

MERRILL'S MARAUDERS

WORLD WAR II
50th Anniversary
Commemorative Edition

MERRILL'S MARAUDERS

February – May 1944



CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY

UNITED STATES ARMY

WASHINGTON, D.C., 1990

MARSHALLS
MARRIAGES

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Foreword to CMH Edition

Merrill's Marauders (February–May 1944) is one of a series of fourteen studies of World War II operations originally published by the War Department's Historical Division and now returned to print as part of the Army's commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of that momentous clash of arms. These volumes, prepared by professional historians shortly after the events described, provide a concise summary of some of the major campaigns and battles fought by American soldiers. The skillful combination of combat interviews with primary sources, many of which are now lost, gives these unassuming narratives a special importance to military historians. The careful analysis of key operations provides numerous lessons for today's military students.

I am pleased that this entire group of studies will once again be available. I urge all military students and teachers to use them to enhance our collective awareness of the skill, leadership, daring, and professionalism exhibited by our military forebears.

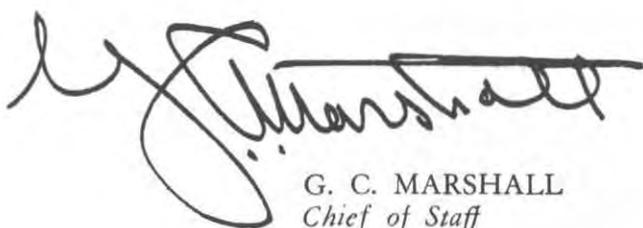
Washington, D.C.
15 September 1989

HAROLD W. NELSON
Colonel, FA
Chief of Military History

Foreword

In the thick of battle, the soldier is busy doing his job. He has the knowledge and confidence that his job is part of a unified plan to defeat the enemy, but he does not have time to survey a campaign from a fox hole. If he should be wounded and removed behind the lines, he may have even less opportunity to learn what place he and his unit had in the larger fight.

AMERICAN FORCES IN ACTION is a series prepared by the War Department especially for the information of wounded men. It will show these soldiers, who have served their country so well, the part they and their comrades played in achievements which do honor to the record of the United States Army.



G. C. MARSHALL
Chief of Staff

WAR DEPARTMENT
Military Intelligence Division
Washington 25, D. C.
4 June 1945

Merrill's Marauders is an account of the operations of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) in north Burma from February to May, 1944. The Marauders' effort was part of a coordinated offensive, the Allied reconquest of north Burma. Details of the offensive are summarized briefly to set the operations of the 5307th within the larger framework. On 10 August 1944 the 5307th was reorganized as the 475th Infantry Regiment.

The combat narrative is based mainly on interviews conducted by the historian of the 5307th after the operation and on information furnished the Historical Branch, G-2, War Department, by the Commanding General and several members of the unit. Few records were available because the Marauders restricted their files in order to maintain mobility while they were operating behind the Japanese lines. During the second mission a Japanese artillery shell scored a direct hit on the mule carrying the limited quantity of records and maps kept by the unit headquarters. During the third mission the heavy rains made preservation of papers impossible for more than a day or two. The unit's intelligence officer was killed at Myitkyina, and his records were washed away before they could be located.

This study is the fifth of a series called "American Forces in Action," designed exclusively for military personnel. No part of the narrative may be republished without the consent of the A.C. of S., G-2, War Department, Washington 25, D. C.

The manuscript was submitted by the Historical Section of the India-Burma Theater. One photograph is by Acme Newspictures, Inc. (page 25); three are by Capt. Logan E. Weston (pages 35, 63, 85); two aeriels are by the U. S. Army Air Forces (pages 38; 104); all others are by the U. S. Army Signal Corps. Readers are urged to send directly to the Historical Branch, G-2, War Department, Washington 25, D. C., comments, criticisms, and additional information which may be of value in the preparation of a complete and definitive history of the operations of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional).

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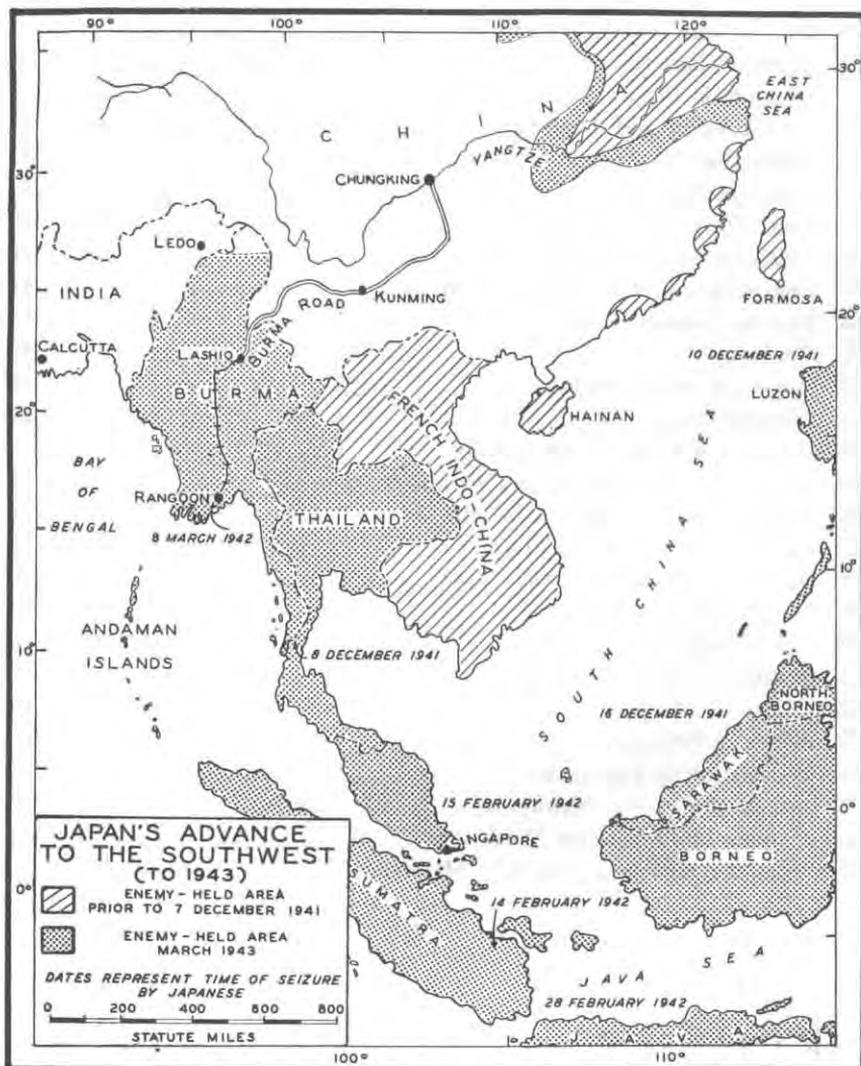
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MAP NO. 1



Introduction

THE 5307th COMPOSITE UNIT (Provisional) of the Army of the United States was organized and trained for long-range penetration behind enemy lines in Japanese-held Burma. Commanded by Brig. Gen. (now Maj. Gen.) Frank D. Merrill, its 2,997 officers and men became popularly known as "Merrill's Marauders." From February to May, 1944 the operations of the Marauders were closely coordinated with those of the Chinese 22d and 38th Divisions in a drive to recover northern Burma and clear the way for the construction of the Ledo Road, which was to link the Indian railhead at Ledo with the old Burma Road to China. The Marauders were foot soldiers who marched and fought through jungles and over mountains from the Hukawng Valley in northwestern Burma to Myitkyina on the Irrawaddy River. In 5 major and 30 minor engagements they met and defeated the veteran soldiers of the Japanese 18th Division. Operating in the rear of the main forces of the Japanese, they prepared the way for the southward advance of the Chinese by disorganizing supply lines and communications. The climax of the Marauders' operations was the capture of the Myitkyina airfield, the only all-weather strip in northern Burma. This was the final victory of the 5307th Composite Unit, which was disbanded in August, 1944.

The War in Burma, January, 1942 — March, 1943

Burma had been conquered by the Japanese 2 years before the Marauders' operations (Map No. 1, opposite). During the 6 months



BRIG. GEN. FRANK D. MERRILL
Commanding General, 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional)

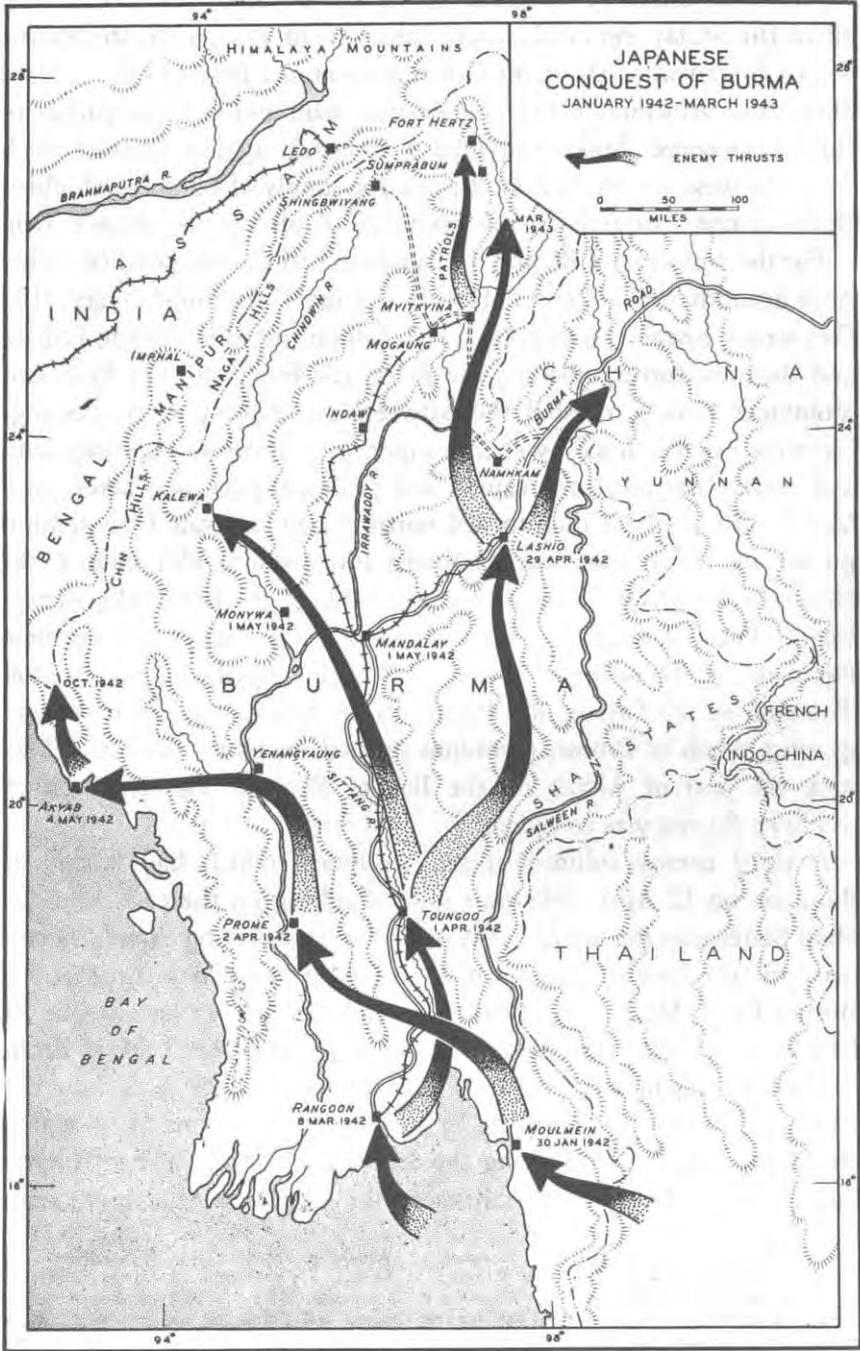
between December, 1941 and May, 1942 the enemy had overrun the Philippines, much of Oceania, all of the Netherlands East Indies, all of the Malay Peninsula, and almost all of Burma. In the Pacific Ocean his advance threatened communications between the United States and Australasia. On the Asiatic mainland his occupation of Burma menaced India, provided a bulwark against counterattack from the west, cut the last land route for supply of China, and added Burma's raw materials to the resources of an empire already rich.

For the conquest of Burma the Japanese had concentrated two divisions in southern Thailand (Map No. 2, page 4). In mid-January, 1942 they struck toward Moulmein, which fell on the 30th. British, Indian, and Burmese forces, aided by the Royal Air Force and the American Volunteer Group, resisted the Salween and Sittang river crossings but were overwhelmed by enemy superiority in numbers, equipment, and planes. Rangoon, the capital and principal port, was taken on 8 March. The Japanese then turned north in two columns. One division pushed up the Sittang where Chinese forces under Maj. Gen. (now General) Joseph W. Stilwell were coming in to defend the Burma Road.¹ The other Japanese division pursued the Indian and Burmese forces up the Irrawaddy Valley. On 1 and 2 April, the enemy took Toungoo on the Sittang and Prome on the Irrawaddy. From Yenangyaung, north of Prome, a column pushed westward and on 4 May took the port of Akyab on the Bay of Bengal. The conquest of southern Burma was complete.

A third enemy column of two divisions, which had landed at Rangoon on 12 April 1942, was now attacking on the east from the Shan States into the upper Salween Valley and driving rapidly northward to take Lashio, junction of the rail and highway sections of the Burma Road. Mandalay, completely outflanked, was evacuated by its Chinese defenders and occupied by the Japanese on 1 May. From Lashio the Japanese pushed up the Salween Valley well into the Chinese province of Yunnan. In north central Burma they sent a small patrol northward along the Irrawaddy almost to Fort Hertz, and to the west they took Kalewa on the Chindwin. The main rem-

¹ The "Burma Road" extends from Rangoon to Chungking, approximately 1,445 miles. It is actually made up of a railroad from Rangoon to Lashio, a new motor road from Lashio to Kunming, and an old highway from Kunming to Chungking. The new section, constructed in 2 years from 1937-39, was the first link between Burma and China for heavy traffic. Before the Japanese conquest of Burma, the road carried vital supplies to the Chinese armies fighting the Japanese. Great Britain, acceding to a request from Japan, closed the route from July to October, 1940 but reopened it when Japan joined the Rome-Berlin axis.

MAP NO. 2



nants of General Stilwell's forces retired from north Burma to India by way of Shingbwiyang, while British, Burmese, and Indian survivors withdrew up the valley of the Chindwin and across the Chin Hills. The Allied withdrawal was made on foot, for no motor road or railway connected India with Burma.

When the monsoon rains came in June the Japanese held all of Burma except for fringes of mountain, jungle, and swamp on the north and west. General Stilwell grimly summarized the campaign: "I claim we got a hell-of-a-beating. We got run out of Burma, and it is as humiliating as hell. I think we ought to find out what caused it, go back, and retake it." But this counteroffensive could not start at once, and the Japanese were able to make further advances in the next fighting season.

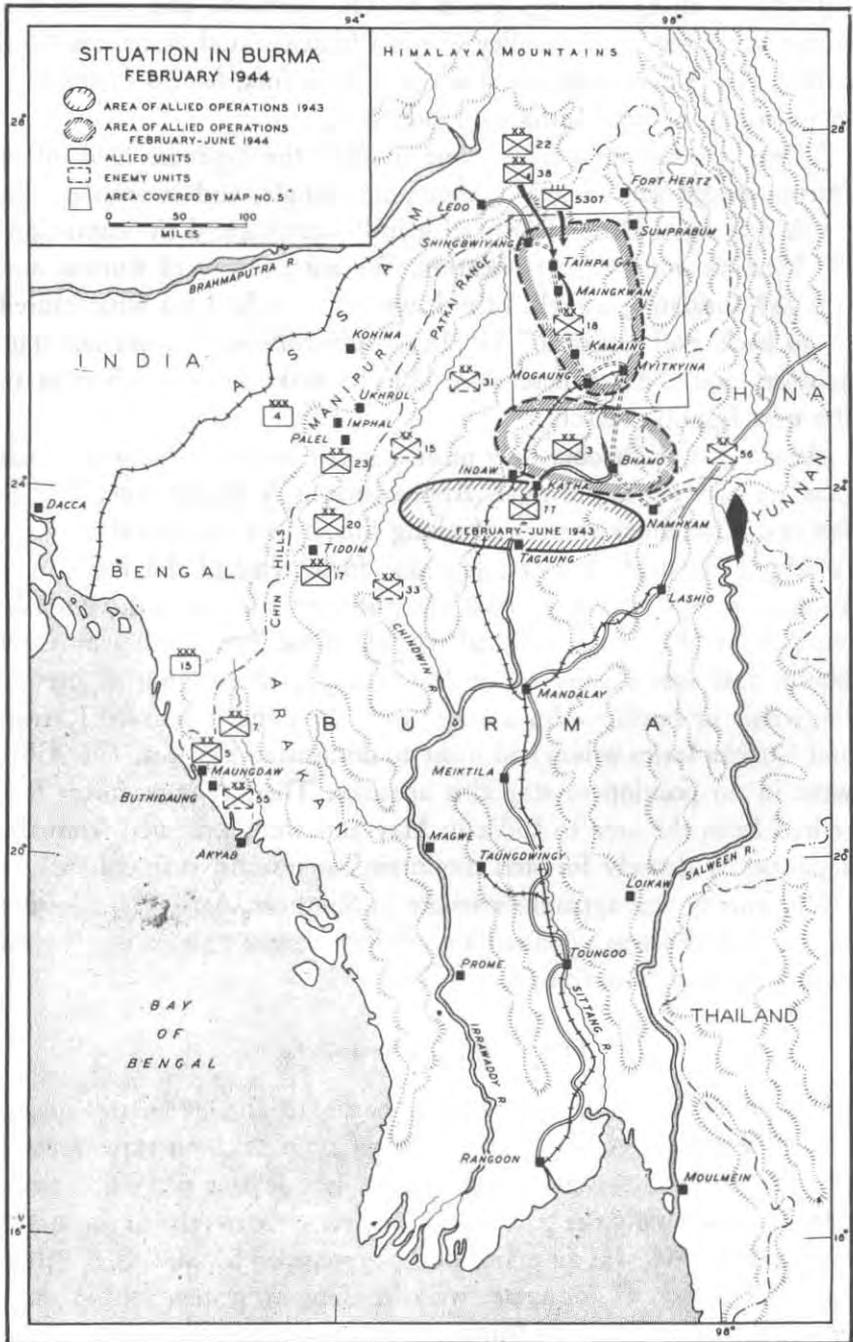
At the end of October they pushed northwestward along the coast from Akyab toward Bengal. Approximately a month later British forces counterattacked strongly along this same coast, but their gains could not be held, and the Japanese force reached the frontier of Bengal. In February of the next year the enemy began to drive northward from Myitkyina. He had covered some 75 air miles by early March and was closing in on Sumprabum, threatening to occupy the whole of northern Burma and to destroy the British-led Kachin and Gurkha levies which had hitherto dominated the area. The Allies were in no position to stop this advance. Their regular forces had retired from the area to India in May and were separated from the Japanese by densely forested mountain ranges and malarial valleys.

The enemy was apparently secure in Southeast Asia. The question of the moment was whether his advance would halt at the Burma border or would continue into India.

From Defense to Offense

The strategic situation in Burma began to change in the spring of 1943 when the Allies assumed the offensive with an experimental operation behind the enemy lines (Map No. 3, page 6). This operation, foreshadowing the part the Marauders were to take in the larger offensive of 1944, was an expedition commanded by Maj. Gen. (then Brigadier) Orde C. Wingate, who led long-range-penetration units of the 77 Indian Infantry Brigade across the natural barrier between India and Burma into Japanese-held territory.

MAP NO. 3



Wingate's forces consisted of eight jungle columns totaling 3,200 men, assembled from British, Indian, Burmese, and Gurkha troops. Directed by radio and supplied by air drops, in a period of 4 months (February to June, 1943) his columns covered a distance of 1,000 miles. In the area of northern Burma, from the Chindwin River eastward to China, they gathered topographical and other intelligence, harassed and confused the Japanese forces, and cut enemy lines of communication. The columns put the Mandalay-Myitkyina railway out of action for 4 weeks and engrossed the efforts of six to eight enemy battalions. When ordered to return, the columns dispersed in small groups, each of which successfully fought its own way out of Burma.

After this first penetration the seasonal rains again restricted ground activity. However, Allied bombers of the Tenth Air Force continued their attacks on Japanese supply lines in both Burma and Thailand with steadily increasing strength. Maj. Gen. George E. Stratemeyer's force had established definite superiority over Burma by November, 1943, the beginning of the dry season during which a ground offensive was possible.

At this time many indications pointed to a resumption of the Japanese offensive against India. Since the fall of 1942 the enemy had brought two more divisions into the area, making a total of five distributed along the India border. The one division (55th) on the front beyond Akyab was extremely aggressive. In the Chin Hills three others (the 15th, 31st, and 33d) were organizing for a strong offensive into Manipur Province. The 18th Division, in northern Burma, was ready to oppose any advance from Assam.

The Allies, too, were preparing for major offensive operations from both India and China. Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten,² commander in Southeast Asia, was assembling troops and supplies in Bengal and Manipur. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek was strengthening his forces along the Salween River in Yunnan. The first Allied blow was to come from the north, led by General Stilwell, Deputy Commander in the Southeast Asia Command and Chief of Staff for Allied operations in the Chinese theater. Operating from bases in the upper Brahmaputra Valley, General Stilwell had mounted an offensive to carry over the Patkai Range, conquer northern Burma,

² Admiral Mountbatten was appointed Supreme Allied Commander, Southeast Asia Command, at the Quebec Conference of August, 1943.

and open a new land route to China. American-trained Chinese divisions constituted his main striking force. In immediate support of his advance, long-range-penetration operations were to be carried out by combat teams of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) under General Merrill.

By February, when the 5307th arrived in the area of operations, General Stilwell's offensive had made good progress. The Chinese 22d and 38th Divisions had crossed the Patkai barrier and were engaging the Japanese forces in the flood plains of the Hukawng Valley. Covered by this advance, United States engineers had pushed a road over the Patkais to Shingbwiyang, 100 miles from the starting base at Ledo. However, the main enemy resistance and strongest prepared positions were still to be met.

Secondary Allied operations had been planned to support the main drive into north Burma. General Wingate's jungle columns of the 3 Indian Division were ready to thrust into central Burma, with the aim of cutting enemy communications far south of General Stilwell's objectives. On the Irrawaddy headwaters in northeast Burma the Allies had a base at Fort Hertz, in wild country which the Japanese had never been able to conquer. Here, Gurkha and Kachin levies from the native tribes were harassing Japanese outposts in the Sumprabum-Myitkyina corridor.

Origin and Training of the American Force

The 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) was organized to participate in the Burma operations as the result of a decision made at the Quebec Conference in August, 1943. Five months later, on 1 February 1944, the three battalions comprising the provisional unit had been transported to India, organized, trained, and equipped for employment. They were the only American ground combat troops designated at this time for the China-Burma-India Theater.

On 1 September 1943, when the size of the battalions had been fixed at 1,000, the War Department began recruiting personnel from jungle-trained and jungle-tested troops, primarily infantrymen. General George C. Marshall requested 300 volunteers "of a high state of physical ruggedness and stamina" from the Southwest Pacific, 700 from the South Pacific, and 1,000 each from the Caribbean Defense Command and the Army Ground Forces in the United States.



COL. CHARLES N. HUNTER
Second in Command
5307th Composite Unit (Provisional)



DEOGARH TRAINING CAMP, *set up late in November, 1943, was occupied by the Marauders for more than two months.*

In answer to General Marshall's request the South and Southwest Pacific commands selected 950 men from veterans of Guadalcanal, New Guinea, and other operations in those theaters. The Caribbean Defense Command secured 950 more troops who had served on Trinidad and Puerto Rico, and a similar number came from highly trained units within the United States. The Caribbean volunteers flew to Miami, crossed the continent by rail, and assembled in San Francisco with the volunteers from the States. These men formed two battalions; the third from the South and Southwest Pacific areas was to join the force on the way to Bombay.

Col. Charles N. Hunter, the senior officer among the volunteers, was appointed commander of the battalions. He was ordered to prepare the men while en route for the performance of their mission, to keep General Stilwell informed of the progress of the movement, and to report to the General upon arrival in the theater.

On 21 September, the two battalions sailed from San Francisco on the *Lurline*. As much of their equipment as could be loaded aboard went with them; the remainder was sent to San Diego, and from there it was to be forwarded in one shipment to Bombay.³ The *Lurline* proceeded to Noumea, New Caledonia, where 650 officers and men from the South Pacific Theater came aboard. The contingent from the Southwest Pacific joined the ship at Brisbane, Australia. After a brief stop at Perth, the *Lurline* steamed across the Indian Ocean and up the Arabian Sea to Bombay, where the three battalions disembarked by 31 October.

Organizing and training of the 5307th began immediately. Col. (now Brig. Gen.) Francis G. Brink, selected because he had trained Chinese troops in India, instructed the unit in long-range-penetration tactics. After meeting the *Lurline* at Bombay, he accompanied the troops to a British camp at Deolali and 3 weeks later moved with them to Deogarh, close to an area suitable for jungle training.

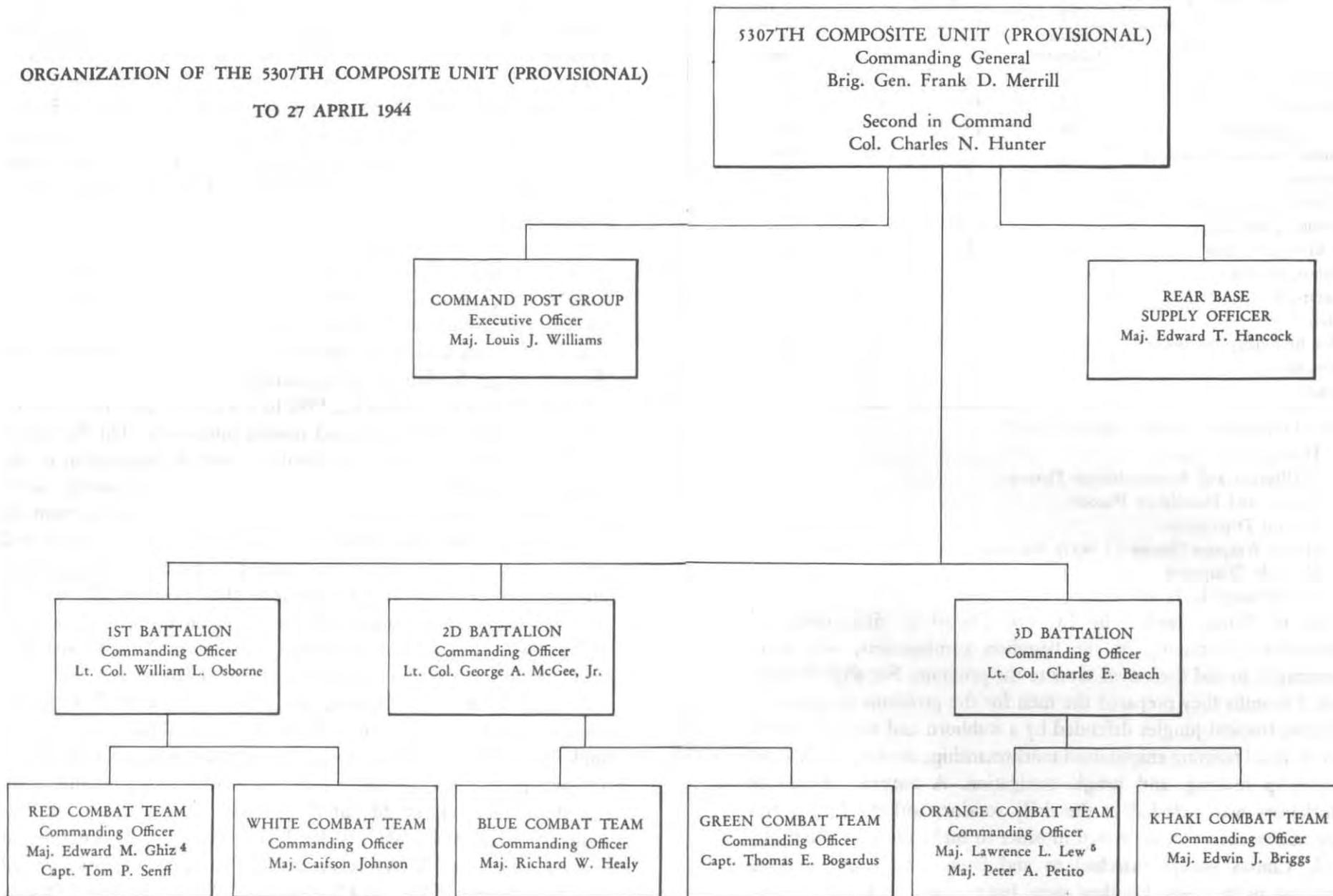
From the end of November, 1943 to the end of January, 1944 the 5307th remained at Deogarh and trained intensively. On the advice of General Wingate, who supervised the over-all preparation of the unit, each battalion was formed into two jungle columns, called "combat teams" by the Americans. These were not combat teams in the accepted American sense, for their organization represented only a division of each battalion into two smaller units, without any addition of elements not organic to the battalion. The division was made in such a manner that each "combat team" had its share of the heavy weapons and other organic battalion elements and thus was able to operate as a self-contained unit (Chart, page 14).

Lt. Col. William L. Osborne was assigned command of the 1st Battalion, and its two combat teams, Red and White, were placed under Maj. Edward M. Ghiz and Maj. Caifson Johnson, respectively (Chart, page 12). Lt. Col. George A. McGee, Jr., became commanding officer of the 2d Battalion, which was composed of Blue Combat Team under Maj. Richard W. Healy and Green Combat Team under Capt. Thomas E. Bogardus. The 3d Battalion was placed under command of Lt. Col. Charles E. Beach and comprised Orange Combat Team under Maj. Lawrence L. Lew and Khaki Combat Team under Maj. Edwin J. Briggs.

³ Almost all equipment had arrived before the troops started up the Ledo Road. Among the essential pieces lacking were Browning automatic rifle clips, which were supplied to the unit from theater stock.

ORGANIZATION OF THE 5307TH COMPOSITE UNIT (PROVISIONAL)

TO 27 APRIL 1944



⁴ Commanding Officer to 6 April 1944.

⁵ Commanding Officer to 4 April 1944.

ORGANIZATION OF BATTALIONS

(This Table of Organization does not include supply base detachment at Dinjan.)

	Battalion Headquarters	Combat teams		Total
		No. 1	No. 2	
Officers	3	16	16	35
Enlisted men	13	456	459	928
Aggregate	16	472	475	963
Animals (horses and mules) ..	3	68	68	139
Carbines	6	86	89	181
Machine guns, Heavy		3	4	7
Machine guns, Light		2	4	6
Machine guns, Sub	2	52	48	102
Mortars, 60-mm		4	6	10
Mortars, 81-mm		4	3	7
Pistols		2	2	4
Rifles, Browning Automatic ..		27	27	54
Rifles, M-1	8	306	310	624
Rockets		3	3	6

General Composition of each Combat Team:⁰

Headquarters Platoon

Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon

Pioneer and Demolition Platoon

Medical Detachment

Heavy Weapons Platoon (3 heavy machine guns, 4 81-mm mortars)

1½ Rifle Companies

½ Company Headquarters

Colonel Brink, assisted by Lt. Col. Daniel E. Still, delegated supervision of training to the battalion commanders, who were encouraged to add their own ideas to the program. For slightly more than 2 months they prepared the men for the problems of operating in dense tropical jungles defended by a stubborn and skillful enemy.

Individual training emphasized marksmanship, scouting and patrolling, map reading, and jungle navigation. A normal amount of calisthenics was included in the daily routine, and the length and pace of marches were increased in order to make the men physically hard. Classes always marched to and from ranges and training areas, no matter how far they were from camp. Packs were worn whenever possible.

⁰ Each battalion commander arranged a division of his organization into combat teams, so that only a general table of composite parts can be given here. For instance, the 1st Battalion was so divided that one combat team had a rifle company and rifle company headquarters and the other combat team had two rifle companies.

Platoon tactics were stressed in every training operation. Company, combat team, battalion, and unit exercises were also held, but time was short and attention had to be directed mostly toward moulding squads and platoons into highly efficient and well-coordinated teams. Each small unit was familiarized as much as possible with the normal combat activities of other types of units. Rifle platoon leaders and noncommissioned officers were instructed in directing mortar fire, and all men were taught the rudiments of voice radio procedure.

In general, the heavy weapons, intelligence and reconnaissance, pioneer and demolition, and communications personnel were already

TEN MILES A DAY *was the average rate of movement over the Ledo Road for the Marauder column.*



well trained in their special functions. Taking part in all training of their combat teams, they became physically hardened to the same extent as the rest of the men. Rear echelon personnel, including parachute packers, riggers, and kick-out crews, were trained separately by the unit S-4.

Ten days spent on maneuvers with General Wingate's troops brought to light minor deficiencies. There was a shortage of pack animals, and the changes which had been made in organization and equipment required final adjustments.

After the commanders within the unit had been assigned, General Merrill was placed in charge of the entire force. He appointed Maj. Louis J. Williams as his executive officer, in charge of the Command Post group.

On 8 January 1944, the completely organized and trained unit was assigned to General Stilwell's field command in northern Burma.⁷ He expected to use it in conjunction with the Chinese forces which were beginning their drive against the Japanese 18th Division. In accordance with General Stilwell's concept of the use of long-range-penetration units, the 5307th was to be sent on bold missions against assigned objectives behind the enemy lines in order to facilitate the seizure of key points by the main Chinese forces.

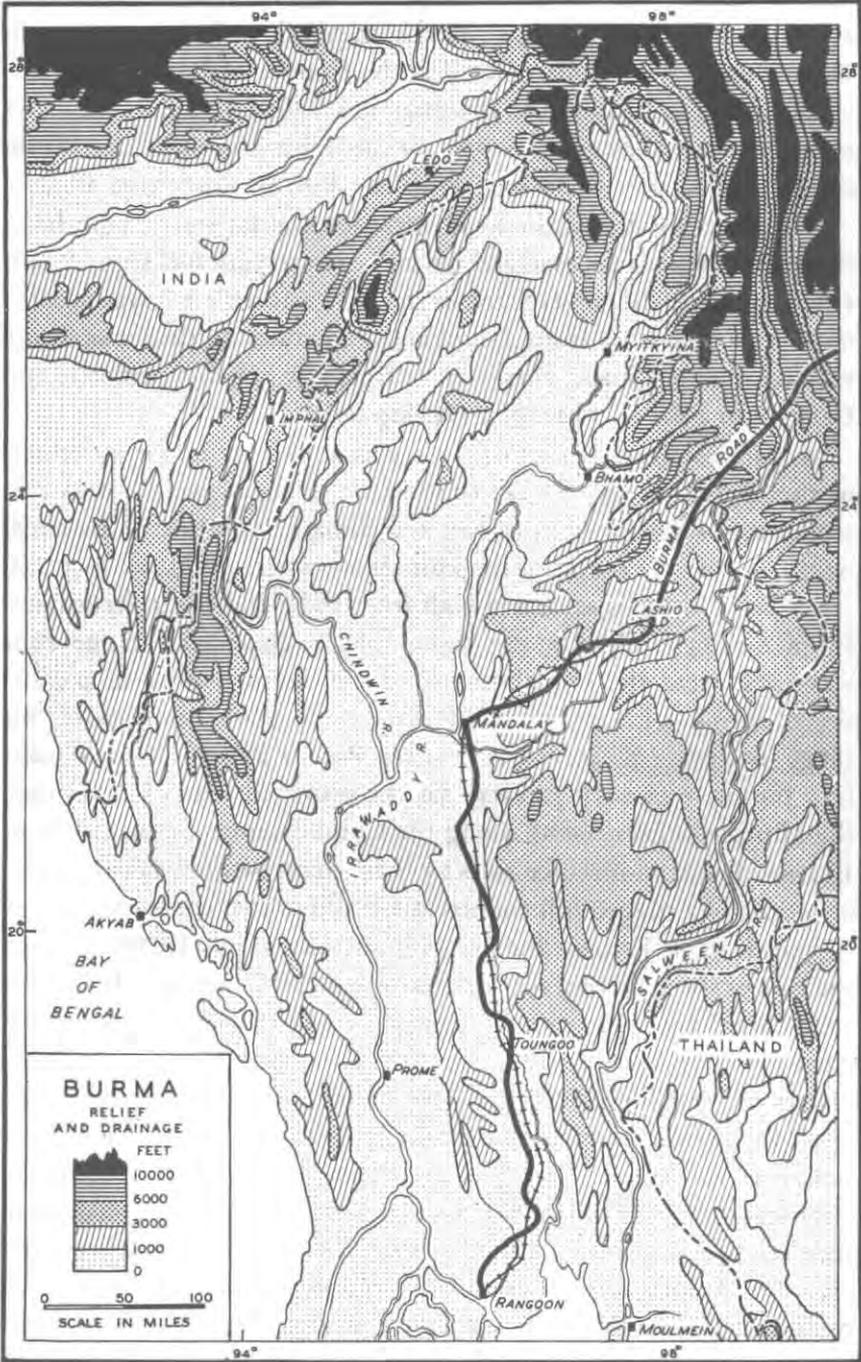
General Stilwell's immediate orders to the 5307th were to close in on Ledo by 7 February and from there to march over the trail as far as Ningbyen. The unit started at once from the training area in order to arrive on schedule. The 1,000-mile trip by train and boat to Ledo consumed a month; the last 100 miles on foot took 10 days. On 19 February the 1st Battalion, head of the column, arrived at Ningbyen. It was followed 2 days later by the 3d Battalion, tail of the column. The men had been thoroughly tested by the 10-day march and were ready for their first assignment.

Area of Operations

Plans for the Ledo Road⁸ are the key to an understanding of the 1944 campaign in northern Burma (Map No. 4, page 17). Reopening land communications with China had become a main aim of Allied

⁷ The 31st and 33d Quartermaster Pack Troops, a detachment of the 835th Signal Service Battalion, and a platoon of the 502d Military Police Battalion were added to the unit early in January.

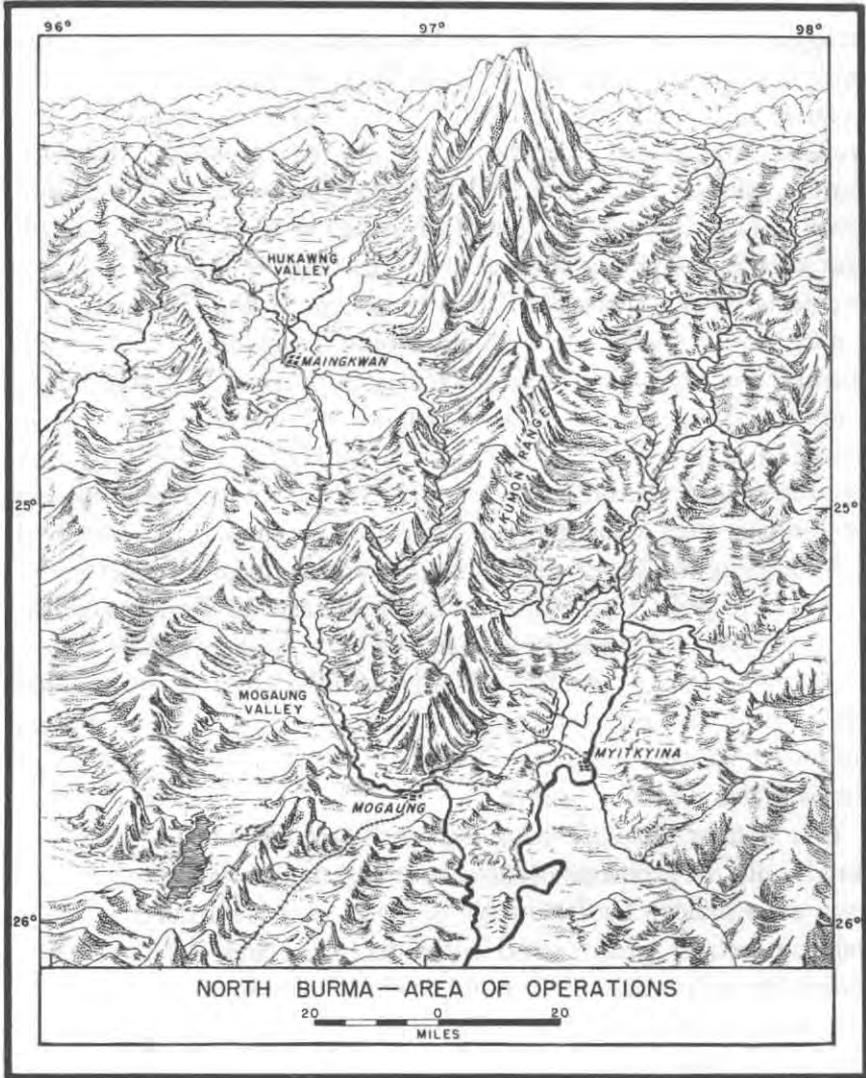
⁸ On 28 January 1945 Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, announcing the completion of the Ledo-Burma Road, renamed the 1,044-mile route to China the "Stilwell Road" in honor of General Stilwell. The first Allied convoy was on its way from Ledo to Kuming.



strategy, but only the total reconquest of Burma would give the Allies control of the old route from Rangoon. The Ledo Road constituted a daring effort to drive a new route from northeast India across north Burma, tapping the Burma Road at the frontier of China. The base of departure, at Ledo in the Brahmaputra Valley, had rail and water connections with Bengal. Nearly 300 air miles separated Ledo from the projected point of link-up with the Burma Road near Bhamo.

The plans for the Ledo Road included the laying of pipe lines, designed to relieve the road and air traffic of carrying fuel from Assam to China. Once the construction of the road was settled, it was decided that two 4-inch lines from Tinsukia, 30 air miles northwest of Ledo, would follow the road. They were to be fed by gasoline pumped from Calcutta to a station near their starting point.

Military conquest of north Burma was a prerequisite for operations of the engineers, and for either infantry or engineers, the area presented major difficulties in terrain and climate. Abutting to the north on the impassable ranges of the Himalayas, where peaks rise to 20,000 feet, north Burma is separated both from India and China by massive frontier mountains. On the India side, a continuous range runs southwest from the Himalayas along the Assam border in parallel ridges reaching heights of 10,000 feet; in the Patkai portion of this range, southeast of Ledo, the Pangsau Pass at about 4,300 feet leads into Burma, making a gateway for the projected road. On the east, the Himalayas curve south along the China frontier to the region of Bhamo. Boxed in on three sides by these main barriers, north Burma is essentially a rugged hill country divided into two compartments by the north-south Kumon Range, with elevations over 10,000 feet. To the east of the Kumons, the Irrawaddy pushes a narrow valley north from Myitkyina into the Himalayas; Sumprabum was the main enemy outpost in this valley. In the other compartment, the headwaters of the Chindwin River have carved out fairly extensive lowlands in the hill country; one of these plains, the Hukawng Valley, lies near the Pangsau Pass over the Patkai Range. Reference to the physiographic map (Map No. 5, page 19) will show the geographic features that governed both the plans for the Ledo Road and the plans for the military operations that would clear the way for this new route to China. Once over the Patkai Range, the essential problem was to get from the Hukawng lowlands over into the upper Irrawaddy



plains near Myitkyina. The best route was by a natural corridor, the narrow Mogaung Valley. This skirted the southwest side of the Kumon Mountains, then passed between them and the lower hills to the southwest to reach a tributary of the Irrawaddy River.

It was in this area of about 5,000 square miles, roughly the size of Connecticut, that the Marauders were to operate. When the three battalions of the 5307th arrived at Ningbyen, they had marched

through a typical portion of north Burma and had experienced the regional conditions under which they were to fight. They had struggled over the ridges of the Patkai Range, where, even in the relatively low country of the pass, they doubted whether "those goddam hills would ever level out." They had been impressed by the tropical rain forests characteristic of western mountain slopes in Burma, where trees 20 feet in diameter at the base rose straight and clean of branches to a dense roof of foliage at 80 or 100 feet. Brush was scant in the gloom of these forests, but the footing was poor in a mould of rotting vegetation 3 to 4 feet deep. In the Hukawng lowlands, the Marauders entered the typical jungle country of north Burma, and veterans of Guadalcanal soon learned that this jungle outmatched that of the Solomon Islands for difficulty. Trees were smaller and more scattered than in the mountains, permitting a rank growth of underbrush, often briary and tangled with vines. Patches of bamboo were sometimes so dense that to chop a trail involved cutting away the lower part of the growth to make a tunnel under the matted plant tops. Growth in the occasional clearings might consist of kunai ("elephant") grass, 4 to 6 feet high and sharp-edged. Everywhere in this country, whether on hills or in the river flood plains, men found that their clothes were damp all the time, even in the driest period of the year, and that their weapons rusted if not disassembled and oiled daily.

In a country of many large and small streams, heavy jungle, and rough hills, the problems of movement and transportation were made even more difficult by the absence of roads. North Burma is an undeveloped frontier country, and native footpaths and cart tracks provided the only means of communication in most of the area. The one road suitable for motor traffic, and then only in the dry months, ran north from Kamaing via the Mogaung corridor and into the Hukawng plain. The nearest railhead was at Myitkyina, reached by a single-track line connecting with central and southern Burma.

Burma has a tropical monsoon climate with clearly marked wet and dry seasons. From June to the end of September the moisture-laden southwest monsoon brings extremely heavy rains to the western and southern flanks of the highlands; annual precipitation on the westernmost hills varies from 150 to 250 inches. In northern Burma, slopes which face the monsoon also receive abundant rain, ranging



AT THE HALFWAY MARK ON THE LEDO ROAD, *the men of the 5307th wind downhill through the Patkai Range.*

between 75 and 100 inches. In the months from January to April, many of the innumerable small streams dry up, and only the large rivers present difficulties for crossing. During the wet period, lowlands such as the Hukawng Valley and even the Mogaung corridor are flooded to the point where movement is greatly restricted; the Ledo Road was to provide the first all-weather route that northern Burma had seen. Temperatures are high throughout the year at lower altitudes but from October to February are not excessive, ranging from 60° to 90° in the lowlands, and during these months the weather is clear and pleasant. Though the dry season does not end until June, the weather becomes increasingly hot and humid from March until the monsoon rains finally break.

The heavily forested hills and valleys of north Burma are thinly populated by pagan Kachins, who have lived in almost complete independence of the government in Rangoon. In 1931 Myitkyina, the largest town, had only 7,328 people in comparison with Mandalay's 134,950 and Rangoon's 398,967. Localities named on maps in territory where the Marauders operated might turn out to be less than hamlets; Lagang Ga has fewer than five houses, and Inkangahtawng, only a jungle clearing, has not a single basha (hut). The settlements usually consist of from 12 to 100 or more huts, built of timber uprights and bamboo. To protect the inhabitants against wild animals the villages are often surrounded by bamboo and wooden stockades. Many of the primitive tribesmen living in this area first came into contact with people of the outside world when their country became a battleground for Allied and Japanese armies.

The vegetation in north Burma is limited almost entirely to large trees and dense underbrush. Wild nuts, fruit, or edible growths, usually found in quantities in jungle areas, are rare in the Hukawng and Mogaung valleys. In small clearings around the villages only enough rice is raised to provide food for the local inhabitants. Cultivated areas increase as southern Burma is approached, where the densely populated valleys and coastal plains show an intricate pattern of paddies producing the great staple crop of the country.

The Kachins are active as traders and mine the amber and jade found in the Hukawng Valley and around Myitkyina. They practice nature worship, in contrast to the Buddhism of the more civilized Burmans who occupy the lowlands to the south. When organized by Americans and British, the Kachins proved very helpful as guides and auxiliary troops in the campaign against the Japanese.

In the hot and humid climate of Burma, disease was a greater peril to our men than the enemy. Almost everywhere malaria and dysentery were endemic. Many of the volunteers from the Pacific theaters had malaria before they reached India, and very few men were uninfected by the end of the campaign. Immunization treatments were not effective against a variety of typhus fever, communicated by mites. The Marauders' long and exhausting marches in rain and tropical heat, their inadequate nourishment, and their inability to take even the simplest precautions against infection resulted in a high percentage of casualties from disease.

The mountains, forests, and rivers of north Burma often seemed imposing and sometimes beautiful to our men. But hard experience proved that the land was no tropical paradise. It literally swarmed with enemies. Diseases and hardships of war in the jungle combined to sap the strength of the Marauders until they reached Myitkyina too exhausted to continue as a fighting force.

Supply

Normal methods of supply were impractical for a highly mobile force operating behind the enemy's forward defensive positions. Any attempts to maintain regular land supply lines, even if adequate roads had been available, would have greatly reduced tactical mobility and would have made secrecy impossible, contradicting the express purposes of the operation. Air dropping of food and munitions, though still in an experimental stage of development, had been satisfactory for General Wingate's expedition of 1943 and was adopted for the long-range-penetration missions of the Marauders.

The experience of General Wingate's expedition had disclosed both the possibilities of air supply and the major difficulties to be overcome. Adequate air and radio equipment, as well as competent air liaison and communications personnel, were absolute essentials. If air supply was to be a success it had to be planned with the utmost care and foresight. Adequate quantities of supplies had to be available at a base for shipment on a moment's notice. Means must be provided for accurate and quick radio communication between the units in the field and the supply base, since exact information regarding requirements, dropping area, and time of drop was necessary. Correct and careful packaging and loading of the supplies, whether to be dropped with or without parachutes, were required if safe delivery was to be assured. The actual dropping called for skilled pilots and crews who could approximate low-level bombing accuracy over the small jungle fields. Cargo planes had to be of types suitable for the kind of work anticipated, and fighter protection was necessary because interference by enemy planes was to be expected. Success would depend on attainment of the closest cooperation between air and ground forces. Air force and supply personnel had to realize that the outcome of the whole enterprise was completely dependent on teamwork of the highest order. The needs of the ground troops for food and ammunition could not wait on good flying conditions.



SUPPLY DROPS were received at about thirty areas during the operation. Here a C-47 releases its parachutes over a jungle clearing, marked with panels.

Bamboo warehouses at Dinjan, 32 miles west of Ledo, were made available to Maj. Edward T. Hancock, supply officer for the 5307th. Good air strips were nearby at Chabua, Tinsukia, and Sookerating. Arrangements were made for coded communication by SCR 284 from General Merrill's headquarters to Dinjan through Combat Headquarters at Ledo. Eventually the base at Dinjan monitored all messages from General Merrill to Headquarters, thus eliminating the loss of time involved in relaying requisitions. Standard units of each category of supplies, based on estimated requirements for 1 day, were packaged ready for delivery. Requisitions were submitted on a basis covering daily needs or were readily adapted to this basis.

At the beginning of the Marauders' operation the 2d Troop Carrier Squadron and later the 1st Troop Carrier Squadron carried the supplies from the Dinjan base to forward drop areas. They dropped by parachute engineering equipment, ammunition, medical supplies, and food from an altitude of about 200 feet; clothing and grain were dropped without parachute from 150 feet. They flew in all kinds of weather. During March alone, in 17 missions averaging 6 to 7 planes, they ferried into the combat area 376 tons of supplies.

The squadrons using C-47's had only one complaint about their transports. Because the planes lacked a drop port in the floor, the supplies, "kicked" out of the side door, sometimes struck the left horizontal stabilizer if the pilot could not maintain level flight. One plane was lost and two were damaged by parachutes catching on the stabilizer. Fighter protection was seldom requested for the drop planes, and only two were lost by enemy action during the campaign.

Where no open space or paddy field was available for the drop, it was necessary to prepare a field, but in the majority of cases the route of march and the supply requirements could be so coordinated that units were near some suitable flat, open area when drops were needed.

MARAUDERS CLEAR THE DROP FIELD. *One man packs clover-leaf ammunition containers, while other men carry the rest of the supplies from the field to a distribution point.*



This was an advantage, not only because it relieved the troops of the hard work of clearing ground, but because it enabled the pilots to use aerial photographs and maps to identify their destinations.

The packages, attached to A-4 and A-7 parachutes,⁹ weighed between 115 and 125 pounds. Containers of this size were easily man-handled. As soon as they reached the ground, two of them were loaded on a mule and transported to a distributing point in a relatively secure area. There they were opened and the men filed by, each one picking up an individual package of rations or ammunition. Rations, wrapped in a burlap bag, contained food, salt tablets, cigarettes, and occasionally halazone tablets for purifying drinking water.

The rations delivered to the Marauders were 80 percent "K," 5 percent "C," 5 percent "10-in-1," and 10 percent "B." A variety in this diet was provided only once when the rear echelon prepared a mess of fried chicken and apple turnovers which was dropped to the 2d Battalion during its darkest days at Nhpum Ga.

When the situation permitted, the practice was to send back to the Dinjan base in the evening the radio request for supplies to be dropped the following afternoon. In emergency cases the service could be speeded up. Special material not available at the Dinjan base was sometimes procured, transported, and dropped 12 hours after the original request was made. The shortest time for a supply mission was recorded on 6 May when a C-47 reached the drop area, 128 miles from Dinjan, just 2 hours and 22 minutes after the message had been filed in the field.

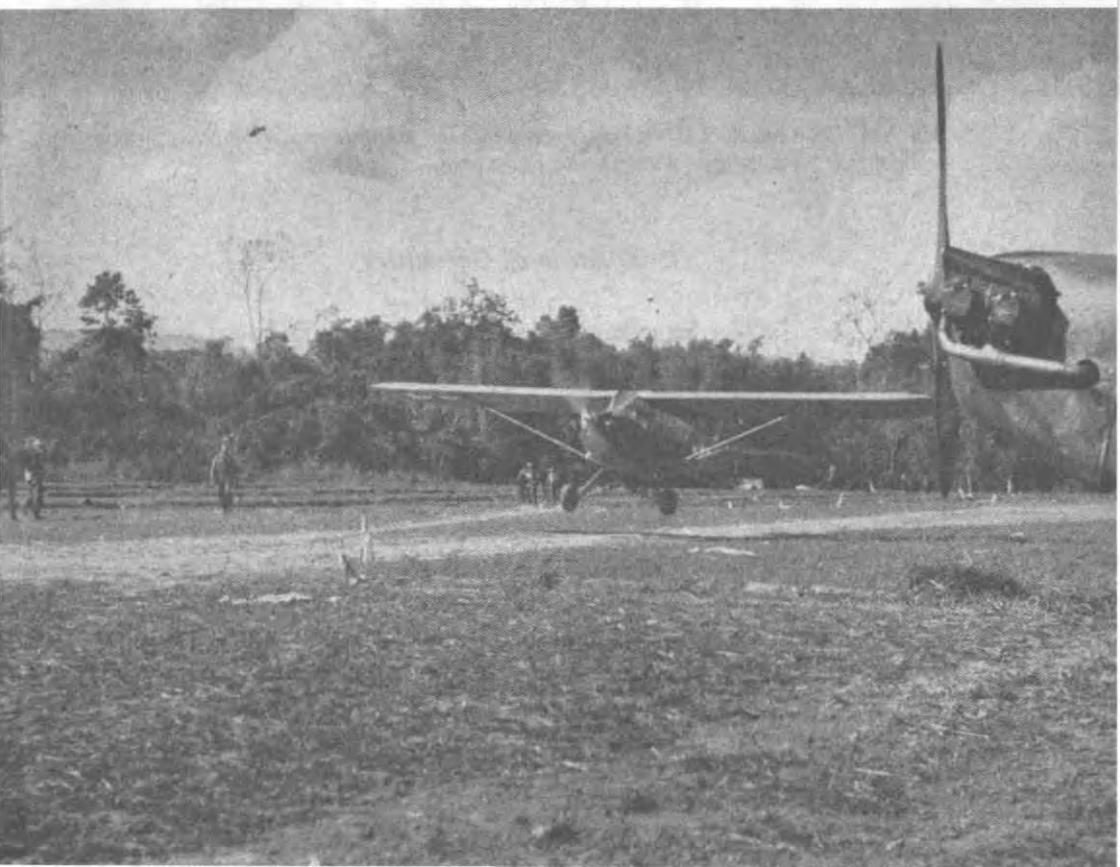
Tabulations were prepared for determining readily the weight of each delivery so that the air liaison officer would know how many planes were needed at any time. A situation map, posted in Major Hancock's office, was kept up to date, and, in a number of instances, anticipatory planning was carried to such an extent that ammunition was actually loaded on trucks kept ready to dash for the airfield. At the destination, air-ground communication with the unit being supplied was used to achieve the greatest possible coordination of effort.

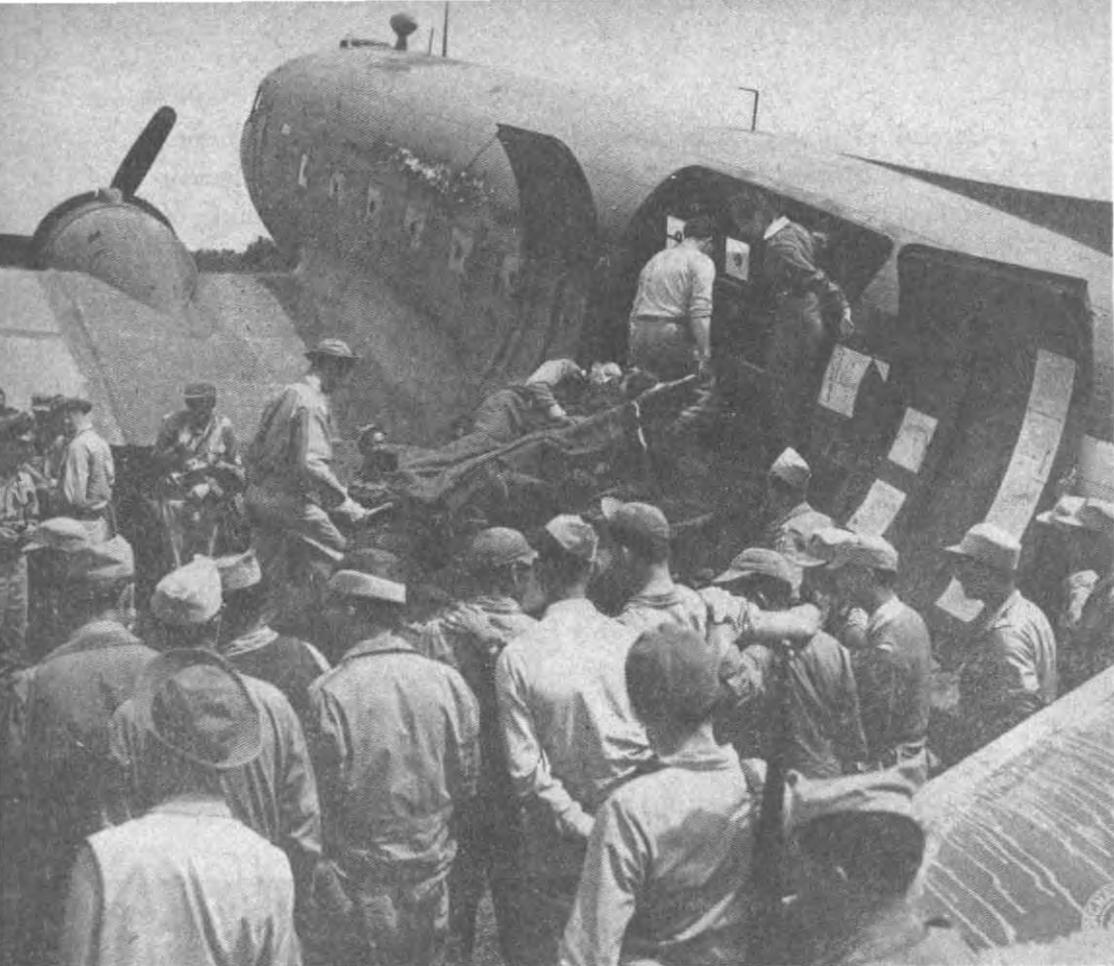
⁹ The A-4 is a canvas container approximately 12" x 24" x 30" inclosed in a reinforced webbing harness and lined with two corrugated pasteboard boxes. The parachute is attached to the webbing harness. This container is used primarily for dropping of medical supplies, signal equipment, and other similar semifragile cargo.

The A-7 consists of two 6-foot adjustable webbing straps sewn together at right angles to inclose boxes of supplies. The parachute is attached at the junction of the two straps. This container is used for dropping small-arms ammunition and other items of a durable nature.

Careful planning, supplemented by speedy adoption of lessons learned from experience, paid big dividends in terms of efficient operation of the air supply system. About 250 enlisted members of the 5307th, including packers, riggers, drivers, and food droppers, were responsible for the job; everyone realized the importance of his role and felt a personal obligation to get the supplies to his comrades in the field at the time and place and in the quantities required. Major Hancock, commander of the base detachment, was assisted by Capt. Willard C. Nelson who was executive officer, Lt. Robert O. Gardiner who supervised the packing of parachutes, and 1st Lt. Marlan E. Lowell who handled air liaison. These officers and their enlisted personnel never allowed any obstacle to interfere with the delivery of supplies. Their outstanding performance and that of pilots and air crews resulted in a smoothly functioning supply system. The high degree of mobility and secrecy which resulted from air supply was one of the chief reasons for the success of the Marauders.

L-4's EVACUATED WOUNDED FROM FORWARD STRIPS. *This liaison plane carries a casualty from Hsamshingyang to a rear field.*





AN AMBULANCE PLANE transports wounded Chinese and American soldiers from a rear field to a hospital in the Ledo area.

Evacuation of Casualties

The 71st Liaison Squadron, using L-4's and L-5's based at Ledo, evacuated the great majority of Marauder casualties from the combat zone after they had been treated by Medical corpsmen or surgical teams. The light liaison planes, landing on drop areas, rice paddies, or gravel bars along the rivers, flew the wounded, often within a period of a few hours after injury, to rear air strips or to collecting and clearing companies along the Ledo Road. From the air strips, ambulance planes (C-47's) transported the casualties to the 20th General Hospital, the 14th Evacuation Hospital, or the 111th Station Hospital in the Ledo area. After the capture of Myitkyina airfield both C-46's

and C-47's, landing on the strip, were regularly assigned to evacuating Americans. Speed in carrying the wounded where they could receive hospital treatment saved the lives of many men who could not have withstood the journey overland through the jungle.

Communications

Before entering the area of operations, the 5307th arranged to carry long- and short-range radios providing constant communication with higher headquarters for orders, supply arrangements, and air cooperation, and within the unit itself for control of the columns. Since the battalions were to be always on the move and most of the time behind enemy lines, it was necessary to carry wherever they went even the heavier, more powerful radio sets. They left Ledo equipped with six radios (three long-range AN/PRC-1's and three SCR 284's)¹⁰ mounted on mules. Each battalion had an AN/PRC-1, for communication to the base station at Dinjan and to the liaison station at General Stilwell's forward headquarters, and an SCR 284 (20-mile range), for signaling transport and fighter planes flying missions for the ground troops. During the latter part of the operation the unit used an SCR 177-S,¹¹ converted for mule pack, to contact rear and forward units and the temporary command base then located at Naubum. From Ledo to Myitkyina all headquarters within the battalions had SCR 300's (Walkie-Talkie).¹² Since this voice instrument proved most reliable for distances up to 3 and sometimes 10 miles in level country, the headquarters used it for quick column contact, supplementing their runners. Except on long marches, the men packed these 32-pound sets on their backs to relay information about enemy movements and to direct mortar and artillery fire.

The communications men found the long-range radios more difficult to transport and operate satisfactorily. These powerful sets required from one to three mules for carriage; their range was limited by the dense jungle growth and the uneven terrain, and they func-

¹⁰ The AN/PRC-1 is a lightweight, high-powered radio set having a normal range of from 200 to 2,000 miles. The SCR 284 for pack transport weighs over 100 pounds and has a normal range of 5 to 20 miles.

¹¹ The SCR 177-S operated very well in jungle but was extremely heavy to carry. It weighs about 700 pounds and has a range of 30 to 100 miles.

¹² The SCR 300 is a portable 32-pound set with an expected range of 5 miles.

tioned best only in the daytime when the signals of other stations were generally silent. The AN/PRC-1's required manpower, not always available, to crank their hand generators.

The operators, at first an inexperienced cross section of the services, learned to get the messages through. They often marched all day and then worked most of the night sending out and receiving communications or repairing their equipment. Upon the communications sections rested the responsibility for keeping channels open to coordinate the unit's operations with those of the main Chinese force, to requisition food and ammunition for the unit's existence in the enemy's jungle, and to call for air support at critical moments. All this they did effectively.

First Mission: Walawbum

BY 24 FEBRUARY 1944 the Chinese 22d and 38th Divisions had driven 60 miles into the Hukawng Valley and were advancing southward against the Japanese 18th Division, which had about 7,000 men near and north of Maingkwan (Map No. 27, inside back cover). Strong jungle-hidden defensive positions, each manned by 40 to 100 Japanese, protected the Kamaing Road, the only motor route through the valley, the main supply artery for the enemy, and the key to control of the valley by either side. The Chinese forces were making their main drive along the axis of this road. The 112th and 113th Regiments of the 38th Division, having taken Taihpa Ga and cleared the area between the Tawang and Tanai Hka¹³ (rivers) north of the road, were attacking south toward Maingkwan. Twenty miles to the west, beyond a 4,000-foot range of hills, the 65th Regiment of the 22d Division had captured Taro on 2 February and was working southeast in an advance that covered the right flank of the main effort.

On the Move

General Stilwell planned to coordinate the employment of the 5307th with the main operations in the Hukawng Valley by sending the Marauders on wide encircling movements east of the Chinese forces to establish road blocks behind the Japanese front lines (Map No. 6, page 33). For their first mission he ordered the Marauders to cut the Kamaing Road in the vicinity of Walawbum and to attack a

¹³ Tanai is an alternate name for the Chindwin in this area.

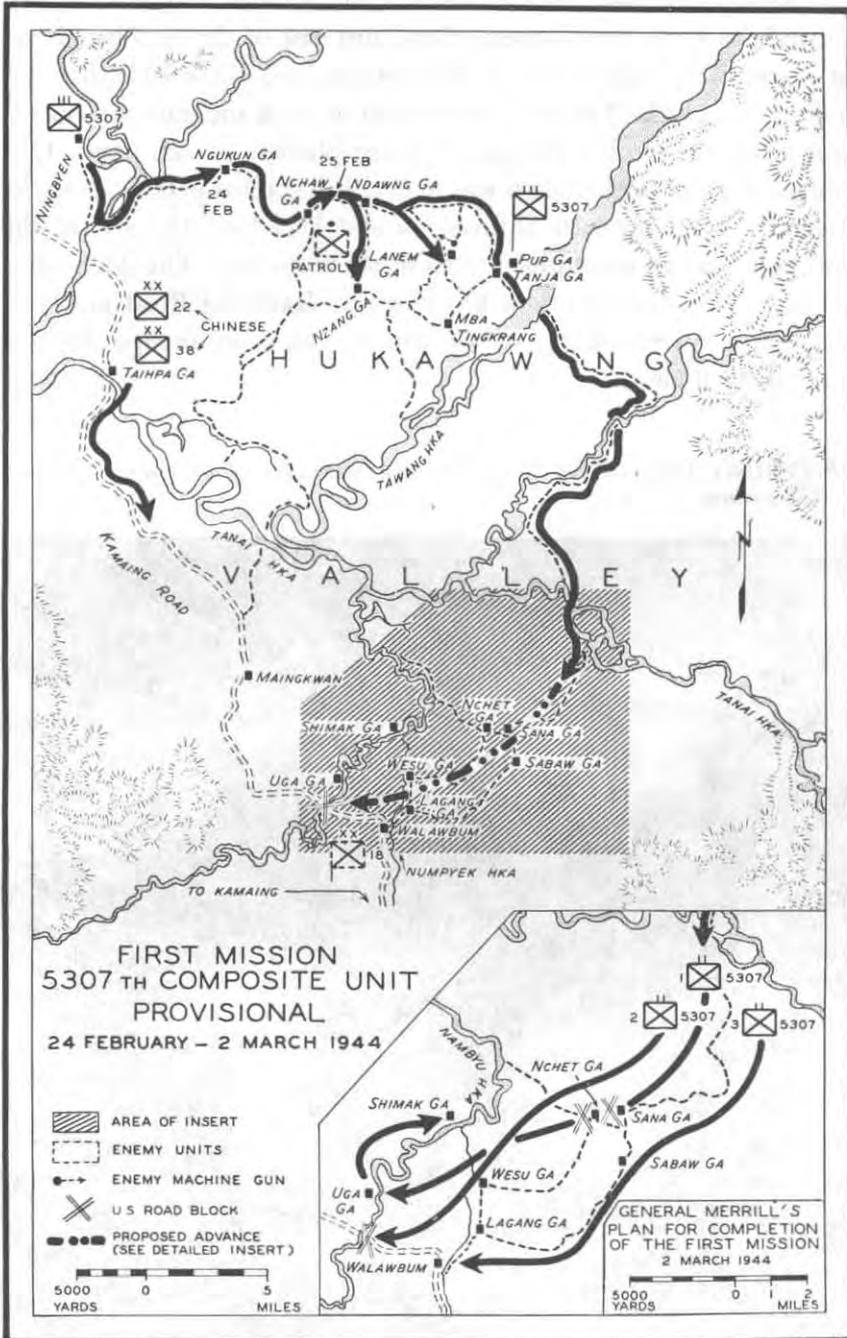
forward command post believed to be near there. The Marauders were to move from Ningbyen to Tanja Ga and await General Stilwell's instructions to jump off. These instructions were to be given at the moment when Chinese operations along the road to the north of Maingkwan would most benefit by an attack in the rear of the Japanese lines.

To get into position for the jump-off, the 1st Battalion at 0600 on 24 February started over the trail from Ningbyen on a 5-day march to Tanja Ga. The 2d Battalion followed at 0900; the 3d at 1100. Each battalion moved out in column of combat teams, and the order of march afforded maximum protection. The I and R (Intelligence and Reconnaissance) Platoon was the point of the column and was followed by a rifle platoon. A rifle company, with half the heavy weapons platoon, was next in line. Combat team headquarters and the medical detachment, in the middle of the formation, preceded another rifle platoon and the rest of the heavy weapons.

In order to prevent surprise attacks, the I and R platoons scouted the trails in advance of the main elements of the combat teams and on the flanks. On the 25th the I and R Platoon of Orange Combat Team ran into an enemy patrol near Nzang Ga. In a sharp exchange of shots one Japanese was killed and one Marauder, Cpl. Warner Katz, was slightly wounded. On the same day, Pvt. Robert W. Landis, leading scout of Blue Combat Team's I and R Platoon, was killed by machine-gun fire as he approached Lanem Ga.

When the Marauders arrived in the vicinity of Tanja Ga on the afternoon of 28 February, they received orders from General Stilwell to proceed as quickly as possible to Walawbum. The steady advance of the Chinese on Maingkwan, forcing the enemy to retreat southward on the Kamaing Road, required the immediate employment of the 5307th. Coordinated with the Chinese operations, the Marauders' first mission was to hasten the enemy's withdrawal south of Walawbum by cutting his supply lines to forward troops.

Walawbum was 40 miles away; 3 days' march put the Marauders within striking distance. On 2 March, during a halt after the crossing of the Tanai River, General Merrill issued combat orders for this first mission (Insert on Map No. 6, page 33). Moving out at 1600, the 3d Battalion was to pass through Sabaw Ga and Lagang Ga and secure control of the Kamaing Road at Walawbum by seizing the



high ground along the Numpyek River east of the road. The 2d Battalion was to proceed via Wesu Ga, cut a trail through the jungle westerly to strike the Kamaing Road just east of the Nambyu River at a point 2½ miles west of Walawbum, and there construct and hold a road block. The 1st Battalion was to block the trails at Sana Ga and Nchet Ga, with a minimum of one platoon at each point. One combat team of the battalion was to establish combat patrols along the Nambyu River between Shimak Ga and Uga Ga. The rest of the battalion was to constitute a reserve at Wesu Ga. The Marauders were to hold their positions blocking the Kamaing Road until the Chinese, following up an enemy withdrawal, could occupy the area and relieve them.

ENTERING THE JUNGLE TRAIL, *the Marauder column is on the way to Walawbum.*





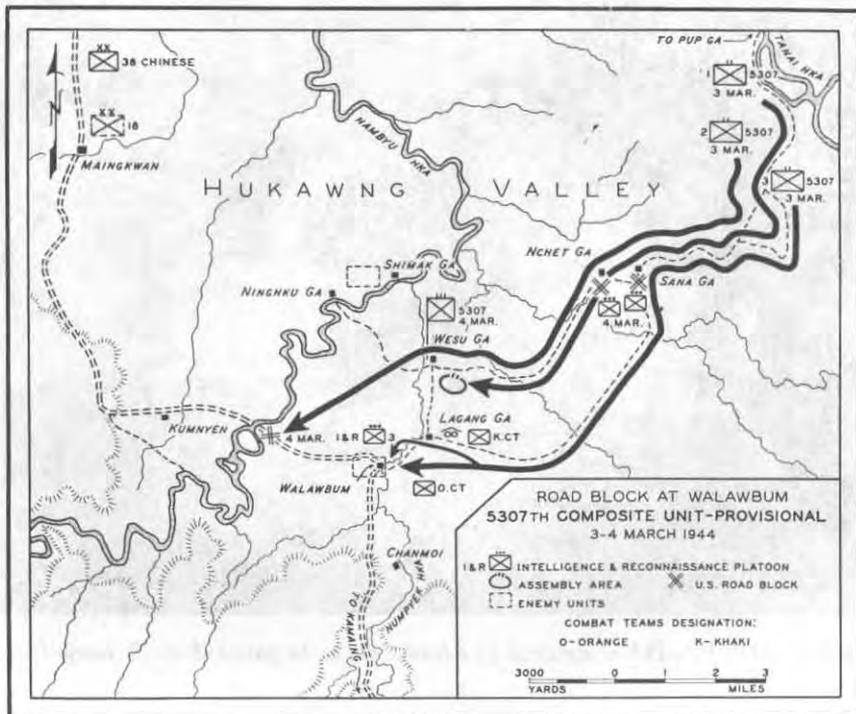
A VILLAGE BASHA is searched by a lead scout as he passes through Tanja Ga.

Kamaing Road Block

By dawn on 3 March all battalions of the 5307th had started for Walawbum, 15 miles away (Map No. 7, page 36). Until their presence was known by the Japanese in this rear area, about 20 miles behind the front lines, the Marauders met only small parties of the enemy moving to and from supply dumps, rear hospitals, or command posts established in and around the small villages near Walawbum. At Lagang Ga a group of seven, carrying one casualty, encountered members of the 3d Battalion Headquarters as they were passing through the village about noon. The headquarters section opened fire when the enemy party was 50 yards away and killed five Japanese before their machine gunner was able to fire effectively.

Orange Combat Team led the 3d Battalion and bivouacked for the night within a half mile of Walawbum, protected on its right flank by the I and R Platoon, under Lt. Logan E. Weston. During the afternoon Major Lew had sent Weston's platoon, relieved of acting as point of the column, across the Numpyek River. The platoon of

MAP NO. 7



48 men with three automatic rifles dug in for the night on the west bank of the stream, a few hundred yards west of Orange Combat Team.

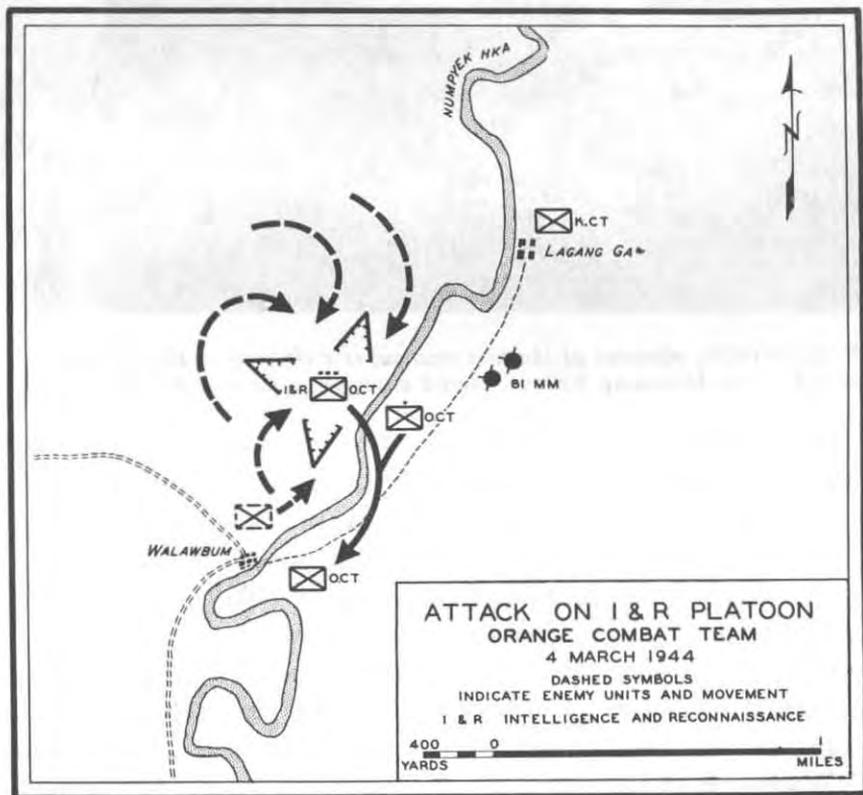
The night of 3 March found the 1st Battalion 2 miles east of Wesu Ga and the 2d Battalion in the same general area. All elements put out heavy local security, consisting of trail blocks and listening posts, and before morning many of these had tangled with small Japanese patrols and foraging parties. No casualties were suffered.

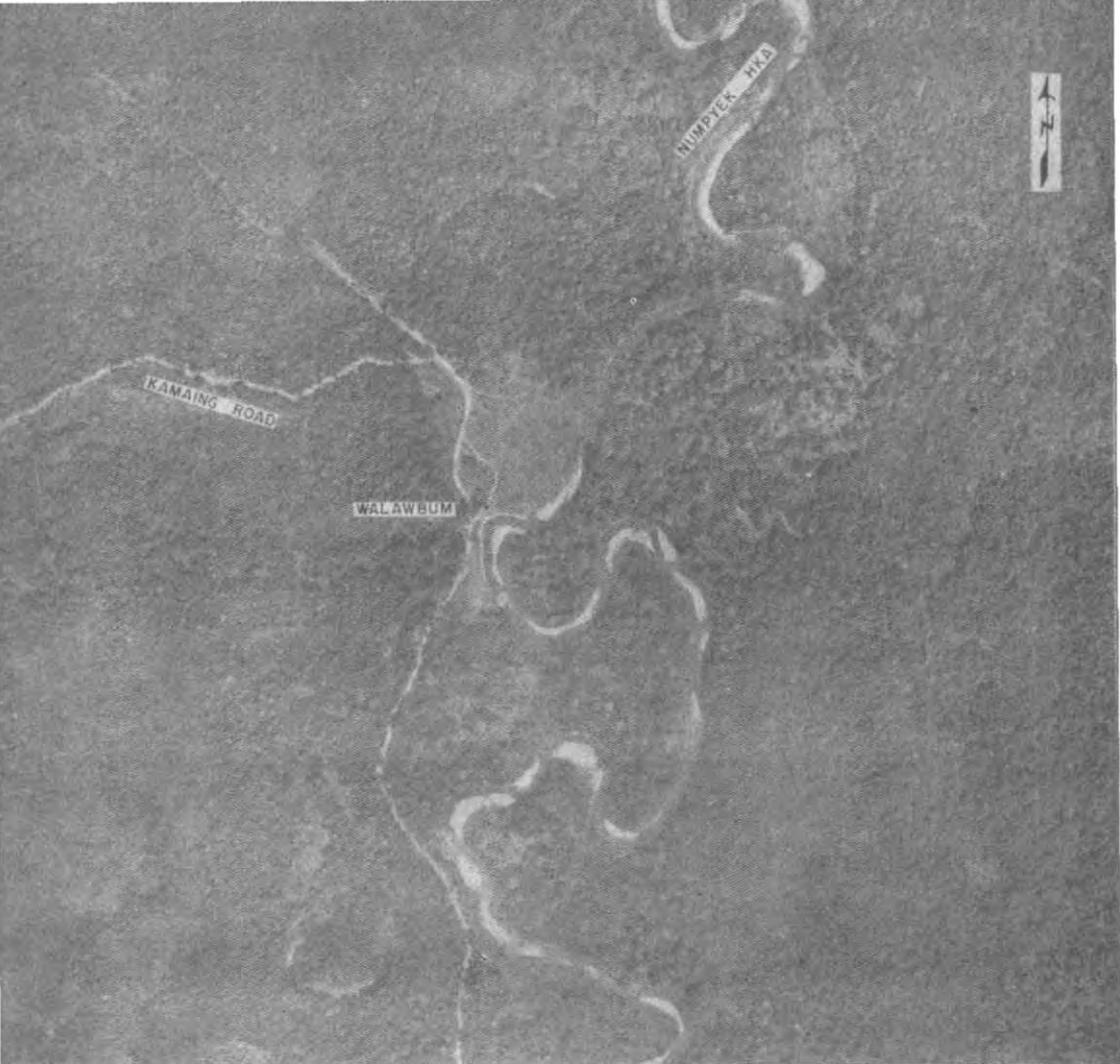
It seemed evident that the enemy had been confused by the sudden appearance of the 5307th in the Walawbum area. Early on 4 March the Japanese began to feel out the Marauder positions. At 0630 an enemy force of 30 vigorously attacked the Lagang Ga air strip, which Khaki Combat Team had constructed and had since been protecting for L-4 and L-5 liaison planes. The enemy arrived just as the Marauders were preparing their breakfast. Conditions of fog, as well as concealment offered by heavy brush and gullies, facilitated the enemy's approach. Nevertheless, a squad of riflemen, two light machine gunners, and 60-mm mortar men quickly drove off the force

after 10 of its number had been killed. Six men from Khaki Combat Team were wounded during the engagement, and four of these were evacuated by liaison plane from the strip.

Within another hour a Japanese force of 90, coming from the direction of Walawbum, threatened Orange Combat Team's I and R Platoon in the heaviest fighting of the day (Map No. 8, below). Lieutenant Weston had moved his unit to higher ground along the river about 300 yards southwest of the position he had occupied during the night. On this higher ground he could stop any attempted enemy crossing of the river either up or down stream toward the flank of Orange Combat Team. At 0720 the platoon brushed with an enemy patrol on the west side of the river and shortly afterward met resistance from a Japanese group to the north. A little later another enemy group came at the platoon's position from the northwest, and a fourth and a fifth group advanced on it from the north and northeast.

MAP NO. 8





WALAWBUM, objective of the first mission, is a clearing in the thick jungle growth of the Hukawng Valley. (Aerial photograph from 11,000 feet.)

Japanese officers were heard shouting orders to their men for these movements. Sgt. Henry H. Gosho, Nisei interpreter with Weston's platoon, was able to translate this information in time for shifting automatic weapons to meet each attack successfully. Nevertheless, mortar fire began to come very close, and by 1100 the platoon was pressed on three sides by superior enemy forces.

When the fourth enemy group was turned back, Lieutenant Weston signaled Major Lew by radio and asked for mortar fire from his 81-mm section. During and after the enemy's fifth attack, Lt. William E. Woomer fired 235 rounds of light, heavy, and smoke shells accord-

ing to Lieutenant Weston's radioed directions. Under cover of mortar fire, the I and R Platoon waded the stream, carrying three litters. The Japanese attempted to follow but a squad from the team, forming a skirmish line, protected the crossing and stopped the enemy with heavy small-arms fire. The I and R Platoon, having held up a strong enemy attack on Orange Combat Team's right flank until it reached its objective, withdrew to the southwest and dug in with the team. The platoon and the mortar section had destroyed two-thirds of the Japanese attacking force, estimated at 90 men.

Orange Combat Team established a perimeter along the Numpyek River on the high ground facing Walawbum and was in position to block the Kamaing Road with mortars and machine guns (Map No. 7, page 36). In the afternoon Major Lew's men threw about 100 shells into the village and on the road. The Japanese replied with some mortar and artillery fire. The mortar shells landed around the perimeter, but the artillery ranged over it to Lagang Ga, where planes were dropping supplies to Khaki Combat Team. Neither Khaki nor Orange Combat Team suffered casualties from this enemy fire.

North of Walawbum two Japanese soldiers infiltrated the Marauder lines and almost succeeded in reaching General Merrill's command post, established temporarily at Wesu Ga. When they were discovered one was setting up a machine gun with which he could have wiped out the entire command group. The other was found worming his way through the heavy growth surrounding the headquarters. Both Japanese escaped, but a pool of blood on the ground showed that at least one was wounded.

Northwest of Walawbum the men of the 2d Battalion had been chopping their way through the jungle toward the Kamaing Road. Meeting no serious resistance, they reached the road at dusk, constructed a block and a perimeter defense, and dug in for the night.

The 18th Division's telephone communications from the front to headquarters at Kamaing ran along the road and so passed through the perimeter of the road block established by the 2d Battalion. Tec. 4 Roy H. Matsumoto, a Nisei assigned to the 2d Battalion for intelligence operations, tapped the enemy's telephone line. One of the conversations he heard concerned the troubles of a Japanese sergeant in charge of an ammunition dump. The sergeant had with him only three soldiers armed with rifles and begged "help and advice" from

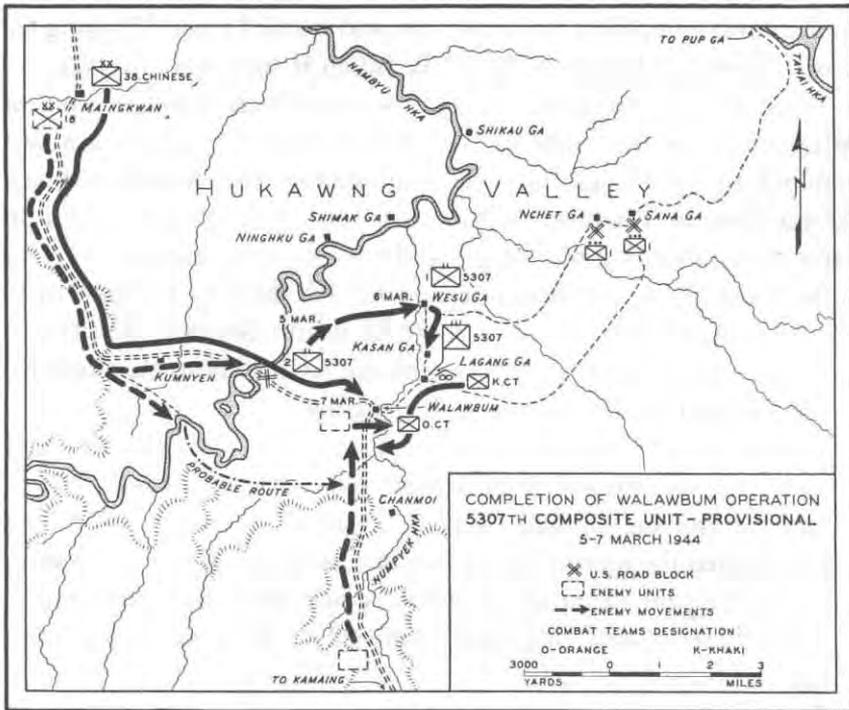
his commanding officer because he had learned of the 2d Battalion's arrival at the road. The sergeant, in reporting the location of the 2d Battalion, gave away his own position. When American planes appeared for a supply drop, the 2d Battalion signaled the crews to send back to the enemy dump fighters or bombers with "help and advice" of an unexpected kind.

On 4 March, while guarding the rear of the 2d and 3d Battalions, two platoons of the 1st Battalion had established blocks near Sana Ga and Nchet Ga on the trails leading into Walawbum. Their patrols inflicted heavy casualties on unwary small parties of the enemy, but nothing approaching a large engagement materialized in that section. From Wesu Ga, where most of the 1st Battalion was in reserve, Red and White Combat Teams sent out strong reconnaissance groups to the air strip at Lagang Ga and across the Nambyu River to Ninghku Ga. Red Combat Team's patrol met no resistance. White's patrol ran into a group of Japanese near Ninghku Ga. The Marauders killed two of the group and dispersed the rest, averting another possible attack on the 5307th's command post.

Japanese Withdrawal

On March 5 the Japanese made several efforts to dislodge the forces blocking their supply road (Map No. 9, page 41). The 2d Battalion underwent considerable shelling and turned back six infantry attacks, at a cost of one man killed and five wounded. South of Walawbum, after heavy mortar fire and some 77-mm artillery shelling, strong Japanese patrols moved toward Orange Combat Team with the evident intention of finding its flanks. Anticipating just such moves, Major Lew had prepared ambush positions along the east bank of the Numpyek River, and Orange Combat Team took heavy toll of the enemy as they were crossing the stream. Seventy-five Japanese dead were counted; Orange lost one killed and seven wounded. Toward evening all activity against the 2d and 3d Battalions slackened, but enemy reinforcements were on their way from Kamaing. Strafed and bombed by our planes en route, they nevertheless kept coming; the noisy slamming of tail gates after dark indicated that truck after truck was arriving and discharging its cargo of reinforcements.

Messages intercepted on the telephone-tap by the 2d Battalion



proved that the Japanese were still confused by the American activities. Finally, Matsumoto reported that forward elements of the Japanese 18th Division had been ordered to withdraw from the Maingkwaw area, crossing the Nambyu River south of Kumnyen. To screen the withdrawal of the main units, which were apparently not intending to use the Kamaing Road, the enemy was planning to attack the 2d Battalion at 2300 that night. The Japanese had artillery available for this attack, and the 2d Battalion, with only a limited amount of mortar and machine-gun ammunition, was in no condition to stop them from pushing through the road block. The battalion had fought for 36 hours without food or water. Colonel McGee explained the situation to General Merrill by phone. The General advised the 2d Battalion to withdraw after dark toward Wesu Ga and join the 3d Battalion east of the Numpyek River. The Marauders blocked the road with trees, placed booby traps in the area, and withdrew along the trail they had cut 2 days before. Fortunately, they themselves were alert to the danger of booby traps and drove a mule ahead of them. The mule was blown to bits. Arriving at Wesu Ga by noon the following day,

6 March, Colonel McGee and his men picked up an air drop of rations and ammunition, filled their canteens, and hurried toward Lagang Ga where they could support the 3d Battalion if they were needed.

After the 2d Battalion vacated its road-block position west of Walawbum on the night of 5 March, Orange Combat Team was holding the only position still commanding the Kamaing Road. Khaki Combat Team was withdrawn from the Lagang Ga air strip early on the morning of 6 March and moved out to strengthen Major Lew's position by advancing beyond his left flank to a point where the Numpyek River makes a sharp U bend. General Merrill also moved 4 miles nearer the position of the 3d Battalion, changing his command post from Wesu Ga to Lagang Ga.

From dawn the Japanese, in what was presumably a further effort to cover the withdrawal of their main force, poured a steady stream of mortar fire on Orange Combat Team and about midmorning supplemented the mortar fire by medium artillery. Major Lew's men, now standing the brunt of the whole attack, were well protected in fox holes roofed with logs and managed to keep the upper hand throughout the day.

Elements of the combat team disrupted the enemy's plans to organize an attacking force to the south. Sgt. Andrew B. Pung directed mortar fire from the 81-mm section on a concentration area for troops arriving from Kamaing. Perched in a tree 30 feet from the ground, he secured several direct hits, one of the shells landing in the bed of a truck from which reinforcements were being unloaded. As a result of this accurate fire, no assaults materialized from the south.

Equal success was obtained against enemy efforts from the west. At 1715 two enemy companies, following each other in line of skirmishers and strongly supported by heavy machine-gun, mortar, and 77-mm fire, attempted to cross the river to attack Orange Combat Team's position. Except for mortars, the Marauders held their fire until the enemy reached the western river bank, some 25 yards away. Then they let loose with their automatic weapons and tore great gaps in the Japanese line. Two heavy machine guns, placed on the river bank with clear fields of fire, used 5,000 rounds each with deadly effect. The attack wilted, and 400 Japanese lay dead on the open ground near the river.

By now Orange Combat Team's ammunition was low. Khaki

Combat Team, which was still moving to get into position south of Orange, rushed up five mule loads of mortar shells and machine-gun cartridges. But before the ammunition arrived the Japanese had retired. The only casualties Orange Combat Team suffered were three slightly wounded. During the hour of combat the Japanese put in a great deal of small-arms fire, but they were aiming uphill and most of the fire passed overhead.

Mission Accomplished

At Kasan Ga, more than an hour before the last Japanese attack at 1715, General Merrill met a Chinese battalion commander who had just arrived, ahead of his regiment, to arrange relief of the Marauders at Walawbum. General Merrill's present intelligence estimates indicated that the enemy was bringing in reinforcements from the south to make a stand at Walawbum. He therefore decided to disengage the Marauders, pull back, circle around to the east, and cut the Kamaing road near Chanmoi, again maneuvering his forces to the rear of the Japanese. The Chinese regiment would take over the Marauder positions at Walawbum.

However, before General Merrill's orders for this move could be executed, the situation at Walawbum had changed. The Japanese had suddenly retired toward Kamaing after their costly attack on Orange Combat Team. Also, the Chinese 22d and 38th Divisions had captured Maingkwan and were pushing rapidly to the south in pursuit of the main enemy force retreating toward Chanmoi on a road which bypassed the Marauder position. Further American efforts were unnecessary.

The 38th Division arrived in the Walawbum area on 7 March. The Chinese made contact with the Marauders so quickly and unexpectedly that the first encounter resulted in an exchange of shots. The Chinese, failing to recognize the American helmets, fired on Red Combat Team disposed along the river east of Wesu Ga. The Marauders replied with rifle and mortar fire, and shooting continued until a Chinese interpreter identified the opposing force. The Americans quickly waded across the stream to find a major and three enlisted men badly wounded. Marauder doctors rushed to the scene, and men from Red Combat Team carried the injured Chinese to the air strip for evacuation.

Shortly after this incident, the Chinese 38th Division entered

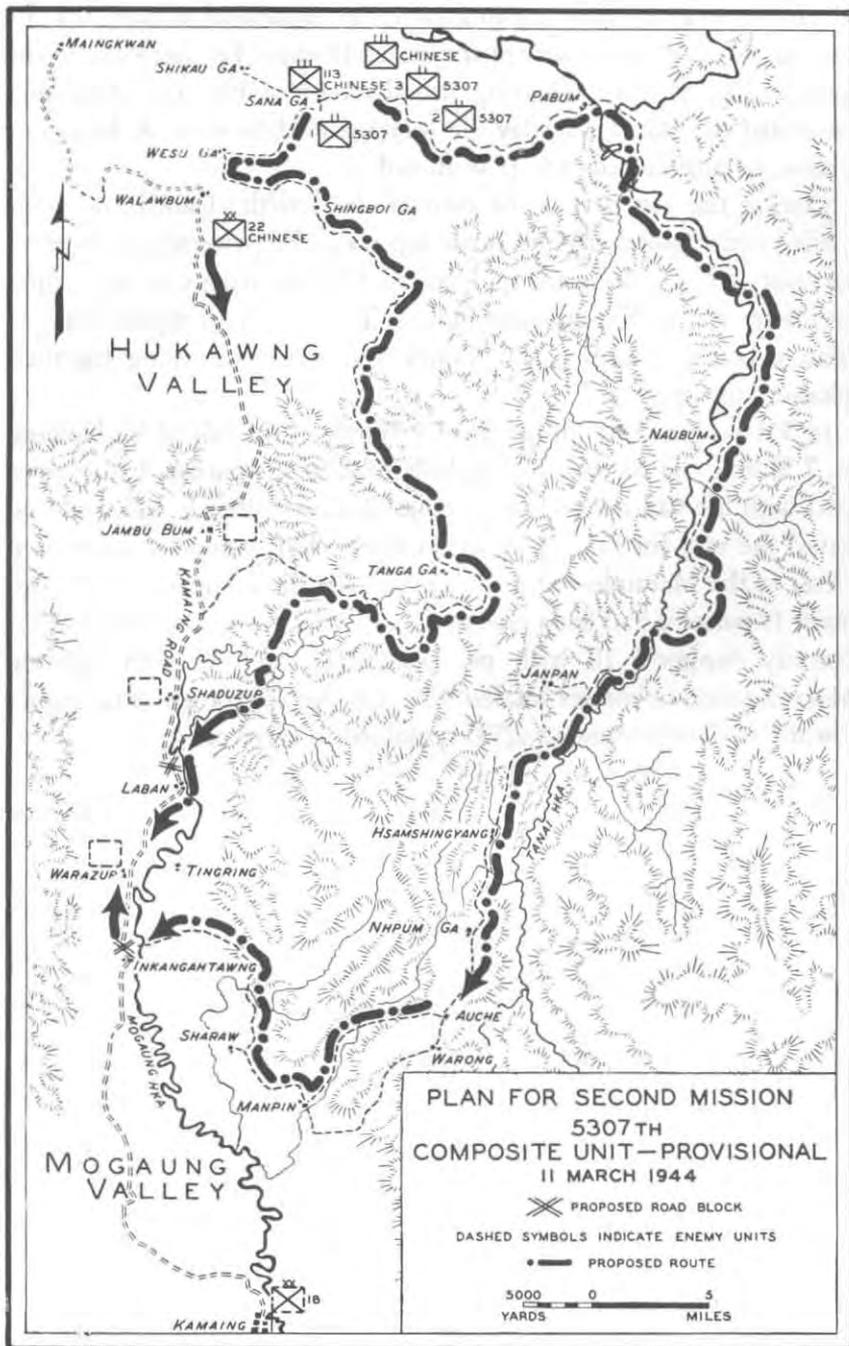


TROOPS OF THE CHINESE 38th DIVISION arrive at Walawbum, marking an end of the first mission. The Marauders on the left withdraw up the trail as the Chinese take over positions in the town.

Walawbum with almost no opposition. At 1845 that evening General Merrill held a staff meeting to inform the assembled officers that the first phase of the Marauder operation had ended. He conveyed to the group General Stilwell's congratulations for a job well done and requested the officers to relay the message to their men. A 3-day rest period, he announced, was now in order.

During the rest period the men of the 5307th cleaned and overhauled their equipment and made repairs and replacements wherever necessary. The Americans and nearby Chinese troops set up a joint perimeter around Sana Ga and Shikau Ga. The two groups exchanged rations, battle souvenirs, and money and went swimming together. Morale was superb.

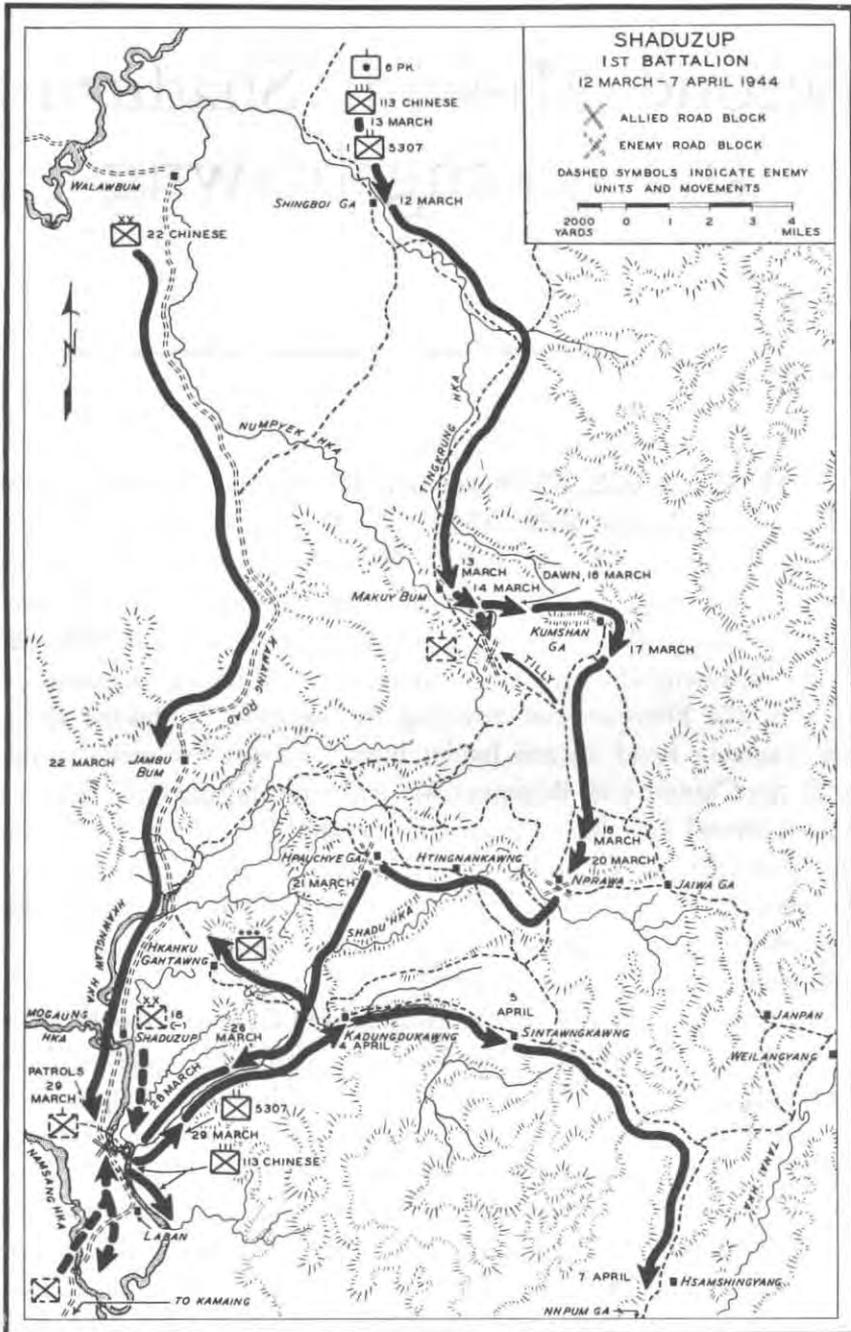
In 5 days, from the jump-off on 3 March to the fall of Walawbum on 7 March, the Americans had killed 800 of the enemy, had cooperated with the Chinese to force a major Japanese withdrawal, and had paved the way for further Allied progress. This was accomplished at a cost to the Marauders of 8 men killed and 37 wounded. Up to this point 19 patients had been evacuated with malaria, 8 with other fevers (mostly dengue), 10 with psychoneurosis, and 33 with injuries. Miscellaneous sicknesses totaled 109. Of the 2,750 men who started toward Walawbum, about 2,500 remained to carry on.



Second Mission: Shaduzup and Inkangahtawng

THE ADVANCE TO Walawbum gave General Stilwell control of the Hukawng Valley (Map. No. 27, inside back cover). The next phase of the offensive would center on the corridor formed by the Mogaung Valley. The entrance to this corridor lies over the low hills near Jambu Bum that serve as a watershed between the tributaries of the Hukawng and Mogaung. Spearheading the main advance, the Chinese 22d Division was crowding the Japanese southward along the Kamaing Road toward Jambu Bum. Twenty-five miles to the west, the Chinese 65th Regiment was still covering the right flank in a push toward Tasu Bum. Once again General Stilwell planned to use the Marauders on an encircling mission east of the Kamaing Road. Penetrating 15 and 20 miles to the rear of the main Japanese forces, two Marauder columns were to cut enemy supply lines and communications and harass rear areas.

On 11 March, the day after he had received General Stilwell's plan for this operation, General Merrill held a staff meeting to brief his officers on the mission (Map No. 10, page 46). Marauder columns were to strike simultaneously at two points along the Kamaing Road and establish road blocks, to pinch out hostile elements between these blocks, and then to attack north or south along the road or in both directions, as the situation warranted. To insure maximum freedom of action for the Marauders, two regiments of the Chinese 38th Division were to take part in the operation. Following the Marauder units, these Chinese troops were to take over the blocks as soon as they



had been established, enabling the Marauders to exploit the situation as it developed.

The 1st Battalion, followed by a Chinese regiment, was to proceed from Sana Ga in a flanking movement to cut the Kamaing Road near Shaduzup. On the 50-mile hike to Shaduzup the battalion was to follow a trail running through the southeastern end of the Hukawng Valley and along the southwestern slopes of the Kumon Range to the Mogaung Valley. The 2d and 3d Battalions, also followed by a Chinese regiment, were to make a wider sweep of about 80 miles to block the Kamaing Road at Inkangahtawng, south of the Shaduzup block. Their trail followed the Tanai River in a constricted valley between two main chains of the Kumon Mountains; beyond Janpan, the trail wound up the side of the valley and led over a series of razor-backed ridges, with differences of elevation amounting to as much as 1,600 feet in 4 miles. Beyond Auché, the column would reach the Mogaung watershed and strike west to the road. The Marauder parties were to take about 2 weeks getting to their positions on the road.

On the Move to Shaduzup

At 0700 on 12 March the 1st Battalion started for Shaduzup; the Chinese 113th Regiment and 6th Pack Artillery Battery followed (Map No. 11, page 48). In the next 2 days the 1st Battalion covered about 20 miles to Makuy Bum, always watching for enemy patrols along the trails. From this point on, the Marauders were in rough hills as high as 2,000 feet, and the difficulties of progress were increased by the tendency of trails to avoid the stream beds and to take the hills as they came.

On the 14th the I and R Platoon of White Combat Team, feeling out the trail south of Makuy Bum several miles in advance of the main column, made the first encounter with enemy forces. Warned by finding footprints, the men of the platoon, commanded by Lt. Samuel V. Wilson, redoubled their caution and slipped up unobserved on a group of Japanese sitting around camp fires just off the narrow jungle path. The Marauders' surprise fire killed four Japanese and one Burman but stirred up a veritable hornet's nest. The enemy proved to be 150 strong, and the platoon quickly dispersed into the jungle. Withdrawing up the trail, one of the Marauders encountered Lt. William C. Evans, commander of Red Combat Team's I and R

Platoon. Upon hearing the plight of Lieutenant Wilson's men, Lieutenant Evans sent a report of the situation back to the main column and hastened with his unit to assist in clearing the trail.

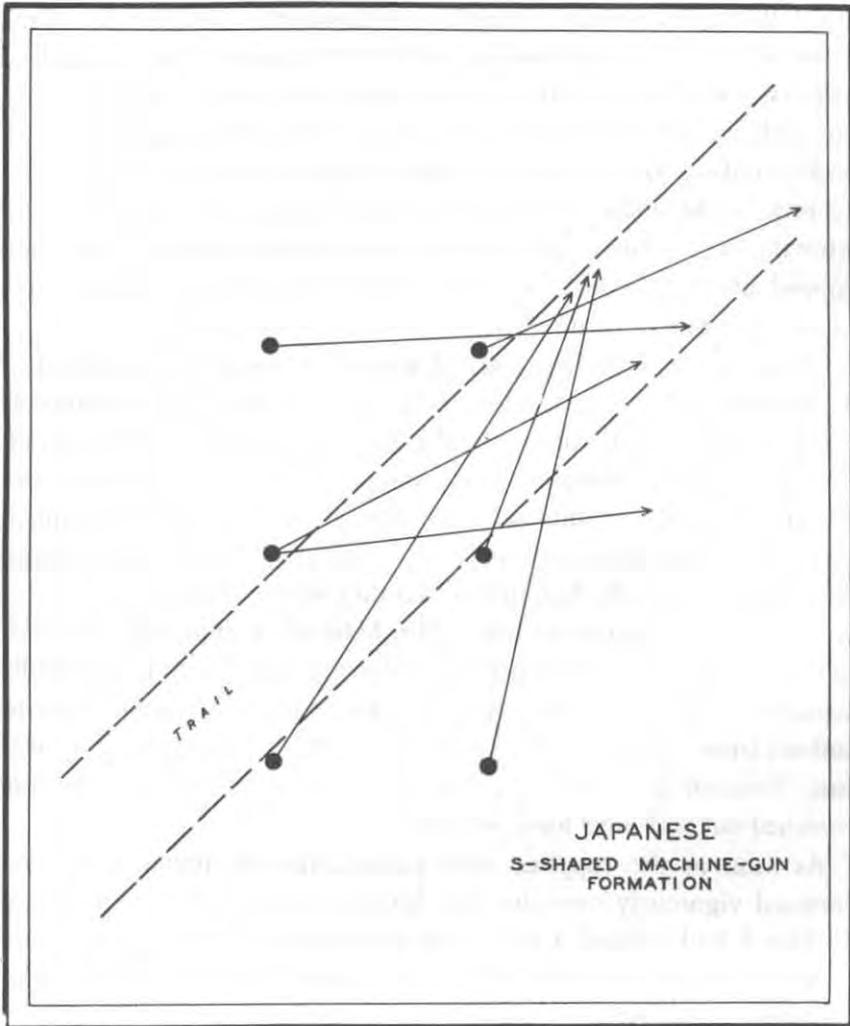
A rifle platoon from the main column under Lt. John P. McElmurry also rushed forward to help Lieutenant Wilson, and the three platoons drove the Japanese across the nearby Numpyek River. Following them closely, Lieutenant McElmurry's riflemen seized commanding ground on the far side of the river, held this bridgehead against an enemy attack, and covered the crossing of the main Marauder force.

This engagement had disclosed the forward movement of the Marauders. On the following day, 15 March, they had to fight eight separate skirmishes with small parties during the first 1½ miles' advance. Lieutenant Evans' platoon, leading the battalion column, bore the brunt of the enemy assaults. In the next half mile the Marauders met a larger group of Japanese, apparently the same one that Lieutenant Wilson had encountered the night before. This group was armed with both light and heavy machine guns; for the first time the Marauders encountered use of the enemy's S-shaped machine-gun formation to block a trail (Sketch No. 1, page 51). The Japanese pinned down the lead squad with machine-gun fire and then threw mortar shells behind the squad so fast that it could not be easily supported by the rest of the platoon. Every time the Marauders got mortars into action against the Japanese machine guns and made an enveloping movement through the thick growth beside the trail, the enemy displaced 100 to 150 yards down the trail and repeated his delaying tactics. Maneuver in this section of the jungle was hampered by growth so dense that, once off the trail, men could easily get lost within 10 feet of each other.

Though the Marauders were unaware of the fact, they were receiving considerable assistance in their battle. A group of irregular Kachin guerrillas, led by Lt. James L. Tilly (Detachment 101, Office of Strategic Services)¹⁴ was ambushing and harassing the rear of the Japanese forces. The Kachin operations kept the enemy group "bouncing" from east to west to meet attacks and increased the enemy casualties. Unfortunately, Colonel Osborne had no information about the Kachin activities. In view of the determined resistance the

¹⁴ Detachment 101, Office of Strategic Services, was operating in Burma to recruit, equip, train, and lead Kachin guerrillas. General Stilwell reinforced General Merrill's command with these OSS-led native groups. They gathered military intelligence, furnished information about roads and trails, and worked ahead of and with the Marauders during much of their campaign.

SKETCH NO. 1



Marauder column was meeting, he could only foresee delays which would prevent his reaching the Kamaing Road on schedule and prevent coordination of his efforts with those of the other Marauder group. Therefore, he decided to cut a trail around the Japanese force.

Leaving Red Combat Team to keep the Japanese occupied, Colonel Osborne pulled White Combat Team back a short distance. It was late evening and little could be accomplished in the darkness. But at dawn on 16 March White Combat Team started chopping a path through the jungle toward Kumshan Ga. Red Combat Team kept in contact with the enemy until late that afternoon, then pulled back

and—together with the Chinese 113th Regiment which had caught up with the team during the day—followed the trail cut by White Combat Team. Every member of White Combat Team, including officers, took turns at the arduous task of hewing and chopping through the jungle. But it took 2 days of back-breaking labor with kukris and machetes to reach Kumshan Ga, a distance of only 4 miles. Clumps of bamboo were sometimes too large to be detoured, and growth was so densely interwoven that the stems could not fall when lopped off at ground level. They had to be cut again some 6 feet above the ground, turning the trail into a sort of tunnel.

When the 1st Battalion reached Kumshan Ga on the afternoon of 17 March supplies were needed. While the request for an air drop was going back to the Dinjan base, the Marauders picked the best available spot in the mountainous area and cleared it for a dropping field. However, in locating this field the transports had consumed so much time that their gasoline supply was dangerously low. The pilots, therefore, advised the Marauders that they would make the drop next morning and returned to base. The Marauders improved the field, and when the planes returned the following day the drop was made. Because of hills encircling the drop ground, the transports had to unload from a high altitude and much of the free-dropped grain was lost. Some of the parachutes floated over a nearby hill, but all were searched out and their loads secured.

As soon as the supplies were packed, the 1st Battalion pushed forward vigorously over the trail leading south and by nightfall of 18 March had reached a point 2 miles northwest of Jaiwa Ga. Here it made contact with the 50 Kachins under Lieutenant Tilly, who provided guides for the rest of the march to Shaduzup.

The next point of enemy resistance was reached on 20 March, when the battalion entered Nprawa. As the lead scouts were plodding along the trail their Kachin guides suddenly became talkative. Having no interpreter handy, the Marauders nonchalantly ascribed the natives' "jabbering" to a desire for food or cigarettes and provided the Kachins with both. Actually, the Kachins had announced that a Nambu (Japanese machine gun) position lay directly ahead, and they assumed that the food and cigarettes were rewards for this information. The machine gun soon disclosed itself, killing one Marauder and wounding two. Luckily, the Japanese were impetuous in opening fire on the



KACHIN GUIDES lead the Marauders cross-country along uncharted footpaths.

scouts; had they waited, more men would have been caught in their field of fire. In an hour the 1st Battalion's mortar fire forced the enemy to withdraw. This incident taught the Marauders a lesson; thereafter, native remarks were always interpreted.

On 21 March the 1st Battalion stopped to pick up a 5-day supply drop in a rice paddy near Htingnankawng, and Red Combat Team, in the lead, reached Hpauchye Ga. After clearing this village, only five miles east of the Kamaing Road, the battalion discovered that every trail was blocked or ambushed. The advance platoon of Red Combat Team, commanded by Lt. Harry B. Coburn, ran into an ambush and at first tried to push through or bypass the enemy positions. As the platoon was cutting a trail around a trail block, the scouts sighted a Japanese group lounging beside well-made fox holes. The Marauders crept forward cautiously and opened fire, killing seven Japanese. When Coburn's men took over the fox holes for a brief

rest, the enemy returned in greater force and attacked them. The fox holes were so well located that the Marauders were able to break up the attack quickly, inflicting additional casualties on the enemy. However, further reconnaissance revealed no trail open to the Kamaing Road. In order to preserve an element of surprise for the establishment of the block near Shaduzup, Colonel Osborne considered it highly important for the 1st Battalion to have as little contact with the enemy as possible. Therefore, he again decided to leave the well-guarded trails and to cut a path southward, cross country, from Hpauchye Ga toward the Chengun River.

During the next 2 days, 23 and 24 March, the going was strenuous and difficult. Time and again the men gained passage through the almost impenetrable growth only by slowly hacking out a path. Frequently they had to unload the animals and carry the supplies by hand up steep hillsides. Colonel Osborne was successful, however, in maintaining secrecy of movement, for during the hike of 5 miles cross country the Marauders met no Japanese.

Into Position

From Lieutenant Tilly, Colonel Osborne had learned that the enemy held Shaduzup in some strength (Map No. 11, page 48). Three hundred Japanese were estimated to be there and five to six hundred more in the vicinity of Jambu Bum to the north. In order to deceive the enemy and avoid being attacked by a combined enemy force, Colonel Osborne decided upon sending one platoon to make a feint toward Shaduzup from the northeast. The main battalion column was to proceed down the Chengun River to the Kamaing Road.

Following Colonel Osborne's decision, Lieutenant McElmurry led one rifle platoon along a trail running northwest to Hkahku Gahtawng. Just before entering this village the platoon surprised two enemy soldiers, evidently a reconnaissance party, carrying only maps and sketching equipment. Both of these men dropped as the Marauders fired, but a moment later one of them leaped to his feet and disappeared into the underbrush. McElmurry passed on through Hkahku Gahtawng. The village soon afterward became a mortar target for the Japanese, who continued to throw shells at it throughout the night. This feint to the north undoubtedly contributed to the

complete surprise achieved the next day by the 1st Battalion's arrival to the south of Shaduzup.

Colonel Osborne had decided to place his road block where the Mogaung River makes a U bend at its confluence with the Chengun River. At this location, approximately 4 miles south of Shaduzup, the river runs parallel to the road. On the night of 26 March the 1st Battalion bivouacked by the upper reaches of the Chengun River. Next day the Marauders, often wading downstream to avoid cutting trails, made their way south to within a mile of their objective.

The I and R Platoon of White Combat Team reported Japanese present, apparently in large numbers, some bathing in the Mogaung River and others grenading fish. There appeared to be an enemy camp between the Mogaung River and the Kamaing Road. Further scouting revealed that at least one Japanese company was installed in this camp and that there was another and larger camp a short distance to the south. The enemy had quantities of food and clothing stored in bashas or under canvas covers.

Colonel Osborne was still confident that the Japanese were unaware of the Marauders' presence, for even the advance platoon had not been discovered. He therefore planned a surprise night attack, to begin early on 28 March. He selected three points for crossing the Mogaung River and organized the battalion into six columns for the attack on the northern Japanese camp. Three columns were to converge upon the camp. Three others, closely following the first three, were to be sent either to add impetus to the shock, wherever resistance might be met, or to fill any gap that might develop in the lines. The second three columns could also, if necessary, be used for flanking operations or to meet any supporting enemy force that might be rushed up from the southern Japanese camp.

Major Johnson's White Combat Team formed the three columns making the first attack. At 0300 the team started out in complete silence and cautiously waded the Mogaung River. Red Combat Team took position on the east bank to cover the south flank of the attacking force. The Chinese 113th Regiment was in reserve.

The Japanese were caught completely by surprise. Not one sentry was encountered as White Combat Team's three columns crept into position. Dawn broke. Small fires began to crackle in the unsuspecting Japanese camp as early risers started to prepare breakfast.

Suddenly the attack order was given by radio. With fixed bayonets the Marauders swept through the camp. Naked or half-dressed, the panic-stricken Japanese scattered in all directions. Those with weapons fired wild, ineffectual shots. Many of them were killed or wounded by bayonets, grenades, and tommy guns.

The platoon led by Lt. Meredith Caldwell, Jr., was the first to reach the Kamaing Road, and his men immediately dug a protective perimeter which constituted the road block. When the perimeter was finished, the men changed into clean underwear which they had found in a captured enemy truck and devoured the rice and fish that had been left cooking over the enemy's breakfast fires.

The Marauders expected a counterattack; it was not long in coming. By 0700 Japanese snipers were very active, and further digging in, although not discontinued, became difficult. By 0900 Japanese artillery opened up on Red Combat Team on the east bank of the river.

Preliminary reconnaissance parties had not discovered that the enemy had artillery. White Combat Team's perimeter was so close to the rise in ground behind which the enemy gun positions were located that for the time being the Marauders were masked and not a vulnerable target. By 1000, however, the Japanese managed to get another battery from farther north ranged in, and soon 77- and 150-mm shells came pouring down on the perimeter.

The stab by the 1st Battalion at the rear of the Japanese seriously diverted their attention from the Chinese 22d Division advancing down the road from Walawbum. After several concerted attacks, the Chinese had reached Jambu Bum, at the threshold of the Mogaung Valley, a few days before the Marauders established their road block below Shaduzup, 10 miles to the south. Enemy troops were hurriedly pulled back along the road to help cope with this new threat to their rear, thus permitting the Chinese to make more rapid progress against slackening Japanese resistance.

Caught between these Allied forces, the Japanese made determined efforts to extricate themselves. By midday White Combat Team's perimeter had undergone an attack from the north which was turned back with heavy losses to the enemy. At 1300 another attack, supported by artillery, developed from the west, and reinforcements were arriving in trucks from the south. But by this time the Marauders had an excellent final protective line which the Japanese were unable to

penetrate. All that afternoon the enemy attacked in varying strength, nearly always from a different quarter, and each time the Marauders repulsed them after inflicting heavy casualties.

Lieutenant McElmurry and Lt. Charles R. Scott crouched together in a fox hole during one of the attacks. McElmurry called Scott's attention to a Japanese officer who appeared on the road. But Scott had also seen the officer and shot him while McElmurry was drawing a bead. In the next half hour 12 Japanese were killed as they attempted to retrieve their officer's body.

The assaults tapered off in late afternoon, but all that night enemy artillery pounded both the road block and Red Combat Team's position across the river. Since the Marauders had no artillery, they used their mortars and threw grenades whenever they heard a suspicious sound along their front.

The 1st Battalion is Relieved

The Marauders had established themselves firmly. Following the plan of operations, the Chinese 113th Regiment moved in just before dawn of 29 March and took over both the road-block perimeter and the supporting positions to the east of the river (Map No. 11, page 48). When the Chinese opened up with their pack artillery, the enemy guns quieted down. By 1000 the 1st Battalion had withdrawn about a mile up the Chengun River to a Seagrave¹⁵ hospital unit which had been set up during the last 2 days. The weary Marauders rested, listening to opposing Chinese and Japanese artillery fire from just over the hill. The action on the Kamaing Road had cost the 1st Battalion 8 men killed and 35 wounded.

By 29 March the Japanese had lost more than 300 men south of Shaduzup, and during the day they withdrew toward Kamaing. One battalion of the Chinese 113th Regiment followed the retreating enemy as far as Laban, approximately a mile to the south. At 1500 patrols from this Chinese battalion met patrols from the Chinese 22d Division pushing down through the Hukawng-Mogaung corridor and the Kamaing Road was declared open to Laban.

General Merrill's instructions to Colonel Osborne had been to

¹⁵ Col. Gordon S. Seagrave, an American medical missionary in Burma for 20 years, had furnished mobile hospital units to General Stilwell's Chinese armies in 1942. He had continued to serve them at the Ramgarh Training Center after their withdrawal from Burma and had followed the Chinese 22d and 38th Divisions back into Burma during the 1943-1944 offensive.

rejoin the rest of the 5307th Composite Unit, which would probably be near Hsamshingyang, as soon as practicable after accomplishing his mission. This order was confirmed when the 1st Battalion received a message to proceed to Janpan by easy stages.

The shortest route for the 1st Battalion from Shaduzup to Janpan was directly across the western chain of hills in the Kumon Range to the Tanai Valley. Movement was started on 30 March. The trail became increasingly rugged as the men backtracked along the Chengun River and headed for the ridges rising east of the corridor to 2,000, 3,000, and almost 4,000 feet. In a day's march of 10 hours they sometimes covered little more than a mile.

A SEAGRAVE HOSPITAL UNIT treats a wounded soldier. A native nurse gives the patient ether by the drop method.



From 1 to 3 April the 1st Battalion was out of contact with headquarters. A sack of grain, falling from a supply plane during an air drop, had crashed into the unit's only long-range radio, putting it out of operation. On the 3d, Colonel Osborne was unwilling to wait any longer to hear from General Merrill and returned to Shaduzup, where the Chinese headquarters had a radio net with the Marauder headquarters. While Colonel Osborne was gone, the battalion's radio operator succeeded in repairing his machine, and simultaneously the Chinese and battalion radios picked up an urgent message from the General directing that the 1st Battalion make all haste to Hsamshingyang.

On the Move to Inkangahtawng

While the 1st Battalion was operating with great success in the Shaduzup area, the 2d and 3d Battalions were carrying out their part of the two-column mission (Map No. 12, page 60). According to plan they were to block the Kamaing Road near Inkangahtawng in the Mogaung Valley. This would cut the enemy's supply artery almost halfway between the Japanese 18th Division's front lines north of the Hukawng-Mogaung corridor and the division's base at Kamaing. Timed to coincide with the strike at Shaduzup, 10 miles to the north, the Inkangahtawng block would increase the threat to the enemy's rear and add to the difficulties of his retirement.

At 0700 on 12 March, the 2d Battalion pulled out of Shikau Ga and Wesu Ga and hit the trail for Pabum. At 0800 the command group followed, and the 3d Battalion, bringing up the rear of the column, got under way at 1000. The Chinese regiment scheduled to accompany this column was not finally available to follow the Marauder battalions.

During the first 3 days, 12-14 March, the Marauders stopped their advance only long enough to pick up an air drop. At Pabum they headed south along the Tanai River, and on 15 March they reached Naubum where their route was approaching the hills. In this village the column was met by Capt. Vincent L. Curl, another member of Detachment 101, with a force of Kachin guerrillas. This group of approximately 300 natives, armed with everything from flintlocks to captured Japanese weapons, joined the Marauders.