

Merrill's Marauders

In August 1943 at the "Quebec Conference", President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and other allied leaders decided that an American Long Range Penetration Mission behind the Japanese Lines in Burma was needed to destroy the Japanese supply lines and communications and to play havoc with the enemy forces while an attempt was made to reopen the much needed Burma Road.

President Roosevelt issued a Presidential call for volunteers for "A Dangerous and Hazardous Mission". The call was answered by approximately 3,000 American soldiers. The volunteers came from State side units, from the jungles of Panama and Trinidad they came, from the campaigns of Guadalcanal, New Guinea, New Georgia they came, to answer the call, some battle scarred, some new to the ways of war, each different but with one thing in common.

They Answered The Call.

** The 75th Infantry Regiment was first organized in the China-Burma-India Theater on Oct. 3, 1943 as Task Force Galahad. It was during the campaigns in the China-Burma-India Theater that the regiment became known as Merrill's Marauders after its commander, Maj. Gen. Frank D. Merrill.

The Unit was officially designated as the "5307th Composite Unit (Provisional)" Code Name: "GALAHAD", later it became popularly known as "MERRILL'S MARAUDERS" named after its leader, Brigadier General Frank Merrill. Formed into six combat teams (400 per team), color-coded Red, White, Blue, Green, Orange and Khaki, two teams to a Battalion, the rest formed the H.Q. and Air Transport Commands.

S.O. # 3 - 5307 Composite Regiment (Provisional) - 5 January 1944

A Copy Of The Actual Orders Transferring the 3,000 Volunteers From The Three Casual Detachments, 1688 A, 1688 B, & 1688 C, Into The Merrill's Marauders

After preliminary training operations were undertaken in great secrecy in the jungles of Central India, the Marauders began the long march up the Ledo Road and over the outlying ranges of the Himalayan Mountains into Burma. The Marauders with no tanks or heavy artillery to support them, walked over 1,000 miles through extremely dense and almost impenetrable jungles and came out with glory.

In Five major (WALAWBUM, SHADUZUP, INKANGAHTAWNG, NHPUM GA, & MYITKYINA) and thirty minor engagements, they defeated the veteran soldiers of the Japanese 18th Division (Conquerors of Singapore and Malaya) who vastly outnumbered the Marauders. Always moving to the rear of the main forces of the Japanese the Marauders completely disrupted the enemy supply and communication lines, and climaxed their behind the lines operations with the capture of Myitkyina Airfield, the only all-weather airfield in Northern Burma.

The attack on Myitkyina was the climax to four months of marching and combat in the Burma jungles. No other American force except the First Marine Division, which took and held Guadalcanal for four months, has had as much uninterrupted jungle fighting service as Merrill's Marauders. But no other American force anywhere had marched as far, fought as continuously or had to display such endurance, as the swift-moving, hard-hitting foot soldiers, of Merrill's Marauders. When the Marauders attacked Myitkyina they had behind them over 800 miles of marching over jungle and mountain roads and tracks. They had to carry all their equipment and supplies on their backs and on the backs of pack mules. Re-supplied by air drops the Marauders often had to make a clearing in the thick jungle to receive the supplies.

Every wounded Marauder was evacuated, an extraordinary feat in itself. Each wounded Marauder had to be carried on a makeshift stretcher (usually made from bamboo and field jackets or shirts) by his comrades until an evacuation point was reached. These evacuation points were mostly small jungle village's, where the Marauders would then have to hack out a landing strip for the small Piper Cub Evac. Planes. The brave sergeant-pilots of the air-rescue unit would then land and take off in these very hazardous conditions, removing every seriously wounded Marauder one at a time. The small planes, stripped of all equipment except a compass, had room for the pilot and one stretcher.

At the end of their campaign all remaining Marauders still in action were evacuated to hospitals suffering from tropical diseases, exhaustion, and malnutrition or as the tags on their battered uniforms said "A.O.E." (accumulation of everything).

The unit was consolidated with the 475th Infantry on August 10, 1944. On June 21, 1954, the 475th was redesignated the 75th Infantry. It is from the redesignation of Merrill's Marauders into the 75th Infantry Regiment that the modern-day 75th Ranger Regiment traces its current unit designation

** <http://www.benning.army.mil/tenant/75thranger/History.html>

MERRILLS
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