

Chapter Four

Converting Catoctin Mountain Park into Military Camps

Within days after the Secretary of the Interior had granted a permit for Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area to be used for military training, officers and enlisted men from Donovan's organization began to arrive on 1 April 1942, and started to convert their part of the park into a basic paramilitary training school.¹ Major Ainsworth Blogg, commanding officer of Training Area B, was the first to arrive. A 43-year old reserve officer, Blogg had been a personnel manager for an insurance company in Seattle, when he was called to active duty in March 1941. As a captain, he commanded a military police unit and then served with the headquarters detachment of the IX Army Corps based at Fort Lewis near Tacoma, Washington, until he was recruited by Donovan's organization.² The second to arrive was 1st Lieutenant Charles M. Parkin from Lancaster, Pennsylvania, an able young officer in the Corps of Engineers, who was assigned as executive officer and chief instructor.³ Other staff members soon got there and began to set up firing ranges and obstacle courses.

The first group of trainees, a dozen or so officers and enlisted men destined to be sent to India and the jungles of northern Burma by the end of the year to begin to organize guerilla teams behind Japanese lines, disembarked from the back of canvas covered Army trucks by late April. They were half of the original contingent of OSS Detachment 101—the other half, as noted earlier, were training at Camp X in Canada—which would become one of the most famous and successful of Donovan's guerrilla organizations, credited with mobilizing 11,000 Kachin natives and providing strategic support for regular combat operations that eventually defeated the Japanese in Burma.⁴

¹ F.J. B., Jr. [Lt. F. J. Ball, Jr.], OSS, to Major [Otto C.] Doering [Donovan's Executive Officer at OSS HQ], 30 March 1944, subject: Release of Area "B," OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II, College Park, Md.

² Maj. Ainsworth Blogg, Area B, commanding officer, Area B, April 1942 to May 1943, OSS personnel file, CIA Records (RG 263), National Archives II Reference to his previous employment is from Mrs. Dorothea ("Dodie") Dow, widow of Capt. Arden W. Dow, an instructor at Area B, telephone interview with the author, 15 May 2005.

³ Charles M. Parkin, OSS personnel file, CIA Records (RG 263), National Archives II. Blogg was the only other person from the Office of the Coordinator of Information at Area B when Parkin arrived. Charles M. Parkin, telephone interview with the author, 10 May 2005.

⁴ William R. Peers and Dean Breilis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963), 27, 30-32, and passim. Troy J. Sacquety, a civilian historian with the U.S. Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., and a specialist on OSS Operational Groups, is currently writing a history of Detachment 101 based on his doctoral dissertation from Texas A&M University. Troy Sacquety, telephone interview with the author, 25 April 2008.

Although the area at Catoctin available for field exercises and maneuvers included several thousand acres in the northwestern part of the park, the center of the Training Area B was Cabin Camp 2 (Greentop), which Blogg designated B-2. That camp initially housed the entire COI/OSS complement; however, in September 1942, the permanent cadre, that part of OSS Detachment B responsible for maintaining the operation, moved down the slope to the former CCC Camp (near today's Round Meadow).⁵ Designated B-5, the area became the OSS Special Operations camp's headquarters with offices, cadre accommodations, motor pool, and storage facility. The basic training facility for the students and instructional staff remained up the hill at B-2. With the park closed to the public, the National Park Service personnel were reduced to three: Park Manager Garland B. ("Mike") Williams, a clerk, and a handyman-mechanic.⁶ Although Donovan's organization controlled the northern half of the park, the National Park Service retained several facilities within that area: the park office, located on the site of what is today the Visitor Center; the Park Manager's residence, then located behind the office; and the park maintenance facility at what is today Round Meadow.⁷

Between the efforts of the Special Operations cadre and staff at Area B and the Army Corps of Engineers, the area around B-2 was soon converted into a commando-style training camp. For that purpose, the camp needed obstacle courses and physical training areas, target ranges for various types of small arms, grenades, and mortars, demolitions areas for instruction in the use of explosives, storage facilities for guns, ammunition and other munitions, and explosives, classrooms and eventually a full-scale mockup of a house to use in urban fighting. In addition, since the cabins, washrooms, dining and recreation halls and other facilities had been designed by the National Park Service only for summertime use, they would have to be winterized. The training schools of the OSS were expected to operate all year long for the duration of the war.

The Army moved fast to prepare Training Area B. The construction by the Corps of Engineers with their heavy equipment put considerable strain on the roadways, and a visitor from OSS headquarters in June 1942 noted that the winding macadam road from Thurmont along the base of the mountain was in "a rather poor state of repair."⁸ Since

⁵ G. B. ("Mike") Williams to Capt. Charles M. Parkins [sic; Parkin], [Acting] Commanding Officer, Area B-2, 2 October 1942, World War II Files, Correspondence Folder, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md.

⁶ G.B. ("Mike") Williams, Memorandum for the Commanding Officer, Camp No. 1, USMC, 13 February 1943, p. 1, World War II Files, Correspondence Folder, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, Thurmont, Md.

⁷ G.B. ("Mike") Williams, Confidential Memorandum for the Director [of NPS], 28 January 1943, p. 2, copy in World War II Files, Correspondence Folder, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, Thurmont, Md. James H. Mackley, a longtime resident of Thurmont and a friend of one of Williams' sons, Aulick ("Ookie"), said the Williams family lived in a house on east Main Street during the war. James H. Mackley, Thurmont, Md., telephone interview with the author, 13 June 2006. The original residence for the Park Manager, located behind the Visitor Center, burned down in 1945 and was rebuilt in 1947. Mackley may have been thinking of the 1945-47 period.

⁸ R.P. Tenney to J[oseph]. R. Hayden [political scientist, member of COI Board of Analysts, and first head of training for the Secret Intelligence Branch], 8 June 1942, interoffice memo, subject: "Area B," OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder, 1721, National Archives II.

much of the field exercises, particularly with mortars and other weapons, took place in the northwest part of the park, the Foxville-Deerfield Road, which ran through the middle of that area, and led from Foxville around to Manahan Road, was closed to the general public due to the hazardous operations at the paramilitary training camp.⁹

The main entrance to the park in the 1930s and 1940s, and thus to the OSS camp in World War II, was on the opposite side of the mountain than it is today. When the old gravel east-west road along the south side of Catoctin Mountain was replaced after the war with a modern, paved east-west road (Route 77) between Thurmont and Hagerstown, the main entrance to the park was re-located along it on the south side of the mountain. But before and during the war, the entrance to the park had been from the north side of the mountain. In those days, visitors drove north about five miles from Thurmont on the Sabillasville Road (today Route 550) to the bottom of the northern slope of Catoctin Mountain. At the village of Lantz, where there was a railroad stop, they would turn west to the even smaller village of Deerfield, then drive south up the dirt and later gravel Manahan Road through what was then the main entrance to the park. Eventually they would arrive south of what is today the paved Park Central Road, which was built after World War II. At that time there was a dirt or gravel road further south and west that connected the CCC camp, NPS maintenance area and Cabin Camp 2. A turn to the east and a mile and a half drive up the hill brought them to the cabin camp for polio-crippled children, which was converted into Special Operations Training Area B-2.¹⁰

One of the first instructors to arrive at Area B-2, 1st Lieutenant Jerry Sage, who got there at the beginning of April, recalled that his group of men in their army truck encountered guards and barbed wire on the little road up through the hills, and they were stopped several times along the way. When they arrived at B-2, it had “some log cabins, a big mess hall and kitchen and a headquarters building surrounded by trees. There was a swimming pool and a large green field, possibly for football or soccer.”¹¹ Apparently, the swimming pool was subsequently filled in and covered over during war.¹² Two months later, a visitor from the Secret Intelligence training office provided a more detailed description of the camp. Arriving at the main gate down toward Lantz, he now found the road blocked off by a wooden obstruction as well as a sentry on guard. Having passed inspection, he reported that he drove a mile or more (probably closer to three miles) up a mountain road through thick, second-growth forest to the center of the training camp. There, at Area B-2, he saw a large, T-shaped mess hall, and many roughly built cabins

⁹ Barbara M. Kirkconnell, *Catoctin Mountain Park: An Administrative History* (National Park Service, 1988), 86, and note 58, lists the date of the announcement of the closing of the Foxville-Deerfield Road as both 22 June 1942 and 22 June 1943.

¹⁰ J. Mel Poole, Superintendent, and James Voigt, Resource Manager, Catoctin Mountain Park, interviewed by the author during a tour of the park with three OSS veterans. Mel Poole said the park’s original address was Lantz rather than Thurmont as it is today. The northern entrance and the route to B-2 via B-5 (instead of via Cabin Camp 1 as it currently is from the main entrance on Route 77 on the south) was remembered and retraced in a tour of the park and the training camp arranged by the author for OSS veterans, Charles M. Parkin, Frank A. Gleason, and Reginald G. Spear, 18 May 2005.

¹¹ Jerry Sage, *Sage* (Wayne, Pa.: Miles Standish Press, 1985), 12.

¹² None of the three OSS veterans taken on a tour of the park and training site on 18 May 2005 mentioned a swimming pool; nor is it referred to in reports by visitors or staff during the war.

scattered throughout the trees and providing housing for the trainees. Each of the four groups of cabins had a latrine with toilets and washbowls but, initially at least, no hot water. Two buildings that served as separate quarters for the officers of the cadre and instructional staff had hot water and bathtubs. Two recreational buildings were used for multiple purposes: a classroom, a theater, and a reading room with desks and chairs and supplied with books, magazines, and other literature.¹³ More than a year later, in October 1943, B-2 was reported to have a capacity of 149, including 20 officers and 129 enlisted men, although this could be expanded by converting the two recreational buildings into barracks lodging 15 enlisted men each, for a total camp complement of 179 men if necessary.¹⁴

Altering a Summer Camp for Year Round Training

A number of alterations were made to transform a summer cabin camp into a year round paramilitary training facility, much of the work being done by the Corps of Engineers. The instructional staff, and before they moved down to B-5 in September 1942, the camp cadre as well, lived in cabins in the woods just to the west and south of the main buildings. But the cabins, which had four cots for the young campers, were turned into two-man cabins, at least for officers, and in the officers' cabins, indoor toilets, chemical or flush, were installed. The Army Engineers installed insulation and wood-burning stoves to heat the cabins.¹⁵ Some of the officers shared rooms in larger cabins or lodge-type buildings. The latter were composed of four, two-bed cubicles, each enclosed by high partitions that left an airspace for ventilation. At the far end of these officers' sleeping quarters, there was a lavatory with a flush toilet and a common room.¹⁶

For the trainees, particularly when large numbers began to arrive in 1943 as the Operational Groups were being prepared for duty in 1943 and 1944, there were temporary barracks, comparatively inexpensive, rectangular buildings each housing about ten men. These were classic Army-style open barracks with double rows of bunks. A potbellied stove was supposed to provide enough heating, but the cold on the mountain

¹³ R.P. Tenney to J[oseph]. R. Hayden [political scientist, member of COI Board of Analysts, and first head of training for the Secret Intelligence Branch], 8 June 1942, interoffice memo, subject: "Area B," OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder, 1721, National Archives II.

¹⁴ The OSS Visual Presentation Branch drew up charts of building layout and complement size for each training area in the fall of 1943. See "Area B-2," map of buildings, including total capacity, 5 October 1943, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, Folder 249, National Archives II.

¹⁵ Comments of Frank A. Gleason, OSS instructor at B-2, June 1942 to March 1943, on a tour of the park, arranged by the author, 18 May 2005.

¹⁶ Charles M. Parkin, OSS executive officer and instructor at Area B-2, comments on a tour of the park arranged by the author, 18 May 2005, and in telephone interview with the author, 10 May 2005. For similar, see the memoir of another instructor, Jerry Sage, in Sage, *Sage*, 25-26.

became so intense while OGs and others were training there in January and February, 1944 that the barracks were evacuated and the trainees put in groups of four into heated, cabins nearby. The barracks were located between the cabins that housed the cadre and the mess hall.¹⁷ There was also a bath or wash house with running water in sinks and shower stalls; the Army Engineers built a frame addition to the bathhouse and installed a barracks heater, electric force hot air blower type, and galvanized steel hot air ducts to the various parts of the bath house.¹⁸ In preparation for the large numbers of Operational Groups being trained for the invasion of France, the Army Engineers installed sanitary toilets to replace Vogel toilets and renewed practically all of the electrical wiring in early 1944.¹⁹

The mess hall was on the same site of the current dining hall at B-2, but the original dining hall was destroyed by a fire in the 1950s.²⁰ The OSS mess hall was constructed as a long, tarpaper covered building with two or three lengthy tables and with the cooking facilities at the other end. "We would sit down and eat in whatever we were dressed in," recalled Reginald ("Reg") Spear, who was there in early 1944 as Special Operations trainee preparing to be sent to some of the islands in the Pacific.²¹ Near the mess hall was the recreation building. It was a different structure than the present one. OSS veterans who toured the park in May 2005 said that their recreation hall was smaller and was a temporary building of wood frame and tarpaper with a foundation of black and gray crushed rock.²²

There were classrooms behind the camp headquarters at B-2, which was in a cabin which today has a totem pole by it, before the headquarters was moved down to B-5 in the end of the first summer. The classrooms were not very big and held about 15 to 20 persons.²³ They may have been NPS cabins but with the interiors converted to serve as

¹⁷ Reginald G. ("Reg") Spear, who was a Special Operations trainee at Area B-2 in early 1944, comments made during a tour of the park arranged by the author, 18 May 2005.

¹⁸ "List of Improvements to Property by War Department...Restoration Survey, Catoctin Training Center, Thurmont, Maryland," 31 October 1945, 1, 3, included with survey by G.B. ("Mike") Williams, memorandum for Regional Director, NPS Region One, 7 March 1946, WWII Files, General Information Folder, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md.

¹⁹ G. B. ("Mike") Williams, custodian, to Regional Director, 30 January 1944, NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 7, Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General, 201 National Defense, C [Catoctin], Box 79, Folder 201, National Archives II.

²⁰ J. Mel Poole, Superintendent, Catoctin Mountain Park, on the tour of the park with three OSS veterans arranged by the author, 18 May 2005. The veterans touring with the author and park officials on 18 May 2005 did not remember so many large buildings on the site as there are now. The large structure near the current dining hall, for example, is the comfort station for the area, and was built after the camp was put on a septic system in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

²¹ Reginald G. ("Reg") Spear, on a tour of the park, tape recorded by the author, 18 May 2005.

²² OSS veterans, Frank A. Gleason and Reginald G. ("Reg") Spear, on a tour of the park, tape recorded by the author, 18 May 2005.

²³ Observations of Frank A. Gleason, instructor at B-2, June 1942 to March 1943, on a tour of the park tape recorded by the author, 18 May 2005.

classrooms.²⁴ The motor pool, where the OSS staff stored and maintained the Army vehicles, was located down the hill in the former CCC camp in what is today the parking lot for the gymnasium.²⁵ The area that once held the CCC camp and then Area B's headquarters and motor pool, has been radically altered since those days. Most of the old buildings were torn down and the area re-graded and rebuilt in 1965 when this was the site of the first Job Corps camp in the United States.²⁶

At the transferred Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp down the slope about a mile to the west of B-2, the Army Engineers made a number of improvements, so that the officers and enlisted men of the permanent staff could occupy that facility when the headquarters and cadre moved down from B-2 in September 1942.²⁷ The facility was designated Area B-5 and was located adjacent to the NPS Service Area, today called Round Meadow. The CCC camp already contained an office, officers' quarters, technical quarters, recreational building, educational building, dispensary, mess hall, and five tarpaper, wood striped, barracks. Those barracks, now gone, were located to the south, behind what is today the dining hall at Round Meadow.²⁸ The Army Engineers improved the water supply and waste disposal systems, building a 25,000-gallon water reservoir of reinforced concrete with a wooden roof and a pump house, and laying 1,500 feet of water pipe, as well as 7,600 feet of waste pipe, and constructing a concrete septic tank. In a number of buildings, the Army Engineers not only provided flush toilets but hot water tanks for showers. They put partitions in one of the barracks to provide some privacy for the enlisted men of the station complement, and they added a walk-in refrigerator to the mess hall.²⁹ Area B-5, at least in October 1943, had a capacity to hold a station

²⁴ J. Mel Poole, Superintendent, Catoctin Mountain Park, on the tour of the park with three OSS veterans, tape recorded by the author, 18 May 2005.

²⁵ Observations of Frank A. Gleason, instructor at B-2, on a tour of the park with the author, 18 May 2005.

²⁶ J. Mel Poole, Superintendent, Catoctin Mountain Park, on the tour of the park with three OSS veterans, arranged by the author, 18 May 2005. The Job Corps was one of President Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" programs adopted by Congress in 1964 and implemented by the Office of Equal Opportunity. It was a program of work training especially for urban minority youths in outdoor settings reminiscent of Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps.

²⁷ On 25 September 1942, OSS Detachment B temporarily vacated Camp No. 2 and occupied Area B-5, an abandoned CCC Camp MD-NP-3, adjacent to Round Meadow Area. Camp MD-NP-3 was transferred on 1 October 1942 under authorization of the Director of the CCC to the U.S. Army, Commanding Officer, Headquarters, Office of Strategic Services, which thereby took over jurisdiction of the CCC camp. Thomas J. Allen, Regional Director, Region One, memorandum for the Director, 29 December 1945, in NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 47 RDAs, Box 60, Folder 601.03.2, National Archives II.

²⁸ Frank A. Gleason on a tour of Catoctin Mountain Park with three OSS veterans arranged by the author, 18 May 2005.

²⁹ "List of Improvements to Property by War Department... Restoration Survey, Catoctin Training Center, Thurmont, Maryland," 31 October 1945, 5-7, included with survey by G.B. ("Mike") Williams, memorandum for Regional Director, NPS Region One, 7 March 1946; World War II Files, General Information Folder, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md. The old concrete septic tank, measuring 8x18x10 feet or the 25,000 gallon water reservoir may be the buried concrete object discovered by the park staff several years ago.

complement of 25 officers and 40 enlisted men, plus up to 200 trainees, a total of 265 OSS personnel.³⁰

As frost arrived on the mountain in the fall of 1942, the Park Manager Mike Williams knew that the camp would soon face a major test, operating amidst sub-freezing temperatures. By November, the Army Engineers had painted buildings inside and out, laid new roofing tarpaper down, and put in additional heating and plumbing facilities. Insulation board was ready to be installed on ceiling and sidewalls of all buildings except the garages. This would be the park's first experience of trying to operate the cabin camps throughout the winter, and Williams reported that "as the plumbing and water systems were not designed or constructed for winter use, there was considerable work connected with protecting them."³¹

"Cold as the devil this morning, nearly froze shaving and everyone had long underwear but me so I beat it to the supply [room] and got a pair," wrote a new arrival, Private Albert R. ("Al") Guay in his diary in late October. A member of the cadre, Guay was appointed assistant company clerk of Detachment B. Years later he recalled "I can remember, it was probably the previous week, the first time I went in to take a shower, there was ice on the floor. There was hot water. I believe we had a coal-fired boiler. The barracks were just board shacks with no insulation in them. I don't think there was any heat in them. There might have been a pot-bellied stove in there, but I don't remember it now. I do remember it being cold!"³²

The largest building at B-5 was the mess hall. It was insulated and heated, and it held perhaps fifty enlisted men (the officers ate in a different location).³³ It also served as a theater where training films and sometimes Hollywood movies were shown. Across from the mess hall was tiny wood building about 12 by 12 feet, which the cadre used as a kind of PX or post exchange (today it is the nurse's station). One side had been cut in half horizontally, like a Dutch door, and the top half would be swung up like an awning, the lower half had a counter inside the small, room-like building. At this little PX, the cadre could purchase toiletries, aspirin, snacks, soda, and various sundries. "It looked like a hot-dog stand at a small baseball field," Guay remembered. "I would usually go over there almost every day and get a can of sardines and a small box of crackers. I would go

³⁰ "Area B-5," map of buildings, including total capacity, 5 October 1943, located in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 85, Box 13, Folder 249, National Archives II.

³¹ G.B. ("Mike") Williams to Conrad L. Wirth, 5 November 1942, NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 47 RDAs, Box 57, Folder 201, National Archives II.

³² Albert R. Guay (pronounced "Gay"), diary entry, Tuesday, 27 October 1942, photocopies of the diary pages during his tour of duty at B-5, 21 October to 19 December 1942, have been generously deposited by Mr. Guay at the request of the author in the World War II Archives of Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md. The second quotation is from a telephone interview with Mr. Guay with the author, 24 October 2005. Guay said the barracks at B-5 were pretty good sized, but not as big as regular two-story military barracks. The B-5 barracks were all on one floor and held about twenty men in rows of double-decked bunk beds in each building, at least for the enlisted men, like Private Guay. He also noted that he and the company clerk worked in one small office where the personnel records were. The camp commander, Major Ainsworth Blogg, had a separate office in the camp headquarters elsewhere in B-5.

³³ Albert R. Guay, telephone interview with the author, 24 October 2005.

and sit down somewhere, maybe lean against the PX and eat it.”³⁴ In addition to that former PX, the only other buildings currently at Round Meadow that date back to the CCC period, according to Park Superintendent Mel Poole, are the original blacksmith shop and the original project office and then the first park headquarters, which is today the Catoctin Research Center. These two buildings would have been used by manager Mike Williams and his crew in running the park in the 1930s and early 1940s.³⁵

Preparing for Combat Training and the “House of Horrors” at the Park

Commando-style training was taught up the hill at B-2, and it involved learning to handle various weapons and munitions, developing knife-fighting and other close-combat techniques. It also meant learning about explosives for sabotage. It meant becoming familiar with guerrilla field operations. And perhaps above all, it required developing and maintaining top physical and mental condition and a predominant attitude of self-confidence, daring, and initiative. The basic Special Operations course at B-2, therefore, required a number of specialized facilities not found in a park.

Among the first to be constructed was a pistol range for target practice with the U.S. Army’s standard sidearm, the .45 Caliber Colt automatic pistol, as well as handguns from Allied and enemy countries.³⁶ It was a quickly made 10- to 20-yard range. “It was nothing fancy,” instructor Frank A. Gleason, recalled, “there was just dirt behind the targets, no concrete butts.”³⁷ However, as a substitute for the standard concentric circle, bull’s eye targets used by the Army for marksmanship training, the special operations instructors put up waist-high, frontal silhouettes of enemy soldiers. In another departure from standard Army military training, instead of raising the pistol to eye level and taking careful aim, the students were taught “instinctive shooting” or “point and shoot,” a technique of quick firing from the hip. Within two months, the stationery targets were augmented for advanced students with targets that popped up from behind shrubs or other types of concealment. A visitor to B-2 described the pistol range in early June 1942: “In front of the administration building is a field at the end of which are targets for shooting

³⁴ Albert R. Guay, telephone interview with the author, 24 October 2005. On 12 October 2005, Guay returned to Catoctin Mountain Park for the first time since 1942 and toured the old Area B-5 with Sally E. Griffin, supervisory park ranger. The PX was the only building he recognized. It stood in what was the center of the old area.

³⁵ J. Mel Poole, Superintendent of Catoctin Mountain Park, on a tour of Catoctin Mountain Park with three OSS veterans arranged by the author, 18 May 2005.

³⁶ G.B. Williams, memorandum for Regional Director, NPS Region One, 7 March 1946; WWII Files, General Information Folder, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md.

³⁷ Frank A. Gleason, instructor at B-2, through March 1943, telephone interview with the author, 1 May 2006.

practice. An apparatus is rigged up for providing a moving target to operate behind the frame of a window and door.”³⁸

Even this was not realistic enough, and a complex “house of horrors” was soon built to help reproduce at least a sense of the disorientation, confusion, stress and fear of actual combat. At B-2 on the edge of the training field, approximately where the stable is today, the Donovan’s organization built what the official records refer to as a “pistol house” or simply a “training building,” but which was known by the trainees and staff as the “mystery house,” “haunted house,” or “house of horrors.” It was modeled after training structures used by the British Special Operations Executive in the United Kingdom and Canada.³⁹ A small house with a rectangular floor plan, 40 by 78 feet, it was complex and also costly; indeed, it was the most expensive structure built by the OSS at Area B.⁴⁰ It was still under construction in early June 1942 when a visitor from the Secret Intelligence Branch reported that “there is also a house which they had been working on recently and which was apparently not completed. It is fitted with wires operating hidden targets and with sandbagged partitions. One end of it, behind the targets, had been heaped up with turf and mud to provide a non-ricocheting backstop for bullets. The purpose of the house is to provide close-in shooting practice under realistic conditions.”⁴¹

To achieve those “realistic conditions,” trainees were awakened in the middle of the night, given a .45 caliber pistol and two clips of live ammunition, and sent into the house where they were told to expect Nazi guards. Sometimes, they were told to kick open the front door and be ready to shoot at once. As they moved through the darkened corridors and rooms, cardboard cutouts of armed enemy soldiers or papier-mâché Nazis with pistols would suddenly pop up to test the trainee’s instinctive firing abilities. Years later, Richard Dunlop, a member of Detachment 101 in Burma, remembered what had been required. “Trainees...walked through a darkened hall about four feet wide, when suddenly the floor dropped some six to eight inches and a papier-mâché enemy appeared. Even though they were thrown off balance, they had to fire from the hip and hit their hated adversary in the head. In the next instant the head popped up, and they had to fire again.”⁴²

³⁸ R.P. Tenney to J[oseph], R. Hayden [political scientist, Far East expert, and an original member of COI’s and then OSS’s Board of Analysts], 8 June 1942, interoffice memo, subject: “Area B,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder, 1721, National Archives.

³⁹ Charles M. Parkin, one of three OSS veterans of Area B-2, on a tour of Catoctin Mountain Park arranged by the author, 18 May 2005.

⁴⁰ The estimated construction cost of the pistol house, or “house of horrors,” was \$6,000, a considerable expense at the time G.B. (“Mike”) Williams, memorandum for Regional Director, NPS Region One, 7 March 1946, WWII Files, General Information Folder, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md.

⁴¹ R.P. Tenney to J[oseph], R. Hayden, 8 June 1942, interoffice memo, subject: “Area B,” OSS Records (G 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder, 1721, National Archives II.

⁴² Richard Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1979), 86; see also, the description of the mystery house reported in the *Baltimore Sun*, 26 July 1948.

Two former OSS agents reiterated the experience of the trainee: “With a masked instructor at his elbow, he would move with drawn revolver through a cleverly designed Scare House that rivaled any Coney Island Chamber of Horrors in one-a-minute thrills. Boards would teeter realistically underfoot as he felt his way along a dark hall, footsteps would echo mysteriously ahead of him, a concealed phonograph would grind out the rumble of guttural German voices around a poker table, the clink of glasses and slap of cards. A turn of the corridor would reveal a suddenly lighted dummy dressed in the uniform of a Nazi Storm Trooper, confronting him. Whirl, fire. Careful, now, there’s someone in the room just ahead. Reload, safety off, hammer cocked. Burst open the door, fire; fire again.”⁴³

Initially, for rifle practice as well as training in the use of various submachine guns, the students were sent by truck to the extensive firing ranges at nearby Camp Ritchie, headquarters for the Maryland National Guard and also the training facility for the U.S. Army’s Military Intelligence School. However, by the end of 1943, the Army Engineers had constructed a comparatively small rifle range near Area B-5, located about 500 yards west of the NPS service maintenance area at Round Meadow. It was a standard U.S. Army rifle range with manually operated targets manipulated by ropes by enlisted men down in pits dug beneath them and earth and concrete butts behind the targets. In this case, it was only a 300-yard range, considerably shorter than the 600- or 1,000-yard rifle ranges the Army used for standard infantry training.⁴⁴ But the Special Operations instructors were less interested in long-range, battlefield firing than in training guerrilla leaders and saboteurs for staging close-range ambushes or fighting their way out of a trap. As with the “instinctive fire” for pistols, so the training here emphasized laying down a quick and rapid fire rather than sniper-like marksmanship. The OSS men were trained with American weapons—rifles, carbines, and submachine guns—as well as similar small arms from various Allied and Axis countries. The rifle range at B-5 could handle only a comparatively small number of shooters. When larger numbers were involved, such as Operational Groups being prepared for duty in Europe, the trainees were trucked up to Camp Ritchie. Numbers were not the only reason for that move, however, the extensive use of automatic weapons was another. “It is dangerous to have [firing] ranges too close to trees and brush,” noted Reginald (“Reg”) Spear, who trained at B-2 in early 1944. “Bullets get hot. They can and do cause fires, tracer bullets especially.” Training sizable groups to fire submachine guns also often involved a trip to Camp Ritchie, for as Spear recalled with gusto, “behind Ritchie for miles there was

⁴³ Lt. Col. Corey Ford and Maj. Alastair MacBain, *Cloak and Dagger: The Secret Story of OSS* (New York: Random House, 1945), 24-25.

⁴⁴ The 300-yard rifle range was due for completion in September 1943. 1st Lt. Montague Mead, commanding officer, Detachment B, to Maj. Wickham, Training Branch, OSS, Washington, D.C., 14 August 1943, OSS Records (G 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder, 1721, National Archives II. For an examples of standard construction with drawings and photographs, see “Completion Report of Constructing Concrete Target Butts at Lorton Rifle Range, Fort Humphreys, Va.,” U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Office of the Chief of Engineers Records (RG 77), Entry 391, Construction Reports, 1917-1943, Box 30, Fort Belvoir, Folder/Book 2, National Archives II.

nothing, and we would do things like let a balloon go and take a grease gun [a compact, rapid-firing submachine gun] and shoot it down.”⁴⁵

For training and practice in the use of explosives as well as throwing hand grenades and firing rifle-propelled grenades, and sometimes the firing of regular rifles before the range at B-5 was constructed, the OSS instructors used what they called a “demolition area.” It comprised about 15 acres. The location is difficult to determine today. It may have been situated about 1,000 feet east of the old CCC camp, now Round Meadow, in an area currently in the vicinity of the Fire Cache, where much of the park’s fire-fighting and other emergency equipment is stored today, or it may have been in an area 8,000 feet north, northeast of Round Meadow.⁴⁶ Within the demolition area, Army Engineers bulldozed part of the woods there to make a level area 100 by 100 feet square. The approximately one-thousand cubic yards of material from making that cut was then pushed by the bulldozers into making an embankment as a backstop along the upper edge of the demolition and firing area. The earth and timber embankment was 10 to 12 feet high and 300 feet long. In the slope below the square, 15 observation pits were dug to provide safe viewing of the use of demolitions, grenades, and mortar fire.⁴⁷ The demolition area was apparently located in what is today the Chestnut Picnic Area on the north side of Park Central Road between Greentop and Round Meadow.⁴⁸

To house the munitions and explosives, the first arrivals on the staff of Area B in April 1942 simply dug caves in the side of the hill and stored them inside. Charles Parkin, the first chief instructor, said that in case of an accident explosion inside, the substantial weight of the earth above it would have contained any blast.⁴⁹ Fortunately, there was no such explosion in the storage facilities at Area B. When the cadre moved down to B-5 in the fall of 1942, much of the ammunition was stored temporarily in a small old wooden building, about twenty feet square, called the arsenal. Private Albert Guay, the assistant company clerk who described it, noted in his diary in November 1942: “Helped take inventory in the arsenal today. Saw thousands of rounds of ammunition, mortar shells,

⁴⁵ Reginald G. (“Reg”) Spear, on a tour of the park, arranged by the author, 18 May 2005, and telephone interview with the author, 11 May 2006.

⁴⁶ The location of these areas is difficult to resolve. The area 1,000 feet east of Round Meadow, where the Fire Cache is today, shows evidence of previous clearing work. On the other hand, Corps of Engineers maps indicate that an area 8,000 feet north, northeast of Round Meadow was used for a rocket, grenade, mortar and demolition area. Current park personnel have not been able to locate any evidence of clearing within that area. Mel Poole, Park Superintendent, email to the author, 6 June 2008.

⁴⁷ G.B. (“Mike”) Williams, memorandum for Regional Director, NPS Region One, 7 March 1946; and “Restoration Survey, Catoctin Training Center, Thurmont, Md.,” 31 October 1945, p. 7, WWII Files, General Information Folder, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md.

⁴⁸ Conclusion of Superintendent Mel Poole based on the directions given by former OSS instructor Frank Gleason on a tour of the park by three OSS veterans arranged by the author, 18 May 2005.

⁴⁹ Reginald (“Reg”) Spear, telephone interview with the author, 11 May 2006. The first chief instructor, Capt. Charles Parkin, called the initial earthen cave for storing munitions, a “go-down.” Charles M. Parkin, on a tour of the park, arranged by the author, 18 May 2005.

grenades, flares, etc.” An avid hunter, the young 22-year-old added: “Swiped 5 tracer bullets and a box of .22 [caliber] long rifles [cartridges].⁵⁰

Later, in 1943, the Corps of Engineers built one of the Army’s standard magazines along with a sentry box for guarding it, about 600 yards north of the old CCC Camp.⁵¹ Designed to store small arms ammunitions, grenades, and mortar rounds, plus TNT and other types of explosives, the standard Army magazine could be either a small one, 10 by 12 feet, or a large magazine, 20 by 24 feet. A four-walled windowless structure, it was made of cinder blocks with a locked steel door and often with steel plates on the walls inside to channel any blast upwards. The flat slightly sloped roof was generally of saturated rag felt and asphalt or of cork and plywood covered with tarpaper.⁵² The structure was designed so that in case of explosion, the force of the blast would be hurled up through the comparatively flimsy roof rather than sideways which would have sent shards of concrete cinder block flying with lethal force across the area.

At Area B-2, the weaponry for special operations training was, at least in the spring of 1942, kept in an arsenal in the general area of the field in front of the current dining hall. It included rows of M-1 Garand semi-automatic rifles, Springfield 1903 bolt-action rifles, Thompson submachine guns, .45 caliber automatic pistols, .45 caliber revolvers, and .33 caliber automatic pistols. It also contained hand grenades and 60 millimeter trench mortars.⁵³

The use of explosives or live ammunition, which were so much a part of the training at Area B during World War II, were prohibited whenever President Franklin D. Roosevelt came up to Catoctin Mountain. The Secret Service wanted no untoward accidents happening to the Commander-in-Chief. Roosevelt frequently came to the mountain park in the summer, because in 1942, he chose it as the site of his wartime Presidential Retreat.

Physical Training at Area B

Getting the trainees into top condition to build up their physical abilities and mental and emotional self-confidence was a priority as important to COI/OSS as teaching them particular skills. In the field in front of current dining hall at Cabin Camp 2

⁵⁰ Albert R. Guay, diary entry, Tuesday, 3 November 1942, copies now in WWII Archives of Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md., plus Albert Guay, telephone interview with the author, 24 October 2005.

⁵¹ G.B. (“Mike”) Williams, memorandum for Regional Director, NPS Region One, 7 March 1946, WWII Files, General Information Folder, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md.

⁵² See, for example, the dimensions, construction information and photographs of sample Army magazines of the period in “Completion Report, Construction of Magazines at Fort Humphreys, Virginia,” completed 24 March 1934, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Office of the Chief of Engineers Records (RG 77), Entry 391, Construction Reports, 1917-1943, Box 30, Fort Belvoir, Folder/Book 2, National Archives II.

⁵³ R.P. Tenney to J[oseph]. R. Hayden, 8 June 1942, interoffice memo, subject: “Area B,” OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder, 1721, National Archives II.

(Greentop), the instructional staff constructed at B-2 several pieces of equipment designed to enhance physical conditioning. There were ropes for hand-over-hand climbing, a football tacklers' dummy that was used to simulate an enemy in jiu-jitsu or similar instruction. There was a wooden platform erected over a sand pit. It was to facilitate practice in jumping and tumbling, its eight-foot height providing about the same shock that a parachutist felt upon landing.⁵⁴ Similarly, there were several large, 30-30-foot square, but shallow open pits dug in the training field in front of the mess hall. They were mainly full of sawdust and sand. The pits were used for ju-jitsu, wrestling, knife-fighting and other close-combat exercises that involved throwing opponents over and down.⁵⁵

Going beyond such familiar exercises, the instructional staff at B-2 developed a new piece of training equipment on their own, which they called the "Trainazium." It was located in the field in front of the mess hall.⁵⁶ "We cut a bunch of fine oak trees, 15" to 18" in diameter," Frank Gleason remembered. "We dragged them back with ropes. The park ranger ["Mike" Williams] was mad as hell at us."⁵⁷ Parkin had designed it and Lazarsky and some other enlisted men built it. They trimmed off the branches, leaving long, heavy logs. Burying the lower part of each log securely in the ground, the men arranged them as tall posts, like telephone poles, in two parallel rows of three poles each. Nearly two stories above the ground, each of the six vertical posts was connected horizontally by narrower rounded poles. These formed a wooden grid both along and across the posts but have above the ground. The entire rectangular structure of the Trainazium measured about 20 by 20 feet for its footprint and it soared almost 18 feet into the air.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Reginald G. Spear, one of three OSS veterans of Area B-2, on a tour of Catoctin Mountain Park arranged by the author, 18 May 2005. A contemporary reference in 1946 by Superintendent Garland B. ("Mike") Williams incorrectly referred to these as "target pits," which suggests that OSS may not have wanted the ranger to see all of the kinds of exercises they were conducting. G.B. ("Mike") Williams, memorandum for Regional Director, NPS Region One, 7 March 1946, WWII Files, General Information Folder, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md.

⁵⁶ The actual location of the Trainazium was right about where the current pump house (a black building) is located next to the swimming pool at Camp 1 (Greentop). In fact, Reginald Spear and Franklin Gleason agreed that the Trainazium was just on the north side of the fence that currently encloses the swimming pool. The area there now, they said, had been plowed and graded since the 1940s. And the two men did not remember a swimming pool being there. Reginald Spear, OSS trainee at B-2 in early 1944, and Frank Gleason, instructor at B-2 from June 1942 to March 1943, were two of three OSS veterans of Area B-2, on a tour of Catoctin Mountain Park arranged by the author, 18 May 2005. The other OSS veteran on the tour, instructor Charles Parkin, concurred. A contemporary document locates the "log obstacle course" as "erected 100 feet west of the pistol house." The pistol house or "mystery house," is described below. G.B. ("Mike") Williams, memorandum for Regional Director, NPS Region One, 7 March 1946, WWII Files, General Information Folder, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md.

⁵⁷ Frank A. Gleason, telephone interviews with the author, 31 January 2005, 1 May 2006, 9 February 2007.

⁵⁸ Frank A. Gleason, letter to the author, 2 May 2006, in response to author to Gleason, et al., 27 April 2006. Gleason's letter includes a drawing he made of the Trainazium as a result of a request by the author. The pronunciation of the structure, Gleason said in an interview, was "Train-A-ZEE-um."

“It was designed to build the men’s self-confidence, to build up their physical strength and dexterity, using their legs and arms and upper body to maneuver around in tight, narrow places, and to be agile on narrow high places,” Gleason declared.⁵⁹ “We could train our agents to walk along narrow places and to climb up and chin up and do that [kind of thing].” “These were big [tall] logs and soft down below in case you fell off.”⁶⁰ Charles Parkin, who designed the structure, had put safety nets below. “We had these landing craft [embarkation] nets that you see on ships. They hung down. And we would jump from one to the other like a group of crazy monkeys.”⁶¹ As one of the students remembered it, “Trainees ran along narrow boards about fifty feet [sic] off the ground to get them used to running over housetops. If they slipped, they plummeted into a net.”⁶²

An Accident on the Demolition Trail

Even more demanding and dangerous were an obstacle course and a “demolition trail” built in different parts of the larger Area B. The first obstacle course erected in early 1942 involved a tricky passage across Owens Creek. A thick piece of wire was tied to trees on opposite banks and stretched taut across the rushing stream; a rope line was run parallel to the wire but several feet above it. Trainees, sometimes wearing full field packs, were required to make their way along the swaying wire while holding on to the rope, successfully crossing over the stream or falling into the cascading, often freezing waters below.⁶³ More intricate and even more hazardous was a “demolition trail” located in the forest down the hill between Areas B-2 and B-5. Trainees were ordered to move stealthily and carefully along the trail in the woods, keeping their heads down and eyes open, looking for booby-traps along the way. The traps were trip wires set up by 2nd Lt. Frank A. Gleason, a recent Penn State University engineering graduate, and Sergeant Joseph Lazarsky, a fellow Pennsylvanian, both members of the Corps of Engineers. The two of them tied small charges of TNT to tree branches away from the trail. A trip of the wire would set off a small, if real, explosion nearby. The trainees were told to keep their heads down, stay on the trail, and move forward in a crawl or crouching position.

Unfortunately, in one exercise, one of the students, a 30-year-old New York lawyer who was in training for the Secret Intelligence Branch, failed to crouch down, and when he blundered somewhat off the trail, snagged a trip wire and set off a charge of TNT. The blast sent a chunk of branch flying through the air. It caught him right in the

⁵⁹ Frank A. Gleason, telephone interviews with the author, 31 January 2005, 1 May 2006, 9 February 2007. “The logs were notched, and we also used spikes in holding them together.”

⁶⁰ Frank A. Gleason, A, on a tour of Catoctin Mountain Park arranged by the author, 18 May 2005.

⁶¹ Charles M. Parkin, chief instructor at B-2 from April 1942 to March 1943, one of three OSS veterans of Area B-2, on a tour of Catoctin Mountain Park arranged by the author, 18 May 2005.

⁶² Richard Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1979), 86.

⁶³ Frank A. Gleason, instructor at Area B-2, June 1942 to March 1943, telephone interview with the author, 1 May 2006.

side of the face and broke his jaw. He had to be taken to the nearest hospital and his jaw reset and held in place with wires until it healed. It was the only training accident at B-2 while Frank Gleason was there between June 1942 and March 1943, and he felt terrible about it. The injured trainee, like the other agents in training, was known to the staff only by a fictitious code name in order to maintain the cover of future secret agents and saboteurs. It was only much later, that Gleason and Lazarsky learned the real identity of the careless trainee whose jaw had been broken in that training accident on Catoctin Mountain. His name was William J. (“Bill”) Casey, a Navy lieutenant and espionage trainee, who would by the end of the war be put in charge of OSS Secret Intelligence Operations in Germany, and who forty years later would be appointed Director of Central Intelligence by President Ronald Reagan.⁶⁴

Roosevelt Comes to Catoctin and the Marines Set Up Camp

For respites from the heat and humidity of Washington in the summer, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had long used his family estate on the Hudson River at Hyde Park, New York, or the camp for polio victims, like himself, at Warm Springs in the mountains of western Georgia.⁶⁵ For relaxation closer to the nation’s capital, he had favored cruises on the President yacht, *U.S.S. Potomac* in Chesapeake Bay. With the nation at war, however, and with German submarines sinking shipping off the entrance to the bay, the White House began to look for a more secure and secret alternative for summer weekend retreats. Roosevelt’s Republican predecessor, President Herbert Hoover, an avid fly fisherman had established a fishing camp on the Rapidan River in Shenandoah National Park for weekend escapes, but the Democratic Roosevelt chose to ignore the camp of the man he had defeated in 1932.⁶⁶ Roosevelt was not a fly fisherman, and the damp atmosphere of the river bottom land aggravated his asthmatic and sinus conditions. His

⁶⁴ Frank Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 31 January 2005; and Joseph Lazarsky, telephone interview with the author 14 March 2005. This may be why Casey in his memoir about his role in the war, did not include any reference to his training but skipped directly from his enlistment in the OSS in early spring 1943 to his arrival in London in October 1943. See William Casey, *The Secret War against Hitler* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1988), 3-5, 22.

⁶⁵ Roosevelt had first gone to Warm Springs, Georgia, in 1924, seeking to recover from the paralysis inflicted by polio. He soon purchased the dilapidated mineral springs resort, turned it into a nonprofit foundation for treatment of polio victims, and built a cabin there. During his presidency, he used it so often that it came to be known as the “Little White House.” He died there of a stroke on 12 April 1945. Turnley Walker, *Roosevelt and the Warm Springs Story* (New York: A.A. Wyn, 1953). In Washington, air conditioning equipment had been installed in the White House in 1933, but the Presidential retreats served as respites from the White House workplace as well as from Washington weather.

⁶⁶ *A Brief History of Camp Hoover* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, 1987). Jimmy Carter, a fly fisherman like Hoover, was apparently the only other President to use Camp Hoover. W. Dale Nelson, *The President Is at Camp David* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1995), 4.

personal physician recommended the cool, fresh air of the mountains. Consequently, in late March 1942, Roosevelt asked National Park Service Director Newton B. (“Newt”) Drury to find a mountain cabin or small lodge fairly close to Washington for his occasional use. Drury gave the assignment to Conrad L. Wirth, his assistant in charge of recreation and land use planning, telling Wirth that Roosevelt wanted a summer retreat in a secluded mountain location within about 50 miles or a ninety minute drive from the nation’s capital.⁶⁷

After NPS had checked on seven or eight mountainous sites in Maryland and Virginia with utilities and adequate roads and within the prescribed radius, Drury wrote to Secretary of the Interior Ickes with three suggestions, one of which was Catoctin Mountain.⁶⁸ Within two weeks, the head of the President’s Secret Service Detail, Michael F. (“Mike”) Reilly, drove up and made a preliminary inspection of the facilities at Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area. As he walked around the camp grounds, he was accompanied by Connie Wirth and a few other NPS men, guided by Park Manager Mike Williams. The next day, Wirth reported to Drury that they had first looked over the site that NPS had proposed. Wirth did not bother to name it, but was probably the site NPS had planned for the yet unbuilt Camp 4 or another undeveloped site nearby.⁶⁹ Then, Reilly and Wirth walked over to Cabin Camp 2 (Greentop), the facility for crippled children, which Donovan’s organization was currently occupying as Training Area B-2. At that location, Wirth reported that Reilly had declared that “a similar layout is exactly what is desired by the White House. With this in mind, we investigated the Hi-Catoctin camp which is on a side road and has a much better distance view.” Reilly was extremely pleased with Hi-Catoctin, Cabin Camp 3, which had been used by federal employees and the Boy Scouts. Part of Hi-Catoctin had been designated for use by Donovan’s organization, but Reilly and Wirth picked out one of the three subunits of Cabin Camp 3, a cluster of cabins around a lodge, for the President. Reilly suggested a few changes. He also said the President wanted to drive up for a visit, so Wirth told Park Manager Mike

⁶⁷ Conrad L. Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 200-201. Earlier in March, Roosevelt, through Secretary of the Interior Ickes had sought to obtain a site on 1,300 foot-high Sugarloaf Mountain located some 30 miles north of Washington, but the owner, Gordon Strong, a Chicago banker, heir to a railroad fortune, and an ardent Republican, refused his request. Chris Lampton, “One Man and His Mountain,” *Maryland Magazine*, Autumn 1980, 2-5.

⁶⁸ Drury’s suggested sites were Comers Deadening at 3,400 feet in Shenandoah National Park in Virginia, about a 2 ½ hour drive from the White House; Cactoctin Mountain at approximately 1,700 feet in Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area in Maryland, about a two hour drive; and Furnace Mountain, Virginia, at about 900 feet, across the river from Point of Rocks, Maryland, a 90-minute drive from Washington. All were equal in terms of seclusion, Drury noted, but he recommended the Shenandoah site first, if the travel time was not deemed to length, mainly because he thought the wartime Presidential retreat if not used by subsequent Presidents would be of more use to the public in Shenandoah. He ranked Catoctin second and Furnace Mountain third, but he recommended that the President visit Shenandoah and Catoctin before making a final decision. Newton B. Drury to Secretary of the Interior, 31 March 1942, memorandum, National Park Service Records (RG 79), Entry 19, Records of Newton B. Drury, 1940-1951, Box 4, Folder “Catoctin,” National Archives II. Nelson, *The President Is at Camp David*, 5-6, relying upon Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and People*, 201, errs in listing the three suggested sites as Comer’s Deadening, and Camps 3 and 4 at Catoctin. Neither source apparently had access to Drury’s 31 March 1942 memorandum, which clearly lists Furnace Mountain as the third possible site and does not distinguish different sites within Catoctin.

⁶⁹ Author’s deduction from references to these two campsites in Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and People*, 201.

Williams to clear out some of the underbrush for better access by the Presidential limousine. If the President liked what he saw, Wirth said that the already developed Hi-Catoctin facility could be ready for Roosevelt's immediate use and that if the President authorized renovation right away, the alterations could be completed by the first of June 1942.⁷⁰

The President was driven up to Catoctin on 22 April, and in the words of NPS Director Newton Drury, who accompanied him, "he was very much pleased with the area and asked us to proceed immediately with plans and estimates." Because cabins, lodges, and even a swimming pool already existed there, the Presidential Retreat could be created at a comparatively minimal cost and within a short time. Drury submitted to the Secretary of the Interior a map showing the location the President selected and also a plan showing a suggested new floor plan for converting of the recreational lodge at one of the units at Camp 3 into the Presidential lodge.⁷¹

Roosevelt had made his choice. The appeal was clear: Catoctin offered seclusion and security in what was during wartime a secret, guarded military reservation for the OSS. Atop the mountain, the President could enjoy fresh air, temperatures five to ten degrees lower than Washington, and spectacular views, including the Monocacy River in the valley below and mountain ranges in the distance. Roosevelt allegedly took one look at the view and declared, "This is Shangri-La!"⁷² He was referring to the wondrous, enervating and hidden mountainous world depicted in the 1937 film *Lost Horizon* based upon James Hilton's novel.⁷³ The Presidential Retreat would be known as Shangri-la until the 1950s when President Dwight D. Eisenhower renamed it Camp David, after his grandson.⁷⁴

Cabin Camp 3 contained three sub-units—each a group of cabins around a larger building. The Presidential Retreat would encompass one of them. The OSS planned to occupy the other two sub-units as part of the spillover from its occupation of Cabin Camp 2, re-designated Training Area B-2, and the OSS training camp during the war did extend

⁷⁰ Conrad L. Wirth, Supervisor of Recreation and Land Planning, to the Director of NPS, 16 April 1942, memorandum [on Reilly's inspection of 15 April], National Park Service Records (RG 79), Entry 19, Records of Newton B. Drury, 1940-1951, Box 4, Folder "Catoctin," National Archives II.

⁷¹ Newton B. Drury to the Secretary of the Interior, 23 April 1942, memorandum, National Park Service Records (RG 79), Entry 19, Records of Newton B. Drury, 1940-1951, Box 4, Folder "Catoctin," National Archives II, which includes the President's sketches. See also Grace G. Tully, President's private secretary, to Newton B. Drury, 15 August 1942; Drury to Tully, 18 August 1942, in President's Secretary's File, Subject File, Box 164, Folder "Shangri-La," and Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 19 February 1943, enclosing a commemorative album prepared by Conrad L. Wirth, "'Shangri-La,' the President's Lodge, 1942," in President's Personal File 3650, "Shangri-La," all in Franklin D. Roosevelt Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY.

⁷² Nelson, *The President Is at Camp David*, 6.

⁷³ The Arcadian idyll in a mysterious valley in the Himalaya Mountains of Tibet, depicted in *Lost Horizon* (Columbia Pictures, 1937), directed by Frank Capra and starring Ronald Coleman, was based on James Hilton's novel, *Lost Horizon* (New York: W. Morrow, 1933).

⁷⁴ Nelson, *The President Is at Camp David*, 1.

up into what is now part of Camp David.⁷⁵ Both National Park Service and the White House acted quickly. Conrad Wirth submitted proposals and cost estimates based on “what we interpreted to be the President’s wishes.” Existing or remodeled buildings would provide accommodations for three dozens persons, both guests and staff. The OSS could lend Army tents if more accommodations were needed. Wirth noted, however, that there was only one washhouse with showers for the entire Cabin Camp 3, and Training Area B-2 would need those existing showers, since Donovan’s trainees would continue to use two-thirds of the camp. Consequently, Wirth allocated \$600 to put in new shower rooms next to existing toilet facilities so as not to interfere with the use of the rest of the camp by the paramilitary trainees of COI/OSS.⁷⁶ Including all proposed changes to Hi-Catoctin, Wirth estimated at first that modifications necessary for the Presidential Retreat could be made for under \$18,000.⁷⁷ That initial estimate quickly became outdated, however, and as Presidential plans for the facility expanded, Wirth revised and revised, finally providing an estimate of \$150,000. But as he later recalled, the President had said laughingly that Congress would never give him more than \$15,000 for it.⁷⁸

The President gave his final approval to the project on 30 April 1942, and a week later, Catoctin Project Manager Mike Williams was authorized to use any resource needed to complete the work as expeditiously as possible.⁷⁹ Two of the OSS demolitions instructors from the Corps of Engineers, Capt. Charles M. Parkin, Jr., and Lt. Frank A. Gleason, were called upon to help out with a difficult problem. A special small room was added onto the lodge for the President. After it was constructed, Gleason said, the contractor found that there was solid rock under the soil in the area where sewage pipes were to go. He asked the two experts in explosives to split the rock so the pipes could be installed. As the rock was right next to the cabin, it was a tricky task; they had to blow the one without blowing up the other. “We used a powder explosive, nitrostarch,” Gleason said. “It’s less powerful than dynamite. We drilled holes in that rock, filled the

⁷⁵ OSS veterans Charles Parkin, Frank Gleason, and Reginald Spear, on a tour of Catoctin Mountain Park arranged by the author, 18 May 2005. The wartime extent of the OSS camp was confirmed by Catoctin Superintendent Mel Poole and Resource Manager James Voigt, who accompanied the tour.

⁷⁶ Conrad L. Wirth to the Director [of NPS], 25 April 1942, memorandum with enclosure, Cost Estimates Hi-Catoctin Lodge, 24 April 1942, in National Park Service Records (RG 79), Entry 19, Records of Newton B. Drury, 1940-1951, Box 4, Folder “Catoctin,” National Archives II.

⁷⁷ Newton B. Drury to Mike Riley [sic], 25 April 1942, memorandum, National Park Service Records (RG 79), Entry 19, Records of Newton B. Drury, 1940-1951, Box 4, Folder “Catoctin,” National Archives II.

⁷⁸ Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People*, 202. Cost for physical labor and equipment provided by WPA and the National Park Service came in at the \$15,000 that Roosevelt had mandated. But the total cost for the retreat and especially the security measures required far exceeded that figure, and the excess was provided by the Emergency Fund for the President, National Defense, 1942. Additional equipment and supplies were provided by the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. “A Summary of the Development of ‘Shangri-La,’” typescript, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N.Y.

⁷⁹ Newton B. Drury to Secretary of the Interior, 2 May 1942, National Park Service Records (RG 79), Entry 19, Records of Newton B. Drury, 1940-1951, Box 4, Folder “Catoctin;” and Hillory A. Tolson, acting associate director of NPS, to G.B. (“Mike”) Williams, 7 May 1942, National Park Service Records (RG 79), Entry 54 Box 57, both in National Archives II.

holes with nitrostarch and then covered it [the rock] with sandbags, and we set it off. We cracked the rock, and they put the sewer line in.”⁸⁰

Heavy rains in May and June plus wartime shortages of labor and materials delayed progress somewhat, but Mike Williams kept close to schedule on preparing the expanded facility.⁸¹ With NPS employees, skilled craftsmen, WPA workers, U.S. Marines and forty soldiers from the Corps of Engineers all helping, Shangri-La was finished enough for the President, joined by his private secretary and four guests, to inaugurate the Presidential Retreat officially on a daylong visit on 5 July 1942. “U.S.S. Shangri-La—Launched at Catoctin July 5, 1942” Roosevelt wrote in a Navy blue log book as he whimsically declared that the Presidential yacht, the *U.S.S. Potomac*, had been replaced by a new, secret “yacht” for the duration of the war. In his jocular manner, Roosevelt always asked his guests at Catoctin to sign aboard the “U.S.S. Shangri-La” for visits he listed as “cruises.”⁸²

The President and Guests at Shangri-La

Anticipating the President’s visit on the 5th of July, three of the OSS instructors, engineers who were experts in explosives, planned to make a gift for Roosevelt when he arrived and to do it right in front of him. Using the new flexible, “plastic” explosive, Compound C, 1st Lieutenant Charles M. Parkin, 2nd Lieutenant Frank A. Gleason and Sergeant Joseph Lazarsky, were going to burn the President’s initials into a steel plate nearly two inches thick. All of this was going to be “done in the presence of the President,” Parkin recalled. “But the Secret Service would not allow us to do it.”⁸³ They did not want any explosives near the President. So Parkin decided to create the gift in the demolition area and give it to the President after it was finished. One Saturday not long afterward, Parkin was in the demolition area practicing making Roosevelt’s initials with explosives. “The red [warning] flag was up,” he said, “so the President’s car should not have driven into the explosives area, but it did. There was just the President himself and his driver. He introduced himself. But, of course, I knew who he was. He talked to me—

⁸⁰ Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview by the author, 31 January 2005. Account confirmed by Charles M. Parkin during a tour of Catoctin Mountain Park, 18 May 2005.

⁸¹ Newton B. Drury to the President, 8 June 1942, memorandum, NPS Records (NG 79), Entry 19, Records of Newton B. Drury, 1940-1951, Box 4, Folder, “Catoctin,” National Archives II.

⁸² Log Book of the “U.S. S. Shangri-La,” President’s Naval Collection, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY. On 8-11 August 1942, Roosevelt formally “accepted” the mythical yacht, “U.S.S. Shangri-La,” into the U.S. Navy, just as the real yacht, the *U.S.S. Potomac*, was a naval vessel. The Presidential retreat was then officially transferred from the responsibility of the National Park Service to the Department of the Navy.

⁸³ Charles M. Parkin, transcript of interview by the author during tour of Catoctin Mountain Park, 18 May 2005; confirmed by Frank A. Gleason, Jr., that same day; and independently by Joseph Lazarsky, telephone interview with the author, 14 March 2005.

imagine the President of the United States, and I was only a first lieutenant or recently promoted to captain, I don't remember which—but here was the President of the United States apologizing to me that he was sorry [for coming into the demolition area when the warning flag was up]. It shows what a big man he was. And I'm a Republican."⁸⁴ Parkin, Gleason and Lazarsky later completed the sign in the demolition area and presented the inscribed steel plate to the President. Using plastic explosives, they had blasted letters six inches high, spelling "F D R" into a rectangular plate of steel two and a half inches thick, measuring about three feet by four feet, and weighing two to three hundred pounds. It took six enlisted men to pick it up.⁸⁵ The President expressed his amazement and appreciation. What the White House did with the massive steel plate is not known.

Roosevelt and his guests were frequent weekend visitors at Catoctin, going up to the Presidential Retreat nineteen times in the summers of 1942 and 1943. A busy schedule in the Presidential election year of 1944, precluded Roosevelt from making more than four visits to Catoctin that year; and he made no visit to it the following year before his death in April 1945. During the war, the President spent a total of 64 days at his retreat at Catoctin.⁸⁶ On some of those Presidential visits in addition to Roosevelt and his guests and their Secret Service agents, there were sometimes as many as a hundred persons there, most of them staff members who came to help run the facility while the President and his guests were in residence. Because of the cold, the President's camp was basically closed down in the winter from December through May, but many of the staff who accompanied Roosevelt there in late fall, remembered how bitterly cold the nights could get in October and November atop the mountain.⁸⁷

OSS Director William J. Donovan was one of Roosevelt's guests during the President's first overnight visit to Catoctin on the long weekend of 18-21 July 1942. There were a number of guests, including Donovan and former Senator James F. ("Jimmy") Byrnes from South Carolina, a politico who was currently on the Supreme Court but would soon to be appointed to head major wartime mobilization agencies. At one point during the four-day visit, Donovan, Byrnes and his wife, walked over to the closest part of paramilitary training camp only a few hundred yards away. There the instructors at B-2 put on a show for the distinguished guests. Captain William ("Dan") Fairbairn, a lanky, taciturn, bespectacled Scot with graying hair and looked like a harmless old man. But he was a renowned authority on martial arts. Known as "Dangerous Dan" and the "Shanghai Buster," he had been assistant commissioner for the international police force in Shanghai before the war and organized its tough riot-control squad. Since 1940, as the top close-combat instructor for Britain's Special Operations

⁸⁴ Charles M. Parkin, and Cheryl Parkin Evans, his daughter, interview with the author during tour of Catoctin Mountain Park, 18 May 2005.

⁸⁵ Charles M. Parkin, transcript of interview by the author during tour of Catoctin Mountain Park, 18 May 2005.

⁸⁶ List of "FDR's Trips to Shangri-La (now Camp David)," typed list of dates of visits, Vertical File, "Shangri-La;" see also "FDR: Day by Day" chronology prepared by filmmaker Pare Lorentz; both in the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N.Y.

⁸⁷ Nelson, *The President Is at Camp David*, 16-17.

Executive, Fairbairn had taught martial arts at training camps in the United Kingdom and then Camp X in Canada, and in 1942, SOE loaned him to Donovan's organization.⁸⁸ He brought the idea of the "mystery house" or "house of horrors" to replicate more effectively the unexpected conditions of combat.⁸⁹

Now Donovan and the Byrnes watched as the 57-year-old Fairbairn, flipped 20-year-old trainees over on the ground with their arm twisted behind their back. He showed the erstwhile spies and saboteurs how to disable or kill the enemy, even armed guards, using only their hands and feet. While the guests watched, American instructors showed the trainees how to leap into a dangerous situation, firing off groups of two pistols shots from the hip quickly and accurately. One of their targets that day was a papier-mâché dummy painted to look like the Japanese premier, General Hideki Tojo. Writing later in his memoirs, Byrnes said he considered it "circus stuff." But both he and Donovan knew that Roosevelt loved a good show, and they took the British martial arts expert back up the hill to entertain the President with demonstrations of jujitsu, specialized weapons, and stories of curbing battling street gangs in prewar Shanghai.⁹⁰

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, the most famous guest Roosevelt had at Shangri-La, first visited Catoctin on May 15, 1943. The two leaders drove there from Washington during a break in the Trident Conference on Anglo-American strategic planning for 1943-44.⁹¹ In addition to discussing military and diplomatic matters, the pair took time out to try some fishing in a nearby creek. A couple of photographs were taken showing the two sitting by the water with their fishing poles. Sending copies of the pictures to Churchill later that summer, Roosevelt wrote that the photos did not turn out well but they "prove we tried to catch fish."⁹² At least one member of the OSS cadre at Area B reported meeting Churchill on a couple of evenings during that visit. Joseph Lazarsky, from Hazelton in the coal-mining region of northeastern Pennsylvania, was serving as sergeant of the guard. "It was about 11 o'clock at night, and we had a couple of people of ours to do some guard duty up here [at the Presidential Retreat]," Lazarsky remembered. "I was the sergeant on duty. I went up to check on how they were doing. Churchill comes walking down alone. There wasn't much light, but you could see him. He had his cigar, and in one hand, he had a drink in his hand. He introduced himself. I

⁸⁸ Fairbairn is sometimes erroneously referred to as having been the chief of the Shanghai police, for example, in William R. Peers and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America's Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963), 31. In fact, Fairbairn's highest law enforcement position had been as Assistant Commissioner of the international Shanghai Municipal Police in charge of their Armed and Training Reserve, which was the special riot duty unit and its training force. See William L. Cassidy, "Fairbairn in Shanghai," *Soldier of Fortune*, 4 (September 1979): 66-71.

⁸⁹ Lt. Col. William E. Fairbairn, British Army, to Director of Office of Strategic Services, 23 March 1945, memorandum subject: Resume of service of Lt. Col. William E. Fairbairn, p.3, in OSS Records (RG 226), Director's Office Files, Microfilm 1642, Roll 46, Frames 19-20, National Archives II.

⁹⁰ James F. Byrnes, *All in One Lifetime* (New York: Harper, 1958), 195.

⁹¹ Nelson, *The President Is at Camp David*, 15.

⁹² Franklin D. Roosevelt to Winston Churchill, 1 July 1943, President's Personal File 7683, in unnumbered box, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N.Y.

knew what he looked like. I had never met him before. We chatted about two or three minutes, an exchange of greetings. He asked me if I wanted a drink. I said, 'I don't drink.' If I did drink, I wouldn't have taken one, because I was on duty. I told him I had to check the guards." On another night, Lazarsky met the Prime Minister once again, out for a similar stroll. Checking on the guards, the sergeant ran into him once more. "There wasn't much of an exchange. 'It's good to see you again.' That's what he said." Subsequently, it was determined that more protected room was needed for such strolls by Roosevelt's visitors, because a few months later, Lazarsky recalled, the Marine Corps "put the guards and guard posts down lower, before you could make your way up the mountain."⁹³

At least one OSS trainee met the President at Catoctin. Reginald ("Reg") G. Spear, a highly talented young American from Pasadena, California, was descended from a distinguished British and Canadian family. His paternal grandfather had been knighted, his father was a highly decorated Canadian officer in World War I, and his aunt, Mary Ellen Smith from British Columbia, had become Canada's first woman cabinet minister and the first woman Speaker in the entire Commonwealth.⁹⁴ In December 1942, young Spear had enlisted in the Army in Los Angeles, went to OCS at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, and became a second lieutenant in the Army's Ordnance Department. Spear was recruited for the OSS and sent to Training Area B in the winter of 1943-44. One day in mid-February 1944, according to Spear, the camp commander, Colonel Blogg, called him out of ranks and told him that the President wanted to see him. Roosevelt may have known about Spear's family from Churchill. Up at Shangri-La, Spear gave his snappiest salute and then listened as the Roosevelt chatted with him and in the first of a series of meetings, Roosevelt unveiled the nature of a special assignment he had for him. The President pledged him to secrecy.⁹⁵ He was going to send Spear into the Southwest Pacific Theater of Operations where General Douglas MacArthur had refused to allow any of Donovan's OSS men. When his training was completed, Spear was to report to Admiral Chester Nimitz, commander of U.S. naval forces in the Pacific. Although an Army officer, Spear would wear a naval officer's uniform. As will be seen in a subsequent chapter on the OSS in the Far East and the Pacific, Spear would be sent on a number of highly dangerous missions.⁹⁶

⁹³ Joseph Lazarsky, telephone interviews with the author, 14 March 2005, and 2 January 2008.

⁹⁴ Sharon Carstairs, "Mary Ellen Smith, First Woman Cabinet Minister in Commonwealth [sic]," *Debates of the Canadian Senate (Hansard)*, 1st Session, 36th Parliament, Vol. 137, Issue 84, Oct. 21, 1998.

⁹⁵ Reginald G. Spear, telephone conversations with the author, 21 December 2004, 6 January 2005, 7 January 2005, 25 March, 2005, 27 May 2005, 24 June 2005; as well as statements made during a tour of Catoctin Mountain Park and personal discussions while driving roundtrip from McLean, Virginia to Catoctin Mountain Park, Maryland, 18 May 2005.

⁹⁶ Reginald G. Spear, telephone interview with the author, 27 May 2005.

Protecting the President and the Relationship to Area B

At Shangri-La, security for the President was, of course, a major concern, even more so in wartime. On May 14, 1942, Mike Reilly, head of the Secret Service's Presidential protection unit, had inspected the site with Conrad Wirth, and subsequently for three days at the end of May, Reilly met there with Lt. Col. Charles Brooks, USMC, since a unit of Marines was assigned to guard the Presidential Retreat. Before the Marines arrived, the OSS cadre had helped guard the Presidential Retreat in addition to their responsibility for guarding the training camp itself. In addition, Colonel Blogg, the commander of Area B, had agreed to allow Secret Service agents to practice at the pistol range at B-2 and offered the services of British instructor William ("Dan") Fairbairn to instruct agents in jujitsu.⁹⁷ But by the end of August 1942, when William D. Hassett, a former newspaperman now an aide to the President, first accompanied Roosevelt to Shangri-La, he confided in his diary that the nearby group cabin camp was "thrice hush-hush" and was "referred to mysteriously as a camp for training commandos." Soon Hassett found out that it was actually a camp established by Donovan for training saboteurs. In the interest of security, the Secret Service apparently sought by then to minimize interaction between the two facilities. In his diary, Hassett noted that Mike Reilly, had indicated that both Donovan's and the President's camps sought to avoid strangers and to maintain their secrecy, and in regard to the OSS camp, Reilly had said. "We haven't called [on them], because we don't want them to call on us."⁹⁸

The establishment of the Presidential Retreat meant additional secrecy and security for the mountain park. For wartime security purposes, the President's staff, the National Park Service, Secret Service and the Marine guards sought to avoid direct references to the location or name of the Presidential Retreat. Instead, they employed such euphemisms as the "Marines on the hill," or that the President was going to "the camp."⁹⁹ Few of the OSS trainees and only a handful of the enlisted members of the cadre at Training Area B knew who was behind the barbed wire fence in the woods only a few hundred yards away. Sometimes the officers on the cadre mentioned that "Mr. Jones" was coming that weekend, but very few of the enlisted members of the cadre, and even fewer of the trainees, knew that "Mr. Jones" was the President or that there was the Presidential Retreat was in the woods. The enclosed compound was off limits, and OSS personnel who happened to wander through the forest and up to the fence were

⁹⁷Michael F. ("Mike") Reilly, weekly report, quoted in Chief, U.S. Secret Service to Assistant Secretary [of the Treasury] Gaston, 1 June 1942, memorandum, U.S. Secret Service Records, File 103A-3 "Catocin Mountain," Box 16, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY. Reilly misspelled the name of instructor William E. Fairbairn as "C.T. Farber."

⁹⁸ Diary entry of 29 August 1942, in William D. Hassett, *Off the Record with F.D.R., 1942-1945* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1958), 113.

⁹⁹ "The camp," in W.J.H. [Presidential secretary William D. Hassett] to Mr. Latta, 12 May 1944; President's Personal File 8086; Marines "on the hill" (quotation marks in original), Lt. Col. Charles Brooks to Capt. John L. McCrea, 8 July 1942, in President's Secretary's File, Subject File, Box 164, Folder "Shangri-La," both in Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, NY.

confronted by armed Marine guards, held for identification, then given a warning and sternly escorted back to the camp at Area B.¹⁰⁰

Local people in Thurmont, the closest town, knew when the President arrived. They would see the Chief Executive come through the little town on his way up the mountain in his special limousine. When the United States went to war in December 1941, the only armored motor car the U.S. government had that could be used for protection of the President was the one the FBI had seized from Al Capone, when the Chicago gangster went to jail in 1932 for income tax evasion. It was used by Franklin D. Roosevelt from December 1941 until a new armored limousine could be specially made for him in Detroit.¹⁰¹ Longtime Thurmont resident William A. Willhide was 16 in 1942, and remembers the Presidential motorcade. “He was escorted by the state police. It was not an open car, you couldn’t see him. But I knew who it was,” Willhide recalled. “We knew the President was up there [on the mountain].”¹⁰² Another old-timer, said that a busload of Marines was the tip off. “When the President was going to be up there,” James H. Mackley, said, “they would drop off guards under bridges going up the mountain road...to guard them as the President went over the bridges. On one occasion, I was at the square corner...in the center of town. I saw them standing guard there. People in town knew when the President was coming here when they saw the bus coming and dropping off the Marine guards.” Mackley recalled impishly that “after the war, Harry Truman went up there in a convertible—an open convertible. He slipped away from the Secret Service and went up there and drove around himself with the top down.”¹⁰³ Catoctin area residents, however, kept information about the Presidential Retreat to themselves. When newspapers began to print rumors of its location in October 1943, one longtime resident blamed the publicity on outsiders and wrote to the Democratic President that “Republican Thurmont had been ...pleased and silent” about Shangri-La.¹⁰⁴

Marines at Misty Mount

The basic security for the Presidential Retreat was provided by the U.S. Marine Corps. In the summer of 1942, Cabin Camp1 (Misty Mount), a WPA-built camp on a steep, boulder strewn slope on the east side of Catoctin Mountain, was taken over by the Marine Corps to guard Shangri-La. The Marine detachment at Catoctin did not simply

¹⁰⁰ That was the experience of Private Albert R. Guay, diary entry of 15 November 1942, and telephone interview with the author, 24 October 2005. Private Guay, served as assistant company clerk at B-5, from October to December 1942.

¹⁰¹ Information from an exhibit of Presidential armored limousines at the William Jefferson Clinton Presidential Library at the time of a visit by the author during the Annual Meeting of the Oral History Association, held in Little Rock, Ark., October 26-28, 2006.

¹⁰² William A. Willhide, Thurmont, Md., telephone interview with the author, 13 June 2006.

¹⁰³ James H. Mackley, Thurmont, Md., telephone interview with the author, 13 June 2006.

¹⁰⁴ Nelson, *The President Is at Camp David*, 19.

patrol the area to protect the President. As active duty Marines, they engaged in drilling and training exercises when the President was not in residence.

The Marine camp at Misty Mount was nearly one and a half miles away through the woods away from the OSS camp (B-2) at Greentop and almost two and a half miles from the OSS's cadre headquarters (B-5) and the NPS maintenance facility at Round Meadow. There was little contact between the Marines and the OSS unit, each of which sought to maintain the secrecy of its operation. "We never had any interface with the Marines," said OSS demolitions instructor Frank Gleason, who was at B-2 most of the time from June 1942 to March 1943. "Their job was to look after the [Presidential] facilities there. That's all. The Marines *never* were up in our area. Never, while I was there, did we have any relationship with them."¹⁰⁵ Neither Gleason nor his superior in the Special Operations Branch, Captain Charles Parkin, who were instructors at B-2 from 1942 to early 1943, ever visited the Marine camp at Misty Mount.¹⁰⁶

In contrast, while OSS Operational Groups, many of them with paratrooper officers, were training at Area B in 1943 and 1944, some of the more rambunctious OG members found and probed the Marine-guarded compound. "We shadowed Marine patrols during their training," recalled Otto N. Feher, from Cleveland, the son of Hungarian immigrants, and a member of one of the Yugoslavian Operational Groups. "They said if you ever get caught, get ready to get your ass kicked by the Marines."¹⁰⁷ Albert R. Materazzi, a member of the first Italian OG, who was there in July 1943, said "We sought to infiltrate Shangri-La. I don't know whether it was a prank, boredom or just testing ourselves, or whether we just wanted to know whether we could find a weak spot where we could get over the fence. We never succeeded."¹⁰⁸ Other OGs jostled with the Marines. Roger Hall, who was briefly at Area B as an instructor that winter, wrote in a jocular, iconoclastic, if not always accurate, account of the OSS, that "trigger-happy Marines" were continually firing at OSS personnel "whenever we got within an extremely variable distance they called 'range,' and the fact that no one was sent home in a box bordered on the miraculous."¹⁰⁹ In reality, the situation was probably not have been as dangerous as Hall made it seem. "One of our training assignments was to get as close to the Presidential Retreat as we could without endangering lives," recalled former 1st Lieutenant Robert E. Carter an officer in the OSS German Operational Group. "We knew there were armed Marines there, so we didn't approach to close. Never close

¹⁰⁵ Frank A. Gleason, Jr., telephone interview with the author, 31 January 2005. Emphasis in the original conversation.

¹⁰⁶ Frank A. Gleason and Charles M. Parkin on a tour of Catocin Mountain Park arranged by the author of 18 May 2005.

¹⁰⁷ Brian Albrecht, "WWII Vet Recalls the 'Stuff that Stays with You,'" *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 27 May 2007, reprinted in *OSS Society Digest*, Number 1760, 30 May 2007, osssociety@yahoo.com, accessed 30 May 2007.

¹⁰⁸ Albert R. Materazzi, email to the author, 24 January 2005, and telephone interview with the author, 23 September 2005.

¹⁰⁹ Roger Hall, *You're Stepping on My Cloak and Dagger* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1957), 34-35.

enough to raise an alarm or problem for ourselves. Never close enough to be fired on.”¹¹⁰ But some groups apparently took a more reckless approach. “We tried to penetrate the Marine guards surrounding Shangri-La,” recalled Caesar J. Civitella, a trainee in the second Italian OG, about a night infiltration exercise that took place in November or December 1943. “They were alerted. We’d try to get close. We’d get exposed. They fired blanks at us. It was not live ammunition. They must have been in on it.”¹¹¹

For Catoctin RDA Manager Mike Williams and the National Park Service, there were increased responsibilities in having the Presidential Retreat at the park. Preparation of the facility for the use of the Commander-in-Chief that summer had been a major job. Preparation for the winter brought added tasks. “This has been our first experience in attempting to operate the camps through the winter,” Williams reported to Conrad Wirth in November 1942, “and as the plumbing and water systems were not designed or constructed for winter use there was considerable work connected with protecting them.”¹¹² With Marines and OSS personnel at Catoctin all year round, there was also a significant increase in trash and sewage. Garbage and trash at a large garbage dump used by the two military outfits required periodic burning. While the Army had its own trucks, the Marines used NPS vehicles to haul sewage, which had to be taken four and three-quarters miles from camps in order to protect their water supply. Because of the war, gasoline was rationed and in short supply in America. In March 1943, Mike Williams had to warn the Marines that unless the Marines Corps provided gasoline for their own use as well as reimbursing the National Park Service the 169 gallons of fuel he had loaned them, the park facilities would run out of gasoline within 24 hours.¹¹³ Presumably the Marines responded from military stockpiles as the park and the two military camps in it--both OSS and the Marine Corps—continued to operate.

End of OSS Use of Area B at Catoctin Mountain Park

As early as March 1943, the OSS Director of Training, citing a number of reasons, had recommended that Area B be abandoned. The creation of the Presidential Retreat had caused the restriction and sometimes complete stoppage of OSS training while the Chief Executive was in residence. The site had been deemed not suitable for trainees of Morale Operations Branch, which was preparing for new disinformation campaigns and who included women as well as men. There was only limited manpower

¹¹⁰ Robert E. Carter, telephone interview with the author, 28 August 2008.

¹¹¹ Caesar J. Civitella, telephone interview with the author, 18 April 2008.

¹¹² G.B. (“Mike”) Williams to Conrad L. Wirth, 5 November 1942, p.5, a seven-page report on developments at the park since the completion of the main lodge for the President, photocopy in World War II Archives, Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md.

¹¹³ G.B. { (“Mike”) Williams to [Marine] Commander, Camp No. 1, 5 March 1943, memorandum, World War II Archives, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives at Catoctin Mountain Park Headquarters, Thurmont, Md.

within Schools and Training Branch to staff Area B. Finally, the Maryland state health department had reported that the sewage disposal system was inadequate and that a new system would have to be installed.¹¹⁴ Although Donovan tentatively approved the decision to abandon Area B, it was not implemented at that time, because it was decided that the area could be useful in handling the overflow of Operational Groups from Training Area F, the former Congressional Country Club.¹¹⁵

There had been thoughts of closing OSS Area B as early as the winter of 1942-43, when OSS training began to be centralized,¹¹⁶ but the facility was maintained through early 1944 before it was finally abandoned by Donovan's organization. The station complement, Detachment B, had remained throughout the period, 1942-1944, at Area B-5, but the training camp at B-2 was used sporadically during those years of operation. Area B played a major role in the initial training of SO and SI personnel in the spring and summer of 1942, and then again performed an important function in the preparation of Operational Groups during the summer of 1943 and the winter of 1943-1944.

Early in 1944 with the OSS Operational Groups and Special Operations teams already trained and in place for the invasion of France scheduled for that summer, Donovan's organization decided to end its use of Area B at Catoctin. OSS was shifting its training focus to the Far East and building up training camps on the West Coast. Thus, OSS would abandon, at least temporarily, the use of Training Areas B-2 ("Greentop") and B-5 (the abandoned CCC Camp MD-NP-3), as well as the approximately 2,000 acres in the northwesterly undeveloped portion of Catoctin RDA, which had been used for field exercises.¹¹⁷ The plan was to discontinue the training camps at Area B as soon the last Operational Group completed its training. Schools and Training Branch had rejected the suggestion Capt. Montague Mead, successor to Ainsworth Blogg, and the final commanding officer of Detachment B, who had recommended additional improvements to Area B. Some OSS training of Operational Groups continued at Area B-2 until the end

¹¹⁴ Col. Paul J. McDonnell, OSS HQ Detachment, to Col. William J. Donovan, 5 March 1943, subject: Retention of Detachment "B" in its Present Status [more accurately, a recommendation not to retain it], in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II.

¹¹⁵ G. Edward Buxton, memorandum for the Secretariat, 8 May 1943; Lt. F. J. Ball to Major Doering, 30 March 1943, subject: Release of Area "B," all in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II.

¹¹⁶ Area B was conspicuously missing from the list of SI-SO training camps prepared by the newly established OSS Training Directorate in January 1943; see Training Directorate to All Geographic Desks and Area Operations Officers, 1 January 1943, subject: The Training Areas, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II.

¹¹⁷ In order to keep its options open in case it needed the site again, OSS headquarters decided to indicate to the War Department that it did not need the use of the Catoctin area "at the present time" and that it was agreeable to having the area made available to Camp Ritchie "on a revocable permit basis," thus being able to "keep a `string' on the property and re-enter at such time as the premises are again needed by us." A. William Asmuth, Jr. office of the counsel, OSS, memorandum for the files, 26 April 1944, subject: Arrangement with the War Department for Temporary Disposition of Area B, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II.

of April 1944.¹¹⁸ By the end of May 1944, the camp was evacuated, except for a handful of fire guards composed of soldiers from nearby Camp Ritchie. The OSS instructors had left from B-2 and most of the cadre of Detachment B based at B-5 had been reassigned. In mid-May, headquarters notified Mead that all OSS training at Area B would be discontinued as of 1 June 1944. Mead was directed to close out the post exchange, transfer all OSS equipment and other property at Area B to other OSS training areas, and turn over use of the facilities to the commanding officer of nearby Camp Ritchie.¹¹⁹

Catoctin Park, NPS and Military Intelligence at Camp Ritchie

From Catoctin Mountain Park, both the OSS and the NPS had a sporadic and congenial relationship with Camp Ritchie located at Cascade, Maryland, only a couple of miles north of the park. In 1926, the State of Maryland had purchased extensive land for the camp for the Maryland National Guard and named it in honor of Governor Albert C. Ritchie. In the spring of 1942, the U.S. War Department took over the camp, and it served as the Army's Military Intelligence Training Center until it was deactivated in 1945.¹²⁰ When it became the military intelligence training school, Camp Ritchie disappeared from the public view. As with Catoctin RDA, an air of secrecy cloaked not only the activities going on at Camp Ritchie but all the Army personnel sent there. The military trainees at the Army's Military Intelligence School arrived individually or in small groups under classified orders. They were told not to reveal their identity to other trainees and not to disclose to anyone including their families that they were in military intelligence. More than 19,000 combat intelligence specialists graduated from the Army's Military Intelligence School at Camp Ritchie during the war and went to serve in the Army or Army Air Forces as interpreters, interrogators of prisoners of war, specialists in enemy units and equipment, and aerial photograph analysts. Many of them were sent on field exercises into the northwestern part of Catoctin Mountain Park.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Col. H. L. Robinson, Executive Officer, Schools and Training, OSS, to Col. Sherman I. Strong, 11 March 1944, subject: Proposed Improvements at Area B, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 163, Folder 1772, National Archives II.

¹¹⁹ Col. Sherman I. Strong, Commanding Officer, OSS HQ and HQ Detachment, to Capt. Montague Mead, 11 May 1944, subject: Discontinuance of Area B, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 163, Folder 1772, National Archives II.

¹²⁰ "Fort Ritchie," in Robert B. Roberts, *Encyclopedia of Historic Forts* (New York: Macmillan, 1988), 388. After the war, Camp Ritchie was reactivated in 1951 by the Army, renamed Fort Ritchie, and designated to support the Alternate Joint Communications Center. From 1964 until the closure of the base in 2005, Fort Ritchie served as headquarters of the U.S. Army's Communications Command (under various titles) responsible for the management of communications and electronics functions of more than one hundred military agencies and activities in the United States. Camp Ritchie was located half a dozen miles north of Thurmont, Maryland on Route 550.

¹²¹ "Military Intelligence Training Center at Camp Ritchie, Md.," National Army Security Agency Association. <http://www.nassa-home.org/history/schools.htm>, accessed 14 April 2007. The MITC was

In April 1942, at the same time that the OSS took over Catoctin RDA, the commanding officer of the Military Intelligence Training Center and Camp Ritchie, Colonel Charles Y. Banfill,¹²² requested permission from the National Park Service to use the northern portion of Catoctin RDA for field exercises under the permit granted to the War Department by the Department of the Interior. Banfill informed Park Manager Mike Williams that the operations would include short field maneuvers, the construction of gun emplacements, slit trenches, camouflaged installations, as well as the placing of booby traps and barbed wire entanglements. They would involve cross-country patrols day and night, the movement of cavalry patrols and horse drawn artillery. Tanks and artillery would be simulated by light vehicles and even plywood mockups. There would be no firing of guns or use of high explosives, but there would be pyrotechnics and smoke, which would be very closely supervised to insure maximum safety. Booby traps would be electrically detonated by engineer troops and removed immediately after the field exercise. No booby trap would be left unguarded at any time. After each operation, the area would be cleaned up to the satisfaction of the Park Manager. Given such assurances, Williams recommended the permit be issued as the Center's activity was similar to that being conducted by the OSS. The permit was issued in May 1942.

Mike Williams had visited the training exercises on several nights to ensure that they complied with the permit and did not damage the park property. He reported that the vehicles used were mainly lightweight, both motorized and horse drawn, and that they were confined to existing roads in the area. After observing the night operations, he concluded that the park would not suffer serious damage. NPS policy during the war to allow short-term military use of the national parks for bivouacking and maneuvers as long as it did not cause serious damage. During the summer of 1943, the Military Intelligence Training Center conducted field exercises and problems about three times a week, mainly at night in the northwesterly 1,800 acres of the park, an area west of the Foxville-Deerfield Valley Road, that had not been developed by the RDA. On average, these involved some 300 soldiers and 50 vehicles. So scrupulous were the soldiers from Camp Ritchie in protecting the park environment, that at the end of the summer, Williams wrote personally to Colonel Banfill congratulating him and his men for taking all precautions to preserve the natural growth in the area and for having removed all the debris resulting from the maneuvers.¹²³

formally activated 19 June 1942, but its cadre began to arrive earlier. For accounts by individual trainees at the MITC on their experiences in the classrooms, firing ranges, and field exercises in and around Camp Ritchie, see, for example, Richard Warren Seltzer, Sr, account posted at <http://www.samizdat.com/gen/seltzer/lifeandtimes.html>, accessed 14 April 2007; and Lewis Bloom, Military Intelligence Service veteran, oral history, Rutgers Oral History Archives of World War II, <http://oralhistory.rutgers.edu>, and also telephone interview with the author, 17 January 2007.

¹²² On Brig. Gen. Charles Y. Banfill, U.S. Army Air Forces, see official biography in <http://www.af.mil/bios/bio.asp?bioID=4597> accessed 14 April 2007.

¹²³ Hillory A. Tolson, acting director, memorandum, 23 December 1942; Col. Charles Y. Banfill to Regional Director, Region One, 1 April 1943; and G.B. ("Mike") Williams to the Director, 8 February 1943, and Williams to the Acting Regional Director, 6 April 1943; Special Use Permit...by the Military Intelligence Training Center for war training purposes," 5 May 1943, signed by G.B. Williams, all in NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 7, Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General 201, National Defense "C" Box 79, Folder 201; and see also support from Fred T. Johnson, acting regional director of NPS Region One,

The Military Intelligence Training Center at Camp Ritchie used the northwestern area of the park again in the summer of 1943, but NPS had to cancel the permit in October 1943 because the Capt. Montague Mead, the commanding officer of OSS Training Detachment B, had informed Mike Williams that OSS use of Area B would be increased dramatically.¹²⁴ This was due to the expansion involved the massive preparation of Operational Groups (OGs) for use in the Allied invasion of France in 1944.¹²⁵ For those purposes, Training Area B had to use all its facilities. It was packed to overflowing (260 men when the maximum capacity was 251) with OG trainees and holdees; they occupied both Area B-2 and B-5 and conducted extensive field maneuvers in various areas of the park.¹²⁶

The Operational Groups—French, Italian, Norwegian, Yugoslav, and Greek—were trained at Areas F and B and then sent to Europe in the summer of 1943 and the winter of 1943-1944, and the OSS role in Catoctin Mountain Park came to a close in mid-1944. Although the OSS was leaving, the War Department had other uses for the property at Catoctin Mountain Park. It intended to turn its area of the park over to the commanding general at the Military Intelligence Training Center at Camp Ritchie.¹²⁷ After acknowledging the May 1944 notice from Secretary of War Henry Stimson that the OSS no longer needed the facilities at Catoctin, Acting Secretary of the Interior Abe Fortas issued a new permit effective 1 June 1944. This permit allowed the use “for war purposes” of Cabin Camp 1 and Cabin Camp 2 as well as the old CCC camp, plus 1,800 acres in the northwest undeveloped portion of the park, which had been used for field exercises by the OSS and by the trainees from Camp Ritchie. The idea was that the intelligence and counter-intelligence trainees of the Army and Army Air Forces from currently overcrowded Camp Ritchie would be housed in what had been OSS Areas B-2 (Greentop) and B-5 (the old CCC camp) and they would continue to hold field exercises

memorandum for the director, 10 April 1943, in NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 47, RDAs, Box 60, Folder 601 Lands, Catoctin, all in the National Archives II.

¹²⁴ For secrecy purposes, the NPS never used the term OSS, but referred only vaguely to “the military unit occupying Areas B-2 and B-5,” and the like in its reports.

¹²⁵ G. B. (“Mike”) Williams to Col. Charles Y. Banfill, 20 October 1943, in NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 7, Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General 201, National Defense “C” Box 79, Folder 201, National Archives II.

¹²⁶ Undated report “Use of northern portion of area [Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area] for special field maneuvers [1942-1943],” located in NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 7, Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General 201, National Defense-General, Box 73, Black Binder, “War Uses, C,” and A. Van Beuren to Mr. Weston Howland, 24 September 1943, subject: Areas B and B-2, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 223, Folder 3106, both in National Archives II.

¹²⁷ In addition to troops from Camp Ritchie, some units from the Ordnance School at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland were authorized to use Catoctin Mountain Park. During the spring of 1944, NPS granted permits on 16 March and 27 April 1944 for overnight bivouacking of troops at the West Picnic Area, south of Route 77, for troops from the Ordnance Bomb Disposal School at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. Fifty troops participated in March and a convoy of eleven vehicles carrying 70 troops came in April. Mike Williams reported that the grounds remained in excellent condition. G. B. (“Mike”) Williams to the Director, 22 April 1944 and 30 June 1944, both in NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 7, Central Classified File, 1933-1949, General 201, National Defense “C” Box 79, Folder 201, National Archives II.

in the northwest quadrant of the park.¹²⁸ Banfill, now a brigadier general, would as the commandant at Camp Ritchie, replace the OSS commander of Area B as the officer responsible for War Department usage of the formerly OSS area of the park.¹²⁹

The National Park Service took the opportunity of a change in military jurisdiction within the park to implement some of the lessons it had learned during the previous two years of military use of the park. The new permit issued in May 1944 put some restrictions on the use of weapons in the park and also allocated some of the additional costs to the military.¹³⁰ The Army's plan for using the park to reduce the

¹²⁸ Acting Secretary of the Interior Abe Fortas to Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, 31 May 1944, and attached Special Use Permit Authorizing Use of Land in the Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area, Maryland, by the War Department, for war purposes, 31 May 1944, plus attached map, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 23, National Archives II; accepted by Acting Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson, 15 July 1944, in NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 7, Box 79, Folder 201, National Archives II. There is a copy in Special Use Permits Folder, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, World War II, located at Catoctin Mountain Park Headquarters, Thurmont, Md.

¹²⁹ Capt. Montague Mead, OSS, to Brig. Gen. Charles Y. Banfill, commandant, Camp Ritchie, 7 June 1944, and Brig. Gen. Charles Y. Banfill to Capt. Montague Mead, 13 June 1944, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 163, Folder 1772, National Archives II.

¹³⁰ Because the OSS ended its use of the park, including Cabin Camp 2 (and the old CCC camp which had reverted to Army), and because the Marine Corps continued to use Cabin Camp 1, the Department of the Interior in May 1944 cancelled the use permit issued to the War Department on 16 May 1942. The new use permit for the War Department, issued by Assistant Secretary Fortas on 31 May 1944, effective 1 June 1944, was "revocable at will" by the Secretary of the Interior. For coverage, see undated report "Use of Camp No. 2, abandoned CCC Camp MD-NP-3, and northwesterly undeveloped portion of Catoctin Area consisting in all of approximately 2,000 acres," located in NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 7, Box 73, Black Binder, "War Uses, C," National Archives II.

The authorized area appears smaller than that granted for use in 1942. In 1944, it was 2,000 acres including Cabin Camp 2 and the area northwest of it. See A.E. Demaray, Associate Director to Director, 16 Jan. 1945 [sic] in file below Entry 7, Box 79, Folder 201, National Archives II. The 1944 permit granted to the War Department included a number of conditions that had not been in the 1942 permit. As OSS counsel explained after talking with Col. Ainsworth Blogg, the original commander of Area B, "It is our understanding that shortly after our original entrance into the Area, certain verbal restrictions were imposed upon our use of the premises by the Department of the Interior, and that the revised permit simply reflects these limitations." A. William Asmuth, Jr., office of the general counsel of OSS, to Charles S. Cheston, acting assistant director of OSS, 26 June 1944, subject: Transfer of Area "B" to Camp Ritchie, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 137, Box 3, Folder 24, National Archives II.

The provisions added to the 1944 permit included the following: NPS employees should not be interfered with in use of the road between the abandoned CCC camp and the NPS Central Service Group. Precaution must be taken to preserve and protect geological and historical objects, and wherever possible structures, roads, trees, shrubs, and other natural terrain features should remain unmolested. Precaution should be taken against fire and vandalism and if fire occurred, War Department personnel and equipment should be made available for fire suppression within the area. The pumping station that supplied water to Group Camp 2 (Greentop) would be operated by NPS, but minor maintenance and repair of the station would be performed by the War Department. The Permittee (the War Department) would bear the cost of electrical energy consumed by Permittee by reimbursing the NPS upon proper billing. All garbage and flammable rubbish would be disposed of at a location designated by the manager of the Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area, and all garbage would be buried and all rubbish burned at least once every five days. Only pistol ammunition could be used in Camp 2 and no live ammunition of any description could be used in the area east of the Foxville-Deerfield Road except rifle or pistol ammunition which could be used on the range situated approximately 400 yards west of the abandoned CCC MD-NP-3. The permittee was granted permission to erect additional housing facilities if and when necessity arose, the

overcrowding at Camp Ritchie was eventually deemed unnecessary by General Banfill. Consequently the trainees and instructors from Camp Ritchie did not take up residence at Areas B-2 or B-5. The Marines, however, did continue to reside in Cabin Camp 1 (Misty Mount).

The Marine Corps suffered extremely heavy casualties in the capture of Japanese-fortified islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa in 1945, and in July, the Corps requested the use of Cabin Camp 2 (Greentop) for the “physical rehabilitation” of its troops returning from those battles in the Pacific. The overcrowding at Camp Ritchie had ended and the Military Intelligence trainees had never taken up residence in Cabin Camp 2.¹³¹ Because Camp 2 was available, the Marines would, in fact, move from Cabin Camp 2 up into it in January 1946. In fact, Greentop, OSS Training Area B-2, which had been vacated by the OSS in the spring of 1944, would be occupied by the Marine Corps from January 1946 until March 1947.¹³²

exact location of such structure to be determined by the manager of the Catoctin RDA and the proper Army officials, and the plans for the structures to be approved by the NPS. At the termination of the use of the area, all buildings, except those of a strictly military technical nature, were to be transferred to the Department of the Interior or, like those of strictly military nature, removed by the permittee and the site restored as nearly as possible to its condition at the time of the issuance of the permit. “Special Use permit...by the War Department,” 31 May 1944, effective 1 June 1944, Map Attached; Abe Fortas, Acting Secretary of the Interior; accepted 15 July 1944, by Robert P. Patterson, Acting Secretary of War, NPS Records (RG 79), Entry 7, Box 79, Folder 201, National Archives II.

¹³¹ Col. Donald J. Kendall, USMC, to Garland B. (“Mike”) Williams, NPS, 3 July 1945; and G.B. Williams to Director NPS Region One, 6 July 1945, memorandum; in Correspondence Folder, Catoctin Mountain Park Archives, World War II, located at Catoctin Mountain Park Headquarters, Thurmont, Md.

¹³² The Marine Corps’ use of Cabin Camp 2 (Greentop), 1946-1947, is covered in a subsequent chapter on the postwar period.