



NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

BEST PRACTICES IN IRREGULAR WARFARE COMBINED OPERATIONS

by

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December 2023

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC, 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE December 2023	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Best Practices in Irregular Warfare Combined Operations			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Daniel L. Ciampini				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE A	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) What lessons can be learned from combined Irregular Warfare activities to inform United States Special Operations Forces (SOF) operating in today's competition continuum? To counter adversaries competing with the United States, small SOF units deploy to over 70 countries yearly seeking to enhance ally and partner relationships, to bolster deterrence, and create opportunities. The United States Army's 1st Special Forces Command dubs this the "indigenous approach," which stresses that interoperability with local partners is the key to forming and operating as an Irregular Warfare force. This thesis employed the independent variables of Information, Support, and Talent to examine two cases involving small teams that deploy and operate with local forces. Both cases were graded using a qualitative ordinal scale to measure the degree the three independent variables played in generating interoperability between the two elements. This research found that selecting flexible personnel prior to deployment of the team, working with a willing local partner force, and leveraging external logistical support networks improved the interoperability of the small team and its local counterparts. This thesis recommends that continued study of combined Irregular Warfare missions will arm current SOF with lessons that can be applied to today's competition continuum.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS United States Army Special Forces (USSF), Detachment 101 (Det 101), combined operations, partner force, Burma, Che Guevara, Bolivia, Irregular Warfare (IW), competition continuum, Special Operations Forces (SOF), United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), interoperability, talent			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 103	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU	

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39-18

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BEST PRACTICES IN IRREGULAR WARFARE COMBINED OPERATIONS

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DEFENSE ANALYSIS
(IRREGULAR WARFARE)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

What lessons can be learned from combined Irregular Warfare activities to inform United States Special Operations Forces (SOF) operating in today's competition continuum? To counter adversaries competing with the United States, small SOF units deploy to over 70 countries yearly seeking to enhance ally and partner relationships, to bolster deterrence, and create opportunities. The United States Army's 1st Special Forces Command dubs this the "indigenous approach," which stresses that interoperability with local partners is the key to forming and operating as an Irregular Warfare force. This thesis employed the independent variables of Information, Support, and Talent to examine two cases involving small teams that deploy and operate with local forces. Both cases were graded using a qualitative ordinal scale to measure the degree the three independent variables played in generating interoperability between the two elements. This research found that selecting flexible personnel prior to deployment of the team, working with a willing local partner force, and leveraging external logistical support networks improved the interoperability of the small team and its local counterparts. This thesis recommends that continued study of combined Irregular Warfare missions will arm current SOF with lessons that can be applied to today's competition continuum.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

IW	Irregular Warfare
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
MTT	Mobile Training Team
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
SAF	Special Action Force
SOE	Special Operations Executive
SOF	Special Operations Forces
USSF	United States Army Special Forces
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research Question. What lessons can be learned from combined Irregular Warfare (IW) activities to inform United States Special Operations Forces (SOF) operating in today's competition continuum?

Purpose. Built upon the first-hand combat experience of a United States Army Special Forces Warrant Officer, this research identified best practices during combined operations during two opposing segments of the competition continuum: Unconventional Warfare (UW) and support to Counterinsurgency (COIN).

Approach. To identify best practices of combined operations during IW campaigns, this research identified and analyzed three factors that could be valuable to small, deployed teams conducting combined operations. The study marshalled evidence for the analytical factors of Information, Support and Talent to conduct a structured comparison of Detachment 101's campaign in World War II Burma (UW) and the 8th Special Forces Group's famed Mobile Training Team mission to Bolivia in 1967 (COIN).

To measure the degree the three independent variables played in generating interoperability between the two elements of the combined force, the mission outcomes of both cases were evaluated using a qualitative ordinal scale of Survive, Operate, or Thrive.

Findings.

External logistical support networks are necessary to support combined IW operations. In both cases, external support aided in the development of the combined force and its subsequent interoperability.

Having a willing partner is important. In both cases, the local partner force wanted to work with the small, deployed team to achieve shared goals.

Local information sources are irreplaceable. In both cases, indigenous information networks improved the protection of the combined force and the ability of the force to achieve a desired campaign outcome.

Selecting the right talent for small, deployable teams is a valuable early investment. Both teams had a bespoke talent selection process prior to the start of the mission. Of note, team member adaptability in an austere environment during the mission was the most valuable trait.

Distance breeds decline. Periods when the deployed units were separated by great distances from their headquarters, support and in-turn interoperability suffered. Yet, if the combined unit was logistically close to their higher echelon, the better each unit was supported. Thus, interoperability with their local counterparts was also improved.

Recommendations.

For new ideas, analyze an old story. The study of historical cases provides an opportunity for the force to understand the past's best practices that can be applied across the competition continuum.

Know your craft. Continued study of combined Irregular Warfare missions is necessary for those organizations that train and conduct these operations. Such study will arm current SOF tactical elements with lessons for the current and future fights.

Apply historical lessons to the After-Action Reports process. Current combined operations could benefit from the use of analytical frameworks like the one used in this research to conceptually organize and evaluate lessons for the force.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to start by acknowledging my colleagues and past team members. Your experiences and ideas helped me identify where my efforts could be best utilized to serve the Special Force Regiment. Without your insight, focus, and determination, I would not have been able to hone this thesis. I would also like to thank the faculty of the Defense Analysis Department who have guided me in understanding the merit of historical study in the competition continuum. Specifically, I want to thank Colonel (R) Ian Rice and Dr. Kalev Sepp, who fanned the flames of my Irregular Warfare fascination and led me toward these interesting cases. Additionally, I remain indebted to Dr. Siamak Naficy and Dr. Bradley Strawser, who provided new perspectives in the study of the human domain and ethical application of my profession. Most importantly, I want to thank my wife and three kiddos for their patience and confidence during the long hours I spent researching and drafting this thesis. –Strength and Honor

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I. INTRODUCTION

In July 2010, General David Petraeus implemented the Village Stability Operation (VSO) approach into operations.¹ This initiative was based on the 2009 idea of Brigadier General (BG) Edward Reeder, the then United States Combined Forces Special Operations Component Command-Afghanistan Commander. The concept adopted a similar approach to a partnered unit between U.S. Army Special Forces and Vietnamese Indigenous Forces, the Civil Irregular Defense Group (CIDG), created to secure areas outside the control of the South Vietnamese Government during the Vietnam War.² BG Reeder's idea was in line with recent guidance from General Stanley McChrystal, the United States Forces – Afghanistan and International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan Commander who assessed his forces needed to “interact more closely with the population and focus on operations that bring stability.”³

In 2012, my United States Army Special Forces (USSF) team deployed to Afghanistan to conduct VSO in Kunduz Province, Afghanistan. Our 12-man USSF team trained over 400 Afghanistan military and police forces while we lived and operated in a combined base with our Afghanistan National Army Special Forces partners. At the time and little to my knowledge, our VSO program, a descendant of the Vietnam War era CIDG program, strived to build a legitimate connection between rural villages, their local security apparatus, and the Afghanistan central government.⁴ While the VSO program, “morphed from a targeted program to an industrial-scale enterprise, with deleterious effects,” my USSF team achieved tactical through strategic successes conducting the VSO approach

¹ William Knarr and Mark Nutsch, “Village Stability Operations and the Evolution of SOF Command and Control in Afghanistan: Implications for the Future of Irregular Warfare,” *JSOU Press*, 2020, 38.

² Appalachian State University, “Brig. Gen. Edward M. Reeder Jr.: A Commanding Presence in the U.S. Army Special Forces,” November 11, 2010, <https://appalachianmagazine.org/stories/id/reeder>.

³ David E. Johnson, “Ends, Ways, and Means—The Debate We Still Need on Afghanistan” (Santa Monica, California: RAND CORP, December 9, 2009), <https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2009/12/ends-ways-and-meansmdashthe-debate-we-still-need-on.html>.

⁴ Knarr and Nutsch, “Village Stability Operations and the Evolution of SOF Command and Control in Afghanistan: Implications for the Future of Irregular Warfare,” 23, 35.

thanks to the implementation of past best practices.⁵ This thesis attempts to capture more best practices to be learned when small forces, like my 12-man USSF team, deploy and work with a large local force to conduct combined operations.

Our VSO base was geographically situated close to the local village, as the proximity improved our security and the local Afghanistan Indigenous population security from insurgent attack, a lesson learned from 5th Special Forces Group working alongside the Montagnard's in Vietnam in 1965.⁶ We were logistically supported by aircraft that were geographically close enough to deliver assistance when needed, a lesson from Clausewitz who stated logistics directly affects, “the strategic lines of a campaign and a war.”⁷ During this tour, we also exchanged capabilities with our conventional U.S. forces and German battlespace allies, such as demolition recovery and destruction, threat reporting, and medical cross training, to ensure we had a sound allied relationships. Our USSF team primarily trained counterinsurgency tactics, techniques, and procedures to our Afghanistan military and police partners honed from over 10 years of the Global War on Terror (GWOT). The main effort of training was coupled with other techniques to support the overall operations of the camp and our ability to develop sound partnerships with our Afghan counterparts. This lesson came from years of experience from members of my USSF team conducting similar missions during both peace and wartime missions. Similar to the perfection of any craft, we adapted, modified, and re-applied old techniques to our modern warfare circumstances. Therefore, this thesis examines two case studies to determine if more lessons are to be learned in the past and innovated across today's competition continuum by answering: What efforts produced strategic effects when a small foreign force deploys and works with a larger local force? What were the best practices that resulted in the small foreign force's outcome as described along a performance continuum as merely 1). Surviving, 2). Establishing an ability to operate, or actually 3).

⁵ Sam Wilkins, “The Rise and Fall of Village Stability Operations in Afghanistan: Lessons for Future Irregular Warfare Campaigns,” *Modern War Institute*, August 9, 2022, <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/the-rise-and-fall-of-village-stability-operations-in-afghanistan-lessons-for-future-irregular-warfare-campaigns/>.

⁶ Francis J. Kelly, *U.S. Army Special Forces, 1961-1971*, vol. 90 (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1973), 19.

⁷ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976), 131.

Thriving in the operational environment? Finally, what best practices are useful to apply to today's competition continuum?

Since World War II, the United States addressed adversaries that spanned the competition continuum. The competition continuum describes a world of enduring competition conducted through a mixture of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict.⁸ Whether direct approaches through armed conflict with another state or indirect approaches through proxies and surrogates, the U.S. military provided military assistance to both deter an adversary as well as support partners and allies against an adversary.⁹ This became an important factor during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, as both superpowers threatened nuclear weapons against each other, yet put significant efforts to destabilize the others' partners, allies, resources, and interests globally.

Following 20 years of countering terrorism and countering insurgencies, the landscape of the competition continuum includes more reliance on allies and partners similar to World War II and the Cold War.¹⁰ Today, competitors like Russia, China, and Iran engage in realpolitik to gain influence and grow their power with other nation states and non-nation states. Concurrently, select U.S. SOF are in over 70 countries, acting as warrior diplomats who challenge these competitors through partners and allies with military assistance efforts like Foreign Internal Defense and Security Force Assistance. These strategic efforts are being conducted by tactical SOF, who are selected and highly skilled personnel.¹¹ The U.S. Government is dependent on these personnel to provide strategic outcomes for military leaders and policy makers. Therefore, the situational changes that exist in the current competition continuum may necessitate research in

⁸ Daniel L. O'Donohue, "Competition Continuum: Joint Doctrine Note 1-19," June 3, 2019, 2, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/jdn_jg/jdn1_19.pdf.

⁹ O'Donohue, 2–3.

¹⁰ Lloyd J. Austin, "The 2022 National Defense Strategy of The United States of America" (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, October 2022), 1.

¹¹ Seth G. Jones, "The Role of Special Operations Forces in Great Power Competition," *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, February 8, 2023, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/role-special-operations-forces-great-power-competition>. The role of 10th Special Forces Group were critical in building the capacity of Ukrainian military forces before and after the Russian invasion.

successful past competition continuum to provide best practices for these strategic outcomes.

To remain adaptive to solutions for the future operating environments across the competition continuum, the U.S. military needs to review best practices from past cases that may illuminate innovative and effective ways to conduct combined operations with partners. Therefore, this thesis seeks to address this need by determining what lessons can be learned from combined Irregular Warfare activities to inform U.S. SOF operating in today's competition continuum.

A. PRIOR RESEARCH

The thesis derives from a current gap of qualitative comparative analysis where past military cases are not compared against a framework of analysis for a tactical SOF unit. Existing historical accounts depict and analyze a wide array of military missions, but few compare cases where small foreign forces work with large local forces to conduct combined operations to illuminate best practices for future use. “Special Operations Success Hinges on People, Partnerships” by Vergun illuminates SOF partnering value created from the past 20 years of the Global War on Terror (GWOT).¹² While his argument is accurate, this thesis reaches further back, as SOF will need to accomplish their IW missions with practices honed previously to the GWOT. Nance argues Special Forces are better at advising partner forces at the tactical level because of their cultural and language training rather than conventional force advisor efforts such as Military Training Teams and Advise and Assist Brigades.¹³ While this training helps Special Forces personnel interoperability, this thesis challenges this argument as I have watched non-selected military personnel advise partner forces without these skills. Another study which this

¹² David Vergun, “Special Operations Success Hinges on People, Partnerships,” U.S. Department of Defense, accessed November 28, 2023, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2835427/special-operations-success-hinges-on-people-partnerships/>
<https://www.defense.gov/News-Stories/Article/Article/2835427/special-operations-success-hinges-on-people-partnerships/>.

¹³ Bill Nance, “Getting Advising Right: The Army Needs a Fundamentally Different Approach to Building Partner Forces,” Modern War Institute, August 29, 2019, <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/getting-advising-right-army-needs-fundamentally-different-approach-building-partner-forces/>.

thesis derived both a similar name and an approach from is Sepp's, "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency" where he argued seven best practices as policy objectives directed by a country's political leadership at a strategic level.¹⁴ This thesis instead examines best practices from the tactical unit perspective to facilitate lessons that can be applied below the strategic level. In "Shared history, shared missions, maximized interoperability: Best practices for USSOF and the CIA," Snyder, Crowell, and Flores-Diaz examine past cases of the two organizations working together and argue there are compromising best practices such as Title 10 and Title 50 intersections to maximize interoperability.¹⁵ This thesis uses a similar qualitative ordinal assessment construct but instead compares and contrasts two separate case studies with dissimilar environments, situations, and timeframes. In "Advising the Command: Best Practices from the Special Operations Advisory Experience in Afghanistan," Helmus discusses seven best practices for the Special Operations Advisory Group based on in-depth interviews with Afghan Special Security Forces.¹⁶ While he argues compelling points toward enhancing the command and control capacity of Afghan Special Security Forces and promoting the long-term sustainability of these forces, the study focuses on a specific conflict. This thesis instead focuses on illuminating past best practices that have adaptability in today's competition continuum, regardless of a geographic area of operation.

In summation, while scholars have argued angles of analytical comparison between past cases of IW, SOF units, Special Forces, partnerships, and counterinsurgencies, none have analyzed and provided best practices for a small foreign force working with a large local force in a combined operation.

¹⁴ Kalev I Sepp, "Best Practices in Counterinsurgency," *Military Review* 85, no. 3 (May 2005): 8.

¹⁵ Andrew B. Crowell, Hugo E. Flores-Diaz, and Eric B. Snyder, "Shared History, Shared Missions, Maximized Interoperability: Best Practices for USSOF and the CIA" (Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2018), <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/61272>.

¹⁶ Todd C. Helmus, "Advising the Command: Best Practices from the Special Operations Advisory Experience in Afghanistan" (Santa Monica, California: RAND Corporation, August 10, 2015), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR949.html.

B. VALUE PROPOSITION

As the U.S. Army prepares for integrated deterrence and large-scale combat operations across the competition continuum, the U.S. Army 1st Special Forces Command (1st SFC) seeks to showcase their value to military leaders and policy makers. 1st SFC describes this value as the indigenous approach.¹⁷ To develop the indigenous approach, USSF needs to ensure its tactical deployable formations are trained in guerrilla warfare, possess a knowledge of foreign weaponry, and employ medical training to preserve life in austere conditions.¹⁸ Beyond these tangible skills as an initial requirement for USSF's deployable formations, there is more to developing a capability that can deploy and work alongside a partner force. Specifically, what are the best practices to conduct combined operations with a local partner? Developing an understanding of best practices derived from prior operations can help bridge the gap between schoolhouse training and the application of the training during operations. The study of best practices help blend these two steps and illustrates a progression of training, to thought, and finally on-the-ground action. Applying this approach will lead to a more wholistic and flexible approach to creating successful combined operations with allies and partners and, in the end, exemplify the value of USSF.

C. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study proceeds with four subsequent sections. First, the analytical approach describes the operational environments for each case, defines the independent variables of information, support, and talent, and the response variable of operational effectiveness. This approach also includes the logic for the selection of the variables, how the study fits into the Irregular Warfare context within the competition continuum, as well as case selection criteria. Two case studies follow in Chapters III and IV with examinations of Detachment 101 in Burma during WWII and the mission of a U.S. Army Special Forces

¹⁷ Daniel Lessard, "The Indigenous Approach," Maj. Gen Angle on the Command's Vision, accessed August 29, 2022, <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-indigenous-approach/id1534621849>.

¹⁸ Barnett S. Koven and Chris Mason, "Back to the Future: Getting Special Forces Ready for Great-Power Competition," War on the Rocks, May 4, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/05/back-to-the-future-getting-special-forces-ready-for-great-power-competition/>.

Mobile Training Team in Bolivia in 1967, respectively. Examining each case through the lens of the three independent variables helps illuminate best practices that led to successful combined operations during Irregular Warfare campaigns. The study concludes in Chapter five with a summary of the findings and policy recommendations.

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II. FRAMEWORK OF RESEARCH

A. THE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

This research employs the Allied Joint Publication, *Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations*, definition of an environment as, “the factors and conditions that must be understood to apply combat power, protect a force, or complete a mission successfully.”¹⁹ In 1942 Burma, Detachment (Det) 101 and the Kachin natives operated in a total war environment. Burma, in 1942, was a geographically diverse and porous non-industrialized country with Japanese forces occupying the central and southern areas. It is important to understand Japan did not control all of Burma, which allowed a gap in north Burma where Allied forces could partner with willing north Burma guerrilla forces, giving them time and space to regain control of central and south Burma.²⁰ The guerrillas or Kachin natives, naturally endowed with fighting skills, were previously pushed to the north Burmese hill lands due to a lack of training or equipment to combat the overwhelming Japanese mechanized infantry and armor.²¹ The circumstance in which the Kachins were placed was beneficial for Det 101, as Det 101 partnered with the guerrillas who could, “rely upon mobility, elusiveness, and surprise” to “reduce the combat effectiveness, industrial capacity, and morale of the enemy.”²²

Conversely, in 1967 Bolivia, the Special Forces Mobile Training Team (MTT) and 2nd Bolivian Rangers operated in a semi-permissive environment and played the counterinsurgency role of the conflict. Bolivia in 1967, was a recently stable, landlocked country when Che Guevara and his small group of revolutionaries occupied a jungle base in hope to leverage recent political unrest to create a popular front against the Bolivian

¹⁹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *AJP-3, Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations*, 1st ed., vol. Edition C (NATO Standardization Office, 2019), 159, https://www.coemed.org/files/stanags/01_AJP/AJP-3_EDC_V1_E_2490.pdf.

²⁰ William Raymond Peers and Dean Breilis, *Behind the Burma Road* (New York: Avon, 1963), 62.

²¹ Peers and Breilis, 62–63.

²² Department of the Army, *Organization and Conduct of Guerrilla Warfare* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1951), 8.

Government.²³ However, United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) tasked the MTT to organize and train, but not accompany a 650-man Bolivian Ranger Battalion (2nd Bolivian Ranger Battalion) to combat the insurgency.²⁴ Being on the counterinsurgency side of this competition, the circumstance in which the 2nd Ranger Battalion faced was distinct from Det 101 in that they had to reach a level of proficiency to combat the revolutionaries without direct MTT accompaniment.

B. THE INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The framework now employs three independent variables: Information, Support, and Talent.

Information: The definition of this variable mirrors the United States Army's "data that has been organized and processed in order to provide context for further analysis."²⁵ Since this research addresses both information and intelligence terms to describe data uncovered and used against the enemy, Information is the broader categorical term when referring to either information or intelligence. The United States Army definition of the term intelligence is, "the product resulting from the collection, processing, integration, evaluation, analysis, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign nations, hostile, or potentially hostile forces or elements, or areas of actual or potential operations."²⁶ Therefore, the term Information was chosen as the first variable to provide clarity of why both Det 101 and the MTT made their decisions. Simply, the better the information available the better the decisions.

²³ Robert W. Jones, "Beggar on a Throne of Gold: A Short History of Bolivia," *Veritas*, SF in Bolivia, 4, no. 4 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n4_bolivia_geography_page_1.html.

²⁴ Charles H. Briscoe, "The Bolivia Mission," *Veritas*, SF in Bolivia, 4, no. 4 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n4_bolivia_mission_page_1.html.

²⁵ Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Department of The Army, 2019), 99, https://rdl.train.army.mil/catalog-ws/view/100.ATSC/1FE33715-CFD1-4614-A489-B3E0480C3F80-1428688882108/adp6_0.pdf.

²⁶ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 2-0, Intelligence* (Washington, D.C.: Department of The Army, 2023), 17, https://rdl.train.army.mil/catalog-ws/view/100.ATSC/B6B654D9-7553-4B08-9DD6-0891F8F04039-1360339759307/fm2_0.pdf.

Support: The definition of this variable is derived from the U.S. Army term for mutual support which, "...render [s] support against an enemy, because of their assigned tasks, their position relative to each other and to the enemy, and their inherent capabilities."²⁷ This research adopts this definition as the variable Support as it is an element that provides ways and means to assist a group in direct contact with an opposing force. The Special Operations Forces fifth Truth from the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) states, "Most special operations require non-Special Operations Forces (SOF) support."²⁸ Since both case studies include a specially selected force in the form of Det 101 and the MTT, SOF fifth Truth applies to both, which is why it is included within the limits of the term Support. This research views the term Support as mutual, which can mean the smaller foreign force can give support to the larger foreign force and vice versa.

Talent: As the third independent variable, Talent is defined as the aptitude or skill of individuals and groups within the partnered force to use their natural and learned abilities to complete the mission. Though the United States Army does not define the term talent, it does use talent management, which it defines as the process that, "puts the right person in the right job."²⁹ Furthermore, the United States Army considers talent management important because, "matching talent to task is an important function of command."³⁰ Since the United States Army does not clearly identify the term Talent, this research defines it based on qualities exuded from intelligent military professionals with common sense that operate in the human domain. Since SOF personnel primarily operate in the human domain, this research also draws on USSOCOM's SOF second Truth, "Quality is better than quantity. A small number of people, carefully selected, well trained, and well led, are

²⁷ Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*, 87.

²⁸ United States Special Operations Command, "SOF Truths," accessed October 11, 2023, <https://www.socom.mil/about/sof-truths>.

²⁹ Department of the Army, *Field Manual 6-22, Developing Leaders* (Washington, D.C.: Department of The Army, 2022), 11, https://rdl.train.army.mil/catalog-ws/view/100.ATSC/3110F413-E915-47C1-85AA-DD4065C654C3-1274570636396/fm6_22.pdf.

³⁰ Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Publication 6-0, Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*, 57.

preferable to larger numbers of troops, some of whom may not be up to the task.”³¹ This emphasizes the role of Talent, as SOF are normally a small force that partners with a larger force, which is what this research focuses on.

C. IRREGULAR WARFARE AND THE FORCES WITHIN

This study uses the *IW annex* to the *2020 National Defense Strategy* as its definition of Irregular Warfare. IW is “...a struggle among state and non-state actors to influence populations and affect legitimacy.”³² However, during the period that each case study takes place, irregular actions were defined differently. From 1942 to 1945, Det 101 conducted guerrilla warfare while partnered with the highly capable Kachin natives.³³ In 1967, the MTT conducted a Foreign Internal Defense mission where they would teach principles of Counterinsurgency (COIN) with the 2nd Bolivian Ranger Battalion.³⁴ In 1950, the United States Army first described irregular actions in FM 31-20, which was the umbrella term encompassing guerrilla warfare as, “a war conducted by irregular forces in conjunction with regularly organized forces as a phase of normal war...against an invading power” or “against existing authority.”³⁵ In 1951, the term guerrilla warfare was loosely used to describe all forms of IW, showing a relationship between the two terms.³⁶

The terms of foreign force and local force are used to describe the American force and the Indigenous force, respectively. The crucial point to recall is that the foreign force is the smaller force, while the local force is the larger force. The term small is relative, however, this research bases the term small in United States Army *Doctrine Publication*

³¹ United States Special Operations Command, “SOF Truths.”

³² Department of Defense, “Summary of the Irregular Warfare Annex to the National Defense Strategy” (Department of Defense, 2020), 2, <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Oct/02/2002510472/-1/-1/0/Irregular-Warfare-Annex-to-the-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.PDF>.

³³ Troy J. Sacquety, “The Failures of Detachment 101 and Its Evolution into a Combined Arms Team,” *Veritas* 2, no. 3 (2006), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v2n3_det_101_page_1.html.

³⁴ Charles H. Briscoe, “Introduction: Special Forces in Bolivia,” *Veritas*, SF in Bolivia, 4, no. 4 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n4_intro_page_1.html.

³⁵ Commandant, The Infantry School, *Field Manual 31-20-1: Operations Against Guerrilla Forces* (Fort Benning, GA: The Infantry School, 1950), 2, <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP85-00671R000100070001-5.pdf>.

³⁶ Commandant, The Infantry School, 4.

3-0, which characterizes a small unit as a squad, section, or platoon, which ranges from nine to 45 individuals.³⁷ Both case studies begin with the foreign forces within this amount of personnel. The term large is also relative, but the United States military does not depict a large force, as it is relative to the mission or operation it is assigned. Therefore, this research labels the local force large based on their relative size to the foreign force. For example, in 1942, Det 101 began with 21 personnel.³⁸ At the height of the effort, Det 101 possessed 300 Americans while the Burmese fighters numbered 10,200 personnel.³⁹ The Americans were only 2.9% of the entire force.⁴⁰ Similarly, in 1967, the MTT possessed only 16 Americans while the 2nd Bolivian Ranger Battalion numbered 650 personnel, making the Americans 2.5% of the entire force.⁴¹

D. THE THREE QUALITATIVE ORDINAL VALUES

The response variable for this study is “Foreign Force Performance” with three possible qualitative ordinal values: Survive, Operate, or Thrive.

The first value, Survive, is limited to the small foreign force’s ability to arrive at an operational area and meet the large local force. Essentially, the foreign force is unable to accomplish any operational tasks such as developing a relationship with their local partner to be able to eventually conduct combat operations as a combined force,

Therefore, “Survive” is the ability of a group to enter an operational area, obtain food, shelter, water, and security while also avoiding or withstanding an enemy element. *United States Army Field Manual 3-50, Army Personnel Recovery Operations* connotes survival means, “the preservation of life” and an “immediate need and a long-term

³⁷ Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Department of The Army, 2019), 63, https://rdl.train.army.mil/catalog-ws/view/100.ATSC/EC4BDD4C-DE65-4D3A-9E7F-AD196953E77D-1428679097901/adp3_0.pdf.

³⁸ Peers and Brellis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 220.

³⁹ Peers and Brellis, 220.

⁴⁰ Peers and Brellis, 220.

⁴¹ Briscoe, “The Bolivia Mission.”

challenge.”⁴² For a foreign force with limited support to be able to develop a partnership with a local force, it must first be able to survive in the area that it plans to accomplish their mutual mission.

Survival is not a trivial matter. This outcome combines both the essentials to sustain human life (food, water, and shelter) with the need for security against the threat of violence. I emphasize both elements because once the foreign force arrives at the area of operations, that unit becomes reliant on its would-be local partners to provide both sustenance and physical security to simply survive during its time in the area. This reliance on another organization is at the core of the Survive outcome.

The goal of any military force is to Thrive while employed, which is rooted in their effort to make their tactical efforts have an impact larger than the extent of their mission itself. These three qualitatively evaluated outcomes are not doctrinal but derive from doctrinal principles and similar definitions. Each outcome represents the effect of a foreign force in space and time while partnered with a local force.

“Operate” is the second possible value to measure mission accomplishment. Once survival is no longer the immediate goal of the force, the foreign force and their local partners can begin to operate. This ability does not mean the force does not have to be concerned with the survival function, only that it possesses the ability to function to accomplish its intended goals. The Operate outcome is achieved when the two forces accomplish shared tactical achievements. This research defines tactical achievement when a force conducts a battle, engagement, and/or activity which achieves the tactical military objective assigned. This definition is close to the definition of a tactical level action in *Joint Publication (JP) 3-0*, which is, “activities at the tactical level to achieve military objectives assigned to tactical units or task forces.”⁴³

⁴² Department of the Army, *Army Field Manual 3-50, Army Personnel Recovery* (Washington, D.C.: Department of The Army2, 2014), 23, <https://rdl.train.army.mil/catalog-ws/view/100.ATSC/BE2C667E-E878-4C49-BACF-21C301CB7925-1409671256724/FM3-50.pdf>.

⁴³ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-0: Joint Operations*, JP 3-0 (Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2011), 14, <https://www.moore.army.mil/mssp/security%20topics/Potential%20Adversaries/content/pdf/JP%203-0.pdf>.

It is important to mention that *JP 3-0* clearly notes the operational level links the “tactical employment of forces to national and military strategic objectives.”⁴⁴ Therefore, the case studies in this research illustrate when the partnered force actions supersede the tactical level, reaching the operational or strategic level. This is important as the third outcome, Thrive, must occur above the tactical level.

Thrive is the final ordinal value which a partnered force can attain. Similar to the second value, Operate, Thrive must include the ability of the partnered force to attain the previous outcomes in an operational area. For this research, Thrive is defined as the ability for a partnered force to achieve an operational or strategic effect. In terms of achieving strategic effects, *Department of Defense Joint Publication 3-0* states the ability to reach a strategic level is to, “achieve theater, national, or multinational objectives.”⁴⁵ Thrive, in this research, is based on this level of success. The effect of a partnered force is not always intentional, but through the combined forces’ continuous efforts alongside conditions that may have been outside of their control, they achieved a strategic effect.

E. APPROACH

This study examines two historical cases to demonstrate how a small foreign force deploys and develops a partnership with a large local force to improve the foreign force’s ability to conduct combat operations. They are Det 101 in Burma during World War II and the 8th Special Forces Group MTT in Bolivia during the Cold War. This approach analyzes Information, Support and Talent within each case to determine the effectiveness of the foreign force to deploy and develop a partnership to support combat operations. The response variable, operational effectiveness, is what resulted in the outcome of Survive, Operate, or Thrive. Examining these cases and studying their situations provides a forum to present best practices for military members with context. Additionally, this thesis focuses on recently developed organizations like the Office of Strategic Services and the Special Forces Regiment. Each one established units who assist other countries to counter an internal or external threat. Fortunately, the Office of Strategic Services and Special Forces Regiment benefitted from both

⁴⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, 13.

⁴⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff, 13.

educated and experienced personnel. In both case studies, the opposing forces varied in size but the threat of their effect on the populace remained. Throughout this research, each case study encompasses how each organization learned, adapted, and modified their tactics and techniques based on successes and failures. The culmination of this research is meant to allow the same for the audience.

F. CASE STUDY SELECTION CRITERIA

This research selected two case studies based on three criteria. First, each case needed to have two forces: a small foreign force and a large local force. Second, the smaller foreign force needed to be an element from the United States. Third, the goal was to find two cases that today's United States Special Operations community were less familiar with.

For this study, the criterion of the size of the smaller foreign force and larger local force are relative to the specific case. If the foreign force is smaller than the local force, the case selection criterion is met. Specifically, the criterion of the smaller foreign force is important because the three independent variables of Information, Support, and Talent better illuminates lessons learned in each case.

While this study focuses mostly on the two forces that are combined, it does not discount the opposing forces. It uses the opposing forces as a catalyst for the foreign force and local force as a reason to partner in the first place. The concept of partnering to combat an opposing force is as important now as it was during these cases. Today, elements of current United States Special Operations community are organized to plan and conduct missions similar to those examined in this research.

Both cases involve United States forces as the foreign element. This choice was made for three reasons. First, the laws and policies that govern United States military forces were generally the same during both case studies. With a goal of gleaning lessons learned for the U.S. military, choosing special operations forces outside of the United States would have presented a dissimilar comparison. Second, since the object of this research is to identify best practices for today's U.S. military personnel that conduct combined military operations, I selected two cases with U.S. military elements as the foreign force. This is possible as both units, Det 101 and the 8th Special Forces Group MTT, according to the

U.S. Army Special Warfare Center and School, are legacy organizations of today's special operations forces designed to train, advise, and assist regular and irregular military organizations from other countries.⁴⁶ Personnel assigned to units similar to those in these cases can apply lessons drawn from this research to improve their own partner-based missions. Third, with one of the objectives to leverage first-hand accounts, this study looked to primary source materials from American military history because of their availability, English language memoirs, and secondary source studies.

Terminology is important for this subject as different terms have muddled what occurs on the ground. Unconventional warfare, guerrilla warfare, hybrid warfare, asymmetric warfare, and low intensity conflict have been used to define activities in the competition continuum. For this study, the term Irregular Warfare (IW) is used as a collective term to describe combined activities that involve small teams that deploy and work with local forces. In 2021, the U.S. Joint staff decided IW is “complex, messy, and ambiguous,” and “does not lend itself to clean, neat, concise, or precise definition.”⁴⁷ IW is also associated with terms such as Foreign Internal Defense, UW, and COIN, among others. For this thesis, these terms become sub-categories of IW, as they all denote working with a partner force. Within IW, JP 3-22, Foreign Internal Defense, defines partners as governmental and nongovernmental agencies, multinational forces, and other interorganizational personnel.⁴⁸ Combined operations is a term that is defined as operations with foreign forces. Those forces can be both state sponsored and non-state sponsored as exemplified today with the Iraqi Counter Terrorist Service, an Iraqi state-sponsored counterterrorism unit, and the Syrian Maghawir Al Thawra, a rebel Syrian opposition faction, respectively.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Jared Tracy, “ARSOF Lineage or Legacy?,” *Special Warfare* 36, no. 1 (August 2023): 24.

⁴⁷ Jared Tracy, “History of the Irregular Warfare Definition,” *USASOC STRATCOM Monthly*, September 2022, 18–21.

Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-22* (Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, 2021), i, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_22.pdf.

⁴⁹ “Iraq,” *United States Department of State* (blog), accessed March 10, 2023, <https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2021/iraq/>; “Jaysh Maghawir Al-Thawra (MaT) Archives,” *The Defense Post* (blog), accessed March 10, 2023, <https://www.thedefensepost.com/tag/mat/>.

In searching for new lessons learned for the U.S. Special Operations community, this study also examined unfamiliar cases of combined operations. Doing so not only reminded the intended readership of these operations but also helped shape a new perspective on combined operations especially after 20 years of partnering during multiple campaigns in the Middle East. It has been my experience that current Special Operations personnel are only familiar with the conditions and events surrounding the GWOT, so an updated view on the two included case studies can reinvigorate strategic thinking toward what LTG Jonathan Braga announced as, “future competition, crisis, and conflict.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, LtGen (R) Paul K. Van Riper (USMC), notes that strategic thinking, which is rooted in experience and education, helps to, “assist in selecting the ways and means needed to support the achievement of national policy goals.”⁵¹ To help develop innovative approaches to future conflict, studying historical cases studies may undercover valuable best practices that the current desire for technological solutions might miss. Therefore, combining best practices from the past with emerging technologies may yield discussion that breeds creativity. This may lead to new tactics, techniques, and procedures that can be applied to specific environments or broadly to support the development of operating concepts within doctrine. As the late Colonel John Boyd (USAF) wrote, “linking particulars together in this manner we can form a new domain or concept...such a synthesis would indicate we have generated something new and different from what previously existed.”⁵²

⁵⁰ Jonathan Braga, “United States Army Special Operations Command Strategy for the Future” (Information Brief, Naval Postgraduate School, October 26, 2023).

⁵¹ Heather Wolters and Paul K. Van Riper, “The Identification and Education of U.S. Army Strategic Thinkers” (Fort Belvoir, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute, 2013), 27, <https://doi.org/10.1037/e639722013-001>.

⁵² John R. Boyd, “Destruction and Creation” (Leavenworth, WA: US Army Command and General Staff College, 1987), 3, <https://cle.nps.edu/access/content/group/b46632a5-2fb1-48b0-bca8-5d2b28db159c/Van%20Riper%20from%20Developing%20Army%20Strategic%20Thinkers.pdf>.

III. DETACHMENT 101: BURMA

We got run out of Burma and it's humiliating as hell. I think we ought to find out what caused it, go back, and retake Burma.

—General Joseph Stilwell, 1942⁵³

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter continues upon the argument that a foreign force (Det 101) partnered with a local force (Kachin guerrillas) can be successful if the variables of Information, Support, and Talent mutually support each other. In particular, the Det 101 mission in Burma illustrated that a foreign force, who embeds with a knowledgeable and willing local force, who appropriately incorporates the populous into information collection, and partners with experienced forces to become a force multiplier can reach strategic success in wartime. Ultimately, the goal of this case study within this thesis is to display these Det 101 efforts as historical best practice examples.

This chapter discusses how the variables of Information, Support, and Talent contribute to the mission outcome within the case study of Det 101 in Burma from 1942 until 1945. Recall that the conditions in Burma at this time are a denied environment, a government in exile, a newly formed foreign force, and a willing and capable, but unorganized indigenous population during total war.

Within this study, the three independent variables of Information, Support, and Talent are depicted as main paragraphs while the subparagraphs give contextual evidence of Det 101 facts, efforts, and effects. Each independent variable has no less than three examples that illustrate how Det 101 affected or was affected to conduct their mission. These examples depict evidence that displays the independent variables for three reasons. First, each example illustrates one effort that guided Det 101 to accomplish their mission. Second, each example illustrates how one effort built toward the progression of the corresponding main argument. Finally, each example argues how each effort, combined

⁵³ Frank Dorn, *Walkout: with Stilwell in Burma* (New York: Crowell, 1971), 243.

with others, aided Det 101 to improve their mission outcome. The mission outcome is the dependent variable and the three qualitative values assigned are survive, operate, and thrive.

This chapter concludes with a structure-focused qualitative assessment illustrating that Det 101 needed a combination of Information, Support, and Talent to succeed in Burma. Overall, the analysis of this case illustrates Det 101 thrived in Burma. This is due to three primary efforts. The three efforts are the Indigenous information networks led by Det 101 trained agents, the willing Kachin locals who became the guerrilla forces, and the talent of Det 101 leaders to leverage external organizational support.

B. BACKGROUND

During World War II, in May 1942, Lieutenant General (LTG) Joseph Stilwell and 114 members of his small staff, his Chinese expeditionary force, and British Commandos retreated to India from Burma.⁵⁴ The loss of the country, and particularly the Burma Road from Rangoon, Burma into China was significant because Allied Forces, those being primarily British Commonwealth, Chinese, and American, supplied Chinese resistance fighters with munitions, equipment, and provisions across the flimsy, snaking road.⁵⁵ Therefore, to support Allied forces in mainland China, Allied aircraft flew over the Himalayan Mountains, known as the “Hump” by veterans of the Burma Campaign, bringing men, weapons, and equipment to Chinese conventional forces in China.⁵⁶ A new overland route from India through northern Burma into China needed created, and since Japanese forces occupied Burma, General (GEN) William Donovan, the leader of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), spoke to LTG Stilwell about an idea that would challenge the Japanese through espionage and guerrilla operations.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ U.S. Army Center of Military History, “Burma, 1942,” *Center of Military History, The Campaigns of World War II - World War II Commemorative Series Pamphlets*, CMH 72, no. 21 (n.d.): 20.

⁵⁵ Peers and Breilis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 17.

⁵⁶ Peers and Breilis, 18.

⁵⁷ Tom Neven, “‘Wild Bill’ Donovan: SOF Pioneer,” *Military History*, May 14, 2018, <https://www.socom.mil/wild-bill-donovan-sof-pioneer>.

The OSS successes in Northern Africa theater proved a small foreign force with a large Indigenous force could have strategic effects against Axis powers.⁵⁸ LTG Stilwell, after sharing the same vision as GEN Donovan, decided a similar unit of highly willing individuals with military and civilian skills, who were mentally and physically tough, was a starting point toward becoming guerrilla warfare experts.⁵⁹ The key problem was that the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater of war was the lowest priority theater for the American forces.⁶⁰ Therefore, the creation of Detachment 101 was built on men of ingenuity and enthusiasm who could be trusted to operate with little more than what comes down to commanders intent, flexibility, and grit without the military intelligence and logistical support of the European and Pacific theaters.⁶¹

1. Detachment 101

Detachment (Det) 101 was a special operations unit created to collect tactical through strategic level information through espionage and reconnaissance.⁶² They were also created to conduct sabotage, psychological operations, and guerrilla force operations against Japanese forces.⁶³ They were a part of the North Burma Campaign, and in particular, the Myitkyina Campaign, which fought Japanese Forces in northern and central Burma.⁶⁴ Furthermore, Det 101 added the mission of rescuing and evacuating downed

⁵⁸ Troy J. Sacquety, “The Office of Strategic Services (OSS): A Primer on the Special Operations Branches and Detachments of the Office of Strategic Services,” *Veritas* 3, no. 4 (2007), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v3n4_oss_primer_page_1.html.

⁵⁹ Peers and Brellis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 38.

⁶⁰ Library of Congress, “China-Burma-India: WWII’s Forgotten Theater,” web page, Library of Congress, accessed October 14, 2023, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/veterans-history-project-collection/serving-our-voices/world-war-ii/china-burma-india/>.

⁶¹ Peers and Brellis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 37.

⁶² Sacquety, “The Office of Strategic Services (OSS): A Primer on the Special Operations Branches and Detachments of the Office of Strategic Services.”

⁶³ Tommaso Piffer, “Office of Strategic Services versus Special Operations Executive: Competition for the Italian Resistance, 1943–1945,” *Journal of Cold War Studies* 17, no. 4 (2015): 43.

⁶⁴ Troy J. Sacquety, “A Special Forces Model: Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign, Part II,” *Veritas* 4, no. 3 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n3_myitkyina_part_2_page_1.html.

Allied aircrews who landed within north Burma.⁶⁵ Troy J. Sacquety of the USASOC History Office notes Lieutenant (LT) Vincent Curl in 1944 stated, “having a network emplaced behind Japanese lines would prove critical as the Allied forces began to go on the offensive.”⁶⁶ After conducting several successful and unsuccessful airborne and waterborne insertions, Det 101 conducted a series of overland insertions that allowed them to operate from jungle outposts established throughout Burma.⁶⁷ Through Det 101’s leveraging of information agents (agents) and Indigenous personnel, they gained crucial information to conduct airstrikes against Japanese forces who debilitated their logistics, supplies, and morale.⁶⁸ Det 101’s guerrilla actions by the combined force of American, British, Burmese, and Indian personnel established an opening for Allied forces to mount a conventional attack that eventually reclaimed Burma.⁶⁹ From April 1942 until July 1945, Det 101 grew from 20 American members to a force of 300 American members. At their height in early 1945, Det 101 recruited over 10,200 Burmese fighters and 122 Burmese agents who were excellent information collection assets.⁷⁰ Their actions proved a strategic success and in 2015, as the United States Army Special Operations Command website attested, Det 101 earned the reputation as “the most effective tactical combat force in the OSS.”⁷¹

2. The Kachins

It is important to understand that the American and British forces of Det 101 were small while the Kachin representation was large within Det 101. While Det 101 was an American-born organization, Det 101 history often depicts both the foreign force and local

⁶⁵ Troy J. Sacquety, “A Special Forces Model: OSS Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign: Part I,” *Veritas* 4, no. 1 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n1_myitkyina_part_1_page_1.html.

⁶⁶ Sacquety.

⁶⁷ Sacquety, “The Failures of Detachment 101 and Its Evolution into a Combined Arms Team.”

⁶⁸ Peers and Breilis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 221.

⁶⁹ Peers and Breilis, 225.

⁷⁰ Peers and Breilis, 220.

⁷¹ United States Army Special Operations Command, “Detachment 101,” Detachment 101, accessed September 4, 2023, <https://www.soc.mil/OSS/det-101.html>.

force as one unit, Det 101. This is a major credit to the Kachin peoples of Burma in 1942 to 1945. Their skill and allegiance is important, as factors affecting guerrilla warfare, as defined by *Field Manual 31-21* in 1951, include “forces who have the courage and stamina to endure hardships and face imminent death while fighting against innumerable odds.”⁷² This is a defining factor of the Kachin people of northern Burma. The Kachins became Det 101’s best opportunity to not only survive infiltration into the hostile environment of Burma, but eventually conduct strategic operations later in the Burma Campaign.⁷³ Additionally, the Kachins “did not like their land occupied by an [Japanese] invader.”⁷⁴ As Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) William R. “Ray” Peers, the author of *Behind the Burma Road* and the second Det 101 Commander stated about the Kachins’ attitude and ability, “in their look was the fierce pride of mountain men.”⁷⁵

C. INFORMATION

Det 101’s ability to leverage the information and natives from the Indigenous Burmese population informed Det 101 how best to accomplish their partnered mission. Additionally, after success and failures in using an advanced echelon party, Det 101 learned a valuable lesson in reducing risk. Recalling the term Information, it is used to depict the data used and applied toward the benefit of a group’s task or mission. Had Det 101 not leveraged the Indigenous intelligence network, they would likely not have survived or grew to combat Japanese forces as the war continued. There are four examples of this information.

1. Indigenous Information Networks

Acquiring accurate information through Indigenous native reporting information networks is essential to understanding and leveraging the enemy’s force advantage in an

⁷² Department of the Army, *FM 31-21*, 13.

⁷³ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 82.

⁷⁴ Peers and Brelis, 84.

⁷⁵ Peers and Brelis, 84.

operational area.⁷⁶ Fort Hertz was where Det 101 established their initial foothold in Japanese controlled territory and where the Kachin Levies, a British led unit, had conducted reconnaissance missions for British forces.⁷⁷ Det 101, attempting to accomplish this task unilaterally, were repelled at Japanese-held lines when attempting to reconnoiter, as Det 101 personnel were Caucasian and did not know the land like the Indigenous Kachins.⁷⁸ Instead, LTC Peers turned to the Kachins, as he stated they had a natural and “rugged staunchness” to live off the land. Det 101 gained momentum partnering with the Kachins, as they also knew how to use the environment in their favor by preparing ambush sites in a way to observe signs in natural vegetation to track Japanese movements.⁷⁹ Forward Det 101 patrols were safeguarded when the Kachin scouts leveraged neighboring village networks to discover and use hidden routes and paths only known to natives.⁸⁰ This occurred during the Kachins’ inclusion in Task Force Galahad, a combined Allied conventional force, to take the town of Myitkyina, Burma.⁸¹ Det 101 Kachin scout elements moved ahead of Task Force Galahad to villages to ascertain the safety and reliability of the civilian populace as well as the disposition and composition of known Japanese forces in the area.⁸² Using the Kachin information network made up for Det 101’s small force size as LTC Peers stated, “friendly villages were an underground intelligence network for revealing enemy locations.”⁸³ Similar to the application of McCormick’s Counterinsurgency Diamond Model, the greater degree in which the population supports a

⁷⁶ Gordon H. McCormick, Steven B. Horton, and Lauren A. Harrison, “Things Fall Apart: The Endgame Dynamics of Internal Wars,” *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2007): 328, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436590601153721>.

⁷⁷ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 84.

⁷⁸ Peers and Brelis, 60.

⁷⁹ Peers and Brelis, 144.

⁸⁰ Peers and Brelis, 194.

⁸¹ Peers and Brelis, 190.

⁸² Peers and Brelis, 173.

⁸³ Peers and Brelis, 173.

force, the greater the information advantage.⁸⁴ Partnering with Kachins to leverage the Indigenous information network overwhelmed the larger Japanese force, as was indicated in Det 101's inclusion in Task Force Galahad and their key role when they later captured Myitkyina.⁸⁵ Upon completion of the operation, Brigadier General Frank D. Merrill, Commander of Task Force Galahad, sent a message to Det 101 who stated, "Thanks for your assistance, we could not have succeeded without the help of 101."⁸⁶ With the Kachin's field expedient ability, their trusted skill to know the enemy, and their leveraging of Burmese village folk, Det 101 recruited and relied upon the Kachins, who became pivotal to Det 101 throughout their Burma mission.⁸⁷

2. Indigenous Guerrillas

The Kachins tracking and guiding skills proved their worthiness on the battlefield, but their knowledge and experience improved Det 101's overall survival, making light work of what a foreigner would need years of experience to learn. The Kachins taught A-Group, the first of Det 101's groups to infiltrate into Burma, the indications of Japanese fortifications and where their lines were thinnest.⁸⁸ The Kachins also taught British and American Det 101 personnel how best to stalk into and out of Japanese encampments and when necessary, how to evade Japanese searches and engagements through ruses and feints.⁸⁹ The Kachins were such expert scouts that Det 101 leveraged them as early as the Spring of 1943 to train new and inexperienced Det 101 members.⁹⁰ This timeframe was quick, as Det 101 had only been in Burma since October 1942.⁹¹ By February 1944, American and British Det 101 members began to plan, review, and conduct several

⁸⁴ Gordon H. McCormick, "Logic of Counterinsurgency and Three Assumptions That Underlie Strategic Competition" (Informational, Seminar in Guerrilla Warfare, Naval Postgraduate School, February 1, 2023).

⁸⁵ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 190–92.

⁸⁶ Peers and Brelis, 165.

⁸⁷ Peers and Brelis, 85.

⁸⁸ Peers and Brelis, 84.

⁸⁹ Peers and Brelis, 86.

⁹⁰ Peers and Brelis, 105.

⁹¹ Peers and Brelis, 75.

rehearsals prior to executing any tactical act, illustrating their newfound Indigenous education and field knowledge.

As Japanese units became desperate to entrench themselves into asymmetric fights to retain Burma, Kachin guerrilla bravery, wit, and shared Det 101 tactics caused the Japanese demise. In mid-June 1945, Japanese forces fell back to Loilem, Burma, the Allied strategic goal.⁹² The Kachin guerrillas, trained in Det 101 communications techniques, probed Japanese fortified defenses in the steep slopes of the town's landscape and used Det 101 radios systems and smoke grenades to coordinate air attacks on the positions.⁹³ Following the successful air attack, the Kachins assaulted the Japanese positions, then conducted this process repetitively until Japanese forces fled.⁹⁴ The Kachins completed this brave action without casualties and through the shared Det 101 tactics, showing the merit of a foreign force working alongside a local force.

3. Indigenous Information Agents

In June of 1943, native Burmese guerrillas, Levies, Rangers, and refugees who Det 101 assessed to have a natural eye for intelligence and courage were selected as information agents (agents), further enhancing Det 101's information collection apparatus.⁹⁵ These volunteers were shuttled through an underground railroad to Nazira, India, then upon completion of their three to five month training, returned to their home of origin to build cells of human intelligence.⁹⁶ This was starkly different than when Det 101 attempted to create agents from Indian refugees, which ended in failure due to the Indians' lost daily familiarity necessary to acquire timely and relevant information.⁹⁷ Det 101 learned leveraging Burmese citizens living in Burma improved not only the likelihood of attaining

⁹² Peers and Breilis, 235–37.

⁹³ Peers and Breilis, 237.

⁹⁴ Peers and Breilis, 237.

⁹⁵ Peers and Breilis, 214.

⁹⁶ Peers and Breilis, 213–14.

⁹⁷ Peers and Breilis, 248.

good information, but gave Det 101 intelligence efforts credibility for future intelligence reporting.⁹⁸

In March 1944, Det 101 deployed 12 of their best agents to gain an information advantage that resulted in preparation for the final Allied drive toward Mandalay, Burma.⁹⁹ One agent, codenamed Betty, infiltrated and set conditions in Hsipaw, an area 190 miles south of Myitkyina, nine months prior to conventional troops arrival.¹⁰⁰ In this time, he trained a select group of Shan villagers, a minority group within Burma and China, who created information reports that were accurate, extensive and timely.¹⁰¹ He captured three Japanese civil administrators who divulged detailed information of Japanese political, economic, and military organization in Burma and Japan.¹⁰² Finally, after sending reports of the Hsipaw area people being ripe for guerrilla force development, Betty assisted one of the Det 101 commanders recruit a guerrilla force.¹⁰³ Betty was personally credited by LTC Peers as one of the most successful agents who provided, “a wealth of information concerning the Japanese.”¹⁰⁴ Another Agent named Skittles who was of Chinese descent, was a previous Burmese mining engineer who spoke English, Burmese, Chinese, Hindu, Urdu, Siamese, Kachin, and several other dialects of Burmese hill tribes talked his way through enemy lines, making him an excellent agent.¹⁰⁵ Using his linguistic ability, Skittles leveraged Det 101 medical aid with an influential Kachin headman, who then volunteered him and his fighters to Det 101 as additional guerrillas.¹⁰⁶ Betty and Skittles were only two of many agents who showed both an information collection and force

⁹⁸ Peers and Brelis, 210.

⁹⁹ Peers and Brelis, 202.

¹⁰⁰ Peers and Brelis, 238–39.

¹⁰¹ Peers and Brelis, 214.

¹⁰² Peers and Brelis, 214.

¹⁰³ Peers and Brelis, 238.

¹⁰⁴ Peers and Brelis, 238.

¹⁰⁵ Peers and Brelis, 27.

¹⁰⁶ Peers and Brelis, 27.

multiplying capacity of highly willing and capable Indigenous people in Burma during World War II.

The Det 101 Agent training program set high operational security standards that prevented intelligence leaks. Burmese citizens were flown to Nazira where upwards of twenty isolated espionage agent training camps were located.¹⁰⁷ Upon the completion of their espionage training, the agents were sent back into Burma to build human information networks and relay reporting to Det 101.¹⁰⁸ The isolation of the training camps became very important, as some agent infiltrations were not always successful.¹⁰⁹ A group of two Burmese agents parachuted near the outskirts of Rangoon, deep within Japanese-controlled territory, and were subsequently intercepted and tortured.¹¹⁰ Fortunate to Det 101, due to their isolated training, the two knew little of other Det 101 operations, resulting in no other Det 101 compromises.¹¹¹

On 12 July 1945, Det 101 was deactivated.¹¹² LTC Peers credits the agents' efforts as the most important reasons that made Det 101 successful saying, "It leads you to the guerrillas and gives you proper introductions. It shows where the enemy is and how desirable it is to strike them."¹¹³

4. Infiltration Advanced Echelon Party

The first Det 101 unit inserted into Japanese-controlled territory, A-Group, inserted into enemy-controlled territory and illuminated how Det 101 forces could lower risk while deploying their advanced echelon (ADVON) personnel. Conversely, B-Group and W-

¹⁰⁷ Peers and Brelis, 64.

¹⁰⁸ Peers and Brelis, 64.

¹⁰⁹ Peers and Brelis, 250.

¹¹⁰ Peers and Brelis, 215. The exact location of the two were never formally stated by William Peers.

¹¹¹ Peers and Brelis, 215.

¹¹² Sacquety, "The Office of Strategic Services (OSS): A Primer on the Special Operations Branches and Detachments of the Office of Strategic Services."

¹¹³ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 211.

Group did not deploy an ADVON, which illustrates the risk without inserting an ADVON prior to the entire element.

A-Group air dropped Captain Jack Bernard and radio operator Sergeant (SGT) Egbert Timothy (Saw) Judson to scout for a base camp upon infiltration.¹¹⁴ While they had initial communications complications, they setup camp, witnessed enemy patrols, and assessed the civilian opinion of Japanese occupation, albeit safely and from afar.¹¹⁵ Upon their judgement the area was favorable, they signaled Det 101 HQ to continue inserting additional A-Group personnel.¹¹⁶

B-Group and W-Group deployed prior to the completion of A-Group's mission, so they had not yet learned the importance of deploying a small ADVON. Instead, COL Eifler, wanting to gain momentum by rapidly deploying forces, inserted both entire elements, and upon initial infiltration, both groups were found by Japanese forces and killed.¹¹⁷ While fault lied on COL Eifler's low risk threshold to sacrifice his forces unnecessarily, more blame lies on his decision to rely on dated intelligence that jeopardized the forces immediately.¹¹⁸ COL Eifler deployed these two groups relying on dated aerial photography and without a reception party to affirm ground safety.¹¹⁹

After Det 101 learned the valuable lessons of A, B, and W-Groups, they implemented procedures to insert forces only after scouting the area and using an ADVON to receive future personnel.¹²⁰

D. SUPPORT

The support from Det 101 headquarters, adjacent air units, and external foreign forces empowered Det 101 to increase the rate of their operations but also mutually

¹¹⁴ Peers and Brelis, 89.

¹¹⁵ Peers and Brelis, 89–93.

¹¹⁶ Peers and Brelis, 89–93.

¹¹⁷ Peers and Brelis, 125, 139.

¹¹⁸ Peers and Brelis, 120.

¹¹⁹ Peers and Brelis, 120, 138.

¹²⁰ Peers and Brelis, 250.

support other adjacent units. Recalling support, these are elements that provide ways and means to assist a group in direct contact with either a foreign force or a local force. Had Det 101 not had this support, they would not have gained the adequate assistance necessary to survive, much less thrive in the Japanese controlled environment of Burma. There are three examples of this support.

1. Headquarters Proximity

Det 101 positioned their Nazira, India headquarters in close proximity to its deployed tactical subordinate elements and adjacent supporting elements, which benefitted Det 101 operations in Burma.¹²¹ In October 1942, due to the rugged terrain, inexperienced Det 101 members, and lack of aerial support, Det 101 needed to remain close to support their subordinates.¹²² This was also the thought of LTC Peers as he stated, “a distance of a hundred miles would mean the difference between success and failure.”¹²³ Therefore, they established a headquarters in the Upper Asam region of India 50 miles west of the Burmese border to expedite information analysis, rapidly deploy additional groups, and support their subordinate elements.¹²⁴ Additionally, COL Eifler thought the headquarters proximity was initially beneficial in the case subordinate elements needed to enter Burma by overland routes.¹²⁵ However, in December, 1943, LTC Peers relieved COL Eifler as Det 101 commander and LTC Peers implemented a new style of command and control.¹²⁶

LTC Peers instituted an area command model, which gave the four Det 101 geographic area commanders tailored support and allowed Det 101 headquarters easier command and control.¹²⁷ LTC Peers added this move that allowed supply requests and radio traffic to funnel through individual echelons of Det 101 control and individual radio

¹²¹ Peers and Brelis, 74–75.

¹²² Peers and Brelis, 74–75.

¹²³ Peers and Brelis, 58.

¹²⁴ Peers and Brelis, 60.

¹²⁵ Peers and Brelis, 75.

¹²⁶ Peers and Brelis, 158.

¹²⁷ Peers and Brelis, 163.

schedules.¹²⁸ LTC Peers also stated the area command model gave Det 101 subordinate units “initiative and flexibility such as we had never known.”¹²⁹

With the expansion of area command came the expansion of other Allied forces, which signaled a coming Allied victory and more mutual support with adjacent units. In January 1945, one of the four Det 101 area commands code named “Forward” by Det 101 leadership, had both guerrilla and agent sections along the Chinese border.¹³⁰ Concurrently, the Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC) and 10th Air Force moved their operational headquarters to Bhamo, Burma, which was situated 30 miles west of China and within the “Forward” network of Agents.¹³¹ Also, the Chinese 1st and 6th Army’s began significant clearing operations toward Mandalay, which improved assurances of security within the region.¹³² Most important, Det 101 and the adjacent units, already relying on each other by this point in the war, strengthened their mutual support as 10th Air Force units inserted Det 101 agents to communicate air strikes via radio and then the Chinese Army units carried out clearance operations.¹³³ When the Allied adjacent headquarters moved from India into Burma, the amount of support for Det 101 increased and Det 101 in-turn supported conventional forces in a more timely manner.¹³⁴

2. Air Support from Adjacent Units

With the support of the air units, Det 101 leveraged previous recovery and survival training to support downed air crews, which supported Det 101 insertions deep behind fortified enemy lines and increased all Allied force survivability in Burma.

¹²⁸ Peers and Brelis, 163.

¹²⁹ Peers and Brelis, 163.

¹³⁰ Peers and Brelis, 213.

¹³¹ Peers and Brelis, 182.

¹³² Peers and Brelis, 213.

¹³³ Peers and Brelis, 215.

¹³⁴ Peers and Brelis, 215.

In March of 1943, the U.S. Air Transport Command (ATC) located in India, was initially reluctant to support Det 101 for fear of losing pilots and aircraft.¹³⁵ However, after understanding the intelligence value of Det 101 operations, they agreed under the stipulation that they could conduct bombing runs following the Det 101 insertions.¹³⁶ This was evidenced in A-Group's initial infiltration into northern Burma, which supported a follow-on bombing run of Lashio, Burma.¹³⁷ Once Det 101 began to show a trend of timely information returning from their subordinate units, Det 101 leadership convinced ATC leadership that they could also provide recovery and evacuation assets in support of ATC's continued support.¹³⁸ This could not have been a more useful exchange, as in late 1943, Det 101 rescued and evacuated 125 crew members, with 25% to 35% of C-46 aircrews who bailed out due to the untested and untrusted aircraft.¹³⁹ However, this spurred further discussion with other Allied air units as the NCAC, Royal Air Force (RAF), and Eastern Air Command (EAC) lost downed crewman due to starving, dying from exposure to the elements, or being caught, tortured, imprisoned, and/or killed.¹⁴⁰

Therefore, Det 101 implemented aircrew member survival courses and built a hospital at Det 101 headquarters which supported Allied aircrews. Det 101 gave experiential instruction to air crews about the Burmese landscape, land navigation, and sourcing clean water, which in turn gave the aircrews confidence to not only fly dangerous air routes, but insert singleton medics into combat.¹⁴¹ One insertion occurred when an ATC medical evacuation section Colonel parachuted into enemy territory, gave medical aid to three Americans, and travelled back to a Det 101 outpost for extraction.¹⁴² Furthermore, by 1945, Det 101 headquarters in Nazira built and staffed a hospital of 47

¹³⁵ Peers and Brelis, 120.

¹³⁶ Peers and Brelis, 120–21.

¹³⁷ Peers and Brelis, 123.

¹³⁸ Peers and Brelis, 86.

¹³⁹ Peers and Brelis, 145–46.

¹⁴⁰ Peers and Brelis, 146.

¹⁴¹ Peers and Brelis, 150–51.

¹⁴² Peers and Brelis, 151.

staff members complete with an airfield that flew Allied casualties to U.S. hospitals for trauma care.¹⁴³ The official OSS war report described the Det 101 medical staff as playing a, “significant, if not vital [role], from the earliest days of the Detachment.”¹⁴⁴ With the recovery capabilities, survival classes offered, and hospital services that Det 101 offered to Allied air units, the more they increased support to Det 101.

In the Spring of 1943, the RAF gave Det 101 a two-seat biplane, affectionately called the Gypsy Moth, which Det 101 used at length to travel to and communicate with their subordinate units.¹⁴⁵ Unfortunately, in February 1944, the plane crashed, but due to previously rescued aircrews, the EAC provided Det 101 with an L-1 replacement aircraft.¹⁴⁶ This was not the only plane the EAC gave to Det 101, but transferring an aircraft to a non-air unit was irregular, particularly when aircraft was in short supply.¹⁴⁷ Later, in November 1944, since Det 101’s overall effort to instruct, recover, and treat Allied air crews increased alongside their operations, Det 101 was assigned 17 different aircraft and 20 pilots.¹⁴⁸ Their air capability growth gave Det 101 the ability to airdrop supplies and people, conduct reconnaissance flights, pick up injured personnel, and conduct commander battlefield circulations to give funds and orders, when necessary.¹⁴⁹ Surprisingly, in a reversal of capability support, Det 101 supported four successful Z force, a British Special Operations organization for the 14th Army, night air drops with Det 101 aircraft.¹⁵⁰ Lastly, in the Spring of 1945, the final months of Det 101 operations, Det 101 and NCAC air units provided close to 200 parachutes or 12 plane loads of daily supplies for Det 101 guerrilla and agent elements in Burma.¹⁵¹

¹⁴³ Lester E Bush, “The Fighting Doctors of the Office of Strategic Services,” ed. Randy P. Burkett, *Studies in Intelligence* 62, no. 3 (2018): 36.

¹⁴⁴ Bush, 38.

¹⁴⁵ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 128.

¹⁴⁶ Peers and Brelis, 167.

¹⁴⁷ Peers and Brelis, 133.

¹⁴⁸ Peers and Brelis, 211.

¹⁴⁹ Peers and Brelis, 180.

¹⁵⁰ Peers and Brelis, 215.

¹⁵¹ Peers and Brelis, 247.

Another supporting function that Det 101 provided to air units came from Det 101 communicators when they uncovered Japanese radio deception stations.¹⁵² In late 1943, LTC Peers stated, “several” ATC aircraft mysteriously crashed into mountains, which the aircrew blamed on poor radio transmissions and fog.¹⁵³ However, the Det 101 radio section, having passed the time listening to communications between outstations, found anomalies in radio transmissions and investigated them, only to reveal Japanese interference.¹⁵⁴ Following Captain (CPT) Philip Huston’s assessment of Japanese interference, Det 101 personnel investigated the matter, which prompted Japanese forces to remove the deceptive vector radio stations from the field, illustrating Det 101’s value to air units.¹⁵⁵ This support further increased the mutual support between Det 101 and air units within the CBI theater.

With the complimentary tasks that Det 101 and adjacent air units conducted, both units increased their ability to sequentially overwhelm the Japanese on ground and in the air, leading to a symbiotic relationship that led toward the success of the Allies by wars end.

3. External Foreign Forces

Det 101 increased their mission success when they leveraged external support from outside of the organic Det 101 organization because they lacked internal experience. A-Group was comprised of three members of the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), four from the Burmese Army, an English Major, and four Kachin natives from Fort Hertz.¹⁵⁶ All but one of the non-American A-Group, while unsuccessful in their task of sabotage, evaded Japanese capture and collected information on key populations, Japanese compositions and dispositions, and hardships of living in the jungle.¹⁵⁷ Of note, two of

¹⁵² Peers and Brelis, 149.

¹⁵³ Peers and Brelis, 149.

¹⁵⁴ Peers and Brelis, 149.

¹⁵⁵ Peers and Brelis, 149.

¹⁵⁶ Sacquety, “The Failures of Detachment 101 and Its Evolution into a Combined Arms Team.”

¹⁵⁷ Sacquety.

these personnel from A-Group later became two of the four area commanders.¹⁵⁸ The inclusion of British forces can be given to LTG Stilwell, as he ordered Det 101 to make an extra effort to, “get along” with the British.¹⁵⁹ Since the SOE in India had a similar mission to Det 101, both organizations exchanged liaison officers to coordinate and deconflict efforts.¹⁶⁰ As the mission continued, Det 101 had mutual support from V Force, a British intelligence collection and reconnaissance unit, until Det 101 absorbed it in February 1944.¹⁶¹

With the support of external foreign forces, Det 101 experience increased, which contributed to mission success.

E. TALENT

The abilities of the selected Det 101 members, the external personnel who brought experience, and the creativity fostered within Det 101 contributed to the overall success of the mission. Recalling talent, this term refers to the people, groups, and organizations who used their natural, learned, and experienced abilities to complete the mission. Had the factors of talent not existed for Det 101, they would not have survived, much less thrived. There are four examples of this talent.

1. Specially Selected Members

Det 101 leadership specially selected members with critical functions and/or leadership attributes, which benefitted the unit’s flexibility and unique, strategically focused mission. COL Eifler had a storied background of being attacked at Pearl Harbor and infiltrating hostile organizations as a U.S. customs officer, using practical means to conduct clandestine operations.¹⁶² When he became the Det 101 commander, his charisma and bold nature attracted junior members toward the organization, which benefitted GEN

¹⁵⁸ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 163.

¹⁵⁹ Peers and Brelis, 73.

¹⁶⁰ Sacquety, “The Failures of Detachment 101 and Its Evolution into a Combined Arms Team.”

¹⁶¹ Sacquety.

¹⁶² Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 41.

Donovan's vision of the organization.¹⁶³ At the inception of Det 101, COL Eifler recruited men who fought at Pearl Harbor including company commander CPT John Coughlin, First Sergeant Vincent Curl, LT Robert Aitken who was a military intelligence officer, and CPT Archie Chun Ming, a medical officer who spoke Mandarin.¹⁶⁴ In COL Eifler's view, their war experience at Pearl Harbor solidified their personal willingness to take the fight to the Japanese, making Eifler's recruiting easy.¹⁶⁵ Altogether, Eifler chose individuals with what GEN Donovan listed as, "military science and tactics, engineering, explosives, radio and other communications, basic medicine, precision machinery, and photography; and men who possessed a language aptitude."¹⁶⁶ The initial 21 Det 101 personnel later became a cadre of leaders who showed flexibility and resilience behind enemy lines, which is what Det 101 needed when conducting guerrilla warfare.

LTC Peers was later described by fellow United States Army Commanders as having a "better grasp of operational combat than Eifler" and as a "dual threat quarterback," having both the "ability both to run and pass."¹⁶⁷ This image offered that LTC Peers could both balance leading an organization and operating as a soldier. LTC Peers, understanding how to implement change, empowered his subordinates with his area command model which aided each to streamline their communications with agents and conventional forces.¹⁶⁸ LTC Peers also leveraged Det 101 aircraft to visit outposts, which he used only to give guidance, field questions from the commander, and learn their needs.¹⁶⁹ In moving toward this decentralized leadership model, he reinforced flexibility and creativity for each area of control, leading toward further mission accomplishment.

¹⁶³ Raymond J. Faunt, "COL Carl Eifler and Detachment 101: Modern Progenitors for the Nexus of Special Operations and Intelligence," *American Intelligence Journal* 35, no. 1 (2018): 6–15.

¹⁶⁴ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 36–37.

¹⁶⁵ Richard Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma* (Simon and Schuster, 2014), 70–74.

¹⁶⁶ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 38.

¹⁶⁷ Wolfgang Saxon, "Lieu. Gen. William R. Peers, 69, Led Inquiry into My Lai Massacre," *The New York Times*, April 9, 1984, sec. Obituaries, <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/04/09/obituaries/lieu-gen-william-r-peers-69-led-inquiry-into-my-laimassacre.html>.

¹⁶⁸ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 163.

¹⁶⁹ Peers and Brelis, 166–67.

2. External Experience

LTC Peers learned the absorption of experience from external groups compensated Det 101 members with limited unconventional experience, which increased the combat capacity of Det 101. This experience was evident as the British and Kachin A-Group, who later trained Det 101 Americans, evaded Japanese forces and LTC Peers wrote, “[they] became so independent, so sure, that they stole into Jap[anese] camps to steal rice and other foodstuffs, yet were never seen.”¹⁷⁰ In 1944, LTC Peers increased Det 101’s capacity when they absorbed the British-led and Indigenous heavy information gathering V-force to help drive conventional Allied forces toward Myitkyina.¹⁷¹ Their inclusion added roughly 30 American and British soldiers and approximately 2,000 Indigenous guerrillas which supported the first successful Allied conventional push from the India/Burma border since 1942.¹⁷² V Force members, once incorporated into Det 101 TTP’s, became forward scouts and experts at ambushing Japanese reinforcements and blocking retreating Japanese forces.¹⁷³ Their inclusion into Det 101 was a decisive move toward adjacent Allied units convening to begin retaking Burma.

In January 1945, Det 101 infiltrated 19 Burmese Agent groups of two to three men in four months into Japanese-controlled territory.¹⁷⁴ The agents not only increased Det 101 preparation of the environment, but they recruited tribes such as Shans and Burmans, who had previously turned over Allied forces to Japanese forces.¹⁷⁵ Their incorporation into Det 101 showed a dramatic shift of popular support and revealed untapped sources of

¹⁷⁰ Peers and Brelis, 94.

¹⁷¹ Sacquety, “The Failures of Detachment 101 and Its Evolution into a Combined Arms Team.”

¹⁷² Gordon Graham, “The Phantom Army of Burma,” Kohima Educational Trust, 2009, <https://www.kohimaeducationaltrust.org/resource-material/documents/v-force-by-gordon-graham-1945.pdf>.

¹⁷³ Sacquety, “The Failures of Detachment 101 and Its Evolution into a Combined Arms Team.”

¹⁷⁴ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 213.

¹⁷⁵ Peers and Brelis, 148.

reporting and guerrilla forces.¹⁷⁶ Altogether, the Shan guerrilla forces incorporated with Kachin forces which formed seven battalions of guerrilla fighters by March of 1945.¹⁷⁷

Lastly, Det 101 did not limit their pre-mission training to strictly U.S. military, as the U.S. Army did not have a schoolhouse designed to produce special operators as they do today.¹⁷⁸ Instead, Det 101 leveraged Camp X, a British-led paramilitary course in Canada.¹⁷⁹ The other half trained in the Catoctin Mountains in Maryland.¹⁸⁰ Under the tutelage of George White, a Treasury Department narcotics agent, Det 101 members trained in sabotage, survival, interrogation, and searching for downed aircrews.¹⁸¹ Det 101 also trained on hand to hand combat as well as information collection from a British intelligence agent who had experience as a former Shanghai police chief.¹⁸² Finally, besides the large quantity of Burma informational books they could find stateside, Det 101 learned from a University of California Professor Dr Christianson, who spent years in Burma, authoring books about his experience.¹⁸³ Altogether, with this diverse education, Det 101 deployed with the best training and information they could acquire, which proved beneficial to increasing their capacity when they arrived in Burma ready to understand the people, geography, and hardships they were to face.

3. Creativity

Due to the changing environment which it encountered, Det 101 used creative thinking to succeed, which led toward mission accomplishment. In one example, Det 101 members built light, movable buildings on airfields at their Burmese outposts to obscure their visibility from Japanese air patrols.¹⁸⁴ In the event of an Allied plane landing, the

¹⁷⁶ Peers and Brelis, 217.

¹⁷⁷ Peers and Brelis, 213.

¹⁷⁸ Tracy, “ARSOF Lineage or Legacy?,” 20.

¹⁷⁹ Dunlop, *Behind Japanese Lines: With the OSS in Burma*, 81.

¹⁸⁰ Dunlop, 85.

¹⁸¹ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 41.

¹⁸² Peers and Brelis, 42.

¹⁸³ Peers and Brelis, 45.

¹⁸⁴ Peers and Brelis, 127.

local security element would move the houses for the aircraft to land, then replace them upon landing.¹⁸⁵ In another instance, Det 101 employed tricks that involved printing either false pamphlets ordering Japanese soldiers to surrender or false documents that caused the Kempe Tai, the Japanese secret police, to investigate Japanese soldiers.¹⁸⁶ Both of these creative efforts eroded and strained Japanese trust, which improved Det 101's espionage efforts.

At a smaller, tactical level effort, the Det 101 communication section and their officer CPT Huston's creativity became paramount to Det 101's success in 1942 and 1943, as Det 101 was still a new organization.¹⁸⁷ CPT Huston and his communication section fashioned together radios made from remnants of aircraft and food rations with the ability to communicate 1200 miles.¹⁸⁸ Later, they developed ground to air signaling techniques, displaying emergency panels for Allied aircraft, which limited the exposure of Det 101 guerrillas to Japanese agents.¹⁸⁹ Finally, CPT Huston implemented a hand generator case to recharge radio batteries that also minimized the sound signature, decreasing the likelihood of enemy interference when reporting information to headquarters.¹⁹⁰ CPT Huston and the Det 101 communications section's creative efforts effectively saved lives and improved timely Det 101 efforts, resulting in Det 101's vast guerrilla networks.

Due to the different environments and forces in which the remaining four Det 101 battalions in April 1945 faced, each had to modify their tactics on a range of conventional to unconventional.¹⁹¹ Until their final mission to Mandalay, Det 101 used guerrilla tactics to fight the Japanese. However, in April of 1945, Det 101 airdropped 4.2 inch mortars to the remaining Det 101 battalions to employ against Japanese forces holed inside their

¹⁸⁵ Peers and Brelis, 127.

¹⁸⁶ Peers and Brelis, 248–49.

¹⁸⁷ Peers and Brelis, 79.

¹⁸⁸ Peers and Brelis, 79.

¹⁸⁹ Peers and Brelis, 93.

¹⁹⁰ Peers and Brelis, 117.

¹⁹¹ Peers and Brelis, 229.

fortified positions.¹⁹² In a creative way, knowing they could not quickly maneuver with the mortars when they had to, they destroyed the weapon, gunsight, and spare ammunition.¹⁹³ During this same time, Det 101 also employed personnel in Allied aircraft to be both navigators and to help the air crew find the nearest friendly unit if crash landing.¹⁹⁴ Det 101's ability to toggle between guerrilla and conventional tactics illustrated Det 101's creative ability, which led to what the General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower claimed in 1946 as their "successful offensive action against over whelming enemy strength."¹⁹⁵

4. Honoring and Celebrating

Det 101 built relationships with those who helped them, as they understood their survival was based on their relationship with Indigenous personnel. Beyond the physical improvements necessary for Det 101 success, A-Group discussed the necessity and intricacy of building relationships with the locals they met behind enemy lines. In one example, SGT Judson, an A-Group radio operator, returned to Det 101 headquarters and apologized to LTC Peers for giving away LTC Peers' gold wristwatch to a Kachin chief.¹⁹⁶ LTC Peers recalls that SGT Judson told him he gave the watch to the man not only because the Kachin led them out of Japanese encirclement, but also because, "part of our business was to make friends."¹⁹⁷ This comment expresses the authenticity in which most Det 101 members exuded as a necessity toward survival with an Indigenous force toward mission accomplishment.

Later in May of 1945, LTG Daniel I. Sultan, commander of the India-Burma Theater, ordered Det 101 to disband their guerrilla units.¹⁹⁸ Understanding the depth of

¹⁹² Peers and Brelis, 229.

¹⁹³ Peers and Brelis, 229.

¹⁹⁴ Peers and Brelis, 238.

¹⁹⁵ Peers and Brelis, 244.

¹⁹⁶ Peers and Brelis, 118.

¹⁹⁷ Peers and Brelis, 118.

¹⁹⁸ Peers and Brelis, 223.

commitment the guerrillas had after over two years of continual combat, Det 101 leaders worked to render final pays, rewards, and award service focused on feats of outstanding gallantry.¹⁹⁹ LTC Peers made custom patches and badges indicating the guerrillas' membership as American-Jingphaw Rangers, a legitimate fighting force whom they fought alongside.²⁰⁰ Treating the guerrilla units as equals and honoring their courage helped with demobilizing them prior to the guerrilla units disbanding.

F. EVALUATION

The dependent variable of the Det 101 mission outcome now evaluates the independent variables of Information, Support, and Talent.

The evidence depicted above dictated the qualitative measurement toward whether Det 101 survived, operated, or thrived. Recalling each term, surviving is the ability of a group to enter an operational area, obtain food, shelter, water, and security while also avoiding or withstanding an enemy element. The term operate is a group's ability to properly function at a tactical level. Finally, thrive is defined as the ability for a group to reach the operational or strategic mission goal.

The case study of Det 101 in Burma from 1942 until 1945 illustrates how a foreign force (Det 101) partnered with a local force (Kachin guerrillas) can be successful if the variables of Information, Support, and Talent are focused correctly. Based on the definitions of the three qualitative values that evaluate the mission outcome, Det 101 thrived.

While each example in this chapter built a case to illustrate Det 101's efforts, facts, and effects, three stood out as the most important. The first effort was that they integrated with the Indigenous Burmese tribes, which established trust that allowed their trained agents to report timely information. The focus that Det 101 gave to having a shared living situation with the Burmese tribes helped their overall mission, but their tapping into Burmese information was a critical capability they did not organically possess. When

¹⁹⁹ Peers and Brelis, 223.

²⁰⁰ Peers and Brelis, 191.

operating with partner forces, Det 101's case illustrates that a shared amount of risk and hardship between both the foreign and local forces resulted in mutual commitment. This commitment achieved trust which further established a sharing of information that would have otherwise not been uncovered.

Second, Det 101 embedded with Burmese guerrillas, where they learned how best to maneuver and fight without sacrificing their ability to surprise and overwhelm Japanese forces. The Burmese guerrillas were the last remaining entity within Burma that had the will to fight the Japanese. They were also crafty and knowledgeable of the environment, which came with generations of experience in the Burmese wilderness. When Det 101 tapped into this knowledge base, they were privy to not only learn tactics from the guerrillas, but also try and fail techniques without the certain risk of death. This is illustrated in the low casualty amounts that Det 101 and the Burmese guerrillas had at the summation of the war.²⁰¹ Furthermore, Det 101 was a combined force of Americans, British, and Burmese Guerrillas that lived and fought together. To think that daily survival for this force necessitated nothing but an extremely close relationship would be odd. This closeness is an effort that may not always occur with future Special Operations forces and their partnered forces, but in a wartime atmosphere behind enemy lines, this closeness is a best practice that should be remembered and applied if the opportunity permits it.

Lastly, Det 101 leadership's decision to create mutually beneficial relationships with external organizations such as the British SOE and various Air Units increased their overall ability to project their forces beyond their organic capabilities. Det 101 arrived in Burma with 21 American personnel and handshake agreements with the British SOE and other allied units. While mutual support may seem instinctual when fighting a common enemy, a lack of manpower and resources can strain common friendly force manpower and logistics. Fortunately for Det 101, a combination of talented and humble Det 101 personnel leveraged external organization support from these units while providing their organic capabilities. These organic capabilities came in the form of timely information and air crew recovery corridors provided by their relationship with Burmese guerrillas and agents. Had

²⁰¹ Peers and Brelis, 246.

Det 101 not leveraged these Burmese resources that were available, they would not have had the support they needed and thus ceased to progress into projecting theirs and external organization forces forward. Luckily, this was not the case and instead Det 101 thrived in achieving strategic effects during World War II. Using capabilities either organically or through partnered forces that leverage external organization supporting capabilities is a best practice that future Special Operations Forces should apply. This is particularly important as the 2022 National Defense Strategy states integrated deterrence will use, “all instruments of U.S. national power, and our network of Alliances and partnerships”²⁰²

The value of Det 101 was best summarized by LTC Peers in the book, *Behind the Burma Road*. In the book, he alludes that the Det 101 guerrilla and espionage operations were not just information gathering efforts only.²⁰³ Instead, Det 101 proved that the Allied forces could retake Burma and LTC Peers credits that the agents became a rallying point for the local people and a cause for national aspirations away from Japan.²⁰⁴ LTC Peers ended the book by stating “Always steady, the Kachins were the vital force of the 101 in its guerrilla operations.”²⁰⁵ This quote gives a good illustration toward the value of the Indigenous population whom Det 101 attached into to become one of the most successful forces in U.S. Special Operations history.

G. MOVING FORWARD

Det 101 began as an idea to build a specially selected unit to conduct sabotage and espionage behind enemy lines, but grew to become a unit dependent on the Indigenous peoples of the theater of war within it.²⁰⁶ At the completion of its mission, it disbanded, leaving American members to recede into the newly created Central Intelligence Agency

²⁰² Austin, “The 2022 National Defense Strategy of The United States of America,” 1.

²⁰³ Peers and Brelis, *Behind the Burma Road*, 257.

²⁰⁴ Peers and Brelis, 257.

²⁰⁵ Peers and Brelis, 257–58.

²⁰⁶ Faunt, “COL Carl Eifler and Detachment 101,” 6.

(CIA), and in 1952, the United States Army Special Forces.²⁰⁷ From 1952 until 1967, the United States Army Special Forces mission grew into preparing for World War III in Europe and countering insurgencies globally.²⁰⁸ In 1967, the U.S. Army Special Forces countered the Che Guevara insurgency in Bolivia as they applied Information, Support, and Talent efforts when they partnered with and trained the 2nd Bolivian Rangers, who conducted a counterinsurgency operation that led to the capture and demise of the communist leader.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁷ David P Coulombe, “Master of Military Art and Science General Studies” (master’s Thesis, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Army Command and General Staff College, 2015), 142, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/AD1041757.pdf>.

²⁰⁸ Charles M. Simpson III, *Inside The Green Berets: The First Thirty Years: A History of The U.S. Army Special Forces* (New York: Berkley Books, 1983), 35.

²⁰⁹ Briscoe, “Introduction: Special Forces in Bolivia.”

IV. MOBILE TRAINING TEAM-BL 404–67X: BOLIVIA, 1967

Bolivia was the best thing we ever did.

—Major Ralph “Pappy” Shelton, 1967²¹⁰

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter continues the argument that a foreign force (Mobile Training Team- (MTT) BL 404–67X) partnered with a local force (Bolivian [2nd Ranger Regiment]) can be successful if the variables of information, support, and talent are focused correctly. In particular, the 8th Special Action Force (SAF) MTT mission in Bolivia illustrates that a foreign force that was hand selected based on experience, multi-purposed, and who were trustworthy enough to accomplish their mission, can deploy to an operational area and be successful. As always, the ultimate effort of this thesis is to display these historical best practice examples.

This chapter discusses how the variables of information, support, and talent contribute to the mission outcome within the case study of the 8th Group MTT in Bolivia in 1967. Recall that the conditions in Bolivia at this time are a semi-permissive environment, a friendly local government, an experienced 16 man foreign force, and an unexperienced 650-man local force outside of war.

Within this study, the three independent variables of information, support, and talent are depicted as main paragraphs while the subparagraphs give contextual evidence of MTT facts, efforts, and effects. Each independent variable has no less than three examples that illustrate how the MTT affected or was affected to accomplish their mission. These examples depict evidence that highlights the independent variables for three reasons. First, each example illustrates one effort that guided the MTT to accomplish their mission. Second, each example illustrates how one effort built toward the progression of the corresponding main argument. Finally, each example argues how each effort, combined with others, assisted the MTT to improve their mission outcome. The mission outcome is

²¹⁰ Henry Butterfield Ryan, *The Fall of Che Guevara: A Story of Soldiers, Spies, and Diplomats* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 82.

the dependent variable and the three qualitative values assigned are survive, operate, and thrive.

This chapter concludes with a structure-focused qualitative assessment illustrating that the MTT needed a combination of information, support, and talent to succeed in Bolivia. Overall, the analysis of this case illustrates the MTT thrived in Bolivia. This is due to three factors. The three factors are the SOUTHCOM support, including the 8th SAF, the selection of the MTT personnel, particularly MAJ Shelton, and the MTT's understanding to motivate the willing 2nd Ranger Battalion into an elite counterinsurgent force within Bolivia.

B. BACKGROUND

The end of World War II bifurcated the global landscape with two major polarizing views. One was an American-led democratic view and the other was a Soviet and Chinese communist view. This situation produced a “Cold War” where heightened tension over nuclear weapons set the conditions to communist-supported “wars of national liberation,” which became the predominant form of conflict in the mid-1960s.²¹¹ This was matched by the American “containment” strategy that became the basis for military-led counter insurgency doctrine.²¹² While both sides waged a political, economic, military, and propaganda front against each other, the United States was determined to prevent a “domino effect” spread of communism.²¹³

1. Rising Unrest in Latin America

Concurrently in Latin America, El Salvador, Argentina, Colombia, Bolivia, Venezuela, Chile, Guatemala, and Peru were experiencing communist inspired revolutions.²¹⁴ In particular, Cuba was promoting communist rhetoric after Fidel Castro

²¹¹ Kenneth Finlayson, “The 1960s: A Decade of Revolution,” *Veritas*, SF in Bolivia, 4, no. 4 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n4_1960s_page_1.html.

²¹² History.com, “Cold War: Summary, Combatants, Start & End,” HISTORY, June 26, 2023, <https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/cold-war-history>.

²¹³ Briscoe, “Introduction: Special Forces in Bolivia.”

²¹⁴ Finlayson, “The 1960s: A Decade of Revolution.”

led a successful revolution against the military dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959.²¹⁵ In November of 1966, one of his lieutenants, Ernesto “Che” Guevara, arrived in Bolivia with a goal to expand the socialist revolution there and create a second Vietnam.²¹⁶ Guevara noted in his diary, “I will set myself up in the selva [forest or jungle] at the frontier between Bolivia and Brazil... From there it is possible to put pressure on three or four countries and, by taking advantage of the frontiers and the forests you can work things so as never to be caught.”²¹⁷ He hoped to leverage their recent unsteady political history and disenfranchised population in the Chaco region of Bolivia.²¹⁸ However, his campaign in Bolivia faced numerous challenges, including a lack of local support, inhospitable terrain, poor headquarters choice, no easy access to cross a border, and effective counterinsurgency operations by the Bolivian government, with assistance from the U.S.²¹⁹ After months of guerrilla warfare, on October 8, 1967, Guevara was captured by the 2nd Bolivian Ranger Battalion and was later executed.²²⁰

The United States was adequately prepared to counter insurgency in Latin America due to its disposition and composition of forces. SOUTHCOM, and its Commander, General Robert W. Porter, stated in Military Review of 1968 that it had five tasks: Defend the Panama Canal, manage the Military Assistance Program for Latin America countries, direct hemispheric defense exercises, map and chart activities, and direct disaster relief and search and rescue operations.²²¹ Porter stated they devoted efforts to assist 17 Latin

²¹⁵ Mauricio Solaun to United States. Department of State, “Ambassador Solaun Conversation with Congressmen Wilson and Murphy: 16 November,” Cable, November 17, 1978, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/1679047342/abstract/98EEF744D2DE48EBPQ/1>.

²¹⁶ Che Guevara and Mary-Alice Waters, *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*, 1st ed (New York: Pathfinder, 1994), 21.

²¹⁷ Jean Larteguy, *The Guerrillas*, trans. Stanley Hochman (New York: Signet Publishing, 1972), 27.

²¹⁸ Jones, “Beggar on a Throne of Gold: A Short History of Bolivia.”

²¹⁹ Christopher Rodriguez, “The Bolivian Insurgency of 1966-1967: Che Guevara’s Final Failure,” [online], Small Wars Journal, accessed March 15, 2023, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/bolivian-insurgency-1966-1967-che-guevaras-final-failure>.

²²⁰ Kenneth Finlayson, “The 2nd Ranger Battalion and the Capture of Che Guevara,” *Veritas*, SF in Bolivia, 4, no. 4 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n4_capture_of_che_page_1.html.

²²¹ Kenneth Finlayson, “The ‘Haves and Have Nots,’” *Veritas*, SF in Bolivia, 4, no. 4 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n4_have_and_have_not_page_1.html.

American countries ranging in size from five persons in Panama to 103 in Brazil. SOUTHCOM had all four military components. The Army Component Command of SOUTHCOM was U.S. Army Forces Southern Command (USARSO), based at Fort Amador, in the Canal Zone of Panama, commanded by Major General (MG) Charles L. Johnson.²²² According to the Center of Military History, MG Johnson's Army Command oversaw multiple units, which included the 8th Special Forces Group (SFG) configured and named herein as the 8th Special Action Force or 8th SAF.²²³ The 8th SAF was located at Fort Gulick, Panama Canal Zone, which was centrally located to deploy forces through both Central and South America.²²⁴

In April 1967, SOUTHCOM tasked the 8th SAF to prepare a 16-man Special Forces MTT for a classified mission to Bolivia.²²⁵ As stated by Briscoe, “The MTT was to organize and train a 650-man Bolivian Ranger Battalion in basic and advanced individual military skills, basic and advanced unit tactics, COIN operations, and conduct cadre training for the unit officers and non-commissioned officers in nineteen weeks.”²²⁶ This training was necessary due to the rising Bolivian insurgency and their ill-preparedness to counter it.²²⁷ The USARSO assigned the mission to the 8th SAF and the 8th SAF chose a seasoned Special Forces Major to assemble a 16-man U.S. Army Special Forces team. The team was sometimes referred to by their MTT designated “MTT-BL 404-67X.”²²⁸

²²² Finlayson.

²²³ William Gardner Bell, *Department of the Army Historical Summary: FY 1969*, The Center of Military History (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1969), 12, <https://history.army.mil/books/DAHSUM/1969/chII.htm#n3> SOUTHCOM was the largest geographic command structure. Their combat power was unrivaled outside of a combat theater. The units assigned included the 193rd Infantry Brigade, the 4th Missile Battalion (HAWK), the 517th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, the 470th Military Intelligence Group, the 3rd Civil Affairs Group, and the U.S. Army School of the Americas.

²²⁴ Finlayson, “The ‘Haves and Have Nots.’”

²²⁵ Briscoe, “The Bolivia Mission.”

²²⁶ Briscoe.

²²⁷ Finlayson, “The ‘Haves and Have Nots.’”

²²⁸ Briscoe, “The Bolivia Mission.” This study will simply refer to MTT-BL 404-67X as the “MTT.”

2. The MTT

The MTT was a classified U.S. Army Special Forces team comprised of 16 members hand-picked to organize and train a 650-man Bolivian Ranger unit to counter the growing insurgency within Bolivia.²²⁹ The team of American military advisors played a pivotal role to bolster their Bolivian counterparts' capabilities through dedication, expertise, and unwavering commitment, ultimately transforming the Bolivian recruits into a highly effective unit that carried out a critical counter insurgency mission in challenging and rugged terrain.²³⁰ Their successful collaboration not only enhanced Bolivia's internal security but also stopped a possible insurgency from emanating into other countries within South America. This study of the MTT is one of a counterinsurgency success story serving as a testament to the power of international cooperation in achieving common military objectives.²³¹

C. INFORMATION

The raw information from the Bolivian populous and processed intelligence of Bolivian and U.S. intelligence agencies informed the MTT on how best to accomplish their mission. Recalling the term information, it is used to depict the data used and applied toward the benefit of a group's task or mission. Had the MTT not benefitted from information, the MTT would likely not have gained the adequate knowledge to raise and train the Bolivian 2nd Ranger Battalion to a standard that overwhelmed Che Guevara's guerrillas. There are three examples of this information.

1. The Guerrillas' Carelessness

Prior to the 2nd Ranger Battalion activation, the Cuban-led revolution by Che Guevara was weak, which provided intelligence gaps for Bolivian local police and military to pierce. While Che Guevara was a charismatic figurehead of the revolution in Cuba, he

²²⁹ Briscoe.

²³⁰ Jones, "Beggars on a Throne of Gold: A Short History of Bolivia."

²³¹ Troy J. Sacquety, "The Aftermath: Che, the Late 1960s, and the Bolivian Mission," *Veritas*, SF in Bolivia, 4, no. 4 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n4_aftermath_page_1.html.

and his guerrilla tactical decision making proved careless. For example, Che's trusted intelligence agent "Tania" left her vehicle abandoned to meet with the guerrillas in March of 1967.²³² The vehicle was suspicious due to the out-of-district license plate, which drew locals to contact the local police.²³³ When the police searched Tania's vehicle, they found four notebooks full of detailed Bolivian urban contacts, Communist networks outside Bolivia, and financial records.²³⁴ Separately, in an attempt to form cohesion within his group of Cubans, Argentine, and Bolivians, Che Guevara conducted a 48-day jungle march through Bolivia.²³⁵ Not only did this march deplete the guerrilla fighters overall strength, it also exposed them to locals that reported the sightings to police, who in turn notified military units. In a final situation illustrating the guerrilla's ineptitude toward operational security, the Bolivian Army surprised the guerrillas while they rested due to a civilian report to a local police officer.²³⁶ The guerrillas fled the area and left documentation including photographs, codebooks, and a unit roster.²³⁷ Altogether, Che's guerrilla forces made multiple operational security missteps which aided the Bolivians to gather information and process useful intelligence from it.

2. Indigenous Information Network

The Bolivian military was primed to be successful against Che Guevara in 1967 due to government stability and popular support, which led toward the population reporting on the guerrillas. In 1964, the Bolivian President was pushed out of office by a military junta led by vice-president General René Barrientos.²³⁸ By 1967, the small 15,000-man Bolivian Army was responsible for combating internal threats to Bolivia, one being

²³² Daniel James, *Che Guevara: A Biography* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1969), 238.

²³³ James, 238.

²³⁴ James, 238.

²³⁵ James, 217.

²³⁶ Gary Prado Salmón, *The Defeat of Che Guevara: Military Response to Guerrilla Challenge in Bolivia*, trans. Lawrence H. Hall (New York: Praeger, 1990), 101.

²³⁷ Prado Salmón, 101.

²³⁸ Finlayson, "The 'Haves and Have Nots.'"

communist guerrillas.²³⁹ While this force seemed irrelevant for a country the size of Texas and California combined, the populous supported the stability of the recent government, so a larger force was not required.²⁴⁰ Being that anti-government protests were not unusual, President Barrientos addressed revolutionary rhetoric via radio and did not increase violence on the population, a common occurrence in Bolivia's past.²⁴¹ Instead, as stated by Weiss and Maurer, he "monopolized the airwaves," promising to crush the rebels and rousing the population into reporting suspicious activities.²⁴² These radio speeches had an obvious effect especially when the population began reporting guerrilla actions beginning on March 9, 1967 with the report of a suspicious vehicle that turned out to be a guerrilla support vehicle.²⁴³ The finality of this proof came on October 8, 1967 when a Bolivian campesino, who had heard presidential radio speeches, reported a seventeen-man element to the 2nd Ranger Battalion.²⁴⁴ The campesino said he was on the lookout after he saw the 2nd Rangers patrol and heard presidential radio reports about the guerrillas.²⁴⁵

3. The Central Intelligence Agency

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) provided much needed intelligence support and integration, improving Bolivian and MTT efforts to tailor training and execution toward counterinsurgent goals. The MTT had contact with CIA personnel assigned to the embassy in La Paz.²⁴⁶ Two of those agents were Cuban exiles turned CIA agents Felix Rodriguez and Gustavo Villoldo, both veterans of the Bay of Pigs.²⁴⁷ Villoldo led a training course for 10 Bolivian soldiers, while Rodriguez liaised at the Bolivian Military

²³⁹ Finlayson.

²⁴⁰ Jones, "Beggars on a Throne of Gold: A Short History of Bolivia."

²⁴¹ Mitch Weiss and Kevin Maurer, *Hunting Che: How a U.S. Special Forces Team Helped Capture the World's Most Famous Revolutionary*, First edition (New York: Berkley Books, 2013), 20–23.

²⁴² Weiss and Maurer, 20–23.

²⁴³ Weiss and Maurer, 13.

²⁴⁴ Prado Salmón, *The Defeat of Che Guevara*, 174.

²⁴⁵ Prado Salmón, 174.

²⁴⁶ Finlayson, "The 'Haves and Have Nots.'"

²⁴⁷ Ryan, *The Fall of Che Guevara*, 96.

HQ in La Paz to be a conduit between Bolivians and U.S. entities.²⁴⁸ These assignments were thanks to an initial successful meeting with President Barrientos where, after proving their value to the Bolivian anti-guerrilla intelligence collection process, President Barrientos personally signed access cards allowing them throughout the country and General Ovando, the Commander of Bolivian Forces, issued them identification cards and uniforms with the rank of Captain.²⁴⁹ Following this, Rodriguez organized and compiled dossiers on every possible guerrilla using intelligence reports, interrogation transcripts, and documentation found from previous Bolivian military raids on the guerrillas.²⁵⁰ Rodriguez also created a radio network that would link aircraft reconnaissance planes to military ground elements, which became important later for exchanges between himself and the CIA station in La Paz.²⁵¹

Rodriguez and Villoldo also traveled to La Esperanza, met the MTT, and set up an intelligence plan with them and the 2nd Ranger Battalion.²⁵² Villoldo, alongside Captain Cruz, the MTT intelligence officer, trained a group for the Ranger Intelligence unit, which upon completion of training, infiltrated into the villages of the red zone to build intelligence networks to report on the guerrillas.²⁵³ Additionally, Rodriguez liaised with the Eighth Division in Santa Cruz, who patrolled the red zone.²⁵⁴ Through their plans and actions, both Rodriguez and Villoldo connected the tactical and strategic spheres of intelligence collection for all Bolivian-friendly parties.

D. SUPPORT

The external support of SOUTHCOM, USARSO, U.S Agency of International Development, and 8th SAF provided the MTT the personnel, materiel, logistic, and financial

²⁴⁸ Weiss and Maurer, *Hunting Che*, 79.

²⁴⁹ Weiss and Maurer, 134–65.

²⁵⁰ Weiss and Maurer, 134–65.

²⁵¹ Weiss and Maurer, 134–65.

²⁵² Weiss and Maurer, 134–65.

²⁵³ Weiss and Maurer, 134–65.

²⁵⁴ Weiss and Maurer, 134–65.

assistance to adequately prepare the 2nd Ranger Battalion to conduct anti-guerrilla actions. Recalling support, these are elements that provide ways and means to assist a group in direct contact with either a foreign force or a local force. Had the MTT not had this support, the MTT would not have gained the adequate assistance necessary to accomplish the mission goal of raising and training the Bolivian 2nd Ranger Battalion. There are three examples of this support.

1. Higher Echelon Support

The MTT leveraged the higher echelon of support from SOUTHCOM, U.S. Agency of International Development (USAID), Bolivian Military Command, and 8th SAF in Panama, which improved the 2nd Ranger Battalion's training. This leverage was in large part due to MAJ Shelton's can-do attitude, being this was his last Army assignment.²⁵⁵ In 1967, LTC Joseph Rice, in charge of the U.S. Military group (MILGP) in Bolivia, impeded progress on materiel and civic action.²⁵⁶ In response, MAJ Shelton directed his requests through SOUTHCOM and 8th SAF.²⁵⁷ When the MTT requested supplies for the Bolivian Ranger recruits such as uniforms, weapons, battle gear, and weapons, SOUTHCOM provided them from war stocks in storage.²⁵⁸ During the Bolivian Minister of Defense and Bolivian Army Chief of Staff visited La Esperanza prior to training, MAJ Shelton convinced them to approve additional funds to purchase nutrient rich food.²⁵⁹ The MTT made the case for additional high caloric rations that would allow the recruits to endure training.²⁶⁰

The MTT also leveraged their ability to route SOUTHCOM aircraft support, which benefitted their austere location with limited military supply.²⁶¹ Following the MTTs

²⁵⁵ Ryan, *The Fall of Che Guevara*, 92.

²⁵⁶ Ryan, 92.

²⁵⁷ Ryan, 92.

²⁵⁸ Ryan, 92.

²⁵⁹ Kenneth Finlayson, "Turning the Tables on Che: The Training at La Esperanza," *Veritas*, SF in Bolivia, 4, no. 4 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n4_turning_tables_che_page_1.html.

²⁶⁰ Weiss and Maurer, *Hunting Che*, 94–96.

²⁶¹ Weiss and Maurer, 94–96.

initial entry into Bolivia using two fully loaded C-130s, the MTT leveraged their ability for air transport.²⁶² The MTT requested the 8th SAF logistics element load a refrigerator via C-130 for delivery to a Bolivian bush pilot in exchange for the pilot to be on call for further MTT requirements.²⁶³ Additionally, the MTT used the SOUTHCOM and 8th SAF support to increase the 2nd Ranger Battalion ammunition allotment, increasing each soldier's total of 10 rounds per man to 5,000 per man.²⁶⁴ Lastly, the MTT offered to organize and host medical capabilities events for USAID in exchange for the construction of a road that would connect La Esperanza to the Santa Cruz highway.²⁶⁵ The road not only assisted in moving logistics for the 2nd Ranger Battalion from Santa Cruz, it also improved transportation for all residents within La Esperanza. Altogether, the support MAJ Shelton and the MTT leveraged gave the 2nd Ranger Battalion a better chance to focus on training and eventually be combat effective.

2. The SAF Communications Ability

Upon initial entry to La Esperanza, the MTT had to change their communications architecture to better facilitate support to training. The primary radio, an AN/GRC-109, could not reach Panama.²⁶⁶ Fortunately, the five person MTT communication section, aided by non-Special Forces qualified personnel, substituted their alternate radio, a KWM 2A ham radio with both Morse code and voice capabilities.²⁶⁷ This proved worthwhile to the MTT, as they used the alternate radio to not only request supplies and support through SOUTHCOM and 8th SAF, but to conduct radio to phone relay communications throughout South and North American-based HAM operators who kept the MTT attune to current Cold

²⁶² Charles H. Briscoe, "Welcome to Bolivia, MTT-BL 404-67X," *Veritas*, SF in Bolivia, 4, no. 4 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n4_welcome_to_bolivia_page_1.html.

²⁶³ Weiss and Maurer, *Hunting Che*, 94–96.

²⁶⁴ Weiss and Maurer, 94–96.

²⁶⁵ Weiss and Maurer, 94–96.

²⁶⁶ Briscoe, "Welcome to Bolivia, MTT-BL 404-67X" Derived from 8th SFG MTT-BL 404-67X SITREP dated 29 May 1967.

²⁶⁷ Briscoe, "Introduction: Special Forces in Bolivia."

War happenings.²⁶⁸ Simultaneously, the MTT primary radios improved the 2nd Bolivian Ranger Battalion, as they used the MTT's AN/GRC-109's to relay information to their headquarters, improving communications for both elements in La Esperanza.²⁶⁹ The MTT communications section, the largest section of one specific occupation, made communications in the austere and remote La Esperanza location, which without, would have likely deteriorated MTT efforts for the 2nd Ranger Battalion.

3. Choosing the Right Training Base

The MTT ADVON element chose La Esperanza as the Ranger training site because it was a safe and remote environment with barracks, range space, and a small population. MAJ Shelton stated that after flying to a proposed training site in Guabira, it held too large a population and lacked adequate space for training areas.²⁷⁰ Instead, MAJ Shelton stated the MTT drove seven miles to the outskirts of La Esperanza, where the location with an “abandoned sugar mill at the end of a farm road” included sufficient billeting for the MTT and the 2nd Ranger Battalion.²⁷¹ The area was remote and included enough adequate training areas and structures that didn't impose on the small population of around 100 people.²⁷² La Esperanza also had wide, open areas with dead space for mortar training and enough vegetation for maneuvering troops.²⁷³ The ranges, combined arms training areas, population, and amenities all contributed to the 2nd Ranger Battalions' combat success later with the guerrillas.

E. TALENT

The abilities of the selected MTT Special Forces soldiers, the 8th SAF, the Bolivian Battalion personnel, and Indigenous Bolivian population contributed to the overall success of the mission. Recalling talent, this term refers to the people, groups, and organizations

²⁶⁸ Briscoe, “Welcome to Bolivia, MTT-BL 404-67X.”

²⁶⁹ Briscoe.

²⁷⁰ Briscoe, “The Bolivia Mission.”

²⁷¹ Briscoe.

²⁷² Jones, “Beggar on a Throne of Gold: A Short History of Bolivia.”

²⁷³ Briscoe, “The Bolivia Mission.”

that used their natural, learned, and experienced abilities to complete the mission. Had the factors of talent not existed for this mission, it would not have had the same level of success. There are six examples of this support.

1. MAJ Shelton Chooses Experienced MTT Advanced Echelon Members

MAJ Shelton selected personnel with combat experience and knew what to search for, since finding a training site takes time but is crucial to mission success. For his ADVON, he chose MSG Roland J. Milliard as his Intelligence Sergeant, since he was a Korea and Vietnam veteran, a Ranger School graduate, and had gained credibility by earning a Bronze Star with “V” for valor in Vietnam.²⁷⁴ MAJ Shelton also chose SFC Hector Rivera Colon to be his Heavy Weapons Sergeant because of his natural Spanish ability, being that he was from Puerto Rico. SFC Colon’s heroic nature would be evaluated the following year when he was killed in Vietnam.²⁷⁵ These two soldiers, MSG Milliard and SFC Rivera would stay in Bolivia until the main body of the MTT arrived in Bolivia 23 days later.²⁷⁶ While they were there, they coordinated the construction of the training base, logistics for personnel and materiel movement, and kept MAJ Shelton informed.²⁷⁷ Overall, due to MAJ Shelton’s decision to hand pick experienced soldiers, the MTT main body quickly integrated with the Bolivian military and was prepared to conduct training upon initial entry in La Esperanza.

2. Specially Selected Personnel for the MTT

MAJ Shelton gave selection criteria for select personnel that were multi-purposed, spoke Spanish, albeit to varying degrees, and whom he could trust, since the mission

²⁷⁴ Lowell Sun, “Roland Milliard Obituary (1933 - 2016) - Dracut, MA - Lowell Sun,” Legacy.com, March 21, 2016, <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/lowellsun/name/roland-milliard-obituary?id=16757892>.

²⁷⁵ Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, “The Wall of Faces,” Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, accessed September 26, 2023, <https://www.vvmf.org/wall-of-faces-profile/>.

²⁷⁶ Briscoe, “The Bolivia Mission.”

²⁷⁷ Briscoe.

required continuity throughout.²⁷⁸ However, since MAJ Shelton was on ADVON, he assigned this responsibility to his deputy, Captain (CPT) Edmond L. Fricke and his team sergeant/senior enlisted advisor, MSG Oliverio Gomez.²⁷⁹ As told to in an interview that Briscoe conducted with Daniel V. Chapa, another member of the MTT, MAJ Shelton chose CPT Fricke to be his Deputy and Operations Officer in part due to his Korean War background and Ranger Department [School] instructor experience.²⁸⁰ According to an interview by Dr. Briscoe with MSG Oliverio Gomez in 2008, Col Magnus Smith, the 8th SAF commander supported MSG Gomez for the MTT because of his combat experience in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.²⁸¹ With CPT Fricke and MSG Gomez as the MTT's highest ranking officer and non-commissioned officer, the two chose available soldiers based on their military occupation specialty (MOS), reputation, and secondary skills.²⁸² After the MTT leadership made their initial team selections, they conducted interviews to ensure each team member fit accordingly. According to MSG Gomez "that proved very useful when we started training in Bolivia."²⁸³ This team selection illustrates the importance of selecting personnel with talent rather than accepting personnel because of their qualifications or position.

Cpt Fricke and MSG Gomez positioned personnel to complete their MTT job with as much preparation and education as possible. According to MAJ Shelton, upon going into an isolation facility in Panama, MSG Gomez provided the MTT members "past programs of instruction (POIs), lesson plans, and training aids. A footlocker full of U.S. Army field manuals in Spanish were gathered from the U.S. Army School of the Americas at Fort Gulick."²⁸⁴ These two efforts were accomplished to further educate the MTT

²⁷⁸ Ryan, *The Fall of Che Guevara*, 91.

²⁷⁹ Briscoe, "The Bolivia Mission."

²⁸⁰ Briscoe.

²⁸¹ Briscoe.

²⁸² Briscoe.

²⁸³ Briscoe.

²⁸⁴ Briscoe.

members who were already performing self-study.²⁸⁵ With this attention toward educating and empowering a selected team of competent individuals, the MTT was better prepared for Bolivia.

3. MAJ Shelton Sets Expectations

MAJ Shelton gave additional guidance to the MTT upon his return from the ADVON, which set expectations for the training environment. According to SSG Jerald Peterson, an MTT member, MAJ Shelton briefed the mission to, “train 600 newly conscripted soldiers” at a remote site “to counter an ongoing insurgency.”²⁸⁶ SSG Peterson gave his opinion that MAJ Shelton’s new information suggested a need to devote extra training time toward confidence and fitness.²⁸⁷ Briscoe’s research noted that the lack of trainee experience was why the MTT initially planned to focus training on rappelling, climbing, and weapons handling. Fortunately, the MTT’s early focus on confidence training increased the 2nd Bolivian Ranger Battalion’s ability enough to succeed at more complex battle drills as the training progressed. This focus showed that the MTT’s adherence to MAJ Shelton’s guidance made early successes with the 2nd Bolivian Rangers.

Upon MAJ Shelton’s return to Panama, he re-addressed a heavy communication requirement to SOUTHCOM since he believed they would not gain adequate support from the U.S. MILGP out of La Paz, Bolivia.²⁸⁸ This proved to be true as the MTT did not receive the personnel and materiel support from the MILGP and had to instead circumnavigate them and communicate directly with SOUTHCOM and 8th SAF in Panama.²⁸⁹ Another purpose was traversing the heavily unpaved roads in Bolivia was arduous, being that the country is set atop the Andean plateau and did not have a system of roads built to traverse the dense mountains.²⁹⁰ Due to the MTT communication section

²⁸⁵ Briscoe.

²⁸⁶ Briscoe.

²⁸⁷ Briscoe.

²⁸⁸ Briscoe.

²⁸⁹ Briscoe.

²⁹⁰ Ryan, *The Fall of Che Guevara*, 40.

having adequate preparation time from MAJ Shelton's guidance, the MTT made communication with Panama regularly and received the personnel and materiel they required.²⁹¹

4. The Willing 2nd Ranger Battalion

The MTT motivated the 2nd Ranger Battalion through arduous collective training, adaptive individual physical gates, and the understanding that the Ranger Battalion was willing to conduct operations against a known insurgency within their country. In May 1967, the 650-man Bolivian Ranger Battalion began as a group of largely uneducated conscripts and educated, minimally experienced officers, warrant officers, and non-commissioned officers.²⁹² By graduation in September of the same year, they were a diligent counterinsurgent force built on shared hardships and pride in themselves and their training. This result did not come easy, but the MTT motivated the heterogenous group into one solid body.

Upon meeting the formation of inexperienced draftees, MAJ Shelton stated they knew the training would need to start at, "square one" in May of 1967.²⁹³ This was due to the many Bolivian shortcomings to include a lack of sustenance. Sergeant Alvin Graham recalls the Ranger recruits would, "fold up a piece of bread and stuff it in their pockets for lunch."²⁹⁴ Other shortcoming included the recruits singular uniforms and no ponchos or field jackets, which played havoc during the surazos, a cold Antarctic rain swell.²⁹⁵ Another shortcoming was the recruits' natural physical state of being upper bodily weak.²⁹⁶ Regardless of these inconsistencies, the MTT continued to train the recruits and the recruits continued to train without complaints. All the while, the MTT requested and received war stocks from SOUTHCOM to supply the recruits with appropriate military

²⁹¹ Briscoe, "Welcome to Bolivia, MTT-BL 404-67X."

²⁹² Kenneth Finlayson, "Turning the Tables on Che: The Training at La Esperanza," *Veritas* 4, no. 4 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n4_turning_tables_che_page_1.html.

²⁹³ Finlayson.

²⁹⁴ Finlayson.

²⁹⁵ Finlayson.

²⁹⁶ Finlayson.

uniforms, requested and acquired increased rations from Bolivian leadership in La Paz to increase their caloric intake, and created obstacle and confidence courses with upper body centric events to build their strength. Throughout these shortcomings and solutions, the Ranger recruits did not waver and instead pushed harder toward their goal in spite of the physically demanding training.

Following the third week of training that consisted of squad, platoon, and company operations, morale increased as the Ranger Battalion was eager to complete their last four weeks of training and deploy to their operational area.²⁹⁷ The training not only included physically demanding gates, but counterinsurgency training which kept their main mission in focus. This was in large part due to the MTT-provided and Ranger Battalion-combined survival, medical, communications, and tactical (to include shooting and patrolling) training. The MTT designed the training to incorporate officers and non-commissioned officers as future instructors, which brought the experienced soldiers and inexperienced conscripts together as one fighting force. Sergeant First Class Daniel Chapa recalls, “they were very competitive among themselves.”²⁹⁸ The MTT also devised complex tactical situations like enemy ambushes, which forced the Ranger Battalion members to depend on each other for survival. Importantly, the MTT also held a ceremony where they awarded the Ranger Battalion green berets to symbolize their elite nature, a decision made by CPT Fricke to further unify the force.²⁹⁹ Through the complex training exercises, the Ranger Battalion increased their esprit de corps and interdependence on one another.

By the end of the training and after the 2nd Ranger Battalion captured Che Guevara, the MTT was pleased with their formation of the 2nd Ranger Battalion. SFC Chapa stated, “We trained those guys like they were our own,” further illustrating the deep effect both forces had on each other. MAJ Shelton later recalled that while Che Guevara had tried to

²⁹⁷ Finlayson.

²⁹⁸ Finlayson.

²⁹⁹ Finlayson.

start an insurgency in Bolivia, authoring a book on the matter, he stated, “but our guys did it.”³⁰⁰ This further illustrates the close connection that both felt.

5. The MTT Rapport That Became Indigenous Support

Commonplace for Special Forces soldiers is to operate in a foreign land. In doing so they are vulnerable, so building and maintaining continual rapport with local authorities helps establish trust and strengthen survival for both the foreign force and local force. This is what the MTT did with the La Esperanza people. Upon the MTT arrival into Bolivia, the MTT leadership team explained their purpose and timeline, but most importantly, their value proposition.³⁰¹ This initial explanation to the locals is normal as Special Forces embeds in the village, living in and around the villagers, with the possibility to upset the normal order or life. However, the MTT followed through with their value proposition when, throughout the deployment, the MTT funneled most of their purchases of goods and services to only the town, bringing new revenue to the village.³⁰² Furthermore, MAJ Shelton promised and then delivered a six-room schoolhouse for the village by December of 1967, which throughout its construction, built incremental credibility for the MTT.³⁰³ The MTT also performed daily and emergency medical treatments to the villagers and Bolivian Rangers and six medical capabilities events to surrounding villages, totaling 2,500 civilians treated in six months.³⁰⁴ These illustrations of the MTT’s intent to place their relationship with the indigenous populace on firm ground helped build a foundational trust throughout the deployment.

In a more acute form of authenticity, MAJ Shelton, upon initial entry into La Esperanza and throughout the deployment, habitually walked around town weekly, gathered in the village center, and played the guitar for and with the villagers.³⁰⁵ In a

³⁰⁰ Finlayson.

³⁰¹ Briscoe, “Welcome to Bolivia, MTT-BL 404-67X.”

³⁰² Briscoe, “The Bolivia Mission.”

³⁰³ Briscoe, “Welcome to Bolivia, MTT-BL 404-67X.”

³⁰⁴ Charles H. Briscoe, “Field Sanitation: Practicing Medicine, and Civic Action in Bolivia,” *Veritas*, SF in Bolivia, 4, no. 4 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n4_field_sanitation_page_1.html.

³⁰⁵ Briscoe, “Welcome to Bolivia, MTT-BL 404-67X.”

strikingly similar way that Colonel Hillindale played his harmonica for the townspeople to gain camaraderie in the fictional book *The Ugly American*, MAJ Shelton created authenticity in his actions and humility with his guitar playing and offkey singing.³⁰⁶ After other MTT members and villagers joined his ragtag band, villagers began to share cultural information with the MTT, which became a rudimentary form of intelligence prior to the establishment of the Ranger intelligence agent training.³⁰⁷ In an interview with Briscoe, MSG Milliard stated, “winning the hearts and minds of the community was the first step towards accomplishing the mission and ensuring our survival.”³⁰⁸ Due to the trust formed with the MTT, the villagers provided the MTT pertinent information that helped the MTT train on how to better identify and locate guerrillas in Bolivia.³⁰⁹

Due to the MTT’s efforts to build authentic trust, the villagers sought medical aid for an MTT member that nearly died in training. A tree viper bit SFC Chapa during a combined night training exercise with the Ranger candidates.³¹⁰ The MTT immediately ground evacuated him back to La Esperanza, where the 8th SAF surgeon advised treatment via phone, but SFC Chapa’s health only worsened.³¹¹ Fortunately, a villager contacted a local healer and treated SFC Chapa with localized medicinal practices, which saved SFC Chapa’s life.³¹² This story illustrates that the villagers’ outward effort to seek aid for SFC Chapa was due to the authentic trust built between the MTT and villagers.

These stories illustrate the tethered and bonded relationship between the Americans and Bolivians, as each became dependent on one another. Their relationship is a testament to the effort in which a foreign force accomplished to strengthen ties with an Indigenous people, ultimately improving both parties’ survival.

³⁰⁶ William J. Lederer, *The Ugly American* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 111.

³⁰⁷ Briscoe, “Welcome to Bolivia, MTT-BL 404-67X.”

³⁰⁸ Briscoe, “Field Sanitation: Practicing Medicine, and Civic Action in Bolivia.”

³⁰⁹ Briscoe, “Welcome to Bolivia, MTT-BL 404-67X.”

³¹⁰ Briscoe, “Field Sanitation: Practicing Medicine, and Civic Action in Bolivia.”

³¹¹ Briscoe.

³¹² Briscoe.

6. 8th SAF Was Prepared

The 8th SAF was organized to be a tailorable element prepared for a counterinsurgency mission, which helped the MTT complete their mission. In the 1960s, as counterinsurgency requirements grew, Special Forces leaders considered the basic Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha (SFOD-A) needed more flexibility.³¹³ The SAF was created and in particular, the 8th SAF, assigned to the SOUTHCOM Area of Responsibility, had this capability.³¹⁴ The composition of the 8th SAF included a Special Forces Headquarters and two Special Forces Companies, but it also included a Communications Company, a Psychological Operations Battalion, an Engineer Detachment, a Military Police Detachment, a Medical Detachment, a Military Intelligence Detachment and a Security Agency Detachment.³¹⁵ These entities, organically housed inside the 8th SAF benefitted the MTT when the mission necessitated it. Of note, three members of the MTT were not Special Forces qualified soldiers, but were from the Military Intelligence Detachment, the Communications Company, and the headquarters element.³¹⁶ Additionally, the 8th SAF operations center communications section maintained continuous secure communications with the MTT as the secret mission required personnel from the in-house Security Agency Detachment.³¹⁷ Finally, Briscoe adds that 8th SAF twice sent an 8th SAF assigned sergeant to La Esperanza to teach the Ranger recruits vehicle maintenance and driver training.

The composition of the 8th SAF enhanced the success of the MTT by having capabilities and personnel not normally held at a normal Special Forces Group. Additionally, the SAF was deployed forward in Panama as opposed to stateside, which

³¹³ Charles M. Simpson III, *Inside the Green Berets: The First Thirty Years: A History of The U.S. Army Special Forces* (New York: Berkley Books, 1983), 73–74.

³¹⁴ Simpson III, 75.

³¹⁵ Kenneth Finlayson, “U.S. & Bolivian Order of Battle,” *Veritas*, SF in Bolivia, 4, no. 4 (2008): 45, https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n4_have_and_have_not_page_1.html.

³¹⁶ Sacquety, “The Aftermath: Che, the Late 1960s, and the Bolivian Mission.”

³¹⁷ Briscoe, “Welcome to Bolivia, MTT-BL 404-67X” William G. Mullins, Sr. interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 20 May 2008, Fort Bragg, NC, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

reduced the lag of communications and travel for intelligence and information. The SAF existence illustrates that a command unit focused on the mission can enhance the success of the tactical unit, similar to the way 8th SAF did with the MTT.

7. Finishing the Training

MAJ Shelton remained confident that the 2nd Ranger Battalion needed the full 19 weeks to train, which proved true when they engaged with guerrillas 12 days following their graduation.³¹⁸ On 23 June 1967, National Security Advisor Walt Rostow wrote to President Johnson, “The Bolivian forces have come off poorly in these engagements, losing 28 of their men to 2 or 3 known rebels killed.”³¹⁹ This sentiment was echoed the same month by the SOUTHCOM Commander, GEN Porter, and Bolivian President Barrientos, who urged MAJ Shelton to complete the training ahead of schedule.³²⁰ Weiss and Maurer alluded that Shelton pushed back, responding in a way that proved the 2nd Ranger Battalion training was necessary for their survival in a counterinsurgency battle and possible future war. Overall, GEN Porter appreciated MAJ Shelton’s bold rebuttal to cutting the training short and long-term vision.³²¹ On 15 September 1967, the 2nd Ranger Battalion completed the 19-week counterinsurgency training.³²² The next day, the Bolivian 8th Division Logistics moved the 2nd Ranger Battalion to the red zone to hunt for the guerrillas.³²³ Since the 2nd Ranger Regiment immediately deployed and found the guerrillas using MTT-instilled tactics, MAJ Shelton’s firm adherence to finishing the training was a good decision, increasing the 2nd Ranger Battalion’s survival.

³¹⁸ Finlayson, “The 2nd Ranger Battalion and the Capture of Che Guevara.”

³¹⁹ Walt Rostow, “Memorandum from the President’s Special Assistant (Rostow) to President Johnson.” (U.S. Department of State, June 23, 1967), <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v31/d164>.

³²⁰ Robert W. Jones, “Che’s Posse: Divided, Attrited, and Trapped,” *Veritas*, SF in Bolivia, 4, no. 4 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n4_posse_page_1.html.

³²¹ Jones.

³²² Jones.

³²³ Weiss and Maurer, *Hunting Che*, 184.

F. EVALUATION

The dependent variable of the MTT mission outcome now evaluates the independent variables of information, support, and talent.

Prior to evaluation, two factors increased the success of the 2nd Ranger Battalion outside of the capabilities of the MTT. They were the ineptness of the guerrilla operational security and the stellar abilities of the CIA Agents, Rodriguez and Villoldo. These examples, while fortunate for the MTT, helped mission accomplishment void of MTT support. Fortunately, the MTT and 2nd Ranger Battalion leveraged both to accomplish their mission objective.

The evidence depicted in this case study dictated qualitative measurement toward whether the MTT survived, operated, or thrived. Recalling each term, surviving is the ability of a group to enter an operational area, obtain food, shelter, water, and security while also avoiding or withstanding an enemy element. The term operate is a group's ability to properly function at a tactical level. Finally, thrive is defined as the ability for a group to reach the operational or strategic mission goal.

The case study of the MTT in Bolivia in 1967 shows how a small organization with excellent preparation and sound local force understanding can accomplish a strategic mission through their partnership with the 2nd Bolivian Ranger Battalion. Based on the definitions of the three qualitative values that evaluate the mission outcome, the MTT reached the thrive value.

The MTT in Bolivia reached the thrive threshold through three main efforts that became best practices. Those three main efforts were leveraging the SOUTHCOM support, including the 8th SAF, the selection of the MTT personnel, particularly MAJ Shelton, and the MTT's understanding to motivate the willing 2nd Ranger Battalion into an elite counterinsurgent force within Bolivia. The first effort of utilizing SOUTHCOM support, which included 8th SAF, impacted the MTT's ability to raise and train the 2nd Bolivian Ranger Battalion. With the supply of uniforms, weapons, battle gear, ammunition, and aircraft, the MTT enabled the Bolivians with proper equipment and supply that enhanced the Bolivian ability to train on the proposed timeline. Had the MTT not received support

from SOUTHCOM, the Bolivian force may not have been prepared for their real-world mission days after graduating. Furthermore, the training would have been inconsistent between Bolivian Rangers, likely causing bad techniques to form, which could have decreased their survivability on the hunt for Che Guevara. Supporting partner forces through available means is critical for future Special Operations Forces to understand and apply.

The second main effort that had significant effect was 8th SAF's selection of MAJ Shelton and subsequently the remaining MTT personnel. MAJ Shelton was chosen based on his qualifications and prior wartime and peacetime experience, emphasizing that this was his last mission prior to retiring. With his experiences and qualifications, his greatest capability was his bold attitude toward mission accomplishment. This was illustrated when MAJ Shelton did not let up advocating support to build the La Esperanza school house prior to his departure.³²⁴ The two ADVON personnel of MSG Milliard and SFC Rivera were trusted to accomplish all coordination and training preparation at the La Esperanza training site for 23 days while the MTT prepared to deploy to Bolivia. They prepared training areas, roadways, and smoothed government and local relationships during their short preparation timeline. Similarly, while MAJ Shelton was on the ADVON trip, CPT Fricke and MSG Gomez chose the remaining MTT members based on the assessment qualities of reputation and subsequent personal interviews. These selection efforts became critical as the MTT personnel illustrated a flexible and resilient trust-based selection process. This is evident when MAJ Shelton suggested having a heavy communications element, which became essential to the MTT's support from SOUTHCOM. Had 8th SAF assigned 16 random team members to the mission, there would likely not have been the heightened level of prioritization toward necessary efforts. Future Special Operations Forces may find this best practice may have application when a unique mission with a finite timeline must be conducted.

The third main effort by the MTT to unify the willing 2nd Ranger Battalion into an elite counterinsurgent force within Bolivia was critically important for the strategic effect

³²⁴ Briscoe, "Welcome to Bolivia, MTT-BL 404-67X."

of their training. In only 19 weeks, the MTT assessed and decided how best to strengthen the heterogeneous group through training hardships that tested the vigor of the 2nd Ranger Battalion. The MTT effort was illustrated through continuous training while the MTT also requested and received support from higher echelons of support. Since the 2nd Ranger Battalion was formed to combat the insurgent threat of Che Guevara, the MTT goal was more than the completion of the training, but to elevate the mindset of the 2nd Ranger Battalion to an elite force. Had the MTT only trained the 2nd Ranger Battalion without focusing on the unification of the force, they may not have been successful or could have taken heavy casualties, further emboldening the insurgents within the populace. As this case illustrated, this result did not occur. Special Operations Forces must heed the MTT example of striving toward the goal of making strategic impacts with the local force as it may make the difference between training a force to completion versus training a force for purpose.

G. CONCLUSION

The MTT supported the SOUTHCOM Commander to counter a possible growing insurgency inside Bolivia, which left undone, could have led the guerrilla movement to either spread throughout South America.³²⁵ The MTT was the right size force for a strategic mission that was effective in every way possible within the law. As Sepp states, “only the [Army] Special Forces are expressly organized and trained for counterinsurgent warfare and advising indigenous forces.”³²⁶ In 19 weeks, the Army Special Forces soldiers of the MTT ushered Bolivian recruits and junior officers into a highly competent fighting force.

The 8th SAF MTT mission in Bolivia illustrates that a foreign force that was hand selected based on experience, who were multi-purposed, and who were trustworthy enough to accomplish their mission, can deploy to an operational area and be successful. The one resounding element of this case, the MTT selected talented personnel, illustrates that a

³²⁵ Robert W. Jones, “Today a New Stage Begins,” *Veritas*, SF in Bolivia, 4, no. 4 (2008), https://arsof-history.org/articles/v4n4_new_stage_begins_page_1.html.

³²⁶ Sepp, “Best Practices in Counterinsurgency.”

small element, expertly conceived, can add both a capability and a capacity to a larger force. The summation of their organization and training of the Bolivian Rangers demonstrates the value of COIN training and validates the precepts of Foreign Internal Defense.³²⁷

³²⁷ Briscoe, “Introduction: Special Forces in Bolivia.”

V. CONCLUSION

A. THE CLAIM

This thesis argued that a re-examination of past Special Operations missions can empower and arm current Special Operations Forces with lessons that may be applied across today's competition continuum.³²⁸

The study identified that irregular forms of warfare are perennial. Put simply, adversaries in both 1943 Burma and 1967 Bolivia cases pushed the United States to approach those situations by employing small units to work alongside larger local forces. In Burma, the conventional Japanese military had repelled British and Indian forces, driving the U.S. to leverage local forces to conduct espionage and guerrilla actions.³²⁹ Similarly in Bolivia, Che Guevara created an insurgency dilemma that required Bolivia and the U.S. to balance raising and training a local force while limiting disruption to the populace.³³⁰ Though the operational environments, local forces, geopolitical limitations, and technology available may be different today, in both cases, the U.S. Special Operations Forces were asked to yield the results that far outweighed the small size of these units.

The proof of Irregular Warfare pervading in recent conflict is readily available. Whether looking at the means of warfare in either the 2022 Russian invasion into Ukraine or the 1969 to 1998 Troubles in Northern Ireland, the landscape of warfare is riddled with warfare through irregular means. Though conventional weapons and tactics are commonplace within these conflicts, there have also been irregular efforts. An example of this includes the United States Special Operations Forces training Ukrainian elite fighting forces prior to Russian invasion.³³¹ Following the invasion, the Ukrainian forces used irregular methods such as sabotage and guerrilla tactics to conduct asymmetric attacks on

³²⁸ O'Donohue, "Competition Continuum: Joint Doctrine Note 1-19," 1.

³²⁹ Sacquety, "A Special Forces Model: OSS Detachment 101 in the Myitkyina Campaign: Part I."

³³⁰ Sacquety, "The Aftermath: Che, the Late 1960s, and the Bolivian Mission."

³³¹ John Vandiver, "US Special Operations Presses On in Ukraine Amid Threat of Russian Invasion," Stars and Stripes, January 19, 2022, <https://www.stripes.com/theaters/europe/2022-01-19/special-forces-press-on-in-ukraine-amid-threat-of-russian-invasion-4343248.html>.

Russian forces within the Donbas region of Ukraine.³³² In Northern Ireland, the Provincial Irish Republican Army applied terrorism to target and kill British soldiers with bombs and snipers in populated areas.³³³ Irregular Warfare has become more common after World War II as conflicts have largely included irregular tactics involving both intra and interstate conflict..³³⁴

Deploying two case studies, this thesis set out to answer three questions. What efforts produced strategic effects when a small foreign force deploys and works with a larger local force? What were the best practices that resulted in the small foreign force's outcome as described along a performance continuum as merely 1). Surviving, 2). Establishing an ability to operate, or actually 3). Thriving in the operational environment? Finally, what best practices are useful to apply to today's competition continuum?

B. BEST PRACTICES WHEN FOREIGN FORCES PARTNER WITH LOCAL FORCES

There are three lines of effort Detachment (Det) 101 used to partner with the willing Kachin locals. First, Det 101 established indigenous information networks. The U.S. team trained agents and then used these agents to form the basis of the guerrilla force that would help resist the Japanese occupation. The talented Det 101 leaders also developed a line of effort that leveraged external Allied support to help keep Det 101 sustained during its campaign. To support the development of indigenous networks, Det 101 integrated their team with the Indigenous Burmese tribes. This technique helped establish trust that allowed their trained agents to gain previously unobtainable information. Second, when Det 101 embedded with Burmese guerrillas, they learned how best to maneuver and fight without sacrificing their ability to surprise and overwhelm Japanese forces. Lastly, Det 101 leadership's decision to create mutually beneficial relationships with external

³³² Nurlan Aliyev, "Ukraine's Asymmetric Responses to the Russian Invasion," Ponars Eurasia, July 28, 2022, <https://www.ponarseurasia.org/ukraines-asymmetric-responses-to-the-russian-invasion/>.

³³³ Chuck Crosset, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare Volume II: 1962-2009* (Alexandria, VA: US Army Publications Directorate, 2012), 392.

³³⁴ Abby Barger, "The Future Is Irregular. Our Doctrine Should Be Too.," *Wild Blue Yonder* 11 (July 6, 2023), https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Wild-Blue-Yonder/Article-Display/Article/3447572/the-future-is-irregular-our-doctrine-should-be-too/#_edn11.

organizations such as the British SOE and various air units increased their overall ability to project forces beyond their organic capabilities. The combination of these three lines of effort resulted in Det 101's ability to thrive and create strategic effects during World War II.

In Bolivia, the MTT also established three lines of effort to facilitate its mission. These lines of effort included leveraging SOUTHCOM support, a formalized selection process of experienced MTT personnel, and the MTT's focus to shape the willing Bolivian 2nd Ranger Battalion into an elite counterinsurgent force. These three lines of effort resulted in effects that surpassed the tactical level of success. For example, the MTT leveraged SOUTHCOM and 8th SAF personnel and materiel support, which increased the 2nd Ranger Battalion strength in the harsh Andean mountains. Second, 8th SAF's superb use of talent management first selected MAJ Shelton who in turn hand selected experienced MTT members who were critical to training the Ranger conscripts to become a high functioning unit. Lastly, with the decision to unify the Bolivian conscripts and experienced officers, warrant officers, and non-commissioned officers into an interdependent force that fought and won against an insurgency, the MTT succeeded in the overall strategic Bolivian mission. These three lines of efforts helped the MTT's ability to create strategic effects in Bolivia through the 2nd Ranger Battalion.

C. COMPARING AND CONTRASTING THE DET 101 AND MTT BEST PRACTICES

1. Similarities

In both cases, the foreign force could not have accomplished the strategic goal of the mission without support from a non-organic unit separate from the tactical element. While the MTT received support from their higher echelon and Det 101 received support from external organizations, the increased capability provided by both were relatively similar. Both received aircraft and logistic support to replace local capability shortfalls. The non-organic support provided necessary supplies and personnel support that became necessary to reach their respective thrive outcome. This aligns with USSOCOM's fifth

SOF Truth, “Most special operations require non-Special Operations Forces support.”³³⁵ Not to be overlooked, both foreign forces provided their supporting non-organic units strategic results in accomplishing a strategic mission usually necessitated by a large conventional force.

Both cases also illuminate the willingness of the local force to combat the threat within their environment. The Burmese guerrillas were previously displaced from their land by the Japanese, causing the Burmese people to have a grievance against the Japanese. In Bolivia, the people, who had recently gained governmental stability through a free and democratic election, faced the threat of a growing insurgency that had the potential to cause instability to their way of life. These two situations gave each local force purpose to combat their respective adversaries and form a sense of duty to defend their homeland.

The environments and threats between the two cases were vastly different. The Det 101 case illustrated the partnered force needed to first learn how to survive in the local environment, as opposed to the MTT, who did not face imminent danger from enemy forces throughout its mission. Additionally, there was a difference in support the two foreign forces were able to muster. The difference in support can be attributed to the level of experience within each of the foreign forces. In the case of Det 101, it is reasonable to assume the Burmese Guerrillas had more tactical experience than the 2nd Bolivian Rangers. The Burmese guerrillas were built upon a warrior culture and had previous combat experience while the mostly conscripted 2nd Bolivian Rangers had little warfare experience and lacked the stamina for combat at inception. This difference of experience did not change the willingness of each local force to be compelled to combat their adversary. Both forces were willing to endure the hardships of their environment to accomplish their mission, albeit training in La Esperanza, Bolivia, or fight in the jungles of northern Burma.

2. Differences

These cases differed in many ways as the environments and situations required different priorities. Of interest, two differences come to mind. The first was both foreign

³³⁵ United States Special Operations Command, “SOF Truths.”

forces specially selected personnel based on different criteria. The MTT chose personnel primarily based on their partner force experience and combat experience, while Det 101 largely chose personnel with leadership attributes and/or critical function specialties. While the personnel for both cases were chosen for a specific mission, the MTT in Bolivia obtained previously assessed and selected personnel trained in counterinsurgency from an established Special Operations unit tailored for partnership training. Furthermore, a majority of the MTT personnel possessed significant partner force experience in past conflicts such as World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. In contrast, Det 101 personnel, while specially selected from willing and existing Army soldiers, lacked partner force experience. While some in Det 101 had fought during the Pearl Harbor attack, the majority of the personnel volunteered because of their willingness to fight the Japanese aggressors. As illustrated in this thesis, Det 101 overcame their experiential disparity by finding and partnering with highly experienced Burmese fighters and members of the British SOE. While the selection criteria of both personnel varied between both cases, it is still important as it is indicative of selecting talent rather than just marshalling personnel.

Another difference between the two cases is that Det 101 integrated with Burmese tribes to gain information while the MTT mission did not need to collect information to develop its plans to develop the Bolivian Ranger Battalion. For Det 101, gaining information became essential to creating strategic effects in their environment. Det 101's ability to leverage their geographic placement in war-torn Burma is a credit upon themselves partnering with the Burmese Indigenous people. While the MTT integrated with the indigenous population surrounding La Esperanza, conducted tactical intelligence training, and collected timely information regarding insurgent strength, this was a biproduct of their mission and integration in La Esperanza. As previously illustrated, the two CIA Agents, Rodriguez and Villoldo, were directly attributable to the successful intelligence network that brought down Che Guevara and his guerrillas, but their collection line of effort was external to the MTT mission.

3. Observations of note

Within the context of best practices, two additional efforts are noteworthy. First, both units were comprised of highly flexible personnel and adaptable processes. Det 101 showed flexibility in their processes after they attempted an ADVON insertion for A-Group and a whole unit insertion with B-Group and W-Group. After the loss of B-Group and W-Group, Det 101 modified their processes to always maintain a reception party on the ground prior to all airborne insertions. Similarly, the MTT packed two C-130 airplanes full of supplies for a six month stay in Bolivia, but after meeting and assessing their partner force, they had to request additional supplies from SOUTHCOM, which adapted their logistics process they previously thought adequate when they encountered the ill-prepared Bolivian conscript without adequate uniforms, weapons, and equipment. The environmental hardships in Burma forced Det 101 American personnel to initially follow the Burmese guerrillas rather than lead operations like they had planned. Although the medics of the MTT were highly knowledgeable of flora and fauna dangers in Bolivia, SFC Chapa nearly died from a snakebite until the MTT trusted in a local villager to save his life. These examples illustrate that partnering with local forces require highly flexible personnel and adaptable processes to progress toward a strategic outcome.

Secondly, in each case the higher echelon of support for both deployed elements was in close geographic proximity to the respective tactical ground unit. This situation allowed for a highly effective support system for the ground unit's operations. While advances in technology has allowed more current-day operations to decrease the relative distance for command, communication, and intelligence, logistical support still requires the ability of ones' own military to move the support physically and quickly to the ground element. When Det 101 found their base of operations in Nazira, India, the location provided adequate shelter, privacy, and more than anything, proximity to Burma, their future subordinate area of operations, and adjacent unit support. This location was significant to Det 101 as it was geographically close to the theater of war, which supported air and ground missions through radio communication lines and overland runner possibilities while minimizing the risk of Japanese attack. Similarly, the 8th SAF, the higher echelon for the MTT, was situated in Fort Gulick, Panama which was a central hub for

SOUTHCOM and all Central and South American operations. While the 3500-kilometer distance between Bolivia and Panama is significant, the MTT mitigated the distance by leveraging the SOUTHCOM logistical support through sound planning and constant communications with SOUTHCOM and their subordinate units in Panama. With the choice for both higher echelon units to be geographically near their subordinate, both units were more likely to be logistically supported.

D. FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

Studying historical cases provides an opportunity for the force to understand the past's best practices that can be applied in the competition continuum. Since World War II, the United States has integrated partners and allies as a matter of deterrence. This is in large part why the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was created. The principle of a shared defense will continue within this organization, as Finland joined in 2023 and Sweden has applied to become the 32nd member.³³⁶ Drawing on the analysis of historical cases empowers strategic thinking and application for continued deterrence and within conflict. As stated in the National Defense Strategy of 2022, as technology advances, the priorities to conduct operations from competition to conflict with allies and partners remains the same.³³⁷

This research was aligned with the USSOCOM strategic framework which states U.S. SOF must enhance ally and partner relationships to increase understanding, bolster deterrence and create opportunities.³³⁸ The United States Army's 1st Special Forces Command (1st SFC) dubs this the "indigenous approach," which stresses that Special Forces interoperability is the key to a partnered Irregular Warfare force.³³⁹ The approach

³³⁶ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "NATO Member Countries," Informational, NATO, June 2023, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52044.htm.

³³⁷ Austin, "The 2022 National Defense Strategy of The United States of America," 1.

³³⁸ "USSOCOM," accessed August 29, 2022, <https://www.socom.mil>.

³³⁹ "USASFC Home Page," accessed August 31, 2022, <https://www.soc.mil/usasfc/hq.html>.

is rooted in the 1st SFC Commander guidance that emphasizes the rebalance of time, effort, and money toward strategic competition and integrated deterrence.³⁴⁰

Future research will include cases of small American forces partnering with a local force on a different continent and in a different theater of competition or conflict. Additional cases will reveal additional best practices that may be beneficial to operational along the competition continuum. Therefore, future research will focus on case studies that are distinct to offer more variation in circumstances and lessons learned of a foreign force partnering with a local force.

This research only focused on United States elements as the foreign force that deploys and works with local elements. Future research may widen the aperture of study to other state actors as the foreign force. In this way, the research could reveal best practices that can be taught to partner forces, who would in turn teach other partner forces. For example, if U.S. Special Forces taught an ally or partner and in turn that force wanted to train a home guard or indigenous force focused on internal security, this further research could reveal efforts not necessarily constrained by U.S. doctrine.

Based on this study's conclusions, I recommend when others study past cases, they use a framework similar to the information, support, and talent variable that results in one of three outcomes. As a Special Forces member, my goal is to perform tactical actions that have operational or strategic effects. Having a framework that evaluates the outcome of historic events may help reinforce how to independently identify my best efforts and gaps to improve. This may be beneficial to other Special Forces leaders as it gives an additional rubric to qualitatively identify performance of a tactical unit.

Further recommendations include studying the best practices identified in this research and applying them to current missions. This research seeks the identification and application of best practices during on-the-ground mission execution and also if they can help achieve operational and strategic effects. Drawing on only two cases, this line of research will lead to additional best practices as this is not the definitive analysis.

³⁴⁰ Lessard, "The Indigenous Approach."

E. CONCLUSION

Both Det 101 and the MTT operated in different environments and under different situations. However, in this research, I did not find any studies that compared the two cases. More importantly, while some would argue the comparison may not be necessary, this research argues studying and comparing historical efforts of foreign forces partnering with local forces is significant, as different environments and situations would yield innovative approaches to the competition continuum.³⁴¹

Through the qualitative analysis framework, my pre-conceived notions of why these cases were successful changed. Without conducting research on Det 101, one could simply surmise that they were successful because of leadership of GEN Donovan and his relationship with President Roosevelt. Furthermore, one could conclude the MTT was successful in Bolivia because Che Guevara and his guerrillas were not prepared to encounter the Bolivian military. While shades of both of these conclusions are correct, they overlook efforts that can allow future military members to glean adequate best practices and apply them, albeit through innovative efforts.

Finlayson, Briscoe, Sacquety and Peers were correct in their respective studies to assume that one of the most important aspects of foreign forces partnering with local forces was that both elements needed a willingness to combat the threat within their respective operational areas. This thesis went further to also identify lines of efforts that were instrumental to success when they complement that willingness.

³⁴¹ Boyd, "Destruction and Creation," 1.

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