

CALCULATED AUDACITY: CASE STUDIES OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS
DURING LARGE SCALE COMBAT OPERATIONS

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General Studies

by

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ABSTRACT

CALCULATED AUDACITY: CASE STUDIES OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS DURING LARGE SCALE COMBAT OPERATIONS, by John Campion 86 pages.

During the Global War on Terror, the United States relied heavily on Special Operations in order to achieve operational and strategic objectives globally. This phenomenon changes somewhat when the nation engages in Large Scale Combat Operations. Maintaining appropriate criteria for planning or accomplishing special operations, or committing special operations forces, becomes vitally important to achieve operational or strategic objectives, and to maintain force readiness and optimal capability. By examining four historical case studies of special operations against the backdrop of Large Scale Combat Operations, this research study determines under what conditions and based on what principles special operations may be employed in order to optimize operational success. Using a combination of principles established by joint doctrine and military theorists, the Jedburgh and Chindit operations along with the Doolittle Tokyo and Vermork Norway raids are qualitatively compared in order to offer conclusions on the effectiveness of special operations.

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ACRONYMS

CA	Civil Affairs
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CT	Counterterrorism
C-WMD	Counter-Weapons of Mass Destruction
DA	Direct Action
FHA	Foreign Humanitarian Assistance
FID	Foreign Internal Defense
FM	Field Manual
HR	Hostage Rescue
IW	Irregular Warfare
LSCO	Large Scale Combat Operations
MISO	Military Information Support Operations
NDS	National Defense Strategy
OA	Operations Area
OSS	Office of Strategic Services
SFA	Security Force Assistance
SFHQ	Special Forces Headquarters
SOE	Special Operations Executive
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SR	Special Reconnaissance
TTP	Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures
USSOCOM	US Special Operations Command

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

During the period from late 2001 until 2018, United States policymakers placed a high priority on special operations mission sets to meet national interests in combatting terrorism. Special Operations Forces (SOF) units consistently maintained a high operations tempo over this nearly two-decade period, and scored major successes for the nation, from the death of Al Qaeda (AQ) leader Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan to the crippling of the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria. The special operations community grew significantly from both funding and personnel standpoints.¹ Additionally, American SOF fielded cutting-edge technology and demonstrated new tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) tailor-made for combatting terrorist networks and destroying their leaders and key nodes. Buzz words like “grey-zone wars” and “low-intensity conflict” for which SOF optimized itself became common parlance when discussing American foreign policy, and the level of precision and discretion with which US forces could destroy enemy targets continued to increase.

However, as America and coalition partners maintained laser-focus on countering terrorism and the insurgencies which appeared after they toppled terrorist-harboring governments, conditions began to change regarding other global powers and America’s relationship with them. The growing influence of Russia and China in international economics and military strength, coupled with their policies toward the global order and toward certain neighbors, paint them as increasingly adversarial to America and the West. Rogue states like Iran and North Korea with certain regional influence and somewhat unknown intentions offer additional competition for Western powers to overcome. These

factors and others led to the 2018 American National Defense Strategy harkening a return to “great power competition” and outlining a plan to prevail over adversaries.²

This reemergence of preparation for larger-scale conflict begs the question of what will become of the vast trove of skillsets, experience, and corporate knowledge gained over the generational struggle of the early 21st century, mainly resident in SOF? Does focus simply shift away from the contextual networking and precision effects leveraged by SOF, or do leaders exploit the advances made in a manner which retains capability and relevance in a large-scale fight?

Prior to answering those detailed, contextual questions, one must step back and assess the role that Special Operations play in large scale combat operations. The purpose of this study is to analyze historical examples in which special operations have occurred during large scale combat and their subsequent effect, good, bad, or immaterial on the nature or conduct of the conflict. Ultimately, this study answers the question of do Special Operations contribute to Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO). In answering that, this study also addresses secondary questions which describe the nature of that contribution.

In discussing whether Special Operations contribute to large scale combat operations, this study also notes what role Special Operations play in deterring an adversary. Additionally, it analyzes the extent to which Special Operations offer a joint force commander effective options for exploiting enemy vulnerabilities and consolidating gains by friendly forces. Finally, it addresses whether special operations missions can—and to what extent do—affect the operational and strategic objectives of a joint force commander.

Assumptions

To address these questions adequately through historical research and induction, the author and reader must make certain assumptions. First, events of the past may be judged fairly in the context that they were in at the time. For instance, Colonel Doolittle did not have the benefit of six decades worth of airpower doctrine development to fall back on before launching his mission on mainland Japan. However, that does not negate the modern researcher's ability to assess the attack in context. Such an assessment remains vital to the study and application of history in general. Along those lines, when discussing events of the past, to draw any reasonable or useful conclusions, one must assume that past actions can influence, foreshadow, or predict future behaviors. This is not to claim that history will perfectly repeat itself, but rather that general norms and behaviors exhibited in the past can and do re-emerge in the future given similar context and circumstances.

Additionally, United States military doctrine as written today, though it will make certain distinct changes, will remain generally applicable to future conflicts. Doctrine both informs the way militaries fight and outlines structures for forces to best integrate and organize to fight. This study will reference current and contemporary special operations and national doctrine analyzing both its faults and usefulness under the assumption that doctrine will continue serving as guiding principles for warfare.

Finally, to draw any worthwhile conclusions about events of the past detailed here being relevant in a future conflict, one must assume special operations will continue to exist as a warfighting entity. Because Special Operations proved generally effective during the 19th and 20th centuries does not make their continuation a forgone conclusion.

This study explores in detail those factors which make special operations effective or not. However, in order for those factors to be useful, one must assume that special operations will continue as a method for employing military power.

Definition of Terms

This section defines certain terms necessary to gain a common understanding of the context in which the study uses them. At times, different definitions are used if appropriate for a given context, but such occasions are acknowledged.

Special Operations: The term “Special Operations” adheres to the doctrinal definition in Joint Publication 3-05:

Special operations require unique modes of employment, tactics, techniques, procedures, and equipment. They are often conducted in hostile, denied, or politically and/or diplomatically sensitive environments, and are characterized by one or more of the following: time-sensitivity, clandestine or covert nature, low visibility, work with or through indigenous forces, greater requirements for regional orientation and cultural expertise, and a higher degree of risk.³

This definition encompasses each of the core activities of special operations. These core activities are: direct action (DA), special reconnaissance (SR), countering weapons of mass destruction (C-WMD), counterterrorism (CT), unconventional warfare (UW), foreign internal defense (FID), security force assistance (SFA), hostage rescue and recovery (HR), counterinsurgency, foreign humanitarian assistance (FHA), military information and support operations (MISO), and civil affairs operations (CA).⁴ The focus of the research most easily lends itself to direct action, special reconnaissance, countering weapons of mass destruction, unconventional warfare, and foreign internal defense, however aspects of the other core activities are also discussed.

In this discussion, one cannot overstate the difference between special operations themselves and the forces which conduct them, or SOF. Special operations forces have become ubiquitous and glamorized heroes in contemporary combat. This largely stems from Hollywood and sensational writers continuing to immortalize them, but this should not detract from the prominent role SOF have played in the recent counterterrorism and counterinsurgency fight. Regardless, military theorists and scholars must avoid the trap of defining missions as special operations simply by the fact that they are accomplished by special operations forces.

Richard W. Rubright, who offers an alternative definition of special operations as “extraordinary operations to achieve a specific effect,” warns against the pitfall of circular logic which designates anything SOF does as “special.”⁵ In fact, simply by the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) conducting an activity, Rubright states, does not necessarily make that activity a special operation, it instead makes establishing a theory for special operations “untenable.”⁶ Likewise, missions conducted by conventional forces but requiring extraordinary means or ways to achieve the effect must fall into the category of special operations. The Doolittle raid is one such example. Rubright’s and other theoretical definitions for special operations will be further explored in chapter 2.

Large-Scale Combat Operations: These are defined most simply as open, state-on-state war. Joint Publication 3-0 defines Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) in terms of its framework of major operations and campaigns consisting of “a series of tactical actions... coordinated in time and place to achieve strategic or operational objectives in an Operations Area (OA).”⁷ A good further description for LSCO comes from the US

Army's Field Manual (FM) 3-0: "Large-scale combat operations are intense, lethal, and brutal. Their conditions include complexity, chaos, fear, violence, fatigue, and uncertainty. Enemies will employ conventional tactics, terror, criminal activity, and information warfare to further complicate operations."⁸ Although mentioned by FM 3-0 as a future condition of warfare, for the purposes of this study, LSCO is referenced primarily as a backdrop against which Special Operations have been executed in the past. By addressing past instances of LSCO, taken in context with the previously mentioned assumptions, this paper draws conclusions about potential future force employment. Additional perspectives on LSCO will be discussed in Chapter 2.

Strategic Competition: According to the United States 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS), strategic competition best defines the era the world entered in the early 21st century. "Revisionist powers," or those who would like to see a change to the dominant international order defined by the United States and its allies following World War II (WWII), further characterize the era of strategic competition.⁹ The importance of strategic competition lies in the fact that a state's ability to project power in the event of Large Scale Combat Operations serves as that state's greatest deterrent to conflict with its competitors in the military context.

High and Low-Intensity Conflict: The amount of force-on-force violence typically defines a conflict as either high or low intensity. Most conflicts for the United States since the Vietnam war have been low-intensity. And special operations made itself the force optimized for low-intensity conflict, so much so the principal advisor to the Secretary of Defense for special operations, as proscribed by 1986 legislation, is named the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict

(ASD SO/LIC).¹⁰ This is not to say low-intensity conflict lacks violence. In fact, high-intensity conflict—or violent, adversarial shooting battle—punctuates those operations characterized as low-intensity. The duration and frequency of conflict make up the difference. Joint Publication 3-0 provides the below graphic for depicting high and low intensity conflict across the conflict continuum between peace and war superimposed upon the range of military operations.



Figure 1. Range of Military Operations Across Conflict Continuum

Source: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 17 January 2017), V-4.

Levels of War: The terms Strategic, Operational, and Tactical, refer to the level at which effects are experienced and risk is accepted. Referencing Joint Publication 3-0 Operations, these levels, “model the relationship between national objectives and tactical actions. The operational level of warfare links the tactical employment of forces to the

national strategic objectives.”¹¹ This study repeatedly refers to tactical actions with operational or strategic level effects based on their impact on the enemy, or on the state of the conflict itself. While the barrier between the operational and strategic levels remains fluid in the real world, for the purpose of this analysis, operational effects refer to those which impact an enemy’s military campaign, while strategic effects alter the enemy state’s ability to or the manner in which they wage the war.

Limitations

Far more examples exist to characterize Special Operations missions’ impact on LSCO than can be addressed in this short paper. While none of the findings from this research discount those other instances, the case studies offer the best examples when examined in context, accounting for why they were chosen. Obviously, with unlimited time and resources, one could write an exhaustive study which accounts for every possible aspect of this topic. However, time and resources limit that effort.

The ability to fully analyze all relevant tactical details of the individual case studies also represents a limitation. Certain case studies, like the Vemork or Doolittle raids, because of their duration, offer more ease in describing many of the details. However, the Jedburgh and Chindit operations occurred over longer periods of time, contained multiple relevant factors that simply cannot be fully analyzed in the space here. This study instead approaches these missions from a broader perspective. The general trends of the 99 Jedburgh missions in France or the three-month Chindit raid in Burma point to relevant analytical factors. Although each smaller mission had its own characters, plot, and conclusions to draw, this work focuses on those more general aspects, leaving the more intimate tactical details to future study.

Scope and Delimitations

This paper is limited to missions fitting the definition of special operations as defined above and occurring within the broader context of large-scale combat operations (LSCO) against the backdrop of an era of strategic competition. Naturally, the seminal conflicts of the 21st century, World Wars I and II, lend themselves as the most appropriate context given that delimitation. While states certainly conducted special operations which impacted LSCO both before and after the two world wars, those conflicts provide the readiest examples.

Significance of Study

The value of this study rests in its ability to analyze previous operations objectively, place them in the appropriate context, and to garner some effective means of properly employing the same or similar type operations in the future. It points out when and why it is appropriate to employ SOF to achieve desired effects.

Special operations own a sizable public spotlight in America. Success in the world's terrorist hotspots earned sensationalized representation in print and in Hollywood. As a result of its success, SOF is seen as a panacea, able to adapt and address any turmoil wherever it should arise. This study counters that narrative. This effort emphasizes the objective for which the nation employs forces and conducts operations.

Organizational Construct

Doctrinally, the strength of special operations resides in the effect they achieve outstrips the size of the force employed. Many factors create this mismatch between the size of the force and its relative effect. These factors are outlined in joint doctrine and in

theory published by students and practitioners of special operations. Chapter 2 of this paper details the body of literature surrounding this topic.

One of the ways to add to this body of literature is by examining and comparing past incidences and finding common linkages. The case study comparison assigns traits which define or significantly contribute to doctrine and theory. It also provides a methodology for accounting for contextual factors which, while they may be instrumental in a certain case, are unrepeatable in others. The nature of case study methodology research is discussed in chapter 3.

Chapter 4 analyzes the case studies themselves. This chapter outlines the background, context, and historical significance of each event. Relevant actors or technologies are described. Chapter 4 also examines tactical aspects of each mission and draws conclusions about their relation to the operational or strategic impact. In the course of discussing each case, certain points will be highlighted for further consideration in chapter 5.

The final chapter draws conclusions based on aspects of each case that contributes to the future employment of SOF. What about the early Unconventional Warfare missions in the European theater of World War II translates into theoretical underpinnings of Special Operations doctrine and practice during Large Scale Combat Operations? What specific traits of Orde Wingate and the Chindit rebels in Burma during the unconventional portion of World War II can model future employment of SOF? And how do Colonel Jimmy Doolittle's raiders over Tokyo or Leif Tronstad's Kompani Linge commandos in Norway provide examples for the effective commitment of special operators? The nuance of each of these questions are examined in chapter 5.

¹ CAPT Jason Salata, Daniel Wade, Michael Bottoms, and U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt Ryan Scranton, *USSOCOM Fact Book* (MacDill AFB, FL: USSOCOM Office of Communications, 2018), 12, accessed 24 October 2018, <https://www.socom.mil/FactBook/2018%20Fact%20Book.pdf>.

² Department of Defense (DoD), *Summary of the 2018 United States National Defense Strategy* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2018), 2.

³ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), Joint Publication (JP) 3-05, *Special Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 16 July 2014), I-1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, II-3.

⁵ Richard W. Rubright, *A Unified Theory for Special Operations* (MacDill AFB, FL: Joint Special Operations University, 2017), 7, accessed 28 January 2019, <https://jsou.libguides.com/jsoupublications>.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁷ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 17 January 2017), V-5.

⁸ Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, October 2017), 1-2.

⁹ DoD, *Summary of the 2018 United States National Defense Strategy*, 2.

¹⁰ US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), *US Special Operations Command History* (MacDill AFB, FL: USSOCOM History and Research Office, 2007), 7.

¹¹ CJCS, JP 3-0, xi.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Because of its use as a preferred force for counterterrorism by the US government over the last nearly 18 years, many thinkers and soldiers have published on Special Operations and its appropriate role and effect in combat. This study examines Special Operations' effects on large scale combat operations, whether it serves as an effective tool for the joint force commander, and the optimal role for special operations. This entails how civilian and military leaders use them—both well and poorly—to contribute to operational and strategic objectives. With this end in mind, this chapter outlines the doctrinal, theoretical, and practical writings, which contribute to an overall understanding of the topic.

Beginning with current relevant opinions, foundational doctrine, and moving into theory, this chapter outlines the current publications which describe how Special Operations Forces (SOF) best organize, train, and equip themselves for as well as what possible roles SOF could fulfill. From there, it mentions the relevant texts which have outlined SOF's function in historic watershed operations. This casts light on not only how SOF can impact joint force operations, but also how authors portray the use of Special Operations in historical perspective. Finally, this chapter discusses texts which address the utility of special operations, and those which either oppose or make no mention of them when engaged in large-scale combat.

Military thinkers, practitioners, and doctrine writers propose the concept of multi-domain operations or multi-domain battle as a dominant opinion in military operations

for the second quarter of the 21st century. Mainly evolutionary, this concept attempts to offer, “a new, holistic approach to align friendly forces’ actions across domains, environments, and functions in time and physical spaces to achieve specific purposes in combat as well as before and after combat in competition.”¹ This approach explains very well the ability for operations to take place in a single domain which ripple effects into multiple others. It also represents the first real foray into accounting for space and cyberspace as warfighting domains. Furthermore, multi-domain battle adequately addresses utilization of military force during phases of competition either short of or aside from large scale combat.

However, multi-domain battle, as described by the 2017 US Army Training and Doctrine Center (TRADOC) white paper comes up short in describing the effect that Special Operations may have in conflict. In fact, it points to special operations as an instrument used by the adversary instead of large-scale combat to “achieve objectives in competition through UW and IW without risking escalation to armed conflict.”² The 48 page white paper only references friendly special operations as an element of the operational framework which can take place in the “deep fires area” along with things like “joint fires, information, and virtual capabilities.”³ In other words, Special Operations happen, likely to achieve some effect, but they don’t warrant true discussion within the operational framework of multi-domain battle. As pointed out by other opinions in addition to the research in this paper, special operations can offer multi-domain effects nested within the construct of multi-domain operations.

James E. Hayes provides a countering opinion which supports the use of Special Operations in large scale combat and elsewhere with his 2018 article, “Beyond the Gray

Zone: Special Operations in Multidomain Battle.”⁴ He makes the case that Special Operations already operate to achieve effects across multiple domains and, “SOF are by design organized, trained, and equipped to succeed in environments where the enemy may dominate one or more domains.”⁵ Hayes further elaborates, as the case studies in this paper reinforce, that Special Operations offer a valuable tool for joint force commanders to achieve operational and strategic benefit, but their true value is complementary to conventional or inter-agency operations in achieving joint force ends, not as stand-alone operations in campaigns.⁶

The topic of special operations complementing conventional forces in LSCO further fleshes out in Army *Field Manual 3-0 Operations* in the discussion of “interdependence, interoperability, and integration of conventional and special operations forces.”⁷ This doctrine publication importantly notes that “there is a level of interdependence tied to the objectives each force is supporting,” meaning that there must be some level at which special operations and conventional forces’ objectives converge to achieve a shared objective.⁸ As intuitive as this may seem, a lack of communication or interoperability between these two cultures, as exemplified by elements of the case studies described here often leads to what appear to be competing objectives. A review of Special Operations doctrine and theory further illuminates the roles and responsibilities Special Operations can should play in LSCO.

Special Operations Doctrine

Multiple joint publications capture Special Operations doctrine. United States Joint Publication 3-05, in addition to defining Special Operations as mentioned, also defines its core activities, describes command and control tenets, and outlines critical

considerations for support to Special Operations missions.⁹ JP 3-05 serves as the foundation for explaining the appropriate doctrinal use of special operations by commanders or national leaders. Furthermore, it outlines those mission sets for which SOF organize train and equip themselves. As already alluded to, this includes, “a broad range of strategic and operational challenges.”¹⁰ However, specific to the context or backdrop of larger operations, the joint doctrine publication states, “USSOCOM trains SOF to conduct special operations during US unilateral and multilateral operations and within IW [irregular warfare] mission areas, to include FID [foreign internal defense], UW [unconventional warfare], CT [counterterrorism], COIN [counterinsurgency], and stability operations; USSOCOM is also the joint proponent for SFA [security force assistance].”¹¹ The first half of the previous sentence represents the primary focus of this study: special operations during US unilateral and multilateral operations. However, in order to fully grasp some of the concepts included in doctrine and theory, this study and the historical examples discussed will describe elements of irregular warfare (IW) and how they either complement or delineate themselves from large-scale combat operations.

Current Special Operations doctrine remains heavily influenced by the 21st-century conflicts against trans-national terrorist organizations and insurgency movements inside the nations offering terrorists haven. The 2004 Unified Campaign Plan assigned U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) the role of a synchronizer for all DoD planning against terrorist networks, and since that time, many joint doctrine publications have been updated to reflect a more prominent role for SOF.¹² *Joint Publications 3-18 Joint Forcible Entry, 3-22 Foreign Internal Defense, 3-24 Counterinsurgency, 3-26 Counterterrorism, 3-07.1 Security Force Assistance, and 3-13.2 Psychological*

Operations all discuss the prominent role Special Operations and Special Operations Forces play in their respective subject matter. While not limited to employment only by SOF, these joint capabilities all nest within Special Operations core activities. Elements of each of these doctrinal areas also feature in the employment of Special Operations during periods of LSCO as described in this study.

For the purpose of this study, doctrinal references to Special Operations—regardless of the type of operation conducted (ie IW, UW, FID, COIN, etc) must be considered in the context of doctrine on Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO). The definition given for LSCO in chapter 1 describes definitive conditions of LSCO, but further doctrinal review helps to provide context. Joint Publication 3-0 describes LSCO in terms of the framework of operations meant to achieve certain objectives which contribute to an overall end state for a campaign. Each operation consists of a “series of tactical actions” which come together to form the campaign.¹³ These campaigns, and the theater plans they support, occur across multiple domains, and sometimes simultaneously across the entire conflict continuum between peace and war. They are joint in nature, where individual service components, or in the case of SOF multi-service components, achieve specific strategic or operational objectives for the joint force commander.¹⁴ JP 3-0 specifically calls out SOF as having a “major role in shaping the operational area and environment by setting conditions which mitigate risk and facilitate successful follow-on operations.”¹⁵

Doctrinally, special operations constitute a small subset of options available to the joint force commander to achieve strategic or operational effects when executing LSCO. These special operations may also occur in any of the geographic areas of the battlefield,

such as the close, deep, support, or a specific Joint Special Operations Area (JSOA), and they may occur in any domain, such as land, sea, air, space, or cyber. Key to any type of special operation in any domain or operational area though, as referenced by nearly every doctrinal publication, is the close synchronization, integration, and interoperability with conventional forces as well as the joint force commander and staff.

Transitioning from doctrine to theory warrants a discussion on the difference between the two. Joint doctrine, as defined by *Joint Publication 1-0 Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, “consists of the fundamental principles that guide the employment of US military forces in coordinated action toward a common objective. It provides authoritative guidance from which joint operations are planned and executed.”¹⁶ In other words, doctrine is well-formulated, tested, and proven principles which then drive the manner in which the military conducts operations. Adherence to doctrine, in the absence of any other guidance or circumstance, should render success or at least effectiveness in whatever contest of wills the military force finds itself. When forces cannot adhere to doctrine, they should at least use it as a footing from which to deviate.

Special Operations Theory

The need for theory, the nature of useful theory, and the wrangling over non-useful theory are valuable to this comparative case study in that it sets the tone for applying any lessons learned from historic SOF missions. Before making any prescriptions or determining any utility, students of history must avail themselves of these discussions of theory. They should also certainly inform leaders and decision makers who historically and naturally inform their actions based on their own experience and on the historical experiences with which they are most familiar, with or without

consideration of theory. This background will inform the context into which the four case studies discussed here are placed.

Theory takes up where doctrine has not yet been written or is in some way inadequate for current or potential conflict. By its nature having a higher standard to be formulated, tested, analyzed before being written, as Baratto claims, doctrine lags necessary guidance for operations at times.¹⁷ These times may necessitate theory to bridge the gap and provide a less-firm but still generally trustworthy—depending on the source of theory—destination for one seeking guidance. Baratto offered such theoretical underpinnings when, as the commanding general of the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School in the 1980s, he published twelve “Special Operations Imperatives” which will be considered when discussing the case studies in this paper.¹⁸ Theory can prove valuable, as described by Homiak, by, “provide[ing] both military and civilian leaders with a common departure point from which to understand how special operations may be used and what these operations might achieve.”¹⁹

Bernd Horn further discusses the value of a comprehensive theory for special operations and its forces. Such an effort at theory, Horn states, “would describe the nature, character, and characteristics of SOF and/or special operations to inform political and military decision-makers on relationships, strategic drivers, actions, and specific conditions required for SOF and/or special operations to attain desired political outcomes (or national interest).”²⁰ Doctrine writers would describe this pivotal characteristic of SOF as developing the operational environment. Offering as clear a definition as possible of relationships, drivers, actions, and conditions certainly fit with the description of developing the environment. However, SOF plays a key role in this development in the

fact that they can fill the role across the entire range of military operations and amidst the entire broad conflict continuum. In addition to explaining the need for special operations theory, a wide array of attempts at and opinions on theories exists, this research focuses on works which are foundational to the study of special operations and topical for the context of their use in LSCO.

One of the most influential theorists on Special Operations doubles as one of its greatest practitioners, ADM (Ret) William McRaven. His seminal work *Spec Ops: Theory and Practice* outlines the basic principles for effective Special Operations. Using eight separate case studies of very particular operations, McRaven provides the formative work on Special Operations theory. He details guiding principles for executing Special Operations at the tactical level, as learned by forces throughout history. McRaven's concept of relative superiority, as well as the six principles of Special Operations: simplicity, security, repetition, surprise, speed, and purpose, are mentioned throughout this study as they relate to the operations analyzed.²¹ McRaven, along with thinkers and scholars who followed him, provides settings in addition to doctrine from which to analyze specific operations and their usefulness or value toward major campaigns.

Moving on from McRaven, Dr. Robert Spulak provides the next seminal work in special operations theory, with his 2007 publication, "A Theory of Special Operations: The Origin, Qualities, and Use of SOF." Dr. Spulak's theory states "special operations are missions to accomplish strategic objectives where the use of conventional forces would create unacceptable risks due to Clausewitzian friction."²² In fact, these "Clausewitzian frictions" make up the very thing which places limits on conventional operations driving the need for special operations.²³ Friction represents the risk which

becomes too great for conventional forces to accept, where SOF—based on specific training, specialized equipment, and different tactics—have built mechanisms for mitigating these risks. Spulak builds from McRaven in that he makes an attempt to characterize special operations theory as more than simply “direct action” and the community begins to see special operations defined more broadly in reference to conventional operations.

Other attempts at special operations theory have published, most often in special reports for the Joint Special Operations University. Most recently, Dr. Richard Rubright published his “Unified Theory for Special Operations,” as an effort to “contextualize” Special Operations and SOF efforts so as to provide a holistic outlook toward them.²⁴ This monograph and those like it provide up to date background on the status of Special Operations theory. Many of these consider recent events employing SOF against trans-national terrorist threats or against Middle Eastern or African insurgencies. However, they also absorb the greater history of Special Operations and thus provide relevant matter to draw conclusions for utilization of SOF during eras of great power competition.

To base his theory, Rubright importantly offers a non-doctrinal definition for special operations as, “extraordinary operations to achieve a specific effect.” This fits well for underpinning theory of special operations, however, it does not necessarily lend itself to scoping future operations for which forces may train, prepare, equip and fund themselves, or study to enhance their professional competency. Rubright’s definition does have value as it contributes to the understanding of special operations effects at the strategic and operational levels, and it will be further referenced in this paper as applicable in historical context. However, this definition fails to provide an overall

measure by which to gauge the operational or strategic effectiveness of special operations, as this study sets out to do, because of the subjective nature of it. While attractive for its simplicity, describing an operation simply as “extraordinary” and achieving of a “specific effect,” does not give a full enough description from which to base a school of thought or even provide a full enough basis for comparison of historical special operations missions.

Similar to Rubright, Dr. Tom Searle proposes a theory of special operations which pays close attention to the definition of the terms, “special,” “specialized,” and “elite.” In “Outside the Box: A New General Theory of Special Operations,” Searle states that these three terms are not synonyms. Rather, referring to forces as special simply means that they are “different” from conventional forces.²⁵ Searle makes the further comparison that SOF is no more specialized than any element of conventional forces, such as an MLRS battery or F-15C squadron, who focus on very specific operations, just as special education teachers are no more specialized than typical educators, they just focus on different types of education.²⁶ By this line of thinking, SOF should focus on different wartime and peacetime tasks than conventional forces, or those that exist, “outside the box” of conventional tasks.²⁷

Searle affirms that special operations are in fact defined negatively, meaning they are defined by what they are not, rather than by what they are. Special operations are simply not conventional operations. This broad aphorism opens a panoply of potential meanings and descriptions for anything and everything considered special. Conveniently, Searle also does not offer a full definition of conventional operations, other than to posit that conventional operations are all those things which, “conventional forces were

designed for.”²⁸ Obviously this method of defining conventional operations, and thereby special operations, changes with each passing doctrine re-write.

This method of defining special operations remains dynamic by its nature, meaning that as those activities which define conventional operations change, so then does special operations. As the current study compares special operations cases in World War II and attempts to apply their lessons to future large-scale combat, Searle’s definition of special operations proves useful and will be referenced when drawing conclusions. At the same time, attention to other theories regarding special operations must be considered.

As a counterpoint to those previously mentioned, Dr. James Kiras claims that the nature of special operations does not necessitate theories in order to illuminate their purpose or value. The dynamic nature of special operations and the fact that they define themselves only by comparison to equally dynamic conventional operations does not lend itself to descriptive theory.²⁹ Kiras agrees with other theorists in that “for theory to have utility... it should explain how to do a job better,” and “provide prescriptive insights that will lead to mission success.”³⁰ However, he claims that current tactics, techniques, and procedures, doctrine, and concepts of operation already fulfill this need and provide these insights. He counters McRaven’s theory of direct action, by humorously stating that “a theory at the instrumental level, such as a theory for special warfare or surgical strike, will have limited application and provide few insights outside of a specific community. It is akin to creating a ‘theory of a hammer’ or a ‘theory of a nail.’”³¹ Instead of providing esoteric or limited prescriptions, a good theory should “facilitate critical inquiry” and challenge those concepts which operators within the community “accept as matters of

faith.”³² Citing Winton’s five tasks theory must fulfill in the military profession of define, categorize, explain, connect, and anticipate, Kiras offers criteria for sufficient theory. Others such as Homiak cite the same five tasks in order to prove the value and need for SOF theory, a notion which Kiras believes does not sufficiently hold up to scrutiny.³³

Special Operations in Practice

Beginning with one of the first effective modern guerilla campaigns conducted by Americans and allied forces, the unconventional warfare (UW) operations in France preceding the Normandy and southern France invasions, code-named Jedburgh, offers solid insight into special operations amidst LSCO. The best literature on these operations come from primary sources, such as COL Aaron Bank’s memoir, *From OSS to Green Berets: The Birth of Special Forces*, which details the training, preparation, and employment of what was considered the first modern UW effort.³⁴

For broader context on the overall mission and their effectiveness toward the greater war effort in the European Theater of Operations, Wyman W. Irwin’s, *A Special Force*, and Ralph Nichols, *Jedburgh Operations Support to the French Resistance in Eastern Brittany* provide more background.

The seminal sources for details describing Operation Thursday and the 1st Air Commando Group’s support in Burma to Wingate’s Chindit raiders come from Dennis Okerstrom’s historical account entitled *Project 9: The Birth of the Air Commandos in World War II*.³⁵ And of course, to understand the greater effects of this effort, Field Marshall the Viscount Slim’s memoir *Defeat Into Victory* provides the definitive work in detailing the Allied invasion of Burma.³⁶

Moving from irregular campaigns to examining raids, the primary source for information on the Doolittle Raid is Gen James Doolittle's autobiography, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*.³⁷ A variety of secondary biographies and histories detail the actions and overall effects of Doolittle's Tokyo Raid of 1942, and this study serves to place that raid in context as a special operation to achieve operational and strategic objectives.

The last WWII special operation examined is the Allied effort to destroy Nazi nuclear weapons development, notably the heavy water facility in Vemork, Norway. Due to the highly classified nature of that effort, the best source for information comes from a recently published secondary source by Neal Bascomb, *The Winter Fortress*.³⁸ Additional secondary sources exist which detail the Nazi intentions and effort in Norway, as well as the effect of the overall resistance movement, to include the sabotage and raid efforts of Torvald's *Kompanilinge*. Justification and reasoning for choosing these particular four case studies are discussed in chapter 3.

¹ U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), *Multi-Domain Battle: Evolution of Combined Arms for the 21st Century* (Fort Eustis, VA: TRADOC, December 2017), accessed 8 March 2018, [https://www.tradoc.army.mil/Portals/14/Documents/MDB_Evolutionfor21st%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.tradoc.army.mil/Portals/14/Documents/MDB_Evolutionfor21st%20(1).pdf), 2.

² *Ibid.*, 15.

³ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴ James E. Hayes, III, "Beyond the Gray Zone: Special Operations in Multi-Domain Battle," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 91 (4th Quarter 2018): 60-66.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ HQDA, FM 3-0, *Operations*, 3-13.

⁸ *Ibid.*

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- ⁹ CJCS, JP 3-05, v.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, II-1.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² Congressional Research Service (CRS), *U.S. Special Operations Forces: Background and Issues for Congress*, CRS Report for Congress (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 29 October 2018), accessed 31 January 2019, <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf>.
- ¹³ CJCS, JP 3-0, VIII-1.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, VIII-7.
- ¹⁶ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), Joint Publication (JP) 1-0, *Joint Doctrine of the United States Armed Forces* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 12 July 2017), xxv.
- ¹⁷ David Baratto, “Chapter 2. Special Operations Theory and Doctrine: A Symbiotic Relationship,” in *Special Operations Theory*, ed. Peter McCabe and Paul Lieber (MacDill AFB, FL: JSOU Press, 2017), 26-27.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 36-37.
- ¹⁹ Travis Homiak, “Chapter 5. A Blueprint for What is Possible: The Value of a Theory in Special Warfare,” in *Special Operations Theory*, ed. Peter McCabe and Paul Lieber, JSOU Report 17-4 (MacDill AFB, FL: JSOU Press, 2017), accessed 23 October 2018, <https://jsou.libguides.com/jsoupublications>, 76-77.
- ²⁰ Bernd Horn, “Chapter 4. Operationalizing SOF Theory: A Function of Understanding SOF Power,” in *Special Operations Theory*, ed. Peter McCabe and Paul Lieber, JSOU Report 17-4 (MacDill AFB, FL: JSOU Press, 2017), accessed 23 October 2018, <https://jsou.libguides.com/jsoupublications>, 55-56.
- ²¹ William H. McRaven, *Spec Ops: Theory and Practice* (New York: Random House, 1996), 4, 8.
- ²² Robert G. Spulak, *A Theory of Special Operations: the Origin, Qualities, and Use of SOF* (Hurlburt Field, FL: JSOU Press, 2007), accessed 23 October 2018, <https://jsou.libguides.com/jsoupublications>, 1.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 4.
- ²⁴ Rubright, *A Unified Theory for Special Operations*, 4.

²⁵ Tom Searle, Ph.D., *Outside the Box: A New General Theory of Special Operations*, JSOU Report 17-4 (MacDill AFB, FL: JSOU Press, 2017), accessed 23 October 2018, <https://jsou.libguides.com/jsoupublications> , 103-104.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 104.

²⁹ James Kiras, “Chapter 9. Do We Even Need a Theory?” in *Special Operations Theory*, ed. Peter McCabe and Paul Lieber, JSOU Report 17-4 (MacDill AFB, FL: JSOU Press, 2017), accessed 23 October 2018, <https://jsou.libguides.com/jsoupublications>, 138.

³⁰ Ibid., 137.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 138-140.

³³ Homiak, “A Blueprint for What is Possible: The Value of a Theory in Special Warfare,” 78.

³⁴ Aaron Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets: The Birth of Special Forces* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1986).

³⁵ Dennis R. Okerstrom, *Project 9: The Birth of the Air Commandos in World War II* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2014)

³⁶ Field Marshall the Viscount Slim, *Defeat into Victory* (New York: Van Rees Press, 1961).

³⁷ Gen James H. Doolittle and Carrol V. Glines. *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991).

³⁸ Neal Bascomb, *The Winter Fortress: The Epic Mission to Sabotage Hitler’s Atomic Bomb* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Returning to the question which drives this paper's research, do special operations play a role in large scale combat operations? This question begins by finding the correct context in which to study both Large Scale Combat and Special Operations and criteria for determining which operations to study. This requires common observations among multiple operations. Each must account for contextual differences and interpretational irregularities. Finally, conclusions may be drawn which link these operations based on certain tenets or principles they exhibit. Secondary questions include whether or not special operations play a role in deterrence, whether they offer a joint force commander effective options for exploiting enemy vulnerabilities or consolidating gains, and whether either type of special operation—strikes or raids and protracted guerilla campaigns—affect the operational or strategic theater objectives of a joint force commander and what might separate the utility of the two.

This research uses a comparative case study. The facts and circumstances of each case were studied as they lie, with no relative merit or fault prescribed to any of them. Comparative analysis points to certain aspects of a given operation which may or may not have exhibited a certain effect on an overall operation or strategy. This should not be confused as an assessment of the operation for its tactical success or failure. The worth of the operation is based on its contribution to operational and strategic objectives; glowing success at the tactical level does not prevent operational or strategic failure.

As a method of qualitative research, comparative case study offers both strengths and weaknesses. For the purpose of analyzing the effect special operations have on large

scale combat, circumstances favor a qualitative study for a few reasons. First, qualitative study allows the researcher to account for differences in objectives, missions, conditions, or personalities in ways that a quantitative study does not. Qualitative research assigns value based on factors which must be related logically or rhetorically as opposed to numerically. Therefore, it can more readily account for finicky things such as human factors. As stated in Kumar's *Research Methods*, it "communicates findings in a descriptive and narrative rather than analytical manner, placing no or less emphasis on generalizations."¹ In this way, qualitative study benefits the exploration of whatever circumstances are studied. It cannot necessarily generalize or scale to apply to different circumstances the way quantitative research can. However, the level of detail may provide insights into future challenges facing similar circumstances.

Second, if attempting to look at operations quantitatively, categorical comparisons would need to be made which may not make any operational sense. As a rudimentary but useful example, a category for comparing operations quantitatively could be the number or percentage of friendly forces lost to combat casualties. This serves as an easy metric for comparison, with less friendly casualties always being better. However, depending on the nature of the operation, such as a fixed-point raid using a company-sized element (Vemork) versus a deep penetration mission leveraging a ten-thousand-person special division (Chindits in Burma), these types of comparisons quickly become misleading. Even basing it on the percentage of casualties could prove futile based on the nature of the mission and its importance for operational or strategic objectives.

Qualitative study also presents weakness compared to quantitative. One major weakness is that it necessarily must leverage opinions regarding how certain factors relate

to one another. In other words it relies on interpretation and subjective perspective.² In the cases presented here, this researcher submits certain things about what makes special operations relevant to campaign objectives based on historical evidence. This same evidence could be analyzed and interpreted by another researcher as unrelated to a mission's relevance. On the other hand, with quantitative research, while numbers may paint a dubious picture at times, they can rarely be disputed as to their veracity.

Comparative case study research provides advantages and disadvantages as well. The greatest advantage is the depth of study which can be reached on given topics. Similar to historical works, comparative case studies offer the ability to analyze an immense amount of detail regarding individual cases in the process of comparing their qualities. Again, citing Kumar, "it is a very useful design when exploring an area where little is known or where you want to have a holistic understanding of the situation, phenomenon, episode, site, group, or community."³ This depth delivers nuance and understanding along with accounting for contextual factors.

A disadvantage of the comparative case study method is that it cannot easily appropriate itself to other cases or instances. Comparing case studies allows one to draw conclusions about those case studies alone, and not to others. Although recommendations are made from case studies, those can simply be seen as lessons learned which may apply to similar circumstances in the future, not theory which can be tested, upheld, or disputed. While not generalizable, conclusions from the comparative case study still provide value. This is especially true to those desiring knowledge on the studies themselves, or faced with similar circumstances.

The method of discovering material may also point to a disadvantage for case study research. This study on special operations utilizes documents, archives, as well as primary and secondary source material in order to paint a picture of the events which took place. This may not provide as effective a description as in-depth interviews with participants, surveys, or questionnaires, however, those methods are infeasible given the time frame in which these cases occurred.⁴

In comparing historical case studies, measures must be taken to ensure the appropriate cases are studied, and the correct data are gleaned from them. Large-scale combat operations and special operations role in them provide the framework for case studies chosen. Other considerations and criteria refine which specific cases are most relevant.

First, criteria must be established for determining which special operations and which large scale combat operations accurately assist in answering the research question and all its secondary questions. For the conclusions drawn by comparing these case studies to serve any type of prescriptive role, or apply lessons to future operations, they must mirror some of the same characteristics or conditions which could apply to future combat. Based on the current NDS and US joint doctrine for military operations, these conditions most likely include large scale combat against a great power competitor.⁵ For this reason, the two world wars of the early 20th century most easily provide this setting. The NDS also discusses wars fought using proxy forces such as later 20th century American and democratic allies versus Soviet and communist sympathizers' struggles in Korea and Vietnam. The manner in which those operations were fought lent itself to description as Large-Scale Combat. However, based on language in the NDS, these types

of behaviors by states will fall short of declared warfare as their focus will more likely challenge the US “ability to deter aggression.”⁶ Special operations will continue playing a dominant role in countering the aggression implemented through proxies. However, those operations lay beyond the scope of this study.

Regardless of whether it takes place between great power competitors or their proxies, future combat will certainly occur across more than one domain simultaneously. It follows, therefore, special operations occurring in this context will also occur or need to account for multiple domains, be they land, sea, air, space, or the information environment⁷. Historic case studies examined here should factor in challenges caused by at least one other domain than the land domain.

Finally, in order to include a look at all varieties of special operations, this research must include case studies from each of the two subsets, raids or strikes, and protracted unconventional warfare campaigns. These disciplines are not likely to fade by extended periods of low-intensity or limited contingency operations, nor by a return to great power competition calling for large-scale combat readiness. In fact, while some skill sets could atrophy through lack of practice, such as true guerilla campaigning, they remain core areas of instruction in formal training for Army Special Forces.

Acknowledging these three criteria of both major disciplines within special operations, actions across multiple domains, and opposing a great power competitor, the Second World War emerges as the optimal context for this study. As today with new warfighting domains in space and cyberspace, WWII featured the first truly modern weaponization of the air and airwaves to achieve decisive effects.⁸ WWII also first featured the combination of sea, air, and land with the commissioning of the first aircraft

carriers capable of extending the range of battlefield effects from the air. The integration of capabilities across multiple domains greatly enabled conventional operations. As evidenced by the case studies chosen here, and as will likely be the case in a future conflict, this multi-domain integration was also instrumental for special operations to even occur.

In addition to criteria for choosing operations to study, this effort must also establish criteria by which to compare those operations, their effect on the overall campaign which they supported, and their utility toward achieving that campaign's objectives. By setting a baseline to compare operations against, these criteria create an understanding of how operations succeeded or failed, not just tactically, but toward operational and strategic ends.

Based on the principles of war originally posited by theorist Carl von Clausewitz, joint doctrine expanded and detailed twelve principles of joint operations.⁹ The principles of joint operations form a backbone for both planning and assessing any military operation. By conceptualizing those elements of an operation which give the greatest advantage over an enemy, they offer guidelines to follow in order to better achieve success. Nearly every military officer memorizes them during training, and because of their foundational status, they are often quoted and used as a basis for comparing operations. McRaven uses the principles of war as the springboard for his analysis of special operations' tactical success.¹⁰ This paper likewise uses a form of these principles to compare special operations effect on LSCO.

Not all twelve of the joint principles of objective, offensive, mass, maneuver, economy of force, unity of command, security, surprise, simplicity, restraint,

perseverance, and legitimacy fully apply in this context. For instance, offensive, mass, and maneuver are typically required in order to guarantee tactical success but have little influence on whether that tactical success will contribute to achieving operational or strategic ends. Economy of force, simplicity, security, surprise, and restraint factor greatly into the planning and execution of an individual operation and in hindsight perhaps—with a principle like restraint—could prove compromising of operational or strategic objectives, but faithfulness to them alone does not directly tie a tactical mission to an operational or strategic success.

Thus, four of the twelve joint principles arise as the best indicators of translating the tactical success of special operations to operational and strategic goals. Objective, unity of command, perseverance, and legitimacy make up the optimal criteria for comparing these operations and achieving fidelity on their contribution to the greater effort in LSCO. Objectives guide the operation to a “clearly defined, decisive, and achievable goal,” and when there are multiple objectives, they must coalesce into the purpose of the operation.¹¹ The principle of Unity of Command states that a single commander bears responsibility for the success or failure of the operation and that he or she retains requisite authority over that force to achieve the military objective.¹² Perseverance means the nation and its forces possess the commitment required to achieve the objectives. And finally, legitimacy means the force maintains legal and ethical rights to act and achieve their objectives, whether through host nation authority, international norms, or humanitarian tenets.¹³ Table 1 displays the doctrinal definitions from JP 3-0 *Joint Operations* for each of the four joint principles utilized.

Table 1. Four Principles of Joint Operations	
Objective	<p>(1) The purpose of specifying the objective is to direct every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and achievable goal.</p> <p>(2) The purpose of military operations is to achieve specific objectives that support attainment of the overall strategic objectives identified to resolve the conflict. This frequently involves the destruction of the enemies' capabilities and their will to fight. The objective of joint operations not involving this destruction might be more difficult to define; nonetheless, it too must be clear from the beginning. Objectives must directly, quickly, and economically contribute to the purpose of the operation. Each operation must contribute to attaining strategic objectives.</p>
Unity of Command	<p>(1) The purpose of unity of command is to ensure unity of effort under one responsible commander for every objective.</p> <p>(2) Unity of command means that all forces operate under a single commander with the requisite authority to direct all forces employed in pursuit of a common purpose. Unity of command may not be possible during coordination and operations with multinational and interagency partners, but the requirement for unity of effort is paramount.</p>
Perseverance	<p>(1) The purpose of perseverance is to ensure the commitment necessary to achieve national objectives.</p> <p>(2) Perseverance involves preparation for measured, protracted military operations in pursuit of national objectives. Some joint operations may require years to reach the termination criteria. The underlying causes of the crisis may be elusive, making it difficult to achieve decisive resolution. The patient, resolute, and persistent pursuit of national goals and objectives often is essential to success.</p>
Legitimacy	<p>(1) The purpose of legitimacy is to maintain legal and moral authority in the conduct of operations.</p> <p>(2) Legitimacy, which can be a decisive factor in operations, is based on the actual and perceived legality, morality, and rightness of the actions from the various perspectives of the interested audiences. These audiences include our national leadership and domestic population, governments, and civilian populations in the OA, and nations and organizations around the world.</p>

Source: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 17 January 2017), A1-4.

Each of the four principles of joint operations corresponds to elements of the four case studies compared here. Some factors which contribute to a particular special

operation’s objective, unity of command, perseverance, and legitimacy tie their tactical success to operational or strategic gain. Table 2 depicts a method for comparing each operation with data points on how it leveraged these four principles of joint operations.

	Table 2. Ability to Leverage Fundamental of Joint Operations			
Special Operation	Objective:	Unity of Command:	Perseverance:	Legitimacy:
Vemork Raid				
Doolittle Raid				
Jedburgh Operation				
Chindit Operation				

Source: Created by author.

Table 2 will be filled in with the details on the given operations established in chapter 4 and further discussed in the analysis portion of chapter 4. This allows a ready comparison of the case studies against the four principles of joint operations. Qualifying factors that either reflected positive or negative impacts on operational success or strategic gain will also be denoted by the symbols “+” for positive and “-” for negative impact.

¹ Ranjit Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step by Step Guide for Beginners*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: Sage Publishing, 2014), 14.

² Larry B. Christensen, R. Burke Johnson, and Lisa A. Turner, *Research Methods, Design, and Analysis*, 11th ed. (Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 2011), 52.

³ Kumar, *Research Methodology: A Step by Step Guide for Beginners*, 155.

⁴ Christensen, Johnson, and Turner, *Research Methods, Design, and Analysis*, 375.

⁵ DoD, *Summary of the 2018 United States National Defense Strategy*, 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁷ According to JP 3-0, the domain of cyberspace is included in the information environment, which, while technically greater in scope than a domain, will be treated as one for this study.

⁸ Although each great power used the airplane in World War I and the US first used it militarily in the 1916 punitive expedition to Mexico, its weaponization and true use as a warfighting machine rather than reconnaissance and limited attack came in World War II.

⁹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 177; CJCS, JP 3-0, A-1.

¹⁰ McRaven, *Spec Ops: Theory and Practice*, 8.

¹¹ CJCS, JP 3-0, A-1.

¹² *Ibid.*, A-2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, A-4.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Norway's Vemork Raid

The sabotage raid on the Nazi-held hydrogen plant, in Vemork, Norway on the evening of February 27-28, 1943, and the subsequent destruction of the heavy water stockpiles it produced, represent one of the most strategic Allied single targets of World War II carried out by a small team of Norwegian-born commandos. This section details the background leading to the raid, a brief description of the raid itself, and the implications it has had or could have for special operations.

Despite many scientists fleeing to England or Sweden, the German invasion of Norway in 1940 brought with it control over all Norwegian scientific advancements at that time. The hydrogen plant at Vemork, run by the Norwegian energy company Norsk Hydro, became a center for scientific advancement beginning in 1933. During that year, a young scientist named Lief Tronstad began working with plant engineers using a process of electrolysis to produce water whose hydrogen atoms contained an extra neutron, an isotope known as deuterium. At the time, the scientists and engineers had little idea what the implications for such a substance would be, other than that they would likely become important to atomic physics or to chemical and biomedical research.¹ The deuterium-rich, or heavy, water was later discovered to be an optimal substance for slowing down neutrons which were sent to collide with the nucleus of a uranium atom in order to split it, releasing atomic energy, a substance known as a moderator.² This discovery put two very distinct actions into effect. Scientists aligned with Nazi Germany required as much heavy water as they could get their hands on to continue their research. Allied scientists,

also understanding its potential, sought to both acquire or produce it and to do everything possible to keep it out of reach of the enemy.

As the German invasion, code-named Operation Weseruebung, spread across Norway in April 1940, it became clear to the Allies any developments toward atomic energy that utilized Norwegian heavy water would fall into Nazi hands. The invasion itself saw five German infantry divisions, beginning with the 3d Mountain Division landing regiments in the far northern cities of Narvik and Trondheim and four additional infantry divisions landing at all of the major port cities stretching the coast all the way to Oslo.³ The Norwegian forces were taken mostly by surprise. Those who did not surrender or claim Nazi sympathies fought bravely allied with Britain, France, and Poland, ultimately surrendering Norway in early June. The occupation of Norway gave Hitler full control of the supply line for Swedish iron ore and other metals from central Norway to fuel German military industrialism.⁴ That such a precious substance for the atomic energy and weaponization process existed in Norway certainly served as a beneficial side effect.

It took German and Allied scientists' continued advancement toward nuclear weaponization to begin to see the value of the water being produced and stored at Vemork. Concurrent with these advancements, many exiled Norwegians, some of them former soldiers, some looking to join the cause, began to coalesce in England seeking a return to Norway in a combat capacity. A number of these men joined together under the British Special Operations Executive (SOE) to form Norwegian Independent Company Number 1, unofficially named the Kompani Linge after the Norwegian commando Martin Linge who perished in a British-led raid to re-take a string of Norwegian barrier

islands.⁵ This company would be led by Lieutenant Colonel John Wilson, who began the Norwegian country section of the British SOE, and Captain Lief Tronstad, formerly of the Vemork hydrogen facility.

The initial phase of operations for Kompani Linge around Vemork, code-named Operation Grouse, entailed a three-person team parachuting into a remote and desolate portion of Norwegian tundra northwest of Vemork known as Hardangervidda. Once there, they would prepare a landing site for a team of sappers from the British Royal Engineers and guide them in for a two-glider assault landing, code-named Operation Freshman. The sappers would then proceed to Vemork and destroy the heavy water and its production facility. On October 18, 1942, the three-person team led by Jens-Anton Poulsson landed in Norway.⁶ Poulsson's team was equipped with a cutting-edge radio beacon which would emit a signal guiding the Horsa gliders' tow planes into their intended landing site. Due to their nature combining elements from British land forces, air forces, and special operations executive, Operation Freshman fell under the Headquarters for Combined Operations, led by Lord Louis Mountbatten.

Unfortunately, neither of the glider's tow planes were able to locate the landing site, partly due to the airplanes' beacons not functioning appropriately. On returning back toward Scotland, both encountered unexpectedly turbulent weather. Both gliders separated from their tow planes and crashed. Only one of the Halifax tow aircraft returned to England. Those Royal Engineer sappers who were not killed on impact were imprisoned by the Germans and executed under the Nazi policy toward saboteurs, rather than held as prisoners of war.⁷

Following the failure of Operation Freshman, and with the commandos still on the ground in hiding near Vemork, Combined Operations readied another raid force, this time of full Norwegian complement. On February 16, 1943, under the command of Joachim Ronneberg and Knut Haukelid, the six-person team of saboteurs, code-named Operation Gunnerside, parachuted into Norway to link up with the three who had been in place since the previous October. After eleven days of preparation and reconnoitering the site, stashing supplies for some of the team's departure to Sweden and others carrying on resistance operations, and hiding out in hunting cabins in the frozen Hardangervidda, the nine-person team readied for the assault on the evening of February 27.

Relying upon laborious training in England, the team climbed roughly six-hundred feet up a cliff bordering the facility to an area with the lightest security presence. Leaving a four-man security element outside, they then silently breached the plant through a wiring tunnel they had recognized from a careful study of the facility. Crawling through pipes, four men reached the room with heavy water concentration tanks. Their intelligence on the plant fed from both Lief Tronstad and other resistance elements inside the facility served them well. The saboteurs set and detonated plastic explosive in a manner nearly rote from all of their training and rehearsal. The eight men escaped hundreds of yards back toward their radio operator before the explosion was detected and German soldier parties departed in search for the team.⁸

The daring sabotage operation successfully destroyed the production facility for approximately 8 months while the Germans repaired it and significantly increased security at the plant. It also left a portion of the already concentrated heavy water untouched in storage tanks separate from the concentration facility. In spite of Tronstad's

objections to the concept, and without informing Tronstad or the Norwegian high command as had become an Allied agreement for targets in Norway, the Vemork facility was targeted in an American B-17 air strike on November 16, 1943.⁹ The location of the plant proved a challenging target given the level of accuracy of bombing at the time. Little damage was done to the facility itself despite the damage done between the Allies and the Norwegian delegation over not informing them of the strike,.

The attempted air strike on Vemork did produce one side effect: the Germans now chose to relocate the equipment in the plant and all of the heavy water produced to Germany. This sprung the SOE and the Norwegian company to action mobilizing the remaining element of Operation Gunnerside still in Norway, led by Knut Haukelid, to hatch a plot to destroy the equipment while it ferried across a lake toward a railhead. On February 19, 1944, the three-person team under cover of darkness boarded the ferry and placed a large charge of Nobel 808 explosive with a custom-made detonation timer set to explode a man-sized hole in the bow when the ferry reached the deepest part of the lake. The next day, as scheduled, the charge exploded, sending forty drums of heavy water—the remaining Norwegian stock—and eleven railcars of equipment to the bottom of Lake Tinnsjo killing 26 Germans and Norwegians on board.¹⁰

The Vemork raid and subsequent operations to disable the strategic target of German heavy water supplies and sources exemplified the capabilities of a small team of operators with unique and specialized training able to attack a strategic target. The mission required synchronization of forces across the air and land domains with a heavy dependence on passing information via wireless transmission, also a new technology of the time. Senior Allied leaders both in government and military back in England knew

the strategic nature of the target warranted persistent pursuit of mission success, especially after the failed Royal Engineer operation. In the end, in 1942 and 1943 when German advance across Europe continued almost unchecked by conventional forces in large scale combat, a small team conducting a well-rehearsed and highly specialized operation led to the thwarting of one of the enemy's most strategic weapons development programs that would have greatly impacted the result of the war.

The Vemork commando raid maintained a clear objective of destroying the heavy water production facility and render the German Army incapable of attaining the materials required to construct an atomic weapon. The operators—first the Royal Engineer sappers, then the Norwegian commando team, US airmen, and finally the clandestine demolition team—did not necessarily know the true objective due to the secrecy surrounding the atomic programs on both sides. However, the operational and strategic leaders in London who devised and approved the mission maintained focus on the clear objective of preventing Germany from creating an atomic weapon. This strategic objective easily translated to the tactical objective of destroying the heavy water and its concentration facility in Nazi-occupied Norway.

The Norway operation succeeded when it featured unity of command and elements of it failed when it lost that unity. The British Special Operations Executive (SOE) maintained command over the training and execution for the raid and sabotage portions of the mission which succeeded. However, when hopes of destroying the heavy water supplies using a raid force waned, the SOE ceded control of the mission to the US Army Air Force. The bombing raid, not approved or supported by the Norwegian authorities in London, had minimal impact on the strategic objective of preventing Nazi

access to heavy water. Instead, it unnecessarily damaged civilian infrastructure while further tipping the German Army that the Allies understood the strategic nature of the target. The bombing raid met its tactical objectives of striking the target, if imprecisely. But it failed in actually destroying the heavy water itself which was stored underground. The Norwegians in SOE with first-hand knowledge of the facility knew the odds of success for an air raid were small compared to the cost in civilian damage, but they were not consulted. The principle of unity of command would have retained authority for destroying the target under the same commander, in this case, the SOE. Ceding control to the Air Force violated the principle and contributed to that aspect of the mission failing.

Thankfully after the failed bombing mission, the objective remained important, and the principle of perseverance held. Perseverance entails, “patient, resolute, and persistent pursuit of national goals,” which the Norwegian commando forces and British SOE exhibited over the nearly 3 years of preparation and execution of this series of missions.¹¹ It would be easy to describe perseverance in this context as the personal and tactical will of the men enduring the bitter Norwegian cold for months on end in tiny hunting cabins across the frozen tundra. However, while admirable, this is not the type of perseverance described by the principle of joint operations. In the operational sense, perseverance means not sacrificing or abandoning an objective after a setback or failure. For special operations such as the Vemork raid, this meant months between attempts beginning with the Royal Engineers and Operation Freshman in October 1942 and ending in February 1944 with the sinking of the heavy water stockpile. Failures strengthened resolve, and success hedged against future tactical objectives as a portion of the

commandos who achieved the first raid stayed in Norway setting up the resistance networks which enabled the ultimate strategic objective of destroying the stockpile.

The final principle this study examines, legitimacy, contributes to this mission serving as a major point of pride for the Norwegian people and military. Of course, the British military and special operators played key roles throughout this mission, and due to the nature of the Allied effort, a British-only raid would likely have been seen as no less legitimate. However, this mission assured legitimacy by the fact that Norwegian forces took part in it or led its tactical execution from start to finish. The Norwegian commandos knew the area around Vemork because for most it was their home. They suffered under the Nazi occupation and sought an opportunity to resist. Legitimacy entails being legally, morally and ethically righteous from the “various perspectives and interested audiences.”¹² All of the allied parties privy to the information found the thought of Nazi Germany wielding the power of nuclear energy as morally reprehensible. Using Norwegian forces to carry out the attack in their homeland lent the operation even more legitimacy by ensuring the government and people of that nation had a stake in its own future, something the Nazi occupiers generally did not allow.

Doolittle’s Tokyo Raid

The April 18, 1942, American B-25 bomber raid on Tokyo led by Colonel James “Jimmy” Doolittle immediately conjures images of intrepid aviators literally throwing caution into the wind as they departed an aircraft carrier in the middle of the Pacific Ocean en route to destiny. That image, well recorded by the book by raider pilot Ted Lawson and later memorialized in a film, *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo*, actually began with an idea months prior in Washington D.C. President Roosevelt, just weeks after the

Pearl Harbor attacks, tasked the military Joint Chiefs to devise a way to strike back against the Japanese mainland with a bombing attack. By late January 1942, Col Doolittle faced the question from Chief of the Army Air Force Henry H. “Hap” Arnold of which American aircraft was capable of carrying a 2,000-pound bomb capacity a distance of 2,000 miles and takeoff in 500 feet.¹³

At the time, this question posed by Arnold applied as much in the Pacific theater as the European and African theaters since the Army would require aircraft ferried into the theater to support the invasion of the North African coast. However, the first known mention of taking medium bombers off of aircraft carriers came from Captain Francis S. Low, an aide to Fleet Admiral Ernest King, Chief of Naval Operations, on January 10, 1942, after observing exercises with the *USS Hornet* at Norfolk. Before the end of that month, Col Doolittle was well into solving the problem of how to make this historic mission happen.¹⁴

Air Force Special Project number 1, as the raid was known at the time, involved modifying each of the sixteen B-25s with three additional auxiliary fuel tanks, special bomb shackles to hold the 500 pound bombs while making room for the extra fuel tanks, as well as installing 16mm video cameras to capture vital imagery of the Japanese mainland during the raid.¹⁵ Additionally, the aircrews themselves trained and rehearsed the takeoff and bombing portions of the mission as much as the aircraft and weather conditions would allow. Because of the priority of the mission, Doolittle routinely required the personal engagement by General Arnold in order to cut through bureaucratic red tape which always accompanies modifying government aircraft in rapid fashion. As Doolittle himself states in his memoir, “without Hap’s personal interest in the project and

unquestioning approval of whatever I wanted to do, we would never have been able to make our deadline.”¹⁶ This testimonial proves that authority over this mission and its preparation was held at the highest level in the Army Air Force. Due to its importance, command responsibility likewise went from Colonel Doolittle to the highest level of the national command authority.

After a brief stop in Sacramento, California for final maintenance, the B-25 bombers were loaded onto the *USS Hornet* and bound for the Pacific on April 2. Due to the security of the mission, once on board the ship, Doolittle informed the aircrews where they were bound for and the targets to be struck. With the assistance of one of the *Hornet's* naval air officers who had previously served as air attaché to Japan, the crews chose targets which contributed to the Japanese industrial base in five separate cities to include Tokyo and the harbor at Yokohama. When many crews mentioned interest in bombing the Japanese Imperial Palace, Doolittle disallowed it. It was not considered a military target and would not impact the enemy's military strength as much as the industrial targets.¹⁷ The 2,000 pounds of explosive onboard each B-25 was a mixture of two separate 500-pound high explosive ordnance and 1,000 pounds of incendiary munition.

Following the bombing mission, the plan called for delivering the B-25 bombers to the American Air Corps elements in China under the command of Claire Chennault. Again, for security reasons, the details of what the bombers were doing prior to arriving in China were not disclosed to the Chinese, or even to any of the American forces in China, save for a brief mention of it to the American commander, General Joe Stilwell, while on a visit to the US.

On April 18, a day prior to the originally intended launch date, the 16-ship task force came across enemy patrol boats. Although the plan called for launching the B-25s within 400-500 miles of Japan, the Japanese had set picket boats with high powered radios approximately 600 miles from the mainland. At 8:00 AM, Admiral Halsey, commander of the task force, ordered the Army aircraft launched. They were approximately 824 miles from Tokyo. Each of the 16 aircraft successfully dropped their bombs on their intended or backup targets, however, none of the aircraft made it to their final destinations in China. The radio homing equipment promised to be installed at four Chinese airfields had not been installed. Without a radio aid to navigation and at especially low fuel states, the aircraft stood no chance of finding the fields in mainland China.

The tactical effect of these 48 bombs delivered via non-precision means on Japanese industry was marginal. However, strategically, this mission signified a definite blow to Japanese pride and honor, as they considered their island sanctuary impenetrable. As Doolittle states, “the primary purpose of the raid . . . was psychological.”¹⁸ Operationally, the raid caused Japanese forces to re-imagine their posture from defensive to more offensive in the central Pacific. This posture shift resulted in a greater amount of Japanese naval surface forces deeper into the Pacific ultimately leading to Allied success in the battle of Midway.¹⁹

Japanese Imperial Navy planners almost immediately began developing the concept for a decisive battle around Midway Island after news of Doolittle’s bombing mission reached them. As naval historian Walter Robinson states in his description of the attitude of Japanese leadership leading up to the battle, “Admiral Yamamoto, never

dreaming that the B-25's could have taken off from a carrier, reasoned that they had somehow managed to fly from Midway.”²⁰ This misperception of the range of the American bombers also played into the additional Japanese motivation to destroy the remainder of the American fleet in one decisive battle they envisioned taking place at Midway. Included in planning for a naval battle in the Pacific, the Japanese Army also began planning invasions for the Aleutian Islands and Hawaii.²¹ These plans occurring at the time they did point directly to the strategic effect the Doolittle raid had on the perception and psyche of the Japanese leadership.

The Doolittle raid met the four pertinent principles of joint operation with varying degrees of fidelity. The objective of the raid was clear from the President of the United States down to the lowest ranking crew member. Tactically, the bombers would strike a variety of targets in mainland Japan before landing in China. In doing so, they would achieve a strategic objective of damaging the psyche of the mainland Japanese and her military forces. The Japanese saw their island fortress as impenetrable and the tactical nested perfectly with the operational and strategic objectives in the case of this bombing raid.

The Doolittle raid also offers an interesting discussion around the principle of unity of command. For the first time in US history, bomber aircraft were being employed in a combat role from a ship at sea. The Army Air Force colonel, Jimmy Doolittle, had command of the mission with authority directly from the Chief of the Army Air Force, General Henry “Hap” Arnold. Authority for launching the mission, however, fell to Admiral Halsey, the aircraft carrier task force commander. Halsey made the decision to launch the aircraft once the ships came across Japanese picket boats, in spite of the fact

that they were well outside the planned range they intended to launch the aircraft from. It remains difficult to argue a counter-factual “what if?” If Halsey had steamed the ships closer to the point of intended launch, would it have effected the aircrafts’ fuel states when reaching China? How would the early warning network of the Japanese have been effected? Since this was the first mission of its kind, these types of issues stemming from lack of unity of command were not addressed in planning. Due to the dominating perception of resounding success of the mission, these issues saw little recognition after the fact. For his part, and according to his autobiography, Colonel Doolittle himself had every expectation of being court-martialed after failing to deliver any of the B-25s intact to the Chinese.²²

Although they lacked clear unity of command, once underway on the carrier task force, the Tokyo raid mission did exhibit perseverance. Doolittle’s team overcame many roadblocks. Barriers to modifying the B-25s in such rapid fashion could have stymied the operation. The commander also could easily have canceled the mission due to the loss of the element of surprise when they were first spotted by Japanese patrol boats. However, Admiral Halsey positioned the airmen as close to mainland Japan as he thought feasible before they launched. Also, while not in the same operational sense in accomplishing national objectives, the crews later learned a new meaning of the word perseverance after crash landing in China or the Soviet Union. Some who crashed behind Japanese lines endured torture or death; others faced hardship in reuniting with fellow crews, received aid from local Chinese, and eventually made it back to Allied forces.

The nature of Chinese assistance to the Tokyo raid demands elaboration on legitimacy from an Allied standpoint. No American could doubt the legitimacy of the

first mission in retribution for the Pearl Harbor attacks of approximately five and a half months prior. This served as the first strike back against the empire which conducted an unprovoked attack against the United States. However, the Chinese who were to assist in getting the crews back to friendly territory received no prior notice of the mission, other than that they should be receiving B-25s for their lend-lease agreement sometime on or around April 18. The commander of American forces in China, who doubled as Chief of Staff for Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, General Joseph Stilwell, knew the mission would take place. He had been informed of it in person in Washington DC by Generals Marshall and Arnold but was on orders to share the information with no one else, especially the Chinese. The delivery of the B-25s to the Chinese government served as a clever ruse to give reason to have them in the area. The fact that none of the aircraft made it to China intact further tested the mission's legitimacy from the standpoint of the Chinese ally.

Placing aside the highest concern for operational security, some illuminating aspects of this mission may be analyzed regarding the decision to inform or not inform the Chinese. First, there was the security concern of whether this relatively untested ally could be trusted with the information. Second, the concern over retribution by the Japanese against Chinese citizens in areas of the Japanese occupation was high. By most accounts, these two reasons accounted for the decision not to inform the Chinese.²³ While somewhat of a revisionist standpoint, had the Chinese actually been informed what these B-25s were doing, a higher emphasis may have been placed on receiving them, ensuring their landing airfields were appropriately prepared, and validating the ground navigation equipment as suitable for them to use while approaching China. These items

alone would have given the aircrews much higher odds of making it to safety after completing their mission in addition to lending the operation further legitimacy with the Chinese government.

Jedburgh Operations in Europe

Established under the secretive Office of Strategic Services (OSS) and in close conjunction with the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), the Jedburgh concept, named for the small town on the England-Scotland border in which members trained, involved America's first foray into organized, planned, and deliberate unconventional warfare (UW). A Jedburgh team would be made of up three individuals, an officer in charge, a non-commissioned operator, and a native resident of the nation in which they were operating, in this case, France. They would insert, typically via airdrop, at least forty miles forward of the front lines of conventional forces, rendezvous with local partisan resistance groups and aid them in organizing and equipping to conduct attacks in German rear areas. OSS leaders determined early that Jedburghs would not do were to serve as guides or labor and raiding parties once their positions were overtaken by conventional forces (originally considered phase 2 of the Jedburgh mission but canceled). Also, because of the need for seventy-two hours to plan and prepare a Jedburgh mission, they would not be used to assist in the tactical plans of conventional forces.²⁴ Jedburgh missions were created primarily to foment the resistance movement into usable ground forces, in the process gaining intelligence on and conducting strikes against operationally significant enemy rear area targets.

Operationally, the Jedburgh teams fell under the command of the SOE Special Operations (SO) branch who created a Special Force (SF) detachment co-located with

each American Army and Army group headquarters. These elements would coordinate the actions of the Jedburghs with the conventional force in their area. However, while they could have no direct contact with the resistance teams, they ensured the reported actions of those groups were known and accounted for by the conventional headquarters.²⁵ These men were effectively liaison officers who worked under the same operational command, Special Forces Headquarters (SFHQ—the term for the combined OSS/SOE HQ) as the teams on the ground. In total, ninety-nine Jedburgh teams trained and operated in France during the latter half of 1944. It is impossible to capture all of their individual exploits and failings here. However, this study rather looks at the overall effectiveness of the operation as they related to the conventional large-scale campaign.

Tactically, the quantifiable results of the Jedburgh teams were mixed. Details relayed by Aaron Bank, a Jedburgh team leader in Southern France and 7th Army's sector, tell of tactical success both prior to and after being overtaken by conventional forces. Bank's team of French partisan resistance attacked German rear area lines of communication and forced the enemy to maintain a larger rear-area security force than preferred while preparing for the Mediterranean invasion by the allies. Later, after being overtaken by 7th Army forces, Bank's team led the re-integration of villages to French civil control, such as that of Nimes.²⁶ Similar effectiveness was experienced by Jedburghs in Northern France and 12th Army's area of operations where they provided "organization, tactical expertise, and training to the [French] volunteers," and "well-documented assistance" after linkup with 12th Army's advance. Typical problems of any new organizations also stymied their tactical success. Conventional army commanders unfamiliar with the concept because of its novelty did not truly know how to integrate

them most effectively. Technological issues with the cutting-edge radio sets and equipment also contributed to breakdowns and failures of communication and command and control throughout France.

At the operational level, the effectiveness of the Jedburghs was much less quantifiable but potentially more important. The psychological effect on the people of France, both those who volunteered to fight and those who supported by other means, cannot be overstated. Seeing Allied soldiers deep behind enemy lines during the occupation by a regime which brutalized the population offered a level of hope that defies quantification.²⁷ These commandos also provided a contact layer of sorts with the population that America had gone to war to liberate and protect. When conventional forces arrived in the towns and villages which had previously been German rear areas, for the most part, the French resistance elements were ready to receive them based on their experience, knowledge, and expectations from working with the commandos. Both of these operational effects, the tangible and the psychological, grew into hallmark operating principles of the US Army Special Forces descendants of the Jedburghs.

When the individual Jedburgh missions airdropped into German-occupied France, they each understood their tactical objectives. Typically it was liaising with a somewhat-established network of French resistance fighters, helping to bind them together into a more capable conventional fighting force, disrupting German rear areas with the intent of linking up with overtaking Allied forces as they consolidated gains and continued the attack. They had as much understanding as they could possibly garner in the up to 72 hours leading up to the mission. For this reason, Special Forces HQ (SFHQ) on the American side and the Special Operations Executive on the British controlled the

Jedburghs' tactical objectives, as opposed to the conventional army commanders in the area. Communications on the Jedburgh activities, tactical or operational gains, and any intelligence collected then relayed through the SFHQ to liaisons with the conventional field army headquarters.²⁸ The Jedburgh's time span of 72 hours for planning and preparing a mission was too long to incorporate effectively into the maneuver element's rapid tempo of operations. Any operational success or failure of Jedburgh missions, therefore, depended on the objectives of the conventional forces in their area to which they were not privy.

The lack of synchronized objectives speaks directly to an indifference toward the principle of unity of command. Unity of command may sometimes fall victim to operational security, especially when missions occur behind enemy lines and there is great personal risk to those involved. Jedburgh missions of 1944 in Europe were no exception. In addition to operational security, the lack of unity of command resulted from the program being new. Very few leaders in the conventional army knew about it, its intended purpose, or its capabilities.²⁹ For this reason, as Irwin explains, the "misuse" of was not due to "malicious waste or misappropriation," but instead simply, "ignorance of the capabilities," brought to the force by the Jedburghs.³⁰

What Jedburgh operations lacked in terms of shared objective or unity of command, they made up for in the other two principles analyzed here, perseverance and legitimacy. The Jedburgh mission, as much as any other, required personal perseverance. Men were subjected to harsh conditions, unknown partisan groups to mold into a fighting force, and the looming threat of being killed if discovered.

Perhaps more important than personal perseverance, however, was the operational perseverance to continue leveraging the capacity and capability of the Jedburgh operators across 99 separate missions in France and the Low Countries during 1944.³¹ Since the earliest days of planning in 1940 after the evacuation of Dunkirk, through the invasion of Germany, national allied leaders, especially Churchill, stood behind the concept of countering German advances with unconventional means.³² Theories abound as to why Churchill and his SOE remained so committed to unconventional warfare. It was seen as a last resort following German occupation, and the defeat of conventional armies, also an attempt to not fall into the trap of the WWI stalemate. Additionally, because of the nature of the European governments in exile in Great Britain, the ground on the continent remained fertile for sowing resistance among the population.³³ Regardless of the motive, Jedburgh teams continued to drop in, and the determination of the resistance movements they supported, as well as the success of the Allied invasion, nourished the perseverance of the Jedburgh operations as a whole.

The governments of European countries in exile in England provided the Jedburgh teams a good deal of legitimacy. The support of men like Charles de Gaulle, the de facto leader of French resistance, and his ready access to wireless broadcasting allowed him the ability to continue to encourage guerilla warfare, even from England.³⁴ Additionally, having a native speaker of the language of the partisans they were supporting lent each team an air of credibility with those they were charged with leading.³⁵ These native speakers trained with the Jedburgh teams in England thanks to the support from their home government leaders who carried on the fight after German

occupation. This element of legitimacy stemming from language-enabled forces and native buy-in carries on as a key tenet for US Special Forces.

Chindit Operations in Burma

Brigadier Orde Wingate did not create the concept of long-range deep penetration raids behind enemy lines when he organized his combined division of British, Ghurka, West African, and Burmese Special Force dubbed the “Chindits.” The name was a mispronunciation of the Burmese word *Chinthe*, signifying the mythical guardian of temples, and Wingate understood well the mission they would accomplish.³⁶ In fact, the mission Wingate planned in the Spring of 1944 would be the second Chindit expedition under 14th Army in Burma with the intent of disrupting Japanese rear areas and cutting off their lines of communication and major supply routes along the Irrawaddy River. The first Chindit mission in the Fall of 1942 saw tactical successes in destroying bridges and interdicting supply routes along the Mandalay-Myitkyina railway line nearly two-hundred miles behind Japanese lines but met operational failure due to the fact that the destruction was quickly repaired and the Japanese main effort it was meant to interdict diverted elsewhere. The first Chindit expedition also faced struggles with re-supply by air and ultimately came at the cost of nearly one thousand soldiers’ lives.³⁷

In part due to his somewhat darling status with Prime Minister Churchill, Wingate’s failure in the first Chindit raid was seen rather as an audacious attempt at interdicting the enemy’s rear without proper resourcing or integration into the main effort attacking the Japanese. Wingate himself was invited back to England and accompanied Churchill to the 1943 Quebec conference where he again pitched his concept for long-range penetration groups.³⁸ General Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Forces attended this

presentation and, understanding the exponential improvements air power could provide the concept, eventually tasked an organization known as the 1st Air Commando Group under Colonels Philip Cochran and John Alison, to provide direct support to Wingate's operation.

As in Doolittle's previous operation, under the direct guidance and authority of General Arnold, Cochran and Alison went to work finding the appropriate aircraft and building the organization to fully support Wingate. They modified the workhorse C-47 Dakota, already prevalent flying the Himalayan "Hump" missions re-supplying the Chinese theater, with the ability to tow two American Waco gliders at once, and also to retrieve the gliders from short landing strips in the jungle without having to land. In addition to the gliders and tows, they leveraged the short and austere field capable North American B-25 Mitchell bombers, P-51 Mustang fighters modified to carry two 500-pound bombs each, and an array of Stinson L-1 and L-5 observation planes. This large air component provided in direct support to one division raised eyebrows throughout the resource-strapped China-Burma-India theater, however, the personal weight behind General Arnold and the Supreme theater commander, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, provided the necessary support to maintain the integrity of Cochran and Alison's formation.

On March 5, 1944, Operation Thursday, code-name for the airborne insertion of Wingate's forces, commenced from Lalaghat air base in Northeastern India. They would insert three of Wingate's four brigades. The first wave in by glider would establish a forward airfield on a jungle clearing thirty-five miles east of Japanese-held city of Indaw code-named Broadway. Within twenty-four hours, the air commandos would establish an

airfield suitable for landing C-47s. The remaining force would arrive in the larger more reliable twin-engine aircraft.

Unlike the first Chindit raid in Burma, the second would be only one element of a three-pronged attack to drive the Japanese from the country. While Wingate's force arrived by air, the Chinese-American-Indian corps under command of General Joe Stilwell attacked from the Northern city of Ledo, and Field Marshal William Slim's 14th Army attacked by land from India. Stilwell utilized the shorter-range penetration battalions of Merrill's Marauders to frustrate the enemy's supply lines along his long march South. The longer-range penetration force under Wingate, in addition to interdicting Japanese lines of communication, worked their way north along the Rangoon-Myitkyina railway. Stilwell would later receive command of the Special Force from Slim in mid-May to ease coordination as the two elements converged on the Japanese hold-out at Myitkyina. The Chindit force performed admirably in the transition from long range penetration skirmishers to a maneuver element, especially considering the loss of their dynamic commander when Wingate was killed in late March when the B-25 he was flying in as a passenger crashed in the mountains between Imphal and Lalaghat.³⁹ Eventually in June 1944, after nearly four months of jungle combat deep behind enemy lines, the Chindit Special Force was replaced on the line on the outskirts of Myitkyina, approximately 80 miles from where they were inserted.

Brigadier Orde Wingate's Chindit force in Burma and their support received from the 1st Air Commando Group demonstrated the effect a specially organized and resourced unit can have when employed in an unconventional manner against a well-defended conventional enemy in complex terrain. They succeeded by bringing novel

capabilities to bear across multiple domains. Additionally, the unique command relationships and authorities they leveraged with 14th Army under Slim, the Chinese-American-Indian Corps with Stilwell, and the supreme theater commander Admiral Mountbatten allowed the force a good deal of flexibility for their audacious mission.

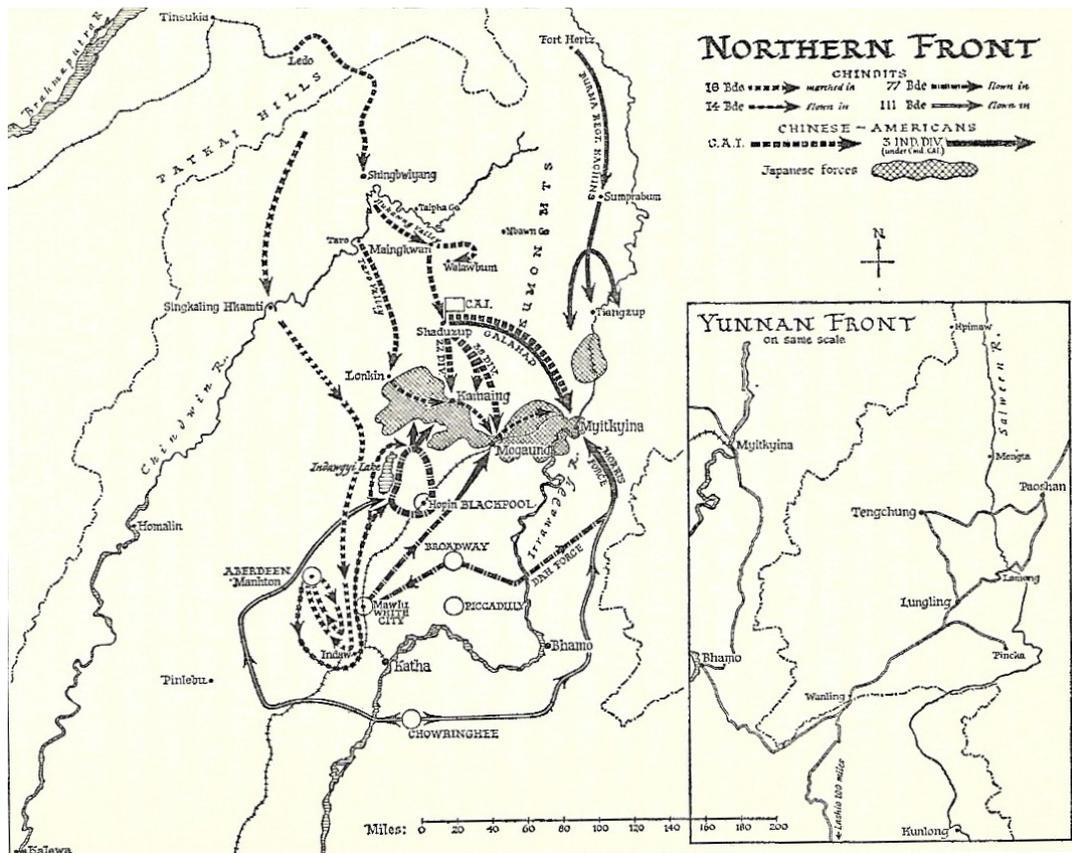


Figure 2. Wingate's Chindit Support to Burma Northern Front

Source: Field Marshall the Viscount Slim, *Defeat into Victory* (New York: Van Rees Press, 1961), 222.

Field Marshall the Viscount William Slim offers the best glimpse into how well the Chindit operation in Burma remained nested within the overall operational objective.

Despite the colorful way Brigadier Wingate vied for resources, charming men like Hap Arnold and Winston Churchill, he ensured he always operated in accordance with the intent of his higher headquarters. Slim relays a particularly lively incident in which Wingate disagreed with an order but eventually acquiesced, in part due to the mature way Slim handled his capable but mostly flamboyant subordinate commander. Also, having already experienced the misery of an operation in which the objective changed to leave his unit dangling at the end of a thinly resourced rope the previous year, Wingate understood full well the importance of maintaining lock step with his higher command.

In the same vein, unity of command, both that of Wingate's unit under Slim then Stilwell, and all of the ground and air forces under Wingate, directly supported the success of a high special operation featuring untested tactics. Wingate's unity of command was not achieved without controversy. Dual allied fronts between Europe and the Pacific and America's encumbering Germany-first policy starved the China-Burma-India theater of aircraft and crews. The fact that Wingate held control over his "private air force" led many in the theater to believe those precious resources were squandered on supporting such a small part of the overall effort.⁴⁰ However, without this unity of command, Wingate's Chindit force would never have had the flexibility and appropriate resources to accomplish their daring behind-enemy-lines penetration and disruption mission. The aircraft in support of this operation provided lift, deep strike, surveillance and reconnaissance, close air support, and casualty evacuation without which the enemy may easily have mitigated or destroyed such a daring mission. Each of these mission sets continue as benchmarks for current US Air Force Special Operations.

Unity of command between Wingate's raiders and the other maneuver elements in the Allied offensive also played heavily in the Chindit mission's success toward the overarching operation. Slim understood what effects he could expect from the Chindit division and was able to keep tabs on their successes and failures. Likewise, later in the operation, as the Chindits approached Stilwell's invading forces from the North in the vicinity of Myitkyina, Slim understood the importance of placing the division under Stilwell's operational control.

Perseverance again conjures images of the Chindit raiders slogging through dense jungle, deep behind enemy lines for months on end with resupply only by air. Indeed, this required personal perseverance. However, in the operational sense, perseverance in Burma meant trusting that this special operation would yield results after previous failure. The fact that sound tactics, resourced appropriately to mitigate what was initially an extremely high-risk mission would yield operational benefit required a great deal of trust on the part of Slim and Mountbatten. However, had they not maintained the perseverance required, Japanese forces likely would have been able to maintain more initiative in their defense against Stilwell and coincident invasion into India.⁴¹

Like the Jedburgh operations in France, the Chindits in Burma relied on local Burmese guides and interpreters in order to carry out their deep penetration mission. Their legitimacy sprang from the fact that they were repelling an invading force from a British colony using local Burmese forces. Allied nations also maintained legitimacy throughout the Pacific and China-Burma-India theater due to the brutal tactics used by the Japanese against both military forces and civilians. This combination of fighting with

forces from the host nation and acknowledging tactics must be consistent with the norms of proportionality combined to ensure legitimacy for the Chindit operation.

All four special operations described in this study exhibit either good or bad characteristics of the four corresponding principles of joint operations. Table 3 offers a side-by-side comparison of each operation with positive and negative values assigned to the aspects of the missions which positively or negatively affected the mission's ability to impact operational or strategic objectives.

	Table 3. Ability to Leverage Fundamental of Joint Operations			
Special Operation	Objective:	Unity of Command:	Perseverance:	Legitimacy:
Vemork Raid	+ Nested within SOE and Churchill's strategic obj + Degrade Nazi atomic prgm	+ Commando Ops featured clear UofC - Air raid lacked UofC	+ Mission continued through two failures + 2 year time span	+ HN local nationals conducted raids + Tgt rep'd existential threat
Doolittle Raid	+ Nested with senior US strategic leaders + Psych blow to Japan	- Different command for AAF and Navy - Halsey gave launch order	+ Continued mission after Japanese spotted + Overcame prep blocks	+ Based on target/threat alone - Lacked Chinese buy-in up front
Jedburgh Operation	+ SFHQ Obj's nested with strat leaders - Lacked sync w/conventional force	- Lacked clear lines b/w field armies and SFHQ - Liaisons / poor comms	+ Trusted concept + 99 missions France/Low Countries in 1944	+ HN member on every team + Contributed to success of concept
Chindit Operation	+ Nested b/w Wingate's Div and 14th Army + Disrupt	+ Clear cmd lines: Wingate-Slim-Stilwell + Wingate commanded	+ Continued after failed 1943 attempt + Con't despite LZ fouled on	+ Leveraged Burmese fighters + Removing invading /

	enemy rear in N. Burma	all support	night one	occupying force
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Source: Created by author.

Conclusions

The four missions described in this chapter present a broad range of conclusions. The focus is to narrow the conclusions to which aspects of the missions contributed or failed to contribute to the overall objectives of the large-scale campaign. This addresses the primary research question of whether special operations contribute to large scale combat operations as well as the secondary questions of whether they can provide deterrence or options for exploitation and consolidation of gains. The chosen cases also offer a path to discussing the differences between special operations strikes and raids which are short, localized bursts of effect, and protracted missions of either unconventional warfare or behind-enemy-lines deep penetration and disruption—two areas which continue as special operations bulwark missions.

¹ Bascomb, *The Winter Fortress: The Epic Mission to Sabotage Hitler's Atomic Bomb*, 6-7.

² *Ibid.*, 9.

³ Ziemke, Earl F. *The German Northern Theater of Operations 1940-1945 Department of the Army Pamphlet 20-271* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 1959), 50.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁵ Bascomb, *The Winter Fortress: The Epic Mission to Sabotage Hitler's Atomic Bomb*, 40-43.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 204.

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- ⁹ Ibid., 261.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., 306.
- ¹¹ CJCS, JP 3-0, A-4.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Doolittle and Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*, 212.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., 222.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., 229.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., 247.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 1.
- ¹⁹ Gary R. Schamburg, “Cloud Patterns: An Operational Hierarchy” (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1995), 33.
- ²⁰ Walter L. Robinson, “Akagi, Famous Japanese Carrier,” in *The Battle of Midway: The Naval Institute Guide to the U.S. Navy’s Greatest Victory*, ed. Thomas C. Hone (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2013), 14.
- ²¹ John B. Lundstrom, “Time is Everything (Japanese Side),” in *The Battle of Midway: The Naval Institute Guide to the U.S. Navy’s Greatest Victory*, ed. Thomas C. Hone (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2013), 26.
- ²² Doolittle and Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again*.
- ²³ Ibid., 12.
- ²⁴ S. J. Lewis, *Jedburgh Team Operations in Support of the 12th Army Group, August 1944* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1991), 5.
- ²⁵ Ibid., 6.
- ²⁶ Bank, *From OSS to Green Berets: The Birth of Special Forces*, 48-58.
- ²⁷ Lewis, *Jedburgh Team Operations in Support of the 12th Army Group, August 1944*, 65.

²⁸ Wyman W. Irwin, “A Special Force: Origin and Development of the Jedburgh Project in Support of Operation Overlord” (Master’s thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1991), 154.

²⁹ Lewis, *Jedburgh Team Operations in Support of the 12th Army Group, August 1944*, 60.

³⁰ Irwin, “A Special Force: Origin and Development of the Jedburgh Project in Support of Operation Overlord,” 154.

³¹ Ralph D. Nichols, “Jedburgh Operations Support to the French Resistance in Eastern Brittany From June-September 1944” (Master’s thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1993), ix.

³² Irwin, “A Special Force: Origin and Development of the Jedburgh Project in Support of Operation Overlord,” 19.

³³ *Ibid.*, 8-9, 20.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 12.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 153.

³⁶ Okerstrom, *Project 9: The Birth of the Air Commandos in World War II*, 29.

³⁷ Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, 134.

³⁸ Okerstrom, *Project 9: The Birth of the Air Commandos in World War II*, 40.

³⁹ Slim, *Defeat Into Victory*, 233.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 188.

⁴¹ Christopher L. Kolakowski, “Is This the End or Do We Go On? The Battle of Kohima 1944,” *Army History: The Professional Bulletin of the United States Army*, no. 111 (Spring 2019): 17.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Final Conclusions

Special operations may be employed with tremendous tactical, operational, or strategic effect in a large-scale combat campaign. However, when not employed under appropriate guiding principles, even tactical success may have a negligible impact on operational or strategic ends. Each mission leveraged or failed to leverage elements of objective, unity of command, perseverance, and legitimacy which contributed to its overall effectiveness in the greater campaign or operation.

Special operations make important impacts on the success or failure of operations or campaigns during Large Scale Combat Operations. Analyzing four successful operations and how well they adhere to the four principles of joint operations of objective, unity of command, perseverance, and legitimacy illustrates how tactical missions contribute to operational or strategic success. Additionally, in the four case studies analyzed, there appeared no direct correlation between the type of special operation mission and the ability to affect operational ends. However, of the four missions studied, the only two that provided any kind of strategic deterrent were individual strike missions, Vemork, Norway and Doolittle's Tokyo raid. Each of the four missions exhibited the ability to offer senior military leaders the chance to exploit enemy vulnerabilities. In these cases the primary vulnerability was the enemy's arrogance and disrespect for Allied technological ability to bring effects through the new domain of airspace. Finally, the extent to which special operations are able to consolidate gains remains murky, but there is likely some level of contribution to that end.

Objective remains the most important principle for ensuring tactical missions net gains at the operational or strategic level. As long as the mission remains nested within its higher headquarters objective, it cannot help but contribute to that overall mission's success. In the case of Special Operations during LSCO, higher headquarters could be the corps or field army as in the case of the Jedburgh missions, or it could be national level leadership as in the case of the Doolittle or Vemork raids. At times, Jedburgh missions failed to nest their objectives with the field army in their area. Typically, this was due to lack of ability to communicate due to broken radios or the like, or messages being frustrated by the cumbersome process of sharing through SFHQ and liaisons. Blame for neither of these reasons fell to the teams on the ground, they could not prevent orders from changing while they were out of communication. In Burma, the objective for the Chindits was simpler, destroy key enemy capabilities in their rear to support the advance from the north. The Chindit mission also maintained regular consistent contact due to their ready air support.

After criteria for achieving a nested objective are met, the principle of unity of command possesses similar importance to tactical effects contributing to higher level gains. The reasons are directly tied. When conventional and special operations missions report to the same commander, by default their objectives will be tied together. No doubt, Admiral Nimitz heavily weighted the strategic objective behind the Doolittle raid. However, he had to balance that with the security of his fleet, his carrier task force, and his flat deck ships which represented the Navy's best hope for success in the Pacific. This balance forced his decision to launch the aircraft outside their expected and planned ranges for the Tokyo mission after being discovered by the Japanese pickets. When

compared to Burma, Cochran and Alison's air forces flew directly in support of Wingate, and both Wingate and Stilwell reported to Slim in spite of one being a conventional and one a special force. On the initial night of the Chindit invasion, no disagreement existed about changing the primary landing zone due to the original being fouled, because the pilots, ground force, and leaders all reported to Wingate who in turn reported to Slim. This tactical decision could have scrubbed the entire mission out of an abundance of caution and negated any operational benefit had a different commander than one of those men been able to make an input. As in the failed bombing raid of the Vemork plant, the commandos on the ground and their commanders familiar with the facility were removed from the decision, ignoring unity of command. Failure resulted because those in command of the mission on the ground who understood the target's imperviousness to air strike no longer had a say.

Perseverance means seeing a mission through to its completion. Without this ability, Wingate would likely have given up after his 1943 failed deep penetration mission, and the timeline for removing the Japanese from Burma would have been dramatically altered. British SOE forces may well have cut their losses after the two glider loads of Royal Engineers went down in Norway had they not persevered toward the goal of thwarting Nazi atomic weaponry. And without perseverance, Doolittle's Tokyo raid could easily have been cancelled at the first sight of Japanese alert boats, allowing the Japanese to continue considering their homeland impenetrable.

Legitimacy allowed tactical success to affect strategic ends by ensuring the Allies were postured to shape the circumstances on the ground long after combat ceased. The French Maquisards who fought alongside the Jedburgh teams would go on to reclaim

their sovereign territory for France after the departure of the Germans. Through the experience of Aaron Bank, we know that Jedburgh teams not only liberated villages after they were overtaken, but were able to re-establish local governance as well. Doolittle's Tokyo raid held the legitimacy of retribution for Pearl Harbor and the initial strike back against an unprovoked attack. This directly fed the strategic success in terms of psychological effect on the enemy and narrative victory for American morale, trumping any lack of legitimacy with the Chinese over not gaining their consent prior to launch.

The type of special operation conducted held little to no sway on its ability to contribute to overarching operational gains. Whether a protracted operation such as the series of Jedburgh drops or the deep penetration of the Chindits, or quick strikes like the three elements of the Vemork raid, or the single night in April, 1942 for the Tokyo raid, all contributed in some way to either operational or strategic ends. The nature of the mission affected tactics of execution and chosen personnel and equipment far more than their impact on the higher levels of war.

As far as deterrence, or the ability to prevent or alter an adversary from acting in a certain fashion, only the Vemork and Doolittle Raids apply. In Norway, the removal of heavy water deterred Nazi ability to develop an atomic weapon. And in Japan, an American unilateral strike deterred the Japanese from their strategy of homeland defense. Results of the Chindit operation or the Jedburgh missions on deterrence, at least in the context of this study, were found to be negligible.

On the other hand, all four missions in some way offered the overall commander options to exploit enemy vulnerabilities. By leveraging extreme operational security, the Doolittle Raid exploited the Japanese vulnerability of overconfidence in their ability to

defend themselves, proving that they could be struck back. The Chindit operation exploited elongated Japanese lines of communication and supply routes, by boldly taking advantage of technology and initiative the enemy though the Allies incapable of doing. Likewise, Jedburgh missions audaciously inserted teams well behind enemy lines by aircraft to aid resistance movements the Germans had full knowledge of and considered terrorists. And the Vemork facility raid exploited an occupying force in Norway unaccustomed to and unexpecting of combat in such a remote place.

The notion of Special Operations having the ability to consolidate gains bears some discussion, although there is far more to unpack than uncovered here. In the physical sense, Aaron Bank's Jedburgh team in southern France nominally acted to consolidate gains after they were overtaken by 7th Army. His partisan forces were native to the area and could quickly transition to stabilizing it while mopping up bypassed enemy forces allowing 7th Army to continue its advance north. In a more metaphorical sense, Special Operations have the ability to prove that gains have been consolidated to a point that allows something like a deep strike to have strategic effect. For example, in the Vemork raid the gains made against the German forces in Norway were almost entirely information and intelligence related in understanding Nazi intentions with heavy water and how the plant in Norway influenced it. The true gains were made by empowering and leveraging reliable partners in the Norwegian commando group. The consolidation of those gains manifested itself in the Allies ability to strike the plant, eventually destroy the material, and yield a heavy blow to the enemy. This type of consolidation of intelligence and partnership gains could prove very useful in the cyberspace domain and the

information environment against a future multi-domain threat, but this represents an area which needs more analysis than this paper can provide.

Recommendations

SOF can and should be employed by states to meet specific objectives during LSCO. The decision to employ SOF by military or government leaders should be reached after they determine the effect needed may only be accomplished by special operators. Once the decision to employ Special Operations has been made against an enemy in LSCO, the four principles of joint operations of objective, unity of command, perseverance, and legitimacy must be considered more strongly than other factors when analyzing the operational or strategic effect expected from the operation. Operational or strategic military and civilian leaders should always only employ special operations when clear linkage can be made between the objective of the mission, and the objective of the field army, joint task force, or nation. Once SOF are committed and resources are allocated to them, command and support relationships should be established which allow for clear unity of command either with the SOF commander or with a common higher commander. Deciding to leverage Special Operations also must include a discussion on the limits of perseverance before committing any forces. The forces themselves and the personalities drawn to SOF know very few limits to personal perseverance as described in these four case studies. However, leaders must understand that committing a force like that encumbers them to see it through to completion, whatever that completion looks like. Finally, leaders should always analyze the legitimacy an operation holds, whether it relates to the target and context as in the case of the Doolittle raid, or to the force accomplishing it as in the Vemork raid. Although a mission's legitimacy may always be

debated, commanders must maintain a clear understanding of it prior to committing forces.

Areas of Further Study

In order to discuss the general topic of Special Operations and their effect on LSCO more deeply, the case studies in this paper were covered somewhat broadly. The Jedburgh operations obviously consisted of 99 separate missions, each with its own character, objectives, and effects. One could easily have parsed out particular case studies among those missions themselves and develop a complex argument on the effectiveness of UW. This represents an area for further study, especially in attempting to relate the American and western method of UW to future conflict under multi-domain battle.

The notion of Special Operations as a tool for consolidating gains also warrants additional study. As discussed above, those gains need not always be key physical terrain. They can also be key elements of populations, key information or intelligence gathered, or psychological gains against enemy forces or populations. These aspects of consolidating gains and the ability to leverage either special or conventional operations against them represent a major area of study as combat moves into the information environment and into the cyberspace domain.

Finally, while certain concepts such as linking objectives and ensuring unity of command, perseverance, and legitimacy were discussed here, the discussion stopped short of prescribing the appropriate method for doing those things. Each one of those four elements could be deconstructed and analyzed for understanding its optimal employment. This paper went to great lengths to explain the “why” those elements were important. The

“how” to ensure they are leveraged effectively in cases other than the four distinct ones described here was left to future study.

Summary

The US leveraged Special Operations in ways never thought possible during the opening quarter of the 21st century. This was born from necessity and crisis. As strategic security planners analyze threats and the ability to counter them amid the current great power competition and potential future LSCO, it pays dividends to analyze past experiences. The four case studies discussed in this paper exemplify experiences in the past when effects were needed against an enemy during LSCO that conventional forces were incapable of providing on the timeline they were needed. The characteristics of those missions, and their adherence to the four principles of objective, unity of command, perseverance, and legitimacy provide insight into how tactical missions can achieve operational or strategic effects. While there is no guarantee that adhering to these principles will always yield success, failing to examine how and why military operations succeed or fail certainly guarantees an advantage to the enemy.

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