

FEB 19 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: OD/CO

SUBJECT: Comments on Exfiltration Debriefing of Three Members,  
Chestnut Team

REFERENCE: Dispatch 896-CAGWU, 13 November 1951, TS No. 67570-A

1. WP/PM has studied the report on the debriefing of the three members of the Chestnut Team who exfiltrated from Albania shortly after being dropped in that country on 15 October 1951. The following comments are submitted:

a. The report indicates that almost from the time the team landed, their efforts were directed wholly at survival and evasion. Aside from the fact that three of the five members of the team were recovered, no other tangible results are indicated and the mission should probably be termed a failure in terms of men lost and time and money spent.

b. If it is presumed that the five members of team selected for the mission were of the proper temperament for such work and were properly motivated, then part of the failure of the mission must be ascribed to either inadequate or faulty training. Though the best trained soldier cannot take his objective frontally if the odds are completely against him, his training should be so thorough that he is able to see the alternatives open to him, and is often able to reach the same objective by other means. The analogy applies also to covert operations personnel. An analysis of the report in question indicates that the members of this team do not appear to have had the training that would enable them to react to an unlooked for situation and choose the second best method to follow if their first course were denied them.

c. On the basis of inferences to be drawn from the report, and without a more detailed knowledge of the actual training program under which the team was instructed, the following suggestions are made:

(1) If possible, all training should be given without the medium of an interpreter. A more direct relationship between instructor and students is thus ensured, there is less chance for error, and the instructor can be sure that his words are being given the proper meaning in the other language. If an interpreter is necessary, the instructor should actually give

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the instructor himself, having his interpreter translate each minor phase before proceeding further. The above is applicable whether the subject be the mechanical functioning of a carbine or the facilities to be provided by a reception committee. Above all, the instructor or briefer should have a thorough, well grounded knowledge of his subject and be able to impart this knowledge in a confident and assured manner.

(2) The report states that the team leader hesitated before jumping, due to a belief that he was not over the correct DZ. It is suggested that the conducting officer, or whoever acted as jump-master, should have ordered another pass or, if there were serious doubt as to their location, aborted the mission entirely. In any event, the team leader, if properly instructed, should jump at the command of the jump master. It is basic airborne doctrine that the jumper has no discretion in the matter; the jump master is entirely responsible for timing and controlling the jump. In this regard, dispatch 842-CAGWU (which contains the debriefing of the aircraft crew and is referred to in the debriefing report) states that the mission was flown in bright moonlight with 20 miles visibility, the ground was snow covered, even minute land marks were visible from the jumping height of 900 feet, and there was negligible wind on the surface. It therefore appears that there was either pilot error in coming over the DZ or that the team leader had not been sufficiently briefed on the appearance of the DZ from the air. This uncertainty could be obviated by setting up in the training area a mock-up of the DZ on a sand table, or by the use of aerial photographs, if obtainable. The drop should be rehearsed on the mock-up, the assembly area designated, and the route of exit gone over in detail. Alternate plans to provide for unexpected contingencies should be presented to the team and their reaction to each of several possible situations should be secured, with appropriate criticism and suggestions where indicated.

(3) It is believed that if the above factors had been thoroughly drilled into this team, much of their future misfortune would have been avoided. As reported by the aircraft crew, light to heavy AA fire had been encountered on the flight into the DZ, and it is probable that the ground was on the alert for an infiltration attempt. Even though the jump may have been made in a remote area, its location could probably have been pinpointed to a considerable extent, inasmuch as the aircraft made a 180-degree turn after the jump and a second pass over the DZ to drop supply bundles. The fact that the bundles landed in trees a half mile away from the teams shows either a mistimed drop signal from the pilot to the handlers, faulty technique by the handlers in

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shoving the bundles from the plane, or inability of the pilot to pick out the personnel DZ a second time. On the other hand, no signal was received from the ground, possibly due to the fact the leader was injured and an alternate had not been designated to give such a signal. These deficiencies again could have been corrected by rehearsal.

(4) The difficulties which the team encountered shortly after leaving the DZ could only have been overcome by a thorough, well grounded knowledge of the basic training necessary for the ordinary foot soldier. In this instance the technique of "Explanation-Demonstration-Application" would probably have the best results in the shortest period of time and, provided the training program had been drawn up to cover all necessary requirements, should have enabled the team to feel confident that they were well qualified to complete their mission.

(5) It is believed that if the above factors were to be included in the training program of both teams or individuals in the future - that in the case of teams there be good discipline, a leader in whom the team has confidence and who is backed up by a good second-in-command - the failure of a mission will not be caused by circumstances capable of control by those mounting the mission.

   
Chief, War Plans Division

WP/PM/WBD/lon/jh

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