

RIGHT MAN FOR THE JOB

COLONEL CHARLES H. KARLSTAD

BY MICHAEL E. KRIVDO



In mid-1952, the Army's senior Psychological Warfare (Psywar) officer, Brigadier General (BG) Robert A. McClure, faced a dilemma. As head of the Office of the Chief of Psychological Warfare (OCPW), he had finally secured permission to create a center and school for both Psywar and Special Forces (SF). Now he needed the right man to bring this project to fruition, an officer with a solid reputation and the perfect combination of Army Staff and schools experience to man, fund, and resource it to make it operational. This task was daunting; the man chosen would be commander of the forces assigned to the Center, Psywar and SF units, and the school commandant who trained and educated officers and soldiers assigned to those units. And because many of the Army's senior conventionally oriented officers remained unconvinced of the necessity for special operations, the new Psychological Warfare Center and School (PWCS) had to be formed posthaste and conduct business at the highest level of professionalism. It had to survive the intense scrutiny of the Army Staff and the Army Field Forces. On 12 May 1952 BG McClure selected Colonel (COL) Charles H. Karlstad to implement his vision of the PWCS.¹

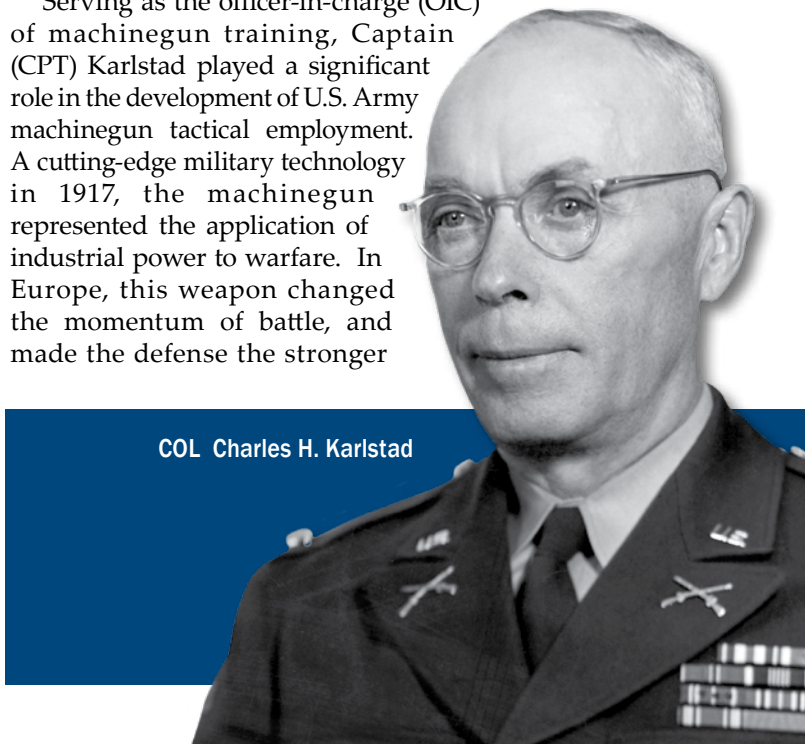
But who was the officer entrusted with this most difficult task? Military historians have traditionally overlooked COL Karlstad and his critical role in the development of Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF). They have instead focused on more colorful personalities like Karlstad's subordinate, COL Aaron Bank. But it was COL Karlstad who became the first commander of the forces assigned to the Psywar Center (PWC), both Psywar and SF, establishing initial guidelines and priorities that shaped the development of each SOF unit into eventual service branches. As its first commandant, Karlstad also created and then saved the Psywar School (PWS) as an independent Army service school responsible for Psywar and SF training. A closer look at his credentials will reveal why BG McClure chose him as the PWCS's premier Commander and Commandant, and why he relied upon Karlstad to defend and preserve the PWCS and ARSOF capabilities during the post-Korea drawdown.²

Charles Herbert Karlstad was born 26 December 1894 in Castlewood, South Dakota, the middle child of seven and the second son of three boys. His parents were Norwegian immigrant farmers of modest means and they supported him through South Dakota State College, the "West Point of the Plains" where he earned a Bachelor of Science in

General Agriculture in 1917. Soon after Congress declared war on Germany in April 1917, a Regular Officer Board selected Karlstad as one of 10,000 candidates to become officers in a planned expansion of the military. He reported to Fort Snelling, Minnesota, in May 1917 to attend the First Officer Training Camp. Three months later, he accepted a reserve commission as a second lieutenant of Infantry.³

As one of the first new officers in a rapidly expanding army, Karlstad found himself tasked with training tens of thousands of Americans joining the armed forces. Reporting to the 88th Infantry Division (ID) at Camp Dodge, a National Army post that had sprung up almost overnight on the outskirts of Des Moines, Iowa, the quiet, efficient leader soon demonstrated his ability to handle tough assignments. The division commander gave Lieutenant Karlstad a company and told him to organize a machinegun school. For almost a year Karlstad trained new recruits on the art of machinegunnery, preparing them for combat in Europe. Since the 88th ID served initially as a training division for the Army, Karlstad taught hundreds of machinegunners only to watch them ship out for France.⁴ Accordingly, Karlstad became a top-notch trainer with a keen sense for mobilization issues that would serve him well later.

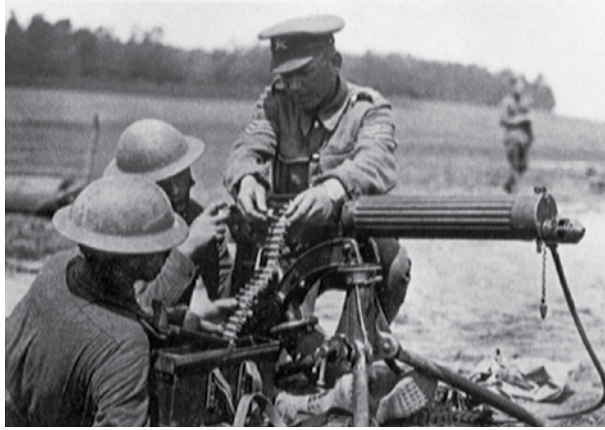
Serving as the officer-in-charge (OIC) of machinegun training, Captain (CPT) Karlstad played a significant role in the development of U.S. Army machinegun tactical employment. A cutting-edge military technology in 1917, the machinegun represented the application of industrial power to warfare. In Europe, this weapon changed the momentum of battle, and made the defense the stronger



COL Charles H. Karlstad

Panoramic composite photo of Camp Dodge, Iowa, in 1917.





A British sergeant trains American soldiers on the Vickers .303 cal. Mark 1 medium machinegun.



A British Vickers .303 cal. Mark 1 medium machinegun employed at the Battle of the Somme.

of the two forms of warfare. Machineguns sited to fire across division fronts broke up infantry attacks with deadly effect, causing unprecedented numbers of casualties. The U.S. military learned from the European experience. Soldiers and Marines trained with the latest Allied medium machinegun versions, the British Vickers .303 cal. Mark 1 and the French Hotchkiss 8 mm Lebel M1914. A select few became familiar with the American-made Browning 30-06 cal. M1917 heavy machinegun. By the time America entered the war both sides experimented with ways to employ machineguns offensively to break the stalemate. Assisted by visiting Allied officers, junior leaders like CPT Karlstad assessed the use of carts and trailers in crew drills to speed up the employment of those weapon systems during infantry attacks. With the success or failure of division and regimental operations so heavily dependent on the proper employment of its heavy weapons, the commanders made the training of gunners a high priority and trusted only their most capable officers to command those units and teach machinegun tactics.⁵

Just when it seemed that the 88th ID might spend the war only as a trainer of the Army's soldiers, the unit deployed to France. Major (MAJ) Karlstad, commanding the 338th Machine Gun Battalion, embarked his unit on the steam ship *Kashmir*, a contracted British vessel. They left Brooklyn, New York, on 15 August 1918 and arrived safely in Liverpool, England, thirteen days later. After the *Kashmir* took on supplies, MAJ Karlstad's unit left for Cherbourg, France, and joined the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) on 1 September. They arrived in time to fight first in the Haute-Alsace Sector and then in the Meuse – Argonne Offensive, the last major battles of the war.⁶

Following the 11 November 1918 armistice, MAJ Karlstad transferred to the 4th ID to command its 11th Machine Gun Battalion during the occupation of Germany. He established his headquarters in the town of Brohl, in the Rhine River Valley area east of Koblenz. There, Karlstad maintained law and order within the district by performing a number of constabulary functions (now considered as Civil Affairs [CA] duties)

in conjunction with the local Weimar government officials. The infantry major performed well and earned a Letter of Appreciation from Lieutenant General (LTG) Hunter Liggett.⁷

The rapid demobilization of the armed forces after the war meant grade reductions for those few Reserve officers allowed to remain on active duty. MAJ Karlstad reverted back to captain in 1920, but his consistently high performance also earned him a Regular Army commission.⁸ Like many of his peers, he spent the interwar period in a variety of command and staff positions throughout the U.S. (Fort Benning, Georgia; Fort Douglas [near Salt Lake City, Utah]; Camp Lewis, Washington; and Fort Sam Houston, Texas), plus a two-year assignment in the Philippines in the late 1920s.⁹ Ever the professional, Karlstad placed 11th on the Army national rifle team in 1924.¹⁰ During the lean years of the U.S. Army CPT Karlstad became known as a solid, dependable leader who stood apart from his peers.

Between field commands, CPT Karlstad distinguished himself as a student and instructor at several Army schools. After attending the Officers' Infantry Course in 1922, he served as a tactics instructor for four years, a pattern he repeated throughout the interwar years. In 1933 CPT Karlstad completed the two-year U.S. Army Command and General Staff School (CGSS) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, qualifying him for future assignment to the General Staff Corps (GSC), the equivalent of today's Department of the Army (DA) staff. School tours had other benefits. At CGSS, CPT Karlstad developed lasting professional relationships with



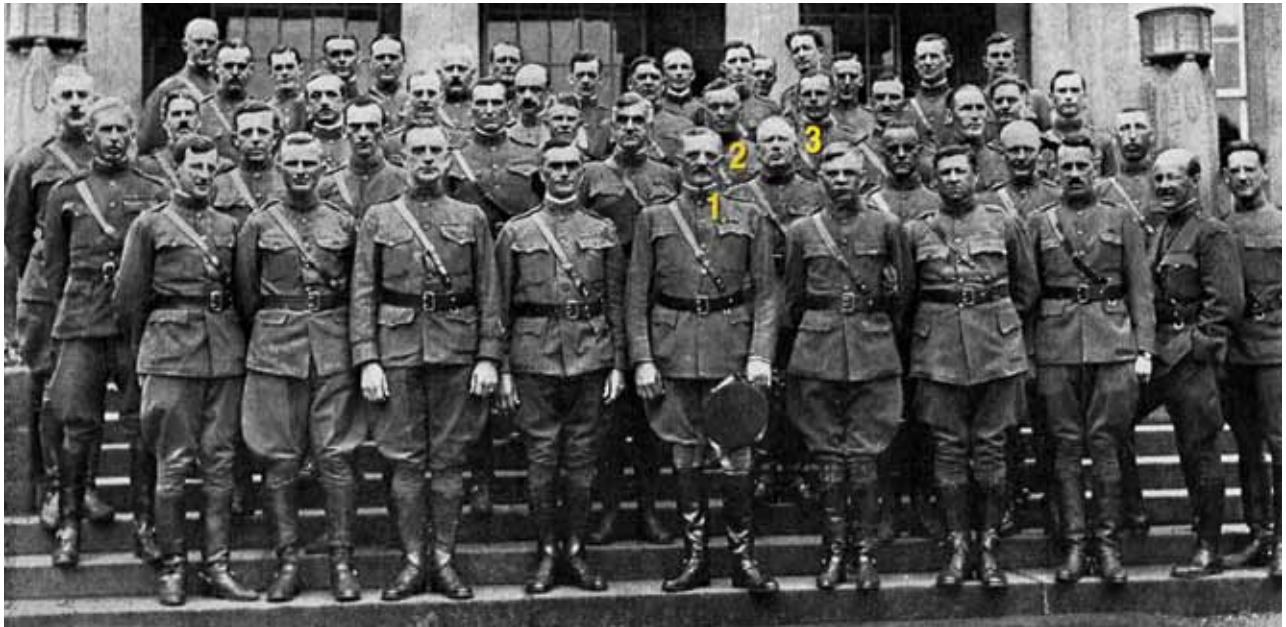
88th Infantry Division SSI from WWI



Command & General Staff School Crest



4th Infantry Division SSI

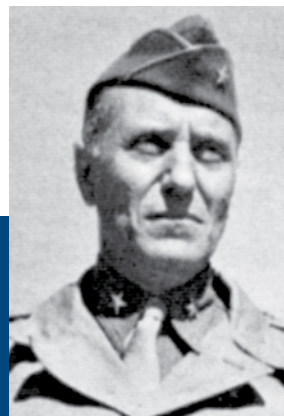


4th ID Commanders with GEN John J. Pershing (1). MAJ Karlstad (2) is over Pershing's left shoulder and MAJ Edward M. "Ned" Almond (3) (CG, X Corps during Korean War) is to Karlstad's left.

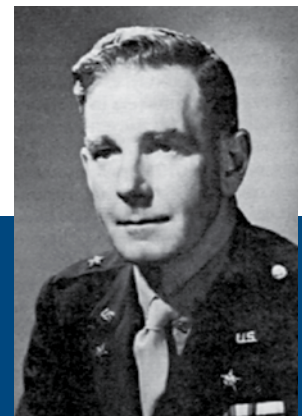
Majors J. Lawton Collins (future Army Chief of Staff), Daniel Noce [postwar Civil Affairs (CA) Chief], Charles A. Willoughby [G-2 and Chief of Staff for General (GEN) Douglas A. MacArthur], and CPT William F. Marquat [another CA/ Civil Military Operations (CMO) specialist]. His classmates at the 1936 Army War College in Washington, D.C., included Majors Robert A. McClure, Norman D. Cota (planner of the Normandy landings), and Charles B. Lyman (division commander under GEN MacArthur). After graduating, MAJ Karlstad was assigned to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas, to participate in the Army's postwar reconstitution.¹¹

By then, events around the world were causing concern among American political and military leaders. The Japanese Army brutally seized Manchuria and attacked China, the Germans perfected their combined arms tactics against Republican factions in Spain, and Benito Mussolini's Italian military forces invaded Ethiopia. At less than 200,000 strong, the American military ranked seventeenth among the world's armies in terms of the number of men in uniform. Furthermore, the U.S. Army consisted of several under-strength WWI-era 'square' divisions of four regiments apiece. These units had little mobility and an unwieldy, highly centralized command and control structure. Compared to its potential enemies, the American Army still travelled predominantly on its feet and its firepower and agility in combat fell far below that of the Japanese, Germans or Italians. To fix these problems and make better use of available manpower, some Army officers advocated reorganizing into smaller, 'triangular' divisions comprised of three maneuver regiments, each having its own transportation and combat support. To evaluate a new base organization and corresponding doctrine, the Chief of Staff directed that the 2nd ID, one of the few divisions at full-strength because of its duties along the Mexican border, test those concepts through field maneuvers.¹²

The Army staff created a special observer group to evaluate, analyze, and report on the 'test division' maneuvers and MAJ Karlstad joined that team. For five long, hard months he labored as part of what has been described as "the most elaborate evaluation program conducted by the army up to that point."¹³ Evaluators accompanied the maneuver elements everywhere and provided their observations to the chain of command. The consolidated report supported fundamental changes in structuring infantry divisions and helped shape new tactical doctrine. Based on his experiences, MAJ Karlstad asserted that the new triangular structure and recommended improvements in mobility and fire support made it more "maneuverable and relatively [more] powerful" than the square division it would replace. He further remarked that other tested changes in the employment of supporting weapons and greater use of noncommissioned officers in combat leadership roles gave the triangular unit greater sustainability in modern combat.¹⁴ Based on the 2nd ID maneuvers the Army made plans to transform the infantry division structure from



BG Daniel Noce



BG Robert A. McClure



U.S. Soldiers manning a Hotchkiss 8mm Lebel M1914 medium machinegun in action.



A Machine Gun Battalion training in France.

the slow, cumbersome, foot-mobile, 'square' WWI model to the more nimble, flexible, faster, 'triangular' formation that still works well today. And Karlstad helped influence that transition.¹⁵

After the division tests, MAJ Karlstad returned to Fort Leavenworth as CGSS faculty. During his two years as an infantry instructor he taught hundreds of officers the latest infantry and combined arms tactics associated with the new 'triangular' combat formations. Essentially, Karlstad trained the WWII generation of battalion and regimental commanders, providing them with solid foundations in new infantry tactics and staff planning, soon to be tested in combat.¹⁶

Because of his previous experiences, in 1940 the Army detailed Karlstad as an umpire for the Third Army Louisiana Maneuvers, specifically with IX Corps headquarters. Building on the triangular division tests of 1937, these maneuvers focused on developing command and control procedures for larger Corps and Army-level commands "over long distances against a mobile enemy . . . under combat conditions."¹⁷ In short, the Army tasked some of its best young thinkers to produce the tactical doctrine and command and control procedures for future wars. Among the officers controlling the exercise were innovative leaders such as COL George S. Patton, Jr., who experimented with important concepts like integrating "the combined action of combat aviation and mechanized forces" to increase combat power.¹⁸ Conducted while the German *Wehrmacht* and *Luftwaffe's Blitzkrieg* smashed through France, U.S. news coverage of the American maneuvers graphically exposed the sad state of the American Army. The German, Japanese, and Italian successes added a sense of urgency to correct the identified shortcomings as the threat grew overseas.¹⁹

After the 1940 maneuvers, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Karlstad joined the G-3 in the War Department General Staff (WDGS). By the time

America declared war on the Japanese after Pearl Harbor, COL Karlstad was Chief, Army Mobilization Branch in the G-3, responsible for national conscription and integration of U.S. Army Reserves and National Guard into the wartime structure. For two critical years he managed the expansion of the Army from its small peacetime size of less than 300,000 to over 4 million soldiers, the largest the nation has ever mobilized. Between 1941 and 1943, the infantry expanded an incredible 600 percent, creating a consequent increase in the need for training capacity, new bases, weapons, and infrastructure, all requiring coordination through Karlstad's office. His Legion of Merit (LOM) citation from that time modestly understates that he "contributed materially to the best utilization of our military manpower during a critical period."²⁰

In September 1942, the WDGS rewarded COL Karlstad with command of the newly formed 62nd Armored Infantry Regiment at Camp Chaffee, Arkansas. That assignment included command of Combat Command A (CCA), a brigade-size, task-organized, combined arms ground combat element of the 14th Armored Division (AD). Combat Commands generally consisted of an armored infantry unit mounted in M2 or M3 halftracks, a tank battalion of fifty-four M-4 Sherman tanks, a self-propelled armored field artillery battalion, and a troop of mechanized cavalry with M8 Scout Cars and/or MB and GPW jeeps.²¹ COL Karlstad diligently trained his unit for combat and deployed to Europe, going ashore at Marseilles on 29 October 1944. From that point on he spearheaded the Seventh Army armored assault across France and into Germany. In January 1945, counterattacking a "sudden, violent attack" by the German 21st Panzer Division that threatened to penetrate friendly lines gained him a Bronze Star Medal for valor.²² The "brilliant tactics, meticulous



Legion of Merit with Oakleaf Cluster



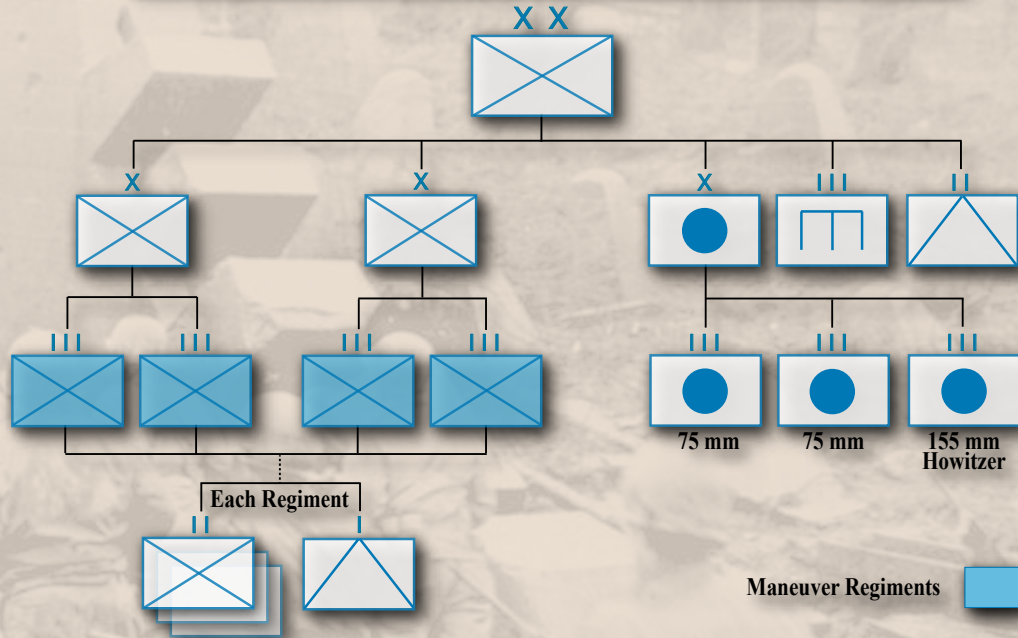
Silver Star



Bronze Star

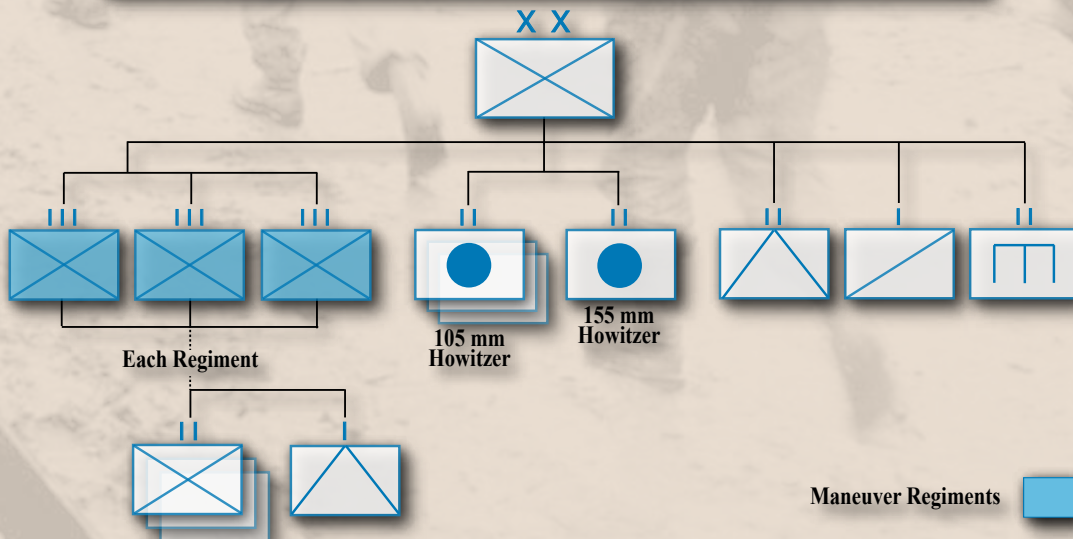
'Square' vs. 'Triangular' Divisions

World War I Era 'Square' Infantry Division Structure



The 'square' division of WWI draws its name from each echelon consisting of four maneuver units. Despite a marked lack of mobility, its extra combat firepower and large size (22,000 to 28,000 soldiers) made it a good fit for the demands of static trench warfare since it could absorb high casualties and remain combat effective.

World War II Era 'Triangular' Infantry Division Structure



In the 'triangular' division structure, each echelon contains three subordinate maneuver elements and organic fire support. The addition of motorized assets and its smaller size (about 15,000 soldiers) made the triangular division more mobile and agile. In 1939 the Army formed five triangular divisions out of three square division structures.

[See Christopher R. Gabel, *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941* (Center of Military History, Washington, DC: GPO, 1991), 9-12; Kenneth Finlayson, *An Uncertain Trumpet: The Evolution of U.S. Army Infantry Doctrine, 1919-1941* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 127-37]



A Sherman tank of the 14th AD smashes into a German camp holding Allied POWs.

14th Armored Division SSI, "The Liberators."

planning and keen foresight" displayed during the drive through the Vosges Mountains added an Oak Leaf Cluster to Karlstad's LOM.²³ Finally, he "organized and personally led two armored combat commands in a well-coordinated assault on the enemy main line of resistance [the Siegfried Line] inflicting great losses on the enemy." For opening a path into Germany, the CCA commander earned the Silver Star.²⁴ On 2 April 1945, the Army promoted Karlstad to Brigadier General (BG).²⁵

Karlstad's most significant combat action took place in late April 1945 when CCA, 14th AD successfully attacked and seized bridgeheads over the Isar River (east of Munich), near the towns of Moosburg and Landshut. BG Karlstad had served in that same region while on occupation duty following WWI. His men faced elements of the 17th *Waffen-Shutzstaffel* (SS) Panzer Grenadier Division and the *Wehrmacht's* 719th ID. To capture bridges before the enemy could destroy them, Karlstad's lead elements charged fifty miles on 28 April, getting within four miles of the town of Moosburg by dusk.²⁶

On the morning of 29 April, a German staff car flying a white flag came from the direction of Moosburg. An SS major asked to meet with the senior American officer. Karlstad obliged him in nearby Putthausen. The German officer boldly proposed a ceasefire and "the creation of a neutral zone surrounding Moosburg."²⁷ The SS officer sought a halt to all military troop movements to discuss "the disposition of the Allied prisoners of war [POWs] in that vicinity." The fact that allied POWs were nearby came as a surprise to Karlstad and he quickly radioed his division commander. The two agreed that the Germans were attempting to hold the POWs hostage until they could withdraw safely across the Isar. BG Karlstad acted immediately to free the prisoners and demanded an unconditional surrender from the Germans.²⁸ Negotiations came to an end.

Karlstad joined his lead tank battalion to break through the dug-in enemy position and headed for the POW camp. The Americans quickly surrounded it as several tanks rammed through two ten-foot high concertina wire fences. Another element captured the guard force and

isolated them from the freed POWs. BG Karlstad and his men were shocked to discover that they had liberated the largest Allied POW camp in Germany, freeing 110,000 prisoners from twenty-five nations. Among them were more than 30,000 Americans, some still listed as missing in action (MIA) from the 14th AD. Many of the prisoners had been relocated from other camps only weeks before as the Germans sought to keep them away from the advancing Allies. After calling forward support troops to care for the freed captives, Karlstad resumed his original task to seize the Isar River bridges.²⁹

Following V-J Day, BG Karlstad returned to the United States to command Camp Butner, North Carolina, and expedite the demobilization of the 4th ID. In January 1946, as part of the large-scale reduction in forces that accompanied demobilization, BG Karlstad reverted back to his permanent Regular Army (RA) grade of colonel. He also served as the South Carolina Military District commander for a year before becoming the Inspector General (IG) of Army Ground Forces, Pacific, in Hawaii. After attending several courses on atomic weaponry, he travelled throughout Pacific Command educating senior military commanders on nuclear capabilities.³⁰

In November 1949 Karlstad became Chief of Staff of the Infantry Center at Fort Benning, Georgia. This important position encompassed managing the day-to-day activities of several infantry officer and enlisted courses. COL Karlstad also oversaw all airborne training, to include the elimination of glider training at Ft. Benning, and became intimately involved in the creation of the Ranger Training Center (RTC), staffing it, and activating the Ranger infantry companies (Airborne) during the Korean War. In his capacity as Chief of Staff, COL Karlstad signed the orders resourcing those units and as a consequence played a major role in recreating of Ranger capabilities.³¹

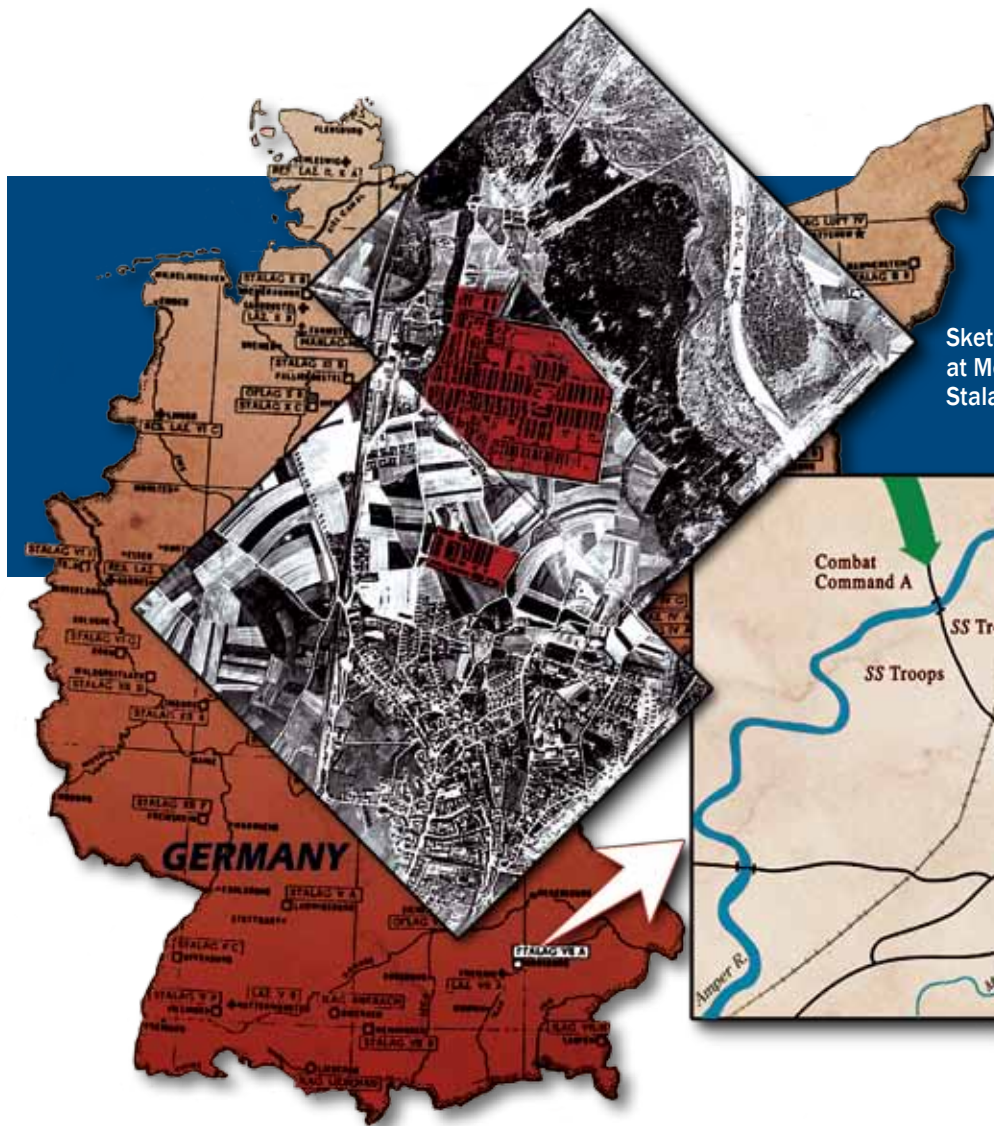
Importantly, Karlstad provided highly creditable input in the Army's decision to operate the RTC after the deactivation of the Ranger companies in 1951 and was a key player in saving the Ranger School at Fort Benning. The Infantry School modified the original Program of Instruction (POI) to capitalize on the positive benefits of Ranger training to professionally develop junior infantry leaders. He also participated in Army and OCPW discussions to transfer the Ranger company personnel spaces to permit the forming of the new 10th Special Forces Group (SFG) in 1952. Shifting those spaces to the U.S. Army Psywar Center proved critical. Karlstad maintained a constant dialogue with BG Robert A. McClure and his staff in the Pentagon.³² This positive relationship determined Karlstad's next assignment.



Ranger Training Center Coat of Arms



The Infantry Center DUI



Sketch Map of the attack to free Allied prisoners at Moosburg with aerial photographs of the Stalag VII A compound.



In early 1952, BG McClure made COL Karlstad his primary choice to be the first commander of the new Psychological Warfare Center and commandant of the Psywar School (PWCS). This proven combat leader with a career of training and education had been capably administering the Army's largest branch school before and during the Korean War. Karlstad was superbly qualified for the challenges of this new job. The Army staff approved McClure's choice and on 27 May 1952 COL Karlstad reported to Fort Bragg, NC, to form his command and to build a first class military school.³³

One of Karlstad's first major tasks involved getting the Army to recognize the PWCS as a formal service school. According to historian Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., some dissatisfaction within the Army G-3 and Army Field Forces existed due to perceptions that they had been side-stepped in the creating of PWCS. Those pockets of resistance had to be eliminated to gain formal school status that would bring increased levels of funding, personnel, authority, and higher resource priorities to survive through leaner postwar years. To accomplish that goal, COL Karlstad insisted on the writing of innovative joint and combined POIs and adhering to strict criteria in assessing and selecting SF volunteers. By establishing high standards from the beginning, the

Psywar School quickly earned a reputation for scholastic excellence. Simultaneously, Karlstad submitted solid staff actions to garner authority and proponentcy for developing doctrine, training plans, and educational standards for Psychological Warfare and Special Forces. These milestones were critical to getting the PWCS recognized by the Army as a formal institution of professional education. Having achieved that standing, COL Karlstad then submitted to the Institute of Heraldry for a distinctive unit insignia (DUI) for PWCS. It seems fitting that Karlstad's DUI remains today, representing the PWCS's legacy to the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School.³⁴

The requisite trappings to 'sell' the Army staff were: an approved PWCS mission statement; a public affairs program to educate the rest of the Army on what the center and school provided; and formal procedures, regulations, and directives. To accomplish this, COL Karlstad applied the same high standards of excellence that he had come to expect at The Infantry School to his new unit. In short order, the PWCS staff published an "Administrative Handbook," a "Guide for Staff and Faculty," an "Organization and Functions Manual," and other reference materials. The school staffs developed top-quality POIs with Army-standard class outlines, handouts,



Psywar Center
DUI, 1952

and reference materials. The PWC's 6th Radio Broadcast & Leaflet (RB&L) Group's presses produced these products for the several courses offered at the school. These efforts served two purposes: they established a high standard of professionalism within the PWCS; and the intellectual rigor behind those products educated the Army on the requirement to develop special operations capabilities. The

commander's intent was evident in all of these. Karlstad had succeeded in raising the performance bar to that of a premier Army school, thereby swaying most former critics to support the PWCS's mission.³⁵

Grumbling by some original SF veterans that they were subordinated under a Psywar-oriented command is unwarranted.³⁶ There would have been no SF without the Army granting recognition and authority to the PWCS to promulgate special operations doctrine, training, and educational standards, and that organization living up to its responsibility by producing doctrinal products in an exemplary fashion. BG McClure had the foresight to gain the Ranger Company billets used to create SF, and Karlstad assisted in that effort. And OCPW staff did the initial recruiting for SF personnel, but Karlstad formalized and legitimized the process and gained airborne school seats to train them. Furthermore, the PWCS commander leveraged the clandestine nature of SF functions as a rationale for rigidly adhering to high recruiting standards for the newly formed 10th SFG. COL Karlstad also initiated the first twelve-week SF courses to qualify men for the rigors of that duty. And while the 10th SFG commander, COL Aaron Bank, wanted ground-breaking Unconventional Warfare (UW) exercises with civilian role-players, it was Karlstad's staff that fought for and won the approval and funding that made them possible. COL Karlstad also provided the bridge between his SF Department and DA to ensure high quality applicants, to establish SF training classes and annual quotas, and to acquire the training funds, support, and resources. Furthermore, the PWCS and OCPW staffs built the SF Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) and got it approved by the Army Field Forces Command. This had to be accomplished to authorize use of the Ranger company force structure spaces to flesh out the new SF units. To make all these pieces come together in a professional and competent manner required a leader who, as Bank personally characterized Karlstad, was "a lean, energetic organizer and disciplinarian."³⁷

Karlstad applied his professional and intellectual expertise to help define the role of SF in UW. He advocated the primacy of SF in a UW environment and challenged his Psywar and SF Departments to provide students with quality instruction, sound tactics, and superior equipment to allow them to "function effectively against enemy forces."³⁸ The founding commander of the PWC is also credited with producing the first widely accepted definition of UW as "a kind of war and a range of tactics," rather than

simply a subset of conventional conflict models.³⁹ Karlstad expended considerable effort to ensure that SF not only survived during this critical period, but filled a permanent, specific role in the full spectrum of warfare.

The Army's first PWCS commander and commandant retired as a brigadier general on 31 July 1953. After a few years travelling around the world he settled in Hawaii. His retirement proved short-lived. BG Charles H. Karlstad died in an automobile accident in Honolulu on 22 December 1960 and was interred at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.⁴⁰

In conclusion, BG Charles H. Karlstad merits classification as an ARSOF icon for the following reasons. First, he transformed the PWCS from its original provisional status to that of a recognized formal service school. Second, Karlstad insisted that quality POIs, backed by Army standard lesson plans, outlines, and handouts, be created for every course offered, thereby elevating the level of professionalism within the center and removing a potential source of friction that critics might have used to downgrade PWCS status. Third, COL Karlstad fought hard for (and won) the manpower, money, and logistics support needed to teach the various courses that provided the consistently high quality of instruction to Psywar and SF. Fourth, he advocated that the Ranger Course at Fort Benning continue to function long after the companies had been disbanded in 1951. Fifth, Karlstad insisted that only qualified soldiers be trained in SF skills and he personally helped champion the assessment and selection process. Sixth, in the short time he was the PWCS commander and commandant, COL Karlstad elevated that organization to the same level of administrative and instructional excellence as The Infantry School. Finally, he supported the effort to develop special operations doctrine and operational concepts, and he formalized the process to disseminate that information throughout the Army, educating future leaders on the emerging subjects of Psywar, SF, and UW. All of these achievements were made possible because of COL Karlstad's lifetime experiences as a superior educator and school administrator.



MAJ John D. Striegel, COL Aaron Bank, CPT Dorsey B. Anderson, and COL Charles H. Karlstad observe 10th SFG training at Fort Bragg, NC, 1952.



BG Charles H. Karlstad during WWII.

The most significant aspects about all of these accomplishments are that they were being done almost simultaneously and in just one year. It is extremely doubtful that Psywar would have lasted beyond Korea and that SF would have been established without the groundwork done by COL Karlstad under the direction of BG Robert A. McClure. Previously, the Army dismantled special operations units and training programs once a conflict ended. But through the determined efforts of these two men the Army reversed that trend and consequently formed and maintained a permanent SOF capability for future conflicts. ♣

Michael Krivdo earned his PhD in Military and Diplomatic History from Texas A&M University. He is a former Marine Corps Force Reconnaissance Officer with varied special operations research interests.

Endnotes

- 1 For more background information on the process of establishing the PWC and School, see: Eugene G. Piasecki, "Smoke Bomb Hill: Birth of the Psywar Center, Part I," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 7:1 (2011), 94-102; Charles H. Karlstad, WD 66 Form (Officer's, Warrant Officer's, and Flight Officer's Qualification Record), Military Personnel File, National Personnel Records Center, St. Louis, Missouri (hereafter NPRC).
- 2 The PWCS combined two functional entities (Psywar Center, and Psywar School) into one organization. The PWC provided command and control to both Psywar and SF units and developed doctrine, requirements, and convened a Psywar Board that focused on solving issues related to each field. The PWS served as the organization responsible for training and educating soldiers in SF and Psywar roles and missions. As Commander of the PWC and Commandant of the PWS, Karlstad assumed overall responsibility for the training, administration, fielding, and combat readiness of the Army's Psywar and SF units and personnel.
- 3 United States, Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900*, Microfilm Publication T623, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C. (hereafter NARA), Roll 1550, page 8; "Charles Herbert Karlstad," U.S. Selective Service System, *World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918*, Microfilm Publication M1509, NARA, Roll 1877, 793; Department of the Army (DA), "Army Register, 1924," *U.S. Serial Set* 8284, Session vol. 23, 68th Congress, 1st Sess., House Document 29, 314; "Army ROTC: South Dakota State University," <http://armyrotc.ude/sdstate/history.htm>, accessed 18 April 2011; "First 10,000 Officers for First Army of 1917," *New York Times*, 6 May 1917; DA, Adjutant General's Office, *Official Army Register for 1922*, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1922), 974.
- 4 N.a., *The 88th Division in the World War of 1914-1917* (New York: Wynkoop Hallenbeck Crawford Company, 1919), 15, 30-35. **Division reports indicate that the officers of the 88th ID trained approximately 50,000 soldiers between 17 September 1917 and 1 August 1918.**
- 5 For information regarding the influence of machineguns in WWI, see War Department, *Changes in Organization Found Necessary during Progress of the European War* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1916), 7-10; and John Ellis, *The Social History of the Machine Gun* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), passim.
- 6 Manifest of the SS *Kashmir*, 15 August 1918, RG 92 (Office of the Quartermaster General, Army Transportation Services) Entry 2061, Box 458, Folder 579.3, NARA; Edgar J. Dwight Larson, *Memoirs of France and the Eighty-Eighth Division* (Minneapolis, MN: Published by the author, 1920), 9; *88th Division*, 35, 16-17, 157; *The Bayonet*, Columbus, Georgia, 17 November 1949, 3; "Army Register, 1924," 314; War Department, *Battle Participation of Organizations of the American Expeditionary Forces in France, Belgium and Italy, 1917-1918* (Washington: GPO, 1920), v, 35, 88.
- 7 Charles H. Karlstad WD 66 Form, NPRC; Christian Albert Bach and Henry Noble Hall, *The Fourth Division: Its Services and Achievements in the World War* (Issued by the Division, 1920), 243-45, 282, 311-12.
- 8 "Army Register, 1924," 314.
- 9 "Service Orders," *Washington Post*, 3 April 1927, S11; Manifest, USS *Grant*, 19 July 1929, RG 85 (Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service), Microform Publication M1410 (Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at San Francisco), NARA, Roll 251, 6; United States, Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930*, Microfilm Publication T626, NARA, Roll 2420, 1A; [Morning] *Oregonian*, Portland, Oregon, 16 April 1921, 4; *Washington Post*, 13 March 1936, 26.
- 10 *Washington Post*, 26 July 1924, S4.
- 11 Karlstad WD 66, NPRC; *Washington Post*, 3 April 1927, S11; *Bayonet*, 17 November 1949, 3; War Department, "Army Register, 1935," *Serial Set* 9945, Sess. Vol. 33, 74th Cong., 1st Sess., 1 January 1935, H. Doc 36, 368; War Department, *Annual Report of the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1932-1933* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff School Press, 1933), 4-6; "Gen. Craig to be Chief Speaker for Army Graduations in City," *Washington Post*, 21 June 1936, TM7; *Washington Post*, 13 March 1936, 26. **Karlstad had crossed paths previously with McClure, since the two officers attended both the Infantry Officer Course and CGSS together (the latter for one year before McClure graduated in 1932) [see Annual Report of the Command and General Staff School, 1931-1932 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff School Press, 1932), 5].**
- 12 "Gaps in American Preparedness," *Newsweek*, 28 August 1939, 11. See Christopher R. Gable, *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941* (Center for Military History) (Washington, DC: GPO, 1991), 9-11, particularly the tables on 10 and 11. **The 'square' divisions of the early 20th century were typified by two brigades with two regiments each. In those units, control of combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) assets was generally managed at the highest level. 'Triangular' divisions were characterized by three maneuver regiments of three battalions apiece with increased organic mobility assets and weaponry. Triangular divisions also generally pushed command and control down to lower levels, giving those commanders greater latitude in conducting fire and maneuver.**
- 13 Karlstad WD 66, NPRC; Kenneth Finlayson, *An Uncertain Trumpet: The Evolution of U.S. Army Infantry Doctrine, 1919-1941* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 127-37, quote from 130.
- 14 Quotes from War Dept., "Unit Tests: Proposed Infantry Division, Test #1, 13-14 Oct 1937," RG 394, Box 18, Entry 250, TMs, NARA, 10; also in Finlayson, *Uncertain Trumpet*, 130. Charles Karlstad to Captain Maertans, 22 December 1937, "Unit Tests: Proposed Infantry Division, 29 October 1937," RG 394, Box 15, Entry 250, TMs, NARA, 3.
- 15 Karlstad WD 66, NPRC; Finlayson, *An Uncertain Trumpet*, 127-37, quote from 130.
- 16 Commandant, *Annual Report, Command and General Staff School, 1938-1939* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff School Press, 1939), 4; Commandant, *Annual Report, Command and General Staff School, 1939-1940* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff School Press, 1940), 3; Orville Z. Tyler, Jr., *The History of Fort Leavenworth, 1937-1951* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff College, 1951), 76.

- 17 Quote from Training Instruction, "Third Army Maneuvers, May 5-25, 1940," Third Army Headquarters, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 18 Quote from Training Instruction, "Third Army Maneuvers, May 5-25, 1940."
- 19 For further descriptions of these maneuvers and their influence on Army development before WWII, see Gable, *U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941*, 12-15. Gable particularly highlights the contrast between widely shown newsreel footage of Germany's *Blitzkrieg* tactics and the spectacle produced by newspaper coverage of American soldiers using wooden tubes and poles to simulate weapons, and trucks with "Tank" written on their sides for armored vehicles.
- 20 John K. Mahon and Romana Danysh, *Army Lineage Series, Infantry, Part 1: Regular Army* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1972), 58-59; Karlstad WD 66, NPRC; Quote from Karlstad File, Citation for Legion of Merit, G.O. No. 42, War Department, 24 May 1945, NPRC. During the period Karlstad worked on mobilization issues, from July 1940 to September 1942, the peacetime Army expanded from having less than 300,000 active servicemen under arms to a robust organization of over 4 million, a remarkable increase in size of almost fifteen times. And it was still expanding exponentially [see Historical Division, *United States Army in World War II*, vol. 1 ([1947]; reprinted, Washington, DC: GPO, 1950), 6-13, 161].
- 21 According to Kurt Willinger and Gene Gurney, *The American Jeep in War and Peace* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1983) (and other sources), the designations "MB" and "GPW" stand for Willys Military model B jeep, and the equivalent Ford manufactured Government Passenger vehicle, Willys design.
- 22 Karlstad WD 66, NPRC; quote from Karlstad Bronze Star Medal Citation, w.G.O. No. 16, HQ 79th Infantry Division, 27 January 1945, Karlstad Personnel File, NPRC, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 23 Quote from Karlstad Legion of Merit Citation (Oak Leaf Cluster), G.O. No. 208, HQ, U.S. Forces, European Theater, 28 August 1945, Karlstad Personnel File, NPRC, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 24 Quotes from Karlstad Silver Star Citation, G.O. No. 40, HQ, 14th AD, 8 May 1945, Karlstad Personnel File, NPRC, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 25 *New York Times*, 3 April 1945, 20.
- 26 Jim Lankford, "The 14th Armored Division and the Liberation of Stalag VIIA," *On Point: The Journal of Army History*, Fall 2005, (Army Historical Foundation, Arlington, VA), found online at: < <http://www.armyhistory.org/ahf2.aspx?pgID=877&id=213&exCompID=56>, accessed on 19 May 2011.
- 27 As quoted in Lankford, "Liberation of Stalag VIIA."
- 28 Charles B. MacDonald, *The United States Army in World War II: The European Theater of Operations*, vol. 9, *The Last Offensive* (Office of the Chief of Military History, Washington, DC: GPO, 1974), 436-37; Lankford, "Liberation of Stalag VIIA"; U.S. Army, "Combat Command A: History," New York Public Library, 21-22; Statement of former POW Frank D. Murphy to Dave Kanzler, October 2004, text online at: <http://www.moosburg.org/info/stalag/murphyeng.html>, accessed 19 April 2011.
- 29 Lankford, "Liberation of Stalag VIIA;" Timothy O'Keeffe, *Battle Yet Unsung: The Fighting Men of the 14th Armored Division in World War II* (Havertown, PA: Casemate Publishers, 2011), 272-75; *New York Times*, 30 April 1945, A3; *New York Times*, 1 May 1945, A4; "Combat Command A," 22.
- 30 *Bayonet*, 17 November 1949, 3; Certificate of Death for Barbara Dale Karlstad, 7 February 1946, North Carolina State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Microfilm S.123, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, NC; Karlstad WD 66, NPRC.
- 31 Headquarters, The Infantry Center, Fort Benning, GA, General Orders No. 149, 7 November 1949, RG 337 (HQ, Army Ground Forces & Army Field Forces), Entry UD 83 (Infantry Training Records), Box 1 (General Orders, 1946-50), Folder 2 "List of Papers 1949," NARA; *Bayonet*, 10 November 1949, 1; *ibid.*, 17 November 1949, 3; "One Year Ago..." *Bayonet*, 30 November 1950, 25; *Benning Herald*, Columbus, Georgia (Monthly), December 1951, 23; *ibid.*, May 1952, 4; Karlstad WD 66, NPRC. Headquarters, Ranger Training Center, Fort Benning, GA, "Diary of the Ranger Training Center," 17 October 1950, Entry for 2 October 1950, RG 339, Entry 190, Folder "RTC History 50-52," NARA; Headquarters The Infantry Center, Fort Benning, GA, "Selection and Assignment of Personnel for Ranger Training Section, The Infantry School, 26 October 1950, RG 339, Entry 190, Box 10, Folder "RTC History 50-52," NARA; HQ, Infantry Center, Fort Benning, GA, General Orders No. 83, 27 October 1950, RG 339, Entry 190, Box 10, Folder "RTC History 50-52," NARA.
- 32 As Chief of Staff of The Infantry Center, COL Karlstad helped develop and approve a new Program of Instruction (POI) for a new 8-week Ranger Course to "provide practical field training of the highest standard for rifle company commanders, platoon leaders, platoon sergeants and squad leaders . . . to improve the training capabilities and leadership of infantry units within the Army." Quote from The Infantry School, Fort Benning, GA, "Program of Instruction for Ranger Course (7-OE-15)," 1 July 1952, RG 337 Box 705, Folder "350/40," 1, NARA. Several other examples of Karlstad's close involvement in Ranger training can be found in RG 337 (Headquarters, Army Ground Forces, 1916-1956), Series UD 83 (Infantry Training Records), Box 1 (General Orders, 1946-50), Folders 1 (1950 General Orders) and 2 (General Orders, 1949); RG 337, Series UD 83, Box 10 (General Records: 1950 and 1951), all at NARA.
- 33 Karlstad WD 66, NPRC; Psychological Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg, NC, "Activation of the Psychological Warfare School," PWC to OCPW, Fort Bragg, NC, 12 September 1952, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 34 Alfred H. Paddock, Jr., *U.S. Army Special Warfare: Its Origins* (1982), revised ed., Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 140-41; Psychological Warfare Center and School, Fort Bragg, NC, "Activation of the Psychological Warfare School," USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Troy J. Sacquety, "A History of the United States Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare School Insignia," *Veritas: Journal of Army Special Operations History* 5:3 (2009), 41-45. One of Karlstad's first initiatives involved producing new POIs, Lesson Plans, Student Handouts, and other materials for each of the courses taught at the school. These were written to his exacting specifications and served to demonstrate the high level of excellence that the school staff operated at. These items accurately reflected the elevated professionalism of the staff and instructors observed by outside inspectors and students. In "Activation of the Psychological Warfare School," Karlstad proudly argued that the PWS had already graduated "334 students," from every U.S. service and from six allied nations, "with all the dignity and prestige that accompanies a diploma from a service school." One month later, the DA G-3 agreed with Karlstad's position and designated the PWS as a service school (DA Gen. Order 92, 22 October 1952, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC).
- 35 For examples of such administrative products, see HQ, PWC, "Organization and Functions Manual," 12 November 1952; HQ, PWC, "Administrative Information Handbook," Psychological Warfare Seminar, 17-19 December 1952, Fort Bragg, NC; PWS, "Guide for Staff and Faculty," April 1953, and several other publications of a similar nature, all in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 36 For example, see Aaron Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets: The Birth of Special Forces* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1986), 164, 171.
- 37 Paddock, *U.S. Army Special Warfare*, 141, 145-49; "Administrative Information Handbook," HQ, PWC, 17-19 December 1952, 2-3, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Karlstad to DA G-3, "Initial Special Forces Course at the Psychological Warfare School," HQ, PWC, 17 September 1952, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC; Herbert I. Abelson, et al., "Factors Related to the Effectiveness of Special Forces Personnel," 5 August 1954, George Washington University, Human Resources Research Office, operating under contract with the Department of the Army, can be found on the Internet at: <http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/AD0379522>, accessed on 19 April 2011; Karlstad to Robert A. McClure, HQ, PWC, Fort Bragg, NC, 12 September 1952, RG 319, NARA; Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets*, 170-85, quote from 170. The GWU study cited above became a framework document for describing in psychological terms the type of individual believed best suited for SF, and it became the foundation for the early SF assessment and selection process. The authors of the GWU study specifically credited Karlstad with originating and supporting the study. And in the document "Initial Special Forces Course," Karlstad provides detailed guidance for administering and teaching the course, deciding that school training of SF personnel would produce better trained individuals than the alternate method of unit training, the option favored by some 10th Group leaders.
- 38 "Administrative Information Handbook," HQ, PWC, 17-19 December 1952, 2-3, quote from 2, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 39 McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft*, 38-39, quote from 39. McClintock specifically cites Karlstad as the author of that definition of UW.
- 40 *Stars and Stripes* (Europe, Mediterranean, and North Africa Edition), 28 July 1953, 3; *Passenger and Crew Lists of Vessels Arriving at New York, New York, 1897-1957* (Microfilm Publication T715), Record Group 36 (Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service), National Archives, Washington, DC, Roll 8442, 283; *Army, Navy, Air Force Journal* 98 (1960), 488; Department of Veterans Affairs, "Nationwide Gravesite Locator," <http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/>, accessed on 18 April 2011. BG Karlstad rests alongside his wife, Barbara Dale Karlstad, in Section 6, site 9312-A at Arlington.