

Chapter 7

Daily Life in Camp, Park, and Town

Since they might well serve in sabotage teams or guerilla units behind enemy lines, the typical recruit for Special Operations, Operational Groups, or the Communications Branch, was generally obtained from the armed forces. Most were former civilians, not career military, men who had simply enlisted or been drafted into the armed forces because of the war. For the agents who would operate behind enemy lines, OSS was especially looking for a combination of intelligence, imagination, courage and, if necessary, ruthlessness. OSS recruiters visited military training centers looking for high aptitude individuals with demonstrated initiative and ability and where possible fluency in an appropriate foreign language. They accepted only volunteers for possible hazardous duty. Most of the young recruits craved the excitement and challenge of a special overseas assignment. A college graduate seeking a different lifestyle, Richard P. (“Scotty”) Scott was drifting in 1942 when he was drafted into the Army. Despite his business degree, he was working as an electrician on a 247-foot diesel yacht in the Caribbean. The Army sent him to Officers’ Candidate School (OCS), but after becoming a 2nd lieutenant, he spent two years behind a desk in the Signal Corps. He yearned to get overseas. He was, as he recalled, rescued by an OSS recruiter, “a dashing Major in paratroop boots,” who interviewed him and got him into the OSS Communications Branch. After training at Area C, he was sent to the Far East. It changed his entire life. Two decades later, he became Assistant Secretary of State for Communications and then Director of Communications for the Central Intelligence Agency.¹

“In September 1943, I was in paratroop school at Fort Benning, Georgia,” recalled Caesar J. Civitella, a private from Philadelphia, “and then at Camp Mackall near Fort Bragg, North Carolina, for airborne and gliders. A guy from the OSS came and interviewed me. I was 20 years old. He asked me did I speak Italian. I did. He asked me if I as sent to Italy and had relatives there and they were working with the Nazis would I shoot them. I didn’t know if I had any relatives in Italy. So I said, ‘Of course.’ He said, ‘You’ll hear from us.’”² A month later, Civitella reported for training with an Italian Operational Group at Area F and then Area B before being sent to North Africa, France, and Italy. He spent the next thirty years in the special operations: OSS, Army Special Forces, and CIA.

Asked about his fellow Special Operations trainees at Area B in the fall of 1943—many of them brash young paratroopers with parachute wings on their blouses and

¹ “Richard P. Scott, W3EFZ,” in James F. Ranney and Arthur L. Ranney, eds, *The OSS CommVets Papers*, 2nd ed. (Covington, Ky.: James F. Ranney, 2002), 211.

² Caesar J. Civitella, telephone interview with the author, 18 April 2008.

trouser cuffs jammed into their jump boots—one of them, future Jedburgh John K. Singlaub, who would serve in France and China, and end his Army career as a major general, recalled that “they were all independent thinkers. I mean I had this impression. They were all very active type people who were willing to do things rather than to sit back and wait. They quickly took charge when they were given a mission. They all wanted to be there and to succeed.”³

William (“Bill”) B. Dreux, a young lawyer from New Orleans, was an infantry lieutenant not a paratrooper and was therefore more typical of the Special Operations volunteer. He had enlisted in the Army, done his basic training, and completed OCS at Fort Benning, Georgia. It was there in June 1943, that he was interviewed by a visiting lieutenant colonel. After learning that Dreux spoke French fluently, the officer asked if he would be interested in a mission behind enemy lines in German-occupied France, working with the *Maquis* in ambushes and sabotage. “We are asking for volunteers,” the colonel said, “because these will be hazardous missions. We expect maximum casualties.”⁴ Elsewhere, Lieutenant Rafael Hirtz was told that operatives behind enemy lines had only a 50-50 chance of survival. Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina to a wealthy French-Spanish family, Hirtz had grown up in Hollywood in the 1930s. After the U.S. entered the war, he became an Army officer and was subsequently approached by the OSS to train for operations in France.⁵ While such warnings deterred some potential recruits, Dreux and Hirtz had both volunteered. Both trained first at Area F, then Hirtz went to Area B and Dreux to Area A. Both were later parachuted into Brittany, France in 1944 in support of the Allied invasion. After the war, Dreux returned to New Orleans to become a highly successful lawyer. Hirtz finished college and spent the next forty years working international finance, grain, and trade.

The son of an American doughboy who married a French woman after World War I, Jacques F. Snyder was born in New York City but raised in France. His father was killed in an automobile accident. When the Germans occupied the country, 19-year-old Jacques Snyder returned to the United States to fight the Germans. He joined the Canadian armed forces, and when America entered the war, he enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps. He wanted to be a pilot but could not, and because of his fluent French, he was put in a language training school in Tennessee. On off-duty evenings, he played clarinet and saxophone in a swing band. Returning home late one night, he was hit by a car and suffered several broken ribs. An OSS recruiter visited him in the hospital and asked if he would volunteer for hazardous duty. Snyder’s son said his father told him that “he thought it couldn’t be more dangerous than playing in the swing band” and he volunteered. After training in Areas F and A, he was sent to North Africa and then

³ Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub (USA-Ret.), transcript of interview by Maochun Yu and Christof Mauch, 31 October 1996, p. 9, OSS Oral History Transcripts, CIA Records (RG 263), Box 4, National Archives II, College Park, Md. , hereinafter, National Archives II.

⁴ William B. Dreux, *No Bridges Blown* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1971), 1-2.

⁵ Transcript of an undated interview with OSS veteran, Lt. Rafael Hirtz posted on Library of Congress Veterans History Project, 12 February 2004, accessed 10 January 2007.

parachuted into France and later into Indochina. After the war, he worked for military intelligence, retiring from the Defense Intelligence Agency in 1991.⁶

Bored as a company clerk in the Army in spring 1942, former Tulsa journalist Edgar Prichard was interviewed by the base intelligence officer, a major, who after reviewing his record and learning that he could speak Spanish and French, asked Prichard if he would like to volunteer for some “interesting duty.” “The only thing he told me was that if I agreed I would be placed on the detached enlisted men’s list,” Prichard recalled years later. “Of course, I had never heard of it, but the first sergeant of the company I was in told me it [detached service] was great duty, so I volunteered.” Under orders marked “Secret,” he arrived in Washington a week later “I learned there that I was in the office of the Coordinator of Information and that I was assigned to the S.O. Branch and that I was going to be sent to a secret camp. I was told to write any letters I wanted to write because I would be out of communication with my family and friends for a time. I was admonished not to tell anyone about what organization I had just joined or where I would be.”⁷ After training at Areas B and A, Prichard was sent to North Africa. After the war, he became a lawyer in Arlington, Virginia.

The secret nature of the organization and the security background checks on recruits caused some difficulties as well as considerable anxiety for the recruits and the folks back home. Initially, Donovan’s organization used Dun and Bradstreet, the commercial, credit-rating firm,⁸ but usually the background checks for the OSS were conducted by the Military Intelligence, the FBI, Treasury agents, or other federal law enforcement agencies. With agents asking questions of former employers and neighbors, parents knew that their youngster had gotten involved in something, but they did not know what. Some thought their son had gotten into trouble—desertion, being absent without leave (AWOL), or some such military offense—and not told them. “When I got home [on leave], everybody wanted to know what I had done because the Treasury Department had been around checking my references,” said Lieutenant James Ranney, of Akron, Ohio, who had been recruited for the Communications Branch. “I said that I was going into a job that required security clearance.”⁹ “We were investigated all the way back to high school,” said Albert (“Al”) Materazzi, a young engineering officer from the small, candy manufacturing town of Hershey, Pennsylvania, who had volunteered for the Italian Operational Group. “I remember a frantic call from my mother asking what had I done, the FBI was in Hershey asking all sorts of questions. I was able to calm her down by saying I was being considered for a government job and such investigations were

⁶ James Snyder, son of Jacques L. Snyder, email correspondence with the author, 16 January and 13 February 2008.

⁷ Edgar Prichard, “Address to Historical Prince William, Inc.,” 16 January 1991, p. 1, typescript of a talk, located, along with a newspaper clipping of the speech, Park Archives, Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.

⁸ Robert R. Kehoe, “An Allied Team with the French Resistance in 1944,” *Studies in Intelligence: Journal of the American Intelligence Professional*, June 2002, 103, originally written in 1997

⁹ James F. Ranney, telephone interview with the author, 8 January 2005.

routine.”¹⁰ Materazzi trained at Areas A, F, and B and then served in Italy. With his postgraduate work on graphic arts, Materazzi worked after the war as vice President of a printing and lithography company and subsequently as director of research and quality control at the U.S. Government Printing Office.¹¹

OSS recruits were prohibited from disclosing their new affiliation or describing or identifying the location of their training camp, even to their parents. 18-year-old Art Reinhardt from near Buffalo, was recruited for the Communications Branch from an Air Corps’ radio school. The OSS officer emphasized it was an elite group, spoke of an intriguing if vague assignment and mentioned that “there’s some danger involved.” Reinhardt readily volunteered. “I wanted to get involved in the war. That was my objective. When you are that old, you are adventurous. You don’t really concern yourself with the adverse consequences.”¹² On detached service from the Army Air Corps, he was sent to OSS headquarters and then to Area F, Area A, while he was cleared for security purposes, and finally to the communications school at Area C. Not allowed to provide any details to his parents, he simply wrote that he was in Washington undergoing training and gave them, as he was told, a postal address: P.O. Box, 1925, Washington, D.C.¹³

Many of the men recruited from Army bases for the OSS did not know the name of the organization recruiting them or, if they learned its initials, did not know what OSS stood for. Captain Francis (“Frank”) Mills, an artillery officer from Oklahoma, recruited for Special Operations, was told that O.S.S. stood for “Overseas Supply Service.”¹⁴ Information about the organization was withheld from recruits until they were cleared for service. The OSS buildings in Washington, D.C. at 2430 E Street, N.W., were supposed to be top secret, but as Ralph Tibbetts, a young recruit for the Commo Branch, found out from the waitress at a nearby delicatessen when he arrived too early, the neighbors correctly suspected that the buildings were filled with “a bunch of spies.”¹⁵ The entrance was protected by an armed soldier and a guard dog, and no one was allowed in without an OSS pass, identification or an escort.¹⁶ Inside when William Dreux reported for duty, he found the long corridors were filled with men and women hurrying back and forth. Some were civilians, but most were military officers. The majority wore Army or Army Air Corps uniforms but some were from the Navy or Marines. Most strikingly were the

¹⁰ Albert Materazzi, Bethesda, Md., *OSS Society Digest*, Number 992, 31 March 2005, ossociety@yahoo.com, accessed 31 March 2005.

¹¹ Joe Holley, “Albert Materazzi, 92, Served in OSS during World War II,” *Washington Post*, 17 April 2008, B7.

¹² Arthur Reinhardt, interview with the author, during a tour of Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va. 14 December 2004.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Francis (“Frank”) Mills in Russell Miller, *Behind the Lines: The Oral History of Special Operations in World War II* (New York: St. Martin’s, 2002), 60.

¹⁵ Ralph Tibbett, memoir in *OSS CommVets Newsletter*, Spring 1997, paraphrased in Dorothy Ringlesbach, *OSS: Stories That Can Now Be Told* (Bloomington, Ind.: Author House, 2005), 33.

¹⁶ Roger Hall, *You’re Stepping on My Cloak and Dagger* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1957), 13-14.

foreign officers: British officers with Sam Brown leather shoulder belts and riding boots; a Scot in kilts, and a Free French officer in light blue uniform and kepi cap. Dreux blinked when a major told him that his first OSS training would be at the Congressional Country Club. “Did you say Congressional Country Club, Sir?” he asked. “That’s right, Lieutenant. Very plush place. Herbert Hoover was one of the founders. It’s about six miles out of town. We’ve taken over the whole club for training, golf course and all.”¹⁷ Dreux and the French OGs were there for a few weeks before being transferred to Area A where they would undergo intensive guerrilla training for the next two months.¹⁸

The Secret Intelligence Branch also recruited in various ways and from diverse groups. William J. Casey, born and raised in a Roman Catholic family in the Borough of Queens in New York City and attended Fordham University and St. John’s Law School. An able entrepreneur, Casey went to Washington as head of a private research bureau in 1941 providing information to businesses on forthcoming mobilization and war orders. After Pearl Harbor, he worked as a consultant for the Bureau of Economic Warfare, helping the Navy get through bureaucratic tangles to increase production of landing craft. Casey was commissioned a naval lieutenant, but as he later wrote, “sailing a desk in the old Navy building on Constitution Avenue was not my idea of helping to win the war. I itched for action and the OSS seemed the best place to get it.” Consequently, he looked up an old friend with whom he had parked cars at Jones Beach as a teenager and who was now a member of Donovan’s law firm, and this led to introductions to Otto Doering and Ned Putzell, partners in the firm who had followed Donovan to Washington and become senior officials in the OSS. The 30-year-old Casey also impressed Donovan himself, who ‘poached’ the talented young officer for detached duty from the Navy. After four months of training and apprenticeship in Washington, including a hazardous paramilitary course at Area B, Casey was dispatched to London. Casey’s eyesight was too poor for working in the field, which he longed to do, but from his office, he ran a number of espionage operations, including efforts within Germany. By the end of the war, Casey briefly headed OSS intelligence operations for all of Europe. After the war, returning to become a Wall Street lawyer and active Republican, he eventually served as Ronald Reagan’s Director of Central Intelligence.¹⁹

Like Casey, Richard Helms, also worked in the Secret Intelligence Branch and subsequently served as Director of Central Intelligence (DCI), but via a different route. Helms came from a prominent family on Philadelphia’s Main Line, and he was educated at private schools in Germany and Switzerland. Graduating from Williams College in 1935, he worked as a journalist in Europe and the United States. When the U.S. entered the war, Helms enlisted in the Navy as a lieutenant and was assigned to the anti-submarine warfare operations center in New York City. In August 1943, the OSS recruited him, without his seeking it, because of his experience and connections in Europe and his fluency in French and German in Europe. He worked first on the SI Planning Staff, and then from 1944 to 1945, he served under Ferdinand Meyer and then Allen Dulles conducting espionage operations from posts in England, France, and

¹⁷ Dreux, *No Bridges Blown*, 11-12.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 13, 15, 17.

¹⁹ William Casey, *The Secret War against Hitler* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway, 1988), 3-5.

Sweden.²⁰ After the war, he worked his way up in the CIA, serving as DCI under Presidents Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon. Most of the SI training took place at Area RTU-11 (“The Farm”) an estate a dozen miles south of Washington or in Area E, estates north of Baltimore, but a number of SI recruits, like William S. Casey, received paramilitary or other Special Operations training at Areas A or B, and some of them received some communications training at Area C.

For the Communications Branch, most of the radio-operators for OSS’s clandestine field or regional base communications network were obtained from the radio, radar, or other electronic schools of the Army, Army Air Force, and Navy. They were generally enlisted men, who a short time earlier had been civilians. David Kenney from the small town of Encampment, Wyoming, turned 18 in 1943 and was drafted into the Army. He scored high on the aptitude tests and was also an amateur musician. He believes the Army thought musicians would be good at radio, because they sent him to a Signal Corps’ radio school at Camp Crowder, Missouri. “Then a friend of mine saw a notice on a bulletin board: ‘Forty volunteers needed for dangerous assignment,’” he recalled. “My buddy volunteered us. I talked to an OSS captain. I didn’t know he was from the OSS or a recruiter. I said that I was worried about the dangerous part. He said, ‘everything overseas is dangerous, but you’ll never regret doing this.’ He was right. I never regretted it. It was a wonderful experience.”²¹

Many of the “Commo” recruits had been amateur short-wave, radio operators (“hams”) before the war or had been trained or further trained in International Morse Code and telegraphy by commercial or military radio schools. In the first several decades of the twentieth century, when radio was in its infancy, amateur experimentation was an exotic hobby. Some individuals with scientific or technical inclinations and a desire to do things themselves, would tinker with equipment, constructing radio crystal sets, with voice or code wireless communication. They learned that they could communicate through the airwaves from their own home and reach out, depending on atmospheric conditions, to places around the country and even around the world. OSS CommVet Art Reinhardt, who continued his work in clandestine communications for the CIA for thirty years after the war, estimated that probably 30 percent or more of the OSS technical personnel had been hams.²² The importance of these amateur radio hobbyists, he said, cannot be overstated. “The hams were the real backbone of the OSS. They were especially important at the base station receivers. Because out in the field you had agents [especially the indigenous agents] who were poorly trained, who were operating under adverse physical, security, and technological problems against interference....So, to counter all that, you had more powerful transmitters and receivers at the base stations, you had better antennas, and you had these wonderful people with good, selective ears that could listen and sort of drag out these weak signals. These ham operators from the

²⁰ Richard Helms interview by Christof Mauch, 21 April 1997, CIA Records (RG 263), OSS Oral Histories, Box 2, National Archives II.

²¹ David Kenney, telephone interview with the author, 11 April 2005.

²² Arthur Reinhardt, “Deciphering the Commo Branch,” *OSS Society Newsletter*, Fall 2006,: 6-7.

1930s who had learned how to seek out the exotic signal, they are the guys who were really, really good, and they were the backbone of the OSS communications system.²³

Most officers recruited for the operational branches of the OSS met Donovan personally. He interviewed them briefly in his office on the second floor of the headquarters building in Washington. Lieutenant Jack Singlaub was partway through his training for Special Operations at Areas F and B when he was summoned to the director's office. He did not know then that he was being selected for one of the elite, multi-national "Jedburgh" teams that would be parachuted deep behind German lines in support of the Allied invasion of France. Standing at attention in front of Donovan's desk while a colonel read his military record, Singlaub eyed the rows of ribbons on the general's uniform, particularly the light blue, star-spangled ribbon of the Medal of Honor he had earned in World War I. The maps on the wall behind him were marked "Secret." Donovan seemed pleased, smiled and said "Lieutenant, you have an excellent training record. And you know how I feel about thorough training." "Yes, sir," Singlaub replied. "Well," he said, and his bright, probing blue eyes fixed upon the young officer to reinforce the point, "I just want you to know that the kind of combat we'll be in is a lot rougher than any training."²⁴

Arrival at Training Camp

OSS recruits were driven to the secret training camps in standard, 2 ½ -ton Army trucks, the back enclosed in olive-drab canvas with the rear flap down.²⁵ They were told not to open it, because their destination was classified information. Sometimes the drivers would talk with their recruits. As with the other OSS men dressed alike in Army fatigues, their background sometimes belied their appearance. The OSS Army private driving Edgar Prichard and his classmates to Area A in May 1942 turned out to have recently been a professor of English at Williams College.²⁶ Many recruits did not know that these had been government parks. Robert R. Kehoe from New Jersey, a 21-year-old recruit from the Signal Corps, thought Area B-2 on Catocin Mountain had been a

²³ Arthur Reinhardt, interview with the author during a tour of Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va., 14 December 2004.

²⁴ John K. Singlaub, *Hazardous Duty: An American Soldier in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Summit Books, 1991), 31.

²⁵ John W. Brunner, telephone interview with the author, 21 March 2005.

²⁶ Edgar Prichard, "Address to Historic Prince William, Inc., 16 January 1991, typescript, p. 4, copy in Park Archives, Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.

“private hunting lodge in pre-war days.”²⁷ Marvin Flisser, a communications recruit from the Bronx, was told that Area C was originally a private camp, perhaps a hunting camp.²⁸

Commo student, David Kenney from Wyoming, remembered the long trip from the Army radio school at Camp Crowder. “They put about forty of us on a train from Missouri to Washington, D.C. We didn’t have an inkling of what was up. Then they put a bunch of us in a canvas covered truck with the flaps down, and we headed south from D.C. Finally we could see the entrance to the Marine base at Quantico from our back flap, and we cheered when the truck turned away from it. We didn’t want to be there. We turned off to the west and up a dirt road into a forested area.” At Prince William Forest Park, they were taken temporarily to Area A-3 for security clearance. It was, Kenney recalls, “a bucolic campground consisting of a number of small, rustic cabins and several larger structures. It was my understanding that it was a former Campfire Girls facility....We poured out of the trucks and into a conference room. They said that we are in the OSS, but they did not even tell us what OSS stood for. They said it is a secret thing. We were not to tell anyone about it. Someone [in the group] had picked up a newspaper, probably the *Washington Post*. It had a column by Drew Pearson about the OSS. Pearson called it ‘Oh, So Social’ or ‘Oh, So Secret.’ He didn’t like it....Someone had that paper...when we arrived at Area A, and from that and what they told us, we figured it out that we were in the Office of Strategic Services, a secret War Department operation.”²⁹ “We were told not to discuss it [the OSS] with anyone. If an MP [Military Police Officer] stopped us and asked for identification, we were to tell him that it was a ‘supply outfit.’ We were also required to supply about ten references for an FBI clearance....We spent about a week there, mostly undergoing indoctrination. We knew Morse code, but their equipment was different than the Signal Corps’. I don’t recall receiving any training there but, during this period, several in our group simply disappeared, apparently after failing to meet security or other OSS-specific requirements”³⁰

OSS trainees were given fictitious code names in order to keep their identity secret. The code names (or “school names” as OSS Schools and Training called them) were generally common American first names such as “Harry,” “Ed,” “Jack,” “Sam,” “Bill,” and “Pete,” but sometimes they were closer to their ethnic background such as “Maurice,” “Leif,” “Ivan,” “Spiro,” “Gino,” or “Bruno.”³¹ Sometimes it was their real

²⁷ Robert R. Kehoe, “An Allied Team with the French Resistance in 1944,” *Studies in Intelligence: Journal of the American Intelligence Professional*, June 2002, 104.

²⁸ Marvin S. Flisser, telephone interview with the author, 27 January 2005.

²⁹ David Kenney, telephone interview with the author, 11 April 2005; and Kenney email letter to the author, 15 March 2005.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ For such lists of “school names” for particular trainees at Area A, B, C, E, F, and RTU-11, including women trainees such as “Sallie” and “Helen” at the SI training school at RTU-11, as well as identification of the particular class, such as A-33 or E-44 or C-204, see Kenneth H. Baker to Lt. Col. Lane Rehm, 18 November 1942, subject: report on trainees at present date; and Schools and Training Branch to Mr. R.H.I. Goddard, subject: report on trainees at present date, 29 September 1943, these and others in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 223, Folder 3106, National Archives II.

first name but with letters and numbers were added. New arrivals were required to turn in all their personal possessions, even their driver's license as well as their uniform. All the trainees received the same kind of Army uniform along with their "school name."³² Cameras were confiscated, because neither the trainees nor the staff was allowed to take pictures, as they might lead to future identification of secret agents or the secret camp.³³ The cadre and instructors knew each other's real names, but in regard to the students, the staff was given information only on a "need to know" basis, and asking too many questions was frowned upon.³⁴

Herbert R. Brucker, who would later become one of the founders of Army Special Forces, was born in Newark, New Jersey to a German-American mother and a French-born, American father who served in the U.S. Army, Brucker grew up in Alsace, France, raised by various relatives, before returning to the United States with his father in 1938. At age 19, he joined the U.S. Army in 1940 as a private and became a wireless radio operator soon sending and receiving twenty words a minute. He was so proficient that in 1942, he was made a Morse Code trainer at Fort Meade and promoted to sergeant. But he wanted to see combat, and so in August 1943, he volunteered when he learned about the OSS. Brucker was not only an excellent radio operator but was fluent in both French and German, and the OSS snapped him up. After getting through the OSS Assessment program, Brucker and thirty other men were trucked up to Area B. Brucker remembered what looked like a CCC camp, eating at the mess hall and being put on guard duty the first night. The next morning when the new men were lined up in three ranks, Brucker was surprised to see a group of Norwegians carrying M-1 Garand rifles jogging by them at double-time. Just then a runner came looking for him. Trainee "Herbert E-54" (Brucker) had been sent to the wrong camp, presumably because Area B was being used mainly for OG training at the time. He returned to Washington and subsequently directed by the Special Operations desk to the Phoenix, Maryland railroad station and taken to OSS Training Area E-3, the Nolting Estate, a mile east of Glencoe, in a rural area north of Baltimore. He went through SO training there in August and September 1943, including infiltration into an Baltimore shipyard as a graduation project.³⁵

³² Stephen J. Capestro, interviewed by G. Kurt Piehler, 17 August 1994, oral history transcript, p. 20, in files of Rutgers Archives of World War II, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J.

³³ Headquarters, Detachment A, "Standard Operating Procedure," 13 April 1944, p. 2, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 174, Folder 1841, National Archives II. Emphasis in the original.

³⁴ Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 31 January 2005. When Erasmus H. Kloman arrived at A-4, his cousin, Anthony Kloman, an instructor there, quickly informed him not to give any indication that they were related or even knew each other. Since the trainees had fictitious names, the family relationship remained a secret. Erasmus H. Kloman, telephone interview with the author, 24 January 2005.

³⁵ Charles H. Briscoe, "Herbert R. Brucker, SF Pioneer: Part II, Pre-WWII-OSS Training 1943," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History*, 2:3 (2006): 26-35. In a July 2006 interview for the article, Brucker referred to his SO training near Phoenix, north of Baltimore, Maryland, as being at "the Farm," but what OSS itself referred to as "the Farm," was the advanced SI training school, RTU-11, located at Clinton, Maryland, south of Washington, D.C. It is possible that some of the trainees and others at Area E-3, which was a country estate with manor house, may have referred to it also as "the Farm."

Trainees, particularly those who were training for individual infiltration behind enemy lines, like SO and SI agents, and who might be captured were not encouraged to make friendships with their fellow trainees. Plus, as the course progressed, trainees were weeded out for any number of reasons, such as failing written or performance tests, being unable to function under stress, deemed too loquacious for a secret organization, or just giving up and voluntarily requesting return to their previous organizations. “We would sit at a round table at night...and one given day, I would see a face was missing. It wasn’t there anymore,” said Sergeant Stephen J. Capestro (“Steve A3”), a former football player from Rutgers College, who trained at Area A. “So, you’d ask, ‘What happened to ‘George A2?’” He [the instructor] would say, ‘Well, he got caught divulging who he was or what he was doing.’”³⁶ “You didn’t make lifelong friendships,” said Reginald (“Reg”) Spear from Los Angeles, who trained at Area B, “because you never saw the guy again, and you didn’t know his name.”³⁷ James L. Boals III, a trainee at Area C in 1944, remembered someone outside their group being called out at roll call as “Jack-S1.” “At the time, we were told that a Nazi had gone through the school with our [OSS headquarters’] knowledge and was not arrested until graduation.”³⁸

Daily Routine

As at any military facility, each day was tightly organized, but at OSS facilities, in keeping with the informal, quasi-civilian nature of Donovan’s organization, the emphasis was on individual initiative and responsibility rather than regimentation. The basic schedule, particularly at paramilitary camps like A, B, C, D and F, was similar to that at a military training base. Each day began with a wakeup at 6:15 a.m., the breakfast at 7:00 a.m., classes in the morning, lunch at noon, more classes in the afternoon, supper at 6:00 p.m. and lights out at 11:00 p.m.³⁹ Unlike regular Army bases, however, the OSS paramilitary training camps did not use bugle calls, no bugler trumpeting out the staccato notes of reveille or the slow, mournful echoing of taps. Instead, the men were awakened by the playing popular music over the public address system. Most of the camp commanders allowed the company clerk’s office to play almost any record they chose. At

³⁶ Stephen J. Capestro, interviewed by G. Kurt Piehler, 17 August 1994, oral history transcript, p. 20, in files of Rutgers Archives of World War II, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J.

³⁷ Reginald G. Spear, telephone interview with the author, 25 March 2005.

³⁸ James L. Boals, III email to the author, 20 February 2007. Whether headquarters had fabricated the story of the Nazi spy to encourage security among the trainees or whether there actually had been a Nazi agent among the trainees remains unclear. The 1947 Hollywood feature film, *13 Rue Madeleine*, starring James Cagney as the OSS instructor and Richard Conte as the German spy portrayed it. Certainly, it was something that the OSS was concerned about, and one of the missions of OSS X-2, counter-intelligence branch was to ferret out enemy agents in Allied countries and in Allied intelligence organizations.

³⁹ “MTP [Military Training Program]-OSS, Training Schedule for Class III, week of 21 to 27 May 1944, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 174, Folder 1840; see also Headquarters, Detachment A, “Standard Operating Procedures,” 13 April 1944, pp. 1, 4, *ibid.*, Folder 1841, both in National Archives II.

Area C, for example, contemporary musical hits were a favorite for reveille. Terry Samaras, remembered waking up to “Holiday for Strings.” Others recalled “Oh, What a Beautiful Morning,” and the country music hit “There’s a Star Spangled Banner Waving Somewhere.”⁴⁰

“Everything that I experienced was very informal,” said Private John W. Brunner a cryptologist from Philadelphia training at Area C. “There was no military routine at all. No marching or parading. We simply got up when we were told. An enlisted man would come down to our hut to wake us up. We went to the mess hall. Afterwards, we went out to our assignment for the day. There was no marching there. We just walked.”⁴¹ “They treated you like a man,” recalled another trainee at Area C, Private Art Reinhardt. “There was very little discipline. He [Major Albert Jenkins, the C.O.] was relying on the [self] discipline of the individuals and the motivation of the people.”⁴² To keep the men in shape, there were calisthenics every morning. Instructors and staff generally participated as well as the trainees. All would assemble individually, then line up and follow the directions of a physical training instructor on an elevated platform. It was held near the mess hall. Afterwards, they would walk into the mess hall for breakfast.

OSS training in the National Parks began in April 1942, when the first basic special operations course held in the United States was conducted at Area B-2 in Catoctin Mountain Park. The basic or preliminary SO course in 1942 provided physical conditioning as well as a variety of skills, which, as Lieutenant William R. (“Ray”) Peers, who would later command Detachment 101 in Burma, remembered it the students would later find very useful in their subversive activities. The included “methods of agent operations, secret writing, resisting an interrogator, searches for downed aircrews, cryptography, experiments with a variety of high explosives, learning the difference between blowing a stone or steel bridge.” Along with their other studies, they read and discussed British commando raids in Norway, France, and North Africa. The basic course at Area B in spring 1942 lasted only two weeks, but it was intensive. “It was,” Peers later wrote, “abnormal to get more than six hours sleep a day.”⁴³

An inspector from headquarters visited Area B-2 in June 1942, by which time the basic SO course had been expanded to four weeks.⁴⁴ The inspector, who was from the Secret Intelligence Branch, talked to one of the SI trainees taking the paramilitary course, John R. Brown, whose code name was “Bill.” Later that student provided the SI office with a chronology of the four-week basic SO course at Area B.

⁴⁰ “Terry Samaras, W2QFP,” and “Harry M. Neben, W9QB,” in James F. Ranney and Arthur L. Ranney, eds, *The OSS CommVets Papers*, 2nd ed. (Covington, Ky.: James F. Ranney, 2002), 201, 208; Arthur Reinhardt, interview with author at Prince William Forest Park, Va., 14 December 2004.

⁴¹ John W. Brunner, telephone interview with the author, 21 March 2005.

⁴² Arthur Reinhardt, interview with the author at Prince William Forest Park, Va., 14 December 2004.

⁴³ William R. Peers and Dean Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road: The Story of America’s Most Successful Guerrilla Force* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1963), 30.

⁴⁴ R.P. Tenney to J.R. Hayden [schools and training in Secret Intelligence Branch of OSS], interoffice memo, subject: Area B, 8 June 1942, located in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1721, National Archives II.

First Week:

Military Drill and Manual of Arms
 Interior Guard Duty explained; Articles of War read
 Elementary First Aid course
 Rifle instruction and practice (M-1 Garand and Springfield '03)
 Elementary principles of explosives (with the use of dynamite)
 Guard problem opposed to raiding senior class
 Exercises and sports twice daily.

Second Week:

Gas training (different types, precautions against, use of different types of gas masks)
 Elementary explosives and demolition
 Practice throwing hand grenades and firing rifle-propelled grenades
 Study of pistols and Thompson submachine guns (shooting from the hip)
 Rifle practice on moving targets with Garand and Springfield '03 marksman rifle
 Field patrol training how to guard against raids
 Study and firing of flares and of .30 caliber Browning machine gun
 Study and practice firing 60 mm trench mortar
 Elementary compass instruction, map reading, and field compass problems
 Guard problem against raiding senior class
 Exercise once daily

Third Week:

Elementary Cryptography and codes
 Practice firing pistols and submachine guns
 Advanced explosives and demolition
 Jiu Jitsu and close combat training without weapons
 Compass problems in field scouting
 Political studies of Nazi party, secret police and regular German police.
 Elementary photography
 Raid problem against guarding junior class
 Exercise once daily.

Fourth Week:

Extensive pistol practice at stationary and bobbing targets
 Advanced demolition and incendiaries
 Raid problem against guarding junior class
 Elementary studies of German and Japanese Armies
 Close combat and unarmed defense
 Raid problem in mined field ("booby traps")
 Lectures on street and house to house fighting
 Lecture on surveillance and criminal investigation
 Exercise once daily.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ "Area 'B' Training Course," one-page, typed schedule for instruction 16 May to 13 June 1942, attached to J.R. Brown to Mr. J.R. Hayden [schools and training in Secret Intelligence Branch of OSS], 14 June

Recreational Activities

Although the class schedule was full at the training areas, there was some free time and some places to enjoy it. At every camp, there was a building large enough to be used as a recreation center at least part of the time. Movies were shown there, not just training films and footage of devastation caused by German and Japanese armies and air forces but occasionally Hollywood movies as well. In winter, the men could shoot hoops and play basketball there. Most camps also had some kind of common room, often called the “Day Room,” in which the men could relax in the evenings, listening to the radio, reading, or playing cards. Some, like the one at C-4, included a ping-pong table.⁴⁶ In the summer, the men at Area C played baseball in a large parking area.⁴⁷ At Area B-5, assistant company clerk Albert Guay played 78 rpm records on the public address system in the late afternoons after duty time and early in the evening. At the little PX, the men could buy candy, soda pop, snacks, toiletries, and perhaps a bottle of beer. Guay would purchase and eat crackers and sardines there. His diary in late 1942 indicated that he saw a movie, a training film, in the mess hall, and that in the recreation room, he watched other enlisted men on the staff playing darts and checkers, and gambling at poker. In the barracks, those enlisted men, he noted, wrote letters and did a lot of talking and joking. Some also took walks in the woods, and a few, like Guay, went hunting there. But many of the men got bored sitting around at night, and Guay wished they had some recreational equipment.⁴⁸

Most camp commanders encouraged the healthy use of leisure time after a day of intensive coursework. The second C.O. at Area B, Lieutenant Montague Mead, did purchase recreational equipment. He also encouraged a healthy competition between the men at Area B-2 and those down the hill at B-5, half a mile or so away. By the summer of 1943, an inspector from headquarters reported that the practice had developed there of playing games, such as soccer, between the two Training Areas.⁴⁹ At Area A in the spring of 1944, a group of Commo recruits had very little to do while they waited at Area for clearance to proceed to communications training at Area C. There were about twenty of

1942, forwarded by Hayden to Dr. [Kenneth H.] Baker, 7 July 1942, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 161, Folder 1754. I have also integrated comments from “Bill’s” oral report midway through the course reported in R.P. Tenney to J.R. Hayden, interoffice memo, subject: Area B, 8 June 1942, Appendix II to Part One of History of the Schools and Training Office, located in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1721, both documents in the National Archives II.

⁴⁶ Arthur Reinhardt, interview with the author at Prince William Forest Park, Va., 14 December 2004.

⁴⁷ Obie L. Etheridge, telephone interview with the author, 14 January 2008.

⁴⁸ Albert R. Guay, telephone interview with the author, 24 October 2005, and diary entries for 28 October; 1, 4, 18, 20, 29, 30 November; 2 December 1942.

⁴⁹ A. Van Beuren to Mr. Weston Howland [forward to H.L. Robinson] 24 September 1943, subject: Areas B[-5] and B-2, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 223, Folder 3106, National Archives II.

them with no recreational facilities. “So one day, a gentleman came by,” recalled Art Reinhardt. “It was one those two handsome movie actors who were in OSS—Sterling Hayden or Douglass Fairbanks, Jr.—I’m pretty sure it was Sterling Hayden. He saw us sitting around and asked: ‘Do you boys need anything?’ We said, ‘We’d like to have some athletic equipment.’ The next day, an open-stake truck came, and it was full of athletic equipment: basketballs, gloves, baseballs, softballs, anything you can imagine.”⁵⁰

Special Operations Training Experiences

“Our training consisted mostly of sabotage operations and the conduct of guerrilla actions ranging from raids, ambushes, and assassinations,” Jacques L. Snyder recalled. “Emphasis was placed on stealth, approaching the target without raising any suspicion, crawling when necessary for long distances, using maximum cover and concealment as camouflage when needed. Another important point was the total ruthlessness and efficiency in dispatching guards and sentries in the target area....The overriding concern was silence and speed in execution.”⁵¹

Everyone who went through OSS paramilitary training remembered the British close-combat instructor, William (“Dan”) Fairbairn. Most were shocked and some appalled by his “gutter fighting” techniques. But he argued that they had a job to do to defeat an evil enemy and they had a duty to learn to survive to do that job effectively. Memoirs that cover OSS training almost always mention Dan Fairbairn, the “Shanghai Buster.”⁵² “We called him delicate Dan the deacon,” Edgar Pritchard remembered. “He knew at least 100 ways to kill people without shooting them. He was a knife fighter and an alley fighter. It was said that he had killed dozens of people in hand to hand combat....Fairbairn had us throwing each other all over the place. Fortunately none of us killed any of our classmates. We all survived.”⁵³ Most memoirs reveal a few of the surprising methods he taught them about hand-to-hand combat. How to fight barehanded (or with anything that came to hand), with all the dirty tricks of gutter fighting: “a knee in

⁵⁰ Arthur Reinhardt, interview with the author at Prince William Forest Park, Va., 14 December 2004. Both Sterling Hayden and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. had joined the OSS, but Hayden went on dangerous Special Operations missions behind enemy lines in Yugoslavia before returning to the United States. Donovan rejected Errol Flynn’s inquiry about joining the OSS.

⁵¹ Jacques L. Snyder, “Cloak and Dagger Days,” typescript memoir, n.d., [late 1990s], p. 1, provided by his son, James Snyder, to the present author, 16 January 2008.

⁵² Some accounts refer erroneously to Fairbairn as former chief of the Shanghai police, for example, Peers and Brellis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 31. In fact, Fairbairn’s highest law enforcement position had been as Assistant Commissioner of the international Shanghai Municipal Police. He was in charge of the 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.

⁵³ Edgar Pritchard, “Address to Historical Prince William, Inc.,” 16 January 1991, pp. 2, 3, typescript of a talk, located, along with a newspaper clipping of the speech, in the Park Archives of Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va. Pritchard trained at both Area B and Area A.

the groin, a savage slash with the side of the hand across an Adam's apple, a jab at the eyes with fingers stiffly hooked in a tiger's claw."⁵⁴ How to fall, roll, and come up on the offensive. How to kick, jab, punch—not with a fist but with a rigid open hand. How to dislocate an enemy's shoulder or break an arm or leg; how to break a sentry's neck from behind. He showed them how to use knives, hatchets, and other cutting or striking instruments. "Fairbairn taught us how to get rid of an opponent using normal everyday items such as a rolled-up magazine or newspaper, a matchbox, a pen or a pencil," recalled Lieutenant Jerry Sage, who taught at Areas A and D. He showed us the pressure points on crucial arteries and demonstrated the sensitive nerve areas where a single blow could immobilize an enemy. With every tactic we also learned the counter-measures to protect ourselves in a similar attack."⁵⁵ Army Corporal Edward E. Nicholas from Rock Island, Illinois, who was trained as an OSS radio operator at Area C in the fall of 1943, said the students there learned "'dirty fighting' or pseudo judo as we called it."⁵⁶

Since few of the students, even those with military training, had any experience with explosives, the instruction in demolition work was generally new to them. It was dangerous work, and it was taught at Area B in 1942 by knowledgeable instructors from the Corps of Engineers, like Charles Parkin, Frank Gleason, Leo Karwaski, and Joe Lazarsky. They taught how to blow up railroad lines, bridges, and buildings and how to make booby traps. They would first lecture in class and then go outside, down the hill and have the students set small charges and explode them.⁵⁷

Plastic explosives, called P.E. or Composition C, had only recently been developed. At Area A in 1943, Lieutenant William Dreux and his fellow French OGs, watched intrigued as their demolitions instructor, a tough, grizzled engineering sergeant named Bolinsky, who had attended a British commando school, showed them how it worked. Unlike dynamite, which is highly sensitive and volatile, plastic explosive is extraordinarily stable, and unlike rigid dynamite sticks, P.E. is soft and malleable like a piece of clay. It was a highly effective explosive when a primer and detonator were inserted and a connecting fuse lit. The trainees practiced with various amounts of plastic explosive on different kinds of material used particularly in bridge construction, blowing up pieces of wood, concrete, and steel. In addition, in order to hamper enemy truck convoys, the students learned how to explode craters in roads. Sometimes, despite the National Park Service's policies, they blasted off stout tree branches or even blew up trees in demonstrating the explosives.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Lt. Col. Corey Ford and Maj. Alastair MacBain, *Cloak and Dagger: The Secret Story of OSS* (New York: Random House, 1945), 26.

⁵⁵ Jerry Sage, *Sage* (Wayne, Pa.: Miles Standish Press, 1985), 20.

⁵⁶ Edward E. Nicholas, "How We Won the Great War," typescript memoir, n.d., [c. 1994], p. 5. Copy sent by Nicholas's son, Ned Nicholas, to the author, 18 July 2005.

⁵⁷ Joseph Lazarsky, telephone interview with the author, 14 March 2005.

⁵⁸ Dreux, *No Bridges Blown*, 17-18. It is possible that Sergeant Bolinski was the same demolition instructor that Jacques L. Snyder had at Area A in late 1943. An old timer with years of experience with explosives, he had only two fingers remaining on his right hand and still used his teeth to crimp the detonating caps on primer cord, a practice as dangerous as Russian roulette and one which he told the students never to do.

Seaman Spiro Cappony, a Greek-American radioman from Indiana, receiving SO training for infiltration into German-occupied Greece, recalled that at Area B in 1943 the instructors there also showed them the new Composition C “They showed us how to put fuses into it. They would also take a line of fuse cord and wrap it around a tree and show us how fast it traveled [burned]. So we became familiar with that. In Greece, [OSS] would airdrop it from Bari, Italy. They would airdrop it, but it would not explode. You had to put the fuses into it. We taught the [Greek] guerrillas how to do that.”⁵⁹

In addition to using plastic explosives, instructors sometimes taught the trainees how to rig improvised explosive devices from artillery rounds. At Area B, Reginald Spear remembers that they blew up a 155mm. artillery shell as an explosive device along a fire trail. “You used [a particular chemical] to explode the 155 mm round. That gave you a few minutes to get away. But the enormous explosion could kill you. We were very respectful of those rounds. We wore steel helmets.”⁶⁰

What most excited many of the trainees, the majority of them young men not long ago civilians, was learning and firing so many weapons. “We fired the Thompson submachine gun and the M-3 submachine gun, a little ‘burp’ gun. I wish I had more time for firing those,” John Brunner noted in his diary at Area C on an October day in 1944, “It was fun.”⁶¹ The OSS emphasized fast combat shooting rather than careful marksmanship and familiarity not just with the standard U.S. Army small arms, the .45 caliber automatic pistol and the M1 Garand semi-automatic rifle, but, since the men were being trained for service behind enemy lines, with a wide variety of Allied and Axis weaponry. They fired many different pistols including German Lugers and Walthers and Japanese weapons. The Colt .45 was the standard U.S. sidearm. Brunner called it “a sweetheart.” “It is superbly accurate at even 100 yards. It puts a man down. A 9mm. [pistol] causes hemorrhaging and death more effectively. You might survive more easily with a .45 wound, but you will be down and in pain and no longer a threat. And it will take several of your buddies to carry you back.”⁶² The .45 was big and heavy, consequently, Reginald Spear recalled, a number of OSSrs carried a 9mm or .380 caliber pistol, because they were smaller and lighter.⁶³

OSS training focused on rapid combat shooting rather than deliberate marksmanship. The primary instructors in pistol shooting at OSS training camps in the

Jacques L. Snyder, “Cloak and Dagger Days,” typescript memoir, n.d., [late 1990s], p. 3, provided by his son, James Snyder, to the present author, 16 January 2008.

⁵⁹ Spiro Cappony, telephone interview with the author, 16 September 2006.

⁶⁰ Reginald Spear, telephone interview with author, 25 March 2005 and 24 June 2005.

⁶¹ John W. Brunner, reading from and elaborating on his diary entry for Friday, 27 October 1944, in a telephone interview with the author, 21 March 2005. At Area A, Lt. William Dreux remembered the thrill of firing pistols, rifles, carbines, and submachine guns at moving and bobbing cardboard targets. Dreux, *No Bridges Blown*, 18.

⁶² John W. Brunner, reading from and elaborating on his diary entry for 24 October 1944, in a telephone interview with the author, 21 March 2005.

⁶³ Reginald G. Spear, telephone conversation with the author, 25 March 2005.

United States throughout the war were Rex Applegate and Dan Fairbairn. They taught their new method of couched, two-shot “instinctive firing” or what Applegate called “point-shoot.” With bursts of two shots fired within seconds, the first would unnerve the enemy even if it did not hit him and the second could kill him. “You chaps have been trained to *aim* a weapon,” Fairbairn told Jack Singlaub and the other SO trainees at their first session with him at Area B in fall 1943. “That’s all well and good on the range. The only problem is that your average Hun or Nip rarely stands still with a bull’s eye on his nose.” With that, three silhouettes of helmeted Germans suddenly sprang up in the bushes about 60 feet away. Fairbairn twirled around, pulling his pistol out of his belt, crouched and fired off three bursts of double shots, each pair right into the center of the paper targets. “The man and the pistol had become a single weapon.”⁶⁴ At Area A, Jacques Snyder remembered that Fairbairn also taught the students how to use a submachine gun, the Thompson was his favorite, “with maximum efficiency, firing only three rounds at a time.”⁶⁵

John Brunner remembers that the day after his group arrived at Area C-4 in October 1944, Fairbairn instructed them in knife and pistol work. “The first thing he told us was that if someone comes at you with a knife, pull out your pistol and shoot him! None of this fair fighting, Marquis of Queensbury rules nonsense. If you do not have a pistol, turn and run away. Do not attempt to fight him. If you cannot run, then and only then, here is what you do. Here is how you disarm a man and incapacitate him. He repeated, however, never enter a knife fight if you can avoid it. You can never predict how good the other guy is with the knife.” “From then on, Brunner said, “we spent little time with the knife. We trained with the pistol. Don’t ever be without your pistol [in a war zone],” Fairbairn said. “Even take it into the shower with you [hung up at arm’s reach]. I did [in China], even into the shower.”⁶⁶

Applegate and Fairbairn were sticklers for realism and detail. They required students to be able blindfolded, in simulated night conditions, to disassemble and reassemble not only American but German and Japanese weapons as well. To get a sense of what it felt like to be shot at, they actually shot at—or rather near—the students. “I remember Delicate Dan the Deacon having us stand in front of a target and then firing a .45 so that it just missed us and we could feel the muzzle blast,” Edgar Prichard recalled vividly.⁶⁷ The former Tulsa journalist remembered the practical final examination held at a pistol house, what Fairbairn called a “mystery house,” built to test the trainee under stress as well as to replicate the dangerous reality that an agent might face in attacking an enemy-occupied house or command center. “Each of us over a period of a couple of days

⁶⁴ Maj. Gen. John K. Singlaub with Malcolm McConnell, *Hazardous Duty: An American Soldier in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Summit/Simon & Schuster, 1991), 32.

⁶⁵ Jacques L. Snyder, “Cloak and Dagger Days,” typescript memoir, n.d., [late 1990s], p. 4, provided by his son, James Snyder, to the present author, 16 January 2008.

⁶⁶ John W. Brunner, reading from and elaborating on his diary entry for 24 October 1944, in a telephone interview with the author, 21 March 2005.

⁶⁷ Edgar Prichard, Arlington, Va., “Address to Historical Prince William, Inc.,” 16 January 1991, p. 1, typescript of a talk and newspaper clipping of the speech, in Park Archives of Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.. Prichard’s reference in this case was to Area B.

would be awakened in the middle of the night and hauled off to carry out a special mission. When it came my time I was told that there was a Nazi soldier holed up in a building and that it was my job to go in and kill him. I was given a .45 and two clips [of ammunition]. The house I was sent into was a log house with long corridors and stairways. I wasn't sure whether there really was a Nazi soldier there or not. I kicked a door open with my gun at ready. Paper targets with photographs of uniformed German soldiers jumped out at me from every corner and every window and doorway. We had been taught to always fire two shots at the target. There must have been six targets because I got two bullets in each one. The last one was a dummy sitting in a chair with a lighted cigarette in his hand. If you didn't shoot him you failed the test."⁶⁸

Field Maneuvers

Training exercises became increasingly demanding as the curriculum progressed. Sometimes in the hot, summer field exercises, the trainees found themselves plagued by insects. After a Sunday morning field problem at Area B in August 1943, Private First Class Arne I. Herstad, a member of the Norwegian Operational Group recently arrived from Colorado, wrote to his finance, "I have never seen so many bugs, flies and pests anyplace as there are here. I even walked past a snake hanging in a tree. Don't like them."⁶⁹ Jack Singlaub recalled more dangerous and demanding aspects of the training. "By the end of November, our training at Area B...had become a grueling marathon," he wrote. "We fired American, British, and German weapons almost every day. We crawled through rain-soaked oak forests at night to plant live demolition charges on floodlit sheds. We were introduced to clandestine radio procedure and practiced typing out code and encrypting messages in our few spare moments. Many mornings began with a run, followed by a passage of an increasingly sophisticated and dangerous obstacle course. The explosive charges under the rope bridges and wire catwalks no longer exploded to one side as exciting stage effects. Now they blasted directly below, a moment before or after we had passed."⁷⁰

Throwing hand grenades is a dangerous business for the jagged steel fragments fly in every direction. In every camp, the grenade range was positioned some distance away and a trench was dug for the trainees who would pull the pin and hurl the grenade. "It's not like what you see in the movies," Ellsworth ("Al") Johnson, a medic from Michigan who trained with the French OGs at Area F and Area B in 1943. "You don't

⁶⁸ Ibid. Prichard trained at both Area A and Area B. A similar account of Area B was given by Spiro Cappony, telephone interview with the author, 16 September 2006.

⁶⁹ Arne [I. Herstad] to his fiancé, Andi, 1 August 1943, *OSS Society Digest*, Number 2064, 28 May 2008, osssociety@yahoo.com, accessed 29 May 2008. For the NORSO group at Area B-2. A, see Van Beuren to Weston Howland, 24 September 1943, subject: Areas B and B-2, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 223, Folder 3106, National Archives II.

⁷⁰ Singlaub with McConnell, *Hazardous Duty*, 32-33.

pull the pin with your teeth or you lose them; and the grenade doesn't blow up a building or a truck. It's an anti-personnel weapon."⁷¹ In Area C, the grenade range began with the trench that had been dug at the top of a big ravine in the woods. "We were in the trench," John Brunner recalled. "We raised up and threw live grenades into the ravine so the fragments would not go all over the countryside. We ducked back down fast. The grenades exploded, and you could hear the shrapnel whipping through the trees above your head. You learned to respect those little things, those grenades. We also fired 60 mm mortars. You had to make sure they were firmly anchored. Then you just dropped the shell down the tube."⁷²

Realism was what the OSS instructors were after. At Area A at least, exploding dynamite caps—not dynamite sticks—were used to simulate the sounds and dangers of battle. "One of our [field] problems involved dividing into two groups with one group being assigned to protect another summer camp area and the second group to try to penetrate the area. I was in the defending group," wrote SO trainee Edgar Prichard about the summer of 1942. "We spread out in the woods and set booby traps all over the place. They were not armed with anything except dynamite caps, but it was a wonder someone didn't get his eye put out from flying fragments. I recall one person got a piece in his abdomen, but it didn't go in deeply."⁷³ The following summer, Norwegian OG, Arne I. Herstad wrote to his fiancé about a night field exercise his group had at the OSS training camp in Virginia, which produced "a little bit of excitement." The instructors had set out some "booby traps," and Herstad managed to set off four of them. "The last one was set very close to us, and a few of the boys got hit with a few pieces of copper. These little pieces go in about 1/8th of an inch, and if there are enough of them in one place, it makes your arm, or whatever it hits, a little numb. The traps were dynamite caps, and they are pretty noisy if they go off beside your ear."⁷⁴

Field exercises sometime used live ammunition, sometime blanks. In either case, it was rigorous and intense. SO trainee Erasmus ("Ras") Kloman, a Princeton graduate from Baltimore, said that the obstacle course at Area A-4 was "designed for the toughest and most combat-ready personnel. I remember keeping my head and the rest of my body down at snake level as we went through the exercise just as if live [and not blank] ammunition were being fired."⁷⁵ Private Albert R. Guay had never had Army basic training, so the field exercise he participated in at Area B in December 1942 was a new and sobering experience for the 21-year-old graduate of American University. The winter

⁷¹ Ellsworth ("Al") Johnson, telephone interview with the author, 27 June 2008.

⁷² John W. Brunner, reading from and elaborating on his diary entry for Wednesday, 25 October 1944, in a telephone interview with the author, 21 March 2005.

⁷³ Edgar Prichard, "Address to Historical Prince William, Inc.," 16 January 1991, p. 5, typescript of a talk, in the Park Archives of Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.

⁷⁴ Arne Herstad to Andi, 25 August 1943, in *OSS Society Digest*, Number 2088, 1 July 2008, ossociety@yahoo.com, accessed 1 July 2008.

⁷⁵ Erasmus H. Kloman, *Assignment Algiers: With the OSS in the Mediterranean Theater* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 13; and Erasmus Kloman, telephone interview with the author, 24 January 2005.

had set in and it was cold and the ground was covered with ice and snow on Catoclin Mountain. “Had my first combat training today,” he wrote in his diary that night. “Advancing over open field under fire. Ground frozen & awful hard. Slipped once & banged my knee cap hard. Probably be sore tomorrow. Enjoyed it very much, but it showed me how tough it would be to actually advance under fire. Casualties would be high. We are expendable.”⁷⁶

Spiro Cappony was a 19-year-old sailor recruited by the OSS as a radio operator, but his naval training had not included ground combat exercises. At Training Area B, he remembered, he underwent field exercises amidst live ammunition. “We had ground fire, where they fired machine guns at us. We’re on our bellies crawling with live ammunition going over our heads.” This was in late summer 1943. Within six months, he was under similar fire, this time from the enemy, in northern Greece. “In fact that happened to me and Johnny—Johnny Athens [an OG lieutenant]—in Greece, where the Germans were firing at us. Our horses stumbled, and we went down a cliff, and we ended up in the vines, grapevines, and the Germans shooting at us. We were lying on our backs. The bullets were flying over our heads. And there we were. It seemed like we had trained for that. There I was doing the same thing. We crawled out of there with the live ammunition going over our heads.” Asked in 2006 to what degree the OSS training had prepared him and proven effective, Cappony responded without hesitation: “One thousand percent! Without that training, I wouldn’t have made it. It saved my life!”⁷⁷

As a member of a French Operational Group, Jacques L. Snyder’s OSS training began in the fall of 1943 at Area F, the former Congressional Country Club. Part of it was learning how to live off the land, surviving on what they could find in our near the woods. “Some of our people became very adept at stealing pigs from local sharecroppers and organizing some fabulous barbecues in the boondocks. This activity reached such proportions that the locals living in the sticks were terrified of the ‘night people’ and no longer dared to get out at night, keeping a loaded shotgun behind the door. This...training included the quick and silent disposition of rabbits and chickens without raising the alarm, and the different ways to prepare them to make them edible. This talent came in handy when I had to sustain my group while operating behind German lines in Alsace [northeast France] and had to raid farms to steal rabbits, chickens, and eggs.”⁷⁸

Since Jacques Snyder had grown up in France and was entirely fluent in the language and customs, OSS decided to shift him to Special Operations for solo infiltration as a spy and saboteur. For that training, he was sent to Area A. “The accent was on sabotage, learning more sophisticated techniques and acting as an individual agent....The course was even more rugged than the previous one and had to meet all the requisites of security, using false identity and cover stories.” He learned radio transmission and codes and other clandestine tradecraft with dead letter drops, cutouts,

⁷⁶ Albert R. Guay, diary entry for 16 December 1942, and telephone interview with the author, 24 October 2005.

⁷⁷ Spiro Cappony, telephone interview with the author, 16 September 2006.

⁷⁸ Jacques L. Snyder, “Cloak and Dagger Days,” typescript memoir, n.d., [late 1990s], p. 2, provided by his son, James Snyder, to the author, 16 January 2008. Similarly, one of the Italian OGs in Fall 1943 remembered raiding the nearby farm of columnist Drew Pearson, author of hostile columns about the OSS. Caesar Civitella, telephone interview with the author, 18 April 2008.

concealing devices, recognition signals, and the forging of identity documents. In addition, “we were conducting night operations, being dropped in an unknown territory with just a map and a compass and had to rendezvous with other groups at a certain time, generally in secluded wooded areas, using prearranged recognition signals. We had a very extensive, in depth sabotage training, which included all the latest methods of destruction, by fire, by explosives, by chemicals, to attack any targets of the opposition....We were also taught how to manufacture our own incendiary mixtures and explosives out of ordinary chemicals.”⁷⁹

Espionage and Sabotage Exercises in the Region

For many future spies, saboteurs or guerrilla leaders, OSS field training exercises culminated in real-life, if mock espionage or sabotage missions at nearby facilities or cities. Bridges and dams were ready made targets. Lieutenant Al Materazzi from Hershey, Pennsylvania, along with a dozen other officers of the first Italian Operational Group were sent to Areas A and C in the spring of 1943 before meeting and training the enlisted men of their OG. At A-4, they were given some night problems. One was to sabotage a major iron bridge carrying U.S. Route One across the Rappahannock River. “At night, we clambered out and placed charges strategically—dummy charges, of course,” Materazzi said. “Another exercise was when we were to sabotage a dam on the Rappahannock River. That one required descending into the gorge and climbing up the other side and—ah—taking care of any guards that might be there and sabotage it. The only one that was there was the poor night watchman. We scared him half to death. Nobody had told him.”⁸⁰

Fredericksburg, not far from Prince William Forest Park, was chosen for a training problem for one of the early classes to graduate from Advanced SO school at Area A in June 1942. That class of more than a dozen men included, among others, Jim Goodwin, a football player from upstate New York; Ben Welles, whose father, Sumner Welles, the Assistant Secretary of State; Robert Schlangen from the State Department; Jack Okie, from Marshall, Virginia; Roger Prevost, a lieutenant in the Free French Army, who had connections at the White House; and Edgar Prichard. The entire group was taken to Fredericksburg and told to find out everything they could about the city that would be useful if they were a sabotage team in enemy territory. With a forged letter on White House stationery which requested assistance for Lieutenant Prevost in establishing a supply base for Charles de Gaulle’s French forces, three of them visited the City Manager and came away with complete information on Fredericksburg, the water supply, the electric supply, the telephone system, the labor force and all of the factories then in Fredericksburg. Meanwhile, Prichard and Scotty Lockwood posing as fishermen pretended to fish on the city reservoir. They crawled through the inside of the dam into

⁷⁹ Jacques L. Snyder, “Cloak and Dagger Days,” typescript memoir, n.d., [late 1990s], p. 3, provided by his son, James Snyder, to the present author, 16 January 2008.

⁸⁰ Albert Materazzi, telephone interview with the author, 26 January 2005.

the hydroelectric plant from below, located the generators and marked them “destroyed” with chalk. “There wasn’t much we didn’t know about Fredericksburg by the end of the day,” Prichard said. But he added, “I do know that later on the same type of reconnaissance program we carried out in Fredericksburg was repeated and that some of the students ended up in the clink.”⁸¹

The practice continued throughout the war, particularly using larger industrial cities such as Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh. In the winter of 1943-1944, a four-man team of SO trainees from Area A was assigned to breach the security of steel plants in Pittsburgh. By that time these OSS industrial field problems—“schemes” they were called—were run in cooperation with the Civil Defense Agency, which assigned the targets in order to check their security. In each city, OSS assigned a senior person to watch over the mission, obtain release of the students if they were arrested, and prevent publicity. This particular team included Ras Kloman, 23, a Princeton graduate; William Woolverton, 23, a Yale graduate from a socially prominent Manhattan family; William Underwood, 32, from an affluent Connecticut family, who left the prominent Wall Street firm of Sullivan and Cromwell for the OSS; and Norman Randolph Turbin, from Richmond, Virginia, who had become a paratrooper at Fort Benning, and who would later, after behind the lines operations in Italy, would be killed in action in the Philippines.⁸²

At Area A, the team Kloman was on worked out cover names and stories and prepared false identification papers. Their assignment was to penetrate US Steel and National Pipe and Tube, both which produced gun barrels and other military ordnance. They rented separate rooms in Pittsburgh and met regularly in working-class bars. The radio operator assigned to them from Area C relayed their progress. Woolverton got a job at U.S. Steel by pretending to be a metallurgist. Underwood posed as a magazine reporter got some information and had interviews lined up with senior management, until the company checked with the magazine which had never heard of him. Unsuccessful at getting a job at National Pipe and Tube, Kloman became discouraged and decided on the last night of the mission to break in at night. Risking being shot by a guard, he squeezed through a space in the chain-link fence. The plant was working round the clock, and no one seemed to notice anything wrong as Kloman walked around making observations and gathering up a number of documents, including plans of the plan. Kloman later learned that he had been the first OSS trainee to actually break into a plant rather than gaining access through a cover story. It was a bold and risky gamble, and he gained some acclaim for it. Richard Helms on SI’s European desk, later asked him, probably facetiously, whether he would like an assignment parachuting into Berlin. Kloman did not go to Berlin, but he did go to Egypt, Algeria, and Italy. At 24 years old, he became Acting Chief of Operations in the Mediterranean Theater, and during the war, he helped

⁸¹ Edgar Prichard, “Address to Historical Prince William, Inc.,” 16 January 1991, pp. 5-6, typescript of a talk, in the Park Archives of Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va. The five SO agents were sent to Nigeria in August 1942 to work with British SOE and set up chains of agents in case the German offensive in North Africa drove down the Atlantic coast of West Africa. After the U.S. landings in North Africa in November, the team was recalled and re-assigned. OSS, *War Report of the OSS, Overseas Targets*, 40.

⁸² Kloman, *Assignment Algiers*, 4, 7-9, 11, 111n.

organize and coordinate Special Operations teams that infiltrated Italy and France on sabotage missions.⁸³

Communications Training Experiences

Trainees at the Communications School at Area C were learning primarily how to be OSS base station operators overseas; they also learned how to be radio operators in the field if needed. They had to know electrical theory, and they all had to know how to communicate between the base stations and the operators in the field, who were equipped with the mainstay of the agents, the small SSTR-1, a suitcase sized clandestine wireless telegraphy sender/receiver.⁸⁴ “The transmitter was absolutely exceptional. The receiver was very difficult, especially in the lower frequency ranges, of course, because the spectrum was noisier, and there was more interference....” Art Reinhardt, who used the SSTR-1 in China explained. “You did not have very much band spread, so your selectivity was very critical. So the operators relied on their expertise and also the phenomenal ability of the communicators [the operators at the base stations], digging out signals from the interference, static, and what have you.” “The major problem sets had was when they were airdropped to agents in the field. They were not designed to handle the shock, and many of them broke on impact.”⁸⁵

Agents from OSS branches and operators from the Communications Branch operators both learned how to use the SSTRs out in the woods. Mostly this was done in the woods of Prince William Forest Park, but often this was done in the Virginia countryside. Directing the antenna was crucial in either case. “We would have to do it all in a quick period of time, because if we were really in the field,” trainee Marvin Flisser recalled, “we would be triangulated by the enemy. We would have to get that antenna up, send out messages, and get the antenna down and out of there before the enemy gets you. Within a half hour we had done everything.”⁸⁶ Reinhardt had similar recollections: We were sent out on live field exercises, where we took our SSTR-1s, and they drove us out in trucks to areas in Virginia somewhere, to abandoned farms. They would give us a lunch. We would encrypt our message, and we would contact the base station back at C. We would create simulated field operations.... Of course, as part of our training, Area C had a base station, which had the more powerful transmitters that you would find at an overseas base station. We were taught how to tune them and be familiar with them. Because, once you went overseas, you didn’t know whether you would end up at a base

⁸³ Ibid., 11-12, and passim.

⁸⁴ R. Dean Cortwright, W9IRY, “Reflections Concerning the SSTR-1,” and James F. Ranney, W4KFR, “The SST-1 Transmitter,” both in Ranney and Ranney, eds, *The OSS CommVets Papers*, 2nd ed., 61-65; John W. Brunner, *OSS Weapons*, 2nd ed. (Williamstown, NJ: Phillips Publications, 2005), with pictures, 232-235.

⁸⁵ Arthur Reinhardt, interview with the author at Prince William Forest Park, Va., 14 December 2004; see also Arthur Reinhardt, “Deciphering the Commo Branch,” *OSS Society Newsletter* (Fall 2006): 6.

⁸⁶ Marvin S. Flisser, telephone interview with the author, 27 January 2005.

station or whether you would be an operator at a field station, or what you would be. It depended on the need.”⁸⁷

During classroom instruction, students would sit at telegraph keys with earphones on their heads, practicing sending or receiving messages in code. For non-Communications Branch student agents the minimal goal was at least six words, or more precisely six five-letter code groups per minute. But for Communications Branch personnel the minimum as Private Harry M. Neben from Illinois remembered, it was 25 words per minute⁸⁸ In the code training room everyone would be wearing earphones, and civilian instructors like John Balsamo and Timothy Marsh would supervise as a dozen or so trainees. The students would first work with simple telegraph keys, but as they became more proficient, they would graduate to using superfast, double actions, fiberplex “bugs,” as these semi-automatic telegraph keys were called. The class would not all be doing the same thing, it would depend on the individual’s progress and also the instructor’s decisions. “You know we all came in from all walks of life. We were all used to operating with different procedures and protocols,” Reinhardt recalled. “They were trying to standardize somewhat. But that changed, because depending upon what field or theater you went in, because sometimes they might want you to simulate the German field operators, the Italians, or whatever. So it varied from place to place.”⁸⁹

Sometimes, the instructor would simply play audiotapes of someone sending Morse code, and the students would copy it, but while that improved speed, it was not realistic. “The stuff on the tapes is all perfect sending, and they weren’t going to hear much of that [in the field],” Lieutenant James Ranney said. “So I would do it by hand, so they could get used to that. It would be imperfect. Everybody has a different—what they call a ‘fist,’ and you can actually identify someone on the key by his ‘fist.’ You can have two people send, and they won’t sound anything alike. It is all in the international Morse [code], but it will be different in the spacing and in how careful they were and how many mistakes they made and so forth.”⁹⁰

Area C Relationship with Area A

Most of the students at Area C knew little or nothing about Area A, the secret training area for saboteurs and spies, even though it was only three or four miles on the other side of Prince William Forest Park. Because of the widespread field exercises with live munitions, it was off limits. Area C had its own pistol and rifle ranges, grenade trench and ravine, and even its own obstacle course, as well as a meadow in which trainees crawled along the ground with rifles under barbed wire.⁹¹ Morse code instructor

⁸⁷ Arthur Reinhardt, interview with the author at Prince William Forest Park, Virginia, 14 December 2004.

⁸⁸ “Harry M. Neben, W9QB,” in Ranney and Ranney, eds, *The OSS CommVets Papers*, 2nd ed., 201.

⁸⁹ Arthur Reinhardt, interview with the author at Prince William Forest Park, Virginia, 14 December 2004.

⁹⁰ James F. Ranney, telephone interview with the author, 8 January 2005.

⁹¹ Marvin S. Flisser, telephone interview with the author, 27 January 2005.

Timothy Marsh remembered that Area A was a place where OSS was using explosives and other munitions and that “Commo” instructors got to meet some of the agents from there.⁹² “We had a vague notion that it was a big wooded area and that there were other people in other areas around us,” trainee John Brunner said. “We did not know the nearest town. The truck did not open the flaps until well into the woods. We did not know that Quantico Marine base was nearby.”⁹³ Wandering around the forested area was discouraged, and the men were directed to stay in camp. Art Reinhardt, a student at C-4 for three months in the summer of 1944, recalled that he stayed at the training camp, except to go on leave. He did not explore the forest park.⁹⁴

Communications instructor James Ranney got into trouble when some of his students wandered into Area A by mistake. He assisted in planning a nighttime field exercise for SO or SI agents that was supposed to be held within Area C, which was unfamiliar to them. “They wanted me to make up a set of instructions guiding them to a certain point, where they would then set up their radio and talk back to the base station. Either my directions were not too clear, or they didn’t read them right, or they just got lost. But they—at least some of them—mistakenly ended up in Area A, where there were all kinds of unexploded mortar shells and everything.”⁹⁵ They were not the only ones who got lost in the forest during the war. Ranney himself, an instructor at Area C for six months in 1943, said “I never was really sure where I was in that camp and forest. It was a forest, and we routinely got lost in the place.”⁹⁶

Accidents

Accidents do occur, particularly with weapons and explosives around, and there were injuries and a few fatalities at OSS training camps. There is little record of minor injuries, but veterans do remember some of the more dramatic ones. Instructor Frank Gleason certainly recalled being blown off his feet and knocked unconscious by a demolitions accident at Area D on the Potomac when someone had improperly wired the detonator.⁹⁷ A communications student from Area C, while helping set up a remote transmitting site near Richmond picked up an antenna wire already connected to the power source and it knocked him about fifteen feet. The student was sore but otherwise

⁹² Timothy Marsh, telephone interview with the author, 18 January 2006.

⁹³ John W. Brunner, telephone interview with the author, 21 March 2005; similarly Obie L. Etheridge, telephone interview with the author, 14 January 2008.

⁹⁴ Arthur Reinhardt, interview with the author at Prince William Forest Park, Va., 14 December 2004.

⁹⁵ James F. Ranney, telephone interview with the author, 8 January 2005.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 26 December 2007.

unhurt.⁹⁸ Another student received a wound, albeit not a deep one, in the abdomen from debris from one of the dynamite caps being used to simulate the noise of battlefield explosions at a field training exercise in Area A in the summer of 1942.⁹⁹ William J. Casey, a future Director of Central Intelligence, but an SI student in 1942 had his jaw broken by a flying chunk of tree branch when he triggered a trip wire on the demolition trail at Area B and was down crouched down far enough.¹⁰⁰ “I was just sick about it,” Instructor Frank Gleason said. “It was the only accident we had that I know of.... We were very, very careful that we did not hurt anybody.”¹⁰¹

Although the final war report of the OSS did not list them, there were several fatalities during paramilitary training. At least two occurred on the obstacle course at Area F, the former Congressional Country Club, where, as at the other paramilitary training camps, in order to simulate battle conditions, students were required to crawl with their weapon along a trail while machine guns fired live ammunition over their heads. Two students were killed when they rose up into the machine gun fire, one of them because he unexpectedly came face to face with a snake.¹⁰² In another instance, this one at the Maritime Unit School at Area D in 1942, a trainee accidentally drowned in one of the underwater exercises on the Potomac River.¹⁰³

A bizarre tragedy occurred during a nighttime field exercise at Area F in 1943. It was planned as a standard exercise, very similar to those done at Area A or B, and it involved a group of OG trainees assigned to make a mock attack on a bridge nearby. The plan was to overcome the guards, whose part was played by enlisted men on the camp cadre, and then set up mock explosive charges to destroy the bridge. Lieutenant Al Materazzi was an observer. Years later, he recalled the events of that summer night. “In the morning, we had received our knives, the famous Fairbairn knife [a razor sharp stiletto]. We were told how to place it, where to carry it. We were given strict instructions not to remove it from its scabbard for the exercise. The exercise was that the officer [Materazzi] would be an observer, and the enlisted men would do the mission, which consisted of going, as I remember it, to a bar along the Cabin John Creek, rendezvous with the others and attack the place with another group. Opposing us was the station complement [enlisted members of the cadre at Detachment F]. The patrol moved in like a classic infantry patrol. There were two points [two members out in front], and as they reached the bridge, they were captured. Now, nothing happened, and one of them [one of the remaining men in the patrol] came to me and said, ‘Lieutenant, I can get up there and

⁹⁸ Obie L. Etheridge, telephone interview with the author, 14 January 2008. Etheridge witnessed the accident.

⁹⁹ Edgar Prichard, “Address to Historical Prince William, Inc.,” 16 January 1991, p. 5, typescript of a talk in the Park Archives of Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va.

¹⁰⁰ Joseph Lazarsky, telephone interview with the author, 14 March 2005.

¹⁰¹ Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 31 January 2005.

¹⁰² Congressional Country Club, *Congressional Country Club, 1924-1984*, n.p., n.d. (Bethesda, Md.: Congressional Country Club, c. 1985), 29. I am indebted to Maxine D. Harvey of the club for this volume.

¹⁰³ John Pitt Spence, telephone interview with the author, 28 January 2005.

do it.’ And what did he do? He put the knife between his teeth, did a magnificent job of crawling over the parapet, waited until the guard turned his back, and then put the knife loosely on the man’s back, and then said, ‘All right, you’re captured. Now, we can go on.’ The guard wore glasses thick as bottles, you might say, and he turned and walked into it [into the knife]. He was killed immediately. Then they started to scream for me...I broke cover. Found out what it was, and arrested him on the spot. I sent him [back] to the F Area. I then took over the platoon to get to where we were supposed to go, which I did.”¹⁰⁴ The man went before a court-martial. He was found not guilty but was transferred out of the OSS.¹⁰⁵

Serious accidents were indeed rare in OSS training in the United States. Instructors emphasized safety measures with the weapons and took great precaution with the explosives. Spiro Cappony, a sailor and a radio operator, had never had any paramilitary training until the OSS recruited him and send him to Area B in 1943. He remembered that a big, red-haired instructor was particularly good. “He taught you to be confident in yourself. Not to be afraid to do things. Learning about your weapons. The weapon is your friend, but it is also your enemy. Because you don’t want to make a mistake with it either. You had to be very careful how you used your weapons. How to store them, how to carry them, and all of that. You were taught not to be careless, but to be careful with them and to respect their firepower.”¹⁰⁶ Learning and practicing with hand grenades and mortars was, Cappony, recalled, “really scary. Because you knew it could explode. That was live stuff, not play stuff. They were very, very strict about training us with that. They were really on top of us. They made us appreciate the danger...to be very, very careful. There was very close supervision because they didn’t want to see any accidents. Thank God, we never had any accidents.”¹⁰⁷

Celebrities in Disguise at OSS Training Camps

OSS training camps had a few nationally known celebrities as trainees. Among those students were professional wrestler “Jumping Joe” Savoldi; professional baseball player “Moe” Berg; New York socialite and former Russian prince, Serge Obolensky; and movie star Sterling Hayden.

Born in Italy but growing up in Michigan, Joseph Savoldi first became famous as an All-American fullback on Knute Rockne’s football team at Notre Dame University in the late 1920s. The Chicago Bears wanted him as a halfback, but Savoldi decided to

¹⁰⁴ Albert Materazzi, telephone interview with the author, 26 January 2005.

¹⁰⁵ Albert Materazzi, *Close Combat, OSS Society Digest*, Number 1123, 18 August 2005, ossociety@yahoo.com, accessed 23 August 2005.

¹⁰⁶ Spiro Cappony, telephone interview with the author, 16 September 2006.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

become a professional wrestler, and in 1933, he won the world wrestling championship by defeating Jim Londos at Chicago stadium. His winning streak continued, and in 1938, he garnered the European wrestling championship.¹⁰⁸ In 1942, the 34-year-old Savoldi was recruited by Donovan's organization, and he was a member of one of the first classes trained at Area B in Catoctin Mountain Park.¹⁰⁹ During close-combat practice one day, instructor Jerry Sage, who knew Savoldi only by his code name "Vic" was taken aback when "Vic" leaped at him feet first, caught him around the legs, toppled him and pinned him to the ground. "Where'd you learn that?" Sage asked, spitting grass. "That's my specialty in the ring," Vic replied, "It's called the flying scissors." He then acknowledged being a professional wrestler.¹¹⁰ After his SO training, Savoldi was selected in 1943 for the "McGregor" Mission to negotiate with Italian admirals for the surrender of their fleet. Michael Burke, all-American football player for Cornell and later president of the New York Yankees, a member of the mission recalled that Savoldi "was built like a gorilla and moved as lightly as a leopard. His wrestler's face had been mashed against the ring canvas a thousand times. He was enthusiastic; I thought he would be perfect. He would terrify Girosi [Marcello Girosi, New York brother of the Italian admiral they were trying to contact] and maybe the entire Italian fleet."¹¹¹ Savoldi would be Girosi's bodyguard. Before the group left, however, Mussolini's fascist government had been toppled, the new Italian government had joined the Allies, and the OSS had already smuggled out of German-occupied Italy, a dozen Italian naval officers and scientists with crucial information about the new radio-guided bombs, high-speed "commando" submarines, and special torpedoes the Axis had developed and were using against Allied forces.¹¹²

Morris ("Moe") Berg was an extraordinary individual, an intellectual, linguist, spy, and most famously a professional baseball player. Growing up in Newark, New Jersey, the child of Russian Jewish immigrants, he starred academically and athletically in high school and at Princeton University, graduating Phi Beta Kappa and captain of the

¹⁰⁸ I am indebted to the grandson of Joseph ("Jumping Joe") Savoldi for this information. Emails from J.G. Savoldi to the author, 26 May 2006. See also, "Information Sought on OSSer 'Jumping Joe' Savoldi," OSS Society *Newsletter* (Summer 2005), 16.

¹⁰⁹ There are two references to Joseph ("Jumping Joe") Savoldi at OSS Training Area B in the spring of 1942. He was identified by name, but incorrectly described as an instructor, by Edgar Pritchard, a 71-year-old Arlington, Virginia, lawyer and OSS/SO veteran in a talk to an historical society in Prince William County, Virginia, "Address to Historic Prince William, Inc.," 16 January 1991, page 2, typescript of talk in Park Archives at Prince William Forest Park, Triangle, Va. A 1942 contemporaneous, internal report on OSS Training Area B does not give Savoldi's name, but states that one of the students there in early June 1942 was "a professional wrestler," presumably a reference to Joseph Savoldi. R.P. Tenney to J.R. Hayden, interoffice memo, subject: Area B, 8 June 1942, in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 158, Folder 1721, National Archives II.

¹¹⁰ Jerry Sage, *Sage* (Wayne, Pa.: Miles Standish Press, 1985), 36.

¹¹¹ Michael Burke, *Outrageous Good Fortune* (Boston: Little Brown, 1984), 94. See also Corey Ford and Alastair MacBain, *Cloak and Dagger: The Secret History of OSS* (New York: Random House, 1945), 149-176; and Max Corvo, *The O.S.S. in Italy, 1942-1945: A Personal Memoir* (New York: Praeger, 1990), 83, 86, 113, 134. All of the above authors had served as officers in the OSS.

¹¹² Ford and Mac Bain, *Cloak and Dagger*, 173-74.

baseball team in 1923. He spent the next 16 years as a catcher for the Chicago White Sox, Boston Red Sox and a couple of other teams, while also earning a law degree at Columbia and taking classes at the Sorbonne. Sportswriters called Berg, “the brainiest guy in baseball.”¹¹³ Berg liked being a hero and the excitement of taking risks. That and his intellect, self-confidence, charm, and his iron nerves made him a perfect OSS agent. In August 1943, he was hired as a civilian by the OSS.¹¹⁴ Apparently, Berg received some OSS training at Area B at Catoctin Mountain Park.¹¹⁵ Subsequently, he was assigned first to the Balkan desk until May 1944, when he left for England and worked on special missions throughout Europe.¹¹⁶

Berg directed a series of daring field operations, in many of which he played the primary role himself. He parachuted into Yugoslavia, and his report supported Tito’s efforts against the Germans. Later, he was flown into Norway, where he obtained more information about the Germans’ nuclear-related heavy water plant, subsequently destroyed by Allied bombing. But his most extraordinary mission was in 1944, when because of his knowledge of physics, Berg was sent to a conference in neutral Switzerland to listen to a lecture by Werner Heisenberg, the leading nuclear physicist in Germany. If Berg judged from Heisenberg’s remarks that a German atomic bomb was imminent, he was to assassinate Heisenberg. Listen to the lecture, Berg correctly concluded that the Germans had not made significant progress toward an atomic bomb. Later, Berg was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom for his accomplishments with the OSS.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Moe Berg’s fascinating life has been sketched in several biographies, the fullest being Nicholas Dawidoff, *The Catcher was a Spy: The Mysterious Life of Moe Berg* (New York: Pantheon, 1994); but see also Louis Kauffman, Barbara Fitzgerald, and Tom Sewell, *Moe Berg: Athlete, Scholar, Spy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1975); and a family memoir/document collection by his sister, Ethel Berg, *My Brother Morris Berg: The Real Moe* (Newark, N.J.: E. Berg, 1976), copy in Special Collections, Alexander Library, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J. Another, if lesser known professional baseball player who trained at Catoctin Mountain Park was Richard W. (“Bobo”) Breck, an OSS Special Operations agent who served in Italy. Breck had played baseball at preparatory school and at Harvard and after the war, was a pitcher for the Pawtucket Slaters, a farm team for the Boston Braves in 1946 and 1947 until he broke his leg. He subsequently worked as a production manager for Raytheon on radar for missile and other defense systems. C.G. Lynch, obituary, “Richard W. Breck, 83, was Veteran of World War II, Raytheon Manager,” *Patriot Ledger*, Quincy, Mass., 17 March 2005, p. 25, reproduced in *OSS Society Digest*, Number 984, 18 March 2005, ossociety@yahoo.com, accessed 18 March 2005.

¹¹⁴ Dawidoff, *The Catcher was a Spy*, 150, 152-153.

¹¹⁵ Alex Flaster, Chicago, email to the author, 24 February 2006; Flaster is a Chicago based documentary filmmaker who was in 2006 producing a feature length documentary film on Moe Berg. At the infiltration test at the end of Berg’s training, he was apprehended in his attempt to penetrate the Glenn Martin aircraft factory in Baltimore. The publicity from his arrest caused a minor scandal in Washington, because there already had been some concern that the OSS might be used for domestic spying on Americans.

¹¹⁶ “I was in charge of General Bill Donovan’s OSS Balkan Desk from August 1943 until I left for England in May 1944.” “Moe Berg,” photocopy of a summary in Berg’s handwriting, undated; and Mr. Morris Berg, Acting Area Operations Officer, ME-SO, to Mr. Thomas Damberg, Special Relations, 12 November 1943, subject: future correspondence, both documents in Berg, *My Brother Morris Berg*, 200, 224.

¹¹⁷ Dawidoff, *The Catcher was a Spy*, 169-217. For some unknown reason, Berg declined to accept the award in 1946. His sister accepted it for him after Moe Berg’s death in 1972.

Prince Serge Obolensky was born in St. Petersburg in Czarist Russia in 1890 to a family that traced its ancestry back to Igor, the Grand Duke of Kiev in the tenth century. Although not a member of the Romanov family, the Obolenskys won the right to use the title prince in the reign of Ivan the Terrible. Serge's father was a general and his mother was from one of the wealthiest families in Russia. Serge studied at St. Petersburg and Oxford universities. When the First World War broke out, he left college and joined an Imperial Guards cavalry regiment. He fought against the Germans in World War I and against the Red Army during the Russian Revolution. After the communist victory in Russia, Obolensky became one of the many white Russian émigrés, settling first in London and then in New York. Working in banking and real estate in New York in the 1920s, he married into the socially prominent and extremely wealthy Astor family. He became a US citizen in 1931, and in 1935 having lived in many of the best hotels in Europe and America, was given the job by Vincent Astor of consulting and promoting the renovated St. Regis Hotel in New York. This led him into the hotel business, and he later became vice President of the Hilton International hotel chain.

In 1940, when the German Army overran Western Europe, Obolensky tried to enlist in the U.S. Army, but was rejected because he was 49. Instead, he joined the New York National Guard as a private and was soon promoted to captain. After Pearl Harbor, he sought out William Donovan and asked to join as a commando. Donovan obtained an Army commission for him as a major. The 51-year-old Obolensky reported to Colonel M. Preston Goodfellow in Donovan's office in Washington in early 1942 and was sent immediately to Area B-2 for Special Operations training.¹¹⁸

At B-2, Obolensky worked hard. He recognized that the course was designed to toughen the men as well as provide them with commando skills. "We got up early and went to bed late, training in special tactics, shooting at sounds at night, guerrilla tactics, memory tests of smell and configurations of places in total darkness, and especially demolition work."¹¹⁹ Obolensky's code name was "Sky," it was written on an identification tag he wore. Lt. Jerry Sage, then an instructor at B-2, remembered "Sky, the tall gentleman...then about fifty-four years old...He was a real man—tough, resilient and good-humored. He trained hard, and despite his greater age, he kept up with all the younger fellows and did everything we did."¹²⁰ Sage recalled that despite his age, Sky (Obolensky) insisted on going along with the OSS tradition of making all five qualifying parachute jumps in one day. When the group had completed the first two jumps, Sky's legs began to hurt. He had the medics wrap them in tape, but the tape broke when he hit the ground again—on both the third and fourth landings. The jumpmaster tried to get him to stop, but he insisted on completing the fifth jump that day. Up in the plane, his legs hurt so badly he could hardly walk and the jumpmaster tried to block his way. But

¹¹⁸ Serge Obolensky, *One Man in His Time: The Memoirs of Serge Obolensky* (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1958), 342. Obolensky wrote in 1958 that Goodfellow sent him immediately "to a commando school in Virginia," but he undoubtedly confused this with Maryland, as Lt. Jerry Sage remembers training him at B-2.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 342-343.

¹²⁰ Sage, *Sage*, 30-31.

Obolensky yelled out, “Throw me out of the plane, damn it!” They did, and he received his paratrooper’s insignia that day.¹²¹

Back at OSS headquarters, Goodfellow put Obolensky to work in the summer of 1942 helping to prepare tables of organization and manuals for guerrilla units, what would later become known as Operational Groups. Obolensky was told that the Joint Chiefs of Staff only reluctantly approved Donovan’s idea for these uniformed, military units and that the U.S. Army had feared a repetition of the nineteenth century’s U.S. Volunteers. Those had been ad hoc units of citizen soldiers led by amateur officers such as in the Civil War and most famously in the Spanish-American War, Theodore Roosevelt and his “Rough Riders.” The Army, Obolensky claimed, would not even allow the OSS units to use the standard military nomenclature—platoons, companies, battalions. Nevertheless, Obolensky declared, eventually “we got everything we wanted, the newest and most secret weapons. We had the bazooka long before anyone else, high explosives, pliable plastics, quite safe with detonators.”¹²²

After being dispatched on a tour of Army training camps by Goodfellow, Obolensky returned to Washington and was sent to OSS Area A in Prince William Forest Park, Virginia. Colonel Russell (“Russ”) Livermore was there in the spring of 1943 and Obolensky says that he worked with Livermore on the development of the organizational and training program for the OGs. It was while he was at Area A that he made the five jumps in one day and earned his paratrooper’s winged insignia. Afterwards, Obolensky, later wrote, he was assigned to prepare a camp for guerrilla warfare training of the OGs, or what he called “our OSS commando combat teams.” The facility was Area F, the former Congressional Country Club.¹²³

Obolensky obtained two young instructors in guerrilla warfare at the infantry school at Fort Benning who would play key roles in the Operational Groups: Captains Joseph Alderdice and Alfred T. Cox. While the men for the OGs were being recruited, Obolensky and Alderdice wrote the training curriculum, lectures, and manual for the OGs. They drew upon British commando material, Fairbairn’s methods, insights that Obolensky had gathered in his career and his tour of American bases, and in addition, the translation of a smuggled copy of the *Soviet Russian Guerrilla Manual*. The manual they wrote, *The Operational Group Manual*, eventually became the *United States Army Guerrilla*.¹²⁴ The brilliant Albert (“Al”) Cox, who had been a civil engineering student at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, President of his class, captain of the football and baseball teams, and Phi Beta Kappa, also played a significant role in organizing and training Operational Groups at Area F, and later in leading and directing them in action. In the Mediterranean Theater, Cox led the first OG teams sent to Corsica from Algiers to

¹²¹ Ibid., 31-32.

¹²² Obolensky, *One Man in His Time*, 343.

¹²³ Ibid., 347-348.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 343, 349, 404, although Obolensky spelled it Alderdyce. See “Lecture: Guerrilla Warfare,” in Lt. Col. Serge Obolensky and Capt. Joseph E. Alderdice, “Outline of Training Programs at Areas `A` and `F` for Operational Groups, Office of Strategic Services, n.p., typescript, n.d., [August 1943], OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136Box 140; Folder 1466, National Archives II.

stage raids along the Italian coastline, and he also led the final OG team into southern France to coordinate all the OG sections in the Rhone River Valley behind German lines.¹²⁵

In late August 1943, Obolensky, by then a lieutenant colonel, was sent overseas to the Mediterranean. In Algiers, Donovan himself explained to Obolensky that the Allies were soon going to invade the Italian mainland south of Naples from Sicily. General Dwight Eisenhower, the theater commander, wanted a prestigious person—in this case Obolensky—to neutralize the Axis forces on Sardinia by delivering special letters to the Italian commander on Sardinia from the General Eisenhower and by the head of the new Italian government, Marshal Pietro Badoglio, ordering him to surrender. The four-man OSS team, including Obolensky, an assistant, Lieutenant James W. Russell, a British sergeant as a radio operator, and one of the Italian American OG officers, Lieutenant Michael Formicelli, from Areas A, F, and B, as an interpreter, parachuted into mountains. At 52, Obolensky thus became the oldest combat paratrooper in the Army. After leaving two members of the team and the radio in the valley, Obolensky and Formicelli made contact with the Italian commanding general, who agreed to surrender. Although Obolensky could not convince the general to use his troops to try to neutralize the 19,000 Germans already leaving the island, his mission to Sardinia proved successful in achieving Allied control of Sardinia and its Italian garrison of 270,000 troops without a fight.¹²⁶

The best known celebrity among the OSS Special Operations agents who trained in the parks was Hollywood star, Sterling Hayden. He had dropped out of high school at 17 and run away to sea, and the 6'5", 230-pound, ruggedly handsome, blonde adventurer had been picked by Paramount, which billed the 24-year-old in 1940 as "The Most Beautiful Man in the Movies," and "The Beautiful Blonde Viking God." The next year, he married his co-star, the vivacious, sexy Madeleine Carroll. But after only two films, Hayden left Hollywood in 1941, did some parachute training in Scotland at Donovan's suggestion, and in 1942, joined the Marine Corps. He went through boot camp and enrolled in Officers Candidate School in Quantico, Virginia. To complete his break with Hollywood and to minimize public recognition after the publicity of his enlistment ("Your face looks familiar," officers and others would say to him), he legally changed his name to John Hamilton. In the summer of 1943, the 26-year-old lieutenant, soon to be promoted to captain, transferred to the OSS. In his memoirs, Hayden wrote simply that "after a series of false starts in the direction of China, I was handed an enlisted man from the Navy who was fluent in Greek, telegraphy, and cipher, and we were dispatched to Cairo to harass the enemy."¹²⁷ Overseas they were separated. The enlisted man was sent behind German lines to help the guerrillas in Greece. Hayden went to Yugoslavia to aid Tito's Communist partisans against the Germans. The seafaring actor also operated a small fishing boat along the Dalmatian and Albanian coastlines, part of an OSS air rescue team and also ferrying supplies to OSS agents in Yugoslavia and southwestern Greece.

¹²⁵ Kloman, *Assignment Alger*, 34.

¹²⁶ Obolensky, *One Man in His Time*, 353-371; Albert Garland and Howard Smyth, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center for Military History, 1965), 258-261.

¹²⁷ Sterling Hayden, *Wanderer* (New York: Knopf, 1963), 310.

For his exploits, Hayden was awarded the Silver Star Medal. Afterward, he returned to Hollywood, where his placid strength and taciturn, solid, weathered persona served him well in such films as *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950), *The Killing* (1956), *Dr. Strangelove* (1963), *The Godfather* (1971), and *The Long Goodbye* (1973).¹²⁸

The enlisted man assigned to Hayden in the summer of 1943 was Seaman Second Class Spiro Cappony from Gary, Indiana, who had been recruited by OSS naval radio training school at Miami, Ohio, in July 1943. He and Hayden, who Cappony knew as Captain John Hamilton, were assigned as a combat team to be sent behind German lines in Greece. Cappony was sent first to the OSS Communications School at Area C in Prince William Forest Park. There, he learned OSS equipment, polished his telegraphy to 22 words a minute and practiced coding and decoding. He learned to tap the telegraph key with either hand, a skill that proved useful in Greece when he was wounded in the right arm. He credits the instruction at OSS Communications School with saving his life. “[In Greece,] the Germans would follow us. They had direction finders. I had my crystals and my radio in a suitcase. We learned how to use that, and we learned how to change our crystals to get the Germans off our backs. I learned how to set up my messages and the numbers and so forth. I had that all in my mind. I had to memorize all that stuff. I picked my [high] school song as my starting point. The guys in Cairo [the OSS radio base station], they knew my school song. So when they would get my messages, they would know it was me. When I got wounded [in my right arm], I had to transmit with my left hand, they wouldn’t accept it. They didn’t recognize my ‘fist’ [his telegraphic style]. I had a hard time convincing them it was me.”¹²⁹

Training at Area B in the use of the bayonet later served Cappony well in action in Greece in 1944. “I remember when I first went into Greece, we were there the first day, and I had my rifle. I heard a whistle. I look around, and I asked the captain [Captain James Kellis, head of the four-man SO team], I said ‘Captain Jim, what’s that sound?’ He said, ‘It’s from the guerrillas. They’ve spotted a German. The Germans are coming at us.’ When he said Germans and here it is my first day, and the Germans are coming at us, I got a tingle. I heard my captain say, ‘Get your bayonet ready.’ I tell you, when I got my bayonet ready, I started to think about my training that I had in Area [B]. I thought, ‘Oh, my God, there’ll be hell to pay up here.’ But thank God, the Germans just came by. We were very, very quiet. There were about three or four hundred of them. They came up and looked around, but we had disappeared. It really scares you, because you are there for combat duty, but thank God for the combat training.”¹³⁰

Sterling Hayden [Captain John Hamilton] returned to the United States in November 1944, visiting Areas F and A, before being sent to France and Germany

¹²⁸ On Hayden the actor, see, for example, the entries on him in David Thomson, *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film*, exp. and rev. (New York: Knopf, 2004); and Karen Burroughs Hannsberry, *Bad Boys: The Actors of Film Noir* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2003), 288-299.

¹²⁹ Spiro Cappony, telephone interview with the author, 16 September 2006. Mr. Cappony recounted much of his entire OSS experience at home and abroad in a letter to a friend in 2004. At the author’s request, Mr. Cappony has made a recording on 4 October 2006 of his reading that letter to the author. The recording has been donated by Mr. Cappony to Catocin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

in 1945 hunting for anti-Nazi Germans to use against the Nazis. Spiro Cappony returned from Greece in late 1944, but did not have any money because he obviously had not received his pay while behind enemy lines. “Captain John Hamilton was my buddy. I met him in the Congressional Country Club. He says, ‘Hey, Gus,’ what are you doing here?’ I said, ‘I can’t get out of here. I don’t have any money.’ He said, ‘Get out and get drunk.’ I said, ‘I’d love to get drunk.’ He said, ‘Here’s twenty bucks.’”¹³¹

Some Lighter Moments in a Tough Training Schedule

Despite the seriousness of the training, there were inevitably some lighter moments at the training camps. Some were funny, some ridiculous, some dangerous. Some resulted from carelessly by personnel inexperienced with firearms. One private on the cadre at Area B-5 in 1942 accidentally shot a hole in one of the walls of the arsenal where all the ammunition was stored. Two weeks later, another private there was caught using the bottom of the handle of a pistol like a hammer to tamp down a nail. He was caught and relieved of the weapon before it went off. For punishment, he was chewed out and confined to camp for a month.¹³² A much less dangerous violation of regulations and procedures occurred at B-5, one afternoon in October 1942, when Private Albert Guay, the new assistant company clerk, who had only been in the Army for three weeks, was, as part of his duties, playing musical records over the camp’s public address system after duty hours. “I was leafing through a bunch of records,” he recalled. “We had a big stack of 78 rpm records.” And I found ‘The Star Spangled Banner.’ I had no more than started to play it when the phone rang. It was Major Blogg, and he said: ‘Who? Why? What for?’ and ‘Stop!’ and ‘Come over to my quarters!’ So I went over to his quarters, and I told him that I had not had basic training yet, and I did not know that that you were not supposed to play the National Anthem except on special occasions. It brought the camp to a standstill.”¹³³ At Area C in Prince William Forest Park in January 1945, Lt. Richard P. (“Scotty”) Scott, who had just arrived, was “schooled” by Major Albert Jenkins, the camp commandant, because one Monday morning on the P.A. system, Scott played an inappropriate song for reveille. Others had played “Oh, What a Beautiful Morning,” and such, but Major Jenkins did not approve of Scott’s choice of “Drinking Rum and Coca Cola” for reveille.¹³⁴

An extraordinary use of the public address system at Area C was made on June 6, 1944, D-Day, as the Allies landed on the coast of Normandy. On that historic occasion, the OSS Communications Branch relayed information on the landings directly from their base station in England. The men of Area C gathered in a recreation hall to follow the news. “We had another civilian named McEwen, an old Navy radio operator, who was

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Albert R. Guay, diary entries of 11 and 30 November 1942.

¹³³ Albert R. Guay, diary entry of 28 October 1942.

¹³⁴ “Richard P. Scott, W3EFZ,” in Ranney and Ranney, eds, *The OSS CommVets Papers*, 2nd ed., 211.

one of us, an instructor in the code department,” recalled Timothy Marsh. “He could copy [receive] up to 60 words per minute while talking at the same time. Like the old telegraph operators. Extraordinary! That day, D-Day, they tied in military circuits into one of the Rec halls, where we were, and he would listen and then tell us verbatim what was going on. He was telling us what was happening in the D-Day invasion as it was sent in Morse code from overseas. This was the only time that that kind of thing happened.”¹³⁵

Parachute training was hard work, but it sometime produced some humorous moments. In the summer of 1942, Area B instructors Captain Charles Parkin and Lieutenants Frank Gleason and Ed Stromholt and a couple of trainees went down to Area A and used it and the Marine Base at Quantico to make the five jumps necessary to qualify as certified paratroopers. “We got in one of those old B-10 bombers, and we took off,” Gleason said. “When we were over the OSS camp, they would throttle it down to 90 m.p.h.; you could hear the ‘beep, beep’ of the warning indicator that it was about to stall, and we would jump. We did five jumps that day. The last one was from 500 feet. It was just: swing, swing, and bang, you’re down. It was a forested area, but there was clearing, and we jumped into that clearing. There were two [OSS airborne] instructors with us. One was a Colonel [Lucius] Rucker.”¹³⁶ The comings and goings of the OSS parachute trainees produced some confusion at the entrance to the Marine Base. As Parkin later recalled, “Each time, we would take off from a plane from Quantico, jump into clearings in Area A and walk back across the road to Quantico. Finally, the Marine sentry at the gate stopped me and said, ‘Captain, I have seen you walk into the base three times today, but I’ve never seen you walk out. How are you doing this?’”¹³⁷

For Parkin, the fifth jump did not quite go off as planned. His friend, Frank Gleason, remembered it. “The last jump, we were only 500 feet high. We jumped and we were practically on the ground. Charlie landed in a tree, he was upside down, hanging by his leg in that tree. It was quite a sight. I helped him get out of that tree. You’ve got to remember that those were crazy days. We were all young, and we were immortal and fearless, and we would do anything, anytime, anywhere.”¹³⁸

OSS high command liked to show off its paramilitary, commando-like training to certain dignitaries who wished to visit the camps. Sometimes such demonstrations went well. Norwegian OG member Arne I. Herstad from Tacoma, Washington, wrote to his fiancé of how more than a dozen of a “Norso” group, headed by Captain William F. Larsen, were called down from Area B-2 at Catoctin Mountain Park to Washington, as Herstead explained, to “put on a small program for the benefit of [Swedish-born, Norwegian] Crown Princess Märtha, Wild Bill Donovan, and a few more brass hats. I and 5 other fellows fired [sub]machine guns, 6 others fired pistols, and the rest of the boys were divided up for close order drill and a few other things we have had in our training. She talked with most of the boys and shook hands with all of us. Then we all

¹³⁵ Timothy Marsh, telephone interview with the author, 18 January 2006.

¹³⁶ Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 9 May 2005.

¹³⁷ Charles M. Parkin, transcript of interview on a tour of Catoctin Mountain Park, 18 May 2005.

¹³⁸ Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 31 January 2005; and interview on tour of tour of Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md., 18 May 2005.

had a real swell dinner with the princess of course. She's really swell, speaks excellent Norwegian. Very much more beautiful than her pictures."¹³⁹

Sometimes the visits did not go well. In 1943, a stream of crisply uniformed staff officers—from colonels to generals—was escorted out to Areas A, B, and F to watch the SO and OG exercises or even to address the trainees. Such visits did not always sit well with the trainees, many of whom resented what they considered gratuitous pep talks by staff officers who would ride out the war in offices and clubs in Washington. Lieutenant Jack Singlaub recalled that at Area B his training group, which included many irreverent paratroopers and future Jedburghs, quickly became fed up with being forced to dress up and listen to such ceremonial visitors. On one particular occasion, they decided to deflate such pomposity. Halfway through the distinguished visitor's talk, they began to yell out a count in unison, concluding "forty-eight, forty-nine, fifty! Some Shit!" That ended the visits to that group in Area B.¹⁴⁰

During one night field exercise at Area A in Prince William Forest Park, other trainees were simulated an assault including overcoming "German" guards and blowing up a dam. At a small concrete dam in the woods in Area A, a few enlisted members of the cadre pretended to be German guards. The attacking force of trainees would sneak through the woods, overcome the guards and set dummy charges to "blow up" the dam. Lieutenant William Dreux recalled one such exercise which went slightly awry. His cabin mate Lieutenant Robert Farley, who had experience fighting in the Spanish Civil War, led his attack force with particular gusto that night, using a flying tackle that left the "enemy" sentry sprawled on the ground and almost unconscious. The problem was that it was not an enemy sentry, but a staff colonel from Washington who had come down to observe the exercise. According to Dreux, the colonel never returned to observe any more such maneuvers.¹⁴¹

Practical jokes were not unusual. One night at Area C in the winter of 1943-1944, trainee Marvin Flisser of the Bronx decided to play a practical joke on his best buddy, with the help of some friends and the camp guards. "We had girlfriends [in Washington, D.C.]," Flisser said. "One day my friend [code named] Larry Lamont—now we didn't tell these girls where we were.... We made up a story—There are several different entrances to this little camp. I don't know, three or four different entrances. We made up a plan ourselves that we were going to play a trick on Larry, and we were going to tell him that his girlfriend, Helen, was looking for him. We told him, "Larry, Helen is at the gate, she's looking for you." He says, "What! I'm going to be court-martialed!" He was so frightened. So, he goes to one of the gates, and he says, "I'm looking for Helen." And they [the guards] say, "Oh yeah, she was here, but she went to the next gate." So he ran to the next gate, and said, "I'm looking for Helen." They say, "Oh, she was here looking for

¹³⁹ Arne [I. Herstad] to Dearest Andi, 6 October 1943, *OSS Society Digest*, Number 2062, 26 May 2008, ossociety@yahoo.com, accessed 26 May 2008. They were selected from nearly 100 men under Captain William F. Larsen at Area B-2. A, see Van Beuren to Weston Howland, 24 September 1943, subject: Areas B and B-2, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 223, Folder 3106, National Archives II. Larsen later led his Norsos on the Percy Red OG Mission in Central France in early August 1944.

¹⁴⁰ Singlaub with McConnell, *Hazardous Duty*, 33.

¹⁴¹ Dreux, *No Bridges Blown*, 18.

you, but she went to the next gate.” We had him running around, all around the camp. We finally told him that this was all a ruse, a phony. (Laughs) Nobody knew who we were or where we were.”¹⁴²

One of the stranger elements of OSS training to many of the students was the role of the psychologists trying to assess them. Art Reinhardt remembered a very brief interview in a darkened tent at Area A in which the main question the psychologist with a pencil flashlight asked him was why he wore his sideburns so long. “I said I didn’t know they were that long. That was the end of it.”¹⁴³ Caesar Civitella remembers the first question that the psychologist asked him was: “How did you feel just before you made your first parachute jump?” I said I had butterflies in my stomach. He said ‘How did you know that? Did you ever eat a butterfly?’ I said, ‘Of course! With chocolate!’ What kind of question was that.”¹⁴⁴ Even more mysterious, civilian instructor Timothy Marsh remembered that sometimes at night, the psychologists used to project weird noises from their office in Area C. “We had this psychology tent, a cabin made up primary of psychologists, which was kind of remote from the rest of the camp. However, it had weird sounds coming from it at night, such as wolves chasing babies, children. You could hear them start a long way off and then getting closer and closer and closer. It was very unusual and unnerving. That was one of the things they liked to play late at night. There were other things that were unnerving, other sounds that were just unnerving....They were military [personnel]. We didn’t know much about them, to tell the truth. But they seemed to be trying to unnerve people.”¹⁴⁵

“Going into Town”

Despite the long hours for staff and trainees, there was some leisure time at the OSS training camps. Most of the recreation and leisure time activities, especially for the staff, came from visiting local towns on an evening pass. At Area B in Catoctin Mountain Park, the nearest town was Thurmont, Maryland, then home of about 6,000 people on the east side only a couple of miles from the entrance to the park. Initially, some of the cadre would occasionally go to Thurmont. Assistant Company Clerk Albert Guay, for example, attended the Lutheran Church there one Sunday in November 1942.¹⁴⁶ Some of the old time Thurmont residents remember seeing occasional soldiers, who were not local men

¹⁴² Marvin S. Flisser, telephone interview with the author, 27 January 2005.

¹⁴³ Arthur Reinhardt, interview with the author while touring Prince William Forest Park, 14 December 2004.

¹⁴⁴ Caesar Civitella, telephone interview with the author, 18 April 2008.

¹⁴⁵ Timothy Marsh, telephone interview with the author, 18 January 2006.

¹⁴⁶ Albert R. Guay, telephone interview with the author, 24 October 2005, and diary entry for 1 November 1942.

home on leave, in the town during the war, but they did not know where these men came from.¹⁴⁷ Around Catoctin Mountain, rumors suggested that the sealed off area had become an officers training camp or later a facility for rest and rehabilitation for combat veterans.¹⁴⁸ A report from the OSS Security Branch in September 1943, indicated that the local residents were naturally aware that there was military activity in the area, “but there appears to be little concrete evidence of any special curiosity or interest existing regarding the nature of that activity.” “The entire Area [B] is ideally situated from the standpoint of physical security,” the report concluded, “being far removed from any town or settlement of any size.”¹⁴⁹

By 1943 in order to maintain secrecy about the training at Area B, personnel from the camp were no longer allowed to go to the nearby hamlets, like Thurmont. Instead, their evening passes permitted them to go to either “Hagerstown or Frederick. These were small but lively cities, each about a dozen miles away. Hagerstown’s normal population of 40,000 was swollen by the influx of many people seeking jobs in the booming defense industry, particularly the Fairchild Aircraft Factory, which transports and other planes. Permanent staff members at Area B seem to have had regular brief excursions to Hagerstown on evenings during the week and on weekends. They could go to the movies, dance halls, roller skating rinks, bowling alleys, or local taverns, bars, cocktail lounges, and nightclubs, or, of course, the facilities provided by the United Service Organization (USO), which served the morale needs of U.S. military personnel.

There were nearly fifty enlisted men on the camp staff in Area B-5 in late 1942, and Al Guay, a recent college graduate serving temporarily as assistant company clerk, recalled that among them were “a rough bunch of guys up there.” On his secondary day in camp, he noted in his diary that “last night a couple of guys got in a fight in Hagerstown & one got a fractured skull.” As Guay told the author in October 2005, “I wasn’t in town that night. But our recreation was to get into a truck and go to Hagerstown, Frederick, or Thurmont. We would go in town in the evenings, not just the weekends. I looked earlier this month to see if I could remember where we parked our truck. In Thurmont, it was in a square. We parked there and most of them went to the bars. I was not a barfly, so I didn’t do that. I would walk around or go to a movie or a dance. There were a lot of USO dances around.”¹⁵⁰ A number of the other enlisted men, Guay recalled, got mean when they got liquor in them.¹⁵¹ “Sgt. got kinda loud & tough to a girl in a restaurant; finally got him outside to cool off,” reads one diary entry. On a bus jammed with soldiers returning to camp from Saturday night leave, there was much trouble with drunks. One soldier “went after the major with a knife.” Guay never saw that

¹⁴⁷ Frank Long, Thurmont, Md., 5 June 2006; William A. Willhide, Thurmont, Md., 13 January 2006; and James H. Mackley, Thurmont, Md., interviewed by the author, 13 June 2006.

¹⁴⁸ William A. Willhide, Thurmont, Maryland, telephone interview with the author, 13 June 2006.

¹⁴⁹ A. van Beuren to Weston Howland, 24 September 1943, subject: Areas B and B-2, p. 1, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 146, Box 223, Folder 3106, National Archives II.

¹⁵⁰ Albert R. Guay, diary entries for 12 and 28 November, and 9 and 11 December.

¹⁵¹ Albert R. Guay, telephone interview with the author, 24 October 2005.

soldier again; he probably ended up in the stockade. Another time, two enlisted members of the cadre went absent without leave (AWOL). The soldier who slept in the bunk above Guay was, the diarist noted, “a real character. Has [in the past] been shot several times in brawls, stabbed, beat up, etc. A very nice fellow when sober: friendly, polite & retiring. But when drunk, he’s loud, obscene & ornery.” On 11 December 1942, the camp doctor “gave us a good sex lecture tonight, because too many men are getting venereal diseases.”¹⁵²

Since they were assigned to the secret OSS rather than a US Army unit, even the cadre did not have unit patches on their uniforms. Some simply let it go that way, others, like Guay went out and bought a shoulder patch. “It was just an Army shoulder patch with a star on it,” he recalled. “We weren’t supposed to let anybody know we were in the OSS. I bought the shoulder patch so I would just look like all the other soldiers. I was wearing a “Class A” [dress] uniform.”¹⁵³ “When we would go downtown, people would ask us where we were stationed. We would tell them Camp Ritchie, Fort Detrick. But nobody from Camp Ritchie was ever around Hagerstown or Thurmont, and they would laugh and say, ‘Oh, you mean up at the old CCC camp.’”¹⁵⁴

Guay, who was from a suburb of Washington, D.C., made his first trip to Hagerstown on Thursday night, 29 October 1942, as his diary indicated: “Went to Hagerstown tonight. Not much of a place, though Shep Fields [a well known band leader] was there at a dance; cost me \$1.65. Soldiers aren’t treated very nicely. Gals gave civilians a better tumble [more attention].”¹⁵⁵ Two days later on Saturday night, he went back to town, saw a movie, and wandered around the streets alone for hours. “An old woman, whose 18-year-old son had just enlisted, stopped me on the street and asked me a lot of questions. I tried to make her feel better. She was pretty worried. I am homesick too. For the first time in my life, I am not able to come and go as I please, and I don’t like it.”¹⁵⁶ It took several visits to local towns before he began to meet young women. Accompanying different sergeants who had been at B-5 longer than he had, Guay began to meet some women, one at a bar, another at a USO dance. Finally, he did meet “a fairly attractive girl” named Dolly in Frederick and later a pretty young woman named Virginia at a dance in Hagerstown. He wrote to them both. He went dancing with Virginia and then to her house for ice cream and cake. On their second date, after bowling, he walked her home, and she let him kiss her goodnight. They went to a local USO talent show for their third date. He enjoyed it, but as he recorded in his diary, “She wouldn’t let me kiss her tonight. She is too prudish that way. It does no harm to kiss a bit.” A week later, he was back to see Virginia again, noting in his diary afterwards: “I’m getting to enjoy her company greatly. She hasn’t let me kiss her anymore after the first time. If I’m around

¹⁵² Albert R. Guay, diary entries of 12 and 28 November and 9, 11, and 12 December 1942.

¹⁵³ Albert R. Guay, telephone interview with the author, 24 October 2005, and diary entry for 23 October 1942.

¹⁵⁴ Albert R. Guay, telephone interview with the author, 24 October 2005.

¹⁵⁵ Albert R. Guay, diary entry for 29 October 1942.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, diary entry for 31 October 1942.

much longer, though, I will. I don't expect to be here much longer, I hope." He was trying to get into Officers' Candidate School. Seven days later, he went to Hagerstown again, "but when I called Virginia, she wasn't home. She had to go to a party given by her company. I sure wanted to see her tonight; I think of her a lot." The next day, however, he learned that he was being transferred, and the day after that the 19th of December 1942, he left, never to return.¹⁵⁷

Trainees, under pressure to conclude an intensive training curriculum in a specified number of weeks, had less leisure time than the staff. Trainee Spiro Cappony remembered that they were occasionally allowed into Hagerstown on weekend evenings "if we had behaved ourselves." "If we were good soldiers, and they were proud of us, they would reward us with a pass. They would take us in a bus [or more often an Army truck] and drop us off at a corner, forget about us for a few hours, and then, at 10:30 or 11:00 o'clock in the evening, they would come back and pick us up..."¹⁵⁸ Some of the men went to local bars and got drunk. Some would get into fights, sometimes with civilians but more often with other soldiers, because, as Cappony recalled, "they were jealous of us because we had money and also because we were kind of cocky. We were sure of ourselves. We knew we were strong, and we kind of poured it on a little bit." But most of the young trainees and staffers going to Hagerstown or occasionally Frederick, went to places to dance with young women: dance halls, USO halls, or even, if they had the money, to nightclubs. The single, young men were looking for female companionship, and young men in uniform were often very popular with young women. "We had a hell of a time" at the dance halls, Spiro Cappony recalled. He and others said that most of the young women did not ask what base they came from (and if they did, the men told them Camp Ritchie). "All they wanted was a good time," Cappony said, "and we wanted a good time."¹⁵⁹

Among the officers, urban socialites like Roger Hall, son of a Navy admiral, found the remote setting at Area B, terribly boring. Transferred in fall 1943 from Area F, the Congressional Country Club located only six miles from Washington, D.C., to the western Maryland mountain camp, Hall said the "B" in Area B apparently stood for "By God, it's a long way from nowhere."¹⁶⁰ "Everyone bitched more because of its remote locale," Hall recalled, "but it was no different in pattern" from other OSS training areas. There was still the detachment cadre, the instructional staff, and the student trainees. But because of the pressure to get the Operational Groups ready for the invasion of France the following spring, Hall said he and his fellow instructors, working under chief instructor Lieutenant Sam Robelards, worked five weeks straight without a day or night off.¹⁶¹

When they could, staff members from Area B obtained two- or three-day passes, which enabled them to go down to Washington, D.C., two hours away. An Army truck or

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., diary entries for 10, 12, 14, 19, 21 November and 1, 3, 10, 17, 18 December 1942.

¹⁵⁸ Spiro Cappony, telephone interview with the author, 16 September 2006.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Hall, *You're Stepping on My Cloak and Dagger*, 34.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 36.

bus would drop them off at the main bus station in Frederick, a city of more than 50,000. From there, they could take a commercial bus, or the enlisted men could hitchhike. Private First Class Albert Guay did both, and the handsome soldier in his snappy, Class-A uniform had some interesting experiences along the way, as he recorded in his diary. “Thursday, November 5th, 1942....Hitchhiked home; 4 women picked me up. There was a 16 yr. old blonde sitting next to me that was plenty O.K. They wanted me to visit ‘em in D.C. tomorrow, but I’m not going to, I guess.”¹⁶² A month later, after being home on a three-day pass and heading back to camp, he recorded, “Tuesday, December 15th, 1942...Dad took me down to the bus. A girl, not bad either, sat down by me & was friendly. So I proceeded to make love to her. Mugged [kissed] her all the way to Rockville where she got off & wanted me to get off with her [but he did not].”¹⁶³

Training Areas A and C and Neighboring Towns

At Training Areas A and C in Prince William Forest Park, the cadre and staff, as well as sometimes the students, would go into neighboring cities for relaxation. As at Area B by 1943, the closest villages—in this case Triangle, Dumfries, and Quantico—were “off limits” to the trainees, except for transit at the Greyhound Bus Terminal or the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad Station. Officers of the cadre and instructional staff seem to have been exempt from this prohibition. Some of them lived there with their families. Bachelor officers were allowed to go into Triangle and talk with the local people. Lieutenant James Ranney, a telegraphy instructor at the Communications School in 1943-1944 explained, “The Commo guys didn’t know a whole lot of information. We operated on a ‘need to know’ basis. Triangle was just a little crossroads. There wasn’t a whole heck of a lot to do there.”¹⁶⁴ The facilities of the U.S. Marine Base at Quantico could be used by permanently attached personnel but not by students or trainees.¹⁶⁵ Some of the permanent personnel and their families used the Marine base across the highway for its PX and movie theater. Captain Arden Dow and his wife attended the movies there, for example, often with Park Manager Ira Lykes and his wife. However, many of the cadre and instructional staff did not use the Marine Base. Army officer and communications instructor Jim Ranney recalled that he never had any

¹⁶² Albert R. Guay, diary entry for 5 November 1942.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, diary entry for 15 December 1942.

¹⁶⁴ James F. Ranney, telephone interview with the author, 8 January 2005.

¹⁶⁵ Headquarters, Detachment A, “Standard Operating Procedure,” 13 April 1944, p. 2, OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 174, Folder 1841, National Archives II.

interaction with that facility. “Marines,” he said, “look down their noses at everybody else.”¹⁶⁶

When on a pass or leave, most of the OSS personnel went to nearby cities: Manassas, a dozen miles away; Fredericksburg, 20 miles; or Washington, D.C., some 35 miles. Communications trainee Art Reinhardt recalled that there would occasionally be a “liberty run” on Wednesday nights to Manassas or Fredericksburg. Trainee Marvin Flisser said “we used to go in the evenings, once or twice a week to Manassas. We would go in an officer’s car, but officers and enlisted men went together, and we would go to a place called the Social Circle, a nightclub or something like that. It was a big—like a barn, a big barn, and there was music there, a band.... There were a lot of girls and men there and a lot of booths and tables. The orchestra played only country music. All the people would get up and dance to this country music. We used to laugh. In between, the band would rest, and during that period, they would turn on regular music. Nobody danced during that period, only during the country music. And the girls would dance with girls, and they would walk around—they didn’t do any square dancing particularly. They would just hold hands and walk.” The men from Area C went out and danced with the women, “we did pretty well.”¹⁶⁷

Given weekend passes, men usually went to Washington, D.C. Sometimes they were driven to the bus stop at Triangle for the hour ride to the capital. More often, a canvas covered Army truck would drive them from the camp to the city. It would drop them off on Friday night or Saturday afternoon at Union Station and pick them up there on Sunday night. Some went in uniforms with the identification patches of their parent unit; others went in just plain khakis without insignia.¹⁶⁸ Sometimes members of the cadre and instructional staff from the training camps in Prince William Forest Park and Catocin Mountain Park were taken over to Area F, the former Congressional Country Club, near Washington for additional lectures or instruction followed by some entertainment. Timothy Marsh, civilian instructor in telegraphy at Area C recalled that “We were there for some lectures, instruction on security, but we also had some socializing. We did sort of fraternize with the girls [from the OSS in Washington].”¹⁶⁹

Some of the married members of the cadre and instructional staff at Areas A and C, those whose families accompanied them to the new assignment, lived in nearby cities, particularly Manassas, only about a dozen miles northwest. Timothy Marsh lived there at the Prince William Hotel with his wife and one-year-old daughter; so did Lieutenant Ellis Marshall, who was also married, and who was in charge of the radio repair department at

¹⁶⁶ James F. Ranney, telephone interview with the author, 8 January 2005. Civilian instructor Timothy Marsh never went to the Marine base at Quantico. Timothy Marsh, telephone interview with the author, 18 January 2006.

¹⁶⁷ Marvin S. Flisser, telephone interview with the author, 27 January 2005. The men from Area C were in uniform, but as far as the dance hall patrons knew, “we were [just] regular soldiers.”

¹⁶⁸ Arthur Reinhardt, interview with the author at Prince William Forest Park, Va., 14 December 2004; also James F. Ranney, telephone interview with author, 8 January 2005.

¹⁶⁹ Timothy Marsh, telephone interview with the author, 18 January 2006.

Area C. Quite a few the staff lived in Manassas and commuted daily by car to Area C, although sometimes they had to stay overnight at the camp.¹⁷⁰

Because of the secrecy surrounding Prince William Forest Park after the War Department took it over, and the fact that there were Army guards around the perimeter of the camp and gates as the entrances, there were various rumors in the local area about what was going on in the park. One rumor was that the park had been converted to a camp for conscientious objectors. One instructor there heard it so often in Manassas where he lived that he believed it was a cover story circulated intentionally.¹⁷¹ Many local residents believed that the camp housed German prisoners of war.¹⁷² Reinforcing that rumor was the fact that some residents saw covered Army trucks driving along Joplin Road at night and they heard voices coming from inside in a foreign language, that they assumed was German.¹⁷³ There was some plausibility for this as there soon were German and Italian prisoner of war camps in the United States, a number of them in Virginia and Maryland, and at least one of those facilities located at nearby Fort Hunt, Virginia, was classified top secret.¹⁷⁴

Life of a Wife of an OSS Instructor

One of the OSS families that lived in Triangle for a while was that of Arden and Dorothea Dow. In the spring of 1942, the newlyweds from Washington State had driven across the country to Training Area B, where Dow was assigned as instructor, and bride had joined four other young wives taking up housekeeping in a big old house a half hour away. That fall, Dow had been sent to Britain for training with SOE. When he returned in October, he was promoted to captain and assigned to be chief instructor at Area A-4 in

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Timothy Marsh, telephone interview with the author, 18 January 2006.

¹⁷² Lee Lansing, town historian, Dumfries, Va., interviewed by Susan Cary Strickland, 15 July 1985, in Susan Cary Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park: An Administrative History* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1986), 27.

¹⁷³ Robert A. Noile, Triangle, Va., telephone interview with the author, 27 April 2007. Noile, who grew up on Joplin Road across from the park, reported on what his father told him soon after World War II.

¹⁷⁴ John Hammond Moore, "Hitler's Wehrmacht in Virginia, 1943-1946," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 85 (July 1977); on a wider scale, see Judith M. Gansberg, *Stalag USA: The Remarkable Story of German POWs in America* (New York: Crowell, 1977). The most super secret camp for German prisoners of war was actually an interrogation center at Fort Hunt on the Potomac River down near Mount Vernon in Fairfax County, Virginia. Known only as P.O. Box 1142, this facility was an Army/Navay installation at which 3,400 captured German submariners, airmen, soldiers, and scientists were held incognito for a few weeks or several months while German speaking interrogators questioned them about plans, equipment, and inventions, before they were sent to regular POW camps. Fort Hunt is today a park on the George Washington Memorial Parkway administered by the National Park Service. Petula Dvorak, "A Covert Chapter Opens for Fort Hunt Veterans; As files on Nazi POWs Are Declassified, Their Interrogators Break Their Silence," *Washington Post*, 20 August 2006, A1.

Prince William Forest Park. He and his wife drove to Triangle and rented a house there. So did several of the other former instructors at Area B now assigned to Area A, including Joe and Rita Collart and Elmer (“Pinky”) and Betty Harris, and Jim Goodwin, a graduate of B-2, now an instructor at Area A and his wife, Helene.¹⁷⁵ Art and Dodie Dow rented a tiny, furnished house with a living room, a kitchen, two bedrooms and a bath. “I had an I.D. card, and I remember that at that time our address was Box 2601 Washington, D.C.,” Mrs. Dow recalled.¹⁷⁶ “Here, I always had a hard time cashing a check, because they couldn’t figure out why I was living here [in Triangle] but had a Box 2601 [in Washington, D.C.]....And I didn’t know either. I couldn’t explain it either. We [OSS wives] didn’t really know what was going on at all.”¹⁷⁷

OSS staff couples frequently went to the big U.S. Marine Corps Base just down U.S. Route 1 at Quantico. They had privileges there and could shop there in the commissary for food and other supplies. They also went to see the latest movies at the motion picture theater on the Marine base. Frequently, the Dows went with the Park Manager Ira Lykes and his wife. “I remember the ranger [Lykes], who lived up in Chopawamsic [Recreational Demonstration Area] would come and go with us to the movies...his wife was there too,” Mrs. Dow recalled. “I guess they were maybe in the thirties...very friendly. She was a small, petite woman with dark hair. He was a slender fellow with dark hair. He dressed in a [Park] Ranger’s uniform, and that was amusing, because when we would go to the movies [at the Marine base], all the young officers there would be out on the steps or somewhere when we walked up. And they didn’t know whether to salute him or not. You could tell they were puzzled by that strange uniform [the forest green uniform and light tan, broad-brimmed hat].” They did not know whether he was a civilian, or a serviceman from another branch, or even another country’s armed forces. They didn’t know, but they would stand up.”¹⁷⁸

During the six months that they lived in Triangle, Captain Dow would leave his home each morning for Area A-4 and come home every evening. He did not tell his wife what he was doing there, but Mrs. Dow remembers that “he did tell me some things like—They didn’t really know anybody’s name. They [the trainees] were like a number or a nickname. And he did say it was amusing to see some of the servicemen [enlisted men] associate with the officers. They didn’t know what rank they were [because all the

¹⁷⁵ Dorothea (“Dodie”) Dean Dow, telephone interviews with the author, 15 May 2005, and 9 and 16 June 2005.

¹⁷⁶ Later in the war, when Detachment A was officially closed effective 11 January 1945, the mail drop for the OSS personnel at Prince William Forest Park was shifted from Washington, D.C. to the Marine Base at Quantico. The new mailing address was Detachment A OSS, Box 1000 Marine Barracks, Quantico, Va.; see Col. H.L. Robinson, chief, Schools and Training Branch, OSS to Lt. Col. James A. Hewitt, Post Engineer, Fort Belvoir, Virginia, 6 January 1945, subject: Closing of Detachment A, OSS in OSS Records (RG 226), Entry 136, Box 153, Folder 1658, National Archives II.

¹⁷⁷ Dorothea (“Dodie”) D. Dow, telephone interviews with the author, 15 May 2005, and 9 and 16 June 2005.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, She remembered the name of Park Manager Ira Lykes, when the author mentioned it to her but not the other NPS supervisor, John Gum.

trainees were dressed in the same fatigues].”¹⁷⁹ The Dows socialized with the Lykes and also with the other married officers on the staff at Area A, the Collarts, the Harrises, the Goodwins, as well as George White, the former Narcotics agent and instructor, and his wife, with whom the Dows went to the theater in New York City one weekend. These Special Operations Branch instructors did not socialize with the separate cadre or staff at the Communications Branch School at Area C.¹⁸⁰

The Dows’ first child, Sharon, was born on 15 March 1943, at the Marine base hospital. Three weeks later, Captain Dow, who had been given a new assignment in China, took his wife and infant daughter and Mrs. Dow’s mother to the railroad station where they left for the cross-country trip to Washington state. He left for China a few days later. So for the next two years, the 25-year-old Mrs. Dow and their newborn daughter stayed with her parents in her hometown on the Washington coast west of Olympia. “It was very lonesome,” Mrs. Dow recalled. “I would go weeks without word from him.” Even then, she did not learn too much more than he was still alive. “The V-Mail, they had all been censored, always censored.”¹⁸¹ When her husband returned from China in May 1945, Mrs. Dow and the baby, now two years old, returned to Washington, D.C. After the war, Lieutenant Colonel Dow remained with the regular Army. He spent the next twenty years in the Army, in Korea, Taiwan, and the Panama Canal Zone, retiring in 1963 as a full colonel, by which time the Dows had two daughters. The family then moved to Athens, Georgia, where he worked for nearly twenty years as an administrator at the University of Georgia.¹⁸²

OSS Relationship with the National Park Service

The National Park Service maintained a presence at Catoctin Mountain Park and Prince William Forest Park to keep an eye on the use of the property and to ensure that the military conformed to the terms of the use permit.

At Area B, the NPS official was Garland B. (“Mike”) Williams. “I remember the Park Ranger, who would make frequent visits to our site,” recalled Lieutenant Frank Gleason, an instructor there from the spring of 1942 to the spring of 1943. “He was just keeping a close look to make sure that we didn’t tear up his forest too much. He was a bit upset to learn that we had caught a rabbit in the winter and cooked it for a rare treat....Two soldiers had caught a rabbit running in the snow. We took the rabbit and skinned it and cooked it. He [Williams] reported me, because I was the officer in charge, and I was in on killing that rabbit. We killed a rabbit on his reservation. We’re supposed

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 15 May 2005, and 9 and 16 June 2005.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 1 January 2008.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 15 May 2005, and 9 and 16 June 2005.

¹⁸² Ibid., 15 May 2005.

to love every little creature, and we did too,” he chuckled. “But soldiers are soldiers, and in the winter, it was something to do.”¹⁸³

Wildlife was abundant in the parks, but although the National Park Service had banned hunting, there were numerous instances when OSS cadre, staff or trainees got themselves some game. But sometimes the game got the staff, or at least their provisions. Instructor Frank Gleason remembered that “While living here, I had told [Sergeant] Joe Lazarsky that I loved Kielbasa [Polish sausage]. So we went up to Hazelton [his hometown in the coal mining region of northeastern Pennsylvania], and brought me back a big Kielbasa. I loved it. So I thought, I’ll put it in the snow [to preserve it]. I went out and covered it up with snow. I came back about a day later. It was gone! Some bear or other animal had eaten it.”¹⁸⁴

Assistant company clerk at B-5, Albert Guay, an avid hunter like his father, planned to do some hunting. As he recorded in his diary, 23 November 1942, “talked to an old guy here who is going to show me where to go hunting. Said we might get a few crows, pheasants, rabbits, etc.” Guay’s father had sent him a shotgun. “The shotgun came tonight. As soon as I get a chance, I’m going out and do some shooting. First I have to find out where I can & can’t go.”¹⁸⁵ No one told him that hunting was not allowed anywhere in the park. Consequently, he did go out hunting. Sometimes he saw nothing, and other times they were just out of range. As he indicated on 29 November 1942, “Went hunting crows, but too cold & crows too smart. Saw lots, but out of range.”¹⁸⁶

The senior demolitions instructor at Area B, Captain Charles Parkin, recalled that he frequently saw Park Manager Mike William, who came by in his National Park Service uniform with his nameplate on it. “I would see him at least three or four times a week in our area,” Parkin said. “He was just keeping his eye on us.”¹⁸⁷ Gleason also remembered Williams, whom he called the park ranger. Gleason described him as 5’9” or 5’10,” dark hair, nice-looking man, medium build, who looked like he was in his early 40s. He came up to the OSS B-2 camp regularly in his National Park Service uniform. “He would come up and see what was going on in the camp and how we were conducting ourselves.” He mainly he talked with the camp commander, Major, later Lieutenant Colonel, Ainsworth Blogg, but he had a few brief conversations with Gleason, then a young lieutenant instructor. “See we cut down a number of trees to build this training facility that we had here [the “trainazium,” a kind of extensive, wooden, jungle gym],” Gleason said. “Of course, I am sure that he was concerned about that. He counted every tree apparently!”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸³ Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview with the author, 31 January 2005; and letter to the author 9 August 2005.

¹⁸⁴ Frank A. Gleason, interview during a tour arranged by the author of Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md., 18 May 2005.

¹⁸⁵ Albert R. Guay, diary entries for 22 and 23 November 1942.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, diary entries for 29 November and 6 December 1942.

¹⁸⁷ Charles M. Parkin, interview during a tour arranged by the author of Catoctin Mountain Park, Thurmont, Md., 18 May 2005.

¹⁸⁸ Frank A. Gleason, telephone interview by the author, 31 January 2005.

Like many teenage boys, some of the young OSS men liked to whip around at high speeds in motor vehicles. Some of them did that in the park. Diarist Albert Guay noted an exciting afternoon that would surely have distressed Park Manager Williams. "Had my first ride in a jeep today and enjoyed it. Hit 60 m.p.h. down a dirt road." The next day, he had a second jeep ride, this time with a sergeant and a load of 125 pounds of dynamite they took to a magazine constructed in the park. "Had another ride in a jeep. Rode fast over a bumpy road, quite a bit of fun."¹⁸⁹ On at least one occasion, reckless driving nearly resulted in a catastrophe. On a frigid evening in mid-December 1942, one of Area B's canvas-covered Army trucks was bringing nearly a dozen staffers returning from leave back from the bus terminal in Frederick. On the high road that leads up the mountain sometimes running high above Big Hunting Creek, the truck skidded on a patch of ice, and spun around. Only a tiny ridge of gravel stopped it from going over the edge and plunging down a forty-foot bank into the creek below.¹⁹⁰

At Training Areas A and C in Prince William Forest Park, Park Manager Ira Lykes also had his problems watching over the OSS, particularly after he was inducted into the Marines and had could only be physically present in the park on weekends. Civilian communications instructor Timothy Marsh remembered seeing Lykes, in his uniform and broad-brimmed hat, walking around the camp at Area C.¹⁹¹ As he made his rounds, Lykes was usually accompanied by his big German shepherd dog, "Fritz."¹⁹² As Dorothea Dow noted, Mr. and Mrs. Lykes did socialize with some of the married officers on the instructional staff at the OSS Training Area.

The park, of course, was sealed off from the public for the duration. The OSS took over the park north of Joplin Road (Route 619), and the Marine Corps occupied it south of Joplin Road and west of Route 626. Military security was pervasive, but the OSS was particularly secretive. Even Lykes, the park superintendent, had to be cleared by a sentry to get to and from his home and office.¹⁹³ The park headquarters was the old Smith family house, not far from Joplin Road on the north side about 1 ¼ miles from the old CCC work camp that became OSS Area A-4.¹⁹⁴ As with the other buildings in the

¹⁸⁹ Albert R. Guay, telephone interview with the author, 24 October 2005, and diary entries for 3 and 4 November 1942.

¹⁹⁰ Albert R. Guay, telephone interview with the author, 24 October 2005, and diary entry for 15 December 1942.

¹⁹¹ Timothy Marsh, telephone interview with the author, 18 January 2006.

¹⁹² Ira B. Lykes, oral history interview by S. Herbert Evison, 23 November 1973, tape number 261, transcription, p. 45, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center Library, Harpers Ferry, W.Va. I am indebted to David Nathanson of the Harpers Ferry Center for responding to my request for a copy the relevant parts of Ira Lykes' oral history interview. David Nathanson to the author, 10 November 2005.

¹⁹³ Ira B. Lykes, interview with Susan Cary Strickland, 4 September 1985, in Susan Cary Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park: An Administrative History* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1986), 27.

¹⁹⁴ Robert A. Noile, Triangle, Va., telephone interviews with the author 27 April and 16 May 2007. Born in 1939, on the south side of Joplin Road diagonally across from the park, Noile knew both the Lykes and

park, the National Park Service gave it up for the duration. Instead, the park headquarters was shifted temporarily to a small, one-room building a bit off the south side of Joplin Road. Lykes and his secretary, Thelma Williams, continued to use the building regularly until January 1943. At that time, the Marine Corps made him a commissioned officer in charge of forestry and fire security at the Marine Base reservation.¹⁹⁵ From 1943 to 1945, Lykes worked at the Marine Base during the week. On the weekends, he would return to supervise the park.¹⁹⁶ During the week, the park office was staffed by Thelma Williams, the park's sole fulltime employee during the war.¹⁹⁷ Ms. Williams worked Mondays through Fridays, managing routine business and holding other matters or documents requiring Lykes' signature for his weekly visits. The small building included a wood-burning stove for heat in winter. Serving in effect as acting park manager Mondays through Fridays, Ms. Williams shared the little building with a uniformed clerk that the OSS had assigned to the park office, who it was reported was "a secretive man given to drink."¹⁹⁸

Lykes had one frightening moment during the war, when it appeared that the Marine Corps might take over his house. The quarters for the park superintendent were a big two-story house with a porch about a mile south of Joplin Road, a site where the NPS maintenance building on the south side is located today. Lykes continued to occupy it even though the National Park Service had officially given it up for the duration. In addition to the living room, dining room and kitchen on the first floor, Lykes had built a small, temporary office on the enclosed porch.¹⁹⁹ Since the National Park Service was no longer paying utilities for the park or its structures, the Marine Corps furnished the fuel and paid the electric and other bills for the house. Lykes did, however, experience at least

Gum families and played with his friends in the park beginning when the War Department returned it to the Park Service in 1946. He added that the park office was near the road to the old Wilson place.

¹⁹⁵ Lykes was provost marshal, security officer, for 94,000 acres of Marine Base at Quantico, which included 13 firing ranges, plus what he called "little Tokyo's" makeup houses for simulated urban fighting. The Marine base during the war included 8,000 to 10,000 acres of the park south of Joplin Road which was known as the "Guadalcanal Area" and was used for training. By the end of the war, Lykes was a major. He was mustered out in January 1946 and returned immediately to his job as project manager of the park. Ira B. Lykes, oral history interview by S. Herbert Evison, 23 November 1973, tape number 261, transcription, pp. 42-43, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center Library, Harpers Ferry, W.Va.

¹⁹⁶ Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 26.

¹⁹⁷ Thelma Williams Hebda, Dumfries, Va., interview with Susan Cary Strickland, 15 July 1985 cited in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 26. Ms. Williams later married Joseph Hebda, who became an NPS employee at the park after the war. Robert A. Noile says other than Superintendent Ira Lykes, the only civilian allowed into the OSS area of the park north of Joplin Road during the war was Epp Williams, who did maintenance work. Robert A. Noile, Triangle, Va., telephone interviews with the present author 27 April and 16 May 2007.

¹⁹⁸ Ira B. Lykes to Frank T. Gartside, superintendent, NPS National Capital Region, 31 May 1943, Records of the National Park Service (RG 79), File Number 1460/4, which in the 1980s was at the Federal Records Center, Suitland, Md, as quoted in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 27. These records have disappeared.

¹⁹⁹ Robert A. Noile, Triangle, Va., telephone interviews with the author 27 April and 16 May 2007.

one worrisome moment in regard to this house, during a visit by the commandant of the Marine Base at Quantico. “I’ll never forget General Philip H. Torrey came in one day. I don’t know why General Torrey liked me, but he seemed to. He came in one day for quarters’ inspection, and he walked in and looked around, and the first thing he said was, what a damn good officers’ club this would make. I didn’t know how to respond to that, so I didn’t respond. They never did turn it into an officers’ club.”²⁰⁰

As at Catoctin there certainly were episodes of cutting down trees and of shooting wildlife in Prince William Forest Park during the war. At Area C one day when, a group of nine or ten Communications Branch trainees were practicing at the rifle range near Quantico Creek, a flock of wild turkeys suddenly flew through the valley. According to one the trainees, “the command was given to fire at will and the entire group qualified [as marksmen], and they ate turkey for a week.”²⁰¹

A peaceful man who loved nature and had a sincere desire to protect the flora and fauna under his care, Ira Lykes had considerable philosophical differences with the Special Operations Branch of the OSS with its emphasis on secrecy, violence, gutter fighting, and winning at any cost. He certainly supported the war effort against the Axis, but the OSS often shocked his sensibilities—perhaps they sometimes did so purposely. At the very beginning of OSS’s take over of the park, for example, in the spring of 1942, the first commanding officer of Area A, Captain William J. Hixson allegedly made Lykes an offer. As Lykes retold the story thirty years later, Hixson “came to me, and he said, we would like you to join the OSS and leave the Park Service. He said, we will offer you a full colonelcy. I said, what do I have to do for this? He said, well, we will drop you behind the lines in France and, he said, I might as well tell you, your chances of getting back are about 1 in 8 or 1 in 10. I said, thanks but no thanks, I don’t think so. I don’t think so. I think I have a career with the National Park Service when this thing is over. Of course, he used the old argument, what if it doesn’t get over, you won’t have a Park Service. But I think discretion is a better part of valor and here I was discrete enough to say so.”²⁰² He declined Hixson’s perhaps facetious offer.

Although Lykes helped the OSS with information about the park and the area and in the location and construction of new buildings and some of the other training facilities, he remained distressed years later about many of their methods. In 1973, long after his retirement, the 66-year-old Lykes was formally interviewed in an oral history project by the National Park Service. . The following is Lykes’ remembered impressions of the OSS, which certainly convey a sense of his suspicion and criticism of it, even if some of it may have been misremembered or exaggerated :²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Ira B. Lykes, oral history interview by S. Herbert Evison, 23 November 1973, tape number 261, transcription, p. 44, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center Library, Harpers Ferry, W.Va.

²⁰¹ Ralph Tibbett, memoir in *OSS CommVets Newsletter* (March 1997), paraphrased in Dorothy Ringelsbach, *OSS: Stories That Can Now Be Told* (Bloomington, Ind.: Author House, 2005), 34.

²⁰² Ira B. Lykes, oral history interview by S. Herbert Evison, 23 November 1973, tape number 261, transcription, p. 42, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center Library, Harpers Ferry, W.Va.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 39-42.

“Well, one day I had a call to come to Washington, and I think it was in, oh probably, the latter part of 1942, the middle of ’42 [it was early spring 1942]. There the Director [of the National Park Service] and his staff advised me that the Office of Strategic Services, Colonel Donovan with his cloak and dagger boys, were looking for a place, and they thought Prince William Forest—Chopawamsic—was the ideal place to do it. So anyway, we would have to cancel all the leases on camp grounds, and they would move the OSS in there. I was to remain as the liaison between the Park Service and help them in any development they wanted done in the war effort because we were right in the beginning of World War II.

“I do recall that they—one of the processes was—I later found this out with my Marine Corps experience, that in recruiting men for OSS they would go into a military unit such as [a] Marine Corps platoon or Marine Corps battalion, and they would say, do you have any Italians or Germans in this organization or any of Oriental extraction in this, and when the commander would say yes, he [the OSS recruiter] would say, I would like to see them. Now this was done by the FBI in connection with the OSS officials and several other security agencies. They would get these individuals aside and they would say, do you have any relatives—for example, in Germany—Yes, I have a grandmother there. Well, how is she being treated? Well, the last we heard she was being poorly treated. Particularly if they were Jewish. Finally, they would get this boy, how would you like to get even with them?²⁰⁴

“Then from that point on, they would test this man, and they would run a check on him and make absolutely certain that he was a loyal American. Then, they would take them to Washington from all around the United States and there at 2 o’clock in the morning, they would put them in a bus [or truck] with the windows all sealed so they couldn’t see where they were going, and they would ride them down to Charlottesville and [from] Charlottesville to Richmond, and Richmond [to] somewhere else and finally wind up 35 miles away from Washington where they started. They [the recruits] had not the slightest idea of where they were. And here, they would be put into a camp with only three other men, plus one instructor. They were never allowed to mix generally within the camp. They had to stay in their group of four with one instructor present at all times, even sleeping in the barracks—eating and sleeping. Well, this is what made the place so ideal, because of the little tent building[s] we had there. They were winterized by the way, and they could put four in there with an instructor, and they didn’t have to have any other services, except they would eat at the dining room, which they divided off into cubicles of four.²⁰⁵

“The [OSS Special Operations] officers there—they had one officer there who was a Britisher, a very stern looking individual with a ramrod back. He had

²⁰⁴ The author has not heard such stories from any of the former OSS Special Operations, Operational Group, Secret Intelligence, or Communications personnel that he has interviewed.

²⁰⁵ Author’s note: The author has not found any other evidence of this restriction and the continuous close supervision by an instructor, except perhaps for certain groups of foreign nationals and their own leaders training at OSS camps.

been Chief of Police of Hong Kong [sic] for 20 years, and he knew everything there was to know about killing a man without a weapon. That was his instruction.²⁰⁶ Another one [training course] was how to build a radio—or a transmitter out of an ordinary radio. Another one was how to demolish an automobile without being detected. Another one was how to blow up a bridge without being seen or how to make explosives out of ammonia and [word on audiotape unclear] acid and different things like this. This was taught to these men.

“Also, one of the training exercises was that you had to jump out of an airplane in the daytime. You [also] had to jump at nighttime over a designated place, and you had to jump at nighttime over anywhere. So they had an old C-23 [sic] down at Quantico [Marine Base], and I used to ride in the blister [plexiglass bubble] of that thing and take moving pictures of these men bailing out in the daytime. And then we would have a critique that afternoon of these men jumping out of an airplane. I think we killed two or three [sic; that is, two or three were killed in the jumps], but that was part of the game anyway.

“They had to take different lessons in how to bail out, and I built them a long cable with a pulley on it, and they would jump off a platform and come down and land and roll. This sort of thing. This was a tremendously involved business of which I want no more part, because I’ve seen men suffer as a result of this. For example, I remember we built a little place we called Little Tokyo in which we had one building, and we had to train the men how to get through the door of that thing and walk down a labyrinth in a blue light, a very, very dim light, while they were being fired at [and they had to fire back] in order to protect themselves.

“They taught them such delicate things as when they burst into a room of German staff officers, which one to shoot first. The one that stood up was the one that got shot first, and the one that had the wild look and stare on his face got shot last because he hadn’t collected himself yet, and he didn’t know what to do. This was the fine shadings in murder. Of course, we had to do it, because we had to fight fire with fire, and it was a really justified program.”²⁰⁷

Twelve years later in 1985, at age 78, during another oral history interview, Lykes continued to be critical of the OSS Special Operations training program in the park. He told Susan Cary Strickland, an historian working for the National Park Service, that “Students were not permitted to gather in groups larger than four. An unexplained absence could result in imprisonment for the remainder of the war.” In what one suspects was actually Captain Hixson pulling one over on a gullible Lykes as the OSS arrived, Lykes told Strickland that Hixson had called upon him to serve as a guide during a

²⁰⁶ Another’s note: William E. (“Dan”) Fairbairn, former Associate Commissioner of the international Municipal Police of Shanghai.

²⁰⁷ Ira B. Lykes, oral history interview by S. Herbert Evison, 23 November 1973, tape number 261, transcription, pp. 39-42, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center Library, Harpers Ferry, W. Va. I am indebted to David Nathanson of the Harpers Ferry Center for responding to my request for a copy the transcript of Ira Lykes’ oral history interview. David Nathanson to the author, 10 November 2005.

manhunt through the woods for a student who was AWOL (absent without leave). Hixson had given the park superintendent a .45 caliber pistol and told to “shoot first and ask questions later.” Lykes told Strickland that he was very relieved that they had not found the AWOL student, at least while Lykes was with the search party.²⁰⁸ During the 1985 interview, Lykes told Strickland that he was grateful to General Torrey, the commandant at the Marine Base, for getting him a position at base during most of the war, because it enabled the park manager, in Lykes’ words, to get “away from the stomach-turning roughhouse of the OSS!”²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Ira B. Lykes, Venice, Fla., interview with Susan Cary Strickland, 4 September 1984, quoted in Strickland, *Prince William Forest Park*, 28.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.