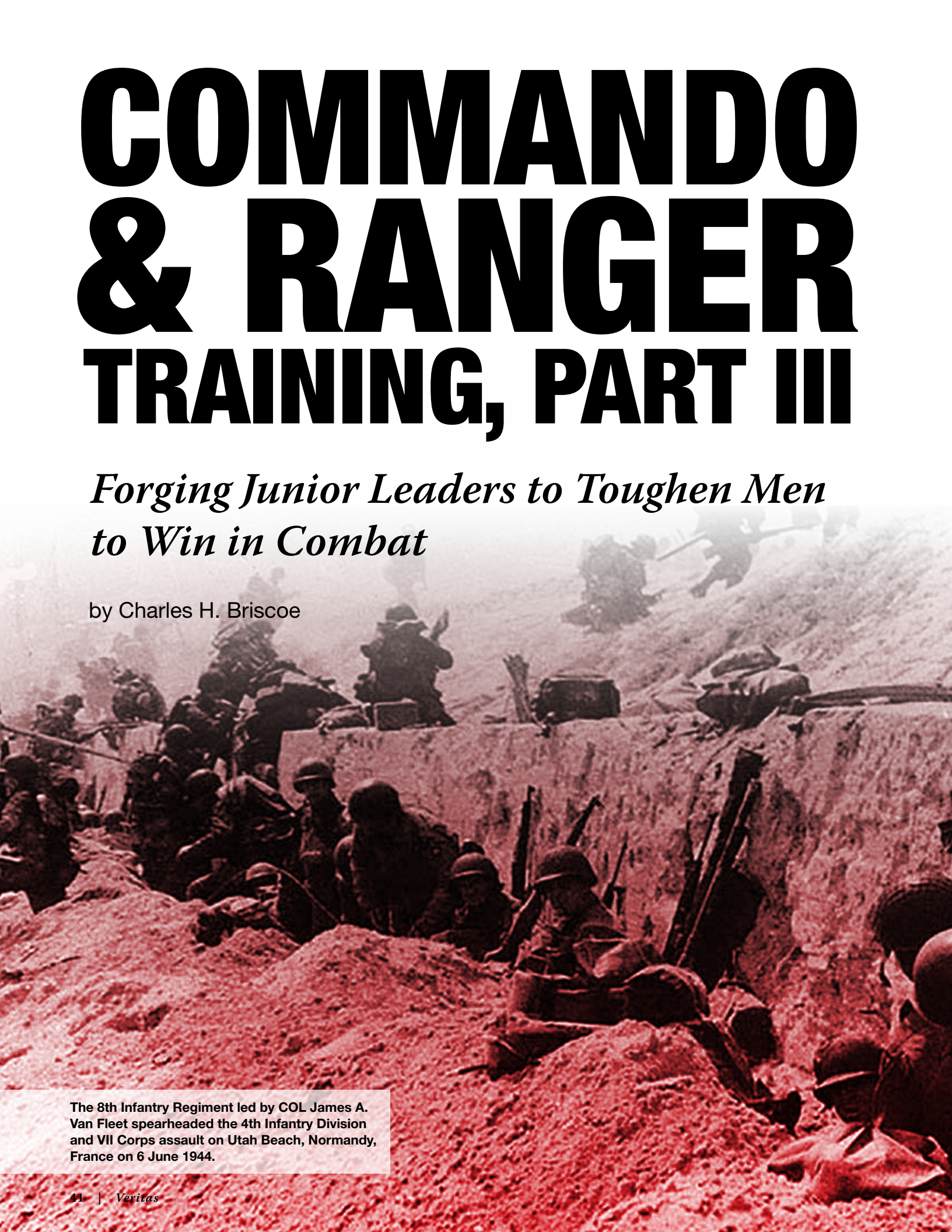


# COMMANDO & RANGER TRAINING, PART III

*Forging Junior Leaders to Toughen Men  
to Win in Combat*

by Charles H. Briscoe



The 8th Infantry Regiment led by COL James A. Van Fleet spearheaded the 4th Infantry Division and VII Corps assault on Utah Beach, Normandy, France on 6 June 1944.

**Abstract:** This article, centered around a ‘Commando’ instructor at the Amphibious Training Center who created the 4th Division Ranger program, explains why individual troop-building skills were critical to preparing a draft Army for war. Both programs developed Army junior leaders ‘on the cheap’ by providing practical methods to ‘steel’ recruits for combat overseas. Intertwining the professional growth of Captain Oscar L. Joyner, Jr., 8th Infantry Regiment, with the environment of 1940s America reveals the state of U.S. military preparedness while war was raging throughout the world.

This article emphasizes how important ‘Commando,’ Ranger, and amphibious training were in preparing America’s soldiers to fight on multiple fronts in World War II. Infantry Captain (CPT) Oscar L. Joyner, Jr., 4th Division, was prepared to organize a ‘shoestring’ Ranger program after six weeks of Commando training at Camp William, Achnacarry, Scotland, in 1942.<sup>1</sup> This was proven when he was diverted for ‘Commando’ instructor duty at the new Amphibious Training Center (ATC) at Camp Clarence R. Edwards, Massachusetts. When CPT Joyner rejoined the 4th Division in November 1942, he brought a wealth of field expedient individual and collective ‘Commando’ training and amphibious operations experience.<sup>2</sup> By chronicling CPT Joyner’s professional development during the feeble Army modernization during America’s mobilization for World War II will show his ‘value-added’ to 4th Division.

Sidebars will connect Joyner’s military progression with the state of Army junior officers in 1940; the credentials of his mentor, one of the Army’s strongest leaders, commanders, and trainers at the battalion and regimental level; and the spread of war worldwide. The U.S. Army ranking among nations, second and third order effects of British, Chinese, and Russian combat losses, pacifist impacts on conscription, and defense priorities before Pearl Harbor serve as the atmospheric context. They help one better appreciate the importance of ‘shoestring’ training for a draftee Army. All of these factors increased the pressure on junior officers and sergeants charged with daily transforming new recruits into combat-capable soldiers. Severely resource-constrained British Commando improvised training methodology and combat skills became the templates for Ranger programs. Combat marksmanship and urban fighting were emphasized as well. Consider these factors along with life in small town America in the early 1940s.

### CPT Joyner's Early Years

Born 8 January 1919 into the upper middle class family of Dr. Oscar L. and Mrs. Eleanor ‘Lucille’ Stafford Joyner in Kernersville, North Carolina (population 1,219 [1920]), Oscar Junior grew up in the Depression as the

oldest of five children.<sup>3</sup> His father, the Kernersville dentist, graduated from Atlanta Dental College (now Emory University School of Dentistry) and his mother attended nearby Salem College in Winston-Salem. It was a foregone conclusion that the Kernersville High School senior class president and salutatorian was off to college in 1936.<sup>4</sup> This was not typical.

According to the 1940 census, just half of America’s population (132 million plus) had finished eighth grade. Six and four percent of men and women were college graduates. There were significantly more white Americans better educated than minorities.<sup>5</sup> These demographics were reflected in America’s draftee Army and represented what a commissioned Oscar Joyner would face in the 1940s.

While at Davidson College, north of Charlotte, North Carolina, Oscar Jr. pledged Beta Theta Pi fraternity, lettered three years in soccer, and was a cadet captain in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) battalion. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in chemistry in June 1940 and was commissioned as an Infantry Second Lieutenant (2LT) in the Organized Reserve



2LT Oscar Joyner, Jr., 8th Infantry Regiment—WWII officer rank was worn on uniform epaulettes. **DUI:** The 8th Infantry Regiment, Regular Army, was constituted on 5 July 1838.

Corps (ORC).<sup>6</sup> 2LT Joyner elected to attend his branch basic course at Fort Benning, Georgia, that summer.

## 4th Infantry Division

After completing the Infantry Officer Basic Course at Fort Benning, 2LT Joyner was offered a Regular Army (RA) commission and an assignment to the 8th Infantry Regiment of 4th Division.<sup>7</sup> It had been reactivated as the seventh RA division on 1 June 1940, raising the active Army strength to 227,000 men; still 33,000 soldiers short of that authorized by the 1920 National Defense Act.<sup>8</sup> Though designated a new 'triangular' division, the 4th consisted of two 'skeletal' infantry regiments (the 8th and 22nd Infantry) instead of three, at 31 percent authorized strength.<sup>9</sup> Only two Army divisions (RA and NG) were rated 'mission capable' for Rio Grande border patrol: the 1st Cavalry and 2nd Infantry at 63 percent and 71 percent strength, respectively.<sup>10</sup> By keeping units undermanned the War Department could divert soldier pay to other priorities, like modern airplanes, tanks, and mechanized and motorized vehicles.

Lieutenant (LT) Joyner was quickly swept up in a flurry of activity as newly conscripted recruits arrived for indoctrination into Army life and soldiering. The lieutenants and sergeants were to provide thirteen weeks of mobilization (basic) training. Then, the soldiers were organized into platoons and companies in battalions for sixteen weeks of combined training.<sup>11</sup>

To complicate matters, in August 1940, the Army provisionally 'motorized' the 4th with enough motorized vehicles to move the entire division. Twenty to forty year-old draftees (half of whom had an eighth grade education) had to be taught how to drive, service, and repair a fleet of motorcycles, scout cars, half-tracks, and various trucks (to 2½ ton). Because his family had one of 400 automobiles registered in Forsyth County, North Carolina, LT

Joyner was logically 'tapped' to help with driver training and basic maintenance.<sup>12</sup> Regardless of its state of training, the 4th Motorized was force-listed for maneuvers.

## Carolina Maneuvers

The 4th Division got its third regiment, the 12th Infantry, on 24 October 1941, just days before the First U.S. Army (FUSA) Carolina Maneuvers.<sup>13</sup> Road movement tactics, techniques, and procedures were developed 'on the fly' as they convoyed east on predominantly dirt roads using local 'road maps.'<sup>14</sup> Gasoline resupply was an afterthought in planning. Broken down and 'out of gas' vehicles littered roadsides from Georgia into the Carolinas. The 'triangular' division doctrine was still in draft when General Headquarters (GHQ) umpires graded the division and regimental commanders on tactical proficiency.<sup>15</sup> LT Joyner was fortunate. The 8th Infantry was led by the 4th Division's best regimental commander, Colonel (COL) James A. Van Fleet.<sup>16</sup> But, sometimes a good leader was not enough.

The troops' view of the Carolina Maneuvers:

*"a general confusion of enemy alerts, the reds and the blues, foxholes by the numbers, great clouds of dust, smoke pots and tear gas, the Pee Dee River battles, and warm beer."<sup>1</sup>*

The 8th Infantry was spearheading the 4th Motorized Division attack to relieve pressure on the 1st Armored Division when it ran straight into a major II Corps assault. After being quickly surrounded by the four regiments of the 44th Division (NG), the 8th Infantry was abandoned as the 4th began 'back pedaling' to break contact. The highly-touted tank divisions of I Armored Corps 'outran' their fuel resupply. Tank regiments were surrounded at rural gas stations while commandeering fuel. COL Van Fleet and the 8th Infantry officers learned how vulnerable road-bound trucks with soldiers aboard were to 'ground pounding' infantry.<sup>17</sup> Mobility and maneuver speed were negated. It was embarrassing being sacrificed, but the gross tactical errors made by the generals had severe consequences.

The biggest casualties in the maneuvers (Louisiana and Carolinas) were generals. Poor performance led to considerable turnover. 4th Motorized Division commanders, on average, lasted three months, with seven commanders in two years (June 1940 to July 1942); turbulence created uncertainty in the ranks.<sup>18</sup> After Thanksgiving 1941, the 4th Motorized left the



The 4th Division was motorized provisionally in August 1940. It became the 4th Infantry Division (ID) on 12 April 1943

## Infantry Lieutenants 1940

In the years preceding World War II, the Regular Army (RA), National Guard (NG), and Organized Reserve Corps (ORC) were critically short of lieutenants. By late 1940, ROTC and CMTC (Citizens's Military Training Camp) graduates constituted 90 percent of the Army lieutenants and 60 percent of officers in tactical units.<sup>1</sup> The 1940 Army maneuvers in Tennessee revealed weak leaders at all levels and a general unfitness of soldiers. This caused a diversion of RA officers to 'shore up' the federalized NG four infantry regiment 'square' divisions.<sup>2</sup> The lack of lieutenants and young sergeants made NG weekend drills 'paper soldiering.'<sup>3</sup> By 1940, the Enlisted Reserve Corps (ERC) was in name only.<sup>4</sup>

## Colonel James A. Van Fleet



James A. Van Fleet, a native of Florida, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1915 after leading the football team to victory over Navy (20-0).<sup>1</sup> Van Fleet was a respected, experienced leader, trainer, and coach.

He commanded the 17th Machine-Gun Battalion, 6th Infantry Division (ID) in WWI, infantry battalions in Panama, Maine, and Georgia in the inter-war years, and coached the Kansas State University, University of Florida, and West Point football teams. He led the 8th Infantry from July 1941 through July 1944, spearheading the 4th ID and VII Corps D-Day assault on Utah Beach, Normandy. Personal valor led to two Silver Stars and a Distinguished Service Cross before promotion to Brigadier General (BG) on 24 July 1944, far behind his West Point classmates. At the end of the war in Europe, Major General (MG) Van Fleet commanded IX Corps of Third U.S. Army. In Korea, Lieutenant General (LTG) Van Fleet was X Corps commander before taking command of the Eighth U.S. Army. General (GEN) Van Fleet retired in 1954.<sup>2</sup>

## Just How BAD Was It?



Conflicts throughout the 1930s grew to encompass the world by 1939. Japan began the onslaught of China by invading Manchuria in 1931. Nazi Germany annexed the Sudetenland before conquering Czechoslovakia in March 1939 and Poland seven months later. This latter invasion prompted declarations of war by Great Britain and France and the sending of a ten-division, predominantly British, Allied Expeditionary Force to Europe to shore up defenses. Fascist Italy had invaded Ethiopia in 1935 before conquering Eritrea and Somalia, annexing Albania, and then intervening in the Spanish Civil War. By then, the Japanese had expanded their aggression into regional British, French, and Dutch possessions like Burma, Indochina, Singapore, the East Indies, and Malaya. In America, isolationism and pacifism predominated politics and national policy.

The Selective Training and Service Act of October 1940 established conscription for 21 to 45 year-old able-bodied males for twelve months service. Congress debated for months while France collapsed. The Allied Expeditionary Force suffered 100,000 killed or captured before it abandoned ten divisions-worth of tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, mortars, trucks, scout cars, and tons upon tons of munitions and supplies to allow 350,000 soldiers to escape from Dunkirk. By then, England was subjected to massive cross-Channel bomber raids while Nazi submarines devastated shipping in the Atlantic and Caribbean.<sup>1</sup> In 1940, the U.S. provided more than fifty WWI-era destroyers to England for use of its Caribbean islands to protect the Panama Canal, U.S. shipping, and the Western Hemisphere. Under Lend-Lease agreements in 1941, America provided aid "for the defense of any country the President deemed vital to defense of the United States."<sup>2</sup> Of the more than thirty, Great Britain and the Soviet Union dominated the list.

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Congress to extend draftee service to thirty months for national security reasons, the bill was approved by one vote in pacifist-heavy House of Representatives.<sup>3</sup> By July 1941, 606,915 draftees had been processed, inducted, and assigned to nine woefully understrength 'triangular' RA divisions and eighteen 'square' NG divisions.<sup>4</sup> In his Biennial Report to the Secretary of War (1 September 1940), GEN George C. Marshall said that "the active Army...of approximately 174,000 enlisted men...was virtually a third-rate power."<sup>5</sup> A third of American soldiers were at coastal artillery posts defending seaports.<sup>6</sup> The U.S. Army, strengthwise, was ranked 19th in the world-below Portugal and above Bulgaria.<sup>7</sup> America was the least prepared of the world powers to fight a global war.

# "The Alcatraz of the Army"<sup>1</sup>

Adopting the quip of Walter Winchell, the scandal-mongering, sensationalist gossip columnist of the era, the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion (CMB) characterized "the combat swimming, speed marches, un-orthodox exercises, street fighting, Judo, hand-to-hand fighting, use of knife and bayonet, cargo net practice on mockups, loading and unloading small craft, demolitions, and use of explosives... as vigorous, hazardous, and exciting" (6 May to 10 June 1943).<sup>2</sup> They underwent training, unlike the 2nd Chemical Mortar Battalion (December 1942). Those soldiers "fired (4.2 inch mortar smoke) from landing craft (to screen) simulated assault landings. For the first time ammunition was available... to permit adequate gunnery practice. Firing technique was developed."<sup>3</sup> The 2nd CMB accompanied the 45th Infantry Division (ID) overseas and the 81st CMB joined 1st ID for D-Day assault landings on Omaha Beach.<sup>4</sup> These heavy mortar men benefited from the efforts of CPT Oscar Joyner. And, Major MG James A. Van Fleet, 90th ID, praised 81st CMD for its smoke and high explosive (HE) support from August 1944 to January 1945.<sup>5</sup>

**Top:** A chemical 4.2 inch mortar mounted in an Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM 3) to smoke screen an assault landing at Camp Gordon Johnston.  
**Bottom:** The 4.2 inch mortar being 'man transported' on its carriage to a hilltop.



## BRITISH COMMANDO TRAINING, 1942

The abandonment of ten divisions-worth of tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, mortars, trucks, scout cars, and tons upon tons of munitions and supplies around Dunkirk 'rocked' the British army. Demands for retaliatory action by Prime Minister Winston Churchill prompted numerous enthusiastic Commando raids along the coasts of Europe. The majority of these were debacles, low-keyed to the public. After Commando training was centralized in 1942, U.S. Army and Marine officers attended the course to learn how individual soldiers and small groups were physically and mentally strengthened by a tough regimen of challenging tasks under combat conditions. All were done on various terrain, in all weather, day and night, 'on the cheap.' CPT Joyner and his comrades began the indoctrination by carrying their baggage eight miles from Scotland's Spean railway station to the Commando Depot.<sup>1</sup>

Daily physical training (PT) focused on agility and strength exercises to build stamina and endurance. Skills and techniques needed to overcome wall, barbed wire, water, ravine, and cliff obstacles were taught and practiced on multiple confidence courses spread throughout the rugged Scottish terrain. Log drills built teamwork and cooperation. Combat-experienced cadre designed and built quick-reaction, live fire assault lanes everywhere. The overarching premise was to develop self-confidence while promoting initiative and ingenuity in individuals and the small groups.<sup>2</sup>

Problem solving was inherent. Reconnaissance and combat patrols and raids were done day and night. Live fire with small arms, machineguns, antitank weapons, and mortars applied combat, instinctive marksmanship techniques. Repetitive practice continued until competency was achieved in all conditions. Hand grenades, explosives, and pyrotechnics increased the element of shock to enhance violent attacks. Hand-to-hand unarmed combat, 'dirty' knife fighting, navigation with map and compass was practiced on land and water. Small boat operations were rehearsed during the day and executed at night in the midst of exploding artillery, mine simulators, and overhead machine gun fire using tracer ammunition.<sup>3</sup> Since the European population lived in villages, towns, and cities linked by railroads and a variety of roads, street fighting from house-to-house with booby traps everywhere was done day and night.<sup>4</sup> The easily 'exported' fighting skills, techniques, tactical training methods, and field expedient venues became the 'bread and butter' of division Ranger training in the States.<sup>5</sup>



Carolinas to return to Fort Benning before relocating to Camp Gordon, Georgia. The troops were settling into their Camp Gordon barracks on 7 December 1941 when they heard that Pearl Harbor had been attacked by the Japanese. The infantry battalions were quickly dispatched to reinforce coastal defenses from North Carolina to Florida.<sup>19</sup> A maneuver respite allowed GHQ to reassess Army training and readiness levels as it regularly ‘riddled’ divisions for troops to fill those going overseas. Basic infantry training was a constant in the battalions because levies of a hundred plus key personnel three times in two years turned readiness upside down. The internal turmoil was bad, but war news was worse.

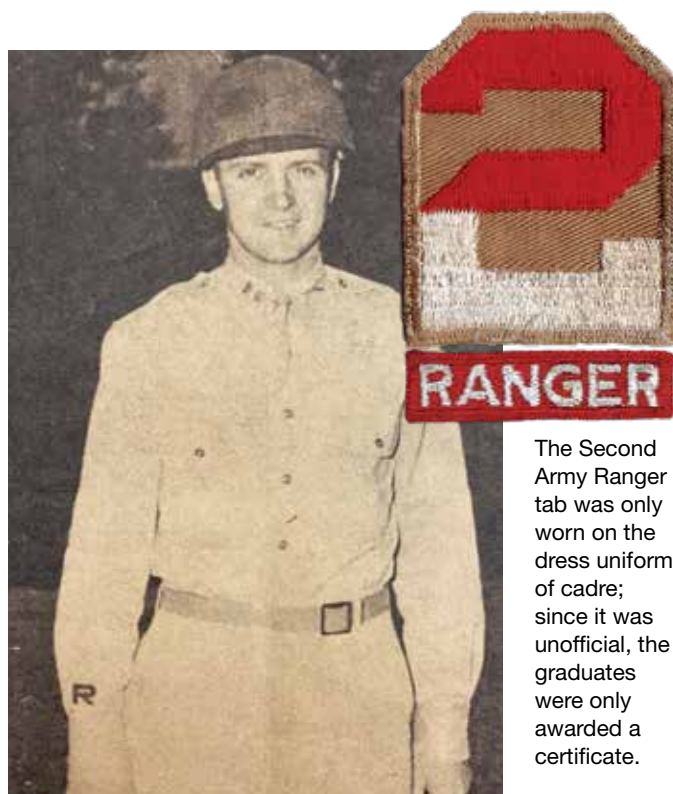
## Commando Training

By the time the fear of imminent Axis attack had subsided in July 1942, Army Ground Forces (AGF) command had written sufficient doctrine to have the Armies conduct maneuvers corps-on-corps to evaluate divisions and regiments. By then, CPT Joyner, the 4th Division selectee for Commando training, was at Camp William, Achnacarry, Scotland. He was there because GEN Marshall headed an Army plagued with weak junior leaders and unfit American soldiers. He saw Commando training as a way to strengthen and instill confidence among those charged with getting the Army ‘fit for combat.’<sup>20</sup> The Commando sidebar specifies the individual and collective skills developed as well as the innovative, ‘cheap’ training methods adopted by the resource-constrained British after Dunkirk.

CPT Joyner wrote to COL Van Fleet explaining how Commando training could be used to develop more capable junior officer and sergeant leaders in the 4th Division. The 8th Infantry Regiment commander replied after the Second Carolina Maneuvers that they were “preparing for bigger events to come,” mistakenly believing that the 4th was troop-listed in the plan to invade North Africa.<sup>21</sup> The 4th Division leaders were stressing tactics and techniques for attacking fortified positions and concrete ‘pill boxes’ like those in the Maginot Line along the border of France.<sup>22</sup>

Joyner had no inkling that he would not be rejoining his division. Like his Commando mate, CPT Jack T. Shannon (later 10th Special Forces Group [SFG] executive officer and first commander, 77th SFG), he was diverted to the Amphibious Training Center at Camp Edwards. Assigned to its Commando Division, the two were to train the federalized NG 36th ID from 24 August to 4 October 1942 as directed by Major (MAJ) William B. Kunzig.<sup>23</sup>

Based on the lessons learned from the 45th ID in the previous cycle, more night training was added to the Commando task force program: map reading and



CPT Oscar Joyner, Jr. is wearing the 4th ID Ranger insignia—a black ‘R’—above the cuff of the right shirt sleeve of his khaki uniform.

The Second Army Ranger tab was only worn on the dress uniform of cadre; since it was unofficial, the graduates were only awarded a certificate.

compass land navigation; explosive charge preparation to eliminate beach obstacles; mine and booby trap detection and neutralization; sandy beach speed marches; sea wall scaling; and obstacle and combat assault courses at night. Since 36th ID Commando Task Force elements would do beach reconnaissance as well as spearheading the division assault, it was isolated on Washburn Island in Waquoit Bay for intense, specified training since they were the key to success.<sup>24</sup>

There, 36th ID ‘Commandos’ lived like Spartans, practicing overwater scouting, stealthy night rubber boat insertions, artillery and naval gunfire targeting; obstacle creation to impede motorized counterattacks; and clearing and securing multiple landing sites. For ten days sleep-deprived ‘Commandos’ trained hard living on combat rations and water. Since amphibious operations, vice ship landing exercises, were new to the expanding Army, field expediency, live fire, and creativity, was practiced following the British Commando example.<sup>25</sup>

Just as the ATC cadre got into a smooth training rhythm with the 36th ID, AGF ordered the center moved to the Florida ‘Panhandle.’ Training of the 38th ID was scheduled to begin 23 November 1942. The cadre, reconstituted for BG Frank A. Keating, the ATC commander, had new training priorities established personally by LTG Lesley J. McNair, the AGF commander.<sup>26</sup>

## Second Army Ranger School

The formation and training of a Commando task force in each division was eliminated. Never a strong supporter of the Commando concept, General McNair retained only those tough training features that would condition all troops for combat. He was not interested in making ‘super killers’ out of a select few. All soldiers would get live-fire battle ‘inoculations’ and practice urban street fighting as part of their physical and mental hardening for combat.<sup>27</sup>

However, LTG Ben Lear, the Second Army commander, still upset about the drubbing given his divisions by LTG Walter Krueger’s Third Army in the 1941 Louisiana Maneuvers, relieved the most inept generals and colonels. The 1912 Olympics bronze medalist (equestrian) was disgusted with the physical fitness of his infantrymen and weak junior leaders. To deal with those problems, LTG Lear organized a Second Army Ranger School late in 1942. All of his division commanders were told to send their best lieutenants and sergeants to the two-week course. “We are here to toughen men for dirty work,” commented General Lear.<sup>28</sup> The course graduates were to promulgate ‘Rangerism’ in their units.<sup>29</sup>

After helping to move the ATC to Camp Gordon Johnston near Carrabelle, Florida, Captains Joyner and Shannon returned to their units: 4th Motorized at Camp Gordon; and 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) at Fort Benning, respectively. Instead of rejoining COL Van Fleet in November 1942, Joyner was assigned to Division G-3 to organize a Ranger program.<sup>30</sup>

Ranger training was still the ‘hottest thing’ in the Army despite the misgivings of LTG McNair. It was a simple and inexpensive way to develop tough, highly motivated junior leaders. Select Second Army Ranger course graduates became 4th Division instructors. Ranger-trained junior leaders were in demand because attrition (all ranks) to fill units going overseas required constant basic training. Even new Officer Candidate School graduates had to attend.<sup>31</sup>

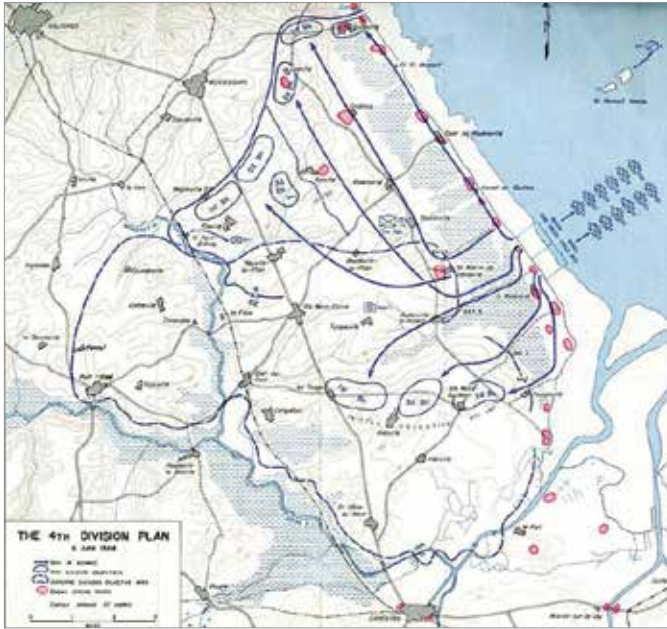
CPT Joyner lengthened and reduced Ranger training curriculum based on conditions at Fort Dix, New Jersey (April to August 1943) and Camp Johnston (September through November 1943) while engaged in the III Corps Carrabelle Maneuvers. While the redesignated 4th Infantry Division (April 1943) was at Camp Johnston, its infantry regiments did amphibious operations when not committed. CPT Joyner, a former ATC instructor, could recommend the best training for the time available.<sup>32</sup>

December at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, marked the last 4th ID Ranger course. The graduates were given embroidered black ‘R’ patches sewn above the right cuff of the long-sleeve khaki uniform shirt.<sup>33</sup> After the Christmas-New Year holidays the division boarded trains for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. They shipped out of New York on 18 January 1944 and reached England eight days later.<sup>34</sup> The next five months were spent training for the amphibious invasion and assault of Europe.

As a division G-3 operations officer, CPT Joyner arranged live-fire amphibious training for the 4th

Second Army Rangers cross a stream on a toggle-rope bridge under simulated battle conditions. This demonstration occurred at Camp Forrest, Tennessee, on 23 January 1943.





ID regiments at the U.S. Assault Training Center at Slapton Sands and Woolacombe Beach, near Devon, England. Its commander was Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) William B. Kunzig, Joyner's former Commando Division boss at Camp Edwards. CPT Joyner was well-versed in landing and beach breakout plans.<sup>35</sup> The best trained infantry regiment would lead the way.

## Assault on Normandy

COL Van Fleet's 8th Infantry Regiment (reinforced by 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry) led the 4th ID and VII Corps assault on Utah Beach, Normandy, France, 6 June 1944. CPT Joyner helped Brigadier General (BG) Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., the Assistant Division Commander, direct units inland. In the first two hours the 8th Infantry Regiment had captured five fortresses while clearing a two-mile swath in the Cherbourg peninsula.<sup>36</sup> But, this was not done without significant losses.

As 4th ID officer casualties mounted, CPT Joyner was sent down to the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry on 13 June as the executive officer. He was replacing MAJ John Dowdy, an original 4th ID officer, who had taken command on 8 June.<sup>37</sup> This 'troop assignment' was reward for 'staff officering' in the G-3 since November 1942. The two battalions of the 22nd Infantry had captured Azeville, the major bastion overlooking the beachhead, and driven the Germans from Chateau de Fontenay, a major headquarters. Infantry advances inland were made dangerous and laborious by hedgerows.<sup>38</sup>

For centuries Normandy farmers had planted hedgerows around their property as fences. The German had months to take advantage of these natural obstacles that channeled movement to roads and paths and allowed the siting of well-concealed fighting positions with interlocking fire. U.S. soldiers discovered quickly how dangerous the hedgerows were and ground movement was slowed considerably.<sup>39</sup>

On 21 June, as the 22nd Infantry was approaching Le Thiel in the 4th ID-led VII Corps drive to Cherbourg, accurate enemy artillery fire forced CPT Joyner to relocate the 1st Battalion jeep-mounted command post (CP). They barely escaped a well-directed barrage. 'Bugging out' under fire, the CP vehicles chose to follow a narrow wagon trail. This route channelized them into a



**Top:** 4th ID's plan for the assault on Utah Beach on 6 June 1944. **Center:** Just inland from Omaha Beach on D-Day, 4th ID MG Raymond O. 'Tubby' Barton (center), BG Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. (left) and the G-3 discuss division progress. Those personnel behind them were G-3 staff personnel. **Bottom:** WWI veteran BG Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.





These 4th ID soldiers, moving along a road between dense hedgerows, are in the Normandy breakout. They were excellent concealment for German infantry who burrowed into them from the back side.

well-camouflaged hedgerow ambush. The jeep-mounted CP was annihilated by heavy machinegun and rifle fire. CPT Joyner and his driver were killed instantly.<sup>40</sup>

CPT Oscar L. Joyner, Jr. was posthumously awarded Silver and Bronze Stars, a Purple Heart, and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. He is buried in Normandy American Cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer, France, overlooking Omaha Beach of D-Day.<sup>41</sup> Lest one in remorse forget, the 'Commando,' Ranger, and amphibious training organized, taught, overseen, and promulgated by CPT Joyner for two years undoubtedly saved countless numbers of soldiers in the 36th and 4th Infantry Divisions. And, this training turned several hundred corporals, sergeants, and lieutenants into leaders in the 4th ID, 36th ID, and other divisions. CPT Oscar Joyner merits a gracious salute by these veterans from the Greatest Generation. 🇺🇸

## Takeaways:

- 1** WWII Ranger programs, built on British Commando training methodology and combat-proven skills, challenged, motivated, and produced junior officer and NCOs capable of molding draftees into fit, confident soldiers, capable of winning in combat.
- 2** The two years of 'Commando,' Ranger, and amphibious training organized and run by CPT Oscar L. Joyner, Jr. saved countless lives in the 36th and 4th ID and other divisions while making leaders of several hundred corporals, sergeants, and junior officers.
- 3** Physical training can be done anywhere, anytime; demonstrate how to overcome tough obstacles and then make 'enabled' soldiers face those challenges every day and at night.

## Endnotes

- 1 "Oscar L. Joyner," at <http://1-22infantry.org/kia/joyner>, accessed 4 February 2020.
- 2 Charles H. Briscoe, "Commando & Ranger Training: Preparing America's Soldiers for War," *Veritas*, 10:1 (2014): 64-79, and "Commando & Ranger Training, Part II: Preparing America's Soldiers for War: The Second U.S. Army Ranger School & Division Programs," *Veritas*, 12:1 (2016): 1-15.
- 3 Monica Young, "Second Chances," at [https://www.journalnow.com/news/local/second-chance/article\\_082caf7d-514c-5175-95](https://www.journalnow.com/news/local/second-chance/article_082caf7d-514c-5175-95), accessed 24 October 2019. Oscar L. Joyner, Jr. was a teenager when his dentist father purchased their family home at 408 West Mountain Street, Kernersville. Oscar, Sr. was one of the first dentists to practice in the town. That house was renovated in 2011 by another dentist, Dr. Amy-Jo Fischer.
- 4 George Gunn, *Milestones Backward Run....: Beta Theta Pi at Davidson*, Vol. II 1941-1971, 30 in Matthew R. Joyner family papers; Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1967), 428. The Organized Reserve Corps (100,000+) consisted primarily of college graduates from the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and Citizen Military Training Camps (CMTC). There were about 14,000 professional Regular Army (RA) officers in the summer of 1940. It was customary to offer the Honor Graduates of the combat arms basic officer courses an RA commission. Kent R. Greenfield, Robert R. Palmer and Bell I. Wiley, *The Organization of Ground Combat Troops: The Army Ground Forces: United States Army in World War II* (Washington, DC: Historical Division, United States Army, 1947), 2.
- 5 "National Assessment of Adult Literacy," at [https://nces.ed.gov/NAAL/lit\\_history.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/NAAL/lit_history.asp), accessed 15 May 2020.
- 6 Gunn, *Milestones Backward Run*, 30; Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 428.
- 7 Gunn, *Milestones Backward Run*, 30; Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 428; Greenfield, Palmer and Wiley, *The Organization of Ground Combat Troops: The Army Ground Forces*, 2.
- 8 Greenfield, Palmer, and Wiley, *The Organization of Ground Combat Troops*, 3; Robert R. Palmer, Bell I. Wiley, and William R. Keast, *United States Army in World War II: The Army Ground Forces: The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1948), 489; Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 424.
- 9 Shelby I. Stanton, *World War II Order of Battle* (New York: Galahad Books, 1984), 81; Greenfield, Palmer, and Wiley, *The Army Ground Forces; Organization of Ground Combat Troops*, 9; Martin A. Kreidberg and Merton G. Henry, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1955), 550.
- 10 Kreidberg and Henry, *History of Military Mobilization in the United States Army*, 550.
- 11 Gabel, *The U.S. Army Maneuvers of 1941*, 18-19. The Mobilization Training Program (MTP) lasted about thirteen weeks: six weeks were devoted to basic soldier skills from physical fitness to discipline (School of the Soldier) and seven weeks for specialty training. Riflemen practiced weapons maintenance and marksmanship and their role in squad tactics.
- 12 Paul F. Braim, *The Will to Win: The Life of General James A. Van Fleet* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001), 62. The Army's original experimental unit, the 2nd Division, was divested of its mobility field testing.
- 13 Stanton, *World War II Order of Battle*, 81; Greenfield, Palmer, and Wiley, *The Army Ground Forces; Organization of Ground Combat Troops*, 9. Contrary to Gabel in *The U.S. Army Maneuvers of 1941*, 29, the 12th Infantry Regiment was simply motorized, never mechanized. The armored divisions (supposedly fully motorized) and the Cavalry's experimental 'mechanized' force had gotten virtually all 'mechanized' assets. Their infantry carriers and artillery haulers were the M2 and M3 half-tracks. Reliance on Army-level documents and journal articles without cross-referencing with veterans distorted reality. John K. Mahon and Romana Danysh, *Infantry: Part I: Regular Army: Army Lineage Series* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1972), 311-323; "The Units: 12th Infantry Regiment," at <https://web.archive.org/web/20121218022544/http://www.25thida.com/12thinf.html>, accessed 26 March 2020.
- 14 Braim, *The Will to Win*, 62-64; Gabel, *The U.S. Army Maneuvers of 1941*, 45-47, 87.
- 15 Management of the training of the field forces had been decentralized in July 1940 by transferring this function from the War Department General Staff (WDGS) to the staff of the wartime General Headquarters (GHQ) to assist the Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, in his capacity as Commanding General of the Field Forces. GHQ ran the maneuvers of 1940 and 1941. Shortly after America's declaration of war, Army Ground Forces command was created and assumed this training responsibility. Greenfield, Palmer, and Wiley, *The Organization of Ground Combat Troops*, 6, 12, 16, 31, 43, 44, 60; Stanton, *World War II Order of Battle*, 81; Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 424.
- 16 Wiley, *The Building and Training of Infantry Divisions Study No. 12*, 13. There was a dearth of competent regimental and battalion commanders and other field grade officers. But the junior and noncommissioned situation was even more disturbing.
- 17 Gabel, *The U.S. Army Maneuvers of 1941*, 146.
- 18 The Army Ground Forces, CPT Marshall O. Baker, *The Amphibious Training Center: Study No. 22* (Washington, DC: Army Ground Forces Historical Center), 5-7, 10; Wiley, *The Building and Training of Infantry Divisions Study No. 12*, 12; Stanton, *World War II Order of Battle*, 81; Greenfield, Palmer, and Wiley, *The Army Ground Forces; Organization of Ground Combat Troops*, 9.
- 19 Braim, *The Will to Win*, 63.
- 20 The Army Ground Forces, MAJ Bell I. Wiley and CPT William P. Govan, *History of the Second Army Study No. 16* (Washington, DC: Army Ground Forces Historical Section, 1946), 33.
- 21 Letter, COL James A. Van Fleet to CPT Oscar L. Joyner, 8 August 1942. Matthew R. Joyner family papers. The unwieldiness of the 4th Motorized Division became obvious to planners by the number of ship transports necessary to accommodate its vehicles. Braim, *The Will to Win*, 65, 380 endnote 40.
- 22 Braim, *The Will to Win*, 65.
- 23 Briscoe, "Commando & Ranger Training," 69, 71, 72, 74.
- 24 Briscoe, "Commando & Ranger Training," 69, 72, 74.
- 25 Briscoe, "Commando & Ranger Training," 72, 74.
- 26 Baker, *The Amphibious Training Center: Study No. 22*, 12, 48, 57-58; Briscoe, "Commando & Ranger Training," 69, 71, 74.
- 27 Baker, *The Amphibious Training Center*, 48, 58, 59-60.
- 28 Tennessee, Department of Environment and Conservation, Division of Archaeology, Report of Investigations No. 13 (2007); Benjamin C. Nance, "Archeological Survey of World War II Military Sites in Tennessee," 17.
- 28 David W. Hogan, Jr., *Raiders or Elite Infantry: The Changing Role of U.S. Army Rangers from Dieppe to Grenada* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), 23.
- 30 Briscoe, "Commando & Ranger Training," 71; Photograph, Matthew R. Joyner family papers.
- 31 Braim, *The Will to Win*, 65-66.
- 32 Stanton, *World War II Order of Battle*, 81.
- 33 Photograph, Joyner family papers.
- 34 Braim, *The Will to Win*, 64.
- 35 Briscoe, "Commando and Ranger Training," 77.
- 36 "Famous Fourth: The Story of the 4th Infantry Division," at [http://www.lonesentry.com/gi\\_stories\\_booklets/4thininfantry](http://www.lonesentry.com/gi_stories_booklets/4thininfantry), accessed 11 October 2019; Joyner family papers.
- 37 Stanton, *World War II Order of Battle*, 82; Joyner family papers; Braim, *The Will to Win*, 68; "LTC John Dowdy, Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry, 4th Infantry Division, 1944," at <http://1-22infantry.org/commanders/dowdypers.htm>, accessed 4 February 2020.
- 38 "Famous Fourth: The Story of the 4th Infantry Division," at [http://www.lonesentry.com/gi\\_stories\\_booklets/4thininfantry](http://www.lonesentry.com/gi_stories_booklets/4thininfantry), accessed 11 October 2019; Joyner family papers.
- 39 "Famous Fourth: The Story of the 4th Infantry Division," at [http://www.lonesentry.com/gi\\_stories\\_booklets/4thininfantry](http://www.lonesentry.com/gi_stories_booklets/4thininfantry), accessed 11 October 2019; Joyner family papers.

- 40 "Famous Fourth: The Story of the 4th Infantry Division," at [http://www.lonesentry.com/gi\\_stories\\_booklets/4thinfantry](http://www.lonesentry.com/gi_stories_booklets/4thinfantry), accessed 11 October 2019; Joyner family papers.
- 41 Joyner family papers.

## Quote

- 1 *History of the Second Chemical Mortar Battalion* (undated WWII account), 6, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.

## Infantry Lieutenants 1940

- 1 Ronald Spector, "Military Effectiveness of US Armed Forces, 1919-1929," in Allan R. Millett and Williamson Murray (eds.), *Military Effectiveness: The Interwar Period* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1988), 70, cited in COL Lonnie B. Adams III, "The Interwar Period: Lessons from the Past" manuscript (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1992), 5; **Major Generals (MG) Robert T. Frederick** (Canadian-American First Special Service Force, 1st Allied Airborne Task Force, and 45th ID commander, WWII) and **John K. Singlaub** (Office of Strategic Services [OSS], WWII) attended CMTC. MG Singlaub was operations officer of the U.S. Army Ranger Training Command, Ft. Benning, GA and CIA Joint Advisory Commission, Korea (JACK) during the Korean War and was the first Commander, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam Studies and Operations Group (MACV-SOG) during the Vietnam War. MG Robert T. Frederick, Official Military File, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, MO; Retired MG John K. Singlaub, interview by Dr. Charles H. Briscoe, 25 January 2008, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC
- 2 Army Ground Forces. MAJ Bell I. Wiley, *The Building and Training of Infantry Divisions Study No. 12* (Washington, DC: Army Ground Forces Historical Section, 1946), 12. **The WWI-era 'square' infantry divisions had four infantry regiments were considered to be too unwieldy for modern 1940s warfare. The U.S. Army reduced the divisions to three smaller infantry regiments to improve their mobility. Thus evolved the 'triangular' division.**
- 3 Christopher R. Gabel, *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History United States Army, 1992), 16, 17.
- 4 Spector, "Military Effectiveness of US Armed Forces, 1919-1929," 70.

## COL James A. Van Fleet

- 1 *The Howitzer 1915* (NY: The Blanchard Press, 1915), 191.
- 2 Braim, *The Will to Win*, 43, 45, 48-52, 52-53, 57, 59-61, 92. **Army Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall, had James A. confused with another Van Fleet, a drunkard at Fort Leavenworth, KS. Consequently, many of his classmates were four-star generals by the end of the war.**

## Just How BAD Was It?

- 1 William Addleman Ganoë, *The History of the United States Army* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1942), 517
- 2 "H.R. 1776, the Lend-Lease Act of 1941, 10 January 1941," at [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp\\_textbook.cfm?smlID=3&psid=4075](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smlID=3&psid=4075), accessed 27 May 2020.
- 3 Ganoë, *The History of the United States Army*, 519; *The Officers' Guide*, 9th ed. (Harrisburg, PA: The Military Service Publishing Company, 1940), 19; Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, 569.
- 4 Greenfield, Palmer, and Wiley, *The Organization of Ground Combat Troops*, 10.

- 5 *Biennial Reports of the Chief of Staff of the United States Army to the Secretary of War, 1 July 1939-30 June 1945* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1996), 3.
- 6 Richard W. Stewart, ed. Army Historical Series. *American Military History Vol. II: The United States Army in a Global Era, 1917-2003* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, U.S. Army, 2009), 67.
- 7 John W. Mountcastle, "Foreword" to Biennial Reports, v; David B. Woolner, email to Politifact, 13 June 2014, "SUBJECT: The 'Special Relationship' between Great Britain and the United States Began with FDR," 13 June 2014, at <https://rooseveltinstitute.org/special-relationship-between-great-britain-and-united-states>, accessed 3 February 2020.

## Alcatraz of the Army Sidebar

- 1 **This quip about the Army Amphibious Training Center at Camp Gordon Johnston near Carrabelle, Florida, was coined by Walter Winchell, the scandal-mongering, sensationalist gossip columnist and radio news commentator of the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. He was notorious for exploiting famous people, first in the entertainment world, Prohibition era gangsters, then to J. Edgar Hoover in law enforcement against appeasers of Nazism before WWII and by aiding and abetting Senator Joseph McCarthy's allegations and labeling of government and Hollywood celebrities as Communists. This Second Red Scare was triggered by the Communist takeover of China and the Korean War. That association with McCarthy finally led to his demise as television eclipsed radio and newspapers. The major political gossips/pundits were Edward R. Murrow and Walter Lippmann. Herman Klurfeld, *Winchell: His Life and Times* (NY: Praeger, 1976). It was cited in *History of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion, Training History at CGJ (May 6th through June 10th 1943)*, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.**
- 2 *History of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion, Training History at CGJ (May 6th through June 10th 1943)*.
- 3 *History of the Second Chemical Mortar Battalion* (undated WWII account), 6, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 4 *History of the Second Chemical Mortar Battalion*, 6; "World War II History of the 2nd Chemical Mortar Bn," at <http://www.4point2.org/hist-2w.htm> accessed 16 June 2020; *History of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion*; "WWII Commands: 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion," at <https://www.historynet.com/wwii-commands-81st-chemical-mortar-battalion.htm> accessed 16 June 2020. **The 2nd Chemical Mortar Battalion served 1,000 days in the Korean War.** Walter J. Eldredge, *Red Dragons: The 2nd Chemical Mortar Battalion in Korea* (Indianapolis: DogEar Publishing, 2009); "Unit History in Korean War," at <http://red-dragons.org/Unit%20History%20in%20Korean%20War.html>, accessed 16 June 2020.
- 5 *History of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion*.

## British Commando Training 1942

- 1 Timothy R. Moreman, *British Commandos 1940-46* (London: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 16-17.
- 2 Moreman, 38; Nick van der Bijl, *No. 10 Inter-Allied Commando 1942-45* (London: Osprey Publishing, 2006), 12.
- 3 Moreman, 38; Bijl, *No. 10 Inter-Allied Commando 1942-45*, 12.
- 4 Moreman, 38; Bijl, *No. 10 Inter-Allied Commando 1942-45*, 12.
- 5 Briscoe, "Commando & Ranger Training," 72-76, 78; Briscoe, "Commando & Ranger Training, Part II," 5-9; Donald J. Cann and John J. Galluzzo, *Images of America: Camp Edwards and Air Force Base* (Charleston SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2010), 67-73; Elizabeth Taylor, *Images of America: Camp Forrest* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2016), 60-61, 66-70, 72-78.