7/29/2008

Subject: OSS Field Report to LTC Smith dated 13 May 1945 with editorial comments by Ron Hairston

Remarks: The report is an onion skin copy without a signature block. The author is very likely 1LT James P. Fine, Commander of Team Camel (MB#9). It's also possible that it was drafted by his second in command, 2LT Raymond L. Hairston. Whether or not this document was actually sent to LTC Smith is unknown. LTC Wilfred J. Smith was the OSS Chief in Chihkiang where the team is ordered to return after three or more months of operations behind Japanese lines.[1] COL Richard P. Heppner commanded Detachment 202 headquartered in Kunming. He had overall responsibility for OSS operations in the China Theater (CT). One of Detachment 202's special operations (SO) teams, Team Muskrat, was commanded by CPT Walter R. Mansfield and further broken down into four subordinate teams including Team Camel which is associated with this report.[2] Individuals shown in the photo "In Chinese Uniforms – Team Camel" were the OSS operatives of this intrepid team.

OSS Team Camel in Chinese Uniforms
From left to right: 2LT Hairston, Chinese-Malay Radio Operators "Chicago" & "Kenny", 1LT Fine
China circa January 1945

[1] Mills, Francis B, *OSS Special Operations in China*, Phillips Publications, Williamstown, NJ, 2002, p. 479.
[2] Ibid, p. 508.

The names of towns and villages mentioned in the report have not all been located. Additional map research is needed. Many of the coordinates probably reflect an actual field location in a secure area near a town that was identifiable on the maps in use at the time. It's possible that one or more of the grid coordinates are incorrect. Distances mentioned in the report do not always correlate to map distances between grid locations. Finding the towns can be difficult as many of their names have changed over time. Maps in use during the period were not readily available at the time that this commentary was prepared. The scale of the maps that were available (1:1,000,000) simply does not provide the desired resolution.

Mills, Mills, & Brunner, *OSS Special Operations in China*, p. 270.

Team MUSKRAT: Top row left to right: Lts. Fine, Hairston, Smith, Capt. Mansfield, Lts. Matthai, Never, Coutoupis. Front row: Thinman, Chicago, Susu, Kenny, CheeChee.

OSS Team Muskrat in Chinese Uniforms
China circa December 1944-January1945[3]

[3] Ibid. p. 270.

Historical Setting

In 1944, anticipating that the end of the war in the European theater was near, OSS resources are being shifted to the China-Burma-India (CBI) theater of operation. CPT Walter Mansfield who had earlier parachuted to Mihailovic's Chetniks in Yugoslavia is now given the task to train Chinese guerrillas.[4] On loan by the OSS to the Eastern Command of China Combat Command (CCC), the Army commander in Shawan, COL H. E. Spengler, directs Team Muskrat and its subordinate teams at enemy communications and supply lines deep behind enemy lines.[5]

OSS Team MUSKRAT[6]
From left to right top row: 2LT Raymond Hairston, CPT Walter Mansfield (USMC) Team Commander, LT (JG) Jack Matthai (USMR), and 1LT Charley Smith. Bottom row: 1LT James Fine, 1LT Gregory Coutoupis, and 1LT Leo Nover
China circa December 1944-January 1945

Previously assigned to Detachment 404 (with duty in Calcutta, India April – May 1944 and in Galle, Ceylon (Sri Lanka) June – December 1944), 2LT Hairston arrives in Kunming, China on 12 December.[7] By January 1945, Team Camel is in the field at Wukanghsien (now Wugang) located in the Hunan Province of China. This is the point in time that the report begins.

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[4] Smith, R. Harris, *OSS – The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency*, University of California Press, Berkley, Los Angeles, London, 1972, p. 242.
[5] Mills, p. 274.
[6] Brunner, John W., in email to Ron Hairston states photo is of Team MUSKRAT which was broken up before operations into teams BEAR, BUFFALO, CAMEL, ELEPHANT and possibly others.
[7] Dates and places from small address book that LT Hairston kept notes in.

The wartime political situation has a number of challenging complexities. While this detachment tries to ally with elements of both Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Army and a large Chinese civilian army made up of peasants, the two Chinese groups do not cooperate well. Chaing's army generals, like warlords rule their provinces.[8] General Tai Li who is extremely loyal to the Generalissimo, runs a brutal secret police and intelligence network of 300 thousand agents throughout China and other places in the world where Chinese communities existed from Bangkok to San Francisco.[9] He opposes independent intelligence operations in China by the US. In the north, Mao Tse-tung with Chou En-lai and their communist movement compete for control of China. They are intent on having a communist state rise from the ashes of war.[10] The power struggle and greed by Communists and Nationalists alike interfered with China's ability to effectively wage war against a common enemy. The OSS makes every attempt, albeit unsuccessful, to get the two factions to work together in defeating the Japanese.

In the prior year, 1944, Japan launched Operation Ichigo[11] reestablishing their control of key areas in central China and the critical supply line known as the Burma Road.[12] The easternmost Airfields used by General Chennault's Fourteenth Air Force for bombing Japan are displaced and the Burma Road is under Japanese control. Lack of this road means that every class of supplies must be flown in over the dangerously high Himalayas know as "The Hump".[13] Near the end of 1944, responding to the enemy situation and under pressure from the Generalissimo, President Roosevelt relieves General Stillwell as the China-Burma-India theater commander and replaces him with General Albert Wedemeyer.

Map of Inchigo Plan

[8] Smith, p. 242.
[9] Ibid, p. 248.
[10] Ibid, p. 272.
[11] The Map Archive, http://www.maparchive.org/details.php?image_id=462&mode=search&sessionid=516204139b237d6087c0cbcabb10e22d
[12] Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Ichigo
[13] Hunt, p. 41.

Map Showing Enemy Situation on 31 December 1944[14]

In the report, we observe a vivid example of an economy-of-force effort in China to turn the Japanese advance. The tactical operations that teams such as Camel undertake are essential. They infiltrate well behind Japanese lines to train Chinese Guerrillas to kill, capture, and harass the enemy. They sabotage vehicles, equipment, food stores, bridges, rails, and telephone lines. Strategically, Kunming is of most concern as it is the key base for providing logistics coming by air over "The Hump" and is a critical link to the China-Burma Road. Kunming supported the American and Chinese Armies, and is the headquarters for General Chennault's 14th Air Force. This base and other airfields in eastern China are vital as it brings B29 bombers in close enough to drop bombs on the Japanese mainland. Because the allies cannot yet draw on the equipment and personnel resources that are still directed towards Nazi Germany, the OSS uses its unique talents for training and arming the Chinese. Guerrilla warfare is the only method available for engaging the Japanese in China and grinding down their capability to control the strategic areas they occupy. These are the tactical operations necessary until either General Douglas MacArthur invades the Japanese mainland or until a secret weapon is used on 6 August 1945 at Hiroshima.

[14] Military.com, http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourceFileView?file=worldwarii_asia_maps_map43.htm

The following is a text copy of the subject report:

13 May 1945

SUBJECT: Field Report

TO: Lt. Col. Smith

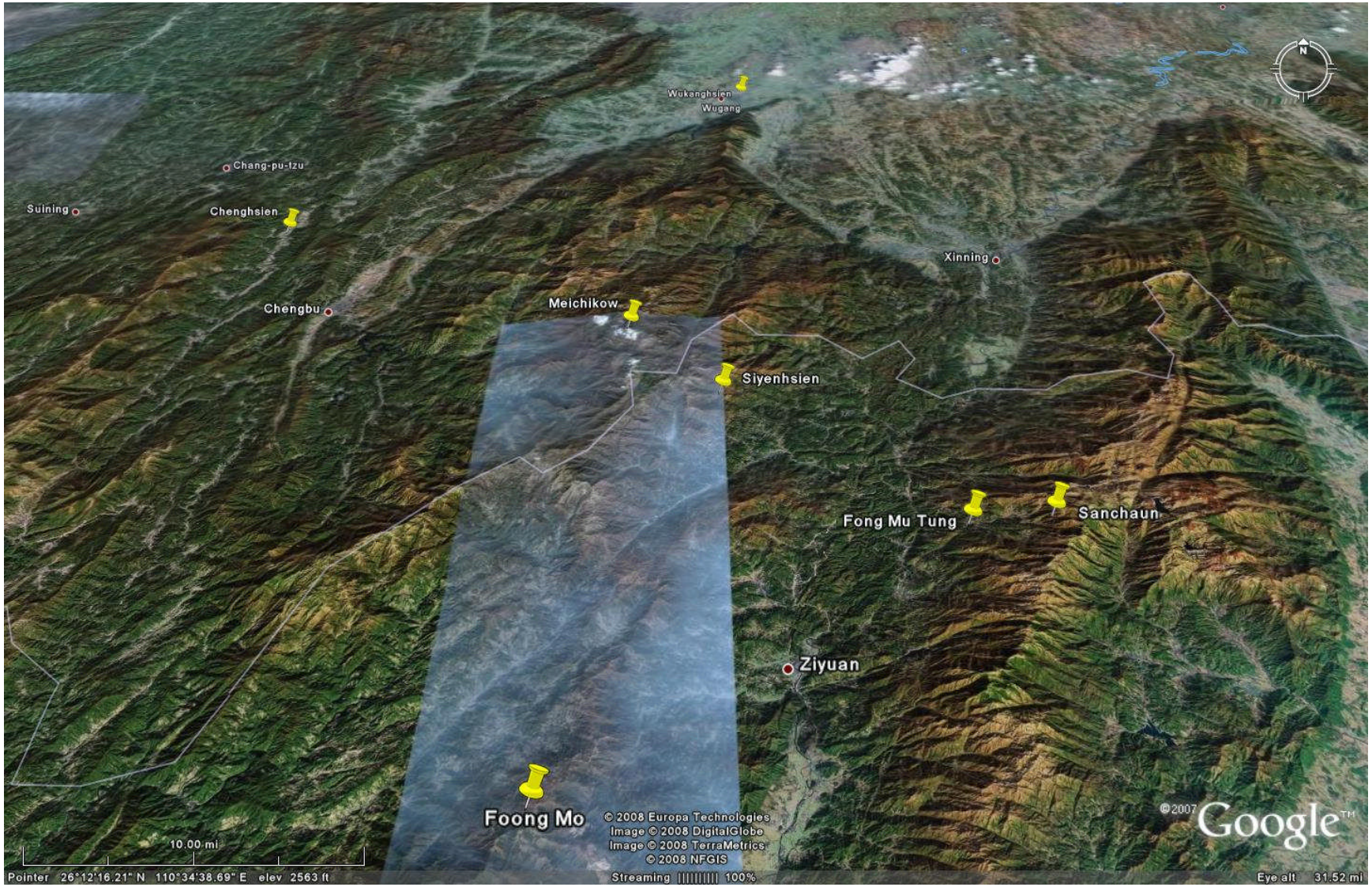
1. We left Wukanghsien (110.38-26.44) *[now Wugang]* January 18, 1945 and arrived at Siyenhsien (110.36-26.15) about the 27th of January. Two companies of Chinese Army Guerrillas were operating out of Siyenhsien. We had orders to operate with them as well as the civilian guerrillas. The commanding officers name was Col. *[Lt. Col. penned in by Ray Hairston]* Fung Gee E. We brought with us forty tommy guns, 10,000 rds. .45 ammo., three hundred hand grenades, one bazooka, 500 lbs T. N. T., 20 rockets, 30 caps, a few booby traps, firing devices and incendiaries, 12 shaped charges and 2 rolls of prima cord. We had a V-100 radio set.

2. A few days were spent training the Chinese to use the tommy guns, bazooka, and hand grenades. *[We] a*lso gave demonstrations of work that can be done with explosives. We let them cut down a tree, explode charges with prima cord and explode a hand grenade with a firing device. They all appeared to be very interested.

3. We left Siyenhsien on February 1st for a place called Feng Mu Tung (110.45-26.08) near Sanchan (110.48-26.08) *[Sanchaun as penned by Ray Hairston]*. We learned after our arrival there that this place was the H. Q. of a Mr. Chiang who commanded some 4000 civilian guerrillas. Col. Fung lost no time getting maps and information concerning Japs in that area from Chiang. The civilians were very cooperative which is more than can be said about the cooperation between two units of the Chinese Army.

4. We decided it would be best if we took *[turns] [correction penned in by Ray Hairston]* going out with our army unit on ambushes. Lt. Hairston went out the first time with one company. That night they stayed in a civilian house and the Chinese officers discussed openly and in front of everyone their plans for the morning attack. During the night *[someone]* attempted to set fire to Lt. Hairston's bedroll. *[That]* attempt *[was]* unsuccessful. Moving out before daylight the next morning the company was ambushed and lost one captain, one 1st Lt. and three Sgts. Later that morning they reorganized and killed about eight Japs and took one prisoner. The prisoner was captured by one of the spies using the .22 cal. silent pistol *[see story that follows this report]*. The Jap was wounded and captured within a 100 yards of *[an]* enemy machine gun nest. The pistol did not attract any attention from the machine gun nest. Two days later another prisoner was captured by the other company.

5. While at the civilian troops H. Q. we discussed with the leader plans to use his force for ambushing and demolition work. Our idea was for the civilians and the Chinese Army to work together. When this was discussed with Col. Fung he flatly refused. We did not give up but tried again and again but with no success. We then decided to work without him and found out what equipment the civilians needed. This turned out to be ammunition and some sort of communication between the H. Q. of the other three civilian groups under command of Mr. Chiang. We requested these items but never received them.



Team Camel Area of Operations Jan – May 1945

The OSS Team Camel departs Wukanghsien on 18 Jan and establishes a new team HQs in Siyenhsien 33 miles to the south. Here, they meet up with COL Fung who commands a Chinese Army unit. The team, accompanied by COL Fung departs Siyenhsien on Feb 1 for Fong Mu Tung 12 miles southeast where Mr. Chiang commands a very large number of civilian guerrillas. COL Fung and his army are replaced by MAJ Wong and his forces that move 21 miles south of Siyenhsien to Foong Mo. Two weeks later MAJ Wong receives orders to move from Foong Mo to Meichikow but it is later changed to Chenghsien.

6. In the meantime the civilians continued their own ambushing and stealing from the Japs. They have captured and stolen enough Jap weapons and equipment to supply almost one entire group. Each group contains about 1000 men and there are four groups.

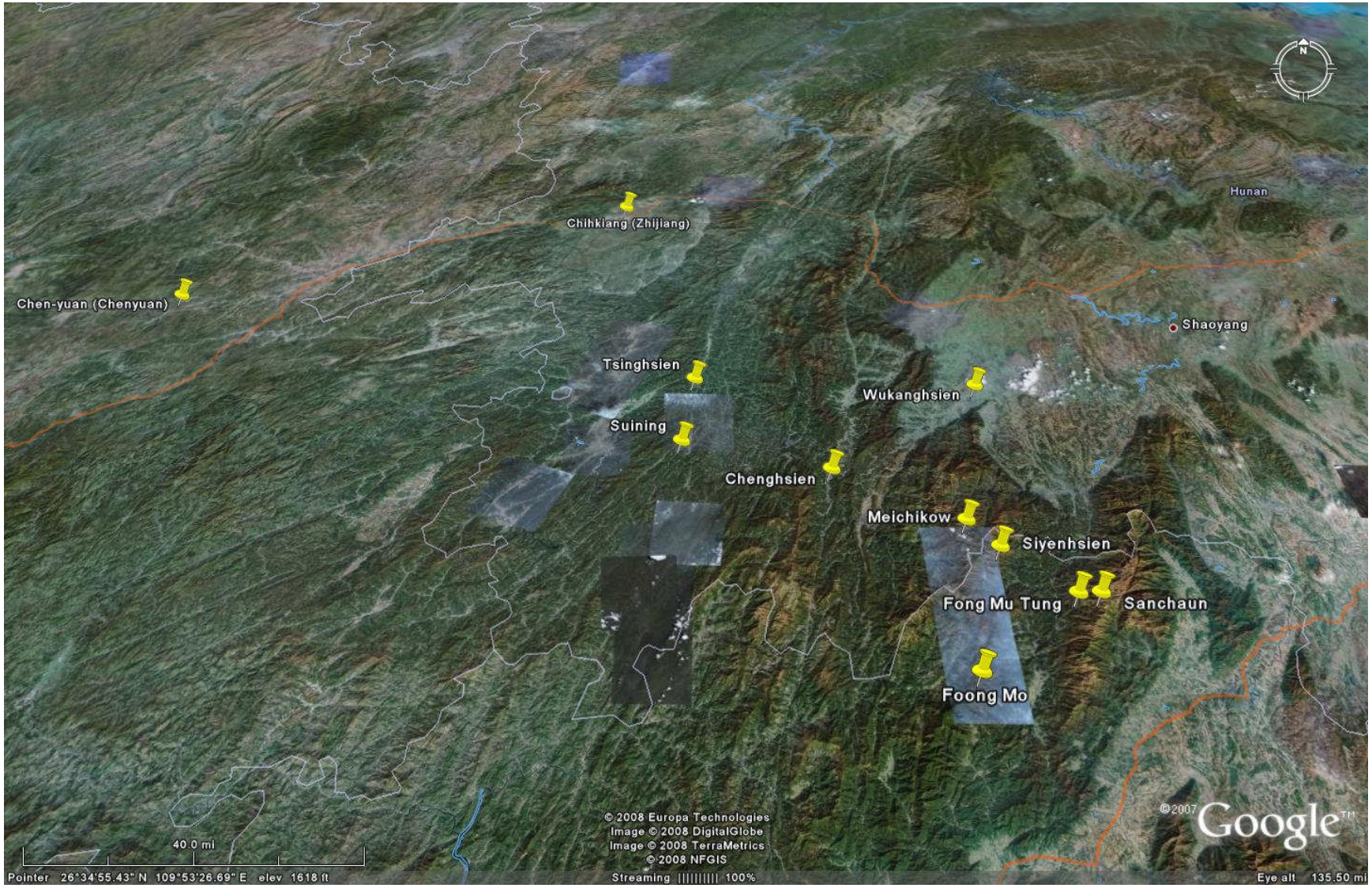
7. Due to no supplies and the fact that Col. Fung was made over responsible for our *[safety]*, we could do little. We did put out a newspaper and made speeches to the civilians. We moved from one place to another ambushing a few Japs here and there.

8. Col. Fung and his unit was replaced by a Maj. Wong. When the Col. left he *[insisted]* on taking with him every tommy gun and handgrenade we had. He was not interested in where the weapons and grenades for Maj. Wong would come from. We flatly refused to allow such a thing. He gave in and left the tommy guns but carried off without our knowledge or consent nearly all the .45 ammo. and handgrenades.

9. Maj. Wong was at first a little more agreeable with our plans than Col Fung. He allowed us to train a demo team (But never gave it a chance to work) and also made a feeble attempt to use the civilians and work with them ambushing Japs. He made an agreement with Mr. Chiang in that he would knock out three Jap machine guns situated on top of the hill, with his mortars and bazookas if the civilians would then go to the top of the hill and kill any remaining Japs. There was only about 50 Japs on top of this hill and the civilians furnished about 100 men for this job. The Maj. set his 2 *[mortars]* and 2 bazookas on top of a hill about 600 yards from the Japs. He had 20 *[repeat]* 20 rds of *[mortar]* ammo and 20 rockets. The Jap position was well built of heavy logs and dirt. He fired all his *[mortar]* ammo and 17 rockets at the Japs. The range was too far for rockets and only three hits scored. The *[mortars]* did no damage. He got very angry when the civilians would not charge up hill in the *[face]* of fire from three machine guns, and refused to have any more to do with the civilians. Lt. Hairston witnessed this *[engagement]* and will verify it.

10. Our main H. Q. was always at Siyenhsien. Maj. Wong had orders to move to Foong Mo (110.30-25.57) *[Fengmu]? (110.36-25.54)]* about 15 miles *[22 miles using map coordinates]* from Siyenhsien. We refused to go with him as we were not getting supplies and our only chance of receiving supplies was by airdrop. The airdrop field had been chosen and white silk bought for panels. We expected supplies to arrive any day – but no supplies. Before Maj. Wong went to Foong Mo he again went too far in trying to look out for our *[safety]*. We were in Siyenhsien talking to a Mr. Chow who leads the group of civilians armed with Jap weapons. We were discussing future plans with this leader. We spent several hours with Mr. Chow. During this time Maj. Wong some how found out our whereabouts and sent an armed guard into town with orders *[repeat]* orders for us to return at once. We refused at first and the officer, Lt. Pan, raised so much hell and made so much noise that the entire town was soon at the door. It was impossible to continue our work so we were forced to leave.

11. Messages that we sent back by radio asking questions were never answered. An example, we *[asked]* if Jap rifle ammo was available. We never received an answer. It was very important to have this as any deals with Mr. Chow hinged on our ability to get Jap rifle ammo for his men.



Team Camel Returns to Chihkiang April-May 1945

The OSS Team Camel accompanies MAJ Wong traveling from Foong Mo to Chenghsien 40 miles northwest. The team receives instructions to return to the OSS forward base at Chihkiang.[15] The 200+ mile route takes them from Chenghsien to Suining to Tsinghsien to Chenyuan and finally to Chihkiang.

[15] Hunt, p. 41.

12. *[Maj.]* Wong stayed in Foong Mo for about 2 weeks and then returned with orders to move to Meichikow (110.32-26.19). We still refused to go as we were hoping that we would still receive at least a small part of the supplies we requested soon. Also we were disgusted with Maj. Wong and wanted to have as little to do with him as possible.

13. Before he *[Maj. Wong]* was able to move to Meichikow he again received orders to move to a place about six miles from Chenghsien (110.14-26.28). We had been out of radio communication for about two weeks at this time (although we could hear our base, our base could not hear us) and decided the best thing to do would be *[to go with the Maj. And attempt to contact at the new base.] [handwritten by Ray Hairston possibly to record where carbon paper did not extend far enough to produce a complete copy]* Before leaving we sent a message by the Maj. *[to]* radio to you requesting information on whether to stay there or go with the Chinese Army. We doubt if you got the message.

14. On arriving at our destination Maj. Wong's radio broke down. He went into Chenghsien to use the Army radio there and the next day sent word back for us to join him there. We arrived at the outskirts of the city May 3, 1945, at 11.15, just in time to see three Jap fighters with Chinese marking*[s]* bomb the town. The*[y]* completely demolished the building that we were to occupy. Maj. Wong narrowly escaped with his *[life]*.

15. We were still unable to make contact over our radio although we did pick up a message sent blind with instruction to return to *[Chihkiang] [now Zhijiang (109.40-27.27)]*. The route given in the message that we should follow led lengthwise through the Jap line. We ignored this and picked a much shorter and safer route that led from Chengshsien to Suining (109.52-26.33) to Tsinghsien (109.34-26.45) where we picked up a ride to Chenyuan (108.26-27.04) and from there to *[Chihkiang]*.

Is This the Ride OSS Team Camel Picked Up?

2LT Raymond Hairston in Chinese uniform carrying Tommy Gun
"We rode these horses across rope & plank bridges. They were 600 – 700 feet long and it was 500+ feet down. Some of the planking always came loose."
China circa 1945

16. We found out upon our arrival at Chihkiang that Mr. Lee our interpreter had been threatened on three different occasions by *[Maj.]* Wong. He was told that if he continued his efforts in helping us work with civilian troops in that area he would *[lose]* his life or words to that effect.

17. We received a message stating that our man Chicago could not be trusted. We *[immediately]* inquired about this as to where the information came from *[etc]*. We got an answer, stating *[it was]* from O S S Kunming. No more was ever received regarding this matter. So we hired one of the civilian guerrillas Mr. Lee for our interpreter and sent Chicago back.

Mr. Lee Civilian Interpreter that Replaced Distrusted "Chicago" in OSS Team Camel
China circa 1945

18. We sent 5 safehand deliveries back with personal mail but to the best of our knowledge only one was ever received.

19. Our recommendations are that this same team or another team be sent to the same area to contact Mr. Chiang. This can be done easily through the Siyenghsien magistrate also we strongly advise that no team in the future should work in any way with any Chinese Army guerrillas if their work is also to be with civilian guerrillas. Also that U. S. uniforms should be worn and not Chinese uniforms. Also that [the] teams be allowed to carry canteens and pistols into the field as well as flashlights. We were not allowed to do so.

20. Last January we turned over to Col *[Spengler]* our pistols and carbines. Col. *[Spengler]* said that a receipt was unnecessary as we could pick our weapons up when we returned from the field. We understand that these weapons have been issued out again in our absence.

OSS Team Camel in US Uniforms
From left to right: 2LT Raymond Hairston, Chinese-Malay Radio Operators “Kenny” & “Chicago”, 1LT James Fine
China circa 1945

Remarks (continued): Team Camel returns to Chihkiang around the beginning of May 1945. On 21 June, Raymond Hairston is promoted to1LT. A month later on 26 July, he parachutes into Team Elephant along with 7,000 lbs of badly needed equipment.[16] Under CPT Walter C. Hanna's command, 1LT Hairston immediately begins conducting weapons training for guerrilla students.[17] Two weeks later orders are received for the Americans to cease operations as the war with Japan has officially ended.[18] 1LT Hairston was officially relieved of duties with the OSS China Theater on 23 October 1945 and took leave until his discharge on 19 January 1946.[19]

Story told by Ray Hairston to son Ron regarding the capture of a prisoner and wounding him with a silent 22 cal. pistol.

A plan was devised to capture a fat Jap major who would routinely visit a woman in a village. I gave a 22-caliber pistol to one of our Chinese who was supposed to apprehend the major should he get past me. Going up to the second floor where the Major and his lover were, I kicked in the door, and pointed my Thompson submachine gun at the man who was taken by complete surprise. We didn't expect this fat naked man to jump out the window but he did just that. It was funny watching from the second floor window while the naked major was being chased by the Chinaman who was shooting and missing him time and time again as they went round and round the house. Finally, the Jap major was hit and we captured him. It was only a flesh wound so all we had to do was put a "Band-Aid" on it. When we told the major to get up and come along with us, he complained that because he was wounded he would have to be carried. I pointed the Thompson at him to let him know that he could walk or be left behind dead. [Ray laughing] The major even double timed as we departed the area.

Story told by Ray Hairston to son Ron regarding being chased by Japanese

After attacking the Japanese, they would routinely chase us but it didn't take very long to get away. However, on one occasion they were relentless. We ran for days. Weak from physical exhaustion and from not having eaten, all we could do is drop once the pursuit was over. We had no food and were too tired to walk to anyplace where we could get some. As it turns out, a stray dog wandered into the area and one of our Chinese killed it. I have no idea where the little bit of rice came from. If you want to know, dog tastes a lot like squirrel.

Ray Hairston spoke of ongoing supply shortages and never getting what they needed to sustain themselves. "*We would radio for supplies but they never came.*" Chapter 11 (Elephant-The Killing Fields) in the book *OSS Special Operations in China* by Mills, Mills, & Brunner, gives a vivid description of gross failure of the Army's China Combat Command to pass on requests for supplies to OSS Headquarters and relay targeting information to Fourteenth Air Force.

[16] Mills, p. 357. Note: The American Guerrilla instruction Report by CPT Hanna dated 26 August 1945 shows Hairston arriving on the 26th of July and training Chinese Guerrillas the following day, 27 August
[17] Hanna, Walter C., CPT, American Guerrilla Instruction Report, Headquarters, OSS, China Theater, APO 627, 26 August 1945, p. 15.
[18] Mills, p. 358.
[19] Hairston, Raymond L., CPT, Statement of Service dated 22 January 1958.

.Names in the Report and Narrative

Chiang, Mr., commanded Chinese Civilian Guerrillas in Feng Mu Tung
Chiang Kai-shek, Generalissimo Nationalist Chinese Army and President of Nationalist China
CheeChee, Chinese-Malay Radio Operator, member of Team Muskrat[20]
Chennault, Clair, GEN, commanded Fourteenth Air Force.
Chicago, Chinese-Malay Radio Operator, member of Team Camel[21]
Chou En-lai, Foreign Minister for Communist Chinese regime
Coutoupis, Gregory, 1LT, member of Teams Muskrat and Bull[22]
Chow, Mr., leader of group of civilians armed with Jap weapons in Siyenhsien
Fine, James P., 1LT, member of Teams Muskrat and Dormouse, commanded Team Camel[23]
Fung Gee E, COL or LTC, commanded Chinese Army Guerrillas in Siyenhsien
Hairston, Raymond L., 2LT, member of Teams Muskrat, Camel, and Elephant[24]
Hanna, Walter C. Jr., CPT, commanded Team Elephant[25]
Heppner, Richard P., COL, commanded Detachment 202
Kenny, Chinese-Malay Radio Operator, member of Team Camel[26]
Lee, Mr., Chinese civilian interpreter that replaced "Chicago"
MacArthur, Douglas, GEN, Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Theater
Mansfield, Walter R., CPT USMC, commanded Teams Muskrat and Bear[27]
Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the Communist Chinese party
Matthai, John C., LT (JG) USMR, member of Teams Muskrat and Dormouse, commanded Team Buffalo[28]
Nover, Leo, 1LT, member of Team Muskrat, commanded Team Bull[29]
Pan, LT, Chinese Army Guerrilla under MAJ Wong that interrupted meeting with Mr. Chow in Siyenhsien
Roosevelt, Franklin D., President of the United States of America
Smith, Charles W. Jr., 1LT, member Team Muskrat, commanded Team Buffalo[30]
Smith, Wilfred J., LTC OSS Chief, Chihkiang[31] (previously commander of the OSS cover organization 5329th Air and Ground Forces Resources Technical Staff (Provisional) or AGFRT—pronounced Ag-Farts)[32]
Spengler, H. E., COL, commanded Eastern Command of Chinese Combat Command (CCC) in Shawan (located between Chihkiang and Wukanghsien)[33]
Susu, Chinese-Malay Radio Operator, Member Team Muskrat[34]

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[20] Mills, p. 270.
[21] Ibid, p. 270.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid, p. 507.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid. p. 270.
[27] Ibid, pp. 506, 508.
[28] Ibid, p. 507.
[29] Ibid..
[30] Ibid..
[31] Ibid. p.479.
[32] Smith, pp. 260-265.
[33] Mills, p. 274.
[34] Ibid, p. 270.

Thinman, Chinese-Malay Radio Operator, Member Team Muskrat[35]
Tai Li, General, Director of the Central Investigation and Statistics Bureau (Chinese Secret Service)[36]
Wong, MAJ, replaced COL Fung as commander of Chinese Guerrillas

[35] Ibid, p. 270.
[36] Ibid, p. 7.