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Abstract
Abstract: During the Second World War, Camp Ritchie, Maryland played an important role in the training of intelligence soldiers. This camp was one of the many that taught men the various ways to gather intelligence on a battlefield. From aerial photography to prisoner interrogations, soldiers learned the skills required to gather information, make sense of it, and propose plans based on what they knew about enemy troop positions and movements. These skills would be put to the test once the men graduated their six months of intensive training, and were sent abroad to assist in the war effort. Despite Camp Ritchie being an important aspect of the war effort, not much literature has been produced on the activities of the camp and its men during the war. This paper will serve to provide a look at the role this camp played during the Second World War by exploring the paths of three men who were trained at this camp: Karl Hornung, William H. Bilous, and Edmund Winslett.

Keywords
Aerial Photography, Camp Ritchie, Cascade Maryland, Intelligence, Military Intelligence Training Center, M.I.T.C., South Pacific, WWII.
Introduction

“German forces have made a landing on the Eastern seaboard, have pushed forward from PHILADELPHIA to HANOVER, PA… ‘you will make a reconnaissance in the area BLUE RIDGE SUMMIT – FLINT – ZORA – McGINLEY HILL – FAIRFIELD – JACKS MOUNTAIN – BLUE RIDGE SUMMIT. Your mission will be to obtain information… concerning the following: Enemy motorized or mechanized movements; enemy identifications; the condition of the road between IRON SPRINGS and BLUE RIDGE SUMMIT.’”

Although no assault ever touched the continental US during WWII, scenarios such as this were common for the students at the Military Intelligence Training Center (M.I.T.C.) located at Camp Ritchie, Maryland. These exercises were used to train soldiers to quickly respond to new military developments, conduct intelligence operations, and report on the information gathered. Although conflict was located an ocean away, the training exercises that students at the M.I.T.C. participated in brought the war to the mountains of northwestern Maryland.

Camp Ritchie played an important role in the American war effort during the Second World War, as it served to train soldiers and officers in the US Army the various skills they

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1 “Practical Exercise in the Preparation of Messages and Reporters,” ca. Spring 1942, Military Intelligence Training Center, Karl Horning Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Camp Ritchie Maryland.
needed, to gather military intelligence in the field. Although military strength and tactics are important components to winning battles, acquiring and utilizing military intelligence is crucial if commanders wish to reduce risks and capitalize on their gains on the battlefront. Commanders have repeatedly beaten the odds by utilizing gathered intelligence effectively and out-maneuvering their opponent during conflict. The skills the soldiers picked up at Camp Ritchie, which were learned both quickly and methodically, were invaluable on the battlefront. The men who graduated from the M.I.T.C. at Camp Ritchie served their field commanders well during battle by analyzing situations and providing quick reports on enemy movements. Furthermore, these graduates played meaningful roles following the engagement, as they would work to interrogate prisoners and analyze photographs to provide intelligence for the next battle.

Background and Historiography

Nestled in a dale in the rolling green hills of the Blue Ridge Mountain Range, a secret military training facility is one of the last things anyone would think to find in such a bucolic location. Once a place for the wealthy to summer, the Cascade area in Maryland became the ideal location for such a base due to its secluded location and terrain. Originally, the land was utilized as part of the Buena Vista Natural Ice Company, which opened for operation in 1889. The company planned to cut and sell natural ice in the winter to sell to the wealthy summer visitors. However due to the combination of the advent of affordable refrigeration in

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2 These battles include the First Manassas Battle (Bull Run) in 1861, the Battle of Tannenberg in 1914, the Battle for Midway in 1942, and the Battle at Inchon Harbor in 1950. In each of these battles, intelligence played a crucial role in obtaining victory. Gregory Elder, “Intelligence in War: It Can Be Decisive; Winning with Intelligence,” Central Intelligence Agency, Accessed December 9, 2017 from https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol50no2/html_files/Intelligence_War_2.htm.
homes and cinders from steam locomotives contaminating the ice during winter, the Buena Vista Ice Company shuttered its operations and closed for good in the early 1920s.³

In 1926, the Maryland National Guard purchased the property along the existing Western Maryland rail line, which was constructed to service the now defunct Buena Vista Ice Company. After purchasing the property, the National Guard proceeded to renovate the location for use as a summer training base for its recruits. The new camp was christened “Camp Ritchie” after the Maryland Governor, Albert C. Ritchie. Between 1926 and 1941, the Maryland National Guard utilized the base primarily as a summer training base. Since training only took place over the summer months, only minor improvements were made to the base. These included a parade ground, firing ranges, and a few structures such as “The Castle,” (fig. 1) which served as the main headquarters, was modeled after the castle unit insignia of the Corps of Engineers that had built the base.⁴

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the American war effort began in earnest. Although President Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Chiefs of Staff had been trying to prepare the nation for the coming conflict, the nation’s military was underprepared for a war on a global scale. In 1942, the War Department took over control of Camp Ritchie to repurpose the base as a national training center for military intelligence. Camp Ritchie was in an ideal location for such a base, due to it being secluded in the mountains as well as

having a climate and terrain similar to that of Germany. As a result, The Military Intelligence Training Center was established at Camp Ritchie with the mission of training soldiers and officers in interrogation techniques, aerial photography, map reading, and intelligence gathering, along with other important skills that would help the military gather intelligence during combat.\(^5\)

Camp Ritchie played an important role in the war effort, as the skills gleaned here by select soldiers was used overseas in the design of battle plans, the gathering of information, and the interrogation of enemy soldiers. Although Camp Ritchie played an important role in the American war effort, few works have been produced about the base. To date, only two notable accounts of the base exist: a historical documentary titled “The Ritchie Boys,” and a book, *Sons and Soldiers*. Both follow a select group of soldiers, who would become known as the “Ritchie Boys.” The Ritchie Boys were mostly direct descendants from Europeans, or were German Jews who had escaped to America in the years preceding the war. The army preferred these men, as they already knew European languages such as German, which would prove useful in interrogating captured enemy combatants. Although the two above-mentioned works shed lights on the work of this select group of men, little attention is given to the rest of the roughly 19,000 men, including intelligence officers, interrogators, and photographic analysts who were trained at this camp.

Karl Hornung, *Education at the M.I.T.C.*

The selection process to be assigned to Camp Ritchie involved finding men suited to the job of intelligence work. Men

who knew several languages, such as German, French, or a number of eastern European languages were preferred. Additionally, previous experience in working with prisoners or on security details, such as in the Military Police, was also an advantage. These skills would aid the men in their task of gathering intelligence from enemy POWs.6

One such soldier who trained at Camp Ritchie during the war was Karl W. Hornung. Arriving in 1942, through the traditional wrought iron gate with the title “Camp Ritchie” proudly displayed above it, Hornung could see that he was one of the first men to pass in to this new camp. At this time, major construction was still taking place at the camp, as it had just recently been turned over to the Army from the National Guard. As Hornung spent his time at Camp Ritchie learning about intelligence gathering, the Camp itself was in the process of expanding and settling in to its new role. For both Hornung and Camp Ritchie, the first year of instruction was a learning process, and a time of expedited development.7

Once at the camp, the men would embark on an intensive education regimen that trained them in specialized areas of military intelligence. Hornung arrived at Camp Ritchie in March of 1942 and immediately began his training in intelligence. His training took him through a strenuous course of study, beginning with the basics of army structure and ending with practical exercises on how to react to an enemy attack, all of which prepared him to serve the future unit he would be attached to during battle.8

6“Personnel Placement Questionnaire,” ca. Fall 1942, William H. Bilous Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Camp Ritchie Maryland.
7 Karl Hornung Collection, Box 1, Folder 1, Camp Ritchie Maryland.
8 1942, Military Intelligence Training Center, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Camp Ritchie Maryland. During the early stages of training, most soldiers were placed in to small groups, which could be attached to larger units in theater. However, this was a constantly evolving practice depending on the specialization of the individual, current war needs. As shown later on, men
Jammed into small, hastily-built classrooms (fig 2.) with class sizes hovering around 18-24 men, Hornung’s instruction began with a need to understand how the US Army was structured and how it operated. He learned the chains of commands for different army groups and divisions. For example, Hornung learned how the chain of command for an infantry battalion is different from an artillery battalion. Additionally Hornung learned the roles that the general staff plays in shaping operations and making decisions, as well as how information flows both up and down the command structure. This was important knowledge for Hornung, as he was expected to quickly provide the proper information to the correct officers so that important decisions could be made in a timely manner under chaotic battlefield conditions.⁹

Once Hornung and his classmates had completed their lessons on the structure and organization of the US Army, they began instruction on the basics of intelligence and information-gathering during conflict. It was important for the men to learn to be able to differentiate between information and intelligence, and then decide what intelligence was actually useful to the current situation. Typically, information is regarded as the raw data that is gleaned by the soldier. This information could range from simple weather reports, to casual conversation with local residents who may have seen military operations taking place. Intelligence, however, is the “value-added” portion of information where the soldier takes all of the threads information that were gathered, sorts through them, and then weaves them together to form a coherent

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picture of the entire scene that entails both what is known along with what will likely happen as developments occur.\textsuperscript{10}

Factors such as terrain and weather could play a large role in how the enemy would maneuver and act during a battle; consequently, it was important for Hornung and his classmates to understand these factors in order to provide proper information to commanding officers. Something as simple as a change in the cloud cover could affect how soldiers would react in different situations, such as their ability to utilize aircraft for both reconnaissance, and combat. This lack of aircraft could prove advantageous to the allied forces, as enemy aircraft would not be able to operate effectively under heavy cloud cover. However, it would also hinder the allied efforts to establish air cover. Intelligence analysts such as Hornung had to use weather reports, and knowledge about climatic patterns to anticipate weather conditions, and then create reports on how those weather conditions would affect both the troops and equipment.\textsuperscript{11}

In addition to weather, terrain also played an important role in intelligence gathering as it could both be an advantage and a detriment to forces fighting on the ground. Terrain is an important feature to consider during military campaigns as the landscape can change how a unit is fighting. Forests may provide excellent cover from enemy observation; however, they also increase difficulty in maneuvering vehicles and large numbers of men. Conversely, open fields can allow for easy movement, but also leave units and vehicles exposed to enemy attack. Intelligence officers had to be able to weigh the costs and benefits of the terrain types to their own men, as well as know how to predict enemy movements across the landscape.

\textsuperscript{10} “Intelligence Exercise,” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Camp Ritchie Maryland.
\textsuperscript{11} “Military Aspects Climate Elements” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Camp Ritchie Maryland
To understand how the terrain in a particular area varies, students took a number of map-reading and drawing courses at the M.I.T.C. These included basic map-reading courses, where soldiers learned to identify symbols and locate objects on a map, as well as more advanced courses, where students were required to create and update their own maps of a particular area. For many of these exercises, the instructors at Camp Ritchie utilized the surrounding area. Local small towns such as Sabillasville, Maryland, and Blue Ridge Summit, Pennsylvania, were the object of study for many of these classes. Hornung was required to map out road networks and draw in terrain features as well as the elevations of mountains and hills surrounding the towns.¹²

Another important aspect of mapping taught at Camp Ritchie was how to read and employ maps from other nations. While similar, the symbology on Allied maps could vary in design and meaning, which could lead to confusion. Students learned how to identify which symbols corresponded to the different nationalities among the Allies, and what each symbol meant. For example, the symbol for a dirt road on an American map may be a brown line. However, on a British map, that same dirt road may have been symbolized as a dotted black line. Intelligence soldiers who were interpreting these maps, needed to know the different meanings in symbols to effectively communicate and work closely with the Allied forces in Europe. ¹³

In addition to learning how to interpret and utilize different Allied maps, students such as Hornung, at the M.I.T.C. learned

¹² “Conventional Signs and Symbols” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, Camp Ritchie Maryland; “Military Aspects Climate Elements” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Camp Ritchie Maryland “Maps and Map Reading Lessons No 1-5,” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Camp Ritchie Maryland; “Hand Drawn Maps, and Mapping tools” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Camp Ritchie Maryland.

¹³ “Test on British Symbols,” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Camp Ritchie Maryland; “British Identification Marks,” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Camp Ritchie Maryland.
how to translate and exploit captured enemy maps. In many ways, a captured German map could prove more valuable to an intelligence officer in the field than a comparable map produced by the Allies. Enemy maps could contain information regarding troop placement, lines of fortification, and potential battle plans, all of which were of high value to Allied Commanders who were creating battle plans. Something as simple as a designated road on a German map could tip off a trained officer. Was there going to be a troop movement along the road? Was the road mined or hazardous? Or was this one of the main lines of communications for the enemy army? By taking in this information, along with other information gathered from observations and various reports, a trained intelligence man could interpret the conditions and provide the necessary intelligence a field commander would need to make a well-informed decision.  

Once the basics of creating, interpreting, and using maps was established, Hornung progressed to more advanced techniques of using aerial photography to gather ground information and make sense as intelligence. The practice of using aerial photography for reconnaissance and intelligence during combat became popular during the First World War. Even before early aircraft could be fitted with armaments, missions were being flown over the scarred European battlefields to photograph the snaking trench lines and gather information on enemy troop to artillery placement. Students at the M.I.T.C. learned how to use images taken from aircraft and deduce enemy ground strength, fortifications, and mechanized units. Using stereoscopes and exact duplicates of images spaced a few inches apart, two-dimensional photographs would appear to be

14 “German Conventional Map Signs,” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Camp Ritchie Maryland; “Organization of the German Army,” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Camp Ritchie Maryland; “German Maneuver Exercises,” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 2, Camp Ritchie Maryland.
in three dimensions. This would assist the viewer in picking out anomalies in the areas, such as camouflage netting, tents, or vehicles.  

The troops would use the information they knew about the area based on maps, and then combine that with the information gleaned from the image to create intelligence reports. One of the main advantages of using aerial photography was that with a single aircraft, a unit could gather a vast amount of data and be able to process it rapidly. Previous techniques (which were taught earlier in the course of study) involved sending troops out into the field to observe enemy movements and report back to their headquarters. Although this could be more accurate than a photograph at times, it was also much more risky and time consuming. Furthermore, photographs could provide not only a faster but also more accurate depiction of troop movements. Rather than reports being a day or two old, photographs could be developed and analyzed within a few hours of the aircraft landing, providing a more “up to the minute” view of the battle field.

One of the last, and arguably one of the most important skills that Hornung learned during his time at Camp Ritchie was the art of interrogation of both captured Prisoners of War (POWs) as well as noncombatant civilians. In terms of intelligence gathering, having reliable firsthand accounts of enemy troop movements was extremely valuable. If an intelligence soldier gained information from a captured POW regarding unit size and type, other units in the area, or the enemy plans for battle,

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16 “Basic Aerial Photographs Lessons 1-4” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Camp Ritchie Maryland; “History of the Photo Intelligence Section in the Luzon Campaign,” ca Summer 1945, William Bilous Papers, Box 1, Folder 13, Camp Ritchie Maryland
American commanders would have an advantage during the planning and fighting stages of the battle. Unfortunately, gaining intelligence from enemy prisoners was typically a tough task. Lower-ranking enemy soldiers were normally not told much in terms of the larger picture, and any soldiers who knew information were usually tight-lipped due to their loyalty to their nation and their comrades.17

In order to elicit intelligence from POWs, the M.I.T.C. taught men various interrogation strategies and techniques to use on captured men. The first part of this lesson focused on how to treat and where to place POWs, as they were brought in from the front lines during an active battle. Once away from the front lines, soldiers would first check the POWs for wounds, and if necessary, send them to a hospital for treatment. After this initial process, the remaining healthy POWs would be escorted to a guarded area. During battle conditions, this could be as simple as a temporarily designated area with a ring of American guards surrounding the enemy POWs to await further movement. If necessary, the preliminary stages of interrogation would begin from this ad hoc confinement area.18

If time was not as vital and the facilities were available, POWs would be escorted to a POW camp near the front. Once at the camp, the American soldiers would segregate the enemy POWs based on nationality and rank. All prisoners from one nation were sent to a designated area of the camp, which enabled the interrogators to quickly select men from the nationality of soldiers they wanted to interrogate. From there, the enemy officers would be separated from the enlisted men, which allowed an American

17 “Analysis of ‘Name, Rank and Number’ Film” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Camp Ritchie Maryland.
18 “Instruction on building and running camps” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Camp Ritchie Maryland.
interrogator to quickly select the group he wanted to interrogate. Once this was complete, the interrogations would begin.\(^{19}\)

Hornung was trained to gather intelligence from interrogations in multiple forms. Typically, asking direct questions on battle plans would not lead very far, as most soldiers would not easily divulge that sort of information. Rather, interrogators’ training involved learning how to become friendly with the enemy POWs, and how to “beat around the bushes” to obtain bits and pieces of information that would help to create a larger picture(fig. 3). When working with enlisted men, seemingly mundane questions regarding what they saw along their marches, their diets, or how they felt about their officers could turn up important fragments of information that could be pieced together to form an idea about the general situation these men had faced. It was the intelligence team’s job to sort through the minutiae to form a coherent idea of the larger picture.\(^{20}\)

As mentioned earlier, the enemy officers were typically better informed in terms of battle plans and the general situation; however, they also tended to be less likely to reveal information. According to some interrogators, these interrogations would last hours and sometimes days if the officer seemed particularly knowledgeable about the battle plans. Again, the interrogators would try to strike up friendly conversations with the enemy officers regarding mundane topics such as their religion, values, hobbies, or home life. The goal was to find areas of the POWs life that they would be willing to discuss. Ultimately, the goal was to get the prisoner comfortable enough to sustain a conversation. Once the prisoner was talking, the interrogator would then try to subtly guide the conversation in a direction that would

\(^{19}\) Ibid.
\(^{20}\) “Analysis of ‘Name, Rank and Number’ Film” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Camp Ritchie Maryland; “Sample Interview Sheet” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Camp Ritchie Maryland.
consequently have the prisoner unknowingly divulge bits of information to the interrogator.\textsuperscript{21}

In some special cases, interrogators would find prisoners who were loquacious and not so tight-lipped, providing a goldmine of information to the intelligence team. Typically, however, the men were taught to not expect to gain too much from one individual prisoner. Rather they were trained to focus on small pieces of information collected from many POWS to be combined and used later. Although it was preferred that the integrators attempted to remain amicable toward the prisoners, it was sometimes necessary to try other methods to get prisoners to talk. Once away from the classroom and in the field, the latitude that these soldiers had in which to conduct their interrogations greatly expanded.\textsuperscript{22}

Guy Stern and Fred Howard were members of the select group known as the Ritchie Boys, and they made great use of this additional latitude to play mind games on the German POWs. Nearing the end of the European conflict, the pair of interrogators devised a strategy to frighten the POWs into divulging information they would otherwise keep to themselves. Knowing that German soldiers were fearful of being sent to Russian POW camps, Stern and Howard utilized this fear for their own purposes. One man in the team would dress as a Soviet representative using previously captured Russian uniforms (from German war trophies) and other authentic Soviet paraphernalia. This “Soviet” soldier would then be used as a ploy to get the Germans to talk with the implication

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{The Ritchie Boys}, directed by Christian Bauer (2004; Toronto, Ont: Tangram, 2007), DVD; “Analysis of ‘Name, Rank and Number’ Film” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Camp Ritchie Maryland; “Sample Interview Sheet” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Camp Ritchie Maryland; “Practice Interview Sheets” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Camp Ritchie Maryland.

\textsuperscript{22} “Analysis of ‘Name, Rank and Number’ Film” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Camp Ritchie Maryland; \textit{The Ritchie Boys}, directed by Christian Bauer (2004; Toronto, Ont: Tangram, 2007), DVD.
that if they cooperated with the Americans they would be sent to American camps. However if they refused, they would be sent back to Russia with the “Soviet” officer, to face the Russian POW camps.23

Once finished with the interrogation, prisoners were again segregated based on nationality and rank. Additionally, they were also separated from the un-interrogated POWs to avoid having information passed on about what questions could be expected. From there, they would be further processed and sent to POW camps to be held until a prisoner exchange or the end of the war occurred. Following the interrogations, the American interrogators would use the knowledge gained at Camp Ritchie to provide a large scale picture of events for their superiors.24

During his final weeks of training at the M.I.T.C., Hornung practiced weaving loose threads of information together to from cogent reports on the larger situation. Lessons would consist of providing men with multiple and oftentimes confusing and conflicting reports. Additionally, the men would practice interrogations on “German prisoners,” and “local witnesses” about the events of the exercise.25 From there, the intelligence men would take the information they had been provided and use it to create situational awareness to manage the upcoming “battle.”

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23 The Ritchie Boys, directed by Christian Bauer (2004; Toronto, Ont: Tangram, 2007), DVD.
24 “Instruction on Building and Running Camps” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Camp Ritchie Maryland; “Sample Interview Sheet” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Camp Ritchie Maryland; “Practice Interview Sheets” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 4, Camp Ritchie Maryland.
25 During the war Camp Ritchie held a small contingent of American soldiers who would play act the part of German soldiers during war games. This would allow the training American soldiers to get a feel for how the German army maneuvers, as well as how to better spot enemy troops in different scenarios. Although typically on base, at times the “German” soldiers would be seen by unsuspecting local residents who became alarmed thinking that the German army had invaded the US.
Again, the local area was utilized for training purposes. Local towns became the sites of new “battles.” Fairfield PA, - Blue Ridge Summit PA, - Emmitsburg MD, -Westminster MD, Baltimore MD, and many others were all “invaded,” “repulsed,” and “invaded” again by fictitious German armies. Although humorous at times, these exercises taught the intelligence men valuable lessons that they would use once they went in to the field.26

Once the soldiers graduated from the M.I.T.C. at Camp Ritchie, they would have the ability to serve in many different roles in the intelligence section of the military. Some of them would go on to become interrogators in the European Theater of Operations, including the famed Ritchie Boys. Others would go on to serve by analyzing documents and other more mundane duties behind the front lines. Some, such as Sgt. William H. Bilous would serve as aerial photograph interpreters. For Bilous, Camp Ritchie was a career-changing assignment that enabled him to be sent overseas and serve the nation utilizing both his strong character, as well as his newly-acquired knowledge from Camp Ritchie.27

William H. Bilous, Changes to Camp Curriculum

William H. Bilous joined the Army in 1939 at the age of 24. After going through basic training, Bilous was sent to Hawaii to serve in the Military Police Hawaiian Department. During his time in Hawaii, Bilous distinguished himself as a reliable, hardworking, and trustworthy soldier. Through his efforts, Bilous

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26 Many of the exercises, and information that the men received were able to slip in slight jokes and humor in to very serious lessons. For example when discussing effective means for camouflage, “DON’T hide under matted camouflage. It is as conspicuous as a bad haircut.” “Exercises in the German Attack of the area.” Fall 1942, Karl Hornung Papers, Box 1, Folder 8, Camp Ritchie Maryland

impressed his superior officers who recommended that he would be an excellent soldier “for any position requiring a person of Intelligence, tact, and reliability.”28 From these recommendations, Bilous would begin a journey culminating in his appointment as head of a distinguished aerial photography intelligence team in the South Pacific by the end of the war.29

Following his recommendation for a new position, Bilous was transferred to the 226th Military Police Company at Fort Mason, California in early 1942. Following his transfer, Bilous was first promoted to Corporal on March 28, and was again promoted to Sergeant less than three months later on June 1. For Bilous, his hard work and character quickly paid off as his promotion to Sergeant came with a new base assignment. From Fort Mason, Bilous was sent to the Indiantown Gap Military Reservation in South Central Pennsylvania. While serving at the Military Reserve, Bilous was tasked with guarding prisoners of war. He served in this capacity to the best of his ability, again distinguishing himself. His commanding officers urged him to apply for the infantry Officer Candidate School (OCS) in late 1942, however, by then all available slots were full. Not one to give up, Bilous then applied to the OCS for army administration.30 Luckily, for Bilous, he was able to secure a spot in the Army Administration OCS.

Upon graduation on June 23 1943, Bilous was once again promoted, this time receiving his commission as a second lieutenant. He returned to the base at Indiantown Gap to continue

28 “Major, J. P. Evans, to whom it may concern,” September 5, 1941, William Bilous Collection, Box 1, Folder 1, US Army Research and Education Center.
29 Papers ca. 1941-1945, William Bilous Collection, Boxes 1, 2, and 3, US Army Research and Education Center.
30 “Certificate of Corporal” March 28, 1942, William H. Bilous Collection, Box 1, Folder 2. US Army Heritage and Education Center; “Certificate of Sergeant” June 1, 1942, William H. Bilous Collection, Box 1, Folder 2. US Army Heritage and Education Center; “Application to OCS” September 1942, William H. Bilous Collection, Box 1, Folder 2. US Army Heritage and Education Center.
serving as a Military Policeman (MP) until further orders arrived. After seven months, those orders arrived: He was sent to the M.I.T.C. at Camp Ritchie to become trained in Aerial Photography. On February 2, 1944, Bilous reported for duty at the front gate of Camp Ritchie. During his five-month stay at Camp Ritchie, Bilous learned about and worked closely with the aerial photography unit. Rather than becoming a general intelligence soldier, Bilous was to become a specialist in aerial photography interpretation.\(^{31}\)

In the two years between training Hornung (1942) and Bilous (1944), much had changed at Camp Ritchie. During the first training secession, the trainees learned as much as the Army did. This first group in 1942 was trained to be general intelligence personnel. As discussed earlier, Hornung learned a varied range of skills, including weather interoperation, map navigation, and prisoner interrogation. The first cadres of men were trained to be flexible in the field since they were able to perform a multitude of roles depending on the challenges presented by the location of their deployment and the needs of their commander. Although this may sound like a good idea, the army quickly realized that this training style was not ideal in battle. After this training was applied in North Africa, the army quickly changed its requirements for intelligence training, refining the roles of intelligence personnel in the field.\(^{32}\)

Changes to the training regimen at Camp Ritchie continued throughout the war. However, the most drastic change came in early 1943. Taking what was learned from training the initial cadre of men in 1942, the commanders and educators at Camp Ritchie

\(^{31}\) “Certificate of Second Lieutenant” June 23, 1943, William H. Bilous Collection, Box 1, Folder 2. US Army Heritage and Education Center; “Orders to Report to Camp Ritchie” January 5, 1944, William H. Bilous Collection, Box 1, Folder 2. US Army Heritage and Education Center.

altered the curriculum so that men could better demonstrate what was learned. This was due in part to the Army’s need to have more specialized intelligence personnel in the field. Rather than training the men in a variety of fields to an adequate level, Camp Ritchie morphed into a training base for army specialists. Additionally, the change in curriculum was due to a better understanding of what skills were needed in the field. Training hours were increased to allow time to teach soldiers about German and Nazi culture, beliefs, and economics, as well increased attention to unit identification.\(^{33}\)

As the Allied armies advanced through North Africa and Italy, better information was collected on tactics and strategies utilized by the Axis powers. In addition to these strategies, enemy equipment and personnel were captured. As intelligence officers in the field collected this information and equipment and provided it to their commanders, some would be shipped back to the US as training aids for soldiers. Over the course of the war, Camp Ritchie began to acquire a cosmopolitan identity. Although all of the soldiers stationed there were American, various sectors of the camp were demarcated as “German,” “Italian,” and “Japanese” sectors. In these areas, mock towns and structures (fig. 4) were created to train the men in what to expect in each region. Additionally, Camp Ritchie installed captured enemy equipment to further enhance the training environment. Selected American troops would play-act enemy roles using captured equipment in these mock villages to assist in the training.\(^ {34}\)

Two of the most unique structures that were utilized to assist in training the men were a mock Nazi Rally Arena, and half of a farmhouse. American soldiers would be sent to the Mock Nazi


\(^{34}\) Blizard, *Fort Ritchie 1926-1998,* 39, 52-54.
Arena to participate in a fake Nazi Rally. American actors would dress as high-ranking Nazi party officials, while other actors would play the part of Nazi Storm Troopers. Additionally, other actors would be placed among the crowd of GIs to act as German civilians. German nationalistic songs were played, and the actors used Nazi tactics to “stir up enthusiasm” among the Americans.  

The mock arena was constructed as a way to demonstrate to the soldiers the psychological background German soldiers would have been accustomed to during over the past ten years. Throughout the mock rally, American interjections were broadcast over the loud speakers to alert the soldiers to the blatant lies that Nazi Propaganda promulgated during the rallies, as well as to bring attention to the tactics that were used to further indoctrinate German soldiers under the Nazi movement.

Less exotic than a US-staged mock Nazi rally on an American military base was the cut-away farmhouse (fig. 5). Built prior to the construction of the Buena Vista Ice Company in 1889, this farmhouse was situated at the base of a small hill. Sitting abandoned for well over fifty years, it was transformed into a demonstration area. Bleachers were installed on the hillside and the wall facing the bleachers was demolished. This produced an area where a group of men could watch instructors demonstrate how to raid a house and check for both enemy combatants as well as important documents. Demonstrating invaluable lessons, such as room clearing and searching for documents among the nooks and crannies in a house, this location played an important role in the education of soldiers.

Although specializing in aerial photographic interpretation, Bilous still had to take other courses, such as map interpretation and weather prediction, to round out his education. Along with

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35 Ibid., 42
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid., 34.
general classes, to become specialized in aerial photographic interpretation he has set of specialized courses to train him in this field. This course of study consisted of ten hours of instruction in basic aerial photography, six hours of ground photography, five hours of camouflage study, and eight hours of selection of battle positions. One of the unique techniques that Bilous learned during the course was called the “Floating Line Method of Photographic Observation.” In essence, this technique was used to determine unobstructed lines of sight. The intelligence officer was to assess an aerial photograph and imagine a floating line from a vantage point toward the region where he wished to observe. If this imaginary line “floated” to that point, there was a clear line of sight. If the line “dug in” to a mountainside, or other obstacle, the line of sight was blocked. By all accounts, this floating line method worked reasonably well. However, this aerial photography course was not the only redesigned class that Bilous took while at Camp Ritchie, as he was also able to take advantage of a new set of courses on the Japanese.

Unlike with the Nazis and the Italians, capturing Japanese prisoners and equipment proved difficult. The tradition of bushido in the Japanese culture encouraged soldiers to either die fighting or commit suicide; becoming a prisoner of war was considered dishonorable. Additionally, it has been noted that unlike the European Theater, the Pacific Theater was regarded as more of a race war, in which American soldiers tended to be less merciful toward any Japanese prisoners. This combination made it extremely difficult for Americans to collect and capture significant

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38 US War Department, *History of Military Intelligence Training at Camp Ritchie Maryland*, 96, 97.
amounts of intelligence, equipment, or prisoners during the early part of the war (1942-43).  

By the time Bilous was training at Camp Ritchie, enough Japanese equipment and materiel had been captured to allow the creation of a new course on the battle tactics of the Japanese. This course was similar to those courses teaching men about the German or Italian armies. Men would learn the unit identification, army structure, tactics, and battle psychology of Japanese soldiers. To enhance this class, a few Japanese-Americans reenacted Japanese battlefield tactics by dressing up in available gear and using captured weapons. Although small in number, those actors provided a great deal of important training to the men slated to serve in the Pacific Theater. Bilous’ increased training in aerial photography analysis along with the newly developed courses on the Japanese Army would serve him as he went to serve in the Pacific theater.

William H. Bilous, Putting the Knowledge to Work

Upon graduation from the M.I.T.C. at Camp Ritchie, Bilous received orders to report to Camp Stoneman, in Pittsburg California on June 18, 1944. Camp Stoneman was built in early 1942 to provide a staging ground for American forces entering the Pacific Theater. Units from across the nation’s training facilities moved through Camp Stoneman to be processed, outfitted, and shipped out in a matter of a few days. As Bilous left the front gate of Camp Ritchie, he would have had an inkling of where he was going to be sent. Having been made chief of a photographic interpretation team and ordered to one of the major processing

40 US War Department, History of Military Intelligence Training at Camp Ritchie, Maryland, 92.
camps for the Pacific Theater, Bilous would have deduced the basics of his next assignment as he watched the US countryside rush by on his three-day train trip to California.41

During his three-day stint at Camp Stoneman, Bilous checked over his equipment one last time. Rifles and pistols were fired for reliability and accuracy, shoes and clothing were checked for excessive wear, and last minute medical care was given to those who needed it. Camp Stoneman would be the last location that on the US mainland that these men would stand on for quite some time. Once Bilous’ unit passed final inspection, it was loaded onto a troop ship and shipped off to the South Pacific. Crammed onto a troop ship, Bilous, his team, and hundreds of other GIs embarked on a cruise crossing the largest ocean in the world.42

Upon entering the South Pacific, Bilous was ordered to the headquarters of the 5th Replacement Department of the US Army Air Forces in the Far East (USAFFE). Here, Bilous was placed in command of the 104th Photographic Intelligence Team. In this role, Bilous and his team distinguished themselves by providing valuable analysis of aerial photograph taken by American planes. By the spring of 1945, Bilous was recommended for a promotion to First Lieutenant. In addition to the promotion, Bilous also received a Bronze Arrowhead as he and his team “participated in the initial assault wave (H/2) of the Lingayen Gulf Landing, 9 Jan 45.”43 Not only did Bilous provide valuable services to the ground forces through analysis of aerial photography, but he also endured

43 “Citation for Bronze Arrowhead,” March 18, 1945, William Bilous Collection, Box 1, Folder 12, US Army Research and Education Center.
similar conditions to the assault troops as well. Coming ashore during an assault landing to quickly provide intelligence to the men on the battlefield, Bilous was an effective and flexible leader and intelligence officer.  

Recognition of Bilous’ ability continued throughout 1945. As a first lieutenant, Bilous was ordered commander of two photographic intelligence units, the 103rd and the 104th, which were selected to provide aerial intelligence for the Luzon campaign from the fall of 1944 to the summer of 1945. Both the 103rd and the 104th were beset by setbacks throughout the campaign when dealing with aerial intelligence. During his time with the 104th, Bilous encountered many of the problems that negatively affected performance of aerial photography in the Luzon campaign.

To his credit, none of the responsibility for reported problems with aerial photography fell upon Bilous’ shoulders. Rather, Bilous and his team had to deal with the problems and find solutions. The first few sorties for aerial photography returned poor photographic coverage of important sites such as beachheads. Rather than designating specific squadrons for the disposal of the 103rd and 104th Aerial Photographic Intelligence teams, the Army forced these teams to work alongside the Air Force and Naval intelligence sections, forcing all three intelligence sections to share both aircraft and equipment as they carried out their duties. Although this may have seemed like a sound idea as a way to save manpower, fuel, and time, it turned out to be a major error. The Army intelligence teams were tasked with different missions and objectives than those of the Air Force and Navy, resulting in inconsistent and inaccurate photographs for analysis. Although this issue was sorted out with time and stronger communications, other

44 “Official Papers - Personnel Papers” February 14 -March 18, 1945, William Bilous Collection, Box 1, Folder 12, US Army Research and Education Center.  
issues continued to plague Bilous and his team throughout the Luzon campaign.  

For Bilous’ team to operate effectively, a number of items required coordination. Proper cameras in aircraft were crucial to producing high quality images, which could be analyzed both quickly and accurately. Aircraft had to fly at the proper altitude and speed for the cameras to snap high quality shots. Once grounded, film needed to be quickly developed so that prints could be disseminated throughout the intelligence team for analysis. Finally, analysis had to be rapid enough to make up-to-date, informed decisions, while still being highly accurate. At one point or another, Bilous’ team faced a breakdown in each of these sections.

During the early portion of the Luzon campaign, cameras used in reconnaissance aircraft were not the correct type. Using what was available, gun target cameras rather than proper aerial intelligence cameras were loaded into reconnaissance aircraft. Although useful at noting which structures had been destroyed or which aircraft had been shot down, target cameras did not provide the clarity or resolution required for proper photographic intelligence. Another issue that beset Bilous’ team was a lack of developing facilities. This slowed down the analysis process by producing a backlog of undeveloped photographs. Furthermore, this hindered wide dissemination of photographs, as only a minimal number of images were printed as a way to increase the speed. There were enough images be analyzed at the team’s headquarters, but not enough to spread throughout the rest of the division and for other officers to have a copy. Although these

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46 “History of the Photo Intelligence Section in the Luzon Campaign,” ND, William Bilous Collection, Box 1, Folder 13, US Army Research and Education Center.
47 Ibid.
problems existed, Bilous and his men were able to provide adequate intelligence for the Luzon campaign. In total, the 103rd and 104th Aerial Intelligence Teams produced over 750,000 photographic prints of the battle area. Additionally, with the help of the Army Airforce and Naval Airforce, over 1,000 individual reconnaissance sorties were flown during the Luzon campaign, each returning hundreds of images for analysis. Furthermore, with practice, the Aerial Intelligence units were able to predict future requests, and with available time, would process images that might prove useful to commanders before a request was ever submitted. Finally, these units utilized innovative photography and analysis techniques to provide more accurate images and intelligence reports. These techniques included taking images from both vertical (straight above) and oblique (from the side) angles to locate and identify enemy emplacements and supply dumps in the mountainous areas. Although these techniques were time consuming, they proved to be exceedingly accurate.

For coping with these hardships and successfully commanding his teams, Bilous was once again recommended for a promotion. Following the surrender of the Japanese, Bilous was promoted to the rank of Captain as he “conducted the work of his team in a highly efficient manner and has amply demonstrated his fitness for promotion to the next higher grade.” With promotion in hand, Bilous was shipped back home on the SS Marine Falcon. Once ashore, Bilous once again traveled across the nation this time to Fort Dix, New Jersey. From there he was provided with 45 days leave and accompanying rations to return home and rest. However Bilous’ service did not end in late 1945 with an honorable

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48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 “Recommendation for Promotion,” October 6, 1945, William Bilous Collection, Box 1, Folder 13, US Army Research and Education Center.
discharge from the US Army; rather, Bilous reenlisted to continue serving.51

Using skills learned at Camp Ritchie, Bilous would continue to serve with the US Army until he retired in 1959. He worked in a variety of roles, including Assistant Supervisor of Prisoners, at Green Haven, New York and Fort Hancock, New Jersey, and Captain of a unit of MPs. Going overseas again, Bilous became Chief of Criminal Investigation in occupied Japan, and finally was promoted to the Officer in charge of Army Photo Identification Center, Korea Forward, during the Korean Conflict. In his multitude of roles in the US Army throughout his career Bilous was able to use the skills he had learned at the M.I.T.C. at Camp Ritchie to lead his men successfully, and provide valuable intelligence reports to his commanding officers.

*Edmund Winslett, Planning the Invasion of Japan*

Commissioned in 1917 as an infantry officer, Edmund J. Winslett was a career military man. At the outbreak of WWII, Winslett had been an officer for 24 years. Serving as an infantry officer had taught him many things; however his experience in WWII would tremendously increase his education. At the outset of WWII, Winslett was assigned to a coastal protection artillery battery. As commander of the battery, Winslett was in charge of ensuring the protection of the American homeland from enemy invasion. Although chances of a cross-ocean invasion force from either Germany or Japan were slim, Pearl Harbor had shown that American Territory was vulnerable to enemy naval attack.52

51 Papers ca. 1941-1945, William Bilous Collection, Boxes 1, 2, and 3, US Army Research and Education Center.
52 Papers ca. 1944-54, Edmund J Winslett, Boxes 1, and 2, US Army Research and Education Center.
After the US composed itself from the initial shock of the attack on Pearl Harbor, Army plans were refined and put into action. Although older than many of the new recruits to the US Army, Winslett was a valuable asset. He had years of experience as an officer. He was sent off to Camp Ritchie to train at the M.I.T.C. as an intelligence officer. Taking many of the same classes that Bilous and Hornung did, Winslett gained a valuable education that would serve him later in the war. Upon graduation, Winslett became commander of his own intelligence unit. Initially shipped off to serve in Europe, he served only briefly, before being ordered to the Pacific.  

While at Camp Ritchie, Winslett studied photographic interpretation and found himself as part of a photographic intelligence team. Following a similar path to that of Bilous, Winslett was shipped off to the pacific. Serving in the 131st photographic interpretation team, Winslett and his team were tasked to aid in the invasion of Luzon. Under similar difficult conditions to those of Bilous, Winslet and his team performed their duties to the best of their abilities. Poor communications, inadequate cameras, and a lack of supplies took their toll; however, much like Winslett’s European assignment, this assignment did not last long.

As the tides of the Pacific War began to turn, the likelihood of an invasion of the Japanese Home Islands was becoming all too apparent. With increasing resistance during battle and the advent of the Kamikaze aircraft in 1944, the Americans had a bitter taste of the resolve of the Japanese people. If the American Army was forced to land on the Japanese Home Islands, it was understood that the logistics involved would be tremendous and that the casualties would be exceedingly high. Similar to the D-Day

53 Ibid.

54 “Personnel Papers,” ca 1945, Edmund Winslett Collection, Box 2, Folder 1, US Army Research and Education Center.
invasion of 1944, any invasion of Japan proper would be a large undertaking, involving massive amounts of men and materiel along with a high degree of coordination between air, ground, and naval forces. A key element to ensuring this invasion would succeed was ensuring high quality intelligence.\textsuperscript{55}

In 1945, Winslett was ordered to assist in the Japanese invasion planning.\textsuperscript{56} Reporting in, he was tasked with using his skill set that he acquired at the M.I.T.C. and during the war to plan a portion of the invasions. Providing his skills of both photographic interpretation and his long experience in the Army, Winslett and his team aided in creating a battle plan for the invasion of Japan. The basic invasion strategy was to commence with invasions originating in the southern parts of the island. American forces were to come ashore at the isthmuses between the Kyushu and Shikoku regions, and between the Shikoku and Honshu regions, thus splitting Japanese forces into three separate areas. This would cut lines of communications, and allow American forces to perform an envelopment maneuver to attack and capture objectives in discrete sections of the country. After these initial invasions, two additional invasions were to commence in each region to further pressure Japanese forces and capture land area.\textsuperscript{57}

Although planned for the fall of 1945, the military invasion of Japan never happened. With the dropping of the two atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese


\textsuperscript{56} Due to the highly secretive nature of such an operation, much of the individual information pertaining to Winslett and his involvement is not accessible. Either through being blacked out, destroyed, or simply not listed, much of the data that would describe times and places were not to be found.

\textsuperscript{57} “Map of Chosen –Honshu invasion,” Ca. July 1945, Edmund Winslett Collection, Box 1, Folder 7 and, Box 2, Folder 9, US Army Research and Education Center.
government soon capitulated, thus ending WWII. Still, similar to Bilous, Winslett did not immediately leave the army. Following the end of the war, Winslett was promoted to Major and given command of the Visitors Liaison Office, Headquarters I Corps, in Japan. He remained at this post throughout the end of the Korean Conflict, working in public relations as well as negotiating various issues.  

Towards the end of the Korean Conflict, Winslett became part of the group that negotiated prisoner exchanges with the North Korean government. In this role, Winslett was responsible for bringing American POWs safely home after the harsh condition in Korean prisoner camps. Utilizing interrogation skills learned at the M.I.T.C. at Camp Ritchie, Winslett was prepared to read body language and use discussion tactics to deduce the real intentions of his counterpart negotiator. After a long, hard and fulfilling 30-year career in the military, Winslett retired following the end of the Korean Conflict.

Conclusion

Following the end of WWII, Camp Ritchie maintained an air of secrecy. Following a rapid decommissioning process, it was once again chosen to be the site of a secret communications base during the 1950s. As tensions between the US and USSR increased during the Cold War, new installations were needed to protect high-level officials from the threat of nuclear war. Carved out of a mountain less than five miles away from Camp Ritchie, Site-R, or “The Underground Pentagon,” was designed to house high-level military officials during any nuclear standoff between the US and its Soviet counterpart. Now christened “Fort Ritchie,” it was ideally located to act as one of the main communications basses for

58 “Personnel Papers,” ca 1945, Edmund Winslett Collection, Box 2, Folder 2-8, US Army Research and Education Center.
59 Ibid.
Site-R, as it was so close to the new base. Fort Ritchie fulfilled this duty throughout the remainder of the Cold War. Finally, in 1998, Fort Ritchie closed its doors for good as the US military shuttered the base in an attempt to reduce costs.⁶⁰

Although Camp Ritchie now stands a silent hollow shell of its former self, the camp continues to live on in the memories and actions of men like Hornung, Bilous, and Winslett. By providing highly trained officers and soldiers in the field of intelligence, Camp Ritchie helped win battle from across the sea. Men trained at Camp Ritchie provided vital information to their commanders as well as to units on the ground, helping to find enemy units and reduce American casualties by cutting through the fog of war to provide a clear battlefield picture. Although one man’s life is not any more important or valuable than another man’s, the men trained at Camp Ritchie became force multipliers once in the field. Taking skills learned at Camp Ritchie and applying them to actual battle situations, these men gave a decided advantage to American forces in battle. Whether it be prisoner interrogations, aerial photography analysis, or map-making, the skills learned at Camp Ritchie proved to be important for the 19,000 men who graduated from the M.I.T.C. as they assisted in the American war effort during WWII as well as throughout the rest of their service to the nation.

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Figure 1. A military parade rolls in front of Camp Ritchie’s Headquarters, the “Castle” during WWII.  

61 “Drive by of Jeeps in Front of the Castle” Photographic Image Scans, Western Maryland Reading Room, Hagerstown Library, Hagerstown MD.
Figure 2. Men at Camp Ritchie during a coding exercise in the Signal Intelligence Code Room. Cramped classrooms such as this were common while Hornung was training at Camp Ritchie in late mid to late 1942.62

62 “Signal Intelligence Code Room” Photographic Image Scans, Western Maryland Reading Room, Hagerstown Library, Hagerstown MD.
Figure 3. Demonstrations of how to properly capture, handle, and interrogate prisoners were common as they would allow soldiers see firsthand how their classroom instruction was be used. The “prisoner” in the middle is an American serviceman playing the part of a captured German soldier during one such demonstration.63

63 “Three Actors” Photographic Image Scans, Western Maryland Reading Room, Hagerstown Library, Hagerstown MD.
Figure 4. Mock villages and towns, such as this mock German village, were constructed and used to help train soldiers on what to expect and how to fight once they reached Germany. 64

64 “German Man Poses in Snow,” Photographic Image Scans, Western Maryland Reading Room, Hagerstown Library, Hagerstown MD.
Figure 5. The cutaway farmhouse allowed soldiers to watch actors carry out maneuvers in confined spaces and search for hidden documents, offering valuable lessons for intelligence men in the field.  

65 “Scene with a Soldier”[Top] and “Spying [Bottom],” Photographic Image Scans, Western Maryland Reading Room, Hagerstown Library, Hagerstown MD.
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Camp Ritchie Photographic Scans. Western Maryland Reading Room, Hagerstown Library. Hagerstown MD.

Secondary

