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Title: Summary of Organization and Training of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional)

Author: COL Francis G. Brink

Abstract: Summary of organization and training of 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), U.S. long range penetration unit for Burma operations. Extracts only.

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D 787.2 Summary of Org & Tng of 5307th
.B 77 Composite Unit (prov)

Summary of Orgn & Tng 5307th
Composite Unit (Prov) (U S
Long Range Penetration Unit)
for Burma Opns by Col Francis
G. Brink

CBI

4 April 44

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Extract:

72-III
Date 11/3/47 #3
Classification ~~canceled~~ or changed to
By authority of Letter Hq AGF, 330.01/411 (DG) CNGBI
dated * 23 Dec 46, Subject * "Downgrading", and Comdt TIS

3. DIRECTIVES: H.S. Willson Col. Inf. Librarian.

Administration and Supply:

2. For all matters pertaining to administration and supply, you will deal directly with the General Staff Sections of Rear Echelon Headquarters, U. S. A. F. -CBI, which will be responsible for necessary coordination of arrangements with Special Staff Sections and with headquarters of lower echelons.

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14. Staff:

In the absence of a designated commanding officer, Colonel Brink designated Lt Col C. H. Hunter, Infantry, as CO and a headquarters staff was built up from available officers.

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17. RECOMMENDATIONS:

a. The base camp should be in a training area easily accessible to U S Supply and hospitalization agencies and staff officers. The training areas must be such that troops can be subjected to active, continuous rigorous field conditions permitting movement of at least one hundred miles.

b. Should a higher headquarters be needed to exercise command over battalions, the personnel for such a headquarters should accompany the battalions from the United States.

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e. Immediate U. S. communication with headquarters Rear Echelon, USAF-CBI and an organized system of frequent staff visits should be set up on arrival to assure quick orientation of a unit in the theater.

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f. A combat team, regardless of size, should contain all the essential elements of a long range jungle combat team consisting of a headquarters, a highly organized intelligence and reconnaissance unit, a pioneer and demolition unit, a heavy weapons unit, and a standard rifle unit, e.g., rifle company, rifle platoon, or squad.

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NOTES FOR STAFF

1. ADMINISTRATION:

The major problems in this project consist of:

Movement of troops and supplies to the base camp from which long range training operations will be conducted.

The organization of battalions as combat units by distribution of battle-hardened troops throughout.

The movement and storage of supplies of all types into the area from which they will be transported by air.

The preparation of the base camp and reconnaissance of training areas.

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4. TRAINING:

Upon arrival of troops at the debarkation point, certain of their key command, training and supply personnel should be flown to the base camp to make preparations for the arrival and training of the troops. They should be thoroughly orientated as to missions, training programs and the operation of the camp. Such personnel should be as follows:

Troop commander, 3 battalion commanders or executives, 12 company commanders or second in command, 1 assistant supply and mess sergeant per co., 1 reconnaissance sergeant or officer per co., 1 armorer per co., 1 cooks per co., 1 selected private per company

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5. SUPPLY AND EVACUATION.

The base camp will be prepared along the following lines:

Separate battalion areas.

A group headquarters ~~is to be located~~

A pack camp for pack units and animals.

The use of MAKUN FORT should be considered as a secure spot for headquarters, and storage point for maps, documents and other supplies requiring special protection.

Exit routes from the battalion areas to training areas to permit individual movement of battalions will be arranged. Such routes may be cut as a training measure. Similar paths should be prepared leading to bathing spots. A sketch showing the area of the base camp is attached.

Storage space must exist near the base camp area for supplies to be used during the training period.

At the air base, the remainder of equipment should be warehoused in the base area where they are easily accessible for packaging and air-dropping.

The movement of supplies between the base camp area and the air base area and the evacuation of wounded from the camp base area to the base hospital will be the responsibility of the SOS. This project possesses no motor transportation except that in use for training purposes.

It is understood that the air corps will have the responsibility for the packaging and delivery of all air supplies.

Water purification and malaria control measures must be in effect before the arrival of the troops.

The following additional items of special equipment should be requested immediately to improve the combat efficiency of the units:

- (1) Bipod assembly to convert light machine guns now authorized by T/E to a model M1919A6.
- (2) A colored smoke grenade or shell to be fired at ranges from 300 to 600 yards for designation of targets to our supporting aircraft. Inquiry to WD 10/13/43.
- (3) 1 additional 2" mortar per platoon.
- (4) 20 Native boats.

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Summary of Org & Tng of
5307th Composite Unit (Prov)
(U.S. Long Range Penetration
Unit for Burma Operations)
by Col Francis G. Brink, Comdg.

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27 Oct 43 - 1 Feb 44

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TAB A

NOTES FOR STAFF

(By Colonel Francis B. Brink)

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7. AIR
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Chart on organization of Air Supply Base and Service Company

Chart on organization of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment

Chart - Original Proposed Organization for 5307 Composite Regiment Hq. Detachment (Prev.)

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TAB G Conclusions reached with regard to employment of IRP units.

1.
 - a. An IRP force must always operate in tactical support of a specific operation to further the movement of a specific force.
 - b. A defended Base of Operations from which an IRP unit operates must be established in which task forces are made up and moved out on definite missions.
 - c. IRP units must be given a specific mission(s) after the performance of which it returns to a friendly base.
 - d. The size and composition of IRP forces should be adapted to each specific mission and set up and trained in the base area some time before moving out to attack.
 - e. U.S. combat methods are best for U.S. troops and others should not be imitated.
 - f. There must be extremely close coordination and understanding between IRP forces and air units supplying and supporting the ground operations; otherwise the operation will fail or produce mediocre results.
 - g. The U.S. IRP unit is not organized or equipped for heavy attacks or for long defense of positions.
 - h. The movement of IRP forces on long distant strategic missions which affect the advances of main forces is only justified if their objectives cannot be struck by the air arm, or by quick raids of air-borne glider troops which return preferably by glider after the operation.

4 inclosures - Diagrams on attacking enemy forces.

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TAB H Letter of Commendation to Col Francis G. Brink, from Brig.
Gen. Frank D. Merrill, Comdg.

Pamphlet: UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES
CHINA-BURMA-INDIA

"FAR EASTERN WARFARE
COMBAT METHODS"

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1. It is desirable that troops fighting in Burma be given long range penetration training for use in operations there. Combat in Burma extends over wide areas and requires frequent detachment of troops from the main body during which time they must operate independently on deep or long range penetration missions (or encircling movements).

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NOTES FOR STAFF

1. Major problems in this project consist of:

The beginning of unit training in movement, air-dropping and signal communication immediately upon arrival of troops in the base camp. To this end, the area itself must be prepared ahead of time and the combat personnel not required to complete the domestic arrangements.

The assembly of training staffs at least 2 weeks prior to the arrival of troops.

Advance movement of certain troop key personnel from the debarkation point by air to the base camp to permit their orientation prior to the arrival of troops.

The 2 1/2 months training time (in contrast with the 6 months desirable) requires that training be restricted to activities of major importance and that field training commence immediately upon arrival of troops at the base camp.

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Summary of Orgn & Tng 5307th
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3. Pursuant to the provisions of paragraphs 1 and 2 above,
you will:

b. Conduct the training of this organization at such place
and in such manner as may be directed by SEAC.

d. Maintain records on the progress of training and on
tactical instruction including use of and experience with special
equipment.

10. TRAINING:

The basic plan for the training of this unit was established
along the following lines:

(a) Battalions were trained primarily to operate as independent
or semi-independent long range penetration units; also, with the possibil-
ity of operating under a centralized control of a higher group (regimental)
headquarters.

(b) Training was to be decentralized to battalion commanders
who were to conduct and train in certain subjects of long range penetration
and basic tactic and technique methods as specified in a ten-weeks training
program issued by the officer in charge of training. (See Appendix 'C').

Battalions prepared their weekly schedules based upon the basic
program and included the subjects in which they found their sub-units de-
ficient. The basic weekly training program was adjusted to meet the
supply situation since training in subjects were dependent upon the arrival
of supplies, for example, river crossing equipment, shortages in personnel,
animals. Certain basic requirements were to be met in the training of all
units, similar sub-units of the battalion and supply units. (See appendix
'B').

Long range penetration SOP's based on combat experience were
practiced to include river crossings, bivouac defense, roads halts, ambushes,
anti-ambush measures, dispersal with a later rendezvous to execute a mission
and air supply droppings. Each individual was trained in their procedure.

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The pamphlet "Far Eastern Warfare" (attached) was used as a special training document since it dealt primarily with tactics appropriate for this unit.

Training was conducted along absolutely realistic line, subjecting personnel, animals, and equipment to severe field tests in order to weed out the unfit and select the most practicable organization and equipment for long range penetration operations.

The main training problems briefly were:

- (a) Adjustment of schedule to the late arrival of certain training supplies and animals.
- (b) Organization of battalions and regimental headquarters from casual officers and men during the short training period of 10 weeks and building them into strong compact, fighting units.
- (c) High sick rate from recurrent malaria cases in troops from South and Southwest Pacific.
- (d) Administrative demands on the small headquarters training staff.
- (e) Lack of an organized headquarters and a training staff of experienced officers ready to function upon arrival of troops.
- (f) Need for maintaining morale of troops particularly those drawn from active theaters.

11. SPECIAL ORGANIZATION AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

Special requirements for the operation of this long range penetration unit called for organization and specialized training of detachments, in a very short period, not provided in any US WD Table of Organization. These were:

- 1. Group (Regimental) Headquarters staff, complete.
- 2. Packing and Rigging Unit for packing and rigging supplies and parachutes for air drops, and actually dropping.
- 3. Flame Thrower Detachments.
- 4. Rocket Launcher Detachments.
- 5. Air base Warehousing, Personnel and Transportation Detachments.
- 6. Pack Detachments.
- 7. Six Air Liaison Units with combat teams.

8. Communication Units.
9. Pioneer and Demolition Platoons.
10. Reconnaissance Platoons.
12. The following is a summary of field activities up to 15 January 1944:

Night marches by combat teams	37
Day marches by combat teams	55
Night bivouacs by combat teams	62
Day bivouacs by combat teams	46
Attacks by combat teams	24
Ambush by combat teams	15
Battalion attacks	6
River crossings	20
Dispersal from bivouac by combat teams	22
Air dropping to combat teams	6
Dispersal from ambush by combat teams	13
Distance traveled by marching by each battalion approximately -	300 Miles

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14. Since the mission of the unit was to be one of long range penetration and its tactical direction under the British Headquarters Special Forces, the British ordered organization and training for combat to be prepared generally along their lines. This was treated, however, by the officer in charge of training as only one type of several combat operations and tactical training was conducted along American lines. The fact that the battalions might participate in operations other than long range penetration was anticipated, and training along the lines of a standard battalion was to be conducted after long range penetration training which, of course, was given first priority in view of the directed mission.

The organization for combat of the battalion as directed by SEAC was tested in the first month of training, and is shown in Appendix 'E'. This proved satisfactory in maneuvers against the British and has the full confidence of the combat teams' commanders. The opinion of one is typical:

"The Organization of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) allows greater flexibility than any organization I have seen. It provides officers and men who are mentally trained to fight in any sized group or combination of groups. It is routine for a platoon leader to expect to handle in action ~~MG~~ mortars, rocket launchers and other weapons or combination of weapons, and the men are trained so that they expect to be able to fight in any sized group with any combination of weapons. The training is such that platoon leaders and even NCOs who are squad leaders, can and do handle and coordinate these weapons with riflemen.

"In my opinion this results in such flexibility that a unit so organized and so trained can be more successful in any type of operations

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than any other unit of similar size trained along routine lines.

"Officers are trained to coordinate weapons of all kinds and platoon leaders are, therefore, much more capable of taking over the tactical handling of a company if required. Greater initiative is developed in officers, NCO's and men, and they are thus able to operate in small groups effectively."

The only modification of this organization at the end of the month was to reduce the size of the Battalion Headquarters to give it greater mobility and to detach the 60mm mortar section from the I & R Platoon -- both in the interests of mobility.

15. TEST OF ORGANIZATION, TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT:

The unit engaged in a 10-day exercise with the British troops, operating against a battle-experienced brigade. Although the headquarters and battalions were not fully equipped or trained, the maneuver proved extremely valuable not only as a training measure, but as a test of the organization, and equipment then available. The success of the unit against the British unit greatly increased the morale particularly since this was General Wingate's original 77th Brigade which entered Burma in 1943. As a result of recommendations called for from the regimental staff and all commanders, final decisions were made on the organization and equipment as given in Appendix 'F'.

16. The morale of this unit is high and based primarily on the confidence of each officer and man in his own knowledge of his own ability to fight and confidence in the ability of other units than his own. Their possession of the most modern weapons and equipment was an additional factor. The arrival of a commander in January served to raise the morale of the unit still higher. Brigadier General Merrill relieved Lt Col Hunter of command of the unit shortly before the unit moved to Burma, Lt Col Hunter becoming executive officer. To date the organization has been operating successfully in conjunction with the Chinese in Northern Burma.

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17. RECOMMENDATIONS:

g. It is desirable that such units receive preliminary long range penetration training in the United States before embarkation. Such training is absolutely essential if the unit is to maintain itself as a fighting team for several months of independent or semi-independent operation. The unit should be capable of quickly adopting various formations for combat to insure flexibility to meet various missions. These should be capable of forming two and three smaller combat teams with appropriate elements of each and capable of reassembling quickly in a normal formation. Combat teams should be organized as to permit the easy formation of smaller combat teams.

h. A minimum of fifteen weeks should be available for complete LRP training of a unit already organized for such a mission; six months is better.

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3. DIRECTIVES:

3. Pursuant to the provisions of paragraphs 1 and 2 above,
you will:

f. Render to this Headquarters such other reports as
are required for the administration of U. S. Forces.

g. Render weekly progress reports to D/COS SEAC and
to Rear Echelon Headquarters, USAF -CBI, pertaining to status of
training.

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Summary of Orgn & Tng 5307th
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NOTES FOR STAFF (1 Oct 43)

4. TRAINING:

A 10 weeks training schedule is attached which lists the training subjects based on such information which is available on the present state of training of the troops. This schedule will be modified after consultation with troop commanders if their units have received considerable training on any particular subject or lack training in any one not listed:

Jungle, mountains, padi, open country, rivers, swamps and small streams are available immediately and adjacent to the base camp. The jungle is extremely dense in spots and permits training in trail cutting, stream and swamp crossings, and action of patrols and ambushes.

Certain temporary combat ranges are necessary for quick firing, rocket launcher, and grenade training.

Small ground maps are desirable for the use of battalion and company commanders to make quick checks on the knowledge of their junior officers and non-commissioned officers on minor tactics

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Summary of Orgn & Tng 5307th
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72-II

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3. DIRECTIVES:

3. Pursuant to the provisions of paragraphs 1 and 2 above,
you will;

c. Allocate and assign equipment of the organization
in accordance with T/E of the individual units and require-
ments of tactical employment. Changes or additions to T/E
will be directed by SEAC.

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17. RECOMMENDATIONS:

d. There should be a stocking of individual and organization
equipment in the Theater prior to the arrival of the units.

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Summary of Orgn & Tng 5307th
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NOTES FOR STAFF (1 Oct 43)

The following motor equipment is desirable for use by
training personnel during the training period:

3 C & R Cars.

9 Jeeps

2 1-1/2 Ton Trucks

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6. SIGNAL.

A special signal officer acquainted with both the operation of air and ground communications radios should be a member of the training staff. His principal duties will be to check over the operation of all radio nets both between air and ground and ground-to-ground communications. He should assist in the training of air liaison signal personnel which accompany columns and should advise on the simplification of radio transmission and use of all code or cipher messages.

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1 -IV - E
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NOTES FOR STAFF (1 Oct 43)

7. AIR.

Air liaison groups are to organized as follows:

1 air officer, either pilot or navigator.

1 non-commissioned officer.

Sufficient radio operators to operate a set.

3 enlisted men as mile leaders and general assistants.

Initially, by November 1st, 4 such teams should be organized with the eventual organization of 9 teams to operate with columns and one group at the air base. These 10 teams should be ready by the time the troops arrive.

Groups with the columns must be capable of transmitting column supply requirements, requests for air support, marking the dropping areas and guidance of aircraft by air ground voice communications to dropping areas and to air targets. To this end, they must be highly proficient in the operation of all types of panels, smoke signals and radios.

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72-III
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1-IV-C

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NOTES FOR STAFF (1 Oct 43)

5. SUPPLY AND EVACUATION.

Supply in this project consists solely of air and animal transportation with the possible use of porters or bullocks. Requiring men to act as pack animals must be avoided. Evacuation of wounded will be by air. During the training period, supplies are to be delivered to the base camp area by the SOS. As a training measure, air-dropping and recovery of supplies should commence within the first week. All signal communication must be tested early. Upon the arrival of animals, pack units may be sent (again as a training measure) to the SOS warehouses with recovery units. The responsibility for supply to the base camp, however, must always rest with the SOS and the movement of supplies to the base camp by pack units will be only for training purposes.

Pack and recovery units for columns should be organized in the first week. Development of standard loads for air delivery must be tested. Code or cipher requests for movement of supplies and evacuation of wounded must be simplified and agreed upon. The use of a standard drop package containing a specified assortment of supplies in the package which can be called for is desirable to simplify requests from troops.

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