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General Denholm (right) visits Field Station Phu Bai, Vietnam with Brig. Gen. Herbert E. Wolff, Commander, ASA Pacific (left).

MAJ. GEN DENHOLM BEGINS LONG TENURE AS ASA COMMANDER
15 September 1965

On 15 September 1965, fifty-year-old Maj. Gen. Charles J. Denholm assumed command of the U.S. Army Security Agency (ASA). He would continue in command until 5 February 1973—almost seven and a half years later—making Denholm's tenure well over twice as long as most ASA or INSCOM commanders.

Over twenty-seven years earlier, Denholm had entered the Army as an infantry lieutenant upon graduation from West Point in 1938. His career began as a platoon leader with the 16th Infantry of the 1st Infantry Division. From 1941-1943, he saw service in North Africa and Sicily, rising to the command of the regiment's 1st Battalion. In September 1943, he was transferred to the 36th Infantry Division to command a battalion in the 143d Infantry, leading it in combat during the Italian campaign. By 1944, he assumed command of the regiment as a 29-year-old lieutenant colonel and piloted it throughout its campaigns in France and Germany. By the end of the war, he had been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star Medal for Valor with Oak Leaf Cluster, and a Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster.

Between the end of World War II and his assumption of command in 1965, Denholm served in a variety of assignments typical of an ascending infantry officer. During the later part of the Korean War, he was the 24th Infantry Division's G-3, and in the early 1960s, he served with the Military Assistance Advisory Group in Iran and later as the Second Army's chief of staff. However, he also had several intelligence-related positions: G-2 staff officer on Gen. Mark Clark's Far East Command for three years (1952-1955); chief, Collection Division of the Army G-2 for four years (1956-1960). Briefly, he served on the National Security Agency's staff in 1961-1962.

Upon assuming command of ASA, Denholm's most pressing need was furnishing signal intelligence (SIGINT) support for the growing Army involvement in the Vietnam War with the deployment of combat divisions in July 1965. Eventually, at its peak, ASA had some 6,000 soldiers in thirty units scattered throughout South Vietnam. With these units, Denholm met strategic requirements but always kept an eye on the needs of the tactical commanders. Under his leadership, ASA units harnessed technology and honed procedures to provide critical information to commanders at singular speed: ASA intercept of enemy signals reached the tactical units within thirty minutes. So successful was Denholm's agency in supporting the field commanders that surveys revealed that 60-90 percent of their timely intelligence came from ASA information. This condition prompted General Bruce Palmer, the Army's vice chief of staff to note, "field commanders in Vietnam, continue to say that this [ASA support] is the backbone of their intelligence effort. They can't live or fight without it."

Yet, as the Army was fighting a hot war in Indochina, it was fighting a Cold War in much of the rest of the world. General Denholm became an effective advocate for the Army's SIGINT system. Under his tenure, ASA added a record five major field stations to its arsenal of worldwide fixed sites. In the Pacific, these included two in Thailand and one in Okinawa. In Europe, ASA established Field Station Berlin, which became perhaps the agency's most effective site during the Cold War. Elsewhere in Germany, the agency consolidated three older sites at Field Station Augsburg. In addition, General Denholm stood up two new tactical support battalions in the United States; added airborne assets to support forces in Korea; and deployed ASA elements to provide support to tactical troops in the Dominican Republic. Finally, under his direction, ASA made important technological advances: improved airborne platforms; remote intercept; AN/FLR-9 antenna array; wideband intercept; and increased use of computers in the tactical environment.

Affectionately known to many of his soldiers as "Charlie Two-Star" or even "Uncle Charlie," Denholm never met the expectations of a highly decorated combat commander. He was hardly "a STRAC trooper;" instead, his haircut was just within (or without) regulation, and his uniform was rarely freshly pressed. Modestly he rarely wore his ribbons. Yet, at the head of ASA, he not only strengthened the Army's cryptologic efforts, but made them supportive to the commanders in the field and in the Pentagon. ***—Michael E. Bigelow, INSCOM Command Historian***

ALLIES LAUNCH OPERATION MARKET-GARDEN
17 September 1944

On 17 September 1944, the Allies launched a combined operation using airborne (Operation MARKET) and armor (Operation GARDEN) forces to capture a series of bridges over Dutch canals and rivers. The enemy response to MARKET-GARDEN was surprisingly swift and formidable. While commonly decried as an intelligence failure, the shortcomings of MARKET-GARDEN were not a result of poor intelligence collection but of overconfidence and divergent opinions within the allied headquarters.

After breaking out of their Normandy beachhead in July 1944, the allied armies dashed across France. Fueled by optimism the war was nearing its end, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery proposed the daring Operation MARKET-GARDEN, which if successful would assist the allied crossing of the Rhine River near Arnhem, Holland, before the Germans could organize their defenses in the area.

Waves of allied paratroopers land in Holland for Operation MARKET-GARDEN.

Operation MARKET-GARDEN, the largest airborne assault of World War II, began on 17 September 1944, with the landing of one British and two U.S. airborne divisions in the Netherlands. The 101st and 82d Airborne Divisions captured their target bridges and opened a road for the advance of allied armor toward the Rhine. The British 1st Airborne Division, however, encountered two Panzer divisions while trying to advance to their target bridge over the Lower Rhine near Arnhem. Meanwhile, German resistance to the British Second Army's ground attack, combined with poor weather and terrain difficulties, delayed a quick link-up between the airborne and armor forces. Fog and rain at British airfields postponed the airdrop of reinforcements and supplies for three days and prevented close air support.

MARKET-GARDEN hinged on the assumption German defenses were thinly manned by disorganized formations. While true in early September when the operation was initially planned, the situation had quickly changed. Various intelligence sources alerted the Allies to the presence of the two Panzer divisions near Arnhem in the days before the operation.

On 5 September, decryptions of high-level German messages, code-named ULTRA, indicated the *9th* and *10th Panzer Divisions* had been sent to the Arnhem area to rest and refit. Concerned by this information, five days before the operation began, Maj. Brian Urquhart, intelligence officer of the British I Airborne Corps, ordered an aerial reconnaissance flight near Arnhem. Photographic intelligence confirmed the presence of the Panzer divisions. Additional confirmation was received from the Dutch underground, considered one of the most organized and effective in Europe. Discounting these warnings and indications, the Allies continued to believe the visible tanks were only being refitted and were not part of the fighting force. In fact, anticipating an upcoming airborne attack in the Arnhem area, the German *9th* and *10th* divisions had quickly regrouped there and were manned by veteran fighting forces.

In addition to miscalculating the German strength in the area, the Allies' terrain analysis presumed the route to Arnhem could support the rapid advance of some 20,000 vehicles. In fact, the single road, later dubbed "Hell's Highway," was narrow, slowing traffic and making it

vulnerable to attack. The ground on either side of the road was either low-lying farmland or woodland and poorly suited for the cross-country movement of tanks and heavy equipment.

The surprising speed and strength of the German response to MARKET-GARDEN proved the enemy was far from defeated. The stunned Allies recalled, "the regrouping and collecting of the apparently scattered remnants of a beaten army were little short of remarkable." By 25 September, the Germans had halted the allied advance. While the Allies had successfully taken about 90 percent of their objectives, nearly 17,000 soldiers were killed, wounded or captured, including 3,664 Americans. The Germans held the bridge near Arnhem, and the fighting there would continue to be costly until the Allies finally liberated it in April 1945.

—Lori S. Stewart, USAICoE Command Historian

Washington's retreat from Long Island, August 1776. Several weeks earlier, the Committee for Detecting Conspiracies unearthed a plot to kill Washington in New York. (National Archives)

NATION'S FIRST CI ORGANIZATION ESTABLISHED IN NEW YORK
21 September 1776

On 21 September 1776, the New York Provincial Congress established the Committee for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies to collect intelligence on enemies of the colonies. The committee served as the nation's first counterintelligence group and investigated more than five hundred cases of espionage and treason during the Revolutionary War.

As the British colonial government began to collapse in the mid-1770s, the Continental Congress recommended each of the thirteen colonies establish a Committee of Safety to oversee civil disputes and emergency situations when the larger colonial legislatures (such as the New York Provincial Congress) were adjourned. In July 1775, the New York Committee of Safety was

established under the provincial congress and tasked with "responding to government letters, executing resolutions, obliging Continental Army officials," and "directing the military when in New York." By 1776, the Committee of Safety held vast executive power over New York and even began legislating and adjudicating New York citizens suspected of disloyalty to the Patriots. According to historian Joshua Canale, "New York's leaders attempted to instill legitimacy and security not only by punishing those who assisted the British, but also by limiting people's ability to oppose or deny" their authority. Committees of Safety "enforced social order when traditional authority collapsed."

When British forces arrived in New York in June 1776, the Continental Congress wanted to increase measures "for detecting, restraining, and punishing [the] disaffected," further increasing the committee's civil authority over matters of disloyalty. A smaller committee was formed, the first Committee for Detecting Conspiracies, and was immediately actioned to unearth a plot to kill Washington in New York. The committee was headed by John Jay, a thirty-year-old lawyer and politician who had served on the New York Committee of Correspondence, as a delegate to the First Continental Congress in 1774, and on the Second Continental Congress' Committee of Secret Correspondence. [See *This Week in MI History #214 29 November 1775*] The Committee for Detecting Conspiracies was tasked to "investigate the activities of known Loyalists, those disaffected with the American cause, and those who might be threats to the revolution," as well as suspected counterfeiting operations, which had the potential to bankrupt the fledgling republic.

Although this secret committee began operating in mid-1776, the Patriot-aligned New York Provincial Congress did not formally establish the Committee for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies (CDDC) until 21 September 1776, after the colonies had declared independence and New York had fallen to the British. The New York legislature selected John Jay, William Duer, Charles De Witt, Leonard Gansevoort, Zephaniah Platt, and Nathaniel Sackett to lead the organization and swore them to secrecy. They were given the authority to raise a militia, employ secret agents, and investigate, interrogate, imprison, and deport Loyalists and saboteurs. The CDDC, therefore, became America's first counterintelligence agency and John Jay the first chief of American counterintelligence. By the end of the revolution, the CDDC had investigated more than five hundred reports of espionage and sedition in New York.

The CDDC ceased operations at the end of the war in 1782, after which John Jay was selected to represent the new nation at peace negotiations in France. Jay's experiences with counterintelligence and the secrecy with which the CDDC operated became the inspiration for some of his later writings in *The Federalist Papers*, including advocacy for secrecy and discretion in matters of foreign affairs and intelligence operations. Jay wrote in *Federalist No. 64,* "the most useful intelligence may be obtained, if the persons possessing it can be relieved from apprehensions of discovery," and the president should be allowed to "manage the business of intelligence in such a manner as prudence may suggest."

—Erin E. Thompson, USAICoE Staff Historian