

MACK KIDD

January 7, 1924- July 12, 1944

Summary

Pvt KIDD, a U.S. Army Soldier, joined the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) supplemental group as a part of New Galahad. He arrived in the CBI Theater in late May 1944 and was assigned to Co K, 3d Bn. He was reported KIA on 12 July 1944. Efforts during the 1940s to recover and identify Pvt KIDD'S remains were unsuccessful. In 2018, DPAA began the first of a series of exhumations of unidentified remains believed to be associated with the Battle of Myitkyina and subsequently buried as World War II Unknowns in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP), in Honolulu, Hawaii. In September 2021, as a part of that effort, Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) personnel exhumed Unknown X-57 Kalaikunda from the NMCP for comparison to the unresolved casualties of the Battle of Myitkyina, including Pvt KIDD.

Circumstances of Loss

Between 17 May and 5 August 1944, Myitkyina, Burma, became the site of a major battle, that was eventually won by combined American, Chinese, British, and Kachin (a group of native ethnicities of northern Burma) air and ground forces. Returned to Allied control after two years of occupation by Japanese forces, Myitkyina represented a place of strategic importance for connecting air and land supply routes to China from India. It also became the concentration site for the remains of fallen service members from across northern Burma. The soldiers of the 5307th were critical to the effort to win Myitkyina.

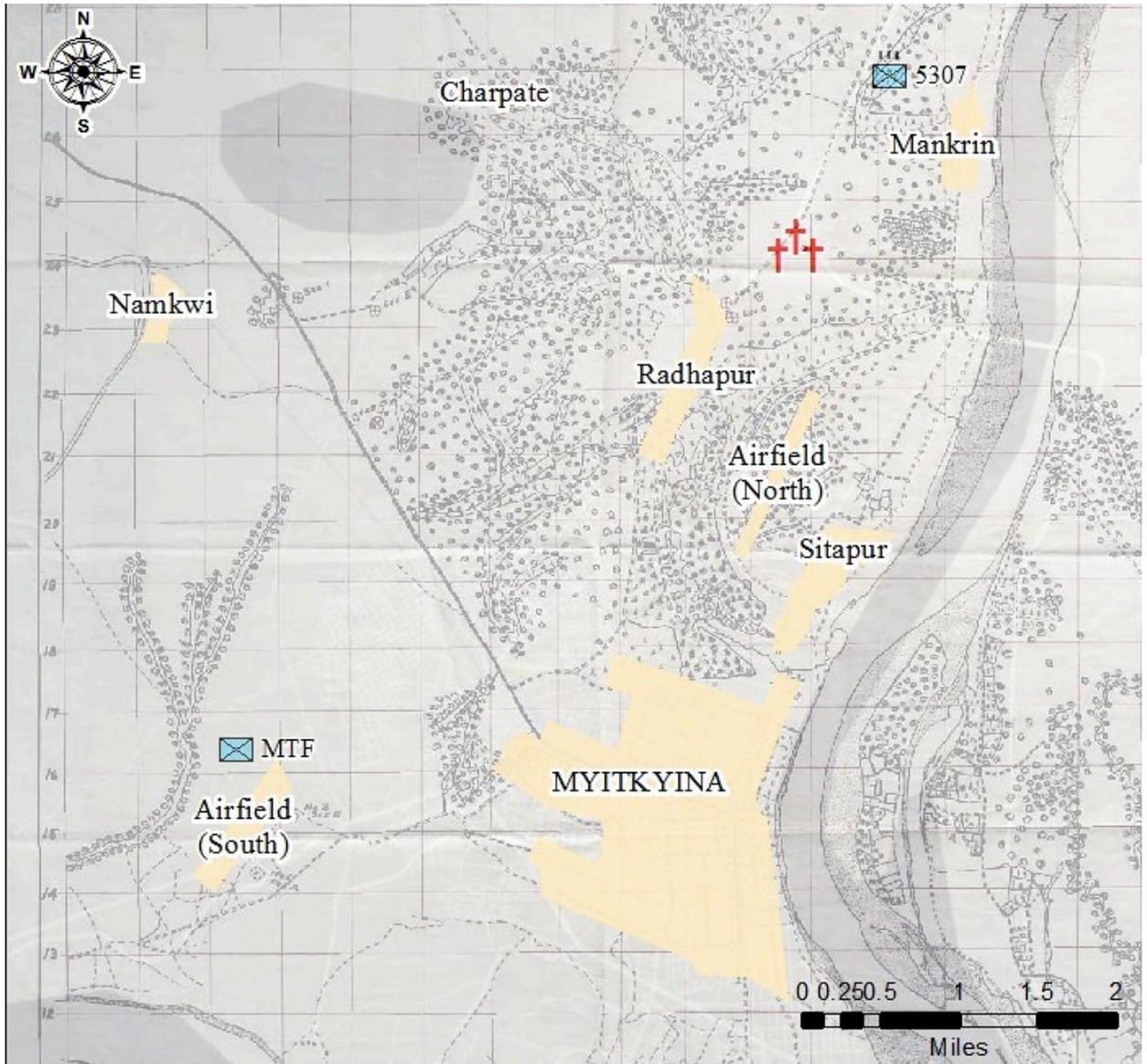
The 5307th was a volunteer-only Special Operations Light Infantry Unit that specialized in surprise attacks behind Japanese lines, often against superior numbers, working jointly with Chinese and Burmese forces, and with the backing of U.S. air support. Following the model of the British 77th Indian Infantry Brigade (popularly known as the "Chindits"), U.S. forces organized the 5307th as a similar unit designed to operate as a deep penetration ground force that could travel lightly on foot, and with pack mules for long distances over rough terrain. The unit first arrived in Bombay, India, in October 1943 to receive training in jungle combat maneuvers, and they continued on to Burma, on foot, from Ledo, India, in early 1944. Beginning their mission on 24 February 1944, the 5307th marched, on foot, from Ledo to Myitkyina, traversing roughly 1,000 miles of mountainous terrain and dense jungles. This unit became known as Merrill's Marauders. They fought against a far more numerous Japanese army in five major and 30 minor combat engagements, creating chaos by ambushing Japanese forces and hampering their lines of supply ahead of the main Allied advance into Burma.

By the end of May, of the 2,750 members with which the 5307th had started, only about 200 Soldiers (primarily 1st Bn) were considered fit to remain at Myitkyina. By 4 June, all but a few reasonably healthy Marauders in key positions in the 2d and 3d Marauder Bns had been evacuated to India because of injuries or illness. As the battle had progressed, the few 5307th

members deemed healthy enough to remain in the field, along with 275 Soldiers of the original 5307th element who returned to the front lines after medical treatment in India, had become known as “Old Galahads.”

In April 1944, the War Department had called for 2,600 volunteers as replacements for Galahad, which originally comprised a force of 2,750.12 Pvt KIDD was one of those 2,600 new volunteer 5307th Composite Unit Soldiers—or New Galahads—who augmented the depleted regiment. The soldiers first assembled at Fort Meade, Maryland. Deployed to the CBI Theater, they arrived in India on 25 May, where they organized for a week at various bases before transferring to Myitkyina. Pvt KIDD was assigned to Co K, 3d Bn, which was defending villages on the outskirts, such as Mankrin and Radhapur. Their efforts helped the 3d Bn successfully counter Japanese combatants defending the Maingna ferry road to reach the Irrawaddy River north of Myitkyina, by 17 June 1944. However, progress across Myitkyina’s battlefields became relatively stagnant over the last week of June into early July, as monsoon rains turned the land into a swamp and severely limited visibility.

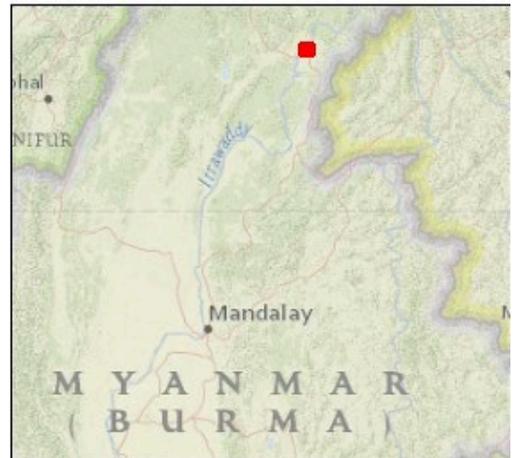
The next attempt at a major attack against defending Japanese forces came on 12 July, with support by USAAF fighter and bomber crews; however, the attack did not go as planned. Communication between air and ground units failed to effectively enforce safe margins for the strike, and 40 percent of the bombs dropped reportedly fell on members of U.S. forces north of Sitapur. Also, advances made by two Chinese regiments towards Myitkyina measured only in hundreds of yards. It was the same day as this attack, 12 July 1944, when Pvt KIDD was reported as KIA. Available records do not indicate exactly how or where Pvt KIDD was killed, although it seems likely to have been correlated with the coordinated attack efforts of 12 July 1944.



Legend

- Battle Landmarks
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 U.S. Military Cemetery at Myitkyina
- HQ Myitkyina Task Force
- HQ 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional)

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Map showing some approximate battle locations around Myitkyina in 1944.