

WWII U.S. GLIDER PILOT'S BRIEFING

NATIONAL WWII GLIDER PILOT ASSOCIATION
OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE



**SPECIAL EDITION
OPERATION THURSDAY**



PICCADILLY IS OUT!

Col. John R. Alison, accompanied by General Wingate, reviewed the harrowing photographs of LZ PICCADILLY with his staff just half an hour before takeoff. Despite the impending mission, Alison opposed a reconnaissance of the area, fearing it could alert the Japanese. In response, he questioned, "Who ordered the photo reconnaissance of PICCADILLY?" Col. Cochran candidly admitted, "I had a hunch." Wingate, with a subtle smile, lowered his head, contemplating an immediate alternative plan. "I, therefore, decided to start with BROADWAY alone."

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nww2gpert@gmail.com

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Liaison: 94th Flying Train-
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Technology/Briefing
nwwiigpa@gmail.com

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USMC
At-Large member &
Briefing Editor

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ber

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Immediate Past Chair
r.bruce.overman@gmail.com

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Airborne Troop Carrier
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SPECIAL EDITION

Spring 2024 Special Order # 14

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This edition researched and written by Trevor Shimulunas and Patricia Overman. All photos researched by Tom Martin.

Special thank you to the U. S. National Archives and the U.S. Air Force Historical Research Agency

You are receiving this quarterly briefing as a valued member of the National World War II Glider Pilot Association. Our association operates as an independent 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization with the primary mission of supporting the education and preservation of the history of World War II glider pilots and their remarkable contributions. The content within this briefing is diligently curated by our dedicated members, all of whom contribute their time and expertise voluntarily without financial compensation. Our aim is to provide you with exclusive insights into glider operations and other troop carrier narratives, accompanied by a wealth of information, captivating images, and historical accounts sourced directly from U.S. Military archives and other rare repositories not typically accessible to the public. If you wish to discontinue receiving these publications, please feel free to reach out to Claudia Coggin at claudia.coggin@gmail.com. Your preferences are important to us, and we are here to assist you in any way we can. Thank you for your ongoing support and membership in our association.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The publication of this special edition marks the 80th anniversary of Operation Thursday—the aerial invasion of Burma.

Operation Thursday holds a special place in my heart. My involvement with this wonderful organization was sparked back in 2020 when I reached out to the Leon B Spencer Research Team seeking information on my great-uncle, Leroy Shimulunas, one of the glider pilots who was killed in action during a patrol to Indaw, Burma after he landed his glider in the jungle off-course from Broadway. Because of the dedication of that group of researchers, as well as the legacy forged by the veterans who started this organization, I was able to learn about my relative.

More important than the context I was able to share with my family, however, has been the awe-inspiring realization that Leroy's tale is just one of many. The glider pilots of Operation Thursday were not certain of success—all they were certain of was their mission. On the night of March 5th, 1944 they embarked on a one-way mission over an 8,000ft mountain range to land behind enemy lines where hostile contact was likely.

The men who made it to Broadway had to be innovative as they worked to quickly clear

the landing zone of broken and disabled gliders, knowing that at any moment the Japanese could attack them from the treeline. The pilots went on to provide a critical casualty-evacuation capability to Wingate's men, something that had been unheard of in the previous Burma operation of 1943. The resolve that must have sprung up within the British troops knowing that they would be able to receive fresh supplies, fresh reinforcements, and a ride home must have been refreshing compared to the jungle horrors previously experienced.

As always, I invite you to reach out to us at the below email address so that we can share your insights with the rest of the membership in the following quarter's issue.

briefingeditor.nwwiigpc@gmail.com

Best,

Trevor Shimulunas



F/O Leroy Shimulunas in a portrait taken in his home city of Two Rivers, WI after earning his wings.

LEADING TO OPERATION THURSDAY

BY TREVOR SHIMULUNAS (MAJ USMC)

In 1937, the Empire of Japan became embattled with China in the Second Sino-Japanese War. Japan officially entered World War II in 1940 after they invaded French Indochina. The Japanese Empire had rapidly expanded its influence across Southeast Asia and the Pacific, sparking war in their wake. China, bitterly embroiled in the conflict with Japan, was supplied with war materiel by the Allies.

While under British control, Burma hosted one of two ground lines of supply into China, known as the Burma Road. This supply route ran from Lashio, British Burma, to K'un-ming, China. Originally controlled by the British, Burma was invaded by Japan in 1942 under the pretense of liberation. The Japanese then closed the Burma Road, and with it severed the most critical supply line into China. As these supplies dried up, so too withered the Chinese will to fight. The war could be seen on a turning point in the theater if supply lines were not reopened.

General Wingate in 1943 had attempted a ground invasion of Burma, Operation LONGCLOTH, during which roughly 1/3 of his force were casualties to the Japanese and the Jungle. Despite this, he had been satisfied that such long range penetration was doable. With this in mind, General Wingate was able to convince his superiors to allow him to embark on a subsequent invasion—this time with the support of the Americans. To provision General Wingate in his fight to reopen Burma, General



Arnold, Commanding General of US Army Air Forces committed significant resources to accomplish the mission. Providing two of the most capable Colonels he had to offer, Phil Cochran and John Alison together began pulling assets from across the service to bring together the 5318th Provisional Air Unit, later known as the 1st Air Commando Group. Comprising Bombers, Fighters, Maintainers, Transports, and Gliders, the 1st Air Commandos were task-organized as a self sufficient force capable of putting the British where they needed to be.

No military supply depot was safe from the acquisitions efforts of Cochran and Alison. General Arnold, backed by the Army Commanding General, General Marshall, had given them essentially a blank check to pull the people and gear that they needed. This was not always kindly received by other Theater commanders, but it was respected.

General Wingate's original inclination had been a

ground movement through the Burmese jungle, while being resupplied and evacuating casualties by air. Colonels Cochran and Alison received specific instructions from General Arnold that they were to do all they could to support General Wingate. Colonel Alison recalled the following instructions from General Arnold.

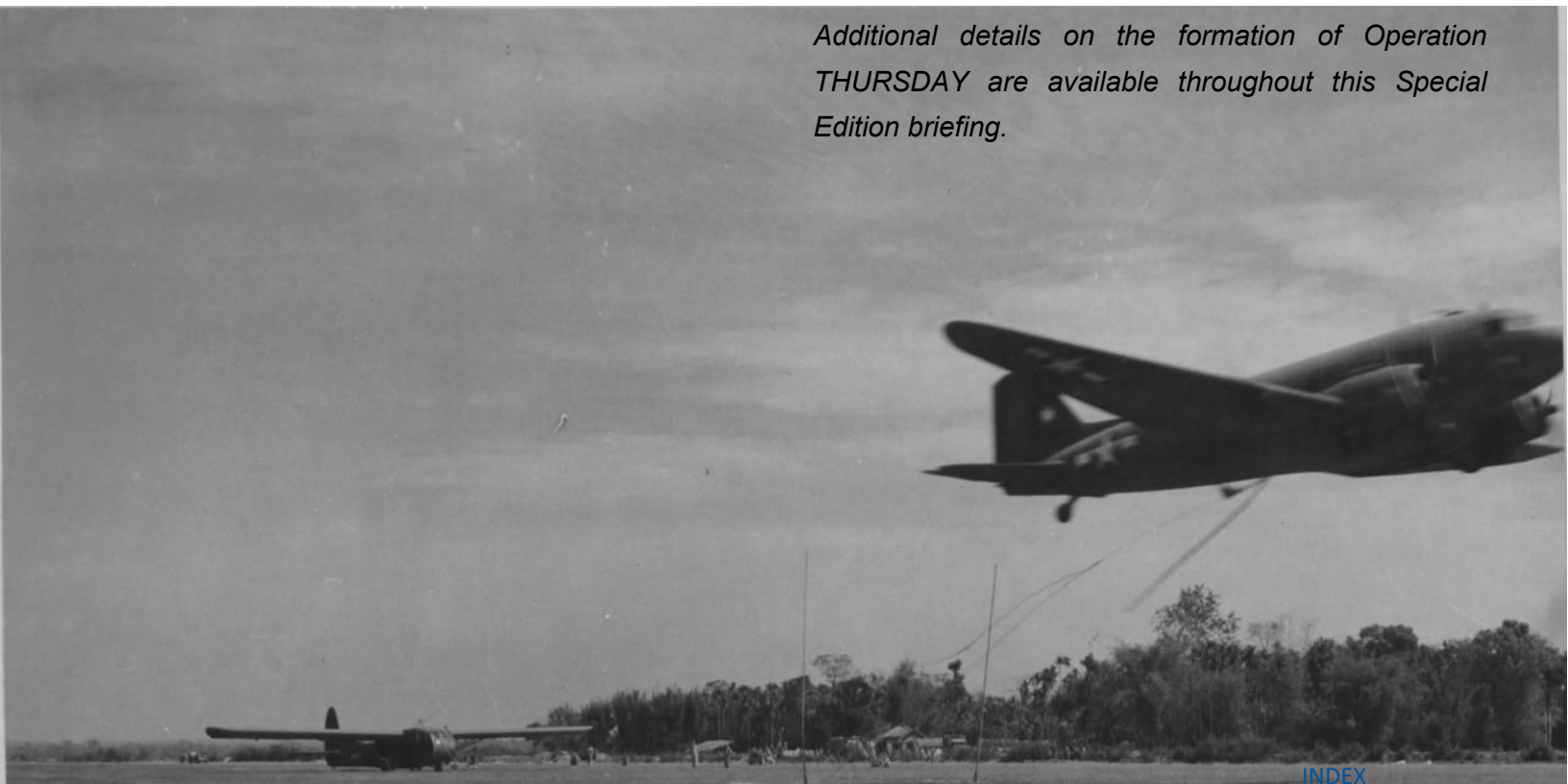
“I am giving you 200 L-5 and L-1 type aircraft. I want you to go in there and take out General Wingate’s wounded...I not only want you to do that...but I want the USAAF to spearhead General Wingate’s operations.”

Once the Americans got involved in Burma, Colonel Cochran quickly injected himself into Wingate’s plans. The details of Operation Thursday came together. One of Wingate’s brigades would march into Burma while two brigades would be flown behind enemy lines. Utilizing gliders, the 1st Air Commandos would deliver British Chindits to secret landing zones where inserted engineers and equipment would

allow construction of expeditionary airfields.

From these airfields, heavier transport aircraft would fly in the rest of General Wingate’s forces. These men would go on to establish multiple strongpoints behind enemy lines, enveloping Japanese forces there. The Allies would conduct patrols, attacks, and would sever Japanese lines of communications wherever they could. This would make the pressure too great on the Japanese and would ultimately allow the ground transport of war supplies for China to resume. Supplies flown over the Hump and supplies moved by ground were critical to the ongoing Chinese war effort. Had China fallen out of the war, Japan would be free to redistribute their forces to other fronts. General Wingate’s second invasion of Burma mirrored some of his objectives from the first—but this time the Chindits would not have to walk, and wounded could be effectively evacuated.

Additional details on the formation of Operation THURSDAY are available throughout this Special Edition briefing.



5318 PROVISIONAL AIR UNIT PERSONNEL ARE TRANSFERRED TO THE CHINA BURMA INDIA THEATER

SPECIAL ORDERS)
NUMBER . 71)

HEADQUARTERS CHINA BURMA INDIA
AIR FORCES TRAINING COMMAND (PROV)
A.P.O. 882, 26 November 1943

1. Pursuant to radio instructions, Hq AAF I-B Sector, 26 November 1943, M/Sgt HENRY J. RADO, 19000851, AC, having reported to this Hq in compliance with Ltr Orders, AAF, Hq Weather Wing, Asheville, N.C., Subj: "Orders", dtd 4 November 1943, is asgd to 10th Weather Sq, and WF via 1st available air and/or rail T fr APO 882 to APO 885, reporting upon arrival thereat to the CO, 10th Weather Sq, for dy.

In lieu of subs an alws of \$6.00 is authorized for travel by air. If travel by rail is performed and if it is impractical for the Govt to furnish cooking facilities for rats, the Fin C will pay in advance to this EM travel alws at the rate of \$3.00 per day for three (3) days travel by rail fr APO 882 to APO 885 in accordance with Par 1g, AR 35-4820, and Par 17, AR 35-4520. Final adjustment of monetary alws will be made upon completion of the journey. FDGA 3 P 431-02 A 0425-24. TDN. (Release #77, Hq AAF I-B Sector)

2. SECRET.

3. The following named O and EM, 5318th Provisional Air Unit, WF via 1st available air T fr APO 882 to APO 465, reporting upon arrival thereat to 1st Lt VINCENT J. ROSE, 01166596, for dy:

Capt WILLIAM H. TAYLOR, Jr, 0338838
2nd Lt PATRICK H. HADSELL, 0674268
2nd Lt STEVE T. UMINSKI, 0534944
2nd Lt ROBERT P. SHARROCK, 0671209
2nd Lt RICHARD E. KUENSTLER, 0437163
2nd Lt DONALD A. LEFEVRE, 0536811
2nd Lt GERALD L. ARKFIELD, 0559008
2nd Lt CHARLES B. LISTON, 0529445
2nd Lt LOUIS R. NEWELL, 0673715
2nd Lt ALVIN J. PLOUFF, 0532993
F/O JOHN L. COOGAN, T604
F/O KENNETH GEORGESON, T121325
F/O LEROY C. SHIMULUNIS, T121188
F/O MORRIS M. BAREN, T121820
F/O KENNETH JOHNSON, T60741
F/O BERNARD P. MCGAULLEY, T1194
F/O FRANCIS L. RANDALL, T851
F/O JAMES K. ROLLINS, T465
F/O MARLYN O. SATROM, T549
F/O BRUCE WILLIAMS, T1230
F/O JAMES T. CLEMENS, T1122
F/O ALLEN HALL, Jr, T121130
F/O NIMROD F. HANKINS, T121842
F/O HOWARD E. JOHNSON, T122141

2nd Lt ROBERT L. DOWE, 0529702
2nd Lt SOLOMAN SCHNITZER, 0532948
2nd Lt NEAL J. BLUSH, 0535775
2nd Lt CARVIN A. MILES, 0529689
2nd Lt KENNETH L. WELLS, 0535786
2nd Lt JAMES E. SEWER, 0529263
2nd Lt DONALD E. SENSE, 0520801
2nd Lt VIRGIL E. SCORBY, 0562001
2nd Lt JACKSON J. SHINKLE, 0530730
F/O JAMES S. BARTLETT, T121708
F/O CLIFFORD C. PEDERSON, T727
F/O ERWIN H. LAVARIE, T121541
F/O SAMUEL L. ALTMAN, T121407
F/O WILLIAM C. DIXON, T121047
F/O CHARLES R. HON, T121066
F/O JOHN F. NEWLAND, T121368
F/O WILLIAM C. RITZINGER, T1230
F/O EUGENE L. RULZ, T60840
F/O TROY C. SHAM, T553
F/O HADLEY D. BALDWIN, T436
F/O ROBERT E. EVERETT, T617
F/O ROBERT C. HALL, T121422
F/O RONALD A. HENNIG, T60732
F/O NESBIT L. MARTIN, T121034

R E S T R I C T E D

R E S T R I C T E D

Par 3, SO #71, Hq CBI AF Tng Comd (Prov), 26 November 1943. (Cont'd)

F/O MARTIN J. MCTIGUE, T60765
F/O ROBERT WAGNER, T566
F/O MAINORD H. WEAVER, TL21194
F/O LEO ZUK, T216
F/O ROBERT S. CHAMBERS, TL21978
F/O WILLIAM M. HEALY, TL21844
F/O GENE A. KELLY, TL22294
F/O HARRY L. HICKAIG, T60887
F/O VERNON NOLAND, TL22153
F/O JIM PATTERSON, T845
F/O EDWARD G. SCOTT, TL21465
F/O JAMES W. TATE, TL21287

F/O SAMUEL F. STEINMARK, TL21474
F/O EARL O. WALLER, TL273
F/O RUSSELL J. WEST, T479
F/O FRED W. ALCOTT, TL071
F/O JOHN E. GOTHAM, T622
F/O THOMAS A. HIGHT, Jr, TL317
F/O EDMOND LOPEZ, T60375
F/O BILLY MOHR, T833
F/O BISHOP PARROTT, TL21555
F/O JOHN H. PRICE, Jr, T657
F/O WALTER M. STEINKE, TL21283
F/O CHARLES B. TURNER, TL299

T/Sgt PERRY L. GARTEN, 37233543
S/Sgt MUNCY E. ADAMS, 38273601
Sgt RICHARD H. ARMSTRONG, 37229970
Sgt MARION L. CLAY, 39098601
Sgt WILLIAM J. MCMAHON, 35285706
Cpl ROBERT S. BOVEY, 33058271
Cpl JOHN A. KINNER, 16025774
Pfc GLENN R. HANSDORFF, 38361944
Pfc LINN E. MAGOFFIN, 39282509
Pfc FRED M. PUGH, Jr, 18098757
Pfc GEORGE C. WHEELOCK, Jr, 38350360
Sgt JOHN J. RAYNAK, 35529166
Pfc WALTER C. STELTER, 37504309

S/Sgt LESTER C. MILBRECHT, 37268595
S/Sgt ROBERT BICKNELL, Jr, 38109667
Sgt GEORGE H. CANCELMBE, Jr, 18149257
Sgt JOSEPH F. GAMBILL, 18125392
Cpl WILLIE J. ANNOLD, 38271714
Cpl ROBERT E. HENDERSON, 11037911
Cpl EDGAR V. MCDOWELL, 37222151
Pfc ROBERT D. KINNEY, 36741548
Pfc ESTIL I. NIENABER, 17077642
Pfc CHARLES J. USEY, 38376163
Pfc DONALD L. JOHNSON, 37554656
Pvt JOE F. SAPARINO, 33230792
T/Sgt EDMOND LAFONTUNE, 11009508

In lieu of subs a flat per diem and/or alws of \$6.00 is authorized for travel by air, except that at points where required to perform temp dy and where Govt billets are furn, the C are authorized a per diem of \$3.00 and the EM alws as prescribed in Table II, Par 2a, AR 35-4520. FDGA 3 F 431-02 A 0425-24. TD

4. 2nd Lt JAMES J. MCGARTIN, 0804340, AC, is rel'd fr asgd to Hq CBI AF Tng Comd (Prov), asgd to Hq Chinese American CTU (Prov), and will report to the CC thereof, for dy.

Motor T will be furn by the TC.

5. Pursuant to radio instructions, Hq AAF I-B Sector, 16 November 1943, the following named C and EM, Shipment AF-664-AA, having reported to this Hq in compliance with Par 13, SO #12, Hq Sta #10, Caribbean Wing, AFG, Floridian Hotel, Miami Beach, Fla., dtd 26 October 1943, as amended, are asgd to Hq CBI Air Service Command, and TP via 1st available air T fr APO 332 to APO 335, reporting upon arrival threath to the CG, Hq CBI Air Service Command, for further asgmt and dy:

Capt WENDELL W. CUTCLIFFE, 0913822
2nd Lt WILLIAM C. RICHARDS, 0576043

R E S T R I C T E D

PREPARATIONS FOR THE INVASION OF BURMA

LALAGHAT AIR FIELD, INDIA



Glider pilots of the 1st Air Commando Force pose in front of a glider and below pose in front of camouflaged gliders at Lalaghat, India



SECTION III - OPERATION THURSDAY

8. The Plan.

a. General plans for Operation "Thursday", as the airborne invasion of BURMA was styled, were made in conferences at NEW DELHI and at COMILLA, the latter Headquarters for the 14th Army and the 3rd Tactical Air Force. The details were worked out by General WINGATE and the COCHRAN-ALISON Air Commando Force. Co-ordination of the general air effort, involving the part to be played by 224 Group and 221 Group of the 3rd Tactical Air Force and the Troop Carrier Command, was effected at a meeting in COMILLA 24 February.

b. Operation "Thursday" is remarkable in that no one commander was given direct charge of the whole enterprise, which hence relied solely upon the co-operation of the various BRITISH and AMERICAN Army and Air Units involved. Besides the First Air Commando Force, these were the 14th Army (Lt. Gen. W.J. SLIM, CB, CBE, DSO, MC) with its 3rd INDIAN Division (Major General WINGATE), the 3rd Tactical Air Force (Air Marshal Sir John BALDWIN) and Troop Carrier Command (Brigadier General William D. OLD, USAAF). In the later stages the air commando force was brought under the operational control of the 3rd Tactical Air Force, but for all practical purposes each of the three air organizations was autonomous. The personality of General WINGATE is such that he likewise is believed to enjoy unusual freedom of action.

c. The general plan called for the air commando force to fly in both the 77 and 111 Brigades of WINGATE'S 3rd Indian Division by night helped by aircraft of the Troop Carrier Command. Meantime, the third brigade of the same division, 16 Brigade, was to march in from the NORTH. According to Operational Instruction No. 5/44 of the 3rd Tactical Air Force.

"The Air Task Force is charged with assisting in the operations of 3rd INDIAN Division and in particular facilitating:

- "(a) the forward movement of L.R.F. columns,
- "(b) The supply and evacuation of these columns,
- "(c) Providing a small covering and striking force in support thereof".

d. The strategic situation along the INDIA-BURMA front at the time may be summarized as follows: (See Map, Appendix "B"):

- (1) The ARAKAN front in the SOUTH was stable along the MAUNCDAW-BUTHIDAUNG line after 14 corps had succeeded (largely by supply-dropping) in extricating itself from a serious situation caused by a JAPANESE flanking infiltration.

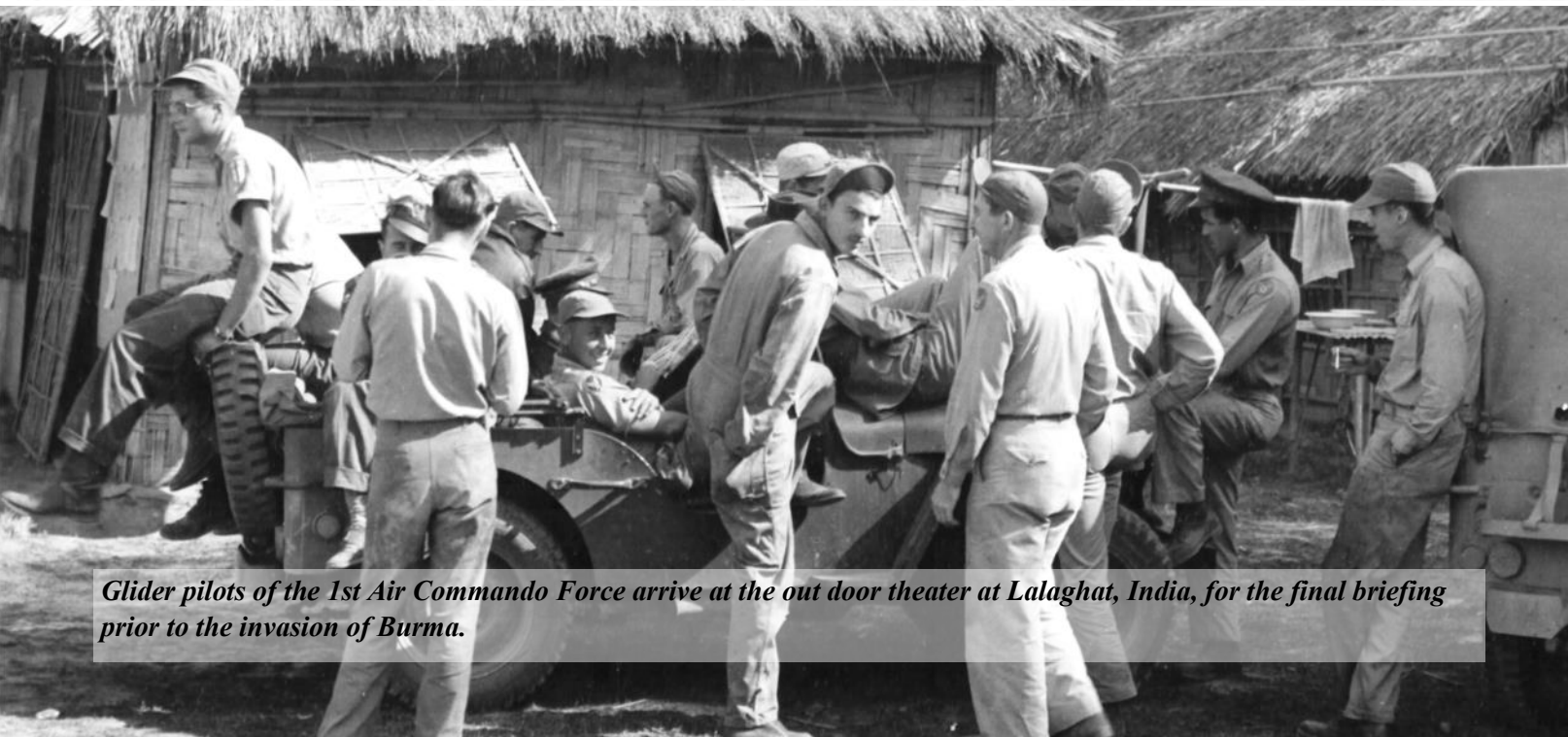
From JICA/CBI, New Delhi, India, Report 1448 date 29 March 1944

- (2) A JAPANESE offensive of considerable proportions was developing along the CENTRAL CHIN HILLS front, involving a serious threat to IMPHAL itself and the MANIPUR Road that serves the three divisions then deployed on that front.
- (3) The CHINESE-AMERICAN forces under Lt. Gen. Joseph W. STILWELL were making steady progress in their advance down the RUKAWNO VALLEY, in NORTHERN BURMA.

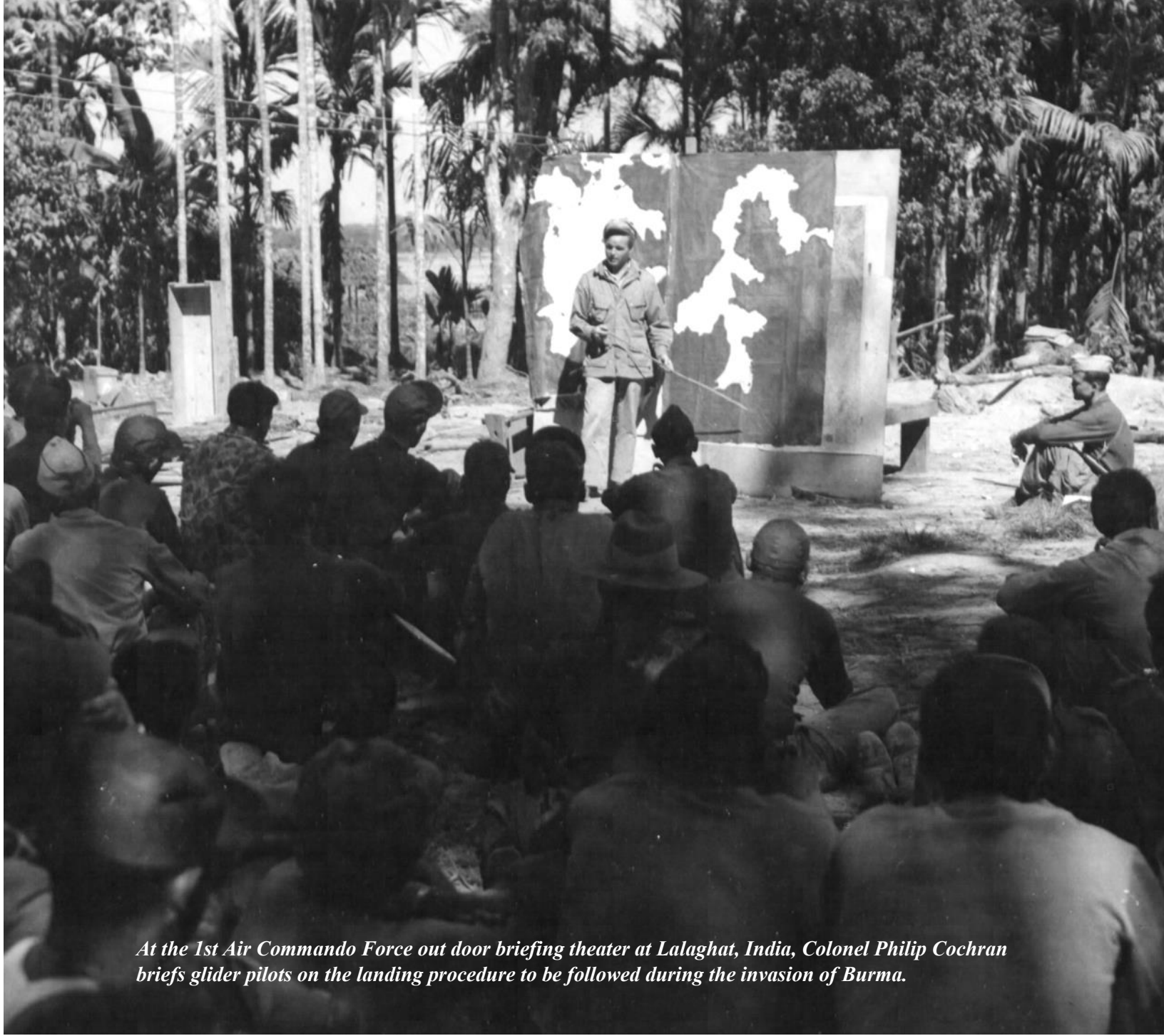
e. Purpose of the WINGATE expedition is considered to be cutting the JAPANESE lines of communication with NORTH BURMA, permitting the possible entrapment of the JAPANESE forces in that area and, as a consequence, securing the advance of the LEDO Road to CHINA. (The effect of the airborne invasion behind the JAPANESE offensive on the CENTRAL BURMA front is still, at this date, a matter of conjecture).

f. Two secret landing grounds in NORTH BURMA were selected by the WINGATE invasion force and designated BROADWAY and PICCADILLY, in keeping with the Joint AMERICAN-BRITISH effort. BROADWAY is located approximately 25 miles EAST of MOKHYIN; PICCADILLY is about 20 miles SOUTH OF BROADWAY. (See map, appendix "C". Detailed loading plans were drafted by the WINGATE organization, based on the use of the two fields. Bulldozers were to be placed in the first night's gliders to help prepare the fields for C-47 transports to follow.

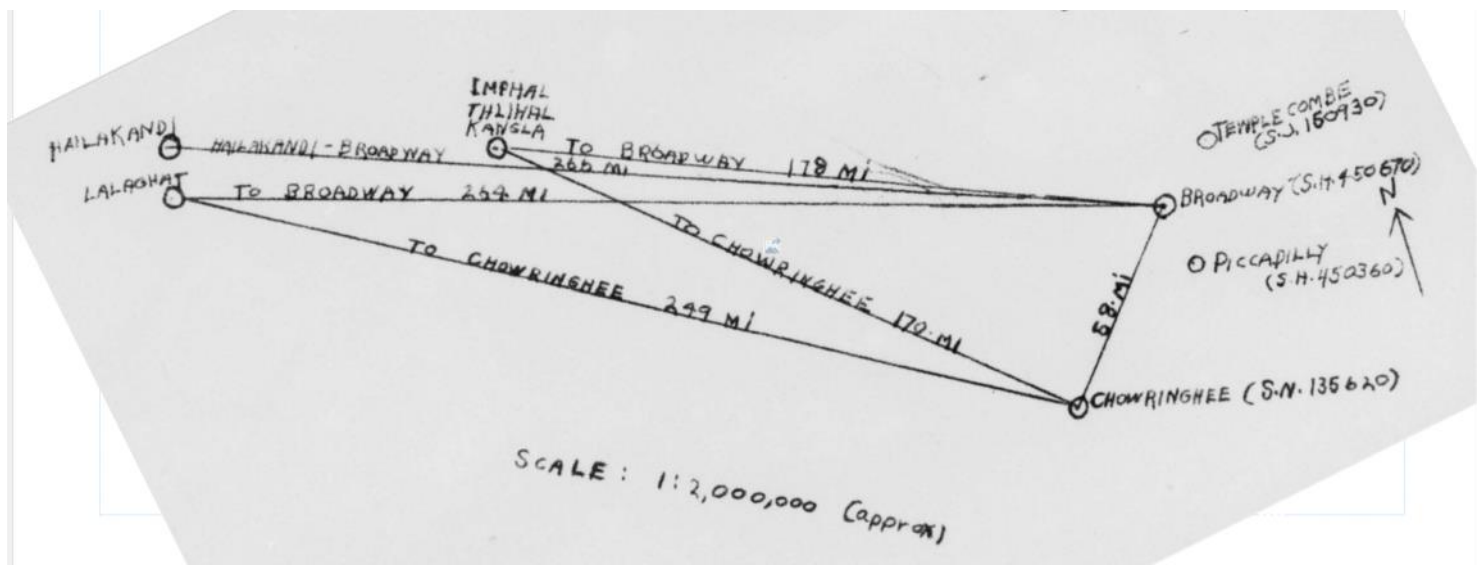
g. Beginning the first of March, both the Strategic and Tactical Air Forces launched attacks on enemy airdromes and all photo reconnaissance units were ordered to concentrate on any enemy aircraft count, particularly YOUNGOO AND NORTHWARD. In addition, arrangements were made for the dropping of special equipment that simulated ground fire on various parts of BURMA the night of the operation. It was decided that neither BROADWAY nor PICCADILLY would be photographed preceding the operation, to avoid all chance of drawing the enemy's attention to that area.



Glider pilots of the 1st Air Commando Force arrive at the out door theater at Lalaghat, India, for the final briefing prior to the invasion of Burma.



At the 1st Air Commando Force out door briefing theater at Lalaghat, India, Colonel Philip Cochran briefs glider pilots on the landing procedure to be followed during the invasion of Burma.



This glider suffered very little damage during the night landing of the 1st Air Commando Force at Broadway Field, Burma.



Glider pilots cooperated in assembling the wings, tail structures and connections on gliders of the 1st Air Commando Forces..



CG-4A gliders of the 1st Air Commando Force getting ready for action at Lalaghat, India

Tow ropes which had been lined on racks bordering the field at Lalaghat, India, were placed in position in front of the 1st Air Commando gliders so that as each transport moved into position, the tow lines could be attached to the gliders and tow plane more easily.





Glider mock-up built of bamboo for practice seating of "Gurka" troops of the 1st Air Commando Force based at Hailakandi, Assam, India. The CG-4A glider specification for seating was 15. Two pilots and 13 troops. It was documented that the gliders were loaded with 16 to 18 Gurkas. And over weighted with unauthorized extra ammunition.

Alison, Cochran and Wingate are looking at a photo of the landing area of PICCADILLY. Below is what they see on the photo. Take off for PICCADILLY and BROADWAY is scheduled in half an hour. Although Cochran okayed the reconnaissance of the LZ, it was Captain Charles "Rush" Russhon's hunch which had convinced Col. Cochran to let him check out PICCADILLY, preventing countless crashes in the blocked landing zone.



9. D Day.

a. The signal for D Day came on 5 March when Air Marshal BALDWIN sent the following message to all units concerned:

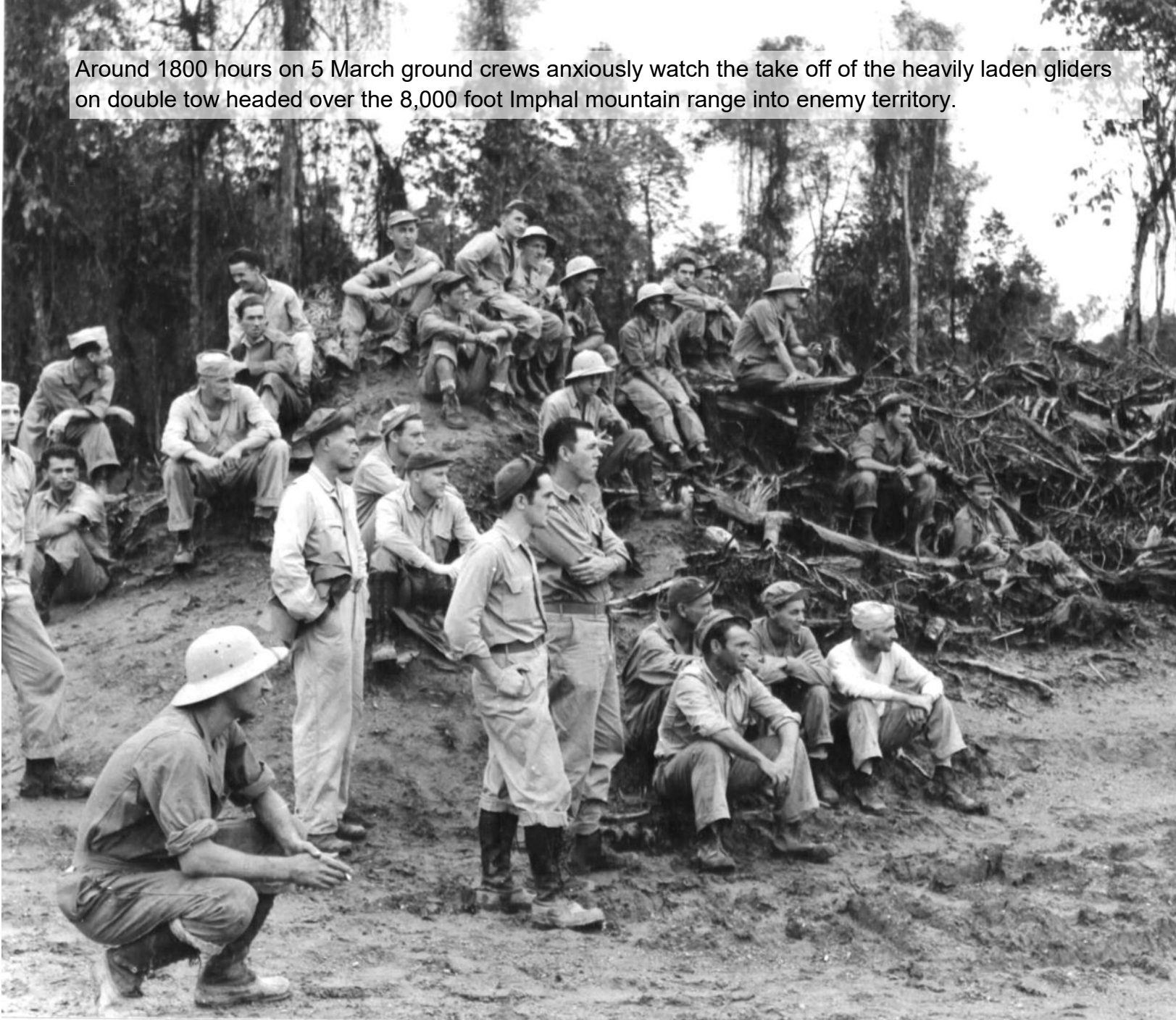
"Weather is suitable. Carry out Operation Thursday".

b. Mid-day on 5 March Colonel COCHRAN - on a "hunch" - ordered a B-25 photo reconnaissance of BROADWAY and PICCADILLY (Lt. RUSSHOW) to make certain the fields were undisturbed. Despite the strictest security that prevented even members of the air commando force from knowing where they were going until the actual briefing for the mission, no one could be sure the JAPANESE had not planned an ambush.

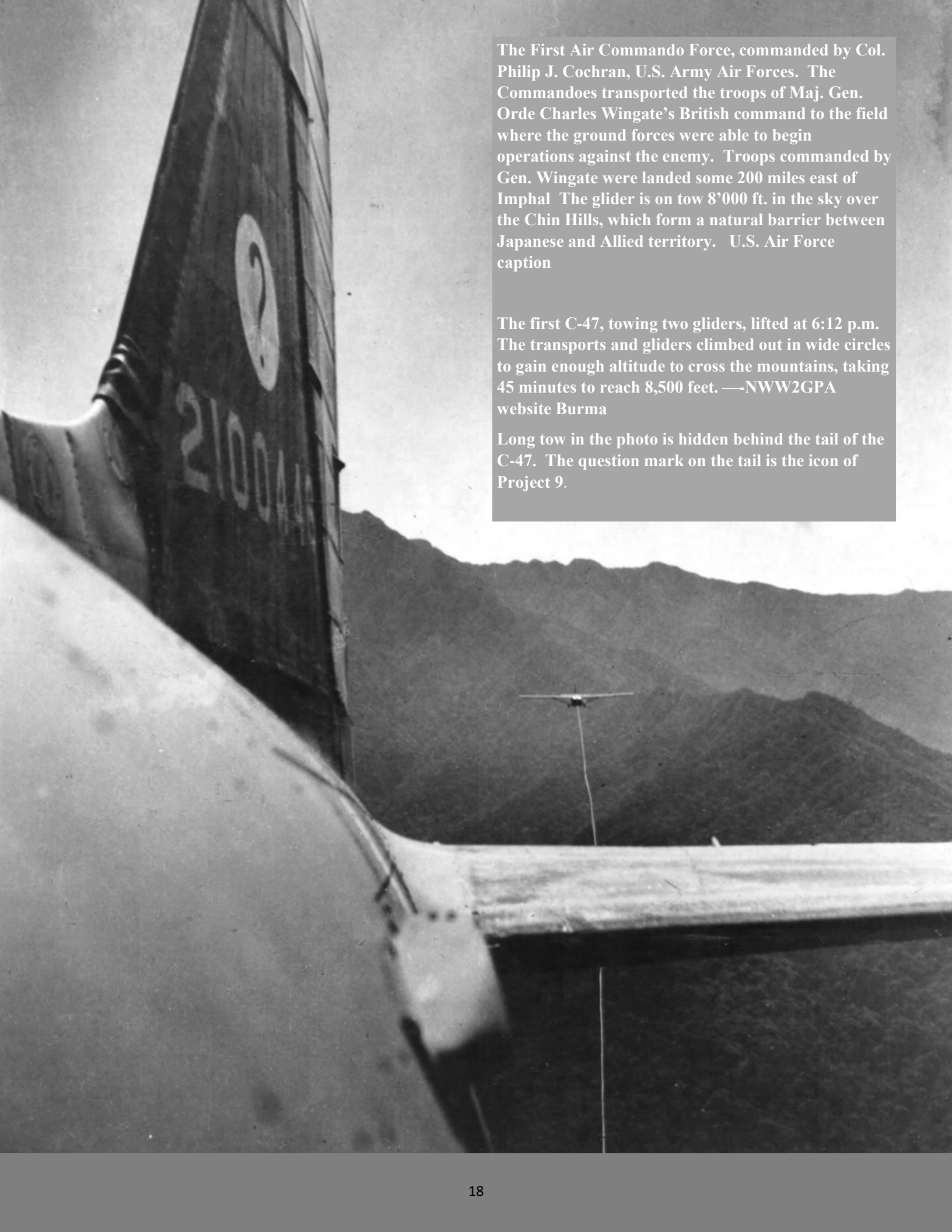
c. The D Day operations were to be from LALAGHAT, the glider and transport base 12 miles SOUTH of HAILALANDI. Transport planes were lined at one end of the runway, to the right. Long nylon tow ropes, rigged for double-tow, lay nearby. CG-4A gliders were massed to the left. Glider troops were grouped into parties in a woods. Just at the end of the runway. General WINGATE directed loading operations from a small tent. The time for the first take-off was 1740, which would place the gliders over BROADWAY and PICCADILLY just after dusk.

d. Fifteen minutes before the time for take-off, the gliders loaded, and all personnel briefed for either BROADWAY or PICCADILLY, enlarged photographs of the two fields arrived. They showed PICCADILLY hopelessly obstructed. Large tree trunks had been dragged to all parts of the field - all but one small portion, which might be mined. Did the JAPANESE know all about the invasion? Was the enemy ready for what had to be a surprise? That was the questions raised by this picture:

Around 1800 hours on 5 March ground crews anxiously watch the take off of the heavily laden gliders on double tow headed over the 8,000 foot Imphal mountain range into enemy territory.



First gliders of the 1st air Commando Force take off from Lalaghat, India for the flight to Broadway, Burma



The First Air Commando Force, commanded by Col. Philip J. Cochran, U.S. Army Air Forces. The Commandoes transported the troops of Maj. Gen. Orde Charles Wingate's British command to the field where the ground forces were able to begin operations against the enemy. Troops commanded by Gen. Wingate were landed some 200 miles east of Imphal. The glider is on tow 8'000 ft. in the sky over the Chin Hills, which form a natural barrier between Japanese and Allied territory. U.S. Air Force caption

The first C-47, towing two gliders, lifted at 6:12 p.m. The transports and gliders climbed out in wide circles to gain enough altitude to cross the mountains, taking 45 minutes to reach 8,500 feet. —NWW2GPA website Burma

Long tow in the photo is hidden behind the tail of the C-47. The question mark on the tail is the icon of Project 9.



BURMA—An unruly glider which was released from the tow plane, landed in a nearby field with none injured.

The gliders were overloaded with both men and ammunition. The glider can hold 15 men including the pilot but these gliders were loaded with up to 18/19 men. Unbeknownst to the glider pilots, many of the Chindits carried along extra ammunition packs and rations. Those who had taken part in Wingate's previous ground invasion of Burma did not intend to be caught out again on short supplies. Many of the gliders/ tow ropes broke either shortly after takeoff or at the high elevation over the hills.

REPORT ON MEDICAL ACTIVITIES AT BROADWAY

RESEARCHED AND EDITED BY PATRICIA OVERMAN

Preparations for the Broadway invasion were meticulously completed well in advance, involving the assembly of equipment and the readiness of gliders for the efficient evacuation of wounded personnel. The equipment, totaling approximately two hundred pounds, was divided into three distinct components: a splint set, a box of plasma, and additional dressings.

Specifically, two gliders were configured to accommodate six litters each. The design allowed for flexible deployment, enabling swift setup, folding, and convenient storage as needed. An additional glider was equipped with a single litter, foldable against the fuselage, serving as a receiving station in case setting up in the trees proved impractical. Simultaneously, a parallel set of three gliders was prepared for the Piccadilly invasion. However, as only Broadway was utilized, gliders configured for twenty-six litter cases departed from the main base.

Captain Tulloch's glider touched down at Broadway at 2150, experiencing a bumpy yet uneventful landing. The commencement of actual medical work coincided with the arrival, triggered by an incident involving an occupant from one of the four preceding gliders. This individual had crashed his glider when the landing gear failed, resulting in a crushed finger. Treatment options were limited, primarily involving a dry dressing, as subsequent gliders had landed with varying degrees of success. Due to the insufficient availability of litters, a

relocation to the site of these gliders became necessary. Injuries up to this point were generally minor, stemming from the challenges posed by the rough ground and landing gear losses.

Around this juncture, two British medical officers arrived and established their operations on the east side of the area. An agreement was forged with them to manage all injuries occurring on their side of the field due to the escalating hazards posed by the frequent arrival of gliders, occurring at a rate of two every two and a half minutes. One glider crashed in the jungle while attempting a 360-degree turn to lose altitude, with a second glider experiencing a similar fate but at a deeper location.

Captain Tulloch took charge, enlisting the assistance of British soldiers to transport the flight service chest and plasma to the nearest crash site. At this location, nine men out of the twenty occupants were found alive. The glider had landed on its nose, resulting in all the deceased individuals being jammed in the wreckage.

The most severely injured individual suffered compound fractures of both femurs, alongside an undetermined chest injury, and was in severe shock. Despite administering plasma and morphine, he succumbed to his injuries in about half an hour. Another person with a broken hip and in shock received plasma, resulting in a successful recovery. Another individual

had a broken shoulder but was in good general condition and received morphine. At that moment, three individuals were simultaneously receiving plasma. The remaining injured individuals were generally in good condition, with minor fractures, lacerations, and contusions. All but the first case progressed well and were successfully evacuated by air the following day.

Captain Tulloch then embarked on a mission with three British soldiers to locate the second glider in the jungle. After an hour of searching, it became apparent that finding it in the dark was impossible. Given the numerous crashes heard on the field, the decision was made to return and assist the British medical officers.

Simultaneously, gliders were landing and experiencing difficulties, such as losing landing gear and ground looping across the field. The initial plan was for occupants to disembark and push the glider to the field's edge upon landing. However, due to the rough ground, many gliders lost their gear and became immovable, resulting in seven collisions between gliders. Four men were killed on the field and many injured. These were attended by the British medical officers and their enlisted men. The medical care of all was completed at 0530 hours (5:30 am).

Shortly after daybreak, the writer and the American Security Officer organized a search party to locate the second glider, knowing it was down in the jungle. After two hours of an ineffectual search, the party returned to the base. Meanwhile, two British officers had left

the glider and made their way to the field. Both were dazed and provided meager directions regarding the glider's location, mentioning that some men were still alive. The party resumed the search, thoroughly combing the area, but dense foliage obscured the glider. After another two hours of searching, light planes were approaching, prompting a decision to return to camp and seek their assistance.

The glider was eventually spotted by an L-5 after organizing the party and following a definite compass course. The glider was found with three survivors and fifteen casualties, who were treated on the spot and transported back to camp on litters. Notably, neither of the gliders in the jungle had safety belts utilized by passengers, prompting the observation that "undoubtedly many more would have been saved had they been used."

During the extraction of the last wounded individuals, some were evacuated by L-1s. As darkness fell, engineers prepared a strip for C-47s to land. These planes brought in more troops and evacuated the remaining wounded. In total, approximately twenty litter cases and fifteen wounded who could sit were evacuated by air. All safely arrived back in Allied hands, marking a commendable achievement given that the activity took place over a hundred miles behind enemy lines.

A summary of the events revealed the unfortunate loss of four Americans and twenty-seven British and Gurkhas, with approximately forty individuals wounded in the same proportions.

Of these, fifteen were successfully evacuated, while the remainder sustained only minor injuries. Importantly, none of the deaths or injuries were attributed to enemy action.

Many gliders found it necessary to detach from tow planes en route, including those carrying the other Flight Surgeon and numerous litters. To date, there has been no definitive information regarding their fate. [see Murphy]

The S-3 officer reported that Capt. Tulloch's report was perceived as exceedingly modest by others who read it and were eyewitnesses. Four days after the actual occurrence, he visited Broadway and observed the aftermath of the events on the evening of March 5th.

Engaging in discussions about the medical situation with two British medical officers provided valuable insights from their unique perspective. Both officers spoke highly of Captain Tulloch, expressing that without his assistance, they were uncertain how they would have managed. It was noted that the only plasma to successfully reach the strip was from Captain Tulloch's equipment. A British doctor mentioned that he initially had some of his medical equipment, but his Brigadier, at the last moment, directed him to leave it behind in favor of ordnance equipment.

Broadway landing.

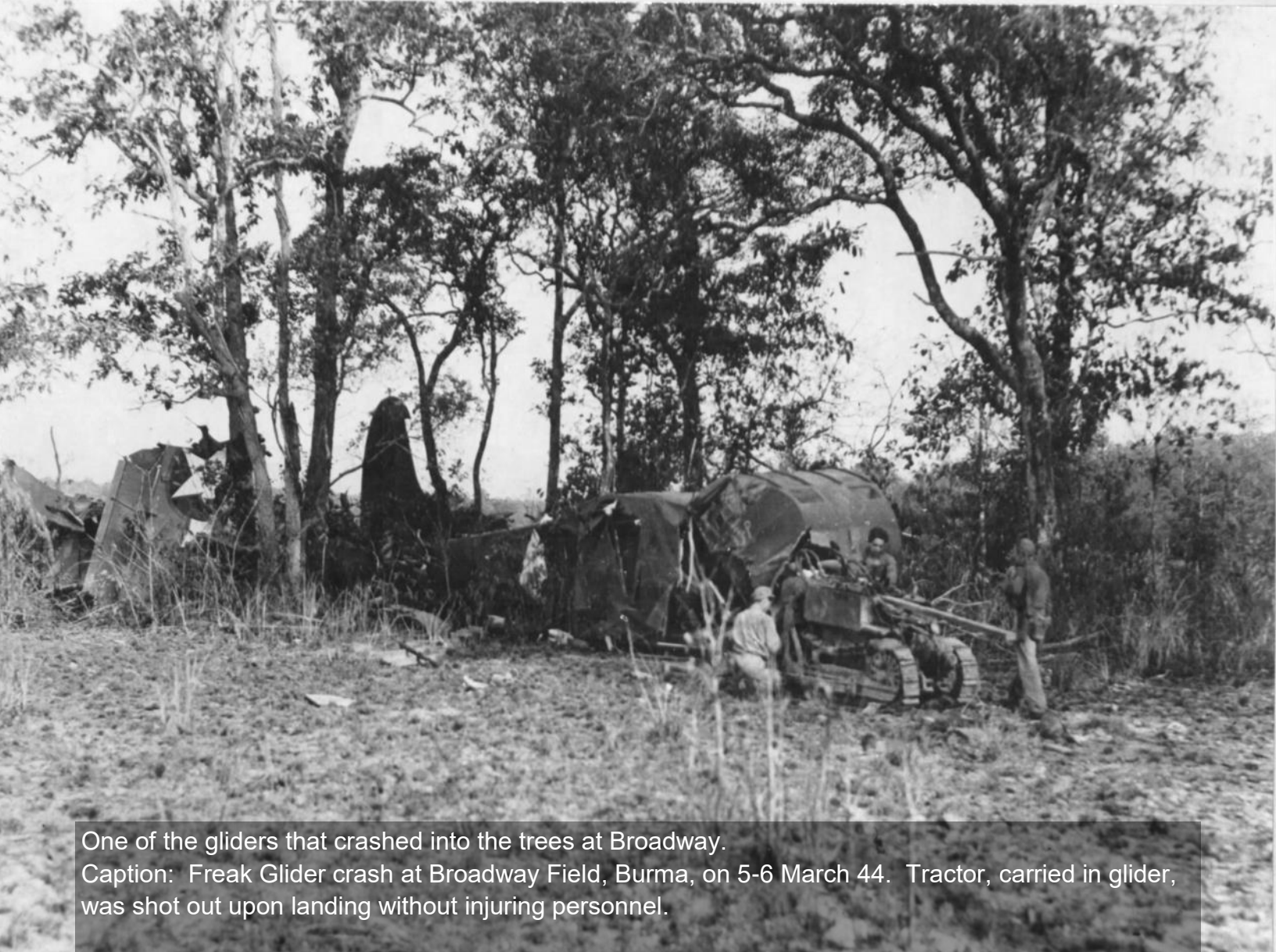




Colonel John R. Alison (left) poses with an unidentified British Officer (center) and Major William H. Taylor, Jr. (right) beside a glider of the 1st Air Commando Forces at Broadway, Burma. By this time all gliders have landed.



One of the gliders that crashed into the trees at Broadway.



One of the gliders that crashed into the trees at Broadway.
Caption: Freak Glider crash at Broadway Field, Burma, on 5-6 March 44. Tractor, carried in glider, was shot out upon landing without injuring personnel.



Evacuation of wounded by a Vultee L-5 Burma

Lt. Solomon "Sol" Schnitzer, glider pilot of the 1st Air Commando Force, looks at a glider which was wrecked during landing operations at Broadway, Burma. For the size of the operation, the losses were amazingly small.





*A cracked up glider was hit by an incoming glider during landing operations of the 1st Air Commando Force at Broadway, Burma
Chalk number 11B was flown by glider pilot Flight Officer Marlyn O **SATROM***



*This glider suffered very little damage during the night landing of the 1st Air Commando Force at Broadway Field, Burma.
Chalk number 22B was piloted by Flight Officer John E. Gotham and co Pilot Sgt George H. Cancienne*



A glider of the 1st Air Commando Force crashed into a log when it landed at "Broadway", Burma, during the night landing operation.



Glider pilot Flight Officer Morris M BAREN of the 1st Air Commando Force piloted glider Chalk 17B and upon landing crashed into a log in landing zone Broadway. Here are Flight Officer Baren's memories of that day:

After flying an hour and a half at the end of a tow line, I knew we were lost. Our altitude was 16,000 feet, blackness in the middle of the night, over the Himalaya mountains. I knew that any second, my tow line was to be cut. My head felt like a wheel going in circles, knowing I would have to find myself a spot to land. Then I saw the designated area. I released my tow line and started to descend. My air speed was 130 mph because of the heavy load I carried. I had 16 men and a bulldozer in my glider. As my eyes were searching [in] the darkness, I saw an image in the sky which appeared to be 100 feet tall. It was the face of my dead mother who had been deceased for five years, dressed in a polka dot silk dress that she used to wear. She had her arms outstretched, tears falling from her face, with an expression that told me she wanted to help me but couldn't. Then her vision disappeared. I turned to my copilot and said to him, "this is it, we're finished."

With the rigid training I had in flying school, I knew that I would have to have a severe amount of speed in reserve, because as I was coming in I saw gliders smashed up, in all directions. As I approached the ground, there was a glider 50 feet in front of me I pulled back on the wheel, jumped over that one, saw another one in front of me, jumped over that one,



saw a third glider, jumped over that one and landed.

When I awoke, my copilot, Lafaire, was prying the plexiglass of my windshield which had cut into my throat. He informed me that we had only lost two men, thank God, as he himself had both legs cut off from the knee down. He died later that night.

—Taken from personal papers of Morris Baren



HEADQUARTERS
1st AIR COMMANDO GROUP
APO 433

10 March 1944

Mrs. Madeline Sharrock,
1410 S. Fourth Street,
Louisville, Kentucky.

Dear Mrs. Sharrock,

It is my duty to inform you of the death of your husband, 1st Lieutenant Robert P. Sharrock, who was a member of my command. Your husband was the pilot of a glider, towed by a transport airplane, both of which carried troops and equipment, on a very important mission into enemy territory. Upon approaching the air strip, behind enemy lines, Robert's glider crash-landed, instantly killing himself and the occupants.

Robert's personal effects have been collected by one of his fellow officers and shipped to the Effects Quartermaster, Kansas City, Missouri, from which point they will be forwarded to you.

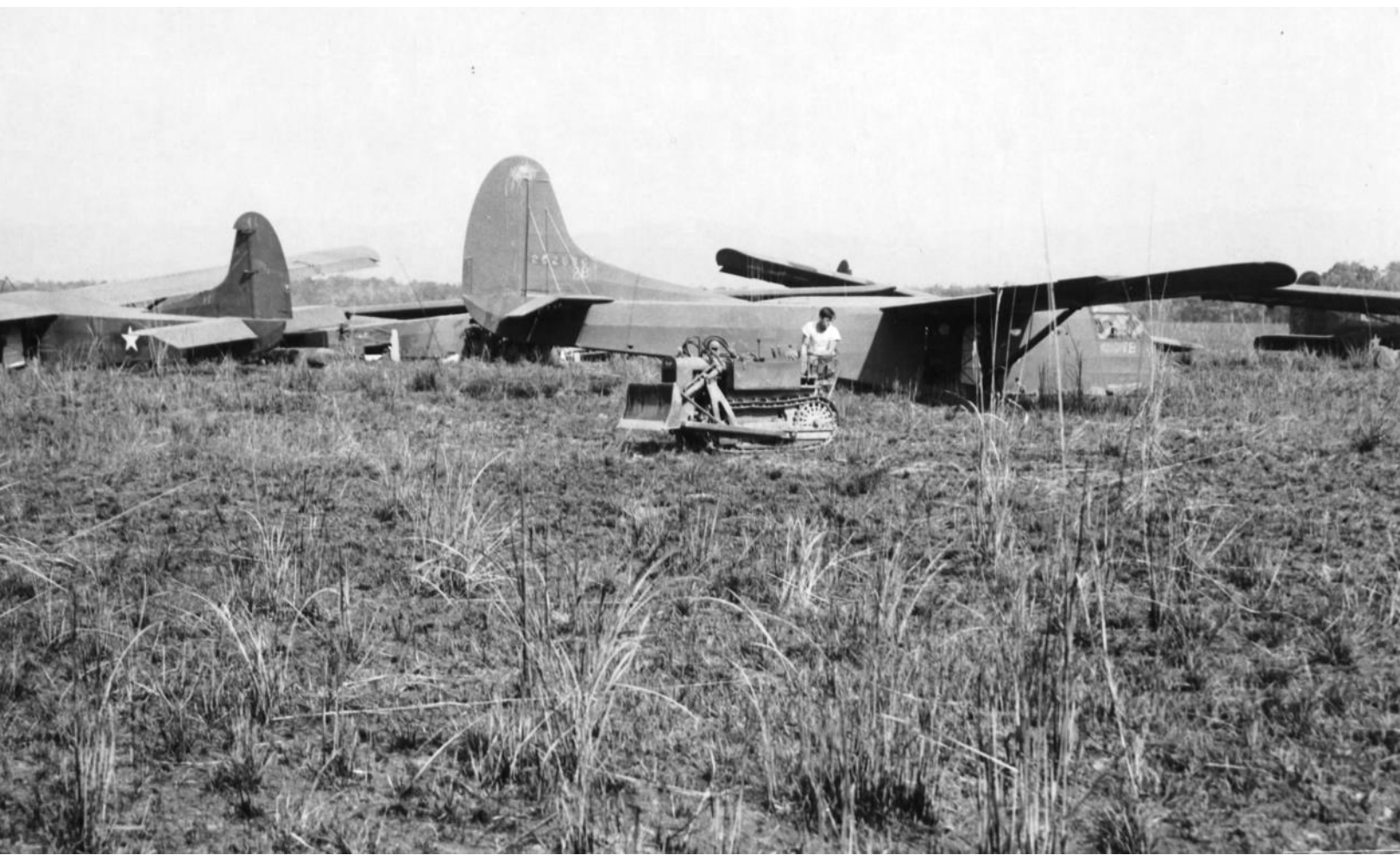
There is very little I can say in this letter to make your suffering less. I only hope that the knowledge that others grieve with you will make your burden a little easier to bear. Your husband was one of our outstanding pilots and his death has been a great loss to us as friends and as soldiers.

I am sorry that I have so little information to give you at this time. Please write to me if there is anything I might make clearer to you. Our heartfelt sympathies are with you.

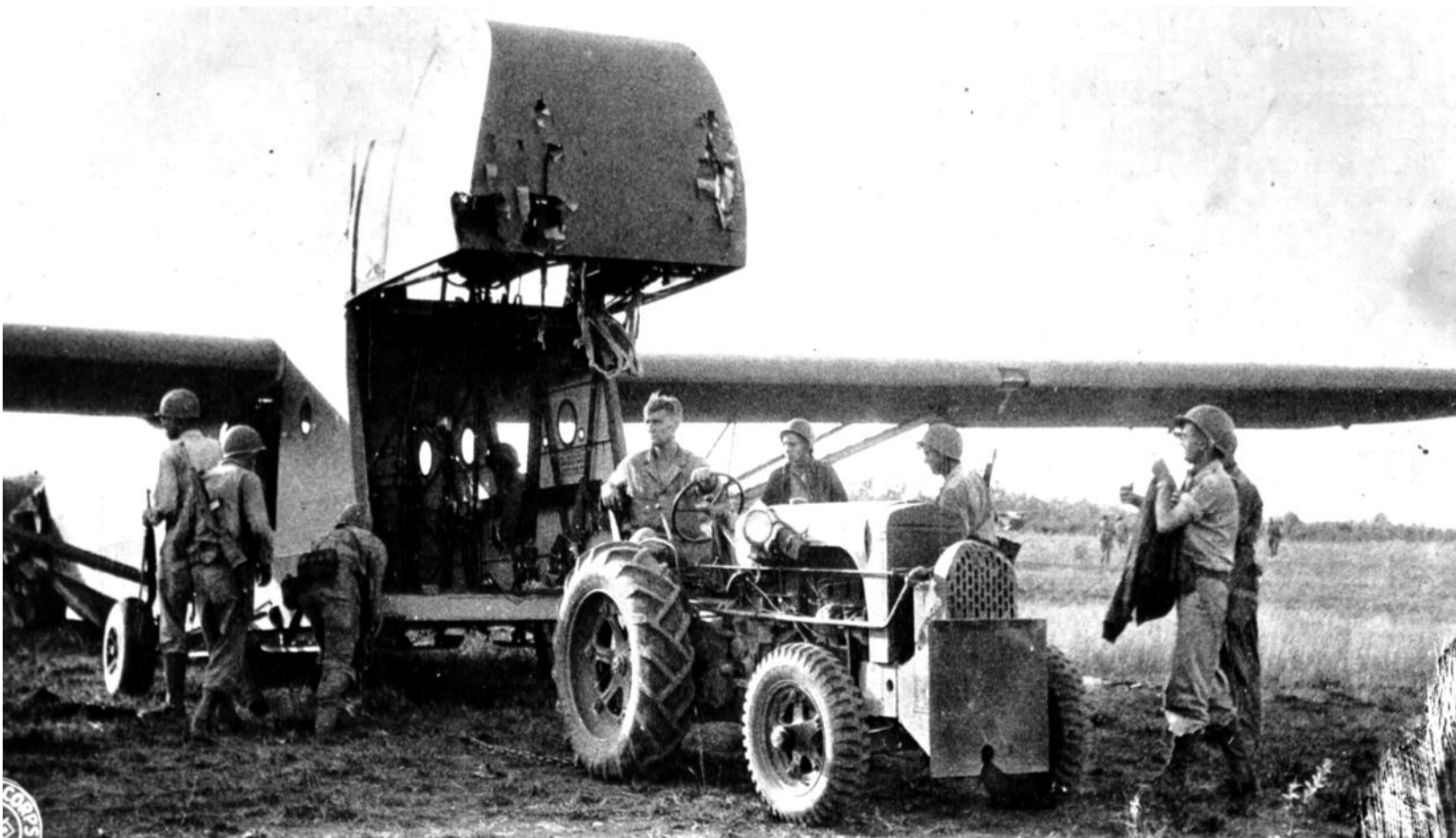
Sincerely,

P. G. Cochran
P. G. COCHRAN,
Colonel, Air Corps,
Commanding.

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Glider pilots of the 1st Air Commando Force delivered equipment to carve out an air field to land C-47 with Allied troops. On 10 March General Stratemeyer reported the results up to D+4 made the comment, "... Up to this hour a total of 439 Glider and Dakota sorties have arrived at Broadway and Shangri and that ain't hey."



A GLIDER PILOT COMMENTS UPON HIS EXPERIENCES

"Took off for Broadway, from Lalaghat, approximately 1830, 5 March 1944. Cable separated about two hours out, altitude approximately 10,000 feet. Crash landing in rice paddy. Bumped right side of back on co-pilot's seat. While getting equipment from glider, were fired upon by Japs (Rifle and Machinegun) from cover about 75 yards to our right. Exposed and unable to locate enemy, we deployed, made for cover away from fire some 250 yards away. No one was hit.

Organized column, Burmese Captain Barr and four Burmese riflemen leading. Marched westward, avoiding villages and trails. Followed by Japs with dogs, lost them. Short rest about 0100 hours 6 March. On at 0200 to cover at 0500, 6 March. Few hours sleep. Small rations, cheese and bread at 0700. Took stock of rations; one box "K" ration per man for four day march.

Broke camp about 1500 hours 6 March. Tea at 2300. Camp at 0400 7 March. Breakfast (Tea and K ration) 0700 hours. Jap advance scouts sighted within 100 yards of camp. They apparently leaving to report, we broke camp, heading into the swamp area to the West. Reached Chindwin River at 1500 hours 8 March.

Made camp, ate, packed for river crossing, slept. Crossed river at 0500 to 0600 hours 9 March. One man drowned. Several lost packs. Remaining fifteen men shoeless. Improvised sandals, ate "K" rations, moved on at about 1100 hours. After several false starts succeeded in getting through heavy jungle of river bottom. Following elephant trails, continued North and West. Camp at 0100 hours 10 March.

Water and "K" rations at 0800 hours. Native village at 1100 hours. Feast of rice and curry. To nearby British Gurkha camp, rice, peafowl and tea for dinner. At 0900, 11 March more rice and curry. Three hours march to village. Picked up by light planes at about 1730 hours 11 March 1944. Dinner American camp Tamu. Arrived Hailakande at 2300 hrs 11 March 1944."

Flight Officer Wagner as a result of his walk through the jungle contracted a severe dermatitis of his right foot. During his stay in the Sick-Bay he wrote the following account of his experiences:

"On the 5 March at 1845, glider took off in double tow behind a C-47 and three hours and fifteen minutes later broke off over the Irrawaddy River in Burma and landed on a sandy strip opposite the town of Katha. During the next sixteen days the party of eighteen covered about one hundred miles crossing the Irrawaddy River one and one half times, one railroad and innumerable hills and streams before finally reaching Broadway, where the party was divided. The English joined their own forces and the American pilot and co-pilot were evacuated by C-47 the same night.

UNCLASSIFIED

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Everyone was a little tense when we landed and when they began to realize the situation they were in. We had made one wide 360° turn after breaking off the tow and had lost six thousand feet. The left wing had a hole in the leading edge about a foot wide but otherwise there was no serious damage. Dressed in dark clothes the men moving over the moonlit sand stood out like inkspots on a sheet of white paper. To the East was the shore, an indistinct mass of black with the moon highlighting the more prominent landmarks. North, South and West were stretches of white sand fading into the night. So far, all was quiet.

Then we spotted them. It looked like three squads advancing on us across the sand. Everyone spread out and got down, rifles loaded and prepared for a battle. As the "Japs" moved closer their forms began to take shape. We started breathing again when the "Japs" moved closer and were identified as three small herds of cattle.

Between us and the opposite bank lay a stretch of water about one hundred and fifty feet wide. Fourteen of the men could not swim so men and equipment were ferried over by the four swimmers, two English and the pilot and co-pilot with the aid of three lilos and individual English Mae Wests.

When the glider was burned the fire alarm gong went off in a nearby village, dogs barked and there was a confused jumble of people shouting. Everyone was across by 2400 and after we had fixed our position we struck across country, due East. We crossed thick brushland fences and a lot of victory gardens before we bumped into a native village which proved unfriendly. They threw rocks at us so we left and stopped at a grove of trees sometime later at 0400 and slept until 0600.

That morning we turned South through open country covered with belts of elephant grass and spent the night in thick woods near a shallow stream. Our intention was to head South and West below the larger towns around Katha, cross the narrow part of the Irrawaddy and on the Western side turn North up along the hills to the area in which our forces had been landed. Inventory of our rations was made and they were redistributed. Each man then had twelve and a half packets of "K" rations. Two men split one packet at each meal.

The next night at 2200 we crossed the Irrawaddy in two river boats and one canoe after much rupee and pistol waving. On the other side we crossed a wide sandbar, passed through a village and across a jap airfield (pulse 120). 0430 found us well past the airfield and we bunked down for the night. We slept in our clothes with one blanket and a waterproof ground cloth. The issue hammock proved to be too heavy to carry around with all the rations, so we had to cut them up and use the waterproof part for a ground cloth and used insect repellent in-lieu of a mosquito net.

The next five or six days were uneventful. During that time we were able to augment our rations with rice and bananas from the villages. We crossed the railroad at Katha taking advantage of the bright moonlight and used the trails from there on, but only at night. One English soldier had developed malaria.

After a long forced march we arrived at 0200 the morning of the 14th at the rendezvous North of Okyi at the junction of the Kawkwee and Nabu Rivers. At 1000 the same morning two L-5's spotted us and dropped a message telling us that they would be back in fifteen minutes. We prepared a message pick-up station and waited for their return. As it later turned out, it was impossible for them to return. On the morning of the third day there, we prepared to move on to Broadway. A reconnaissance patrol that we had sent to Piccadilly six miles away had reported that there was no one there. We met the advance patrol of Col. Scott's 81st Column coming from the East barely an hour before our intended departure for Broadway to the North. They gave us food, quinine and cigarettes and from that time on we ate regularly and the boy with the malaria started getting his quinine. We had lost our quinine supply in the Irrawaddy. By this time he could barely walk because of a swollen groin.

That afternoon we went to Piccadilly with the column arriving in the blackest night and made camp. The men in the columns cleared away the trees that the Burmese had put across the field under direction of the Japanese and made an airstrip for the light planes. The next night we had a supply drop from a C-47 plane and we spent the following day getting our equipment dried out, taking a bath and filling our packs up with rations. Word came that the head of a column of three thousand Japs had arrived in Buwa, the area we had just left about six miles back. At 1900 March 19th just after dark we left Piccadilly with the original glider load of men, three from the column sick with jaundice and two men to handle the two horses. We were heading for Broadway twenty-five miles away.

At 1500, 21 March we arrived at Broadway and Pilot and co-pilot were evacuated to Lalaghat via C-47 arriving at 0300 the next morning.

Chow -- bed

F/O Wagner, pilot - S/Sgt. Gambill, co-pilot - Lt. Freeman,
English Commanding Officer.

AWARD OF THE AIR MEDAL FOR BROADWAY

Award Issued: Apr 24, 1944, GENERAL ORDER NO. 58 section II. **THURSDAY**
HQ, AAF, CHINA-BURMA-INDIA, AIR MEDAL G.O. No. 58, c.s., dated 24 April 1944,

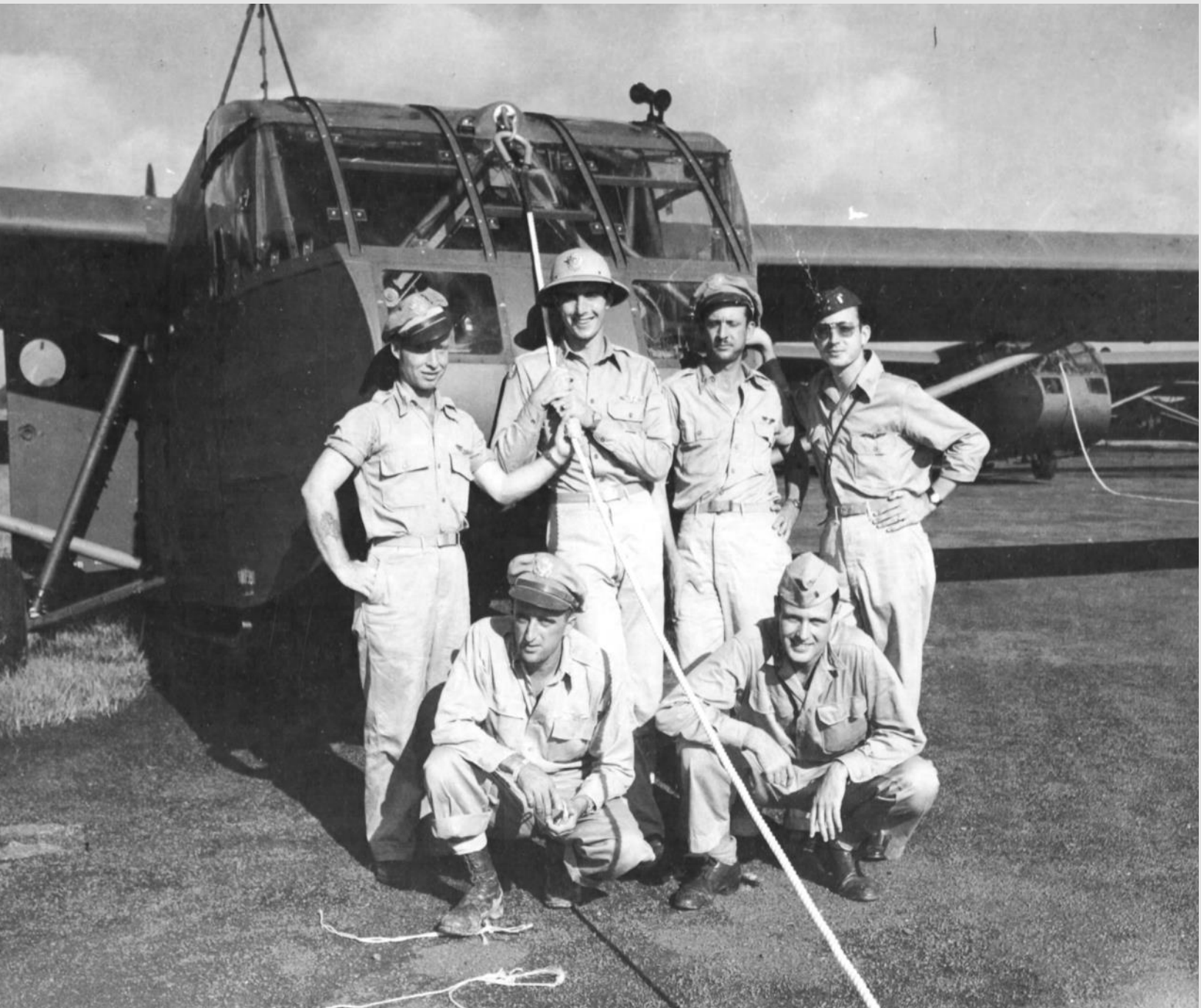
*II. Awards of the Air Medal. 1. Pursuant to the authority contained in Army Regulations 600-45, War Department, Washington, D. C., 22 September 1943, the Air Medal is hereby awarded to the following named Officers and enlisted men of the * * * Air Commando Group for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on the night of 5 March 1944 during which exposure to enemy fire was probable and expected. Performing extremely hazardous double -tow operation without benefit of guide lights due to the proximity of the enemy, they crossed a 7,000 foot range of mountains during which they encountered haze conditions which continued for the remainder of the mission — approximately four to five hours — fully realizing the impossibility of return, regardless of conditions encountered at their destination, inasmuch as the tow planes were flying the maximum possible distance with such an overload. Landing in territory known to be patrolled by the enemy, they encountered innumerable obstructions making a successful landing, without crashing, very nearly impossible. In spite of hazards involved, they displayed great skill in the accomplishment of these landings which resulted in a minimum of casualties. After landing, they aided in clearing the field for subsequent glider lands, removing crashed gliders and other material and equipment from the field and later assisted in the construction of a landing strip suitable for transport aircraft — a task requiring twelve hours of completion — although their physical endurance had been taxed to the utmost by the strenuous nature of the flight just completed. Their successful accomplishment of this flight with a display of devotion to duty and a degree of efficiency above and beyond that normally expected reflects great credit upon themselves and upon the Army Air Forces of the United States.*

COL, John R ALISON; Dayton Beach, FL-- chalk No: 004
FO, Samuel L ALTMAN; Bowling Green, FL-- chalk No: 0 Pilot
2LT, Gerald L ARKFELD; Norfolk, NE-- chalk No: 0 Pilot
CPL, Willie J ARNOLD; , -- chalk No: 008B Co Pilot
FO, Morris M BAREN; Spokane, WA-- chalk No: 017 Pilot
FO, James S BARTLETT; Lucas, KS-- chalk No: 002B Pilot
SSGT, Robert BICKNELL; Friona, TX-- chalk No: 003B Co Pilot
FO, Neal Jellison BLUSH; Whitefish, MT-- chalk No: 002 Pilot
MAJ, Richard W. BOEBEL; Buffalo, NY-- Co Pilot
CPL, Robert S BOVEY; Clarksgreen, PA
SSGT, George H CANCIENNE; Belle Alliance, LA
SSGT, Marion L CLAY; Lakeport, CA
SSGT, Joseph A D'URSO; Bronx, NY
2LT, Herbert Joseph DELANEY; Detroit, MI-- chalk No: 027 Pilot
SSGT, Joseph F GAMBILL; Fort Worth, TX
FO, Robert Charles HALL; Spokane, WA
FO, Nimrod Freeman HANKINS; Iola, KS
CPL, Glenn R HARSdorff; Brazoria, TX
SGT, Robert E HENDERSON; Lynn, MA-- chalk No: 026B Co Pilot
FO, Ronald Arthur HENNIG; Tekamah, NE-- Pilot
FO, Thomas Aldwin HIGHT;

FO, Charles R HON; , --
CPL, Donald L JOHNSON—coPilot
FO, Howard Edward JOHNSON; , --
FO, Kenneth JOHNSON; , --
FO, Gene A KELLY; , --
SGT, John A KINNER—coPilot
2LT, Richard E KUENSTLER; San Antonio, TX-- chalk No: 024 Pilot
FO, Donald André LEFEVRE; Schenectady, NY-- chalk No: 015 Pilot
FO, Charles Bourck LISTON; Adel, IA-- chalk No: 003 Pilot
CPL, Linn E MAGOFFIN—copilot, chalk No: 004
FO, Nesbit L MARTIN;
CPL, Edgar V MCDOWELL—coPilot
SGT, William J MCMAHON—coPilot
FO, Martin John MCTIGUE;
FO, Carwin Arthur MILES; Imperial, CA
FO, Billy MOHR;
CPT, Weldon O MURPHY; Co Pilot
1LT, Louis Read NEWELL; Torrington, WY
FO, John F (P) NEWLAND;
SGT, Estil I NIENABER—coPilot
FO, Vernon NOLAND;
FO, Clifford C PEDERSON;
FO, Alvin Joseph PLOUFF;
SGT, Cyrus C PORTER—coPilot
CPL, Fred M PUGH—coPilot
SGT, John J RAYNAK—coPilot
FO, William Charles RITZINGER—Pilot
FO, James Kenneth ROLLINS;
2LT, Vincent J ROSE; Kenosha, WI
CPL, Joe F SATARINO—coPilot

FO, Marlyn O SATROM; , --Chalk B11
FO, Sol SCHNITZER; Port Arthur, TX--Chalk 26P
2LT, Virgil E SCOBAY; Alliance, OH--
FO, Edward G SCOTT; , --
FO, Donald Esrey SEESE; Penn Yan, NY--
2LT, Robert Pershing SHARROCK; Louisville, KY--
FO, LeRoy Carl SHIMULUNAS; Two Rivers, WI-- Pilot
FO, Jackson Johnson SHINKLE; Saint Louis, MO--
FO, Samuel F STEINMARK; , --

CPL, Walter C STELTER—coPilot
1LT, William H TAYLOR; Sesser, IL—Pilot
CPT, Donald C TULLOCH -- Co Pilot
SGT, Charles J USEY—coPilot
FO, Robert WAGNER; , --
FO, Earl C WALLER; , --
FO, Mainord Monroe WEAVER; , --
FO, Russell John WEST; , --
FO, Bruce WILLIAMS; , --



Glider pilots of the 1st Air Commando Force

CHOWRINGHEE AWARD OF THE AIR MEDAL

Issued: Apr 24, 1944, GENERAL ORDER NO 58, section II, #2 CHOWRINGHEE HQ, AAF, CHINA-BURMA-INDIA, AIR MEDAL

2. Pursuant to the authority contained in Army Regulations 600-45, War Department, Washington, D. C., 22 September 1943, the Air Medal is hereby awarded to the following named officers of the Air Commando Group for meritorious achievement in aerial flight on the night of 6 March 1944 during which exposure to enemy fire was probable and expected. With their gliders loaded with heavy engineering equipment, they flew over a 7,000 foot range of mountains to a point approximately 150 miles behind enemy lines where ground action by enemy patrols was expected. Although the area was full of large holes, skillful piloting on the part of this personnel brought in all gliders, but one, without injuring to personnel or damage to equipment. Although taxed by pilot fatigue, they assisted in the construction of a landing strip for transport aircraft which required another eighteen hours for completion. This display of a devotion to duty and a degree of efficiency above and beyond that normally expected reflects great credit upon these officers and upon the Army Air Forces of the United States.

FO, Robert S CHAMBERS; Fresno, CA, chalk No: 32P Co Pilot
FO, John Leslie COOGAN; Los Angeles, CA, chalk No: 32P Pilot

2LT, Robert L DOWE; Waukegan, IL-- Pilot

LTCol, Clinton B GATY; La Jolla, CA-- Pilot

1LT, Patrick H HADSELL; Denton, TX-- chalk No: 030P Pilot

FO, William McKenna HEALY; New York, NY-- Pilot

2LT, Jack U KLARR; Detroit, MI-- chalk Pilot

FO, Edwin Herman LAVARRE; New Orleans, LA-- chalk No: 031B Pilot

FO, Edmond B LOPEZ; Las Cruces, NM-- chalk No: 023P Pilot

FO, Harry Lloyd MCKAIG; San Antonio, TX-- chalk No: 029P Pilot

2LT, James E SEVER; Norfolk, VA-- chalk No: 0 Pilot

FO, Charles Bruce TURNER; Palo Pinto, TX-- chalk No: 0 Pilot

FO, Steve Thomas UMINSKI; Malden, MA-- chalk No: 029P Pilot

FO, Leo ZUK; Buffalo, NY-- chalk No: 016P Pilot

Flight Officer John Leslie Coogan, most famously known as the “child star” in the 1930 movies and Fester in the Adams Family series, led a 12 glider formation into air field Chowringhee, part of the invasion of Burma.

[“THE KID” In 1944, Jackie Coogan lead a long-range vertical envelopment at the head of 12 gliders loaded with engineers and their equipment deep into the hostile jungles of Burma.](#)





Back row (L-R): Flight Officer Francis L. Randal; First Lieutenant Soloman Schnitzer; Flight Officer James S “Mickey” Bartlett; unidentified; unidentified; unidentified; flight Officer Leo Zuk; First Lieutenant James E Sever; First Lieutenant Steve T. Uminski

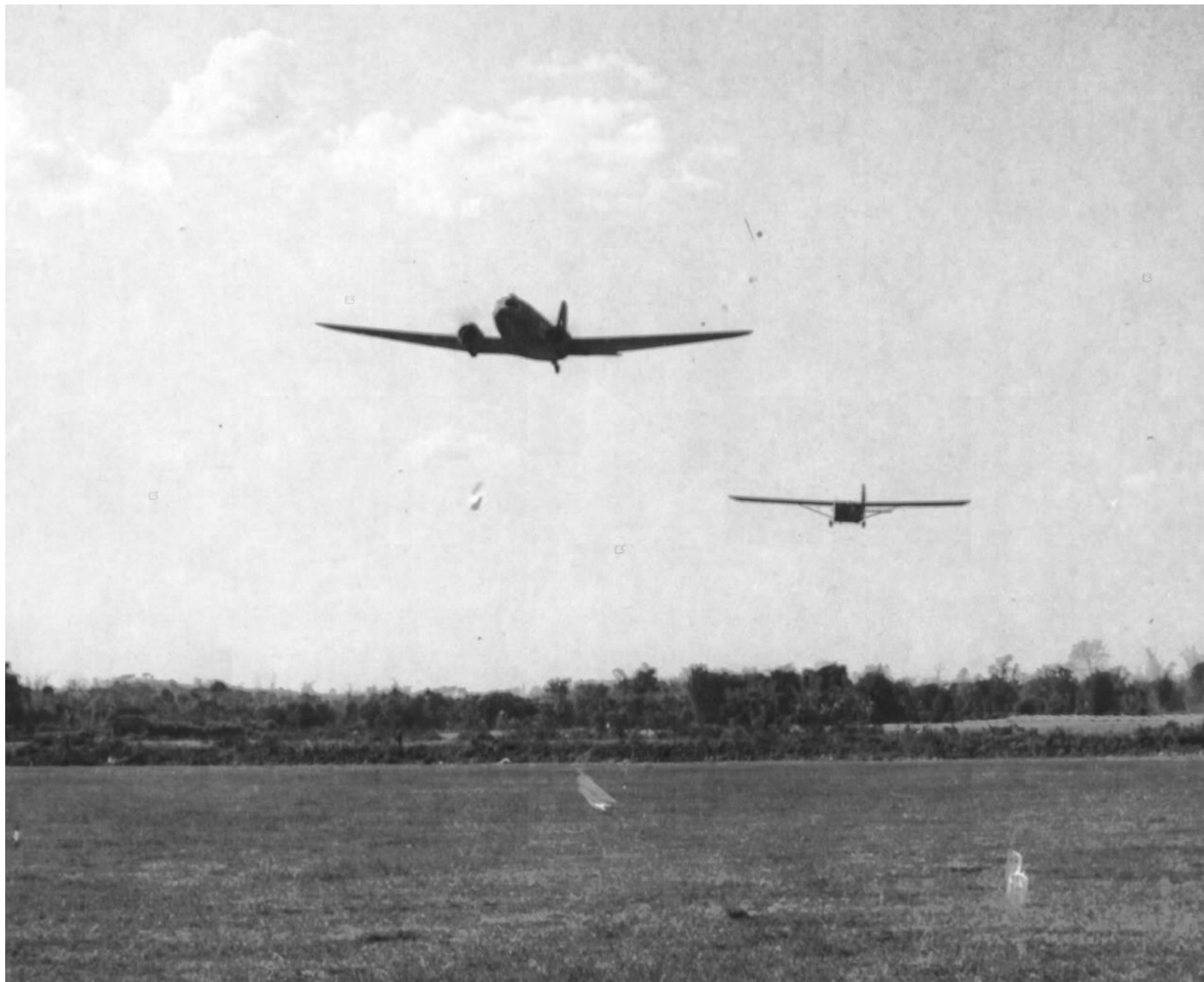
Front row (L-R): Flight Officer Samuel F. Steinmark; Second Lieutenant H. J. Delaney; unidentified; First Lieutenant Vincent J. Rose; First Lieutenant Jackson J. Shinkle; First Lieutenant Patrick H Hadsell; flight Officer John L. “Jackie” Coogan.

—Names from R. D Wagner’s Any Place Any Time, Any Where Pg 53

Pilot Flight order
C is for LZ

CHOWRINGHEE

| | | |
|-----|----------|--|
| 10 | Coogan | Flight Officer John “Jackie” Leslie COOGAN Lead glider. Guided in other gliders. |
| 20 | Sever | 2nd Lieutenant James E SEVER |
| 30 | MCKAIG | Flight Officer Harry Lloyd MCKAIG |
| 40 | Hadsell | 1st Lieutenant Patrick H HADSELL |
| 50 | Dowe | 1st Lieutenant Robert L DOWE Killed on landing |
| 60 | Lavarre | Flight Officer Edwin Herman LAVARRE |
| 70 | Healy | Flight Officer William McKenna HEALY |
| 80 | Lopez | Flight Officer Edmond B LOPEZ Killed on a later mission |
| 90 | Turner | 2nd Lieutenant Charles Bruce TURNER |
| 100 | Uminski | 2nd Lieutenant Steve Thomas UMINSKI |
| 110 | Zuk | 1st Lieutenant Leo ZUK |
| 120 | Chambers | Flight Officer Robert S CHAMBERS |



Coincidental with the carrying of troops to the field at "Broadway", Burma, was a glider invasion of another field known as "Chowringhee", Burma. Here, the first glider, piloted by Jackie Coogan takes off from the field at Hailakandi, India.

Chowringhee occurred on the 6th of March, 1944. A landing strip was to be repaired and used temporarily for a few days to get British Gurkas and Chindits into the area.



Throughout World War II, the CG-4A was a faithful transport craft. Out of all the missions flown by these gliders and their pilots there is only one account of a CG-4A that flew, armed, into combat. This glider was piloted by 2nd Lieutenant Charles B. Turner during Operation Thursday the invasion of Burma. Unhappy at the prospect of meeting Japanese troops in the clearing at LZ CHOWRINGHEE, 2ndLt. Turner and fellow glider pilot F/O Harry McKaig used some G.I. ingenuity to fix a .30cal machine gun from a B-17 into the windshields of their gliders. After a test-fire from McKaig's glider resulted in a broken windscreen, the two pilots worked to reinforce the screen on Turner's glider (Okerstrom, "Project 9: The Birth of the Air Commandos in World War II," p. 226).



Gliders and native bullock carts on the field at Chowringhee.



Gliders of the 1st Air Commando Force were moved to the edge of Chowringhee Field and displaced among the trees. Burma.

Immediately upon landing in a dark field F/O Coogan instructed his Gurkhas to the edges of the landing zone to set up a perimeter of the area where an air strip would be constructed. F/O Coogan ran to set out smudge pots to guide the other 11 gliders to the LZ...

The last glider Chalk #12 was flown by Lieutenant Robert Dowe. He was carrying the most precious and needed cargo; a bulldozer and three engineers to construct the dirt landing strip. Dowe approached the landing zone but overshot it on the first pass. He did a graceful 180 degree turn and lined up again with the smudge pots on the runway. But what

could not be seen with that approach was a tree at the far end of the landing zone. The nose of Lt. Dowe's glider made a direct hit with the tree and all on board were killed. As the glider tumbled, the bulldozer went through the nose of the glider and was destroyed. The work on the air strip now had to wait for more engineers and equipment. F/O Coogan was ordered to keep his men out of sight until another glider could get to the LZ the next day. —excerpt from [FLIGHT OFFICER JOHN "JACKIE" LESLIE COOGAN](#) It was noted in all reports that mentioned F/O Coogan that he was a "child star".

ROSTER OF OFFICERS NOT YET IDENTIFIED IN A MISSION

The following Officers were involved in the Burma campaign. Some flew L-5s to evacuate wounded as well as many of the CBI glider missions. We are still researching to add each one into the missions they flew. This is a long hard process. If you have information on these officers actions during the campaign please contact our editor.

FO, Eugene L ADOUE, Harker Heights, TX
FO, Fred William ALCOTT, Dallas, TX
2LT, Morris C ALLEYNE, Jacksonville, FL
FO, Robert Edward ALTHOFF, Arlington, TX
FO, Leslie D BAILEY, New London, IA
FO, George BALOG, Midway, PA
FO, Norman Mario BOUTIN, San Francisco, CA
FO, Ernest S BUTLER, Harrisonburg, VA
FO, Frank R CAMPBELL, Poway, CA
FO, Boyd M CANNON, Boston, GA
FO, Amos B CHAMBERS, Cucamonga, CA
FO, C Tracy COWAN, Jacksonville, FL
FO, James A CRISMAN, Monroeville, PA
FO, Orville L CROTHERS, Louisville, KY
FO, Wilmer Ralph DIXON, Winter Garden, FL
FO, Harry H ELLIS, Crossville, TN
FO, Robert Emmett EVERETT, Shreveport, LA
FO, Charles Edwin GALLOWAY, Tucson, AZ
FO, Kenneth GEORGESON, Santa Ana, CA
FO, John E GOTHAM, Northridge, CA
FO, James F GRAGG, Carrollton, TX
FO, Douglas Elloitt GRAY, Topsham, ME
FO, Woodrow Wilson GRIMSLEY, Atlanta, GA
FO, Allen HALL, Waco, TX
FO, Robert Charles HALL, Spokane, WA
1LT, Robert D HAM, Richmond, VA
FO, Nimrod Freeman HANKINS, Iola, KS
FO, Ned W HARRISON, Victoria, TX
CPL, Glenn R HARSDORFF, Woodboro, TX
FO, Edwin F HARTER, Lower Burrelli, PA
FO, Edward Shirlie HERRING, Norfolk, VA
FO, George D HESS, Naperville, IL
UNK, Paul Bernard HIGGINS, Placentia, CA
FO, Thomas Aldwin HIGHT, Longview, TX
FO, Wyman Edward HOLT, Crystal City, MO
FO, Charles R HON, Orlando, FL
FO, Remus Gordon HOOTEN, Clinton, MO
UNK, Richard C JAY, Denton, TX
UNK, Don JOHNSON, San Diego, CA
FO, Harlie B JOHNSON, Tallahassee, FL
FO, Howard Edward JOHNSON, Rock Island, IL
FO, Kenneth JOHNSON, Stronghurst, IL
FO, Lloyd Francis JONES, Baraboo, WI
FO, Stephen Paul KACEN, Bloomfield, NJ
FO, Jack W KEISER, Lynchburg, VA
FO, Gene A KELLY, Milwaukee, WI
FO, William KUBIDA, Winston-Salem, NC
FO, Nesbit L MARTIN, Portales, NM
FO, Donald Klor MAY, Richmond, IN
FO, Robert Foote MCFARLAND, Camp Hill, PA
FO, Martin John MCTIGUE, Leechburg, PA
FO, Jadie M MIMS, Jacksonville, FL
FO, Billy MOHR, Roseburg, OR
FO, Albert LeRoy MOTT, Kankakee, IL
FO, Earl Edward NELSON, Sun City, FL
1LT, Louis Read NEWELL, Torrington, WY
FO, John F (P) NEWLAND, Bellevue, WA
2LT, Carwin A NILES, ,
FO, Vernon NOLAND, Port Neches, TX
FO, Randolph Ancel NUNNERY, Baker, LA
FO, Julius Anthony OWEN, Nashville, TN
FO, Jim PATTERSON, Independence, KS
FO, Clifford C PEDERSON, Arcadia, CA
FO, James V PIZIO, Syracuse, NY
FO, Alvin Joseph PLOUFF, Denver, CO
FO, George C POLOVICH, Goodelle, MI
FO, Marshall B POTTS, La Puente, CA
FO, William John PRAYNE, Camden, NJ
FO, John Huddleson PRICE, Midvale, OH
FO, Luther D PURSLEY, Hawthorne, NJ
FO, Norman Herman RAMBOW, Millwood, WA
FO, Renton R RECTOR, Tryon, NC
FO, Joseph F REVELLI, Winter Park, FL
FO, William Charles RITZINGER, Chippewa Falls, WI
FO, Paul Swain ROBERTS, Tulsa, OK
FO, James Kenneth ROLLINS, Nadill, OK
2LT, Vincent J ROSE, Kenosha, WI
FO, RevEdgar R ROSEN, Waynesboro, VA
FO, Eugene Louis RUIZ, Vallejo, CA
FO, Marlyn O SATROM, Indianapolis, IN
1LT, Hugo P SCHEUERMAN, Linwood, NJ
FO, Sol Sol SCHNITZER, San Antonio, TX
FO, John L SCIEZ, St. Louis, MO
2LT, Virgil E SCOBAY, Wooster, OH
FO, Edward G SCOTT, Merritt Island, FL
FO, Neill Lafayette SCOTT, Las Vegas, NV
FO, Donald Esrey SEESE, Saint Louis, MO
2LT, Robert Pershing SHARROCK, Louisville, KY
FO, Troy C SHAW, Lafayette, LA
UNK, A Francis SHEA, Williamsburg, MA
FO, Jackson Johnson SHINKLE, St. Louis, MO
FO, Jack M SHIPMAN, Gresham, OR
2LT, Charles D SKELTON, Montgomery, AL
FO, Walter M STEINKE, ,
FO, Samuel F STEINMARK, Dencer, CO
1LT, Watson A SUDDATH, Vicksburg, MS
FO, James W TATE, Drakesville, KY
FO, Paul S VANVALKENBURG, Lake Havasu Cty, AZ
FO, James Dewitt VAUGHN, Glendale, AZ
FO, Robert WAGNER, Norwalk, CT
FO, Earl C WALLER, Blue River, WI
FO, Edwin Cornelius WALTON, Augusta, GA
2LT, George Brent WARREN, ,
FO, Mainord Monroe WEAVER, Kalamazoo, MI
FO, David Lee WELLS, Shelton, WA
2LT, Kenneth L WELLS, Hays, KS
FO, Russell John WEST, Ft. Worth, TX
FO, Bruce WILLIAMS, Palmyra, PA
FO, Robert E WOLFENSPERGER, Modesto, CA
FO, Jack Dempsey YATES, Kingsport, TN

ROLE OF HONOR FOR BURMA

[2LT, Robert L DOWE, Waukegan, IL](#) Died March 6, 1944

Killed landing glider. Over shot the landing field and hit a tree trunk that was not visible due to the dark jungle and the light from the smudge pot that did not light up the area beyond the LZ. He was carrying a bulldozer. Need to research copilot.

[FO, Howard Edward JOHNSON, Rock Island, IL](#) MIA March 5, 1944

Flight Officer Howard E. Johnson entered the U.S. Army Air Forces from Illinois and served in the 1st Air Commando Group. On March 5, 1944, he piloted a cargo glider during the airborne invasion of Burma. F/O Johnson departed Lalaghat, India, being towed by a C-47 Skytrain. Somewhere over northern Burma, the tow rope broke, and the pilot of the C-47 lost sight of the glider. F/O Johnson was not seen or heard from again. He has not been associated with any remains recovered from the area after the war and is still unaccounted-for. Today, Flight Officer Johnson is memorialized on the Walls of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery in the Philippines.

Based on all information available, DPAA assessed the individual's case to be in the analytical category of Active Pursuit. --Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

[FO, Donald André LEFEVRE, Troy, NY](#) Killed May 9, 1944 and [FO, Hadley Dwinell BALDWIN, Lisbon, ND](#) May 8, 1944

BURMA - Building a jungle air strip for the Chindits, 10 May 1944

Was killed piloting a glider into "Clydeside" a strip which could never be secured and was lost 3 days after the initial landing so his body was never recovered. He was flying a load of gasoline for the engineer equipment which was to build the air strip. He went down in flames on his final approach but still in Japanese held territory. It was his last mission in May 44 before rotating Stateside .

British troops rushed out of the jungle to give us a hand - landing gear washed out, wing collapsed, we had overrun the field knocking out a few bunds. No casualties - all ropes held, the dozer never moved an inch. The next gliders landed in adjoining paddy fields - washing out their landing gear - and never touching the "strip"! The glider that nosed in, killing both pilots [1LT Donald A. Lefevre and FO Hadley D. Baldwin], contained Pfc Fisher and Lovelace - both injured - and the glider, completely demolished.

From World War II Today, <https://ww2today.com/10-may-1944-building-a-jungle-airstrip-for-the-chindits>

[FO, Charles Bourck LISTON, Long Beach, CA](#) Killed April 2, 1944

National Archives Missing Air Crew Report that acknowledges his glider went down with fellow IACG personnel MSgt Hart and Cpl Yackie on Mar 6, 1944 over the Chindwin River Area, Burma. MI-A03/06/1943 Died in POW camp 4/2/1944 His remains were being flown home when plane crashed in the Bay of Benga May 16/1946l

[FO, Edmond B LOPEZ, Las Cruces, NM](#) May 4, 1944



Needs research. May have been shot down while landing at My

[FO, Martin John MCTIGUE, Leechburg, PA](#) March 8, 1944

Flight Officer Martin J. McTigue entered the U.S. Army Air Forces from Pennsylvania and served in the 1st Air Commando Group. On March 5, 1944, he piloted a cargo glider during the airborne invasion of Burma. F/O McTigue departed Lalaghat, India, being towed by a C-47 Skytrain. Somewhere over northern Burma, the tow rope broke, and the pilot of the C-47 lost sight of the glider. F/O McTigue has not been associated with any remains recovered from the area after the war and is still unaccounted-for. Today, Flight Officer McTigue is memorialized on the Walls of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery in the Philippines. Based on all information available, DPAA assessed the individual's case to be in the analytical category of Active Pursuit. --Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

[FO, George C POLOVICH, Goodelle, MI](#) February 14, 1945

14 February 1945 a C-47 of the 318th TCS on a resupply mission crashed into a mountain in the Philippines killing all aboard.

[FO, William Charles RITZINGER, Chippewa Falls, WI](#) March 6, 1944

According to Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency FO Ritzinger is "unaccounted for".

[2LT, Robert Pershing SHARROCK, Louisville, KY](#) March 5, 1944

According to Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency 2nd Lt. Sharrock is "unaccounted for". Glider Crashed on landing everyone killed.

[FO, LeRoy Carl SHIMULUNAS, Two Rivers, WI](#) March 6, 1944
[Shot by Japanese troops](#)

[FO, David Lee WELLS, Shelton, WA](#) March 1, 1944

Believe Wells was killed in reconnaissance glider mission into Burma prior to the invasion. Needs research still.

[FO, Jack Dempsey YATES, Kingsport, TN](#) February 14, 1945

14 February 1945 a C-47 of the 318th TCS on a resupply mission crashed into a mountain in the Philippines killing all aboard.



ADDITIONAL READING

[Burma](#)

[Flight Officer Leroy SHIMULUNAS \(KIA\)—From the Jungles](#)

[Locating Flight Officer Robert Charles HALL \(POW\)—from the Jungles](#)

[First Glider Behind Enemy Lines](#)

[The Beginning of Special Operations](#)

[Flight Officer John “Jackie” Leslie COOGAN \[Chowringhee\]](#)

[Glider Retrieval by Jungle Moonlight](#)

[Tim Bailey JUNGLE RESCUE \(video\)](#)

[The Snatch Process](#)

[Compilation of articles](#)

[The Flying Mules of the CBI](#)

Editors' notes:

- ◆ The use of the title 1st Air Commando was bestowed on the 5318 Provisional Air Unit by the British after the invasion of Burma. The 5318 PAU was too complicated a title.
- ◆ Because Burma was a British operation the American historical diaries for Burma used the British terms for the C-47 “Dakota” and the CG-4A glider “Hadrian.”
- ◆ According to the crew list for Operation Thursday, the chalk numbers assigned to Broadway comprise a combination of #P and #B. P originally stood for Piccadilly and B Broadway. Due to the discovery of sabotage in Piccadilly and the subsequent last-minute cancellation of that mission, the crew lists available to our researchers lack specificity and accuracy. Originally designated for Piccadilly, chalk numbers ending with a P were not redefined after the cancellation. Consequently chalks numbers ending in P were reassigned to either Broadway or Chowringhee.
- ◆ In Baron's memoir recounting his Broadway experience, he mentioned 1st Lt Donald André LEFEVRE as his co-pilot. However, discrepancies often arise in memoirs, and in this case, it has been established that LeFevre was not Baron's co-pilot. One contributing factor was that LeFevre piloted his own glider. Additionally, a source of confusion may stem from the fact that both LeFevre and Hadley Dwinell BALDWIN lost their lives two months later during the "Clydesdale" mission while attempting to seize an airfield from the Japanese. Their glider, laden with fuel, caught fire over the mountains, resulting in both men burning inside the glider as it crashed into the jungle covering the mountains.

The Defense for MIA/POW, along with collaboration from the American Monument and Burial Commission, supports this information. To avoid confusion, LeFevre's name was omitted from the memoir. The files for Burma lack complete information on co-pilots, prompting ongoing research to identify Baron's actual co-pilot.

- ◆ Gurkhas were infantry troops known for their valor in conventional warfare, the Chindits were a specialized unit engaged in unconventional, behind-the-lines operations in the challenging terrain of Burma. Both played important roles in the overall Allied effort in the Burma Campaign during World War II.
- ◆ CG-4A specifications for the number of men to be carried in the glider were 15 men. Two pilots and twelve men on benches (six benches of three men on a bench) and one man in a jump seat nearer the tail. In reports for Burma of the number of men in the CG-4A gliders ranged from 16 to 18 men. These men were also over loaded with ammunition that they added without the knowledge of the pilots. This overloading caused tow ropes to break over the mountains at altitudes ranging from 7,000 to 9,000 feet. No seat belts were worn. For those who made it to Broadway no one was killed or wounded by the enemy. Considering the landing situation and the size of the operation not that many men were killed. However, there were overwhelming numbers wounded that, pointed out by the medical staff, would not have been wounded had they had their seatbelts on (probably not enough seatbelts so no one wore them).

TROOP CARRIER MOVEMENT

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AND COMBAT GLIDER HISTORY



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80TH ANNIVERSARY OF NORMANDY NEXT!



L—R

Lt. May Adjutant to Brigadier General Pratt; BGen Pratt; Major Murphy, pilot; Lt. John Butler, co-pilot.

Cover photo: The cover photo depicts General Wingate, Colonel Alison, and Colonel Cochran examining photo reconnaissance results of LZ PICADILLY moments prior to the original departure of THURSDAY's first wave.

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