Parachute Division to hold on to the port of Brest, and the German XXV Corps had been preparing for such a mission for weeks. Giles aided the 17th and 15th Cavalry Squadrons' attack on the approaches to Crozon by coordinating actions with the Free French, and in the words of the Team Giles report, the Americans and French "cooperated magnificently."²⁵ General Koenig's special forces staff arranged for team Giles to be re-deployed to England by sea prior to the final reduction of Crozon in early September.²⁶

Chins Up! The Tragedy of Team Jacob

With Brittany area operations in full swing by late July, General Koenig's staff began cueing up Jedburgh teams to support the allies' march east toward Paris and beyond. At the same time, it began deploying teams to central France that could harass German forces that might come north toward allied lines or go east and south toward the southern invasion beaches. Beginning in the middle of July, the staff had anticipated the deployment of Jedburgh teams and wished to send two teams to the Vosges mountains area in eastern France and one team each to the Ardennes. But they deleted the Oise, Seine et Marne, and Marne Departments from the approved regions because they "do not appear to be ready" and reminded the British and American planners that those in the field requesting the teams should be asked to give an evaluation of their region's readiness for uniformed teams.²⁷

The idea of conducting an operation in the Vosges had begun in June but only now coalesced into an operation code named "Loyton" in early August. The British 21st Army Group tasked its Special Air Service to send ten men as an initial reconnaissance party to harass German lines of communication from Paris east toward Saarbrücken and Strasbourg. A Jedburgh team was to accompany the mission. During the same time that French General Koenig was working to get the Aloes mission organized for the command and control of Brittany, his staff drafted the plans for team Jacob to accompany elements of 2 SAS on its mission to the Vosges. The SAS was to run the mission, but since part of it involved

working with the local Maquis, who were, to quote the SAS order, “not fully organized,” Koenig’s headquarters was interested in providing the Maquis its leadership. Team Jacob consisted of British Capt. Victor Gough, French Lieut. Maurice Boissarie, and British Sgt. Kenneth Seymour. In November 1943, Gough was transferred from the Auxiliary Units to the Jedburghs as an instructor, and later joined the regular list of men to be deployed on Jedburgh missions. Divorced the January before his deployment, Gough listed the woman running the boardinghouse where he lived as his next of kin. Gough was educated as an engineer, and his drawing skills were so good that he won the competition among the Jeds to design their special forces patch.²⁸

But Gough was not sent along with the SAS element to win drawing contests. They were to meet up with the regional French resistance leader and train and equip the region’s Maquis. The Résistance in the area was led by Gilbert Grandval a man of great local prestige. He is also unique among regional leaders as he had not been sent into France by the Free French, but instead had been appointed to the position after taking over the region’s resistance group, the *Ceux de la Résistance*. Nevertheless, he believed in the efforts of the centralized authority of de Gaulle, regarded General Koenig’s authority for military matters to be synonymous with de Gaulle’s, and viewed the politics around Algiers’ military action committee to be harmful to France. In turn, Koenig thought, “that he would work out perfectly.”²⁹ Grandval was just the kind of man Koenig was looking for as he was loyal to de Gaulle, had knowledge of the local area, and possessed great leadership skills.

Gough, Boissarie, Seymour, and the SAS team members of the Loyton mission parachuted from their aircraft to one of Grandval’s drop zones lit up and looking “like bonfires on Guy Fawkes night,” one of the SAS men reflected after the war.³⁰ The landing went well but Seymour broke his toe and it began to swell so badly he could not go as fast as the rest of them. On landing, the team quickly regrouped with the SAS soldiers and were met by one of Grandval’s assistants. The Vosges is rugged country with thick forests and steep hills rising up from the river Saône that runs to the southwest and the Moselle which runs to the north into Germany. The valleys and forest naturally channel the region’s roads and railroads into narrow valleys densely covered by trees. The country is great for guerrilla tactics.

The Maquis made their command post on top of one of the mountains about six miles from their drop zone and they guided the newcomers back to it before the sun rose. Over the next two days, they made their

initial plans.³¹ Gough requested one of the SAS radio operators to send Jacob's first message to London saying that Sergeant Seymour had been injured on the jump but would be recovered within a week, and they believed they would be contacting Grandval himself, soon. Team Jacob also sent a message on 15 and 16 August with the briefest of details on the local Maquis, which numbered 800 men, of whom 50 were armed. They had still not contacted Grandval but expected to on that day. For security reasons, they had to travel five miles from their command post to use the radio.³² Germans were thick in the area, and by this time, they had been ordered to evacuate France and the roads were crowded with moving vehicles going into Germany. But the regional Gestapo was also aware of the SAS and Jedburgh team's presence and was organizing an effort to catch them.

On 17 August, two days after the landings in southern France, one day after Hitler gave the order for many of the occupation forces in southern France to evacuate, and at a time when Patton's Third Army was still approximately 500 kilometers to their west, Gough and his comrades heard that the Germans were coming up the mountain toward them. With the Jedburghs were approximately 100 men, inadequately armed with weapons that had been dropped when they parachuted in, some weapons provided by previous drops, but mostly older rifles the Maquis had managed to hide after the armistice. They decided to leave a small rearguard at their position while most would attempt to make their way down to escape the trap. They set off around 1600 hours with the SAS, Gough, and Boissarie up front and Sergeant Seymour in the middle of the column still hobbled by his injury. Unfortunately, there were enemy troops on their side of the mountain, and when the enemy initiated the fire fight Sergeant Seymour, "could not discover what was going on" after the group scattered into the trees and boulders to escape what was now a rapidly closing trap. The Maquis, according to Seymour, dropped their weapons and moved off, leaving him alone and unaware of what was happening to his fellow Jedburghs. He took cover behind a large jutting boulder and fired at the enemy with his large caliber Bren gun. When that ammunition was gone, he fired at them with his carbine, and last shot at them with his pistol, expending every round. When a grenade landed near him but did not go off, he breathed a sigh of relief, but while the Germans drew nearer, he burned his radio codes and cipher pads. Realizing that he was alone and out of ammunition, he decided to give up when a German soldier shouted something at him which Seymour assumed was an offer of safety. Left with little choice and not knowing what happened to the rest of his group, he surrendered.



Figure 5.2. The Team Jacob “Mug Shots.” Photo courtesy of the British National Archives.

He was marched over to the nearest tree and stood against it. Two of the enemy were detailed as a firing party and were just preparing to take aim when a senior officer came rushing up to them. He wanted to interrogate Seymour instead of shoot him. Therefore, Seymour was marched down the mountain and taken to an office at a nearby German camp and interrogated regarding what he was doing and what his mission was. Seymour replied vaguely that he was in a “recco party,” sent in to scout out the area and that his SF badge meant that he was a paratrooper. The interrogator seemed to be content with that and Seymour was transported to a prison at Schirmeck, France. He did not know what had become of his teammates, nor did he know what would become of him. But when later presented with some of the SAS team’s radio equipment and codebooks, he insisted to his captors that did not know whose they were or anything about them.³³ Special Force Headquarters in London, now completely in the dark, also had no knowledge of Seymour’s teammates as they had had no messages from Jacob for several days.

Team Jacob’s relatively early arrival in the area was nevertheless not early enough. In fact, Jacob was effectively destroyed as a team on 17 August while descending down into the *Wehrmacht*’s counter-insurgency sweep. The Germans succeeded in capturing Seymour, forced the Maquis to disperse, and sent the SAS and remaining Jedburghs scattering into the Vosges woods. The German task force commander, Major Schoner, who had lived in New York before the war, was the one who stopped Seymour’s summary execution immediately after his capture, brought him to their command post, and questioned him.³⁴ “He spoke excellent English with an American accent,” Seymour noted.³⁵ Seymour was questioned and, according to testimony after the war, gave the enemy enough information to spare his life and garner decent treatment.³⁶ The next day the Germans moved Seymour to Schirmeck camp, “an ordinary slave jail,” as Seymour called it and part of the Natzweiler prison system where he remained for ten days.³⁷

But what had happened to Captains Gough and Boissarie? Koenig's staff in London had heard nothing of Team Jacob since 16 August, the day before Seymour's capture. The German counterinsurgency operations not only proved to be completely able to foil any coherent Résistance in Region C but were also able to capture and kill many of the Maquis, the British SAS, and the Allied Jedburghs sent to work with them. But while Gough and Boissarie had escaped the trap on 17 August, they had no means to communicate to London, and regional delegate Grandval's message to London on 3 September reported only that he knew of the team but did not give any details of what they were doing or indicate anything involving their present condition.³⁸ Attempting to coordinate other things, it is clear that Grandval was merely repeating rumors from the field back to London. But on 26 August Captain Gough succeeded in sending word that he needed new equipment and a new team. In a second message from a second operator he asked for "arms, ammunition, grenades urgently needed for 600 men," and that he needed a parachute drop of no more than 70 containers, and a radio. It ended with, "area getting hotter daily."³⁹ However, those messages probably were not recognized as being from Jacob as they were sent from another radio operator's equipment. A status report of Jedburgh teams done on 27 August laments that no communication from Team Jacob had been received since 16 August.⁴⁰ But on 5 September, Gough managed to get off two more messages. The first asked that his equipment be sent via the SAS air drop to take place in a few days and reported that he could not receive arms before due to being attacked. He needed money and remarked that getting food was difficult. Also, on 15 September he telegraphed that Seymour had been captured and he feared that the Germans had executed him. He also stated that Boissarie was killed. "I am now sole member of team Jacob. 100 *Maquis* killed 100 captured in same battle. Rest dispersed." The next day his spirits seem to have risen somewhat. Gough apologized for such little communication; he stated that his Maquis leader was under surveillance and therefore could not operate but that Gough had rallied two hundred Maquis and armed them with SAS-provided weapons. He signed off with the plucky remark, "Chins up." On 19 September, the Allied-Free French staff finally replied saying it was sending money, and on 23 September telegraphed Gough again requesting details as to the fate of Seymour and Boissarie. They received nothing back from Captain Gough.⁴¹

Gough was the only Jedburgh in the area Eisenhower had made a top priority so despite knowing little about his true operating capabilities, Koenig now sought to utilize him. On 27 September, with Allied armies

approaching the Vosges and crossing the Meurthe River, Gough's operations could prove very valuable.⁴² But it is unclear what messages Gough was receiving from London. Reports of the SAS note that Gough was operating independently of them and working with a group known as Maquis de Reciproque in October. But by early November the Germans had captured him.

The Gestapo had organized two operations in the area to defeat the insurgency after the *Wehrmacht's* initial efforts in the middle of August failed to do so. Operation WALDFEST began in September and was organized by the SS commander in Strasbourg, Eric Isselhorst, and his deputy Wilhelm Schneider. Isselhorst had been a member of the Nazi Party since 1932 and had worked his way up the party's ladder in Gestapo offices in Berlin, Erfurt, and Munich; after participating in and organizing *Einsatzkommando* detachments in Poland he became the head of the Strasbourg Gestapo in 1943.⁴³ His effective actions had largely succeeded in rounding up all of the SAS of another mission code-named Pistol and nearly all of the SAS with Team Loyton. With Boissarie killed on or about 4 September and Gough captured at the end of October, Isselhorst had succeeded in destroying Team Jacob. Gough and Seymour were still alive, but while Gough was held at Schirmeck and later moved to a prison in Strasbourg, Seymour had been moved on into Germany.⁴⁴ The prison camp was organized to place special prisoners such as these parachutists in their own cells. So along with Gough were five SAS, four US airmen who had parachuted out of disabled aircraft, three priests, and another Frenchman. All were held there because they were taken while working with or being with the Résistance.⁴⁵ Also with them was Werner Helfen, a German non-commissioned officer who had thrown his sawed-off shotgun in the river and ordered his soldiers to do the same. Helfen had been in the *Schutz Polizei* when his unit, then equipped with illegal shotguns, was ordered to turn over their legal weapons to frontline soldiers. He told his men to throw their shotguns into the river because if they were captured, he was afraid the Allies would try them for having a weapon that was against the international conventions. However, that action got him arrested by his own army and brought to Schirmeck as a prisoner. While there, he was given light duties bringing him in contact with the other inmates. He often did favors for the foreigners such as getting them medical attention, passing messages among them, and simply speaking kindly to them.⁴⁶

As the Allies advanced, the camp commander Karl Buck received orders from Isselhorst to shoot any special prisoners that he might select, release the women, and burn down the camp. Buck did not carry out these

orders because he “did not consider it wise to leave fresh mass graves behind, and secondly I considered the camp might have been useful to the *Wehrmacht* who were retreating.” Instead, he arranged to transport the prisoners across the Rhine River to Germany and a prison at Gaggenau, on 21 November. Captain Gough, having been told they were leaving, gave his silk escape map to his German friend Werner Helfen as sign of appreciation. The next day, while they were all on trucks, Helfen, the only one of them who had been told of his death sentence, jumped from the truck and escaped. The others arrived at the camp at Gaggenau, Germany, on 23 November. Witnesses after the war attested that they were all still at the camp at midday on 25 November, but later that day the SAS, the three priests, the four airmen, the French civilian, and Gough were put back into a truck with soldiers and shovels.⁴⁷

The truck drove into the Erlich Forest and pulled alongside a bomb crater. The execution unit took three prisoners out of the truck at a time, marched them into the bomb crater, and shot each of them in the back of the head. One of the priests attempted to flee, but was shot down by the three men of the execution squad as he stumbled and fell in the trees. After killing them, they stripped them of their clothing, set fire to the bodies, and pilfered the best of their belongings from the pile of clothes, boots, and other meager possessions the prisoners had.⁴⁸

Conclusion

These two Jedburgh teams’ experiences are not necessarily typical of all Jedburgh operations. Many teams saw little action as they arrived too late to impact events. Some teams spent a great deal of time coaxing along better relations among competing Maquis groups, and many were frustrated by lack of proper air supply. But teams Giles and Jacob had similar missions to prepare areas where large conventional forces were transiting, by being a part of a command and control element for later Jedburgh teams, and ultimately support and conduct reconnaissance for conventional forces. Giles and Jacob could have had very similar experiences if Koenig’s planners had anticipated the dynamic situation Team Jacob would endure due to the German forces being better equipped and their more determined desire to return to Germany. They transited Jacob’s area before the Jedburghs were ever able to establish working relationships with the resistance and before the frontline movement and weather squelched reliable air drop operations. Unlike Giles, team Jacob never established working drop zones and was forced to evade until captured and imprisoned or killed. So, despite Jacob’s area being a higher priority to General Eisenhower, it could not get adequate support in a region filled

with less capable Maquis, more capable Germans, and far less reliable air support. Captain Gough's raw and admirable "chins up" courage proved insufficient due to conditions that overwhelmed him. For special operations to successfully support large conventional forces, time with the guerrillas to build trust is required, but also reliable support must be provided, and clear command relationships established. Otherwise, we will see more operations like Team Jacob than Team Giles.

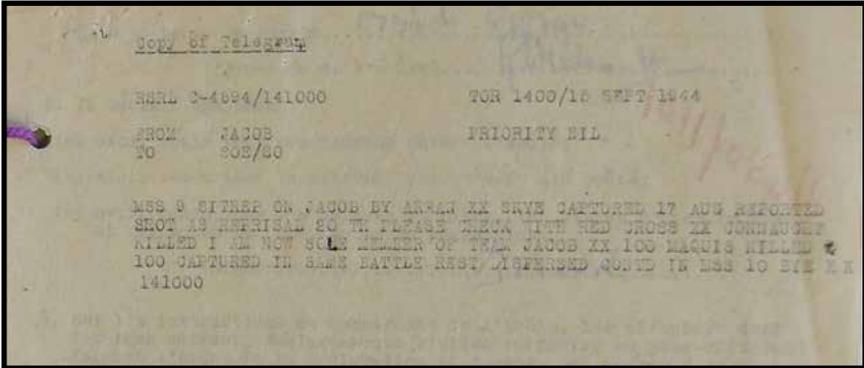


Figure 5.3. Team Jacob reports Lt. Guy Boissairie "Killed in Action." Photo courtesy of the author.

Notes

1. For a fuller account of the politics, the nature of the French resistance, and the pre-invasion planning done by Allied Special Forces Headquarters, see my *Eisenhower's Guerrillas: The Jedburghs, the Maquis, and the Liberation of France*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

2. Report of Team Giles, OSS/London Microfilm, Roll 8, Target 1, Vol. 4, Book II, 324.

3. "NOTE POUR M. Le Colonel Vernon Chef de L'EMFFI" 14.6.1944, No. S 365 de CDT Lejeune, BCRA Correspondence; *Operations Order no. 14*, 1-4 ; and *Troops in Finistere*, ANNEX C all found in 3 AG 2 462, Archives National, Paris, France.

4. Report of Team GILES, 324.

5. Bernard Knox, interview, 8 June 2001.

6. Report of Team Giles, 338-39. Napoleon's Hat is the name of a rock formation off the coast of France near the town of Perros-Guirec.

7. "Frederick, June Moon through August non-Moon," HS 8/148, British National Archives, Kew, UK.

8. Report of Team Giles, 339 and 623; Joseph de Francesco telephone conversation; Bernard Knox to author, 2 April 1999; Knox interview, June 2001.

9. OSS London Microfilm, Roll 8, Target 1, Vol. 4, Part I, 327, and Part II, 340-41.

10. OSS London Microfilm, Roll 8, Target 1, Vol. 4, Part I, 327, and Part II, 340-41.

11. OSS London Microfilm, Roll 8, Target 1, Vol. 4, 327 and Part II, 327 and 342.

12. OSS London Microfilm, Roll 8, Target 1, Vol. 4, 327 and Part II, 327 and 344; and Noguères, Degliame-Fouché, and Vigier, *Historie de la Résistance en France, de 1940 à 1945*, 285.

13. OSS London Microfilm, Roll 8, Target 1, Vol. 4, Part I 327 and Part II, 328-329 and 343-344.

14. OSS London Microfilm, Roll 8, Target 1, Vol. 4, Part I, 327 and Part II, 328-29.

15. Report of Captain Le Zachmeur," 1-4. HS 6/507, BNA, Kew, UK.

16. "Report of Capitaine Le Zachmeur on the Death of Major Ogden-Smith 91977 R. A. and Maurice Myodon S. A. S." and Team FRANCIS: Report of Sergeant Dallow, A. 14403727," both undated but probably written during August or September of 1944. *French Forces of the Interior*, Washington, DC Library of Congress, Photoduplication Service, 1977, microfilm, 888-902.

17. United States, Office of Strategic Services, OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch War Diaries, 1944, microfilm 331.

18. Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch War Diaries, 1944, 330.

19. Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch War Diaries, 1944, 350.

20. Robert Kehoe, "Jed Team Frederick, 1944: An Allied Team with the French Resistance," *Studies in Intelligence*, (Winter 1998-1999): 34-35.
21. United States, Office of Strategic Services, OSS/London: Special Operation Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch War Diaries, 1944, microfilm, 333 and 351-352.
22. Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch War Diaries, 1944, 366.
23. Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch War Diaries, 1944, 377.
24. Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch War Diaries, 1944, 336 and 353; Claude E. Boillot, US Representative, Suez Canal Company (Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez), 1952 – 78, Papers 1924-1984, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library; and M. R. D. Foot, *SOE in France*, 407-408.
25. HS 6/515, BNA, Kew, UK.
26. The French Forces of the Interior, microfilm, 867.
27. FFI/214, 21 July 1944, Jedburgh Documents, 3 AG 2 462, Archive National, Paris, France.
28. Emails and unpublished work by Colin Burbidge, nephew of Victor Gogh, 18 May 2008. Burbidge's work has since been published as, *Preserving the Flame*, 2008.
29. Noguères, Degliame-Fouché, and Jean Louis Viger, 545.
30. John Hislo, *Anything but a Soldier*, as quoted in "Captain Victor Gough," Burbidge manuscript, in possession of author.
31. "Report on Team JACOB," 1945, Team JACOB HS 6/529, BNA, Kew, UK, 1.
32. United States, Office of Strategic Services, OSS/London: Special Operations Branch and Secret Intelligence Branch War Diaries, 1944, microfilm. Roll 8, Target 4, Volumn 4, Book IV, 765-766.
33. Team Jacob Report, HS 6/529, BNA, Kew, UK, 2-3.
34. Burbidge manuscript, 69.
35. Kenneth Seymour, "Team Jacob Report," HS 6/529, NA, Kew, UK.
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Chapter 6

The Alamo Scouts in the Pacific

Stephen E. Ryan

Overview

The Alamo Scouts were established in World War II as the US Sixth Army's special reconnaissance unit in the Southwest Pacific. The Sixth Army formed the unit to fill a capability gap that left the commander dangerously under-informed about the enemy. The Alamo Scouts' mission was to provide intelligence about the enemy and conduct tactical reconnaissance in advance of Sixth Army landing operations. They performed that and other operations from their first mission in February 1944 until the unit disbanded in September 1945. The unit never had more than 140 personnel assigned to it at one time, but they conducted 108 missions, killed over 500 Japanese, took approximately 60 enemy prisoners yet never lost a man.¹ The Alamo Scouts enabled large-scale combat operations by providing critical intelligence and conducting special operations within enemy-held areas.

The history of the Alamo Scouts provides implications for the future conduct of large-scale combat operations. The Alamo Scouts demonstrated the viability for special operations forces to set decisive conditions for large-scale operations. The Alamo Scouts routinely penetrated the enemy's battlespace to provide essential intelligence to enable the joint force to disintegrate the enemy. The Alamo Scouts facilitated the Sixth Army's maintenance of a calibrated force-posture and added to the convergence of Sixth Army's capabilities with indigenous approaches, precision targeting, and crisis response. They illustrate how combined capabilities produce results in areas where friendly large-scale combat forces do not have a presence, but the enemy does. It highlights conventional force and special operations forces (SOF) operational synergy and the combat multiplying effect of SOF operations. It includes the value of harnessing indigenous combat power and combat-enabling capabilities within local populations.

Specifically formed to support an Army-level force, the small, specialized Alamo Scouts enabled the Sixth Army to mitigate risk and sustain its agile operational tempo that supported the momentum of the theater strategy. The operations conducted by the Alamo Scouts show how the combination of SOF capabilities integrated with those of its mission partners can achieve decisive results to enable large-scale combat operations.

Introduction

The Pearl Harbor attack on 7 December 1941 initiated major Japanese operations in the Pacific. They struck throughout the region, including Thailand, Malaysia, present day Myanmar, the Philippines, Guam and Wake Island. The Japanese military expansion encompassed the southern islands of Java and Indonesia and eastward through New Guinea to the Marshall and Gilbert Islands. Impeded only by the narrow Timor and Arafura Seas, the Japanese advance threatened Australia. The United States hastily gathered a war footing to address the Nazi threat in Europe as the Japanese were initially successful in attempting to create their Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.

Japanese expansion ended with the decisive naval battles of the Coral Sea in May 1942 and Midway in June 1942 and with successful US and Allied attacks in the Solomon Islands in August. These attacks on Guadalcanal, Tulagi, and Tanambogo were the beginning of the hard fought but successful strategy to defeat the Japanese in a progression of planned battles from New Guinea east to west, then north through the Philippines, and finally on mainland Japan. But the Japanese were strengthening their forward locations, creating airfields, troop concentrations, and strongpoints to hold their gains.

To defeat the Japanese and manage the strategy, the Pacific Theater was divided into two areas, the Pacific Ocean Areas (North, Central and South) and the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA), commanded by Gen. Douglas A. MacArthur.² Under his command, the US Sixth Army began large-scale amphibious operations in New Guinea.

General MacArthur chose Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger to form the US Sixth Army and also lead a joint task force composed of Sixth Army troops augmented by elements of other forces. Krueger's headquarters was tasked to coordinate the plans of the ground forces and supporting air and naval forces in all operations in which the command participated. Beyond the challenges of forming a new Army command that synchronized joint operations, the kinds of operations and the environment in which it would fight required specific large-scale training. It included training in jungle warfare and instruction in amphibious operations, troop management, and care of the health and welfare of personnel.³

Equally as important as having a trained force was knowing where and how to employ it. That hinged on knowing the enemy's locations. Early on, Lieutenant General Krueger recognized a critical shortfall in his capabilities to find the enemy. To solve the dilemma and address the gap,

he formed his own reconnaissance element. He wrote: “The trouble we had met in getting information of the enemy and our objective areas had prompted me to issue orders...for training selected volunteers in reconnaissance and raider work. Specially selected graduates would be designated Alamo Scouts and form a pool under my own control.”⁴ So the Alamo Scouts were established.

The Alamo Scouts’ missions would support the Sixth Army’s execution of MacArthur’s strategy through New Guinea, into Leyte, and across Luzon. In each of the three areas, the Scouts performed different primary roles. In New Guinea they conducted predominantly reconnaissance operations. In Leyte, they conducted both reconnaissance and liaison with guerrilla forces. In Luzon they shifted primarily to liaison with guerrilla units. Because of their unique capabilities, they would conduct other operations. In Luzon, the Scouts infiltrated enemy territory to obtain coordinates to attack specific enemy capabilities. In both New Guinea and in Luzon, the Alamo Scouts would conduct POW rescue operations.

Reconnaissance and Raider (Commando) Capabilities

The Alamo Scouts trained to conduct reconnaissance for beach landings, determining enemy locations, strengths and concentrations, obstacles, key weapons systems, and provide targeting information for air, artillery, and naval strikes. They learned message writing, radio communications, aerial photography, intelligence, field reconnaissance, and employing rubber boats in night landings.⁵ Their skills in close combat, marksmanship, *jiu-jitsu*, and jungle field craft also provided them the capability to conduct “raider” (commando) operations.

It was a purpose-built unit, designed to support the larger effort of its parent unit. The Sixth Army would execute its part of MacArthur’s strategy using amphibious landings to attack the Japanese. Ahead of the landings, the Alamo Scouts would penetrate and operate behind enemy lines to provide vital intelligence regarding the enemy. They provided a capability to be combined with results of other intelligence collection efforts. Their intelligence would enable the Sixth Army commander to adjust plans to avoid or neutralize enemy strengths, to exploit enemy vulnerabilities, or seize discovered opportunities.

Gaining that intelligence was not easy. The region’s dense jungle vegetation and thick canopy made observation of the enemy difficult. Finding the enemy was further complicated by the Japanese ability to use camouflage and terrain. Japanese camouflage “varied greatly in ingenuity of conception and attention to detail. Many fortified positions were camou-

flaged with such skill and minute care that they were extremely difficult to locate.⁶ Well-hidden Japanese positions utilized the natural advantages of the terrain. The Japanese used caves and other terrain features for protection, concealment, and mutually supporting positions.⁷ The Alamo Scouts employed all of their skills to find the enemy, determine its disposition, and report how the Japanese were arrayed. The Alamo Scouts' first mission demonstrated the value of their capabilities.

New Guinea

Their first mission occurred in New Guinea with the pre-landing reconnaissance of the island of Los Negros. For the preceding two weeks air reconnaissance detected no activity suggesting the enemy vacated the area.⁸ Fifth Air Force pilots consistently reported the absence of any signs of Japanese activity on Los Negros. The reports suggested that ground troops could immediately seize the supposedly undefended island with its valuable airstrips. It appeared that air power had driven the Japanese from the island.⁹

Casting doubt on that assessment, intelligence estimates revealed that more than 4,000 Japanese were defending the Admiralties that included Los Negros on the east. But specifically where they were on the Admiralties remained unclear. Obtaining the information became critical when the timeline for the attack accelerated. Lieutenant General Krueger commented: "But it was so essential for us to get more definite information of the enemy than we had that, although the new D-day was close, an Alamo Scout team... was dispatched... to the southeast coast of Los Negros for the purpose."¹⁰ The Alamo Scout team conducted behind-the-lines reconnaissance on 27-28 February 1944 and found Japanese units on Los Negros. The Scouts identified enemy concentrations and locations for targeting, and the landing force adjusted its plan. The assault units landed where the enemy did not expect an attack, and the Sixth Army units secured Los Negros. The Alamo Scouts provided critical information to enable the successful operation that contributed to achieving Sixth Army goals.

Confirming the location of enemy forces was critical to enable successful landings. Equally as important was knowing where the enemy was not and where the enemy had fewer forces than previously understood. In the case of Operation COTTAGE, conducted from 15-16 August 1943 on the western Aleutian Island of Kiska, a three week bombardment dropped 755 tons of Navy and Air Force munitions on vacant ground.¹¹ The Japanese force of 5,183 soldiers had been completely evacuated on 29 July 1943, an event that remained unknown to those who ordered the bombard-

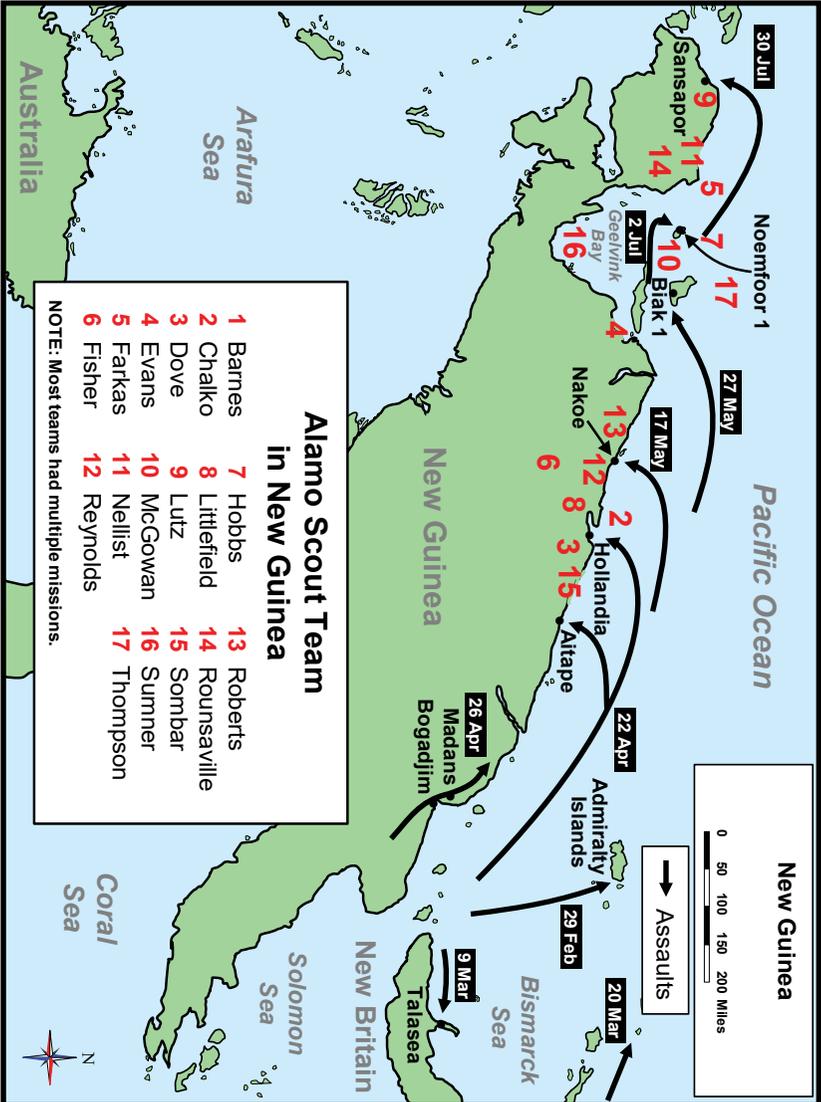


Figure 6. 1. Alamo Scout teams in New Guinea. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

ment. The intelligence picture was not clear, and no prior ground reconnaissance was conducted. But in the case of the Sansapor mission on New Guinea, the Alamo Scouts confirmed aerial reconnaissance intelligence of so few Japanese that the pre-landing bombardment was unnecessary.¹² The Scouts' intelligence illuminated opportunities, enabled the judicious employment of capabilities and informed the development of operational planning and execution.

In addition to gaining intelligence to support amphibious landings against the enemy, the Alamo Scouts conducted reconnaissance missions with the specific purpose to support seizing existing airfields or finding suitable locations for their construction. General MacArthur intended to "provide land-based air support and flank protection for subsequent operations to the west and north," consistent with his overall strategy. Alamo Scouts conducted reconnaissance missions on Cape Sansapor and Cape Opmarai on present day West Papua, Indonesia with members of an engineer aviation battalion, the Allied Intelligence Bureau, and the US Navy to find bases to extend the operational employment of fighters and bombers towards the west and north.¹³ With the task to find airfields, the Alamo Scouts enabled the positioning of capabilities for operational-level maneuver in support of strategic objectives.

The Alamo Scouts conducted nearly 40 reconnaissance missions on New Guinea and its nearby islands. They provided intelligence to support large-scale conventional operations and to enable the agile positioning of air assets to support the theater bounding strategy. In determining enemy strengths, they bought down risk to both the landing forces and the mission. In determining enemy weakness, they revealed opportunities, enabled the judicious use of resources, and facilitated the tempo of Sixth Army's operational execution.

Leyte

The Allied forces next advanced on Leyte, executing the strategic design towards Luzon. But Leyte was a different fight. The topography of Leyte contrasted with the confined terrain of New Guinea where the Scouts had just operated. In New Guinea, "[t]he terrain was a commander's nightmare because it fragmented the deployment of large formations."¹⁴ The terrain of Leyte, however, allowed facing "the enemy for the first time *en masse*, with armies and corps pitted against each other in comparatively free maneuver."¹⁵ In the new context, the Alamo Scouts expanded their role in supporting large-scale combat operations. Still continuing pre-landing reconnaissance, the Scouts conducted longer duration coastal and interior intelligence operations and now began working with guerrilla units.

On Leyte, the Alamo Scouts conducted pre-landing reconnaissance and intelligence collection to support ground maneuver. Short term reconnaissance operations on Leyte included missions based on requests of the 24th Infantry Division to determine the enemy's disposition at Palo to San Jacinto and from Palo to Tanavan. Operations included a pre-landing reconnaissance at Camp Downes, southeast of Ormoc, where the Scouts used an indigenous fishing boat to perform the mission.¹⁶ Longer-term intelligence collection occurred at Cananga from 12 November until 5 December and five Alamo Scout missions at Ormoc, the island's major Japanese logistics port, one mission which lasted from 6 November through 22 November. Among the Scouts' 13 reconnaissance and intelligence missions, two Scout teams conducted interior reconnaissance along the main road network running north from Ormoc to determine the enemy's activities.¹⁷ The Alamo Scouts' role expanded to conduct both coastal and interior reconnaissance to support large-scale operations on Leyte.

Liaison with Guerrillas on Leyte

The Scouts were also directed to contact, enable and synchronize guerrilla elements on Leyte. The indigenous potential was significant, but its capabilities were lacking and its efforts fragmented. The Scouts coordinated a wide range of indigenous capabilities across Leyte and on nearby islands. They established information networks and coast watcher networks which "provided planners with information on enemy arms and troop activity on Luzon and several nearby islands."¹⁸ The networks also provided bomb damage assessment of US strikes and reported Japanese attempts to reinforce Leyte. In an area designated for a future amphibious landing, the Alamo Scouts consolidated five guerrilla groups, established operational sectors for them, and created intelligence reporting networks. The Scouts evaluated, vetted, and consolidated the information into reports sent to the Sixth Army. Through air drop delivery, the Scouts supplied arms, ammunition, food, and other material to the guerrillas. The Scouts created combat power using indigenous mass to support the Sixth Army. The Alamo Scouts' role with guerrillas would expand as MacArthur moved onto Luzon.

Luzon: Alamo Scouts and Guerrillas

The role of the Scouts in New Guinea was primarily reconnaissance. On Leyte it expanded to include working with guerrillas, but on Luzon it was primarily coordinating and enabling guerrilla forces. The Philippines contained numerous guerrilla elements. Many were led, coordinated, and supplied by Americans such as Col. Russell Volkman, Col. Wendell Fer-

tig, Maj. Robert Lapham, and Maj. Edwin Ramsey. The scale of guerrilla potential was significant, and the Alamo Scouts were an integral part of the Sixth Army's guerrilla intelligence effort on Luzon.¹⁹ The first Alamo Scout team on Luzon established contact with a 3,000-man guerrilla unit and evaluated the unit's capabilities. The Scouts' assessment concluded that the unit was capable of operating in conjunction with US units.²⁰ It fought alongside of the 43rd Division, most notably forming one of three prongs of the 43rd Division's assault on a major dam supplying Manila.²¹ Another team landed behind enemy lines in the southern Bataan area where it organized resistance and intelligence activities between its guerrilla forces and the advancing XI Corps.²²

The Scouts benefited from the information obtained by local people who had contact with the enemy. Because the enemy had to procure local goods and services, some individuals gained valuable intelligence from the exchanges. From them, the Alamo Scouts were able to pass details such as unit names, weapons, morale, and the enemy's physical condition to the Sixth Army.²³ Guerrilla combat forces harassed and scattered the enemy, driving them from key locations.²⁴ The Alamo Scouts synchronized guerrilla activities to set conditions for future operations.

The Scouts faced challenges in synchronizing guerrilla elements which required specific skills. The Scouts had to be adept in addressing the challenges of human dynamics. One scout team leader noted: "Political frictions hampered teamwork, and some units had no recognized leader. The Scout teams became coordinating agencies, mediating quarrels, appealing for unity of effort, expelling chronic agitators."²⁵ The Scouts integrated an understanding of individual guerrilla agendas, rivalries, and leverage points. Working with guerrillas required astute skills in understanding and navigating human terrain.²⁶

The linkage between the Scouts and Allied forces included reporting to the Sixth Army and communicating directly with conventional forces in their area of operations. To support the amphibious attack through Legaspi, the Alamo Scouts provided intelligence to the US 158th RCT assault force. The Scouts vetted and consolidated indigenous reports and sent them to the 158th. After the landing, the Scouts coordinated the employment of the guerrillas in scouting, information gathering, and combat operations.²⁷ The Alamo Scouts were able to harness the combat power of the guerrilla forces and the information gathering capacity of the indigenous population to shape the ground for conventional operations. When the conventional force landing began, the Scouts directly integrated guerrilla activities to support the ground force main effort. The Legaspi

operation illustrates the Alamo Scout capability to coordinate indigenous forces, achieve synergy in their efforts between conventional forces, and to support the conduct of successful large-scale operations.

Raider Operations

The Alamo Scouts also penetrated enemy lines for high payoff purposes. In one case, the Scouts were tasked with the immediate mission to recover a sensitive item: the complete field order of the XXIV Corps, hastily cached near a forced landing location of an aircraft on the island of Samar.²⁸ In another case, the Sixth Army pulled a Scout team from an ongoing mission and tasked them to capture or determine the whereabouts of two of the highest ranking Japanese officers in their area.²⁹ The Scouts succeeded in the first mission, but could not find the enemy leaders in the second. In recovering the sensitive material, the Scouts averted potential grave harm not just to one corps but to the entire Sixth Army. These raider-type operations demonstrated the rapid and agile employment of highly-refined Scout capabilities in direct support of Sixth Army priority requirements.

The Scouts also obtained coordinates for high priority targets. Following the Sixth Army's amphibious assault on Luzon, the Scouts provided direct support to enable corps-level operations. On 6 January 1945, the Sixth Army executed a landing at Lingayen Gulf employing two corps abreast to drive south towards Manila. On the eastern half, I Corps met significant resistance from the enemy in strong defensive positions on the elevated terrain of its sector. One XIV Corps report noted that "I Corps had met enemy resistance from the north and east and could not advance southward."³⁰ The 43rd Infantry Division supporting I Corps described the artillery impeding their progress in "Field Order 2," dated 13 January 1945: "Heavy coastal artillery pieces are located 600 yards east of Rabon, 1200 yards west of Cataguintingan, and northeast of Damortis."³¹ So effective was the enemy artillery that the same order directed: "The destruction of enemy artillery positions commanding Division Sector is the primary mission of all elements of this command."³² As the I Corps was halted, the XIV Corps on the right advanced south and created a significant risk in exposing their flank. It threatened the Sixth Army plan.

The Japanese artillery positions proved formidable, with the guns hidden in caves which made locating them difficult for counter-battery fire.³³ A description of the artillery in this area showed "the enemy was firmly dug in and much of the fire was of necessity directed against point targets, including the use of direct fire."³⁴ The Japanese concealment and firing tech-

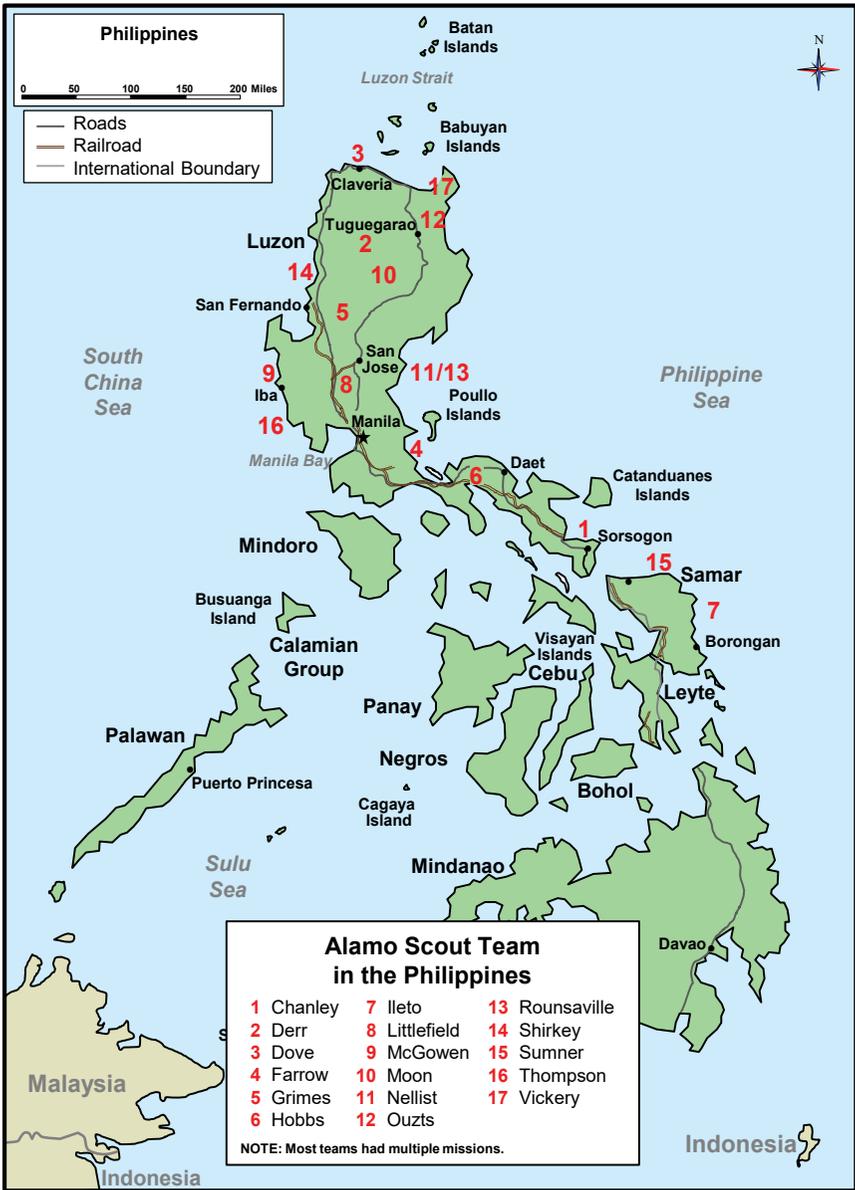


Figure 6.2. Alamo Scout teams in the Philippines. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

niques made the big guns difficult to find and hard to strike. To provide the coordinates for point-target fires, the Alamo Scouts were tasked to go behind enemy lines and find specific guns.³⁵ Four days after the issuance of “Field Order 2,” the Scouts infiltrated into enemy territory north of the Sixth Army beachhead beyond the friendly front-line trace. They went after a battery of some of the enemy’s largest heavy artillery, the 240mm howitzer.³⁶ The howitzers had to be neutralized, and the Alamo Scouts found them.

The I Corps advance eventually overcame the enemy’s strong defenses due to a variety of factors, including decisive maneuver and days of hard fought infantry assault in restrictive terrain using small arms, grenades and flame throwers.³⁷ The advance also used the targeting information provided by the Alamo Scouts to pinpoint those specific guns.³⁸ Their triangulated coordinates allowed for more precise targeting, which occurred the day after the Scouts returned with the information. In a clear illustration of synergy between conventional forces and special operations forces, the Alamo Scouts provided refined targeting locations to support air strikes and artillery fire against high value, critical point targets.

From New Guinea to Luzon, Alamo Scouts provided critical intelligence determining where the enemy was strong, weak, and absent to provide the Sixth Army commander and staff information to achieve operational objectives. The Scouts penetrated and operated behind enemy lines to provide essential intelligence to enable Sixth Army large-scale maneuver, to set conditions for the decisive phase on Luzon and to support its execution. The Scouts harnessed the capabilities of guerrillas against the enemy and provided essential intelligence to the Sixth Army.

POW Rescue Operations

The Alamo Scouts performed other special operations: they rescued POWs. The initially successful Japanese offensives had produced significant numbers of POWs who were sadistically treated and held in abject conditions. The Allies knew of the Japanese savagery. MacArthur’s G-2 produced various intelligence estimates indicating the likely potential for POW massacres at the Davao Penal Colony and at Cabanatuan.³⁹ On 29 January 1944, *The New York Times* published a front page report of Japanese atrocities in the Philippines titled “5,200 Americans, Many More Filipinos Die of Starvation, Torture After Bataan.”⁴⁰ In early January 1945, survivors reported the massacre of 150 POWs in the prison camp at Puerto Princesa Camp, Palawan, Philippines that occurred on 14 December 1944.⁴¹ As the war turned against the Japanese, more massacres seemed inevitable.

General MacArthur, concerned for the safety of the thousands of prisoners held for years in a number of Japanese camps, considered the factors as his forces moved towards Manila. He wrote:

With every step that our soldiers took toward Santo Tomas University, Bilibid, Cabanatuan, and Los Banos, the Japanese soldiers guarding them had become more and more sadistic. I knew that many of these half-starved and ill-treated people would die unless we rescued them promptly. The thought of their destruction with deliverance so near was deeply repellent to me.⁴²

The US Sixth Army commander, whose forces were rapidly approaching Cabanatuan, put it more bluntly: "If the Japanese received any inkling of it [a rescue attempt] they would probably massacre all the prisoners."⁴³ Krueger faced "a fragile obstacle...of enormous emotional import."⁴⁴ He ordered the rescue of the prisoners at Cabanatuan, imposed strict secrecy over the operation, and quickly assembled a force that included the Alamo Scouts.

The rescue force included the Sixth Ranger Battalion, two elements of Philippine guerrilla forces and two Alamo Scout teams. The camp was located 25 miles behind enemy lines along a main route used heavily by the enemy repositioning its forces against the US advance. The camp itself was a temporary cantonment for transitory units. Nearing the end of January 1945, the approaching US 1st Cavalry Division was but 25 miles to the northwest, heading south with Cabanatuan in its sector.⁴⁵ Its impending presence would soon be recognized by the Japanese controlling the camp. In sum, time was of the essence, and the enemy could be thick around and within the camp.

The Alamo Scout teams conducted reconnaissance of the POW camp and worked with local guerrillas to rapidly assess the target area. The Scouts obtained detailed information from the guerrilla-coordinated local populace and from their own close-target surveillance of the camp. The intelligence allowed the formulation of a precise plan, and the assault occurred after dark on 30 January 1945. The Alamo Scouts attacked as part of the Ranger assault force that breached the main gate, swept through the camp, killed over 200 Japanese and rescued 513 prisoners. Those POWs who could not walk were carried or moved by animal-drawn carts. To evacuate the most seriously wounded Ranger, an Alamo Scout coordinated the efforts of local villagers to create an improvised airstrip in the event of an air evacuation.⁴⁶ During the slow and perilous return to friendly forces, an Alamo Scout team provided rear-guard security. To ensure the

safety of the withdrawal, a guerrilla force stopped Japanese infantry and armor reaction forces by fiercely holding a blocking position that allowed the safe evacuation.⁴⁷ The Scouts' multifaceted role in the rescue included employing indigenous information capabilities, using their own surveillance and close combat skills, and harnessing civilian capacities. Their efforts contributed to the combined Sixth Ranger, guerrilla, and Alamo Scout success at Cabanatuan.

The timely, dramatic, and successful POW rescue at Cabanatuan was not the Alamo Scouts' first. The Scouts conducted a rescue and recovery operation to free Dutch civilians and a Philippine local chief at Cape Oransbari on New Guinea from 4-5 October 1944. The camp was located in Japanese-held territory by-passed by MacArthur's bounding strategy. Compared to Cabanatuan, it was small: it held a prisoner population of 66 guarded by a Japanese force of approximately 26.⁴⁸ The force of 17 Americans, indigenous guides and one Dutch officer serving as interpreter and liaison conducted the operation. Detailed information from indigenous personnel enabled the rescue plan that was executed with surprise and violence of action. Alamo Scout members Lieutenant Nellist, Lieutenant Rounsaville and Private First Class Kittleson participated in the rescue and would later perform key roles in the raid on Cabanatuan. Kittleson, in another conflict, would participate in the attempted POW rescue mission at Son Tay. Throughout their employment, the Alamo Scouts demonstrated superlative reconnaissance capabilities and the ability to work with indigenous groups. With the rescues at Cabanatuan and Cape Oransbari, the Scouts demonstrated their range of special operations capabilities, including raid and POW recovery operations.

The Alamo Scout missions produced significant results. In considering the preparations for the campaign on Leyte, Lieutenant General Krueger summed the contribution of the Alamo Scouts. He wrote:

A considerable volume of extremely valuable information was obtained by Alamo Scout teams...all of them operated for weeks deep in enemy-held territory, set up radio stations, reported enemy movements, concentrations and activities, and effectively coordinated the work of Philippine guerrillas.⁴⁹

The Scouts enabled maneuver in large-scale operations and harnessed the capacities of indigenous forces. From New Guinea to Luzon, the Alamo Scouts demonstrated capabilities reflecting those of today's special operations forces. Their employment reveals implications for the future conduct of large-scale combat operations.

Implications for the Future

Implications from the Alamo Scouts reveal aspects of today's emerging concepts related to multi-domain operations and current US Army Special Operations strategies.⁵⁰ While the emerging concepts are not yet fully matured, they contain clearly discernable threads that can be recognized in Alamo Scout operations.

The Alamo Scouts demonstrated the value of people and populations to enable large-scale combat operations by using an indigenous approach.⁵¹ The Scouts harnessed and directed the intelligence gathering potential and the combat power of civilians and guerrilla forces to support Sixth Army campaign objectives. Through the networks they established, the Scouts were able to gather raw indigenous reporting, analyze, and vet the information, and pass it to the Sixth Army. The reporting added a substantive stream of information to integrate into the intelligence process. The Alamo Scouts were able to synchronize the combat power of guerrilla forces consistent with their capabilities. The Scouts were able to assess the status of one 3,000-man guerrilla unit as capable of operating with a US infantry division. That force participated as one of three major elements to attack an enemy-held strategic dam. On the other hand, the Scouts utilized a group of guerrilla elements to support the main effort during an amphibious landing, consistent with their capabilities, through collecting information and harassing the enemy. The indigenous approach contributed to large-scale operations by enabling a convergence of capabilities using guerrilla and civilian capabilities with conventional forces.

Emerging concepts posit the aspect of imposing complexity and dilemmas on the enemy. The Scouts achieved that aim in their time through an indigenous approach that provided the Sixth Army with multiple methods of seeing and attacking the enemy. Guerrilla forces and information networks disrupted enemy interior lines and illuminated the enemy's disposition. Indigenous capabilities confronted the enemy with an additional array of threats to which it had to respond. The Alamo Scouts used influence and understanding to bring indigenous capabilities to support Allied goals. They were able to negotiate human factors and cultural dynamics within Philippine groups and individuals to impose complexity on the enemy.

The Alamo Scouts' forward presence in advance of amphibious assaults and in longer term coastal and interior reconnaissance and intelligence operations facilitated the Sixth Army's effort to achieve a calibrated force posture and conduct theater-level expeditionary maneuver. The bounding, island hopping strategy required the Sixth Army to over-

come the enemy's anti-access and area denial capabilities on each island it attacked. Success depended on joint efforts, and the Navy and Army Air Force were decisive. For its part, the Scouts' forward presence in nearly 40 missions on New Guinea enabled the Sixth Army to maintain its operational tempo and position for its next objective. The Scout's reconnaissance determined the enemy's disposition and enabled Sixth Army operations to avoid enemy strengths, exploit enemy vulnerabilities, and gain advantageous positions. On New Guinea, scout-enabled Sixth Army operations achieved advantageous positions by reducing or bypassing the Japanese and by scouting locations for vital airfields and ports for the next phase of the strategy. In getting to Leyte and Luzon, both the Navy and Army Air Force decisively supported Sixth Army maneuver. In specific cases, the Scouts enabled intra-theater maneuver into those same islands which contained significant enemy ground forces capable of contesting the Sixth Army's efforts. The Scouts' pre-landing reconnaissance work at Ormoc on Leyte and Legaspi on southeast Luzon enabled Sixth Army's access onto those islands. The Scouts provided targeting information, intelligence, and guerrilla operations to reduce risk to the main effort's intra-theater maneuver.

The Alamo Scouts' operations reflect the synergy of special operations forces with conventional forces, other services and indigenous elements. The Scouts used a variety of joint platforms and indigenous elements to support operations to conduct reconnaissance and target enemy capabilities. The Scouts used fast Patrol Torpedo (PT) boats, submarines, indigenous vessels, and a variety of aircraft including the water-landing capable PBV Catalina to infiltrate enemy areas. The Scouts employed indigenous elements in a variety of unconventional warfare (UW) capacities to gain intelligence, conduct sabotage, and conduct combat operations against the enemy.⁵² The Alamo Scouts' operations reveal the value of SOF employing a combination of joint enablers and indigenous capabilities to support large-scale conventional force operations.

The Alamo Scouts conducted raider operations in enemy-held areas for tactical and operational objectives. In conducting refined targeting, they provided triangulated coordinates for joint strikes. They conducted deep penetration raids to rescue POWs, conducted operations to capture high value personnel and recovered sensitive items. The Scout operations reflect a facet of special operations' support to major combat operations through direct action (DA) in the form of precision targeting, deep-penetration raids, interdiction operations, crisis response and special reconnaissance against targets of operational significance.

The Scouts were able to task organize force packages tailored to support a variety of missions. They expanded the scale of their operations by creating multiple nodes from within their teams to extend their geographic presence with more guerrilla forces. The Alamo Scouts' agile operational approach reflects a special operations forces' ability to deploy tailorable mission command nodes and scalable force packages to conduct independent, dispersed, cross-domain operations in lethal, contested environments, both unilaterally and with partner forces. The Scouts' management of guerrilla forces' roles in relationship to the conventional force also reflects the dynamic application of agile mission command. The Scouts initially used the guerrillas in a general support role providing information to the Sixth Army and conducting independent combat activities. With the imminent amphibious assault, the Scouts synchronized the guerrilla activities directly with the tactical ground force unit. The Alamo Scouts' operations reflect characteristics of adaptive and tailored mission command in support of large-scale operations.

Conclusion

The history of the Alamo Scouts provides implications for the future conduct of large-scale combat operations. The Alamo Scouts demonstrated the viability for special operations forces to set decisive conditions for large-scale operations. They bought down risk by penetrating the enemy's battlespace to provide essential intelligence. They conducted precision targeting and crisis response to address high-priority Sixth Army requirements. They used influence and wielded understanding to synchronize guerrilla forces. The Scouts employed indigenous approaches to apply additive ways to see and attack the enemy. The Scouts supported joint operations to overcome the enemy's anti-access and area denial capacities. They illustrate how combined capabilities produce essential results in areas where friendly large-scale combat forces do not have a presence, but the enemy does. The Alamo Scouts highlight conventional and special operations operational synergy and the combat-multiplying effect of SOF operations. The small, specialized Alamo Scouts enabled the Sixth Army to mitigate risk and sustain its agile operational tempo that supported the momentum of the theater strategy. The operations conducted by the Alamo Scouts show how the combination of SOF capabilities integrated with those of its mission partners can achieve decisive results to enable large-scale combat operations.

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Chapter 7

Guerrilla Operations in Luzon

Richard E. Killblane

The Axis Powers achieved significant ground gains at the outset of World War II, placing the Allies at a disadvantage. This led to guerrilla resistance in occupied Europe, Southwest Asia, and the Pacific islands. Americans were directly involved in three of these resistance movements, France, Burma, and the Philippines, and each contributed to the creation of special forces and American insurgency doctrine after the war. Of all these, the insurgency in the Philippines, especially on the island of Luzon, contributed the most in support of large-scale combat operations and the eventual liberation of the island. Unfortunately, this success has not garnered the recognition it deserves.

In 1937, Japan invaded China initiating the second Sino-Japanese War. After a year of fighting, the Chinese were divided politically and philosophically on the conduct of the war. The Nationalists and Communists suspended their civil war in preference to fighting a common enemy—the invading Japanese. While many advocated for a conventional war, in 1938, Mao Zedong recommended a strategy for a protracted war against the Japanese. In 1934 during the civil war, he had already led the Long March to escape from the Nationalist Army. Four years later, he prophesied that the longer the war waged, the more war-weary the invading soldiers and Japanese economy would become.

He advocated that the Chinese allow the Japanese to overextend their occupation and fight a protracted war comprised of three phases. The first phase was the enemy's strategic offensive and Chinese strategic defensive where the conventional force traded ground for time. A year after the invasion, the Chinese were still retreating in that phase. Mao envisioned a second phase where the enemy was on the defensive and the Chinese prepared for an offensive. During this phase, the main Chinese army would retreat to a safe distance beyond the reach of the Japanese main force. There it would build up its forces while Chinese guerrillas surrounded the occupying army and placed it on the defensive. The third and final phase was the Chinese strategic counter-offensive and Japanese strategic retreat. While the Americans continued to supply and train the Nationalist Army to fight the Japanese on conventional terms, Mao's Communist forces employed the second phase into an insurgency against the Japanese. The dropping of

the atomic bombs on mainland Japan ended the Second World War before Mao could see the third phase against the Japanese brought to fruition. Instead, his army would resume the civil war against the Nationalists.

Academics have had the luxury of time to reflect on warfare and articulate their ideas based upon either their experience or those of others. Although Napoleon Bonaparte would dictate his thoughts to a secretary years later, others like Antoine-Henri Jomini and Carl von Clausewitz would produce the most influential writings that identified the principles of Napoleon's success. Similarly, Mao's writings would propel him to the forefront of the theorists of insurgencies and guerrilla warfare. Sadly, many brilliant minds that executed the principles that led to victory would never be remembered as great philosophers of war. While Mao may not have seen the fruition of his theory of protracted warfare against the Japanese, he is credited with the development of the theory of insurgent warfare. The American-led insurgency in the Philippines evolved along the same stages but they did not receive recognition for it. The US had retreated from the Philippine Islands a safe distance to Australia while a guerrilla force surrounded the Japanese. From 1942 to 1944, the Americans and Filipinos left behind conducted Mao's second phase of protracted war and in early 1945, MacArthur returned to Luzon with a conventional army and the guerrillas rose up and fought as conventional forces to tie down Japanese divisions that could have been committed against the US Sixth Army. The Americans and Filipinos guerrillas became a significant combat multiplier in retaking the archipelago. The manner in which these American led guerrilla forces operated in concert with and in support of MacArthur's conventional maneuver force could be considered a precursor to the Conventional Forces-Special Operations Forces (CF-SOF) Operational Synergy as defined the draft *Army Special Operations Forces Operating Concept*.

Background

The American-Filipino alliance had its beginnings during the Spanish American War where the American Pacific Fleet destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay in 1898, thereby gaining control of the Philippines. The US delayed allowing the Filipinos full autonomy that led to the Philippine Insurrection in 1899. The Filipinos had vast experience as guerrillas fighting the Spaniards, but the capture of their guerrilla leader, Emilio Aguinaldo, in 1901 ended the insurgency on the main island of Luzon when the Americans convinced him that they only wanted to establish a protectorate that would eventually lead to full independence. Assisting the Filipinos on a path toward full autonomy forged a strong bond of friend-

ship that would prove vital during the war against Japan. Military cooperation began with the establishment of the constabulary force and grew with the authorization of the Philippine Army.

The Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1935 authorized Philippine independence to take effect in 1945. The Philippine Assembly passed the National Defense Act of 1935, which approved a regular army of 10,000 and Reserve of 400,000 by 1946. In 1935, Philippine President Manuel Quezon recruited Gen. Douglas MacArthur as Military Advisor to the Commonwealth to build the Philippine Army. MacArthur retired from the US Army and returned to his boyhood home. He inherited a small but capable army.

The American-led Philippine Scouts (PS) had served in the defense of the islands since the Philippine Insurrection in 1901. In 1922, the Philippine Army inactivated three regiments and consolidated the 45th and 57th Infantry, 26th Cavalry Regiments and 24th Field Artillery into the American-led Philippine Division with the US 31st Infantry. The US 31st Infantry and 26th Cavalry (PS) formed the most disciplined and best trained units in the US Army Forces Far East (USAFFE). This division comprised the Philippine Army until the threat of Japanese invasion aroused the country.

In July 1941, the Philippine Army expanded into ten divisions of draftees and was brought into service under MacArthur's USAFFE. American officers and Philippine Scouts formed the cadre of commanders, key staff, and NCOs to organize and train these brand new Philippine regiments and divisions. Taking the threat of Japanese invasion seriously, the US Army sent the families of soldiers home. USAFFE then divided the defense of the archipelago into three geographical areas. Four Philippine infantry divisions (11th, 21st, 31st, and 71st) and the 26th Cavalry (PS) formed the Northern Luzon Force under Maj. Gen. Jonathan Wainwright. Two Philippine infantry divisions (41st and 51st) made up the Southern Luzon Force under Maj. Gen. George M. Parker, Jr. Three infantry divisions (61st, 81st, and 101st) comprised the Visayan-Mindanao Force in the islands south of Luzon. The 91st Division remained in reserve in Manila. Many of the future American guerrilla leaders served in these Philippine regiments.

In July 1941, Capt. Russell W. Volckmann was assigned as the executive officer of the 11th Infantry Regiment. In October, 1st Lt. Donald Blackburn was assigned as an instructor of communications and transportation with the 12th Infantry Regiment. The 11th Division consisted of the 11th through 14th Infantry Regiments. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, 1st Lieutenant Blackburn assumed command of a battalion. Maj.

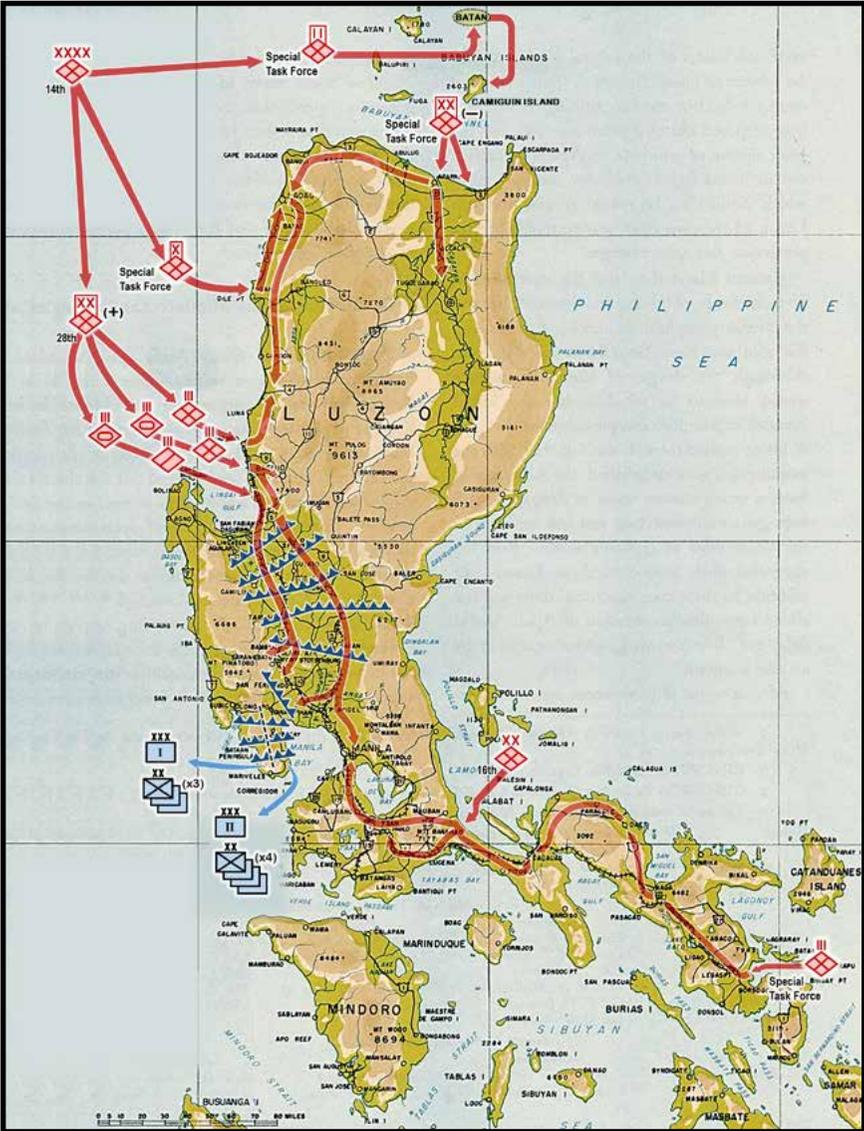


Figure 7.1. Landing on Luzon. Graphic created by Army University Press Staff.

Arthur Noble commanded another battalion and Maj. Martin Moses commanded the 12th Infantry. 2nd Lt. Robert Lapham, a Military Police officer, arrived in June and was similarly assigned to train a Philippine regiment. Another future guerrilla leader, 1st Lt. Edwin P. Ramsey, led Filipinos in the 26th Cavalry (PS). The newly-formed regiments had little training and equipment to stand up to the veteran Japanese Army, but this limited experience training Filipinos would later prove extremely

valuable to both the Americans and Filipinos in forming the guerrilla resistance.

Phase I: Strategic Defensive

The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor at dawn on 7 December 1941. Because of the International Dateline, this concurrent attack took place in the early morning of 8 December in the Philippines. Later that morning the Japanese air force destroyed the American air force on the ground in the Philippines, which then gave the Japanese aerial superiority for the invasion. Meanwhile, the Japanese 14th Army waited offshore with two divisions and 500 aircraft. On 10 December, the Japanese landed in three remote locations to draw American and Philippine forces away from the main landing. The *Tanaka* Detachment landed with about 3,000 men at Aparri on north end of Luzon and the *Kanno* Detachment with 2,000 men at Vigan on the west side of the island. The *Kimura* Detachment landed at Legaspi at the southern end of the Bicol Peninsula on 12 December. The capture of Aparri and Legaspi provided the Japanese airfields from which to launch air attacks on the island.

Major General Wainwright assigned the 10th Division to contend with the Japanese invasion of Northern Luzon while he kept the others ready to repel the main landing. With his commander sent on a special mission to Cagayan Valley, Captain Volkmann assumed command of the 11th Infantry on 10 December. 1st Lieutenant Blackburn was also assigned to command one of the battalions in the 12th Infantry. One battalion had marched north to oppose the Aparri landing and defend the Cagayan Valley from the *Tanaka* Detachment and the 43rd Infantry with a battalion of the 12th Infantry marched north to blunt the southward drive of the *Kanno* Detachment. On 21 December, the *Kanno* Detachment advancing down the west coast attacked Noble's battalion of the 12th Infantry at San Juan. Major Moses then moved north with another battalion and became pinned down. Blackburn's battalion likewise marched north from Banang where he linked up with the 71st Infantry. This initial experience made Volckmann and Blackburn familiar with Northern Luzon and gave them a familiarity with the Filipinos of that area that would flourish later.¹

Finally, the Japanese 48th Division landed with two tank regiments in Lingayan Gulf on 22 December and MacArthur announced his plan to fall back to Bataan the next day. This withdrawal cut off the 12th, 43rd and 71st Infantry Regiments and C Troop of the 26th Cavalry, so they marched toward Baguio where they consolidated under Lt. Col. John P.

Horan, commander of nearby Camp John Hay. Horan declared Baguio an open city and the Japanese advancing from the north entered the city on 23 December. Horan then led his force south to Balete Pass where he disbanded his Filipinos and then withdrew with a small group of raiders into the Zambales Mountains. Volckmann, Blackburn and other American officers commandeered a truck and drove to Balete Pass to find Major General Wainwright. They received permission to return to Manila to clean up before rejoining their 11th Division.²

The Philippine divisions put up little resistance and the Japanese strengthened their beachhead on 24 December. That same day, the Japanese 16th Division landed in Lamon Bay in Southern Luzon to reinforce the *Kimura* Detachment advancing toward Manila. Poorly trained and equipped, the 11th and 21st Divisions withdrew from Lingayen Gulf on 24 December. Meanwhile, the Philippine Division formed the nucleus of the Bataan Defense Force. The US 31st Infantry moved to Zig-Zag to protect the withdrawal of Philippine forces retreating from the central and southern sectors. The 57th Infantry (PS) defended the bridges over the Pampanga River along the Gueagera-Porac Line.³

The Japanese army advanced south along two main roads leading to Manila flanked by the Zambales Mountains on the west and the Carabarro Mountains on the east. The 11th and 21st Divisions fell back to their next line and were reinforced by the 91st Division on 26 December. On that day, the 11th Division ordered regiments to abandon all heavy weapons and continue south. Volckmann found a railroad and upon receiving a steam locomotive and eight box cars, his 11th Infantry loaded all their equipment on the railroad cars and in the regimental trucks. The Philippine divisions could not hope to stop the veterans of Malaysia, but each time the Filipinos set up a defensive line, they forced the Japanese to stop and deploy on line to attack. The next day the Philippine divisions would fall back and through this process delay the Japanese advance. The remnants of the three Philippine divisions fell back to Bataan on 1 January and the Japanese entered Manila the next day.⁴

Meanwhile on 31 December, 1st Lieutenant Blackburn and Major Primrose rejoined the 11th Division and reported to their division commander, Brig. Gen. William E. Brougher. Brougher assigned Blackburn as his signal officer. There Blackburn reunited with Majors Moses and Noble. On 3 January, Col. Glen R. Townsend returned to command the 11th Infantry. Blackburn would later be promoted to captain on 21 January and met up with Volckmann who would be promoted to major by the end of March.⁵

The bulk of the Philippine Army had retreated to Bataan to hold out for supplies and reinforcements from the United States. There 80,000 soldiers set up a main line of defense along Mount Santa Rosa on 7 January with Wainwright's I Corps on the left and Parker's II Corps on the right. The Japanese 48th Division, reinforced by the newly-arrived 85th Brigade, attacked on 9 January. After five days of fighting, the Philippine Division had suffered severe losses. On 16 January, 1st Lieutenant Ramsey led the last cavalry charge with G Troop of the 26th Cavalry (PS).

On 26 January, the Japanese broke through the 51st Division sector forcing the Americans and Filipinos back to the Reserve Battle Line in the Pilar-Bagac area. On 1 February, the Japanese broke through the main line, and over the next 21 days the 11th and 45th Infantry and the 91st Division fought to close the pocket. On 15 February, the Japanese penetrated the 11th Division main line of resistance, and around 20 February, the 11th Division drove back the Toul Pocket. Through their defense on Bataan, the Filipino soldiers were gaining combat experience while weather, disease, and artillery kept the Japanese at bay for the next couple months. Meanwhile, events unfolded that would inspire future guerrilla resistance.⁶

Previously, Maj. Claude A. Thorp, the former Provost Marshal at Fort Stotsenburg, personally met with General MacArthur in January, receiving authorization to lead a raiding party to Clark Field and also gather intelligence on the enemy with a promotion to lieutenant colonel. Together with Capt. Ralph McGuire, 1st Lt. Robert Lapham, seven American NCOs, and several Filipinos, they infiltrated through Japanese lines on 27 January. Upon reaching the vicinity of Clark Field and Fort Stotsenburg, Thorp and Lapham left to form separate guerrilla camps. They were joined by other Americans and Filipinos cut off during the retreat. In February, Colonel Horan, cut off in the Zambales Mountains, organized his remaining force into the 121st Infantry to wage a guerrilla campaign behind the Japanese lines. So Thorp and Horan formed the initial guerrilla resistance while fighting continued on Bataan.⁷

On 12 March, MacArthur escaped to Australia, and Wainwright assumed command of USAFFE. MacArthur's promise to return gave some hope to continue resisting the Japanese occupation. President Quezon also flew to Australia to set up a Philippine government in exile. This would also give legitimacy to the later resistance movement.

On 28 March, the Japanese launched a major attack. The 31st and 45th Infantry unsuccessfully counter-attacked on 6 April and suffered heavy losses. They were forced back to Mamala River. On 7 April, the Japanese

penetrated Parker's II Corps and it fell back. I Corps fell back on the night of 8 April and surrendered after that. Brigadier General Brougner told Volckmann, Blackburn, and other officers around his division headquarters that II Corps had surrendered. Volckmann and Blackburn chose to escape and link up with Colonel Horan in Northern Luzon. Many of the American officers with previous experience working with the Filipinos expected better chances of survival hiding among the locals. Lieutenant Colonels Moses and Noble also escaped in an effort to join up with Horan. Capt. Parker Calvert and Capt. Arthur Murphy of the 43rd Infantry also refused to surrender. Meanwhile Parker's corps retreated back to Cabcaben on 9 April when Wainwright ordered it to surrender. On 5 May, the Japanese landed on Corregidor and the defenders surrendered on 6 May. That ended the conventional warfare in the Philippines.⁸

After Wainwright broadcast instructions for everyone to surrender, Colonel Horan surrendered on 14 May, but the bulk of his 121st Infantry preferred to resist. Capt. William Peryam assumed command of the remnant of the regiment and Capt. George M. Barnett organized guerrillas in the Ilocos Province. Lieutenant Colonel Thorp commanded a guerrilla unit in the Tarlac Province near Mount Pinatubo. During the Death March out of Bataan, Lt. Col. Peter Cayler of the 31st Infantry was left for dead on the side of the road after a truck ran over him. Upon recovery under the care of a Filipino, he similarly organized a guerrilla unit in the Tarlac Province.⁹

The remaining 60 men of the 26th Cavalry cut off in the final push divided up into small groups to escape the Bataan peninsula. 1st Lieutenant Ramsey, Captains Ralph Praeger and Joseph Barker made their way to join up with Thorp in Central Luzon where they had been stationed before the war. Everyone seemed to want to return to familiar locations. In the latter part of April, Ramsey and Barker ran into Moses and Noble who were intent on reaching the mountains of Northern Luzon where they had trained Filipinos prior to the invasion. In September, Volckmann and Blackburn also reached Thorp's camp but insisted on continuing to the better climate of Northern Luzon to link up with Horan. Most of the Americans were suffering from malaria and other tropical diseases. Many of those who escaped may have hoped to eventually escape to Australia or just survive until the Americans returned. Regardless of their motivation, these holdouts would form the seeds of further resistance.¹⁰ These resistance forces, operating under American leadership, were a harbinger of one of the *ARSOF Operating Concept's* capability pillars, the indigenous approach. The indigenous approach is

the transformation of indigenous mass (local populations) into combat power to achieve military objectives.¹¹

Phase II: Prepare for Counter-offensive

Wainwright's order to surrender left many American soldiers with a dilemma. Many expected humane treatment from their captors, but suffered cruelty during the Death March and subsequent interment. Some luckily escaped along the way but many more died. Those cut off behind Japanese lines remained bewildered at what to do next. While there was an army fighting in Bataan, there was a reason to resist. Help from America might just be on the way, but after the surrender, their attention turned to survival.

The remnants of USAFFE executed Mao's theory of protracted warfare, not by choice but out of necessity. Survival led to resistance and resistance led to organization. Through trial and error, the guerrillas learned the importance of intelligence and to attack the enemy's weakness while avoiding his strength.

For this phase, MacArthur formed the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) Headquarters of the Pacific Theater of Operations in Australia and the US Sixth Army out of Army National Guard divisions arriving from the United States. The USAFFE had delayed the Japanese long enough to prevent its invasion of Australia that year. So the Americans and Australians had the luxury of a vast ocean and numerous islands between them and the Japanese to provide a sanctuary to prepare for a counter-offensive. Upon arrival, MacArthur immediately joined the Australians in an offensive to take back the island of New Guinea. Over the next year, the Americans would leapfrog along the northern coast in a series of amphibious landings. New Guinea would provide the launching point for MacArthur's return to the Philippines. Meanwhile on Luzon, those Americans and Filipinos who evaded capture organized into guerrilla units.

While many of the Americans merely hoped to survive, the Filipinos had a different motivation. They hated the Japanese occupiers and wanted their country back. Many wanted to fight. Still others took advantage of the situation and became nothing more than bandits, more of a threat to the locals than the Japanese. The Americans had already built a rapport over nearly half a century of presence in the country. Most Filipinos respected the Americans as benefactors who were leading them on the path toward total independence, and the American soldiers had the military skills needed to train them to fight. Many former Philippine soldiers sought them out as leaders. American leadership gave the cause legitimacy. All across the

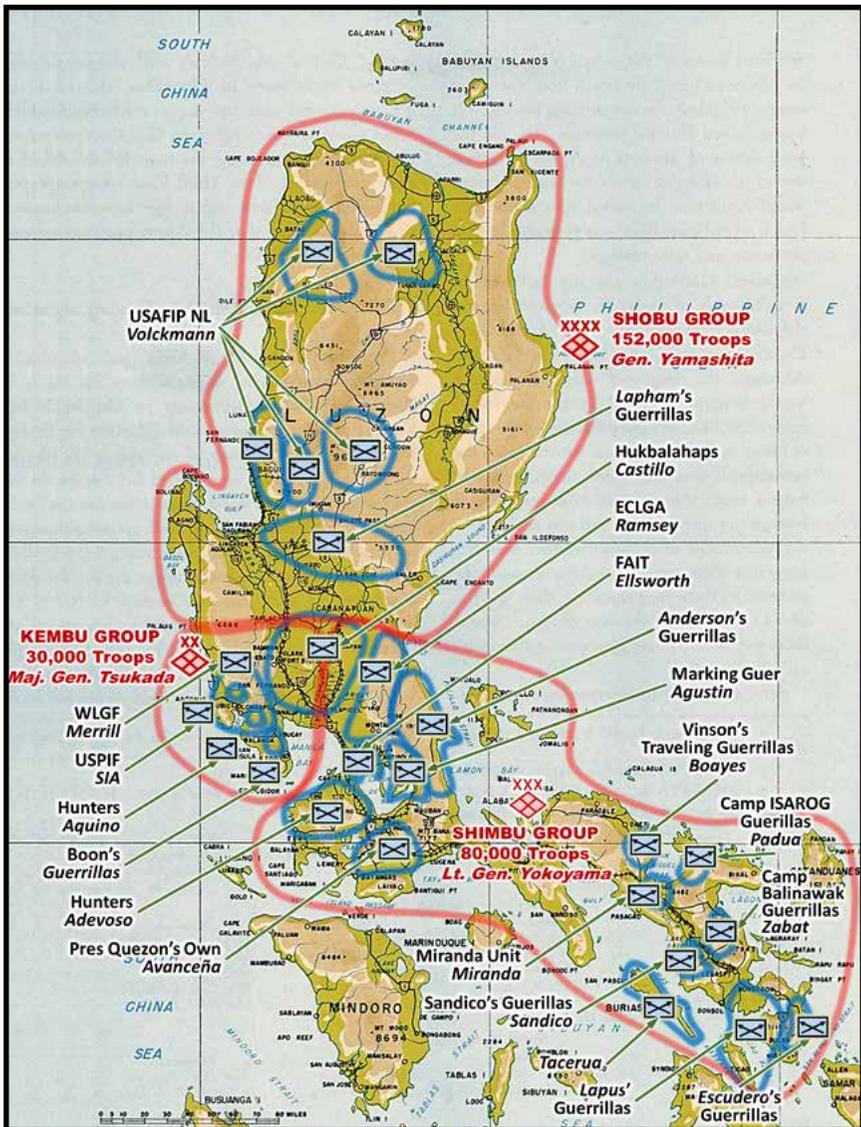


Figure 7.2. Moving in. Graphic created by Army University Press Staff.

Philippines, guerrilla bands would spring up and organize. Over the next year, the guerrilla resistance took shape.

Besides Thorp and Horan's initial activity, other guerrilla units formed during the defense of Bataan. Maj. Guillermo Nakar of the 14th Infantry organized one of the early guerrilla units and even acquired a radio transmitter. Right after the Japanese landed at Lingayen Gulf, Walter M. Cushing, a civilian mining executive, organized his miners and recruited

30 American soldiers led by 1st Lt. Robert Arnold, also cut off during the retreat, into guerrilla bands. Arnold's men trained the miners into an effective guerrilla unit and Lieutenant Colonel Horan commissioned Cushing a captain. After Cushing claimed credit for the success of an ambush of a truck convoy, Arnold, in a dispute, joined Nakar's guerrillas. Cushing was later killed in an ambush by the Japanese, and his brother, Charles, took his place as the guerrilla leader.¹²

Many of the starving and ill Americans who had escaped out of Bataan spent the next few months evading capture and trying to recover their health. Many recuperated in the Fassoth camp constructed by an American planter, William Fassoth. Almost all the future guerrilla leaders passed through that camp of bamboo huts hidden in the Zambales Mountains at one time or another. They would also return to recruit Americans into their ranks.

Over the next few months, the guerrilla leaders recruited, trained, and organized the guerrillas in their areas. Lieutenant Colonel Thorp and Lieutenant Colonel Cayler led small guerrilla bands in the Tarlac Province but, unfortunately, had remained fairly inactive and alienated some Filipinos, especially the neighboring Hukbalahaps. The Huks were the military arm of the Philippine Communist Party and had been organized as a guerrilla force for years in Central Luzon. Consequently, they followed the teachings of Mao. They initially professed a willingness to avoid conflict with the American-backed resistance in order to fight a common enemy—the Japanese, but soon turned to fighting the rival American-led guerrillas under Thorp.

Since many of the Americans escaping Bataan had heard of resistance movements created by Thorp and Horan, they sought them out. Thorp called his command, the USAFFE Luzon Guerrilla Forces and organized the guerrillas under his command into four regions. Capt. Joe Barker commanded the East Central Luzon Guerrilla Area (ECLGA) with 1st Lt. Ed Ramsey as his deputy and Maj. Bernard Anderson as his chief of staff. Barker appointed Charles Cushing as the commander of the Pangasinan Province. Thorp, now a colonel, appointed Capt. Ralph McGuire, former member of the 26th Cavalry, commander of the Western Luzon Guerrilla Forces (WLGf), Captain Praeger commander of the Northern Luzon, and Capt. Jack Spies as commander of Southern Luzon. Robert Lapham would form one of the best organized guerrilla forces in the Pangasinan Province, which would become the Luzon Guerrilla Armed Forces (LGAF). These formed the nucleus of the guerrilla resistance in Central Luzon.¹³

On 9 September 1942, Volckmann and Blackburn finally met up with Moses and Noble in the Zambales Mountains where they learned that Colonel Horan had been captured. They also learned of several guerrilla bands forming throughout the country. Captains Parker Calvert and Art Murphy, former company commanders in Horan's 43rd, had formed guerrilla bands. Capt. George Barnett, another member of the 43rd, maintained a guerrilla band in Ilocos Province. Captain Praeger had taken his guerrillas into the Cagayan Valley. Captain Nakar moved into eastern Nueva Vizcaya and Isabela while Capt. Manolo Enriquez moved into western Nueva Vizcaya and Benguet. As the senior officers, Lieutenant Colonels Moses and Noble set out to organize the resistance on Northern Luzon.¹⁴

Everyone with military training was in demand, and American enlisted men made excellent guerrilla leaders. Cpl. John Boone had begun organizing an effective guerrilla band in northern Bataan immediately after it fell. Ramsey would recruit him into Barker's organization and commission him a captain. S. Sgt. Ray Hunt, an aircraft mechanic, would also rise to area commander in Pangasinan under Lapham with the rank of captain. Lapham similarly promoted Pfc. Albert Hendrickson, of the Signal Corps, to captain in charge of the Tarlac Province. Guerrilla commanders received "jungle promotions" appropriate to the level of command.¹⁵

While these guerrilla bands grew, field grade officers tried to unite them into some kind of umbrella organization. Col. Gyles Merrill, former member of Wainwrights' staff, was the senior officer to have escaped Bataan and not surrender to the Japanese. He organized his own guerrilla headquarters in the Zambales Mountains and had Volckmann and Blackburn, who passed through his camp, deliver a sealed letter to Thorp, which claimed he was the senior commander of guerrilla resistance in all of Luzon. Thorp burst into a rage claiming to have received direct authorization from MacArthur to organize the only resistance movement in Luzon and resented any other authority. Therefore Thorp remained independent until his capture. Merrill, on the other hand, remained relatively inactive and did not exert much influence over his competition. Capt. Ramon Mag-saysay, a former Philippine auto mechanic in the 31st Infantry and future president of the Philippines, fell in on Merrill's staff but would later join forces with Thorp.¹⁶

On 15 October 1942, Moses and Noble directed that Captain Baldwin lead their first guerrilla attack on a Japanese garrison near the Igoten Mines. The attack failed and inspired a retaliatory campaign by the Japanese. The Japanese employed the *Kempeitai* to hunt down the guerrillas.

This secret police used a variety of tactics to eradicate the guerrilla resistance involving spies, collaborators, bribes, bounties, coercion, torture and raids. Through informants, the *Kempeitai* developed an accurate by-name list of the guerrilla leaders and offered bounties for their capture. The offer of reward convinced one of McGuire's guerrillas to kill him and turn his decapitated head into the *Kempeitai* for the bounty. After McGuire's murder, Captain Magsaysay assumed command of his Western Luzon Guerrilla Forces. Captain Spies was also killed before the year ended. The Japanese recruited Filipino collaborators into a military organization known as the *Sakdalistas* who formed the *Makapili*, or network of informants. As the Japanese counter-intelligence corps worked closely with the *Kempeitai* to collect intelligence on the location of guerrilla leaders and their camps, they often used torture to induce the prisoners to betray the location of their leaders and camps. The Japanese army then staged raids and the process would repeat itself until the guerrillas had retreated deeper into the jungle and mountains.¹⁷

With the only radio transmitter in Luzon, Captain Nakar sent messages to MacArthur's SWPA Headquarters until captured with his staff in September 1942. Maj. Manolo Enriquez replaced him and later surrendered after the Japanese captured his wife. His executive officer, Maj. Romulo Manriquez, replaced him in command. They received no replies, but MacArthur at least became aware there was a guerrilla movement organizing in the Philippines. Unfortunately, these conventional soldiers had no training in guerrilla warfare and had to learn the hard way. For the next year, the Japanese waged an aggressive counter-guerrilla campaign that placed the guerrillas on the defensive. Mistakes resulted in capture, torture and death.

Through their connections with the Huks, Barker and Ramsey acquired a copy of Mao's book *On Guerrilla Warfare* and used it as a guide for building their guerrilla force. From this they learned to avoid pitched battles with regulars, but attack the enemy's weakness, such as supply dumps, vehicles and aircraft. *Attack only when guaranteed of success*. Guerrilla warfare required a long-term commitment. Thorp assigned Barker responsibility for the guerrillas operating from Manila to the Lingayen Gulf.¹⁸

After Lieutenant Colonel Thorp and his staff were captured while recruiting *Negritos* in western Tarlac on 29 October 1942, Barker assumed leadership of the Luzon Guerrilla Armed Forces, leaving Ramsey in charge of East Central Luzon. Barker was later captured outside Manila on 13 January 1943 and was taken to the same prison as Thorp to await ex-

ecution on 2 October. That fate awaited any captured guerrilla leader. Although senior in rank, Major Anderson did not protest when 1st Lieutenant Ramsey assumed command of the region. In January 1943, the Japanese also captured Captain Peryam and Major Barnett assumed command of the 121st Infantry in Northern Luzon. Captain Lapham owed his initial allegiance to Thorp and generally ignored the authority of anyone else.

Sometime in April, Ramsey met up with Lapham near the boundaries of where their commands overlapped. Lapham informed Ramsey that Thorp had put both of them in for promotion to major. In the discussion, Ramsey had an earlier commissioning date and asserted his seniority and recalled Lapham agreed to serve as his deputy commander. Lapham, however, remembered it differently. Ramsey wanted to recruit a large guerrilla force, whether arms were available or not, with him as the overall commander. Because of the unique differences in each area, Lapham preferred maintaining smaller, armed and well-trained forces capable of gathering intelligence, maintaining order and repelling bandits and Japanese in their assigned areas. Fortunately, the two liked each other and traveled together for a while before returning to their separate commands. Even though Ramsey believed he commanded the whole of Thorp's command, he remained in East Central Luzon and Lapham in North Central Luzon. So the two operated independent of each other. To his credit, Ramsey tried to make contact with Brig. Gen. Vicente Lim, the first Philippine graduate of West Point and commander of the former 41st Division, to recruit him to command all guerrilla forces in Luzon. The Japanese wisely kept Lim under close watch and later killed him during his attempt to escape to Australia in June 1944. This failure to find a single commander everyone could agree on encouraged independent guerrilla commands.¹⁹

While Moses and Noble oversaw guerrilla operations in Northern Luzon, they tasked Volckmann to organize a clandestine communication network with other guerrillas. He established the headquarters farther in the mountains. Volckmann and Blackburn centralized control of the guerrilla bands while Moses and Noble visited the camps and guerrilla leaders. By the end of April, Volckmann had established communications within the Ifugao and Bontoc sub-provinces and with Moses and Noble in Apayao through Captain Manalo. Enemy activity hindered their efforts to unify their guerrilla command.²⁰

By April, Parker Calvert and Art Murphy were on the run. The Japanese had captured Rufio Baldwin south of Baguio and Major Enriquez in May. Captain Manalo was also hard pressed. Capt. Charles Cushing surrendered after the Japanese imprisoned his wife. Command of his guer-

rillas fell to his brother, James. The success of the Japanese counter-guerrilla offensive drove many of the guerrilla bands further into hiding in the mountains and significantly limited their activity.

The greatest threat to the guerrillas was collaborators, so the guerrillas turned their focus on eliminating them either through intimidation or execution. This resulted in the killing of a number of pro-Japanese town mayors. Fortunately, the majority of Filipinos remained anti-Japanese. This allowed Volckmann, Lapham and Ramsey to develop extensive intelligence networks even inside the Japanese military that would warn them of impending raids.

On 3 June, the Japanese captured Moses and Noble and executed them three months later. Praeger was likewise captured in Apayao in July 1943 and executed in Manila in December 1944. While these were devastating blows to the resistance, others rose to replace them. For the past year, the guerrillas had learned their trade by trial and error at the cost of many key leaders. As the junior officers rose up to take their place, they had the benefit of learning from previous mistakes and the resulting guerrilla organizations performed much better.²¹

By the end of July, the Japanese offensive died down, which gave Volckmann just enough breathing room to reorganize the guerrilla operation in Northern Luzon. He organized the guerrillas closely along a division table of organization and equipment into companies and regiments. The guerrilla forces had formed out of USAFFE infantry regiments, 11th, 14th, 15th, 66th, and 121st Infantry. Volckmann organized the elements of three regiments under Horan that had been cut off into the 66th Infantry but adding up their regimental designations: 1st Battalion, 43rd Infantry; 2nd Battalion, 11th Infantry; and 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry. Each regiment was directed to organize three battalions with four rifle companies each dispersed throughout the district away from population centers and main routes of travel. Parker Calvert commanded the 66th Infantry. George Barnett assumed command of the 121st Infantry after the capture of Peryam. 1st Lt. John O'Day formed the 15th Infantry from two companies of the 121st Infantry. Volckmann assigned Blackburn to organize the new 11th Infantry from members of the Antipolo, Haliap, Tamicpao and Kamayong tribes along the west coast of Northern Luzon. Blackburn chose the designation of the 11th Infantry hoping to attract former members of the regiment, which it did. Manriquez' 14th Infantry also joined Volckmann's USAFIP-NL.²²

Volckmann divided Northern Luzon into five military districts around each of the five regiments. These five regiments formed a division-level

command called the US Armed Forces in the Philippines—Northern Luzon (USAFIP-NL) in Ifugao sub-province. He organized the headquarters similar to an American general staff. This became the largest and best organized guerrilla force in Luzon.

Lapham, on the other hand, organized his guerrilla bands into squadrons, which were the equivalent to a company. He assigned district commanders over squadrons and organized the districts into three area commands. Lapham's Luzon Guerrilla Armed Force would number about 13,000 guerrillas. Since Manila counted in Ramsey's East Central Luzon Guerrilla Area, he boasted his force grew to nearly 40,000 guerrillas. Japanese pressure on Ramsey, however, reduced his influence outside his area and Lapham assumed control of the rest of Central Luzon guerrilla forces.²³

Thousands of Filipinos wanted to join the guerrilla movement, but there were only enough arms to equip a few hundred of each band at most. The vast majority were recruited in the support and intelligence role. They provided intelligence, carried messages, and transported supplies to the camps. When the guerrilla leaders boasted of high numbers of their organizations, the majority of them were in the support role.

Volckmann reached out to recruit all the guerrilla bands into a single organization but Lapham and Ramsey would not join the USAFIP-NL. Besides the fact that they had inherited their authority from Thorp who had received his authority from MacArthur, they differed in philosophy. Volckmann's guerrillas trained as companies hidden deep in the mountains waiting for the return of MacArthur. This caused Lapham to consider them relatively inactive. Lapham preferred to operate as small guerrilla cells in the barrios where they could be more active and see the enemy approaching. While there were still independent bands of guerrillas, most fell under one of the three major commands. Lapham commanded the Luzon Guerrilla Armed Force (LGAF) and Ramsey commanded the East Central Luzon Guerrilla Area (ECLGA). Everyone generally ignored Colonel Merrill. Without American leadership, the guerrilla bands in southern Luzon operated more as bandits and fought each other as much as they did the Japanese.

Radio communications with SWPA was vital. Without it, the guerrillas existed in complete isolation of the outside world. After the loss of Nakar's radio, the guerrillas in Luzon operated without any contact with MacArthur's headquarters until Praeger salvaged a transmitter from a mine and established radio communications with SWPA Headquarters in Australia. Transmitters back then were large and required a signifi-

cant power source. Praeger had to go off the air when he was captured by the Japanese in July, which once again severed communication with SWPA. In late 1943, Parker Calvert managed to get another transmitter operating, which provided Volckmann contact with SWPA. He received instructions to avoid combat with the enemy for fear of reprisals on both the guerrillas and civilians, but to train guerrillas and collect intelligence on the enemy. In turn the SWPA began to supply the guerrillas with medicine, weapons, ammunition and uniforms by submarines in Lingayen Gulf. About the same time, Major Anderson had his agents working in Manila steal enough parts to assemble a two-way radio and opened communications with SWPA. He also operated independently of the others. Ramsey wanted a radio so badly that he sailed down to the island of Mindoro after hearing that Major Phillips had one, but discovered that the Japanese had already killed him and destroyed his equipment. What the guerrillas required most from the outside world was the ability to communicate with SWPA Headquarters.²⁴

In comparison, the guerrilla movement in the lower islands had greater success under Col. Wendel Fertig due to a smaller Japanese presence. They had established continued radio contact with SWPA since 1942. Consequently, MacArthur infiltrated officers into the southern islands with the hope of establishing contact with the guerrillas in Luzon. In December 1943, Lt. Col. Charles M. Smith arrived in a submarine off the coast of Samar to expand intelligence collection into Luzon. In April, another submarine delivered Capt. Robert V. Ball to Samar and he ventured in a sailboat up to Luzon and into Dibut Bay in May 1944 with a limited supply of food. There, Lapham's coast watchers spotted him. In July, Lapham received his own transmitter and finally had radio contact with Smith on Samar who could then relay messages to SWPA. Lapham's command then began to send intelligence reports to Smith and coordinated for a resupply by submarine. The USS *Narwhal* arrived on 31 August with 1,627 tons of supplies that included brand new weapons, ammunition, food, medical supplies, sundry items, newspapers, and magazines, and more radios. Lapham divided these supplies up with Anderson's command.²⁵

After Ball arrived with the two-way radio, Anderson urged Lapham to inform Volckmann that supplies were arriving and he would also receive a radio. In July, Volckmann began forwarding intelligence reports to Lapham by courier. In August, Ball sent a radio with two operators to Volckmann and he could finally relay transmissions through Ball to Smith to SWPA. Volckmann's USAFIP-NL received its first resupply by subma-

rine, from the USS *Gar*, on 21 November. Reassured of victory and with a steady supply of arms and munitions coming in, the guerrillas began building up their strength and preparing for the invasion. The most important thing MacArthur wanted in return was intelligence on enemy strength and positions for planning the invasion.²⁶

Phase III: Strategic Offensive

The object of any war is to defeat the enemy. Clausewitz described this as striking at the enemy's center of gravity and destroying his will to resist, whatever that may be. In the past, the center of gravity was seen as the enemy's political capital or major seaports, but it did not have to be. During the American Civil War, Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant saw Lt. Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia as the center of gravity of the Confederacy. In Mao's theory of protracted warfare, he described this as the strategic offensive phase. During an insurgency, the prolonged war wears at the occupying nation's resources and will to continue the war, while the struggle blunts the enemy's military. In other words, while the guerrillas' military capability improves, the enemy's capability degrades until the former has enough of an advantage to defeat the latter. In the end, the war is won by taking and holding ground. In the case of the liberation of the Philippines, the Philippine guerrillas were significantly aided by the arrival of the US Sixth Army.

The US Sixth Army landed on Leyte on the southern end of the Philippine Archipelago on 20 October 1944 and MacArthur fulfilled his promise of returning. This provided great encouragement to the guerrillas in Luzon that their liberation was also near. During this time, the delivery of supplies by submarine increased while the US Army Air Force strafed Japanese targets on Luzon. This sent the message that liberation was near and with more weapons, ammunition, uniforms and equipment, the guerrilla ranks swelled. Preparation for the defense of Luzon also distracted the Japanese from hunting down the guerrillas.²⁷

On 4 January, the separate guerrilla headquarters finally received the long-awaited radio message to conduct four days of sabotage in support of the impending landings. The US Sixth Army landed in Lingayen Gulf on 9 January 1945 in Ray Hunt's area. His guerrillas linked up with the Sixth Army first, Henderson next and then Ramsey as the Sixth Army turned south to liberate Manila. Lapham was attached to the Sixth Army headquarters and the guerrillas were attached to the divisions advancing through their respective areas. The guerrillas augmented the regiments providing intelligence on the enemy, scouting ahead of the Americans,

18,000, the equivalent of a division and he had an effective communication system. This provided a very significant combat multiplier.

Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita did not expect to prevent the Americans from retaking the Philippines, but instead to buy as much time as possible for the defense of Japan. He divided his force into three groups. He personally defended Northern Luzon with 152,000 Japanese of the *Shobo* Group, Maj. Gen. Rikichi Tsukada defended Manila with 30,000 of the *Kembu* Group, and Lt. Gen. Shizuo Yokoyama defended Southern Luzon with 80,000 of the *Shimbu* Group. Yamashita anticipated the Sixth Army would attack along a front from Baguio to Bambang. So he planned to defend with his largest force, the *Shobu* Group, from the mountains in Northern Luzon with the Cagayan Valley as his supply line to Aparri. Japanese forces would concentrate in mountain redoubts around Baguio, Bontoc and Bambang in what would form a defensive triangle. Yamashita stationed regimental size units at Aparri and by the Vigan-Laoang area in the event of American efforts to flank him with airborne or amphibious forces. Guerilla activity along Routes 4 and 11 between Bontoc and Baguio convinced Yamashita that the Americans would mount an amphibious landing in the vicinity of Libtong and drive inland to Bontoc. Consequently, Yamashita planned to move the 19th Division from a blocking position at Libtong along Route 9 between Bauang and Bontoc.²⁹

The Sixth Army advanced against the *Shobu* Group into Northern Luzon with the 25th Infantry Division up Route 5 and the 33rd Infantry Division up Route 11. In February, Gen. Walter Krueger discovered a supply road connecting Baguio and Aritao that, if not interdicted, would allow the Japanese to quickly shift forces from one front to the other. If the I Corps could capture both the entrance to the supply route at Aritao and the junction of Routes 4 and 5, this would open the way into the Cagayan Valley and divide the *Shobu* Group. Otherwise, the *Shobu* Group could conduct a fighting withdrawal up Route 11 into the mountains. By the third week in February, Krueger realized he could not shift the 32nd Infantry Division from its fighting along the Villa Verde Trail to outflank *Shobu* Group's flank. Krueger's plan was to have the 25th and 32nd Infantry Divisions provide the main attack against the *Shobu* Group north of the Bambang front and the 33rd Infantry Division would only provide a supporting attack until the 37th Infantry Division was released from Manila.³⁰

In mid-February, Krueger learned the Japanese 19th Division was withdrawing from Baguio farther north into the mountains toward Bontoc, the northern apex of the triangular redoubt. Unfortunately, Krueger could spare no American division to contain the 19th Division. Krueger

had only planned to use the guerrillas to gather intelligence, interdict enemy supply lines and harass enemy movements. By that time, Volckmann's USAFIP-NL had so effectively pinned down and diverted Japanese units that Krueger considered using Volckmann's force in lieu of an American division.

The 121st Infantry in conjunction with the US 123rd Infantry attacked the Japanese redoubts near San Fernando and Bacsil inland from the coast of La Union. They coordinated air attacks with the 308th Bomb Wing and elements of the 24th Marine Air Group. Employing a coordinated air-ground attack, the 121st Infantry liberated San Fernando on 23 March.

The 121st Infantry shifted to Bessang Pass along Route 4. This pass remained critical to the escape of the 19th Division to the east. The Japanese similarly dug in redoubts along the mountains and emplaced artillery. The Japanese 73rd Infantry of the 19th Division counter-attacked and drove the Philippine 121st back on 17 May. Volckmann renewed the attack with the 15th Infantry and elements of the 66th Infantry on 1 June, and the three regiments fought as a division. To aid the guerrillas, the 33rd Infantry Division provided the 122nd Field Artillery to support the fight. The Filipinos seized Lamagan and Lower Cadsu Ridges on 5 June, captured Magun Hill on 10 June and Upper Cadsu Ridge on 12 June. They launched their final assault on 10 June and captured Cervantes on 15 June. This successful attack demonstrated how effective the guerrillas had become as a fighting force.³¹

Japanese resistance continued until the surrender of Japan on 2 September. After that, General Yamashita surrendered his forces to Volckmann and his guerrillas. Previously, MacArthur decorated the guerrilla leaders with Distinguished Service Crosses for their contribution to the resistance and eventual liberation of the Philippines. The operations in Luzon stand out as one of the most successful examples of guerrillas supporting a large-scale combat operation.

Summary

Once the US Sixth Army landed at Lingayen Gulf, the guerrillas cut Japanese lines of communications, provided detailed intelligence on Japanese movements and also engaged Japanese divisions as a conventional force. They helped defeat the final Japanese resistance in the mountains of Northern Luzon. The latter is what separated their resistance movements from those in Europe and Burma during WWII. The success of the guerrilla operations in the Philippines was due to several factors. The widespread resentment against Japanese occupation provided a large base for

recruitment limited largely by availability of weapons and training. An existing respect for the Americans provided the necessary leadership that organized and trained the guerrillas into an effective fighting force. The independent commands of Lapham and Ramsey limited their contribution to augmenting the US divisions. The fact that Volckmann had organized a larger force into a single command with an effective communication network allowed his guerrilla regiments to combine their efforts to fight as a conventional division.

The Philippine guerrilla army evolved through all the stages of resistance as outlined in Mao's *On Protracted War*. Although very successful in their execution of guerrilla warfare, no American guerrilla articulated any great treatise that received the scholarly attention like the writings of Mao, Vo Nguyen Giap or Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Instead, the Americans authored field manuals. Volckmann and Blackburn remained on active duty after the war and wrote FM 31-20, *Operations Against Guerrilla Forces* and FM 31-21, *Organization and Conduct of Guerrilla Warfare*. After the war, Volckmann, Ramsey, Lapham, and Hunt also wrote of their memoirs. Most importantly, Volckmann and Blackburn would team up with Wendel Fertig and Aaron Bank, a veteran of the Jedburgh teams in France, to create a military organization designed to train guerrillas—the US Army Special Forces.

Notes

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Chapter 8

Partisan Operations in the Korean War

Michael E. Krivdo and Jason A. Byrd

Purpose and Scope

The United States Army's quest to design and employ forces capable of decisive victory on the battlefield is as old as the Army itself. Continuously, conventional and special operations forces innovate with new concepts, capabilities, and technologies to build or modify forces to assure robust deterrence against threats and, if necessary, overwhelming defeat of those threats in the event of major war. This chapter uses an historical vignette from the Korean War as a means to demonstrate that the Army, and specifically Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF), rethinks, recalibrates, and reorganizes to maintain the innovative military advantage, and have historically done so as well. By organizing an indigenous force of approximately 25,000 partisan anti-Communist guerrillas in North Korea, Eighth US Army (EUSA) planners estimated ARSOF could disrupt and divert up to 500,000 regular North Korean troops from their normal duties required for the Communist forces to conduct large-scale ground combat operations.¹ This estimate proved accurate, at least in the assessments of Gen. Douglas MacArthur's headquarters and General Partridge, the Fifth Air Force commander. MacArthur's staff remarked that the partisan guerrillas greatly contributed by effectively harassing North Korean Communist forces and by adding significantly to Allied knowledge of enemy force dispositions.² General Partridge himself credited the ARSOF-led partisan forces with containing two North Korean Army Corps in the Hwanghae Peninsula during a Communist major spring offensive.³ US-led partisan guerrilla forces in the Korean War have direct linkages to modern ARSOF activities, and this chapter will explore how the creation, development, and successes of the partisan guerrilla command served as a precursor and instructor to formational and operational ideas the Army and ARSOF are framing today.

The succeeding text depicts how US Army forces in Korea recognized operational and capability gaps and identified opportunities to mitigate the shortfalls through an ARSOF solution. After the vignette, the chapter profiles ARSOF's current methodology for engaging with and executing operations through partner forces known as the indigenous approach. It then defines the Army's multi-domain operations (MDO) approach to pos-

turing forces and capabilities that will successfully meet and defeat current and emerging threats. It also contains a detailed treatment of conventional forces-special operations forces (CF-SOF) synergy, which uses methods such as calibrated force posture to optimize CF and SOF interoperability across the military operations spectrum. The chapter emphasizes the interrelationships between the indigenous approach and MDO. By revisiting the vignette, it also highlights one of the historical scenarios out of which these modern operating activities were born.

The historical vignette specifically focuses on the Eighth US Army's (EUSA) identification of disparate partisan guerrilla forces and its recognition that forming them into an integrated unit of action commanded and controlled by US cadre would greatly assist Allied efforts against North Korean forces. This vignette is central to a discussion about the indigenous approach and MDO because EUSA efforts to formalize a guerrilla command, a then unique US approach to coopting guerrilla forces, laid the foundation for ARSOF and Army efforts to maximize the utility and effectiveness of partner forces today. A survey of EUSA operations will set the stage for the discussion, culminating in insights and implications for the potential future of US military organization.

Road to War and the Emergence of Partisans

The Allied victory over Japan in August 1945 ended World War II, yet left hundreds of thousands of Japanese soldiers still occupying large portions of mainland Asia, from China to Burma. The sheer scale of the task of disarming them and reestablishing local government functions over such a wide expanse challenged American military and political planners. To complicate matters, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), by declaring war against Japan on 8 August 1945, insisted on being involved in the disarmament process.⁴ Although there would be no combined occupation administration of Japan as there had been in Germany, it became practically impossible to keep the USSR out of postwar reconstruction efforts in Asia. And, after its last-minute invasion of neighboring China's industry and resource-rich Manchurian Province in early August, the Soviets used their disarming of Japanese troops in North Korea as a toehold to influence events there, further insisting on taking part in that country's restoration to sovereignty, preferably under Communist leadership. At that time, North Korea held most of the industrial capacity and power generation capability in the peninsula, thereby making it a prize to whomever controlled that region. Additionally, because the USSR shared a common boundary with Korea, Soviet leaders considered that region to have strategic significance as a buffer from the

West.⁵ Complicating Korea's internal governmental restoration was the fact that it had been administered as a Japanese dependency since 1910. Because of their association with the hated Japanese, most Korean citizens were distrustful of the native Korean civil servants and believed they needed to be replaced by persons not tainted by colonialism.⁶ The Soviet occupiers exploited this point to their advantage.

In an effort to resolve the problems of restoring sovereignty to the Korean people, the United States and the Soviet Union agreed to a temporary division of the peninsula along the 38th Parallel: the US would disarm Japanese troops south of that arbitrarily designated line, while the Soviets did the same for Korea north of it.⁷ Although never intended to serve as a functional boundary between two sovereign entities, Soviet intransigence about creating a friendly buffer state linked to industrial and mineral production in the USSR led to installing a Communist government in North Korea. Meanwhile, the United States, United Kingdom (UK), and the United Nations' newly-created Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK) supported a democratic government in the south.⁸ The conditions were set for a clash of ideological differences between the two Korean states.

Following UN-supervised elections in the south and the establishment of the Republic of Korea (ROK) on 15 August 1948 under President Syngman Rhee, most American forces departed. They left behind a small Provisional Military Advisory Group (PMAG) of only one hundred soldiers to train the new nation's lightly armed military. With US national interests focused more on demobilization and disarmament after its victory in World War II, PMAG personnel focused their efforts on training and equipping a small constabulary force to serve as the ROK Army. By design, the ROK's military had no tanks, no offensive aircraft, only light artillery and little anti-air capability.⁹ In the north, however, increasingly authoritarian and aggressive Communist rule took hold and its military developed along quite different lines.

With the full support and assistance of the US, new Communist-trained North Korean leaders like Kim Il Sung instituted radical changes designed to strengthen their military power and tighten the dominant Communist Party's grip on the population. Large quantities of Soviet military equipment, supplies, and advisers poured in, and tens of thousands of Koreans who had fought alongside Mao Zedong's Red Army in China constituted the combat-hardened core of the powerful North Korean People's Army (NKPA). With Soviet backing and prompting, Kim Il Sung and other contenders for power began implementing Communist policies that had al-

ready proven effective in Eastern Europe. On 5 March 1946, Kim's Provisional People's Committee passed a Land Reform Act that "completely dissolved" the traditional Korean ruling class, the landowners and local governing officials, and placed them at the mercy of peasant farmers.¹⁰

That legislation constituted the first step of a social restructuring within the north and the initial phase in the later forming of collective farms. Increased agricultural 'taxes' and inflated assessments then tied the rural farmers to support of government policies by forcing them to pay up to 70 percent of their crops to the government. Furthermore, in 1947, nationalization placed "over 90 percent of the industry's 1,034 important factories and businesses" under direct control of the government. A succession of national conscription acts then inducted most young men into either the highly regimented NKPA or in forced labor projects. Religious organizations and oppositional political parties were persecuted through widespread extra-judicial jailing or execution of anti-Communist or pro-democracy leaders and supporters. All of these policies elevated trusted Korean peasants to positions of authority while demeaning the educated and skilled middle and upper-classes. As power began to concentrate around charismatic Koreans like Kim Il Sung, they employed their popularity to further purge rivals, punish protesters, and hold tightly the reins of power.¹¹

The North Korean government harshly suppressed dissent and further tightened controls over its citizens. These measures in turn prompted some to challenge governmental authority. The more the Communists clamped down, the more these dissenters pushed back. Millions 'voted with their feet.' One American official reported that "Russian Occupation is forcing thousands of Koreans and Japanese to flee southward toward the American zone."¹² By "allowing the exodus of those who opposed Soviet occupation policies (primarily large landowners, Christians, and Koreans who had collaborated with the Japanese) [this simplified] the process of establishing political control" in North Korea, even though the resultant 'brain drain' reduced the numbers of skilled persons.¹³

However, not everyone who stayed complied with the escalating authoritarianism of the Communist government; many refused to leave and decided instead to resist. Some viewed the imposition of Communist ideals as another form of foreign influence in Korean affairs, like the despised Japanese occupation.¹⁴ The Soviet presence in Korea only reinforced that perception. In some of the more remote regions of the north, anti-Communist movements formed around religious, educational, and trade organizations. And the more the groups resisted, the harder the local Commu-

nist leaders cracked down causing a vicious cycle of oppression. Some of the more hardened protesters and draft evaders fled to the remote, rugged mountains to avoid arrest, imprisonment, or injury.¹⁵ Pak Choll, a future guerrilla leader, “kept up [his] anti-Communist uprisings and was put in jail for three-and-a-half months,” causing him to be more clandestine in his activities afterward.¹⁶ A small core of resisters took a more direct approach by physically attacking tax collectors, police, government officials, and draft enforcers. These early anti-Communist resistance elements became the heart of the guerrilla organizations that would later fight under the United Nations’ flag.

Opportunities Identified: Partisan Guerrilla Force

The sudden surge of the NKPA’s full-scale assault on the south in the wake of Kim Il Sung’s invasion on 25 June 1950 left Communist officials in rural areas without the full protection of military forces. By the end of September, with the NKPA in full retreat as a result of Gen. Douglas A. MacArthur’s decisive amphibious assault at Inch’on and the breakout of UN forces from Pusan, many opponents of Communism believed that an opportunity to take action had arrived. In areas of the north outside of the NKPA’s retreat routes, few military forces remained to support Communist Party agendas. Boys and men who had been forced into NKPA service surrendered to the first UN soldiers they encounter and the remainder of the North’s army retreated toward China and the Soviet Union. As a result, some local Party leaders were left exposed for the first time to the direct wrath of the people who suffered under their rule.¹⁷

As the Allied forces surged north, some military leaders were surprised to discover that anti-Communist North Koreans had already taken matters into their own hands and liberated their districts. Pockets of disaffected North Koreans formed paramilitary units and chased Kim Il Sung’s police and military forces away. These anti-Communist partisans welcomed the UN troops and even helped them locate, attack, and harass retreating NKPA elements.¹⁸ Guerrillas like Kim Chang Song recalled that he contemplated “about what we should do to meet [the UN troops and join the] fight against Communism.”¹⁹ Making his move, he recalled “I had my people ambush each important [enemy] place.” They burned police stations to the ground with Molotov cocktails and destroyed several other military outposts.²⁰ “We killed every Communist we found; and seized control of the district.”²¹

By liberating themselves, the guerrillas inadvertently joined the Allied fight, but did so conditionally. Although the irregulars expressed contempt

for Kim Il Sung's Communists, they felt equal disdain for Syngman Rhee and his ROK government. Most wanted nothing more than to consolidate their newly regained freedom and enjoy some autonomy over their affairs without interference from both the North and South Korean governments. In areas like the mountainous Hwanghae region in the west, many of these rebels had fought long and hard to restore their control over their communities and lives.²²

Unfortunately for the resistance members, the massive Chinese intervention in November 1950 ended their hopes for autonomy. Chinese formations quickly pushed Allied troops out of North Korea. Faced with an untenable situation, tens of thousands of peasants chose to leave for the south; yet some decided to remain in the north and fight as guerrillas. In the more remote regions like Hwanghae and Pyongan, these anti-Communist fighters still controlled sizeable areas behind the lines of battle. In other locales, "semi-organized and partly armed" civilians fled to the numerous western islands off North Korea to continue their fight.²³

The Allied naval blockade, its air superiority, and a lack of enemy landing craft made the islands safe for guerrillas and refugees alike. According to a contemporary study, "an exodus [of guerrillas] began in December [1950], reached the proportions of a mass flight, and ended on January 1951 when the Communists managed to gain the upper hand and close the [land] exits." Left with few options, more than 10,000 lightly-armed irregulars and their families continued to fight from the islands. Refugees not interested in fighting hoped that the UN would return to free their villages and enable them to go home.²⁴

In the winter of 1950-1951, UN forces blunted the combined Communist Chinese and North Korean offensive. Allied planners began considering options to reunify the peninsula and factored the potential combat power of the partisan North Koreans behind the enemy lines into their plans. As one contemporary study noted, "a number of remote little islands in the Yellow Sea, unnoticed before... suddenly had become last-stand strongholds of North Korean antagonists to the Communist regime."²⁵ One EUSA [Eighth US Army] concluded: "These volunteers have organized themselves, and appointed leaders and, by virtue of their own initiative, have overcome numerous hardships while effectively combating [the enemy] and securing intelligence." He also asserted that "These groups possess the will to resist, and if supplied, organized, and properly employed, would form the nucleus of an ever-growing liability to the Communist Forces."²⁶ How to get them committed to the UN effort remained to be seen.



Figure 8.1. The Korean War. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

Societal conditions north of the 38th Parallel deteriorated and Communist ambitions resulted in aggressive military action against the Republic of Korea. These circumstances naturally bred anti-Communist partisans determined to fight the encroachment, reverse the effects of North Korea’s totalitarian political structure, and regain local autonomy. The rejection and active resistance to Communist North Korea “prompted the formation of anti-Communist paramilitary organizations. It began with the advance of UN forces into North Korea.”²⁷ Chinese Communist forces thwarted UN advances into the north, and ultimately forced their withdrawal in late 1950; consequently, anti-Communist Korean paramilitary forces “fled



Figure 8.2. A US Army advisor teaches basic demolitions to a group of North Korean guerrillas on one of the northwest islands.

their villages for remote areas and offshore islands that provided them with a degree of security to continue their fight. By early 1951, reports filtered in that several thousand lightly-armed guerrillas were conducting small-scale raids against North Korean targets.”²⁸

Recognizing the potential value of the disruptive effects partisan guerrilla forces could achieve against North Korean forces and the intelligence they could collect, UN military leaders determined this seemingly loose federation of anti-Communist antagonists should be organized, equipped, and led in their precision attacks to “reduce pressure on the main battle lines” where allied and North Korean forces were decisively engaged.²⁹ The allied desire manifested itself as the Guerrilla Command assigned to the Eighth US Army (EUSA).

Formalizing the Guerrilla Command

The Eighth US Army (EUSA) headquarters dispatched Maj. William A. Burke, a decorated WWII armor officer, to the islands. Burke reported, “These volunteers have organized themselves, appointed leaders and, by virtue of their own initiative, have overcome numerous hardships while

effectively combating [the enemy] and securing intelligence.” He believed that “these groups possess the will to resist, and if supplied, organized, and properly employed, would form the nucleus of an ever-growing liability to the Communist Forces.”³⁰

This field grade officer’s assessment convinced EUSA planners to add the guerrillas to the UN effort. The necessity of imposing some command and control over the scattered, independent partisan groups was realized. Otherwise, their operations might prove counterproductive to the major war effort. The crux of “the problem was how to convert these untrained and [largely] unarmed volunteers into an effective fighting force and adapt their capabilities to missions advantageous to the over-all operations against the enemy.”³¹ It became obvious that a guerrilla command had to be formed to provide logistical support, coordinate training, and to integrate the partisans’ activities into the UN campaign.

How should this guerrilla command be organized, led, and directed? A guerrilla war was a new challenge for the US Army. That type of warfare and the environment were totally different than that encountered in Europe during WWII. The ROK government demonstrated no interest in North Korean anti-Communist guerrillas because they considered them politically unreliable. The Far East Command (FEC) in Japan focused on bigger issues. By default, the EUSA staff got the guerrilla warfare mission. Fortuitously, Col. John H. McGee, a WWII Philippine veteran with guerrilla experience, was the EUSA G-3 “Miscellaneous Duties” officer. He had been assigned to every “special” or unconventional project since August 1950.

McGee had created, organized, and fielded the GHQ Raider Company and the Eighth Army Ranger Company, and established and commanded the new Ranger Training Center near Pusan for the ROK Army on 15 August 1950.³² McGee also formed and commanded the UN Reception Center at Taegu to “clothe, equip, and provide familiarization training with US Army weapons and equipment: to foreign contingents assigned to the UN. Colonel McGee first studied the North Korean guerrilla problem in September 1950 when he helped develop anti-guerrilla operations to neutralize pockets of North Korean soldiers and bandits inside the Pusan Perimeter. Later, after the breakout from the Perimeter, McGee focused on the elimination of enemy “leakers” (deliberate stay behinds, infiltrators, and stragglers) bypassed during the UN charge into North Korea.³³ These experiences taught McGee how guerrilla units operated. Although his initial mission involved destroying guerrillas, that experience gave him the necessary understanding of how guerrillas operated and what their strengths and weaknesses were.

Not surprisingly, the EUSA commander gave Colonel McGee, the most qualified officer on his staff, the guerrilla command. By 13 January 1951, the WWII vet had submitted a plan to conduct “attrition warfare,” his term to describe the desired effects of guerrilla operations. He recommended forming “a combined headquarters consisting of United States Army, Navy, and Air Force and ROK Army and Navy liaison personnel” to accomplish the mission. Thus, McGee’s “attrition” plan became the guide for command and control of guerrilla operations.³⁴

McGee organized the guerrilla forces as the Attrition Section of EUSA G3’s Miscellaneous Division, and Burke, now his assistant, developed an organization and operations plan for the partisan forces named Plan ABLE.³⁵ The Attrition Section, later renamed Miscellaneous Group, 8086th Army Unit (AU), “was the first Army unit specifically created to conduct guerrilla operations.”³⁶ McGee experienced both success and failure in this endeavor, but by the time he departed Korea in the summer of 1951 he had succeeded in creating a type of US-led initiative that would endure, primarily under the custody and control of ARSOF.

Today’s ARSOF benefits from the continuous evolution of US-led partisan guerrilla warfare. As Korean War history illuminates, the Army recognized the potential to organize, equip, and lead anti-Communist guerrilla efforts north of the 38th Parallel. Though mission success and subsequent capitalization and exploitation proved challenging, the process of coopting, formalizing, and maneuvering partisan, or partner, forces began. Over the next 70 years, ARSOF continued to refine the tactics, techniques, and procedures of partisan warfare. Two long standing special forces missions grew out of the refinement, unconventional warfare (UW) and foreign internal defense (FID). USASOC continues the tradition of modifying partisan guerrilla warfare operations for the modern operating environment through the indigenous approach, a topic addressed later.

Rehabilitating the Operational Approach and Battlefield Framework

The Army’s future end-state vision requires the department to man, organize, train, equip, and lead formations to “deploy, fight, and win decisively against any adversary, anytime and anywhere, in a joint, multi-domain, high-intensity conflict, while simultaneously deterring others and maintaining its ability to conduct irregular warfare,” by employing modern manned and unmanned ground, air, sustainment, and weapon systems against perpetual and future threats from both state and non-state actors.³⁷

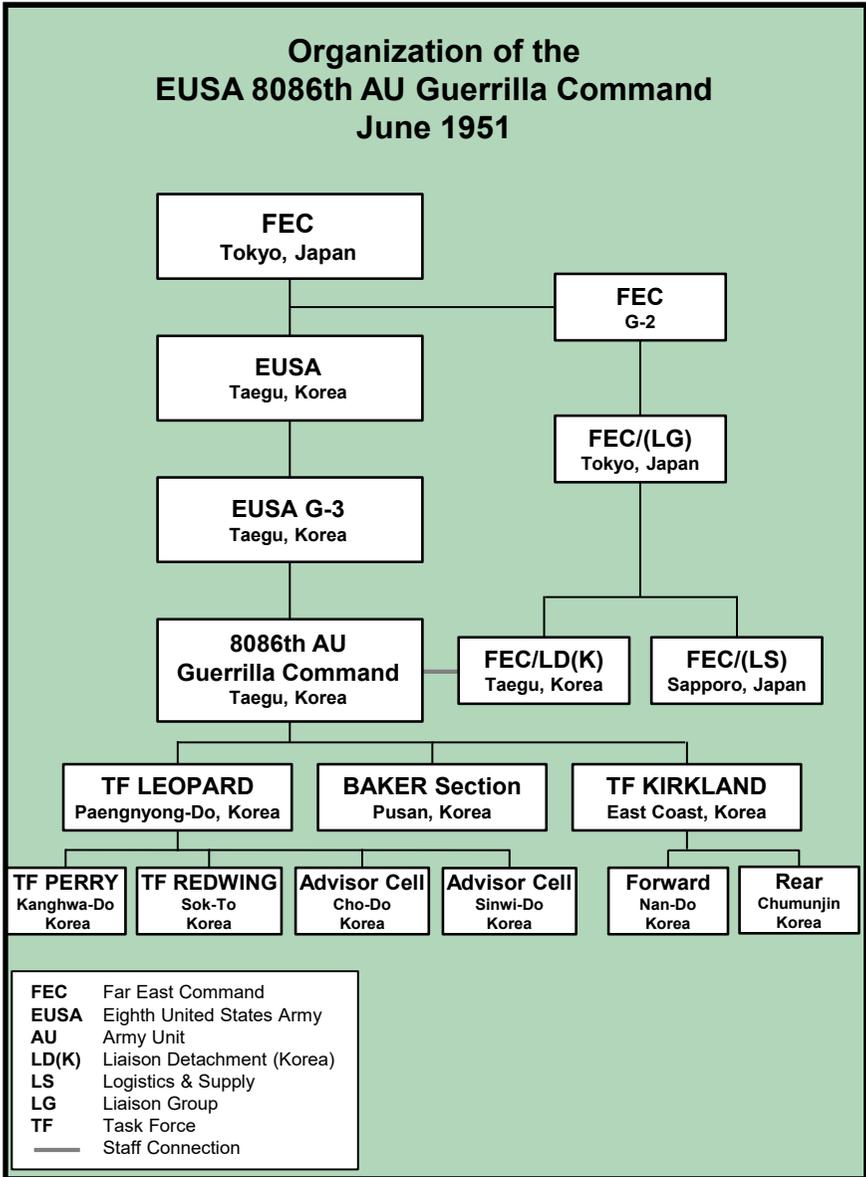


Figure 8.3. Organization of the EUSA 8086th AU Guerrilla Command, June 1951. Graphic courtesy of the author.

This enormous set of tasks places significant stress on the force. Modern and future complexities include a continuously evolving geo-strategic operating environment, ambiguities of future threat posture and capabilities, and rapid advances in technology that enhance combat power, lethality, information gathering, and intelligence activities.

To address the relative unpredictability of both state and non-state threat actors and the uncertainties surrounding future technological innovation, the Army introduced multi-domain operations (MDO). MDO proposes the Army develop suitable capabilities to operate in echelon across five domains: air, land, maritime, space, and cyberspace.³⁸ Additionally, MDO recognizes the information environment (IE) and the electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) as areas of interest, operations, and engagement.³⁹ These ideas do not represent a revolution in military thinking, but rather a rehabilitation of long standing approaches to non-linear and non-contiguous operating environments adjusted to provide a more comprehensive and flexible framework that can reorient to meet current, projected, and even unknown threats. This analysis below highlights the efficacy and promotes the further doctrinal development of ARSOF's indigenous approach, the Army's MDO, and conventional forces—special operations forces (CF-SOF) operational synergy discussed below.

The Indigenous Approach: An Echo of Partisan Guerrilla Warfare

Through historical reflection of the Korean War, one observes the evolution of partisan guerrilla warfare into modern unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense administered and supported by specialized US Army forces. McGee's experience with building and leading ROK specialty units uniquely qualified him to organize another peculiar force, the Attrition Section. Over the past seven decades, the nomenclature has changed and the nuances have been adjusted due to advances in technology, changes in political will, and other environmental factors; yet, planning, organizing, and leading partisan guerrilla warfare remains primarily with ARSOF. The current term used to describe this aspect of special warfare is the indigenous approach, defined by USASOC as "a means to address challenges to regional stability with and through populations and partner forces empowered by persistent ARSOF engagement."⁴⁰

This definition clearly establishes the need for routine, repetitive, and resident engagement with a given indigenous population in order to increase the likelihood of operational and tactical success when ARSOF partners with it. The lesson echoes from McGee's partisan guerrilla force command structure. In 1955, a group of researchers from Johns Hopkins University's Operations Research Office (ORO) produced a study for the US Army Military History Institute entitled *UN Partisan Warfare in Korea, 1951-1954*. Among the recommendations, the panel signaled that, "In addition to their general training in guerrilla warfare, Army personnel assigned to work with foreign nationals in guerrilla operations should be

given special training in the language, habits, customs, culture, etc., of the nationals with whom they are to work.”⁴¹ ARSOF trains to do exactly that. The Army built on McGee’s efforts with the guerrilla command, its “first attempt to deliberately create a command to conduct guerrilla warfare,” and by “the end of the conflict this wartime effort [was] supported by Army Special Forces trained soldiers.”⁴² Since that initial effort, ARSOF continued to train, advise, assist, cohabitate with, and fight alongside or in support of guerrilla forces. To meet modern demands and posture for future required capabilities built to work with indigenous and partner nation forces, Army conventional forces are now attempting similar activities and outcomes.

Sharing the Load: Conventional Forces—Special Operations Forces (CF-SOF) Operational Synergy

The future operating environment (FOE) requires a modified approach to meet the security challenges the United States currently faces and will face beyond the horizon. USASOC assesses significant emerging challenges over the next twenty years, accelerated by increased technology proliferation and exploitation, will arise from both known and yet unidentified competitors and adversaries.⁴³ Challenges will lead to conflict that “will emerge in many nascent forms and across multiple domains...and decision space for policy makers will contract in response to opaque environments, ambiguous actors and hybrid threat strategies.”⁴⁴ FOE conditions must be met with the new ideas and frameworks the Army and ARSOF posit. Both SOF and the Army have long recognized that conventional forces must participate in partner force development to meet security demands in modern complex environments and the FOE. ARSOF and Joint SOF became stretched very thin in recent years by expanding capacity building, advise/assist/accompany (A/A/A) operations, and combat operations in multiple theaters simultaneously. Conventional forces attempted to fill a capacity gap by partnering with foreign forces in areas of armed hostility (AAH) and non-combat theaters. Conventional formations attached to brigade combat teams designated as military training teams (MiTT) deployed to mitigate some of the shortfalls in Iraq. Later, the Army designated units of action (UA) at the brigade level and above as regionally aligned forces (RAF). These units aligned with partner nation forces in specific geographies and routinely rotated into those theaters. This created US Army unit familiarity with a region similar to special forces regional affiliation.

The most recent Army iteration, the security force assistance brigade (SFAB), demonstrates a recognition of the nation’s military needs in the contemporary complex world and the FOE. As the name implies, an

SFAB provides “the Army with a purpose-built organization directly focused on assisting partnered nations’ security forces. SFABs will provide an enduring solution while allowing brigade combat teams to refocus on preparing for decisive action.”⁴⁵ By restructuring to meet security force assistance requirements, the Army is creating a greater opportunity for conventional and special operations forces to interoperate more fluidly, deliberately, and from a perspective of institutionalized organizational culture. Pursuing interoperability and achieving synergy among conventional and special operations forces is a chief aim. Being a dedicated unit with a principal mission of enabling partners, the SFAB is the closest conventional force yet to achieving CF-SOF operational synergy, which is a deliberate and expanded initiative where CF and SOF design operations and campaigns together and operate more seamlessly across the full range of military activities.⁴⁶

With the SFAB, the Army is partially adopting a traditionally AR-SOF-centric posture. At least since the end of the Korean War, ARSOF has dominated what is now termed the indigenous approach. Conventional forces’ expanded activities in assisting and developing foreign partner forces have reduced the requirement from brigade combat teams to train partner military forces and allowed ARSOF to focus on more specialized partner unit. This is a principal example of CF-SOF operational synergy.

CF and SOF must continuously evolve, seeking innovative ways to organize, deploy, and operate seamlessly. This is in essence what Colonel McGee attempted to do with his partisan guerrilla command in Korea. McGee’s construct, the 8086th AU under the EUSA G-3, was an early example of a SOF entity planning and operating with (and reporting to) a conventional command. In addition to being a harbinger for the indigenous approach, the way the 8086th AU functioned was a prelude to MDO and CF-SOF operational synergy. To seize upon the opportunities the anti-Communist partisans presented to Allied forces, McGee and his staff had to rethink military task organization. They created a unique organizational structure tailored to the specific operational requirements and indigenous capacities of the partisan guerrillas, and they determined how to optimized command and control and nest it with general purpose forces. To achieve, or at least approach, optimum interoperability, they had to calibrate the operating and command and control relationships between EUSA traditional forces and the guerrilla command.

Under MDO and the ARSOF operating concept, the Army and AR-SOF are attempting a similar level of interoperability on a far grander scale through CF-SOF operational synergy. To optimize the relationship

and maximize mission compatibility, planners perform a similar set of organizational design tasks that McGee's team used. Both the Army and ARSOF recognize that interoperability requires a redesign in military task organization and operational attitude. The method used is calibrated force posture: "a dynamic mix of different types of forces...[that] can be brought to bear at all times from all places...to create operational unpredictability in the minds" of adversaries in stability and deterrence operations as well as major combat.⁴⁷

Moving to a calibrated force posture demonstrates the attitude required to meet contemporary and emergent threats. It will help CF and ARSOF improve synergy in communications and operations. Considering CF and SOF already share one mission set encapsulated in the indigenous approach, the foundation for CF-SOF operational synergy through a calibrated force posture should be easier to achieve. That foundation is crucial to realizing the required force and task organization under an MDO framework that addresses enduring challenges with increasingly complex conditions.

Concluding Thoughts: Old Problems in New Environs

Multi-domain operations recognizes four principal attributes of modern and future warfare: 1) US formations will be contested in all domains; 2) we will face increased lethality; 3) the operating environments will be significantly more complex; and 4) deterring threats, competitors, and open adversaries will become more challenging.⁴⁸ The fundamental problems EUSA faced that drove them to create a guerrilla command are akin to contemporary problems that drove the Army to manifest MDO based on those four attributes. Similarly, ARSOF applied historically familiar considerations when conceiving the indigenous approach and CF-SOF operational synergy. McGee had to organize non-English-speaking partisans to conduct specified tasks, accomplish certain objectives, and achieve desired end states. Furthermore, success could only be achieved if his new type of organizational structure could function with and subordinate to conventional forces. His approach, his failures, and his successes provide valuable instruction to planners today.

Arguably, McGee's operational environment was less complex than today. His partisans were ethnically homogenous and somewhat politically aligned (anti-Communist), and his enemy was clearly identifiable and transparent in its aims. Regardless, his approach to creating a new and unique force and command structure to meet a series of military problems is useful to study in greater detail. Thematically, the vignette

on McGee's initiative under EUSA connects most clearly with the indignant approach, but the details and insights gained from understanding his challenges in creating a guerrilla command under a CF construct are instructive in achieving CF-SOF operational synergy and operating using the MDO framework.

The vignette, the overview of new ARSOF and Army ideas, and the analysis reveal that constant reformative action must take place to meet contemporary and future threats and to mitigate gaps in operational capability. The challenge to anticipate the posture, lethality, intentions, and motivations of the United States' adversaries will only grow more difficult as the world rapidly advances technologically, especially in the communications realm. ARSOF and Army forces of today and tomorrow must contend with enemies in more domains than US Forces did in Korea nearly 80 years ago. However, the ability and methodologies they used to identify gaps and threats and to recognize and harness opportunities inspires leaders and planners of the modern era to do likewise. The fundamental insight from the presented historical vignette is that ARSOF and Army professionals must maintain an innovative mindset, and remain keenly aware of emerging threats and opportunities. Additionally, they must always be prepared to capitalize on readily identifiable solutions to capability and force posture problems while exercise ingenuity to generate new ideas to outpace the uncertainties, complexities, and ambiguities of the current and future multi-domain operating environment. Finally, combat history invariably supplies insights to help resolve current military problems.

Notes

1. Letter, "Questionnaire, Project MHD-3," 16 March 1953, Headquarters, 2nd Partisan Infantry Regiment [PIR], Far East Command/Liaison Detachment, Korea [FEC/LD] (K), 8240th Army Unit (AU), included in 8086th AU, Armed Forces Far East (AFFE) Military History Detachment-3, "UN Partisan Forces in the Korean Conflict, 1951-1952," Project MHD-3, Center of Military History, Fort McNair, DC, 85.

2. Far East Command, "Communique 845 by General of the Army MacArthur's Headquarters," 5-6 April 1951, contained in United Nations Security Council document S/2080 11 April 1951.

3. Record Group (RG) 319 (Army Staff), Entry 383.6, Box 1693, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, MD, 2: John H. McGee to Col. Rod Paschall, San Antonio, TX, 24 March 1986, John Hugh McGee Papers, Box 38, Entry F7, AHEC, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 24-26.

4. See Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), "Soviet Declaration of War on Japan," London, United Kingdom, 8 August 1945, available at <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/s4.asp>, last accessed on 21 February 2012. During the Yalta Conference (4-11 February 1945), President Franklin D. Roosevelt and United Kingdom Prime Minister Winston Churchill agreed the "pre-eminent interests of the Soviet Union shall be safeguarded" with respect to the key harbors of Port Arthur and Darien in China and the Chinese-Eastern and South Manchurian Railroads, giving the Soviet Union major advantages over other allied nations in that region. In return, the Soviets promised they would declare war against Japan no more than 90 days after the surrender of Germany. The USSR also gained control over the Kurile Islands in Northern Japan (the USSR ceded those islands to Japan in 1904 following its defeat in the Russo-Japanese War). "Protocol of the Proceedings of the Crimean Conference," February 1945, reprinted at: <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/yalta.asp>, accessed on 8 July 2012, quote from text.

5. "General Order No.1" and "Revision of General Order No. 1," Washington, DC, 11 August 1945, reprinted in US Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers*, Vol. 6, 1945, *The British Commonwealth, The Far East* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1969), 507-12, 635-39.

6. With the forced signing by Korean Emperor Sunjong of the "Japan-Korea Treaty of 1910," the Japanese annexed Korea and administered it as a dependent colony until September 1945, when Japanese troops surrendered to forces of the United States and the Soviet Union. In the absence of a viable national government, the occupying nations performed those functions until a new Korean-led government could be established.

7. "Revision of General Order No. 1," Washington, DC, 11 August 1945, reprinted in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1945, 636; and Charles W. McCarthy, Secretary, "Memorandum by the State-War-Navy Coordinating Committee to Brig. Gen. Andrew J. McFarland, Secretary of the Joint Chiefs of

Staff,” Washington, DC, 24 August 1945, *Foreign Relations of the United States* 6, 1945, 1040.

8. During the Yalta Conference in February 1945, the United Kingdom and United States agreed to grant certain concessions (“Agreement Regarding Japan,” 11 February 1945) to the USSR should it enter the war against Japan. However, unlike the division of Germany (also agreed at Yalta), the USSR would not administer any portion of a divided Japan. Instead, the three parties accepted the formation of provisional Korean government” (Agreement, “Interim Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; Moscow, December 16-26). Rather than reunify, the governments of both North and South Korea moved farther from one another politically, each hoping to eventually reunite the peninsula under its own particular political system.

9. United Nations, “The Problem of the Independence of Korea,” December 12, 1948, A/RES/195 (III), *Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly during its Third Session, 25-27*, available at <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/resguide/r3.htm>, last accessed on 21 February 2012. That same resolution declares the Republic of Korea a “lawful government,” and also the “only such Government in Korea” by virtue of the results of the UN supervised elections held earlier that year (A/RES/195 [III], quotes from 25). For information on PMAG and its successor unit, the Korean Military Advisor Group (KMAG), see Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 8, 18, 35; Robert Sawyer, *Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in War and Peace* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1962), 8-45; and John D. Tabb, “The Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG): A Model for Success?,” School of Advanced Military Studies, US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 17-28. Although PMAG later grew in numbers and even became more robust KMAG, the few US military that were authorized in PMAG when the ROK became independent illustrates how small the US military presence had become by the Fall of 1948.

10. United Nations, “Report of the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK),” (A/1881) (Supp) (hereafter UNCURK A/1881 Report), 27-28; Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea: From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 91-92, 94-97; Jae Jean Suh, “The Transformation of Class Structure and Class Conflict in North Korea;” *International Journal of Korean Unification Studies* 14:2 (2005): 52-84, quote from 56.

11. Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea*, 94-97; Suh, “Class Structure and Class Conflict in North Korea,” 52-84, quote from 56.

12. John Carter Vincent, “Memorandum by the Director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs to the Under Secretary of State.” Washington, DC, 1 October 1945, in *Foreign Relations of the United States* 6, 1945, 1066-67, quote from 1067; *Foreign Relations of the United States* 6, 1945 1144-48; Charles K. Armstrong, *The North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950* (Cornell, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 45-47; Kathryn Weathersby, “Soviet Aims in Korea

and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945-1950: New Evidence from Russian Archives,” Cold War International History Project (CWIHP), Woodrow Wilson Center, Working Paper No. 8 (November 1993), 13; United Nations, “Report of the United Nations Commission on Korea [UNCOK],” Vol. 2, Annexes, (A/939/Add. 1), 7-8. The historical record reveals that the numbers of Koreans relocating to the south increased rapidly with the tightening of Communist control. Armstrong notes that “by December 1945, the USSR occupation authorities had recorded nearly half a million Koreans entering the American zone,” (Armstrong, 47). Another source asserts that by mid-December “Entry into our Zone of an additional 1,600,000 refugees” meant that “Three-quarters of the population of Korea is now in our hands” (“The Acting Political Adviser in Korea to the Secretary of State,” Seoul, [Republic of Korea,] 14 December 1945, in *Foreign Relations of the United States* 6, 1945, 1142-44, quotes from 1142 and 1143, respectively). Not all were fleeing Communist oppression, but significant numbers were and the population shift remained predominantly north to south for the next five years.

13. Weathersby, “Soviet Aims in Korea and the Origins of the Korean War, 1945-1950,” 13.

14. According to the UNCURK A/1881 Report, 28: “Although land reform in North Korea may have been enthusiastically welcomed at the time of its inauguration, disillusionment among the farmers quickly followed. There is a difference of opinion whether the conditions of the former tenants were better following the land reform than under the Japanese regime. *For the most part, it would appear that there was merely a substitution of the Communist authorities for the former landlords,*” (emphasis added).

15. For example, see Kim Jae Seol, *War History of the Kuwolsan Guerrilla Unit* (Seoul: Kuwolsan Guerrilla Unit Comrade Association, 2002), 39-42 (copy in History Support Center, Fort Bragg, NC), for personal accounts of the hardships imposed by communist officials between 1945 and 1950. Another good source is the aforementioned “UN Partisan Forces,” and Frederick W. Cleaver, George Fitzpatrick, John Ponturo, et al., “UN Partisan Warfare in Korea, 1951-1954,” AFFE Group Technical Memorandum ORO-T-64, Johns Hopkins University, Operations Research Office, June 1956 (hereafter ORO Study).

16. “The Narrative of Mr. Pak Choll, Leader of Donkey 4,” interviewed by Lt. Col. A.S. Daley and Maj. B.C. Mossman, 3 November 1952, in “UN Partisan Forces,” 56-72, quote from 56.

17. ORO Study, 29.

18. Appleman, *South to the Naktong, North to the Yalu*, 488-514, 607-09, 614-21; ORO Study, 29.

19. “Narrative of Mr. Kim Chang Song, Leader of Donkey 13,” interviewed by Lt. Col. A.S. Daley and Maj. B.C. Mossman, 3 November 1952, in “UN Partisan Forces,” 87-93, quotes from 87.

20. “Narrative of Mr. Kim Chang Song,” in “UN Partisan Forces,” 87-93, quote from 90.

21. "Narrative of Mr. Kim Chang Song," in "UN Partisan Forces," 87-93, quote from 92.

22. "UN Partisan Forces," 87-93; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 229-30. For much of the war, Syngman Rhee and his officers viewed most of the partisans with suspicion. Being mostly citizens of North Korea, ROK leaders were content to allow the EUSA and UNC to administer and care for the partisans rather than risk inducting them wholesale into the ROK Army. For their part, the partisans felt the same way; few expressed any interest in serving in the ROK military until it became apparent late in the war that there was little chance of a renewed UN offensive that would allow them to return to their homes.

23. ORO Study, 7-8, 29-31, quote from 29; Mossman, *Ebb and Flow*, 229-30.

24. "UN Partisan Forces," 3-5, quote from 4.

25. ORO Study, 30-31; Quote from "UN Partisan Forces," 10.

26. Maj. William A. Burke, "Report on Korean Volunteer Groups Operating on the Hwanghae Peninsula," 20 January 1951, copy in "UN Partisan Forces," 31-32, quotes from 31.

27. Michael E. Krivdo, "Creating an Army Guerrilla Command Part One: The First Six Months," *Veritas* Vol. 8, no. 2 (2008): 14.

28. Krivdo, 14.

29. Krivdo, 14.

30. Maj. William A. Burke, "Report on Korean Volunteer Groups Operating on the Hwanghae Peninsula," 20 January 1951, copy in "UN Partisan Forces," 31-32, quotes from 31. Major Burke enlisted in the Army Reserve on 2 January 1938, and accepted a reserve commission as a cavalry second lieutenant on 7 February 1942. He served as an armor and cavalry officer in WWII, earning two Silver Stars and a regular commission. Burke graduated from the Command and General Staff Course in 1948 and became Colonel McGee's Miscellaneous Division second-in-command soon after its creation (US Army, *Official Army Register, 1951*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1951), 93.

31. ORO Study, 30-31; Quote from "UN Partisan Forces," 10.

32. "Record of Assignments," John H. McGee Service Record, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), Military Personnel Records, St. Louis, MO (hereafter "McGee Service Record").

33. "McGee Service Record"; David W. Hogan, Jr., *Raiders or Elite Infantry? The Changing Role of the US Army Rangers from Dieppe to Grenada* (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 105-112; General Headquarters, Far East Command, "Citation for the Legion of Merit (Oak-Leaf Cluster)" for John H. McGee, "McGee Service Record"; Maj William J. Fox, "Inter-Allied Cooperation During Combat Operations," Military History Section, Far East Command (FEC), Center of Military History, Fort McNair, Washington, DC, 15 August 1952, quote from 10-11.

34. "Record of Assignments," "McGee Service Record;" John H. McGee, "Attrition Warfare," G-3 Section, EUSA, 13 January 1951, included in "UN Partisan Forces," 65-67, first two quotes from 65 and 67, respectively. Around that

same time an assessment of the guerrillas by Major Burke predicted they might, “if supplied, organized and properly employed,” pose “an ever-growing liability to the Communist Forces.” Maj. William A. Burke to Col. John A. Dabney, “Report on Korean Volunteer Groups Operating on the Hwanghae Peninsula,” 30 January 1951, in “UN Partisan Forces,” 31-32, quote from 31.

35. Krivdo, “Creating an Army Guerrilla Command Part One,” 16.

36. Krivdo, 16.

37. *The Army Vision*, 2028.

38. *The Army in Multi-Domain Operations*, Initial Coordinating Draft v0.3f (23 May 2018), 2-3.

39. *The Army in Multi-Domain Operations*, 2-3.

40. *Army Special Operations Forces Operating Concept for 2035 and Beyond* Version 0.91, 2.

41. ORO Study, 4.

42. Krivdo, “Guerrilla Command,” 14.

43. *ARSOF Operating Concept*, 5.

44. *ARSOF Operating Concept*, 5.

45. US Army Office of the Chief of Public Affairs, “Security Force Assistance Brigade,” Stand-To: The Official Focus of the US Army, February 17, 2017 (accessed July 5, 2018), <https://www.army.mil/standto/2017-02-17>.

46. “Security Force Assistance Brigade,” 19.

47. *Multi-Domain Operations*, 14-15.

48. *Multi-Domain Operations*, i.

Chapter 9

Civilian Irregular Defense Group in Vietnam

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The Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) program demonstrated the viability of Army Special Operation Forces (ARSOF) to set decisive conditions for large-scale ground combat operations (LSCO) throughout South Vietnam by developing forces to meet the enemy head on, and to support Army of Vietnam (ARVN) operations. The training and units produced by the CIDG program, between 1961 and 1967, would eventually become the bedrock for the ARVN Ranger Command during Vietnamization between 1968 and 1971. Through developing understanding and wielding influence and long term engagement with indigenous partner forces and civilians, the CIDG program provided decisive results in areas with no large scale friendly combat forces, expanding the competition space, confusing enemy commanders, gaining valuable intelligence, and occupying enemy forces in operational synergy with regular ARVN forces.

ARSOF history offers several vignettes that serve as precursors for modern operating concepts that serve both ARSOF and Army conventional forces. Historical episodes were identified as unique and effective, and were cultivated and iterated to meet constantly evolving and, even emerging challenges that collective forces have faced. This project uses the United States ARSOF's irregular warfare efforts in Vietnam, particularly in its efforts to develop and employ the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) populated by South Vietnamese indigenous fighters, as a platform for analyzing US approaches to modern warfare. Irregular warfare for the purposes of this chapter will be defined as written US Joint Publication 1, "a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations."¹ Reflections on the CIDG's inception and evolution inform both conventional Army and ARSOF concepts being integrated into today's formations.

In the modern context, the Army's current operational framework iteration is encapsulated in the multi-domain operations (MDO) concept, which "proposes detailed solutions to specific problems posed by the militaries of post-industrial, information-based states" as well as non-state threat forces and populations.² The intent of MDO is to optimize forces across all competitive domains and overcome and overwhelm those threats.³ This "solution" contains numerous components, but this histor-

ical survey and implications analysis deals with only one, formations, and specifically within that component, semi-independent maneuver and human potential. After treating the Army concepts and linking them to historical precepts illuminated in the CIDG vignette, the chapter evaluates some ARSOF concepts, which are compatible with and nested under the broader Army approaches and how these approaches support LSCO.

US activities centered on and around the Civilian Irregular Defense Group were built on irregular (and even unconventional) warfare practices from previous wartime scenarios. ARSOF's legacy of this time of conflict originated in Korea with Eighth US Army's partisan guerrilla warfare cadre programs. The CIDG was a natural iteration a generation later. In the twenty-first century context, to include the future operating environment (FOE), ARSOF has, similar to the Army's efforts with the MDO construct, adjusted its framework to incorporate concepts and force posture that meet current and future demands, yet have clear ties to methods of the past and horizontal linkages to conventional force posture of today. The ARSOF operating concept offers four responses to the ambiguities and complexities of the modern battlefield and future operating context. Three of which, the indigenous approach, develop understanding, and wield influence, can draw a distinct correlation to US ARSOF operations, actions, and activities with the CIDG. The historical survey and subsequent analysis will demonstrate that the Army and ARSOF have a doctrinal foundation based on this historical case that can be refocused for future success.

Irregular Warfare in Vietnam

In 1961 South Vietnam was struggling with an insurgency by the Communist Vietnam Independence League or *Viet Minh* for control of the country. Beginning with the splitting of Vietnam in 1954, the Viet Minh began a concerted effort to undermine the South's government led by Premier Ngo Dinh Diem. In 1961, the United States, under the leadership of President John F. Kennedy, began escalating their support to Premier Diem and South Vietnam in an attempt to curb "the growing number of Wars of National Liberation" and Communist aggression throughout the world.⁴ The United States' efforts were initially led by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) with participation concentrated on limiting *Viet Minh*, now collectively called *Viet Cong* (VC), efforts to subvert the central highlands and delta lowlands and to stem the flow of support coming across the border from North Vietnam. Further, they were ordered to accomplish these tasks and to gain support for the Diem regime through the development of selected marginalized ethnic and religious groups into paramilitary forces.

To these ends, United States Special Forces units and soldiers supported the CIA's efforts under the US Military Assistance and Advisory Group, Vietnam (MAAG), Combined Studies Division through the development of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) program. This program, conducted in uncontrolled and denied areas using minority ethnic and religious groups, gained valuable tactical and operational advantages and insight. They shaped the battlefield for large scale operations through understanding and influencing the situation and local populaces, the collection of operational intelligence, precision targeting, interdicting infiltration routes, and engaging with enemy forces. In a large portion of South Vietnam, CIDG forces were the only South Vietnamese military presence available to confront the growing Communist threat.

It exemplified the value to LSGCO of ARSOF formations that conduct intelligence collection, maneuver, and strike activities. CIDG operations highlight the value for future multi-domain operations, the use of the indigenous approach, and irregular warfare through partnered military and minority populaces. Its operational results bring into focus the benefit of ARSOF precision targeting and understanding and influence in support of multi-echelon operations. CIDG operations are examples of the future contributions possible by the "empowered ARSOF soldier" as the bedrock of ARSOF combined arms, and the operational synergy between ARSOF and conventional forces. CIDG operations highlight the success of mission specific forces and operational approaches that provide commanders with additional options to achieve campaign objectives in conflict. These actions create layered and complex battlefields which ferment unpredictability in the mind of the adversary commander and overwhelm his decision making process.

Civilian Irregular Defense Group (1961-1967)

By 1961 the *Viet Cong* in South Vietnam began to escalate their insurgency against the government and military of South Vietnam. In response, President Kennedy with support of the US Congress, increased US economic and military aid.⁵ This assistance was meant to broaden South Vietnam's counterinsurgency efforts against the Viet Cong and was conducted through several programs such as the one to improve Central Highland village agricultural conditions. This in fact was a clandestine CIA effort intended to collect information on VC activities and North Vietnamese Army (NVA) infiltrations into the heavy jungle of the mountainous border areas while the agency evaluated developing the paramilitary potential of selected minority groups.⁶ US Army Special Forces ODAs, assigned to the CIA's cover organization,

MAAG's Combined Studies Division (CSD), provided support with military training and advisory assistance to these minorities through the Civilian Irregular Defense Group program.⁷ The South Vietnamese government sought the help of the CSD and gave them permission to meet the Rhade (the largest of the Montagnard tribes) tribal leaders.⁸ After establishing rapport, the CSD offered defense training and small arms to the Rhade if they would swear allegiance to South Vietnam's government and start self-defense programs.



Figure 9.1. The First Line of Defense. A fence reinforced by Punji stakes around Buon Enao.

The first village selected was Buon Enao in the Darlac Province, becoming what would be called “Buon Enao Experiment.”⁹ By presidential decree it was to be controlled solely by the Combined Studies Division, not the Vietnamese Army or the MAAG. In October 1961, two Americans, Davis A. Nuttle, a career International Volunteer Services (IVS) official who had been serving in the Republic of Vietnam since 1959 doing agricultural projects and a special forces medical sergeant on special duty from the 1st SFG, S. Sgt. Paul F. Campbell, went to Buon Enao. Campbell recalled the first session with the village elders: “Nuttle explained that

the project was intended to improve the Montagnard living, agricultural and medical facilities. The concept was to go into a village like Buon Eno, teach the people to put some sort of defense around the village to keep everybody out, not just the *Viet Cong*, but also the ARVN. It would be a “show of defiance” with the villagers acting as a national guard or a self-defense force.¹⁰ This was a badly needed resource in the rugged mountain and border areas where the VC were gaining more control. After two weeks of conversations, and Staff Sergeant Campbell’s successful medical treatments, the village elders agreed and swore allegiance to start the Village Defense Program (VDP). Swearing of allegiance to the Diem government ensured that the tribe would stay out of the control of the Communists. The Montagnard built a protective fence around the village, dug shelters to protect the elderly, women, and children against VC attack, constructed a training center, built a medical clinic, and established an intelligence network that tracked movement in and around the village and served as an early warning system against attack.¹¹

By mid-December 1961 the Buon Eno project was finished. Another fifty men from a neighboring village were also trained as local security, or strike force, to protect Buon Eno and its environs.¹² Strike forces would later play a vital role in projecting combat power during the Vietnamization era and along with CIDG companies became the basis for the ARVN ranger units. With the first village secured, the Darlac province chief expanded the program to include 40 more Rhade villages within a 50 kilometer radius of Buon Eno and required those village chiefs and sub-chiefs to take defensive operations, patrolling, and guerrilla warfare tactics training.¹³ The Village Defense Program grew so fast that between April and October 1962 another 200 Rhade villages were added. By the end of 1962, these successes prompted the RVN government to assign program responsibility to the Darlac province chief with instructions to include the Jarai and Mngong tribes.¹⁴

The Buon Eno Experiment continued to generate more American SF activity in South Vietnam. South Vietnamese Special Forces, or *Lac Luang Dac Biet* (LLDB), received more training. These increased training requirements increased the number of US Special Forces Operational Detachment Alphas (ODA) in Vietnam on six-month temporary duty (TDY) tours and caused the establishment of Headquarters, US Army Special Forces, Vietnam (Provisional) [USASF (P)]. In mid-September 1962, Col. George C. Morton, Chief, Special Warfare Branch, J-3 US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, and 72 5th Special Forces Group (SFG) advanced echelon (ADVON) personnel from Ft Bragg, North Carolina,

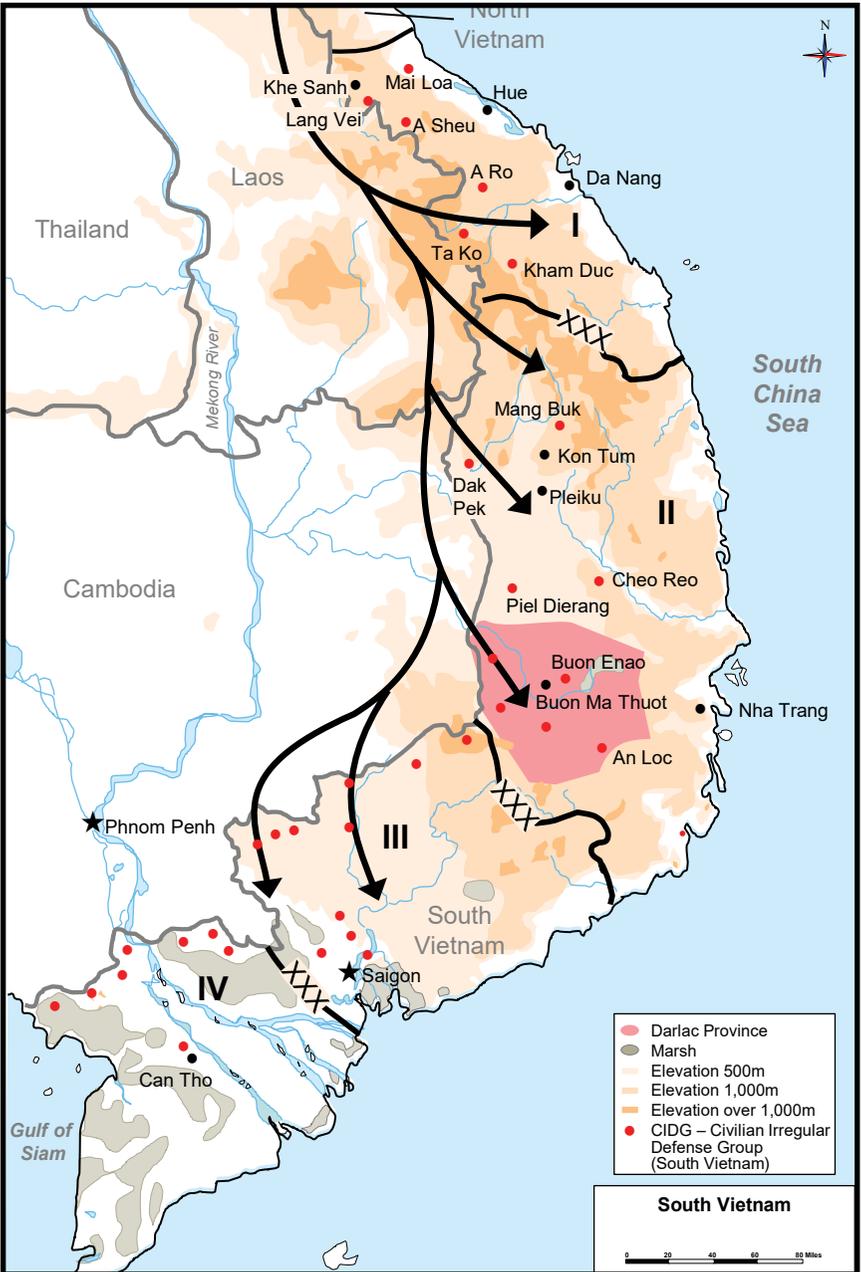


Figure 9.2. Ho Chi Minh Trail and Routes used by VC to enter South Vietnam. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

formed a C-Team with four ODAs as the nucleus of the USASF (P) Headquarters in Saigon.¹⁵ By November 1962, the main body had arrived in Saigon. The C-Team now had 14 officers and 43 enlisted men. Colonel Morton sent Lt. Col. Eb Smith and 18 enlisted men to Nha Trang to establish the Special Forces Operating Base (SFOB) with the intent of moving the C-Team out of Saigon. From this central location, Colonel Morton controlled 530 special forces soldiers serving on four B-Teams and 28 ODAs throughout South Vietnam.¹⁶

In the meantime, MAAG Vietnam restructured and changed its name to the US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam. This transition triggered two significant changes: MACV would advise and assist the South Vietnamese government on how to train, equip, and employ VDP forces; and the Village Defense Program (VDP was changed to Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) Program.¹⁷ In February 1962, the Combined Studies Group ran the CIDG Program, controlled the SF units supporting it, and coordinated CIDG activities with MACV. By May 1962, the CSD was in charge of CIDG logistics and operations. Control of the *Lac Luang Dac Biet*, shifted to South Vietnam's government. These seemingly minor changes redefined operational relationships.

On 23 July 1962, the US Department of Defense (DoD) National Security Action Memorandum 57 directed that all overt special forces paramilitary activities be transferred from the CIA to MACV. The US Army became the executive agent for CIDG logistics. DoD retained sole authority to appoint the special forces commander in Vietnam. The US Army was to institute flexible, efficient, and effective supply and funding procedures to support the CIDG program.¹⁸

Codenamed Operation Switchback, this command and control redirection changed military operational objectives: the VC became military targets, but minority populations were not to be further mobilized.¹⁹ Accomplished in phases, Switchback was completed on 1 July 1963. By then, special forces had trained enough hamlet militia, strike force soldiers, and other indigenous personnel to reduce VC exploitation throughout the rural areas of South Vietnam.²⁰ The VDP and CIDG program successes from May 1962 to October 1963 were almost negated by significant military and political events. A *coup d'état* on 1 November 1963 resulted in the death of US supported President Ngo Dinh Diem and the end of his regime. This prompted MACV and the ARVN to implement major changes afterwards. Diem had not allowed MAAG, MACV, and ARVN commanders and staffs to interfere with either US Special Forces training activities or LLDB and CIDG operations.²¹ On 5 January 1964, the military-domi-

nated South Vietnamese government followed the precedent of Operation Switchback and restricted LLDB independence by assigning them to the ARVN.²² Without Diem's restrictions, MACV quickly instituted major command and control changes. SF personnel in Vietnam were placed under the operational control of the senior US Army advisor (MACV) in each Corps Tactical Zone (CTZ). Col. Theodore Leonard replaced Colonel Morton as the USASF (P) commander. Colonel Leonard reevaluated and redefined USASF (P)'s mission and centrally located and controlled the CIDG program. Management was further shifted to MACV headquarters. Operationally MACV directed that the Republic of Vietnam's border be manned by fortified SF camps defended by Chinese Nung mercenary units.²³ Furthermore, SF area-development projects were deemphasized and CIDG forces were to be organized as conventional elements (strike forces) to supplement regular ARVN combat formations.²⁴

These operational changes and the resumption of minority mistreatment by Vietnamese authorities almost killed the CIDG program. On 19 September 1964, five Montagnard CIDG camps near Ban Me Thout revolted against the Vietnamese government.²⁵ Located in the II CTZ, Ban Me Thout was the provincial and traditional Montagnard capital. The ten day revolt ended only when US advisors, acting as intermediaries, brought the hostilities to an end. They accomplished this by convincing the South Vietnamese government officials that each side could benefit if they were willing to accept or at least consider compromises on native rights.²⁶ Though of short duration, the rebellion had long term consequences because in the end, "old grievances and old hatreds remained unresolved."²⁷

On 1 October 1964, the DoD reassigned the 5th Special Forces Group (SFG) (Airborne) from Fort Bragg, North Carolina to Nha Trang, South Vietnam to replace USASF (P). The 674 members of the USASF (P) would integrate into Headquarters 5th SFG. Overseas assignments to the 5th SFG would be one-year permanent change of station (PCS). The six-month temporary duty tours by the SF ODAs would end on 1 May 1965.

The 5th SFG mission was: exercise command less operational control of ODAs deployed with US senior advisors in each corps; advise MACV on opening and closing CIDG camps; establish new CIDG camps; advise the Vietnamese Special Forces High Command; and, when required, provide formal training for LLDB and CIDG units. Mission "creep" increased US Special Forces strength in South Vietnam to four Operational Detachment Cs (ODC), 12 Operational Detachment Bs (ODB), and 48 ODAs by February 1965.²⁸ Initially, the presence of the 5th SFG Headquarters had little effect on the activities of the ODAs or the CIDG strike forces. US

SF continued advising and assisting the CIDG program while its strike forces protected tribal villages.²⁹ During Tet in late 1964, the military situation in Vietnam changed. Organized main force VC units began engaging and defeating large ARVN forces. To counter this, the 5th SFG redefined its counterinsurgency program in January 1965. At the same time, United States DoD also announced that large well-equipped conventional military forces would begin arriving for combat duty in Vietnam by the spring. Until these conventional units arrived and became operational, Gen. William C. Westmorland, Commander, MACV, directed that “SF and the irregulars assume the offensive role with the mission of becoming hunters and finding and destroying the enemy.”³⁰

The increased insurgent operational tempo (OPTEMPO), instead of being the rationale for expanding foreign internal defense and development (FIDD in those days), had caused US military leaders to commit American conventional forces to assist the ARVN. This added impetus to MACV’s intent to “conventionalize” civilian irregular forces, convert selected CIDG units to regional force status by 1 January 1967, and implement the first steps of its master plan to phase out all American SF in Vietnam. CIDG strike force operations switched from tribal and territorial holdings against VC exploitation to offensive conventional actions country-wide to defeat the enemy.³¹

During this transition, MACV realized that SF-led CIDG troops were highly skilled at gathering intelligence, finding and fixing enemy forces, and could engage the enemy on his own terms. These capabilities created a double-edged sword for SF and CIDG strike forces. The quality of intelligence served to revitalize and strengthen the CIDG program, but reduced effective area development and information gathering on home front VC activities.³² As conventional force operational intelligence requirements increased between 1965 and 1968, efforts to expand the minority village defense system declined.

US Special Forces-led CIDG forces continued to engage the enemy, but quietly moved further away from village defense missions. With helicopters provided in May 1966, they became mobile counterinsurgency strike forces to commit against enemy-controlled zones. As mobile strike forces numbers doubled and combat skills improved, they were employed more frequently as exploitation forces or reaction forces for camps that needed reinforcement during VC attacks. By September 1966, US Special Forces had opened 22 new camps and increased the number of CIDG combat reconnaissance platoons from 34 to 73. MACV also tasked the 5th SFG to establish a Recondo School at Nha Trang. The mission was to pro-

vide a 12-day, combat-oriented course for all Vietnamese SF replacements and the long-range patrol personnel of conventional ARVN combat units.³³ Having achieved more success against the VC in 1966 by emphasizing night operations, General Westmoreland directed Col. Francis J. Kelly, 5th Special Forces Group, to closely examine current and proposed ODA deployments throughout Vietnam and produce an annual campaign plan coordinated with each CTZ.³⁴

This relook of the annual campaign plan directed by COMUSMACV contained specific guidance: each US SF team camp was to be positioned to maximize its full mission potential; ODAs would be replaced by converting civilian irregular strike forces into ARVN forces; coordinate campaign plan with Corps MACV senior advisors and their counterparts.³⁵ “Simply stated, our mission is to help the Vietnamese people help themselves,” said Colonel Kelly in August 1966.³⁶ If American SF advisors were being reduced, the LLDB would have to assume the role.

US Special Forces advisors worked to improve LLDB performance to the point that they assumed complete control of the Plei Mrong CIDG camp by May 1967. Those LLDB at Vinh Gia and Min Thanh did the same by the end of June 1967.³⁷ Progress was constantly overshadowed by American and South Vietnamese political maneuvering.

By 1967, the MACV campaign plan did not have a schedule to end the war. It only addressed US military expansion and a major increase in ARVN forces. Colonel Kelly published the CIDG program annex that had been reviewed and approved by all four Vietnamese Corps commanders and their senior American Advisors. It had: a country-wide strategy for the CIDG camps; and a plan to phase-out US Special Forces by the end of 1971. To accomplish both, MACV had to withdraw US Special Forces from those camps without a border surveillance mission and relocate them to new CIDG camps along the frontier.³⁸ The intent was not to reduce the number of camps or special forces personnel, but to reapportion critical US assets to better support the allied effort to “Vietnamize” the war, turning over responsibility to the ARVN. Unfortunately for the US and South Vietnamese armies, North Vietnam had other plans. MACV long-range plans collapsed in January 1968 during the Tet Offensive.

Setting the Conditions for Large-Scale Ground Combat Operations (LSGCO)

The CIDG program demonstrated the viability of ARSOF to set decisive conditions for large-scale ground combat operations (LSGCO) throughout South Vietnam by developing forces to meet the enemy head

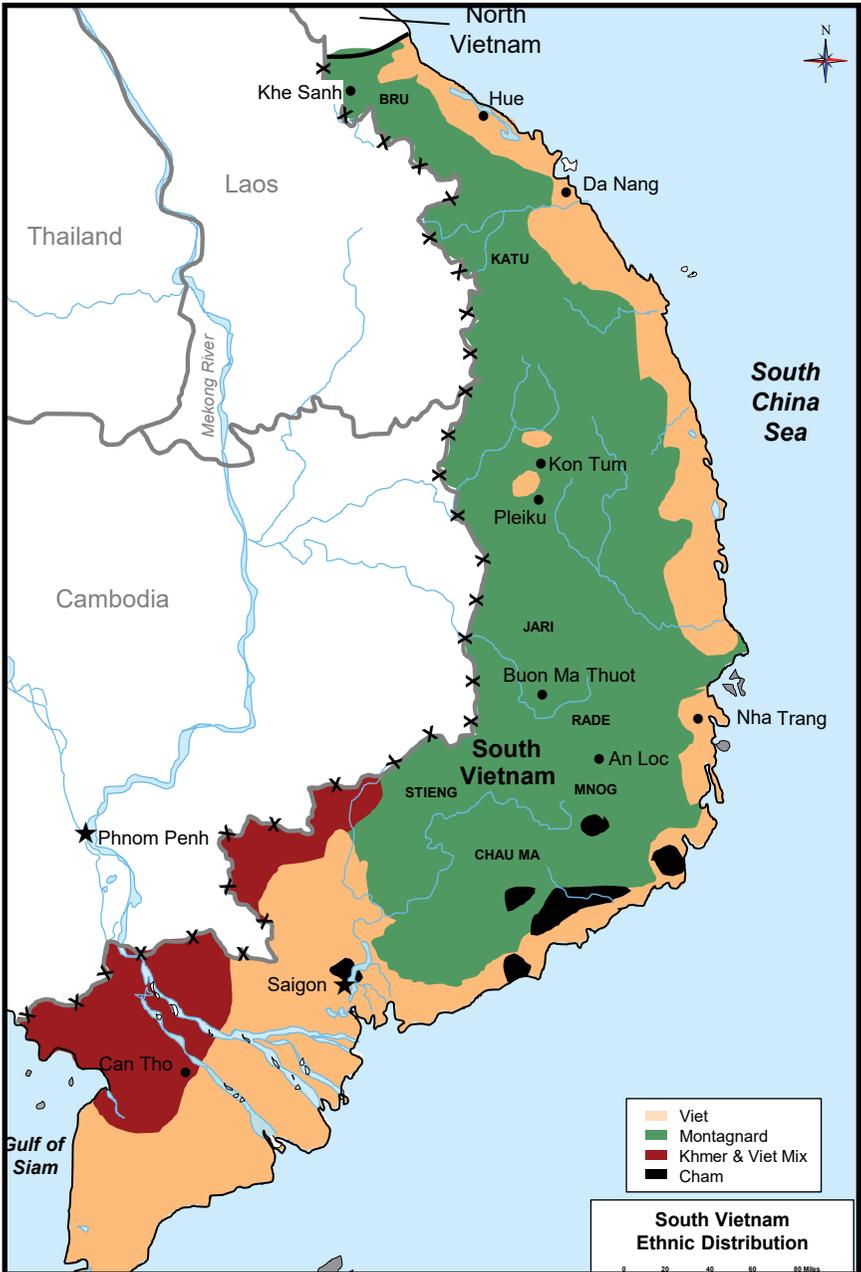


Figure 9.3. Ethnic Distribution in South Vietnam. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

on and to support Army of Vietnam (ARVN) operations. The training and units produced between 1961 and 1967 would eventually become the bedrock for the ARVN Ranger Command during Vietnamization between 1968 and 1971. Through developing understanding and wielding influence and long term engagement with indigenous partner forces and civilians, it provided decisive results in areas with no large-scale, friendly combat forces, expanding the competition space, confusing enemy commanders, gaining valuable intelligence, and occupying enemy forces in operational synergy with ARVN forces.

US Special Forces were not initially intended for the mission they were tasked with in South Vietnam. The original intent was for them to insert into enemy held territory and develop insurgent forces to conduct guerrilla warfare to occupy, harass enemy forces, and set the stage for the introduction of regular forces into the contested country. In Vietnam though they were tasked with developing forces to counter internal and external threats within a friendly country.³⁹ In accomplishing this mission they trained, set up, and ran the Vietnamese Ranger School, trained the regular ARVN forces in the wake of the 1972 Hue offensive, and, most importantly for the war effort, they established and trained the CIDG.⁴⁰

What made the CIDG program a successful addition to the South Vietnamese effort to thwart the communist aggression? First, a paramilitary force of minorities would expand South Vietnam's counterinsurgency efforts into remote areas providing decisive results in areas with no large scale friendly combat forces, expanding the competition space. Geographically the western and northern borders and central highlands represented unguarded, covered high speed avenues of approach to South Vietnam's centers of population, commerce, and power. Ethnic Vietnamese people lived nearly exclusively in large cities and the coastal plains. ARVN units were concentrated around these areas and left a majority of the county unguarded and open to VC and NVA occupation and influence. By 1961, the VC insurgency presented a real threat to the Diem regime and the ARVN. The CIDG program developed a friendly force in an area previously uncovered by the South Vietnamese government with a full-time military and intelligence gathering presence. It gave them the ability to fight the VC and North Vietnamese invaders in territory previously unaccounted for. By using people, indigenous to the specific areas, it gave them invaluable knowledge of the geographic and human terrain allowing for easier intelligence assessments and movement. MACV J2 estimated that fifty percent of all intelligence collected between 1966 and 1969 came from the CIDG program. Being on the "home court"

gave the indigenous fighters the upper hand, or at least equal, in fighting on familiar terrain.

Second, the effort recruited resources to the South Vietnamese side that could have easily been turned to support the VC and NVA. The recruitment of these forces gave the ARVN a needed ally and created layered and complex battlefields which occupied the enemy, fermented unpredictability in the mind of the adversary commander and, in doing so, overwhelmed his decision making process. It incorporated large populations of minorities who had been marginalized previously by the South Vietnamese government. The CIDG program encompassed not only the Montagnards, but numerous other ethnic and religious minorities including Cambodians, Nung tribesman from the highlands of North Vietnam, and members of the Cao Dai and Hoa Hao religious groups.⁴¹ VC dominance of the central highlands was a major concern of the South's leadership.⁴² The first group targeted was the Montagnards who were the largest minority, dominated the central highlands and had always been treated as third class people by the government. The poor treatment of these people made them prime targets for Communist propaganda and recruiting. US Special Forces outreach to them and other ethnic minorities with promises or training and, more importantly, South Vietnamese government promises of support and limited autonomy gained allies with personal and group motivations. They would be fighting for their own land, tribe, village, and family. By the end of Operation Switchback in January 1962 US Special Forces had trained 52,636 hamlet militia, 10,904 stike force soldiers, 515 village medical workers, 946 trail watchers, and 3,803 mountain scouts and 879 CIDG villages.⁴³

Third, the indigenous approach greatly aided in the collection of valuable intelligence that was used locally and throughout the country in support of large scale operations as designated by the CTZ commands. The MACV J2 estimated that as much as 50 percent of all intelligence collected between 1965 and 1968 came from the CIDG program. Indigenous personnel were ideal for collecting intelligence because they fit into their environment. CIDG camps were spread throughout the country, generally in enemy controlled areas in the remote mountains, delta, and along the border. US Special Forces CIDG camps numbered at least 115 between 1964 and 1971 spread throughout Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ) I-IV. Another reason was that the indigenous CIDG recruits were taken from the area where they lived and or close proximity where they had been all or most of their lives giving them the advantage of knowing the terrain and people. In this regard they could quickly recognize those who did not belong and knew the avenue of travel and hiding places.

US Special Forces soldiers from the beginning developed understanding, gained trust, and wielded influence over the CIDG program participants making the successful program that it turned out to be. The first camp Buon Enao, highlights this. Davis A. Nuttle and S. Sgt. Paul F. Campbell went in with the mission to gain allies for the South Vietnamese government from people who had been marginalized by them. To do this they had to sell the support to the South in terms that highlighted benefits to the Montagnard. Their concept was to go into a village like Buon Enao and teach the people to put some sort of defense around the village to keep everybody out, not just the Viet Cong, but also the ARVN...to sell them on their own autonomy. Concessions had to be made by the South Vietnamese government giving the tribes limited autonomous rule, supplies, and agricultural support. The Rhade had to be convinced that in swearing allegiance to the South Vietnamese government that they would see better treatment and benefits in exchange. Trust was gained through their professional knowledge and notably Staff Sergeant Campbell's medical program. The outcome was that the Rhade agreed to support the CIDG program at Buon Enao and the US Special Forces used this success, their professionalism, and future combat success to spread the program through their influence.

US efforts to establish and enable South Vietnamese forces including the CIDG continued the tradition of ARSOF assembling, organizing, training, and partnering with indigenous forces. Though conditions, desired end states, and operational outcomes differed from previous attempts in World War II and the Korean War, and are historically distinct from later efforts in other combat theaters, the idea that the US SOF advises, assists, accompanies, and in some cases creates host nation partner forces perpetuates throughout ARSOF's existence. Today, those efforts are encapsulated in the indigenous approach.

The *US Army Special Operations Forces Operating Concept* identifies four capability pillars. One of the pillars, the indigenous approach, states "that ARSOF operate among, train, advise, assist, and fight along with people of foreign cultures. They achieve effects with and through partner forces in the physical, cognitive, and virtual realms."⁴⁴ This pillar's value "is demonstrated during ARSOF core activities such as UW, stability operations, COIN, and foreign internal defense (FID)."⁴⁵ A comprehensive survey of special forces activities during the Vietnam War show that the indigenous approach is not new. In fact, organizing ARSOF partnering activities under an umbrella indicates that ARSOF recognizes the efficacy and effectiveness of their historical actions. As a capability pillar, ARSOF

will use in the future operating environment (FOE), the indigenous approach draws on lessons learned from previous endeavors, and that fact particularly resonates with US Special Forces' operations, actions, and activities with the CIDG.

The Vietnam War would come to reflect the future character of war with superpowers competing through proxy states and organizations to gain regional influence and dominance. State and non-state actors since have become increasingly capable and willing to wield physical and cognitive weapons to gain power and influence over areas and peoples for various reasons. Using the model of the Vietnam War and many conflicts before, weaker actors have turned increasingly to unconventional warfare, terrorism and information warfare to project power and gain control of land and peoples.

The CIDG program exemplified the value to LSCO of ARSOF formations that conduct intelligence collection, maneuver, and strike activities that give combat commanders operational options and advantage. CIDG operations highlight the value for future large-scale combat operations of the use of the indigenous approach and irregular warfare through partnered military and minority populaces. Its operational results bring into focus the benefit of ARSOF precision targeting and understanding and influence in support of multi-echelon operations. CIDG operations are examples of the future contributions made possible by the "empowered ARSOF soldier" as the bedrock of ARSOF combined arms, and the operational synergy between ARSOF and conventional forces. CIDG operations highlight the success of mission-specific forces and operational approaches that provide commanders with additional options to achieve campaign objectives in conflict. These actions create layered and complex battlefields which ferment unpredictability in the mind of the adversary commander and overwhelm his decision making process.

Notes

1. The US military recognizes two basic forms of warfare— traditional and irregular. A useful dichotomy for thinking about warfare is the distinction between traditional and irregular warfare (IW). Traditional warfare is characterized as a violent struggle for domination between nation-states or coalitions and alliances of nation-states. With the increasingly rare case of formally declared war, traditional warfare typically involves force-on-force military operations in which adversaries employ a variety of conventional forces and special operations forces (SOF) against each other in all physical domains as well as the information environment (which includes cyberspace). IW is characterized as a violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). In IW, a less powerful adversary seeks to disrupt or negate the military capabilities and advantages of a more powerful military force, which usually serves that nation's established government. Joint Publication 1-0, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, 25 March 2013, Incorporating Change 1, 12 July 2017, 1.

2. *The Army in Multi-Domain Operations*, Initial Coordinating Draft ver. 0.5j (11 July 2018), 1.

3. *The Army in Multi-Domain Operations*, Initial Coordinating Draft ver. 0.5j (11 July 2018), 1.

4. Eugene G. Piasecki, "Civilian Irregular Defense Group: The First Years: 1961-1967". *Veritas*, vol. 5, no. 4 (2009): 1

5. Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, p. 4-5

6. Paul F. Campbell, "Personal notes of Col. Gilbert Layton", Director of the Office of Combined Studies, MAAG, email to Eugene G. Piasecki 18 August 2009, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. Hereafter referred to as Layton Notes.

7. Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 6

8. The Rhade were one of the two hundred or so tribes of the Montagnard minority group spread throughout South East Asia. The Rhade were chosen for the beginning of the CIDG program due to their size, about 100,000 strong, central location in South Vietnam, their progressive nature and noted influence within the Montagnard peoples. Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 24-26.

9. Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 24

10. Christopher K. Ives, *US Special Forces and Counterinsurgency in Vietnam. Military Innovation and Institutional Failure, 1961-1963* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 15-16.

11. "US Army Special Forces Vietnam, Provisional 1962-64," *US Army Special Forces Vietnam, Provisional*, 1 June 2009, http://www.groups.sfhq.com/adv_rvn_61_63.htm.

12. Layton Notes. When first formed, the mobile fighting units were called Strike Force. When MACV gained control, they referred to them as "Mike Forces."

13. Col. Francis John Kelly, *Vietnam Studies: US Army Special Forces 1961-1971*, (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1973), 25.

14. Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 28
15. Shelby L. Stanton, *Green Berets at War: US Army Special Forces in Southeast Asia 1956-1975* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1985), 52-53.
16. Stanton, 54. At this time ODAs (A-Teams) were comprised of two commissioned officers and 10 non-commissioned officers (12), and ODBs (B-Teams) had six officers and 18 enlisted men assigned.
17. "US Army Special Forces, Vietnam, Provisional 1962-1964," *US Army Special Forces Vietnam, Provisional*, 1 June 2009, http://www.groups.sfahq.com/adv_rvn_61_63.htm.
18. Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 30
19. Ives, *US Special Forces and Counterinsurgency in Vietnam*, 24.
20. Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, 57.
21. Stanton, 64
22. Stanton, 76.
23. Cmd. Sgt. Maj. (ret) John E. Kessling, interviewed by Eugene G. Piasecki, 10 October 2009, Fayetteville, NC, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
24. Shelby Stanton, *Special Forces at War: An Illustrated History, Southeast Asia 1957-1975* (Charlottesville, VA: Howell Press, 1990), 37.
25. Stanton, 37.
26. Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 64.
27. Stephen Sherman, *Broken Promises and Other Readings about US Army Special Forces and the Montagnard of South Vietnam* (Houston, TX: The RADIX Press, 1999), 61. USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
28. Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 74.
29. Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, 91.
30. Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 77.
31. Kelly, 78-79.
32. Kelly, 81.
33. Kelly 96. Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, 170-173.
34. Kelly, 97.
35. Kelly, 97.
36. Kelly, 99.
37. Kelly, 102.
38. Charles M. Simpson III, *Inside the Green Berets, The First Thirty Years. A History of the US Army Special Forces* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1983), 200.
39. Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, 291.
40. Stanton, 291.
41. Kelly, *Vietnam Studies*, 28.
42. Kelly, 19.
43. Stanton, *Green Berets at War*, 57.
44. *Army Special Operations Forces Operating Concept for 2035 and Beyond* ver. 0.91, 25.
45. *Army Special Operations Forces Operating Concept for 2035 and Beyond* ver. 0.91, 25.

Chapter 10

Special Operations Forces in the Yom Kippur War

Tal Tov

The Yom Kippur War was a war of armor maneuvering in masses and immense firepower. Thousands of tanks and hundreds of thousands of soldiers were thrown into battle by the belligerents, and the world witnessed one of the largest clashes of tanks since the Second World War. Furthermore, the war itself was decided by these very same maneuvering masses.¹ Nonetheless, in this war special forces also played a role, and in fact their involvement supported the maneuvering forces. The extent of their support is at the heart of this chapter.

The aim of this chapter is to examine how the armies of Egypt, Syria, and Israel used their special forces during the war. This chapter will examine the missions assigned to the various units and how, and to what extent their activity contributed to the battle efforts of the maneuvering forces. Since the war was initiated by a joint Egyptian-Syrian attack, the chapter will also examine how the special forces of the Arab countries were integrated into the war plans prior to the war, how they operated during the initial phases of the war, and whether these actions contributed to the Egyptian and Syrian successes in the beginning of the war. In other words, this chapter aims to examine and analyze the place of special operations forces in conventional warfare, with the Yom Kippur War as a case study. In this, the chapter will make a modest contribution to the examination of special operations forces in large-scale combat operations.

The chapter has five parts: the first briefly surveys the type of special operations forces in the various armies. The next two parts examine the actions of the Egyptian and Syrian special forces during the war, and the fourth part does the same for the Israeli special forces and its brigade and territorial command reconnaissance units, which also had special operations forces capabilities. Finally, the tactical and strategic contribution of the special forces in the overall context of the war will be evaluated.

Special Forces in the Arab and Israeli Armies

The special forces of the Arab armies were constructed and operated according to Soviet doctrine, which had a crucial influence on the armies of Egypt and Syria in the years prior to the Yom Kippur War. In Soviet military doctrine these forces had two main tasks: the first was based on their being inherently élite infantry forces and as such intended to reinforce

combat units at the tactical level. The second task was based on their being a force trained for operations in the enemy's operational and strategic depth through: striking corps and division command, control and communications (C3), fires, logistics, and transportation hubs. Other roles were to disrupt and delay the arrival of enemy reinforcements and reserves to the front and supporting the tactical and operational missions of the forces in immediate contact with the enemy.²

The Egyptian and Syrian special operations forces were part of the paratroop and amphibious forces. In the Egyptian army, on the eve of the war, there were twenty-four battalions and in Syria there were ten.³ The dedicated training of these special forces emphasized night warfare, cooperation with helicopters, crossing water obstacles, executing amphibious landings, and attacking targets at or near the shore. The battalions were equipped with anti-tank weapons, mainly the AT-3 Sagger anti-tank guided missile (ATGM), as well as rocket launchers (RPG-7), giving the commandos the ability to also execute anti-tank ambushes or strike armor concentrations.⁴ During the War of Attrition (1969-1970) Egyptian commandos conducted several raids on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal, causing losses to the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), but more importantly, boosting the self-confidence of the Egyptian Army and providing their commandos with important operational experience.⁵

In examining the IDF special forces on the eve of the war, we can determine that two units were distinctively defined as special forces: Unit 269 (in Hebrew: *Sayeret Matkal*) and the Naval Special Warfare Unit—Flotilla 13 (F.13) (in Hebrew: *Shayetet 13*).⁶ Unit 269 is defined as a commando unit belonging to Intelligence Branch (J-2) Special Operations, whose primary mission was to gather strategic information in order to strengthen Israel's strategic warning capabilities.⁷ Nevertheless, the combatants of this unit were (and still are) highly trained in complex missions of direct action (DA).⁸ Furthermore, in the IDF there were several additional regular units that had special operations capabilities, mainly DA. These units were the reconnaissance companies of the 1st Infantry Brigade (*Golani*), the 35th Paratroopers Brigade (*Tzanchanim*) and the 7th Armor Brigade. In addition, each of the regional commands had reconnaissance battalions (North – Egoz, Central – Haruv, South – Shaked). In the years prior to the war, the various IDF special forces units conducted complex raids against enemy targets, such as the raid on Beirut International Airport (Operation Gift, December 1972) and Operation Spring of Youth.⁹ IDF special forces also conducted raids against military and terrorist targets in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon, and areas adjacent to the border with Israel.

It is important to note that besides outlining the purpose of the F.13 unit in war, the literature contains no discussion regarding the missions of the other units in time of war. Although the primary mission of the brigade reconnaissance companies in war is to provide intelligence and combat support for the brigade units, it is unclear whether they operate as an organic force or are dispersed to different, remote sectors of battle. As we shall see below, the brigade reconnaissance companies did not operate according to their primary mission. Therefore we can argue that IDF special operations forces operated successfully outside of their published operational conception while the Egyptian and Syrian forces failed to realize their full potential by remaining anchored within Soviet military doctrinal limitations.

The Utilization of Egyptian Special Forces

Egypt's original war plan was to cross the Suez Canal and move deep into the Sinai. Accordingly, the missions of the commando forces were defined as missions in the depth of the Israeli deployments and particularly seizing vital areas in their enemy's territories and striking C3 targets and logistical depots.¹⁰ The original war plan of the Egyptian army determined the utilization of three groups of commando battalions; each group consisting of six to ten commando battalions. The first group, under the direct command of the Egyptian General Staff, was to secure the operational space by setting ambushes on the eve of the first day of the war in the areas of the Gidi and Mitlah passes and on the axes leading to the field armies' areas of action, in order to enable the forces of the field armies to securely cross the Canal and establish a bridgehead on the eastern bank.¹¹ The battalions in the second group were under the command of the field armies and their mission was to assist in establishing the bridgehead and to cause the IDF to lose command and control over the units in immediate contact with the Egyptian forces. To do this they would attack targets in tactical depth in the battle zone, up to 25 km from the Canal; specifically, by setting up ambushes, laying mines, raiding artillery batteries, and severing lines of communication. Another mission was securing the field armies' flanks. A third group was under the responsibility of the Red Sea Command and its mission was to seize the eastern shore of the Red Sea and capture Sharm El-Sheikh.

However, the war plan was cut back near the start of the war, and the new plan determined that the Egyptian army would cross the Suez Canal in several places and establish itself in a defensive position up to ten km from the eastern shore. Therefore, the in-depth missions of the commando forces were cancelled. Since the Egyptian evaluation was that the IDF

would react immediately by sending armored forces to the Canal, it was highly important to disrupt and delay their movement while simultaneously striking command, control, and communication systems in order to increase the “fog of war” in the Israeli Southern Command. Furthermore, the Egyptian commando units were part of the first line of defense of the Egyptian alignment on the eastern shore of the Canal, tasked with the mission of “hunting tanks.” This meant using ATGMs to strike at Israeli tanks attempting to approach the main Egyptian force that had not yet established itself properly in defense or was in the midst of various phases of crossing.

At 1730, three-and-a-half hours after the beginning of the war, as nightfall approached, fifty Mi-8 (NATO reporting name Hip) transport helicopters crossed the Suez Canal and flew three commando battalions into the Sinai Peninsula. At 21:00 another battalion was landed. All in all, 1,700 soldiers carrying large numbers of anti-tank weapons participated in the assault. The helicopters penetrated the Sinai at low altitude, flying in formation toward quality targets and locations that commanded central axes, which IDF reserve forces were expected to use on their way to the Sinai front.¹² Indeed the attack of the Egyptian commandos surprised the IDF both in its scope and in its daring, despite Israeli air control receiving an alert regarding the penetration of helicopters and launching fighter aircraft in order to intercept them. The problem for the Israelis was that their pilots had trouble identifying the helicopters due to the darkness and their low flight altitude. This allowed some of the Egyptian helicopter formations, mainly those that were flying in the northern sector, to fly undetected. These continued eastward to their targets, landed their commando forces without encountering any resistance, and returned safely to Egypt.¹³

Nevertheless, in other areas the Israelis succeeded in downing dozens of Egyptian helicopters in various ways, some of them quite unusual.¹⁴ Many of the helicopters were still on their way to their objectives and had commandos on board. Still others were downed by aircraft, anti-aircraft fire and even by direct tank fire.

After the remaining commando forces landed, some of them were attacked by Israeli ground forces sent to the probable landing areas. There, battles ensued in which some of the Egyptian forces were destroyed. Only a small portion of the Egyptian forces managed to attack IDF forces, and those that were not destroyed began moving westward in an attempt to join the forces that had crossed the Canal. The most successful attack was conducted against Israeli reserve forces moving on the El-Arish–Qantara axis, in which ten IDF soldiers were killed and twenty injured. That Egyptian

commando force was finally destroyed by a combined force of tanks and soldiers from the Shaked reconnaissance unit.¹⁵

Most Egyptian commando forces that were landed in the Sinai abandoned their missions almost immediately and began seeking their way back west to friendly lines. In all, in the first two days of the war, 72 Mi-8 transport helicopters carrying 1,700 soldiers penetrated the Sinai. In the ensuing days the Egyptian army attempted to deliver food, ammunition and supplies to the commando forces that had been landed in the Sinai, through the Gulf of Suez, using boats. However, these were sunk by ships of the Israeli navy. Of the 72 helicopters and 1,700 men comprising the Egyptian commando assault force, 25 helicopters were downed, 750 commandos were killed, and another 330 were taken prisoner.¹⁶ It is possible that the absence of any reference to the activities of the commando battalions in the memoir of war-time Chief of Staff Gen. Saad El Shazly testifies more than anything else to the fact that the commando forces did not fulfill the in-depth missions they were tasked with.

The main importance of the Egyptian commando forces to the Egyptian war effort can be identified in their use within the divisional formations that crossed the Canal. Six commando battalions were allocated to these divisions and their mission was to support the stabilization of the bridgeheads, attacking targets in the IDF's tactical depth using raids and ambushes, and attacking some of the Israeli strongholds on the eastern shore of the Canal. Since the commando forces were the first to cross the Canal, their mission was to ambush Israeli armored forces that were expected to move from their bases toward the Canal. This is how Avraham Adan, the commanding officer of the 162nd Armored Division, described the sight in his book:

As they (one of the division's battalions) approached, they saw hundreds of Egyptian infantry soldiers who suddenly fired a barrage of missiles at them...[and] Egyptian RPG-7 and Sagger missiles hit some tanks.¹⁷

Another mission of the Egyptian commandos was to secure the gaps between the Egyptian units in order to prevent an attack on their flanks.¹⁸ Overall, the IDF identified few attempts to attack targets in the tactical depth and, in fact, even in the later phases of the war, commando forces rarely embarked upon in-depth missions. Thus we may assert that the only significant action of the Egyptian commando forces was when they operated as tank hunters in the forward tactical space of the Egyptian forces crossing the Canal. At times, these squads were sent beyond the line of

defense in order to set up ambushes for IDF armored forces moving along the axes toward the crossing areas.¹⁹ In the later phases of the war, and especially after the IDF crossed the Canal, the commando forces were used as light and mobile forces in order to fill in breaches in the rear of the Egyptian alignment and in an attempt to halt the advancing forces of the Israeli army.²⁰

The Syrian commandos

Studies written after the war and based on the analysis of the Syrian maneuvers in the first days of the war have concluded that the Syrian general staff had constructed its war plans while being deeply influenced by the Soviet doctrine of deep battle.²¹ Following this doctrine, the Syrian war plan determined that the breaching of the Israeli defenses in the Golan Heights would be conducted along a wide front with several divisional efforts along the border and not with one main effort. This was intended to make it difficult for the IDF to identify where the Syrian attack was succeeding and shift reserves to that area in order to hold back the attack. Furthermore, the breaching attempts would be supported by massive artillery fire, aerial assaults, close air support, air interdiction missions, and attacks on strategic targets. A further mission was landing commando forces in the tactical and operational rear of the IDF.

In this doctrine, commando forces were a complementary component of the breaching, as the original plan called for landing them at the IDF's main strongholds on the Hermon, Bental, and Tel-Faris mountains. Capturing these strongholds, with all their observational, intelligence, and electronic warfare equipment, would grant the Syrian army an important advantage. This would be a significant operational contribution; as such actions would hamper the Israeli command's ability to form a coherent intelligence picture in real time, to identify successful Syrian breaching attempts, and to direct reinforcements to these areas. A second planned mission was to land commando forces near the bridges of the Jordan River. This was intended to ambush the reserve forces that were expected to make their way to the Golan Heights and thus disrupt their arrival to the battle zone.²² A third mission was to establish anti-tank defenses in the areas captured by the Syrian army.²³

On the first day of the war the most significant operation conducted by the Syrian commando forces was the capture of the Israel Hermon stronghold.²⁴ The 82nd Battalion of the Syrian commando was landed using three helicopters (a fourth crashed after hitting the mountainside) and immediately stormed the stronghold, while other forces were sent to set

up ambushes in order to stop the advancing Israeli counter attack. The Syrians managed to capture several dozen Israeli soldiers and take over the stronghold, which was equipped with advanced electronic devices for communication, observation, and electronic warfare missions. Following the capture of the stronghold, Soviet technicians arrived to dismantle the equipment and transfer it to the Soviet Union for examination.²⁵ From the Israeli point of view, this meant the loss of a strategically important base that commanded the entire battle zone of the northern front and also the loss of the ability to disrupt Syrian communications and radar systems.²⁶

Apparently, on the first day of the war, two other commando landings were planned. The first was intended for the southern Golan Heights, with the intent of delaying the Israeli forces in that area and enabling the 5th Infantry Division to advance deep into the territory. This operation was cancelled because Syrian observers identified intense Israeli aircraft activity, and feared the helicopters carrying the commandos would be shot down. In the second operation, the commandos were supposed to take over areas near the Jordan River bridges in order to disrupt the ascent of the IDF armored reserve brigades to the Golan Heights. This was of great strategic significance, as the IDF war plans asserted that in case of war, reserve units were supposed to enter combat within 24 hours. Execution of a commando landing would have presented a serious operational dilemma to the IDF. This is not idle speculation: on the first night of fighting, only hours after the beginning of the war, tank platoons and even solitary tanks from the Israeli reserve 179th and 679th Armor Brigades began to climb up to the southern and central Golan Heights and engage with the advancing Syrian forces.²⁷ By arriving earlier than the Syrian forecast, the Israeli armored reserves disrupted, to a certain extent, the Syrian advance toward the Golan slopes.

The Jordan River bridge commando operation was supposed to be executed within nine hours of the beginning of the attack, but for some unknown reason it was cancelled.²⁸ It is possible that the change in the starting time of the war, 1400, necessitated a night assault, which was a mission that Syrian helicopter pilots had difficulty with. In fact, during the entire war, not a single Syrian night helicopter assault was documented.²⁹

The two commando operations were cancelled without the Syrian army putting other measures in their place. In fact, on the first day of the war, except for the capture of the Hermon, the commando battalions operated only in support of the breaching divisions, being used as élite infantry in failed attempts to capture IDF strongholds along the border and in the role of tank hunters. The commando battalion that operated in the northern

Golan Heights participated in repelling the IDF's attempt on October 8 to recapture the Hermon stronghold. The Israeli force suffered heavy casualties and withdrew without achieving its objectives.³⁰

On October 7, helicopters landed commando forces that proceeded to capture the Tel-Faris stronghold, which had been evacuated by its Israeli defenders several hours earlier.³¹ This base became a large prize because of the intelligence-gathering, electronic warfare, and air traffic control functions. The stronghold was recaptured by the IDF two days later.

The most intensive activity for the Syrian commando forces was conducted on October 9. On this day the Syrian army began a two-pronged attack from the north and from the east. Using several divisions, they attempted to outflank the forces of 7th Brigade (Armored), which had contained the Syrian thrust intended to capture the northern part of the Golan Heights. The preliminary action of this attack was the landing of commando forces at several crossroads in order to ambush the IDF forces expected to advance through them on their way to hold the Syrian attack. The most important crossroads was Nafah Junction, near the Israeli 36th Division headquarters.³² Helicopters successfully landed about sixty commandos near the divisional headquarters, but in a battle that developed between them and soldiers of Unit 269 and 1st Brigade, 50 Syrian commandos were killed and the rest were taken prisoner. The same day forces from a Syrian commando battalion operating in the northern Golan Heights near Buq'ata village succeeded in inflicting heavy damage to the 7th Brigade Reconnaissance Company and attached infantry that had been sent to destroy them.³³

With the retreat of the Syrian army from the Golan Heights (10 October) the commando forces operated as élite infantry and together with armored forces attempted to repel the IDF forces that had begun to gradually establish positions in an enclave within Syrian territory.³⁴ But all of these attacks were repelled by the forces of 1st Brigade with the support of tanks. The last gasp of the Syrian commandos in the war occurred during the recapture of the Hermon stronghold on the night of 21-22 October (Operation Dessert). During the weeks prior to the attack, the commandos entrenched very well on the ground and laid mines on the only road to the stronghold. In the ensuing battle, 55 soldiers from 1st Brigade were killed, but after a lengthy battle the stronghold was recaptured. Some of the Syrian commandos that retreated from the stronghold and some that were found on the Syrian side of the Hermon were killed in ambushes setup by paratroopers from 317th Brigade, which had been infiltrated into the Syrian rear with helicopters.

Israel's Special Forces

A survey of the literature on the Yom Kippur War clearly reveals the fact that the Israeli brigade and regional command-level reconnaissance units, which had special forces capabilities, were used as élite infantry. Regional reconnaissance units and also the 1st Infantry Brigade reconnaissance company were subordinated to the fighting divisions, where they conducted reconnaissance missions and direct action (DA), according to tactical needs. No significant difference was found between the operations of the various reconnaissance units compared to regular infantry battalions either.

The Paratrooper's Reconnaissance Unit was subordinated to the General Staff for special missions, and the literature on the war notes only two operations conducted by this company during the war. The first, called Operation Gown, was conducted on the night of 11-12 October, during which 25 soldiers were flown to an area near the Syrian-Jordanian-Iraqi border triangle, about 300 km into Syrian territory. The force setup an ambush of an Iraqi convoy that was moving to reinforce the Syrian army in its attempts to repel the IDF forces within Syria. The strike on the convoy and on the bridge in the axis of movement delayed those forces that were supposed to reinforce the Iraqi Expeditionary Force that was already engaged in battle with the IDF. The following day the convoy was also attacked from the air. This delay enabled the IDF forces to repel the Syrian and Iraqi counterattacks and thus strengthen their hold on the enclave they had captured within Syria.

The next day the reconnaissance unit embarked on another operation, again in an attempt to strike an Iraqi convoy, but this force was identified by the Syrians and was compelled to move back into Israel without fulfilling its mission. An analysis of Operation Gown demonstrates how a micro-tactical action can be significant at the campaign and even the strategic-level, and thereby influence the war in general.

Notably, regarding Unit 269 the literature does not say whether it had specific missions during wartime. An examination of the unit's record in the Six-Day War proves the insignificance of this unit. During this war the unit was tasked with complex raids on Egyptian airfields in the Sinai, but by the time the unit's soldiers got organized for the operation, the airfields had already been captured by the maneuvering armored forces. The sporadic references in the general literature on the Yom Kippur War indicate that Unit 269 was used mainly for DA missions, raids on targets in the depth of Egyptian territory, and also as an élite infantry force.³⁵

At the start of the war the unit arrived at the Golan Heights where it was split into two task forces. The first was joined to 146th Armor Division and was tasked with reconnaissance and securing tank parks. The second task force was joined to 36th Division and was assigned the defense of the divisional headquarters in the Nafah Base. The teams of this force operated as tank hunters and also conducted reconnaissance to identify Syrian forces. This task force together with Company C of the 51st Battalion (1st Infantry Brigade) engaged a Syrian commando force that had been landed by helicopters north-west of Nafah and destroyed it (9 October). At the conclusion of the Israeli counter-attack (10 October), part of the task force that had operated alongside the 146th Division was transferred to the Sinai front and was joined to 100th Battalion (Armored) as a reconnaissance company on jeeps. One of this company's missions was to operate as tank hunters using the jeeps, which were equipped with the M40 recoilless rifle (106mm). Several teams remained at the unit's base and these conducted several raids in the Egyptian-controlled territory on the western bank of the Canal. In one of the operations, (Operation Pontiac, 11 October), the soldiers of the unit were flown along with artillery soldiers armed with 105mm Howitzer guns (M102), and for an entire hour they shelled the headquarters of Egypt's Third Army and adjacent targets. Subsequently the force evacuated the area without casualties.

The task force that remained in the Golan Heights continued to operate under the command of 36th Division, and during the division's attack into Syria the soldiers of Unit 269 conducted reconnaissance missions and raids on Syrian artillery batteries, operated to extract wounded, and as elite infantry fighters in the capture of Syrian strongholds. On the night of 20-21 October, several dozen fighters from Unit 269 deployed fire-direction posts ahead of the attempt to recapture the Hermon stronghold. On the morning of the 21st the shelling began, with the soldiers of Unit 269 guiding the fire toward the Syrian stronghold, which still held captured Israeli soldiers, reporting hits. When Syrian forces finally retreated, the fighters of Unit 269 killed and captured dozens of Syrian soldiers who were moving toward the Hermon stronghold still held by the Syrians. Unit 269 did not participate in the final liberation of the Hermon stronghold, but this was accomplished by fighters of the 51st Battalion of the 1st Infantry Brigade.

The activities of F.13 can be defined as distinctly special operations, and in fact it was the only unit whose usage corresponded to one of its original missions: inflicting damage on the enemy's naval force. Out of the various activities conducted by F.13, especially notable are the series of

operations called Magbit and Lady, which targeted Egyptian ports on the Red Sea (Hurghada) and the Mediterranean (Port Said), respectively. For the purposes of this chapter, the Magbit series of operations is important due to its location and strategic importance for both Israel and Egypt.

Hurghada is a port on the northern Red Sea, on the East-African shore, which commands one of the key points in the Red Sea arena. From the Israeli point of view, the presence of a naval force at this port threatened Israel's southern sea egress (the port of Eilat) and also enabled Egypt to land forces on the western shores of the Sinai Peninsula. Also, the IDF had made plans to land forces on the Egyptian bank of the Suez Gulf and the Egyptian naval presence threatened such an action. Indeed, prior to the war Israel had intended to strengthen its naval force in the Red Sea with several missile boats that were supposed to reach the Red Sea arena in a lengthy journey around Africa, but the war broke out before they had set sail. Thus, in the beginning of the war there were only a few patrol boats, each armed with a 20mm cannon, Browning .50 caliber machine guns, and a recoilless rifle (84mm). The Egyptian harbor itself was protected by dense air defenses and thus was impossible to attack from the air, not to mention that the Red Sea arena was allocated only two F-4 Phantom jets. Thus, the only way the IDF had to cope with the naval threat presented by the Egyptian fleet anchored at Hurghada Port was to conduct F.13 raids to render inactive the two missile boats there and damage the port's infrastructure. F.13 fighters conducted three raids that pinned a large Egyptian force to the defense, with the final raid even compelling the naval force to retreat much farther south. These actions terminated the Egyptian naval threat in the Red Sea arena.³⁶

Operation Lady was another action aimed at ships of the Egyptian fleet that had withdrawn to Port Said harbor. Prior to the operation, missile ships of the Israeli navy had struck several Egyptian ships in sea battles in which numerous surface-to-surface missiles were used. Consequently, the Egyptian ships had withdrawn behind the defenses offered by the harbor. The goal of the operation was to strike additional ships and thus further reduce the Egyptian naval fighting force in the Mediterranean Sea arena. During the operation, several frogmen infiltrated the harbor and managed to sink four ships, one of them a missile boat. After the operation the Egyptian navy refrained from conducting sorties into the Mediterranean Sea, thereby granting the Israeli navy complete control of this arena.

After the war the IDF began to study lessons from the war and conduct significant reforms. One of them was to establish two special units:

the first was Unit 5101 (*Shaldag*; Kingfisher in Hebrew), whose mission was to provide the Air Force with independent intelligence capabilities, particularly with regards to locating mobile air-defense batteries, and to mark targets for aerial attacks. Throughout the years additional missions were assigned to the unit, mainly in the field of DA.³⁷ The second unit was Unit 669, whose primary original mission was extricating wounded pilots who were abandoned behind enemy lines. Currently the unit also engages in combat search and rescue missions (CSAR) of fighters that require evacuation from battle zones.

Evaluation of Special Forces Operations: Discussion and Conclusions

The Egyptian and Syrian armies forced Israel into a conventional war, and therefore the war actions required the manipulation of massive amounts of fire and numerous maneuvering forces, in order to achieve the objectives of the war as determined by the political echelon of the two Arabs countries. In this context, the role of the commando battalions was to support the maneuvering forces by disrupting C3 systems of the headquarters in the Sinai and the Golan Heights, striking various strategic installations, and also disrupting the arrival of reserve forces to the war zones. Doubtlessly, the use of commando forces was demoralizing to the Israel forces, who felt that they were being attacked from both the front and the rear.

However, the Syrian commando forces failed to disrupt the assembly and arrival of the Israeli reserve forces to the Golan Heights, nor did they inflict significant damage on C3 and logistic systems. Neither did their actions during the war itself, and particularly on 9 October, create any significant threat to the Israeli forces. One exception was the capture of the Hermon stronghold in the initial hours of the war, which besides the terrible blow to morale, also prevented Israel from holding an observation point toward Syria as well as the northern Golan Heights and a point from which artillery fire could have been directed to support the IDF forces fighting in this sector. Furthermore, Syria took possession of valuable intelligence equipment, which instructed her regarding the manner of operation of Israeli intelligence and therefore caused long-term damage. In other words, in evaluating the activities of the Syrian commando forces we can assert that they failed at the tactical level but achieved a considerable success at the strategic level, with the capture of the Israeli Hermon stronghold. That said, it is important to note that Syria lost all of its military gains in the war. By 10 October its forces had retreated entirely from the Golan Heights, and the Hermon stronghold was recaptured toward the end of the war.

Examination of the activities of the Egyptian commando forces shows that these forces utterly failed in the missions assigned to them in the Israeli strategic and operational depth in the Sinai Peninsula. However, they did achieve great success when they operated as tank hunter squads in the forward tactical zone of the crossing Egyptian forces. These teams succeeded in delaying and even halting the arrival of Israeli tanks, operating in small forces, to the Canal line to rescue the IDF soldiers in the Canal strongholds. This also prevented Israeli forces from disrupting the Egyptian crossing, which was its most vulnerable stage. Thereby the Egyptian commando forces made an important contribution to the initial consolidation of the Egyptian army on the eastern bank of the Suez Canal, where it remained in place until the end of the war, as the IDF was unable to dislodge them from that position.

The utilization of the Israeli special forces also clearly indicates that the role of these forces in war is to provide combat support to the conventional forces. The special forces and those forces that had special forces capabilities were used in select infantry missions, just as the Arab commandos were. Only the activities of F.13 can be defined as being in the realm of classic special operations forces and particularly the raid on Hurghada Port. The only operational response available to Israel regarding this naval base was special forces action, as it did not have enough regular forces, naval or aerial, to strike the Egyptian port. As a result of these raids, Egypt was unable to use this important naval base, which threatened the seaways from Eilat southward, and was also prevented from landing large forces on the Sinai shores. Therefore the actions of F.13 went beyond the realm of battle support and had a strategic effect in the Red Sea arena.

The main conclusion from this chapter is that in the Yom Kippur War, special operations forces of all the armies were a support element which enabled regular forces to engage in intensive fighting, as required by the character of this war. Sometimes, as in the Egyptian case, the special forces were a force multiplier for the regular forces, with the Egyptian commando constituting an important element enabling both the crossing of the Canal and the consolidation of the bridgeheads. Sometimes, as demonstrated by the F.13 raids or the ambush conducted by the reconnaissance company of 35th Brigade, the actions of the special forces made a contribution at the strategic level. But an overall review of the war shows that the special forces contributed mainly in the realm of tactical battle support.

Notes

1. Kenneth S. Brower, "The Yom Kippur War," *Military Review*, March 1974: 25-33.

2. These tasks were assigned to Spetsnaz forces in the Russian army. See Viktor Suvorov, "Spetsnaz: The Soviet Union's Special Forces," *Military Review* 64 (3) 1984: 30-46. See also: Robin Neillands, *In the Combat Zone: Special Forces Since 1945* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 77-78.

3. Two of the ten battalions were established using the military forces of the Palestinian organizations that were operating under Syria's patronage. One belonged to the As-Sa'iaq organization and the other was part of the Palestine Liberation Army. The two battalions operated under Syrian command, which assigned their missions.

4. For a review of the organization of the Egyptian special forces, see Dani Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy for the Yom Kippur War: An Analysis* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009), 154-156.

5. Kenneth M. Pollack, *Arabs at War: Military Effectiveness, 1948-1991* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska University Press, 2002), 92. See also; Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy for the Yom Kippur War*, 156.

6. Hereafter F. 13.

7. Neil C. Livingstone and David Halevy, *Inside the PLO: Covert Units, Secret Funds, and the War against Israel and the United States* (New York: Quill and Morrow, 1990), 49. See also: Neillands, *In the Combat Zone*, 148-150.

8. Direct action entails short-duration strikes and other small-scale offensive actions conducted with specialized military capabilities to seize, destroy, capture, exploit, recover, or damage designated targets in hostile, denied, or diplomatically and/or politically sensitive environments (JP 3-05, *Special Operations*, 2014, x).

9. The operation took place on the night of April 9 and early morning of 10 April 1973, when Israeli army special forces units attacked several Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) targets in Beirut and Sidon (in Lebanon).

10. In fact, methodical thinking about the utilization of special forces during war began in the IDF following the lessons of the Second Lebanon War (2006). One of the products of this thinking was the establishment, in 2011, of the Depth HQ, which is under the direct command of the Chief of the General Staff.

11. The importance of the two passes is derived from their being the only ones permitting movement of armored vehicles from the southern part of the Suez Canal deep into the Sinai. Also, if they had fallen into Egyptian hands, the IDF would have been unable to move its reserves to the theater of war.

12. George W. Gawrych, *The Albatross of Decisive Victory* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), 176.

13. Regarding the survivability of helicopters as a crucial factor in the success or failure of special forces operations, see Anthony H. Cordesman and Abraham R. Wagner, *The Lessons of Modern War (vol. 1): The Arab-Israeli Conflicts, 1973-1989* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1990), 100-101.

14. Some helicopters were downed using a maneuver in which a Phantom aircraft flew over the helicopter's rotor at a low altitude while engaging its burners. In this way turbulence was created, causing the helicopter to go into a tailspin and crash.

15. Eldad, Nachum and Tzvi (without last name), "Fighting the Egyptian Commando in the Yom Kippur War", *MAARACHOT* 327 December 1992: 20-25 (in Hebrew).

16. For more on the Egyptian commando in the war, see Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy for the Yom Kippur War*, 156-159.

17. Avraham Adan, *On Both Banks of the Suez* (San Rafael, CA: Presidio, 1980), 21. See also: Trevor N. Dupuy, *Elusive Victory: The Arab – Israeli Wars, 1947-1974* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 401-410.

18. Pollack, *Arabs at War*, 108, 110.

19. Gawrych, *The Albatross of Decisive Victory*, 176-177.

20. Asher, *The Egyptian Strategy for the Yom Kippur War*, 159.

21. Pollack, *Arabs at War*, 480-482.

22. The assembly areas of the reserve forces were around Rosh Pina, and in their movement eastward, to the Golan Heights, they had to cross the Jordan River.

23. Dani Asher (ed.), *Inside Israel's Northern Command: The Yom Kippur War on the Syrian Border* (Lexington, KY: Kentucky University Press, 2014), 129. See also: George E. Knapp, "Antiarmor Operations on the Golan Heights, October 1973", in: Roger J. Spiller (ed.), *Combined Arms in Battle since 1939* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1992), 27-34.

24. Pollack, *Arabs at War*, 491; Abraham Rabinovich, *The Yom Kippur War* (New York: Schocken Books, 2004), 154-155.

25. One of the soldiers who was captured was an intelligence officer who under the pressure of interrogation revealed a great deal of information, including the purpose and activities of Unit 269. This forced the Military Intelligence Directorate to make drastic changes to its modus operandi.

26. Asher (ed.), *Inside Israel's Northern Command*, 185-186.

27. Asher (ed.), 168-170.

28. Pollack has argued that the Syrian President, Assad, did not authorize commando raids in the depth of Israeli territory since the commando battalions were composed of soldiers loyal to his regime. Therefore he wished not to risk them and also desired to have them close at hand in case of a coup attempt. See Pollack, *Arabs at War*, 479-480.

29. This in contrast to IDF special operations, which in most cases involved night-time landings of forces.

30. Rabinovich, *The Yom Kippur War*, 254.

31. Jerry Asher, *Duel for the Golan: The 100-Hour Battle that Saved Israel* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1987), 185.

32. In 1973, and to a certain extent today as well, the Golan Heights did not have an abundance of paved roads, so that a force that wished to move from one

place to another was limited to a small number of axes running the length and breadth of the Golan Heights. Furthermore, in numerous areas mines had been laid before and after the Six-Day War, which endangered vehicles that attempted to stray from the few axes. Nafah Base was established in a strategically important junction in the middle of the Golan Heights, with an important axis extending from the junction westward, toward the Bnot Yaa'kov Bridge.

33. Regarding the events of October 9, see Asher, *Duel for the Golan*, 200, 229-230.

34. Iraqi commando battalions were also operating alongside the Syrian commandos. They too conducted élite infantry assignments and did not operate in the depth of Israeli territory.

35. Moshe Givati, *The Hermon Mountain Operations* (Ben-Shemen: Modan, 2015), 265-266 (in Hebrew).

36. On the operations of F.13 in the Red Sea Theater see: Ze'ev Almog, *Bats in the Red Sea* (Tel Aviv: Ministry of Defense Publishing House, 2007), 153-205 (in Hebrew).

37. This unit is similar in its characteristics to a United States Air Force Combat Control Team.

Chapter 11

If the Cold War Goes Hot

Special Forces Berlin and Planning for Operations in East Germany, 1956-1990

James Stejskal

During the initial stages of the Cold War, US military planners believed the forces of NATO to be far overmatched by those of the Soviet Union and their Eastern European allies. In anticipation of a possible war in Europe, US Army Europe (USAREUR) sought out solutions to stem, or at least slow the tide of what they believed would be a massive invasion by as many as 145 enemy divisions. A new tool was introduced into the planning matrix with the establishment of US Army Special Forces in 1952 and shortly thereafter an idea was born: deploy a special forces (SF) company to Berlin to disrupt and retard a Soviet attack.

In the words of the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) Gen. Bernard Rogers, the unit's mission was simple: "Buy me time, any time at all." It was a tall order. Some considered it suicidal.

Special Forces Berlin was intended from the outset to support large-scale Allied conventional operations in the European Theater. This paper will discuss its mission, along with the unique, unconventional methodologies employed by its soldiers, as well as the unit's coordination to support conventional force goals.

SF Berlin, a classified, clandestine special mission unit was operational from 1956 until it was disbanded in 1990. Because a war in Europe did not occur, the plan's success cannot be fully evaluated, but some of the unit's challenges and potential problems will be considered.

The Need Arises

In the spring of 1956, 40 US Army Special Forces soldiers quietly prepared for a new mission. They were members of the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) stationed at Bad Tölz, Germany. The 10th was an elite organization, created only four years before to conduct unconventional or partisan warfare behind the lines in Eastern Europe in the event of war with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). SF was intended to help defend Western Europe from a Soviet attack. Its wartime mission was to "support resistance movements and organize

guerrilla forces in the Soviet-dominated Eastern European satellite countries.” It was a mission much like that of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) during WWII—one that would force the Soviets to divert resources from their main objectives.¹

The 10th Special Forces Group trained in small teams of ten non-commissioned officers commanded by a captain. The men were highly skilled; each man was a weapons, demolitions, medical, communications or an intelligence specialist and most were crossed-trained in multiple disciplines. They also were required to speak the language of their target countries. Many were foreign-born, Lodge Act soldiers—emigres who had been recruited from Eastern Europe and were ideal for the mission ahead.²

Following World War II, the Soviet Union’s occupation of Eastern Europe seemed permanent and put Western Europe under a new threat. Germany was divided into four sectors, each occupied by one of the four powers: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and the USSR. It was not long before a line was drawn—what Winston Churchill called an “Iron Curtain”—between the Western Zone and the Soviet-controlled East. The West would become the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), while the East became the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

The manipulation of elections in Poland and the Berlin Blockade in the late 1940s showed the true nature of Soviet Premier Josef Stalin’s ruthlessness and prompted Allied military planners to prepare for another war in Europe. Then, in 1953, a workers’ rebellion was brutally suppressed in East Germany as the Kremlin cemented its control over satellite states as a buffer zone to protect its own frontier. War on the Korean Peninsula did little to relieve tensions between East and West.

By the mid-1950s, the divided city of Berlin was at the epicenter of an existential struggle between the West and the East. After the blockade and workers’ uprising, the city stood as a symbol of freedom to the Western powers while the continued presence of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces in the city was a “thorn in the side” of the Soviet bloc. Moreover, Berlin’s open borders threatened the existence of the GDR as hundreds of thousands of refugees escaped to West Germany through West Berlin. An economic disaster for East Germany loomed due to this exodus. Communist leaders hoped to remove this irritant, first by weakening and then eliminating ties between West Berlin and West Germany. Their goal was to force the Allies to abandon the city so that it could be incorporated into the GDR. Simultaneously, the West deliberated on how best to main-

tain their presence, ensure unrestricted access to the city, and guarantee freedoms for West Berliners.

Berlin, the former capital of Germany, was also occupied by the Four Powers. Lying 110 miles inside the GDR, Berlin was split into sectors. The western half stood as an isolated outpost for the French, British, and Americans, while East Berlin was controlled by the Soviet Union. Although the border between West Berlin and the GDR was a controlled frontier, the intercity border was not—at least until 13 August 1961.

Before 1955, the Allies considered Berlin to be little more than a place to “show the flag” and military forces stationed there reflected that thought. Few thought the Allied occupation forces could offer more than token resistance in the event of war. West Berlin was surrounded by half a million East German and Soviet Army troops while the American, British and French forces totaled around 10,000 soldiers. Allied planning scenarios were centered on limited unilateral defenses of their own sectors.³

By 1955, however, Allied thinking and military planning for Berlin began to shift towards a concentrated, unified defense of the city.⁴ As part of the planning, tactical and strategic demolitions were considered. Although demolition of targets inside and outside West Berlin to hinder the enemy had been discussed as early as 1953, no specific plans were established either unilaterally or in concert with the other Allies.

In 1955, Maj. Gen. Charles L. Dasher, the commanding officer of US Command Berlin (USCOB) began to reassess the unilaterally-oriented strategy and planned not only for a unified defense of the city with the British and French, but a possible breakout to the West. That fall, USCOB proposed that portions of the US garrison in Berlin begin to prepare for such a contingency in conjunction with special forces operations in and around the city. At a strategic conference that same year, the three Allied Command chiefs of staff and the three commanders of US, British, and French forces in Berlin agreed that demolition squads should be used to destroy strategic targets inside and outside the city to slow enemy forces should the Soviets choose to advance on the West.⁵

Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe, Commander in Chief, US Army Europe (CINCUSAREUR) agreed and immediately took steps to assign the equivalent of a special forces company—six 11-man “A” Teams and a staff element—to the 6th Infantry Regiment in Berlin. In May 1956, the USCOB was given the authority “upon the outbreak of general hostilities, or under certain conditions of localized war” to commit the assigned special forces teams to attack targets in Berlin and East Germany. The designated targets

were rail lines, rail communication systems, military headquarters, telecommunications, POL facilities, storage and supply points, utilities, and inland waterways, in that order.⁶ “The proposed demolitions were intended to contribute to the over-all Allied war effort as well as to the defense of Berlin.”⁷

In the summer of 1956, those 40 previously mentioned men arrived in Berlin.⁸ They made up the core of what would become six full teams, but they were not identified as a special forces unit. Instead they were assigned to the 6th Infantry Regiment at McNair Barracks as its “security platoon,” an innocuous title that served to protect their true mission which was known to only the senior leadership of the command. They were under the command of Maj. Edward Maltese, an infantry officer who jumped into St. Mere Eglise, France on D-Day with the 1/505th Parachute Infantry Regiment and again into the hellfire of Operation Market Garden in Holland. Maltese’s primary role would be to deal with the staff at Berlin Command while his men plunged into the details of building a clandestine unit in the city.⁹

In April 1958, the detachment moved several kilometers across town to Andrews Barracks, a location that would permit expansion and better security. The unit was renamed Detachment “A” and was simply called the Detachment or “Det A” for short. Recruitment had continued and by this time the unit numbered nearly 90 men—six “A” Teams of 11 soldiers each, with the remainder staff and support personnel.¹⁰

Mission

In 1956, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), Gen. Alfred Gruenther, knew that NATO military forces would be severely disadvantaged if the Warsaw Pact was able to achieve surprise in any military action. He relied heavily on intelligence sources to provide him with indications of Soviet preparations for war. When and if war came, NATO would rely on its air assets to destroy key choke points such as rail marshaling yards and bridges crossing the Elbe and Oder Rivers to slow the enemy’s advance and follow-on logistics. US Special Operations Forces would contribute as well; infiltrating by US Air Force aircraft deep behind the enemy front lines to disrupt and harass the Soviet forces and those of their allies.¹¹ Most of these forces, however, were oriented on Eastern European countries, not East Germany.

In considering the USCOB’s request, USAREUR planners recognized that if SF elements were pre-positioned in Berlin before hostilities, they would be “behind the lines” even before hostilities began. Better still, they

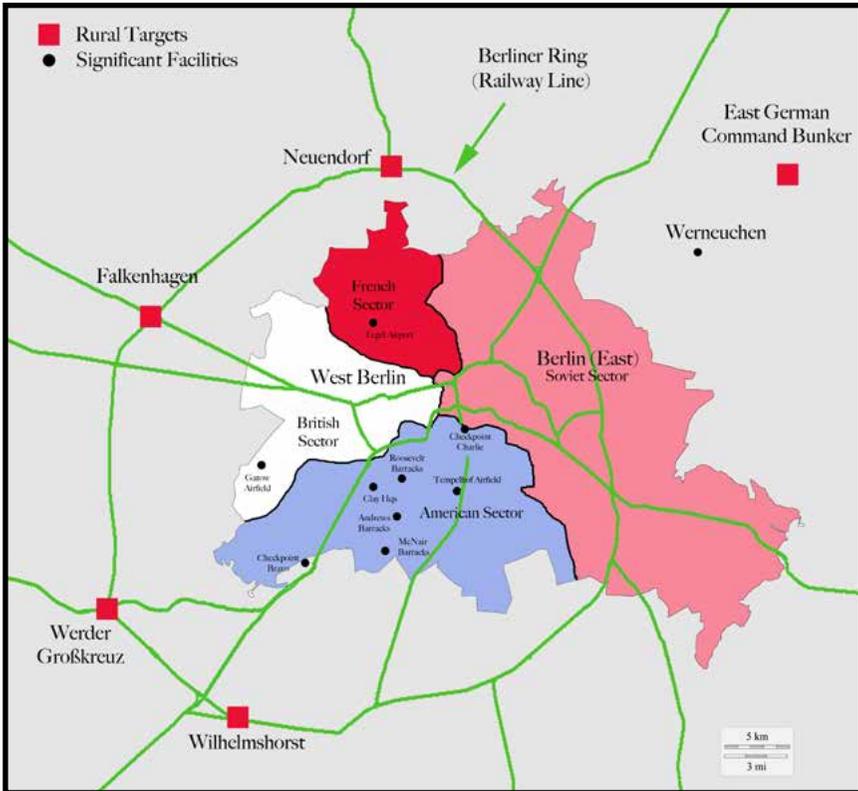


Figure 11.1.A Map of a Divided Berlin showing the *Aussernring* rail-line and Targets. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

would have time to prepare for a possible Soviet D-Day while in their operational area. The unit's mission was for its six SF teams to conduct direct action missions against rail, road, and canal infrastructure in and around Berlin before beginning unconventional warfare (UW) operations.¹² A key element of these operations was to report via long-range, high-frequency radio on enemy locations, activities, and movements to enable NATO air strikes against them.¹³

In wartime, the teams would take their orders from a new subordinate element of US European Command (USEUCOM), the Support Operations Task Force—Europe (SOTFE). SOTFE was set up in Paris in May 1955 to conduct planning and to provide operational control of all US special operations in the theater.¹⁴ Their primary mission was to use its assets to delay and hamper a Soviet attack. In peacetime, SOTFE set up field exercises, unit evaluations, and coordinated training of the units with foreign SOF units. During wartime, it would direct the deployment of American SOF units against the Warsaw Pact in accordance with the orders of CIN-

CEUR. For the next 35 years, until after the fall of the Wall in 1989, SOTFE would supervise operations of SF in Berlin.

Planning and Training (Execution)

Once the unit arrived in Berlin, intensive training began and sterile equipment not attributable to the US government was acquired. The mission was simple: upon the outbreak of general hostilities or under certain conditions of localized war, the teams would first attack targets in East Germany vital to the USCOB's defense of the city, as well as priority USEUCOM targets that would slow the Soviet juggernaut's advance. Once that task was completed, the teams would conduct UW operations, linking up with local guerrilla forces to harass and delay the Soviet offensive operations.

The primary USCOB and USEUCOM targets lay just outside the Berlin city limits on the *Berliner Aussenring*, a 125 kilometer rail line which encircled West Berlin just outside the city that would carry the overwhelming majority of Soviet military traffic westwards to the front. Four of the teams were oriented on destroying the railway's critical points such as bridges and marshaling yards to slow the enemy's forward progress. Two teams would remain in the city to conduct urban "stay-behind" operations.

A number of factors went into the choice of targets. First, was the target critical to the Warsaw Pact? Second, was it accessible i.e., could the team get to it? Then, would the enemy be able to repair or replace the damage quickly? Would the target's destruction have any effect on the enemy?¹⁵ Obviously, destroying a bridge that could be easily bypassed or a railway line that could be quickly repaired would have little long-term effect so those targets were scratched from the list. The operational concept was straightforward. However, its execution would be another story.

Teams spent a lot of time looking for suitable crossing points into East Germany. The East Germans were expecting people to escape out of the GDR, not into it, which made the prospect of crossing this fortified barrier somewhat easier. When the Wall was built in 1961, the mission became quite a bit more difficult for the teams tasked to cross over. Even then, crossing the border was just the first hurdle. Once outside Berlin, the teams faced a cross-country march to the target that would require them to avoid enemy rear area security forces. The teams had to be prepared to deal with local guard forces; a bridge or a railway junction might not be defended, but an enemy headquarters would be guaranteed to have heavy security.

Like all special forces units, the individual "A" Teams planned their mission execution intensively. Unlike most other units, however, SF Ber-

lin had access to more intelligence information than usual and a proximity to their targets that made planning much easier. In addition to physical surveillance of their targets, they had everything from East German telephone books and military maps, aerial photographs routinely captured by US and Allied surveillance flights, as well as current order-of-battle data and intelligence reports to assist them. The teams produced an extremely detailed concept of operation from start to finish. Even if the team members could not actually visit their target, the Berlin Aviation Detachment's daily reconnaissance flights around the perimeter of the city permitted them a way to see the approaches to their destination.

Every team had a different approach to the mission. Most planned to cross the border in small groups—three four-man cells or two larger cells—either over, through, or under the wall.¹⁶ They would meet at pre-planned mission bases near the initial target, or each section would proceed to attack multiple targets in different locations. The strategic aim was cause chaos: railway destruction to sow confusion and tie up logistical traffic. Attacking the enemy's communication and command sites around Berlin was also planned.¹⁷

In reality it was an ambitious and extremely dangerous mission. Each team was assigned a specific area in the city for their initial operations, and each man had to be well-versed in the esoteric skills necessary for success. These included clandestine operations, sabotage, and intelligence tradecraft like surveillance and non-technical communications methods, which were taught by specialists from other agencies. The detachment embraced the tactics of the Office of Strategic Services, as well as those of urban guerrilla fighters in anticipation of conducting its mission in the face of a numerically superior enemy. To survive in such a hostile environment, the gloves would have to come off.

Tools of the Trade

To accomplish the mission, many tools were considered and prepared. Initially high explosives such as C-3, along with weapons, communications gear, and medical equipment were stockpiled and cached in hidden mission support sites throughout the operational area to support operations. Explosive coal was also acquired to sabotage train engines.¹⁸ Intended to be placed in railroad fuel bunkers, that method was abandoned as East German and Russian trains increasingly used diesel locomotives. Plans were made to destroy critical parts of the railway line itself, switching gear, critical bridges, and communication systems would have tied up the forward transport of troops and equipment, forcing the Warsaw Pact forces to rely on roads.



Figure 11.2. Detachment A soldiers prepare to load a C-119 at Tempelhof Airfield for a jump in West Germany. Unit Commander Lt. Col. Roman T. Piernick talks with Senior Medic Richard “Jim” Laritz in the foreground. (Photo courtesy of Col. Jim Wilde)

In 1956, the use of atomic demolitions munitions was contemplated and tested by members of the unit.¹⁹ The problems of transport, stockpiling, and security of the weapons in Berlin precluded those plans from reaching fruition. Conventional explosives and weapons would be used for the mission.

The Operators

Much of the men’s time was spent preparing for life as an independent operator in the city, as well as working as a member of a clandestine underground cell. Urban UW was practiced in Berlin and cities in Western Europe, which tested the soldiers’ abilities to operate clandestinely in civilian cover. The exercises tested technical and non-technical communications and the execution of a mission against a notional enemy. Reality was interjected through the routine operations of the Allied security and Berlin police elements who were never informed of the presence of the operators in their midst. The SF Berlin soldiers had to avoid compromise of their locations and activities by suspicious civilians as well. If they were ever stopped, cover stories had to survive questioning—apprehension or arrest was not an option.

Fluency in German was a prerequisite for the assignment. Because there were many Lodge Act soldiers in the unit, most of whom had fought in resistance forces during World War II, English was often a second lan-

guage in some of the team rooms.²⁰ False documents were prepared for each man, but once the men entered East Germany, cover would be more difficult. The detachment stayed on rotating alert for its entire existence, with at least half of its teams ready to roll out within three hours of initial notification. That would later shrink to a two-hour window.

Although limited field and weapons training could be done in Berlin, full-scale exercises were done in West Germany. This often necessitated a flight out of the city. The men would arrive at Tempelhof Airfield, board a waiting US Air Force transport and rig their gear in flight to avoid curious eyes in the city. Then a parachute drop would take place somewhere in West Germany.

Field exercises allowed the unit to role play and organize a UW support structure that closely replicated the building of a guerrilla force auxiliary behind enemy lines—exactly what they would need to do in wartime.

From its inception, the detachment honed its skills on exercises like Field Training Exercises (FTXs) High Point and Sea Ruler. Later, the detachment participated in SOTFE's annual FTXs Flintlock and Fleet Deer, usually playing the roles of the underground and guerrilla force militia to SF detachments from Bad Tölz and the United States. The men also forged working relationships and traded techniques and procedures with a number of foreign special operations units outside Berlin.²¹

Back in Berlin, each team spent the majority of its time working in their assigned areas, getting to know them and the people who lived there. The relationships they built would have been useful for any wartime eventuality, and although most Berliners were unaware of their “friends” true affiliation, many understood the nature of the game and volunteered wholeheartedly to assist. One such Berliner, known as “Lothar,” was a senior administrative official of the West German government. For many years, he worked with one team to provide access to private and public properties to use as safe houses or hidden staging bases for operations. Many other Berliners helped and the stories of their contributions remain *sub rosa*.

When construction of the Berlin Wall began on the night of 12-13 August 1961, the USCOB anticipated the worst. For the next few months, NATO prepared to defend the Western Sector of Berlin. The SF detachment was given two separate missions in the event of hostilities. The first was to sabotage the *S-* and *U-Bahn* railway lines which entered West Berlin to prevent their use in an invasion.²² The second was to destroy portions of the Berlin Wall to assist the US forces to breakout from the city.²³ The crisis, however, passed and the detachment was not required to put

its skills to use. Nevertheless, the calculus for war had changed. With increased security on the newly fortified frontiers, crossing over to the East became more difficult and plans required revision.

Throughout the 1960s, the unit kept up its proficiency with the unconventional warfare mission. World events, however, soon forced significant changes to SF roles and doctrine. Beginning in the 1950s, the Communist Bloc began to support revolutionary warfare throughout the Third World with the aim of “diverting the attention and forces of the United States.”²⁴ SF had been heavily involved in Indochina since 1957 and more and more resources were increasingly devoted to counterinsurgency warfare in that region. In addition, small “brushfire” wars had to be dealt with in South America and Africa. These operations proved that SF was very adaptable to a variety of missions beyond its core task of UW. It also set the stage for counterinsurgency and “foreign internal defense” to take precedence as SF’s primary mission in the future. With SF’s primary mission now counterinsurgency, the 10th SFG, and especially the SF detachment in West Berlin, were the units that kept the Army’s unconventional warfare mission alive through the 1960s until the end of the Cold War.

The additional skills required for the mission in Berlin were not taught at Fort Bragg, the home and school for the SF community. That was especially true in the case of intelligence tradecraft and how to organize and operate clandestinely—the skills needed to survive in a denied area. Mobile training teams from the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) taught many of those techniques and the unit adapted them to its own tactics. Later, the detachment would train other SF and other special operations teams who required these skills.²⁵

Conducting vulnerability surveys was to become another facet of the unit’s operations. In early 1961, USCOB gave the detachment its first formal tasking: to study the vulnerabilities of a prominent “at risk” German politician: Willy Brandt. The East German security services had already kidnapped a number of important West Berliners and Brandt—a critic of the GDR government—was believed to be a target.²⁶

The study resulted in a completely revised protection plan for the politician and led to additional tests of US and West German installation security. The detachment also launched small cells of SF soldiers into the United Kingdom, pitting them against British MI5 and MI6 security forces. These exercises honed the demeanor and skills required of a clandestine organization. Additionally, the men were detailed to assist the various US intelligence organizations in Berlin to conduct surveillance on Soviet or

East German intelligence officers and criminal personalities. Such work enhanced capabilities and honed skills that would be needed in wartime.

While operating in the city posed little problem for the men of the Detachment, the building of the Berlin Wall made reconnaissance of targets in the GDR difficult. Even the CIA had difficulty collecting intelligence in the East as the intensive internal security environment made operations there extremely difficult. To practically solve the problem, the detachment partnered with the US Military Liaison Mission (USMLM) whose personnel monitored Soviet and East German activities in the GDR.²⁷ The USMLM sent out two-man mobile teams to look for new units and equipment. They essentially acted as an early warning mechanism. This gave the unit an opportunity to look at their targets up close. Beginning as early as 1966, unit personnel began to travel into the GDR as if they were regular USMLM personnel to conduct target reconnaissance. While the USMLM (and those of the UK and France) provided a wealth of intelligence throughout its existence that benefitted NATO, it also greatly assisted SF Berlin's mission preparations. Similar trips were made into East Berlin as part of the Berlin Brigade G-2 tours.

In 1974, the detachment acquired a secondary mission: counterterrorism (CT). In the early 1970s, USAREUR planners monitored the development of revolutionary and terror groups in the Middle East and Europe and saw the need for a reaction force after it witnessed the German and Israeli responses to terrorist incidents. Detachment "A" was selected for the job because of its training and expertise in special operations and urban unconventional warfare. CT quickly took precedence over the wartime mission because of the high level of training required to execute a hostage rescue or counter aircraft hijacking operation and the higher potential of a CT mission actually taking place.²⁸

In 1979, the unit was alerted for and participated in the pre-mission reconnaissance and Iran hostage rescue attempt called Operation Eagle Claw.²⁹ Tragically, that mission ended in failure at the Desert One site. The need for a CT force remained, however, and SF Berlin continued with the mission, albeit on a more restrained level in the following years.³⁰

Going Further Underground

In July 1981, SACEUR Gen. Bernard W. Rogers, visited the unit to receive a formal mission briefing. Rogers's highest wartime priority was strategic intelligence collection and reporting on the Soviets. He told Detachment "A's" commander, Lt. Col. Darryl Katz, that intelligence in the first 24 hours of a war would be critical for a successful defense of Europe and



Figure 11.3. PSSE-B soldiers pose in front of their aircraft after a successful Ellipse Bravo Counterterrorism Exercise in 1985. Unit XO Maj. Bill Davis kneels center front. (Photo courtesy of the US Army)

asked Katz to plan accordingly. He summed up his needs succinctly: “Buy me time, Colonel, any time at all.”³¹ The new mission was called “Strategic Intelligence Collection and Target Acquisition” (SICTA).³² It was essentially deep reconnaissance, except that the unit did not require a long-range penetration of enemy territory. They were already there.

The unit now found itself with three missions: SICTA, UW, and CT but it had a new and different problem. News magazines and articles on the Iran raid had exposed Detachment “A” as a special forces unit in Berlin. General Rogers wanted the operational security problem fixed. As a result, Detachment “A” was inactivated in October 1984. In its place, the Army secretly created a new unit on the other side of the city. Known as Physical Security Support Element-Berlin (PSSE-B), it would take the reins and the missions from Detachment “A.” Katz would later say, “It was the same unit with a different name.”³³

PSSE-B had a different name, new personnel, and a better cover plan to protect it.³⁴ The primary mission of supporting the USEUCOM and US-AREUR war plans did not go away, but the targets changed subtly.

Rather than disrupting railways and communications systems, surveillance of the main lines of communications were planned. Techniques developed by the British Special Air Service were adapted and practiced during extended field exercises in West Germany. In addition to mastering the subtle arts of reporting on Soviet military movements from a hole in

the ground behind the lines around Berlin, several teams were given the mission to infiltrate deeper into East German territory to locate and place surveillance on the known Soviet and East German command posts near Zossen, Wunsdorf, and Harnekop respectively. Both sites were expected to be heavily guarded, so the teams planned to surveil the sites from a distance and provide location data via high-speed burst radio communications to enable USAF bombers to conduct strategic attacks.³⁵

Throughout this period, PSSE-B was also required to keep up its counter-terrorist skills as the CINC's In-extremis Force (CIF) as well as conducting its cover mission. That mission entailed conducting security surveys and vulnerability assessments in the EUCOM area of operations across Europe and Africa. It was a resource-taxing mission that required several days of work at each diplomatic site or special weapons storage facility. Site visits were followed by weeks of work assembling the product: survey reports that consisted of properly annotated and geographically oriented maps, photographs of every building, fence, door and window from all possible angles, plus blueprints, diagrams, and amplifying descriptions. This reporting would prove invaluable in a crisis, but it was an enormous workload for the team that put it together. It was also an exercise in target analysis that honed the soldiers' tactical abilities.

For the next five years, PSSE-B would maintain its unique SF skills and expertise. In addition to maintaining its SICTA mission, the unit was alerted and deployed for several CT incidents in the 1980s. Because of political or operational considerations, however, it was never called upon to execute the CT mission.³⁶ Following the fall of the Iron Curtain, the so-called "Peace Dividend" led to the detachment's inactivation once and for all on 15 August 1990. Special forces was no longer required in a unified Berlin. Like Detachment "A" (39th SFD) before it, PSSE-B (410th SFD) slipped out of Berlin quietly and without fanfare.

Issues and Problems

Throughout its 34 years of existence, Special Forces Berlin prepared to execute a mission that was thought by most to have little prospect of success. They were aware of the odds against them and the threat posed by the Warsaw Pact forces stationed just kilometers away. Despite that, not one man wavered in his commitment to face and deter the Soviet war machine.

Beyond mission preparedness, both Detachment "A" and PSSE-B had their share of problems that need to be considered both as a historical note and in consideration of future missions of a similar nature.

The Detachment's lack of an approved cover mechanism and the resulting operational security problems led to its inactivation. The securi-

ty environment that existed in 1956 was quite different than the one that existed in 1982. For one, the Soviet and East Germany security services were most concerned with their own internal security in 1956 and did not expend extensive resources collecting intelligence on their enemy's Order of Battle. However, as they fully consolidated control over their countries, their focus moved increasingly outward. Additionally, American journalists, spurred by incidents during Vietnam, became increasingly willing to report on classified military operations and programs as Jack Anderson did when he exposed the second Iran rescue mission in August 1980.³⁷

But having an "approved cover" was not an airtight method to keep hostile intelligence services and news organizations at bay. It was just a starting point. OPSEC and the unit's cover plan were meant to protect the unit up to the moment of war. Once war began, the enemy would have to find 100 dangerous men scattered among several million people.

Command, Control, and Oversight

A major issue with the control mechanism for SF Berlin was a lack of coordination between the field and the headquarters' planning staffs. SF Berlin never suffered from too much command oversight, quite the contrary. Although annual evaluations were accomplished through UW field exercises, minimal intrusion came from the special operations staff at USEUCOM.³⁸ The unit ran its operations more or less unfettered by their higher headquarters. To an even greater extent, the US Army Berlin Headquarters' involvement was less invasive. Besides occasional briefings and capability demonstrations to the commanding general, its primary concern, other than knowing what targets it would destroy in the opening stages of a future conflict, was that the unit would literally go off the reservation and unilaterally start a war.

One reason in particular led to this situation—there was little or no expertise in urban UW operations in the US military. Nearly all the subject matter experts on urban UW and how it was to be executed were assigned to the unit in Berlin. Further, almost every aspect of how the work was to be done was devised from within the unit. The flip-side of this coin meant that little in the way of operational guidance and targeting support was provided from higher echelons—what was received was often the result of questions the units themselves had initiated. Deconfliction of targets was done by the units' staffs with SOTFE and SOCEUR directly, from the bottom to the top. It should have been done the other way around, starting at the headquarters level before the targets were ever assigned.

A secondary reason for SF Berlin's isolation was the extreme level of secrecy and compartmentation that surrounded its existence and oper-

ations. With classified operations, normal coordination and cooperation was difficult except with those organizations working on a similar security level, such as the USMLM, military intelligence detachments, and the CIA. The stringent security requirements restricted contact to a degree that made it hard to maintain productive relationships. It must be said that some of this isolation was self-imposed to keep the “un-indoctrinated” at arm’s length. In this, the units were successful. It also ensured that few outsiders knew or understood the true potential of either unit. The units’ location in Berlin made them even more remote, both literally and figuratively, from Army leadership at the Pentagon.

To Succeed or Not to Succeed

The most important question to consider is whether or not the units could have accomplished their wartime mission. The question is speculative as war never came and could be argued ad nauseam since a negative is hard to prove. What can be said is that the UW mission would have been extremely difficult.

The unconventional warfare mission for both units was to be executed just before, or at the outbreak of a general war in Europe. The foundation on which the plan rested was based on the experiences of the OSS in World War II and its UW operations in France, Italy, and Yugoslavia, all locations where receptive, mostly cooperative, and experienced underground and resistance forces were already conducting combat operations.

Many planners believed the same thing would be possible in Eastern Europe. Interestingly, the CIA’s experiences in the 1950s in Albania, Ukraine, and Poland showed that UW was not feasible in the Soviet satellites during peacetime. Despite this, many senior US military and intelligence planners expected UW operations would succeed during wartime. That was based on an assumption that the fog of war would disrupt internal controls and encourage resistance.

Chaos would reign in the initial days of a conflict, which theoretically would have permitted teams to penetrate enemy territory. Given warning, the Berlin Brigade could have mounted a defense of the city and, as combat raged around the borders, SF Berlin would have been able to cross over to conduct its direct action or strategic reconnaissance missions, while the in-city teams would have caused grief for the attacking forces.

That was where individual and team training and preparation would be key to survival. The foundation of any special operations unit is dependent on the quality of its personnel. To get qualified men (or women), a vigorous and effective assessment and selection (A&S) of each person must be conducted

to the standards established for each unit's particular requirements. That was done with both units but, as with A&S programs in all special operations units, there were a few soldiers who passed through the initial program but did not adapt to the demands of the job. The unaccustomed freedom found working under a quasi-civilian cover, along with long hair, "civies" (civilian clothing), alcohol during duty hours, operating as a singleton, and living among the local populace, proved to be the downfall of a few Army commandos. For that reason, a unit must have a probationary period that is stated and understood from the outset and enforced for those who can't adapt or fit in.

Language and cultural knowledge were extremely important skills that each and every soldier assigned to either unit had to master, unless they were a native-born German. Living a cover required more than adopting the dress and hair style of a local; each man had to be able to play the role his legend described.

SF Berlin went to extraordinary lengths to give its men the necessary skills in language, as well as cultural and area knowledge. Further, each man had to study and understand the German culture to essentially become "*Berliner*"—to be able to live and portray his cover under any circumstance.

Careful screening was required of everyone before assignment to ensure they had the conspiratorial behavioral skills and demeanor of a clandestine operator to survive as part of an urban underground, as well as work in the field. Determination, adaptability, flexibility, and innovation were equally important for the individual operator. The soldiers needed to succeed as team members, but also have the stamina to work for long periods as a singleton on their own in an extremely difficult and often ambiguous environment.

In war, the men would rely on their wits, training, language skills, and individual cover identities to protect them. The majority of men assigned to the unit could be documented and pass themselves off as a German or a foreign resident of Berlin, although the documentation process itself was too slow.³⁹ As a result, some of the unit members 'generated' their own German identification documents that just might have gotten them past a Soviet, if not a German check point. For those lacking professionally-produced false documentation, it was better than nothing.

In the final analysis, aspects of the mission would have been extremely difficult while others would have been achievable. Most difficult would have been the follow-on mission of linking up with resistance forces and conducting guerrilla warfare outside the city of Berlin proper. This was because a capable resistance force did not exist in East Germany after around 1958 and no one can know how long it might have taken to establish one.⁴⁰

Special Forces Berlin teams would have been obligated to establish and build a resistance organization from scratch, which during peacetime was a nearly impossible proposition in the total police state that defined East Germany and the rest of Eastern Europe. While it is possible that indigenous East German opposition to the Soviets would have emerged later in a conflict, it is doubtful that an underground or resistance force would have been useful to the Americans when most needed: at the onset of hostilities.

In East Germany, without an existing resistance force and in the presence of many thousands of enemy rear echelon security troops, special forces teams would have faced a difficult environment in which to wage a war. That said, the initial missions of sabotaging lines of communication or collection of strategic intelligence, as well as urban unconventional warfare within the confines of Berlin were quite feasible.

By the early 1980s, conditions in the Warsaw Pact began to change. The populations of the Soviet satellites were beginning to tire of their Communist masters and, as the populace became restive, the political scene also changed. This led to the destruction of the Soviet monolith through passive resistance, government mismanagement and mistakes, not war.⁴¹ In Poland, a trade union called Solidarity and activists associated with the Nikolai and Reformed Churches in Leipzig, East Germany led the way in discrediting the communist governments through non-violent means. The rest of Eastern Europe would follow suit and the Warsaw Pact would thankfully fold without conflict.

Conclusion

Special Forces Berlin was well positioned and ready to support the large-scale goals of Allied conventional operations had war come to the European Theater. When the Berlin Wall fell and the Iron Curtain was drawn open, an expectation of peace also emerged. It was believed the time had come for much of the United States' military in Europe to be reduced. In 1994, the Berlin Brigade was disbanded. Following a final Allied celebratory parade, the Federal German *Bundeswehr* was once again able to march down the streets of the German capital.

With the reunification, the fate of SF Berlin was quickly decided. A highly specialized tool in an army that was becoming smaller was found to be unnecessary, much like the OSS after World War II.

At the time, no other US military unit possessed both a robust direct action capability (a combination of the CT mission and basic UW skills) and a unilateral US clandestine special operations capability. Both the Detachment and PSSE were hybrid organizations, the only such units in the

US military that integrated urban special operations, intelligence, direct action, and UW stay-behind operations skills in one package, not to mention its cover security mission. Nevertheless, although it was extremely well-trained and prepared, its role was weighed against other available assets when the time came to make choices.

By 1989, the CT mission was firmly in the hands of the national strike forces: Delta and SEAL Team-6. The unit's role as part of the CINC's In-extremis Force was turned over to 1/10 SFG. Moreover, the unit's primary mission of clandestine unconventional warfare was never well understood. And in 1990, few military or political leaders thought a conventional war in Europe was probable and with that perception of a diminished threat, the services of SF Berlin were no longer required. It was one of the "dividends" of the new peace. With its deactivation, a key capability was lost.

Following the demise of the Warsaw Pact, US Special Forces entered a new period. The Cold War was over and the US Army Special Forces continued its focus on missions begun in Vietnam: Foreign Internal Defense and Development (FID) and counterinsurgency operations (COIN) in "Third World" countries around the world. These missions were easy to justify on the policy side of the Pentagon and in the White House. Even in the 1990s, special operations forces were regarded with skepticism by the conventional leadership at the Joint Staff. The result was that special forces were given politically low-risk missions such as FID and COIN, while more sensitive operations such as UW and CT were off the table.⁴²

Meanwhile, unconventional warfare was largely forgotten. Although it was still listed as a mission for SF, training to support guerrilla warfare faded from the scene as a priority. It would not return until shortly after 9/11, when teams were deployed along with CIA officers into northern Afghanistan to defeat the Taliban. But even then, with the return of a "functioning" government in Kabul and the need to train the Afghan security forces, the mission quickly changed to FID and COIN.

Recent events in Syria, Ukraine, and other exotic locales have shown that there is a place for UW as a tool of national strategic policy to support the larger combat effort. The Commander of US Army Special Operations Command, Lt. Gen. Charlie Cleveland, recently noted that there is:

a key capability gap to conduct "high-end" UW...where resistance movements are just beginning and operating clandestinely, the occupying power is highly capable, limited safe havens exist, and where the degree of risk is exceptionally high.

Through the efforts of Cleveland and the USASOC staff, UW is beginning to be re-emphasized as a key SF mission. Given the nature of the threats that loom on the horizon, all instruments of power must be available for consideration. The reemergence of unconventional warfare is long overdue.

A Final Note

In the research for this article, information from Soviet and East German sources surfaced that provided insight into the “enemy’s” view of SF Berlin. In December of 1989, Maj. Gen. Sid Shachnow, who commanded Det “A” in the mid-1970s, returned to become the US Commander of Berlin. Shortly after the Wall fell, the chief of the KGB’s *Rezidentura* in Berlin-Karlshorst, Gen. “George Dulenko” visited Sid’s home along with the Soviet commander of GSFG. Shachnow took the opportunity to ask Dulenko if the KGB knew anything about US Special Forces in Berlin. Dulenko confirmed that they were aware of the unit and said they had estimated its strength at 500 men.⁴³ Whether that number, a 400 percent increase of the unit’s actual strength, was based on flawed information or a Soviet tendency to inflate their enemy’s size is unknown.

Discussions with former East German National People’s Army (NVA) officers and analysis of East German Ministry of State Security (MfS / *Stasi*) documents show that while the East Germans were aware of the existence of a special forces unit in West Berlin, little was known of its men or the unit’s targets.⁴⁴

East German and Soviet special purpose company-sized units were available in East Berlin and a Soviet *Spetsnaz* company served as security at the Soviet command center at Zossen-Wünsdorf.⁴⁵ If they had been able to launch a no-warning, surprise attack on the headquarters of SF Berlin, they might have crippled its operations. That said, SF Berlin did not plan on being caught in its barracks and made plans for dispersed operations at the first indication of hostilities. Once the unit was in its operational area, the enemy would have been hard-pressed to find and eliminate 100 well-prepared soldiers among the two million inhabitants of West Berlin.

Epilogue

On 30 January 2014, Lt. Gen. Charlie Cleveland, then the Commanding General of the US Army Special Operations Command, said of the unit, “No force of its size has contributed more to peace, stability and freedom.”⁴⁶

Notes

1. The most formidable obstacle to success, both in peacetime as well as war, were the oppressive security conditions that existed in the Soviet-controlled areas.

2. Charles H. Briscoe, "America's Foreign Legionnaires: The Lodge Act Soldiers-Part I," *Veritas, Journal of Army Special Operations History*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (2009): 14-21.

3. Donald A. Carter, *Forging the Shield: The US Army in Europe, 1951-1962* (Washington DC: Center for Military History, 2015), 76, 406-407.

4. Headquarters, US Army Europe, *The US Army in Berlin, 1945-1961, AG TS 2-102* (Heidelberg: USAREUR, 1963), 54-55.

5. US Army Europe, *The US Army in Berlin*, 54-55.

6. US Army Europe, *The US Army in Berlin*, 54-55.

7. US Army Europe, *The US Army in Berlin*, 140.

8. Lt. Col. Harry E. Brown (Ret), interview with the author, 12 June 2017. The soldiers' orders read with assignment to Headquarters and Service Battalion, 7781st Army Unit, which had the mission to provide personnel, administrative, and logistical support to the Berlin Command.

9. Sgt. Maj. Hilmar Kullek (Ret), email exchange March-December 2014 with the author.

10. The unit was formally constituted as the 39th Special Forces Detachment on 27 August 1965. (USAREUR General Orders 263).

11. In accordance with in COMSOTFE Unconventional Warfare Operation Plan (OPLAN) 57-1; later OPLAN 4304.

12. Letter, Major General Dasher, USCOB to General Hodes, CONCUSA-REUR, 2 Nov 56, Subj: War Planning for the Allied Garrison of Berlin, & Berlin Command Ops Order No 2, 1 July 1959 – Unilateral Plan (TS) for Special Forces Berlin. Declassified 7 July 2001.

13. Col. James Wilde (Ret), interviews and emails with the author, 2014-2016.

14. SOTFE moved to Patch Barracks in Stuttgart when USEUCOM moved out of Paris in 1967. It was was redesignated Special Operations Task Force—Europe in 1978, and in 1983 became Special Operations Command—Europe (SOCEUR).

15. SF used the acronym CARVE to analyze targets: Criticality, Accessibility, Recuperability, Vulnerability, and Effect. Later another "R" would be added for Recognizability.

16. Several teams were trained in underwater operations and could cross the border via the many miles of canals and rivers.

17. Kullek, *op cit*.

18. The Office of Strategic Services and British Special Operations Executive developed and used the coal during World War II sabotage actions.

19. Brown, *op cit*, and USAREUR Staff Memorandum 10-100-1, 19 July 1956, "Staff Responsibilities for Special Weapons (Atomic) Activities," cited

in Headquarters, US Army Europe, *The US Army in Berlin, 1945-1961, AG TS 2-102*, (Heidelberg: USAREUR, 1963), 142. See also Annex F (Atomic Operations) to COMSOTFE OPLAN 1-56, undated, (declassified 17 Feb 2017), which detailed the planning for use of ADMs by SF in European UW operations.

20. Maj. Rolf R. Kreuscher (Ret), interview with the author, April 2014.

21. Maj. Adam Klys (Ret), interview with the author, 18 August 2014.

22. Unilateral Detachment "A" Oplan STRANGLE, a sub-plan of BB OPLAN 2, 5 Nov 62. Declassified 11 December 2000.

23. BB-OPLAN 3-11, Unilateral plan for Special Forces Detachment to covertly destroy portions of Berlin Wall. Declassified 11 December 2000.

24. Christopher Andrew, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), 35.

25. Additionally, small teams of operators from US Army Special Forces Groups and special mission units trained with SF Berlin on a regular basis.

26. Wilde, op cit.

27. Thomas S. Lough, "The Military Liaison Missions in Germany," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (June 1967): 258-261. The Huebner-Malinin Agreement of 1947 established the US and Soviet Military Liaison Missions for the purposes of monitoring and furthering better relationships between the forces of the Four Powers. It also provided for an overt intelligence collection apparatus that looked for indications of the imminence of hostilities.

28. Col. Mercer M. Dorsey (Ret), email exchanges and interviews with the author 2012-2015.

29. The assault groups of Task Force 1-79 were comprised primarily of SFOD-Delta soldiers along with a smaller contingent from Detachment "A."

30. Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Jeff Raker (Ret), interviews with the author, 2013-2017.

31. Col. Darrell Katz (Ret), interviews with the author, September-October 2014.

32. Special Forces as a whole acquired the SICTA mission in the early 1980s. Lt. Gen. Charles Cleveland discussion with author, 16 December 2015.

33. Special Forces as a whole acquired the SICTA mission in the early 1980s. Col. Darrell Katz, discussion with author, September-October 2014.

34. PSSE-B was activated on 16 April 1984 and received the classified designation of 410th Special Forces Detachment.

35. Col. Jack Moroney (Ret), Commander, PSSE, discussions with author (then A-Team Leader) 1987-88.

36. Schoomaker, General Pete, quoted in Richard H Schultz, Jr., "Nine reasons why we never sent our Special Operations Forces after al Qaeda before 9/11." *The Weekly Standard*, Vol 9, No 19 (January 2004).

37. Jack Anderson, "Iran invasion plan reported, denied," Syndicated Column, 16 August 1980.

38. First SOTFE and after 1984, SOCEUR.

39. The production process from initial paperwork to document in hand required about six months under normal circumstances. In an emergency, the reports could be produced quicker.

40. The CIA's declassified files on its preparations for UW are held by the National Archives and can be found at Records of the Central Intelligence Agency, (Record Group 263). Available at <http://www.archives.gov/iwg/declassified-records/rg-263-cia-records/second-release-subject-files.html>. Accessed 30 April 2019.

41. Mary Elise Sarotte, *The Collapse: The Accidental Opening of the Berlin Wall*, (New York: Basic Books, 2014), xxvi.

42. Shultz, "Showstoppers."

43. Shachnow, op cit, 376 and interview (1 January 2015).

44. Col. Siegfried Lautsch (Ret), East German National Peoples Army and Col. Friedrich K. Jeschonnek (Ret), West German *Bundeswehr*, discussions with author, 2017-2018.

45. Col. Siegfried Lautsch (Ret), East German National Peoples Army and Col. Friedrich K. Jeschonnek (Ret), West German *Bundeswehr*, discussions with author, 2017-2018.

46. Detachment "A" Memorial Dedication Ceremony, USASOC Headquarters Fort Bragg, NC, 30 Jan 2014.

Chapter 12

Task Force Viking

Army Special Operations Forces and the Indigenous Approach through Long-Term Partner Engagement

Daniel E. Stoltz

When Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) commenced on 19 March 2003 the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) (10th SFG(A)) formed the nucleus of Task Force Viking, known officially as the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force—North. During the initial weeks and months of the war, Task Force Viking partnered with over 52,000 Kurdish Peshmerga fighters to fix, disrupt and in some cases defeat a numerically superior enemy consisting of over 150,000 men who comprised 13 Iraqi divisions, two terrorist organizations, and several Fedayeen Saddam militias. By opening a second front in northern Iraq, Task Force Viking established a lodgment for the buildup of conventional forces in the north and prevented the 13 Iraqi divisions from displacing to the south thus enabling the coalition main effort from Kuwait toward Baghdad to attack the seven remaining Iraqi divisions in the south.

Coalition operations in northern Iraq during OIF provide relevant insights for today and implications for multi-domain operations (MDO) in the future operating environment (FOE). Implications include the relevance of long term partner engagement and the indigenous approach in competition and conflict; ARSOF's developed understanding and wielding of influence as part of the indigenous approach, and employment of precision targeting coupled with indigenous combat mass. The examination of large-scale combat operations (LSCO) conducted in northern Iraq in early 2003 demonstrates an opportunity to learn from the past in order to set the conditions for success tomorrow.

Historical Context

On 11 September 2001, non-state terrorism skewed the balance of national security from an uncertain future to one that would certainly confront global terror.¹ That shift was noticeable. The 2002 *National Security Strategy* specifically oriented the United States toward “a war against terrorists of global reach.”² It also identified the country's primary geopolitical objective: “The enemy is not a single political regime or person or religion or ideology. The enemy is terrorism—premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against innocents.”³

Throughout the Middle East, the force of US hard power confronted Al Qaeda and a rogue government in Afghanistan controlled by the Taliban. By 2003, pressure was building to prevent the threat of terrorism from gaining momentum in Iraq to a point that rogue groups could acquire weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). A sense of urgency compelled the US to adapt concepts of deterrence and imminence in a way that demanded action against potential rogue states and terrorists.⁴ Thus, the US expanded its regional campaign consisting of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan to include a new front—Operation Iraqi Freedom.

For more than a decade prior to OIF in 2003, the United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) maintained operations throughout its area of responsibility. After Operation Desert Storm ended in 1991, USCENTCOM continued contingency planning, theater infrastructure improvements, training, exercises, logistics pre-positioning, and the buildup of forces to set the conditions for future options.⁵

Following Operation Desert Storm, Saddam Hussein brutally suppressed a Kurd uprising in northern Iraq forcing the Kurds to flee their villages and seek shelter in the inhospitable, freezing mountains. The 10th SFG(A) deployed to northern Iraq as part of the humanitarian assistance mission Operation Provide Comfort (OPC).

Although a humanitarian assistance mission, US policy makers were also very interested in training and arming the Kurds. The Kurds were a large population in a strategic location that had outstanding potential to be used against Saddam at will if they could be brought under friendly control and turned into a modern fighting force. There were already numerous patriotic bands of freedom fighters among the Kurdish factions. They only needed leadership, guidance, money and weapons to be an effective fighting force. Unfortunately, the special forces teams were restricted to teaching only survival skills and medical related tasks. Offensive tactics were restricted from being taught to the Kurds under the authorities authorized for a humanitarian assistance mission.⁶

OPC I and II spanned from 1991 through 1996. They were followed by Operation Northern Watch that enforced the no-fly in northern Iraq, from 1997 through 2003 and Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003. Under the authorities of these operations, the 10th SFG(A) maintained a recurring presence in Turkey and Iraq throughout the decade.⁷ The importance of this long-term partner engagement was not lost on the Kurds when the 10th SFG(A) returned in March 2003 for OIF.

As OIF commenced, the theater-level operational design included creating a northern front by establishing a coalition task force north of the “Green Line” that separated the Kurdish autonomous zone from the rest of Iraq to the south. Forcing the Iraqi leadership to address this threat from the north would support the Combined Force Land Component Command (CFLCC) main effort in the south by preventing 13 Iraqi army divisions along the Green Line from reinforcing toward Baghdad.

However, in the first months of 2003, the plan for OIF in the north changed substantially due to Turkey not authorizing the use of its land or air space to support the invasion. The 4th Infantry Division, originally slated to lead the second front in the north could no longer attack from Turkey as originally planned, and now necessitated an alternate lead force to open and lead the second front. The 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) was ordered to assume this role for all operations in the north. The 10th SFG(A) would form the nucleus of the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force—North (CJSOTF-North), better known as Task Force Viking.

Months prior to the official start of hostilities, the 10th SFG(A), sensing that Turkey may not allow use of its land or airspace, began infiltrating several Special Forces Operational Detachments Alpha (SFODAs), over land and into Iraq. Their mission was to link up with Kurdish leadership of the two main factions, gather information, and send reports back to the unit. Over the course of the next several months, still prior to hostilities commencing, a Special Forces Company headquarters and several ODAs also infiltrated over ground into Iraq through an elaborate plan serving as a “security detail” for a 3-star European Command general conducting meetings in northern Iraq as a NATO emissary. The Special Forces (SF) security detail accompanied the general through the border crossing from Turkey into northern Iraq without issue. Following the conclusion of his meetings in northern Iraq, the general departed but, as planned, his “security detail” remained and linked up with their Peshmerga counterparts.⁸ In the final weeks prior to initiation of hostilities, the battalion commanders of the 2nd and 3rd battalions and their operations officers also infiltrated into northern Iraq ahead of the main force. TF Viking now had a reinforced SF company and two battalions’ leadership in country to set the conditions for the remainder of the unit to infiltrate.

Enemy Forces

The Iraqi I, II, and V Corps were deployed along the Green Line to defend Iraq against the Kurdish Peshmerga and any US forces that may attack from Turkey. The Iraqi III and IV Corps were deployed south in the

Al Basrah province and along the Iranian frontier—with the exception of the 11th Infantry Division, which was deployed in the An Nasiriyah area. The Republican Guard divisions were deployed around Baghdad, except for the Ad Adnam and Nebuchadnezzar Divisions, who were deployed in the north along the Green Line.

The enemy in the north consisted of 13 Iraqi Army Divisions with over 150,000 enemy soldiers.⁹ It included two Iraqi Republican Guard divisions, two mechanized infantry divisions, one armor division and eight infantry divisions. The Iraqi II Corps also included the terrorist organization Mujahedin-E-Khalq's (MEK).¹⁰ Other threats in the north included the Fedayeen Saddam militias and the terrorist group Ansar al Islam.¹¹

Friendly Forces

The CFLCC ground forces included the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), Task Force Tarawa, a 7,200-man force of Marines and sailors from the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, and the 1st Marine Division. They would attack from the Iraq-Kuwait border and advance into Iraq.¹² These southern units comprised the CFLCC main effort and would attack toward Baghdad while Task Force Viking disrupted and fixed enemy forces to the north.

TF Viking consisted of a variety of SOF, conventional, joint, combined and indigenous forces. At its core was the 10th SFG(A) Headquarters and its 2nd and 3rd Battalions as well as the 3rd Battalion of the 3rd SFG(A), (3-3 SFG(A)). The task force also consisted of other joint and coalition special operations units: 404th Civil Affairs Battalion; D Company, 96th Civil Affairs Battalion; A Company, 9th Psychological Operations (PYS-OP) Battalion; the 352nd Special Operations Group (Air Force Special Operations Command); and Task Force 7 Special Boat Service from the United Kingdom. Conventional army and joint forces that also contributed to TF Viking were the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry, 10th Mountain Division; elements of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU); and the 173rd Airborne Brigade. At its peak, Task Force Viking consisted of approximately 5,200 personnel and over 52,000 Kurdish Peshmerga forces.¹³

Together, these forces prevented three Iraqi Corps from moving south to reinforce Baghdad, thus supporting the main effort conventional forces attack north from Kuwait.

Task Force Viking—Operations in Northern Iraq

On 20 March 2003, the 10th SFG(A) infiltrated via six Air Force Special Operations Command Combat Talons to partner with the indigenous



Figure 12.1. KDP and PUK Boundaries, March 2003. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

forces and lead them in combat. Having been forced to circumvent Turkish airspace, the aircraft encountered very heavy air defenses as they flew for hours in a circuitous route around and through hostile Iraqi airspace along the Syrian border from the south to get into northern Iraq. Five of the six aircraft made it to their destinations and landed in Bashur and Sulaymaniyah. The sixth, severely damaged, was forced to make an emergency landing in Turkey. The passengers would join the rest of TF Viking several days later after Turkey relented and allowed limited use of its airspace.¹⁴

Having linked up with their advance party forces and the Kurdish Peshmerga, TF Viking established a lodgment in the north and with their indigenous forces created the foothold that would enable the operational-level maneuver of CF to begin building the coalition combat power in northern Iraq. As part of that lodgment, 10th SFG(A) prepared a drop zone at Bashur airfield to receive the 173rd Airborne Brigade's parachute jump

six days later.¹⁵ Over the next two weeks following their jump, the 173rd brought in 20 more C-17s to land their tanks, personnel carriers, troops, and logistics.¹⁶ By 10 April 2003, the 173rd Airborne Brigade was completely on the ground and prepared to support TF Viking.

TF Viking created a combined force with the 52,000-man strong Kurdish Peshmerga that comprised two factions; the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Although historical antagonists of one another, the PUK and KDP would work toward a combined goal with the US Special Forces to fight their common enemy.

The joint special operations area (JSOA) that TF Viking established in northern Iraq encompassed over 173,000 square kilometers and was bordered by Turkey to the north, Iran to the east, and to the south by the Green Line (see Figure 12.1).

The JSOA was subdivided in half with two special operations areas (SOA); East and West. 3rd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), (3-10 SFG(A)) and the PUK Peshmerga operated in SOA East while 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), (2-10 SFG(A)) and the KDP Peshmerga operated in SOA West.

The TF Viking commander understood the Peshmerga were fighting on their “home field” and although the Peshmerga approached warfighting very differently than US forces, they were nonetheless effective. The SF teams built rapport, trust and confidence by not changing how the Peshmerga fought but rather by allowing them to fight their way and supporting their approach with US technology, airpower and planning.¹⁷ This dynamic synergy produced decisive results.

The Four Decisive Battles of Task Force Viking

Operation Viking Hammer

In the eastern SOA, 3-10 SFG(A) needed to gain the full trust and cooperation of the PUK Peshmerga in order to persuade them to fully commit men and equipment against the Iraqi divisions along the Green Line. Although the long term partnership existed between the two, the Peshmerga doubted US intentions due to the US not following through against Saddam Hussein following Operation Desert Storm.

In preparing his campaign plan for Northern Iraq, the Commander of the 10th SFG(A) faced a two-pronged dilemma. His primary opposition in the region came in the form of three Iraqi corps massed along the Green Line. To confront this force, his 300 special forces soldiers joined with more than 52,000 Kurdish fighters arrayed against Iraqi forces. Yet, prior

to engaging the Iraqi frontline forces, he determined he needed to eliminate the threat to the Kurdish rear area (see Figure 2) posed by the Ansar al-Islam (AaI) terrorist organization.¹⁸

AaI routinely skirmished with the Kurdish troops from its stronghold above the town of Halabjah near the Iranian border. With well-developed defensive positions on the high ground, the 700-man strong AaI was a formidable threat to any Kurdish operations. An additional threat was a suspected Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) site located in the village of Sargat at the foot of the Shandahari Ridge. The mission to defeat Ansar al-Islam was assigned to 3-10 SFG(A) and was named Operation Viking Hammer. While 3-10 SFG(A) was already engaged along the Green Line, Viking Hammer was assigned to a reinforced Charlie Company, 3-10 SFG(A) to defeat the AaI threat in the east.

C/3-10 SFG(A) partnered with 6,500 Peshmerga fighters of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The PUK leadership looked to the American special forces to provide the firepower and close air support for an attack against AaI. The PUK also realized that having US forces by their side would deter Iran from openly backing AaI. The commanders of 3rd Battalion and the PUK Peshmerga formulated a six-pronged attack to drive AaI out of the valley and seize the suspected weapons of mass destruction (WMD) site at Sargat. Before the attack commenced, however, a demonstration of US firepower and resolve was in order.¹⁹

ODA 081 occupied a small house in Halabjah, looking down the valley toward the AaI stronghold. On the evening of 21 March, the 3-10 SFG(A) commander and the Peshmerga commander stood on the roof of the house watching in anticipation of the first missile attack on the AaI forces. For the next three hours, Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (TLAMs) impacted the AaI positions. By the end of the bombardment, 64 TLAMs had impacted in the region of the AaI base but with minimum effectiveness as the enemy had taken shelter in their caves. Missiles detonated around the WMD facility at Sargat, and throughout the targeted sector, but did not significantly degrade AaI's defensive positions.²⁰ Defeating AaI would require a well-coordinated ground assault.

At 0600 on 28 March, the ground assault commenced. Operation Viking Hammer began with the six-pronged attack up the valley. Each of the six assault forces consisted of 900-1500 Peshmerga fighters, accompanied by a SF ODA.

The combined force made considerable progress along all the assault routes. As they swept through the valley, SF and Peshmerga fighters ob-

Aal-dominated valley and held the high ground. Operation Viking Hammer had eliminated Aal as an effective fighting force, and removed the threat to the PUK rear area. With this accomplished, the mission transitioned to supporting the rest of the PUK forces on the Green Line. The presence of the SF teams helped the Peshmerga in numerous ways, from providing close air support and indirect fire, to assisting with command and control and combined planning before the attack. The SF presence was important in less quantifiable ways, as well. As the 3-10 SFG(A) Commander remarked, “the morale boost for the PUK of seeing US SF in their ranks cannot be understated. The ODA members attacking with them were tangible proof that the US was committed to providing them assistance.”²² With the Aal threat gone, C/3-10 SFG(A) and the PUK were free to join the rest of the Kurdish and TF Viking forces in attacking the Iraqis on the Green Line and opening the way for coalition control of the north.

Battle of Debecka Crossroads

In late March 2003, 2-10 SFG(A), occupied the western half of TF Viking’s area of responsibility. Situated along the Green Line, 2nd Battalion faced four dug-in and well-equipped divisions of the Iraqi V Corps.

During the first few days of April 2003, 2-10 SFG(A) and their Peshmerga counterparts took the offensive and steadily drove the enemy toward the urban centers of Kirkuk and Mosul. Perhaps the most intense resistance faced by the 2nd Battalion was near Debecka on 6 April 2003.²³ The town of Debecka is located 40 kilometers southwest of Irbil, and farther to the northeast is the Zurqah Ziraw Dagh Ridge, referred to by Americans as “Dog Ridge.” On the side of the ridge is a small village named Pir Da’ud, where Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) 044 established an observation post (OP) during the initial stages of Operation Iraqi Freedom. From their OP, ODA 044 could see Iraqi soldiers manning mortar, heavy machine gun, and antiaircraft artillery positions.

In preparation for the offensive, ODAs 044 and 043 from 10th SFG(A) were joined by ODAs 391, 392, 393, and 395 from 3rd SFG(A) who brought ground mobility vehicles (GMVs) with M2 .50-caliber machine guns and MK19 40mm automatic grenade launchers (see Figure 12.3). The plan was to soften the ridgeline with close air support during the evening, and at sunrise launch four simultaneous assaults against the ridgeline and two separate objectives.

The morning of the attack, the assault forces quickly reached the base of the ridge. The two independent Peshmerga columns met only limited opposition, and reaching their objective first, swarmed across the central por-

tion of the ridgeline. However, the two flank columns faced much greater resistance and the assault became a battle.²⁴ The ODAs then closed to within 1700 meters and began to engage the enemy with MK19 40mm automatic grenade launchers and M2 .50-caliber machine guns.

Before long, the Iraqis responded with their own heavy machine guns and mortars. ODA 043 was able to employ both US Air Force B-52s and US Navy F-18s, and the assault force quickly seized the objective. The Peshmerga captured several prisoners, mortars, and heavy machine guns.²⁵ The ODAs maneuvered operating in two-vehicle sections, each of which possessed its own forward air controller. Once the assault force reached the reverse slope on the southeast side of the road, it encountered dug-in troops supported by heavy weapons. During a brief skirmish, special forces and Peshmerga soldiers captured approximately 30 enemy prisoners, including several officers and two Republican Guardsmen. One Iraqi lieutenant colonel confirmed that the aerial bombardments had demoralized his soldiers. In the end, the Iraqis on the ridge welcomed the opportunity to surrender.²⁶

After the ridge was secure, the Peshmerga continued to advance, and the SF teams quickly established control over the area. However, the ODAs soon began to receive direct fire from the tanks and quickly withdrew to an intermediate ridgeline. ODAs 391, 392, and 044B established a hasty linear defense at the intermittent ridge. As they continued to receive tank, mortar, and heavy machine gun fire, at least five Iraqi tanks, four armored personnel carriers, two troop trucks, several command vehicles, and a company of infantry approached the intersection. The ODAs decided to defend the ridge and returned fire with Javelin missiles and heavy machine guns, forcing the enemy tanks to halt behind an embankment. Dismounted infantry from the armored personnel carriers sought cover in an abandoned hamlet.²⁷

However, as the Iraqis began to hit the ridge with smoke, the ODAs realized that the enemy had ranged their positions, and the teams decided to pull back. Close air support soon had the Iraqis reeling from the combined air-ground onslaught, and their second counterattack faltered badly. By the end of the first day, the ODAs and Peshmerga had driven the enemy from Zurqah Ziraw Dagh Ridge, repelled three successive armored counterattacks, and broken the enemy critical line of communication at Debecka. The intense battle for the crossroads had itself lasted for two and a half hours, and when it was over, the small force of SF and Peshmerga fighters had destroyed five T-55 tanks, three armored personnel carriers, eight cargo vehicles, and had neutralized 90 enemy troops.²⁸ The battle for Debecka cross-

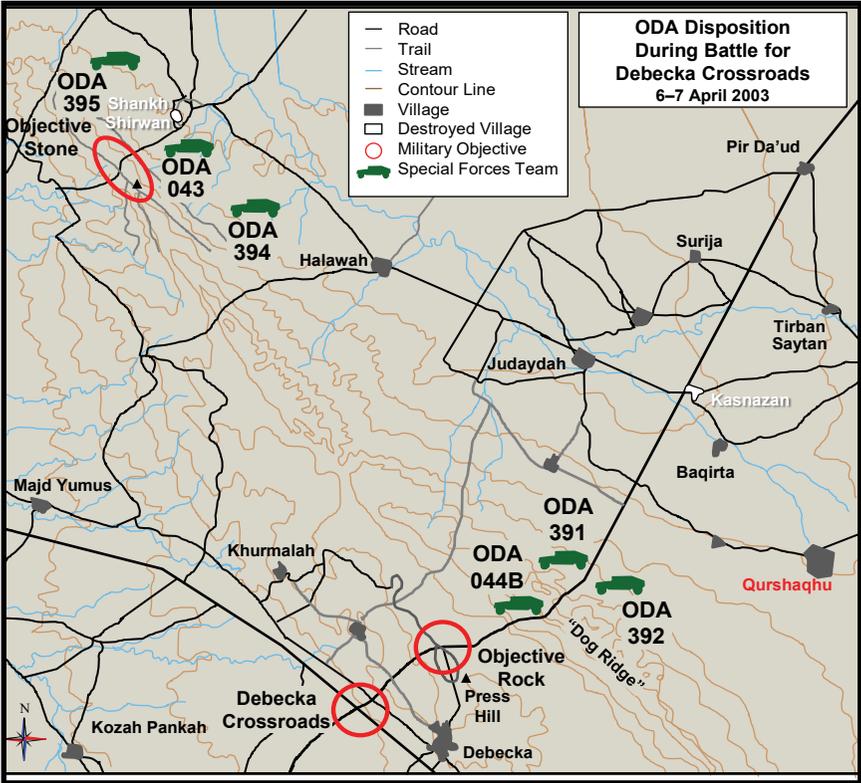


Figure 12.3. Disposition of the ODAs during the Battle for Debecka Crossroads. Graphic created by Army University Press staff.

roads was a tactical victory due to CF-SOF operational synergy between the ground forces and the close air support provided by the US Air Force and Navy. But it also served a larger operational purpose. Besides dealing a significant blow against conventional Iraqi forces, the victory facilitated future SF and Peshmerga advances toward Mahkmur and Al Qayyarah and bought time for a larger US force buildup in the north.

The Liberation of Kirkuk

After the defeat of Ansar al-Islam to the east, the 3-10 SFG(A) consolidated with their PUK Peshmerga and continued operations in the eastern SOA along the Green Line. As they seized the town of Chamchamal, they forced the Iraqis to withdraw to the outskirts of Kirkuk. With the attached forces of ODAs from the 3-3 SFG(A) who were supported by 2-14 Infantry from the 10th Mountain Division, they could secure the oil fields around Kirkuk. As the TF Viking units advanced, Iraqi positions along the Green Line were weakened by air strikes from coalition aircraft. Wave

after wave of US airpower destroyed enemy formations and supported the ground attacks. The aerial bombardment coupled with indigenous networks deep in denied areas within the city facilitated the relatively quick defeat of the Iraqi forces and facilitators in and around the city. Kurdish networks and covert manpower working with the PUK Peshmerga enabled effective targeting thus hastening the Iraqi withdrawal.²⁹

Following the seizure of Kirkuk by the special forces and Peshmerga and the withdrawal of the Iraqi forces on 10 April 2003, troops and tanks from the 173rd Airborne Brigade were brought forward from the rear to occupy the city and surrounding oil fields, allowing the ODAs and PUK Peshmerga to move back north of the Green Line. It was critical to regional strategic partnerships that the PUK Peshmerga be kept out of Kirkuk after they helped liberate it.

The Commander of 3-10 SFG(A) and his staff were acutely aware of the strategic impacts of minimizing the Peshmerga and Kurdish civilians from flowing into Kirkuk. Although not possible to keep them all out, the 173rd was brought forward to occupy the city and control the transition.³⁰ The battle to seize Kirkuk was significant in that it kept the Iraqi Army divisions engaged in battle so as to not retreat south in defense of Baghdad. The CF-SOF operational synergy proved effective as the elements of the 10th Mountain Division worked seamlessly with the 3rd SFG(A) ODAs and the 173rd Airborne Brigade was brought forward to occupy the city and the surrounding oil fields.

The Liberation of Mosul

The day after Kirkuk was liberated, ODAs from 2-10 SFG(A) with their KDP Peshmerga moved towards the city of Mosul in the western SOA. Whereas Kirkuk had a predominantly Kurdish population, Mosul was mostly Arab and strongly supported the Iraqi army. Resistance in the city was much more significant. However, there was also a Kurdish population in the city and the Peshmerga had a strong interest in reuniting. The 2-10 SFG(A) commander was in an challenging situation. While he needed the Kurds to fight the Iraqi forces, he could not allow them to advance into Mosul. After the special forces and Peshmerga seized Mosul, the battalion would struggle to keep all of the Peshmerga out of the city. A city of two million people is difficult for an SF battalion to secure alone. Task Force Viking developed a plan to introduce the 26th MEU to occupy the city and satisfy US, Kurdish, and strategic interests. As the 26th MEU occupied Mosul on 11 April 2003, the SFODAs moved their Peshmerga forces back north of the Green Line.³¹ Without the CF-SOF operational

synergy between the Marines and the ODAs, Mosul would have been a significant challenge to secure and maintain order.

Key Insights of TF Viking Operations

An ad hoc CF-SOF task force came together in a place and at a time that larger, less mobile units could not infiltrate due to regional politics. Through years of long term partner engagement, the 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) was able to infiltrate and partner with a 52,000-man indigenous force and fixed, disrupted and in some cases, defeated an overwhelming 150,000-man strong enemy comprising 13 Iraqi divisions including armor, mechanized infantry, and Republican Guard as well as Fedayeen Saddam militias, the MEK, and Ansar-al Islam.

By infiltrating in phases that started months prior to the war, SOF turned denied areas into contested space. From that contested space SOF harnessed the power of indigenous forces to support strategic outcomes. Furthermore, SOF clearing and securing key cities and the subsequent CF occupation facilitated post-conflict transition. Success required CF-SOF operational synergy and integrating the combat power of indigenous forces. In both Kirkuk and Mosul, the transition from Phase III: Combat Operations to Phase IV: Stability Operations occurred quickly and in Kirkuk occurred nearly overnight. This was due in large part to linkages between SOF, the Peshmerga forces, and the Kurdish populace in the cities. Illustrating the power of the Indigenous Approach, the SF teams and the Peshmerga quickly activated the local Kurdish populace who immediately came back to their jobs, helping establish local governance and establishing basic services such as power, water, and trash removal.³² TF Viking adroitly employed both indigenous combat power and indigenous civil capacity during the conduct of their operations. The synergistic effects spanned from the tactical to strategic levels and highlight how CF, SOF, and indigenous forces can produce exponential results when their respective operational skills are effectively synchronized.

The battles TF Viking waged across the extended Green Line were highly decentralized. Key to victory was the aggregated effort of the ODAs working with the Peshmerga. The ODAs were operating on commander's intent and broad guidelines. Subordinates, down to the SF team leaders executed the plans, exploited successes, and kept the Kurds at the forefront of the effort.³³ When combined with US air power and technology, decentralized mission command enabled the Peshmerga's indigenous way of fighting to achieve success.

Multi-Domain Operations and ARSOF Implications

As we look to the future, the multi-domain operations concept reflects a deeper internalization by the Army, as part of the joint force, to conduct multi-domain operations to compete and win in all domains. If competition fails, Army forces must penetrate and disintegrate enemy anti-access and area denial (A2AD) systems and then exploit the resultant freedom of maneuver to achieve strategic objectives and force a return to competition.

The MDO operational problems are summarized in the following questions: How does the joint force compete to enable the defeat of an adversary's operations to destabilize a region, deter the escalation of violence, and, should violence escalate, turn denied spaces into contested spaces? How does the joint force penetrate and disintegrate enemy A2AD systems throughout the depth of the support areas and in deep areas and then exploit the resulting freedom of maneuver to defeat the enemy in the close and deep maneuver areas? After the adversary's defeat, how do US forces compete to consolidate gains and produce sustainable outcomes, set conditions for long-term deterrence, and adapt to the new security environment?

To contribute to the joint force response to address these operational problems, ARSOF has four pillars of capabilities. These capabilities provide strategic value through indigenous approaches, precision-targeting operations, developed understanding, wielding of influence, and crisis response.

It is the ARSOF indigenous approach that develops resilient and resistant partners to prevail in competition against adversary threats and maintains cohesive networks of people and organizations that condition the environment against sudden shocks. ARSOF persistent global presence and expeditionary capabilities set the conditions for the joint force to seize early initiatives by frustrating adversary's attempts to destabilize regional security through direct and indirect strategies.

In this regard, a MDO concept may benefit by accounting for indigenous maneuver. The potential effects created by indigenous populations as combat mass in both the competition space and armed conflict are a force multiplier that cannot be created overnight and should be a doctrinal long-term investment. Equally, the human domain should be considered as an integral part of multi-domain operations. The most prevalent forms of conflict include insurgency, rebellion, civil war and resistance movements. A multi-domain operations concept should consider incorporating indigenous maneuver and aspects of the human domain as the concept develops.

Through ARSOF crisis response, a small number of operators can rapidly address emergencies to enable host nation solutions to local or region-

al security challenges. By operating not only in the maneuver area but also in the operational deep fires area, ARSOF can conduct precision targeting operations against uniquely difficult, high-value targets. ARSOF can rapidly infiltrate austere, remote locations and quickly mass combat power—from individual operators to regimental-size formations—to seize, destroy, capture or recover designated targets in contested and denied areas. ARSOF deploys tailorable mission command nodes and scalable force packages to conduct independent, dispersed, cross-domain operations at the tactical and operational levels in lethal, contested, and denied environments either unilaterally or with partner forces. During armed conflict, indigenous mass developed by ARSOF during competition provides combat power to create physical, virtual, and cognitive effects in the close, deep maneuver, and strategic fires areas.

Lastly, the indigenous approach and wielding of influence through developed understanding allows ARSOF to leverage indigenous mass in the form of both fighters and local populations to consolidate and maintain gains made during armed conflict. During post-conflict and return to competition, ARSOF, by working with and through the indigenous population, can enable the joint force in maintaining long-term deterrence and adapting to the new security environment.

Considerations and Implications for the Future Operating Environment

How do battles that occurred almost two decades ago help prepare the force for competition and conflict two decades in the future? Significant challenges will emerge in the FOE over the next 20 years.

Technology's proliferation and rate of change will empower state actors, non-state actors and even individuals with competitive advantages. A globally connected world will have pervasive human-machine connectivity, allowing for unprecedented ease of communication and access to information. Adversaries will need minimal investment to employ social media and informational technologies to influence vulnerable populations, spread their ideologies, gather support, fund operations, crowd-source intelligence, and share techniques. Adversaries will likely challenge the stability of regions and US interests through indirect means and approaches.

Looking through the lens of the past with an assessment of the future allows for the formulation of implications for future warfare. The aforementioned ARSOF capabilities emerge as relevant to future competition and conflict.

The Value of Time, Persistent Partner Engagement, and the Indigenous Approach

ARSOF soldiers and units provide commanders options to shape the OE. ARSOF envisions persistent partner engagement to orchestrate partnered activities around a continuously responsive framework that expands operational maneuver options.

Persistent partner engagement enables ARSOF to develop long-term relationships necessary to resist negative influences and remain resilient in adversity.³⁴ They provide physical, cognitive and virtual support to resistance movements as a means to alter an adversary's cost calculus. Persistent partner engagement takes advantage of relationships to respond to security changes in environments where operational reach is strained and the ability to mass forces is constrained. It is part of a campaigning approach using the advantage of operational time, particularly during security contexts outside of combat operations.³⁵ Such campaigning to engage partners expands the strategic start point and anticipates strategic risks earlier in their development. Global relationships also enable crisis response. ARSOF positions its force globally to respond with partners to crises. In effect, "Persistent engagement helps nurture relationships to the left of the bang that build trust, increase understanding, facilitate stability, buy time to prevent conflict, and shape the environment for the use of short-notice direct action should it become necessary."³⁶ These options to escalate or de-escalate security conditions are a way that ARSOF can harness the power of partners when competing below armed conflict.

The Value of a Developed Understanding and Wielding of Influence

Through long-term engagement ARSOF develops understanding to wield influence among populations. Developing understanding and wielding influence are essential aspects of the value SOF capabilities provide the nation. They involve a SOF network of personnel, assets, and formations to obtain early understanding of the operating environment. SOF networks also have the potential of wielding influence to positively affect outcomes, especially during competition.³⁷ The other ARSOF capability pillars draw their strength from the ability to understand the environment—to include its physical, virtual, and cognitive elements—and to influence the population. Without a deep and nuanced understanding of the environment, pulsed operations are difficult if not impossible. Understanding also enhances the ability to wield influence to build indigenous mass. In the FOE, this pillar will use a number of technologies to enhance human engagement. These include artificial intelligence, machine learning, enhanced reality, wearable sensors, and quantum computers.

The Value of Precision Targeting

Precision-targeting operations combined with indigenous mass provide direct action and counter-network activities against individuals and infrastructure. They buy time and space for other operations to gain traction (e.g. counterinsurgency) or to collapse transregional threat networks through deliberate targeting of critical enemy physical, cognitive, or virtual nodes (e.g. counterterrorism).³⁸ Precision-targeting operations derive their precision from two primary sources. The first is the tactical and technical skills of ARSOF operators and units supported by advanced technologies. The second is cognitive in nature—the nuanced understanding of the operational environment resident in those operators and units. Much like the indigenous approach, precision-targeting operations will pulse to mitigate the effects of adversary targeting capabilities in the physical, cognitive, and virtual realms. ARSOF will execute precision-targeting operations semi-independently or in concert with CF, interagency forces, or indigenous forces with whom it will form habitual relationships.

Conclusion

Task Force Viking’s operations in northern Iraq provide lessons and implications for the conduct of future warfare and the multi-domain operations concept in LSCO. The agility and maneuverability of Task Force Viking resulted in the penetration of denied areas and creation of contested space by harnessing the combat power of over 52,000 Kurdish forces and demonstrates the value of approaches which incorporate partner and ally capabilities. It underscores the need in the future to conduct persistent partner engagement over time, build capabilities, and grow relationships through indigenous approaches. The CF-SOF-indigenous force synergy at tactical, operational and strategic levels that produced decisive results reflect the synergy required in the armed conflicts of tomorrow. Incorporating multi-domain capabilities against the diverse range of adversaries of the future will necessitate synergy among many mission partners and their capabilities.

The rapid aggregation of a variety of units under Task Force Viking reflects the agility and flexibility required to form purpose-built units for the future. Comprised of a range of capabilities, they will form, reform and harness talent and expertise based on particular mission requirements. The Task Force Viking soldiers who possessed the skills to lead and advise large scale indigenous forces and disrupt armor and mechanized forces exemplify the “Empowered Soldier of Tomorrow.” The “empowered ARSOF soldier” will have the competencies and skills to prevail in the future,

including cross-cultural proficiency within US Army Special Forces, technology and digital fluency, and the ability to succeed with and without digital capabilities. Task Force Viking created significant combat power and lethality through the physical mass of the Peshmerga. In the FOE, ARSOF will need to create and orchestrate physical, cognitive and virtual mass.

To gain and maintain an enduring competitive advantage over the US' adversaries, ARSOF will be compelled to adapt and change in an accelerated fashion. As part of joint SOF, ARSOF must be ready to prevent, deter, and defeat adversary strategies in both the competition space and if that fails—during armed conflict. As the ARSOF narrative states, “The United States Army Special Operations Command is ready to move from the force of today to the force of tomorrow to ensure we remain—*Without Equal.*”³⁹

Notes

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17. Lt. Gen. (Ret) Charles T. Cleveland interviewed by Bob Warburg, Fort Bragg, NC, 4 May 2018.
18. Briscoe, *All Roads Lead to Baghdad*, 194.

19. Briscoe, 195.
20. Briscoe, 195
21. Briscoe, 197.
22. Lt. Gen. Kenneth E. Tovo, CG USASOC, interviewed by Dr. Michael Krivdo, USASOC Historian's Office, 15 May 2018.
23. Briscoe, *All Roads Lead to Baghdad*, 252.
24. Briscoe, 254.
25. Briscoe, 254.
26. Briscoe, 256.
27. Briscoe, 257.
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29. Lt. Gen. Kenneth E. Tovo, CG, USASOC interviewed by Dan Stoltz, Fort Bragg, NC, 2 May 2018.
30. Lt. Gen. Kenneth E. Tovo, CG USASOC, interviewed by Dr. Michael Krivdo, USASOC Historian's Office, 15 May 2018.
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32. Lt. Gen. Kenneth E. Tovo, CG, USASOC interviewed by Dan Stoltz, Fort Bragg, NC, 2 May 2018.
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Conclusion

Special Operations Forces in Large-Scale Combat Operations

*ARSOF will leverage adaptive and innovative institutions, empowered Soldiers, and integrated units capable of delivering unmatched special operations capabilities in order to provide joint force commanders operational options and advantage over our nation's adversaries.*¹

—US Army Special Operations Vision, 2018

Bringing the Past into Focus

Deep. Unconventional. Resistance. Precision. Sensitive. Lethal. Indigenous. Strike. Denied. Culture. Language. Disruption. Clandestine. Risky. Partnered. Secret. Throughout this volume, these words have described the character of many kinds of special operations. As we reflect on the examples compiled here, one more word stands out—synchronization. For large-scale combat operations, synchronization is a key that unlocks the complementary relationship between how special operations forces and conventional forces fight early, deep, and together. Collectively, the preceding chapters explore the challenges and opportunities of new ways of warfare that synchronize physical, cognitive, and virtual aspects of maneuver through time and at all levels—strategic, operational, and tactical. The operating force has grown in their conception of operations since the time of T.E. Lawrence. *Altogether, this volume reveals a synergy that otherwise would not exist were it not for the synchronization of conventional force operations and special operations.*

The challenge for US Army Special Operations going forward is to study the past carefully and prepare themselves for future fights. In 2013, then Col. Francis Beaudette, observed that to “win against humans, you must meet or influence them in their environment, and all components must work in close concert, synchronized with all available capabilities.”² Any future large-scale fight will require all Army components to synchronize their capabilities to meet and influence our adversaries in their environments. That is why Lt. Gen. Francis M. Beaudette, Commander, US Army Special Operations Command, is guiding US Army Special Operations forces with a vision that emphasizes, “operating with and through indigenous forces, understanding and wielding influence, precision targeting, and crisis response.” Operational designers must think creatively, applying these characteristics of US Army Special Operations’ capabilities in innovative ways that are synchronized with all other components of a large-scale fight.

We have in this volume a glimpse at the past that situates our current thinking about how to use SOF in large-scale operations. It comes at an opportune time as the joint force addresses the rising threat of peer and near-peer adversaries. These chapters reveal the utility of a study that places large-scale combat operations in the center and places SOF's role in the forefront. A lot of ground was covered in the preceding chapters, from 1916 to 2003. The units conducting these operations were organizations with SOF-like characteristics and functions, though some were not called "SOF" in their time. Today's fighting concept—*The US Army in Multi-Domain Operations, 2028*—reveals the relevance of large-scale combat operations in addressing rising peer and near-peer competitors. Prevailing over them will come from operational synergy across domains, much like the synergy between conventional forces and SOF.

Looking Back

Each reader should glean their own insights as they study the variety of ways our forces fought. There are, however, some themes worth specifying as the Army's body of knowledge evolves with new warfighting concepts like multi-domain operations (MDO). Future MDO conflicts at scale should not be faced with blind intellect. Rather, practitioners, campaigners, commanders, and staffs alike must exercise their cognitive capabilities by practicing the mental discipline of how to fight.

Deep is the New Close: Fighting the Deep Fight

Deep is the new close in time and effect. Hence, we need new ways of warfighting that take advantage of the deep fight. For instance, SOF employs uniquely trained forces to apply its core capabilities to use indigenous approaches in support of the joint force's objectives. SOF's global posture and agile forward positioning provide synergistic capabilities at the intersection where physical, virtual, and cognitive instruments of power combine to prevail in multi-domain operations. SOF deploys teams of experienced operators who are skilled in the use of technology, trained in the business of people and populations, possess mature judgement, and have capabilities for precision targeting and crisis response. They penetrate operational areas and locations where other forces cannot both in competition and conflict. Their physical presence at the right place delivers capability options that work in conjunction with cyber, space, and others to create multi-domain effects. SOF creates indigenous power, leverages human networks, and applies precision effects to achieve positional advantage. ARSOF successes in experiments have been in providing joint and Army commanders with deep situational awareness in denied areas as

well as support to locating, tracking, targeting, and battle damage assessment of high-value targets.

Create Freedom of Action from the Inside

In the early 1980s, AirLand Battle thinkers broadened the Army's view of the battlefield to include a deep area. They required capabilities to synchronize effects deep with actions in close. Today's multi-domain operations thinkers are further broadening the battlefield and going further with deep maneuver and strike areas. As we have seen throughout this volume, the battlefield constitutes more than just the immediate conventional fighting space. It has included, and will continue to include, hard-to-reach areas that extend deep, beyond the normal reach of conventional capabilities. One theme this volume's case studies show is how commanders can reach deep into the battlefield using SOF to create freedom of action, and, even limit enemy freedom action, from inside the enemy's spaces.

Overwhelming the Enemy with Dilemmas

Conventional force and SOF activities in the early periods of a conflict continuum can be synchronized for combined effects. A CF-SOF combined arms approach to preparation of the environment and security cooperation creates multiple dilemmas that challenge a threat's decision-making. An outcome of such dilemmas early on would force a potential adversary to become indecisive—unsure of what decision they should make. Similarly, a CF-SOF combined arms effect would force would-be adversaries to make bad decisions, particularly with respect to underestimating or overestimating civil considerations. Another consideration is an emerging nexus of SOF, cyber, and space. The capabilities from cyber, space, and SOF combine to see, characterize, and respond deep—see, sense, strike—to emerging adversary intentions and actions. These kinds of options can pre-emptively act to place adversaries in positions of disadvantage and achieve positional advantage for the joint force to dominate any fight, either in competition or in conflict. The tactician, having read this volume, should consider how they would arrange different kinds of operations in time, space, and purpose so that our joint force “[attacks] an enemy already mesmerized into dazed inaction by the rapid development of the strategical situation.”³

Synergy reinforces the initiative

In today's context, defeating threats remains much the same. In part we defeat their systems, but we also need to outmaneuver their plans and intentions. In the process of setting a theater, the joint force can erode a potential threat's grip on any initiative by orchestrating activities to frustrate

thier plans and intentions. When capabilities from conventional forces and special operations forces are synchronized in time, space, and purpose, their combined effects throw the enemy off balance. They complicate the friendly picture with unexpected combinations of force. ARSOF adds multiple forms of attack synchronized with capabilities across all domains to achieve cross-domain synergy and convergence. ARSOF, operating with indigenous partners in the deep areas, network their sensor-to-shooter capabilities into the operational and strategic fires architecture. They contribute capabilities to penetrate and disintegrate the enemy's systems and exploit freedom of maneuver. Combined with conventional forces, they together reveal a doctrine for operational maneuver that “[places] a premium on the initiative of leaders and *synchronization* of arms and services throughout the depth of the battlefield or theater of operations.”⁴

Looking Forward

One of the ways ARSOF is preparing itself for future fights is by prioritizing three big modernization efforts. The multi-domain character of the future operating environment demands that forces look hard at how seamless their interactions with one another are. ARSOF will place emphasis on integrated units that combine their capabilities to see deep, maneuver deep, and strike deep in the physical, cognitive, and virtual environments. With accelerating technology trends giving individuals greater power and autonomy than ever before, militaries around the world are placing more capabilities directly into soldiers' hands. ARSOF will capture the power of its primary weapon system—the soldier—empowering the individual with capabilities and more importantly the ability to use those enabling tools. Finally, the future operating environment is proving to be fast and unpredictable. The DOD, and especially the Army, must play to win during periods of competition as well as during periods of conflict. This demands an institutional culture of agility, which is foundational to ARSOF force modernization.

Empowered Soldiers

The ARSOF soldier has highly-lethal capabilities to fight in major conflicts and unique skills to win in irregular warfare. The Soldier uses whole battlefield visualization to understand the operating environment and maintain situational awareness. With developed cross-cultural agility and expertise, the soldier navigates human terrain to harness the power of people and populations to create additional complexity and impose dilemmas on an enemy throughout his or her operating space. The Soldier applies signature management and operational concealment to retain free-

dom of action. Bio-genetic, digital and mechanical enhancements enable the soldier. Proficient in both digital and analogue environments, it is the ARSOF soldier who is capable of maintaining operational tempo under either digitally supported or degraded conditions.

Integrated units

The integrated ARSOF unit includes standing, configurable, scalable, and purpose-built teams. These units are capable of conducting distributed operations, conducting mission command, and establishing scaled networks, in nearly any environment. In multi-domain operations, ARSOF units are part of joint force solutions for a calibrated force posture, multi-domain formations, and convergence. Seamlessly integrating information within ARSOF and with ARSOF's partners gives decision makers an ability to characterize the trajectory of security problems. ARSOF units adapt to a wide range of security contexts and form and reform as needed. ARSOF integrated units are configurable—purpose-built to deploy and conduct targeted ARSOF activities anywhere.

Institutional agility

Institutional agility is the enterprise set of behaviors that characterize how USASOC and its forces plan, prepare, and execute special operations. Every aspect of the operating force, the generating force, and the institutional force must function in a nimble manner to anticipate rather than react to challenges. Whether it is acquisition, finding and managing talent, capability development, doctrine development, or policy development, agility will be the driving institutional force that keeps ARSOF ahead of competitors as the pace of change accelerates. Vigilant, agile, and responsive force management is how the institution anticipates then postures force requirements to transition from competition to conflict and back to competition. Finally, ARSOF institutions are units of precision, targeted action. Realistic, tailored training, constant readiness, and inspired professional development are essential to the ability to perform their mission. The complete system of military and civilian personnel; the processes and functions; the policies and procedures all comprise the institutional unit that must reflect progressive agility to remain ahead of adversaries.

Be Ready—ARSOF Preparing for Large-Scale Operations

Ultimately, the study of our past makes clearer the opportunities we have to strengthen our combined force. The overlap of commonalities and of the distinctions between how conventional forces and special operations forces are attacking future challenges present three multi-purpose

opportunities. First, there is an opportunity to bridge the purposes of our partner relations. We can pursue dual-track efforts to grow relationships and to grow capacities that blunt immediate challenges while gaining contact with future emerging ones. Second, there is an opportunity to gain synchronized lethality through a synergy of CF and SOF operations. Much of this volume on SOF in large-scale combat operations highlights the employment of physical and information power, so the force can better refine SOF's role in delivering increased lethality for multi-domain operations. We can pursue ways to combine uniquely lethal joint force capabilities in campaign-style approaches over time, and across spaces and purposes. Third, there is an opportunity to link the readiness of forces globally engaged now with the postured readiness of forces able to surge capabilities. We can connect the operational concepts for campaigns aimed at competition and those aimed at conflict with a war-winning force that can alternate between contexts. Learning from this and the accompanying volumes of large-scale combat operations, the tactician must now figure out how to combine conventional forces and SOF in large-scale combat operations so that our adversaries face "a form of warfare that does not correspond to [their] doctrine and strategic preferences."⁵

Notes

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