French connection

During World War II, some French-speaking Louisiana servicemen found themselves involved in secret missions with the French Resistance behind German lines.

BY GEORGE MORRIS

"They were all men of the 1930s, Robert LeBlanc of Abbeville, was the forerunner to other French-speaking soldiers, who were part of the Office of Strategic Services, the forefather to today's Central Intelligence Agency."

Robert LeBlanc, a New Iberia native, spent weeks behind German lines disrupting enemy movements before and after the invasion of southern France.

LeBlanc had received his lieutenant's commission from LSU in 1943, was sent to Camp Butner, N.C., with several men as a source of bilingual operatives. He was also to secure bridges so the Americans could go and the other was to secure communications to the OSS office in London, which would give supplies - often guns, ammunition and food - to be delivered by nighttime air drops. LeBlanc would tell the Jedburghs to deliver supplies to the field, and the Jedburghs would drop these supplies to the field.

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Robert LeBlanc of Abbeville often went behind enemy lines as the U.S. 3rd Army moved across France after the D-Day invasion.

"The Jedburgh area is where the Acadian people originated from," Theriot said. "It's pretty neat to interview these men who were in that Brittany-Cherbourg area who ran into some of the French locals, and they could speak some of the same kind of language, the French-speaking (OSS) operatives were placed by German-speaking soldiers."

"The Jedburghs were trained in the soldiers' experiences, as the subject of the third edition. This is a book about the Jedburghs, those special soldiers..."