

DETACHMANT 101: A MICROCOSM OF THE EVOLUTIONARY NATURE OF  
WARFARE

by

KRISTINE WITHERS

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College of Arts and Sciences

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Approved by:

Major Professor  
Dr. Mark P. Parillo

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KRISTINE WITHERS

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## **Abstract**

The question as to the nature of war, whether evolutionary or revolutionary, has been a subject of some debate since William S. Lind and his associates introduced the concept of Fourth Generation Warfare in 1989. The adaptive and evolutionary nature of warfare is demonstrative in an examination of Detachment 101. Detachment 101 was initially a small American clandestine unit assigned to South-East Asia during World War II, under the auspices of the Office of Strategic Services, which morphed into a combat unit that greatly aided the Allied advance into Burma. The objectives of this paper are twofold. The first is to show how the Americans successfully adapted and evolved tactics and strategies to use the military potential of the stateless people in Burma, in particular the Kachin people, against the Japanese during the Second World War. In particular, this paper will show the evolution and adaptation to battle-area needs by the detachment, and the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns when operating with indigenous units. The second goal is to examine the nature of combat in Burma as conducted by Detachment 101, to demonstrate the evolutionary nature of warfare. This is especially true when one looks at combat in Burma in the light of the concepts and doctrine of non-linear combat in non-contiguous combat areas that have developed and are known as Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW). This paper will show how the actions of the Detachment provided a template for successful non-linear military operations in a non-contiguous battlefield in conjunction with indigenous personnel, by presaging and developing 4GW concepts, for future military operations in non-contiguous battle areas.

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## **Dedication**

This is dedicated to my parents, Richard and Marcia, and my son Woodrow. They never lost faith in me, even when I doubted myself. And as always, it is dedicated to the Big Guy upstairs who guides me along this path that we call life. ;0)

## **Introduction**

Whether war is evolutionary or revolutionary has been a subject of some debate since William S. Lind and his associates introduced the concept of Fourth Generation Warfare in 1989. The revolutionary paradigm in studying war had been the traditional approach in examining the evolution of warfare among military historians. Accepting the revolutionary nature of war would seem consistent with empirical observation, because clearly the ability to field nuclear weapons, as much as the machine gun during the late nineteenth century, changed military strategies and tactics. The same could hold true with the introduction of gunpowder, steam power, fortifications, or the longbow. Nevertheless, for something to be revolutionary it needs to be an action or innovation that is outside and beyond established procedures or concepts. While it is true that the technological means of extending force over, and therefore ultimately defeating, the enemy evolved and grew more lethal through revolutionary innovations, the ultimate goal in warfare has not changed. The ultimate aim of warfare, defeating an enemy by achieving economic and combat supremacy while obtaining, or coercing, popular support of the indigenous population, remains constant. The ability to wage war by revolutionary means, while simultaneously attaining the traditional martial goals, would therefore lead to the conclusion that the nature of war is evolutionary and adaptive rather than revolutionary. The adaptive and evolutionary nature of warfare is demonstrative in an examination of Detachment 101.

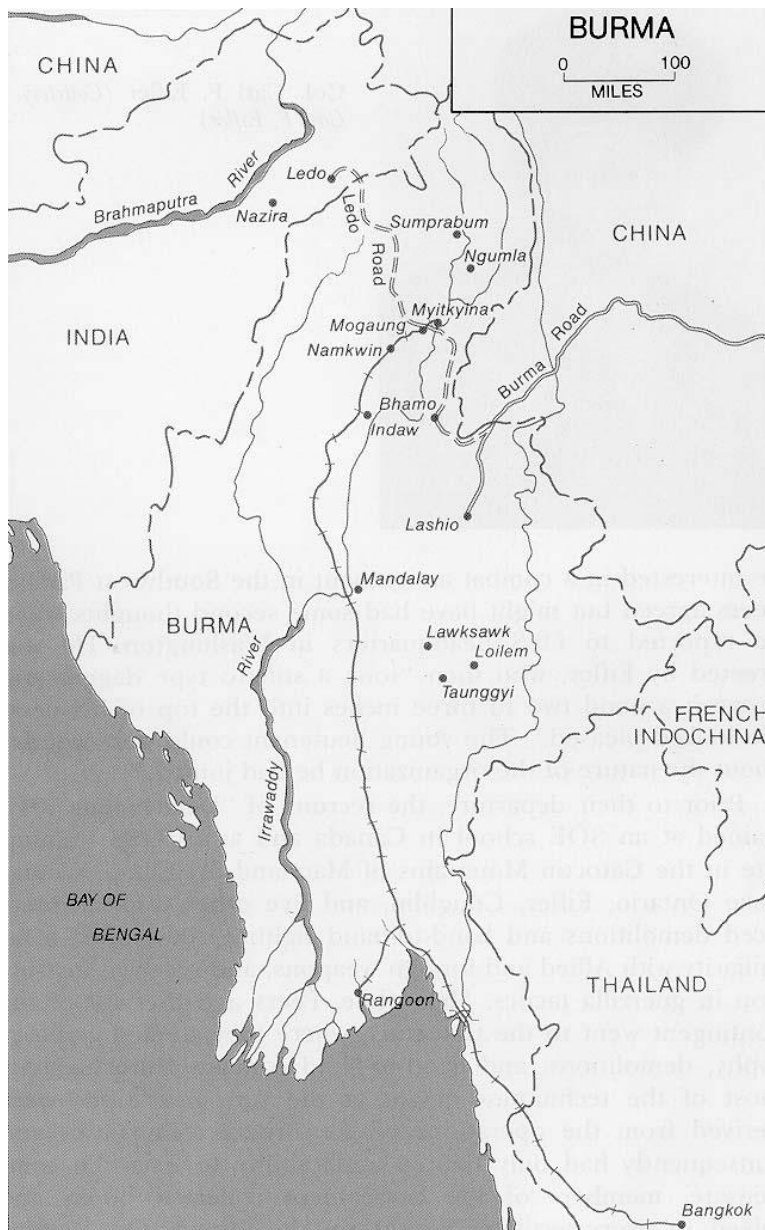
Detachment 101 was an American clandestine unit assigned to South East Asia during World War II. Many ethnic groups in South East Asia were anti-colonialist before the onset of the Second World War. When the Japanese invaded South East Asia in 1941, much of the native population saw the Japanese as liberators. Some ethnic groups continued to aid the Japanese for most of the war, but other groups felt that the Japanese occupation was oppressive and actively

offered aid to the Allies. Japanese and Allied forces used indigenous ethnic groups' feuds, cultural attributes, manpower, supplies, and knowledge of the terrain to attain their strategic and tactical objectives. This was especially true in Burma. The river valleys, rugged mountains, monsoons, and dense jungle vegetation of Burma made conventional linear combat extremely difficult. Both sides relied greatly on the few roads and railroads to transport troops and supplies to the conventional Indian and Chinese fronts, and these routes were highly vulnerable to military operations. To operate in this difficult terrain, assistance from the indigenous peoples was essential. There has been little historical study on the military value, utilization, and strategic effectiveness of the indigenous Burmese people in Allied military operations in the China-Burma-India Theater(CBI) neither during the Second World War nor on the development of viable non-linear strategies and tactics in a non-contiguous battle area.

The occupation of Burma was of strategic importance to the Japanese and Allies, because of its strategic position. For Japan, the occupation of Burma was essential to solidifying their control over South East Asia. Japan began its battle for Japan in 1931 with its takeover of Manchuria; by 1941, they had practically isolated China from the rest of the world. The hard-pressed Chinese had only one source to obtain foreign supplies, the Burma Road. This supply line originated from Burma to the Chinese city of Kunming. Japanese occupation of Burma would effectively end Chinese resistance and provide a staging area for a Japanese invasion of India. In addition to the strategic value Burma provided Japan, Burma also provided oil, rubber, tin, and other natural resources. This was important to the Japanese because it was a nation of few natural resources. For the Allies, their strategic goals were the obverse of the Japanese. The Allies needed to keep the Burma Road open so that the Chinese forces could be supplied and



continue to remain in the war and to deny the Japanese a staging area to invade India and its badly needed resources.



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<sup>1</sup> Map from David W. Hogan W. Hogan, *U.S. Special Operations in World War II* (Washington, D.C.:CMH Publications, 1992), accessed April 30, 2011, <http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwII/70-42/map9.JPG>.

The objectives of this paper are twofold. The first is to show how the Americans successfully adapted and evolved tactics and strategies to use the military potential of the stateless people in Burma, in particular the Kachin people, against the Japanese during the Second World War. In particular, this paper will show the evolution and adaptation to battle-area needs by the detachment and the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns when operating with indigenous units. The second goal is to examine the nature of combat in Burma as conducted by Detachment 101 to demonstrate the evolutionary nature of warfare. This is especially true when one looks at combat in Burma in the light of the concepts and doctrine of non-linear combat in non-contiguous combat area that have developed and are known as Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW). The ability of Detachment 101 to conduct non-linear combat operations in a non-contiguous battle theater was possible because of technological advances and adaptations to fighting in terrain that mandated non-linear tactics in a non-contiguous battle area. As with most new military concepts, contemporary participants misunderstood the concept and nature of non-linear combat in the non-contiguous battle area and classified the detachment's military operations in the theater simplistically as "guerrilla." To term the detachment's operation as simply "guerrilla," even though the detachment went through a "guerilla" operational phase, is too restrictive, given its evolutionary nature. This paper will show how the actions of the Detachment provided a template for successful non-linear military operations in a non-contiguous battlefield in conjunction with indigenous personnel, by presaging and developing 4GW concepts, for future military operations in non-contiguous battle areas.

Studies that examine the operations of the Chindits mention the use of the Kachin people in military operation by the Allies, but only in passing and dismissively. The Chindits were a British unit formed and led by Major General Orde Wingate in 1942. The Chindits were a "long-

range penetration” force that infiltrated Japanese lines in North Burma during the war, and their operations were commando in nature. For many months, they lived and fought the enemy in the jungles of Japanese-occupied Burma, relying totally on airdrops for their supplies. Studies characterize the Kachins contributing to the Chindits’ military operations as laborers or guides or as British levy troops attached to Chindit operations in support positions. The Chindits had a detachment of indigenous people, composed mainly of the Kachins, operating under their command. The Kachins’ place in the organization, actions, use in the tactical operation, and overall effect on the outcome of battle, while mentioned, are not the focus of the studies of Chindit operations. This is the case in the works of Nathan N. Prefer’s *Vinegar Joe’s War: Stilwell’s Campaign in Burma*, David Roone’s *Mad Mike: A Life of Brigadier Michael Calvert and Wingate and Chindits: Redressing the Balance*, and Trevor Royle’s *Orde Wingate: Irregular Soldier*.<sup>2</sup>

The 5307 Composite Unit, better known as “Merrill’s Marauders,” is also the focus of many historical narratives examining operations in Burma. The unit operated under the codename Galahad and owed its inception on the perceived strategic success of Wingate’s Chindits. The 5307<sup>th</sup> also had substantial Kachin elements attached to it, which grew as the 5307<sup>th</sup>’s operations proceeded. The Kachins’ role in the historical works that examine the 5307<sup>th</sup> operations, though recognized, is underplayed. *The Marauders*, by Charlton Osborne, is generous in its praise of the Kachin people who aided the Allies. Osborne cogently contends that the indigenous people deserved more credit for their part in the eventual Allied victory in Burma

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<sup>2</sup> Nathan N Prefer, *Vinegar Joe’s War: Stilwell’s Campaign in Burma* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 2000.), David Roone, *Mad Mike: A Life of Brigadier Michael Calvert and Wingate and Chindits: Redressing the Balance* (Barnsley, U.K.: Pen and Sword Books, 2007), and Trevor Royle, *Orde Wingate: Irregular Soldier* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995).

than presented in his work. Charles N. Hunter's *Galahad* and James E. T. Hopkins and John M. Jones' *Spearhead: A Complete History of Merrill's Marauder Rangers* focus on the Americans' privations and difficulties with jungle warfare and barely examine the indigenous people's role in Detachment 101 in the 5307<sup>th</sup>'s combat operations.<sup>3</sup> The indigenous people's support, when acknowledged, appears paternalistic and is plainly apparent. The studies examining the Kachin people's contribution to military operations and organization and their importance to the overall success of military operations in the theater is lacking. This is the case in John Kennedy Ohl's *Supplying the Troops: General Somervell and American Logistics in WWII* and Louis Allen's *Burma, the Longest War*.<sup>4</sup> Other scholars' work focuses on General Joseph Stilwell's military leadership in the CBI Theater and barely acknowledges the indigenous people's helpfulness in the war effort as laborers or guides. Of those narratives, Charles F. Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *United States Army in World War II, China-Burma-India Theater, I: Stilwell's Mission to China* and II: *Stilwell's command Problems*, and III: *Time Runs Out in the CBI* are prime examples. Barbara Tuchman, in her Pulitzer Prize winning *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911 – 1945*, built her history of the Burma Theater around Stilwell's experiences.<sup>5</sup> Tuchman's mentions of the Kachin are fleeting, and the Kachins are characterized as little more than coolie labor or guides.

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<sup>3</sup> Charles N. Hunter, *Galahad* (San Antonio, TX: Tlie Naylor, 1963), James E.T. Hopkins and John M. Jones, *Spearhead: A Complete History of Merrill's Marauders Rangers* (Baltimore, MD: Galahad Press, 1999), and Charlton Ogburn, *The Marauders* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959).

<sup>4</sup> John Kennedy Ohl, *Supplying the Troops: General Somervell and American Logistics in WWII* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994), and Louis Allen, , *Burma, the Longest War* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1984).

<sup>5</sup> Charles F Romanus and Riley Sunderland, *United States Army in World War II, China-Burma-India Theater, I: Stilwell's Mission to China, II: Stilwell's command Problems, III: Time Runs Out in the CBI*

Successful manipulation of ethnic conflicts and concerns among the different people of Burma helped the Allies achieve victory in Burma. The Burmans are the largest single ethnic group in Burma, comprising approximately two-thirds of Burma's population, and were initially receptive to the Japanese. Most of Burma's ethnic minorities inhabited areas along the country's mountainous frontiers. The Karen and Shan groups comprise about 10% of the population, while Akha, Chin, Chinese, Danu, Indian, Kachin, and other minority groups represent 5% or less of the population.<sup>6</sup> The Kachin live in the mountainous northeast section of Burma, mainly in and around the valleys of the two upper branches of the Irrawaddy River and along the Chinese border, as well as a small number who live in Assam. The traditional occupation of the Kachins is farming. They used “slash and burn” techniques to clear fields and provide fertilizer and grow rice, the primary crop, corn, buckwheat, sesame, tobacco, and a wide variety of vegetables. The Kachins also hunt, fish, and breed pigs, chickens, and buffalo and/or cattle.<sup>7</sup> The Kachins are overwhelmingly Christian, converted by missionaries at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The number of Kachins participating with the United States military during the Second World War is estimated at around 8,000 to 11,000. *Jinghpaw* means “hill people” in the Kachin language, and the Kachins prefer *Jinghpaw* over the hated term “Kachin,” which means “sour-bitter” and was the name given to them by their traditional enemies, the Burmans.<sup>8</sup> For the

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(Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1953) and Barbara Tuchman, *Stilwell and the American Experience in China, 1911 – 1945*(New York: Grove Press, 1970).

<sup>6</sup> “CIA World Fact Book,” Central Intelligence Agency, Accessed on January 22, 2009, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bm.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Barbra West, *Encyclopedia of the Peoples of the Asia and Oceania* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 355.

<sup>8</sup> Shelby Tucker, *Among Insurgents* (New York: Macmillan, 2000), 66.

purposes of this paper, the term Kachin is used to describe the indigenous people recruited by Detachment 101 because it was the popular term employed at the time and in official documents.

The limited transportation infrastructure and rough topographic nature of the Burmese theater strongly influenced the development of non-linear tactics through practical necessity. Detachment 101 developed strategies and tactics in response to the nature of a non-contiguous battle area. The non-contiguous and non-linear nature of the Second World War in Burma has engendered confusion about the nature of military operations by the detachment's military component and the tactical and strategic contribution the detachment made to the overall Allied offensive into Burma. The organization, training, recruitment, methods, and operations of the detachment's military component developed reactively to combat and strategic concerns, demonstrating how an intelligence unit can evolve into a military force that fights in addition to conducting the unit's primary intelligence mission.

Allied commanders, and some members of Detachment 101, were initially unaware or unappreciative of the military potential of Detachment 101 in Burma. The military success and tactical importance of Detachment 101 makes an operational study of this unit valuable to the study of warfare overall. The detachment's success was dependent on the relationships formed between the Kachins and the detachment personnel. The personal relationships between an alien military force and the indigenous people are an important factor in this type of warfare because of the necessity of mutual trust in combat. Andy Knight's research in 4GW arrives at a similar conclusion. Knight notes that "winning hearts and minds" is essential to successful operations and "the ultimate objective of the military in such scenarios is to make the security/humanitarian

mission as seamless as possible.”<sup>9</sup> To build and maintain a cohesive fighting force composed of indigenous people, Detachment 101 found it needed to befriend the indigenous people, gain their trust, and guarantee the safety and welfare of the indigenous fighter’s dependents.

Let us define some terms. “Guerrilla warfare” dates from the Napoleonic Wars, when the defeated Spanish army reorganized into small independent units capable of conducting limited actions; as a result, the Spanish diminutive suffix added to their word for war, *guerra*, resulting in *guerrilla*. Guerrilla warfare, as usually defined, occurs when irregular forces, nonprofessional civilian-soldiers, take up arms to fight against a professional and organized military force.

Lieutenant Colonel George B. Jordan maintains that guerrilla warfare can also mean a phase of unconventional warfare conducted by indigenous forces organized on a paramilitary or military basis to harass and eventually defeat an enemy.<sup>10</sup> The fundamental tactic employed by guerillas is striking and fleeing continually; there are no conventional military objectives or concentration of force. Mao Zedong, in his study of guerrilla warfare, maintains that the guiding principles for guerrilla “operations proceed without exception from one basic principle; that is, to strive as far as possible to preserve one’s own strength and annihilate that of the enemy.”<sup>11</sup> There is a consensus among military theorists that guerrillas must operate in areas where they have the support of the local population in the form of information, food, shelter, and recruits.

In 1995, the terms “noncontiguous” and “nonlinear” were introduced into Joint Publication 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*. The United States Army’s FM3-0 doctrine

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<sup>9</sup> Andy Knight “Civil-military Cooperation and Human Security” in *Civil-military Cooperation in Post-conflict Operations: Emerging Theory and Practice* ed. Christopher Ankerson (New York: Routledge, 2007), 23.

<sup>10</sup> Lt. Col George B. Jordan, “Objectives and Methods of Communist Guerrilla Warfare”, in *Modern Guerrilla Warfare*, ed. Franklin M. Osanka (New York: Glencoe Free Press, 1966), 403.

<sup>11</sup> Mao Zedong, *Selective Works*, II. (Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1965), 121.

manual in 2001 codified the terms. Linearity refers primarily to the conduct of operations along lines of operations identified as the forward lines of one's own troops in linear operations; "emphasis is placed on maintaining the position of the land force in relation to other friendly forces. From this relative positioning of forces, security is enhanced and security of rear areas guaranteed. This is especially true of the lines of communication between bases and fighting forces".<sup>12</sup> In nonlinear combat operations, military units operate in noncontiguous areas throughout the battle theater, known as Areas of Operations (AOs). Nonlinear operations typically focus on numerous decisive points in the battle theater, and units conduct multiple military missions, also known as lines of operations, based on geographic, strategic, or tactical considerations of the AOs. "Lines of communications (LOCs) often diverge from lines of operations, and sustaining operations may depend on supplies being moved in union with units or supplied by air."<sup>13</sup> Providing airborne supplies and coordinating units operating in different AOs was technologically possible during the Second World War, which meant nonlinear combat was viable in the Burmese theater during the war.

4GW is a concept defined in 1989 by a team of American analysts, including William Lind, to describe modern warfare's evolution to a decentralized form. Publishing their findings in the *Marine Corps Gazette*, the authors argued that first-generation warfare is characterized by Napoleonic-style close-order formation of line and column. Second-generation warfare, building on the improvement in the firepower of industrial age weaponry, sought to achieve victory through attrition as exemplified by World War I-era combat. Third-generation warfare, again using technological advancements as a spur for evolution, is defined by emphasis on maneuver

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<sup>12</sup> United States Army, *FM 3-0: Operations* (Washington DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2001), 24.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 5-11.



and innovative decentralized attacks. The authors persuasively maintain that 4GW will involve small, highly maneuverable, independent units that do not rely on logistical or other lines of communications; the units will seek to achieve psychological goals as much as physical goals.<sup>14</sup> This would mean that the 4GW battle theater would be non-linear and non-contiguous and dependent on achieving a military victory by using means and methods beyond actual physical conflict with the enemy. This would include using factors such as cultural sensitivities and rivalries, propaganda, and economic incentives to achieve a victory. Stateless forces typically fight 4GW, either independently or in conjunction with outside aid from an established state, against a nation-state. Because of this, Jacques Heynan logically concludes that 4GW uses three levels of tactics to achieve victory: physical, mental, and moral. Therefore, “there may even be no one combatant and those smaller groups organize in impromptu alliances to target a bigger threat, that being the state armed forces or another faction”.<sup>15</sup> Because of the strength differentials between forces, the allocation of military resources, to be maximally beneficial, should have an emphasis on not engaging in attritional combat. As Thomas X. Hammes notes, in 4GW, operations “may focus not on physical destruction but on area denial or disruption.”<sup>16</sup> The overall strategy of 4GW is generally attributed to Mao Zedong, but 4GW tactics and principles can be seen in Detachment 101 operations also.

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<sup>14</sup> William Lind, et al “The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation,” *Marine Corps Gazette* 63/3, (October, 1989), 22-26.

<sup>15</sup> Jacques M.C. Heynan *Murders Without Assassins* (Raleigh: Lulu Books, 2008), 57.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas X. Hammes *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (St. Paul, MN.: MBI Publishing, 2006), 216.

## Chapter 1 - The First Phase

Detachment 101's companies, battalions, and brigades were dispersed in noncontiguous AOs, operating independently towards separate objectives, or decisive points, but with a common strategic purpose. Burma is ringed by high mountain ranges, particularly in the north, with a central plain that is dense with heavy jungle and dissected by swift rivers. The transportation infrastructure was extremely limited and vulnerable. All this necessitated the use of small troop movements. These features promoted nonlinear and non-contiguous operations, and the technology of the time made such operations feasible and necessitated the development of 4GW tactics and strategies. The airplane and radio had revolutionized military operations by making it possible to disperse non-linear formations around the battlefield and allowing units to operate independently of ground lines of communications.<sup>17</sup>

The rugged topography of Burma makes the concept of nonlinear and non-contiguous warfare crucial in examining Detachment 101's military role in Burma during the Second World War. In jungle warfare, "linear formations are virtually impossible to maintain, since men get lost or stray in the underbrush, which makes compact formations essential."<sup>18</sup> The detachment's military units were perfect for fighting the Japanese in Burma, because of their knowledge of the battle area, compact formations, speed of movement, and ability to survive and fight in the jungle terrain. The detachment's military units evolved from a group of rag-tag adventurers into light infantry units and utilized in a far more conventional nature to fill a void in Allied planning. Allied planners, especially the Americans, had not foreseen the need for non-contiguous light

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<sup>17</sup> This argument is made by Major John L. Atkins, RLC in *A Model of Nonlinear and Noncontiguous Operations: The War in Burma 1943 – 1945* (Monograph United States Command and General Staff College 2003), but limits his conclusions to Chindits operations and Kachin Levies operations with British forces.

<sup>18</sup> United States Army. *FM 3-0: Jungle Warfare*, 39.

infantry troops for reconnaissance, area denial or disruption, and seizing and holding ground for the main advance. The detachment filled this conventional combat need in a non-linear battle area and developed 4GW principles in reaction to the battle area's needs.

The Forerunner of the Central Intelligence Agency was the Coordinator of Information (COI). The COI's, renamed Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in June of 1942, mission was to "collect and analyze all information and data which may bear upon national security, and to carry out such supplementary activities as may facilitate the securing of information for national security not now available to the government."<sup>19</sup> The OSS conducted many intelligence and espionage operations in many battle theaters, with varying degrees of success, but one OSS operation went beyond clandestine operations to conduct conventional military operations. This operation was in Burma and conducted by Detachment 101. The operation and unit was officially established in the spring of 1942, authorized under a directive from the Joint Chiefs of Staff that authorized the OSS to conduct guerilla warfare in conjunction with, and for, the Allied Forces.<sup>20</sup> Scholars and participants' accounts maintain the detachment's actions were guerilla in nature. Yet, upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that Detachment 101 evolved into a military unit that used 4GW strategies and tactics to achieve conventional military goals while maintaining its espionage component.

Detachment 101 started out with a modest force and a limited mission in what some considered the backwater of the Second World War. Detachment 101 was the brainchild of

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<sup>19</sup> John Ranelagh, *The Agency: The Rise and Decline of the CIA* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), 61.

<sup>20</sup> Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan, "Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944". Record Group 226, Entry A1-170, Box 277. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, National Archives, Md.

Millard Preston Goodfellow, a former Brooklyn newspaper publisher and Boy's Club executive. As part of his OSS activities, he prepared staff studies for intelligence and irregular warfare operations in Asia. He proposed an OSS operation for Burma.<sup>21</sup> Burma was low on the American list of priorities to allocate forces and material at the beginning of the American involvement in the war, because American military planners viewed it as a primarily British area of operations. Detachment 101 consisted of nine officers and fourteen enlisted men at the start of operations, in the spring of 1942, under the Command of then Major Carl Eifler.<sup>22</sup> Eifler's role in Detachment 101 would seemingly confirm H. Allen Holmes's argument that 4GW and guerilla conflicts need the "the right skills and right leadership" to be effective.<sup>23</sup> In early 1941, Captain Eifler received a call to active duty and took command of Company K, 35th COI in Washington, D.C. General William J. Donovan, the commander of COI, wanted to establish a paramilitary unit in the China-Burma-India Theater (CBI), but the commanding general of the theater, General Joseph Stilwell, opposed this plan.<sup>24</sup> There was already an espionage unit operating in the CBI Theater. Captain Milton S. Miles had arrived in May 1942 with vague orders from the Navy Department to undertake operations that would do maximum possible damage to the enemy. Stilwell, who

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<sup>21</sup> Russell Francis, *The Secret War* (New York: Time-Life Books, 1981), 108 – 110, and Richard Dunlop *Behind Japanese Lines*. (New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1979), 89, assert this claim

<sup>22</sup> Francis Russell, "OSS Detachment 101" in *Ex-CBI Roundup*", October 1988 (online) [http://www.cbi-history.com/part\\_vi\\_101\\_oss-3.html](http://www.cbi-history.com/part_vi_101_oss-3.html). Accessed on 4/30/11, gives this number, James R. Ward "The Activities of Detachment 101 of the OSS" in *The Secret War: The Office of Strategic Services in WWII* (Washington D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), 321 and Harve Saal "SOG" in *Special Operation Association* (Nashville: Turner Publishing, 2005, put the initial number of the detachment at 21, because it does not include Eifler or Couglin in the count because they were commanders.

<sup>23</sup> H. Allen Holmes "Special Operations Forces as a Strategic Asset in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" in *Roles and Missions of SOF in the Aftermath of the Cold War* ed. Richard H. Schultz, Robert L. Pflatzgraff, and W. Bradley Stock (Washington D.C.: Department of Defense, 1997), 164.

<sup>24</sup> Russell, Francis, *The Secret War*, 169.

wanted to hit back at the Japanese in some way, gave Miles free and exclusive control over all American intelligence and special operations in CBI.<sup>25</sup>

Donovan was stubborn and did not accede to Stilwell's desires. Two months later, Eifler, an old acquaintance from Stilwell's interwar service on the Mexican border, appeared in Chungking at the head of an OSS mission that Stilwell had initially rejected. Because Eifler had known and worked with Stilwell during the interwar period, Donovan chose Eifler to train and command a group of OSS saboteurs assigned to the CBI Theater.<sup>26</sup> Upon his arrival, Eifler found that Stilwell had little inclination to use the detachment in any meaningful way. A conventional soldier and a passionate admirer of conventional infantry tactics, Stilwell disparaged guerrilla tactics as an "illegal action" and "shadow boxing."<sup>27</sup> Miles complicated the situation, because he was working under the assumption that he was in command of all Allied intelligence and special operations in CBI. Miles argued that he had already reached an agreement with the Chinese General Tai Li, Nationalist Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek's intimidating director of internal security, to train 50,000 Chinese guerrillas. Alerted to detachment's existence by the suspicious Tai Li and determined to preserve his exclusive control, Miles took his case to Stilwell, who claimed with some irritation that the War Department had pulled a "squeeze play" on him. Consequently, when Eifler appeared at theater headquarters in July, Stilwell remained aloof,

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<sup>25</sup> Eifler to Donovan, 24 November 1942, OSS History Office Files, Entry 99, Box 49, RG 226, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) and David W. Hogan, Jr., *US Arms Special Operations in World War II* (Washington: US Army Center of Military History [CMH], 1992), 65-68.

<sup>26</sup> Eifler's choice as first commander of Detachment 101 is well documented in Richard Dunlop's *Behind Japanese Lines*. (New York: Rand McNally and Company, 1979), and Peers and Brellis' *Behind the Burma Road* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1963.)

<sup>27</sup> Peers and Brellis' *Behind the Burma Road* (Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1963.), 48.

informing him, "I didn't send for you and I don't want you."<sup>28</sup> This confusion was indicative of the lack of planning in determining the detachment's mission, and early operations.

After several meetings with Eifler, Stilwell finally agreed to allow the detachment to operate under his command, with the mission of conducting sabotage missions in Burma. In September of 1942, Stilwell issued orders for the unit to start operations, and the orders limited the detachment exclusively to conducting sabotage operations. Stilwell sent Eifler to Burma, as much to keep him clear of Miles in China as for any other reason.<sup>29</sup> The detachment's orders read:

The following initial specific mission is given you for immediate execution: To make plans for denying the use of the Myitkyina Aerodrome to the Japanese as an operational field. This is your primary mission. In the accomplishment of this mission, without any desire to restrict you, it is desired to indicate that destruction on the railroad, the firing of railroad cars, and the sinking of vessels carrying fuel will all contribute to the general success of your operations. Effective destruction of important bridges, such as the R.R. Bridge near Neza would reduce rail shipments of gasoline to a minimal amount. You should make a careful estimate of the situation and plan your action, then inform this headquarters of your general plan. b. Subsequent missions will be given you from time to time, but for these you will submit your plans for approval before executing them.<sup>30</sup>

The detachment would go beyond the parameters of these orders because of the leadership and personality of Eifler, which was suited for nonlinear and non-contiguous warfare.

The choice of Eifler can account for the initial success and survival of the detachment despite the detachment's chaotic beginnings and lack of a clear mission purpose. Eifler was not a

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<sup>28</sup> Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, p. 109; see also Milton E. Miles, *A Different Kind of War*, ed. Hawthorne Daniel (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), 76.

<sup>29</sup> This argument is successfully made in David W. Hogan, Jr., *US Arms Special Operations in World War II* (Washington: US Army Center of Military History [CMH], 1992), 65-68.

<sup>30</sup> Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944". Record Group 226, Entry A1-170, Box 277. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, National Archives, Md. Attachment 3, pp. 2.

conventional military officer; he was an adventurous man who had been a Treasury agent, border guard, and police officer. This would help Eifler and the detachment to adapt to the Burmese battle area, rather than be limited by a conventional view of the unconventional battle area, and effectively use the detachment's limited allocation of manpower and supplies. Stilwell appreciated Eifler's daring nature, enthusiasm, and leadership ability. Stilwell would notice the burly Major, and call out, "Buffalo Bill! Come on over!" and then introduce Eifler to senior officers as the "Army's number one thug."<sup>31</sup> Stilwell's parting instructions for him were, "Eifler, I don't want to see you again until I hear a boom from Burma!"<sup>32</sup> Eifler was in his early forties at the time of his service and presented a formidable presence. At 250 pounds, he was physically intimidating, and he had a gregarious personality, sharp intellect, loud voice and a love for adventure. Eifler was a natural leader for a unit conducting independent operations in a non-contiguous battle area.

The detachment's initial efforts were far from successful and reflected a lack of clear direction for the detachment. In July of 1942, Eifler recruited Captain John Coughlin, who in turn recruited Ray Peers, and together they recruited twenty-one handpicked enlisted personnel who shared Eifler's predilection for seeing war as an adventure.<sup>33</sup> This was the detachment's

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<sup>31</sup> Historical Section, China-Burma-India Theater, "History of the China-Burma-India Theater, 21 May 1942 to 25 October 1944," unpublished manuscript, vol. 2, pt. 2, CMH Archives, Section AG, p. 3, Section JICA, p. 2, Section PW, pp. 2, 5-6; Eifler to Donovan, 24 November 1942; Moon and Eifler, *The Deadliest Colonel*, pp. 63, 68-69, 108; Peers interview, I: 3-4, 14, 17, II: 24, 26, quoted in David Hogan Jr. "MacArthur, Stilwell, and Special Operations in the War against Japan." *Parameters* (Spring, 1995), 101 – 115.

<sup>32</sup> This comment is documented in Tuchman *Stilwell and the American Experience in China 1911-45*, Peers *Behind the Burma Road*, and Dunlop *Behind Japanese Lines*.

<sup>33</sup> Francis Russell, "OSS Detachment 101" in *Ex-CBI Roundup*", October 1988 (online) [http://www.cbi-history.com/part\\_vi\\_101\\_oss-3.html](http://www.cbi-history.com/part_vi_101_oss-3.html). Accessed on 4/30/11, gives this number, James R. Ward "The Activities of Detachment 101 of the OSS" in *The Secret War: The Office of Strategic Services in WWII* (Washington D.C.:

initial personnel as it deployed to the CBI Theater. Through personal contacts made in Calcutta, Eifler obtained the use of a plantation in Nazira for the detachment's headquarters and training facility. Between late December 1942 and late February 1943, four small groups of trained Detachment personnel, augmented by a small group of refugees from Burma, infiltrated Japanese lines to attempt acts of sabotage but largely failed in their mission. The only damage caused by the detachment was the destruction of Namkwin Bridge and parts of the rail line, at a cost of eighteen men. In March 1943, groups "L" in the upper Hukawng valley, "M" in the Taro Valley, and "J" at the junction of the Chaudan and Pangeao passes, received the assignment to gather information on Japanese dispositions, strength and movement on roads and trails and to rescue downed Air Corps personnel.<sup>34</sup> The detachment's failure to inflict substantive damage on the Japanese demonstrates the futility of trying to obtain victory in the non-contiguous battle area by attritional means. The focus of the detachment's mission had shifted from sabotage to espionage and rescue, which would fortuitously lead to greater contact with the indigenous people of the area.

At this time, the detachment's unit leaders started to recruit, train, supply, and arm Kachins to conduct limited military, and espionage, operations against the Japanese.<sup>35</sup> Members of the detachment formed friendships with the chiefs of the different Kachin tribes, gaining their trust by deferring to the Kachin societal hierarchy and customs. Barbra West's research shows

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National Archives and Records Administration, 1992), 321 and Harve Saal "SOG" in *Special Operation Association* (Nashville: Turner Publishing, 2005, put the initial number of the detachment at 21, because it does not include Eifler or Coughlin in the count because they were commanders.

<sup>34</sup> Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944". Record Group 226, Entry A1-170, Box 277. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, NARA., Attachment 3, pp. 3-4.

<sup>35</sup> Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944", 7 -8.



that there are two trends in the Kachin political culture; the *gumsa* system, where hereditary chiefs control the land, labor, and resources, and the *gumlao* system, which is similar to a confederacy among different chiefs.<sup>36</sup> By recognizing the indigenous Kachin culture's political culture and adapting to its mores, the detachment gained more indigenous manpower. This in turn increased the numbers of indigenous volunteers, which allowed the detachment to take on more diverse and wide-ranging military missions. This is because the Kachin leaders brought loyal fighters, bases of operations, manual laborers, and intelligence resources to the detachment under an already established hierarchy conducive to military operations. The exact numbers of Kachin personnel recruited initially by the detachment is not available because each leader brought with him a different number of followers. Obtaining the aid of indigenous people in the battle area is an absolute necessity for success in any conflict in nonlinear, noncontiguous, or 4GW battle area. Hy S. Rothstein logically maintains that in unconventional warfare, which utilizes 4GW tactics and strategies, the goal in obtaining the aid of indigenous people is to "win a war by working with –as opposed to neutralizing or fighting around – local populations." To obtain that aid, the 4GW warrior must "win their trust... live with them, eat with them, and share the same living conditions".<sup>37</sup> This does not mean to imply the OSS did not cooperate with other indigenous people in other theaters of the war. Rather, the nature of the CBI Theater and extent of dependence on an indigenous people by the detachment was unique at the time. The detachment's operations in fighting a common enemy in a noncontiguous battle-area in conjunction with non-state indigenous force presaged accepted modern conceptions of 4GW tactics and strategies.

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<sup>36</sup> Barbra West, *Encyclopedia of the Peoples of Asia and Oceania*, 356 -357.

<sup>37</sup> Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 159.

As more manpower became available, the detachment had to develop tactics and a strategy to effectively use and organize the increased military ranks tactically to achieve Allied strategic aims in the theater. Initially, the Kachin volunteers conducted traditional hit and run guerilla operations, but they would eventually shift their mission focus to establish secure AOs by occupying and holding non-contiguous territory in the Kachin hills. The establishment of secure and recognized AOs facilitated logistics, allowed greater coordination of operations, and led to the detachment's integration into the CBI theater hierarchy. While similar to "guerilla strongholds,, the detachment's AOs reflected zone of control linked to an established chain of command and logistical source. Whereas guerilla strongholds depend on the military force exerted by one side or the other, and the guerilla forces are supplied by the resources within guerilla control, in secure AOs, secure lines of supply (LOS) are linked to the controlling headquarters, usually by air, and their actions are coordinated with other AOs. Guerillas differ in that they do not normally try to set up an established base of operation or initiate operations, beyond hit and run operations, against the occupation force. As the detachment recruited more personnel who were indigenous, the detachment was able to establish more bases of operations behind Japanese lines. By the end of 1943, Detachment 101 had established six non-contiguous AOs behind Japanese lines in northern Burma, three on each side of the Irrawaddy River.<sup>38</sup> The AOs were still modest efforts, not capable of exerting much military force projection. Each area commander recruited and trained a small Kachin element for his personal protection, defense of the AOs, and limited military operations, principally small ambushes, intelligence gathering, and acts of sabotage.

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<sup>38</sup> Lt Col. Peers to Brig. Gen. Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April to 30 April, 1944, Inclusive" Microfilm collection, *Detachment 101 Records*, Draw 98, National Archives, Md., 2-3.

Communication between stable AOs with controlling headquarters is essential to success in the 4GW and non-contiguous battle-area. Stable communication allows “real-time” intelligence and concerns, humanitarian and tactical, to be communicated to the controlling headquarters. This allows for effective use of force, coordinated operations, psychological operations, and allocation of supplies among multiple AOs in the battle area. General Wayne A. Downing, based on his examination and experience in the modern 4GW battle areas, posits, “[S]upport teams working with American allies provide an invaluable link the national force and the controlling headquarters.” Downing further contends, “Cultural awareness helps their teams operate with foreign military contingents, and the teams organic communication systems make them the ideal link with the coalition headquarters”.<sup>39</sup> This was readily apparent to the detachment, and they adapted. Group “Knothead” had many Kachins who had been actively resisting the Japanese since the Japanese invaded, and this group formed the foundation for the detachment’s military assets. In May of 1943, with fifteen men and forty-five porters, Captain Vincent Curl marched from Fort Hertz to the western slopes of the Hukawng Valley. His mission was to “block the trails leading from the Hukawng Valley into the hills, so that the enemy could not establish positions in the heights, and confined to the valley proper”.<sup>40</sup> Curl's unit maintained contact with the detachment’s headquarters via airdrops and radio, thereby forming an independent AO working in conjunction with the main Allied headquarters.

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<sup>39</sup> General Wayne A. Downing “Foreword – Challenges of the Future” in *Special Operations Forces: Roles and Mission in the Aftermath of the Cold War* ed. Richard H. Schwartz Jr., et al. (Washington, D.C.: Dept. of Defense, 1994), 5-6.

<sup>40</sup> Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan “Report covering Period 1 March to 31 March, 1944”, 8.

Vince Curl was regular Army, having been a sergeant in Company K, 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry, where he attracted the attention of Eifler. Curl and Eifler, because of their similar personalities, formed a close friendship. Colonel John Coughlin, a West Point graduate who was also in the 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry and recruited by Eifler for duty with the detachment, said that Curl would “gladly have killed for Carl Eifler.”<sup>41</sup> Because of this close friendship, and Eifler’s proclivity for audacious actions by his subordinates, Curl had wide latitude to operate his group. It is possible that Curl suggested his operational group’s mission to Eifler because of his conventional conception and training in jungle warfare. In the standard jungle warfare training given to American service members, it was conventional teaching to secure the aid of the native population in military operations.<sup>42</sup> It is possible, though far from certain, that Curl looked for organized native resistance forces to use in theater because of his military training. Curl knew from Red Maddox, an Anglo-Burmese native attached to the detachment, of a rag-tag Kachin resistance group with Zhing Htaw Naw as *duwa* (leader) in the western hills of the Hukawng Valley that had kept the Japanese from occupying the area securely.<sup>43</sup> Curl, with little information on Zhing’s location, went into the hills to search for him. Curl and his men wandered the hills for weeks, unaware they were under constant surveillance by Zhing’s men, until one of the Kachins brought Curl to Zhing. Curl found Zhing sick with malaria and successfully treated him.<sup>44</sup> The two men formed a close bond and agreed to join forces against the Japanese, and the arming and training of the Myhprap-Hpung, or “Lightning Force,, began in

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<sup>41</sup> Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, 70.

<sup>42</sup> War Department, *FM 31-20 Basic Field Manual: Jungle Warfare, December 15, 1941* (Washington, D.C., Office of Government Printing, 1941), 24.

<sup>43</sup> Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan “Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944”, 2.

<sup>44</sup> Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, 216 -218.

earnest. Curl and Zhing's personal relationship, and Curl's respect for the indigenous culture, demonstrate the importance of the human element in warfare. Others in detachment also arrived at similar conclusions about the importance of recruiting the indigenous people.

In February 1943, Captain William C. Wilkinson and four agents arrived in Sumprabum and began to contact Kachin leaders in the area. A Japanese advance on the town soon forced them to flee, but in April Wilkinson, operating from Fort Hertz, infiltrated Japanese lines by foot to establish an operating base at Ngumla, where he raised a small fighting force to harass the Japanese. Wilkinson, by the time of his departure in January 1944, had built a force of 700 Kachin fighters, called the Home Guard by the Kachins, and a network of agents, one of whom was a general contractor to the Japanese in the Myitkyina area.<sup>45</sup> Wilkinson's group, "Forward," set up ambush positions along the roads leading north from the Japanese positions composed of interlocking fields of fire. Groups assigned to the Sagribum area were to drive the Japanese out of the Triangle, a name used to denote the Kachin hills area, by attacking their supply lines and prevent them from re-entering the Triangle by guarding the ferries with strategically placed Home Guard units. Further attacks across the Nali Hka and the M'Mai Hka Rivers on Japanese positions and their supply lines prevented Japanese reentry into the area. In January 1944, Lt. Commander James Luce took command of group Forward, headquartered at Ngumla. When Luce assumed command, Forward had four trained and experienced combat groups holding the jungle around Ngumla and ambushing Japanese troops. By April, Forward had seven organized companies, with 1,100 Kachin fighters, planting land mines and denying ease of movement and

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<sup>45</sup> Hogan Jr., *U.S. Army Special Operations in World War*, 108.

territory to the enemy.<sup>46</sup> Forward's operation can be termed a conventional mission of clearance and occupation of enemy territory. Forward's successes at establishing a secure AO in the non-linear and non-contiguous battlefield provided a template for similar operations in the future.

In addition to establishing the two main bases, Forward and Knothead, by the end of 1943 Detachment 101 had infiltrated several other intelligence and operational groups into northern Burma. These groups established smaller AOs. Group Pat, named after its commander, Lieutenant "Pat" Quinn, established itself in the Myitkyina area. Quinn organized a small-armed force that harassed the Japanese and helped downed Allied flyers to escape. One of Pat's agents watched Myitkyina airfield with a telescope from a nearby hill and reported traffic directly to the Tenth Air Force.<sup>47</sup> To the west at Taro, Group Red, under Captain Maddox of Group A, trained 500 Kachin fighters and reconnoitered Japanese activities on the right flank of the Allied forces preparing for their advance into Burma. Other groups penetrated even farther behind Japanese lines. By December 1943, Detachment 101 had eleven radio stations reporting regularly from behind enemy lines.<sup>48</sup> These small AOs were more mobile and seemingly guerrilla-like in their tactics, yet unlike guerrilla forces, they were strategically connected, supplied, and coordinated with the centralized command, which is standard in operations of units operating from noncontiguous AOs in non-linear and non-contiguous battlefields.

The British, in an attempt to harness the existing resistance of the Kachins and other hill people, created an operational group called "Guerrilla Forces-Plan V," or V-Force. In August

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<sup>46</sup> Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944", 7

<sup>47</sup> David Hogan, *U.S. Army Special Operations*, 108.

<sup>48</sup> Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944", 6-8.

1943, a V-Force team flew to Fort Hertz to establish a unit of Kachins. The unit was to be made up of veterans of levies under British colonial rule. Stilwell diverted to Fort Hertz eight officers and forty sergeants (radiomen, cryptographers, and medics) from the group of American soldiers already assigned to train the Chinese infantry divisions for their push into Burma. British planners assumed that V-Force would be successful because the Kachins would fight for the British because of past loyalties, and this would expand British influence over the military operations in Burma.<sup>49</sup> Nevertheless, V-Force would prove to be a failure in furthering British influence in the CBI Theater.

V-Force's failure can be explained by the British rejection, or ignorance, of the 4GW concept of an integrated and active operational effort to gain popular support through psychological operations, attention to civil affairs, cultural sensitivities, and humanitarian programs. Thomas X. Hammes convincingly posits "the 4GW operational planner must determine what message he wants to send, the networks available him, the types of messages those networks are best suited to carry, the action that will cause the network to send the message, and the feedback system that will tell him if the message is being received".<sup>50</sup> The British recruitment effort of V-Force was contingent on obsolete obligations, loyalties, and a British sense of entitlement of the Kachins' loyalty based on prewar colonial norms. This was the wrong message to send to the Kachins, because it denoted a return to the prewar status quo of a dependent subjection, whereas the American approach to gaining Kachin support was respect for cultural sensitivities, material profit for the native people, and a concern for humanitarian

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<sup>49</sup> Charles H Briscoe, "Kachin Rangers: Allied Guerillas in World War II", *Special Warfare*. Updated December, 2002, accessed September 28, 2009. <http://www.militaryphotos.net/forums/archive/index.php/t-27927.html>.

<sup>50</sup> Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 216.

issues.<sup>51</sup> Stewart Alsop and Thomas Braden attribute the success of the detachment to “the difference in attitude” toward the Kachins between American and British forces, basing their findings on interviews with detachment veterans. The veterans explained that “unlike the British, they did not treat them as ‘natives.’ The Americans were, they said, quite natural and open with the Kachins, asked their advice, which was frequently badly needed, and even on occasion slapped them affectionately on their bare backs. The Kachins, after their initial amazement, reacted highly favorably to this treatment and took the Americans to their hearts.”<sup>52</sup> The British, to be fair, did train the Kachins in 1942, and worked well with the Karan, Chin, and Shan. The British, as Robert B. Asprey cogently notes, “had nothing to offer” the Kachins but a return to the prewar status quo.<sup>53</sup> The failure of General Wingate’s Chindits would seem to bear this out, especially when compared to the detachment’s American approach.

In February 1943, British Major General Orde Wingate and 3,000 Chindits entered Burma. Wingate had developed his war-fighting theory of Long Range Penetration (LRP) while serving in Palestine and Ethiopia before serving in the CBI Theater. LRP advocated sending groups, supplied by a nonlinear LOS and with no fixed lines of communications, behind the enemy lines to disrupt the enemy’s LOS and ability for active operations. The LRP groups were

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<sup>51</sup> The works of Judith A. Bennett *Natives and Exotics: World War II and Environment in the Southern Pacific* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), Stanley Sandler *World War II in the Pacific: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2001), Susan Lisa Curruthers, *Winning Hearts and Minds: British Governments, the Media, and Colonial Counter-insurgencies* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1995), and Victor Rothwell *War Aims in the Second World War: The War Aims of the Major Belligerents, 1939 – 1945* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), have arrived at similar conclusions based on British and American interactions with indigenous populations.

<sup>52</sup> Robert B. Asprey, *War in the Shadows The Guerilla in History* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1994), 434.

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



“lightly armed and equipped troops, operating without conventional artillery, tank, and logistical support,” and assigned to “offensive operations deep in the jungle behind enemy lines with the aim of collecting intelligence, cutting enemy lines of communications, disrupting command and control, attacking base installation, and diverting troops from other tasks.”<sup>54</sup>

There were two Chindit expeditions into Burma, the first in February 1943. Their mission was to disrupt Japanese communications, attack outposts, and destroy bridges. The operation was very costly. Wingate lost a total of 818 men, and of the 2,000 who returned, 600 never recovered enough to fight again. Though the Chindits’ mission was similar to the mission of Detachment 101, the Chindits failed while the detachment succeeded. Arguably, one of the main factors for the Chindits’ failure was not understanding the concept of establishing secure and fluid AOs or operating with a set of cultural sensitivities to obtain indigenous support.

V-Force eventually merged its operations with Detachment 101. The detachment used Fort Hertz as a forward operational headquarters and supply depot and served as the link between the detachment’s headquarters at Nazira and the non-contiguous AOs. Supplies, personnel, and prisoners went from the Nazira to the AOs, and vice versa, by air. Groups Forward and Knothead had to construct airstrips at their AO bases, which required the labor of hundreds of natives. Detachment personnel hid the airstrips by building numerous dummy bamboo huts, so that when seen from above the airstrips looked like an insignificant village. It took minutes to remove the dummy huts and make the strip ready for landing.<sup>55</sup> The ability to land aircraft at the bases provided the detachment’s headquarters greater command and control, a dependable line of supply, and the capacity for rapid reinforcements of the detachment’s AOs.

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<sup>54</sup> Tim Moreman, *Chindit 1942 -1945* (New York: Osprey Publishing, 2009), 4.

<sup>55</sup>Peers and Brellis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America’s Most Successful Guerilla Force*, 108.

The capacity to build, hide, and maintain airstrips, beyond the practical necessity of establishing a stable non-linear LOS to conduct operations, also solidified and enlarged Kachin support. The airfields brought the Kachins, not just the Kachin fighting for the detachment, security, supplies, and employment.

Keeping track of friendly occupied areas behind enemy lines is difficult, and the detachment's units were sometimes in as much danger from Allied forces as from the Japanese. On January 2, 1944, Curl, in response to a bombing run on Jaiwa-Ga by the U.S. Air Corps on January 1, sent a message to base to "tell the Air Corps to lay off Jaiwa now with their bombing that our forces have reoccupied it."<sup>56</sup> This is a dangerous but necessary part of non-linear combat; the very mobility that is necessary in the non-contiguous battlefield makes it difficult to provide flawless support. In nonlinear battle areas, sharing information between, and among, the AOs and headquarters is crucial. Richard S. Deakin cogently notes that in nonlinear battle areas, it is vital to understand the "concept of information dominance and the recognition of its role as a weapon in its own right".<sup>57</sup> The detachment, by adapting to its battle area conditions, demonstrated the importance of communications to the success of its mission and gave the dispersion, maintenance, and replacement of communication equipment top priority.

Maintaining a fluid AO was important to Detachment 101's operation, as it still is in operations conducted in non-contiguous battle-areas. Steven L. Canby reasonably maintains that in a 4GW and non-contiguous battle-area, activity "should be husbanded and surged when situations are fluid, such as the beginning of hostilities and episodically thereafter when

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<sup>56</sup> *Report from Capt. Curl: January 1944*. Microfilm 119, Drawer 91. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, National Archives, Md., 1.

<sup>57</sup> Richard S. Deakin, *Battlespace Electronics: Network-Enabled Electronic Warfare* (Norwood: Artech House, 2010), 3

breakthroughs make the battle once again fluid.”<sup>58</sup> The detachment’s units maintained numerous fluid AOs against the Japanese, retreating when they needed while effectively denying the main area of the AOs to the Japanese. The Kachins were able to fight off Japanese incursions because their strategically placed forward outposts had great defensive ability, and because the denseness of the jungle forced the Japanese to stick to narrow trails. Curl described one Myhprap-hpung outpost as “definitely one of the best positions covering those trails they could have had. You could not detect their firing positions until within five feet of them. There’s no way in the world anything could come up those trails and get by them.”<sup>59</sup> The detachment’s strategic outposts are demonstrative of how low level technologies can be employed as effective force multipliers in the non-contiguous and 4GW battle-areas. The detachment’s outposts added lethality to the intersecting fields of fire and excellent camouflage with the brilliant use of the *pungi* sticks, a sharpened stake mounted vertically in the ground. The Kachins would place *pungi* pits alongside the trails so that Japanese seeking cover would impale themselves. The Kachins also strung twenty-five to fifty grenades at intervals of five yards, connected by an electric wire to a detonator.<sup>60</sup> This had the effect of turning the detachment’s outposts, with the aid of these force multipliers, into fortified positions that were capable of holding off Japanese infiltration into the Kachin hills. If the Japanese used greater force, detachment personnel could, and did, retreat a bit and easily set up another strategic position nearby.

By late 1943, the Myhprap-hpung, under Curl’s loose command, controlled the hills effectively enough to establish its own headquarters, supply depot, and military outposts in the

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<sup>58</sup> Steven L. Canby “SOF: An Alternative Perspective on Doctrine”. in *Roles and Missions of SOF in the Aftermath of the Cold War*, ed. Richard H. Schulz Jr (Darby, PA: Diane Publishing, 1996), 184.

<sup>59</sup>Report from Capt. Curl: January 1944,2.

<sup>60</sup> Dunlop. *Behind Japanese Lines*. (New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1979), 303.

group's AO. The area was so secure that Eifler and General William J. Donovan, the head of the OSS, flew into the area to inspect Knothead group's headquarters in December of 1943. Donovan, Zhing, Eifler, and Curl held a lengthy conference, and Donovan came away with the belief that the Kachins could contribute greatly beyond simply supplying intelligence. Donovan, once briefed on the methods and tactics of non-linear combat being developed by the detachment, believed the detachment could aid in military operations. All the Americans needed to do was to arm, equip, and train the Kachins and then tie their activities into the grand design of Allied strategy.<sup>61</sup> The tactical value of the Kachin armed forces had not been figured into Detachment 101 operations when it was conceived, but after Donovan's trip, the detachment expanded its mission beyond simple sabotage and intelligence operations.

In switching the detachment from a clandestine operation, which was able to secure and hold ground from the Japanese, into a combat force that also conducted intelligence operations, the replacement of Eifler by Colonel William Peers was of no small import. Eifler was crucial to setting up the detachment and planning its early operations, but lengthy service in theater got to him physically. In late 1943, Eifler received a concussion in a plane crash. According to Peers, Carl Eifler's health and mental state were deteriorating noticeably. He could not sleep, was nervous as a cat, would not submit to medication, as requested by the 20<sup>th</sup> General Hospital at

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<sup>61</sup> R Dunlop. *Behind Japanese Lines*, 258 -261, and Peers and Brellis. *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerilla Force*, 131, maintain this perspective. Peers maintains that if Donovan had any doubts about the Kachin, they dissipated after the meeting. Video of the meeting can be found at <http://www.realmilitaryflix.com/public/691.cfm>.

Ledo, and completely disregarded all advice.<sup>62</sup> The downturn in Eifler's physical condition prompted a change in command.

At the Navy's insistence, Miles had a separate chain of command back to Washington, although Stilwell supposedly had complete authority over Miles where "necessary." To avoid jurisdictional clashes with Miles, Donovan agreed to designate him as the OSS Strategic Services Officer (SSO) for the theater, but the understanding did not work well. Miles was determined to remain independent of OSS, which, in turn, increasingly saw him as a tool of the Chinese and an obstacle to their plans for espionage operations in China free of foreign control. At first, Stilwell got along well with Miles and backed operations that he thought might prove productive. Eventually, Stilwell came to view Miles "as a loose cannon, when (Miles) attempted to expand his sphere by sending liaison officers to the 14th Air Force and Lord Louis Mountbatten's new Southeast Asia Command".<sup>63</sup> After his visit to the theater in late 1943, Donovan removed Miles as the OSS's theater chief, relieved Eifler, and extensively reorganized OSS operations in the theater. Colonel John Coughlin became the new SSO, reporting directly to Stilwell and

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<sup>62</sup> Peers, and Dunlop both conclude that Eifler's health concerns were the reason for the Eifler's dismissal as the head of the detachment, according to the narrative in Richard Dunlop's *Behind Japanese Lines*, and Peers and Dean Breilis'. *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerilla Force*.

Yet, when one looks at Eifler's next assignment, to kidnap the head scientist working on the atomic bomb in Germany, it is hard to agree with them. Eifler hand-picked a team and began training for the mission within months of leaving Burma. The plan was well into training and reconnaissance when the mission ended because of the successful testing of our own atomic bomb. The more likely reason could be due to Eifler's skill at clandestine operations, as demonstrated by his success with the Detachment, and the fact that the detachment was taking on more of a conventional nature that Peer and Coughlin, not Eifler, was more qualified for.

<sup>63</sup> Wesley Marvin Bagby, *The Eagle-Dragon Alliance: America's Relations with China in World War II* (Dover: Delaware Press, 1992), 204-210, and John Kreis, "China and the Fourteenth Air Force" in *Piercing the Fog: Intelligence and Army Air Forces Operations in World War II*, ed. John Kreis (Washington, D.C.: Air Force History and Museums, 1996), 319- 326, document Stilwell's change of attitude towards Miles.

possessing supervisory authority over Detachment 101, now under the command of Colonel W. R. Peers. Peers, who became a career Army officer, joined the Army right out of College in 1938 and remained in the service after the war. Peers was perfect for the transition of the detachment emphasis from intelligence to combat operations. While mindful of the importance of the intelligence component of the detachment, Peers had an inkling of the military value of the detachment. His ability to conceptualize the detachment's operations in a conventional way in an unconventional theater was beneficial to Allied operations in the Burma Theater in 1944, when the detachment would play a part of the Allied offensive behind enemy lines Burma.

The template makes use of feature in Word called "styles." A "style" is a named set of formatting characteristics. For example, the heading above is in "Chapter 1 – Heading 1" style and is used for each chapter heading. This style has a specific set of characteristics: 16 pt font, bold, centered, etc. Other styles are used in other portions of the document. For example, "Heading 2" style is used for 1<sup>st</sup> level subheadings, and "Body Text" style is used for paragraph text.

## Chapter 2 - A New Focus

Wingate met with Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt in August 1943 and extolled on his theory and the strategic benefits of Long Range Penetration operations. Smitten by Wingate's enthusiasm and Churchill's approval, Roosevelt was convinced of the feasibility of Wingate's theories and decided to create a similar group led by American officers.<sup>64</sup> The 5307<sup>th</sup> Composite Unit, also known as "Merrill's Marauders" because of their commander General Frank Merrill, came into being with the mission to support the Allied counteroffensive into Burma. The 5307<sup>th</sup> had the assignment of outflanking the Japanese in northern Burma, ahead of the main Allied forces composed of conventional forces of numerous American-trained Chinese units under Stilwell.<sup>65</sup> The main units were to plunge into the jungles and hills of northeast Burma and occupy the area by establishing traditional lines of communications and control. The operation was codenamed Galahad. Given the pyrrhic result of Wingate's expedition and the rate of loss of units conducting operations, it is hard to imagine that Galahad would have succeeded without the aid of the detachment's combat force.

The counteroffensive into Burma coincided with what Peers in his official reports labeled the second phase of the detachment, which the official history of the detachment identifies as December 1943 to August 1944. This period marks an increasing level of military integration and joint operations with conventional forces. Peers, upon learning of the planned counteroffensive, immediately realized the need to reorganize the units under his command for

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<sup>64</sup> Shelford Bidwell, *The Chindit War: The Campaign in Burma, 1944*, (Leicester: Ulverscroft, 1982), 110-122.

<sup>65</sup> Merrill's Marauders, 5-7.

better command and control.<sup>66</sup> Under Eifler, each unit had operated in a more or less autonomous and haphazard manner that reflected the need to maintain control over the different AOs. Peers reorganized the detachment to reflect his own ideas of military efficiency. He organized the detachment's groups in Northern Burma into four clearly delineated Areas of Operational Control (AOC), each under the control of an area commander. The area commander would be responsible for all operations and groups in his area.<sup>67</sup> The four AOC's were: Area I (Forward) east of the Irrawaddy River; Area II (Pat), between the Irrawaddy River and the Kumon Range; Area III (Knothead, between Kumon Range and the Hukawng Valley; and Area IV (Tramp), from the Hukawng Valley to the Indian border.<sup>68</sup> Area commanders would be communicating directly with their units and receiving their orders from the detachment's headquarters at Nazira. This allowed for more cohesive command and control better suited to a non-contiguous operational area. Included in this reorganization was the addition of V-Force personnel to the detachment, which brought more conventionally trained personnel into the detachment.

In Burma, Stilwell faced the veteran Japanese 18<sup>th</sup> Division and remnants of the 56<sup>th</sup> and 53<sup>rd</sup> Divisions under the command of Major General Shinichi Tanaka. Tanaka also had assorted army and corps units for support. Allied headquarters believed that Tanaka had between 40,000 and 50, 000 battle-hardened troops under his command. The 28<sup>th</sup> Air Regiment fielded thirty fighters and nine bombers, based in Rangoon, to provide air support for the Japanese forces in

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<sup>66</sup> Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 1 April to 30 April, 1944, inclusive.

<sup>67</sup> Peers. and Brelis. *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerilla Force*, 136 – 138.

<sup>68</sup> Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944" 4.



northern Burma.<sup>69</sup> The Japanese troops set up strong defensive positions in the Burmese jungles, each manned by forty to a hundred troops, to protect the Kamaing Road, the only motor route through the Hukawng Valley and the main supply line for the Japanese in Northern Burma. Stillwell had an estimated 55,000 combat troops to send against Tanaka, and air support provided by the 10<sup>th</sup> United States Army Air Force composed mainly of medium bombers and a few P-47s.<sup>70</sup> Stilwell planned to send his American-trained Chinese troops, the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Divisions, to attack the Japanese down the axis of the Kamaing Road, with the 5307<sup>th</sup> conducting encircling movements to the east of the Chinese troops.<sup>71</sup> The British would move east down the Burma railway in conjunction with the American and Chinese offensive. The counteroffensive was scheduled to begin in January of 1944. By late February 1944, the Chinese 22<sup>nd</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> Divisions had driven sixty miles into the Hukawng Valley, and the 5307<sup>th</sup> was in position around Tanja Ga to begin their operations in earnest.<sup>72</sup> Detachment 101 was providing effective intelligence to Allied headquarters, for which it was winning praise, but it appears there was no thought of using it for active combat operations.

Morale is important in any military operation, but it is vital to warfare in a noncontiguous battle area. Stephen Krasner convincingly maintains that in non-contiguous and 4GW battle-

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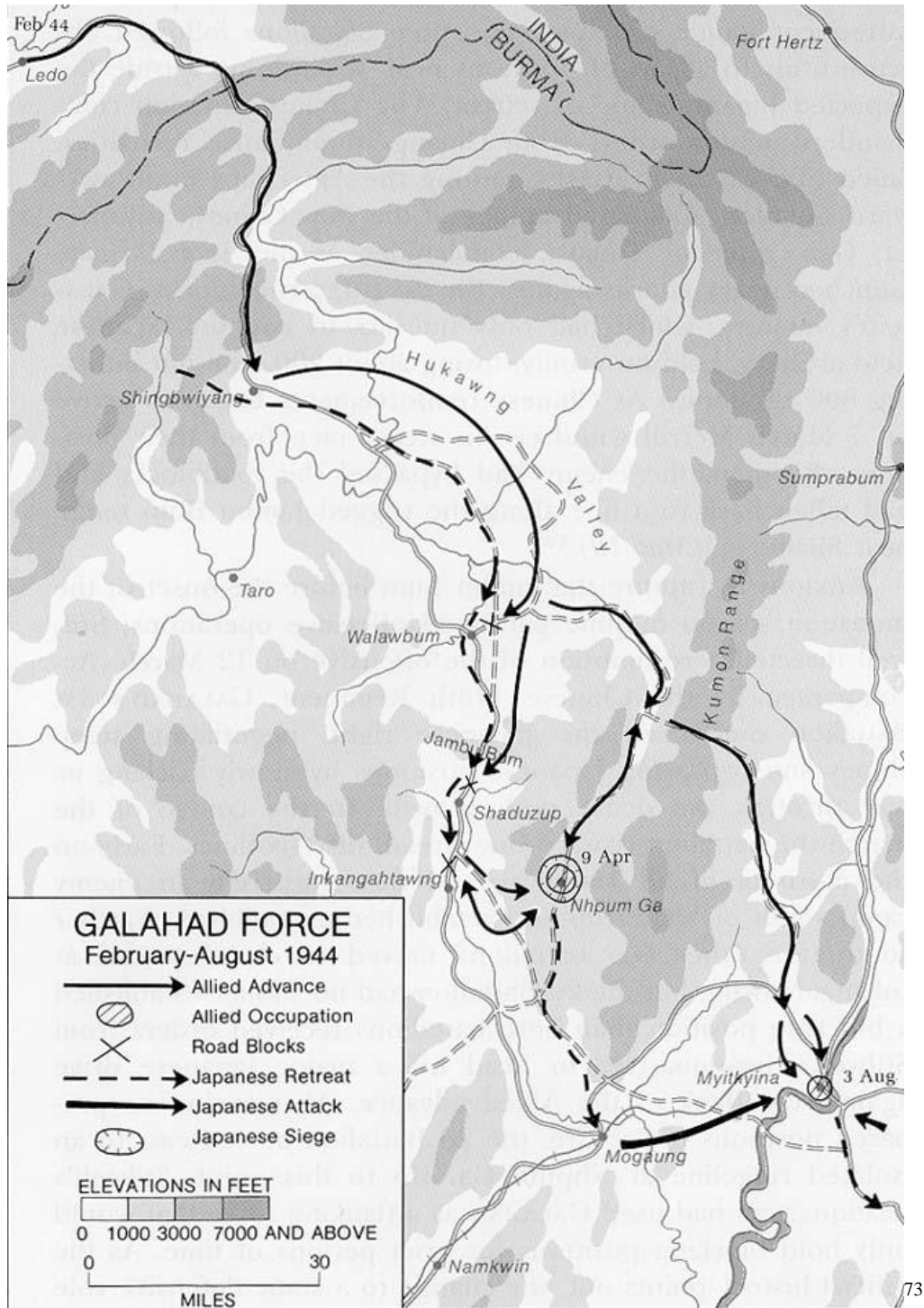
<sup>69</sup> Won-Loy Chan, *Burma, the Untold Story*, (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1986), 33, and Romanus and Sunderland *China-Burma-India Theater: Stillwell's Command Problems*, 85.

<sup>70</sup> Major Bernhardt L. Mortensen, "The Clean-Up" in *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, ed. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate (Washington D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 452, posits that the 10<sup>th</sup> Army Air Force groups numbers are hard to estimate because it was a "paper" Air Group, because of political considerations that deprived the group of actual units to fulfill its numbers, but notes that the group used mainly medium bombers and P-47s.

<sup>71</sup> War Department. *Merrill's Marauders*, 31.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

areas, sometimes “success is not defined as controlling territory but in terms of the damage done



<sup>73</sup> Map from David W. Hogan W. Hogan, *U.S. Special Operations in World War II* (Washington,

to the morale of the population.”<sup>74</sup> Peers states that he met with Stilwell and Merrill to brief them on the combat aid that the detachment could provide, but it appears that Stilwell believed the detachment was only capable of providing intelligence. This was a logical conclusion, given the detachment’s difficulties in January of 1944.

This period demonstrates the importance of keeping the personal loyalties and confidence of indigenous personnel and their families through humanitarian operations. In late December of 1943, just a few days after Donovan’s visit, the Japanese assaulted Jaiwa. Using Kachin women as human shields, 150 Japanese troops easily captured Jaiwa. The Myihprap did not oppose the Japanese force because they did not want the women killed, and had to retreat. The Myihprap, who still controlled the jungle around Jaiwa, surrounded the village and harassed the Japanese, who were forced to retreat after three days.<sup>75</sup> This attack sapped the morale of the Kachin fighters, and some were questioning the viability of continuing with the detachment while their families were vulnerable. The Kachin enthusiasm for cooperating with the Americans was furthered weakened because the Americans had difficulty in keeping the promises made to the Kachin. The Americans were supplying the Myihprap with defective equipment, missing airdrops, and failing to deliver on promised supplies. This caused doubt among the Kachins about the validity of American promises. Curl feared he would lose the goodwill and support of the Kachins because of these logistics failures.<sup>76</sup> The ability of foreign forces to carry through on

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D.C.:CMH Publications, 1992), accessed April 30, 2011, <http://www.history.army.mil/books/wwII/70-42/map10.JPG>.

<sup>74</sup> Stephen Krasner quoted in Herbert Hirsch, *Anti-genocide: Building an American Movement to Prevent Genocide* (Westport: Praeger Books, 2002), 183.

<sup>75</sup> *Report from Capt. Curl: January 1944*, 4.

<sup>76</sup> *Report from Capt. Curl: January 1944*, 5.

promises made is essential for continuing combat operations in non-contiguous battle areas. Indigenous support is contingent on providing humanitarian aid and safety to the indigenous fighter's families. Therefore, even though Peers could claim that the detachment could and would supply valuable intelligence on the Japanese, given the detachment's poor morale and logistics deficiencies, the detachment's military potential in the counteroffensive was unknown at the start of the counteroffensive.

Curl's subsequent actions to repair the trust between the Kachins and the Americans demonstrate the importance of maintaining personal and humanitarian relationships in nonlinear warfare. Curl managed to restore the morale and regain the confidence of the Kachins by providing medical care for the Kachin villages, supplying food to the villages, providing improved arms, and caring for Kachin refugees.<sup>77</sup> However, the rumors among the Kachins that the Americans were similar to the British in their failure to keep their promises persisted into early February 1944 and caused a slowdown in indigenous recruitment.

The Japanese attempted to use this period of Kachin doubt to infiltrate detachment operations. Kachin sympathizers recruited by the Japanese were usually apprehended quickly because of the goodwill Detachment 101 had by now earned with the Kachins and because of the unceasing efforts to aid Kachin refugees by Father Stuart, a Christian missionary beloved by the Kachin who attached himself to the detachment. The Japanese sent intelligence personnel to infiltrate the Kachins. Five Japanese agents married Kachin women in order to monitor the detachment's operations, and in late 1943 were moderately successful. The detachment learned

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<sup>77</sup> *Report from Capt. Curl: February 1944*. Microfilm 119, Drawer 91. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, National Archives, Md., 3.

about the Japanese infiltration and set out to apprehend the women and Japanese operatives. One woman was arrested in February 1944, but the others were never apprehended despite Zhing's best attempts.<sup>78</sup> The Japanese attempts at rapprochement with the Kachins, plainly superficial, were also unsuccessful. Kachins who deserted from the Japanese made up forty percent of the Myihprap. The deserters most often left because of overwork and mistreatment. Curl was very cautious when recruiting Kachins who had deserted the Japanese, but he was practical. He and Zhing needed the recruits, so they accepted the deserters and monitored them until their loyalties were beyond suspicion. If a Kachin were found to be disloyal, the incriminated person would face immediate execution. Because of this harsh discipline, very few examples of betrayal are documented.

With a combination of humanitarian efforts, discipline within the AO, and resumption in the recruitment of Kachin recruits, Knothead's AOs could be effectively occupied by the detachment, which could then contribute militarily to the coming Allied counteroffensive. Nevertheless, the planners of Galahad, Peers, and even Curl did not see the value of the detachment's military assistance or the ability of the detachment units to operate more efficiently in a noncontiguous battle-area than standard conventional forces, which measured success based on enemy killed and territory captured. At this point, success in combat in the CBI Theater depended on not only overwhelming firepower and greater lethality, but on obtaining and maintaining the support and participation of the indigenous population to achieve AO control.

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<sup>78</sup> *Report from Capt. Curl: February 1944*. Microfilm 119, Drawer 91. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, National Archives, Md., 7.

On February 16, 1944, Curl, who had up to this time had been left out of the counteroffensive planning meetings, received notice of the beginning of the counteroffensive and was ordered to provide aid to Merrill's troops. Curl had no practical information on troop movement or specific orders on which to base the detachment's plans for aiding the counteroffensive. The lack of information caused Curl to act conservatively, and he held back the units military assets. Zhing wanted to launch a full-scale assault on Japanese supply lines. Zhing told Curl that his men were tired of just waiting at the outposts for the Japanese to approach and were anxious to start attacking the Japanese. Curl told Zhing to tell the fighters to "wait until everything is set before we can strike, just to have patience and they will get plenty of action".<sup>79</sup> On February 20, Curl found out the leading elements of the 5307<sup>th</sup> would be reaching Naitaing on March 8 and that he should be there. Curl received orders that the detachment was to offer any assistance it could.<sup>80</sup> Neither Peers nor Curl mentioned the Myihprap assisting the 5307<sup>th</sup> militarily, and there is no reason to believe that they felt that the Kachins could offer effective military support beyond intelligence and manual labor. But Lieutenant James L. Tilly saw the military potential of the Myihprap and requested permission to use his Myihprap units to launch raids on the Japanese, which would clear the trail for the 5307<sup>th</sup>. Curl refused, because he received orders from Stilwell not to ambush the Japanese and stay in position. Curl, believing the Myihprap were "trigger happy," wanted to keep them backing check.<sup>81</sup>

As Stilwell moved into Northern Burma, the Japanese launched the U-Go offensive in northern Burma on March 6, 1944. U-Go had two aims, to pre-empt the Allies plans to retake

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<sup>79</sup> *Report from Capt. Curl: February 1944*, 15.

<sup>80</sup> *Report from Capt. Curl: February 1944*, 16.

<sup>81</sup> *Report from Capt. Curl: February 1944*, 18.

Burma and to invade India itself. The failure of multiple British offensives in the Arakan, the coastal region of western Burma reinforced the Japanese high command's low opinion of their opponent's abilities as jungle fighters. Two divisions of the Japanese 15th Army, composed of the 33<sup>rd</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 31<sup>st</sup> divisions and commanded by General Renya Mutaguchi, crossed the Chindwin River and moved on Imphal. The third headed for Kohima. Disconnected from main Japanese supply lines and not supplied by an aerial LOS, Mutaguchi's troops could rely on no more than a month's supplies. Mutaguchi also was pressed for time, similar to Allied planners, because the monsoons would arrive in May and render offensive operations all but impossible.

General William Slim, the commander of the British 14th Army, prepared to go on the offensive. The British 14<sup>th</sup> Army was reorganized from the remnants of the defeated Eastern Indian Army, and it represented the bulk of British forces in Southeast Asia. Paradoxically, Slim had intelligence that indicated that, while he was planning counteroffensive operations, he had to plan also to receive a Japanese attack. The sector where the Japanese attacked was expected had poor communications and few facilities for the basing of the large numbers of troops now committed to the defense of India.<sup>82</sup> The British remained hampered by their inability to obtain and maintain the support of the indigenous people in that area. Detachment 101 was to aid the British in countering the Japanese offensive and then assist the ensuing British counteroffensive by covering the British right flank. The detachment established fluid AOs on the right flank of the British to screen the Japanese. Though useful to the Allied defense against the Japanese offense in the Arakan, Detachment 101 was not fully appreciated by British planners for its combat

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<sup>82</sup> John Keegan, *The Second World War* (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 549-51, and Moreman, T. R., *The Jungle, the Japanese and the British Commonwealth Armies at War, 1941-45: Fighting Methods, Doctrine and Training for Jungle Warfare* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 124-8.

capability beyond its value for obtaining intelligence. This misperception led to the underestimation of the detachment's combat potential and its potential value at the beginning of the main Allied counteroffensive.

The detachment's combat debut in the Allied counteroffensive was not impressive. On March 5, Tilly, in charge of Group 1 of Knothead; received orders from the detachment headquarters at Nazira to harass and disrupt the Japanese in his area. Tilly could not comply with these orders immediately because his forces were too small. Two-Hundred Myihprap assigned to his AO were still a two-day march away. On March 9, twenty-five Myihprap reached Tilly, and he immediately planned an assault on the Japanese forces in the village of Salang Ga. The Myihprap double enveloped the village, the conventional approach to taking a village, and established machine gun positions around the village with interlocking fields of fire. They mounted two assaults on the village before the Myihprap had to withdraw.<sup>83</sup> Tilly unsuccessfully used conventional flanking movements to capture the village. More Myihprap troops reached Tilly in the following days, and he was able to secure the position. This action showed that the detachment did not have to function solely as a guerrilla force, but rather, the detachment would adapt conventional methods for an unconventional battle-area.

The Japanese did not ignore the military threat posed by the detachment. In response to Myihprap operations, the Japanese sent a strong force against Tilly's headquarters outside of

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<sup>83</sup> *Report from Lt. Tilly: March 1944*. Microfilm 119, Drawer 91. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, National Archives, Md., pp 2 narrative suggests that the Myihprap units conducted an offensive operation, but Troy Sacquety, "A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign", *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* Vol. 1, 1, 2008, 8, contends the Japanese withdrew from the village and abandoned arms and equipment of their own accord.



Saipawn Ga. The Japanese, using mortars, machine guns and rifles, attempted a frontal assault on the Myihprap's lines but were forced to retreat after the Myihprap perimeter held against repeated attacks.<sup>84</sup> Tilly and the Myihprap held off four more Japanese assaults before being ordered to withdraw on March 15 to make way for the Allied forces advancing into the area. The Myihprap killed an estimated one hundred-fifty Japanese, blew up Japanese supply dumps, and burned Japanese trucks to block the trails, without sustaining a single casualty.<sup>85</sup> The Myihprap's actions were hardly guerilla in nature, but were operationally conventional in their mission goal. They acted as reconnaissance and screening military assets; engaging the enemy, denying the enemy the ability to construct defensive fortifications, and withdraw when ordered. Tilly's Myihprap aided Galahad's initial advance into Burma immensely as a highly mobile, disciplined, and well-armed screening and reconnaissance force, and arguably made the counteroffensive a success.

The Myihprap evolved tactical maneuvers suited for the battle-area's nonlinear nature to conduct traditional reconnaissance and screening operations. The Myihprap's operations kept the Japanese forces "bouncing" from east to west to meet the detachment's attacks, and the Japanese casualty rate increased.<sup>86</sup> The Myihprap not only helped the counteroffensive by combat, for their operations also hurt the Japanese morale by making the Japanese feel they were surrounded and vulnerable. The detachment, having experienced and learned the insidious effect of a drop in the morale of troops in a non-contiguous battle-area are, appreciated how much decreasing Japanese morale could aid in defeating them.

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<sup>84</sup> *Report from Lt. Tilly: March 1944*, 3.

<sup>85</sup> Dunlop. *Behind Japanese Lines*, 302, and Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 1 March to 31 March, 1944". Microfilm 119, Drawer 91. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, National Archives, Md. make this claim.

<sup>86</sup> War Department. *Merrill's Marauders*, 50.

The lead elements of Galahad were the part of the Allied forces that did not evolve or adapt to the unique nature of the battle area and were tactically grounded in the linear concept of Wingate's theories. Allied planners were operating in a Third Generational Warfare approach, central to the strategic conception behind Galahad's mission of bypassing "the enemy's combat forces and infiltrating his lines to collapse him from the rear forward. Instead of "close with and destroy," the motto was "bypass and collapse."<sup>87</sup> Though operating behind the lines, Galahad was still reliant on a linear supply line, had limited self-sufficiency, and depended on larger units to follow up on their line-of-march to secure territory. The failure of commanders to anticipate and quickly adapt to the non-linear nature of combat in the Burma battle-area hindered Galahad's ability and mission. 3GW concepts in planning were also apparent on the tactical level. This is seen when Colonel Osborne, not knowing of the Myihprap's tactical adaptations and evolution, decided to break away a portion of his command to try to encircle Japanese forces. There can be no doubt if Osborne had been aware of the Myihprap's tactical adaptation and worked in conjunction with the Myihprap troops, the Japanese would have sustained a far more costly defeat.

Initially, Curl did not want to release the Myihprap troops to Tilly, but upon receiving orders from Peers to give Tilly the troops for purely informational gathering purposes, Curl agreed.<sup>88</sup> Tilly had orders instructing him to maintain close communications with headquarters, but his radio transmitter stopped working a day out on the trail. Tilly took the initiative, much to Curl's distress, but Tilly was correct to do so. Initiative is a vital component in the success of

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<sup>87</sup> W.S. Lin., "Understanding Fourth Generation Warfare" *Military Review* (September – October 2004), 12.

<sup>88</sup> *General Report on Detachment 101 for March 1944, Annex No. IV, Captain Curl's Report*. Microfilm 119, Drawer 91. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, National Archives, Md., 2.

military operations in the non-linear and non-contiguous battlefield because of the fluidity and semi-autonomy of the AOs. Brian Drinkwine, in his study of Al Qaeda tactics and operations, finds that small and compact units need innovative leadership because of the decentralized unit's operations and general knowledge of the commander's intent. Dispersal of leadership and fighters across the battle area create the need for junior officers to be innovative to mount sustained operations in the nonlinear battle-area.<sup>89</sup> The detachment's emphasis on encouraging lower command officers to act upon their personal initiative when commanding non-contiguous units would eventually evolve, through experiences in similar battle areas in future conflicts, to become established Marine Corp doctrine. "The lower commanders should make their decisions on the understanding of their senior officer's intent, the capability of his command, knowledge of the terrain, and disposition of the enemy in their AO, rather than passing information up the chain of command and waiting for orders to act."<sup>90</sup> Personal and bold leadership, especially when operating with indigenous forces and non-state forces, is essential to maintaining the morale of a non-linear fighting force and popular support among the indigenous people. The actions of Tilly, Curl, Eichler, and Quinn, along with many other of the early detachment leaders, are demonstrative of this. They show how combat necessities force commanders to respond to the battlefield condition and evolve techniques and tactics, while using available resources and technology to achieve victory.

There is no evidence to show that Merrill was aware of the full significance of the tactical, intelligence, or logistical value the detachment could provide the 5307<sup>th</sup> in its advance

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<sup>89</sup> Brian Drinkwine, *Serpent in Our Garden: Al-Qaeda and the Long War* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, 2009). 20.

<sup>90</sup> U.S. Marine Corps, *FM 1, Warfighting* (Washington, D.C.:U.S. Marine Corp, 1989), 62.

into Burma. Curl complained of the lack of coordination between the 5307<sup>th</sup> and the detachment, which he estimated reduced the combat effectiveness of the 5307<sup>th</sup> by seventy-five percent.<sup>91</sup> Colonel Charles Hunter, the 5307<sup>th</sup>'s second in command, contends that Stilwell did not inform Merrill of the military aid the detachment could provide because Stilwell "didn't set much store by 101."<sup>92</sup> It would seem more likely that the military planners of the Allied offensive could not appreciate the importance, or combat capability, of a lightly armed force composed primarily of indigenous personnel in providing tactical assistance on heavily entrenched Japanese forces. Allied planners conceived the Burmese advance based on a conventional 3GW theories of maneuver and the necessity of cutting the enemy's supply lines with troops massed linearly and with clear lines of communications and control. In Burma, the forward battle areas were by necessity small, independent operational AOs manned by small, lightly armed units. This is because of the topographical realities of the battle-area and the Allied planners' inexperience with the battle-areas' actual terrain. The detachment evolved their strategies and tactics because of the knowledge gained from the indigenous people and "boots on the ground" experience with the topographic and combat realities of the battle-area, while Allied planners planned their operations based on maps. Merrill's force would suffer from Allied planners' failure to adapt. The detachment had evolved its tactics and strategy to operate within independent AOs, and applicable to conducting operations within the physical limitations and realities of the battle-area's terrain, to strike with selective combat lethality and the necessity of maintaining an aerial line of supply. This allowed the detachment the ability to provide a decisive influence in the Allied counteroffensive into Burma.

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<sup>91</sup> *General Report on Detachment 101 for March 1944, Annex No. IV, Captain Curl's Report*, 7.

<sup>92</sup> Hunter, Charles N. "Galahad: Intelligence Aspects", *Studies in Intelligence*, (Winter 1961), Vol. 5, No. 1, 6.

The detachment, though handicapped by ineffective coordination with the 5307<sup>th</sup> forward units, still managed to aid the 5307<sup>th</sup>'s initial phase of operations. The detachment, because of their intelligence on Japanese troop dispositions, attacked Japanese getting into positions to disrupt the 5307<sup>th</sup> advance and thus reduced the Japanese capability for a counterattack.<sup>93</sup> Because of their experience working with the Kachin fighters, detachment commanders understood that indigenous units act more rapidly in response to localized intelligence information than foreign forces entering the battle-area. When Curl met with General Merrill at Naitang on March 8, he pressed Merrill for greater involvement of the Myihprap in the counteroffensive, but Merrill was dismissive and insistent that he wanted to use Curl's Kachins primarily as coolies and scouts.<sup>94</sup> The reaction of Merrill is indicative of the Allied command's failure to appreciate the nonlinear nature of warfare in the Burma battle area and the military assistance that the indigenous fighters could afford. This again demonstrates the importance of understanding the importance of personal interactions between indigenous and non-indigenous personnel fighting together in a non-contiguous battlefield. Detachment personnel personally witnessed the effectiveness of the indigenous forces and formed strong personal relationships with them and addressed their humanitarian concerns to obtain and maintain their support.

Curl seemed content with Merrill's attitude about the use of the detachment. Curl signaled Zhing to strengthen the southern post and ordered Tilly to suspend his aggressive operations. Curl, demonstrating his belief that the detachment would not have a role in the Allied offensive, instead of activating his best guides issued orders to get the units in readiness, as they

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<sup>93</sup> *General Report on Detachment 101 for March 1944, Annex No. IV, Captain Curl's Report.*, 7

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

“would soon be informed” of the “time and place of meeting.”<sup>95</sup> Yet as the 5307<sup>th</sup> advanced, American troops increasingly appreciated the Myihprap’s assistance. In addition to clearing the trails and combat forces, the detachment’s association with with the Kachin helped the 5307<sup>th</sup> obtain scouts, laborers, and elephants for pack transport. The maps the Allies used were old and inaccurate, so the 5307<sup>th</sup> commanders quickly learned to take no routes south of Nambum unless selected with prior consultation with the detachment personnel. Numerous trails along the 5307<sup>th</sup>’s line of march were cleared or blazed by detachment personnel. The Myihprap protected the 5307<sup>th</sup>’s left flank during the attack on Kamaing.<sup>96</sup> The detachment’s usefulness, though unappreciated by the Allied high command, was recognized by the men of the 5307<sup>th</sup>. The crucial aid given by the detachment to the 5307<sup>th</sup> demonstrates the importance of gaining and retaining the support of the indigenous population in military operations in non-contiguous battle areas even if dismissed of by centralized strategic planners. The detachment’s attention to the humanitarian concerns of the Kachins assured the their support when the Allies needed it. The detachment demonstrated American humanitarian concerns for the Kachin by establishing a hospital for the Kachins, protecting the Kachins from depredations from outside forces, and providing for Kachin refugees. Supplying humanitarian assistance to one’s ally is still an important component in the modern nonlinear battle-area.

The detachment’s encouraging operational success eventually caught the attention of General Stilwell. On March 17, Stilwell met with Peers. Stilwell stated that he would give the detachment “all assistance possible in the line of personnel and equipment,” and all indigenous

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<sup>95</sup> *General Report on Detachment 101 for March 1944, Annex No. IV, Captain Curl’s Report.*, 5.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

organizations working in Burma would be under the command of the detachment.<sup>97</sup> This also included the British V-force and Major Coffey's Kachin Levies. Stilwell authorized the expansion of the detachment to approximately ten thousand men. It was clear from Stilwell's actions that Detachment 101 was going to expand its combat role. By May, the number of trained, armed, and uniformed Kachin reached two thousand. Supplies by airdrops increased from thirteen planeloads totaling 78,000 pounds in January of 1944 to 55 planeloads delivering 271,000 pounds of supplies in April of 1944 alone.<sup>98</sup> Peers submitted a plan to Stilwell on March 25, which Stilwell approved without changes. The plan called for the detachment's Area III to provide direct support to the 5307<sup>th</sup>, to attach two companies of 350 to 400 Kachins to the 5307<sup>th</sup>, and to support H and K forces by patrolling and reconnoitering their fronts and flanks. Another 200 to 250 detachment personnel were to join M force, and the remaining troops were to stand by to protect the Nawbum area and aid the Chinese troops if necessary.<sup>99</sup> The detachment's non-contiguous AOs effectively melded into the contiguous AO of the 5307<sup>th</sup>, and the detachment's troops could switch easily from nonlinear to linear combat. Stilwell's concession of including the detachment as a combative component in the CBI demonstrates how established military thinkers adopt and evolve their tactical and strategic thinking based on success.

The ease of transition of the detachment units from non-linear to linear combat operations as the Allies' contiguous AO melded into the detachment's non-contiguous AOs, show the

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<sup>97</sup> Lt. Col. Peers to General Donovan, thru Mr. Scribner, "Report from Headquarters, O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101: Operations in Northern Burma": June 19, 1944. Microfilm 119, Drawer 91. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, National Archives, Md., 20.

<sup>98</sup> To Chief of Special Funds from Cmdr. J.F. Leete, 3 May 1944. Microfilm 120, Drawer 91. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, NARA, 1.

<sup>99</sup> Peers, and Brelis. *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerilla Force*, 162 and also put fourth in Peers report to Donovan of June 19, 1944, Section 3, 1.

detachment's ability to adapt and evolve to changing military needs and conditions.<sup>100</sup> The forward AOs ahead of Galahad provided scouts and firepower for the advancing Allied forces. This concept is similar to "rolling barrage" artillery tactics. A "rolling barrage" is a curtain of fire that moves along at a predetermined rate, followed closely enough by infantry to attack the weakened and dazed enemy.<sup>101</sup> Additionally, detachment personnel in Area I set up outposts along the Irrawaddy River and its feeders to prevent the Japanese from using the waterway for reinforcements or supplies. The detachment thus became an integral part of the conventional Allied military force advancing into Burma, yet still retained its operational edge by constantly adjusting to the changing necessities of the battle area. Stilwell sent the detachment two 41-foot commando boats and three Piper Cub airplanes to increase its military effectiveness. He also significantly increased Detachment 101's arms and supplies to up the unit's firepower for neutralizing Japanese lines of supply and communications.

Peers, in anticipation of Stilwell's approval of his plans, decided to place "Knothead" under the command of Tilly. Peers also rotated other personnel out of the unit as needed. The detachment had many volunteers lured by the opportunity to rid the Kachin people, and eventually other indigenous groups, of their enemies and secure their safety and welfare. To be eligible and demonstrate their loyalty, the Kachins had to swear they were "willing to leave their families and fields and move southward when the necessity arrived."<sup>102</sup> Peers outlined how the Myihprap and Home guard would integrate with military units under the detachment's command in other AO's and with the conventionally trained British Kachin levy units out of Nazira

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<sup>100</sup> The conventional nature of the training can be seen on "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101: Student Training" photographed by T. Sgt. Horee and Sgt. De Weese. Available at <http://www.realmilitaryflix.com/public/186.cfm>

<sup>101</sup> Major M.E. Locke "Artillery in Europe" in *The Field Artillery Journal* (1917), Vol. VI, No. 3), 300.

<sup>102</sup> *General Report on Detachment 101 for March 1944, Annex No. IV, Captain Curl's Report*, 13.



recently assigned to the detachment by Stillwell's order.<sup>103</sup> Peers thus made his command a more centralized organization that could coordinate their actions with the Allied advance but still retain a certain amount of independence among the non-contiguous AOs.

Peers was worried about the detachment's Kachin personnel moving south out of Kachin territory when the Allied offensive began. Peers adapted the supply system to support the Kachin troops on the move south while also attending to the humanitarian needs of the Kachin civilians. Experience and adaptation had shown Peers that the Kachin fighters, who were non-state volunteers and feared for their families' safety and way of life, were willing to fight and cooperate with an outside forces that could provide safety, economic advantages, cultural respect, and humanitarian aid. In addition to making sure the humanitarian needs of the Kachin volunteers' families were met, Peers proposed that "Zhing be paid more, and given as much status and money as necessary for his efforts in the recruitment of Kachins to go south."<sup>104</sup> The recruitment of the Kachins for a multiethnic military operation outside of their indigenous area and under foreign command was a significant break in the traditional definition of the detachment of a guerrilla force.

Even as the detachment evolved to adapt to the military needs of the Allied offensive, it continued to aid the Allied advance on the airfield at Myitkyina. Detachment personnel in the "Knothead" AO performed reconnaissance for the 5307<sup>th</sup>, a distinctly non-guerilla activity.<sup>105</sup> Reconnaissance had traditionally been the purview of the horse cavalry or light infantry. After the First World War, the United States mechanized its cavalry force for reconnaissance and

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Merrill's Marauders, 59.

screening. The American mechanized cavalry could not provide effective reconnaissance and screening because of the battle-area's terrain, so the detachment provided those services for the 5307<sup>th</sup>. For example, at Mupaw Ga, during the push on to Khuri, the 5307<sup>th</sup> found that a group Myihprap had captured a strategic roadblock on the high ground overlooking the trail to Auche. The Americans relieved the Myihprap on guard, and the Myihprap proceeded to clear the trail for the 5307<sup>th</sup>. This allowed for a rapid Allied advance to Auche.<sup>106</sup>

The detachment also filled manpower shortfalls of the 5307<sup>th</sup> at vulnerable areas. On March 29, the Second Battalion of the 5307<sup>th</sup> found itself under siege at Maggot Hill (Nphum Ga), a siege that would last eleven days. Fifty-four Myihprap worked their way in to the besieged battalion and participated in the defense against repeated Japanese assaults. Detachment fighters conducted harassing attacks on the besieging Japanese and cut Japanese supply lines.<sup>107</sup> The Myihprap attached some troops to the 5307's Third Battalion while it was en route to relieve the besieged Second Battalion. This reserved enough First and Third Battalion manpower to attack a weak section of the Japanese lines and break through to the Second Battalion with a minimum of loss.<sup>108</sup> At the siege of Nphum Ga, the 5307<sup>th</sup> lost 57 killed, 302 wounded, and 378 stricken with dysentery. The losses of the Second Battalion's, renamed force M, were replaced with 200 Kachins recruited from "Knothead."<sup>109</sup> These Kachins were the recruits who swore they were

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<sup>106</sup> Lt Martin Waters to Lt. Col. William R. Peers, *Services Rendered to 5307<sup>th</sup> Composite Unit (Prov) by Det #101 during the period of Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> –Apr 16<sup>th</sup> inclusive*, 4-5. Microfilm 119, Drawer 91. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, National Archives, Md.

<sup>107</sup> Troy Sacquety, "A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign" in *Veritas: Journal of Special Operations History*, (Vol. 4, No. 1: 2008), 14

<sup>108</sup> Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944". Attachment 5, 6.

<sup>109</sup> Sacquety, "A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign", 17.

“willing to leave their families and fields and move southward when the necessity arrived”<sup>110</sup> with the detachment. Detachment Kachins integrated seamlessly into the conventional troops of the 5307<sup>th</sup>, now under Colonel Charles Hunter, who had assumed command when Merrill had a heart attack on March 31.<sup>111</sup> Not only did they bring their experience, adaptations and evolutionary tactics in a non-linear battle-area, the Kachins’ involvement in the siege, and in its relief, demonstrates their ability to adapt to the more conventional nature of combat operations in the battle-area while maintaining 4GW warfare capabilities.

The Chinese forces in Burma did not obtain the detachment’s full support. With great reluctance, the detachment attached some units to the Chinese forces under General Sun Li-Jen to perform reconnaissance for their drive on Kamaing.<sup>112</sup> However, the Kachins did not like or trust the Chinese and so did not perform as enthusiastically as they did with the Americans. Field Marshal Viscount Slim noted that in the retreat from Burma in April and May 1942, Chinese troops fleeing north through the Mogaung and Hukawng Valleys had looted Kachin villages with “no law and little mercy.”<sup>113</sup> Thus, the Kachins disliked and feared the Chinese at least as much as the Japanese, and any cooperation between the two peoples had to come from American insistence.<sup>114</sup> During the offensive in the summer of 1944, a Kachin battalion of the detachment had crossed into China to retaliate for the looting. This placed the American commanders of the detachment into the role of peacekeepers. Peers resisted Chiang Kai Shek’s demands to turn over

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<sup>110</sup> Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W.J. Donovan “Report Covering Period 30 April, 1945 to 31 May, Inclusive, 8.

<sup>111</sup> Merrill’s Maruders, 97.

<sup>112</sup> Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan “Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944”, 10.

<sup>113</sup> Viscount William Slim, *Defeat into Victory* (London: Papermac, 1986), 108.

<sup>114</sup> Charlton Ogburn, *The Marauders* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), 105.

the Kachins to his Chinese for punishment, and Donovan supported him.<sup>115</sup> Peers and Donovan understood the importance of retaining the support of non-state indigenous fighters, which strongly influenced their military and humanitarian decisions. If they had turned over the Kachins to the Chinese, a crisis of morale might have occurred, perhaps causing the Kachin to withdraw their support and desert. As Hammes notes, in non-contiguous and 4GW battle-areas “it is easier for stateless entities (tribes, clans, businesses, criminal groups, etc.) to change sides than nation states or national groups... non-state entities get involved only for their needs, and if the needs change, they can easily shift loyalties.”<sup>116</sup>

By April, lead units of Galahad had advanced into Forward’s AO, which was under the command of Lieutenant Commander James Luce. Luce was originally a doctor in the navy, and had been recruited to provide medical care to the detachment. Luce built a modern facility and “commendably administered a 50 bed Detachment hospital in Chabus, Assam.”<sup>117</sup> Supplying medical care to indigenous fighters and their dependents proved to be an important factor in maintaining the fighters’ combat readiness. Luce transferred to “Forward” in November of 1943 and built up a lot of good will among the Kachin of the lower Hukawng Valley because of the care he gave to the Kachin refugees. Bill Wilkinson, the original commander of “Forward,” recommended Luce assume command when Wilkinson was ordered to return to Nazira. Wilkerson said of Luce, “Although he is a doctor, he acts more like an infantry officer. Since he

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<sup>115</sup> Frederic Wakeman, *Spymaster: Dai Li and the Chinese Secret Service* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2003), 512.

<sup>116</sup> Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone*, 210.

<sup>117</sup> Headquarters of Office of Strategic Services India Burma Theater to Theater Psychological Warfare Officer, “Report upon OSS and OWI”, July 3, 1945, Record Group 226, Entry A1-170, Box 229. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, National Archives, Md., 10.,

has been here he has quickly grasped the situation, and is completely familiar with my plans and operations.”<sup>118</sup> In April, Luce commanded a fighting force of 1100 men, divided into seven companies, which controlled large areas in the southern Kachin hills. Luce’s success demonstrates Emily Spencer’s argument on winning in a nonlinear and 4GW conflict. Spencer observes, “[U]nits must be capable of a wide range of activities from humanitarian assistance, to peacekeeping, to war fighting. Moreover, leaders must be intellectually agile and adaptive so they can use innovative tactics and approaches to accomplish the higher intent of the mission.”<sup>119</sup> Luce gained and maintained the support of the Kachins through his humanitarian work and was able to harness that support for military operations. Luce’s Kachins aided the Allied counteroffensive by providing reconnaissance, conducting screening operations, and securing the flanks of the 5307<sup>th</sup>.

When the detachment’s AOs started to merge as the Japanese retreated out of the hills, detachment units reestablished non-contiguous AO deeper in Japanese-occupied Burma. In moving the Detachment unit’s AO in conjunction with main Allied forces advances, the detachment provided a vital conventional military need that was missing in planning for combat in the Burmese theater, reconnaissance and screening. Although supported by some armor elements, United States reconnaissance units in the theater consisted of unarmored jeeps and lightly armored wheeled scout cars.<sup>120</sup> American mechanized reconnaissance units, because of dense jungle and limited transportation infrastructure, were unsuited for operations in large parts

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<sup>118</sup> Dunlop. *Behind Japanese Lines*. 276.

<sup>119</sup> Emily Spencer. *The Difficult War: Perspectives on Insurgency and Special Operations Forces* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2009), 225.

<sup>120</sup> John J. McGrath, *Scouts Out! The Development of Reconnaissance Units in Modern Armies*. (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2007), 111

of the Burma theater. Forward's units adapted to perform the cavalry's traditional missions. Detachment units and cavalry share the characteristics of mobility, firepower, and shock action, utilized at decisive times and places to sway the course of battle. Similarly, cavalry and detachment units had flexibility and daring, making them the force of choice for reconnaissance and screening.<sup>121</sup> The detachment's units had evolved to fill the void created by cavalry's inability to operate effectively in Burma..

As the detachment's military activities increased, its focus on its intelligence mission seemingly decreased. In April 1944, Peers wrote Donovan that the intelligence gathering had become secondary to the "sharp increase in the actual combat functions of our patrols."<sup>122</sup> However, for two reasons this was only a temporary lull in the detachment's intelligence gathering. First, in April of 1944, a forward intelligence and liaison section began operating at Combat Headquarters, at Shadzup, in anticipation of the Myitkyina assault. This caused a bottleneck of intelligence gathering. Ironically, the purpose of setting up this section was to increase the efficiency of the flow of intelligence to Combat Headquarters from groups in contact with the Japanese.<sup>123</sup> Secondly, the focus of both military and intelligence operations was the capture of Myitkyina Airfield, and the detachment concentrated its efforts on that goal. Because

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<sup>121</sup> For the traditional cavalry missions and combat roles refer to George F Hofmann *Through Mobility We Conquer: The Mechanization of U.S. Cavalry* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), David E Johnson *Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers: Innovation in the U. S. Army, 1917-1945* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 2003), and John J. McGrath, *Scouts Out! The Development of Reconnaissance Units in Modern Armies*. (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2007)

<sup>122</sup> Peers to Donovan, "Report Covering period 1 April," 30 April 1944, NARA, in in Sacquety, Troy "A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign", 17.

<sup>123</sup> Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944". Attachment 5, 10.

the detachment intelligence was so concentrated, it appeared that detachment's intelligence was less wide ranging, compared to earlier, when intelligence reports from the detachment covered more of the theater. Therefore, the detachment's units assumed more combat missions but still provided intelligence. This again demonstrates the ability of the detachment, especially the leadership, to adapt to the needs of combat and evolve their tactics.

While a large percentage of Knothead's personnel were conducting reconnaissance and screening operations, a majority of Forward's units were engaged in diverting actions. The detachment's units captured Wahawng, Sadon, and several other towns of lesser importance. The Japanese diverted more than five hundred troops, originally allocated for the attack on forward units of Galahad, to attack the detachment's units to alleviate the threat they posed. This allowed Galahad to advance to the Myitkyina airfield with less resistance from the Japanese.<sup>124</sup> Detachment units, attached to Forward, also provided Galahad with a flanking guard.<sup>125</sup> Concepts such as flanking guard, screening, reconnaissance, and disrupting lines of supply, which were the missions assigned to Forward's unit, were not guerrilla operations but rather missions that were traditionally the purview of cavalry or armor units in 3GW. In Burma, these missions fell to the indigenous forces operating under Detachment 101, because of the nonlinear and 4GW nature of the battle-area that the detachment had to adapt to and evolve to be effective.

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<sup>124</sup> Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944". Attachment 5, 8.

<sup>125</sup> Department of Defense *Dictionary of Military Terms*. available at <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/data/f/02108.html>

## Chapter 3 - Jinghpaw Rangers

By the time Stilwell was ready to strike at Myitkyina, the men of the 5307<sup>th</sup> were in poor condition. The 5307<sup>th</sup> had marched 500 miles in tough terrain and lost 700 men, the survivors were malnourished, and most also suffered from dysentery and fever. The 5307<sup>th</sup>'s total strength at the beginning of operations was 2,997 officers and men; taking away rear echelon personnel, the total of fighters shrinks to 2,750. When the 5307<sup>th</sup> reached Myitkyina Airfield, there were only 1,310 Americans left. Between May 17 and June 1, a majority of the Americans, most with jungle-borne diseases, had to be taken to rear area hospitals.<sup>126</sup> Detachment personnel were an important component on the final drive towards Myitkyina because they replaced those evacuated members of the 5307<sup>th</sup>. Three hundred Kachin fighters joined M force, and a large number of Myihprap veterans joined H and K forces, which was the result of the reorganization of 5307<sup>th</sup> Second Battalion.<sup>127</sup> The 5307<sup>th</sup> also employed many indigenous scouts and coolies not attached to Detachment 101. In late April 1944, K Force and H Force started for the airfield at Myitkyina, with the rest of 5307<sup>th</sup> following a few days behind. H Force spearheaded the attack on the airfield, and K force left the line of march for a diversionary attack on Tigkrukawng. This was the beginning of the final evolution of the detachment's units into a more conventional military force, though composed of stateless fighters who were mercenarily motivated.

Detachment personnel, because of their combat experience and knowledge of the terrain, assumed important positions in the Galahad units they joined. Indigenous soldiers are important to friendly combat units in a non-contiguous battle-area, but their importance is not limited to

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<sup>126</sup> Gary J Bjorge, *Merrill's Marauders: Combined Operations in Northern Burma 1944* (Washington, D.C.: Combat Studies Institute, 1996), 2.

<sup>127</sup> War Department *Merrill's Marauders*, 96 – 97.



combat. Indigenous soldiers' knowledge of the terrain and population and the ability to garner the support of non-combatants indigenous people contribute to successful operations in non-contiguous battle-areas. An example of this was H Force's approach to the Myitkyina airstrip. Leading H force was 14-year-old N'Naw Yang Nau, who picked out little known trails that skirted Japanese patrol positions, and in effect, assumed control over the attack route. On the trail, Nau was bitten by a venomous snake, which for a time threatened the entire mission. His foot swelled until it was impossible to walk. Nau persuaded Hunter to allow him to continue on horseback, and Nau led the columns right to the edge of the airstrip without detection by the numerous Japanese patrols.<sup>128</sup> H force bivouacked and waited for the rest of Galahad to assume their positions. Nau demonstrates, again, the importance of obtaining the aid of indigenous people in the battle-area. It is doubtful that American troops would have been able to approach the airfield and evade the Japanese with so few casualties.

Detachment participation was essential to capturing the Myitkyina Airfield. Hunter wrote to Peers, "Thanks to your people for a swell job. Could not have succeeded without them."<sup>129</sup> Capturing the airfield was an illusionary victory, however. Stilwell wanted the Chinese to have the credit for the town's capture, but the Chinese attack failed. The two Chinese columns, because of a lack of intelligence and operating in the fog of war, mistook each other for Japanese units and attacked each other, nearly decimating one another. The Chinese confusion allowed

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<sup>128</sup> This story is told in Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944". Attachment 5, 10, and recounted in T Sacquety, "A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign, as well has Roger Hillsman, *American Guerrilla: My War Behind Japanese Lines* and Richard Dunlop. *Behind Japanese Lines*.

<sup>129</sup> "O.S.S.S.U. Detachment Monthly Report," May, 1944, NARA and in Sacquety, "A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign", 18.

time for the outnumbered Japanese to receive reinforcements. Only 300 Japanese troops were in the city on May 18, but by the end of May, there were more than 2,500.<sup>130</sup> The Chinese forces never obtained the full support of the indigenous population for either military or intelligence purposes, and that likely contributed to the Chinese military fiasco and confusion. The Allied forces that started their siege on Myitkyina, which would last a little under three months, contained a large percentage of detachment personnel.

During the siege of Myitkyina, the detachment aided the Allies by setting up AOs south and east of the area. The detachment constructed ambush points into the area, isolating the Japanese remaining in Myitkyina. Detachment AOs disrupted Japanese supply lines, which caused the Japanese chronic logistical difficulties and hampering their operational proficiency. The detachment's secure and non-contiguous AOs, operating in conjunction with each other and the main Allied command, stopped Japanese supplies and troops from leaving or entering the encircled town. As the supply situation worsened, small groups of Japanese soldiers tried to leave by following the trail to the river or going along land trails. On the river and trails, the detachment decimated the fleeing Japanese. The detachment killed approximately 300 Japanese troops trying to escape via the river and another 300 on the trails and roads leaving Myitkyina.<sup>131</sup> Detachment group Pat's commander, Pete Joost, received permission to set up positions eighty miles south of Myitkyina, at Sima, where 400 Japanese had escaped the initial detachment AOs around Myitkyina. Joost's unit slaughtered the Japanese. On August 2, Colonel Maruyama, Japanese commander at Myitkyina, and the remainder of his men broke out of the siege of Myitkyina and tried to flee to Bhamo. Detachment personnel assaulted the Japanese fleeing

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<sup>130</sup> Sacquety, "A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign", 19.

<sup>131</sup> Dunlop. *Behind Japanese Lines*, 361.

through their AOs. Maruyama managed to reach Bhamo with between fifty and a hundred troops.<sup>132</sup> Other units in the theater adapted the detachment methods and tactics because of their success.

General William Slim, the British commander in Burma, having learned the lessons of the failure of the Chindits' 1943 expedition, discarded Wingate's idea of using the Chindits opposing the Japanese 16<sup>th</sup> Division along the Indian border. Slim reorganized the Chindits to use the detachment's method of relying on indigenous forces to establish and maintain fluid AOs. The revised Chindit strategy called for series of "strongholds" emplaced ahead of the main British linear position. The Chindit strategy reflected the AO concept developed by the detachment; the "strongholds" would be in close communication with headquarters and coordinate their operations with the larger British units advancing and supplied by air. The "strongholds" would send out columns to block Japanese communications, harass the enemy's rear, and aid in the Allied advance.<sup>133</sup> The success of a unit that adapts and evolves tactics and strategies to overcome enemy forces in a certain battle-area, and the technology readily available, inspires other units to adopt those tactics and strategies in the hope of replicating that success. These other units may further adapt the tactics and strategies to suit its needs, thereby evolving new tactics and strategies.

The use of "forward bases" was not new in conventional warfare; there had always been lead elements in front of the bulk of an army on a contiguous battlefield. However, the non-

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<sup>132</sup> Dunlop. *Behind Japanese Lines*, 363.

<sup>133</sup> Lt. Col. William R. Peers to Brig. Gen. William J. Donovan, *Report covering period 1 March, 1944, inclusive*, 31 March, 1944: 4-5. Microfilm 119, Drawer 91. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, NARA, Md., 10.

contiguous nature of the battlefield modifies the space between these linear lead elements entering into an independent AO. The concept of “forward bases” and independent AOs would be the conceptual basis for Fire Support Bases (FSB), which became a dominant element in ground maneuver during the Vietnam War. Initially the FSB was to be a mobile AO similar to the detachment’s AOs, but the firebases in Vietnam morphed into semi-permanent and more sophisticated fortresses reminiscent of medieval castles because of sustained enemy counterattacks and bombardments.<sup>134</sup> As one sees the evolution of independent AO combat, the more it resembles modern conventional warfare that is not constrained by linear logistical barriers. The idea of a surrounded fortress that can defend its area of operations and raid opponent’s bases, in coordination with a grand strategic objective, is an old concept that is adapted to situations where it is needed and discarded where not needed.

Between the Myitkyina-Mandalay-Rangoon railway and the 14th British Army lay a 250-mile gap that contained a series of north-south corridors. Those corridors provided natural approaches to the Ledo Road and had to be secured against Japanese encroachment. The Allies could not spare troops to accomplish this, so the job fell to the detachment. Peers initially dispatched a small force, ten Kachins under the command Lieutenant Charles Steel and Captain Joost. At first they operated out of the Chindits’ stronghold of “Broadway.” Joost, Steel, and their men were to patrol the area and go into the Kachin villages to identify and eliminate pro-Japanese Kachin collaborators.<sup>135</sup> With the hills secure, Steel and Joost were able to recruit locally, and the new recruits eventually formed Group 10. Group 10 formed the sub-groups

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<sup>134</sup> Randy E. M. Foster and Peter Dennis, *Vietnam Firebases 1965-73: American and Australian Forces* (New York: Osprey, 2007) 20-25.

<sup>135</sup> *Report from Lt .Steele: Report covering period 1 March, 1944, inclusive, 31 March, 1944: 4-5.* Microfilm 119, Drawer 91. Records of the Office of Strategic Services OSS, NARA, Md., 3.

“Mates,” “Adams,” “Barnes,” and “Davis.” Group 10 deployed on a 75-mile front from near Myamy on the west to Ke-his Mansam on the east and from reinforced strategic positions screened against the Japanese.<sup>136</sup> These groups not only provided intelligence but also secured the western Kachin Hills. The subunits also conducted attacks on Japanese supply lines and providing a flank guard for the British left.<sup>137</sup> The operations of Group 10, building on the detachment’s earlier success, foreshadowed the “hearts and minds” strategy, which seeks to involve the indigenous people to rebuild their basic societal and cultural infrastructure, assist economic advancement, and provide security for the rebuilding of the indigenous people’s society. The application of the “hearts and minds” strategy by the detachment secured the Allies flanks, lowered troop demands on the Allies, and secured territory from enemy encroachment at a minimal military cost, all of which demonstrates the importance of humanitarian concerns in non-contiguous warfare.

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<sup>136</sup> Romanus and Sunderland. *Time Runs out in CBI*, 327.

<sup>137</sup> William R. Peers to William J. Donovan “O.S.S.S.U. Detachment 101 Monthly Report, May 1944” and Sacquety, “A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign”, 8.

## Chapter 4 – The Final Phase

As Myitkyina fell and the Japanese offensive against India failed, the detachment turned its focus beyond the Kachin hills. By August of 1944, the detachment had deployed in multiple non-contiguous AOs south of the Kachin hills. Area III, known as Red, under the command of Major Red Maddox increased its force to two thousand to secure the gap between the Chindwin and Irrawaddy Rivers. Red unit's chief mission, at its inception, was to train the Kachins and other indigenous people, to deny the Japanese forces control around Lonkin and to protect the right flank of the continuing Allied offensive into Burma.<sup>138</sup> The detachment's units organized into units of 400 to 500 men each, with the village of Mansi serving as the main base.<sup>139</sup> Red's units were to provide flank protection to the British drive south along the Burma Railway and coordinated patrols with the British along the Chindwin River. The detachment's units held an increasingly conventional linear front; the detachment held off a strong Japanese assault on the village of Alegyun and secured the area as Japanese forces retreated.<sup>140</sup> If the detachment forces were following guerilla warfare tactics, they would have withdrawn from the battle area and let the Allied conventional forces take over combat operations. Red's operations show that the detachment units were assuming a more conventional mission as line troops in an increasingly linear and contiguous battlefield. The nature of combat changed in the battle-area as the terrain changed, and the detachment's forces adapted.

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<sup>138</sup> . Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944", 10.

<sup>139</sup> Peers, William R. and Dean Brelis *Behind the Burma Road*, 174. And Peers, W.R. *Intelligence Operations of OSS Detachment 101*, 5 shows the disposition of the Detachment units in Area III.

<sup>140</sup> Lt. Colonel W.H Peers to Brigadier J. Donovan, *Report covering Period October to 30 November, 1944*. RG# 226, NND 974345, Entry A1-175, Entry 210, Box 273. NARA, Md., 5..

Area II established AOs south of Myitkyina under the command of Captain Larry Grimm and fielded six units, varying from one hundred to four hundred men. A coordinated offensive by Area II groups cleared out Japanese positions around Katha, put blocks on rivers, roads and trails, and thus isolated the villages in the AOs. When the British 36<sup>th</sup> Division entered Katha, they encountered little opposition.<sup>141</sup> Joost, commander of Area III southeast of Bhamo, joined with Major Lazum Tang of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Burma Army, a group of Burmese nationalists who declared Burmese independence and based in the Sinlum Hills east of Bhamo, and recruited the largest Detachment formation by the fall of 1944. Together, Joost and Tang recruited, equipped, and trained two battalions of 1000 men and had three more battalions in training. By mid-December, Joost and Tang commanded a force of 4,000 Kachin fighters around the Bhamo area. The force under Joost and Tang were to provide flank protection for Allied troops advancing on Bhamo.<sup>142</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, under the command of Lieutenant Dan Muternich patrolled south of the Burma Road. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, under Lieutenants Tom Chamales and Alvin Freudenberg, patrolled east along Galahad's line of march<sup>143</sup> These operations are further examples of how the detachment's evolution from a reconnaissance operations to frontline infantry troops in Burma proceeded. As the size of the detachment grew, the larger the AOs grew, rendering the detachment's operations an increasingly linear and conventional nature.

The detachment developed the strategy of operating groups out of established fortified AOs and expanding territorial control via the enlargement of the AOs. As the detachment

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<sup>141</sup> Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 177.

<sup>142</sup> OSS to P Division, Subject Captain Louis Lazum Tang, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. The Burma Rifles. 8 December 1944. RG# 226, NND 974345, Entry A1-170, Entry 210, Box 229. NARA, Md., 1..

<sup>143</sup> Peers, William R. and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 179.

recruited more indigenous personnel, the detachment units grew large enough to conduct “clear and seize” operations against the Japanese. Increasingly, the Japanese forces sustained greater numbers of casualties while the Detachment’s units suffered relatively light casualties. James C. Ward’s examination of the official records documents that the detachment killed 5,428 Japanese, wounded 10,000, and captured 78 prisoners. The detachment lost 27 Americans, 338 indigenous personnel, and 40 espionage agents killed.<sup>144</sup> From its fortified AOs, the detachment units under Tang and Joost continually harassed Japanese troops on the roads leading to Bhamo and raided outlying Japanese outposts. “Detachment forces effectively cut Japanese communications, and the Japanese were forced to evacuate Bhamo on 15 December.”<sup>145</sup> The detachment’s actions are representative of a 3GW approach to combat, showing the evolution of the detachment adaptations to the realities of the battle-area. Yet the detachment retained 4GW concepts, using stateless indigenous forces to rout the enemy using support among the population. Joost and Tang conducted a siege of sorts on Bhamo, which isolated the Japanese forces and forced them to retreat. Besides conducting conventional operations with its own forces, the detachment was still providing personnel to other Allied units for reconnaissance and screening missions.

By the fall of 1944, the detachment had grown measurably but was still undermanned because of its success. Peers reported being “besieged” by the requests of Allied units for detachment personnel for reconnaissance and screening operations. Peers assigned some units to other Allied commands but “felt that their absence affected the Detachment’s field operations

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<sup>144</sup> James C. Ward, “The Activities of Detachment 101 of the OSS” in *The Secret War: The Office of Strategic Service in WWII*, ed. George C. Chalou, (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2002), 325.

<sup>145</sup> Peers, William R. and Dean Brellis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 182-183.



acutely.”<sup>146</sup> The 124<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment and the 475<sup>th</sup> Infantry, known as the MARS task force, each received a company of Kachin fighters. The First Tank Group, the British 36<sup>th</sup> Division, and the First and Sixth Chinese Army each received a platoon of the detachment forces. The detachment’s units assigned to Allied military units performed reconnaissance and liaison. Allied planners learned from their experience with Galahad and continued to rely on detachment personnel. Though this may have been helpful to the overall campaign and helped offset the errors of Allied strategic planning, it adversely affected the detachment in achieving its combat mission. Peers sent his American officers and battle-tested indigenous fighters to other assets in the theater at a time when the detachment needed them for combat leadership as the organization grew in size and complexity, and needed to conduct battle in conventional military operations as the battle-area changed.

When Stilwell authorized the detachment to expand, it consisted of 29 American officers, 65 enlisted men, 103 agents, and 1,966 armed Kachins. By November of 1944, the Detachment had 400 Americans and 6,000 indigenous Burmese, mostly Kachins, under its command.<sup>147</sup> A majority of the personnel were combat troops. For the period of June 1944 to April 1945, the detachment recruited 80 espionage agents and thousands of indigenous fighters.<sup>148</sup> The detachment’s support units and infrastructure also grew, so much so that the unit organizational chart was as complicated as any conventional division. The detachment’s combat headquarters

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<sup>146</sup> Lt. Colonel W.H Peers to Brigadier J. Donovan, *Report covering Period October to 30 November, 1944*. 3-4.

<sup>147</sup> Lt. Colonel W.H Peers to Brigadier J. Donovan, *Report covering Period October to 30 November, 1944*. 25.

<sup>148</sup> *Statistical Summery of Personnel Recruited (covering period from June '44 to April '45* RG# 226, NND 974345, Entry A1-175, Entry 210, Box 229. NARA, Md., 1..

moved to Myitkyina. At Nazira, the detachment's previous Headquarters, a 50-bed hospital, base communications, field photograph lab, and a training school continued to operate. The soldiers at the training school drilled in the basics of military training and conducted field exercises in the jungle to prepare for conventional combat operations in the jungle.<sup>149</sup> Because of the increasingly multiethnic makeup of the detachment, ten camps were established and widely scattered to segregate the different nationalities, such as the Shan, Karin, and Burmese people. Early supply problems were eliminated by the implementation of a centralized operational supply system based in Dinjan.<sup>150</sup> The complexity of the detachment's organization effectually resembled the American divisional organization.

After the capture of Bhamo, the Detachment entered a new phase. The detachment left the hilly homeland of the Kachin and began operating in the plains of middle Burma and the Shan mountains. The Burmans, Shan, and Karens, who viewed the Kachins in hostile terms, populated this area. Detachment leaders worried that indigenous support would be hindered by ethnic differences and the change in terrain would nullify the detachment's operational advantages. However, a combination of Allied victories and Japanese misrule of the area enabled the detachment to work with the local tribes and other ethnic groups. The detachment even managed to recruit numerous Shan and Karen personnel, groups that were previously pro-Japanese. A detachment agent, Betty, was sent into the Shan area to scout out the viability of conducting detachment operations. Betty reported that the people of the area were "ripe for

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<sup>149</sup> Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944", 3.

<sup>150</sup> Headquarters United States Forces India Burma Theater to Theater Psychological Warfare Officer, *Report Upon OSS and OWI*. 15 December 1944. RG# 226, NND 974345, Entry A1-175, Entry 210, Box 229. NARA, Md., 8 -10.

development of military operations."<sup>151</sup> Major Lutkin was detached to the area to organize the detachment's Shan military component. A few miles north of Mandalay, a detachment unit under the command of Lieutenant Coussoule had Kachins and Gurkhas but depended on the Kachins for most of the combat because of their greater experience.<sup>152</sup> This would seem to demonstrate that in nonlinear and 4GW battle-areas, cultural differences can be ameliorated in a popular effort against a hostile force but are still an important factor that has to be taken into account.

Political and societal mores change during warfare. When operating with non-state actors, an advantageous political and societal result is a condition given for indigenous participation. In Burma, as in modern nonlinear and 4GW battle-areas, American forces adapted to the popular political realities of the indigenous population to garner support rather than yielding to the unpopular, though legal, controlling political structure. Maddox, commanding a consolidation of Areas II and III, led his fighters in a series of raids against Japanese communications to support the British Fourteenth Army's advance south. In Area I Joost's force, now comprising six battalions of 5,500 Kachin and Shan, harassed Japanese traffic along the Hsenwi-Wanting segment of the Burma Road and provided a security screen for the advance of the Chinese Fiftieth Division.<sup>153</sup> As a victory in Burma seemed to be closer and armed indigenous armies occupied large areas, the British began to worry that American involvement with the Kachins would weaken postwar British rule. At a January 29, 1945 meeting, Donovan stated that the handling of the Thakin movement, the Burmese nationalist movement, would be

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<sup>151</sup> Lt. Col. W.H. Peers to Brig. Gen. W. J. Donovan "Report covering Period 31 October to 30 November, 1944", 5.

<sup>152</sup> Peers, *Behind the Burma Road*, 183.

<sup>153</sup> CMH Publication [Special Operations in the China-Burma-India Theater](http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/html/bookshelves/collect/usaww2.html) available at <http://www.army.mil/cmh-pg/html/bookshelves/collect/usaww2.html>.

left to British Force 136, whose sole mission was to combat Burmese nationalists. Donovan explained that the OSS would not sponsor any political movement in Burma and the detachment would only conduct its intelligence and military operations.<sup>154</sup> This agreement allowed the detachment to continue its operations in conjunction with the British Fourteenth Army while maintaining popular support among the indigenous population.

The detachment aided in the capture of Lashio and Mandalay by outflanking the Japanese forces, cutting the Japanese supply lines, and inflicting high casualty counts. By 17 January 1945, detachment advance patrols were clashing with Japanese outposts along the Burma Road north of Lashio. Around Lashio, seven detachment battalions established independent AOs to pressure the Japanese. North of Mandalay, approximately 2,500 detachment personnel harassed Japanese troops, weakening the Japanese defensive capabilities.<sup>155</sup> As the numbers of the detachment increased and the battle shifted to the broader plain to the south, the AOs started to change the non-contiguous and non-linear aspects of their operations. The detachment took on an increasingly linear combat role. The detachment's reports of February 1945 noted that the acquisition of enemy territory facilitated the movements of several detachment battalions into other detachment AOs zone of operation.<sup>156</sup> Reports show the detachment's battalion was successful in taking strategic locations from the Japanese, aiding the overall Allied advance into Burma.

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<sup>154</sup> "Meeting Between Heads and Representatives of Clandstine Services of Great Britain and the United States of America. Jan. 29, 1945. RG# 226, NND 974345, Entry A1-170, Entry 210, Box 229. NARA, Md., 3.

<sup>155</sup> <sup>155</sup> Hunter, "Galahad: Intelligence Aspects", 6.

<sup>156</sup> *Area One Headquarters Weekly Report February 1 to 7 Inclusive* . RG# 226, NND 974345, Entry A1-170, Entry 210, Box 227. NARA, Md., 6.

An example of the detachment's adaptability to evolve as the combat situation warranted occurred on February 26, 1945. Four detachment companies captured and held a hilltop overlooking the road between Hsenwi and Lashio against an estimated 500 Japanese troops.<sup>157</sup> In the modern battle-area forces have to adjust from combat operations in a nonlinear or 4GW environment to one of conventional, or 3GW, linear combat. The detachment's battalions coordinated their actions with Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC), the main Allied command in the Burmese combat theater, but operated successfully by being able to evolve and adapt to its particular battle-area's conditions and needs. The Japanese evacuated Lashio on 7 March, thereby allowing the Allies to link the Ledo Road to the Burma Road and reopen the land route to China. In these later operations, the detachment coordinated its actions in tandem with Allied conventional units to conduct conventional operations, or 3GW, using the period's conventional methods. The detachment, at this point, had evolved from a ragtag operation into a conventional military asset capable of operations in conjunction with other conventional Allied forces.

Detachment 101 received orders to withdraw and inactivate once the 14th British Army had occupied Lashio and Mandalay, but heavy fighting in southern China changed those plans. General Daniel Sultan, who replaced General Stilwell as Supreme Allied Commander of Northern Combat Area Command, feared the newly opened supply line to China was susceptible to Japanese interdiction north of Lashio. His main concern was the area south of Hsipaw-Maymyo, where the Fifty-Sixth Division, estimated to have five to six thousand Japanese troops, controlled the area. In addition to logistic concerns, Sultan was also apprehensive about the road

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<sup>157</sup> Romanus, and Sunderland, *Time Runs out in CBI*, 227.

from Taunggyi to Kengtung, which the Japanese were using to escape to Thailand. The bulk of the Chinese and American forces allocated for the CBI Theater headed to the China battle-area, and Sultan, in an effort to make up for Allied numerical inferiority in the Burma battle-area, ordered the detachment to clear out the remaining Japanese along the Taunggyi-Kengtung road that led to Thailand.<sup>158</sup> Peers, utilizing the support and goodwill the detachment built up among the Kachin by its humanitarian efforts, called on the detachment's Kachin forces to volunteer for further service.

The core of the detachment's military force was Kachin fighters who were hundreds of miles from their homeland. Chinese bandits threatened some parts of the Kachin homeland. Still 1,500 Kachin volunteered for a final offensive to secure the Burma Road in the Allied advance to southern Burma. Joined by about 1,500 Karen, Gurkha, Shan, and Chinese volunteers, the detachment, beginning in April 1945, infiltrated into Japanese territory and harassed Japanese communications, particularly along the roads where Japanese troops were trying to escape to Thailand.<sup>159</sup> The remaining Japanese were in poor condition, but their rear guards still fought hard from fixed positions. At Lawksawk, a battalion of the detachment under Maddox withstood repeated Japanese assaults before withdrawing to reorganize. The Japanese forces withered from the assaults, so that the detachment's counterattacks easily overwhelmed the Japanese defenses. Lawksawk was captured by the detachment on June 1, 1945. In desperate fighting at Loilem, a critical juncture in the Burmese road network, the detachment assaulted Japanese entrenched positions for ten days before the Japanese withdrew. A detachment company, under Lieutenant

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<sup>158</sup> Peers, *Behind the Burma Road*, 191-192 and Hunter, "Galahad: Intelligence Aspects", 193.

<sup>159</sup> Peers, *Behind the Burma Road*, 191-192 and Hunter, "Galahad: Intelligence Aspects", 197-199

George Albers and Bob Sweeny, mopped up and occupied Loilem.<sup>160</sup> At Pangtara, the detachment successfully assaulted entrenched Japanese on June 8.<sup>161</sup> The Kachins, despite limited Allied air support, suffered their heaviest losses during this phase of operations. The detachment fought independent operation to control of enemy territory and destroy enemy resistance. These were not guerilla operations but standard, conventional 3GW operations, demonstrating the evolutionary nature of the detachment, who adapted to guerilla, conventional 3GW, and 4GW tactics as dictated by the changing nature of the battle-area. By mid-June, they had inflicted approximately twelve-hundred casualties on the Japanese and had driven them from the Taunggyi-Kentung region, and linked up with the British Sixty-fourth Brigade, an achievement for which Detachment 101 later received the Distinguished Unit Citation. This citation demonstrates official recognition of the detachment's evolution.

American officers and men recruited, organized, and trained 3,200 Burmese natives entirely within enemy territory. They successfully conducted a coordinated four-battalion offensive against important strategic objectives defended by more than 10,000 battle-seasoned Japanese troops. Locally known as 'Kachin Rangers,' Detachment 101 and its Kachin troops became a ruthless striking force, continually on the offensive against the veteran Japanese 18th and 56th divisions. Throughout the offensive, Kachin Rangers were equipped with nothing heavier than mortars. They relied only on air-dropped supplies and by alternating frontal attacks with guerrilla tactics, the Kachin Rangers maintained constant contact with the enemy and persistently cut him down and demoralized him.<sup>162</sup>

The detachment grew and evolved from an improvised group dedicated to espionage operations to a unit that was an important component of the Allied military offensive into Burma.

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<sup>160</sup> John Breen, , "My Experiences in Detachment 101", *OSS Association Incorporated*, Winter 1999 – 2000, 2 available <http://www.oss-101.com/newsletters/Det%20101%20News%202000/101%20Det.%20Winter%202000.pdf>

<sup>161</sup> Dunlop, Richard, *Behind Japanese Lines*, 436 – 438, and C.H. Briscoe "Kachin Rangers: Allied Guerillas in World War II Burma, *Special Warfare* provide sketchy details about the operations but is clear the Detachment forces used conventional assault and flanking movements to capture the cities.

<sup>162</sup> Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines*, 437 – 438.

The detachment aided the Allied reconquest of Burma in a tangible way; 5,428 known Japanese kills, 10,000 Japanese estimated kills and seriously wounded, 75 Japanese captured, 51 bridges destroyed, 9 trains derailed, 277 Japanese military vehicles destroyed, 3,000 tons of Japanese supplies destroyed, and 700 tons of enemy supplies captured.<sup>163</sup> Given Japan's limited manpower and supply, these losses seriously harmed the Japanese war effort in Burma.

The detachment's military operations, far from being guerilla in nature, were a foreshadowing of combat in the later part of the Twentieth and the early Twenty-first centuries, where combat operations are commonly conducted in non-linear and non-contiguous battle-areas. The detachment's experience provides an example of how the warfare is evolutionary. The detachment performed hold and control, reconnaissance, flanking guard, and screening operations for the Allied offensive into Burma. The detachment's actions and operations demonstrate the importance of evolving and adapting a viable non-linear tactical approach to battle in a non-contiguous battle-area. This was, and still is, possible by adapting technological advances that are available to obtain the ultimate goal of warfare, which is to destroy the enemy's means and will to conduct combat. This is not to suggest that the detachment's actions and success definitively confirm the evolutionary nature of combat as opposed to a revolutionary nature, but suggests that a closer examination of the detachment provides an example of the evolutionary nature of warfare.

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<sup>163</sup> Peers, *Behind the Burma Road*, 217.



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## **Appendix A - Enter Your Appendix Title Here**

Appendices must be identified by letters (A, B, etc.) rather than by numbers. For this reason, different style headings are used with appendices. (The style at the top of this page is “Appendix A - Heading 6.”)

### **First-level Subhead (Heading 7 style)**

Within an appendix, Heading 7 is the style to use for all first-level subheads. If you need to add another subhead level within Heading 7, use Heading 8 as shown below.

### ***Second-level Subhead (Heading 8 style)***

Use Heading 8 for all second-level subheads within an appendix. If you need to add another subhead level within Heading 8, use Heading 9 as shown below.

### **Third-level Subhead (Heading 9 style)**

If you need a third-level subhead in an appendix, use Heading 4.

## **Figures and Tables Within Appendices**

When you first add a figure or table to an appendix, it will be numbered as though it were in a regular chapter. For example, when the figure below was first inserted, it became “Figure 4.1”. As a figure within Appendix A, it should be “Figure A.1”

To make this change, the codes in the caption labels must be modified, and it’s best to wait until all figures and tables have been added to appendices. For details, see the Appendices section on the Using Word page (<http://www.k-state.edu/grad/etdr/orient/wordindex.htm>).

### **Figure A.1 First Figure in Appendix A**



## **Appendix B - Enter Your Appendix Title Here**

If you need additional appendices, use style “Appendix A – Heading 6” for the appendix heading. This will label appendices in alphabetical order (A, B, C, etc.).