

the 69th General Hospital during August-September 1944. These patients were all admitted after the Battle of Myitkyina was over and Merrill's Marauders were being reorganized. Two types of combat disorders were noted. During the first month after the battle, August 1944, most of the cases seen were "anxiety and tension states (which occurred) on the basis of a psychopathic personality or an immature neurotic personality." Many were precipitated by combat and were not seen by a psychiatrist for some time after the onset of the illness. The symptoms described were anxiety, tension, startle reactions, nightmares, vivid combat dreams, insomnia, and irritability. Treatment consisted of individual psychotherapy, and narcosynthesis in selected cases. Captain Chipkin noted that "some were salvaged, but due to the pressure of work, too extensive therapeutic procedures were not used."

During September 1944, the second month after the battle, the predominant clinical picture noted was of a conversion hysteria which developed in troops from the rear areas. The conversion symptoms appeared to be centered around

residual complaints of gastric discomfort and fatigue, allegedly resulting from previous attacks of amebic dysentery or typhus fever. Most of these patients had made a poor combat adjustment and had extensive histories of hospitalization and sick call attendance for a variety of functional complaints.

Also during September, in the re-trenchment and reorganization of the Marauders for future combat, unit commanders made every effort to unburden their organizations of inadequate and maladjusted individuals. Though patients were repeatedly returned to duty from the hospital, they were inevitably readmitted with such diagnoses as "Not yet diagnosed," "Flat feet," or "Administrative admission for the determination of physical fitness." The unit commanders absolutely refused to separate the soldiers administratively, and insisted that they be disposed of through medical channels. Most of this group were ultimately re-assigned to limited duty with non-combat organizations. Approximately 60 percent of all these patients were evacuated to the Zone of Interior, 25 percent were returned to a limited type of duty,

and 15 percent were returned to full duty.

This last group of cases illustrates the need for the Army to develop a rapid method for the administrative evacuation of inadequate and non-effective personnel during combat. The present method of presentation before an AR 615-368 or AR 615-369 board of officers is too cumbersome and time consuming a procedure to be of practical value during the stress of battle, and inevitably results in the unwarranted abuse of medical channels of discharge.

Support CBIVA!

3. The use of U.S. railway troops (Military Railway Service, consisting of 5 Railway Operating Battalions and a Railway Shop Battalion) was made necessary to relieve a bottleneck on the meter-gauge portion of the Assam LOC. How many miles of meter-gauge railroad did they operate?

- 1,506
- 309
- 122
- 804

4. Most CBIers arrived in ports (Karachi or Bombay) on the Western coast of India. They were then moved an additional 2,100 to 3,000 miles in order to reach destinations in Assam or China. This was because:

- The U.S. Army wanted troops to see a good portion of India.
- For rest and recreation after a long ocean voyage.
- Ports on the East coast of India were blocked by Japanese activity in the Bay of Bengal.
- The British used ports in East India.

CBI QUIZ

(Prepared for SOUND-OFF by LTC Joseph B. Sipe (USA Ret.), 8619 Cromwell Dr., Springfield, VA 22151.)

1. Until late Spring of 1944, most U.S. Army troops arrived on British transports, after transshipment from War Shipping Administration vessels in the Mediterranean. Thereafter, they were brought in by U.S. Navy transports of the P-2 type. The first to arrive in May 1944 was the:

- Gen. Randall
- Gen. Meigs
- Gen. Butner
- Gen. Black

2. The Assam Line of Communications (LOC) was described by one Army logistician as "the most fascinating and complex problem we have in the world." It consisted of rail, water, rail/water, water/rail, and to a limited extent, rail/highway routes. In the beginning this LOC carried between 1,000 to 1,500 long tons a day. By April, 1945, the tonnage



The winning smile of our next Americanism Award recipient, Ruth Spitz, at Spring Board meeting in Lancaster

D. Dale Photo

peaked at 8,975 long tons a day. This LOC led from:

- Calcutta to Assam
- Bombay to Assam
- Karachi to Assam
- New Delhi to Assam

ANSWERS TO CBI QUIZ

(Questions on page 12)

- c. Gen. Butner
- a. Calcutta to Assam
- d. 804
- c. Japanese activity in Bay of Bengal

Letters

Mad Merrill's Marauder

To the Editor:

As a veteran of the CBI, I look forward to reading (and studying) the "CBIVA Sound-Off" and also the "Ex-CBI Roundup." Most of us that served in the CBI have memories that are fading but others that were burned so deeply in our young minds that even time will not wash away, be they good or be they bad.

In reading the "Sound-Off", it has a way of loosening some of those lodged memories and the thoughts and events of years past spill out, some probably figments that may not be exactly the way it was; others, that were so indelibly placed in our hearts and minds that only the grave will erase them.

This note is by no means meant to call anyone to task for being wrong or mistaken but to maybe shed a little more light on a situation and I'm sure the same can be said of what I write at this time.

First, in the CBI Quiz by LTC Joseph B. Shupe of Springfield, VA, in Vol. 37, No. 3, Summer '91 "Sound-Off." I believe if he checks the record of the ship, Gen. Butner, he will find it to be an Army troop transport rather than Navy. I crossed the Atlantic and landed in Bombay on the Gen. Butner and worked with the Army men of the Transportation Corp. The Lt. Col. who was in charge of the ship offered to transport me from the Infantry to the Transportation Corp. to stay with the ship. Being young and foolish, I asked to be allowed to stay in the Infantry so I could continue to enjoy the great outdoor life style. At that time, I was a Corporal and had no idea what lay ahead for us, Infantry that is.

This brings me to the second part, the article on Combat Psychiatry concerning morale problems of Merrill's Marauders - again, I'm sure most of this article was taken from the files and the memories of those that worked with these men.

Let me ramble for a moment. As I said, I was on the Gen. Butner with men in the Infantry, like myself, that had volunteered for a dangerous, hazardous mission in Jungle Warfare! When we volunteered, we had no idea where in

the world we would go, but seven days after stepping off the Gen. Butner, in Bombay, India, we were fighting for our lives on a muddy little air strip in Myitkyina, Burma. I was given a squad of men, twelve to be exact, four had Infantry training, two were artillery, one was an M.P., and I don't recall what the others were; but we did not train together, had no idea who our Company Commander was.

We were given our unit address so we could write home for the first time, this was the last of May 1944 and our address was 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) APO, N.Y. The unit was known as Merrill's Marauders. The men we were replacing were some of the saddest looking group of soldiers I had even seen at that time; later I saw another group of soldiers even in worse condition. We were replacing the original Marauders that made the long trek from India. They were worn and sick and needed to be taken out of combat, but to put men in to replace them without training as a unit was criminal.

Two weeks training together would have made a world of difference, many men would have been alive today had that been done; however, I understand the situation was critical and it had to be. I'm surprised in the number that survived the next three months of the worst possible conditions that troops could be subjected to. Little is written about these three months in any articles or books. As I think back, my mind becomes numb as I recall the stench of dead, rotten, and burned bodies all around, hungry, wet, having to use wire for shoelaces and to hold your jacket together, day in and day out in the rain filled foxholes.

My battalion had many men missing in action, well over 200. We were bombed by our own B-25s several times and suffered many casualties. There was no morale, only the thought of survival. Mad! You bet. We were the forgotten. Then, when the final push was to be made, promises were made to us: "When this is over, we will fly you back to India for rest, clean clothes, beds and food." Sounded great but that isn't what happened, we were pulled back about 10 or 15 miles, shown a pile of tents, shovels, axes and told to build a camp, later named Camp Landis. It

was named for the first Marauder killed in action.

Who were we? We were about 400 enlisted men with five officers left out of about 1,000 that had started three months earlier. They said you are the Galahad Forces. "My heart is young, my soul is pure, call me Galahad." We, that were left, felt neither young nor pure, only anger, beaten, tired, hungry and very dirty. After Camp Landis was built, the 5307th Composite Unit Provisional was deactivated. This was in August 1944 and the 475th Infantry was activated with survivors of both the original and replacement Marauders, plus new men from stateside.

The 124th Cavalry, a National Guard unit from Texas, also moved into Camp Landis and became part of the Mars Task Force. The combined units of Infantry and Cavalry, along with Artillery and Mule Pack units, became the only Brigade in the Army in WW II. I think it was designated as the 5302nd Brigade and it became one of the best fighting units the Army had in WW II.

Now that I have given a little background, I would like to "Sound-Off" on the article concerning Combat Psychiatry and some of the misinformation in print. I was there and even though it has been many years, some things you don't forget. First, the Mars Task Force did not relieve Merrill's Marauders as I have stated before. The statement about Mars Task Force group with approximately 2,000 poorly trained men with preliminary histories of instability and maladjustments is absolutely wrong.

Mars Task Force, again I repeat, was activated in August 1944 from combat veterans and units from the States that trained together at Camp Landis to make one of the finest fighting forces the Army had. Check your records again and see how many psychiatric casualties were reported from about November 1944 thru June 1945 and I think you will find fewer psychiatric casualties from the ground combat force than was reported in your rear echelon forces.

As Sgt. Major of one of those combat forces for over a year, I know what happened - the battle for Myitkyina was as bad as any combat seen by any ground troops in any campaign anywhere in the

world and it lasted for an eternity. These troops did not suffer combat neuroses, they were totally exhausted, mentally and physically. These men had been lied to, ill fed, poorly supplied with clothing, ammunition and medical supplies, bombed by our own planes, told by Quartermaster that we were using too much ammunition and told we had received promotions and medals only to find when we pulled back after the campaign was over, to find, no promotions were made. Our medals were put in for and with most of the officers dead or gone, there was no way to reestablish the request for medals.

Those of us that were left finally did get promoted but we were too tired and disgusted to care. When our duffle bags were finally sent up to us at Landis, they had been stripped of anything of value, even dirty clothes had been put in to replace what we had left behind when we went into combat. Neuroses you say? These survivors were mad as hell, mean as a snake and totally exhausted. On top of all of this, they (we) were told to clear the jungle and build a camp, Camp Landis.

My vascular system isn't what it used to be, the blood flows slower through these old sclerotic vessels, but it still comes to a boil when I think of those days at Myitkyina in June, July and August 1944 and to have some Rear Echelon Commander refer to the group as having a preliminary history of instability and maladjustment when he does not even know the history from a hole in the ground - the records must have stayed in the latrine too long.

Forget it? Not on your life, nor will I ever forget it, those memories will live as long as we do.

When the Mars Task Force embarked on its campaign, it was a totally different story. We were a cohesive group, trained together, well equipped and supplied, good officers and noncoms, strong mules and backed up by Air Corps second to none, a Quartermaster that made sure we had what was needed and medical personnel with us and behind us could not have been better. Yes, it was different; it seldom rained, except artillery shells. We were physically and mentally strong.

Sure we got tired and scared at times but it was different, we knew

we were stronger and better than our enemy and I think he knew it too. Sure we complained and belly-ached, we were foot soldiers and damned good ones. Yes, it was rough at times, you never adjust totally to having someone shooting at you or being shelled day and night with 105 and 155 artillery, it does get on your nerves and you do get tired but you now know you can win and the shooting and shelling will stop and things will get better, until the next battle.

Neuroses? No, occupational fatigue is a better phrase, a few days rest, a bath and some food and you are ready again. I would expect that if these psychiatric studies were made in the hospital on the medical personnel you would have found many to have the same - "I'm away from home" neuroses syndrome.

Sorry to ramble on so long about so little but it has been locked inside so long that when the gate was opened just a little, it just about all fell out.

Years erase many things and even tilt what you think was correct; however, when you live so close to death for so long with the stench of death and burning bodies on a day to day basis, it doesn't leave. I awake at night still with a start. My wife of 46 years finally adjusted to my outcries and they are fewer and further apart but still there. I know I'm only one of many that feel these flashbacks and they come from each war, campaign or happening. These flashbacks could be considered a psychiatric disorder or neuroses, then I expect just about every veteran of any or all wars could be included in this category with the Merrill's Marauders, 5307th Composite Unit Provisional, and the Mars Task Force.

Dr. Ray F. Mitchell
Optometrist
PO Drawer 268
Biloxi, MS 39533

835th Sig Svc BN

To the Editor:

I'm looking for buddies who served with me as radio operators, 835th Signal Service Bn., along the Ledo-Burma Road area. So far, I have only found two of them and I have checked the Federal Register or call reports, but found none. So, I must assume they are either dead or have dropped out of ham radio.

I know there were a lot of men working as radio operators along the Road. I heard from one man, Jack Abelow, 99 Florence Street, Apt. 222, Malden, Maine 02148 and his call number is WIVCF. He was at Bangalore from 3/42 to 12/44.

After reaching India, by way of airtransport via Natal, Ascension, Karachi, I went to Calcutta, Ledo, up the Road to Myitkyina, Warazup, Lashio, Bhamo, Lungling, Paoshan, Yunnanyi and Kunming. Over the years I have practiced amateur radio and have run into at least a hundred CBI vets on the air, in fact, I also found one man whom I have known for over 25 years living in our local area. That man was in pole line construction work in the 835th Signal Bn.

Kirby Strickland, WS9D
407 Wateka Street
Park Forest, IL 60466

CBI Hats OK in London

(The following letter was written to Charles W. Rose of Brunswick, MD, and is reprinted to put at ease any American Branch member planning to attend the Burma Star Assoc. Reunion in London. - Ed.)

Dear Charlie,

Many thanks for your letter of the 14th November concerning dress at the Royal Albert Hall and on the subsequent parade.

I do not know why John raised this problem because your CBI hat, part of the uniform of your Association, is perfectly acceptable both at the reunion in the Albert Hall and on parade in Whitehall.

I would be grateful if you would let all members know that we welcome the sight of the CBI hat and are proud to have them with us.

It is possible that some confusion has arisen because we have stopped some of our members wearing scruffy headgear on parade. This does not apply to CBI veterans. I hope this makes the position clear.

Yours sincerely,
AVM Sir Bernard Chacksfield,
KBE, CB
Hon Nat Chairman

MOVING?

In order to continue to receive Sound-Off, send new address to Adjutant Charles Hollaway, 5860 Amrap Dr., Parma Hts., OH 44130.

The 2nd Chindit Expedition

Maj. Richard D. Newton

A Case Study in Tactical Air Supply

"The 2nd Chindit Expedition" was first printed in the Winter 1991 issue of the AIR LIFTER QUARTERLY, a publication of the Airlift Association. The Airlift Association is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to providing a forum for people interested in improving the capability of U.S. airlift forces. Membership information available at SOUND-OFF's editorial office.

We learned from the Spring 1991 Newsletter of the Hump Pilots Association which also reprinted this article that the author, Major Richard D. Newton, is the son-in-law of Humpster Tom Sheridan of New Port Richey, FL.

Major Rick Newton is a

student at the School for Advanced Military Studies, the second-year program at the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College. He has been an H-3 helicopter pilot since 1978, with operational tours in Korea, Florida and Iceland. His most recent flying assignment was an instructor pilot and wing tactics officer for the 1550th Combat Crew Training Wing, Kirtland AFB, NM. In 1985 and 1986 he was an air staff training officer in the Airlift Force Structure Division and Air Force Project Checkmate, Headquarters U.S. Air Force. Major Newton is a graduate of the Air Force Academy and holds a master of military arts and science degree from the Command and General Staff College.

The Allied ground campaign in Burma from mid-1943 to the end of the war was made possible by air supply. Without goods delivered by air, the Wingate expedition could not have been launched, the second Arakan campaign would have been an Allied disaster, Imphal would have fallen to the Japanese, Stilwell could not have taken Myitkyina, and the final Allied conquest of Burma would not have taken place until amphibious resources had been provided for a major amphibious assault.

Joe G. Taylor, Air Supply in the China-Burma Campaign

The Allied campaigns in Burma were unique. British, American, and Chinese soldiers fought a capable and determined Japanese foe in the worst possible environment for modern mechanized warfare. The Burmese jungles, mountains and monsoons were formidable obstacles to foot traffic and nearly impenetrable for vehicles. These were extremely challenging conditions to test and refine emerging air supply concepts.

This article examines one of the Allied operations in Burma, the Second Chindit Expedition, Operation Thursday, and the tactical air supply operations that made it possible. From March 5 until May 20, 1944, British Brig. Gen. Orde C.

Wingate and five brigades of 3rd Indian Division operated deep in the Japanese rear to disrupt the lines of communication supplying their invasion of India. Although all of the Allies' operations in the Burma campaigns depended upon airlift, Operation Thursday offers some enduring lessons concerning the relationship between conventional and special operations air supply for airmen today.

Background

Between the world wars, airlift was an important but low priority support mission. The doctrinal debate within the Army Air Service centered on weapons (bombers and fighters) rather than supporting airlift. The notion of air supply as a tactical mission was essentially nonexistent. The development of military cargo and transport airplanes had been neglected in favor of bombers and fighters. It was lend-lease sales to the Allies and the needs of a maturing airline industry that spurred the United States to produce many transports prior to Pearl Harbor. Not until 1942, after German airborne successes on Crete and elsewhere demonstrated the effectiveness of tactical airlift, did the War Department direct the Air Corps to assign units to the mission of air movement and supply of airborne forces.

Why Fight in Burma?

The Japanese invaded China in 1937. Beginning in 1939, the United States provided money, arms, uniforms, vehicles and ammunition to help Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalists fight the Japanese. Because the Japanese held most Chinese ports, American supplies arrived in China via land

routes through the Soviet Union and Burma. Japanese successes in Manchuria closed the northern route in 1939. In March 1942, with the fall of Myitkyina (Mitch-in-aw) in northern Burma, the Burma Road was completely closed. The last overland supply route to China was lost.

China's active participation in the war was important to the Allied cause, especially for the Americans. If the Chinese capitulated, several veteran Japanese combat divisions would be freed for service elsewhere in the Pacific, Asia or India. With U.S. and British attention focused squarely on the Germans in Europe and Japanese expansion in the Pacific Islands, the thought of a significant Japanese threat to India or the Soviet Union was cause for concern. Additionally, in 1942, the Americans were still planning to use China to launch strategic bombing missions against Japan and as the staging base for an Allied invasion of the Japanese home islands.

After the Japanese conquest of Burma, the only way of getting supplies into China was to fly them over the Himalayas (nicknamed the "Hump"). In almost three years, the Air Transport Command, the precursor to today's strategic airlift system, flew 650,000 tons of equipment, men, and supplies the 500 miles from northeastern India to Kunming, China. Lt. Gen. William Tunner, commander of the Hump airlift, noted that, "every vehicle, every gallon of fuel, every weapon, every round of ammunition which made it to China went by air." This was a difficult and expensive proposition and the supplies delivered were barely sufficient to keep the Chinese troops in business. Because of the high cost of running the Hump airlift in China, the Allies' first strategic goal in the China-Burma-India theater was to capture upper Burma in order to improve the air route and to establish overland communications with China.

To reopen the Burma Road and increase the amount of lend-lease supplies flowing into China, President Roosevelt and Gen. George C. Marshall, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, insisted that the British launch an offensive in Burma. While Prime Minister Churchill agreed it was important to keep the Japanese out of India,

British interests were focused primarily on the former European colonies in Burma, Malaya and Sumatra. To satisfy American demands to begin combat operations in Burma and perhaps restore the overland supply route, Prime Minister Churchill looked to the charismatic, eccentric and unorthodox Brig. Gen. Orde C. Wingate.

Who were the Chindits?

After the British and Dutch defeats throughout Southeast Asia in the early years of the war, the popular consensus was that European forces could not compete with the Japanese. In General Wingate's opinion the Allied soldiers had been beaten because they had conceded mobility to the Japanese. Allied troops were road-bound - tied by their trucks, armored vehicles and logistics tails to the few existing roads through the jungles. The Japanese had exploited this Allied weakness by using lightly armed, foot-mobile infantrymen to penetrate deep and envelop Allied units.

General Wingate wanted to fight the Japanese with these same unconventional jungle penetration tactics. He proposed battalions of infantry, supported by mules and airlift, operating deep behind the Japanese lines. As Sir Robert Thompson observed, despite all criticism of the general, "he understood that mobility is relative to that of the enemy and that superior mobility must be employed to threaten and attack the enemy's vitals." General Wingate's answer to Japanese penetration tactics was counter-penetration.

General Wingate urged the Allies to exploit their own strengths in airpower and communications to penetrate deep behind the enemy lines and "wreak havoc out of all proportion to the force's numbers." He believed that properly trained European soldiers could move long distances and fight for extended periods in nearly impassable jungles, supplied completely by air." His theories depended upon the Allies diverting precious resources from the primary theaters, but the general was the man who believed in such causes and had the ability to sway others to his point of view.

The initial Allied attempt to match Japanese mobility in the jungle was General Wingate's First

Chindit Expedition. In February 1943, General Wingate and a 3,000-man British, Gurkha and Burmese brigade set out on foot to raid deep into Burma. The three battalion-sized columns cut roads, destroyed bridges, attacked outposts and sabotaged the Mandalay-Myitkyina railroad. This first expedition served as proof of General Wingate's ideas and tested the infant concept of tactical resupply of troops in combat.

Although some of Wingate's detractors claimed the operation was neither strategically nor tactically decisive, the Japanese did commit two valuable divisions to suppress this threat to their rear. In addition, the Chindits diverted Japanese attention away from invading India. To General Wingate and those who believed in the concept of long-range penetration, this first Chindit Expedition played a significant part in the development of tactics and doctrine for air supply. Even though the soldiers suffered from the rigors of the campaign, by operating completely divorced from ground logistics support, the Chindits confirmed the feasibility of air supply to forces in combat.

First, the operation indicated the amount of airlift required to support European troops and their mules in the jungle. Over the three-month course of the operation, the air supply effort only delivered 1-1/2 pounds of food and supplies per man each day. Considering the primitive state of the air supply system in Burma-India in 1943, this was a tremendous effort. Unfortunately, the amount of supplies delivered was barely enough for the men to survive and definitely not enough for them to fight and move through mountainous jungles. When the Chindits walked out of Burma and returned to India, many of the men were so feeble they could never serve in combat again. General Wingate and his staff knew that future efforts would require greater quantities and varieties of supplies.

Another concept tested and validated during the first Chindit expedition was the use of air liaison officers - a concept unheard of and virtually unthinkable in the Royal Air Force at the time. Sir Robert Thompson, an RAF pilot assigned to General Wingate's staff, recruited and trained RAF of-

ficers and enlisted men who would travel with the ground forces, locate and prepare drop zones, and then use their radios to direct the pilots to these DZs. The air liaison officers and the noncommissioned officers also recruited Burmese villagers to collect the supplies and carry them to the Chindit battalions.

The other problem identified during this first expedition involved the lack of medical evacuation. Wounded or sick soldiers had to be left alone in the jungle or with Burmese villagers until they could recover and make their own way back to India. Having to abandon wounded comrades had considerably hurt the soldiers' morale during the first Chindit expedition. One soldier, realizing he was holding up his column because open sores on his legs slowed him down, simply walked off into the jungle and disappeared. Sir Thompson and General Wingate made it a point to include medical evacuation in their plans for the second expedition.

Recognizing that the air supply operation required more than just crews and airplanes, both the British and the Americans developed the support organizations necessary to make the aerial resupply effort successful. Each organized similar units dedicated to requesting, storing, packing, and loading the supplies at the main supply bases, with detachments in forward areas to receive and distribute the supplies. These early support units functioned much like a composite of modern transportation, supply and aerial port squadrons. The experience supporting aerial resupply proved invaluable during later airlift operations conducted throughout the theater.

The first Chindit expedition, furthermore, provided a badly needed boost to morale on the home front. After almost two years of Allied defeats, the British news services finally had something they could claim as a victory. In three months, the Chindits had walked over 1500 miles and had done what no other British forces had been able to do - carry the war to the Japanese. The press made General Wingate and the Chindits into heroes.

One of those most impressed with General Wingate's unorthodox

tactics was Winston Churchill. He felt that the general's novel and relatively inexpensive approach to fighting the Japanese would satisfy American demands to initiate an offensive to reopen the Burma Road and also help reassert British presence in Southeast Asia.

Mr. Churchill asked General Wingate to accompany him to the Quadrant Conference in Quebec in August 1943. There the general presented his plan for a second Chindit expedition into Burma during the coming dry season to the Combined Chiefs of Staff. Although some British staff officers in India felt the plan preposterous, General Wingate's ideas captured the imagination of General Marshall and Henry "Hap" Arnold. With President Roosevelt's concurrence, these two generals committed the Americans to provide air and ground forces to another bigger, Chindit expedition.

Air Supply in the Second Chindit Expedition

General Arnold's concept was for an autonomous air support organization, dedicated solely to the deployment and sustainment requirements of Wingate's brigades. General Arnold realized the unique and experimental nature of this "special" unit, but saw it as an opportunity to exploit and expand the role of tactical airpower; he believed this to be an experiment in the future of warfare. Contrary to air doctrine of the period, the organization would be a composite force, with C-47 transports, CG-4 gliders, P-51s and B-25Hs for fire support, L-1s and L-5s for medical evacuation, and YR-4 helicopters. To command this unique organization, General Arnold selected Lt. Col. Philip Cochran and Lt. Col. John Alison. (These men would later inspire characters in Milt Caniff's comic strip "Terry and the Pirates.") Although originally designated co-commanders, the two agreed between themselves the flamboyant Colonel Cochran would assume the preeminent position while Colonel Alison utilized his organizational talents to build the structure and train the personnel of what became the First Air Commando Group. Their marching orders were simple - General Arnold told them, "Wingate marched into Burma the first time; this time I want him to fly in and fly out."

Except for the L-1s and L-5s which General Wingate had personally requested to provide for medical evacuation, General Arnold gave the two colonels an almost free hand in structuring their unit and picking the personnel. It was Colonel Alison who suggested adding the CG-4 gliders to the inventory. He realized that deep penetration as Wingate planned would require aerial supply on a scale never before tried. Only gliders could carry the heavy equipment necessary to build the jungle strongholds and the volume of supplies needed by Wingate's brigades. In addition to the gliders, Cochran and Alison also procured a dozen experimental Sikorsky helicopters. By the time they had finished, the 1st Air Commando Group comprised almost 300 aircraft and over 600 men.

The Air Commandos were under the operational control of General Wingate, the ground commander, but assigned to Eastern Air Command for administration and supply. This seemed to be a doctrinal step backwards to Major General George Stratemeyer, commander of EAC. The airlift experience to date had supported the centralized control of scarce air supply resources. Parceling out the assets had proven to be an efficient way of allocating airlift.

The Allies nodded to this - in a limited way - by placing all OTHER Army Air Force and Royal Air Force tactical air supply units under Troop Carrier Command, commanded by Brig. Gen. William Old (within the Eastern Air Command, in turn under the Southeast Asia Command). General Old resented the implications of the independent operation and the burden it imposed on Troop Carrier Command. The Air Commandos exacerbated his annoyance by refusing to accept Troop Carrier Command's advice on airlift matters. The Commandos also refused to allow large scale exercises or pre-launch surveys of proposed landing sites (for operational security). In spite of objections, SEAC Supreme Allied Commander, Lord Louis Mountbatten, kept a promise he had made to General Arnold and refused to allow the Air Commandos to do anything except support General Wingate.

Although General Arnold had committed the Air Commandos to

exclusive support of Wingate's forces, General Wingate's Chindits proved to need more support than their fully dedicated airlifters could provide. As a result, Troop Carrier Command took over all conventional transport operations; the Air Commandos retained the glider and aero-medical evacuation missions.

On March 5, 1944, just before dusk, 54 C-47s towing two CG-4 gliders each, lifted off airfields in eastern India. Operation Thursday, the return of General Wingate and the Chindits to Burma, had begun. Two hours later, after a difficult flight over the Naga mountains, the gliders were landing in a jungle clearing nicknamed "Broadway." Throughout the night, 37 gliders landed at Broadway unopposed by Japanese fighters. The next morning the Chindits and their accompanying airborne engineers moved the wreckage of gliders damaged or destroyed during the landings from the clearings. By nightfall, they had carved a C-47 landing strip in the jungle.

That second night, 62 C-47s and an equal number of gliders poured men and supplies into Broadway. Similar operations occurred at another site nearby and by March 11, Broadway and Chowringhee were established as Allied strongholds 200 miles behind Japanese lines. The establishment of fortified enclaves in areas the Japanese could not attack with artillery or tanks enabled the Chindits to launch raids and disrupt the enemy rear. During the initial assault into Burma, the Air Commandos and Troop Carrier Command combined to airlift over half a million pounds of supplies and equipment, 9,000 personnel and 1,200 mules into the two jungle strongholds.

For the next 2-1/2 months, General Wingate's columns operated behind Japanese lines to disrupt lines of communication, divert combat troops from the main effort, wreck supply dumps, and generally wreak the havoc the general had envisioned. The Air Commandos and Troop Carrier Command provided enough supplies to make these innovative tactics possible. Air supply freed the infantry columns from the roads and eventually caused the Japanese to abandon their invasion of India when their supply situation had become untenable. Air supply

provided the solution to Japanese penetrations, enabling the Allies to resist Japanese jungle tactics and prevent the capture of Allied supplies.

Lessons Learned

Carl von Clausewitz, the noted Prussian theorist, asked in "On War" if war governs supply or if supply governs war. In the case of the second Chindit Expedition, it seems that supply considerations determined the tactical plan. Without the advantages of secure logistical bases deep behind Japanese lines and an aerial distribution system optimized for and dedicated to their unique requirements, it is unlikely that Operation Thursday could have succeeded. The first Chindit expedition had shown the difficulty of combat under such arduous conditions with tenuous lines of support.

A complementary relationship developed between conventional airlifters and air commandos (special operations) that remains today. After Operation Thursday was completed, General Arnold activated two more air commando groups with accompanying troop carrier squadrons (organized into combat cargo groups). One was sent to assist with the reconquest of Burma and the other to the Philippines.

The value of air liaison officers was underscored. With the air liaison officers selecting and preparing drop zones, Sir Robert Thompson noted that "supply drops from the C-47s became as regular as any train service."

Throughout the operation - and before and after air superiority was achieved - transport sorties were flown at night to avoid Japanese fighters, except when Air Commando fighters were available for escort. The airlift assets were too vulnerable to chance interception by Japanese Zeroes.

Similar policy remains in force today. Aircraft conducting tactical resupply missions are extremely vulnerable to opposing enemy fighters. Special operations and accompanying C-130s operate at night, unless the joint force commander determines the priority of the mission justifies armed escort for the airlift assets. Once that decision is made, the air component commander will allocate fighter sorties to protect the airlifters.

The Air Commando organiza-

tion overcame orthodox military thinking. Its unique organization was intended by General Arnold to be an experiment in innovative application of airpower. This allocation of a personal air force to support General Wingate was doctrinally contrary to all the lessons learned during previous conventional airlift experiences. If one considers the Air Commandos as analogous to the air component of a modern joint special operations task force, then the World War II arrangement makes sense. As Colonels Cochran and Alison showed, the air task force component supported the ground forces (General Wingate) with assigned resources, then requested additional help from the theater air component (Troop Carrier Command) when it was needed.

Conclusion

Supplying soldiers by air was not a new idea before World War II or when General Wingate first went into Burma. What the first Chindit expedition tested and the second one proved and refined was that large forces could be inserted and operate deep behind enemy lines, completely sustained by air. In Burma, air supply was the chief, and often the only means of supplying Allied ground forces in contact with the enemy.

After the war, General Arnold, "the conquest of Burma brought to light new concepts and tactics in warfare. The Burma campaign showed that whole armies can be transported, supported, evacuated and supplied entirely by air." The Army Air Forces Evaluation Board for the China-Burma-India theater observed in 1944 that "supply from the air has been successful because of two outstanding characteristics of air-power, namely speed and flexibility."

The overall strategy for Burma was an application of General Wingate's ideas implemented on a large scale. For the rest of the war, throughout the theater, British and combined Chinese and American divisions moved and fought through the jungle, free from cumbersome logistics tails. Air supply had begun as an emergency measure to help British and American forces retreating from Japanese attacks in 1942. By 1944, tactical airlift was firmly established as doctrine with its unique organizations, manuals and equipment.

Opium and Memories of War Linger on the Ledo Road

By Bertil Lintner

(The following article was printed in the FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW of March 31, 1988. It was sent to Paul L. Jones of San Diego by Mr. Simon Yu, a naturalized US citizen living in Guam with whom Paul worked in Assam during WW II. SOUND-OFF is unaware of where the ECONOMIC REVIEW is published and is unable to contact them but felt confident they would not disapprove our reprinting an article of such compelling interest to so many of our readers. — Ed.)

The Ledo Road, in the classic tradition of military highways, cuts for most of its length straight through the thick forest of the Hukawng Valley in western Kachin State. There is hardly a bend in sight on the plains. Only the first 100 or so miles of the road zig-zags its way up from the railhead of Ledo in Assam in the west — which gave the road its popular name — over the steep Patkai range, and down to Shingbuiyang in the Hukawng Valley on the other side of the watershed which forms the international frontier.

The idea of a road from India across northern Burma was first conceived by American Gen. Joseph 'Vinegar Joe' Stilwell after the Japanese had occupied most of Burma by December 1942. It was no longer possible to ferry in supplies via Rangoon and through Burma to the Nationalist Chinese forces who were fighting the Japanese in Yunnan. The old Burma Road from Lashio to Kyukok on the Sino-Burmese border had been cut, and Stilwell thought the solution lay in a new road from the Allied bases in India, through the Hukawng Valley to Myitkyina — the administrative centre of the Kachin Hills — and down to Bhamo and Namkham where the new road would link up with the old Burma Road to Wanting across the border to China, opposite Kyukok.

This road-building project was possibly one of the most ambitious ever undertaken in Southeast Asia. First went Stilwell's American-trained Chinese divisions, driving the Japanese before them. On either side, in flanking movements, Chinese and American patrols provided security for the road construction teams. On the heels of the Chinese divisions came the trailblazers, marking out the line with axes for the armour-plated bulldozers that followed. Last came the

main labor force who blasted the road, metalled it and constructed steel bridges across the innumerable streams and rivers in the Hukawng Valley.

The labor force was also one of the most mixed in the history of road construction anywhere in the world. "Chinese, Chins, Kachins, Indians, Nepalese, Nagas, Garos slashed, hauled and piled," Lt. Col. Frank Owen recollected in his book, "The Campaign in Burma." "Negroes drove machines. Black, brown, yellow and white men toiled shoulder-deep in the streams, belt-deep in red mud. In one camp, 2,000 laborers spoke 200 different dialects."

It was the British Empire, with American backing, which struck back against the Japanese. Town after town was conquered, and even Myitkyina fell on 3 August 1944, after a 78-day-long siege by the Allies. Stilwell's dream came true, and barely two years after he had accepted responsibility for building the road from Ledo, it joined the Burma Road and became a new, laterite highway stretching from Assam to Kunming in China, a total of 650 miles.

The Ledo Road today is not what it once was. Stilwell built a 30-ft. wide, double-tracked, metalled, trenched, banked and bridged all-weather road down which flowed weapon-carriers, guns and tanks. The Indians still maintain their portion of the road — from Ledo up to the border pass at Pangsau in Patkai Range — but on the Burmese side, large stretches of it have returned to jungle.

Most of the road is, like infrastructure elsewhere in Burma, neglected and falling apart. Jungle creepers and grass have taken up almost half of the road and today two vehicles cannot pass one another unless one of them swerves into the encroaching vegetation.

Convoys of 50-60 lorries make two or three trips a year from Mogaung on the Mandalay-Myitkyina railway, 85 miles westwards through the Hukawng Valley to the garrison town of Tanai by the upper reaches of the Chindwin river. From there, smaller vehicles can use the road during the dry season up to Shingbuiyang and sometimes, if the weather is good, to Namyung in the Naga Hills, 35 miles from the Pangsau Pass. The road ends at Namyung, with only a footpath to the Indian border.

The necessity of moving in convoys today is prompted not by the presence of any Japanese troops, but because of frequent ambushes launched by rebels of the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) who operate in the area. The KIA has been fighting for autonomy within a Burmese Union since 1961 and it, in effect, controls most of the Kachin area today. The Ledo Road and the small towns along it are about all the present Burmese Government can claim in western Kachin State.

I reached the Ledo Road after a long and arduous trek through the swamps and jungles between it and the Chindwin river in the west. Some 200 KIA guerillas provided security. I was incapacitated by an infected leech bite during part of the journey when we crossed the Ledo Road so I was on elephant-back. There were no signs of government troops in the vicinity, though the nearest Burmese army outpost — at Tingkaw — was only a few miles away. We stopped at a small village along the road and had fresh, bottled fruit juice which bore the appropriate label "Ledo Orange."

It was as if time had stood still. Many local villagers had not seen a white face since the last war, and old men frequently asked about the whereabouts of Sergeant-major Jones, Private Wilson, or that American fellow, John something. Nearly every male above the age of 50 seemed to have served with the US-raised Kachin Rangers, or the British-organized Kachin Levies. Both were guerilla units made up of local Kachin tribesmen who fought behind Japanese lines in the 1940s, alongside the Allied forces.

The younger Kachins today talk with pride about their grandfathers, fathers and uncles who fought together with the Americans, with

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Field-Marshal Sir William Slim's 14th Army, the 28th West African Division, or the legendary Chindits, who were raised by one of the war's most remarkable men, British Maj-Gen. Orde Wingate.

Charles M. Simpson, a retired US Army officer, writes in his book, *Inside the Green Berets*, that the Kachin Rangers alone ultimately numbered about 11,000 men who "kept the Japanese under surveillance, raided, ambushed and harassed without cease." The high command in the CBI (China-Burma-India) theatre credited almost 90 percent of its intelligence reports to these Kachin tribesmen, and 85 percent of the 10th Air Force's targets.

According to Simpson, Stilwell once asked the leader of a successful Kachin Ranger Unit how they could be so sure of the large and exact number of Japanese killed in a single battle. The Kachin opened a bamboo tube and dumped a pile of dry ears on the table: "Divide by two," he told Stilwell. Simpson wryly comments that "it would seem that the Kachin kill figures were based on sound mathematics. Their own casualties were remarkably light: only 22 Americans and 184 Kachins killed."

Although the practice of severing ears has been brought to a halt, the legacy of World War II is still evident in today's KIA. There are company sergeant-majors, platoon sergeants, and being highlanders, it is hardly surprising that the Kachins felt close to the Scots. One morning in a KIA camp in western Kachin State, we could hear bagpipes sounding forth "Scotland the Brave" and "Amazing Grace." Sheep's stomachs are in short supply; the Kachin bagpipes today are made of car tire inner-tubes, covered with locally woven tartan cloth.

Partly because of their distinguished martial tradition, the Kachins today maintain the strongest and best organized ethnic resistance army.

However, not all memories from World War II and the Allied powers are pleasant. The British policy was to pay for services from the local people with opium. This was done on a limited scale, but the arrival of US forces immediately changed that.

Ian Fellowes-Gordon, another British officer who served in north-

ern Burma during World War II, wrote an excellent account of the fighting, entitled, *The Amiable Assassins*. He remembers how US Air Force aircraft flew in large quantities of opium from India and distributed it "with typical efficiency, in ample generous doses. Whereas in the (British-organized) Northern Kachin Levies, the kani (for opium) was given only to villagers in exchange for labor and food, the Americans were now paying a number of their levies with it. The men were entitled to draw pay in cash or in opium and could also buy the drug in liberal quantities. As a result, it was starting to circulate as currency and it seemed as if, rather than being able to cut down the use of it, we (the British) would have to step up ours."

Opium as a currency, and opium addiction, are perhaps the two worst legacies of World War II in the Kachin Hills. More people, as a result, began to grow it locally when the US Air Force's aircraft no longer brought in supplies from India. Tax on the opium provides some income for the rebels today, albeit negligible compared to the vast amounts Burmese army officers collect in bribes and tea

money to allow transit.

It is, therefore, not difficult to understand that the present US narcotics policy in Southeast Asia has found few sympathizers in northern Burma. Most people appear puzzled. Some have become outright anti-American as a result. "Those Yanks didn't care as long as it was only we Kachins who suffered. But now when their own kids have become addicted, they make a big fuss about it. And they think they can stop it by supporting Rangoon — one of the most corrupt governments in Southeast Asia. It's a shame," said Luzum Naw Bawk, a 72-year-old former Kachin Ranger I met in the Hukawng Valley. His job during the war had been to unload the opium-loaded Dakota aircraft that came from India, and he recollects with a big smile: "The opium was very good, no complaints about that. I almost became addicted myself."

Despite a feeling of being abandoned by their erstwhile Western comrades-in-arms, the Kachins fight on with a mixture of pride, bitterness and courage. A third generation of Kachins has grown up to continue the tradition of their grandfathers and fathers; it is a war that never seems to end.

Son Retraces Father's Steps in India

(Lt. Col. William "Bill" Laybourn is the son of Gene Laybourn who was a Lt. with Gen. Joseph W. Stilwell at the time of the "Walkout" from Burma and later served at Ramgarh training Chinese troops. Col. Laybourn is retired from the military and as part of his activity of supplying museums and ceremonial units with 19th Century military equipment, he imports materials from India and Pakistan. He attended the CBIVA Reunion in Denver where it was our privilege and pleasure to talk with him. We felt his impressions of India forty-some years after we CBiers departed would be of interest to most readers. LTC Laybourne lives at 657 20½ Rd., Grand Junction, CO 81503. — Ed.)

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I went to India in January and got the impression that if my father, Gene Laybourn (Walkout, Ramgarh '42-'44), had been with me he would have found things pretty much the same in many ways and quite different in other ways.

Poverty and filth is still everywhere only now there is unabated air pollution caused by greatly in-

creased motor transport, belching industrial smokestacks and, of course, an exploding population.

Literacy and health care seems to be a lot better than in 1944 and you can get around the country pretty handily by bus, train, plane or even taxis (I could have hired a taxi to take me from Delhi to DehraDun, a five-hour drive for about \$30!).

There was absolutely no problem communicating as all Indians that I met spoke an excellent English even though the National Government insists that of Urdu and Hindi. As a matter of fact, I frequently observed Indians conversing among themselves in English.

Wherever I went I was treated like a gent and when they would find out that I was not a German or "Britisher" but an American they would treat me even better! Except for taxi drivers, I found folks to be scrupulously honest.

There are still a few adult beggars but no little children follow you shouting "Bakshish Sahib, no

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Mommy, no Poppy, no whisky soda," as mentioned by my father.

While I saw no overt examples of social unrest or "communal strife" there were almost daily news articles about a terrorist killing here or a bomb blast there. I was impressed by one government billboard with the simple plea, "SHED LOVE, NOT BLOOD" in English.

Russians are everywhere as is their armor and aircraft. This is because Russia gives foreign aid to India, while the U.S. supports Pakistan. Since India has one of the largest standing armies on earth (4,000,000 men, said one Indian) I feel sorry for the Russians who not only supply tanks but are also committed to industrial and agricultural aid. India must be a terrible drain on the Russian economy.

I was going to go to Lahore, Pakistan, but even though I was in Delhi a week before my planned trip to Muslim, Pakistan, I could not get "booked" on one of the few flights each week to and from Pakistan. I was told that flights were carefully controlled by both countries.

There may be animosity in India between Muslims and Hindus but none of it was expressed to me by the Muslims and Hindus with whom I dealt. There does seem to be some radically oriented humor in India like our own Mexican, Pollock, Catholic, Irish, Jewish humor. One non-turbanned Sikh told me a whole string of Sikh jokes in exchange for mine. He and I polished off half a bottle of 60 proof Peter Scott Indian-made "Scotch."

Except for Russian tourists who seem to be kept to themselves in small herds, I saw only European tourists — mostly German and Swiss. The native hawkers at Agra (Taj Mahal) were shouting marvelous German phrases to the Swiss-German tour group I joined from Delhi.

While in Delhi, I went to a Russian Space and Technology Exhibition at a permanent fairground. There must have been ten mockups of various Soviet spacecraft which the Indians paid only casual interest to. The medical and industrial-chemical exhibits were of — good basic stuff. Frankly, I like the Soviet water pumping windmill (like we used to have on farms) which had a unique cam operated pump rod and a tilt-back rotor. They also had a high speed hy-



Kanpur, leather and footwear center of 3,000,000.

draulic press no bigger than a footlocker that squeezed out threading tap blanks three a minute.

When I flew to Kanpur (a leather center) we went by a twin engine British commuter jet.

Kanpur Airport is really an Indian Air Force Base. As we came in, we flew over about 16 obsolete American fighter bombers all lined up for satellite pictures — complete with flat tires and missing canopies. I really was not on a spy mission but when I tried to take a picture of my commuter plane at the civilian end of the field I was stopped and asked to take the film out of my camera. A kindly official in civvies intervened when I swore I was only taking a shot of my plane. Sure enough, there was a small sign saying, No Photographs! I did not realize that we were on a military airfield either. In fact, a knowledgeable person told me later about the airfield and the row of jets.

There are still plenty of loose cattle except for central Delhi.

Smaller towns and large city outskirts abound with water buffalo, Brahma cattle and goats.

I had toyed with the idea of going to see Ramgarh but gave it up, planning the trip since the old American Chinese training base is now in Bangladesh which has a lot of civil unrest. Riots and killings were reported in the Delhi papers while I was there.

Dehra Dun lies north of Delhi about 120 miles in the foothills of the Himalayas. It was started as a retirement community for British Civil servants. It soon became famous for its British Style Private Schools and to this day it is an educational center with Indian kids going to and from school in their private blazers. Just about everyone who is anyone got his high schooling in Dehra Dun (including Prime Minister Ghandi). For that matter, India's West Point and Forestry College are located in Dehra Dun. The hills, cleaner air, and less-crowded conditions remind me of Boulder, Colorado.

While I was in India, a friend visited Burma for a couple weeks. My friend sent along some photos of the area around Yedashey, between Tungoo and Pinmana. Even though my father had often told me of how he and Col. G. B. Sliney came under fire from the Japs, I had always assumed the area was mountainous and heavily jungled. There are hills in the distance, but the photos indicate to me a rather open and flat area.

In case anyone is interested, it was shortly after Yedashey that General Stilwell assembled his Americans (24), Dr. Seagrave and his Burmese nurses, a few British and started his remarkable walk-out (see *Retreat With Stilwell*, by Belden).



Delhi Bazaar

History of CBI Depends on Writer

William Eng served in China with the 3198th Signal Svc Bn at Chanyi and took issue with Joe Shupe on the latter's location of the 21-step mountain in Joe's "CBI Quiz." Below is Joe's response to William's letter in the Fall issue of SOUND-OFF. Joe even attached a map locating the area but the contrast was insufficient to reproduce a good copy so we were forced to omit it.

Mr. Eng has continued to read articles previously written by Col. Shupe and, as one of Chinese heritage, is upset with Joe's portrayal of Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese war effort as written in a two-page treatise entitled, "The American Effort in China, Burma and India" and printed in the Winter 1992 SOUND-OFF.

William Eng's umbrage is expressed in a letter that follows. We may be getting into an area which is more a matter of viewpoint than fact but will be happy to continue these exchanges as long as the participants are willing. In any event, we would like to learn much more about Mr. Eng if he will accept our invitation to tell us about himself.

21-Step Mountain

To the Editor:

In reply to letter "Where is 21-Step Mountain" (Fall 92, edition of Sound-Off) by William Eng. He is right, the location is between Chanyi and Kweiyang. I checked my notes and that's what I sent in, but somehow "Kunming" was entered as the correct answer instead of Kweiyang. (MEA CULPA - Ed.).

I was adjutant of the Hqs Base Section #2, SOS, China Theater, and one of our operating units the 3843rd QM Truck Company hauled supplies from Chanyi, northeast over that mountain to Kweiyang and through a railhead at Tuyun. From there, the supplies were trans-shipped by rail to supply units of the 14th Air Force in East China (that's before the Japanese overtook those bases). And, what stories those drivers told about transporting supplies over the most rugged, poorly maintained roads, full of hairpin turns and steep grades. In addition, along the way, they had to fight off Chinese bandits who would board the slow

moving trucks in an attempt to steal the cargo.

The 3843rd made their first round trip starting on June 4, 1944, from Chanyi to Tuyun in seven days; in contrast before they arrived it took 2-12 weeks by Chinese trucks of the SWHA (Chinese Southeast Highway Administration) to make that same round trip.

The distance between those two points as the crow flies was only about 250 miles, but going up and down mountains, and around hairpin turns, it was many, many more miles. The 857th Ordnance Co. (Heavy Automotive Maintenance) helped make this possible by their expert maintenance of those trucks at Chanyi.

Joe S. Shupe
8619 Cromwell Dr.
Springfield, VA 22151-1208

Letters

Chinese History

To the Editor:

An article was printed in CBIVA SOUND-OFF, page 52, Vol. 38, No. 1, by Stilwell Basha Commander Joseph Shupe. I don't think he understands Chinese history at all. Especially why's and when's Chinese Armed Forces fought against Japanese Invasion Forces.

Do they know the Tanaka Plans and 21 Demands upon China before the September 18, 1931, Japanese invasion of Manchuria? Do they know what's and why's of Japanese forces invasion of Shanghai in February 1932?

Gen. Chiang Kai-shek and the 19th Route Cantonese Army fought the Japanese to a standstill for three months. Do you know how many Chinese divisions were lost in these battles?

After the peace agreement was signed in Shanghai between the Chinese Nationalists and Japan, Gen. Chiang Kai-shek started to rebuild his army with German assistance and his Air Force with Italian help. But the Japanese don't like that for they realize once China is militarily strong they won't have a chance to conquer the rest of China.

It's history now that Gen. Chiang is the only Chinese capable of leading Chinese resistance against Japanese invasion of all of China. Don't forget Lu-Shang Conference and

July 7, 1937, incident at Marco Polo Bridge near Peking.

The Chinese people want a Chinese to be commander of their military forces and to be united. Gen. Chiang is Chinese and look back at his 1927 unification of China. Does any country help? In fact, the Japanese tried to block him

William Eng
US Naval Hospital
PSC 482, Box 171
FPO AP 96362-1695

Ancient Chinese

To the Editor:

I have just finished reading a fine book entitled "The Genius of China" by Robert Temple (Simon & Schuster, copyright 1986). I found this book in my local library.

The above mentioned book reveals that ancient China was the most technically developed empire in the world hundreds and even thousands of years before the Chinese inventions and discoveries were recognized or adopted by the empires of the West. The brilliant ancient Chinese excelled in math, medicine and health, farming, cartography, industrial technology, the physical sciences, transport and exploration, sound and music, and in defensive warfare.

As young GIs in China, in the early 1940s, we saw only poverty and hunger among the Chinese which was the result of war with the Japanese for many years as well as with the Communists of the north.

To me, it was a great privilege to discover this book and learn of the many wonderful contributions made by the ancient Chinese to our present world. I believe that the now old GIs who served with me in China would thoroughly enjoy the book "The Genius of China." These guys could then see the great potential of the one billion Chinese people to again contribute to the advancement of the free world - once they throw off the shackles of Communism.

J. Phillip Reed
3647 Tinsley Place
Duluth, GA 30136-3150
Former member of
373rd Bomb Sqdn, 308th Bomb Gp
Luliang, China

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Life is the greatest bargain; we get it for nothing. (Jewish Proverb)

Opium Story in Fall Sound-Off Provokes Response from CBl'er

(In the Fall issue of the SOUND-OFF, an article entitled "Opium and Memories of War Linger On the Ledo Road," by Bertil Lintner was reprinted from the FAR EASTERN ECONOMIC REVIEW which had been sent to us by Paul L. Jones of San Diego. The following version of opium usage by our forces in Burma has been submitted by John H. Allen of Nashville. — Ed.)

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By John H. Allen

The article by Bertil Lintner, "Opium and Memories of War Linger on the Ledo Road" reprinted in the Fall issue of Sound-Off is very misleading about the use of opium by our forces in Burma. It casts a stigma on our Country and our Armed Forces that is not justified. It is contrary to my first-hand knowledge about our use of opium in North Burma in WWII. While my knowledge of this matter is limited to my own experience, I was involved with the use of opium fairly early in the war during the period March to December 1943. I was aware of just why we used it, who was aware of it and involved in the decision to use it.

Some of Mr. Lintner's observations seem to me to be gross exaggerations. His reference to the "opium loaded Dakota aircraft" is a good example. That would have been one Hell of a lot of opium! Our sole source of supply of opium was from the British Government of India and was secured from them by the OSS. Surely if the British thought that we were using too much of it or mis-using it, they would have cut off our supply. Certainly Lintner's statement that we flew in large supplies could not have happened without British concurrence. I never heard of any American selling opium. There could have been a few cases of this but not to the extent inferred by Lintner. The British were never loath to take our money for anything (like letting us help them fight their war). Do you suppose that they could have sold us more opium than I thought they did? After all, they were our sole source of supply.

In March of 1943, I did one of the foolish things that Second Lieuten-



Second Lt. John H. Allen at Tagap Ga in northern Burma in August 1943. Weight is 118 pounds, fully clothed and carrying side arms. Could this be the lieutenant referred to on page 265 of Book Four "Confusion Beyond Imagination" by Boyd Sinclair?

ants do. I volunteered for a special assignment. This turned out to be Supply Officer for Chinese Troops in the forward area at Tagap Ga, onetime site of a Naga village in North Burma. That was as far as the Allies had gotten in in going back into Burma. Only Chinese troops and small detachments of OSS and V Force were there plus a small hospital unit of the Burma Surgeon, Dr. Gordon Seagrave. The Ledo Road went only to Hells Gate and was not always open. From there you walked. It took me seven days to make the trip and it rained all the way.

The route was over the Refugee Trail where thousands died in May of 1942 trying to get to India. The trail was literally strewn with skeletons. Without these grisly sign posts we would have been lost more times than we were. This more than ample supply of skulls on this and the other escape routes from Burma furnished an abundant supply for the thrifty Nagas when they realized that GI's had bought the myth that they still engaged in head hunting. But, this is getting away from the use of opium.

Shortly before I got to Tagap Ga, Gen. Wheeler was jumped by a Jap patrol just up the hill from Tagap.

This effectively stopped his attempt to get to Shingbwiayang to see about building an air strip there. Intelligence was still no better when I left Ledo as I had been assured that there were no Japs within a hundred miles of Tagap! On the day before I got to Tagap, I met Gen. Wheeler on his way back. He was pleasantly surprised to hear that we had seen no sign of Japs on our trip out. He explained that the mortar fire we were hearing and had heard for the past three days was the result of his encounter.

With the advent of Gen. Wheeler's contact with the Japs, the Garo porters the British had a Tagap to build bashas for quarters and supplies, pulled out. This had constituted the entire labor force at Tagap. The less than one battalion of the 114th Chinese Infantry Regiment there were all needed to man the outposts around Tagap. I had only seven EMs with me and while they were the best they were not enough to do what had to be done.

All of our supplies were to be air dropped. With nearly constant rain it was essential to get everything under cover, fast! So, we were in dire need of lots of help in a hurry. The bashas there were not adequate for the job so we needed people for labor to act as porters, build the needed structures and handle the supplies. Fortunately (especially so for me) there were some very competent people at Tagap who knew the country, people and the many languages. Some of these were, Capt. (later Lt. Col.) J. R. Wilson, V Force, a resident of Burma, Lt. Dave Darlington, a former missionary with the Hill Tribes and fluent in Jingpaw, Burmese and other languages, Dr. (Lt. Col.) Gordon Seagrave who had spent his life treating the people in the Hill Country of Burma. He knew more about the diseases we would have to contend with, what to do about them and how to survive there than anyone else. Kalu Ma Nong, the Kachin Head Man for that part of the world, and his son Peter Kalu Yam. Peter spoke English and most of the languages used there. He was my right hand man. Bill Cummings, a former missionary and long-time resident of Burma and associate of Dr. Seagrave was with the local OSS Team. There were others who were most helpful and last but certainly far from the least of these

was "Skittles," a Sino-Burmese and native of Rangoon, who was there with the OSS. His knowledge of the many languages used in that part of the world and his help in my relations with the Chinese was most valuable.

Our CO back at base was Gen. Boatner. He exercised tight control over everything and everyone there. We all reported directly to him. All of the people I mentioned and probably others got together and the plan to solve our labor problem that evolved was to convince the scattered tribes of Nagas, that lived around Tagap, to leave their villages with their families and come to Tagap to fill all our needs for labor. This must have required at least a bit of coercion as relations between the different tribes was not neighborly to say the least. It was recognized that this would also relieve us of the need to police these small scattered settlements.

All negotiations were conducted through the Headmen of the various tribes. They were good bargainers and during this is where I first learned about the use of opium by the hill tribes in North Burma. Most of the men smoked opium. This was recognized by the British and their Law permitted these people to grow their own poppies, the sap of the seed pods being instantly converted into opium. This was true of other hill tribes such as Chins, Khamptis and Kachins. For the most part, they used opium with a great degree of moderation.

The only money recognized by the hill people was silver. No paper money was acceptable. Opium, therefore, was a bartering item as was food or anything else these people had. Their supply of opium was never great. They practiced a type of slash and burn agriculture. Their only tool for clearing land was their long knives or dahs, and they were sorely taxed to clear enough land to produce the rice and vegetables they needed to survive. So, there was not a lot of land left for poppy production. Fertility of the soil was quickly exhausted requiring constant clearing and eventual relocation of the village.

Dr. Seagrave said that years of observation had convinced him that those who used opium lived much longer than those who did not. His conclusion was that it made them more resistant to dysentery and more tolerant to ma-



Nagas collecting air-dropped supplies at Tagap Ga in northern Burma in August of 1943.

laria. This reminds me that we were issued opium pills to treat dysentery when we left for Tagap.

It was an established fact that use of opium by the hill tribes was and had been a way of life for longer than anyone knew. So, if we wanted them to come to work for us we would have to give them the opium they needed. In fact, the British made this very clear to us **and they told us just how much we were to give them!** They were already paying the Kachins and other smokers who worked for them the same way.

We agreed to pay the Nagas one silver rupee per day if they did not smoke and three quarters of a rupee and enough opium for two pipes per day if they did smoke. They were issued only a three-day supply of opium at a time. The only objection the British had to this deal was the money part. They thought that was much too much. They never objected to the opium part of the pay recognizing that was the only way we could get them to work.

The Nagas finally agreed to leave their villages to work for us and relocate their families at a new village at Tagap Ga. Part of the deal was unique. The headmen had asked, "If we come to work for you, what will we do when your war is over until we can harvest another crop of rice and poppies?" After some dickering and the approval of Gen. Boatner, we agreed to continue to supply them with food and opium until their harvest was in. My successor refused to honor this verbal agreement. Somehow a few Nagas located me about it. I finally got word to Gen. Boatner and the agreement was honored with as good a bonus as I could get.

During my stay at Tagap, we also enjoyed people from some of the other hill tribes and paid them

at the same rate as the Nagas. When refugees began to arrive there, mostly Kachin, we paid them the same way if they were willing to work for us.

I usually got from 10 to 25 sers (a ser was about a kilo) of opium at a time. I kept it in unlocked grenade boxes under my cot. None was ever stolen and my basha was guarded no more than any of the other facilities at Tagap. None of my men ever used it and I have never heard of any drug problem with our troops.

It is ridiculous to say that we caused the hill tribes to become opium addicts. They already were when we got there and this was recognized by law. It is equally ridiculous to blame the Americans for the illicit opium trade in the Golden Triangle. Maybe that was the only way the people there had to make a living in the chaos following the collapse of the British Colonial Empire. It could be that they took a page or two from British history and decided to copy the profitable way the British exploited the opium trade in the last century that resulted in the Opium Wars of China.

The British and Americans were not the only ones making use of opium in Burma. The Japs were doing it to a far greater extent than we were. They were in the country and more of it much longer than we were and I am sure they were not as circumspect in their use of it as we were. There were many reports of their widespread use of opium in the conquered areas of Burma. We all know that they used any means available to get what they wanted.

Once we had not had a drop in over three weeks when a plane finally came in I was happy to see 25 sers of opium. We had been just about out of food and opium. Each block of opium was wrapped with a recent issue of *Colliers Magazine* opened to a well documented article describing how the Japs were corrupting the conquered people of Burma with large quantities of opium to get their cooperation.

If, perhaps, the War caused any increase in opium addiction in Burma it is far more likely that it was caused by the British or Japs than the Americans. After all, they were there a lot longer than we were.

Support CBIVA!

Wetzel's WW II Career Is History of C.B.I.

(The late Nevin Wetzel had an experience paralleled by no one else, we know of — he served in the C.B.I. Theater before war broke out between the U.S. and Japan, throughout the entire conflict, not being mustered out of the Theater until the war was over. In that four-year period he was always at the center of action and served every top general: Stilwell, Chennault, Boatner, the lot. He wrote many articles for the EX-CBI ROUNDUP, supplied source information to Boyd Sinclair and Bob Kadel and compiled copious notebooks of his experiences. His sons, David and Jim, and daughter, Kathleen, edited and compiled and had printed these notes into "ENGINEER IN THE FAR EAST — Memoirs of World War II in China, Burma, and India." At the request of SOUND-OFF, Nevin's good friend, John Allen, excerpted highlights from the Memoirs for this issue. It was his intent that we would then distill these excerpts even further. However, we could think of nothing more interesting to be printed by a CBIVA publication than pieces of the history of wartime experiences as told by a comrade. The following is the 'shorter' of two summaries prepared by John. — Ed.)

Nevin Wetzel's WW II experience in the CBI reads like a history of American involvement in that Theater. This accounts for the widespread use of material from his Journal and his personal recollection that contributed so much to many of the published histories of the war in China, Burma, and India.

An Army Reserve Officer, he was called to Active Duty in 1940 because of his qualifications as a demolitions expert. A year later he was assigned to the American Military Mission to China, commanded by BG John Magruder, headquartered in Chungking, China. In October 1941, Capt. Nevin F. Wetzel, CE, was in Rangoon, Burma, assigned to work with Maj. John E. Ausland on a gigantic engineering project, the construction of the Yunnan-Burma Rail Road. Knowing that he would be working with the Chinese, he began to study their language and customs as soon as he learned of his assignment. This



NEVIN F. WETZEL
(Pre-WW II photo)

NEVIN F. WETZEL

December 8, 1912 - January 12, 1989

Nevin F. Wetzel, mining engineer, CBI veteran, and artist, died January 12 at the age of 76 in Salt Lake City. He was born in Price, Utah, to a mining family and attended the Colorado School of Mines, from which he graduated in 1934. During the late 1930s he worked for the Hercules Powder Company in West Virginia, developing a new type of safety explosive. A reserve officer, he was called into service in early 1941 to work on the Yunnan-Burma Railway, and he remained in the CBI Theater for the duration of the war, advancing from the rank of Captain to Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Corps of Engineers. In addition to working on the railway and on the construction of the Ledo

may have been the reason he was able to accomplish more with the Chinese than some of his counterparts.

His first assignment was to try to cut through the red tape and bureaucratic maze encountered in trying to get the British to authorize the shipment of about one and one half million tons of dynamite, TNT, and other explosives and equipment, newly arrived from the States for use on the YBRR, and stored on barges in the river near Rangoon. He finally got permission

road, one of his major assignments under General Stilwell was the training of Chinese engineers, who later performed with a high degree of skill during the second Burma campaign. For his service, Lt. Col. Wetzel received the bronze star with one cluster and a medal of appreciation from the Chinese government — the special Breast Order, Yun Hui, with ribbon. He also had the Asiatic-Pacific medal with three bronze stars and the American Defense Service medal with one bronze star.

His memoirs of the war appeared serially in the EX-CBI ROUNDUP and were later published by his children as *ENGINEER IN THE FAR EAST*. His memoirs were also cited in a recent multivolume history of the CBI Theater, *CONFUSION BEYOND IMAGINATION*, by William Boyd Sinclair.

After the war, Mr. Wetzel established the Western Sales Engineering Company in Salt Lake City, serving the mining industry throughout the Rocky Mountain states. During the late 1950s he took up painting and sat on the board of directors of the Salt Lake Art Barn (Salt Lake Art Center), for which he also directed the art school. He later became a stone carver, specializing in works done in Colorado alabaster, including a series of pieces inspired by the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. In recent years his sculpture has been exhibited by the Phillips Gallery in Salt Lake.

During the early 1970s, Mr. Wetzel married Virginia P. Frobes, who survives him, as do a sister in Price, Utah, and three children from a previous marriage to Jane Rawlins. To his family and friends, he was a humanitarian and a man of great sensitivity and humor.

(Prepared for SOUND-OFF by the children of Nevin Wetzel—Ed.)

for it to be shipped out after convincing the British Commander that one hit on the barges would set off a tidal wave that would destroy Rangoon and the surrounding area. A suggestion was made to the British Commander that some of the explosives be kept in Rangoon in the event it should be taken by the rapidly advancing Japanese. The British Commander brusquely refused to consider the possibility that Rangoon would ever fall to the Japanese and soon all of the explosion
(See Wetzel on next page)

(WETZEL—from preceding page) sives were on the way to Lashio.

He made several trips between Rangoon and Lashio by car, horse-back and any other means available.

Rangoon was bombed by the Japs on 23 December '41 and repeatedly thereafter throughout their ground attack on Burma in January '42. On February 17th, Wetzel found himself back in Rangoon to assist in the demolition of Lend Lease equipment and supplies there. By the next day, practically all of the British, Anglos, Indians, and Americans had fled to escape the imminent Japanese occupation now that the British defense of Burma had virtually collapsed. The city was in a state of chaos with widespread looting and a general state of panic.

With him in Rangoon were Maj. Frank Merrill (later to command the Marauders), Col. St. John, Maj. John Russell, Capt. Roscoe Hambleton, Maj. Ted Haywood and 1st Sgt. Astolphie. Capt. Wetzel and Maj. Merrill had to resort to looting themselves to get food and supplies for their remaining time there and their trip out.

At 10 p.m., on 22 February '42, a British Tank Unit, the last of the British troops there, passed them headed north. The next day, Gen. Magruder and Maj. Harry Aldrich arrived by jeep from Lashio. Files were burned and two sedans and other transport were loaded with food and supplies as it was obvious that time there was running short. On Feb. 24th, Maj. Merrill and Gen. Magruder were unsuccessful in evading them. Magruder and Merrill reported that the British troops had been entrapped on the other side of the Sittang River, only one Battalion having escaped and that the Japs would occupy Prome that night.

Col. St. John decided to destroy all CD and Lend Lease supplies immediately. This presented a problem as there was absolutely no explosives left in Rangoon. They had to resort to using gasoline to do the job. The British had declined to help in destroying their facilities and chose just to get out.

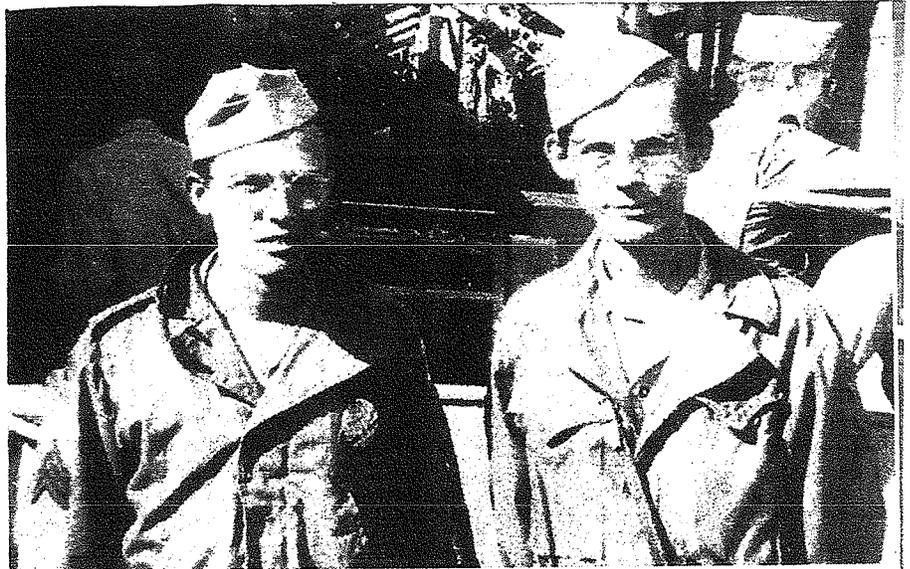
Using gasoline and sawdust fuses, Wetzel planned the job. Between 2:00 and 5:00 p.m, he, Merrill, St. John and Astolphie destroyed the entire General Motors assembly plant there with 1,000 trucks still in crates, together with

15 or 20 warehouses with supplies of all kinds. For some reason the fuse did not work on the last warehouse, but somehow the fumes from the gas-soaked warehouse ignited prematurely. Wetzel was trapped under the door, Merrill and St. John and Astolphie also suffered painful, but minor, injuries as did Wetzel who somehow managed to get from under the door. All were black as spades. They left right away driving over a hundred miles before stopping to rest.

Two days later he was back in Lashio which was bombed that

day. With the Jap invasion of Burma, all work was stopped on the YBRR and all American Forces there transferred to work on the Ledo Road. Lashio was bombed daily while he was there. He got out for Calcutta on April 5th.

From then on he was always on the move. From Calcutta he went to Karachi to help Gen. Wheeler ready equipment there for shipping. From there he was ordered to report to Gen. Chennault at Lwoing, China. The same day he got a wire from Gen. Stilwell saying that
(See Wetzel on next page)



Left to right: Charlie Wright of Lynchburg, VA and Ron Dick of Queens, NYC, stand on the Calcutta dock before boarding the Marine Jumper, May 31, 1946, for home. They had served together as members of the Army Airways Communication System in the CBI Theater, which was officially closed on this date.

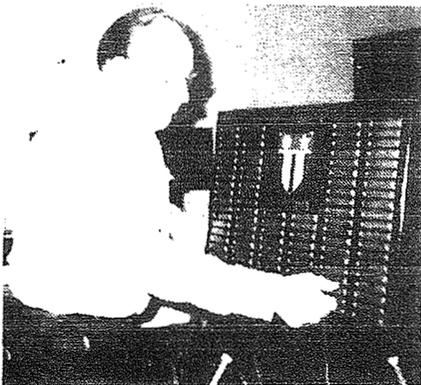


Left to right - Fifty-five years later Wright and Dick live in South Carolina, Charlie in North Augusta and Ron in Wagener. They are photographed above at the S. C. Basha meeting June 9 at Fort Jackson. Taking advantage of the GI Bill after leaving the service, Charlie came to S.C. in 1952 to work as a physicist at the Savannah River Plant and Ron retired to S.C. after a career of teaching in New York State. Photos by Charlie Wright

(WETZEL — from preceding page)

he was now under his command. Lashio having fallen, he managed to get to Myitkyina from Calcutta. In his Journal, Wetzel commented that on the day he left Calcutta going back to Burma, Gen. Stilwell and his party were starting their long, hard trek from Maymyo, Burma, to India. He also commented that Stilwell's resolve fortunately changed the course and brought eventual victory. From Myitkyina he rode by car to Loring only to find Chennault leaving. Chennault told him "that if he had a way up the Burma Road to report to him again in Kunming." He did this riding with Dick Camp of Socony Vacuum Oil Co., stopping at Chinock to burn the Socony Oil and Gas Dump there. Barely ahead of the Japs, he made it to Kunming. There he was directed by Chennault to study the feasibility of using caves to protect his aircraft from bombings. Mme. Chiang had suggested this and wanted an American engineer to do the job.

With Col. Lawrence Kwang, construction engineer, assigned by the



The 1752nd and 1753rd Ordnance Supply and Maintenance Companies and Group Ordnance Headquarters Squadron of the 301st Service Group are meeting May 4-8 at the Colonial Hotel in Miami, (FL). In 1977, a search was started by Gene Zimmerman of Alton (IL) to locate the members of these companies and bi-annual reunions resulted from his search. In 1985, the group decided to honor its deceased members and Alfred and Lillian Adameczk of Taunton (MA) volunteered to prepare such a plaque. Alfred is shown above with the name plates of the 94 members they have been able to locate. A star is placed by the name of each deceased member and at some time in the distant future when stars are by all the names, the plaque will be a part of the permanent display at the Museum at Selfridge Field (MI), where the 301st was formed in 1942. Photo by Gene Zimmerman

Chinese Government to work with the AVG, he spent 12 days in Hengyang, Kweilin and Linchow, traveling at night by train. On arriving at Hengyang, he found some of Doolittle's flyers there who had bombed Tokyo. They quickly left on his plane and the Japs bombed the field five minutes later, attesting to the excellence of their espionage. He survived numerous bombings on this trip. Back in Kunming, he was relieved to learn that he was to make his report to Stilwell rather than to Chennault.

He reported that although the plan was feasible, it was impractical from the standpoint of time and equipment and the imminent Japanese occupation. It took the Japs only five months to capture these areas in late '44. He tempered his report by recommending use of a large cave at Kweilin to store planes. Later it was used to store 25 B-25s. About this time Chennault and the AVG were inducted into the U.S. Army. (July 4, 1942.)

That summer he worked with Col. Kwang, locating and siting air fields for Hump traffic into Kunming. He also worked closely with Gen. Bissell on needed changes in air field construction.

With Stilwell's arrival on June 4th, he was listed as Acting Engineer and Assistant G-2 on his staff. He handled a number of assignments and in Nov. '42 was promoted to Major.

Stilwell was elated when he heard about the American landing in Africa. After this news he asked Wetzel if he could train him some combat engineer officers at Ramgarh. Of course he said that he could. Stilwell rewarded him for the good job he had done by giving him a five-day delay in Calcutta en route to Ramgarh. He enjoyed his duty there. While in the hospital recovering from amoebic dysentery, a Lt. Colonel newly arrived from the States, because of his senior rank, relieved him as head of the Engineer Section. This officer later became his lifetime friend.

Arriving at Ramgarh, Stilwell was not pleased with this change but Wetzel told him he would be content to be left with the large regiment he had trained. The General agreed and promised him that the next good job that came along would be his. After that, he never put a Combat Engineer senior to him in the Chinese Combat Forces.

Once more Wetzel found himself

on the way back to Burma but this time he walked over the Refugee trail from Hells Gate to Tagap Ga, just ahead of the 12th Combat Engineer Regiment, CAI, that he had trained so well at Ramgarh. For the next five months, which he said was some of his most pleasant duty, he stayed at Tagap while his Chinese engineers built bridges, a small air strip and several miles of jeep road well ahead of the Ledo Road construction.

Tagap Ga, once a Naga Village, was the southernmost place in Burma occupied by the allies. When he got there, the 112th and 114th Regiments of Gen. Sun Li-Jen's battle-tested Division were there along with Lt. Col. J. R. Wilson's small V Force group, Lt. Vince Curl and his OSS Team, Lt. Col. Seagrave and his small hospital and Lt. John Allen, Forward Area Supply Officer, and his small QM Detachment. Lt. Segars and Lt. Napier were also there as liaison officers for the two Chinese units.

For some time Allen has been receiving large quantities of dynamite, TNT and other explosives and equipment by parachute. This was being stockpiled for use by Wetzel's engineers who built the jeep road and air strip with only hand tools and explosives. All supplies for Tagap came by airdrop and the Indian cotton chutes often failed. With the explosives this created a most hazardous situation. Fortunately there was never an explosion. Needless to say, Wetzel was warmly welcomed by Allen who was finally glad to have someone there who knew something about handling explosives. Wetzel stated in his journal that to his knowledge this was the first time in WW II that explosives had been parachuted in such volume.

Wetzel's Chinese engineers did their job well. Just how well was expressed in a wire he got from Gen. Boatner who had observed the progress from the air. He told him to stop all work south of Kumkidu or they were going to present an access road for the Japanese forces in the Hukawng Valley to "Come in and capture our forces." This so called "Jeep" road proved invaluable in facilitating movement of road machinery once the Ledo Road crews finally got there.

While Wetzel was at Tagap, Col. John Willey arrived to take com-

(See Wetzel on next page)

(WETZEL — from preceding page)
 mand of the forces being assembled there for the Hukawng Valley Campaign. Also arriving was "Gentry," an American-Chinese who was to be Wetzel's good friend and interpreter for the rest of the war.

With the capture of Shingbwi- yang, Wetzel and the 12th, under the command of Col. John Willey (soon to be BG), moved there to maintain road communication between the forces under Gen. Pick and the rear areas of the division forces, build bridges and clear runway approaches. While there he made a night horseback ride to take a top secret, "Eyes Only" message to Stilwell at Ningam Sakan. He watched the General read and reread the message and then burn it but he never knew what it was.

In late 1944, he got a leave to go home for 30 days with some duty for a few days at equipment factories after which he found himself back in Karachi en route to Kunming which he reached on Dec. 2nd. He was assigned Engineer Officer of the Eastern Command. Gen. Wedemeyer had now assumed command of our forces in the China Theater and Wetzel was to go with BG Frederic Boye's group by convoy to Kweiyang to coordinate the many groups doing demolition in front of the rapidly advancing enemy. He reached Kweiyang on Dec. 5th after 400 miles of tortuous icy, snow-covered road, clogged with thousands of retreating Chinese soldiers and civilians. They logged the road noting the few places where demolitions would provide appreciable delay of the enemy. With him in his jeep were Sgts. Kardler and Bettrige.

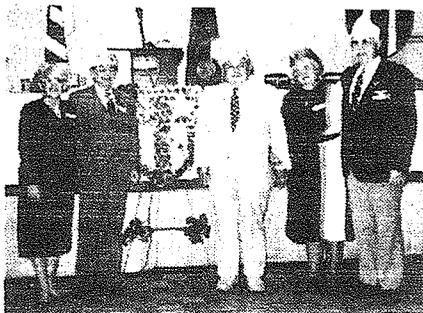
One of the four U.S. Demolition teams, commanded by Maj. Frank Gleason, OSS, was the subject of the book, "Mountain Road," by his good friend, Ted White. Even without radios, the U.S. Teams performed their job well. The many Chinese teams doing demolitions, acted most indiscriminately. By the time they reached Kweilin the groups mission was ended. Although the Chinese were panic stricken and in no position to resist, the Japs, still in summer uniforms, pulled back and dug in for the winter.

With the help of Maj. Belcher, the demolition teams were reorganized and equipped to be ready

for any further retreat.

During that bitterly cold winter, the Chinese civilians turned on their own troops and disarmed them. Gen. Teng En Po's 500,000-man army vanished leaving no opposition for the 60,000 enemy troops. It looked like Kunming

(See Wetzel on next page)



Sandra Danzig, Great N.E. PA Basha Commander Bernie Danzig, Past Commander of the N.E. PA Basha Ed Transue and his wife Nell, are shown with Pennsylvania State Commander Wendall Phillips at a meeting in Allentown last fall. Bernie Danzig Photo

Wilkes-Barre Will Host Penna. Fall Meeting

By Ed Transue

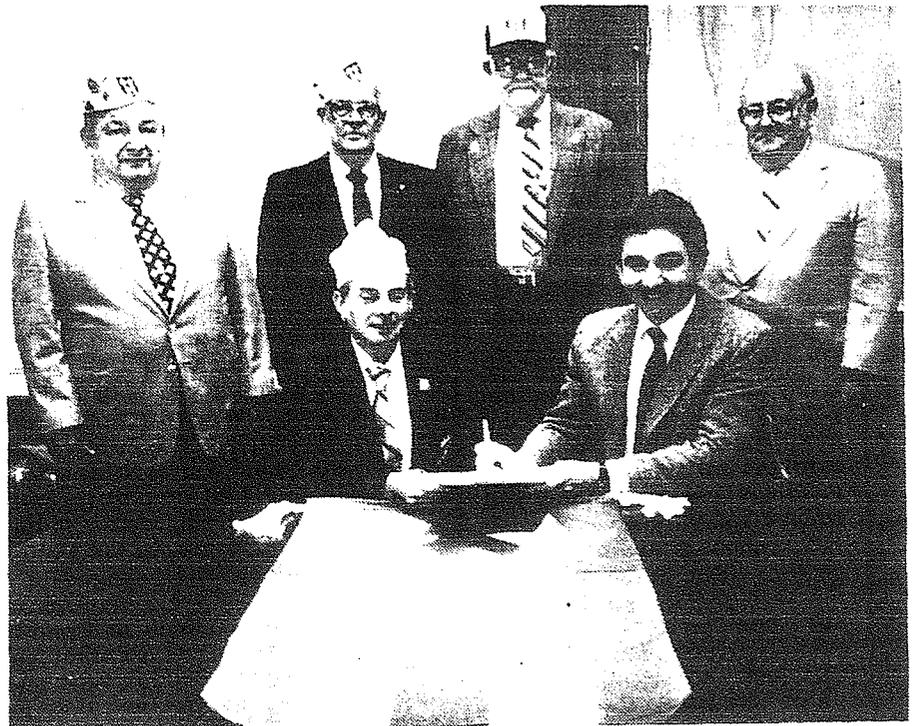
The Department of Pennsylvania Fall Board meeting will be held at the spacious Quality Inn in Wilkes-Barre (PA), October 5, 6, 7 and 8. The Quality Inn is just minutes from downtown Wilkes-Barre.

This meeting will incorporate the Pennsylvania Department Fall Board meeting, the many social functions of a state reunion along with planned and optional tours, sightseeing and shopping time.

Scheduled at this time is a tour of the eleven-story Wilkes-Barre, VA Hospital, a guided tour of the McDade Coal Mine, visits to historic Wyoming and Forty Fort and the 108-year-old Swetland House.

Additional information, a detailed schedule and registration and reservation forms will be printed in the Summer SOUND-OFF.

NO DUES — NO SOUND-OFF!



MAYOR RECOGNIZES VETS

Wilkes-Barre Mayor Lee Namey signs a proclamation Wednesday for veterans who served in the China-Burma-India theater during World War II. President Ronald Reagan has proclaimed Saturday, Nov. 12, as the China-Burma-India Veterans Association Appreciation Day. The Greater Northeast Pennsylvania chapter, which covers the Wilkes-Barre / Scranton area, includes members from Towanda to Stroudsburg and from Carbondale to Danville. Seated from left: Bernie Danzig, commander; and Mayor Namey; standing from left: Edward Trausue, past commander; Bruce S. Davis Jr.; Sheldon Glahn, clerk; and George Morgan.

(This is the picture and caption that the Great N.E. PA Basha was able to get in the Wilkes-Barre, PA, THE TIMES LEADER, on November 12, in honor of CBI Veterans Appreciation Day. Submitted by Basha Past Commander Ed Transue.)

(WETZEL — from preceding page)

would fall. The 14th Air Force had to abandon so many bases that one humorist ended his comment by saying, "from these and other operations, five of our bases are missing." This was, according to Wetzel, China's darkest hour. The tide turned, however, when Gen. Wedemeyer, against the wishes of the British in India, sent two of the Ramgarh trained and battle tested Divisions in to fill the gap. These men were strong, well fed and clothed and equipped. They were tough and proud as a result of their success in Burma. The Japs chose not to oppose them and withdrew to their corridor in the east. This again proved the value of Stilwell's far-sighted plans for the training and equipping of the Chinese.

Kweiyang, in December '44 and Jan. '45, was a city of horror and excitement. It was very cold. Wetzel and his engineers proceeded to build an engineer organization plan.

With spring he came back to Kunming only to find his promised job filled by a Colonel. The Colonel was surprised to learn that he had sited every major Hump air field in the area except the one south of town. He said that he would like for Wetzel to work for him but only if he would agree to remain in China for an indefinite period after the war. Having the highest point rating for release in the Theater, Wetzel wanted out and said, "No."

PHOTOS WANTED

A New National Historian Book, "Memorable Book of Events" has been started and many blank pages are awaiting your articles, photos, old and new. The book will be carried to all the national and regional meetings and your photos will be on display for all to see.

A request is again made to identify those in the photos to the best of your ability. Yes, any member of CBIVA can submit articles pertaining to CBI, past and present.

Our National Commander Bill Dorman, will be pleased to carry the book following his term in office.

George Bracik
National Historian
42886 Dellefield Road
Elyria, OH 44035



Dr. W. R. A. Boben of the Great N.E. PA Basha proves you can't keep a good CBI veteran down. Dr. Boben suffered a severe stroke some time back but enjoys the camaraderie of a basha meeting even if confined to a wheel chair. He is shown above with his wife Arona, without whose assistance this pleasure would be impossible. A resident of Mountaintop (PA), Dr. Boben served as a flight surgeon with the 7th Bomb Group. Ed Transue Photo

As Engineer Officer for the Reserve Command in Kunming, he started a Chinese Engineer Officers Training School. This was pleasant duty and the school became a show place for visitors.

With the end of the war in Europe and more than double the points needed for release, release was again denied. He was told that the Commanding General had turned him down stating, "there is not another officer with either your experience or ability to replace you. With the program as set up for the next three or four months — you cannot be spared." He was commended for the superior and efficient job he was doing.

Toward the end of May in Kunming, Gen. Boatner, serving under Gen. Wedemeyer's Combat Commander, called Wetzel to his office. He told him that he had recently seen Gen. Stilwell, commanding the 10th U.S. Army, in the Philippines. That he was engaged in a plan for a large scale invasion of the China coast south of Canton. Little was known of communication routes between Liuchow and Canton. He told Boatner that he wanted Wetzel to personally make a reconnaissance of this route and submit a report. Boatner impressed upon him the highly secret nature of this mission and told him to arrange for personnel and equipment and wait for permission to leave. He equipped two jeeps and chose another officer, two EM and

his friend and interpreter Gentry for the mission.

On June 6th, he left with orders to make a road reconnaissance between Liuchow — Nanking and Pai Hoi. Road conditions were terrible with wide spread destruction by retreating Japanese and from the Chinese years earlier. It took three days for the trip to Nanking. They soon bogged down south of Nanking. Abandoning the jeeps, they proceeded on foot. For ten days they moved from one Chinese guerilla group to another taking many pictures for his report showing the destruction that would take more thousands of laborers to repair that it had done to cause it.

They were successful in avoiding the Japanese and on the tenth day they came to the sea at Pai Hoi. They immediately stripped and luxuriated in the sea water. Wetzel recalled that no bath ever felt so good! They radioed Nanking that they were ready to be picked up and were soon back in Nanking. He worked on the report for a couple of days and went to sleep after sending it and the film to Kunming.

He was still in Nanking when the A Bomb was dropped and on that day got orders to report to Liuchow as Engineer Officer, Forward Echelon, Chinese Command.

While there and in a conference with three generals and a colonel of artillery about what to expect when he moved his troops toward Nanking, Col. Belcher burst into the room and yelled, "The war's over!" Everyone in the room was jumping and shouting except the artillery colonel who still wanted to know what to expect on the road to Nanking!

Two days later, Lt. Col. Wetzel was on a plane homeward bound.



The two hosts for the Mahoning Valley Basha's March dinner meeting "The Wearing of the Green," are the bartenders, Richard Mogg and Les Donald, at the Colonial Catering in Canfield, Ohio, March, 1989.

Ellen Vogelberger Photo

New Jersey Plans Party for Tenth

By Bill and Helen Specht

The Garden State Basha has been enjoying a very busy and very social year to date — hopping from various meeting places which they do on a monthly basis — sampling the tasty meals at exceptional cosmopolitan “eateries.”

The February meeting was a particularly notable one because the membership enjoyed the special hospitality extended to them by CBI member, Herb Fischer who is also in an executive capacity for the 94th Bomber Squadron Restaurant in Fairfield, New Jersey. On this particular day, the members were offered complimentary champagne, flowers for the female guests and a beautifully served, delicious meal. Drinks were sipped as members viewed the taking off and



Bill and Helen Specht, with backs of Angie and Bob Abrahms, at a restaurant in Fairfield, New Jersey. 94th Bomber Squadron.



New Jersey CBI member David Leich being “pinned” the China Medal by his wife.

landing of small crafts and helicopters and then they moved to a private dining room where a fire glowed in the raised fireplace. Through large picture windows, the guests then took in the brilliant sunset and as night fell — the flick-



Herb Fisher and wife Emily host the 94 Bomber Squadron in a February 1988 dinner meeting for the New Jersey Basha.

ering airport lights added a special treat.

All of this, in a replica of a World War One French farmhouse, obviously a greatly embellished farmhouse!!

China was on the agenda for March. The chef in the Cheng Tu Restaurant in Plainfield was lavishly complimented for his family style service and his platters of delectable shrimp, chicken and beef choices. The members more than ate their fill and quite a few left carrying “doggie bags.”

A meeting after this dinner was held at the home of Vice-Commander Bob Abrams. Plans were formulated for the 10th anniversary of the Garden State Basha in June 1988. The members were probably reluctant to get on the scale Monday morning because Bob and Angie Abrams also served a lovely spread of “goodies” guaranteed to add to the waistline!!

A May meeting will be held at the home of Bill Specht with at least 20 committee members driving from far points in New Jersey to finalize plans for what is certain to be a great 10th anniversary party.

The Last “Roundup”

April 11, 1946

New member Homer Venardos of Godfrey (IL) has loaned to SOUND-OFF the last copy of the India-Burma EX-CBI ROUNDUP appropriately entitled, “THE LAST ROUNDUP.” It was published April 11, 1946, and was succeeded by “THE CHOTA ROUNDUP” which started publishing in Calcutta, April 18, 1946, and was a smaller version of its predecessor. Jimmie Menutis, who found us at the Spring Board meeting in New

Orleans in May of 1987 was on the staff of both papers.

The LAST ROUNDUP contains a history of the war in CBI, operations which covered a 65-month period. Some of the highlights which this issue focused for the troops remaining in the Theater at that time may be of interest to SOUND-OFF readers and we will list below.

I-B Theater Peak Strength was in the month of March 1945 is itemized as follows: Theater troops, 18,060; SOS, 58,461; AAF, 73,009; XX Bomber, 15,915; ATC, 29,225; AACCS, 3,135; Misc. Atchd., 1,762; and Unassigned, 13,030. Total, 213,143.

Another breakdown shown was that of troops “Evacuated to ZI” (shipped home) for a seven month period the numbers were: Sept. 1945, 14,684; Oct. 1945, 50,986; Nov. 1945, 45,832; Dec. 1945, 40,092; Jan. 1946, 17,679; Feb. 1946, 12,301; Mar. 1946, 10,403. Totals: 191,977. This includes the 41,177 China Theater men evacuated through the I-B. To get a total of those who served in CBI in WW II it would be necessary to know how many men were rotated home with points, etc., during the war plus the number who flew home and shipped out of Shanghai. Even so, these are some figures to play with.

Missing and dead in I-B Theater were 901 in 1942-43; 4,506 in 1944; and 2,695 in 1945. No similar figures were shown for the China Theater.

Supplies to China peaked in the month of July 1945 and totaled 91,183 short tons. They were delivered: By Air, 73,682; By Road, 5,900; By Pipeline, 11,601.

ATC HIGHLIGHTS: From September 1, 1944 to August 31, 1945, the ATC carried 1,204,207 persons, flew 350,209,660 miles. ATC transported 515,598 net tons to China in 237,572 trips over the “Hump.” Airlifted 195,893 Chinese and U.S. troops, their battle equipment and their 4,400 pack animals. Evacuated 4,720 patients over 2,181,496 flight miles.

One page is devoted to British-American relationships and a sub-head of a story headlined “British Tommies Give Yanks the ‘Business’” reads “Say GI’s Here Talk Big, Spend Far Too Freely.” (Don’t let your wife see this.)

If interest is sufficient we’ll quote more items from this eleven-pages of print. The twelfth page is nothing but pin-ups — fully clothed.

4th Combat Cargo Group Establishes a Precedent

Compiled by Stan Miller
Old Pueblo Basha, Tucson, Arizona

Those of us who served in the CBI Theater know it has generally been ignored by WW II historians. This is a shame because some innovative tactics and methods were developed that have continued to prove themselves during subsequent periods of tension. One of these was the use of air-lift for logistic support of combat fighting units.

Even before "Combat Cargo" became a recognized terminology for this support, the 1st Air Commando Group air delivered the majority of materiel for General Wingate's second Chindit campaign and Merrill's Marauders recapture of the airfield at Myitkyina, Burma. The operation proving the viability and effectiveness of using air-lift to totally sustain rapidly advanced ground forces, however, was the campaign to recapture Burma by the British XIV Army. This continuous aerial supply action was conducted during the fall and winter of 1944-45 and the spring of 1945.

To accomplish this unheard of mission, the Combat Cargo Task Force was created. This Task Force was composed of American C-47 units, Canadian and Australian Dakota (C-47) aircraft and

the US 4th Combat Cargo Group. The 4th Group contained four squadrons, each assigned 25 Curtiss C-46 aircraft. These were the only C-46s in the Task Force. I was a member of the 13th Squadron in this 4th Group.

The C-46, depending on trade-off between fuel requirements and cargo load, could carry almost three times the payload weight of the C-47. The 4th Group's exploits and activities in contributing to the Japanese defeat in CBI are interesting enough to chronicle here. Some of these mostly unheralded accomplishments have yet to be equalled.

4th Group Activated

The 4th Group was activated at Syracuse AAB, NY, during June of 1944. Initial aircraft assigned was the Douglas C-47. About the time training was completed in the C-47s, the Group moved to Bowman Field at Louisville, KY, and converted to the larger C-46 aircraft. The Group deployed to CBI during November. An interesting note is that War Plans in Washington knew the unit's ultimate mission and destination at the time of its activation. The crews and other personnel, however, didn't find out until they were enroute to CBI and

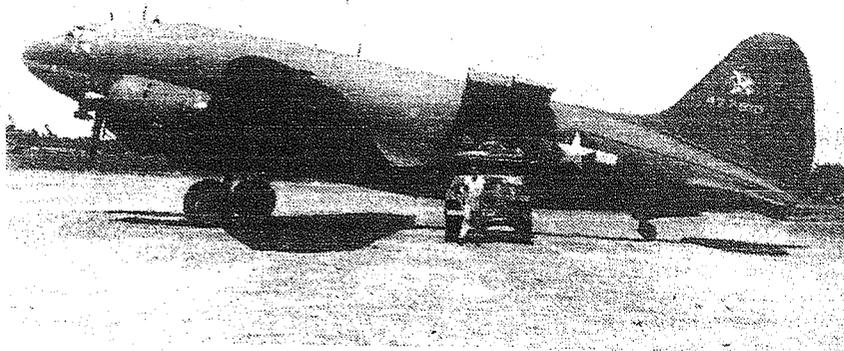
had passed the "point of no return" between West Palm Beach, FL, and Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico. Then they were allowed to open sealed, secret orders specifying the destination of Sylhet, India.

Upon arriving at Sylhet, initial flying consisted of air-lifting tar and other airport construction materials from the upper Assam Valley to recently recaptured Myitkyina in northern Burma. About the middle of December the Group was formally assigned to the Combat Cargo Task Force. The goal of the Task Force, a first in the annals of combat, was to provide the total logistic support of ground fighting forces; an army being completely dependent on air support for its continued existence.

4th Stockpiles Materiel

As a part of the Task Force, the 4th Group started moving supplies into Imphal, India, to develop stockpiles of materiel for the XIV Army's imminent drive south. Return trips consisted of transporting wounded and passengers to Calcutta or Comilla. Comilla, India, was the headquarters of the Task Force. Sylhet was not a British supply point so the air crews had to go first to Comilla to pick up the loads destined for Imphal. It was not a very efficient operation because of the wasted, dead-heading flying time required of the crews and planes.

Christmas 1945 was spent at Sylhet. To help celebrate the Season, four or five of us sharing quarters in the same building chipped in and bought a bottle of Scotch whiskey from our British compatriots. They were not as full as the Holiday spirit as we had hoped because after serious negotiation we settled for \$25.00. At that time a fifth of Scotch in the States was about \$5.00. On Christmas Eve, after sipping on our expensive Scotch for awhile, the single drop cord light in our room seemed to sway back and forth and a slight tremor was felt. We all looked at each other but nobody would mention this phenomenon because we



C-46 in Burma

didn't want the others to think we were affected that much by the whiskey. The next day we found out that there had been a slight earthquake?

At the end of December, the 4th Group moved to Agartala, a supply point south of Sylhet. During this period, the XIV Army had progressed south to the Kabaw Valley and supplies were air-lifted over the 10,000 foot mountains to dirt airstrips quickly hacked out of the jungle. When the XIV Army reached Kalewa, heavy Japanese resistance was encountered. The British forces prevailed and the bridge allowing access to the central Burmese plain was secured. The XIV Army's two Corps split at this time, the 33rd turned east, heading towards Mandalay, while the 4th Corps continued south following the Myittha River.

Dirt Strips Turn to Mud

January 1945 was a busy and eventful month for the 4th Group. Much effort went into smoothing out its scheduling and loading activities and refining forward area operational procedures. In early January there were three days of unseasonably heavy rains, water-logging the forward area dirt strips. Since the landing strips were unusable, the 4th Group started its first air-drops of supplies. The C-46 was not impressive as a bundle dropping aircraft even though several records were established in the tonnage dropped on one pass. (Subsequently, C-119s and C-130s have far exceeded any tonnage dropped by the C-46s.) During this period, both day and night drop missions were accomplished.

The Japanese quickly figured out the number of passes a plane would make to drop its total load. During these passes, the Japanese in the jungle surrounding the drop zone would hold their fire. After the last pass, however, small arms fire was directed at the C-46s, resulting in occasional bullet holes being discovered. No planes or crews were lost. Our intelligence people surmised that the fire was held during the drop passes because the Japanese needed and hoped they could capture the supplies that were dropped.

The 33rd Corps, pushing southeast from Kalewa, secured the foothills and proceeded on towards Mandalay. We began rolling into dirt strips at Ye-U while nearby

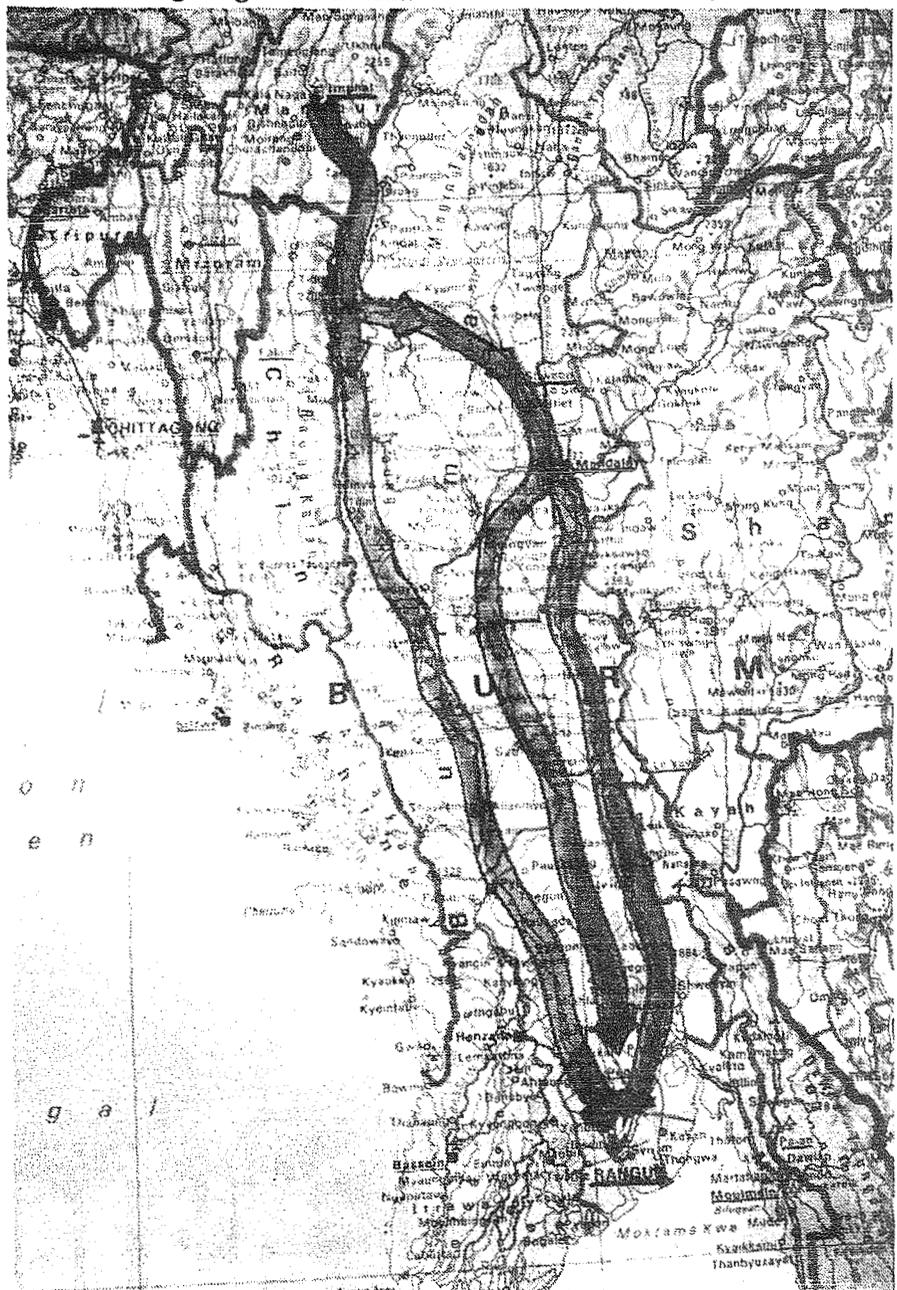
villages were still burning from the strafing of P-47s and Spitfires and 33rd Corps artillery fire. Beyond Ye-U, capturing Shewbo was the next successful operation of the 33rd Corps. Shewbo was on the main north-south railroad and highway and the 4th Group used the strip there for a longer period.

Move to Chittagong

At the end of January, the 4th Group moved from Agartala to Chittagong, India. Chittagong, a large cosmopolitan city on the Bay of Bengal was a major port, rail and highway terminus. This move was accomplished without reduction of the cargo flights to Burma.

The day we moved, I took a load from Agartala to Burma, returning to our new location at Chittagong. All of us crew members carried our personal belongings in the C-46 belly compartment so we were ready to set up "housekeeping" when we finished our day's flying.

During early February, the Task Force was supplying the 4th Corps as it moved south with Kan on the Myittha River being a major resupply point; and the 33rd Corps further east at a constantly changing set of dirt strips. Some of these quickly developed airfields were in use less than a couple of weeks. On one of my missions to a



24th Army's Routes in Burma

forward dirt strip, a wing flap follow-up cable broke during the landing sequence. With the broken cable, the left wing flaps would not retract, grounding the plane. It was going to be the next day before another plane could bring in the required repair parts.

The British Army forces offered us a place to stay with them but someone had to stay with the plane for security reasons. After some discussion, we decided that all four of us crew members would stay with the plane. Part of the load we had hauled consisted of canned mutton stew (Ugh!). We appropriated a few cans of the stew to supplement our emergency 'K' rations. To heat our dinner stew, I drained some of the plane's gasoline, mixed it with some dirt which I then stacked up around the sides of the cans of stew. When I got ready to light the fire I noticed some local Burmese people watching from the high grasses just off the parking area. As I touched a match to the dirt and it burst into flame, there were many surprised looks and excited chatter among the Burmese. I felt I could have been their medicine man as long as my gasoline lasted! The fire effectively heated the stew and we did return to Chittagong the next day.

Field is Shelled

As the 33rd Corps moved closer to Mandalay, Shewbo became less important and Ondaw became a major supply point. Ondaw is north of Mandalay and was the first place the 4th Group encountered 105mm artillery shells hitting the field during off-loading operations. It took several weeks to neutralize these gun emplacements in the

hills along the west bank of the Irrawaddy River. No casualties resulted from this shelling.

During the latter part of February, the 4th Group went on an almost constant flying schedule. Copilots, radio operators and crew chiefs were rushed in from B-24, B-25 and P-47 units to help support the 20-hour daily operations. Some planes would return to Chittagong after the fourth trip of the day only one hour before they were to take-off on the next day's missions.

In the last week of February, the XIV Army's 4th Corps made a spectacular tank break-through to stand behind the Japanese lines at Meiktila. Now the Task Force, including the 4th Group had to routinely fly over and land behind enemy lines. Some ground fire was experienced during these missions but no crew injuries or aircraft losses occurred. The first field to be used behind the lines was operational for one week when the Japanese retook it. The Japanese wanted to re-group and increase the size of their forces in an attempt to smash the now isolated forces of the 4th Corps. They were unsuccessful.

Airstrip Overrun at Night

In the first week of March the main strip at Meiktila was opened. The Japanese usually overran the airstrip every night. The control tower and all other personnel withdrew before dusk to a perimeter of tanks a half mile west of the airfield. (Reminiscent of our wagon trains during the movement across the western plains.)

(To Be Continued Next Issue)



Members of the 1752nd and 1753rd Ordnance Supply & Maintenance Companies on the Jungle Queen to their mystery island.

Gene Zimmerman Photo

301st Service Group Holds Reunion

By Gene Zimmerman

Members of the 1752nd and 1753rd Ordnance Supply & Maintenance companies of the 301st Service Group had their sixth reunion in North Miami Beach, Florida, in May 1989. Hosts were Ben and Doris Friedman of Miami.

In addition to the hosts also attending were Al and Lilian Adamczyk, Norm and Nora Clisold, George and Vicky Daddona, Jim and Phyllis Davison, John and Frances Dobitsky, Art and Dottie Erdman, Harold and Della Fuchs, Zan and Roz Kaplan, Bern and Selma Lifschultz, George and Rosemary McGuire, Matt and Mary Milos, Howard and Marda Sackrider, Joe and Martha Silva, Lou and Marge Soloman, Sam and Autum Stoner, Gene and Sue Zimmerman and Bruce Whaley.

Four days of fun and excitement was in store for all persons who attended. A trip to the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, a great country estate, which has been occupied and redecorated over the past 400 years. One historical moment was Sept. 10, 1987, when President Reagan and Pope John Paul II met alone in the Renaissance Hall and addressed the world through the international media.

The second trip was by boat on the Jungle Queen to their mystery island out of Ft. Lauderdale for a fun-filled evening. An excellent meal was served and the entertainment was old-time vaudeville style. The last trip was an 18-hour trip by boat to Freeport in the Bahamas for a few short hours of sightseeing.

The next reunion has been set for May 1991 in Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

One sad note about our army family is that we have lost two members, John Dobitsky and Sam Stoner within a short period of time — 30 days.



C-46 Loading

4th Combat Cargo Group Establishes a Precedent

Compiled by Stan Miller
6860 E. Paseo Penoso
Tucson, AZ 85715

(In the Winter edition of SOUND-OFF, Stan Miller described how the 4th Combat Cargo Group was activated in Syracuse, NY, in June 1944; trained in C-47s, moved to Louisville, KY, where they converted to larger C-46s; flew to Sylhet, India, where they joined a task force of Canadians and Australians flying supplies to the British 14th Army which was retaking Burma from the Japanese who were offering heavy resistance. Last issue's account left the 4th Comcar landing at a strip at Meiktila which was overrun each night by the Japanese. All allied personnel retreated to a perimeter of tanks each night, swept the strip for mines each morning and another routine day at the office was resumed. — Ed.)

During this period, the first morning flights to Meiktila would check in with the control tower at Ondaw on the way south to see if the air strip had been cleared of land mines. Occasionally we landed there to wait for a "safe" field at Meiktila. Before the Japanese finally succeeded in closing the air strip during daylight hours, a number of C-46s off-loaded at Meiktila

during 75 and 105mm shells attacks on the field itself.

The advance of the 4th Corps of the XIV Army was stalled for a short time in the Meiktila area, but they did finally manage to secure the airfield. While they were stalled, the 4th Corps established a bridgehead on the river's east bank. The Japanese destroyed the bridges, effectively cutting off these advance forces. Our C-46s flew in Baily Bridging one night and by morning the bridge was erected and troops poured across to relieve the cut-off forces.

While the Japanese were busy in the Meiktila area, the 33rd Corps was successful in taking Mandalay. Within two weeks, five air strips were built of which three were retained as supply points for the 33rd Corps. All the 4th Group aircrews continued to make many daily trips and log long days of flying hours.

Cheap Thrill for Crew

Late one afternoon after our third trip, we headed our C-46 west into the setting sun enroute back to Chittagong. The plane was on auto pilot and all four of us crew members dozed off. When the fuel tank being used for the left engine

ran dry, the resulting engine backfires and aircraft yaw brought everyone wide awake. You never saw three sets of hands reach for fuel tank selector valves so fast. About the time the left engine came back, the right engine ran out of fuel. All of us stayed awake for the rest of the trip!

One interesting mission at this time was in support of the Chinese forces fighting northeast of Mandalay. Four of our C-46s were tasked to move U.S. Army personnel and four Bofors anti-aircraft guns to a remoted area where the Japanese were threatening to overrun a Chinese unit. The Bofors guns had proven very effective when firing white phosphorus shells horizontally into the jungle. The white phosphorus would scatter like shotgun pellets inflicting many burn casualties. The place we landed our C-46s was a large grassy meadow where an occasional tree had been removed. White flags marked the corners of the landing area. The operation made us feel like we were barnstorming in the early days of flying.

Burmese "Manufacture" Gems

April was our busiest month when the 4th Group logged the most flying hours and delivered the most cargo of any period during the Burma operation. Meiktila reopened and a strip was established further south at Myingyan. Both of these fields were put on a 24-hour operation. Frequently the runway lights would be inoperative which added an element of chance to the landings and take-offs. The lights would be out because the Burmese would take them for the colored lenses. They would break the glass into small pieces and melt it just enough so when it cooled, the pieces looked like small gems. Many of us unsuspecting crew members traded cigarettes and candy for these "rubies and opals."

The macadam road and more open terrain going south towards Rangoon greatly facilitated the XIV Army's advance. During a twelve-day period, when armored columns pushed south from Meiktila, the Japanese lost 3,500 men and much materiel. After 20 days, the XIV Army had covered 180 miles towards Rangoon. This rapid push increased the length of our flights from Chittagong and the total logged flying hours.

The 4th Group flew a total of 18,412:35 hours during April. Per-



The Author in his "Office"

sonally, during April, I logged 117:05 hours flying time. When loading, unloading and ground turnaround times are added, the result was some very long days. Considering the Group had about 90 or so planes at this time, each one had to average nearly 190 hours flying time during the month. Each plane also had down time for the required 50 and 100 hour inspections. The maintenance personnel did a superb job keeping the planes in the air. March was the second highest flying hour month which was 1200 hours less than April.

In early May, the last field to be opened specifically for Task Force use was at Toungoo, north of Rangoon. The route of the Japanese forces was almost complete. Except for a few strategic points, they were in full retreat. The two pincers of the 4th and 33rd Corps continued south cutting off all means of escape for the Japanese.

Paratroops Dropped

Another surprise for the Japanese occurred on May 2nd when Task Force planes dropped paratroops just south of Rangoon at Elephant Point.

As May came to an end, so did the requirement for round the clock support of the XIV Army. During the first eight days of June, the 4th Group did haul 5,192 tons of supplies, logging 3822:40 hours flying time. The 4th Group's support of the XIV Army ceased at this time.

Bailey Bridging Poor Cargo

Of all the priority items moved by the crews of the 4th Group, Bailey Bridging was probably the one most disliked by the air crews. It consisted of large preformed metal sections resembling huge erector set pieces and way too large to throw out if the plane lost an engine. Crew members would have had an impossible job getting back to the door if a bailout was required. We also hauled bombs, gasoline, food and all the myriad items required to support and maintain an army.

As the Burma war took its place in history, it marked a new phase in the annals of warfare. Its success had depended solely on airpower, and more specifically, that part of airpower known as Combat Cargo. It established for the future the viability of air logistic support for both static and fluid combat situations.

During the time the 4th Group supplied the British XIV Army, 465,302:55 flying hours were logged and 133,832.6 tons (267,665,200 pounds) of materiel and personnel was moved. A quote from an article about the 4th Combat Cargo Group in an official British publication, "Phoenix" published in Calcutta, dated June 16, 1945, states, "In the past twelve weeks, the 4th Group has doubled the tonnage carried by all other cargo groups and now hauls more in a day than could be moved to the front by trucks in a month."

The flying was accomplished day and night, many times in extremely adverse weather with minimal navigation facilities. Credit and many thanks must be given the British for their voice direction finding equipment. All of us called for a "DF Steer" on occasion. The 4th Group backup personnel did a marvelous job in keeping the planes flyable and in providing all the other support requirements. The aircrews delivered the loads, but it was the concerted effort of all personnel that made it possible. (The above information is from a 4th Combat Cargo Group Report, 4th CCG S2, 13 Sept. 1945.)

Move to Myitkyina

When the Burma campaign was finished, the 4th Combat Cargo Group moved from Chittagong to Myitkyina, Burma (a strip built from the material we had hauled in during the past December). We were assigned to the Air Transport Command and began flying the Hump. The Group retained its designation and command personnel but its flying hours and tonnage hauled is buried in the ATC

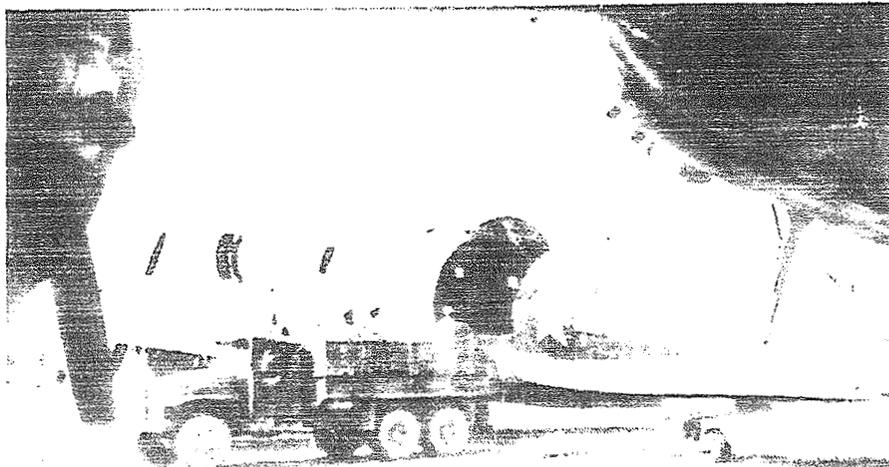
records.

The 4th Group aircrews continued to log a lot of flying hours in support of the ATC mission. During September 1945, I logged 101:45 hours flying the Hump. One mission we were a part of was the moving of Chinese troops from eastern Burma back to south China. Most of the troops were flown from Lashio, Burma, to Nanning, China. There were some interesting, if unpleasant incidents associated with this operation.

One Chinese soldier decided he wanted to go back to China ahead of his assigned flight. He climbed into the wheel well of a C-46's main landing gear. Even with the wheels retracted, the engine heat and fumes and the lack of oxygen, he survived the trip over the Hump to Nanning. When the landing gear was lowered, one of his hands became caught in the mechanism. When the plane came to a stop, the soldier was dangling, unable to free himself. Even though war action gunfire could be heard in the distance, the plane was jacked up, the wheels retracted and the soldier released. After all this effort, the Chinese Military Police marched him over to the side of the airport and shot him for deserting his unit.

Some of the C-47s also used in this operation were missing their paratroop jump doors. The story is told that enroute to China, a soldier would get up to look out the door and another one would push him out. The rest of the soldier passengers would laugh because the pushed out person would have to walk home!

The Chinese troops were con-



C-46 Unloading in Burma

sidered cargo and did not have parachutes. In the C-46, there was a crawl space under the cockpit with access doors in the cockpit and out under the right wing. We kept our crew parachutes in the cockpit and were briefed to bail out through this avenue of escape if needed. There had been reports of crews trying to bail out through the rear door but the Chinese would not let them.

After the war ended, some units of the 4th Group were moved to Shanghai, China. There they assisted in moving Chinese troops to areas in northern China where the Communists were beginning to rebel. In February, 1946, the 4th Combat Cargo Group was moved back to Panagarh, India, where it was ultimately inactivated.

4th Can Be Proud

All of us can be proud of our contributions to the successful end of WW II. The 4th Group has a special niche in the history of the war for its contributions to the total war effort. The Group was awarded three Battle Stars and individual crew members were awarded many Distinguished Flying Crosses and Air Medals for heroism in combat flying. The viability of Combat Cargo support as established by the Task Force and 4th Group has subsequently been proven again during the Berlin Airlift, the Korean War and during Vietnam.

PROSTATE PRIMER

What ALL Men Need to Know

By Marty Harper
National Surgeon General

If you are a man over 50 years old, which includes all you CBI veterans, read this and wince. Chances are at least 6 in 10 that your prostate is enlarged. About 12 million men over 40 suffer from painful prostate gland disorders. That is a lot of trouble from a chestnut sized gland with only one known function.

The prostate plays a supporting role in the male reproduction system. Its one job is to produce some lubricating fluid that transports sperm cells during ejaculation. The gland rests below the bladder and completely surrounds the urethra (tube which carries urine and semen out of the body).



National Surgeon General "Marty" Harper with her husband, Jim, carry the best wishes of Pennsylvania's Roof Garden Basha to Florida's Tampa Bay Basha in January. Windmuller Photo

Swelling of this gland obstructs the urinary tract. Mild symptoms are annoying. Severe symptoms could make you get up five times during the night and pose some major challenges during the day. There may be discomfort or pain when urinating, and sometimes inability to void the bladder.

There are three basic types of prostate disorder.

I. Inflammation of the Prostate. Called prostatitis, an inflammation can happen to men of all ages, from teenagers to senior citizens.

1) An infectious inflammation is caused by bacteria that find their way to the prostate. Infections in other parts of the body can send unfriendly bacteria to the prostate. Once they reach it they are often there to stay. A man who has a prostate infection is vulnerable to repeat flare-ups, although these can be well controlled so that a man can be symptom free.

2) Congestive inflammation is caused by fluid build up in the gland. Regular ejaculations clear up this problem.

II. Enlargement. Called benign prostatic hypertrophy, this is the most common prostate complaint from men of retirement age.

III. Cancer of the prostate. Few men under 40 ever have cancer of the prostate but for men age 55 to 74 it is the third highest cause of cancer deaths. By age 80 most men have the beginnings of it. Fortunately, if cancer is discovered early enough it is highly treatable. For this reason, experts recommend regular rectal exams, especially in men over 40.

Treatment. Biopsy to rule out cancer. If cancer cells are found there are at least three methods of treatment, and the choice depends on the condition (age) of the cells

and the area involved. For young cells "seeding" is usually recommended for a small area, and radiation for larger areas. Most oncologists (cancer specialists) resort to surgery as last choice.

In non-cancerous enlargements, prostatic massage releases excess fluid, and thus the heaviness and swelling. This relieves the symptoms but doesn't always cure the problem.

Experts in prostate research think men vulnerable to prostate trouble may have too much fat in their diet, and too little of the trace mineral zinc. Studies show a definite link between high cholesterol levels and enlarged prostates. Jonathon Wright, M.D., an expert in nutritional therapy from Kent, Washington, says his patients with enlarged prostate often find relief by taking supplements (zinc tablets) and eating foods containing essential fatty acids (poly-unsaturated fats) which can lower the fat levels in the blood. Sunflower, soy, and safflower oils, nuts, seeds and whole grains contain high concentrations of fatty acids.

A normal, healthy prostate contains more zinc than any other organ in a man's body, but researchers have learned that men who suffer from infectious prostatitis have a diminished amount or total absence of zinc in the prostate. Because of this, experts think the presence of zinc serves as a defense against prostate infection. Patients have been placed on a regimen of zinc tablets and zinc-rich foods with very positive results.

If you are afflicted, abide by your doctor's advice. There are now new and refined procedures in addition to the common transurethral surgery. A new drug called Proscan (Merck & Co.) is in final clinical trials. It shrinks the prostate with no unpleasant side effects and seems very promising.

The MESSAGE, men, is: have regular rectal examinations. Don't wait until you have distressing symptoms before you go for a prostate check-up.

Ladies, you don't need to be reminded to have annual Pap tests and mammograms.

(Monroe Greenberger, M.D., with his daughter, Mary Ellen Siegal, co-authored the book, "What Every Man Should Know About His Prostate." Walker & Co. 1983).

Atlanta Doctor Tells of CBI Experiences

By Elmer Feleki

Photos by Ralph Turner

The Atlanta Basha held its winter dinner meeting on Saturday, February 18, at the Sheraton Century Center Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia. The meeting was attended by 68 members and guests.

Atlanta Basha Commander Bob Peck introduced the following guests: Dan Carson, son of CBier Sam Carson, Jerry and Veronica Crockett, daughter and son-in-law of CBier Walter Slaughter, Mamie Jo Hunter, guest of Past Commander Clifford Blackman, and Dr. and Mrs. John Wolff and son Preston, guests of Service Officer Catherine Terrell. Dr. John Wolff is also the son of the guest speaker of the evening.

Commander Peck then introduced the newest member of the Atlanta Basha: Houston Endsley Jr., along with his wife Mary. Next, Peck announced that Past Commander Tony Szerkadakis and his wife Faye were celebrating their 45th wedding anniversary. Tony and Faye received a big round of applause in recognition of this important observance.

Commander Peck called on Past Commander George Hightower to introduce the guest speaker, Dr. Bernard Wolff, a native of Atlanta who had served as Chief Medical Officer in the CBI at Chabua General Hospital.

Wolff began his talk by stating that he entered the Army in 1943 via the Emory Medical Unit of which he was a founding member. He then had the opportunity to join the Charlotte Unit where no more than two medical officers were from the same city. Although he missed old friends, he found that morale was healthier in the Charlotte Unit. The personnel were



Atlanta Basha guest speaker, former Chabua Hospital chief medical officer, Dr. Bernard Wolff and Mrs. Wolff.

younger but had outstanding qualifications. After training with this unit for six months in Macon, Georgia, the group sailed from Long Beach, California, and reached Bombay, India two months later. They finally arrived at Chabua, Northern Assam where they replaced the 99th Station Hospital, which was moved to Kunming, China.

Wolff wrote his wife in Atlanta almost every day and she retained all his letters in chronological order. He has referred to these letters to write a book about his experiences. The book is being read for publication and he has been encouraged but has not yet been told when it will be published.

Wolff went on to relate several episodes from the book he has written. He said that when they first arrived in Chabua, the 10th Air Force was equipped with P-39 and P-40 fighter aircraft. Later on, these airplanes were replaced with P-47 and P-51 fighters. He noted that most of the fighter planes in their area were based at a jungle air strip near Mohanbari, a village about seven miles south of Chabua. Other strips were located at Dinjan and Sookerating.

As Wolff explained, the fighter pilots were well known to the hospital people since they were favorite dates for the nurses and because of the peculiar traits of their trade they were often patients. In the hospital they were found to have a high incidence of peptic ulcer, irritable bowel syndrome, and tension headaches. In addition, most pilots seemed to suffer from nightmares to some extent. "He generally starts tossing about, applying body English generously and soon begins shouting prayers, curses, and jargon, all intermingled. Usually he will end up sitting upright,

staring wildly around and, with awareness, sink back on the bed embarrassed, but thankful his dreams weren't true," said Wolff.

He continued to tell about a 1st lieutenant he remembered especially well. The lieutenant, who was from South Carolina, had volunteered for duty with the Royal Australian Air Force and had been stationed in Rangoon and Moulmein, Burma, before the Japs took over. When the United States entered the war, he transferred to the 10th Air Force.

The lieutenant was a patient in the 99th Station Hospital when Wolff's unit took over from them and became one of their earliest disposition problems. "In addition to having constant diarrhea from his irritable bowel syndrome, he also had recurring, severe tension headaches and, worst of all, had 15 attacks of malaria. His nightmares were truly outstanding. In them he frequently flew his Hawker Hurricane all over the place and was constantly besieged by Japanese Zeros and especially by fears of sabotage. He delivered long threats to the maintenance crews and accused the mess officer of putting poison in his food. He had been shot down in the Andaman Islands and picked up by a Burmese fishing boat. This scene was re-enacted in his nightmares also. He was such a disturbance on the ward that the corpsmen frequently roused him in the pitch and toss phase of his dreams. During the frequent bombing alerts he was always first in the slit trench and the last to leave. He was our introduction to the 'syndrome of the war weary' in World War II lingo and 'shell shocked' in World War I," said Wolff.

Wolff explained that problems of this sort became routine but no one knew the best course to take. They felt they would be deluged with war wearies if they sent him home and yet he certainly wasn't up to going back to duty, much less flying a fighter plane. Finally, he came down with malaria again and they sent him home on this basis.

Wolff commented that malaria, in itself, was a major dilemma when they first arrived. After sending the afflicted lieutenant home they were engulfed in malaria cases. The problem became so serious that they were forced to set a malaria attack limit before

(Continued on next page)



Left to right: Atlanta Basha members Charles Fram, Faye and Tony Serkadakis. The Serkadakis' were celebrating their 45th wedding anniversary.

(Continued from preceding page)

considering a ticket home. As he recollected, the minimum was 20 attacks. The whole matter was abruptly ended with the introduction of the daily mandatory prophylactic atabrine tablet. Malaria was no longer a serious threat to the health of the average service man.

Wolff recalled another vivid memory of a lieutenant from Texas. He said, "He was a tall, gangling, sandy-haired boy with an easy grace and smile. He had infectious hepatitis and was in the hospital at least six weeks. During this time he was up and about a great deal and helped the nurses 'run up the charts,' organized bridge and other games, and generally was a great asset to the ward. When the time for his discharge neared he seemed to become morose and withdrawn, totally unlike his old self. The change was so great that our psychiatrist was asked to see him a few times. He reported that the flyer had a mild anxiety depression that probably would heal with return to his own unit." The lieutenant himself agreed with this diagnosis and he was returned to active duty.

He went on to state that a few days later a P-51 was seen buzzing the nurses' quarters. The aircraft was then observed climbing out of sight but it soon reappeared in a rapid dive from which it never recovered. Upon arriving at the scene of the crash they found the body of the Texas lieutenant. Later, they were told by members of the squadron that the lieutenant went up to 50,000 feet and apparently blacked out. Wolff said "I've often wondered about that blackout!"

Wolff next explained some of the highlights of their periodic hunting trips in the area near Chabua. He told of how on one occasion they drove an ambulance into the jungle in search of the Samba deer which he estimated to weigh around a ton. They successfully bagged the creature and proceeded to dress it out, partially. Thereupon, they hauled it back to the hospital and turned it over to the mess officer who had it properly butchered. After a few days of curing, the meat was prepared and served for one of their meals. They found it to be quite tasty although it was the only fresh meat they ever ate at Chabua.

Wolff related another hunting story about a raging elephant they



Atlanta Basha members, left to right: Homer Cooper, Past Commander Floyd Whittle and Patricia Whittle.

once encountered. He described the excitement they experienced in their harried attempts to flee from the wild and threatening animal whose behavior was not typical of most elephants.

He concluded his presentation by telling about a trip they took to the vicinity of Sadiya, an outpost on the boundary of the unadministered territory bordering India just northeast of upper Assam. Sadiya was an important trading post for the wild tribes of Mishmi and Miri as well as Tibetans. He said that he traded with the Tibetans for a ceremonial sword which he still keeps in his home workshop.

Wolff described the Tibetans as very tall, of six or more feet, with dusky, light tan skin and greasy, slick, yet matted hair. Aside from their giant size, they had an even more outstanding characteristic that would make them recognizable anywhere. "From them emanated a most animal-like, rancid milk, garbage can aroma that seemed to pervade the air for several yards. It was an acrid heavy smell that was overbearing and forced one to breathe in short gasps and to hold your breath between times," said Wolff. He learned that it was largely due to a buckskin undergarment they wore next to the skin which was sewn on and worn until it disintegrated with use.

He said that the Mishmi and Miri were small people, less than five feet tall but the Mishmi men were well muscled and the women were doll-like in appearance.

Wolff related that they moved on through the jungle to clearings in the terrain where they could see tremendous snow-capped mountains towering above. After a leisurely lunch they began their long downhill walk back to Chabua. As he ended his talk, he said the trip to the remote area of outland was so pleasurable that the memories of those few days remain fresh and warm to the present time.

Following the talk, the basha commander thanked Dr. Wolff for his interesting narration and called upon Service Officer Catherine Terrell to make a report. Terrell reported that since the last meeting, two members passed away. They were Scott C. Chamblee and the Reverend Harold L. Turner. Following her report, Past Commander Jim Fletcher asked to take the floor to request volunteers to serve as pall bearers at funerals for deceased CBI veterans. There were several members who volunteered.

Commander Peck then announced that the next meeting will be held on May 20th, Armed Forces Day, at Columbus Georgia, with a visit to nearby Fort Benning included. This coming meeting will be arranged by Past Commander George Ward and his wife Gwen. Ward commented that General Stilwell's daughter-in-law plans to attend.



Elmer H. Carter is shown receiving his China War Memorial Medal from Max Stockman in Battle Creek, Michigan.

Letters

To the Editor:

I was with the 779th E.P.D. Co. in India, Burma and China. I received the Legion of Merit Medal and the China War Memorial Medal, nine campaign stars, Bronze Star, two battle stars.

I was separated from my outfit in Yannyi, China. I went into Kunming on the mail plane and I was "missing in action" over five months. I finally found them behind the cemetery in Kunming. I was relieved from duty because of a spine injury and had also contracted malaria. I just learned that my company had returned to India for a combat refresher course while I was in Beijing. When the war was over, they went home and I went to Kunming again.

Elmer H. Carter
P.O. Box 2142
Battle Creek, MI 49016

684th AAA MG Bty (Separate) (Airborne)

By Harold G. Russell, Jr.
Box 226, Gwynn, VA 23066

(The following unit history is about one verse short of the Bible in length, but, in our judgement, the experiences recounted were very interesting and, in many ways, so similar to those of most readers that we felt many would find the account very nostalgic reading. We will continue from issue to issue until concluded. - Ed.)

* * * * *

The 684th AAA Battery was activated at Camp Stewart, Georgia, during September 1942. It was one of six (682nd, 683rd, 684th, 685th, 686th and 687th) activated at the same time. The officers were volunteers, young, and for the most part, unmarried. For myself, I graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1941, and had earned an ROTC Commission. After going through Anti-aircraft Artillery School at Fort Monroe, Virginia, I was assigned to the 204th AAA Regiment at Camp Hulen, Texas, where I was on December 7th.

The 204th moved to San Diego in mid-December. In mid-July 1942, I was promoted to First Lieutenant and transferred to a 40mm gun battery at Fort Bliss, Texas. From there, I attended the 40mm Bofors school at Camp Davis, North Carolina. I was then assigned to Camp Stewart, Georgia, as Battery Commander, Headquarters Battery of a 40mm Gun Battalion.

The problem was that there were three captains, each of whom had understood that he would become Battalion Executive Officer (Major). That was a situation that no junior first lieutenant would like to be in. As soon as the call went out for volunteers for the AAA Batteries, I did.

The enlisted men came from several sources. Part from a deactivated 40mm gun battalion; part from men who had previously served as gun crews on freighters, many who had life-boat time; and the rest direct from basic training. At the time of activation, we had our shipping APO numbers, though we had no idea where we were going. The officers of the 684th



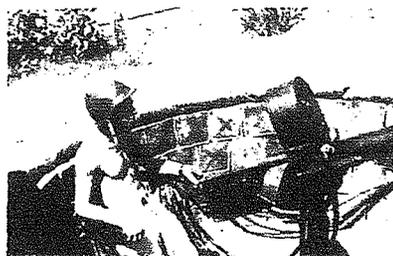
The Author Then

were: Capt. Clyde Adkins, myself, 1st Lt. Charles Largay, 1st Lt. Charles Zerzan, and 2nd Lt. Alexander Kevorkian. There were 85 enlisted men including one First Sergeant, one Battery Clerk, three Platoon Sergeants, three Medics, one Armorer, one Supply Sergeant, one Mess Sergeant, and two Cooks. The 684th was equipped with 12 water-cooled .50 caliber machine guns, two Jeeps, and two Jeep trailers.

Training Continued

At Camp Stewart, we organized, drew our equipment, learned about loading C-47 troop carrier aircraft, fired on anti-aircraft and anti-mechanized ranges, took long marches (which I ducked whenever I could) trained hard, and played hard. In the evenings, many visited the Officers Club where we held "Prayer Meetings" (gathering around a piano and singing risqué "barracks ballads."

I remember one practice maneuver where the 684th flew to an airfield in South Carolina and set up our anti-aircraft defense. We discovered a number of wild pigs running loose. Several were "tommy-gunned." Capt. Adkins



Corporal Kobani on
.50 Caliber Machine Gun

sent a party into town and expended some Battery funds for beer. We had an excellent Battery barbeque that evening. Breakfast the next morning was not so good. All we had to eat was cold canned salmon. The flight back to Hunter Air Field (serving Camp Stewart) was very bumpy. It was one of the few times that I almost became airsick.

After a formal inspection, we were able to get rid of one misfit. In mid-November, there was an Officer's Call. A Major, from Camp Stewart Plans and Training, told us in his thick Arkansas drawl, that we were ready. He knew where we were going, but he couldn't tell us. We wouldn't like it, but we would never forget it. How right he was!

The six separate AAA Batteries loaded up a troop train, and we set out for the West Coast. We later learned that the Officer's Club at Camp Stewart burned down the night after we left.



Lt. Zerzan

In New Orleans, Lt. Zerzan and Staff Sgt. Ramsey got off the train to buy cigarettes and candy for the men, and got left behind. They caught up with us in about 50 miles down the road as they were fortunate in being able to catch a fast train which overhauled us.

I was Train Mess Officer, and was able to arrange for a Thanksgiving turkey dinner with all the trimmings to be served to the men when we passed through El Paso, courtesy of Fort Bliss. On to Camp Stoneman, California, where we rechecked all of our gear, got all kinds of shots (Why don't they equip our arms with Zerk fittings?), and waited for the word from the San Francisco Port of Embarkation.

We Board Troopship

On 8 December 1942, we sailed from San Francisco on the Ile De France. (See Fall 1993 issue, CBIVA "Sound-Off" article *Troopship Ile De France* by Hugo Schramm; and Winter issue letter, *More on the Ile De France*, by

Frank Hofstatter). Capt. Adkins was able to get one of our machine guns mounted on deck. This permitted our men to get more deck time than would otherwise have been permitted. In the evenings, many of us who had participated in the Camp Stewart "Prayer Meetings" continued the practice on deck.

I recall that we passed through some heavy weather between New Zealand and Australia. The Ile De France took green water over the bow. I escaped the sea-sickness which overtook all too many. I also recall the comfort afforded by a cruiser and destroyer which escorted us as we passed south of the Dutch East Indies. We arrived in Bombay on 15 January 1943.

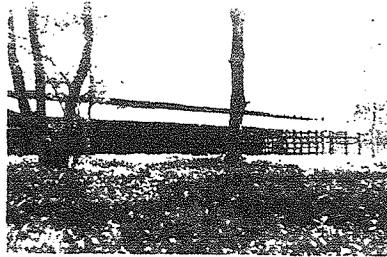
The six AAA Batteries embarked on a troop train for the trip across India. It was a slow trip, and, as I recall, took over a week. We had the option of keeping the windows closed and sweltering, or opening the windows and breathing the coal smoke from the engine. Kitchen field ranges were set up in a freight car. The train stopped at meal time and we lined up and received our chow. Somewhere near Calcutta, the 686th and the 687th AAA Batteries were detached and sent to the Dacca area. The rest of us continued toward Assam.

At some point, we left the train and boarded a river boat and steamed north on the Brahmaputra River. Our next stop was at a British-operated camp where we left the boat and transferred to a narrow gauge railway for the rest of the trip to Northeastern Assam. At this camp we were warned to keep our mess kits covered as we passed through the chow line. Those who disregarded the warning were sorry. Birds (Kites?) dive-bombed and grabbed food right out of your kit.

The AAA Batteries were assigned to Forward Echelon, 10th Air Force, Headquartered at Dinjan. The staff officer for Anti-aircraft Artillery (Major Meigs) made our assignments, allotted spaces at schools and rest camps, reviewed our reports, and helped us as best he could. There was no intermediate level of command. This was both a blessing and a hardship. We could demote and promote as necessary, cut individual travel orders, establish standards for wearing uniforms, set training schedules, and use our

own ingenuity.

In fact, we could do everything a separate Battalion or Regiment could do. Additionally, we were seldom burdened with staff visits and inspections. On the other hand, a Captain's request for supplies and services did not carry the weight that would be given a request from a Major or Colonel. And - there was no room for officer promotion.



Tea Drying Shed

Chabua Assignment

The 684th AAA Battery was assigned to Chabua where we joined the 706th AAA Battery in the protection of the airfield. Chabua was located at the edge of several tea plantations. Tall trees with fine leaves shaded the tea bushes beneath. Indian women (usually with a baby on her back and one in her belly) picked tea leaves and carried baskets full to multi-storied drying sheds. These sheds were open and harbored all kinds of birds and other wild life. I guess that is why we use boiling water to brew tea!

We were quartered at the Chabua Polo Grounds for a few days, and then set up a tent camp closer to the airfield while bashas were built for us. Malaria was of concern and Battery orders were that all personnel were to sleep under mosquito bars. An inspection revealed that some did not, and several gun Corporals were demoted.

The 706th had been at Chabua for some time and had undergone a Jap strafing attack. (The function of the AAA Batteries was defense against strafing.) On 23 February 1943, while we were still in the tent camp, we were bombed by a high flying aircraft - much too high for us to do any good. One officer of the 706th was killed, but aside from that, little damage was done to the field or aircraft caught on the ground. On March 23rd, shortly after midnight, we were hit by a severe rain and hailstorm. We had one tent blown down, and the 706th had three tents and five

bashas blown over. Then, on April 23rd, an aircraft crashed on landing and wiped out five other parked planes. From then on, we wondered what the 23rd of each month would bring forth.

Finally, our bashas were complete and we moved in. Capt. Adkins was very concerned about the proximity of the camp of the workmen who built our bashas. It was located across a rice paddy about 25 feet from our quarters, and could be a source of malaria and theft. He contacted the Burmese who was the contractor, and who promised to have camp removed within two days. The two days came and passed, and the camp was still there. The contractor was contacted again, and he promised that the men would be gone the next day. They weren't. The contractor was again contacted and told that unless the men were gone by afternoon, they would be burned out. That afternoon, they were still there, so we got some gasoline and torches and burned them out. We posted a double guard that night, but there was no trouble.

Loved That Food

The food at Chabua was supplied by the British, and was terrible. We could count on canned corned beef six meals a week with corned mutton for the seventh. About 40 percent of the eggs, when we got them, were bad. Bread was sour, and sugar was coarse, but there was plenty of tea and rice. One item I did like was canned soya flour sausages. One day we received a truck load of live ducks, and we had roast duck for dinner. We bought chickens and raised them for eggs and food, and we also bought and raised a few pigs. There was plenty of garbage for them to eat. The night after the pigs were gelded, some men had a special treat, sweetbreads.

We had quite a problem keeping the jackals away from the chickens and pigs. Another treat that we had was frog legs. There was a lot of large frogs around, and the men giggered them at night. The legs were breaded and deep fried. They tasted just like chicken. One culinary effort was an utter disaster. Mangos, sliced, had the consistency of peaches. Would not a mango pie be a treat? It was not. More garbage for the pigs. And, then came SPAM! It was good when

compared to the corned beef and corned mutton that we had been eating, but weeks, months, years of Spam was too much. I very much doubt that any CBI veteran has eaten one mouthful of Spam since the war.

For a change of pace, we would occasionally eat in the Chinese restaurant in Dibrugahr. The food was pretty good, and the place appeared to be clean. We occasionally saw a movie in the Dibrugahr theater, but most of movie watching, if you could stand the odor given off by some of our garlic-eating Chinese guests, was at the Chabua Polo Grounds recreation building.



Dibrugahr Street Scene

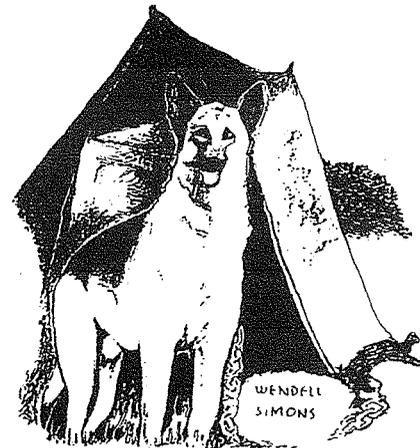
Dibrugahr Visited

Dibrugahr was our closest town. The road to Dibrugahr had, at one time been black-topped, but the military traffic had reduced the road to a series of potholes. Ve-

hicle springs were in high demand. Parts of Dibrugahr were neat, clean, and flowered. There was a movie theater and an Angelican Church. Other parts were filthy, and smelled to high heaven. Cow dung was plastered to walls of huts. When dried it was used as fuel.

There were many strange sights. There was a truly holy roller there. He wouldn't walk, though he had no visible affliction. He rolled down the street through cow dung and everything, singing and shouting all the time. He was accompanied by a woman who held out a begging palm. There was a woman who I saw several times whose actions made me believe that she was crazy. She went naked to the shopkeepers of the bazaar and they gave her corn and other grains. Instead of eating them, she smeared them on her face. Looked filthy. There was a beggar with a horrible looking stump of a leg always asking for "bakshish," the most frequently used word in the Indian language. Occasionally one saw a fakir. The one I saw in Dibrugahr had long kinky hair, a burlap jacket, bells, and a snakelike curved stick. His body was smeared with ashes and mud.

(To Be Continued)



training area for Chinese troops he was preparing for the upcoming retaking of Burma. Not just those troops who had stumbled out of Burma with him in the debacle of '42 but thousands more flown in from China for proper care and training. This area was for the housing and training of these Chinese and their American instructors. Those of us of far less import were relegated to two tent cities dubbed "Bulltown" and "Cowville" - the wrong side of the tracks.

Where the Chinese had buildings in which to prepare their food and eat it, the Americans had kitchen tents and, if lucky, a tarp-roofed dining area. If not lucky, find a convenient stump, boulder, or your own tin hat as a seat. This early day affirmative action included not only facilities but vehicles as well for it seemed to us there was a jeep for every two Chinese officers, a weapons carrier for every four non-coms and a 6 X 6 for every squad of privates. We traveled the vicinity by shank's mare. This is no attempt to denigrate the Chinese ping but it did seem to us that if all soldiers were created equal there were some that were a helluva lot more equal than others. Possibly the reason (at Ramgarh at least) those of the Chinese viewpoint leaned toward Stilwell's nick name of "Uncle Joe" while we not anointed were more inclined to accept the monicker, "Vinegar Joe" - on a day we felt kindly disposed.

Traveling through the main section of Ramgarh and on through Bulltown, the first tent city annex, we arrived at Cowville, furthest removed from the center of activities and housing "G" Company, to which we'd been assigned. Once we reported in, we were assigned an

First Impressions - Ramgarh

By Richard J. Zika (Central Michigan Basha)

Illustrated by Wendell A. Simons (Atlanta Basha)

On 16 July, 1944, 24 of us from War Dog Det.-CBI were ordered to leave Kanchrapara and join the Infantry components at Ramgarh in training for the Second Galahad: later to be designated the 475th Infantry.

Our group was to travel the 183 miles by motor convoy and both men and dogs (the dogs in their crates) to ride in 6X6s. Oddly enough there were also three command cars in the convoy and, with their comfy leather upholstery, all riding empty. Once the dogs had been loaded aboard, the honest, law-abiding citizenry of our group boarded the trucks designated for troops and prepared to endure the jolting, kidney-killing journey coming up.

All but a few. These conniving opportunists delayed loading until suddenly it seemed there was not enough room in the trucks and they "volunteered" to ride in the

command cars. Once this was discovered by the others, the vile language and insults that arose were as to dissuade those of lesser stamina but volunteers must remain steadfast of purpose so we weathered the storm with grace, dignity, and the well known one-fingered salute. It's not always easy being a hero!

Ramgarh was a small town in Bihar province and on the map only because the Indian Government had built a four square mile POW camp on the rolling, sun-swept plain nearby. Consisting of row after row of long, low adobe buildings, it very much resembled some stateside military posts and had us momentarily thinking we were moving up in the world and would once again be quartered in buildings. Momentarily.

In truth, the entire area had been turned over to General Joseph Stilwell to be used as a

area on the very outskirts of this tent city and if Bulltown and Cowville were indeed on the wrong side of the tracks we were in the position of not even being able to hear the train.

Our area was on a surface of cement-like clay with a gentle incline leading to one of the then dry gullies which in the rainy season would become raging tributaries to the Nadee River, possibly a half mile distant. But the monsoons, though imminent, had not yet arrived in force and in the ending of the dry season the sun was ferocious in its furnace-like intensity. The entire area was quite barren of trees and only lightly covered with a sparse grass not quite capable of holding down the dust raised with each step. Under such conditions, our dogs desperately needed shelter and it was obtained by housing each dog house (crate) in an individual pyramid tent with sides rolled up. Though they were as extremely hot as our own tents they held off the direct rays of the sun and our dogs realized the value of daytime siestas, holding exertion to a minimum until the cool of evening.

It is axiomatic that an army travels on its stomach but the kitchen tent we had been assigned had either never heard of this or were deliberately flaunting it for we soon learned the food was on a par with the starvation days aboard the liberty ship when coming over. Happily, we this time had alternatives and the haggling with local vendors for fruit, eggs, chickens, and anything else safe to eat never ceased.

Another escape was due to a fortuitous windfall garnered by Lt. Miller, our veterinarian. Somehow, he had been able to requisition an entire truckload of Eagle Brand condensed milk as an additive to our dog's diets. Eagle Brand, as you might know, is so condensed that before diluting it is more like a very thick, sweet syrup than anything else.

In conjunction with this, at Ramgarh, we were fortunate in being able to buy up to a case of beer a month and it was up to us whether to ration it out or go on a spree. Most of us opted the ration route and when breakfast became just too unbearable we learned that a can of Eagle Brand, eaten with a spoon and washed down with a warm beer was by far the

better option. Besides which it was also more nutritious.

There might be some who'd object on the grounds that we were stealing from our dogs but we did try to make amends by bringing them the untouched meals we'd received. Being intelligent animals they'd turn up their noses at the stuff the same as we and so much for the expertise of "G" Company's kitchen tent.

Like everywhere else in CBI, Ramgarh had its own unique and indelible first impressions.

The Stolen Ring Caper

By Sam J. Niver

In 1944, as a staff sergeant in the chemical warfare service, I was temporarily stationed at Ondal, India, waiting for reassignment. I shared a room with another sergeant, C. D. Finch, at the end of one of the barracks. It was a small room, barely big enough for two bunks and a writing table, but being lazy as most GIs are, we hired a little native Indian boy to keep our tiny place clean and run errands for us.

We paid him a few annas daily (less than a dollar), for this service. He was extremely polite, as were most of the Indian people, and very conscientious about his duties. He took his work seriously and responded to our orders with alacrity and good humor. To this day, I don't remember his name although it was probably Abdul which we used as a nickname for most boys.

Among the few personal possessions I had carried overseas, was a high school class ring given to me by my girl friend at the time. It meant only that we were "going steady," in the vernacular of that era. Along the way, I had broken the band of the ring and could no longer wear it. As a result, I kept it in a small box along with a notebook, writing materials and a few odds and ends. I frequently dumped out the box when I sat down to write a letter.

On just one such an occasion, I noticed that the ring was missing. A hasty search failed to turn it up and I could only conclude that it had been stolen. Since Sgt. Finch was much bigger than I, and a Texan to boot, I couldn't very well accuse him of the theft. That left our little gofer as the scapegoat and I promptly fired him. That proved to be a major mistake.

The very next morning we were roused early by a raucous procession wending its way up the road toward our barracks. From the wailing and crying we took it to be a funeral parade, not an unusual sight in India. In this case we were dead wrong as the strange line of white-robed natives headed straight for our building and came to a stop directly in front of me. Our erstwhile cleaning boy led the group and pointed me out to the others who promptly fell on their knees, clasped their hands and prayed. Then, one after another, they rose, came forward and knelt again to kiss my feet!

With scores of GIs watching and gleefully enjoying my discomfort and embarrassment, I finally determined that the visitors were pleading the boy's innocence. His mother, father, assorted aunts and uncles, led by their priest or guru, as well as the headman of the village, all extolled his virtues and pleaded for his reinstatement. How could anyone, let alone a lowly GI, refuse such eloquent appeals? Not me! I rehired the lad on the spot just to get rid of that tearful, sobbing entourage.

But the mortification didn't end there. A few days later I found the ring where it had fallen into a crevice in the wall beside our table. The boy got a fat raise in pay, of course. After all, we hadn't realized the economy of the whole village depended on his career.



New Sliney Basha members Bill and Pat Zimmerman at the April 10 meeting held at Martinelli's Steak House. Bill was a sergeant with the 502nd M.P. Bn which controlled traffic on the Ledo Road. He patrolled as far as Shadazup during his 15 months overseas. Bill was another USS Hermitage voyager. Syd Wilson Photo

684th AAA MG Bty (Separate) (Airborne)

By Harold G. Russell, Jr.
Box 226, Gwynn, VA 23066

(In the first installment of this saga, the 684th had undergone its training period at Camp Stewart, GA, shipped out from San Francisco 8 December 1942 on the Ile de France and arrived in Bombay 15 January 1943. Following the weeklong troop train tour of India, the battery made it to Calcutta and from there to Chabua where they set up their defenses and established their quarters. - Ed.)

PART TWO

PX items such as razor blades, tooth paste, cigarettes, cigarette lighters, flints, and pipe tobacco, (I am a confirmed pipe smoker) were in very short supply. You did without (or shredded cigarettes) until packages from home arrived, four months later.

Mail also was slow. I ran a little experiment. I sent three letters home, one air mail, one regular mail, and one by V-mail. The air mail letter arrived first followed shortly by the regular mail. The V-mail letter came through one week later. Stamps were hard to come by. Eventually we were given Franking privileges, and stamps were no longer necessary. Because of the lousy food, the shortage supplies, the want of PX goods, and slow mail, it was of no wonder that the saying developed, "The Japs are fifth on our list."

The weather in India and Burma varied. In winter, it was not too bad. The monsoons were a different story. Hot and humid with frequent downpours. It would pour cats and dogs and within an hour there would be dust on the roads. Letter writing was done in the early morning when it was cooler, but even then you would place a piece of paper under your writing arm so that the ink would not smear. Mold developed everywhere: on shoes, belts, and jackets; in ears, and between the toes. One of our officers got a good case of "jock itch." He felt that ultraviolet treatment might help, so on a clear day, he sun bathed on a cot. He forgot that the ultraviolet treatment would also cause sunburn. He sure did walk funny for the next few days!



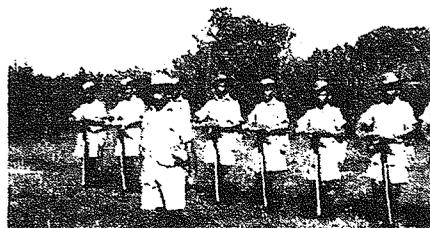
Captain Collard

As noted, the organic transportation of the 684th was two jeeps and jeep trailers. We needed more. I'm not saying that our men were a bunch of thieves, but they did have a knack for "moonlight requisitioning." There were a couple of traditional trucks around the Battery, but when British lorries started to show up at our gun positions, we put our feet down and most of the trucks were returned.

Gurkha Basketball

The infantry defense of Chabua was provided by a Company of the Mahindra Dal (A Regiment of the Gurkhas from the Kingdom of Nepal). Through the British liaison officers (Capt. Collard and Capt. Nicholson), we got to know the Subahdar and some of his men quite well. These fearless soldiers are very clean, industrious, and friendly when they are on your side. I still have a gift kukri given me by them. Capt. Collard was an interesting person. Only 23 years old, he had been wounded three times. He had been at Dunkerque, Tobruk, and Burma. We saw quite a bit of Capt. Collard - poker games and dinner exchanges.

We arranged for a basketball game between the 684th and the



Gurkhas ready
for Kukris inspection

Gurkhas. The only stipulation was that the Gurkhas left their kukris at home.

While we were at Chabua, the Japanese were advancing on Fort Hertz (Putao) in Burma. It occurred to me that it was possible that the 684th might be called upon to cover an evacuation from Fort Hertz. It might be wise to look over the place. I hooked a ride on a C-47, flew over some snow covered mountains, landed, made some sketches, and returned. Fort Hertz was not much. Just a dirt strip with a few bashas. The C-47, which took off from Fort Hertz just ahead of us, must have attempted a straight climb over the mountains instead of circling to gain altitude. It crashed. It was an awesome sight seeing the wrecked plane and the oily black smoke against the crystal white snow. We circled several times, but saw no evidence of life, so we returned to Chabua. (None of the AAA Batteries were sent into Fort Hertz).



Rest camp at Shillong

I was sent to a five-day, British operated, Security Course at Gauhati. I found that there had been a mix-up on dates and I had arrived a week too early. I went up to the rest camp at Shillong to pass the time. Shillong is at 6000 feet on the Khasi Hills. The air is cool and dry as compared to the very hot and humid weather of the Brahmaputra valley. Some pine trees, neat lawns, and lots of flowers. There were horse races on Sunday, and I am quite sure that the same horses that raced on Sunday could be seen pulling wagons during the week. Shillong is also close to Cherrapunji. When the warm, moisture laden monsoon winds blow against the Khasi Hills; the air is forced upward, the moisture condenses and it rains. The annual rainfall at Cherrapunji exceeds 450 inches, making it the wettest place on earth.

The day I visited Cherrapunji

was clear and I could see for miles across the Bengal delta. My stay at Shillong ended all too soon, and it was back to Gauhati.

The school had excellent instructors, and dealt with British-Indian matters (biased), as well as experiences that the British had had fighting the Japanese. Life at the school was different. We were awakened at 0745 by a bearer lifting the mosquito bar and serving a mug of hot tea. After a full breakfast at 0945 classes began. After lunch, classes ran until tea time at 1630. Dinner was served at 2000. This was a life-style foreign to American soldiers.

Drunken Tales

Now begins the alcoholic tales told to me of a lieutenant from a Highland Regiment, whom I first met at Shillong. The scene is Edinburgh. The lieutenant was on one of his evening drunks. On his way to another "spot" he was dumped into the back seat of a taxi where he passed into a drunken oblivion.

Somewhere along the way, he roused enough to discern a place he knew. He said, "Here's where I get out," and did so while the taxi was going 30 miles per hour. They gathered him up and took him to a hospital where it took six weeks to piece him together again.

He was to return to his Battalion in Ireland but, as usual, he was "stewed." He wandered down to the docks and was carried aboard ship. He continued to drink as long as his supply lasted. Then it soaked through his soused head that the trip was taking longer than usual. When he sobered up enough to ask questions, he found that the ship was pulling into Cape Town, South Africa, on the way to India. He did his best to explain his way out, but no soap. A member of a cadre for India was very ill and was taken off the ship at Cape Town. The Lieutenant was put in his place to continue to India.

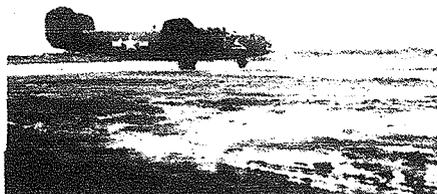
The Lieutenant got off the ship at Cape Town to replenish his liquor supply. He was so intent on his job that he forgot to notice where his ship was tied up. It so happened that right next to his ship was a sister ship. The Lieutenant had secured enough liquor to last him to India, and had drunk enough to get him half way there. He staggered up the gangplank and into cabin 10, which was the right number, but someone else had had

the audacity to move in with his baggage and had gone to bed. The Lieutenant threw the intruder and his baggage into the passageway, locked the door and went to bed.

In the morning, he discovered his mistake, sneaked back to his own ship and hid until his ship was clear of Cape Town.

The Lieutenant completed a Battle Indoctrination (Commando) course in India and earned a few days rest at Shillong. After such work a little indulgence was indicated. Well, he passed out in the club right in front of the General and his wife who made some remark about "intoxicated officers." The Lieutenant let it be known that some women he knew, talked too much; whereupon a Major escorted him outside. He went without any trouble, but later returned walking through a plate glass window on the way in.

I met the Lieutenant again at Gauhati. He came into the officers mess for breakfast with a quart of gin under one arm and a quart of lemon squash under the other. They were his breakfast. Then he got banged up a good deal when he fell down a flight of 15 stairs.



China-based B-24

A Close Encounter

In addition to being a shipping point for food and material going to China, Chabua was an airfield where China based B-24 bombers received rear echelon maintenance, such as engine changes. When we saw a B-24 "slow-timing" an engine on the ground, we could be pretty sure that in a short time it would take off for an engine check.

Such a flight was an invitation to hook a ride. Now I loved to fly. While at Fort Monroe, Virginia, I would go over to Langley Airfield, get a ride on anything available, even an old B-18A. When in San Diego, I rode in primary trainers and in Navy SNJ's.

One day I saw a B-24 "slow-

timing" an engine and started to make arrangements for a ride. The plane was parked in the middle of a huge pool of standing water. I said, "To heck with it," and went on my way. That afternoon the B-24 took off with a complement of passengers. During the flight, the pilot dropped down and "buzzed" the Brahmaputra River. There was a cable operated ferry that crossed the river. The plane hit the cable. The belly of the plane was ripped out along with four of the passengers (who were never found.)

Somehow the pilot managed to keep the plane airborne and managed to return to Chabua. Wheels were lowered by hand but there were no brakes. The plane got to the shoulder of the runway where there were small ditches which drained water from the runway. The plane hit one of the ditches and buckled nose down. Those passengers in the nose (where they were not supposed to be during a landing) had to be cut out.

The pilot took off and hid in the tea patches for several days before he turned himself in. He was later court martialed and sent back to the States. My ardor for flying cooled considerably after this incident, and I flew only on business. No more joy-riding!

We had a casualty. Pvt. M_____ was cutting out the end of a 55 gallon drum with a cold chisel and was doing so without safety glasses. A piece of steel flew and put out an eye. The real strange thing about it was that during World War I, his father had been pounding on a steel drum; and had lost an eye.

Move to Tezpur

In October 1943, we moved by train to Tezpur. Capt. Adkins had checked into the hospital so I was in charge of the move which went quite smoothly. Tezpur was further from the "Hump," but closer to Imphal and Kohima where the British were repelling a Japanese attack. The country is flat with no hills for about 40 miles in all directions, but on clear mornings we could see the snow-capped Himalayas. There was nowhere near the air activity at Tezpur as there was at Chabua.

We emplaced our guns and lived in tents until our bashas were built. My first discipline case concerned a gun crew which had painted the gun mount red, and

refused to remove the paint when told to do so by the platoon commander. We now had three new noncoms who would do what they were told to do when they were told to do it.

Once the guns were emplaced, we had plenty of time for recreation. We played badminton in the evenings and cards after dark.

One evening, after a badminton game and showers, one of our men saw something on the ground under his tent. He stomped it and kicked it outside. The next morning he saw what it had been - a Banded Krait. This is one of the most poisonous snakes in India.



Lt. Largay

I played cribbage against Lt. Largay. He usually won. When we could get enough officers together, we played poker. We also read a lot of books.

One night the Red Cross came over. I got a phonograph from one of the day rooms and the men had dancing lessons. We used a blast pen for the dance floor and unfused bombs served as chairs. We also organized a few deer hunts - on elephant back. I was surprised how hairy the creatures were, and how fast they moved. We shot no game on the trip I went on, but we had a darned good time.

(To be Continued)



New members of the Minnesota Basha are: Donald and Emma Granger of Minneapolis. Don served at Jorhat in the 329th Service Group. Photo: Art Meyer

Third Quarter Review Of Minnesota Basha

By Art Meyer

Beautiful Riverwood of Monticello was the site of the Minn. Basha Fall meeting on Sept 7 and 8th. Elegant vintage decorator pieces highlighted the fancy king size bedrooms. The ample acreage of lawn, trees, shrubs, flower beds and walkways down to the shores of the Mississippi River served to relax our tired muscles. It really seemed to be more of a retreat than a motel. The hospitality rooms were spacious and most comfortable - best ever!

Our afternoon business meeting was opened with the pledge of allegiance by Cmdr. Gene Bierne. Chaplain Obert Rust conducted our annual Memorial Service for our fallen comrades with the message of "Death and thoughts of Life." His selection of music, prayer and thoughts highlight how fortunate we are to have someone who is so dedicated and skilled. Included in those memorialized were the following:

We were shocked and saddened by the death of Vice Commander Harlan Schmidt, who had served in the 9th Bomb Sqdn of the 10th Air Force. He and his wife Joyce were working on the Spring reunion at Fairmont when he died. We will miss him - stay with us Joyce, we are your friends. Harlan's picture is on page 22 of the Summer issue of Sound-Off.

Just a short month after Russ' death (reported in the last issue) we were saddened again by the passing of his dear wife, Agness Amlee. They never missed our functions and they are pictured on page 23 of the Summer Sound-Off just a few weeks before their demise. Twenty Basha members attended the Memorial Service for Russ and Agness at the Bloomington Universalist Church. Cmdr. Gene Bierne and P/C Everett Harpestad presented the colors.

Chas. G. MacDonald of the 493 Bomb Sqdn, 7th Bomb Group, passed away in Aitkin, MN, and Norman R. Jeske of Crystal, MN, who served with the 699 Engr. Pet. Co., died last month. He is survived by his wife Jean - our sincere condolences.

We welcome to membership Donald and Emma Granger of Minneapolis. He served in the 329th



Enjoying dinner at the Minnesota Basha Fall meeting are Herb and Vi Solem, long time members. Herb is in a wheel chair after his long fight and leg amputation.

Photo by Art Meyer

Service Group in Jorhat.

It was good to see Russ and Vi Medin, former Minn. Basha members and now Florida Pukka Sahib. Of course, our faithful friends from Milwaukee, Bill and Elsie Lamp, honored us with their presence.

Congratulations to Pete Johnson of Walker, MN, who was elected administrator when Art MacFarlane moved up to the vice-commander upon the death of Harlan Schmidt.

The Spring meeting is being shifted to Camp Ripley, near Little Falls, MN. I do not have all of the details but it really sounds interesting. Nice quarters at very reasonable prices. We will keep you posted as details are finalized.

Stillwater, in the beautiful St. Croix River Valley and birthplace of the state of Minnesota, will be the site of the Fall of '95 meeting on October 4 and 5th. P/C Tom Lynch and wife Mary and P/C Art Meyer and wife Joyce will be hosting.

Tom and Mary will once again put the loose ends together on our Christmas party. Watch your mailbox for details - we always have fun!

Tom Lynch moved that we initiate the procedure to make Eugene Beebe of St. Paul, MN, a member, posthumously, of the Minn. Basha. His frozen body was recently recovered with two buddies in the Himalayan ice cap. It has to go thru National so we will monitor it.

Finally, a heartfelt thanks to Cup and Pearl Otten for hosting the Riverwood meeting. It was very nice and just one more example of your endless willingness to serve our basha.

See you at the Christmas party!

684th AAA MG Bty (Separate) (Airborne)

By Harold G. Russell, Jr.
Box 226, Gwynn, VA 23066

(In the first two installments of this unit history, the 684th had trained in the States, shipped to Bombay, arriving there January 15, 1943, taken the scenic train ride, via Calcutta, to Chabua, Upper Assam where they set up their weapons and established their quarters. In last issue's recitation, the author visited Shillong, took a training course at Gauhati, told of experiences at Chabua and then the unit entrained for Tezpur, where they again set up their anti-aircraft guns.)



Lt. Kevorkian

In mid-October we had an earthquake. I was in bed and Lt. Zerzan had, moments before, returned from Chabua with a 2-1/2 ton six-by-six and a Dodge weapons carrier. Lt. Kevorkian said, "We're being bombed!" I replied, "It's just a little earthquake," and rolled over. Then, the ground really began to shake. I wished that I had gotten up and gone outside. There was not much damage but quite a few items fell off the walls.

The Evils of Drink

Another disciplinary problem: the men go into town and buy a bottle of Lily Brand gin, Tiger Brand brandy, or Fighter Brand whiskey. Horrible stuff. The men are not permitted to bring any back to the Battery, so they would drink the whole bottle and stagger back drunk.

One day, Pvt. T---- returned from town drunk, and tried to get into a poker game that was going on in the day room. He was told that there were already six at the table, and that he should not play while he was carrying such a load. He insisted, and a sergeant ordered him to bed. T---- called the sergeant some very uncomplimentary names, and the sergeant, who was no featherweight, broke a knuckle on T----'s jaw.

Lt. Largay came along and ordered T---- to bed. About 20 minutes later, T---- got out of bed, took a Tommy gun, loaded and cocked it, and started to look for the sergeant. Fortunately, he was

intercepted by a rough, tough private named W---- who took the gun away. A fight ensued, and W---- proceeded to knock the living ---- out of T----. I appeared and jeeped Pvt. T---- to the Provost Marshal who got a doctor to sew T---- up. (I heard without anesthetic.)

I preferred charges for a General Court Marshal. I also recommended W---- for a Soldier's Medal. Neither went through, but T---- was given a Special Courts Marshal, did time, and was transferred to another outfit. As a result of this, we decided to establish a Battery bar for the men, to be run by the sergeants. The officers financed it, and the drinks were sold at cost. Though illegal, it worked out well; and there was no longer a problem with drunkenness.

Teeth Problems

Capt. Adkins returned in December. (I never heard what his medical problem was, but I suspect that it was a near fatal case of Lakanooki), and I went back to my 1st Platoon. A recent dental inspection showed that I had three impacted wisdom teeth. With Capt. Adkins back, it was a good time to have them out.

Back at Chabua, the dentist gave me two shots of novocaine and took 1-1/2 hours to get it out. The next morning my jaw was badly swollen, and I abandoned any hope for an early return to the Battery. The second morning the doctor decided that there was an infection and started to feed me sulfathiazol. I did not get out of the hospital until 27 December.

There was a Captain H-----, from a Troop Carrier Squadron, at the hospital. He had received his orders to return to the States on

December 11th. They were dated December 6th. He was shot down on December 9th. A slug went through his thigh clipping his safety harness; a second slug went through his shoulder. Then, when he crashed, his head hit the front of the cockpit and he fractured his skull. He also didn't have much of a nose left. The doctors started plastic surgery on Christmas Day. Captain H----- said that it was the best Christmas present he could receive.

After the first of the year, 1st Sergeant Remington, Staff Sergeant Apple, and I went down to Calcutta to get some spare parts, and to get supplies for the Battery bar. I stayed at the Grand Hotel. I had looked forward to the trip, but by the time we arrived, I was feeling lousy. Jaundice. I still don't know if it was a relapse from the bad Yellow Fever shots that I had received in San Diego, from the sulfathiazol at Chabua, or something else. Anyway, I was miserable. I didn't feel like eating, doing the town or anything else.

We took an Army Panel Wagon to the Supply Depot to get some truck springs, and other spare parts. The driver was a Sikh in his beard and turban. He cut in and out of traffic, leaned on his horn, and used jackrabbit starts. The man sitting in front of me turned to me and said, "He drives just like a Chicago taxi driver." The Sikh turned and said, "I was for two years." You should have seen us as we left the Grand Hotel. Staff Sergeant Apple leading two bearers with truck springs on their head, five bearers with cases of liquor on their heads, and two more bearers with other supplies on their heads, followed by 1st Sergeant Remington. A regular safari.

Christmas Baksheesh

Winter mornings at Tezpur could be cold. Films of ice would form in water buckets and fire barrels. One of our Army organizations thought that it would be nice to give children (many of them running around with little or no clothing) a Christmas present of sheeting material. All hell broke loose. Local merchants objected most strenuously. We were depriving them of their livelihood. Distribution of the cloth could not be permitted unless the merchants were compensated. They were paid off and the children got their cloth.

The Oriental "squeeze" was operating.

It was difficult for gun crews to maintain firing proficiency while at their airfield defense positions. Occasionally, we moved one or two guns to a firing range and shot at a towel target or a rocket. It was also difficult to find a location for the firing range that would not endanger civilians. We had such a problem at Tezpur. We worked with local officials to find a suitable location.

The best site that we could find contained a very small village, and the local police assured us that the village population would be removed during our firing. On the day of firing range use, we were again assured that all civilians had been removed from the village. The day after our practice, police showed up at the Battery with several .50 caliber machine gun bullets. There was no question that the bullets were ours. We had killed one woman and two cows. The villagers were most upset about the loss of the cows. We had documented the precautions that we had taken, and were off the hook; but I suspect that some reparations were made.

Big Time Operator?

Private Wz had lied about his age and had enlisted when he was seventeen. By the time his lie was discovered, he was 18 and was allowed to remain in service. Wz was a pleasant enough kid; but was one of those individuals who, within five minutes after putting on a clean uniform, looked as if he had just crawled out of a chimney. Also, he was jittery after dark, making him a risk on night duty. The solution was to make Wx our officers' orderly.

Back at Chabua, Pvt. Wz requested a three-day pass to visit his friends at Jorhat. He had been behaving himself, so we let him go. He fell asleep on the plane, and when he woke up, he was in Calcutta. He was so convincing, when we got him back, that we gave him two weeks of Battery punishment.

Now, we were getting ready to move to Burma, and we started picking on our orderly. When Wz brought in our food, he would hear words like, "Gliders," "Parachutes," and "Expected casualty rates." Our kidding was too well done, and Wz checked into the hospital with stomach problems. He stayed in the hospital until we were safely in Burma. (More about Wz later.)



Anti-Aircraft Target Practice

Fubar

So, began the most fouled up move that ever occurred in the history of the Army. This was our move from Tezpur, India, to Warazup, Burma. We were supposed to be flown by troop carrier planes, however other military activities took precedent. Merrill's Marauders had fought and marched across the mountains to the vicinity of Myitkyina. Though exhausted, diseased, and under strength, these men rushed and captured the airfield at Myitkyina.

A Chinese regiment was immediately flown in from India, replaced Merrill's men, and advanced into town. A second Chinese regiment was flown and advanced into town. The two Chinese regiments met in town, and a fire-fight developed between the two Chinese units.

Meantime, the Japanese dug in. It took months to dig the Japs out. The aircraft that were supposed to move us were needed to support the fighting at Myitkyina. We moved by rail to Ledo where we were loaded on trucks for the journey to Warazup. By the time we reached Shingbwiayang, the monsoons struck, and sections of the road ahead were washed out. We were stuck.

Our sister Battery, the 683rd, helped as best they could, but they did not have the facilities or housing for an additional 90 officers and men. Our men were sleeping in jungle hammocks, and we were put onto the new anti-malaria drug, atabrine. Finally, enough aircraft became available so the headquarters and one platoon could be flown to Warazup.

From then on, those of us who stayed behind met every incoming aircraft and asked of the pilot, his destination and if he would fly overloaded. The C-47 was designed to carry 5,000 pounds, but that was for "Hump" flying. It was valley flying between Shingbwiayang and Warazup, and some of the pilots

were willing to make the flight overloaded. Bit by bit, we were able to get a few men and some equipment on to Warazup.

Army Accounting

On one such flight, we had a full gun crew and its equipment. The plane lost an engine on take-off, and disappeared behind the jungle trees. I watched in horror, and expected to see the plume of black smoke that arises from a plane crash. There was none. A little later, the Shingbwiayang tower told me that the pilot had radioed from Warazup. He had made the trip on the one engine. The machine gun ammunition, and the mens' barracks bags had been thrown out of the plane, but the men and their guns were safe.

Thank God for the skill of that pilot and the reliability of the C-47. (Later, when we had to account for the items thrown out of the plane, we included everything that the 684th had ever lost, or ever wanted to lose. I hesitate to estimate what the total weight of the "lost" items was.)

Eventually, man by man, and piece by piece, we all made it to Warazup; and we were a unit again.

The road behind us was washed out, and the condition of the Warazup airfield frequently made landing impossible. We were cut off. Food was air dropped to us. Frozen beef, frozen pork, and on Sundays - ice cream. Aside from the lack of fresh vegetables, it was the best chow that I had while in the Army. On top of that, the Quartermaster ration breakdown men messed with the 684th, and we received the surplus items left over after other units had drawn their rations. Each gun crew had plenty of canned fruit juice at their field positions. Even after the airfield was fully operational, we continued to eat well.

(To be concluded next issue)



Gen. G. W. Sliney Holiday Party. Left to right: Shirley Deutsch, Bob Ariani and Marge Ariani.

Sydney Wilson Photo

684th AAA MG Bty (Separate) (Airborne)

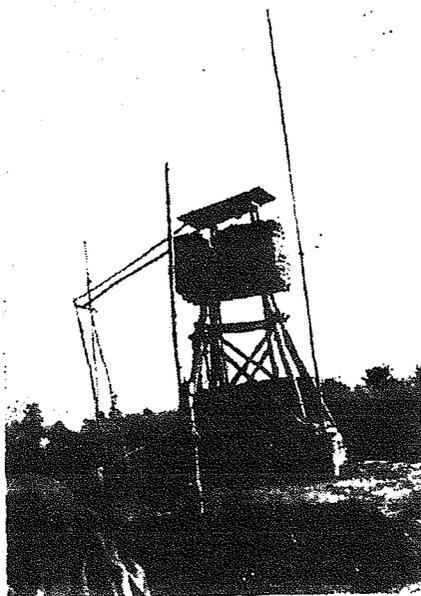
By Harold G. Russell, Jr.
Box 226, Gwynn, VA 23066

(The history of the 684th AAA MG Bty (Separate) (Airborne) written by Harold G. Russell, was started in SOUND-OFF a year ago and after a one-issue interruption is concluded below. In the three preceding installments, we have learned of the Battery's activation at Camp Stewart, GA, in September of 1942, training, shipping to CBI in December 1942, journey by train and ferry to Dinjan, assignment to Chabua, description of sights in Dibrugahr, moved in October 1943 to Tezpur, eventual hairy move to Warazup where we left the men in 1944 in the Winter 1995 issue. - Ed.)

* * * * *

We had received a radio transmitter. It was the type used in Command Cars. Normally, it had a range of five to ten miles, but we erected two radio towers, each made of two sections of four-inch pipeline. We figured out the desired antenna length for the wave frequency that we were to use, and "Queen-Tare 32" was in operation. Our transmitting range was up to 200 miles.

One of the first messages we



Radio Station and
Command Post at Warazup

received was encoded, and from one of our sister Batteries near the hospital. Pvt. Wz was there. What should they do with him? By the time that we decoded the message, encoded our reply telling them to keep their eyes on him, and to escort him to the first plane heading for Warazup, Pvt. Wz had visited the Red Cross and arranged for a loan. He had found a plane heading for Warazup via Calcutta.

At Calcutta, the plane developed engine trouble. Then there was a mixup, and the shirts Wz got back from the laundry had sergeant's stripes on them. This convincing story resulted in 30 days Battery punishment. While Pvt. Wz was serving his punishment, I received two letters from his mother. One was addressed to the Battery Commander, and the other to the Chaplain. I figured that I was both. They explained that Pvt. Wz had always been such a good boy, that she couldn't understand why he was in trouble. Maybe it was because of her problems at home. Her husband had brought home a girlfriend, and all three were living together.

Problems at home caused another morale problem. One of our men from New York, (where at that time, divorce laws were strict) was separated from his wife and child. While he was still in the States, he had arranged for an allotment to be sent to his mother to assure that his child would be properly fed and clothed. The moment he boarded ship, his wife applied for, and was awarded the allotment that his mother had been receiving. His wife was spending the allotment on herself, and the child was poorly fed and clothed. I (this had occurred at Tezpur when I was acting Battery Commander) asked the Red Cross to investigate, and they confirmed the report, but because of the way that the law was written, nothing could be done.

GI Ingenuity

Our organizational pyramidal tents were hot and uncomfortable. We replaced the tents with structures built of Hessian cloth

(burlap) for the bottom three feet, topped with mosquito netting to the eaves, and covered with two roofs of scrap canvas. They were cooler, and the men furnished them very neatly.

Another innovation was our device for mess kit washing. (No immersion heaters were available in those days.) Fifty-five gallon drums were cut in half. Beneath each drum was a pipe elbowed down and back. A pinhole was drilled just ahead of the pipe cap. Gasoline (100 octane) was dripped into the pipe and ignited at the pin-hole. The vaporized gasoline created a roaring fire and we had boiling wash water in no time. We also had hot showers. A piece of four-inch pipeline was placed through a 55 gallon drum and welded in place. The pipe had a short stack welded on one end and a tall stack welded on the other. Gasoline was dropped into the short stack and ignited at the base of the tall stack. Water flowing through the drum and leading to the showers was hot in no time. We never had an explosion.

One idea that did not work out was our attempt to dig a well. We dug down to the water table then tried to push down a length of pipeline. That didn't work too well, so we dropped a 1/4 pound of explosive down the pipe and set it off. The pipe sunk about a foot. Next, we tried a one pound charge and the pipe went down six feet. I was suspicious so we pulled the pipe up. We had blown off the bottom six feet of the pipe.

It Hit the Fan

About this time, the AAA Batteries, though keeping their numbers, were reorganized into the 16th AAA Battalion. Captain Adkins went to Battalion as a staff officer, and I again was Battery Commander. One of the first things that happened was an encoded message to me from the Theater Commander. Why had not Pvt. C--- been carried as critically injured?

As noted, we had received a radio transmitter, but we had no radio operator. We had selected Pvt. C----- to go to radio school in Calcutta. We finally got the story from his friends in the Battery. While he was at the radio school, Pvt. C----- had come down with malaria. He had gone out to a six-holer latrine just after it had been treated for fly control with gasoline. Pvt. C----- had dropped a

cigarette butt down the next hole!

He was hurt, but not as badly as he could have been. He had written home about being injured but had not given any details. His father had written to his senator, the senator had written to the War Department, and the War Department had written to the C.B.I. Theater Commander. I encoded all the gruesome details and replied.

Mulish Mules

There was a remount station about two miles north of Warazup. The station had a supply of mules which had recovered from various illnesses. We made arrangements with the remount station, saddled up a couple of good looking mounts, and rode them back to the Battery. The next morning they were gone. We drove back to the remount station, and there they were. We led them back to the Battery, and built a really strong hitching rail. The next morning, the rail had been pulled out of the ground, and the mules had gone home again. We decided that it was not worth the effort to have to return to the remount station each day to recover the mules. We returned halters, bridles, saddles and other gear and did our gun position inspections on foot.

Search for Downed Plane

Warazup was home to the 490th Bomb Squadron (B-25s - some with 75 mm cannon or eight .50 caliber machine guns in their nose, and others conventionally equipped); and two Combat Cargo (C-47) Squadrons. One morning, when we were fogged in, we heard a plane crash. When the fog lifted, we could see a cloud of black smoke on a mountain a few miles west of us. I went out with a search party.

The first few miles were not too bad - just elephant grass and leaches (at one stop, I burned off eight of the little suckers). Then we entered the jungle and the going was pure hell. Sunlight could not penetrate the jungle and the ground was slick with decaying vegetation. We hacked our way through thorned vines that always managed to trip us or grab our rifles. We climbed hills and slid down into ravines. We would crawl ahead for 45 minutes and then fall exhausted for 15 minutes.

The liaison plane that was supposed to guide us could not find us. At 1700, we turned back and were exhausted when we got back to

camp. During the next three days, other search parties went out, but could not find their way to the plane. The next search party that went out carried radio receivers and flares which they would occasionally set off.

I stood watch in the control tower and advised the search party on the direction to take. This search party did not reach the plane, but they did find an alternate route. The next day, I rode in a liaison (L-5) plane. The search party carried a walkie-talkie and flares. At no time could we see the search party nor they us.

As we flew overhead, they sent up a flare. Then, we would radio them how far to go and in what direction. The party reached the wreck at 1530 and returned the next day. The plane was a C-47, but not from Warazup. They found seven skulls, two sets of identification tags, two pistols with serial numbers, and three belt buckles. This enabled the War Department to change their status from "missing" to "dead."

Chindits at Warazup

General Wingate (British) had led a Long Range Penetration Force deep into Burma where the Force had cut Japanese communications and raised general hell. They had been out about six months and had been resupplied by air. They ended their trek at Warazup, and were air evacuated back to India.

I never have seen such a beat-up bunch of men. They were overly thin (gaunt is a better word), sunken eyes, and yellowed skin. Invariably two men were supporting a third. When the Force reached Warazup, they dumped their gear, including their .30 caliber carbines.

Our men "salvaged" the carbines, used them on guard duty, and carefully wrapped their own M-1s and .45 caliber Tommy guns in oiled cloth. The M-1 rifles and Tommy guns were unwrapped only for inspections that were required before the men could go on pass or to a rest camp.

Relations with Chinese

The Ledo Road ran along side to the Warazup runway, and we had some gun positions between the two. On one occasion, the communication wire that ran between the gun positions was gone. Chinese troops passing through

on the way toward China had stolen it.

In contrast to that unit, we had a Chinese regimental headquarters camped next door to us. The commanding officer had been wounded in Shanghai, and his life had been saved by American missionaries. He was very pro-American as were his men. We were dinner guests of the Chinese one night, and one of the courses was rice with little pimentos. They weren't pimentos. They were the hottest red peppers that I had ever put into my mouth. I gave my hosts a good laugh when I gulped down cup after cup of tea.

Malaria

Malaria had become a problem for the 684th, due in part to our stay at Shingbuiyang. Some men had suffered repeated relapses and were sent home. Of the 90 officers and men only two or three escaped coming down with the disease. I was one of the lucky ones. Rightly or wrongly, I attribute this to my pipe smoking.



Author Today

We had been overseas for over 18 months and our names had been submitted for rotation. Some had already left, and Lt. Largay was scheduled to leave the next morning. We were in Largay's basha celebrating the occasion when a plane, with a peculiar engine sound, approached Warazup. I stepped outside to see what was happening just as bombs were falling on the runway. I rushed to the Command Post, alerted the guns, and radioed an alert to the other AAA Batteries. The plane