

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Jubilant over the victory of World War II, America saw itself as the defender of democracy, but soon America's confidence would be shaken in the Cold War. While communism advanced, McCarthyism spread throughout America. As a result, Presidents Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower devoted much of their foreign policy agendas to containing communism. The containment policy had been in place only five years after the end of World War II, when suddenly North Koreans crossed the 38th Parallel and invaded South Korea.

Millions of Americans answered the call to protect the world's democracy during the Korean War and the war's aftermath. Among those who responded were thirty-four Kansans who were supported by their loved ones at home. Having served at different times and in different locations, the Kansans were bound together by their experiences during the war, thousands of miles from home in a country few knew. The Korean War servicemen and their loved ones gave a part of their lives, their hopes, and their dreams for a war which many Americans have forgotten.

This thesis tells the story of the Korean War largely from the point of view of the

Kansas servicemen and their families who were interviewed for this project. In twenty chapters, major episodes and controversial issues of the Korean War are narrated and then illustrated by autobiographical and anecdotal material from the interviews. Based on evidence from the interviews, the Korean War did shape and change the lives of American servicemen and their families.

WHERE THE BOYS ARE: KANSANS AND THE KOREAN WAR

A Thesis

Presented to

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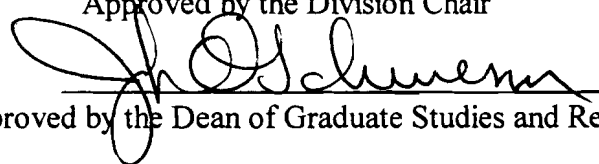
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Thesis
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Approved by the Division Chair



Approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research

Preface

Three years ago at Fort Hays State University, my life changed forever when I took a class on limited war. Anxious to learn new subjects, I saw information about the Korean War blaze off my pages of notes and the pages of Burton I. Kaufman's book, The Korean War: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command. Until this class, I had only seen what most Americans had seen about this war, the antics of the 4077th M*A*S*H unit in the hills of Korea. Obviously, I learned quite quickly that this caricature of the war represented little of the happenings on the Korean peninsula. Lured by the Korean War, I was told by my family that a great-uncle had served in this forgotten event, but I soon discovered that, instead, he had served in the post World War II occupation of Japan. Yet, my quest to discover the truth of the Korean War, from the men who served in North and South Korea and the women who lived through it, had only just begun.

Like any other state, Kansas played an important role in this war. While sending 212,000 to World War II and 103,000 to the Vietnam War, Kansas sent 53,000 of its citizens to the Korean War and enlisted another 47,000 to serve stateside. Of those who were sent to the distant shores of South and North Korea, 415, gave the ultimate sacrifice for democracy. Of the fifty Kansans from eight counties who shared part of their lives with me, twenty-four were Korean War servicemen, four served in the post Korean War occupation, six served stateside during the war and occupation, and sixteen were wives of these servicemen. All were volunteers who answered my newspaper ads or whose friends encouraged them to help me. The fifty Kansans did not speak of every aspect of the war, and they might not represent all of the views and experiences of others connected to the

war. Nevertheless, they spoke honestly about what they faced during the Korean War.¹

This thesis is an oral history which covers major Korean War developments through the words of the servicemen and their wives. Although historians have summarized and analyzed this war, I have devoted only the first chapter to their work. In chapters two through fifteen, I focused on various aspects of the servicemen's lives on the Korean peninsula during the war and its aftermath. I devoted chapters sixteen through nineteen to the lives and struggles of stateside servicemen, and to homefront wives and sweethearts.

To say the least, I am indebted to many who helped me with my thesis. First and foremost, I thank the Lord for directing me onto this topic and for sustaining me through my research and my writing. Next, I thank the interviewees who not only made this thesis possible, but also made my research fascinating. I also thank my family, Daryl, Linda, and Adam North who have always supported and inspired me, for the countless times they said, "We'll pray for you." Also, I thank my friends and colleagues who listened to my ideas and tolerated me on my "stressed" days. Finally, I thank my thesis committee, Dr. Karen Manners Smith, Dr. Sam Dicks, and Dr. Chris Lovett, for giving me invaluable encouragement, instruction, and guidance.

COLOSSIANS 3:17

NOTES

1. "Selected Data on Participants and Deaths by Major War Period by State of Pre-Service Residence," Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Kansas, photocopy; "Estimated Number of Veterans Living in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, by Regional Office and Period of Service, March 31, 1996," Veterans Administration, Washington, D.C., Kansas State Historical Society, photocopy; and "U.S. Military Personnel Who Died From Hostile Action (Including Missing and Captured Declared Dead) in the Korean War, 1950-1953," Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs, Kansas State Historical Society, photocopy. "Selected Date" showed that only 404 Kansans died, but "U.S. Military" showed not only that 415 died, but also listed the men's names and other relevant information. All of the interviewees currently live in Kansas, but they may not have lived in Kansas during the Korean War. Of course, I could not include all of my interview material in my thesis. After looking through various courthouse records, I found the following statistics of Kansas servicemen during the Korean War: Greenwood County - 102, Morris County - 37, Ellis County - 319, Lyon County - 641, Rooks County - 61, Ness County - 78, Russell County - 232, and Rush County - 73. I realize that the discharge records at these courthouses were only those of men who volunteered to put them there. But, this was the only estimate of servicemen in these eight counties that I could find. At the Ellis County Historical Society, the book called "Ellis County Veterans Memorial" listed only 164 men who served in the war or the occupation. Unfortunately, I was unable to find all of my interviewees' discharge records.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	ii
Table of Contents	v
CHAPTERS	
1. A War is Still a War, As Time Goes By: A Look at Major Korean War Interpretations Through Five Decades	1
2. “The ‘Commies’ Are Coming! The ‘Commies’ Are Coming!”: Kansans Respond to the North Korean Invasion	25
3. “Oh, No, Here We Go Again.”: Kansans Face Another Communist Invasion	38
4. “You Can’t Get Rid of Us That Easily.”: Kansans Again Advance on the Korean Peninsula	56
5. “I Now Close My Military Career and Just Fade Away.”: MacArthur’s Dismissal and America’s Limited War Policy in the Korean War	65
6. “Let’s Play a Game of Tug of War.”: Stalemate on the Korean Peninsula	85
7. “God May Have Saved My Soul But the Medics Saved My Life!”: A Glimpse at Medical Care in the Korean War	102
8. “Please, Don’t Let Me Get Seasick Again.”: Kansans in the Navy	112
9. “Bomb ‘em to Oblivion, Boys!”: Kansans in the Air Force	123
10. Brothers in Arms: Brothers Fight on the Korean Peninsula	137
11. “Is This War Ever Going to End?”: Kansans Reflect on the Truce Talks and the Armistice of the Korean War	149
12. “I’m Watching You!”: Kansans in the Occupation of South Korea	164
13. “We’re Not in This Alone.”: America’s Allies in the Korean War	180
14. “I Don’t Think We’re in Kansas Anymore.”: Kansans Face Culture Shock in a War-Torn Country	198

15. “To Be a Marine, You Must Kill a Family Member.”: Unbelievable and Humorous Stories of the Korean War	207
16. “I Did My ‘Bit’ Too.”: Kansas’ Stateside Servicemen	214
17. Spies Like Us: “Secrets” of a Stateside Counter Intelligence Agent During the Korean War	223
18. “We’re in This Together.”: One Couple’s Experiences at a Hawaiian Naval Base During the Korean War	236
19. “Where Have All the Boys Gone?”: Wives of Korean War Servicemen Remember the War	249
20. “Where Have You Been?”: Conclusion	271
BIBLIOGRAPHY	275
APPENDICES	
Appendix A: Maps	288
Appendix B: Pictures	293
Appendix C: Flight Diary Of Harley G. Rowley	294
Appendix D: United Nations Personnel and Assistance for the Korean War	302

Chapter 1

A War is Still a War, As Time Goes By: A Look at Major Korean War Interpretations Through Five Decades

“SOUTH KOREA INVADED: U.S. Army Men Fear Major Red Drive Started,”¹ “SEE THE HAND OF RUSSIA: Without Support of Soviets, Invasion Would Not Have been Made. . . .,” “GRAVE U.S. VIEW.”² To these terrifying headlines unsuspecting Americans awoke on June 25, 1950. But why would an invasion into a small, unknown country, a country outside of American defense perimeters and a country of little strategic importance, push an unprepared America into war?³ It was a Red Scare in America that transformed this small country into a battlezone of good - - Americans - - against evil - - communists. Already alarmed that the communists dominated one-fourth of the world’s population, and frightened by the Russian advances in Berlin, Czechoslovakia, and mainland China, America was overwhelmed when the Russians successfully tested an atomic bomb in 1949. Terrified at the exposure of communist spies Alger Hiss, Klaus Fuchs, and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, Americans accepted Senator Joseph McCarthy’s devious claims of communists in the government. Facing a nation zealous for action against the malicious communists, President Harry S. Truman had little choice but to contest communist advances into South Korea.⁴

Yet this had not been the first time Korea, ironically once called the “Kingdom of Morning Calm,” had been invaded. In fact, Korea had quite a stormy history. It had been invaded by China, Japan, and Russia numerous times, yet its people continued to hope for independence. After the Japanese occupation of Korea, begun in 1910, ended with the conclusion of World War II, Koreans’ hopes were again dashed when the USSR and the

USA divided the Korean peninsula at the indefensible 38th Parallel into two spheres of influence. Unfortunately, these World War II victors, who first promised Korean independence “in due course” in the 1943 Cairo and the 1945 Potsdam Conferences, overestimated the Korean people’s appreciation of this promise; since the Korean language lacked the words “in due course,” the Koreans were once again disappointed to face yet more occupation forces. As a result, both Kim Il-Sung, leader of communist Democratic People’s Republic of North Korea which was vastly militarily backed by Russia, and Syngman Rhee, leader of the democratic Republic of Korea in South Korea which was only armed by America for internal security purposes, wanted to unify their homeland. After most Russians and Americans withdrew from their Korean spheres, Kim acted first, sending troops across the dividing line on June 25, 1950.⁵

Applying the foreign policy philosophies of “containment” and “the domino theory,” President Harry S. Truman responded quickly to this communist threat. In Memoirs, Truman explained his interpretation of “the domino theory” as it applied to South Korea,

[If] South Korea [were] allowed to fall Communist leaders would be emboldened to override nations [closer to our shores]. . . . If the Communists were permitted to force their way into the Republic of Korea without opposition from the free world, no small nation would have the courage to resist threats and aggression by stronger Communist neighbors.⁶

Facing a world-wide communist threat, Truman decided to take a stand in South Korea and protect other “domino” countries from falling. Acting instinctively and without notifying members of Congress, he sent American air and naval forces to South Korea on June 26, 1950, and sent ground forces just three days later. After Truman notified the

United Nations of what he considered a desperate situation on the Korean peninsula, the collective security organization “called upon the authorities of North Korea to withdraw forthwith their armed forces to the 38th parallel.”⁷ Because North Korea did not heed these warnings, the UN “[recommended] that the Members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and restore international peace and security in the area.”⁸ As a result, Truman received ground, air, naval, and medical units from twenty-two nations in support of his country’s communist-containing action.⁹

The Korean War was largely an “accordion war.” First, the North Koreans almost overran South Korea. Breaking out from Inchon and the Pusan Perimeter, the UN troops gained the initiative, crossed the 38th Parallel, and stormed into North Korea. Disregarding the communist Chinese threats to support its North Korean neighbor, the UN soldiers under General Douglas MacArthur rushed to the Yalu River. The Chinese threats proved real: as their North Korean allies had first done, the Chinese pushed the UN forces back. After MacArthur was relieved of his command on April 10, 1951, Generals Matthew B. Ridgway and Mark W. Clark led the UN forces to an armistice. On July 27, 1953, the “endless” Korean War concluded after two years of frustrating peace talks. Yet no matter how effectively or ineffectively Truman, America, and the UN responded to this crisis on the Korean peninsula, historians and Korean War participants have formed their own interpretations and gained new insights into the Korean War.¹⁰

Fueled by the Cold War hysteria, some of the propagandistic 1950s’

interpretations of the Korean War described the American/UN forces as honorably and justifiably defending South Korea from malicious, invading communist forces.

Contemporary scholarly treatments suggested that few in the American government and populace doubted that the North Koreans - - communists - - had started this terror.

Clearly, the Russians had sprung their world-domination plan onto the Korean peninsula.

Easily overtaking the helpless South Koreans, “the [North Korean] advance . . .

[demonstrated] . . . the gaudy promises of the Soviet scheme . . . to unite Korea. . . .”¹¹

Because it was assumed the Russians had started the invasion, the UN first turned to Russia to stop its North Korean satellite forces and their “treacherous attack.”

Apparently, the Russians were really behind the North Korean invasion, for it was Jacob A. Malik, the U.N. representative from Russia, who first sued for peace.¹²

Saving South Korea from the communist’s “fiendish” hands, the UN forces moved north. It seemed as if no one in the American government or the UN membership questioned this advance. Officers Walter Karig, Malcolm W. Cagle, and Frank A. Manson, authors of Battle Report: The War in Korea (1952), simply stated, “On . . . October 1, the 3rd ROK Division, one of the six . . . poised along the line, crossed the 38th parallel.”¹³ Since the communists did not heed MacArthur’s warnings to surrender, the American 1st Cavalry Division led the non-South Korean forces across the border. The UN was poised and ready to end communist tyranny on the Korean peninsula.¹⁴

Karig, Cagle, and Manson noted that the Allied Command under MacArthur was deaf to the communist propagandistic warnings. First seeing the Americans as aggressors, the communist Chinese next labeled them as “imperialists.” Because the American

government recognized the Chinese nationalist government under Chiang Kai-shek as the true representative government of China, America had no direct diplomatic links to the communist Chinese government. As a result, the warnings of the Indian ambassador to the communist Chinese government, Sardar M. Panikkar, were dismissed as scare tactics. Set on deception, the Chinese entered the fighting as “volunteers.” According to the Department of Defense, although other UN forces like the Royal Ulster Rifles Battalion from the United Kingdom may have “retreated,” Americans troops “fell back” and “withdrew” from the formidable, fanatical Chinese.¹⁵ In fact, according to Major General Oliver P. Smith, “[Americans were] only attacking in another direction.”¹⁶

Once the Chinese had pounced on the UN forces, the war drastically changed, especially after MacArthur was dismissed in 1951. First, contemporary coverage of the Korean War found the MacArthur dismissal insignificant. Surprisingly, the Army’s version of it just stated, “On Apr. 11, Gen. Ridgway had been named Commander in Chief, United Nations Command, taking over from Gen. MacArthur.”¹⁷ Clearly, the army did not want to thrash one of its own. Yet, E.J. Kahn Jr., a correspondent in South Korea, saw MacArthur’s dismissal as a “dethronement.” He was surprised to discover that the average soldiers were neither interested nor concerned about MacArthur’s dismissal while the American homefront stirred in uproar to support the great war hero. And as the UN leadership changed, so too did the UN war aims. The war aims evolved from first containing communism, to rolling back communism, to, finally, maximumly afflicting losses on communist forces while sustaining minimal losses themselves.¹⁸

Knowing that they could not defeat the UN forces on the field, the communists

moved their “devilish” schemes to the negotiation table. According to the Department of Defense, the war would have ended sooner if it had not been for the communist contrivances:

Employing every deceitful device in their well-stocked bag of tricks, the Communist negotiators [had] falsified, equivocated, propagandized, threatened, pouted, and raged. Not once in . . . [the] plenary sessions at Kaesong and later at Panmunjom did they demonstrate the slightest concrete evidence of good faith in the negotiations or of a real willingness to bring an end to the conflict on any but their own terms.¹⁹

While the communists evidenced their wrath at the negotiation table, the UN negotiators desperately tried to bring peace to the Korean peninsula. Anxiously awaiting peace, American troops just wanted to see an end to the suffering.²⁰

Of course, not all 1950s’ interpretations favored the South Koreans. In fact, I.F. Stone in The Hidden History of the Korean War revealed quite the opposite interpretation. Just the names of some of his chapters, like “Was it [, the North Korean invasion,] a Surprise?,” “Stampeding the United Nations,” “Mystery at Wake Island,” and “Ridgway’s Own Iron Curtain,” hinted at his communist-leaning views. Stone claimed that because Syngman Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek wanted to maintain control over their respective areas, they conspired and began the Korean War with an invasion into South Korea. Then, the plotting Rhee announced to the world that the North Koreans had begun the assault. Even if the North Koreans had started the war, thought Stone, Russia had little to do with the North Koreans since the Russians gave little aid to them. Also, since both Rhee and Chiang Kai-shek wanted to crush communist China, they provoked China to enter into the war.²¹

According to Stone, the American government, along with Rhee and Chiang, conspired not only to begin the Korean War but also to keep it going:

Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee, [the] principal political beneficiaries in Asia, still wanted [the war] to continue. John Foster Dulles . . . [was] campaigning for broader American involvement in the Far East. . . . Truman and Acheson were their prisoners, sometimes eagerly, sometimes hesitantly. . . . [Yet] Truman showed himself more insistent even than General [James] Van Fleet that the fighting in Korea must continue until every last item in the interminable negotiations had finally been thrashed out.²²

Clearly, Stone believed that the communists were innocent victims, trying to defend themselves from an onslaught of conniving foreign powers. According to his publishers, Stone's book faced a boycott and blackout in 1952 because "its analysis was extremely damaging to the State Department line on the war."²³

Representing America's side of the Cold War, several of the 1950s' interpretations, such as Battle Report and The Peculiar War: Impressions of a Reporter in Korea, praised American action in the Korean War. Although the Korean War was then officially known as a "conflict" or a "police action," it was still a major American military action. In addition, through the American-led UN forces, America had much world-wide support in its response to the communist threat. Overall, the limited war approach worked. On the other hand, Stone's banned book denounced the non-communists' "intrusion" into the Korean peninsula.²⁴

In the 1960s, some Korean War interpretations, such as General Matthew B. Ridgway's The Korean War and Richard E. Neustadt's "The Exercise of Presidential Power," described the American-led UN war effort as a success that had almost been ruined by an overambitious MacArthur, and by sly communist negotiators. In this story

the North Koreans began the war when they pounced on the South Korean and American advisory forces on the 38th Parallel. In this “war” or “conflict,” the freedom-defending forces suppressed the Russian-backed North Korean forces who “[shot] their prisoners, [enslaved] their citizens, and [denied] the dignity of man.”²⁵ In his 1967 analysis, Matthew B. Ridgway, who had served as the second Supreme UN commander, justified America’s role in the war as a “challenge . . . [which had] . . . ceased to be a right for freedom for our Korean Allies alone and for their national survival. It [had] become . . . a fight for our freedom, for our own survival, in an honorable, independent national existence.”²⁶ The United States of America’s response clearly demonstrated that an attack on any free country by a communist force would be seen as an attack on all free countries.²⁷

According to Matthew B. Ridgway, Walter Millis, Robert K. Sawyer and other 1960s’ writers, America’s success was almost undermined by one of its own, MacArthur. Instead of supporting the UN effort to contain communism, he sought self-glorification. For example, threatening the Pusan Perimeter’s defenses by taking needed Marines and supplies away from General Walton H. Walker’s 8th Army, MacArthur enhanced his ambitious Inchon landing. In addition, MacArthur took credit for a successful Ridgway offensive which he himself had neither planned nor initiated. But these were just minor mistakes. Not only did MacArthur ignore China’s threats and the first signs of their troops in North Korea, but also by disobeying a directive from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to send only Republic of Korea forces near the Yalu, he prompted the Chinese to attack. As a result, American troops experienced their longest retreat in history. To make matters

worse, MacArthur ended a chance for an early peace. As the State Department planned truce talks with the communists in March of 1951, he declared, “The enemy . . . must by now be painfully aware that a decision of the United Nations to depart from its intolerant effort to confine the war to the area of Korea, through an expansion of our military operations to his coastal areas and interior bases, would doom Red China to the risk of imminent military collapse’.”²⁸ Undaunted by previous misjudgments, he zealously proposed an all-out war with the communist forces and publicly condemned the Truman administration’s realistic limited war policy. According to military historian Walter Millis, it was lucky for America and the world that Truman dismissed MacArthur for insubordination after he consulted with Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Secretary of Defense George Marshall, and all of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.²⁹

No matter how out of line MacArthur was, his bluster could not compare to the communists’ cunning at the truce talks. For example, Ridgway described the communist negotiators as “stubborn men” who invented UN “attacks” on communist-held areas. One such UN bombing “attack” was manufactured from old aircraft wreckage neatly placed on an undamaged “crash” site. Straining for a potential armistice, the UN negotiators endured many such unbelievable communist schemes. As the UN’s frustration grew, the communists used delaying tactics such as these to propagandize their cause and demoralize their war-weary foes. In the 1960s, the communists were still seen as the world’s menaces.³⁰

With this interpretation of the Korean conflict firmly embedded in American minds and having already succeeded against the communists on the Korean peninsula, many

presumed it was almost inevitable to fight for freedom in South Vietnam. In fact, during the Korean War, Truman accelerated aid to the French fighting in Indochina. While military policy specialists Alvin J. Cottrell and James E. Dougherty claimed that the Korean War “prepared the American people for intervention in Indochina,” historian Allen Guttman, in his book Korea and the Theory of Limited War, believed that the war in Vietnam “[made] the test-case of Korea even more important.”³¹ In 1960s’ ideology, prevailing over the communists in one military showdown made another showdown with them inescapable.³²

Facing the turmoil and the aftermath of the Vietnam War, some 1970s’ interpretations stated that the Korean War, in which America triumphed over an insidious foe, debilitated Russia’s relationships with its Chinese and North Korean satellites. In these interpretations which clearly separated the Korean War from the Vietnam War, the Korean War was successful only if it hurt Russia’s diplomatic relations. For example, while receiving inadequate and obsolete equipment from the Russians, North Korea and China realized that they were fighting the communist wars while Russia lazily watched. Choe Yong-gon, North Korea’s National Defense Minister, evidenced North Korea’s and China’s growing frustration in 1952 during the armistice talks,

The Soviets [were] now attempting to start a general war. . . . The Chinese Communists [were] unable to understand why the Soviets [did] not support more strongly the North Korean and Chinese settlement at Panmunjom [sic.]. True Korean and Chinese nationalists [were] becoming suspicious of the Soviet’s real intentions. . . . [The] . . . Soviet policy clearly [showed] the Soviet desire to provoke the Chinese into making rash decisions designed to widen the war in Asia. The Soviets [planned] to keep Asians fighting Americans while [they sat] back and [talked] about Soviet peace. They [did] not care about the unification of Korea; they merely invested material and professional aid in order to pin down U.N. forces and weaken U.S. strength.³³

Clearly, this Russian strategy had not encouraged better communist relations.

Even two decades after the war, the Chinese communists were still embittered by their experiences with their Russian ally. One Chinese official expressed his animosity,

[We] found ourselves obliged to wait for help from the Soviet Union. The help was delayed at times. . . . We felt torn apart and we suffered. [We] had to tolerate it because we were on the battlefield and because the modern weapons came from the Soviet Union. The wise man . . . learns the lesson from the experience. We have learned an important [lesson].³⁴

Chinese-Russian relations had definitely weakened. Statements such as these and other findings gave some historians in the 1970s more of a grasp on communist-to-communist relations in the Korean War.

As a result of this Russian debacle, writers of the period assigned the Americans victory in the Korean War. While protecting the presidency and the limited war policy, Truman had justifiably dismissed MacArthur. Under America's leadership and direction, the UN forces had its first major victory over the communists, communists who deceitfully tried to prolong the peace talks. Both historian Richard H. Rovere, in a discussion of John Edward Wiltz' essay "The Korean War and American Society," and commander of the UN forces in Korea Matthew B. Ridgway, in his book The Korean War, stated that America accomplished exactly what it wanted; by using collective security, America had stopped an aggressor and brought peace to South Korea.³⁵

According to some 1970s' interpretations, the Korean War led to American involvement in South Vietnam. Historian Edmund S. Wehrle, in a response to Lawrence S. Kaplan's essay "The Korean War and U.S. Foreign Relations: The Case of NATO," explained, "Korea confirmed a pattern of response. American credibility was maintained

by means of limited war; henceforth it would be all too easy to resort once again to limited war in order to maintain that necessary credibility.”³⁶ Since a limited war policy had saved South Korea from communist aggression, it was only natural for policy-makers to believe that it could save South Vietnam. Unfortunately, American leaders mistakenly believed that military action could solve political problems. But, these two wars occurred in different areas, different eras, and with different participants. Overall, in this view, the Korean War’s success led the American government into the Vietnam War failure.³⁷

Later interpretations of the war, those of the 1980s and 1990s, demonstrated that Korean War had, in fact, been unsuccessful and filled with outright mistakes. In South Korea, and later in South Vietnam, the major anti-communist defender, America, was forced by the world’s watchful eye to wrongly intercede in a war which allowed the invading communist government to continue its rule. After seeing vehement anti-communism drag America into two wars, historian Burton I. Kaufman explained overlooked significances of the Korean War, “[The] most important lesson to be learned from Korea was the need to be more responsive to the economic requirement and political wishes of the world’s underdeveloped areas, particularly in Asia. . . . [Americans] were . . . warned that . . . the United States would need to be extremely leery of supporting undemocratic regimes.”³⁸ In other words, America should have realized that some nations may have fallen to communism for economic, not political reasons. In addition, America should have learned that it was unwise to support leaders, such as the dictator Rhee, just because they were a vehement anti-communists.³⁹

In the view of Kaufman and other writers, many people contributed to the Korean

War mistakes. For example, by badgering the communists, Rhee almost ruined the peace talks. Initially refusing to accept the final armistice, he organized anti-armistice demonstrations, recalled his representative from the negotiations, and released over 25,000 prisoners of war. Luckily, President Eisenhower persuaded Rhee to accept the armistice by luring him with American economic and military aid. Many Americans also blundered. For instance, American airmen did not evidence non-aggression when they bombed a Russian airfield. Willing to pay for the damages, the American government apologized for this military misdeed. In addition to other mistakes that Americans made, both the Truman and Eisenhower administrations missed chances to negotiate an early peace with Russia in the Cold War. Having already decided to cross the 38th Parallel and unify Korea militarily, the Truman administration ignored a Russian resolution calling for elections throughout Korea and for a peace settlement with its arch-rival, America. Next, Eisenhower not only ignored but also challenged a Russian peace initiative made by Stalin's successor Georgi Malenkov. Proclaiming that the Russian words were meaningless without deeds, Eisenhower issued unreasonable demands for Russia to demonstrate its sincere desire for peace. Once again, the flame of peace was extinguished in the fury of the Cold War.⁴⁰

According to historian Gary A. Donaldson in America at War Since 1945 (1996), other members of the American government failed in the Korean War. The Joint Chiefs of Staff failed when Truman needed them most. General Omar Bradley, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman, reflected on their collective misjudgment regarding MacArthur:

We read, we sat, we deliberated, and unfortunately, we reached drastically wrong

conclusions and decisions. . . . The [Joint Chiefs] should have taken firmest control of the Korean War and dealt with MacArthur bluntly. . . . At the very least the chiefs should have canceled MacArthur's planned offensive [to the Yalu]. Instead we let ourselves be misled by MacArthur's wildly erroneous estimates of the situation and his eloquent rhetoric. . . .⁴¹

In addition to Bradley's revelation, Secretary of State Acheson conceded that all of Truman's advisors knew that MacArthur's Yalu offensive was antagonistic to China, but they failed to voice this opinion. Unfortunately, these American errors of omission helped impel China to enter the Korean War.⁴²

A number of past speculations concerning the communists' action were either clarified or disproved after the opening of the Russian archives after the end of the Cold War. Newly available materials have brought new light to the North Korean, Chinese, and Russian participation in the Korean War. For example, according to these documents, even though Joseph Stalin approved the North Korean invasion plan, which became known as the "6-25 plan," and gave military aid to North Korea, it was Kim Il-Sung who first proposed the invasion. Beginning in March of 1949, Stalin and Kim met often to discuss and plan the reunification of Korea. In fact, Russian military advisors helped design this plan. Convinced that the Americans would not intervene on behalf of South Korea, Kim believed that his forces would capture Seoul in three days and overtake the entire Korean peninsula in seven days. As the months passed, Stalin grew restless while Kim, who was anxiously awaiting the promised two Korean divisions in the Chinese army, delayed his offensive. Finally crossing the 38th Parallel, Kim not only caught America but also a potential ally, China, off guard. Although he had discussed reunifying Korea with Mao Zedong, he did not specify a date for the invasion. As history has shown, Kim's

reunification plan failed. Yu Song-chol, the chief of the Korean People's Army Operations Bureau during the Korean War, explained the dismay at this failure, "Although we expected the '6-25' [plan] to last three days, in reality it was a war that lasted . . . three years. In other words, this [correctly] implies that any war outside of those three days was one that was not in the game book of the Korean People's Army."⁴³ Instead of reunifying Korea, the invasion further divided the Korean people.⁴⁴

Halted, the North Korean forces began to retreat. Unfortunately for the communists, they disregarded Chinese General Deng Hua's prediction that MacArthur might launch an amphibious assault near Pyongyang or Seoul. When this did in fact occur on September 15, 1950, Stalin fumed, "The strategic incompetence of our advisors as well as their blind inability to gather intelligence has . . . come to our attention. They failed to appreciate the strategic significance of the enemy's landing at Inchon, [and] they doubted the seriousness of the landing."⁴⁵ Alarmed at the UN advance, Kim rushed messages which requested aid to the Chinese and Russian capitals.⁴⁶

The Russian documents further revealed that unbeknownst to Kim, the Chinese government was already contemplating intervening, but for far different reasons than just aiding his beleaguered forces. Watching the "imperialistic" Americans first occupy the Formosan Straits and then advance to his border, Mao Zedong had to decide quickly whether or not to repulse this aggressor on the Korean peninsula. Although Stalin did not believe that the Chinese could defeat the Americans, Mao had discovered weaknesses in America's foreign policy which clearly favored the European over the Asian theater. That American emphasis on strategic concerns in Europe, plus the fact that America had troops

in forty-nine countries, made South Korea a weak link in America's global policy. First issuing unheeded warnings, Mao made the decision to intervene on October 2, 1950, and sent the first Chinese "Volunteers" into North Korea with an entrapping strategy. Hoping to quickly end the war by inflicting maximum casualties on the enemy, the Chinese troops' early attacks and disengagements drew the Americans into a Chinese encirclement. Forcing a major enemy retreat, this strategy worked for the Chinese.⁴⁷

According to Russian archival material, besides supporting its North Korean and Chinese allies with military aid, Russia did play an active role in the Korean War. Camouflaging his military advisors as civilian Pravda correspondents, Stalin confined these aides to the army's headquarters, far away from the front lines where they could be easily identified. Sending in the Soviet 64th Independent Fighter Aviator Corps, he allowed seventy thousand Russians to contribute to the communist war effort. Although he allowed some pilots to fly over one hundred combat missions, Stalin placed certain stipulations on these men. Flying in aircraft marked with the Chinese colors, the pilots dressed in Chinese uniforms and supposedly only spoke Chinese on their combat missions. Like Truman, Stalin advocated a limited war; he did not allow Russian aircraft missions within sixty miles of the front lines, nor did he allow his bombers to participate in the Korean War. Unfortunately, Stalin's government added to the horror of the Cold War by consenting to use American prisoners of war in monstrous medical experiments. The last contribution of the Russian government under Stalin was to propose peace talks which eventually led to the armistice.⁴⁸

The revolving interpretations and speculations, along with the military experiences

since the war, have proved the Korean War's significance in American history. Of the 1.5 to 1.6 million American troops who served, 54,246, including 415 Kansans, gave their lives for the small country of South Korea. In addition, after the victorious, total war of World War II, the Korean action was the first limited war for America in the twentieth century, not to mention America's first major armed engagement in the Cold War. The UN's military response to communist aggression in South Korea defined a "police action," and a "conflict," and established in America the supremacy of constitutional civilian authority over military authority. Also, many American foreign policy philosophies, such as "containment" and "the domino theory," which pushed America into the Vietnam War were first used in the Korean War. Finally, the Panmunjom armistice of 1953 is still in effect. Often forgotten, the Korean War shaped American history in ways which continue to affect us today.⁴⁹

NOTES

1. "South Korea Invaded: U.S. Army Men Fear Major Red Drive Started," Hays Daily News, 25 June 1950.
2. "Attacks on South Korea,: Communists from the North Storm Across the Border at Eleven Places, Including Two Landings on the East Coast," Kansas City Star, 25 June 1950, p. 1. These are subtitles in this article.
3. Although the situation in North and South Korea was officially called a "conflict" or a "police action," I call it a "war." Since many of the original 1950s' interpretations have carried through the decades, I have focused only on some of the differing interpretations which have developed. Burton I. Kaufman, The Korean War: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command, America in Crisis Series (New York: Knopf, 1986), 25, 22. While addressing the National Press Club in January of 1950, Dean Acheson, Secretary of State, defined American defense perimeters which excluded South Korea.; "From Where I Stood: A Panel," in The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective, ed. Francis H. Heller, with a Preface by Francis H. Heller (Lawrence: Regents Press of KS, 1979), 13. Former Special Assistant to the Secretary of State Lucius D. Battle stated that this Acheson speech did not face criticism nor did it gain importance until after South Korea was invaded.; Matthew B. Ridgway, The Korean War: How We Met the Challenge. How All-Out Asian War Was Averted, Why MacArthur Was Dismissed, [and] Why Today's War Objectives Must be Limited (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 12, 34-35. According to Ridgway, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in September of 1947, disregarded South Korea's significance to American foreign policy in a memorandum which stated, "' . . . from the standpoint of military security, the U.S. has little strategic interest in . . . Korea.'"; Gary A. Donaldson, America at War Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 11. Ironically, as an Army Chief of Staff who later became president, Dwight D. Eisenhower would later have to end a war in this "unimportant" area of the world.; and Alonzo L. Hamby, Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 529.
4. Lawrence S. Kaplan, "The Korean War and U.S. Foreign Relations: The Case of NATO," in The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective, ed. Francis H. Heller, with a Preface by Francis H. Heller (Lawrence: Regents Press of KS, 1977), 101. In the discussion following this article, W. Averell Harriman recalled the communist takeovers in Berlin and Czechoslovakia.; Kaufman, War, 35, 37; and Donaldson, America, 17.

5. Walter Karig, Malcolm W. Cagle, and Frank A. Manson, Battle Report: The War in Korea, Battle Report Series (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1952), 5; Robert K. Sawyer, Military Advisors in Korea: KMAG in Peace and War, ed. Walter G. Hermes, United States Army Historical Series (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1962), 5, 6, 96; Ridgway, War, 1, 17, 8; “Panel” in Perspective, 10. Former Army Chief of Staff J. Lawton Collins described how American leaders effortlessly divided Korea along the 38th Parallel, “This was actually decided by Dean Rusk and [Colonel Charles H.] ‘Tip’ Bonesteel, an army officer who was with him. . . . It happened that there was one map available and Bonesteel noted that the 38th Parallel just about split the country in two.” Collins also noted that Korea had already been divided along the 38th Parallel in the Russo-Japanese War.; Geoffrey Perret, Old Soldiers Never Die: The Life of Douglas MacArthur (New York: Random House, 1996), 539, 537. Before the massive North Korean invasion into South Korea, both Koreas had skirmishes across the 38th Parallel. Perret aptly described Rhee as a leader “who ran a right-wing police state under American protection.” He described Il-Sung as a “vainglorious thug who ran a Communist prison camp under Stalinist guidance.” On page 520 of his book, Hamby described Rhee as “a tough dictatorial nationalist.”; and Kaufman, War, 5, 9. According to Kaufman, America supported the American-educated Rhee because, among other things, he was an ardent nationalist and staunch anti-communist.

6. Harry S. Truman, 1945, Year of Decisions, vol. 1 of Memoirs (New York: 1965), 479, as quoted in Gary A. Donaldson, America at War Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War (Westport, CT: Praeger), 17. This quotation also appeared in Francis H. Heller, ed., The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective, with a Preface by Francis H. Heller (Lawrence: Regents Press of KS, 1977), 3.

7. U.N. Security Council, “Resolution of June 27, 1950,” in Korea and the Theory of Limited War, ed. Allen Guttman, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 3. According to Guttman, America, France, Norway, Nationalist China, Cuba, Ecuador, and the United Kingdom voted for this resolution while Yugoslavia dissented. Although it first did not vote, India later accepted this resolution while Egypt abstained from the vote. Upset that communist China was not represented in the United Nations, the Russian UN representative was absent when the vote occurred. For more information on United Nation actions, see the chapter below entitled “We’re not in this alone.”: America’s Allies in the Korean War.

8. Ibid.

9. Kaufman, War, 16, 68, 37. Kaufman wrote that Truman informed leaders of Congress after he ordered troops to South Korea.; Karig, Cagle, and Manson, Report, 20, 22. Truman also sent the 7th Fleet to the Formosan Straits.; Military History Section, AFFE, “The War in Korea,” Pacific Stars and Stripes, 1953, 7.; and Summers Jr., Harry

G., Korean War Almanac (New York: Facts on File, 1990), 290. For more information on United Nations actions, see the chapter below entitled “We’re not in this alone.”: America’s Allies in the Korean War.

10. When referring to mainland China’s communist government under Mao Zedong, I use “China” and “communist China.” When referring to nationalist China under Chiang Kai-shek, I use its leader’s name. Donaldson, America, 46. MacArthur claimed that the war’s movements were like an accordion.; Richard E. Neustadt, “The Exercise of Presidential Power,” in Korea and the Theory of Limited War, ed. Allen Guttman, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 52. Neustadt stated that the UN followed America’s lead in the war.; Hamby, Truman, 556; and Kaufman, War, 162. The decision to relieve MacArthur was made between April 9th to the 11th by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Truman.; Ridgway, War, 257. On May 12, 1951, General Clark succeeded Ridgway as commander of Allied Forces in Korea after Ridgway was named to replace Eisenhower as NATO commander.

11. Karig, Cagle, and Manson, Report, 109.

12. Ibid., 15, 19; E.J. Kahn Jr., The Peculiar War: Impressions of a Reporter in Korea (New York: Random House, 1952), vii; Military History Section, “War,” 5, 1.

13. Karig, Cagle, and Manson, Report, 292. ROK stands for the Republic of Korea.

14. Ibid., 295.

15. Ibid., 47, 294-95, 438; Military History Section, “War,” 3. The only mention of retreat in “The War in Korea” deals with the Royal Ulsters.

16. Military History Section, “War,” 3.

17. Ibid., 4-5.

18. Kahn, Impressions, 5; Allen Guttman, ed., Korea and the Theory of Limited War, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 16; and Military History Section, “War,” 2-3, 4.

19. Military History Section, “War,” 6.

20. Ibid., 5-6; Kahn, Impressions, 209, 146. Kahn included a Korean War quotation from George Barrett of the New York Times which stated, “[Soldiers] want to see something signed, sealed, and delivered.”

21. I.F. Stone, The Hidden History of the Korean War (New York: Monthly Review, 1952), 30, 9, 10-11, 42, 7, 13, 62-63, 85, 151, 153, xiii; and Sawyer, KMAG,

114. Since many of the ROK troops and the KMAG advisors were on leave, it is illogical to presume that the South Koreans began the Korean War.

22. Ibid., 345-46.

23. Ibid., v.

24. Hamby, Truman, 537. Hamby described how Truman decided to call the Korean action a “police action,” “At a press conference on June 29, [1950,] . . . a reporter asked him if the effort might be called a ‘police action,’ [and] he replied . . . , ‘Yes. That is exactly what it amounts to’.”; Military History Section, “War,” 6; Karig, Cagle, and Manson, Report, 63; Kahn, Impressions, 146, 156; and Public Information Office, Hqs, Far East Air Forces, “The Air Force Over Korea,” Pacific Stars and Stripes, 1953, 12. Only in “The Air Force Over Korea” were the disadvantages of limited war, like the enemy’s MIG Manchurian sanctuary, mentioned.

25. Ridgway, War, 264.

26. Ibid., 265.

27. Neustadt, “Exercise,” in Limited War, 52. Just by reading the title of Ridgway’s book, it is obvious that he believed the Korean action was a “war.”

28. Ridgway, War, 155; and Walter Millis, “Truman and MacArthur,” in Korea and the Theory of Limited War, ed. Allen Guttman, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 50.

29. Sawyer, KMAG, 114; Ridgway, War, 153, 30, 109, 47, 61, 162, 154, 71, 66. Ridgway says it was a “retirement,” “withdrawal,” and a “retrograde movement.”; Neustadt, “Exercise,” in Limited War, 64. He states that the U.N. forces did retreat.; Guttman, Korea, ix, 14, 153; Millis, “Truman and MacArthur,” 48, 50, 51; and Alvin J. Cottrell and James E. Dougherty, “The Lessons of Korea: War and the Power of Man,” “in Korea and the Theory of Limited War, ed. Allen Guttman, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 83- 84. They claim that MacArthur’s aggressive ideas to blockade China and bomb Manchuria would have weakened China. But these actions might have also initiated World War III especially since the 1950 Sino-Soviet Treaty called on Russia to defend China after a foreign power’s attack into Chinese territory. Although many were not alarmed by the Chinese warnings, MacArthur totally disregarded them. On page 557 of his book, Perret claimed that Mac’s inept staff contributed to MacArthur’s mistakes.

30. Ridgway, War, 197, 200; and Cottrell and Dougherty, “Lessons,” in Limited War, 89, 88.

31. Guttman, Limited War, vi; and Cottrell and Dougherty, "Lessons," in Limited War, 92.

32. Guttman, Limited War, vi; and Alexander L. George, "American Policy-Making and the North Korean Aggression," in Korea and the Theory of Limited War, ed. Allen Guttman, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 75.

33. Robert R. Simmons, "The Communist Side: An Exploratory Sketch," in The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective, ed. Francis H. Heller, with a Preface by Francis H. Heller (Lawrence: Regents Press of KS, 1977), 200-201.

34. Kaplan, "War," in Perspective, 84. In the discussion part of this chapter, Roger E. Kanet revealed this Chinese comment. The Chinese official's name was not given.

35. Ibid., 80, 89, 107, 79. In response to Kaplan's essay, Roger E. Kanet, Edmund S. Wehrle, W. Averell Harriman, and U. Alexis Johnson expounded on America's success in Korea.; John Edward Wiltz, "The Korean War and American Society," in The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective, ed. Francis H. Heller, with a Preface by Francis H. Heller (Lawrence: Regents Press of KS, 1977), 182, 179, 184. Two decades after the war, General J. Lawton Collins still believed MacArthur should have been dismissed. Wiltz stated that in 1962 MacArthur admitted a soldier's role was to obey civilian authorities. Commenting on Wiltz' essay, Richard H. Rovere and Matthew B. Ridgway supported America's success in the Korean War.; and Heller, Perspective, 7. According to Heller, MacArthur later stated that Truman was correct in dismissing him.

36. Kaplan, "War," in Perspective, 89. Wehrle said this in response to Kaplan's essay. Later in this discussion (on page 93), historian Theodore A. Wilson agreed with this view.

37. Wiltz, "Society," in Perspective, 179. Richard H. Rovere stated the military action-political problem comment.; Kaplan, "War," in Perspective, 79. U. Alexis Johnson believed that America's involvement in the Korean War led to its involvement in the Vietnam War.

38. Kaufman, War, 94.

39. Donaldson, America, xiv, 3, 64, 61, 27.

40. Kaufman, War, 326, 327, 332, 90, 86; Richard G. Stilwell, "A Victory Not to be Forgotten," American Legion Magazine, June 1990, 30; Richard K. Kolb, "Korea's 'Invisible Veterans' Return to an Ambivalent America," VFW Magazine, November 1997, 24. Stilwell said there were 1.5 million while Kolb said there were 1.6 million.; and Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower: Soldier and President (New York: Simon & Schuster,

1990), 329-30, 323-25.

41. Donaldson, America, 35.

42. Ibid.

43. Vladimir Petrov, "Soviet Role in Korean War Confirmed: Secret Documents Declassified," Journal of Northeast Asian Studies 13 (Fall 1994): 62, 66.

44. Ibid., 42, 50, 52, 43-44, 45, 64, 63; Douglas Stanglin and Peter Cary, "Secrets of the Korean War," U.S. News and World Report, 9 August 1993, 45, 46; and Hao Yufon and Zhai Zhihai, "China's Decision to Enter the Korean War: History Revisited," China Quarterly (March 1990): 100; Donaldson, America, 15.

45. Petrov, "Confirmed," 59.

46. Yufon and Zhihai, "Decision," 101.

47. Ibid., 97, 101, 109, 107. Other weaknesses included America's limited supply of atomic bombs and the bombs' limited impact on the huge landmass of China, along with the fact that the mountainous Korean terrain and America's ten-thousand mile supply lines would restrict American troop movements.; Thomas J. Christensen, "Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace," International Security 17 (Summer 1992): 128, 135, 136, 134, 151, 141-42, 144, 140, 148. Both of these authors claimed that the Chinese saw only the American forces, not the U.N. forces, as a threat.; Petrov, "Confirmed," 45. This author stated that Stalin pressured the Chinese into intervening. Shang Rongguang's essay, "Panmunjom Negotiations: Veteran Soldier and His Book," and Hiroyuki Umetsu's essay, "Communist China's Entry into the Korean Hostilities and a U.S. Proposal for a Collective Security Arrangement in the Pacific Offshore Island Chain," also described the Chinese intervention and role in the Korean War.; Donaldson, America, 63. He stated that one of Zedong's sons, his oldest, died fighting in the Korean War.

48. Petrov, "Confirmed," 52, 67, 56, 57, 46; Stanglin and Cary, "Secrets," 47, 45. They stated that Russia sent one billion rubles worth of aid to the North Koreans.; Jon Halliday, "Rewriting History: A Secret War," Far Eastern Economic Review 156 (22 April 1993): 33, 36. Some Americans, like pilot John Glenn and those in the American government, suspected that Russian forces had entered the war. Some Russian pilots failed to follow this language restriction. Paul Lashmar's article, "Uncle Joe's Betrayal," also described Russian participation.; Douglas Stanglin and Peter Cary, "Korea: An Old War's Dark Secrets - Fresh Evidence of American POWs in Korea," U.S. News and World Report, 23 September 1996, 46, 47; and R. Cort Kirkwood, "Soviets Used Our POWs for Nazi-Like Experiments," Insight on the News, 21 October 1996, 7. In these experiments, Americans were subjected to unnecessary amputations, and biological, radioactive, and chemical materials, along with "mind-altering drugs." The New York Times article, "Russian Tells of Korea-Era U.S. Captives," also described American

prisoners of war.

49. Robert Famighetti, et al., eds., The World Almanac and Book of Facts 1997 (Mahwah, NJ: World Almanac Books, 1996), 184. This source did not list the number of servicewomen.; Summers, Korean War Almanac, 76, 77; Stan Teasley, Commission on Veterans' Affairs, "U.S. Military Personnel Who Died From Hostile Action (Including Missing and Captured Declared Dead) in the Korean War, 1950-1953, Kansas," [photocopy].; Donaldson, America, 60, 63, 65, 13, 17, 18, 19, 22, 64; Military History Section, "War," 7; and Kaufman, War, 45, 356.

Chapter 2

“The ‘Commies’ Are Coming! The ‘Commies’ Are Coming!”: Kansans Respond to the North Korean Invasion

After the Japanese surrender aboard the Missouri on August 14, 1945, the sun surely shined on America. America was truly on top of the world, a world which no longer possessed the domineering forces of the German Nazis, Italian Fascists, and Japanese imperialists. GIs returned home not just as victors but as conquering heroes who wanted nothing more than the American dream, a family, a home, and a job. Hidden behind the Baby Boom, Levittowns, and other standards of conformity and success, racism and insecurity lurked. While Americans, excluding the second class minority members, stood on the threshold of glory, sinister communism seeped into new world areas.

Although Americans feared communism’s growing world expansion, many clamored for rapid demobilization after World War II. But, demobilization became more of a dissection. For example, at World War II’s conclusion, the American military contained eight million servicemen and carried a budget of more than \$50 billion. Just five years later, when the Korean War broke out, the military contained just over one-sixteenth of the number of men and had a budget of one-tenth of its 1945 level. President Harry S. Truman had objected to this blind military disbandment as had General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Acting as an informal aide to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Eisenhower warned of future trouble just one year before the North Korean invasion, “‘Of course, the results [of an inadequate defense policy] will not show up until we get into serious trouble.’”¹ Both Truman and Eisenhower were overruled by the populace and Congress. The price of

demobilization would be disaster for the American military in South Korea.²

Like a sinister storm cloud over the Kansas prairie, the clouds of war were soon swirling over the Korean peninsula. Thunder struck, waking Americans from their glorified peacetime splendor, when 110,000 North Koreans invaded South Korea on June 25, 1950.³ Washington, D.C. felt the vibrations first. Relaxing at home, Truman recalled, “At eight o’clock Central Standard Time in Independence, Missouri, Saturday night, [June 24, 1950,] I received a telephone call from the Secretary of State informing me that the North Korean forces had invaded South Korea in an all-out effort to overturn the South Korean Government.”⁴ According to Truman biographer Alonzo L. Hamby, Truman announced his decision to defend South Korea by saying, “‘Dean [Acheson], we’ve got to stop the sons of bitches no matter what’.”⁵ America would defend democracy in South Korea.

Within hours Truman and his advisors convened in Washington, D.C. to discuss their strategy. First, Truman lifted all restrictions on the Far Eastern Command’s air and naval forces, allowing them to give full support to the South Korean government. Next, he ordered the 7th Fleet to the Formosan Straits, protecting Nationalist China and Communist China by obstructing their possible attacks on each other.⁶ On June 27, 1950, the United Nations Security Council, obviously absent the Soviet delegate, branded the North Koreans aggressors and asked for nations to aid the helpless South Korean government. In all, fifty-one nations expressed support for this resolution.⁷ Alarmed that they were not notified or consulted by the Truman administration, Congress nonetheless supported Truman’s action.⁸ On June 30, just five days after North Korea’s invasion,

American servicemen stationed in Japan became the first American troops sent to South Korea in response to the invasion.⁹ Among the American servicemen helping to repel communism on the Korean peninsula in the first stages of the war were Kansans John T. Schuckman, William A. Reynolds, Ronald Burbridge, and Michael Metzger.

Presuming he would spend his service time “on vacation in Japan,” John T. Schuckman had enlisted in the Army. Unfortunately, the North Koreans had other plans for him; this rifle platoon squad leader in the 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division was on his way to Japan when the Korean War began. As a result, Schuckman was initiated into the Far Eastern way of life on the Korean battlefield, not by basking in the Japanese sun.¹⁰

Despite the arrival of American troops in South Korea, the North Koreans continued to advance. Shaken from their victory climate, Americans were appalled that their gallant troops could not instantly stop this communist force. In fact, American newspapers, like the Emporia (KS) Gazette, claimed that the North Koreans were not hampered by but were actually inspired by the American entry into their internal conflict. Justifying the Americans’ scamper south from June through August of 1950, this newspaper stated that the North Koreans “must be getting plenty of Russian help . . . and we have only a token force in the field . . . [which has] not yet begun to fight.”¹¹ Comparing Korea to Bataan, the Emporia Gazette pilloned the South Koreans who ran in the face of communist adversity, forcing the Americans to fight for a country its own citizens refused to protect.¹²

Unfortunately, the American troops in South Korea were not as confident as the

Emporia Gazette. They had “begun to fight,” but the ill-prepared, ill-equipped, and overwhelmed American soldiers could not stop the tough, well-trained North Koreans who refused to run. Arriving in South Korea on July 18, 1950, John T. Schuckman joined the few Americans already there. “[When] we got there,” he remembered, “there was hardly anyone there . . . other than the troops [who] had been in Japan. . . . [There] was a lot of activity and not many people there. . . . We did nothing but run and fight.”¹³

As the North Koreans continued their assault south, chaos ruled the battlefield. Recalling these trying times, Schuckman exclaimed, “Everything happened so fast. . . . [We] were short on food a lot of times [and there] was real bad intelligence. We didn’t know where we were and we were behind enemy lines before we knew it.” South Korea became a terror for Americans as the North Korean forces annihilated American youth on distant battlefields, “In our regiment, we probably lost half of [our men] in the first two weeks and when you’re talking about half . . . , the companies are 180 or 185 people . . . and one regiment has four companies so there were a lot of casualties.” Apparently, America had met its match against the communist North Koreans.¹⁴

As the Emporia Gazette celebrated the gallantry of American soldiers who fought for South Korea, Schuckman revealed the true emotions of these men against the mighty North Koreans. Once dauntless, they became frightened and dismayed. Schuckman was shocked to see the terror in his fellow servicemen’s eyes,

I guess a lot of people over there weren’t prepared for it mentally. They couldn’t stand the pressure. . . . I had some people with me [who] wanted [me] to shoot them so they could go home, shoot them in the ankle or something like that so they would get crippled enough to [go home]. One time we had somebody crossing a railroad track and he kinda sat and put his leg across the rail and he wanted me to jump on it.”

Never participating in these cowardly acts of petrified men, Schuckman admitted that he too was scared.¹⁵

Shocked by the courage and mastery of North Korean troops who drove the once “invincible” American troops back, Schuckman became a member of America’s last desperate stand in South Korea, the Pusan Perimeter (Appendix A). William A. Reynolds joined Schuckman there (Appendix B). Enlisting in the Army in 1949, this seventeen-year-old had no idea of what awaited him in the hills of North and South Korea. When he arrived in South Korea, a place he “didn’t know existed,” in August of 1950, the situation looked grim for this man of Fox Company, 21st Regiment, 24th Division.¹⁶ The light of democracy had begun to flicker out as American troops desperately defended the Pusan Perimeter.

Then, the great war hero of World War II, the beacon of hope, General Douglas MacArthur made a triumphant entry on the Korean front. Staging an ambitious amphibious landing at the west coast port of Inchon where men faced tides of thirty feet and troublesome mudflats, Operation Chromite cut the North Korean supply lines and sent the enemy reeling back (Appendix A).¹⁷ The Council Grove (KS) Republican described this action matter of factly, “United Nations amphibious landing in Communist-held Korea have begun this morning [, September 15, 1950,]. . . . U.S. and Korean marines stormed ashore at Inchon.”¹⁸ If only the landing had been that easy.

Sent to South Korea to participate in this bold landing was Kansan Ronald Burbridge, who served in 2nd Platoon, Baker Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment, 1st

Marine Division. After he had been told the Reserves would not be called up, he joined the Marine Corps Reserve with his World War II veteran brother in 1948. Convinced by his fellow reservists to “re-up,” he re-enlisted on June 1, 1950, for two more years. Less than a month later, a radio announcer notified Burbridge of his future, “My wife and I were doing the dinner dishes and we always had the music on. . . . They broke in and said, had a bulletin, that the 18th Infantry Battalion in Omaha had been called to active duty and that’s what I was in.” Weeks after he re-enlisted, he discovered that reservists were not immune to the draft.¹⁹

Surprised by the war, Burbridge was shocked by the Marine Corps’ unpreparedness. Once a great fighting force in World War II, the current corps seemed dismal in comparison. “They cut the Marine Corps down to nothing [after World War II],” he stated, “so in order to give [General] MacArthur any kind of a 1st Marine Division in force, they had to take all of the Reserve units and so we had a lot of kids [who] didn’t have the experience that I had and some of them had never [even] fired a rifle.” Having trained for a few nights a week and attended two summer camps a year, Burbridge was a veteran compared to many of his fellow reservists.²⁰

Trying to accomplish the impossible, Burbridge’s officers trained these servicemen as they traveled to South Korea. Burbridge recalled the hasty, emergency drills, “They would throw stuff over the side of the ship and let them shoot at it so they could get used to shooting at [targets].” Knowing that the future did not look bright, “We stayed on deck of that ship until the last light [on the coast] blinked out of sight. It just about tore you apart because . . . we knew that some of us weren’t gonna be back.” Although they

were ill-trained and ill-prepared, these men miraculously performed well in combat.²¹

Although he had “advanced” training compared to his colleagues, Burbridge acknowledged that his real training began in Inchon. Slated to help with the Inchon landing, the 1st Marine Division’s initiation into fire was stalled by Typhoon Kezia. While the 5th Marines landed at Inchon on September 15th and eventually secured Inchon, Burbridge and his fellow Marines landed three to four days later. Nonetheless, these Marines also faced problematic fears, “We went [ashore] . . . in the afternoon. . . . The next morning here’s all of our big ships sitting out there in the mud. . . . It was kind of a morale let-down when we turned around and saw all of these big ships sitting there in the harbor in the mud because if we had been overrun . . . we would have nothing, no place to go. . . .” The tide that carried UN forces into Inchon Harbor could also have helped decimate these forces in its retreat, but luckily, a massive enemy counterattack never materialized.²²

While they advanced, UN soldiers saw sights that would haunt them for the rest of their lives. Disgusted, Burbridge recalled how the North Korean forces treated their prisoners of war, “On the way . . . through Inchon up through Seoul, we came across several bodies of American soldiers with their hands tied behind their back[s] and executed, and not only American soldiers but [also] Korean civilians, the women and children, their hands tied behind their back[s] and shot.” Clearly, this enemy had to be stopped.²³

As the 5th Marines continued their advance to the South Korean capital of Seoul, the 7th Marines advanced to the northwest of Seoul, hoping to cut off enemy troops. They

succeeded. Taking Seoul from enemy hands, Americans celebrated by hoisting an American flag over the capital building. This proved to be a mistake, as Burbridge explained, “[The] Marine Corps . . . got chewed [out] for that. . . . [General] MacArthur came unglued on that. . . . They had to take it down and run up a U.N. flag.” Fortunately, for America’s relations with its allies, the American media only pictured American troops raising a UN flag (Appendix B).²⁴ Then, while President Truman congratulated these soldiers for liberating Seoul, he thanked all “soldiers, sailors, marines and air men . . . fighting for freedom under the United Nations banner.”²⁵ Although America sent the most forces to save South Korea, this war was truly a United Nations action.

Unfortunately, the success of the Inchon landing and the liberation of Seoul brought unforeseen problems. As General MacArthur’s plan split North Korean supply lines, it also split the North Korean forces, forcing most to retreat into their homeland and others to flee south where they joined other guerrilla forces.²⁶ Michael F. Metzger, a World War II veteran from Council Grove, Kansas, who volunteered for active duty after the North Korean invasion, explained this danger, “The rapidity of the movement north cut off great numbers of [North] Koreans in the rear so the rear area was full of the enemy. There were remnants of North Koreans . . . raising havoc with things in the rear, shooting up ammunition dumps and that kind of thing.” Eventually, Metzger heard that a hometown Council Grove serviceman, Leonard Weeks, was killed by a North Korean guerrilla as he guarded an ammunition dump.²⁷ Many years later Metzger regretted that the UN success at Inchon and Seoul overshadowed these sad stories.

Just one day after the Inchon landing, Reynolds and Schuckman, along with the

rest of General Walton H. Walker's forces, broke out of the Pusan Perimeter. Reynolds described this action modestly, "You just [got] shot at and [shot] back. You [ran] into quite a few roadblocks."²⁸ But in writing a short memoir for the Emporia (KS) Legionnaire, Reynolds stated, "Of the 70,000 North Korean enemy engaged in the fighting at Pusan, less than half escaped death or capture. About 30,000 of them made it back across the 38th Parallel. Dead bodies were strewn along the roads all the way to the 38th."²⁹ Although some of the enemy escaped to fight another day, they were given a sting from the UN forces that they could not forget.

John T. Schuckman also helped drive the North Korean forces back. Unfortunately, he was wounded after he crossed into North Korea. Struck in the chest by an enemy's bullet, he left the battlefield. Arriving in a Tokyo hospital on October 11, 1950, Schuckman took over two months to recover before physicians deemed fit him to return to battle.³⁰

While Reynolds, Schuckman, and others were advancing past the 38th Parallel, Burbridge participated in the UN's second major amphibious assault, the October landing at Wonsan. "Operation Tailboard" successfully captured another enemy transportation center and stronghold.³¹ Completing the task of capturing Seoul, Burbridge explained his next major military feat, "Well, . . . we got up to the 38th Parallel [and were] relieved by an army unit and then went back down to Inchon to . . . [supposedly] go home. We were being promised all the time that we'd be home by Christmas. . . . Anyway the next thing I know they load us aboard troop transports and we went up the east side of the Korean [coast] and made an amphibious landing at Wonsan."³² With the enemy on the run,

euphoria filled the air as it seemed the Korean War would just “pass away.”³³

All seemed well for the UN troops on the Korean peninsula. Surrounded by an air of triumph, President Truman and General MacArthur met for a conference on October 15, 1950 at Wake Island. MacArthur, never the humble general, boasted, “I believe that formal resistance will end throughout North and South Korea by Thanksgiving. There is little resistance left in South Korea . . . and those we do not destroy, the winter will. . . . It is my hope to be able to withdraw the Eighth Army to Japan by Christmas.”³⁴ Although he knew that communist Chinese troops were moving south, he crowed, “We are no longer fearful of their intervention. . . . [If] the Chinese tried to get down to Pyongyang [, the North Korean capital,] there would be the greatest slaughter.” At first just trying to save South Korea for democracy, MacArthur, Truman, and Truman’s advisors now planned to reunite North and South Korea through UN-held elections.³⁵ Ultimate victory seemed in hand, but the Chinese would soon prove that MacArthur, a man who prided himself on understanding the Oriental mind, was disastrously wrong.³⁶

NOTES

1. Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower: Soldier and President, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 243.
2. Gary A. Donaldson, America at War Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 24; and Matthew B. Ridgway, The Korean War: How We Met the Challenge. How All-Out Asian War Was Adverted. Why MacArthur Was Dismissed, [and] Why Today's War Objectives Must be Limited (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 16.
3. Burton I. Kaufman, The Korean War: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command, America in Crisis Series (New York: Knopf, 1986), 29. Kaufman also stated that the North Korean forces had 126 tanks and over 1400 pieces of artillery. Of the servicemen interviewed, twelve were surprised by the North Korean invasion while seven were not. Nine did not answer this question.
4. "Acheson's Phone Call to the President," 24 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2. Papers of George M. Elsey.
5. Alonzo L. Hamby, Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 534.
6. "Teleconference with MacArthur," 26 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2.
7. "U.N. Security Council: Resolution of June 27, 1950," Korea and the Theory of Limited War, ed. Allen Guttman, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 2-3; and "Tabulation of Replies to UN Secretary-General With Respect to Security Council Action in Korea," 13 July 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of George M. Elsey.
8. "Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress," 3 July 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of George M. Elsey.

9. "Teletype Conference with MacArthur," 30 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of George M. Elsey.

10. John T. Schuckman, interview by author, Tape recording, Gorham, Kansas, 25 July 1997. All interviewees currently live in Kansas, but may not have resided in Kansas during their service time.

11. "Another Bataan?," Emporia Gazette, 6 July 1950.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.; and Schuckman, interview by author, 25 July 1997. That was his description of the North Korean soldiers.

14. Schuckman.

15. "Bataan," Emporia Gazette; Ibid.

16. William A. Reynolds, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas 20 March 1997.; Ibid., "Post 5's Bill Reynolds Recalls Introduction to Korean War and Experience at Yalu River," Emporia Legionnaire, January 1997. I was unable to find any corresponding page number to this article; and William A. Reynolds, Discharge Record, Lyon County Courthouse, Emporia, Kansas, photocopy. Reynolds was inducted into the Army on July 1, 1949. See Appendix B for his 1950 picture.

17. Ridgway, War, 33, 38.

18. "Landings Behind Korean Reds," Council Grove Republican, 15 September 1950.

19. Ronald Burbridge, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 19 November 1997.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid.

22. Ibid.; and Walter Karig, Malcolm W. Cagle, and Frank A. Manson, Battle Report: The War in Korea, Battle Report Series (New York: Rinehart & Co, 1952), 194-97.

23. Burbridge, interview by author, 19 November 1997.

24. Ibid.; and Emporia Gazette, 30 September 1950. A front page picture showed the U.N. flag being raised.

25. "President Truman's Message to General MacArthur," 29 September 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, President's Secretary's File.

26. Ridgway, War, 42.

27. Michael F. Metzger, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 13 February 1997; and "Editorial by Michael Metzger," Council Grove Republican, 1 August 1995. Writing about the "forgotten war," Metzger reminded this newspaper's readers that six Council Grove men, including Weeks, died in this war.

28. Reynolds, interview by author, 20 March 1997.

29. "Reynolds Recalls," Legionnaire.

30. Schuckman., interview by author, 25 July 1997.

31, Karig, Cagle, and Manson, Report, 298-309. This sources described the Wonsan landing throughout much of October 1950, but it gave no definite date for this landing or of Wonsan's capitulation. "Substance of Statements Made at Wake Island Conference on 15 October 1950 Compiled by General of the Army Omar N. Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, from Notes Kept by the Conferees from Washington," Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, President's Secretary's Files. MacArthur mentioned that Wonsan had already been captured by the time of this conference.

32. Burbridge, interview by author, 19 November 1997.

33. "You Tell 'Em," Hays Daily News, 12 October 1950.

34. "Statements at Wake Island Conference," 15 October 1950, Harry S. Truman Library.

35. Ibid. It is ironic that MacArthur spoke so bravely concerning the communist Chinese intervention when he also said, at this very conference, "This is a threat that cannot be laughed off."

36. Geoffrey Perret, Old Soldiers Never Die: The Life of Douglas MacArthur (New York: Random House, 1996), 551, 552. Perret stated that MacArthur did not know "the Oriental mind" because he had not continually served in the Far East nor did he speak or read any Asian language. In this thesis, the "Chinese" refers to the Communist Chinese unless otherwise specified.

Chapter 3

“Oh, No, Here We Go Again.”: American Forces Face Another Communist Invasion

Smelling victory over the communists on the Korean peninsula, General Douglas MacArthur ordered his United Nations forces full steam ahead. Unfortunately, the glorious advance to the Yalu posed many overlooked problems that later spelled disaster. For example, while organizing his incredible Inchon landing, MacArthur took needed supplies and men from General Walton Walker’s Pusan Perimeter. Steeped in an air of invincibility, he then ordered the inessential Wonsan landing of October 1950 that put many lives at risk. For instance, the UN naval forces took endless days to minesweep the waters around Wonsan as the ROK, Republic of Korea or South Korea’s, forces strolled across the peninsula to take this city. Once again, the 8th Army under Walker, a man whom MacArthur never fully trusted, continued to be plagued by supply shortages. After ROK forces under Walker’s command captured Wonsan, MacArthur selfishly placed them in his own X Corps.¹

Even the locations of the advancing X Corps and the 8th Army proved detrimental. For example, the X Corps continued its advance up the western coast while the 8th Army continued its advance on the east coast. Having separated his forces, MacArthur gave Walker the unbelievable responsibility of both forces’ logistical support even though North Korea’s mountainous terrain divided the two forces. With the two major UN forces cutting themselves off from each other, the communist Chinese forces saw this advantage over their foe even before their massive intervention in late October through November of 1950 (Appendix A).²

Even months after the UN advance, the initial logistics' problem of the advance was still hampering the troops. Michael F. Metzger, a World War II veteran and a captain of the 226th Signal Service Company with the X Corps, had arrived in Wonsan after U.N. forces secured the area. Surprised by the hasty UN advance, he noticed that troops often outdistanced their supplies by “[arriving in] one place and [their] supplies would arrive another.” For example, since his company’s equipment was strewn out from its base in Fort Sheridan, Illinois, to Yokohama, Japan, he and his men had to get most of their communications supplies, switchboard equipment and the like, from a dump of discarded material in Pusan. Driving to Hamhung, North Korea, where he, another officer, and fifty-two others were to establish X Corps Headquarter’s communications, Metzger faced the same obstacle that other servicemen faced, poor equipment. He explained this experience,

We had several mechanical breakdowns in route [to Hamhung]. . . . My particular group had three [breakdowns]. . . . At one point I was with another captain and he [said], “Mike, because of your experience as [a] combat infantry officer, you’re in charge.” So every time we had a breakdown, I would put the men out essentially in a circle, a perimeter around, just in case [of an enemy attack]. . . . We went through that process three times and then we got to Hamhung.

Safely arrived in Hamhung, Metzger and his men established and provided communications for the X Corp Headquarters.³

Regardless of the supply shortages and poor equipment, the real problem that the UN’s advancing forces faced was a new enemy, the communist Chinese. Already suspicious of America since it had aided Chiang Kai-shek and his Nationalist Chinese government and because MacArthur’s recent visit to Chiang seemed to be the beginnings of an assault on mainland China, communist China’s leader Mao Zedong was more

concerned about American forces than other UN forces. After American movements into the Formosan Straits and then Americans' advance to the 38th Parallel, Mao had to act quickly against these potential threats. First, he issued strong warnings to deter American forces from crossing into North Korea, while surprisingly, his government had no objections to ROK forces crossing the 38th. Since Dean Acheson and others were deaf to Mao's warnings, President Harry S. Truman's administration authorized the UN forces' 38th Parallel crossing on September 27, 1950. Just days later, on October 2, 1950, Mao decided to intervene on behalf of North Korea if only to save his country from a two-front war, that is, from American forces on the Manchurian border and Chiang Kai-shek's forces in Formosa. On October 8, 1950, Mao ordered the formation of the Chinese People's Volunteers and began massing troops along the Yalu River.⁴

MacArthur, blinded by success, disregarded the Chinese warnings. He ignored an order to station only ROK forces within thirty-five miles of the Yalu by ordering all UN forces to this border. Unbeknownst to him, 180,000 to nearly 230,000 Chinese "volunteers" awaited his forces. The Chinese troops attacked and then dispersed, teasing MacArthur into believing that they were defeated while they slowly surrounded the UN forces. By the 26th of November, the Chinese forces began their full-scale assault.⁵

Facing the onslaughts of hundreds of thousands of communist Chinese troops were Ronald Burbridge, William A. Reynolds, and Michael F. Metzger. As he looked back on it, Burbridge appreciated what his officers did for him but thanked the Lord for saving his life against the Chinese drove. He described how one incidental move near Sudong-ni in North Korea saved his life,

The whole battalion and our platoon was on one side of the road and the rest of the company was on the other side. . . . The enemy started dropping shells down the road so we scattered and took cover. Our company commander told us to go ahead and dig in for the night on our right flank. . . . They went into the hills on our left side. About two o'clock in the morning we heard all these whistles and bugles. . . . They would blow bugles, anything to drive you bananas and we heard this commotion, gunfire and so forth over on the other side [of] the road. [The] Chinese . . . hit our company over there. They didn't know we were on the other side. Our company commander called for us to come over . . . to help. . . . [but] we couldn't get across [the road] because the Chinese had several big Russian tanks running up and down the road with [these] big spotlights. . . . [Since] we were using a lot of World War II equipment, [we] had nothing to knock these tanks. . . . Our small rocket launchers would just absolutely bounce off of these . . . tanks and so we had to wait until daybreak [when] we could call in an air strike.

Once the sun rose, UN aircraft battered the enemy. Unfortunately, the enemy had already done its damage. Burbridge continued,

[When] we . . . [were] able to get over to our company . . . [I] couldn't believe what I [saw], Marines dead in their sleeping bags. The company was completely overrun in there and our boys were severely shot up. . . . We [moved] through the area checking . . . bodies and so forth . . . to see if anybody was alive [and] to take prisoners. . . . [At] that time we had a Chinese American born . . . lieutenant [Chew Een Lee] who was in charge of our platoon. . . . We . . . started through the area and he rolled one of these people over, stood there, and looked at him for a little bit and he said, "Gentlemen, . . . These people are not North Koreans." He [said], "They are Chinese."

Unfortunately while Lieutenant Lee and his platoon were shocked and prepared for the worst, "MacArthur passed it off. He said, 'They're just "volunteers".'"⁶ But, these Chinese "volunteers" changed the Korean War profoundly.

Advancing farther north, the Americans found the number of "volunteers" grew as resistance stiffened. Near Yudam-ni, a town at the Chosin Reservoir's base, Burbridge and his fellow servicemen faced the most Chinese resistance, "[After] Thanksgiving . . . they closed the door behind us. [They] completely surrounded the 1st Marine Division

with a hundred and fifty thousand troops.” Facing an enemy over ten times their own strength, “things really started to fall apart.” Unable to get supplies or even tank support, they soon discovered that the enemy had completely surrounded them. The battalion headquarters officially told these Marines the desperate situation that they faced: dug in, surrounded by the enemy, they had little chance of breaking free. Disregarding this unpleasant news, Burbridge’s battalion commander blared, “We’re gonna come out as Marines or we’re not coming out at all!’.” Apparently, the Chinese had not known with whom they were messing.⁷

The breakout began. Burbridge recalled his unit’s efforts against the Chinese encirclement,

We had to fight our way back every inch of the way and it was a very costly thing to do. We broke out . . . the early part of December . . . and took the first hill. My company and my battalion [were] to spearhead the breakout. . . . We had to go through the mountains because . . . the enemy had [the roads] pretty well covered. . . . We did this at night under the big guns which would put flares up . . . to guide us out.⁸

With nowhere to turn, Burbridge’s company and battalion began their fight out of the Chosin Reservoir.

Since his return to the United States, Burbridge has repeatedly thanked God for sending his platoon a “gung ho” lieutenant. Even though Lieutenant Lee continuously volunteered his platoon for extra duty, Burbridge and the other platoon men literally voted to keep him as their platoon officer. Fighting their way out of the Chinese encirclement, this lieutenant saved their lives on numerous occasions. Burbridge recited one instance,

Our Chinese [American] lieutenant . . . , he knew these people; he spoke their language and knew what they were gonna [sic] do and so we knew what they were

gonna [sic] do about as quickly as they did. . . . [Once] he convinced a group of Chinese soldiers that we were Chinese [soldiers] out on patrol and they let us . . . go on but then after we got so far from them, then he turned and in Chinese [he] said some bad things to them.”

For Burbridge and his platoon, a Chinese-American lieutenant was truly a godsend.⁹

Although they had escaped some of the Chinese advances, they found that other American forces had not been as fortunate. Fox Company, which initially contained three hundred men, was desperately trying to hold a vital supply route point when Burbridge’s Baker Company came to its rescue. Burbridge was shocked at what he witnessed, “[When] we broke through to Fox Company, they had about thirty [to] . . . fifty [men] left, but I’ve never seen so many dead Chinese people in my life. They had [the Chinese] stacked everywhere. . . .” Shocked by the dead enemy strewn over the battlefield, he grew to admire Fox Company, a group of men ecstatic to see fellow Americans. He reminisced,

[When] the Fox Company Marines saw us coming down, they came running out to meet us because they were . . . very happy to see us. . . . [Although] they were asked many times by the Chinese communists to give up . . . , [their] company commander [who was] severely wounded [and later] got the Congressional Medal of Honor for his deeds [there] at Toktong Pass said, “No, we’re not. We’re not going to give up.”

Ironically, while Baker Company rescued these men, it was Fox Company that Burbridge credited with the gallantry, bravery, and honor of American fighting men.¹⁰

Realizing that they could not defeat the communists alone, the ground forces relied on the air forces. In fact, this armed forces cooperation was not only approved, it was expected. For example, every Marine in Burbridge’s unit carried a fluorescent panel. Before calling in an air strike, Marines laid these panels on the ground in a line to

differentiate their location from the enemy locations for the incoming air strike. To say the least, Burbridge appreciated the flying men, “Thank the Lord we had those with us. . . . Boy, I’ll tell you . . . , if you wanted to see [the enemy] run, call in an air strike.” On many occasions, the airmen literally saved the day for the ground forces.¹¹

Expending energy while fighting for his life, Burbridge had two “nourishing” memories. The first happened when the Navy, refusing to be outdone by the air forces, sent crates of mouth-watering freshly baked bread for the ground troops, including Burbridge’s platoon. The second memory was that while these brave men were surrounded by hundreds of thousands of Chinese, they celebrated Thanksgiving. Once again under the able leadership of Lieutenant Lee, Burbridge’s men broke out against the Chinese in time to return to the hill at the battalion perimeter. There they had a feast of turkey, dressing, mashed potatoes, and gravy, a meal which not only gave them nourishment but also returned them to humanity. Although the cold temperatures also instantly froze their food, this meal still surpassed the ten-year-old C-rations of World War II that they had been eating. In recognition of the turkeys who gave their lives for these forces, these soldiers named this hill “Turkey Hill” (Appendix A).¹²

Unfortunately, according to Burbridge, such short moments of relief seemed few and far between as the enemy continued its human wave assaults. Traumatized by the sights and sounds of Chinese troops, Burbridge and the three other men of his fire team could only expect the worst as they were sent out to man an isolated post. At this warning post, they were to detect any enemy movement. Knowing that the enemy had overrun a fire team in this very location the previous night made Burbridge’s nerves even

worse, “We were just absolutely petrified. We went out about five hundred yards ahead of Baker Company. There was a little path that we took . . . and as we left our perimeter there [were] two machine guns [sitting] up . . . on each side of this path.” Although he should have been relieved to have this support, he could only imagine the worst. As a result, he laughingly cautioned the machine gunners, ““Whatever happens tonight, . . . for heaven’s sakes let the first four guys through ‘cause that’s going to be us’.” Thankfully, that was a quiet night in Burbridge’s sector.¹³

Surrounded by death and despair, two things motivated Burbridge: letters from his wife and his will to survive. Obviously, the mailman did not always deliver, but when he did, Burbridge was elated. First writing to his wife on the ship to the Far East and then after he landed at Inchon, he found little time to sleep let alone write while fighting the Chinese. Luckily, his wife wrote and when Burbridge received her letters, he was entertained for hours, especially if she wrote of their new daughter. But, the letters only stimulated Burbridge’s real motivation, his determination to return home. “When we found out the situation we were in, [we got] mad and then things [changed]. . . . You wanted to go home. That’s the thing you have on your mind all the time. . . . [I] wanted to go home and I wasn’t gonna let anybody stop me.” Little did the Chinese know what anger and determination they faced.¹⁴

Yet anger and determination could not block out the horror of being surrounded by his dead and wounded partners in arms. Describing the hellishness of war, Burbridge recalled that one day he would be talking with a friend and the next day he would “pick him up in pieces, put him in a poncho, and carry him off a hill.” Regardless of the danger,

the Marines collected as many of these fallen men as they could. Once forced off a hill, the Marines regretted leaving their wounded and dead behind, but true to their traditions, they returned. Remembering one young soldier, Burbridge stated, "After we set up a perimeter, I helped carry [the] wounded down off of the hill and as we were putting this young man on a stretcher to bring him down, . . . - this about tears my heart out now - he looked up at me and he said, 'I knew you guys would be back'." Modestly stating that he only obeyed orders, Burbridge insisted that the heroes of the Korean war were the wounded and the dead that they brought out with them.¹⁵

As if the communist forces were not enough, the weather also proved to be an enemy for the UN forces. Facing temperatures of thirty to forty degrees below zero, they felt the Chinese advance seemed even worse as the weapons literally froze up and would not fire, and became so cold that skin froze to their touch. To keep their C-rations and water canteens from freezing solid, men carried them inside their clothes. Back home, The Council Grove (KS) Republican emphasized the freezing conditions that these soldiers faced, "Local residents who complained about the cold weather earlier this week might stop a bit to think about the boys fighting the 'cold war' in Korea."¹⁶ Although the servicemen were given heaps of clothes to wear, the supplies, not the enemy, proved to be the downfall of many. Burbridge stated what caused his combat wound: "We had boots which gave us a lot of trouble." To wear these boots, the shoepacs, properly, he and other servicemen were expected to change their wool socks and sole liner daily, but knowing that the enemy could strike at any moment, few servicemen followed this unrealistic rule. "As you would be moving during the day," Burbridge explained, "your

feet would sweat. Then, if you got held up for any length of time, your feet . . . would freeze.” In fact, these boots caused so many casualties in the Korean War, as they had previously done in World War II, that this ailment became known as “shoepac foot.”¹⁷

Fighting against a treacherous enemy to advance fourteen miles in seven days, Burbridge was evacuated by air from Hagaru-ri on December 7, 1950 because of severe frostbite in his feet.¹⁸

Burbridge explicitly stated that his forces did not retreat, “It was not a retreat; it was a withdrawal. There’s a difference. . . . When you retreat there’s nothing behind you. You can fall back. That’s a retreat. . . . We had as many troops behind us, probably more behind us than we did in front of us. We had to . . . fight our way back every inch of the way and it was a very costly thing to do.”¹⁹ Others also disagreed over the “retreat” issue. For example, General MacArthur explained the UN forces’ movement south as a “misunderstood retrograde maneuver” while history has remembered this movement as America’s longest retreat ever.²⁰

Eventually, on December 24, 1950, Burbridge returned to the United States, only to face more hospitalization in California. Happy to return home, he felt guilty about leaving his friends behind on the Korean peninsula. When Baker Company was evacuated out of Wonsan Harbor, only twenty-seven of its over three hundred men remained. Seeing these troops, Burbridge’s company commander, Lieutenant Joseph R. Owen paid tribute to these fighting men,

I crossed behind the scant line of our men . . . , Baker-One-Seven’s remaining effectives. There were a few new men, people whose names I didn’t know. The old salts, Marines who had been with us since Camp Pendelton, had faces that

were dirt-pitted and coated with ice. . . . Corporal Hogan with Treadwill, Lineberry, and Burbridge [were members of] the only fire team that had lasted from the beginning.²¹

Regardless of what Burbridge said about himself, this assistant fire team leader was and is a hero.

Another Kansan who braved the Chinese attacks and the horrific weather was William A. Reynolds. After watching fellow servicemen fall in the field of battle, he stated, “You [didn’t] want to get too close. They [didn’t] last long enough. . . . You feel bad about somebody getting killed . . . but it’s just a way of life. You don’t think nothing about it.” Reynolds gave his opinion of the enemy, “Life didn’t mean a whole lot to them and their life didn’t mean nothing to me.” Writing a short memoir for the Emporia (KS) Legionnaire, he described the enemy as a formidable foe, fully dressed for winter and self-sufficient in their food and ammunition.²² Like Burbridge, Reynolds was shipped out of the fighting because of frostbite, but unlike Burbridge, he would return to the Korean battlefield.²³

Michael F. Metzger also endured the desperate situation in North Korea after the communist Chinese intervened. As the X Corps fought to withdraw from the communists’ clutches, his communication team worked around the clock, “All we did was work, eat something, and sleep and go back to procedures. . . . We spent continuous hours working night and day.” Metzger remembered that two truck-messenger men bravely faced and completed their hazardous mission of taking an important message to a distant ROK unit. But he remembered there were also unlucky communications men:

We had a reserve division; [it] was [the] 3rd Infantry Division and they were . . .

given [the] mission of going up the route from Hamhung . . . and holding the route of withdrawal open to protect the retreat which enabled [the] 7th Army Division and 7th Division and the Marine Corps Division to extract themselves from that mess and bring out casualties and so forth. My unit sent a group out to set up an advanced message center, [a] communications tower of operations . . . in Koto-ri. They never got it up; they got caught in the fighting.²⁴

Regardless of their unit or military specialty, all UN forces faced the Chinese “volunteers.” While some UN forces fought their way south, Metzger became a member of the UN withdrawal to the eastern coast. He described his new role in this dangerous situation,

We began to withdraw from Hungnam back to the evacuation quarter to Hamhung. We . . . again set up [communications] at Hamhung. I was in charge. We took the equipment and installed it in a van in Hamhung, with the help of the right mechanics, and set up a telephone central in this van. . . . This van made a cut-over from the switchboard operation that the Signal Battalion had . . . so they could retreat.

Surrounded by chaos, Metzger still helped to control communications with the UN forces. Although he also served in a number World War II Pacific battle zones like Mindinao, New Guinea, and the South Philippines, it was on the Korean peninsula where Metzger faced his first “retrograde movement.”²⁵

Thousands of miles from his hometown of Council Grove, Metzger was constantly reminded of his peril, although the homefront read a somewhat cheerier interpretation of his situation. Searching for a positive in this daunting situation, the Council Grove Republican reported, “The UN defense perimeter around the Hungnam evacuation beachhead is still holding. . . . UN forces got help today when the mighty battleship Missouri steamed into the bay and unlimbered her big guns . . . [which] have a range of about 20 miles and can reach far into the hills to hit . . . Red forces.”²⁶ Unfortunately, the

situation for Metzger was not as the Republican imagined. While in a tent camp in Hungnam, he heard continual firing from the Missouri and other naval vessels in the harbor.²⁷ Having controlled most of North Korea before the Chinese invaded, the UN-held area had now diminished to a small perimeter around the evacuation point of Hungnam. The UN forces, who dreamed of “being home for Christmas” had woken to a nightmare.

As the communists continued their advance, Metzger became one of 60,000 UN servicemen who participated in the Hungnam evacuation. He described this massive UN exit, “We moved people and equipment [onto] the ship. Boy, it was cold. . . . It [then] became our turn to board ship. Boy, the vast lines of equipment moving down the road. . . ; the road was cluttered with vehicles and other material, some of them broken down and being towed.”²⁸ Nothing was to be left for the communists’ taking. While he faced this disturbing situation, the homefront read of bustling activity,

Landing craft nosed up on the beaches and against the docks. Small freighters with steam up at quays took on their cargoes of men and supplies.

Bigger transports were standing out in deeper water, taking men and material aboard from landing craft, warships cut through the icy waters. A big white hospital ship took aboard the wounded from smaller craft.

Tanks, guns, tracks and jeeps crowded the wharves bumper to bumper. Doughboys and Marines moved across the decks in steady streams. . . .²⁹

Some North Korean civilians did not fare well either. Despite their hurry, the UN forces also evacuated refugees from the coming communist throngs. Metzger recalled,

[With] the long lines of personnel and materiel coming out of Hungnam . . . , there was also a long line of refugees. . . . They wanted to go too. They didn’t want to stay there. I don’t know how many Koreans were evacuated [from] the beach on anything that would float, any kind of a vessel. Mostly Koreans transported these people because we had all we could do to transport military . . . personnel. But

that line of refugees never stopped through the time I was there. . . .

Clearly, the Chinese intervention proved a desperate situation not only for the UN forces but also for North Korean citizens.³⁰

As UN vessels pulled out of Hungnam, the activity did not end. Aboard ship, watching the port of Hungnam grow smaller and smaller in the distance, Metzger was elated to escape. Trying to calm his mother's, Mrs. Eula Metzger's nerves, Metzger wrote her a letter, describing the scene:

I left the flaming devastated port of Hungnam aboard the SS Exmouth Victory behind a curtain of steel being laid down by the big guns of the Navy, the bombing and rocket firing planes of the Air Force and Navy and the artillery of the 3rd Division. . . . The entire evacuation was a success as a military operation, and much more was saved than most of us felt would be. Needless to say, and I will say it often, I am extremely glad to have gotten out of there.³¹

Leaving North Korea, Metzger's unit received orders to proceed to Pusan.³²

The repercussions of the Chinese invasion were felt not only in North Korea, but also in Washington, D.C. The Truman administration scrambled for new Korean War policies. Among the topics discussed was South Korea's worth, especially in the face of communism's worldwide threat of domination. At a December 1, 1950, National Security Council meeting at the Pentagon, General Walter Bedell Smith summarized the fears of many: "It could be assumed that [the Soviets'] first purpose is to defeat European rearmament. They probably do not plan war now but are willing to have it if they can bog us down in Asia. They will not accept a Korea in hostile hands. We should get out of Korea although we do not solve the problem by getting out."³³ According to Smith, America could not get bogged down in a communist diversion on the Korean peninsula while western

Europe lay ripe for the communists' taking. Secretary of State Dean Acheson and his undersecretary Robert A. Lovett disagreed; they did not want to abandon South Korea. Acheson stated, "Our great objective . . . must be to hold an area, to terminate the fighting, to turn over some area to the Republic of Korea, and to get out. . . ." ³⁴ Holding South Korea if only for political reasons, Lovett suggested working for a cease-fire on the Korean peninsula. ³⁵ Once where victory over the communists had seemed assured, the Korean peninsula had now become an area of negotiation and the objective an armistice. But the UN would first conduct one more major offensive against the communists to insure South Korea's democracy.

NOTES

1. Matthew B. Ridgway, The Korean War: How We Met the Challenge, How All-Out War Was Adverted, Why MacArthur Was Dismissed, [and] Why Today's War Objectives Must be Limited (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 48, 49, 50; "From Where I Stood: A Panel," in The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective, ed. Francis H. Heller, with a Preface by Francis H. Heller (Lawrence: Regents Press of KS, 1979), 34. Former Army Chief of Staff J. Lawton Collins said that MacArthur did not trust Walker.

2. Ridgway, War, 47, 48.

3. Michael F. Metzger, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 13 February 1997.

4. Gary A. Donaldson, America at War Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 32; Burton I. Kaufman, The Korean War: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command, American in Crisis Series (New York: Knopf, 1986), 85; Thomas J. Christensen, "Threats, Assurances, and the Last Chance for Peace," International Security 17 (Summer 1992): 136, 135; Hiroyuki Umetsu, "Communist China's Entry into the Korean Hostilities and a U.S. Proposal for a Collective Security Arrangement in the Pacific Offshore Island Chain," Journal of Northeast Asian Studies 15 (Summer 1996): 99, 100; and Alonzo L. Hamby, Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 542-43.

5. Ridgway, War, 47, 50; and Umetsu, "Entry," 101, 102.

6. Ronald Burbridge, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 19 November 1997.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid. According to Dr. Chris Lovett, a fire team is a subsection of a twelve-man squad. Each fire team consists of four men, a gunner, an assistant gunner, and two riflemen.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. "It's Really a Cold War in Korea," Council Grove (KS) Republican, 8 December 1950.

17. Albert E. Cowdrey, The Medics' War, United States Army in the Korean War (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1987), 118.

18. Burbridge, interview by author, 19 November 1997.

19. Ibid.

20. Walter Millis, "Truman and MacArthur," in Korea and the Theory of Limited War, ed. Allen Guttman, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 47; and Richard E. Neustadt, "The Exercise of Presidential Power," in Korea and the Theory of Limited War, ed. Allen Guttman, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 64. He stated that the U.N. forces did retreat.

21. Joseph R. Owen, Colder Than Hell: A Marine Rifle Company at Chosin Reservoir, with a Foreword by Raymond G. Davis (New York: Ballantine, 1996), 265.

22. William A. Reynolds, "Post 5's Bill Reynolds Recalls Introduction to Korean War and Experience at Yalu River," Emporia (KS) Legionnaire, January 1997, William A. Reynolds, Private Collection, photocopy. I was unable to find any corresponding page number to this article.

23. Ibid.; William A. Reynolds, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 March 1997; and William A. Reynolds, Discharge Record, Lyon County Courthouse, Emporia, Kansas, photocopy. According to his discharge record, his wound of frostbite in both feet "occurred" on January 13, 1951.

24. Michael F. Metzger, interview by author, 13 February 1997.

25. Ibid.

26. "Mighty Mo at Hungnam," Council Grove Republican, 18 December 1950. The author did not underline or italicize "Missouri."

27. Metzger, interview by author, 13 February 1997.

28. "Begin Removing 60,000 U.N. Troops by Sea at Hungnam: 80,000 Chinese Communists Press Menacingly against Tiny Allied Escape Route," Hays (KS) Daily News, 13 December 1950.

29. Metzger, interview by author, 13 February 1997.

30. Ibid.

31. "Michael F. Metzger to Eula Metzger," 23 January 1951, Michael F. Metzger, Private Collection, typed copy; and "Capt. M.F. Metzger in Hungman Escape," Council Grove Republican, 23 January 1951. The typed copy that Mr. Metzger gave me is from the Council Grove Republican. Once talking with Mr. Metzger, I was informed that his mother put some of his letters to her in the local newspaper, the Council Grove Republican. Looking through this newspaper's microfilm, I only found one article, an exact copy of two letters which Mr. Metzger had given to me as part of his letters' abstracts. Both appeared in the newspaper's 23 January 1951 edition. He did not underline or italicize the ship's name.

32. Metzger, interview by author, 13 February 1997.

33. "Department of State Memorandum of Conversation: National Security Council Meeting," 1 December 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to Communists China's Intervention, Box 1, Papers of Dean Acheson.

34. "National Security Council Special Meeting," 28 November 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to Communist China's Intervention, Box 1, President's Secretary's Files.

35. "National Security Council Meeting," 1 December 1950, Harry S. Truman Library.

CHAPTER 4

“You Can’t Get Rid of Us That Easily.”: Kansans Again Advance on the Korean Peninsula

On the world’s scoreboard of ideology, with Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and China falling to communism, America felt it could not allow communism to win another nation. Clearly, a win for communism on the Korean peninsula meant much more than the loss of South Korean democracy; it meant the loss of American prestige and threatened to place American diplomacy second in the world in favor of Russian communism. A few of President Harry S. Truman’s advisors clamored, justifiably, for another advance to the Yalu, but many others sighed for a relief to the end of this “awful war” in North and South Korea.¹ But before negotiations could begin, UN forces pushed north once more, establishing a stronghold over South Korea and insuring democracy on at least half of the Korean peninsula.

Although General Douglas MacArthur “reigned” as the UN commander, it was the 8th Army’s commander, General Matthew B. Ridgway, who remolded the UN forces into the able fighting men they had been before the Yalu-Chosin debacle. Beginning a massive three-month counteroffensive, Operation Thunderbolt, on January 25, 1951, the UN forces slowly advanced (Appendix A). After they repulsed the Chinese fourth offensive, they not only held but for the first time since the Chinese intervention, they took the initiative with Operation Killer on February 21, 1951. Because they succeeded against the enemy at the Han River edging Seoul, they continued their progress with Operation Ripper beginning on March 7, 1951. Within eight days, Seoul lay in the UN forces’ hands, never to be lost to the enemy again. Holding and even advancing against more

communist attacks, the UN forces, including at least four Kansans, advanced north of the 38th Parallel in Operation Rugged which began on April 5, 1951. In less than a year after the North Korean invasion, the Korean War had truly become an “accordion war” of offensives, counteroffensives, and holding actions.²

Among those involved in the revamped UN force was Kansan John T. Schuckman. After a two-month recovery from a bullet wound in his chest, he returned to his old unit, the 5th Cavalry Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division, on December 24, 1950. Although Schuckman was sidelined and personally did not face the Chinese communist forces in North Korea, his unit clearly had. Startled by the visible effects of the Chinese intervention, he noticed, “There weren’t too many people [left] that I knew.”³

Advancing north, he faced a new problem that apparently not only boggled the servicemen, but also the homefront as well to such an extent that newspapers evidenced the peculiar shortage. For example, Stan Swinton’s article in the Hays (KS) Daily News pleaded with the homefront to understand this shortage,

This problem isn’t a correspondent’s business. But so many of the soldiers fighting this war are worried about it that I’m going to put in a word to their wives and mothers:

Don’t write Joe or Bill and ask him why he isn’t sending you more letters.

He wants to. He tries to. But much of the time he just can’t. . . .

Here’s why he doesn’t write very much. . . .

. . . He’s tired. . . . Bone tired. . . . He’s tired and there is always that terrible tension—the waiting. Maybe the shells won’t come over today like they did last night. Maybe these strange Asian enemies won’t make another insane banzai attack and get themselves killed today.

Tension and waiting. They’re always with him up there in the foxhole, with mines and wire around. . . . But he doesn’t want to write that sudden death is around the corner. And if you can’t write about where you are and what you’re doing without worrying the little woman or mother, you just don’t want to write.⁴

This explanation may have been true for thousands of American troops in South Korea, but Schuckman's explanation for not writing home was much different - a lack of stationery. This paper shortage became such a problem that even the 8th Army commander and eventual Supreme UN Commander General Matthew B. Ridgway observed that servicemen lacked writing material.⁵ Unfortunately, this shortage adversely affected the homefront as families who stared out their windows for the mailman's arrival often interpreted the lack of letters to mean the very worst.

But leave it to innovative American soldiers to resolve this paper crisis.

Advancing through virtual South Korean ghost towns, Schuckman and his cohorts spied an abandoned mortuary. "Liberating" envelopes and stationery from this deserted site, he and his friends settled their own paper crunch. Happy to finally be able to write home, they overlooked the blackened edge of the stationery, a design which symbolized a notice of death, hoping that their loved ones at home would also overlook this design. They did not. Having had a total of six relatives serving in World War II and later military actions and especially after seeing this stationery, Schuckman stated, "[My] parents,] they did a lot of praying."⁶

Despite this paper crisis, the war continued on the Korean peninsula. Looking back on his service in the war, Schuckman proudly proclaimed, "I was considered [to have been in] five major battles. . . . I got five Bronze Stars . . . [and] I got a Purple Heart which I earned." As the Korean War continued, Schuckman's three-year enlistment expired in late April of 1951. He came home and married his sweetheart, but suffered from malaria, another Korean War "wound," for weeks. Years later, he remembered his

philosophy to end the Korean War, “We better come up with a settlement.”⁷

Having escaped in the Hungnam evacuation from the communists’ clutches, Michael F. Metzger returned to Pusan. As Washington, D.C., the Far East, and the UN were shaken by the Korean War’s sudden turn of events, Metzger’s Signal Corps Company awaited its orders while celebrating Christmas of 1950. Finally, they received orders to proceed to a small town near Yokohama, Japan, where they established a “wire radio center” and “set up operations,” among their other responsibilities. Pondering America’s foreign policy, Metzger wrote his mother on January 14, 1951,

I have been anxiously [sic] waiting to see what is to develop with the UN forces here in Korea. . . . U.S. policy now makes it appear that we are here to stay and that the UN shall fight on. Actually as I see it . . . [it’s] the only proper thing for the UN to do. Abandonment of Korea would be a loss of all effort thus far and a terrible thing for all loyal Koreans. . . . Perhaps this war can be settled peacefully once the terrific losses of China are felt by its people. We can be thankful for our superiority in air power and arms. . . . The U.S. must go all out for military preparedness and be in position to fight as may be necessary.⁸

And prepare it did. Metzger’s unit, now attached to the 8th Army, restored itself in men and materiel before it returned to South Korea in March of 1951.⁹

Metzger’s Signal Corps immediately began work establishing communications for what became the 8th Army’s advance north. Helping as a “wire communications officer” to string wire across South Korea, Metzger followed the advance while other communications personnel served in the code-handling or cryptographic teams, photographic teams, or telephone teams. After his first year in the Korean War, Metzger applied for Police Command Reassignment, PECOM, and joined the 50th Signal Battalion on Japan’s mainland island of Honshu, where he spent two more years before he returned

home. From his World War II service in the Pacific islands to his Korean War action in North Korea, South Korea, and Japan, he later attested, “At one time I thought war had a certain glory to it and there was purpose in it. I don’t think that anymore. . . . It’s so wasteful, so squanderous of human life. . . . Let’s . . . do something to avoid [war].” Serving in two wars, Metzger knew the truth of war.¹⁰

Another Kansan who participated in the UN forces’ final major advance north was William A. Reynolds. After recovering from frostbite, he returned to the Korean peninsula with the Army’s 14th Regiment of the 25th Division, not his original 21st Regiment of the 24th Division. Once the UN forces succeeded in their advance to the 38th Parallel, Reynolds’ life became less chaotic. In his short memoir, he wrote,

Our duties were somewhat different from those during my first trip [in the Korean War]. We sat on the line, taking turns going on patrol and probing till we drew fire and [we would begin] then withdrawing. Or our mission might be to take a hill and then pull back. Such warfare soon becomes frustrating.¹¹

Obviously, the Korean War was becoming a war of stalemate.¹²

Interestingly, one of Reynolds’ hometown radio stations, KTSW, a forerunner to today’s KVOE, caught up with this Emporia, Kansas soldier amidst the thousands of UN troops on the Korean peninsula. During the battle for Hill 404, an Army correspondent named Lieutenant Bill Neeson interviewed Reynolds as his 3rd platoon waited in reserve, ready to help if the 1st platoon’s attack proved unsuccessful. Now a nineteen-year-old platoon sergeant, Reynolds described the advance on Hill 404 as gunfire echoed through the correspondent’s microphone, “[First platoon is] receiving automatic (gunfire) weapon fire, machine guns (gunfire), . . . [and] possibly rockets . . . [while they’re] throwing

machine gun fire, small arms, [and] rifle fire. Our heavy 30s are sitting up on the hill across from us. We have tanks down at the bottom of the hill (gunfire).” Asked about his previous war wound, he declared that although many UN soldiers suffered from frostbite, the enemy suffered much more from this natural foe. The correspondent who had spent hours with these fighting men agreed as Reynolds proudly declared, “We have about the best platoon, as far as I’m concerned, in the regiment. I believe we can do just about anything they put us to.” Of course, Reynolds could not end this interview without telling his mother in Emporia that he would be home soon, in two months.¹³

Taking hills, leaving hills, and retaking those same hills, these movements now represented the Korean War. Taking casualties while raiding into enemy territory, Reynolds’ Army soldiers, like the Marines at the Chosin Reservoir, refused to leave their fallen men behind. The war continued over mere feet or yards of territory near the 38th Parallel, Reynolds returned home in December of 1951 when his enlistment expired. In addition to his memories, he returned with a piece of the fighting in him - he had shrapnel in one of his hands.¹⁴ Contemplating the meaning of the war, he simply stated, “You do what you got to do.”¹⁵

Stunned by the communist Chinese blow in November 1950, UN forces withdrew, by sea or land, from North Korea months before the UN advance to the 38th Parallel. As troops extracted themselves from the communists’ clutches, the UN Korean War policy of reuniting North and South Korea under democracy changed, forcing American policy advisors to turn the Korean War into a war of attrition, maximumly afflicting losses on the communist enemy while sustaining minimal UN losses.¹⁶ In fact, the April 30, 1951 Joint

Chiefs of Staff report to the Senate's Foreign Relations and Armed Forces Committees delineated the UN's new Korean War policy, "[It] was felt that the Chinese Communists probably would not discuss a cease-fire until they had attempted one or two more offensives and were beaten back with heavy losses. . . . [We] agreed that every effort must be exerted to bring about an honorable solution. . . ."17 Obviously, this policy was enacted, since this report itself was delivered to the Senate during the heat of the UN advance to the 38th Parallel. Clearly, American foreign policy makers were preparing for an armistice in the Korean entanglement, but not everyone approved this new policy. In fact, UN commander General Douglas MacArthur's own policy, which greatly opposed the new Korean War policy, set President Harry S. Truman after him on a collision course of decisive constitutionality.

NOTES

1. Gary A. Donaldson, America at War Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 62. Donaldson described the Korean War as an “awful war.”

2. Ibid., 42, 46; Burton I. Kaufman, The Korean War: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command, America in Crisis Series (New York: Knopf, 1986), 146, 148, 116; and Matthew B. Ridgway, The Korean War: How We Met the Challenge, How All-Out Asian War Was Adverted, Why MacArthur Was Dismissed, [and] Why Today's War Objectives Must be Limited (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 110, 111, 255. Ridgway wrote that J. Lawton Collins was afraid the word “killer” in “Operation Killer” would horrify Americans. Explaining that Americans should understand the truth of war, Ridgway stuck with this operation's name.

3. John T. Schuckman, interview by author, Tape recording, Gorham, Kansas, 25 July 1997.

4. Stan Swinton, “Soldiers Unable to Write Many Letters From Korea: There are Good Reasons Why GIs Sometimes Delay,” Hays Daily News, 29 September 1950. It is interesting that Swinton mentions only enemy, not U.N., deaths after the enemy's banzai attacks. Obviously, Swinton equated the communists' attacks to the Japanese “banzai” attacks of World War II.

5. Ridgway, War, 87.

6. Schuckman, interview by author, 25 July 1997. See the chapter entitled ““Where have all the boys gone?": Wives of Korean War Servicemen Remember the War” for more reaction to this stationery.

7. Ibid.; and “Basgall-Schuckman Vows Were Read,” Rush County (KS) News, 26 July 1951; “Mr. and Mrs. John T. Schuckman,” Rush County News, 2 August 1951. Their June 14th wedding picture was in the newspaper's 2 August 1951 edition. See the chapter entitled ““Where have all the boys gone?": Wives of Korean War Servicemen Remember the War” for more information on his arrival home.

8. “Michael F. Metzger to Eula Metzger,” 14 January 1951, Michael F. Metzger, Private Collection, typed copy; and “Cpt. M.F. Metzger in Hungman Evacuation,” Council Grove (KS) Republican, 23 January 1951. The typed copy Mr. Metzger gave me

appeared in the January 23, 1951 edition of the Council Grove Republican.

9. Michael F. Metzger, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas 13 February 1997.

10. Ibid.

11. William A. Reynolds, "Bill Reynolds Remembers His Second Hitch in Korea as an Army Combat Infantryman," Emporia (KS) Legionnaire, February 1997, William A. Reynolds, Private Collection, photocopy. I was unable to find any corresponding page number to this article.

12. William A. Reynolds, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 March 1997.

13. "Bill Neeson's Interview with Bill Reynolds in the Korean War," KTSW, n.d., William A. Reynolds, Private Collection, Tape recording. Although this interview contained no specific date, the correspondent mentioned that this was Reynolds' second trip to the fighting in South Korea.

14. Reynolds, interview by author, 20 March 1997; and "Reynolds Remembers," Legionnaire.

15. Reynolds, interview by author, 20 March 1997.

16. Ridgway, War, 108.

17. "Record of the Actions Taken by the Joint Chiefs of Staff Relative to the United Nations Operations in Korea from 25 June 1950 to 11 April 1951 Prepared by Them for the Senate Armed Forces and Foreign Relations Committees," 30 April 1951, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to Communist China's Intervention, Box 1, President's Secretary's Files.

Chapter 5

“I Now Close My Military Career and Just Fade Away.”: MacArthur’s Dismissal and America’s Limited War Policy in the Korean War

Deciding on their new Korean War goals, the Truman administration turned to another growing challenge: how to quell the uncontrollable General Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur, who had been raised in an era of total war, when all of society, the government, and the military combined to use every means to achieve a goal, found limited war - when society, the government, and the military only partially mobilized and used limited means to obtain limited goals and objectives - incomprehensible. Almost from the beginning of the fighting on the Korean peninsula, he had questioned America’s limited war policy. Having wanted to blockade China, allow Chiang Kai-shek’s forces plus UN forces to attack China, and use atomic bombs in North Korea, the total war supporter MacArthur could not understand his opposition in the Truman administration. During the Korean War, MacArthur and Truman were on a foreign policy collision course that would lead to MacArthur’s dismissal and a divided America.¹

Not just once, but on several occasions MacArthur acted questionably. Taking needed supplies from his “rival,” 8th Army commander General Walton Walker, to land at Inchon, he put many U.N. forces at risk. Truman biographer Alonzo L. Hamby even questioned the miracle at Inchon, “It was . . . undertaken against a small country with no effective air or naval power. Never a 5,000 to 1 gamble, [it was] never likely to result in the loss of more than a battalion and a destroyer or two if everything had gone wrong.”² Nevertheless, the Inchon victory added to MacArthur’s legend of greatness. Consequently, few members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff chose to disagree with his ideas.

As a result, he advanced north too quickly and overextended his supply lines, putting thousands of UN lives in danger while he disregarded the warnings of an alarmed communist Chinese government. Incredibly, as his forces suddenly found themselves fighting a new enemy, hordes of Chinese “Volunteers,” MacArthur was infuriated that his troops had slowed their advance to the Yalu. Clearly, MacArthur was out of touch with his forces.³

As if his actions were not damaging enough, MacArthur’s own words were disastrous. For example, after visiting Chaing Kai-shek in Formosa, he disregarded the Truman administration’s “neutralize Formosa” policy by openly stating that America should protect this small island - the last bastion of the “old” China - especially from a communist Chinese attack. Although Truman contemplated dismissing MacArthur then, he instead demanded that MacArthur withdraw the outrageous statement. The official published White House statement read, “[In] the field of foreign relations there can be but one voice in stating the position of the United States’ - that of the President.”⁴ MacArthur did disavow his statement, but, unfortunately, his dissenting opinion had already been read by thousands of Americans in periodicals, such as The Congressional Record and U.S. News and World Report.⁵ Justifying his rash advance to the Yalu, MacArthur told the President of the United Press, Hugh Baillie,

From the initiation of the North Korean aggression against the Republic of Korea until the total defeat of the North Korean armies, support from the Communist Chinese . . . was open and notorious and all-inclusive.

[The] tactic of the North Koreans in initially effecting preparations for war behind the concealment of political boundaries and then striking with overwhelming force without warning or notice of belligerency was followed without variation by the Chinese Communists.⁶

Apparently, MacArthur was upset that the enemy had not forewarned him of their attacks.⁷

But the Chinese did warn him, and he chose to ignore their warnings and even to disregard the fact that his own forces had captured Chinese soldiers on October 26, 1950.⁸ Later admitting he had been given warning, MacArthur then claimed he only had “a night’s march” of time to prepare for the Chinese attacks. Of course, as he reasoned, if he had been allowed to bomb Manchuria, “an enormous handicap, without precedent in military history,” his problems and those of his forces would have been solved.⁹ Explaining his actions, MacArthur once again opposed the Truman’s administration’s limited war policy.

But MacArthur’s most outrageous statements were still to come. Once the newly appointed General Matthew B. Ridgway’s 8th Army offensive to the 38th Parallel succeeded democratic forces once again controlled all of South Korea, much to the relief of the Truman administration. Secretary of State Dean Acheson and President Harry S. Truman then turned to the possibility of negotiations with the enemy. Apparently, MacArthur disagreed. Just before the Truman administration stretched its hand of peace out to the Chinese and North Koreans, MacArthur issued a warning to the communists; he demanded that Communist China admit its defeat by the UN forces or else UN forces would expand the battlefield into China. Never one to hide his views, Truman grew more impatient with his Supreme UN commander as MacArthur’s statements ruined a chance for an early peace. But it was a letter to House Minority Leader Joseph Martin that brought an abrupt end to MacArthur’s military career. In this letter which he knew would

be read on the floor of the House of Representatives, MacArthur vehemently protested America's "Europe First" policy - which saw western Europe as the communists' real target and therefore sent more military and economic aid to this area - and clamored for total war on the Korean peninsula. MacArthur exclaimed, "There is no substitute for victory".¹⁰ Releasing his latest attack on Truman's foreign policy, he knew his command days were numbered.¹¹

Yet the tension between MacArthur and Truman had started much earlier, when Truman ascended to the presidency. Seeing this new president as a potential enemy, MacArthur described him as a "Missouri hayseed accidentally shot into the White House by the death of a great man."¹² The animosity was mutual. Truman described MacArthur as "the 'Right Hand of God'".¹³ While MacArthur clamored for a total war, Truman supported a limited action. In fact, Truman repeatedly stated, "We are not at war".¹⁴ Once contemplating asking Congress for a declaration for war, he was advised by Defense Secretary Louis Johnson, Joint Chief of Staff Chairman Omar Bradley, and Senator Tom Connally against such action. These three advisors believed a Congressional minority would slow the declaration of war process, needlessly putting American lives and American action on the Korean peninsula at risk. Without a proper term to call this UN action, Truman agreed with a reporter who asked whether it might be called a "police action."¹⁵ Unfortunately, this term would haunt Truman, and American servicemen and their families for years to come.¹⁶

But it was Truman's limited war policy, not the words describing the Korean War action, that MacArthur attacked. From the beginning, the fight on the Korean peninsula

was intended to be a limited one, as Truman chose to first call up the National Guard and Reserves instead of immediately calling for a wartime draft.¹⁷ In addition, while MacArthur wanted to retake the entire Korean peninsula after the North Korean invasion, Truman initially only wanted to reclaim South Korea for democracy.¹⁸ Even when facing the new Communist Chinese enemy, the Truman administration proceeded with caution while MacArthur continued to push his forces north and called for total war. For instance, in response to MacArthur's clamor for UN bombings in Manchuria, the National Security Council declared, "[Our] policy is to avoid having the Soviets succeed in involving us in a war with Communist China. . . . [The] creation of a situation whereby United Nations aircraft would attack targets in Manchuria would increase . . . [that] likelihood."¹⁹ Cautiously progressing with its war policies, the Truman administration realized that the battlefield must remain only on the Korean peninsula, and that its actions must not start or even hint of starting a war with Russia.²⁰ Clearly, the war policy battle line had been drawn between MacArthur and the Truman administration.

Aware of his Far Eastern and UN commander's expanded war proposals, Truman's only recourse was to relieve MacArthur. But he did not make this decision immediately or alone. For months Truman hoped that MacArthur, a World War II hero, would change his ways and his statements. When this did not happen, Truman turned to friends and advisors, including Defense Secretary George Marshall, foreign policy advisor Averell Harriman, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, and Joint Chief of Staff Chairman Omar Bradley. These four advisors unanimously called for MacArthur's dismissal. The president decided to relieve MacArthur on April 9, 1951, four days after Representative

Martin read MacArthur's latest statement on the House floor.²¹

Unfortunately, problems arose. One day after Truman decided to relieve MacArthur, the president issued orders for Army Secretary Frank Pace, who was in South Korea, to personally deliver the dismissal order to the Supreme UN commander. But a press leak changed these plans, forcing Truman to tell the nation of MacArthur's dismissal even before MacArthur himself received word. In a statement released on April 10, 1951, Truman stated,

With deep regret I have concluded that General of the Army Douglas MacArthur is unable to give his wholehearted support to the policies of the United States Government and of the United Nations in matters pertaining to his official duties. In view of the specific responsibilities imposed upon me by the Constitution of the United States and the added responsibility which has been entrusted to me by the United Nations, I have decided that I must make a change in the command in the Far East. I have, therefore, relieved General MacArthur of his commands and have designated Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway as his successor.

. . . . It is fundamental . . . that military commanders must be governed by the policies and directives issued to them in the manner provided by our laws and Constitution. . . .

General MacArthur's place in history as one of our greatest commanders is fully established. The nation owes him a debt of gratitude for the distinguished and exceptional service which he has rendered his country in posts of great responsibility. For that reason I repeat my regret at the necessity for the action I feel compelled to take in his case.²²

Already unpopular as a president because of the "long" Korean War, Truman faced much hostility for this act.²³ For example, the Chicago Tribune and the Washington Times-

Herald reported:

Pres. Truman must be impeached and convicted. His hasty and vindictive removal of MacArthur is the culmination of a series of acts which have shown that [Truman] is unfit, morally and mentally, for his high office. . . . MacArthur was fired because he said forcefully what the people of the United States are thinking. . . . The American nation has never been in grave danger. It is led by a fool who is surrounded by knaves.²⁴

America's servicemen felt the vibrations of MacArthur's sudden dismissal.

Whether they served during or after the war, in the Far East or stateside, the servicemen were split on this momentous decision of Truman's. Many disagreed with the MacArthur dismissal. For example, William A. Reynolds, a soldier who survived both North Korean and Chinese attacks, stated, "I think Truman made a big mistake. MacArthur was a military man [while] Truman was [only] a politician."²⁵ Soldier Palmer L. Brack gave different explanation for his backing MacArthur, "[MacArthur] had more publicity than the president and [Truman] had to do something so he . . . fired him . . . on 'count of he was getting' so popular. . . . Really, MacArthur probably knew what he was doin'. . . . [He was] just getting too popular and when you get [more] popular than the president, the president has to do something."²⁶ Although he served stateside, Wallace E. Johnson was just as upset as other servicemen, "Truman should never have fired MacArthur because . . . he had been in the Pacific, and [he] knew the people and knew the Chinese and knew that general area."²⁷

Fighting under dangerous conditions against a communist foe, many servicemen fumed that their action in North and South Korea was not called a "war" but a "police action." Distancing themselves from this dishonorable term, airman Glenn Matson and soldier Ronald Burbridge stated that it was "**Truman's** [emphasis added] police action."²⁸ Instead of calling it a "police action," Gerald R. "Jerry" Kline bitterly remembered another name, "It was just a 'peace action' . . . but in the meantime a lot of our buddies were getting killed."²⁹ Everett L. Mickelson, who trained soldiers at Fort Riley, concurred, "They called it a 'conflict' but it was a 'war' and we lost a lot of people."³⁰ Johnson

exclaimed, "I'd like to know what the definition of a 'police action' and a 'war' [are]. What's the difference between the two?. . . We sure weren't trained like policemen."³¹

Like MacArthur, many servicemen were also frustrated with the Truman administrations's limited war policy. Airman Charles "Bud" Hoffman revealed the attitude of many servicemen in the weekly briefings at Kimpo Airfield during the war, "We were told in every one of those briefings if Washington would have turned us loose, we could have won the Korean War within two weeks, but they held us back . . . [so we] were not very happy with Washington."³² Glenn Matson recalled the irony of seeing a Chinese airport just miles away from UN forces, yet according to the limited war policies, the uncrossable 38th Parallel sheltered this enemy stronghold from UN attacks.³³ Serving stateside, Ray Schreiner sensed the frustration as government-ordered limitations only established havens for the enemy, "They told you what to bomb [and] what bridge you couldn't bomb. Well, if you can't do this and you can't do that, that's where [the enemy will] move to if they can't bomb this."³⁴ Jim Lowther, Harley G. Rowley, and Lawrence D. Timmons were disgruntled that as more enemy troops moved south, they faced no opposition because UN forces were not allowed to bomb Manchuria.³⁵ Ronald Burbridge claimed that businessmen were behind the limited war policy,

I don't know how true this is [but] I was led to believe that one reason we didn't [blow up the Chosin Reservoir] was because there was a lot of people in high places in the United States [who] had money tied up in the thing over there. . . . I could not understand that. Two or three well-placed loads of bombs on that reservoir and the war would have been over because all the lights woulda went out . . . [since the] Chosin Reservoir supplies power to Manchuria and all of northern Korea."³⁶

In addition, other servicemen, such as Richard P. Keeling and William A. Reynolds

stated their frustration with limited war by declaring their confidence in the American armed forces. Having served on the Main Line of Resistance with other men, Keeling said, "There wasn't any doubt in our mind that we could push the Chinese all the way back to the Yalu if [we] were given the go-ahead."³⁷ Besides the North Koreans and Chinese, Reynolds looked to battle another communist force, "We should have went across the Yalu and finished it right there and whipped Russia while we were there."³⁸ Since the Korean War was America's first limited war in the twentieth century, it was understandable that many servicemen would question the Truman administration's limited war policies that indirectly led to MacArthur's dismissal.³⁹

While many servicemen opposed the Truman administration's foreign policy decisions, other servicemen supported them. Although he supported MacArthur's leadership, John T. Schuckman understood the danger of MacArthur's proposals,

Later on, thinking about the situation, [I] kinda realized that he wanted to do things that maybe would get us completely involved over there where we couldn't back away from it. Like, he wanted to go into China and that might not have been the right thing. . . . [It] might have been an experience there that we wouldn't have wanted. . . . [It] wouldn't seem possible that we could beat the Chinese who were there on their home ground.⁴⁰

Although he opposed the communist sanctuary behind the Manchurian border, Raymond A. Luthi stated, "I think the wiser people [who] were in charge of things knew that we could not go into China and win. I think there's too many people."⁴¹

While MacArthur had his supporters, so too did Truman. For example, Charles "Bud" Hoffman, Michael F. Metzger, John T. Schuckman, George Walters, and Raymond A. Luthi supported Truman in his decision to relieve MacArthur. Seaman

Walters declared,

I don't think [Truman] had a choice. . . . MacArthur was wanting to call the shots and Truman was his boss and president. . . . History apparently [showed] that MacArthur wanted his way and his way only and Truman found it just could not be so. . . . I think [Truman] would probably do the same thing again in the same circumstances."⁴²

On the other hand, Luthi took a constitutional approach to MacArthur's dismissal, "I think Truman did what was right because you know what? Like it or not, the president is the commander-in-chief and MacArthur wasn't going to do what Truman told him to do and . . . I believe what [Truman] did was on good advice."⁴³

The homefront's response to MacArthur's dismissal was just as divided as the servicemen's responses. Titles of periodical articles, such as "Civilian Stupidity," and "Impeach Truman," evidenced the anger at MacArthur's dismissal.⁴⁴ One newspaper, the Capital Times of Madison, Wisconsin, clearly showed the divisiveness of this issue when it listed abstracts of thirty-seven national newspapers, twenty-one which approved Truman's decision, and sixteen which clearly did not.⁴⁵ Of course, Americans not only read the reactions to MacArthur's dismissal but they also wrote to Truman about their own beliefs. Included among the many responses Truman received was a letter from Mrs. Mabel Ensworth, of Manhattan, Kansas, who wrote that she "[thought] the President [was] 100% right in [the] MacArthur matter."⁴⁶

While Americans divided, the Democrats and Republicans divided along party lines. Democrats, such as the Chair of the House Armed Services Committee Carl Vinson and Senator Hubert H. Humphrey supported Truman's emphasis on constitutional over military authority.⁴⁷ Republicans disagreed. Senator Robert Taft disapproved of

Truman's "pointless policy in the Far east" while Missouri Representative O.K. Armstrong saw MacArthur's dismissal as "the greatest victory for the communists since the fall of . . . mainland . . . China."⁴⁸ Internationally, both the people of Japan and the nationalists of China mourned for MacArthur while America's allies, Great Britain and France, applauded Truman for relieving MacArthur.⁴⁹ Few Korean War decisions divided Americans and America's allies more than the MacArthur dismissal.

When MacArthur and his family returned to American soil, throngs of supporters greeted him. After riding in numerous parades, MacArthur received his greatest honor when he addressed Congress on April 19, 1951. Again blasting the Truman administration's limited war policy, he stated, "[Once] war is forced upon us, there is no other alternative than to apply every available means to bring it to a swift end. War's very object is victory, not prolonged indecision. In war there can be no substitute for victory."⁵⁰ Calling for an expansion of the Korean War, he restated some of his objectives, a blockade of China, bombings in Manchuria, and the use of Nationalist Chinese forces against mainland China.⁵¹ Television gave MacArthur an audience of millions. A World War II and total war hero, he briefly shined in post-dismissal glory, or at least until the Senate's Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees Hearings.

While many Americans questioned the Truman administration's foreign policy in the Far East, Congress became curious. As a result, the Senate conducted hearings in May of 1951 to answer its own questions. Among the many witnesses was Douglas MacArthur. Although he claimed he had been completely subordinate to his superiors, MacArthur did not deny or question Truman's presidential authority to relieve him.

Having wanted to avoid “appeasement” to the communists, he stated that America should fight the Korean War alone, even expanding the war into China. He supported the use of atomic weapons against China, but acknowledged that this responsibility and choice was not his but the president’s. Having testified, MacArthur not only spelled out his catastrophic foreign policy proposals, but also admitted that only the president could decide American foreign policy.⁵²

Next, Truman’s foreign policy advisors testified, shedding more light on the Truman-MacArthur controversy. According to Defense Secretary George C. Marshall, MacArthur was not only insubordinate, he was dangerous.

General MacArthur . . . would have us . . . carry the conflict beyond Korea against the mainland of Communist China. . . . He would have us accept the risk [of] involvement not only in an extension of the war with Red China, but in an all-out war with the Soviet Union. He would have us do this even at the expense of losing our allies and wrecking the coalition of free peoples throughout the world.⁵³

Marshall also explained that MacArthur was not only out of touch with the situation in the Far East, but he was also unaware of the world situation.

[The] divergence arises from the inherent difference between the position of a field commander, whose mission is limited to a particular area and a particular antagonist, and the position of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, and the President who are responsible for the total security of the United States, and who, to achieve and maintain this security, must weigh our interests and objectives in one part of the globe with those in other areas of the world so as to attain the best over-all balance.

It is **their** [emphasis added] responsibility to determine where the main threat to our security lies, where we must fight holding actions, and where and how we must gain time to grow stronger.”⁵⁴

Another Truman foreign policy advisor, Joint Chiefs of Staff General Omar Bradley concurred with Marshall and added his own warning. Following MacArthur’s proposals,

Bradley explained “would involve us in the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy.”⁵⁵ According to these two men, while MacArthur served as a local field commander, his call for an end to the Korean War at all costs not only put the Far East at risk, but the whole world in danger.⁵⁶ As the Korean battlefield turned to stalemate, it became obvious that MacArthur had overstepped his office while the Truman administration and its foreign policy stayed within its realistic confines.⁵⁷ Following the hearings, the great World War II hero, General Douglas MacArthur “just [faded] away” into history after his dismissal.⁵⁸

NOTES

1. Matthew B. Ridgway, The Korean War: How WE Met the Challenge, How All-Out Asian War Was Averted, Why MacArthur Was Dismissed, [and] Why Today's War Objectives Must be Limited (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 145; Geoffrey Perret, Old Soldiers Never Die: The Life of Douglas MacArthur (New York: Random House, 1996), 576; and "Memorandum on Ending the Korean War," 14 December 1952, General Douglas MacArthur, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 25, General Douglas MacArthur File. Even after his dismissal, MacArthur wrote to President Dwight D. Eisenhower of his same Korean War philosophies, proving that he did not understand the dangers of total war in a limited war era. Ridging North Korea of the enemy, he wanted the "atomic bombing of enemy military concentrations and installations in North Korea and the sowing of fields of suitable radio-active materials . . . , [and] to close major lines of enemy supply and communication leading south from the Yalu with simultaneous amphibious landings on both coasts of North Korea."

2. Alonzo L. Hamby, Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 541.

3. Ibid., 545; and Ridgway, War, 30, 61, 59; and Gary A. Donaldson, America at War Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 35.

4. "Dispatch in the New York Herald Tribune," James E. Warner, 29 August 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, President's Secretary's Files. Explaining the different opinions concerning Formosa, the document read, "[MacArthur's] basic contention is that Formosa must be held by the United States or friendly hands for the security of the United States. This contrasts with the official Administration policy, which is that Formosa must be neutralized during the Korean campaign, leaving to the United Nations or other international decision later the ultimate fate of the big island, which the Chinese Communists want to take into their regime."

5. Ibid. Two Congressmen, Representative Joseph Martin and Senator Forrest Donnell, who favored MacArthur's ideas, entered MacArthur's statements into the Congressional periodical.; Hamby, Truman, 555; and Joseph Fromm, "Complete Text of an Exclusive Interview Granted U.S. News and World Report by Gen. Douglas MacArthur in Tokyo," U.S. News and World Report (December 1950), Harry S. Truman

Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, President's Secretary's Files. This source listed no volume or page number.

6. "Telegram from General Douglas MacArthur to Hugh Baillie," Published 2 December 1950 in the New York Herald Tribune, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, President's Secretary's Files.

7. Perret, MacArthur, 550, 551;-52 and Hamby, Truman, 543.

8. "Report from Commanding General X Corps to the JCS," 31 October 1950, Harry S. Truman, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to Communist China's Intervention, Naval Aide Files, Box 1.

9. "MacArthur's Interview with U.S. News and World Report," (December 1950), Harry S. Truman Library, Korean War: Dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur.

10. Perret, MacArthur, 567.

11. Ibid., 566-68.

12. Ibid., 471-72, 541.

13. Hamby, Truman, 480.

14. "Transcript of President's Press Conference," 29 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of George M. Elsey.

15. Ibid.

16. Donaldson, America, 22.

17. "Department of State Memorandum of Conversation," 26 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of Dean Acheson.

18. "President's Conference," 29 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of George M. Elsey.

19. "Interim Report by the National Security Council on United States Courses of Action with Respect to Korea," 16 November 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to Communist China's Intervention, Box 1, President's Secretary's Files.

20. Weekly Review, Department of State, 22 November 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to Communist China's Intervention, Box 1, Papers of George M. Eley; and "President's Conference," 29 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion.

21. Hamby, Truman, 543, 555, 556. The other six men whom Truman consulted were divided on whether MacArthur should have been dismissed.

22. "Statement by the President," 10 April 1951, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, President's Secretary's Files. A similar statement was also founded in "President's Address," 11 April 1951, Harry St. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, President's Secretary's Files. In his testimony in the Senate hearings, MacArthur revealed that he first heard of his dismissal from his wife. One of MacArthur's aides heard the radio broadcast concerning MacArthur's dismissal and immediately informed Mrs. Jean MacArthur who in turn informed her husband of Truman's decision. Douglas MacArthur, "Testimony Before the Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees of the Senate," in Korea and the Theory of Limited War, ed. Allen Guttman, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 17-18.

The following is Truman's order to MacArthur: "I deeply regret that it becomes my duty as President and Commander in Chief of the United States military forces to replace you as Supreme Commander, Allied Powers; Commander in Chief, United Nations Command; Commander in Chief, Far East; and Commanding General, U.S. Army, Far East.

You will turn your commands, effective at once, to Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway. You are authorized to have issued such orders as are necessary to complete desired travel to such place as you select.

My reasons for your replacement will be made public concurrently with the delivery to you of any foregoing order. . . ." "Order to General MacArthur From the President," 10 April 1951, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, President's Secretary's Files. Of course, because of a press leak, Truman had to publicly announce MacArthur's dismissal before the relieved general was properly notified. The following is the order MacArthur's replacement, Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway received: "The President has decided to relieve General MacArthur and appoint you as his successor as Supreme Commander, Allied Powers: Commander in Chief United Nations Command; Commander in Chief, Far East; and Commanding General U.S. Far East.

It is realized that your presence in Korea in the immediate future is highly important, but we are sure you can make the proper distribution of your time until you can turn over active command of the Eighth Army to its new commander. For this purpose, Lt. Gen. James A. Van Fleet is enroute [sic] to report to you for such duties as you may direct." "Order to Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway from General George C. Marshall, Secretary of Defense," 10 April 1951, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B

File, Korean War: Dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, President's Secretary's Files.

23. Hamby, Truman, 556.

24. "Press Comment on Dismissal of General MacArthur," Capital (Madison, Wisconsin) Times, 14 April 1951, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Dismissal of General MacArthur, Records of the Democratic National Committee. The newspaper article combined what the Chicago Tribune and the Washington Times-Herald reported. Therefore, I could not decipher which newspaper said what.

25. William A. Reynolds, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 March 1997.

26. Palmer L. Brack, interview by author, Tape recording, Ellis, Kansas, 22 July 1997. Brack did reluctantly acknowledge that MacArthur "didn't quite do what Truman wanted him to do either."

27. Wallace E. Johnson, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 28 February 1997. Supporting MacArthur, Johnson also admitted that all-out war with China, which MacArthur supported, may have been too much for American forces. In all, ten of thirty-four interviewees supported their Supreme UN commander General Douglas MacArthur. In addition to Reynolds, Brack, and Johnson, Gilbert F. Dinkel, Everett L. Mickelson, Joe L. Klaus, and Victor Higgins also disapproved of MacArthur's dismissal. Gilbert F. Dinkel, interview by author, Tape recording, Plainville, Kansas, 29 July 1997; Everett L. Mickelson, interview by author, Tape recording, Ellis, Kansas, 28 July 1997; Joe L. Klaus, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 21 July 1997; and Victor Higgins, interview by author, Tape recording, McCracken, Kansas, 28 July 1997. Mickelson and Dinkel claimed that if MacArthur had been allowed to finish the Korean War, America would not have experienced the Vietnam War.

28. Glenn Matson, interview by author, Tape recording, Madison, Kansas, 5 March 1997; and Ronald Burbridge, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 19 November 1997.

29. Gerald "Jerry" R. Kline, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 31 July 1997.

30. Mickelson, interview by author, 28 July 1997.

31. Johnson, interview by author, 28 February 1997. In all, eight interviewees vehemently opposed Truman's decision not to ask for a declaration of war. Raymond A. Luthi, Jim Lowther, and Joe L. Klaus concurred with Matson, Burbridge, Kline, Mickelson, and Johnson.; Luthi, interview by author, 10 March 1997; Jim Lowther, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 February 1997; and Klaus,

interview by author, 21 July 1997.

32. Charles "Bud" Hoffman, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 15 July 1997.

33. Matson, interview by author, 18 August 1997.

34. Ray Schreiner, interview by author, Tape recording, Olpe, Kansas 17 October 1997.

35. Lowther, interview by author, 20 February 1997; Harley G. Rowley, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 27 February 1997; and Lawrence D. Timmons, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 26 February 1997.

36. Burbridge, interview by author, 19 November 1997.

37. Richard P. Keeling, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 21 February 1997.

38. Reynolds, interview by author, 20 March 1997.

39. Of the thirty-four interviewees, thirteen opposed the use of limited war. Gilbert F. Dinkel, Joe L. Klaus, Robert L. Dinkel, and Everett L. Mickelson agreed with Hoffman, Matson, Schreiner, Lowther, Rowley, Timmons, Burbridge, Keeling, and Reynolds.; Gilbert F. Dinkel, interview by author, 29 July 1997; Joe L. Klaus, interview by author, 21 July 1997; Robert L. Dinkel, interview by author, 22 July 1997; and Everett L. Mickelson, interview by author, 28 July 1997.

40. Schuckman, interview by author, 25 July 1997.

41. Luthi, interview by author, 10 March 1997. Of all the interviewees, Schuckman and Luthi were the only two servicemen to support limited war.

42. George Walters, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 6 March 1997.

43. Raymond A. Luthi, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 10 March 1997. Of the thirty-four servicemen-interviewees, only Hoffman, Metzger, Schuckman, Walters, and Luthi supported the MacArthur dismissal. Hoffman, interview by author, 15 July 1997; Michael F. Metzger, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 13 February 1997. Although Metzger supported the dismissal, he did not approve of manner in which MacArthur was dismissed.; and John T. Schuckman, interview by author, Tape recording, Gorham, Kansas, 25 July 1997.

44. David Lawrence, "Civilian Stupidity," U.S. News and World Report, (May 1951), Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, Papers of George M. Elsey. This source did not list its volume and page number.; and "Impeach Truman: An Editorial," Washington (D.C.) Times-Herald, 12 April 1951, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, Records of the Democratic National Committee. The author's name was not given.

45. "Press Comment on Dismissal of General MacArthur," Capital (Madison, Wisconsin) Times, 14 April 1951, Harry S. Truman Library, Korean War: Dismissal of General MacArthur, Records of the Democratic National Committee. According to this source, the following support MacArthur's dismissal and/or Truman's foreign policy: the Atlanta Constitution, the Atlanta Journal, the Baltimore Evening Sun, the Baltimore Morning Sun, the Boston Globe, the Boston Herald, the Chicago Sun-Times, the Christian Science Monitor, the Cleveland Plain Dealer, the Denver Post, the Des Moines Register and Tribune, the Louisville Courier-Journal, the Miami Daily News, the Minneapolis Tribune, the Nashville Tennessean, the New York Herald Tribune, the New York Post, the New York Times, the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and the Washington Post. The Chicago Tribune, the Washington Times-Herald, the Cleveland News, the Columbus Dispatch, the Daily Oklahoman, the Dallas Morning News, the Detroit Free Press, the Los Angeles Times, the Nashville Banner, the New York Daily Mirror, the New York Daily News, the New York World-Telegram, the Ohio State Journal, the Omaha World-Herald, the Providence Journal-Bulletin, and the Washington Star did not support MacArthur's dismissal and/or Truman's foreign policy.

46. "Memorandum for Files," 11 April 1951, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Dismissal General Douglas MacArthur, Official File.

47. "Nation Stirred by MacArthur Ouster," Council Grove Republican, 11 April 1951; and "Letter from Hubert H. Humphrey to Friend," Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, Papers of George M. Elsey. This source did not reveal who this "friend" was, nor did it have a date.

48. "MacArthur Ouster," Council Grove Republican.

49. Ibid.

50. "AP Stenographic Transcript of General MacArthur's Address to Congress, April 19, 1951, as Checked Against Official Record," 19 April 1951, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur, President's Secretary's Files.

51. Ibid.

52. Douglas MacArthur, "Testimony," in Limited War, 18, 17, 28, 21, 22-23, 26, 29-30; and John Edward Wiltz, "The Korean War and American Society," in The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective, ed. Francis H. Heller, with a Preface by Francis H. Heller (Lawrence: Regents Press of KS, 1977), 182. Wiltz claimed that in a 1962 West Point speech, MacArthur stressed the superiority of civilian authority and the soldier's obedience to such authority.

53. George C. Marshall, "Testimony Before the Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees [of the Senate]," in Korea and the Theory of Limited War, ed. Allen Guttman, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 32.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.; and Omar N. Bradley, "Testimony Before the Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees [of the Senate]," in Korea and the Theory of Limited War, ed. Allen Guttman, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 37.

56. Perret, MacArthur, 576-77. For example, Perret stated that MacArthur would have put 350,000 American lives at risk if his atomic warfare proposals in the Far East were put into action. Of course, the statistic did not include the Japanese, South Koreans, or even the communist enemies' lives at risk.

57. Ibid.; and Marshall, "Testimony," in Limited War, 32.

58. "MacArthur's Address," 19 April 1951, Harry S. Truman Library. In his speech, MacArthur stated, "The world has turned over many times since I took the oath at West Point, and the hopes and dreams have all since vanished, but I still remember the refrain of one of the most popular barracks ballads of that day which proclaimed most proudly that old soldiers never die; they just fade away. And like the old soldier of that ballad, I now close my military career and just fade away, an old soldier who tried to do his duty as God gave him the light to see that duty." Obviously, the title of this chapter came from this quotation.

Chapter 6

“Let’s Play a Game of Tug of War.”: Stalemate on the Korean Peninsula

By May 1951, the war on the front lines had reverted to stalemate. As the truce talks began and droned for two years, thousands of UN forces were pumped through the “pipeline” to the Main Line of Resistance, waiting and anticipating new communist offensives. Although both the communists and the UN forces staged limited advances, the movements on the front became more of a stalling action as the troops continuously and almost despondently awaited word that the war was finally over. Among those serving in this last stage of the Korean War were Kansans Merlin Haselhorst, Richard P. Keeling, Gerald “Jerry” R. Kline, Glenn Connor, Glenn Grumbein, and Raymond A. Luthi.

Married for two years, Merlin Haselhorst was disappointed when he heard the Selective Service would soon draft married men without dependents to fight in the Korean War. Apparently, the Selective Service found him, for by early 1952 he was at Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky. Having completed Basic Training, Haselhorst eventually arrived in South Korea on June 2, 1952. Even though he admitted, “[My wife and I] were just like all other Americans, . . . not paying much attention to [the Korean War],” Haselhorst gained firsthand knowledge about the war on the hills of South Korea.¹

First as a machine gunner and then as a communications soldier with the Army’s 45th Infantry Division on Old Baldy, Haselhorst helped establish the Main Line of Resistance. He faced front line danger as he served in both capacities. Watching enemy troop movements while the UN forces supposedly hid their own movements with smoke from smudge pots, the UN forces sent patrols out to probe the neutral zone. Haselhorst

remembered the patrols,

[If] we felt that they were doing something over there we didn't like, through intelligence we'd find out, and then we'd send patrols out at night to get pictures of it. Then, we'd try to destroy it [because] we didn't want it being built up. . . . We had the Chinese communists across from us . . . [and] they were always doing something that we were worried about.

Although he never mentioned going on a patrol, he was always ready to help patrols with his machine gun.²

Haselhorst spent his final months of overseas duty in a communications unit, where he was plagued by both the enemy and the terrain. For instance, he became frustrated as the enemy's artillery rounds blew holes in his unit's telephone wire lines which ran from the MLR to the Battalion Headquarters. Checking the telephone wire sets, each of twenty to thirty wires, was essential. Haselhorst explained, "The terrain made it so tough on radio communications that we couldn't [use radios]. You'd be on this side of the hill and [they'd] be over there and there was just no communication at all and so we depended on a lot of telephones." Luckily for some troops on the front lines, Haselhorst and others like him kept the communications going by repairing the telephones and the telephone switchboards. Nicknamed "Pappy" by the younger men in his unit, Haselhorst spent a total of 355 days on the MLR. While he was on his voyage home, the warring parties finally signed the armistice. After surprising his wife at his arrival home, Corporal Haselhorst was officially discharged from the Army on January 15, 1960.³

Drafted, Richard P. Keeling, a native of Indiana, was inducted into the armed forces in October of 1951. Although his fiancé at the time had kept insisting that the Marine Corps did not draft men, Keeling soon learned differently at an Indianapolis,

Indiana base when a “fellow . . . wearing a funny looking uniform [of] blue pants with a red stripe down the side” called off his name for duty. Soon married, he was satisfied with his role as a battalion clerk/typist on a California base. But his friends in the same office were not, and they convinced him to join them in applying for the rank of corporal.

Reluctant, Keeling knew that his new rank of corporal would send him to fight in the Korean War. Although Keeling survived this decision to become a corporal and survived the war, his office friend, Kelly, did not.⁴

Completing his artillery training for the 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, he was eventually sent to an eighty-one millimeter mortar unit. Because he spent two months in a reserve area with the men of this unit, Keeling formed lasting friendships of which the Marine Corps did not approve. He explained this Corps’ attitude, “They didn’t like to keep you together long enough to form close friendships. It [wasn’t] efficient in combat.” Apparently, the Corps did get wind of Keeling’s friendships for it sent him and his other office buddy, Ernie Kelso, to another unit.⁵ After riding two hours in a truck to the rear area, Keeling and Kelso simply had their names checked off a list. Then, the truck driver returned them to a counter-mortar radar unit, just five hundred yards from their mortar unit.⁶

Keeling put his trigonometry knowledge to good use with the new counter-mortar radar equipment. He explained how this long-awaited new Korean War invention worked, “Somebody had discovered that radar that had been developed for aircraft in World War I had the . . . ability to pick up a single mortar round. Mortars . . . fire a round, blow up, and come down in a nearly perfect parabola . . . so if you [plotted] fifty percent of that

parabola, you [knew] where it came from.” Using technology based on World War I insights, Keeling also acknowledged that the Korean War stalemate was much like World War I’s stalemate and trench warfare. He also mentioned that much of the weapons his unit used, such as howitzers, mortars, and Browning automatic rifles, were also used in the “Great War.” Manning the radar for hours at a time, Keeling often became bored waiting for any enemy action. Sometimes, the enemy obliged, even on American holidays.

One time it was Washington’s birthday . . . [and] we got fried chicken and mashed potatoes and gravy and some corn, and some Chinese forward observer got messed up [and] dumped a bunch of stuff [artillery] on us. One round hit our . . . garbage pit, threw that stuff all over us . . . and I was trying to get back to my tent. . . . I was running for all I was worth.

Unfortunately because of this excitement, Keeling wore his food instead of eating it. But surprisingly, Keeling’s sector was often quiet because, as he believed, the enemy did not suspect that his counter-mortar radar unit had discovered many of their mortar locations. As a result of its fine work in finding and helping destroy enemy strongholds, Keeling’s unit received many citations.⁷

On the front lines, Keeling faced danger not just from the enemy, but also from American officers’ attitudes and actions. In fact, one officer put American lives at stake just for glory’s sake. In its job coordinating efforts to destroy enemy mortar posts, Keeling’s unit gave vital information to a mortar unit, which would then aim and fire its mortars against enemy locations. One colonel of a howitzer unit was so angry that a mortar unit was getting all the attention that he rushed to Keeling’s unit and swiped its essential phone book. As a result of the colonel’s action, Keeling’s unit was unable to call in any enemy positions. Keeling had, justifiably, no respect for this officer who cared

more about receiving attention than saving lives. Even though the colonel's unit was eventually moved to another area, Keeling admitted, "Sometimes I wondered who the hell . . . I [was] fighting with or for."⁸

Angered by one officer, Keeling and his fellow counter-mortar radar men enjoyed their time with another, a burned-out World War II lieutenant. The nervous and jumpy veteran ran to his fancy bunker at the sound of almost anything. Armed with this knowledge, Keeling's unit used patrol time to their benefit, "We would walk patrol around the hill, . . . just making sure that the barbed wire was in good shape and that kind of thing. If you . . . found a piece of shrapnel, [you'd] put it in your pocket and later on when the lieutenant wasn't looking, you'd drop it in his bunker or in his doorway." Of course, the shrapnel scared the officer, encouraging Keeling's unit in its mischief. Hoping to buy a pair of shoes similar to what the Chinese soldiers wore, Keeling and his friends planned to walk atop the lieutenant's bunker so he would presume that the enemy had infiltrated the area. Unfortunately for the soldiers, this plan never came to fruition because of the language barrier between them and the rear area South Korean shopkeepers. Saving the lieutenant and probably his sanity, the Marine Corps eventually relieved him of his duty with this prankster outfit.⁹

Yet even though all the pranks had been fun, Keeling admitted that he was most happy on his voyage home. Unfortunately, all was not well on the ship. The Army men, the majority of the ship's passengers, did not like sharing quarters with lowly Marines. Obliging the Army soldiers, the ship's captain volunteered the Marines to guard the eight hundred ex-prisoners of war returning to America. But the Marines got the last laugh as

the ship entered the docks. While the Army prepared for a big photo shoot and sent a brass band out on a tugboat to welcome its soldiers home, Keeling and other Marines were banished to the ship's stern where the garbage was. Surrounded by garbage, Keeling described how the Marines responded to this snobbishness, "Here comes this tug boat with the Army band on board around the stern with a bunch of Marines and all these rotten grapefruits. . . . Perfect target. Everybody was aiming for the big base horn." In this case, revenge was not sweet but rotten.¹⁰

Besides Keeling, Kansan Gerald "Jerry" R. Kline also served in South Korea during the stalemate. Drafted into the Army in November of 1951, he set sail for Korea just five days after his wedding and arrived in South Korea on May 13, 1952. Kline spent most of his duty on Hill 281 with the 9th Regiment of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division near the Chorwon Reservoir. "[Trying to help bring peace] to this land of war," this communications soldier spent six months as a "radio man," carrying the radio on patrols for his lieutenant. During the remainder of his service time he operated switchboards on the front lines.¹¹

Even though the war was at a stalemate, Kline quickly discovered that the enemy was still active. For example, a sniper's bullet hit the helmet of a friend who was reading a letter from his loved ones atop his bunker. Kline's friend was not harmed. But Kline too became a sniper's target. Swimming in a nearby pond, he and his buddies were warned not to let more than two people swim at a time. Literally testing the waters, he and four other men had to scramble out when sniper bullets rained on them. Although he was unharmed, Kline learned a valuable lesson, "After that we knew that when they said two

people, [we] better have two in there [and] not more 'cause sometimes [the enemy] wouldn't waste their ammunition on that small [of] a group." Besides snipers, Kline also survived enemy infiltration. In fact, with the use of some mesh screens, he helped foil infiltrators, who often attempted to drop grenades down the chimney flues of the UN forces' bunkers.¹²

Besides the mesh screen "retaliation," Kline retaliated against the enemy on night patrols into No Man's Land. Although most patrols were just hours of silent waiting, one patrol was disastrous. Of the one hundred and eight men who went on this raid only Kline and thirty-seven other men survived it. Capturing two enemy soldiers, Kline and the other survivors were too overwhelmed with their own dead, wounded, or missing soldiers to take the prisoners of war back with them. Because his platoon lost many men on that fateful night, Kline and the rest of his platoon spent many days in the rear area, recovering from the raid and rebuilding the platoon's troop strength.¹³

Sent back to the front lines, Kline faced a small but significant enemy attack just two months before he left South Korea on May 8, 1953. He related this March 1953 experience:

I happened to be over there when Stalin died and we found out that they were going to salute Stalin when he was buried and for . . . a short period of time . . . they dropped in numerous rounds. . . . The ground was just shakin' this entire period but the Americans [had] found out that they were going to do this . . . , the exact time [and] . . . how long it would last, . . . so we were all in our bunkers [then].

Thankful for the American intelligence corps, Kline and his platoon survived this tribute to the late Soviet leader.¹⁴

The enemy had honored a fallen leader. Kline and a friend named Roger Knutson decided to honor a holiday, Christmas. Stuck on the desolate Main Line of Resistance, these two men dreamed of having a Christmas tree. They soon turned their dream into reality when they ventured out into No Man's Land to find a tree. Surprisingly, the enemy did not shoot at them as they cut the tree down and dragged it back to their own lines. Making icicles out of C-ration cans, Kline and Knutson decorated their Christmas tree.¹⁵

Besides surviving enemy attacks and celebrating Christmas away from home, Kline also had two unique experiences with correspondence as a Korean War soldier. Of course, he received letters from his wife, but he also received a "letter" from the enemy, and a letter from a South Korean schoolgirl. After they killed UN soldiers, the enemy often left propaganda leaflets on the dead bodies. Then, when the UN forces retrieved their fallen soldiers, they also retrieved the leaflets. Kline attained one of these leaflets which showed a blonde American wife at home supposedly writing a letter of sadness and loneliness to her soldier-husband in South Korea. In her letter she wrote, "Darling, I would dream that you were coming back to me this Christmas."¹⁶ According to this communist leaflet, American troops would be home for Christmas if they would just surrender to their enemies.¹⁷

One the other hand, Kline received nothing but encouragement from a South Korean girl named Le Son Suk. In 1952, she wrote, "I fear it is so cold in your battlefield that you have had a lot of hard times with the chilly weather. Then I will sometimes write some letters that will make you pleasant. To you from now on, please take care of yourself, until I call on you again in my letter, be good."¹⁸ Fighting for someone else's

hometown, Kline, like the other servicemen who received such letters, was truly touched by this young girl's words. Even years after he returned to American soil, he still wondered what became of this writer.¹⁹

Two other Kansans who served in the last phase of the Korean War were friends Glenn Grumbein and Glenn Conner. Drafted at the same time, both were inducted into the Army in August of 1952. Unlike other servicemen, Grumbein actually played a large role in his going to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, as he laughingly explained, "We left Ness City [in] . . . one of [those] long drawn-out buses . . . and the driver had missed a lot of sleep and being I was the oldest . . . of the [bunch] why he asked me some place down the line if I would drive and I drove the bus while he slept."²⁰ While he drove to Kansas City, his passengers, Conner and other men, kiddingly asked him to turn the bus around. Of course, he did not.²¹

Entering the Army together, Conner and Grumbein also trained together in Basic Training, and in Crane and Shovel School. Also, they were both attached to the Air Force with SCARWAF. Leaving America, Grumbein admitted that he and other men had lumps in their throats as they passed under the Golden Gate Bridge. Grumbein and Conner landed in Japan, but were soon separated when Grumbein was first sent to South Korea. It was only there, thousands of miles away from home, that the twenty-seven-year-old Grumbein learned he was too old to be drafted. According to Selective Service rules, no one over twenty-six-years-old could be drafted into the military. Given the option to return to America, Grumbein chose to stay and serve his country in South Korea, in the 6th Armored Division.²²

Stationed at Osan in Group Headquarters, Grumbein worked in construction, duty that came quite naturally to him since it was his civilian occupation. In this duty, he traveled to three bases with a major and helped insure that the bases were built to the proper specifications. Also serving as the company carpenter, Grumbein supervised and worked with two South Korean workers, building a mechanics shop, tables and chairs for the Mess Hall, and whatever else was requested. In addition to these duties, Grumbein's duty also involved saving lives. He recalled how he helped save one curious South Korean's life, "[A] sixteen-year-old . . . found a dynamite cap and touched it to a battery. . . . It [blew] sixteen holes in the side of his head . . . and he [came] running out of the tent with blood squirting out of the side of his head. Between our Second Lieutenant and me, we got him in a jeep and took him to the medics." Actions like saving this teenager's life helped Grumbein and other American servicemen in South Korea to feel they were helping this country's people even while the war was at a stalemate.²³

Thinking he would never see Grumbein again in his overseas duty, Conner was flabbergasted to learn his friend was stationed just one block from him at the Osan Air Force Base. In the 1st Company, the outdoors man Conner was first unhappily placed in orderly room duty. Eventually he found a replacement and became a welder. Although he and his fellow workers were bogged down with other jobs, Conner and other enterprising welders devised a plan: if they fixed the ice cream machine, the cooks had to let them have ice cream once a week. The welders did have their ice cream. While others stopped work with the 5:00 P.M. "work out" jet fly-over, Conner doubled up on his duty by taking night jobs so he could have his mornings off duty.²⁴

Stationed just ten to fifteen miles from the Main Line of Resistance, both Conner and Grumbein faced danger, especially since North Korean soldiers hid in the hills surrounding Osan. After he had visited the South Korean capital, a supposed haven of safety, Conner remembered, “Whenever you’d walk around Seoul, you had to keep two or three guys with you. You never walked alone [because] . . . you wouldn’t last long.” Besides enemy ground forces, Grumbein and Conner also had to worry about the enemy air force “graced” them with three nightly air raids, regularly occurring around 10:00 P.M., 1:00 A.M., and sunrise. Although the enemy aircraft never bombed Osan while Conner and Grumbein were there, the threat was always present.²⁵

Although he was never at the Main Line of Resistance, Conner saw the consequences of front line fighting. Years after the war, he was still troubled by what he saw,

I went up to Seoul once and they brought a bunch of South Koreans [ROK soldiers] in there. [There] must have been two hundred [who] would have been up on the front lines and they were all shot up real bad. In fact, some of them didn’t even know where they [were] at. . . . They wouldn’t have lasted very long, I don’t think, . . . without a doctor.

In addition to seeing the ROK soldiers, Conner also witnessed the crash landing of popular professional baseball player and outstanding pilot Ted Williams. Hearing Williams’ distress calls, Conner and other men rushed to help him. Luckily, Williams jumped out of his jet’s cockpit as the bell-landed aircraft continued to plow into the ground.²⁶

Though Conner was devoted to his country and his fiancé, his real love was baseball. Even though Conner broke a professional baseball contract with the St. Louis Cardinals when he entered the military, his glory days as a pitcher did not end. Trying out

for the base team, he became not only a team pitcher, but also a team leader. Under his direction, the team only lost one game. Because of this outstanding record, a base colonel encouraged Conner's team to participate in a Far East Baseball Tournament in Japan. Although he traveled across the Korea Strait to Japan and played in two games, Conner was more impressed with the inexpensive jewelry and Chinaware in the Japanese stores than the tournament.²⁷

Training together and serving nearby each other, Conner and Grumbein also returned home together. They first flew to Japan, then sailed on a Merchant Marine ship back to the states. While they hoped to be home for Christmas of 1953, the ship's captain too wanted to be home for the holidays so he ordered the ship full speed. Arriving on American soil, Conner's and Grumbein's journey home had not yet ended. The cashiers at the Tacoma, Washington, airport, overwhelmed with a crowd of servicemen anxious to return to their hometowns, announced they would first give tickets to the servicemen who had exact change. Conner and Grumbein quickly put their money together, then the tall Conner reached over those in line without the correct change, and grabbed his and Grumbein's plane tickets. After they flew to Denver, their homecoming was again delayed, this time by fog. Still, despite the delays, Conner and Grumbein made it home in time for Christmas.²⁸

In addition to Conner and Grumbein, another Kansan named Raymond A. Luthi also served in South Korea during the stalemate. Luthi was attending Kansas State University when he first entered military service in 1948 through the ROTC program. By May of 1952, when he graduated, the twenty-two-year-old held a commission in an anti-

aircraft artillery unit. Leaving Wichita, Kansas, on Thanksgiving day of that same year, Luthi landed in Japan only to face ninety more days of training. After he completed this training, he became a forward observer for a 105 millimeter field artillery group with a 61st Field Artillery unit supporting the 7th Cavalry Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division. Having been rushed to South Korea after the Chinese forces had pushed through ROK lines, Luthi arrived in the war zone in February of 1953, but the enemy activity settled down before he arrived. Still, the warfare touched his life. Just a year earlier, enemy artillery fire had literally cut a friend to pieces. Although Luthi helped with the first major UN-communist prisoner of war exchange on the Korean peninsula, Operation Little Switch, he grew bored with his duty “because you’d sit around all day with nothing to do.”²⁹ Of course, the enemy fire often ended his boredom. Still, not even the enemy could lessen his excitement when he received word that he was the father of a bouncing baby boy. Luthi recalled, “Forty-four years ago . . . [when] I was tromping through the rice paddies of Korea, . . . I got a telegram that [my son] was born and [my] wife and child were both doing well.”³⁰

Of course, Luthi was also happy when the armistice was finally signed. Then, the “youngest Battery Commander in the division” went into an anti-aircraft artillery unit. Besides this duty, Luthi also served as a defense lawyer in a Court Martial case. Defending a thief, he cited an improperly written charge and won this case on a technicality. Worried that he had done wrong, Luthi was also exonerated when a Colonel Von Kolnitz told him, ““You did right because I appointed you to defend him’.” Nevertheless, the colonel soon moved Luthi from defense counsel to trial lawyer. Serving

in this capacity, he helped prosecute an American GI who had trashed a Japanese brothel. When Luthi returned to American shores in 1954, he was met in San Francisco by his wife and son.³¹

After the war became a stalemate, thousands and hundreds of thousands of American troops were still being funneled into Korea. Arriving in South Korea, they lived in bunkers along the Main Line of Resistance or in tents in the rear areas. They helped take and retake hills, or participated in night patrols to check enemy positions.³² Some even participated in prisoner of war exchanges. Even though few experienced hand-to-hand combat with the communist enemies, Kansans Merlin Haselhorst, Richard P. Keeling, Gerald R. “Jerry” Kline, Glenn Conner, Glenn Grumbein, and Raymond A. Luthi defended South Korean democracy.

NOTES

1. "To Draft Young Married Men: Hershey Says New Orders Will be Issued Shortly," Hays (KS) Daily News, 5 February 1951; and Merlin Haselhorst, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 16 July 1997.
2. Haselhorst, interview by author, 16 July 1997.
3. Ibid.; and Merlin Haselhorst, Discharge Record, Ellis County Courthouse, Hays, Kansas, photocopy.
4. Richard P. Keeling, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 21 February 1997. Keeling did not mention Kelly's first name.
5. I believe that is the correct spelling of his friend's name but I cannot be certain.
6. Keeling, interview by author, 21 February 1997. Although Keeling first said this counter-mortar radar unit was five hundred yards from his previous unit, he also said it could have been six hundred to eight hundred yards away.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid. He did not mention either officer's name.
10. Ibid.
11. Gerald "Jerry" R. Kline, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 31 July 1997.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid. Kline could only presume that the two prisoners were killed.
14. Ibid. Even before Stalin's death on March 5, 1953, the Eisenhower administration was planning its strategy to deal with the eventual transfer of power in Soviet Russia. For example, in a March 4, 1953 letter to Army Chief of Psychological Warfare General Robert Cutler, presidential advisor C.D. Jackson stressed the importance of Stalin's death, "If we do not take the initiative and capitalize on the dismay, confusion,

fear, and selfish hopes brought about by this opportunity, we will be giving the enemy the time to pull himself together, get his wind back, and present us with a new monolithic structure which we will spend years attempting to analyze. . . . Our task, therefore, is to perpetuate the confusion as long as possible, and to stave off as long as possible any new chrystallization [sic].” “Letter from C.D. Jackson to General Robert Cutler,” 4 March 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 29, Psychological Warfare. On the very day Jackson sent this letter, a National Security Council meeting highlighted the potential passing of the Soviet leader, or more specifically, how to use this death for propagandistic purposes. There, Jackson stated America’s reaction to this death “would enable us to counteract with real forcefulness the ‘hate America’ campaign in the Soviet orbit and to calm anxieties elsewhere in the world by reassuring peoples everywhere of America’s devotion to peace.” “Memorandum: Discussion at the 135th Meeting of the National Security Council on Wednesday, March 4, 1953,” 5 March 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council, Box 4, 135th Meeting of the National Security Council; and “Record of Actions by the National Security Council at its One Hundred and Thirty Five Meeting, March 4, 1953,” Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council, Box 1, Record of the Actions by the National Security Council, File 1, Action Numbers 699-791.

15. Kline, interview by author, 31 July 1997.

16. “Communist Propaganda Letter,” Private Collection, Gerald “Jerry” R. Kline. While I interviewed Kline, he showed me this letter and the letter from the South Korean schoolgirl. I wrote down as much as I could concerning each letter’s contents.

17. Kline, interview by author, 31 July 1997.

18. “Le Son Suk’s Letter to Soldier,” Gerald “Jerry” R. Kline, Private Collection. This is the entire letter, and I copied it exactly as she wrote it.

19. Kline, interview by author, 31 July 1997; and Gerald R. Kline, Discharge Record, Ellis County Courthouse, Hays, Kansas, photocopy. Kline was discharged from the Army on November 19, 1959.

20. Glenn Grumbein, interview by author, Tape recording, Alexander, Kansas, 5 August 1997.

21. Ibid. He did not mention whether he drove to Kansas City, Kansas, or Kansas City, Missouri.; and Glenn Conner, interview by author, Tape recording, McCracken, Kansas, 4 August 1997.

22. Ibid. Grumbein said they left for the Far East on January 29, 1953. Saddened that he was not able to serve in World War II, he was married and settled in a civilian job when the military again called him for duty.; Ibid.; and Robert Frank Futrell, The United States Air Force in Korea 1950-1953, With a Foreword by Richard H. Kohn, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 778. According to Futrell, SCARWAF stood for Special Category Army Personnel with Air Force.

23. Grumbein, interview by author, 5 August 1997.

24. Conner, interview by author, 4 August 1997. According to Conner, the Osan Air Force Base had some fighters, but it was known as a bomber base. Osan was also known as K-55. Conner recalled that most night jobs only took from fifteen minutes to one hour to complete.

25. Ibid. According to Conner's beliefs, the enemy never bombed Osan because the U.N. forces never revealed their position at Osan by firing on the enemy.

26. Ibid.; and Kline, interview, 31 July 1997. Ted Williams affected Kline's earlier duty in South Korea. Kline bet on a baseball game's score. Williams hit a home run, ensuring that Kline would win the one hundred dollar pool. As was expected of every man who won, he first gave twenty-five dollars to a South Korean orphanage. Then, Kline sent his remaining winnings home to his wife.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid. Conner said he was discharged in May of 1954. Because both Conner and Grumbein entered the service at the same time, I presume that Grumbein was also discharged them.; and Grumbein, interview, 5 August 1997.

29. Raymond A. Luthi, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 10 March 1997. For more information on Luthi's role in Operation Little Switch, see the chapter below entitled "Is this darn war ever going to end?: Kansans Reflect on the Truce Talks and the Armistice of the Korean War."

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid. Luthi stated, "I left in June of '52 . . . and was gone until March and April of 1954." The colonel's first name was not given.

32. Keeling, interview by author, 21 February 1997; and Kline, interview by author, 31 July 1997.

Chapter 7

“God May Have Saved My Soul But the Medics Saved My Life!”: A Glimpse at Medical Care in the Korean War

Like all other aspects of the American military following the victory of World War II, medical units also dwindled. For example, the Army alone lost thousands of its medical staff members as ninety-one percent of the enlisted men and eighty-six percent of the medical officers returned to civilian life after 1945. In fact, medical units demobilized much faster than other military units. The medical corps of America's armed forces would be unprepared for the coming Korean war.¹

Despite these shortages, men and women answered the call to freedom after the North Koreans invaded South Korea. In fact, because of those who responded, many military medical advances occurred on the battlefields of North and South Korea. Although the idea of a mobile hospital was first conceived in World War I and used experimentally in World War II, the MASH, Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, unit was first routinely used in the Korean War. Second, “battlefield” surgery on neurological and vascular injuries was improved during this clash of democracy and communism. Also, the helicopter came into its own, among its other roles, as a medical evacuation vehicle.² These advances were so incredible that by December of 1950, in the height of the Chinese intervention, combat deaths in hospitals in forward areas accounted for only one in every hundred casualties. The previous lowest death record, established in World War II, was three for every hundred casualties.³

The role of women in battlefield hospitals also increased. Five hundred to six hundred American women served as nurses in the MASH units. In fact, one Emporia,

Kansas nurse, First Lieutenant Charlotte Scheel, was among the first nurses sent to the Korean peninsula. Serving in “an evacuation hospital” near the front lines, she remembered her daily life consisted of C-rations, wounded men, and enemy snipers.⁴ Women made such great strides in the Korean War that when the Surgeon General’s Office contemplated opening the Army Nurse Corps to men in 1951, the public and legislatures responded in outrage. This was remarkable because in the Civil War, less than one hundred years before the Korean War, women were often prohibited from nursing and its “disrespectable” bloody work. Paving the way for future generations, the Korean War nurses had clearly gained a foothold in America’s armed forces.⁵

Although the significance of rear area medical units increased, it was the front line medics and corpsmen who first saw the servicemen’s wounds. Two Kansans who served as medics were Victor Scheck and Edwin Fisher. Drafted into the Army in November of 1950, Scheck arrived on Korean shores in April of 1951. During his first four months, he served in the 38th Regiment of the 2nd Division in an anti-tank and mine unit. Scheck was not particularly fond of this dangerous duty, “The medic [duty] wasn’t as bad . . . because in the anti-tank and mine [unit], we moved out in front of our lines to lay the minefield [for enemy attacks against] . . . the rest of the people and [we] also went to dig up mines.” Remembering one day in battle, Scheck said, “The roughest day I spent in Korea was May 18, 1951, . . . and why I didn’t get hit that day I don’t know. I should [have] because everybody else alongside of me got hit. . . . [The] reason [that] I felt so bad about it . . . [was because] my mom died on a May 18th before then. . . . I knew I was gonna get it that day, but she probably helped me.” Surviving the front line battles and the enemy’s human

wave attacks, Scheck believed his luck was running out.⁶

As a result of his apprehensions, Scheck volunteered to be a medic when this medical shortage was announced. Already trained in the ways of the battlefield, he was as qualified as many to be a “pill-pusher,” though he denied it. Now serving behind the front lines, Scheck was stationed with a “heavy machines weapons” unit. Of course, the action off the front lines gave Scheck two advantages. “I just carried that little black bag with the APC tablets [morphine] in it,” he explained, “Luckily I didn’t have [any] casualties.” Regardless of his “light” duties as a medic, his fellow servicemen valued him, “I tell you one thing, the GIs had respect for me. They sure did. . . . In fact, they’d want to do chores for me; they’d want to do things for me whatever [task it was].” Needless to say, Scheck, who returned to American shores in February of 1952, treasured his time as a medic.⁷

Another Kansas medic, Edwin Fisher, faced a different situation in the Korean War. Called into the armed forces in early 1951 and inducted into the Army on August 1, 1951, he first entered the 179th Regiment of the 45th Division, but upon arrival in Japan, he joined other servicemen in their training to become medics. Humbly describing his role near or on the battlefield, Fisher stated, “[On] a normal day, we . . . spent most of the time in a bunker. Then in [the] evenings [we’d] have to go out on a mission. . . . Then . . . [on] the front lines, well, it stayed intense and stuff like that.” The front lines were indeed intense, especially when he went on night patrols, “I was on one mission where we had to go out and get some prisoners. We got two of them.” Of course, this patrol and other front line action was life-threatening as the medic Fisher went to work on the wounded

men around him. Asked whether he took care of these wounded men, he answered, “Well, not all of them but some of them.” Remembering the battlefield sights, he admitted, “It’s a good experience, but I don’t think I would want to do it again.” Regardless of his war memories, the wounded whom he aided valued his deeds.⁸

One such soldier who recalled the heroic deeds of medical servicemen was Kansan Ronald Burbridge. Reminiscing about the antics of one medic Bill Davis, he fondly remembered,

We had a lot of heroes. . . . We had a young man who was our first aid man, we called him [a] ‘corpsman,’ [who] administered first aid if you got hurt. He was a Navy person. . . . He was a morale builder [and] he was a lot of fun to be around. [When] things would get really depressed and down, he would get a singing group together and lots of things like that. . . . I don’t know how we’d ever have made it without him.”⁹

This corpsman not only kept his men alive, but he also kept them motivated, singing and smiling in the face of adversity.

In addition to sharing his laughter, this corpsman also shared the battlefield dangers with his men. On the front lines with the fighting soldiers, corpsmen rushed to help the wounded men regardless of where they lay or how dangerous the situation was. Burbridge explained one such incident, “The last time I saw Bill Davis in Korea, he had been shot through both legs and still if we would bring [the] wounded to him, he was still doing what he could for them. Now, there’s a hero. . . .”¹⁰

No matter how heroic the medics and corpsmen were, others also gave medical aid to the fighting men. Seeing hospital ships in the war, Burbridge also remembered a recent invention and its role, “A lot of our wounded were taken out by helicopter. . . . We put

them in baskets on the outside of the vehicle. It could handle two at a time and they rode outside.”¹¹ The helicopter aided and speeded the movement of the wounded while enemy infiltration and guerilla attacks hampered ground evacuation. Further, the smooth helicopter ride prevented wounds from hemorrhaging, and spinal cord and head injuries from worsening, while the rough Korean roads had quite the opposite effect.¹² Like other men who experienced air evacuation, Burbridge treasured the helicopter.¹³

Yet, helicopter evacuation was just one leg in the wounded serviceman’s journey to recovery. After rear area physicians examined the wounded, they sent the most severe cases first to Japan and then to the United States. Three Kansans, William A. Reynolds, John T. Schuckman, and Ronald Burbridge, were all sent to Japan. In his short memoir, Reynolds wrote, “I had a bad case of frostbite and was sent to a hospital ship and then to Japan.”¹⁴ Although doctors considered his wound serious enough to send him to Japan, Reynolds recovered and returned to the battlefield.¹⁵

Shortly after crossing the 38th Parallel, Schuckman was wounded in the chest and was eventually sent to Japan. Unfortunately, the Japanese climate hampered the recovery of some servicemen’s wounds. Schuckman explained this irony of medical care close to the Korean peninsula, “If you had bone problems like broken bones and stuff like that, they usually didn’t keep you in Japan because of the healing factor. Bones didn’t heal so good in Japan the way I understood it.” Fortunately, or unfortunately, as the enemy’s bullet blasted near Schuckman’s heart, it traveled between his ribs, went through a lung, and traveled out of his back, once again through his ribs. Surprisingly, the bullet did not break or shatter one bone, nor did the wound hemorrhage. Because he had no “bone

problems,” the army sent him back to the Korean peninsula.¹⁶

Unlike the wounds of Reynolds and Schuckman, Burbridge’s injury sent him home. Because he suffered from severe frostbite, medics first sent him to the division hospital in Hamhung. Continuing to examine his injury, doctors sent him across the Sea of Japan to a hospital where doctors there decided to send him further away, to a hospital in Oakland, California. Unlike Reynolds and Schuckman, Burbridge had passed through the care of all major medical legs on his journey to recovery, the front line medics, rear area medical units, hospitals in Japan, and hospitals in America.¹⁷

Of course, the Korean War’s medical care did have some shortcomings. As a high school senior, Charles “Bud” Hoffman had suffered from appendicitis, an ailment which would later complicate his service as a mechanic at Kimpo Airfield. Since everyone was busy, he decided to lift a huge tire himself. Unfortunately, the tire’s weight tore muscles in his side. After an examination, local military physicians supposedly solved his pain with a heating pad which was left unattended for too long. Waking up the next morning, Hoffman noticed heat blisters near his appendix operation scar. Once again, physicians gave him a quick-fix solution, a bandage. Laughing now, Hoffman was not amused then by what transpired, “Well, [the] next morning, I woke up and the bandage was sticking to me and I looked down there. Not only had the blisters broke but I could see the inside of my stomach wall.” Rushing down to the physicians, he was again told to wear a bandage, this time for two weeks, two long weeks without a bath. Unable to stand this unhygienic situation, Hoffman bathed and reapplied the bandage, using a downed airplane’s first aid kit for his bandage supply. Because of this injury, doctors ruled that Hoffman was to do

no more extra duty. (Hoffman humorously admitted that this “ruling” lasted for his next three years in the Air Force.)¹⁸

Sadly, this was not the end of Hoffman’s medical mishaps. While he was demolishing an unsalvageable aircraft with a hatchet, his shoulder was “attacked” by a piece of flying metal. Feeling no pain, he simply asked the medical staff to extract the metal with tweezers, or at least let him do it. Unfortunately, they had much loftier plans. Years later this situation still amused him as he said, “[The doctors replied,] ‘Ah, ah, ah, . . . we’ve got to rush you to the hospital’. So, they rushed me to the hospital and they X-rayed it and they had this piece of metal lost inside my shoulder bone in [the] socket there and they were gonna take me into surgery immediately and work on that.” Luckily, before any more damage occurred, Hoffman saw and asked a “gruff old doctor” for a pair of tweezers. Successfully completing his own “surgery,” he returned to work.¹⁹

Unlike the medical success cases of Reynolds, Schuckman, and Burbridge, Hoffman faced one medical mishap after another. He recalled the lesson he learned from his own unbelievable experiences, “You gotta be careful, look after yourself ‘cause they’ll be operating on you if you’re not careful.”²⁰ Although Hoffman’s history has already been written, it was curious to note how bored these surgeons must have been to jump on any chance to operate. It was also intriguing to wonder if these same surgeons would have awarded Hoffman a Purple Heart for surviving the “infamous” flying metal attack.

Overall, the Korean War medical units performed superbly. Like almost all other branches of the armed forces, America’s medical corps was not prepared for another war so quickly after World War II. Despite facing shortages, doctors, nurses, and enlisted men

alike joined the United Nations forces to help stop communism. Two Kansans, Victor Scheck and Edwin Fisher served as medics. Along with other medics and corpsmen, they helped save the lives of many servicemen, including William A. Reynolds, John T. Schuckman, and Ronald Burbridge. With the Korean War innovations of MASH units, helicopter evacuations, and improved surgical procedures, the most significant outcome of all medical units' contributions was undoubtedly the thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of lives they saved. Despite some mishaps like those Charles "Bud" Hoffman faced, Surgeon General Raymond W. Bliss' words rang true, "[Our] troops in Korea had received the finest medical care ever achieved in war."²¹

NOTES

1. Albert E. Cowdrey, The Medics' War, United States Army in the Korean War (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1987), 8,9. While the Army lost sixteen percent of its medical staff, total discharges from the Army equaled only fifteen percent in late 1945.

2. Ibid., 69-70, xi.

3. "Army Medical Care Praised: Korean Wounded Get Improved Hospitalization," Hays Daily News, 3 December 1950.

4. "Emporia Nurse with Army in Korea Writes of Battle and Hard Life," Emporia Gazette, 10 August 1950. This nurse was also a World War II veteran.

5. Richard K. Kolb, "Korea's 'Invisible Veterans' Return to an Ambivalent America," VFW Magazine, November 1997, 24; and Cowdrey, Medics', 234. Neither sources mentioned the number of doctors and medics who served in the Korean War.

6. Victor Scheck, interview by author, Tape recording, Victoria, Kansas, 30 July 1997.

7. Ibid.

8. Edwin Fisher, interview by author, Tape recording, Ellis, Kansas, 24 July 1997; Edwin Fisher, Discharge Record, Ellis County Courthouse, Hays, Kansas, photocopy. Spending over six years in the Army Reserves beginning on May 1, 1953, he was discharged on July 31, 1959. Fisher did not disclose the specific unit with which he served as a medic.; and "20 County Men to Take Physicals," Hays Daily News, 12 February 1951. This source stated that Fisher was among twenty men ordered to Kansas City, Missouri, for their military physicals.

9. Ronald Burbridge, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 19 November 1997.

10. Ibid. Surviving his many wounds, Davis climbed to the rank of commander before he retired from the Navy.; and Joseph R. Owen, Colder Than Hell: A Marine Rifle Company at Chosin Reservoir, with a Foreword by Raymond G. Davis (New York: Ballantine, 1996), 223. Owen mentioned another one of Davis' wounds: a shrapnel fragment that flew through his mouth.

11. Burbridge, interview by author, 19 November 1997.

12. Cowdrey, Medics', 93, 95.

13. Burbridge, interview by author, 19 November 1997.

14. William A. Reynolds, "Post 5's Bill Reynolds Recalls Introduction to Korean War and Experience at Yalu River," Emporia Legionnaire, January 1997, William A. Reynolds, Private Collection, photocopy. I was unable to find any corresponding page number to this article.

15. William A. Reynolds, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 March 1997. Reynolds did not mention the location of the hospital in Japan.

16. John T. Schuckman, interview by author, Tape recording, Gorham, Kansas, 25 July 1997. Doctors sent Schuckman to a Tokyo hospital. I could find nothing to substantiate Schuckman's claim about bones not healing in Japan, but I did find the following information in Cowdrey's book: "In prewar days, when more time was available, compound fractures were treated in Japan. Except in rare cases, few such open reductions and internal fixations were performed once the fighting had begun. Orthopedic surgeons now were content to immobilize compound fractures and evacuate the victims as early as possible for definitive treatment in the zone of interior." Cowdrey, Medics', 281.

17. Burbridge, interview by author, 19 November 1997. For more information on the medical journey of the wounded, see Chapter 9, "Definitive Care," of Cowdrey's The Medics' War.

18. Charles "Bud" Hoffman, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 15 July 1997. For more information on Hoffman, see the chapter below entitled "'Bomb 'em to oblivion, boys!': Kansans in the Air Force." Hoffman also wrote a shorted form of these experiences for me in a memoir entitled "My Korean War Experiences."

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. "Army Medical Care," Hays Daily News.

Chapter 8

“Please, Don’t Let Me Get Seasick Again.”: Kansans in the Navy

Like the other branches of America’s armed forces, the United States Navy faced challenges in the Korean War. As quickly as the United States Navy had risen to its historically unprecedented “mastery of the seas” in World War II, it fell from its peak in the postwar world. Because Americans and the Congress pushed for massive demobilization, the Navy faced sharp budget cuts. Much of its World War II fleet was moth-balled. Overcome with victory and confidence, some Americans and government officials even wanted “the Reserve Fleet . . . to be melted down into bobby pins” so taxpayers would not have to pay for its upkeep.¹ Plans for new warships were canceled in this age of blind demobilization. In fact, between 1945 and 1955, only three ships, the aircraft carriers Midway, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Coral Sea, were added to America’s battlefleet. Even though America saw Soviet aggression as a threat, the Navy, like armed forces, faced imminent danger from America’s own demobilization programs and military budget cuts.²

The North Korean invasion into South Korea on June 25, 1950, soon revealed the hazards of America’s nonchalant demobilization. Yet even in its reduced state the United States Navy answered President Harry S. Truman’s first call to duty in the Korean War. In fact, just one day after he was notified of the North Korean aggression, Truman issued the following orders to General Douglas MacArthur:

All restrictions on employment of FECOM [Far East Command] Navy . . . be removed. They will offer [their] fullest possible support to South Korean forces so as to permit these forces to reform. . . .

In addition 7th Fleet will take stations so as to prevent invasion of Formosa

and to insure that Formosa [will] not be used as [a] base of operations against [the] Chinese mainland. . . .

Naval forces may be used without restriction in coastal waters and sea approaches of Korea south of [the] 38th Parallel against [the] forces engaged in aggression against South Korea.³

Continuing and expanding its first mission in the Korean War, the American Navy blockaded and patrolled the Korean waters, cut enemy naval supply lines, transported troops, and supported the ground forces with logistics and gunfire. Among the 1,177,000 seamen who served in the American Navy during the Korean War were Kansans Leo D. Culbertson, Jim Lowther, George Walters, and Charles Marin.⁴

Having known his future course might be set for North or South Korea, Leo D. Culbertson, a football player at the El Dorado junior college, enlisted in the United States Navy at a friend's suggestion. He was inducted on March 8, 1951. Within a few weeks, Culbertson's life changed from pounding the gridiron and cracking the books to only hitting the deck and anchors away. Having risen through the ranks, he soared to the position of a Third Class Boatsman, the equivalent of "a three-stripe sergeant in the army," while aboard the destroyer USS Rowan. The Rowan, the flag ship of the division, which also included the destroyers USS Henderson, USS Gurke, and USS Sutherland, carried the commodore.⁵

Culbertson remembered two key duties of his destroyer: patrolling the North Korean coast and rescuing downed aircraft crews. While others speculated about Russian aid to the North Korean and Chinese coasts, Culbertson knew the Russians "were hauling equipment [into] Korea at the time." He recalled the sighting of a Russian ship in Korean waters: "We followed [a] Russian ship for several miles . . . for a day, and night, and part

of the next day. . . . [We] just kept watch on it [to] make sure it didn't go [into] port." On duty below deck during this chase, he could only assume that his officers knew the Russian ship's destination. In this instance, an American destroyer prevented communist aid from reaching the enemy.⁶

Besides patrolling, Culbertson's destroyer division took turns being a "lifeguard service for [aircraft] carriers." He explained, "[If] one [plane] went down, we'd rescue the pilots and pull them aboard ship." After the rescue, then helicopters from the carriers would fly to his ship to pick up the lucky pilots. Proudly explaining the proficiency of naval pilots, he stated, "We didn't have to do that too much."⁷

Aboard the USS Rowan, Culbertson had many responsibilities. As a 3rd Class Boatman, he supervised the "Deck Apes" or "Swab Jockies" who maintained the destroyer's upkeep. On each four-hour watch, his men cleaned and painted the destroyer; constant repainting helped to save the ship from the devastating effects of rust. In addition, Culbertson served as a powder man on the left five-inch gun on the forward turret. At sea for so long, Culbertson felt sadly isolated from his worried mother back in Eureka, Kansas. She "never wrote too much" and when she did write, he received the letter more than two months later. Reunited with his mother when he returned home after nearly four years in the Navy, Culbertson was discharged on March 4, 1955.⁸

Like Culbertson, Kansan Jim Lowther also served in a destroyer division, Destroyer Division 32. He graduated from the University of Kansas in May of 1951, enlisted, and was inducted into the Navy on January 24, 1952.⁹ Having completed Basic Training and Officers Candidate School, he enthusiastically applied for duty on the

destroyer USS Mason, commanded by a fellow Emporian. Lowther spent his whole naval duty, thirty-six to thirty-seven months, on the USS Mason, a destroyer that had previously supported the Hungnam evacuation.¹⁰

Having returned to North Korean waters, the Mason, now with Lowther aboard, participated in a number of actions. One was the siege of the port of Wonsan. He described his vessel's action:

We'd go in [the harbor] . . . , staying where the mines were swept, . . . and we would shoot at the city, sort of harassment fire. [Command] had given us orders to shoot so many rounds per day. . . . We didn't allow any communist traffic, no communist ships [into port]. We'd [try] to prohibit all traffic of communists in and out of that harbor for anything.

Besides harassment fire, his destroyer's daily assault also wrecked enemy railroad lines and trains, preventing the enemy from supplying and reinforcing its troops. On other missions, Lowther's destroyer helped rescue downed pilots or hunted for enemy submarines¹¹

Having first served in the gunnery department on the Mason, Lowther was moved into the operations department where he worked in communications. Besides serving as a communications officer, he was also the destroyer's coding officer who coded and decoded incoming and outgoing messages. Lowther recalled the role of the communications department and its significance in the Korean war fighting:

We tried to maintain our equipment to talk to the airplanes. We'd have jobs like air control. We might have a group of four fighters that we would control from our destroyer by radio and radar, and they'd be out patrolling, looking for MiGs or something. [Also] we'd have mock dog-fights. If communications failed, you were dead in the water. . . .

Lowther excelled in his communications duty. He continued to rise through the ranks and

eventually became the Operations Officer, third in command of the USS Mason.¹²

Of course, service on a naval vessel did not shield Lowther from danger in a war zone. For example, while his destroyer helped in the bombardment of Wonsan, it faced light and inaccurate fire from communist cannons partially hidden in nearby cliffs. Still, the enemy fire “was kind of scary” because Lowther and the other men, who heard and saw the enemy’s incoming shells, were exposed while manning their battle stations. Also, as he traveled from port to port and mission to mission, he faced the ever-present danger of mines. Lowther soon discovered that a few enemy troops who traveled out in their sampans and dropped crude mines into Korean waters could wreak havoc on many UN ships. Having seen the disastrous effects of the mines on one ship’s bow, Lowther felt chills go down his spine when he realized that his bunk was located in his destroyer’s bow. In addition, he described another fear:

I always thought . . . if a MiG came at us, we would never have a chance to get it because it would be too fast for us to react and get the data in . . . and track it and generate a [fire] command to be accurate. . . . [Once] in a while . . . we would have . . . [exercises with] Air Force planes acting like they were MiGs and they would come low on the water and all of a sudden the radar would pick them up. By that time they were right on [us] going five hundred miles an hour or more and [our defenses] seemed kind of futile so we were always keeping our fingers crossed that the MiGs would more or less concentrate against our planes and not come at the fleet.

Luckily for Lowther’s destroyer and its crew, the enemy did just what he had hoped.¹³

But it was a turbulent typhoon, not the enemy, that caused a near disaster for Lowther and the USS Mason. On this mission, his destroyer division was serving as a submarine-detector for Task Force 77, a force of destroyers, carriers, submarines, and other support ships which had previously helped with the Inchon landing and the

Hungnam evacuation, when a typhoon overtook them.¹⁴ The powerful winds of the typhoon pushed the task force toward the Soviet port of Vladivostok, and the captains of some aircraft carriers labored for nearly an hour before they could turn their vessels from the Russian territory they were fast approaching.¹⁵

Narrowly escaping an incursion in to Russian territory, Lowther's destroyer soon faced another problem. He recalled:

I was on duty in the Combat Information Center when they reported a depth charge loose on . . . our deck. We had a couple of volunteers [and] we put heavy lines around them and life jackets [on them]. . . . We had everything buttoned down water-tight so [we] finally let them out, and they found this thing and got it thrown overboard . . . because a depth charge [was] set off by water pressure. . . . We were afraid that it would become armed banging around and . . . waves hitting it. That was a pretty scary time.¹⁶

Lowther survived the typhoon and other dangers in the war, but he was relieved when the armistice was signed. As the front line troops had grown restless with worry so too had the crew of the USS Mason, who were "getting pretty tired . . . worrying about what [they] were doing." Even though the Korean War had ended, Lowther's duty in the Far East had not. His vessel was then sent into the Formosan Straits to monitor any aggressive activity. Lowther remembered this new duty, "They put some special gear on for us to monitor [the] radio and radar of the Chinese communists to see [if] . . . they were getting ready to attack Nationalist China."¹⁷ Luckily for Lowther's destroyer, which would have been caught in the middle of the fighting, the Chinese communists did not attack. After his tour of duty expired, Lowther was discharged from the Navy on December 11, 1954.¹⁸

Another Kansan who served in the Navy during the Korean War was George

Walters. Walters had first served aboard the aircraft carriers Antietam and Valley Forge at the end of World War II, so he knew what to expect in his Korean War duty aboard the carrier Mindoro. Nevertheless, he was not happy when he was called up with other reservists in 1952. In fact, the very morning he received his “greetings” from President Truman he had enrolled in his final college semester at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas. Less than a month later, he was aboard ship. Part of the UN fleet, his carrier helped conduct flight operations, some nonstop for twenty consecutive days. During this specific operation, he remembered the ship’s atmosphere was characterized by a “nervous tension.” Having shared the Air Office with the carrier’s captain, flight officer, and flight commander, the Air Yeoman Walter’s chief responsibility was to help coordinate the aircrafts’ take-offs and landings, duty which required split second timing to preserve lives and aircraft, and which Walters later laconically described as “pretty touch and go.”¹⁹

Although he remembered little difference between his duty in World War II and the Korean War, Walters stated that three captains shaped his life. After first serving under an isolated and alcoholic captain, he next served under a truly negative captain. Under both captain’s leadership, Walters observed, the ship’s morale never rose above average. But Walters could only recall positives concerning the third captain, who personally knew each of his two-thousand-man crew. Walters remembered the first time he met this captain:

[When] I reported aboard ship, to the bridge to my duty station, he asked me my name and “Where are you from and what did you do?” and he asked me how I liked being called back to active duty. . . . Why the next day, he came up to the bridge with a copy of National Geographic and said, “Here, take this back and read this tonight and bring it back tomorrow. . . . I think you will find it

interesting.” It was the issue that had the story of the 1951 flood . . . here in Kansas. [The flood] made National Geographic because it was one of our worst floods in the state, even Hays flooded. . . . [The captain] was alert enough that [after] he first asked me my name [and] where I was from, he remembered it and brought [the magazine] up. Now, he was a captain. He didn’t have to do that . . . but it was just his way.

Apparently, not only Walters but other men aboard this captain’s carrier were impressed with his leadership. The crew’s morale sky-rocketed. Consequently, the crew won pennants, and praise and recognition for its actions in the Korean war. With this experience, Walters’ two years of service in the war ended positively.²⁰

Another Kansan who served in the Navy during the Korean War was Charles Marin. As an eighteen-year-old, he enlisted and was inducted on January 8, 1952.²¹ Having completed Basic Training, he was stationed in the B Division, maintaining the boilers for the aircraft carrier Bataan. While it sailed in Korean waters, Marin’s carrier faced potential enemy aircraft and submarine attacks. Luckily, enemy aircraft just conducted fly-overs, and enemy submarines were routinely discovered and distracted by the Bataan’s destroyer escort. Nevertheless, Marin witnessed the consequences of combat, “One time we came back from [the Far East] we hauled a bunch of dead soldiers . . . back, stacked up in crates and tied down. . . . There was one end of the hangar deck that was full of these [crates], just stacked up eight high. . . . It made you think because these young men . . . [were] going home in a box.” In addition, Marin remembered that a dead pilot’s body was placed in the carrier’s kitchen’s huge freezer to preserve it which he “always thought was strange.”²²

After the war ended, Marin served an additional three years. Instead of serving on

the Bataan, he was transferred to a bigger and more modern aircraft carrier, the Yorktown. Still working in the B Division, he helped power this enormous three-thousand-man ship as it patrolled the Straits of Formosa. Marin completed his tour of duty and was discharged from the Navy in 1956, but he chose to remain active in the Navy by becoming a Naval Reserve instructor for the Emporia, Kansas, Reserve unit.²³

At least four Kansans sailed the distant Korean coastal waters. When Leo D. Culbertson and Jim Lowther served on destroyers, they helped support ground forces by blockading the enemy's coastlines and destroying the enemy's capacity to supply its troops. Either monitoring a carrier's flights or maintaining a carrier's boilers, George Walters and Charles Marin kept the U.N. naval forces on the move. Explaining the significant achievements of naval men such as these Kansans, Navy Secretary and America's Secretary of Defense James V. Forrestal stated, "In the future, as in the past, the key to victory and to the freedom of this country will be the control of the seas and of the skies above them. . . . Therefore, control of the ocean and of the air above . . . is the key to our own security . . . [and] is the mission of the United States Navy."²⁴

NOTES

1. Walter Karig, Malcolm W. Cagle, and Frank A. Manson, Battle Report: The War in Korea, Battle Report Series (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1952), 3.
2. Ibid; and Kenneth J. Hagan, This People's Navy: The Making of American Sea Power (New York: Free Press, 1991), 333, 340, 334, 335.
3. "Teleconference with MacArthur," 26 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2.
4. Hagan, Navy, 342; and "Casualties in Principal Wars of the U.S.," U.S. Department of Defense, Department of Kansas, Veterans of Foreign Wars, photocopy.
5. Leo D. Culbertson, interview by author, Eureka, Kansas, 4 September 1997.
6. Ibid.
7. Leo D. Culbertson, Telephone interview by author, 24 February 1997.
8. Ibid.
9. James Lowther, Discharge Record, Lyon County Courthouse, Emporia, Kansas, photocopy. Since he signed his interview release form as Jim Lowther, I used this name in the thesis.
10. Jim Lowther, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 February 1997.
11. Ibid. Initially firing only one round at a time, Lowther emphasized the accuracy of aiming the guns for targets. He mentioned that some U.N. ships did not practice such efficiency in accuracy as they fired into their own ground forces.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Karig, Cagle, and Manson, Report, 18, 461, 469.
15. Lowther, interview by author, 20 February 1997.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid. Lowther did not mention who “they” were.

18. Ibid.; and James Lowther, Discharge Record. According to his discharge record, Lowther received a Korean War Service Medal with three stars, for service to the United Nations, Nationalist China, and America’s national defense.

19. George Walters, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 6 March 1997. Describing his other responsibilities, Walters said, “I operated the office [and] was involved in the personnel.”

20. Ibid. Walters did not mention any of the captain’s names or on what aircraft carriers they served. I can only presume that the alcoholic captain served on the Antietam, the negative captain served on the Valley Forge, and the best captain served on the Mindoro.

21. Charles Marin, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 February 1997; and Charles Marin, Discharge Record, Lyon County Courthouse, Emporia, Kansas, photocopy.

22. Ibid. According to Marin, there were three to four destroyers in an escort.

23. Ibid.; and Charles Marin, Discharge Record. According to his discharge record, Marin received a United Nations Service Medal and Ribbon, a Nationalist China Service Medal, and a Korean Service Medal and Ribbon with six stars.

24. Hagan, This People’s Navy, 335, 339. Forrestal became the Secretary of Defense in September of 1947.

Chapter 9 “Bomb ‘Em to Oblivion, Boys!”: Kansans in the Air Force

Besides the Army, Marine Corps, and the Navy, the American Air Force made significant contributions in the Korean War to stop communist aggression. In fact, along with the Naval forces, the Far East Command’s Air Forces were among the first forces President Harry S. Truman called up in response to the North Korean invasion. On June 26, 1950, in a teleconference with the Far East Commander General Douglas MacArthur, Truman ordered:

All restrictions which have previously prevented the full utilization of the U.S. Far East Air Forces to support and assist the defense of the South Korean territory are lifted for operations below the 38th Parallel. All North Korean tanks, guns, military columns and other military targets south of the 38th Parallel are cleared for attack by the U.S. Air Force.¹

Ten American fighter planes in Japan were given to ROK pilots to help defend their country while ammunition was flown to South Korea in bigger aircraft. While the Air Force tried to repel the North Korean forces, it protected American nationals who were evacuating from the coming communist advances. A leader in the first American forces’ defense of South Korea, Supreme UN Commander Matthew B. Ridgway stated that without the Air Forces’ first strikes against the North Korean invaders, South Korea would have fallen to communism.²

U.N. Air Force objectives did not end with the North Korean invasion. Facing initial shortages in materiel and personnel, the Air Force, nevertheless, continued to hamper communist forces. Supporting the Pusan Perimeter, allied aircraft frustrated North Korean efforts to supply its troops to such an extent that the North Koreans could

not stage a final push to drive allied forces into the sea. In addition to their other roles, in the September 15, 1950 Inchon landing, pilots of the Far East Air Force flew photographic reconnaissance missions over the Inchon area. Just six days before the X Corps successfully landed at Inchon, bombers annihilated the enemy's rail system which had extended north from Seoul.³

The Air Forces' contributions to the UN effort continued as the war changed from an offensive to a withdrawal to a holding action. Strafing the enemy and air-dropping supplies to UN forces, UN aircraft helped the 8th Army's and X Corps' advance to the Yalu in September through November 1950. Although MacArthur feared no enemy aircraft from the communist Chinese, the Far East Air Force under Lieutenant General George E. Stratemeyer knew better: the Chinese had at least three hundred aircraft ready to pounce on UN forces. Nonetheless, UN forces consistently had air superiority in the skies over the Korean peninsula. Helping secure the area for the Wonsan landing in October 1950, air forces bombarded a fifty-mile radius around this port city and continued their support for the UN advance over most of North Korea. Yet even before ground forces faced massive Chinese intervention, the UN air forces faced hostile aircraft and anti-aircraft artillery attacks over the North Korean skies. Having confronted only communist Yak-18s, UN air, ground, and naval forces alike were horrified at the first sight of the Russian MiG-15s which were initiated into combat on November 1, 1950. Frustrated that they could not return fire against enemy strongholds across the Manchurian border, the allied air forces leveled much of North Korea including the North Korean ends of bridges over the Yalu River, sixty-five percent of the North Korean

communications center of Kanggye on November 4, 1950, and much of Kim Il-Sung's latest capital at Sinuiju three days later. Having supported the UN forces' advance through November 1950, the air forces also sheltered the ground forces' withdrawal in the face of massive Chinese intervention in late November 1950 through January 1951. Luckily, by that time, American F-86 Sabrejets had arrived in the Korean skies to challenge the Russian MiG-15s, and inspire the ground forces as they moved out of the Chinese encirclement. Months later, in January through April 1951 as the UN forces retook South Korean ground lost to the communists, the air forces once again assisted the advance with air strikes and air drops. The battlefield turned to stalemate, but the air forces continued their missions well into 1953, when three Kansans, Harley G. Rowley, Glenn Matson, and Charles "Bud" Hoffman, arrived in the Far East.⁴

Drafted into the military, Harley G. Rowley enlisted in the Air Force on October 9, 1951. While he trained as a "remote control turret systems mechanics gunner (bomber)" he traveled to five bases before he arrived at Forbes Air Force Base in Topeka, Kansas. Interestingly, at Stead Air Force Base in Reno, Nevada, he was trained in mountain survival "so in case [he] had to bale out" over North or South Korea, he would survive the hazardous mountainous terrain. The farm boy-turned-corporal, a left gunner on a B-29 Superfortress, he served on an eleven-man crew of men from Kansas, Pennsylvania, Illinois, New Mexico, Texas, Kentucky, and California. In the 307th Bomb Wing, 372nd Bomb Squadron based in Okinawa, Japan, Rowley received a special honor, "My B-29 combat crew was President Dwight D. Eisenhower's first B-29 combat crew to be assigned to the Far Eastern Air Force the day President Eisenhower was inaugurated."⁵

After arriving in Japan in January 1953, Rowley set off on his first combat mission against Kopyongmyon on February 8, 1953 (See Appendix C for a listing of Rowley's missions). Although he admitted his crew "never fired [their] guns once in combat . . . , the potential was always there" for even on his first mission, he received word that three enemy fighters were within fourteen miles of his bomber. Luckily, escort fighter aircraft protected the vulnerable B-29 bomber streams against enemy aircraft on every one of Rowley's missions. Rowley admitted that without these escort aircraft, "We [were] just sitting ducks" because the B-29 weapons system was not designed for use against jet aircraft but for propellor-driven aircraft. Besides fighter support, Rowley conceded he also relied on divine intervention as he flew twenty-seven night combat missions over hazardous North Korean skies full of searchlights and anti-aircraft-artillery.⁶

Besides serving as a left gunner, Rowley had other responsibilities. For example, both he and the right gunner's responsibility were to make engine checks every half hour, reporting any engine malfunctions. This responsibility proved vital when his sixteenth combat mission was cut short by a vibration in aircraft number 096's number three engine. As far as additional responsibilities, twenty-two-year-old Rowley had also been trained in the interchangeable positions of tail gunner, right gunner, and central fire control gunner.⁷

As a left gunner of a B-29, Rowley helped accomplish a Joint Chiefs of Staff July 31, 1950 directive "to undertake mass air operations against North Korean targets . . . [to] destroy industrial targets in North Korea and reduce the North Korean ability to wage war. . . ."⁸ Of the four main targets the JCS listed as imperative, Rowley's crew hit near two, Pyongyang and Wonsan, on at least four missions.⁹ After just six months in combat,

Rowley, or more specifically, the bombs his B-29 crew dropped in North Korea, helped destroy enemy strongholds and hamper enemy logistics.

Of course, the North Koreans did not appreciate Rowley's or other B-29 crews' missions. He conceded, "The North Koreans hated our guts [because] we did a lot of damage." As a result, North Koreans often shot and killed downed bomber crews. In fact, Rowley remembered one bomber crew which crashed into North Korean territory in December of 1952. By the time UN forces found their bodies, the crew had died from bullet wounds in the back of the head, not from the crash or the bitter North Korean winter. After hearing this and other deeds of the enemy, Rowley exclaimed, "I hated [the communists] with a purple passion."¹⁰

Although he flew twenty-seven missions, two particular missions stood out in Rowley's mind. Having traveled across most of North Korea to bomb the Sinuiju Airfield, Rowley's B-29 flew in the usual "bomber stream formation." The bombers would take off just one minute apart and were separated by a short distance. In formation fifteen to eighteen bombers from one of the three Bomb Wings based in Japan ascended on the target. Yet as Rowley explained, the formation could prove dangerous:

We were at the Sinuiju Airfield . . . and it was just black, dark . . . black as coal. I mean, . . . you [could] . . . hardly see the tips of the wings and, of course, you had all your lights off . . . and, of course, . . . these bombers [had] one minute separation between "Bombs Away" so they [were very close to each other]. Everybody [had] to be very, very careful . . . that they [didn't] run into [each other.] We almost ran into one [bomber]. We almost turned into him. [We] guys almost had [heart attacks]. . . . [The bombardier], he's . . . already dropped the bombs so his job was done for the mission, just live and get home, . . . and he went "Ah! Ah! Ah!" [The] aircraft commander [saw] it just in time as he was turning off his bomb run and corrected his turn to keep from hitting the other airplane and boy, . . . you could just figure you'd just kiss your ass good-bye up there . . . because [there] ain't no way in

hell you'd ever get home . . . because [the enemy] wouldn't fool around with flight crews.¹¹

Rowley described another dangerous mission, a mission when time, not proximity to another aircraft, almost spelled disaster. He recalled:

Sometimes, we flew what they called "Front Line Support Missions," which means . . . you've got an aircraft carrier sitting off the coast of Korea. . . . Then, we go up there and we [would] contact them and they'd vector us to a target [where] the Army . . . [was] calling for help and [where] they'd direct us to drop our bombs. . . . Well, this one particular night we couldn't contact [the aircraft carrier] . . . and we're . . . in the sky burning up fuel like crazy . . . , worried about the plane . . . and we've only got so much fuel and we've still got to go about 950 miles to get back to Okinawa after we drop our bombs, and we couldn't contact 'em and [our radio man] tried and tried and tried and tried to contact the short hand radar. . . . [He] couldn't contact 'em so we [conducted Plan Murder]. We just [went] seventy miles north of the 38th Parallel and [dropped] the bombs. . . . We just dumped the bombs and . . . and then we [returned] . . . to Japan.¹²

Having survived many hazardous missions, Rowley was not embarrassed to admit his fear. He openly stated, "We [were] all scared to death . . . [but] I can tell you one thing, if you ever get scared just remember this, you can only get so scared [and] then you don't get any scarer [sic]. You just paralyze." Although enemy anti-aircraft artillery, searchlights, and fighter aircraft scared the bomber crews, Rowley remembered that the rumor of daylight missions justifiably terrified them, "It just scared the living daylights out of us. [We] guys [were] all talking about falling off the airplane and breaking our arms and stuff like that. . . . I wouldn't want to do that. I was afraid it would hurt too much but [the mention of daylight missions] made you think about it . . . because that's the only way you could get out of going on a mission." Luckily, Rowley never had to fly a daylight mission.¹³

After his combat duty ended in July of 1953, Rowley heard of the armistice signing while he was home on leave. Although the war ended, Rowley's duty to the Air Force

continued at Biggs Air Force Base in El Paso, Texas. Surrounded by non-combatants who ironically offered combat advice to the experienced airman, he grew to detest his time at Biggs. In fact, he grew so frustrated that he volunteered for duty in Japan, an idea which angered his commanding officer who needed seasoned combat veterans to train his novices. Although the officer was angered, Rowley admitted his mother “threw a . . . really big fit” at his mentioning more duty thousands of miles from home. Against his preferences, Rowley completed his service time at Biggs.¹⁴

Although the flight crews often received the glamour of annihilating enemy strongholds, much of the airmen’s capabilities depended on the skills of Air Force mechanics, such as Charles “Bud” Hoffman and Glenn Matson. The Korean War touched Hoffman’s life early when two of his “school chums” were among the first Americans sent to South Korea. Hoffman’s friend Jimmy Henderson volunteered for the military at the age of seventeen. Hoffman explained that Henderson often wrote to him about the cushy occupational duty in Japan. Henderson’s peacetime duty came to an abrupt end when his 24th Division was rushed to stop the North Korean invasion into South Korea. Hoffman explained what happened to his friend after he entered combat on the Korean peninsula:

He was one of those guys [who] figured, “Well, it can’t be as bad as all these guys shooting at us [so] I’ll just surrender.” . . . He surrendered . . . and when he surrendered - he always had a big mouth - . . . , they said that a North Korean guard told him to do something and [Henderson] told [the guard] what he could do about it. . . . The North Korean guard immediately killed him.¹⁵

Having lost one friend in the Korean War, sadly Hoffman would lose another, Jack Herzet, also a member of the 24th Division. Hoffman explained that while Herzet guarded a position, he was killed not by the traditional enemy, but by a guerrilla:

Jack was guarding a road position and [the American soldiers] were letting these refugees through. . . . A mother with a baby on her back [came] . . . so he let this woman through and then turned to watch the next people coming up. . . . Between [the mother] and the baby was a grenade and she reached and got the grenade and tossed it at [Jack's] feet and killed him so they killed her.¹⁶

According to Hoffman, while American forces faced the oncoming North Korean forces, few Americans expected to face a hostile civilian force full of men and women who deceived and killed American servicemen. Having recalled this story, Hoffman stated, “This was just a forerunner of what it meant to fight in an Oriental country.”¹⁷

But the deaths of his friends did not dissuade Hoffman from joining the armed forces. Having hoped to become a pilot, he enlisted in the Air Force in March of 1951, just a few months before his high school graduation. Soon, the eighteen-year-old learned that all pilots had to be at least twenty-one-years-old, but he was stuck in the Air Force. After completing his Basic Training at San Antonio's Lackland Air Force Base, Hoffman learned how to repair World War II aircraft at Shepherd Air Force Base in Wichita Falls, Texas, and at Luke Air Force Base near Phoenix, Arizona. While he was training at Luke Air Force Base, Hoffman volunteered to go to South Korea in 1952.¹⁸

After a tumultuous voyage of rough seas and the death of one serviceman who fell overboard, Hoffman arrived in the Far East. Eventually, he ended up at Kimpo Air Force Base, just thirty miles from Seoul and near the 38th Parallel. After spending months learning how to repair the P-51 aircraft, Hoffman was informed that the airplanes were not even used in the Korean War. The Air Force assigned him to the Basic Maintenance Department. But misguided training was the least of Hoffman's worries, especially since the Air Force reported Kimpo Air Force Base was expected to fall into enemy hands

within two weeks. Having felt a rush of emotions, especially after he was given a prisoner of war card for his potential capture, Hoffman spent his first days at the base “on twenty-four hour a day shifts until [we] got all the airplanes out.” After he prayed to the Lord for peace, he was reassured and comforted even though he faced danger and potential death close to enemy lines. Although the Marines drove the enemy back before any ground attack, Hoffman, who repaired aircraft for the sole Photo Reconnaissance Wing in South Korea, had to endure enemy bombing raids for thirty consecutive nights.¹⁹

Having survived the enemy’s bombing raids, Hoffman almost died from fright one night on guard duty. He related this incident:

They told us in our briefing just before we [the men on guard duty that night] went out that [during] the shift before [ours], a guy had had his throat slit and it was near the same position that I was going to. . . . It was dark as pitch two o’clock in the morning and I had to walk down this road that curved and on the other side of the curve is where [the previous night’s slaying occurred]. . . . I heard this “G.I., G.I., over here,” and I about croaked but I made up my mind, “Okay, he’s going to get me but I’m gonna see him.” So, I got my flashlight out and [shined] it over there where I thought the voice was. . . . It was a South Korean guard [and] I was really tickled to see him.²⁰

When his combat duty expired four to five months after the Korean War ended, Hoffman braved the ocean’s turbulent waters to return home. While they sailed through sea swells and a typhoon, the men aboard Hoffman’s merchant ship were miserable, especially since every time they would line up for meals, someone in the line would vomit in the food. Not only did this act curb appetites, but it also started a chain reaction. Luckily, a wise person instructed Hoffman to eat crackers to survive this ordeal. At every meal, Hoffman rushed to grab crackers before he too succumbed to seasickness. The crackers worked. Unfortunately, when Hoffman’s ship docked in Seattle, Washington, the

Army alone was present to acknowledge its servicemen with a welcoming parade, even though they had spent their entire duty in Japan. Hoffman and the other airmen aboard, uncelebrated, were the last to leave the ship.²¹

Another Air Force mechanic, Glenn Matson, also served at Kimpo Air Force Base, though he and Hoffman never met, since Matson served in the 4th Fighter Interceptor Squadron. According to Matson, the communist pilots whom his pilot friends faced were “sitting ducks” for the American World War II veterans. Matson calculated that the pilots from Kimpo Air Force Base had 835 kills against enemy aircraft, including the Russian MiG-15s. In fact, in Korea America hailed its first ace in jet aircraft history, a World War II pilot named Captain James Jabara of Wichita, Kansas.²² Jabara was a friend of Matson’s. Unfortunately, the jet ace who shot down twenty to thirty enemy aircraft in the Korean War was not heroically killed in battle, but was killed by a drunk driver in Florida when he was on leave. Matson remembered how terrible he felt when he heard “that was the way [Jabara] had to die.”²³

Having completed his duty as a mechanic in South Korea, Matson was ready to return to the states. As he sailed out of Japan, the Japanese citizens gave Matson and other servicemen a farewell salute with a band, a far better reception than they received in America where, overall, they were ignored. When he returned to the states, Matson, career military man, continued to serve his country for several more decades. During the Vietnam War, he had a rear echelon office job, but the highlight of his service occurred when he flew the Skoshi Tiger to South Vietnam and participated in this experimental aircraft’s testing. In all, Matson served over twenty-two years in America’s armed forces

before he retired.²⁴

Kansans Harley G. Rowley, Charles “Bud” Hoffman, and Glenn Matson were among the 1,285,000 airmen who served during the Korean War.²⁵ A left gunner of a B-29 Superfortress bomber, Rowley (and his crew’s bombing raids) truly left their mark on North Korea. While he worked for a Photo Reconnaissance unit, Hoffman helped save lives, repairing aircraft whose job it was to capture enemy strongholds on film. Matson helped insure victory for jet pilots, such as ace James Jabara, when he repaired fighter aircraft. Having accepted the call to duty, the three Kansans and other airmen at least were not forgotten by their Supreme UN Commander General Matthew B. Ridgway:

[Had] our air . . . forces not supported the ground armies to the limit of their capabilities, losses would have been far greater, and our cause might have suffered a disaster. And it certainly may be said that the gallant airmen . . . who contributed so much to the effort are nowhere more highly honored than in the hearts of the doughboys and Marines who fought the ground battles.²⁶

NOTES

1. "Teleconference with MacArthur," 26 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of George M. Elsey.

2. Ibid.; and Matthew B. Ridgway, The Korean War: How We Met the Challenge, How All-Out Asian War Was Averted, Why MacArthur Was Dismissed, [and] Why Today's War Objectives Must be Limited (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 22, 25.

3. Ridgway, War, 34, Robert Frank Futrell, The United States Air Force in Korea 1950-1953, With a Foreword by Richard H. Kohn, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 58, 137, 157.

4. Futrell, United States Air Force, 201, 2, 202, 217, 219, 221-22, 223, 254, 243, 248, 250-51, 343. According to Futrell, the F-86 Sabrejets first flew in Korean skies on December 15, 1950. Clayton W. Harrell, "Amid the Ascent of the Jet Age, North Korean Airmen Harassed U.N. Forces with Flying Anachronisms," Military History 14 (March 1998): 66; and Robert Jackson, World Military Aircraft Since 1945 (New York: Scribner, 1979), 94. For more information on air forces' support of ground forces, see the above chapter entitled "'Oh, No, Here We Go Again.': American Forces Face Another Communist Invasion."

5. Harley G. Rowley, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 27 February 1997; and Harley G. Rowley, Discharge Record, Lyon County Courthouse, Emporia, Kansas, photocopy; Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower: Soldier and President (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 295. Rowley stated that Eisenhower was inaugurated on January 23, 1953, but Ambrose stated that he was inaugurated on January 20, 1953.

6. Rowley, interview by author, 27 February 1997; and Harley G. Rowley, Flight Diary, Private Collection, photocopy.

7. Ibid.; Ibid.; and Harley G. Rowley, Discharge Record.

8. "Department of the Army, Staff Message Center, Outgoing Classified Message from the JCS to the Commander in Chief Far East," 31 July 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Aide Files.

9. Ibid.; Flight Diary, Rowley. The five missions included his fourth, sixth, ninth, and fifteenth missions.; “Forts Rack Red Supply, Rail Centers,” Pacific Stars and Stripes, 24 February 1953, Harley G. Rowley, Private Collection, scrapbook, photocopy. This source referred to his fourth mission.; “B-29s Brave Ring of Flak to Pummel Troop, Supply Points,” Pacific Stars and Stripes, 8 March 1953, Harley G. Rowley, Private Collection, scrapbook, photocopy. This article referred to his sixth mission; and “AF Rips Rail Hub, Bridges, Vehicles [and] Sabre Ace Destroys MIG [sic],” Pacific Stars and Stripes, 14 April 1953, Harley G. Rowley, Private Collection, scrapbook, photocopy. This article referred to his fifteenth mission. According to Rowley’s notes in his scrapbook, all newspaper articles in his scrapbook came from the Pacific Stars and Stripes.

10. Rowley, interview by author, 27 February 1997.

11. Ibid. Besides Rowley’s 307th Bomb Wing at Okinawa, there was also the 19th Bomb Wing at Okinawa and the 98th Bomb Wing at Tokyo.

12. Ibid.; and Rowley, Flight Diary. In the interview he mentioned that they resorted to “Operation Death,” but in his notes of his twenty-first mission, he stated that they resorted to “Plan Murder.”

13. Rowley, interview by author, 27 February 1997. He did not mention any crews that flew daylight missions.

14. Ibid.; and Harley G. Rowley, Discharge Record. According to his discharge record, Rowley received the following medals: the Korean Service Medal with one Bronze Star, the Air Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal.

15. Charles “Bud” Hoffman, interview by author, Tape Recording, Hays, Kansas, 15 July 1997; and Charles “Bud” Hoffman, “My Korean War Experiences,” hand-written memoir. Hoffman did not identify who “they” were.

16. Hoffman, interview by author, 15 July 1997.

17. Hoffman, “My Korean War Experiences.”

18. Hoffman, interview by author, 15 July 1997.

19. Ibid.; and Hoffman, “My Korean War Experiences.” According to Hoffman, the body of the serviceman who fell overboard was not recovered even after Hoffman’s ship spent twenty-four hours looking for it. Having landed in Japan on Christmas day of 1952, Hoffman was supposed to arrive at Kimpo on January 1, 1953, but tragedy delayed him. One day before his flight to South Korea, 129 people were killed when a C-124 Globemaster cargo plane crashed on take-off. Hesitant to lose more lives, the Air Force rushed to investigate the disaster and solve the mystery of this crash before they let

another plane leave. Baffled by the crash, investigators unsuccessfully ended their inquiry and allowed flights to continue.

20. Hoffman, interview by author, 15 July 1997. Hoffman did not state who “they” were.

21. Ibid. He did not reveal who gave him this “cracker” advise.

22. Glenn Matson, interview by author, Tape recording, Madison, Kansas, 18 September 1997. Having first served as a glider pilot instructor for the Army before the Navy truly shot the project down, Matson later joined the Merchant Marines, hauling wheat and other supplies to war-torn Europe and Africa in World War II. According to Matson, because they were short on men, the communists “just put [servicemen] in airplanes and [the servicemen] didn’t [even] have any safety equipment with them.” He did not state how many American or UN aircraft were lost.; Futrell, United States Air Force, 307, 654. Futrell stated that Jabara later became a major.; and “Rose and Glenn Matson to Tricia North,” letter, 2 December 1997.

23. “Rose and Glenn Matson to Tricia North,” 2 December 1997.

24. Glenn Matson, interview by author, 5 March 1997 and 18 September 1997.

25. “Casualties in Principal Wars of the U.S.,” Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Kansas, photocopy.

26. Ridgway, War, viii-ix. In this quotation, Ridgway also paid tribute to the Navy.

Chapter 10 Brothers in Arms: Brothers Fight on the Korean Peninsula

As American servicemen in the Air Force, Army, Marines, and Navy were sent thousands of miles away to protect South Korean democracy, the military often called on brothers to serve. Already united by blood, these men soon became united in the tension of combat. At least seven sets of Kansas brothers served during the Korean War or its aftermath.

One set of brothers was the Dinkels: Gilbert F., Robert L., and Leroy P. In June 1950 while driving home from a relative's residence, Gilbert, the first of three brothers sent to the Korean peninsula, first heard about the Korean War, "I had an uncle living in Smith Center and [I] went up to see him and on [my] way home I heard on the radio President Truman [say] those South Koreans got invaded by the North Koreans." Soon, the president called for Gilbert's presence in the armed forces and he was inducted into the Army on September 27, 1950.¹ After completing Basic Training at Fort Riley, Kansas, he was sent to Laundry School in Fort Lee, Virginia. Gilbert saw "war" casualties even before he arrived in South Korea; while he sailed to the Far East, the waters were so rough that two seabees died when the waves threw them against the deck. From then on, Gilbert and the other 2997 on his ship stayed below deck by order of the ship's crew. After he landed at Pusan, Gilbert traveled by train to his camp and his new unit, a laundry outfit in a Quartermaster unit, just thirty miles south of the 38th Parallel.²

Working from sun-up to sun-down, Gilbert washed clothes for the ground forces in the field and for the wounded men in the hospitals. He admitted, "[Some] of that

hospital stuff didn't look that good." As his unit moved farther north and closer to the front lines, he faced enemy snipers and enemy bombers. Although his duty was extended, Gilbert returned home in mid-1952 in time to see his brother Robert off to the Korean peninsula. While his brother went off to the front lines, Gilbert was transferred to the Army Reserves on July 6, 1952, and eventually discharged on July 30, 1956.³

Then, it was Robert's turn to face the communist forces in South Korea. Drafted into the Army in January of 1952, he served nine months as a machine gunner on the front lines with the 179th Regiment of the 45th Infantry Division. Overall, Robert spent thirteen months, from May of 1952 to July of 1953, on the Korean peninsula, most of the time above the 38th Parallel. Having vowed he would never be taken prisoner by the communist forces, he admitted, "If you're not scared, you're not normal." Although the war ended when Robert was home on leave, he was not discharged from the Army and the Army Reserves until January 15, 1960.⁴

Next, it was Leroy's turn to defend democracy in occupational duty. Surprisingly, he served in North Korean territory, thirty-five miles north of the 38th Parallel. Drafted in 1956, he spent sixteen months in the Army's Company B, 1st Battle Group, 17th Infantry Regiment. Besides his Basic Training, Leroy was also "trained" with brotherly advice. For better or worst, older brothers Gilbert and Robert admitted, "A good buddy's better than your own brother." Leroy discovered this truth. Although the war had ended, Leroy always faced the potential for combat. Trained to set the computer for an eighty-one millimeter mortar's plotting board, he waited for the North Koreans' to make a move. According to him, the North Koreans did not act.⁵

To keep the occupation servicemen in shape, Leroy's commanders issued one or two-day marches, sometimes up to forty miles. Even though they carried a rifle and ammunition only on guard duty, Leroy and his fellow servicemen trained all day, ready at any moment for an enemy attack or, more realistically, for an alert drill. Leroy described the alert drills, "They wanted to see how fast you could get out to your alert area and we [did] pretty good . . . , usually about twelve minutes or so. I think we had about three miles to go to get out to our alert area. . . . They'd haul us out on vehicles all the time. . . . You'd stay in practice in case 'Joe Chink' would come across the hills."⁶

Without combat, Leroy and his fellow servicemen had time for extracurricular activities. Whether he went to concerts of Korean singers or to base theaters across from his barracks, he always found something to do. Although the war had ended three years before he had arrived on the Korean peninsula, Leroy saw one consequence of the Korean War, an orphanage full of half-American, half-Korean children. Because the Koreans did not accept these "half-blood" children, Leroy and other American servicemen took food out to the orphanage. For example, each month, a different company was responsible for feeding the helpless children and although the Army could only send leftovers, the ravenous children appreciated any sign of kindness. Carrying these pictures in his mind and in his camera, Leroy returned to America in 1958. He was discharged from the Army on November 30, 1962.⁷

Besides the three Dinkel brothers, the Brack brothers, Marvin E. and Palmer L., also went to South Korea. Drafted at the age of twenty-one, Marvin served twenty-one months, from September 20, 1951, to June 4, 1953, in the Army. Having completed Basic

Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, he found disaster on the trip to South Korea - not from the rough waters but from a bout of appendicitis. Rushed to a naval hospital in Adak, Alaska, he spent over thirty days recovering. Finally arriving at Yokohama, Japan, Marvin waited a fortnight as the Army processed nine to ten thousand soldiers for duty on the Korean peninsula. Sent to the front lines of South Korea, he served in a Heavy Tank Company in the 7th Regiment of the 3rd Division, eventually being promoted to sergeant and tank commander.⁸

During the Korean War, Marvin saw his share of combat. He meticulously described some of the action he and his crew faced:

I had a tank that [the enemy] hit. . . . They hit the track and knocked it off and then . . . another shell [came] along and hit the round part of the tank and. . . [It] penetrated [the tank] so iron was flying around inside . . . of the tank there . . . and of course we ducked down, way down in the well . . . there. . . . [It] didn't hit us but I remember [then] I was loading the tank . . . and that's when the tank got a hit on it . . . , dismantled it right there.

In just this enemy attack, Marvin survived three direct hits on his tank.⁹

Sadly, not everyone survived the enemy's attacks. In fact, on numerous occasions, Marvin came through enemy attacks which killed the men around him. He admitted, "I had people get killed right beside me and [I would] walk over some of them after they fell in front of me'." Marvin remembered how a well-timed walk once saved his life,

At night you always had to be worried about getting killed . . . and . . . we [were] up there on the line one time . . . , about six or eight of us in a bunker and I just happened to walk outside. . . . I went out to smoke or something and . . . I went two or three bunkers down to visit somebody and while I was gone they, the [North] Koreans, snuck up . . . on that bunker and [threw] in hand grenades, killed about four or five guys in there. It was terrible. They [would] just sneak up on ya at night. You [would] never hear them comin' ".¹⁰

As if the enemy were not dangerous enough, Marvin's own tank proved to be hazardous to his health. "Hiding" themselves in the darkness of the night, Marvin and other men refused to give up their positions by lighting a warm fire, yet the red hot tank mufflers gave their position away. He explained:

When we [were] going up to the front lines a few times, the mufflers would get so red on the tanks that we'd have to camouflage them . . . so the North Koreans we [were] fighting wouldn't see them because [if] they did, they'd fire at us. . . . [It] was an amazing thing, my gosh, and boy, they'd just get hot . . . and as soon as you'd shut them off again then they'd cool off . . . but then you didn't ever shut them off . . . 'til you got up on the front line. There was sometimes we'd be fifteen miles back . . . and they could see that thing moving down the road.¹¹

On the front lines for six to eight weeks at a time, Marvin's tank crew would then often go to the reserve area for tank repair and upkeep. After they washed, oiled, and greased the tank, they had time for movies, beers, and other forms of recreation. In addition to his other duties, Marvin also served as a platoon commander training a group of thirty men in the reserve area. He stayed busy on and off the front lines.¹²

Although the tension lessened when Marvin was off the front lines and in the reserve area, his fear turned to relief when he received word he was going home. As he moved closer and closer to his embarkation port of Inchon, his relief turned to bafflement and anger when the Army refused to let him see his brother Palmer who had recently arrived in South Korea. Marvin believed that the Army was afraid he would give away "top secret information" about the war, and, therefore, would not reunite the Brack brothers who had not seen each other for over two years. While Palmer began his duty in South Korea, their parents were overjoyed to see Marvin, their first son to fight in the Korean War, return, especially since "they thought [he] wasn't coming back."¹³

Palmer L. Brack, drafted into the Army at the age of twenty, was inducted on October 21, 1952.¹⁴ Trained at Fort Leonard Wood as his brother had been, he served in the 45th Combat Engineers, building roads and bridges to help the infantry and artillery units move their equipment to the front lines. After just six months of combat duty, Palmer and other servicemen breathed a sigh of relief when the warring parties signed the armistice. But according to Palmer, the armistice did not mean as much to the communists, “They violated it hundreds and hundreds of times but we [let] them go. We . . . didn’t seem to think too much of a “few” violations because they [were] gonna do it anyway. . . . Otherwise, . . . we [would go] back to war if we didn’t.” Supporting the anti-communist attitude of the Cold War, Palmer Brack fighter did not think too highly of his adversaries.¹⁵

But Palmer was not alone with these thoughts. In fact, on at least two occasions, the National Security Council under President Dwight D. Eisenhower discussed communist armistice violations. At the March 10, 1955 meeting, the CIA Director Allen Dulles noted “that the Communists had violated the provisions of the armistice agreement since its inception” and an equally aggravated President Eisenhower mentioned “the constant Communist violations of the armistice agreement.”¹⁶ Apparently, this problem was not soon solved, for in another National Security Council meeting almost six weeks later, armistice violations were again addressed. In the April 22, 1955, meeting Retired Army General John E. Hull discussed communist breaches of faith, “[The] United States [is] dealing with an enemy with a completely different code of ethics than our own. The Communists [approve] any means which [leads] to the ends they [seek]. On the contrary,

the UN [sic] Command [has] lived up to the armistice faithfully and conscientiously.”¹⁷

Faced with this predicament, the National Security Council agreed to continue stationing American in South Korea to watch the communists.¹⁸

In addition to watching the communists, American forces in South Korea were also to rebuild this war-torn country. President Eisenhower explained this honorable duty in a July 31, 1953 memorandum to the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the Mutual Security Administrator:

I am particularly enthused over the opportunity here presented to the Armed Forces of this country to do something almost unique in all history. It is the opportunity of an army in a foreign land to contribute directly and effectively to the repairing of the damages of war; to revive a nation, and in so doing, to give to itself the satisfaction of constructive and challenging work, dedicated to the preservation and enhancement, rather than the destruction, of human values.¹⁹

Once defending and consequently helping to decimate South Korea, American forces then rebuilt the war-torn country.

Apparently, American occupation forces received Eisenhower’s presidential message. Palmer and other combat engineers were ordered to being rebuilding the ravished war zone. As Palmer stated, he and other combat engineers became a “clean-up crew,” rebuilding roads and bridges, and cleaning up the rubble of buildings. But American forces were not the only forces rebuilding the ruins of South Korea; prisoners of war were enlisted to do the manual labor of digging culverts and trenches. Palmer completed his military service during South Korea’s rehabilitation and was discharged on October 13, 1954.²⁰

Besides the Dinkels and the Bracks, other men followed their brothers into the

American armed forces during the Korean War. In fact, seaman Charles Marin and his brother served together on the Yorktown in the postwar Korean waters. According to Marin, the Navy allowed this only because a younger brother remained home to carry on the family name if he and his brother should die in combat. Also, soldier Gerald “Jerry” R. Kline’s brother served in the Navy during the Korean War. Raymond A. Luthi’s younger brother was stationed in a Pusan-based Medical Corps. The location of this relative came in handy for Luthi, especially after a South Korean child stole his and his buddies’ money. After traveling to Pusan, Luthi borrowed some money from his brother, but his repayment was far better than an monetary amount. Luthi, explained the repayment, “I stayed with my brother. . . . [He and his friends] were happy for me to be there because they had bed check [and] if I slept in a bed, [do] you know what one guy could do? He could stay out all night.”²¹ After this pleasant experience, Luthi visited his brother at least three more times, to the delight of his brother and his brother’s friends.²²

Other servicemen also had brothers in the military. Charles “Bud” Hoffman gave a chilling order to his brother, like him, who also served in the Air Force during the Korean War, “I told him before I went [to South Korea] . . . , ‘If I die, you’re the only surviving one to carry on the family name. You get discharged immediately. You tell them that you’re the sole one to carry on the family name’.”²³ Fortunately, his brother never had to complete this order. While Hoffman knew of his brother’s service, soldier Glenn Conner did not know about his brother’s duty. Afraid to worry him when he was happily returning home from South Korea, Conner’s parents did not tell Glenn about his brother’s stateside duty. Informed or uninformed of each other’s duty, brothers served America well in the armed forces.²⁴

Alone or together, thousands of miles from home, American brothers served in the defense of South Korea, experiencing all the horror and irony of war. For example, the Dinkel, Brack, Marin, Kline, Luthi, Hoffman, and Conner brothers experienced the pangs of sorrow as they watched their friends succumb to enemy attacks. They also felt tears of happiness as they arrived home, only to worry about a sibling who had been sent to this same distant land. An idol, a hero, a friend, a confidant, what word truly defined a “brother”? In the experience of the Dinkel, Brack, Marin, Kline, Luthi, Hoffman, and Conner brothers, a brother was and is a Korean War and post Korean War serviceman.

NOTES

1. Gilbert F. Dinkel, Discharge Record, Ellis County Courthouse, Hays, Kansas, photocopy.
2. Gilbert F. Dinkel, interview by author, Tape recording, Plainville, Kansas, 29 July 1997. This was the only information Gilbert Dinkel gave me about his unit.
3. Ibid. According to Gilbert, his duty time was extended because a First Sergeant failed to have his soldiers' shot records updated. That is the only information he stated concerning why he was extended.; and Gilbert F. Dinkel, Discharge Record..
4. Robert L. Dinkel, interview by author, Plainville, Kansas, 22 July 1997; and Robert L. Dinkel, Discharge Record, Ellis County Courthouse, Hays, Kansas, photocopy.
5. Leroy P. Dinkel, interview by author, Tape recording, Victoria, Kansas, 27 July 1997. Leroy stated his mother "didn't like it" that the Army had sent another one of her sons to the distant land of Korea.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid. He did not say whether the singers were from North or South Korea, but I presume they were from South Korea. Leroy P. Dinkel, Discharge Record, Ellis County Courthouse, Hays, Kansas, photocopy. Leroy did not mention any American servicemen adopting a war orphan.
8. Marvin E. Brack, interview by author, Tape recording, Ellis, Kansas, 23 July 1997; and Marvin E. Brack, Discharge Record, Ellis County Courthouse, Hays, Kansas, photocopy.
9. Marvin E. Brack, interview by author, 23 July 1997.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.; and Marvin E. Brack, Discharge Record. Released from active, combat duty on June 4, 1953, Marvin served six more years in the Army Reserves.

14. Palmer L. Brack, Discharge Record, Ellis County Courthouse, Hays, Kansas, photocopy.

15. Palmer L. Brack, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 22 July 1997.

16. "Memorandum: Discussion at the 240th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, March 10, 1955," 11 March 1955, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council, Box 6, 240th Meeting of the National Security Council.

17. "Memorandum: Discussion at the 245th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, April 21, 1955," 22 April 1955, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council, Box 6, 245th Meeting of the National Security Council.

18. Ibid.

19. "Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, [and] the Mutual Security Administrator," 31 July 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Papers of President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 34, Harold E. Stassen 1952-1953, File 1. An exact copy of this memorandum was sent to the Director of the Foreign Operation Administration and again to the Secretary of Defense.; and "Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense and Director, Foreign Operations Administration," 30 September 1953, "Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary Series, Box 3, Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary August to September 1953, File 1. In both documents, the word "revive" was difficult to read.

20. Palmer L. Brack, interview by author, 22 July 1997; Palmer L. Brack, Discharge Record. According to his discharge record, Palmer received the following medals and decorations: the Korean Service Medal with one Bronze Service Star, the National Defense Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, a ROK Presidential Unit Citation, and a Meritorious Unit Commendation. Leroy P. Dinkel, interview by author, 29 July 1997. Leroy Dinkel mentioned that the only ravages of war he saw in his occupational duty in rebuilt South Korea were just a few, scattered live rounds of ammunition.

21. Raymond A. Luthi, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 10 March 1997.

22. Charles Marin, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 February 1997; Gerald "Jerry" R. Kline, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 31 July 1997.; Raymond A. Luthi, interview by author, 10 March 1997.; Ronald Burbridge, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 19 November 1997.

Burbridge's oldest brother served in the Marine Corps in World War II.; John T. Schuckman, interview by author, Tape recording, Gorham, Kansas, 25 July 1997. Schuckman was one of six family members to serve in the military. At least three of the family members served in World War II.; Leo J. Siebenaler, interview by author, Tape recording, Olpe, Kansas, 7 October 1997. Siebenaler had a brother who was a World War II veteran.; Michael F. Metzger, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 13 February 1997. Metzger's two older brothers served in World War II while a younger brother served in the Vietnam War. Unfortunately, at World War II's Battle at Mindanao, Metzger and one of his brothers who also fought there were unable to see one another. Unless otherwise specified, the men in this chapter did not state their brothers' names.

23. Charles "Bud" Hoffman, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 15 July 1997; and Charles "Bud" Hoffman, "My Korean War Experiences," hand-written memoir.

24. Hoffman, interview by author, 15 July 1997. According to Dr. Chris Lovett, the military would not allow more than one family member into the same battle zone because of the Sullivan Rule.; and Glenn Conner, interview by author, Tape recording, McCracken, Kansas, 4 August 1997.

Chapter 11

“Is This War Ever Going to End?”: Kansans Reflect on the Truce Talks and the Armistice of the Korean War

The Korean War continued as brother after brother and serviceman after serviceman fought to protect South Korean democracy. While the days turned into months, and the months into years, many of America's servicemen on the Korean peninsula were justifiably disheartened by the war's seeming less end. Having fought for the same hills for extended period of time, the men held the front lines. Like most of Americans on the homefront, the servicemen themselves were ecstatic when the peace talks began on July 10, 1951, only to be disappointed when the talks continued for two more years.

While the front lines were stagnant, the talks between the U.N. and its communist enemies of China and North Korea became more of a war than the actual war itself. On June 23, 1951, the UN delegate from Russia, Jacob Malik, first called for an armistice in a UN radio program, rhetoric which was almost immediately supported by the Chinese and Americans. One week later, Supreme UN Commander General Matthew B. Ridgway stated on the armed forces radio that the UN command would discuss an armistice if the Chinese would agree to such talks. The Chinese agreed. Having reluctantly accepted the communists' choice of peace talks sites - communist-held Kaesong - the UN negotiators, led by Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy, went to Kaesong already expecting problems. And problems arose. As the UN negotiators drove into Kaesong, their jeeps carried white truce flags, they were surrounded by the enemy's journalists, photographers, and guards. The UN representatives had no support, since the communists initially refused to admit the

UN's press corps into the meeting area. Having eventually won the battle of the press by threatening to walk out of the talks, Ridgway again threatened to end the peace talks when a Chinese armed unit marched in front of the UN negotiators' jeeps. The latest Ridgway threat also worked, but the communist press members misrepresented the situation when they wrote that the communists "demanded," not "requested," allied negotiators to return to the peace talks.¹

Unfortunately, during the first peace talks, squabbles ruled. The communists and UN delegates argued over the side of the table each group would have, how large each representative flag would be, and whose chairs would sit higher. In addition, each side had an air of superiority over its enemy because each side believed it had a military victory over the other. Without the clear advantage of victory, neither side was willing to yield to enemy concessions.²

Soon, the UN representatives would become more irritated, angered, and frustrated by their communist counterparts, who proved to be stubborn at the negotiation table. Yet many Americans believed that the communists were using a conscious strategy of stalling for time during the talks. In fact, years after the talks, two national security and military specialists, Alvin J. Cottrell and James E. Dougherty believed that the communists not only used the stalling strategy, but also used it successfully:

Throughout 575 truce meetings, the communist leaders stalled for time. The Chinese Communists built their military power and international support, while the United States suffered all the "internal and external contradictions" which Mao had forecast for all his enemies: mounting casualty lists, consumption of new material [sic], decline of troop morale, discontented public opinion at home and the gradual alienation of the world opinion.³

Mao's pronouncements proved true. For example, the UN forces themselves lost 125,000 casualties during the peace talks. In addition, American homefront support had dwindled during the war. For instance, sixty-seven percent of Gallup poll responders in August of 1950 overwhelmingly approved American servicemen fighting in the Korean War. Months later in February of 1951, thirty-nine percent approved while in July of 1951, almost three-quarters of all responders to a Gallup poll supported the initiation of peace talks. By March of 1952, Gallup poll evidence revealed sixty-five percent of its responders felt that American intervention in the war had been a mistake.⁴

The decline of troop morale was evident when some Kansas servicemen voiced their opinions about the armistice talks. War-weary, seamen Jim Lowther and Charles Marin were relieved when the armistice talks began. Lowther recalled, "It seemed like . . . [everyone] wanted to put [the war] behind them. Everybody was fed up with all that and they wanted peace."⁵ Marin simply stated that the time had come to end the war.⁶ Army officer Micheal F. Metzger personally knew people who attended the first peace talks in Kaesong. He said:

I was there at Yongdong-po when the first meeting were held at Kaesong. Yes, I recall that we sent people there and my company commander went with a detachment of our people. . . . I recall when those [meetings] started I thought, "Well, it's not going to be long now." Not so. What was it [two] years later? Yeah, I went back [to] Japan and left it behind me. I was aware . . . , from the news, that [the talks] had gone on and on and on and on. It seemed to be interminable.⁷

Many servicemen blamed the communists for the prolonged peace talks. For example, Marin stated, "It took an awful long time to [end] and I don't know why unless it was lack of cooperation by the North Koreans. That would be the only thing I could see

and I think it was. I think they [were] trying to get a little more.”⁸ John T. Schuckman also blamed the North Koreans:

They just didn't want to give in or [anything]. They were trying to find a better way out . . . and I think it was really a problem with the process there. It took a long time. Half the time they'd leave and they wouldn't stay at the negotiating table. [They'd] leave for a while [and] had to be begged to come back more or less to get [the talks] going again. We were anxious to do something and I know the South Koreans were too. The North Koreans, they weren't. It's a wonder [the UN negotiators] got anything done.⁹

By the spring of 1952, the negotiators had agreed on all issues, except the repatriation of prisoners of war. Apparently afraid they would lose large numbers of citizens, the communists disagreed with the UN's support for voluntary repatriation. With all other matters settled, the negotiators argued over the POW issue for two long years.¹⁰

Kansas servicemen Merlin Haselhorst explained the frustrating talks:

They had a big hang-up with the prisoner [of war] thing. . . . We had supposedly all of their prisoners in one big compound down in Pusan. They had ours [strewn] all over Korea and China and every place else. . . . [The UN negotiators] weren't going to move off center until they had those all together. The communists [didn't] deal like that. They really didn't care. They were going to have their way about it. . . . They didn't give a whole lot of ground.¹¹

Eventually, negotiators did agree on one POW issue. In December of 1952, the Red Cross suggested an exchange of the wounded and sick POWs, and Supreme UN Commander Mark W. Clark immediately supported the exchange. In March of 1953, the North Koreans and Chinese negotiators agreed to the exchange and offered 150 U.N. and 405 ROK soldiers for the exchange. The UN negotiators offered 5100 North Korean and 700 Chinese troops. During the exchange, named Operation Little Switch, which occurred between April 20 and May 3, 1953, both sides released more POWs than they

had originally offered.¹²

One Kansas serviceman, Raymond A. Luthi, helped in Operation Little Switch. He described his role in the exchange and what he witnessed:

I was the officer in charge of seeing that . . . we [transferred the POWs] from [a] LST, Landing Ship Tank, . . . to the railroad. We had a narrow corridor they could go through so that no one would bother them and I distinctly remember [the Red Cross] made us get back . . . probably one hundred yards. . . . They opened up the front of the LST, put down the gang plank, and we then later found [the communist POWs] were given C-rations to eat. . . . It was just a cardboard box with the C-rations in [it] with a wire around it and if any of those wires were broken, they would not eat [the C-rations] because they thought we were trying to poison them.

[The POWs] had new . . . GI fatigues, and if they had two feet, they had two new boots. . . . I was very saddened by this because they looked so young. . . . As I understand [it], these were mainly troops [who] had made some inhumane charges against the United Nations. . . . There were a lot of soldiers and many had made artificial legs. . . . Maybe [one's] leg would be [cut] off [at] the thigh. They would take two by fours and put cloth on it and then either tie that or hold that with . . . a suspender. . . . Many of them would fall, couldn't walk. If you would try to help them, they would spit at you or hit you. . . . We put them on the train. My goodness, I figured maybe we'd be an hour [but] we were all day getting them transferred because they resented us so badly. . . . We finally got them all on the train [but] before the train could pull out, they broke out the windows of the train and threw the boots out. . . . The train did pull out and took them back north.¹³

After he returned to the United States, Luthi began researching what became of these POWs. Based on his findings, he concluded "most of them were euthanized [sic] because they were not productive citizens" while others simply received no care from fellow citizens.¹⁴

Another Kansan, Richard P. Keeling, had a much different experience with POWs.

He recalled:

[POWs] were [going] home . . . as we were on board a train going back to ASCOM City which was . . . a big military emplacement. The Chinese [who] had been taken prisoner were going north and there was a train there where we were

going south. [I remember] . . . all of the damnedest [sic] things [we did]. I would give \$100 to have film footage or video footage of the gestures we were making [to them].¹⁵

The Eisenhower administration had communications of its own concerning POW exchanges. In a letter to his Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, President Eisenhower mentioned he wanted Operation Little Switch to be completed before further negotiations continued.¹⁶ In a letter to the communist negotiators, Supreme UN Commander General Mark W. Clark stated his optimism, "I share the hope you expressed that a conclusion of the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners of war during the period of hostilities would make more likely a smooth settlement of the entire prisoner of war question."¹⁷ In an April 2, 1953 memorandum to Dulles, Eisenhower explained his opinion of the exchange and the possible coming negotiations:

I had assumed - - possibly erroneously - - that the exchange of sick and wounded prisoners could be accomplished with reasonable celerity. . . . You and I both believe we should take a lesson from [the] past experiences and before opening up again the long dreary process of negotiations that could easily repeat the whole history of the past year and a half, we should use this business of the sick and wounded as a sort of test of good faith on the part of the Soviets.¹⁸

According to some Kansas servicemen, the completion and success of Operation Little Switch did not spur success at the negotiation table. Harley G. Rowley, a left gunner on a B-29 in the Korean War, believed that only the threat of the atomic bomb scared the communists into signing the armistice. Having served with the 97th Bomb Wing in El Paso, Texas, Rowley stated:

I do know for a fact that Eisenhower was fixin' to nuke the North Koreans. This 97th Bomb Wing that I was sent to after I came back from Okinawa, they had sealed orders in Wing Headquarters to go to Guam with their bombers and be operational out of Guam to North Korea with a nuclear bomb the first day of

August '53. That's four days after the peace treaty was signed so that's how close they [came] to getting nuked. . . . The guys [at El Paso were] really scared after they found out . . . 'cause the [chance] of bombers getting back to Guam [after dropping the bomb] was pretty slight.¹⁹

After reading comments by Truman's Assistant Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Charles

"Bud" Hoffman claimed the Eisenhower administration was willing to drop atomic bombs on Pyongyang, major cities in China, and even on Russia to end the Korean War. He explained:

[Eisenhower] knew something that Truman was never evidently told. The Russians had [a] one-line [railway] that [connected] the main port of . . . European Russian with Vladivostok and all of that in there. It would have been the easiest thing in the world for us to send bombers up there and [knock] out about four of those bridges. . . . It would have taken years to [rebuild] because they just don't have that many people up there in [that part] of Russia. . . . The Chinese and Russians, they don't trust each other and there was really no need to be scared . . . because the Chinese wouldn't [have] let the Russians through.²⁰

On the other hand, Henry E. Herrman believed that the threat of atomic warfare was only a threat, not a war plan.²¹

Of course, the members of the Truman and Eisenhower administration had opinions of their own concerning the use of atomic weapons in the Korean War. In fact, just hours after the North Korean invasion, on June 25, 1950, the subject of atomic weapons was discussed at a presidential meeting. Asked by President Truman whether Russian Far Eastern air bases could be knocked out, Air Force Chief of Staff General Hoyt Vandenberg replied, "[It] could be done if we used A-bombs."²² In a November 30, 1950 press release, Truman evidenced his consideration of using atomic weapons in the Korean War, "Naturally, there has been consideration of this subject since the outbreak of the hostilities in Korea, just as there is consideration of the use of all military weapons

whenever our forces are in combat. Consideration of the use of any weapon is always implicit in the very possession of that weapon.”²³ Yet later talking to British Prime Minister Clement Atlee, Truman said “that it was his hope that world conditions would never call for the use of the atomic bomb,” but if conditions did arise, Truman would confer with Atlee.²⁴

Even though Eisenhower did not want to use atomic weapons in the Far East, he stressed their diplomatic value, especially reminding people that he had atomic weapons in Okinawa during the peace talks.²⁵ Like his predecessor Truman, he saw atomic weapons simply as weapons in America’s arsenal.²⁶ With or without the threats of possible use of atomic weapons in the Far East, the frustrating negotiations ended in the armistice signing of June 27, 1953. That night President Eisenhower informed America of the war’s end:

My fellow citizens: Tonight we greet with prayers of thanksgiving, the official news that an armistice was signed almost an hour ago in Korea. It will quickly bring to an end the fighting between the U.N. forces and the communist armies. For this Nation the cost has been high. In thousands of homes it has been incalculable. It has been paid in terms of tragedy.

And so at long last the carnage of war is to cease. . . .

. . . [In] this moment of sober satisfaction, one thought . . . must discipline our emotions and steady our resolution. It is this: We have won an armistice on a single battleground - not peace in the world. We may not now relax our guard not cease our quest. . . .

My friends, almost 90 years ago, Abraham Lincoln at the end of a war delivered his second inaugural address. At the end of that speech he spoke some words that I think more nearly express the true feelings of America tonight than any other words ever spoken or written. You will recall them:

With malice toward none; with charity to all; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in . . . to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

This is our resolve and our dedication.²⁷

After announcing the armistice to all of America, Eisenhower thanked Supreme

UN Commander Mark W. Clark and Chief UN negotiator William K. Harrison for a job well done.²⁸ Besides extending his thanks, Eisenhower also received some thoughtful wishes. In fact, one person extended thoughts of appreciation to him from many Americans. The Post Master General expressed his thanks to “the President for all he had done for every mother and father in the U.S., in efforts to bring about [the] Armistice.”²⁹

While American civilians breathed a long awaited sigh of relief in response to the armistice, servicemen had mixed reactions. Relieved when the armistice was signed, Kansan Glenn Matson was ecstatic when he helped load the treaty papers onto planes taking them to Tokyo.³⁰ Both Glenn Conner and Victor Scheck were surprised when the war ended.³¹ Scheck stated, “I tell you from the day I got there to the day I left, we were always ending [the war]. Every day the war was gonna end.”³² While some servicemen celebrated, such as Charles “Bud” Hoffman and other men at Kimpo Air Force Base, others became disgruntled with the armistice.³³ For example, Richard P. Keeling’s counter-mortar radar unit was not enthusiastic about the armistice:

Our opinion at that time was that it was a total wimp-out. That was the gimmick that [Eisenhower] used in the election was to end the Korean “conflict.” We were not particularly happy with [the truce]. I thought Eisenhower did a credible job as president, always a talented man for organizing things, but we weren’t happy with the decision at the time.³⁴

After three years of advances, withdrawals, and stalemate, the war in the distant land of North and South Korea finally ended in an armistice. Having advanced on the enemy or held their ground, many servicemen became frustrated with the negotiators’ squabbles at the peace table. Yet advances were made in the peace talks. Kansas servicemen participated in a POW exchange called Operation Little Switch and even

handled of the armistice papers themselves. But even with the armistice, thousands of Americans would continue to serve in South Korea, protecting the nation's democracy.

NOTES

1. Matthew B. Ridgway, The Korean War: How We Met the Challenge. How All-Out Asian War Was Averted. Why MacArthur Was Dismissed, [and] Why Today's War Objectives Must be Limited (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 182, 198, 199; John Edward Wiltz, "The Korean War and American Society," in The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective, ed. Francis H. Heller, with a Preface by Francis H. Heller (Lawrence: Regents Press of KS, 1977), 145; and Gary A. Donaldson, America at War Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 53. According to Donaldson, the U.N. delegates were "treated as a defeated enemy."

2. Donaldson, America, 53, 50.

3. Alvin J. Cottrell and James E. Dougherty, "The Lessons of Korea: War and the Power of Man," in Korea and the Theory of Limited War, ed. Allen Guttman, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 90. A similar comment was voiced by Wiltz. Wiltz, "Society," in Perspective, 146.

4. Wiltz, "Society," in Perspective, 148, 117, 142, 146, 147.

5. Jim Lowther, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 February 1997.

6. Charles Marin, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 February 1997.

7. Michael F. Metzger, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 13 February 1997. Metzger mentioned that some of his company's "photographic people" attended the first talks, but according to Supreme UN Commander Matthew B. Ridgway, the communists did not allow any UN press members to the first talks. Ridgway, War, 199.

8. Marin, interview by author, 20 February 1997.

9. John T. Schuckman, interview by author, Tape recording, Gorham, Kansas, 25 July 1997. Although both Marin and Schuckman blamed the North Koreans for a delayed armistice, the Chinese representatives to the peace talks led the communist side while the American representatives led the UN side.

10. Donaldson, America, 54, 55, 60; and Wiltz, "Society," in Perspective, 147.

11. Merlin Haselhorst, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 16 July 1997. Haselhorst also said, "The prisoner [of war] thing was . . . , I think, the biggest thing, even the way they traded prisoners. 'We'll trade so many prisoners for so many prisoners'. That wasn't very popular."

12. Donaldson, America, 58; Kaufman, The Korean War: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command, (New York: Knopf, 1986), 305-6, 309, 308. Kaufman stated that 5800 communists troops were planned to be exchanged for 600 UN troops during Operation Little Switch.; Ridgway, War, 220-21. Ridgway stated that 6050 communist troops were exchanged for 605 UN troops.

13. Raymond A. Luthi, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 10 March 1997. Luthi stated that he helped transfer almost one thousand POWs. He was not allowed to take any pictures of Operation Little Switch.

14. Ibid.; and E.J. Kahn Jr., The Peculiar War: Impressions of a Reporter in Korea (New York: Random House, 1952), 49-50. According to Kahn, many maimed and amputee Chinese POWs did not want to return home because they knew they would not get any help from others in their homeland.

15. Richard P. Keeling, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 21 February 1997. He did not mention who "we" were, and when or where he saw the POWs.

16. "Memorandum for the Secretary of State," Dwight D. Eisenhower, 31 March 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States, Ann Whitman File. This is the only information I have about this source and the other sources relating to this paragraph. Eisenhower's opinion on completing the exchange was also evidenced in "Memorandum to the Secretary of State," Dwight D. Eisenhower, 2 April 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States, Ann Whitman File.

17. "Memorandum for the President, White House," John Foster Dulles, 1 April 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States, Ann Whitman File. A copy of Clark's dispatch was contained in this source.

18. "Memorandum to the Secretary of State," Dwight D. Eisenhower, 2 April 1953, Papers of the President of the United States, Ann Whitman File.

19. Harley G. Rowley, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 27 July 1997. According to Rowley who may have had to fly in one of those bombers, the 97th Bomb Wing was also "the number one strike force to take the bomb to Russia." According to a JCS message to General MacArthur on July 31, 1950, atomic weapon

components were placed in storage at Guam. This memorandum stated, "In accordance with previously-approved long-range plans, formulated prior to the Korean incident, for dispersed storage of non-nuclear components for atomic bombs, 10 such components will be placed in storage on Guam. The expected date of completion of the movement is 12 August 1950. Shipment of nuclear components requiring 72 hours, plus Presidential decision authorizing use would be necessary before atomic bombs could be employed." "Department of the Army, Staff Message Center, Outgoing Classified Message to Commander in Chief Far East (Command) from JCS," 31 July 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Naval Aide Files.

20. Charles "Bud" Hoffman, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 15 July 1997.

21. Henry E. Herrman, interview by author, Hays, Kansas, 21 July 1997.

22. "Department of State Memorandum of Conversation," 25 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of Dean Acheson.

23. "Press Release," 30 November 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, President's Secretary's Files; Alonzo L. Hamby, Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 552. Hamby stated that in this same conference Truman said, "'I don't want to see [the A-bomb] used'."

24. "Communique," 8 December 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, President's Secretary's Files.

25. Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower: Soldier and President (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 303, 328; and Kenneth J. Hagan, This People's Navy: The Making of American Sea Power (New York: Free Press, 1991), 350.

26. "Memorandum: Discussion at the 143rd Meeting of the National Security Council on Wednesday, May 6, 1953," 7 May 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council, Box 4, 143rd Meeting of the National Security Council May 6, 1953. Using the atomic bomb as just another weapon was continually discussed. For example, in the March 31, 1953 National Security Council meeting, Consultant Deane W. Malott stated that the Eisenhower administration should order the use of two atomic bombs in North Korea to spur the peace talks. The other members responded: "The President replied that perhaps we should, but we could not blind ourselves to the effects of such a move on our allies, which would be very serious since they feel that they will be the

battleground in an atomic war between the United States and the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the President and Secretary [of State] Dulles were in complete agreement that somehow or other the tabu which surrounds the use of atomic weapons would have to be destroyed. While Secretary Dulles admitted that in the present state of world opinion we could not use an A-bomb, we should make every effort now to dissipate this feeling. . . .” “Memorandum: Discussion at Special Meeting of the National Security Council, Tuesday, March 31, 1953,” 7 April 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council, Box 4, Special Meeting of the National Security Council March 31, 1953. Even though an armistice ended the Korean War, the Eisenhower administration continued discussing the use of atomic weapons in the Far East, especially if the communists again started hostilities. On December 3, 1953, Secretary Dulles highlighted possible atomic responses to renewed communist aggression: “It is our opinion that . . .it would be possible to take the following courses of action without likelihood of overt, as distinct from covert, Soviet participation and within the scope of a ‘United Nations war:’

- (a) The use of full power, atomic or otherwise, in Korea:
- (b) The full application of the doctrine of ‘hot pursuit’
- (c) The bombing by atomic weapons, or otherwise, of Chinese air bases north of the Yalu which were being used by the enemy in connection with Korean operations and Chinese Communist communication lines and troop concentrations in the vicinity of Korea.”

“General Foreign Policy Matters,” Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of John Foster Dulles, White House Memoranda Series, Box 8, File 5.

27. Department of State, “The President’s Message to the Nation,” Armistice in Korea: Selected Statements and Documents, Far Eastern Series 61, 1953, 1-2. A previous draft of Eisenhower’s statement was found in the following source: “Draft of Statement by the President upon Korean Armistice,” Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1962, Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 35, Statement - Korean Armistice. An October 1952 draft of the armistice was found in “Special Report by the Unified Command under the United States, Letter Dated 18 October 1952 from the Chairman of the United States Delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations, Addressed to the Secretary-General,” 18 October 1952, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States, Ann Whitman File, International Series, Box 35, Korea - 1952 Trip.

28. “Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense,” 27 July 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, International Series, Box 35, Korea 1953, File 1.

29. “Phone Calls 27 July 1953,” Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Diary Series, Box 5, Phone Calls July-December 1953, File 2.

30. Glenn Matson, interview by author, Tape recording, Madison, Kansas, 5 March 1997. Matson stated, "They sent two different airplanes [with the treaty papers to Tokyo in case] one got shot down."
31. Glenn Conner, interview by author, Tape recording, McCracken, Kansas, 4 August 1997
32. Victor Scheck, interview by author, Tape recording, Victoria, Kansas, 30 July 1997.
33. Hoffman, interview by author, 15 July 1997.
34. Keeling, interview by author, 21 February 1997.

Chapter 12

“I’m Watching You!”: Kansans in the Occupation of South Korea

Although the war ended with the armistice signing of July 27, 1953, America’s presence in South Korea continued. The National Security Council vowed to protect a country they felt was a democratic beacon in the Far East. After millions of Americans fought to save South Korea, Robert Cutler, Special Assistant to President Dwight D. Eisenhower, stressed “that any threat to withdraw from Korea was inadmissible.”¹ Besides assuring Americans that their sons and daughters did not die in vain for a distant land, the Eisenhower administration stationed Americans in South Korea to protect it from further communist aggression. In the October 29, 1953 National Security Council meeting, Eisenhower issued a warning to the communists, “If we stay in Korea . . . , it [is] above all essential to avoid allowing the communists to eliminate the ROK forces, after which they could turn upon the UN forces and administer a crushing defeat. In short . . . , the Communists must be made to understand clearly that any attack on the UN forces would mean general war.”² In fact, the President and the rest of the NSC were so adamant about repelling communist aggression that they even proposed using atomic weapons against any new communist invaders into South Korea. In the same October 29, 1953 meeting, President Eisenhower concurred with other NSC members by declaring, “[If] the Communists broke the armistice and resumed hostilities, it was agreed that we would use atomic bombs to meet the situation.”³ Yet before the American government would come to such a drastic decision, it would openly discuss this option with its allies.⁴ At almost all costs, democracy was to stay in South Korea.

In addition to defending South Korean democracy, the Eisenhower administration also had another viable reason for stationing troops there - restraining the almost uncontrollable President of South Korea, Syngman Rhee. The out-spoken Korean nationalist still wanted, unrealistically to reunite his homeland, to the dismay of many in Washington, D.C. In at least three NSC meetings - October 29, 1953, November 23, 1953, and December 15, 1953 - the topic of the South Korean president arose. First, the NSC wanted not only verbal but also written acknowledgment that Rhee would not begin hostilities against his communist neighbors.⁵ Sent to obtain this agreement, Vice President Richard M. Nixon personally delivered a letter from the American president to the South Korean president.⁶ Although Rhee responded that he would not restart hostilities, the NSC still did not trust Rhee.⁷ For instance, the notes of the November 23, 1953 meeting reported, "The Vice President has expressed the view that [Rhee's letter] was just about as far as we could hope to get at present in extracting a commitment from Rhee."⁸ Yet the NSC still hoped that Rhee would not renew hostilities, especially without consulting Eisenhower first.⁹ Nevertheless, the NSC did not fully trust Rhee.

As a result, the NSC was willing to take matters into its own hands. For example, retired Army General John E. Hull was directed to elicit support from leaders in the ROK Army to stop any Rhee-directed advance against North Korea.¹⁰ This was not such a difficult task since, according to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, "certain significant elements in the ROK Government now seemed less likely to rally to Rhee on a course of national suicide."¹¹ Also, since the UN command in the Far East controlled all communications to each division headquarters, the Eisenhower administration would immediately know of any Rhee-ordered advances north.¹²

Only as a last resort, the NSC was willing to overthrow the South Korean president, if he began hostilities, as evidenced in the notes of the October 29, 1953 meeting. Yet Secretary of State John Foster Dulles knew a coup was a sensitive matter as he explained, “[The] replacement of Rhee [is] not merely a matter of technical measures. We must also have a strong moral case before the world, so that we do not appear to be treating the Republic of Korea in the same fashion that the Soviets treat the governments of their satellites.”¹³ Justifying a possible coup, Dulles also noted that in the world’s eyes, a South Korean invasion into North Korea would supposedly look as reprehensible as the June 25, 1950 North Korean invasion into South Korea.¹⁴

Luckily, the NSC was not forced to topple the Rhee government. Although Vice President Nixon reported that the South Koreans supported their president during his visit to South Korea in late 1953, apparently they grew tired of Rhee’s martial law and his warmonger pronouncements.¹⁵ Having vowed to remain in power, Rhee tried to rig the 1960 elections, an act which sparked anti-Rhee, student-led demonstrations throughout South Korea. In the face of this disfavor, Rhee stepped down as the president, thus ending the twelve-year South Korean First Republic.¹⁶

Once the war had ended, the Eisenhower administration sent thousands of American troops to South Korea to protect it nation against another communist invasion and to stop a possible assault into communist territory. Among the thousands of servicemen already stationed in South Korea for occupational duty were Kansans Glenn Matson and Charles “Bud” Hoffman. The unique sight they witnessed at Kimpo Air Force Base was the culmination of an American government ploy. Curious about the

impressive Russian MiG-15 jet, the Eisenhower administration began Operation Moolah by dropping leaflets in the skies over North Korea in the last months of the war. Having offered \$100,000 to any communist pilot who defected to South Korea with his aircraft, the American government hoped to snag a MiG-15. On September 21, 1953, the dream came true. A North Korean lieutenant landed his aircraft on the Kimpo Air Force Base airstrip.¹⁷

Before this aircraft was sent to Okinawa for testing and analysis, it had cause quite a stir at the Kimpo Air Force Base.¹⁸ Airman Glenn Matson remembered hearing the first impression the MiG made, “This pilot was taking off on one of the . . . flights and he [said], ‘There’s a MiG on the airstrip!’ He called up to the tower there and he [said], ‘There’s a MiG on the airstrip!’ . . . [The MiG pilot], he [came] down, taxied right down to the alert section there and . . . then he took it all the way over to the squadron commander.”¹⁹ In addition, Charles “Bud” Hoffman gave his rendition, “A couple of our fighters were taking off and they hadn’t gotten . . . too far down the runway and they looked down [at] the other end of the runway [and saw that] a MiG-15 was coming right at them on the ground. . . . So, they aborted [their mission] real quick and damaged their planes a little bit getting their planes off the runway.”²⁰

While the pilots recovered from panic, hordes of servicemen rushed down to see the MiG for themselves, unafraid or unaware that the aircraft could have been booby-trapped. In a briefing soon thereafter, the base superiors, including Hoffman’s superiors, berated the servicemen for their nonchalance, “Don’t you know that . . . could have had bombs on there and he was [possibly] just waiting [for] thousands of people to go down

there, and then pull that trigger!”²¹ Nevertheless, it took the Marines and tanks to keep the soldiers from the intriguing machine.²²

While the officers at Kimpo Air Force Base faced new problems concerning the MiG’s arrival, the Eisenhower administration faced its own problems. Anxious to have a MiG, President Eisenhower, who was out of town when news of its arrival hit Washington, D.C., decided to shield the enthusiasm in his reaction in a letter to Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith, “I would have notified the communists that we had no interest in the MIG [sic] plane, and if they wanted to send a pilot down and take it back, that would have been all right with us.”²³ Of course, the rightful owners, the Russians, were not forthcoming in their claim.²⁴ As a result, the Americans not only had a MiG, they also had a propaganda tool against the communists, a defector.²⁵

But this successful operation did have some drawbacks. First, this ploy could have been seen as an armistice violation. Aware of the situation, Eisenhower hoped to dispel the “violation” thought, “[We must] stand before the world as very honorable people, maintaining that while we had not been guilty of **real violation of the Armistice** [emphasis added], we were anxious to avoid any implication of violating its spirit.”²⁶ Under Secretary of State Walter Bedell Smith continued emphasizing propagandistic diplomacy in a September 23, 1953 memorandum to the president:

I suggested and will try to arrange to have the pilot reject the \$100,000 on the basis that his action was because of his own convictions and not for money. We can then arrange to have him taken over as a “ward” by the National Committee for Free Asia, which will give him the technical education he wishes and provide for his future to the extent of the reward which he would otherwise have received.²⁷

Although it appeared no one asked this defector, who risked his life to deliver a MiG to the Americans, what he wanted, Glenn Matson did claim that the defector received \$25,000 for his effort.²⁸

The excitement of the MiG's arrival only temporarily overshadowed other aspects of Americans' duty in postwar South Korea. Drafted at the age of twenty, Kansan Leo J. Siebenaler was inducted into the Army on February 6, 1953.²⁹ Having first served in the 6th Armored Division, he was trained in the operation of heavy equipment, such as road graders and bulldozers. But when he arrived in South Korea on July 23, 1953, the Army had no place for heavy equipment operators so it sent Siebenaler to temporarily service in the 366th National Guard unit in Taejon, South Korea.³⁰

Tragedy befell Siebenaler, who had been placed on guard duty, just a few days before the war ended in armistice:

Artillery shells [came] in . . . and one shell hit this ammo section and another hit this fuel section and of course, everything went and, oh, I was probably a hundred feet from a bunker, but then I couldn't get up. It was too late to get in that bunker. It went, "Kaplooy," and everything lit up. I did [eventually] get into the bunker before too much stuff, debris, started fallin'.

The enemy escaped into their extensive tunnel system, but not before their shells killed four servicemen and two dogs. Sadly, the explosion took away most of Siebenaler's hearing in both ears. Even though the Veterans Administration promised full disability compensation to the American wounded of the Korean War, Siebenaler received no compensation of any form because the Army had misplaced his records.³¹

Having recovered from his injury, Siebenaler finally could put his equipment training to use. While he was next attached to the 20th Air Force Division, he helped build

airstrips in South Korea and in the Japanese Islands. He first helped build an airstrip at the western coast town of Kunsan. There he and other construction engineers literally moved hills to fill in rice paddies while constructing an airstrip which had eighteen inches of cement to “cushion” the aircrafts’ landings. According to Siebenaler, this airstrip’s total length was over one and one-sixth miles while its width was three hundred to five hundred feet.³²

Yet Siebenaler’s most interesting duty occurred in the Japanese Islands. First on Rest and Recuperation, he saw the effects of a atomic bomb, buildings in rubble. Even eight years after the bomb’s blast, he and his friends were not allowed within four to five miles of the blast’s center because of high radiation rates. Supposedly fully rested and recuperated, Siebenaler’s B Company moved to Iwo Jima to rebuild an airstrip decimated in World War II. There, he saw a grizzly sight.

One time there was a trench in there and when we moved . . . this top dirt off, stacking it off to the side so we could put it in different places . . . , we [ran] into a bunch of skeletons. . . . I guess [it was] a mass burial. . . . It was kind of weird, made you feel kind of funny [when] you would go through there, pick up these bones, [and] take them out [of] your area. . . . You wonder what . . . really happened there.

While this area was eery, another area was deadly. Working in the “cool” 115 degree nights, he and his fellow construction engineers heard strange sounds as they excavated the area. When the sun rose, they were shocked to discovered that they had been moving human bones and live artillery shells. Apparently, the ravages of World War II still marked Iwo Jima.³³

Having spent his last six weeks rebuilding Iwo Jima, Siebenaler returned home

after a total of thirteen months in the Far East. Although he completed his overseas duty, he still faced eleven months of stateside duty. At Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, Siebenaler continued his construction duty by rebuilding the fort's surrounding infrastructure. He was discharged from the Army on February 4, 1955.³⁴

Another Kansan who served in the occupation of South Korea was William E. Sprague. Drafted at the age of twenty-one, he was inducted into the Army in January 6, 1953. Trained with "fire direction control people," he arrived in Sasebo, Japan, on June 20, 1953 with Company D of the 542nd AFA Field Artillery Battalion. Unfortunately, once he arrived in South Korea, the Army paid little attention to his training. It grabbed the first able-bodied men it saw, artillery men, from the front of the troop train, ignoring the trained infantry men in the back part of the train. Sprague was justifiably upset, "Well, this didn't sit too well with a lot of us because we were trained artillery people. We'd had eight weeks [in] Basic Training [for] infantry [detail], but still . . . we had trained so hard to be artillery people." Regardless of his training, he was in the infantry. Soon he arrived at Camp North Star, three miles from Uijongbu.³⁵

During his service in the occupation of South Korea, Sprague had many responsibilities. First unhappily assigned as the company clerk for the 14th Infantry Regiment of the 25th Division Headquarters near Seoul, the outdoors man soon felt stifled in his new position. He found a typist to replace him and soon joined the Motor Pool as a taxi driver. Although he modestly stated that he drove "anybody [who] wanted to go anywhere," his duty was complex. Among those whom he taxied were Red Cross workers, usually an older woman and young woman who distributed doughnuts to the

servicemen. According to Sprague, while the servicemen appreciated the Red Cross' graciousness, they were overjoyed to have coffee to down the soggy doughnuts. While taking Red Cross workers and others around South Korea, he sometimes accumulated 150 miles per day, which seemed quite a feat at thirty miles per hour. Traveling from place to place, Sprague found his taxi driver duty also included dropping off and picking up camera film for servicemen.³⁶

In addition to his driving responsibilities, Sprague was also "the company entertainment person." Since his company had an impromptu movie theater, a shaved-off hillside for seating with a white-painted truck tarp for a screen, he helped deliver and show up to three movies weekly. Besides movies, Corporal Sprague and other men on the base sometimes ventured over to the NCO Club. Apparently, the Women's Christian Temperance Union who adamantly opposed sending beer rations and other such "luxury" items to the Korean War soldiers had failed in their campaign. Asked whether the mothers at home appreciated this beer-drinking attitude of the soldiers, Sprague responded with the old adage, "What [mother] didn't know really didn't hurt her."³⁷

But if mothers and other women did not approve of their sons drinking alcohol, they probably also did not approve of Marilyn Monroe entertaining their sons. Although the mothers frowned on such entertainment, the over one hundred thousand servicemen who watched her perform in South Korea enjoyed it. One of the thousands of awe-struck men touched by Monroe's appearance was Sprague. In fact, he helped her. Sprague boasted,

I remember one time I was a taxi driver and Marilyn Monroe was visiting [South]

Korea. We had probably one of the best baseball teams in [South] Korea, if not the best baseball team. We had two brothers [from] Cuba and they wanted pictures taken of these two brothers and Marilyn Monroe and I had to take [an] extra large jacket . . . up to division headquarters so she could have [her] picture taken with these two fellas. For some reason . . . when they took the ball players [to] division headquarters, they didn't pick up the jacket so I had to drive some forty miles to deliver this jacket in the early hours of [the morning].

Unfortunately, Sprague never met Monroe and only saw her through a Mess Hall window.

Despite the disappointment, her memory remained in Sprague's heart.³⁸

After Monroe left South Korea, Sprague's duties eventually changed. He was promoted to driving a colonel, the regimental commander, in May of 1954. In addition, as a trusted representative of the division, he carried and was allowed to read any official directives sent to his division's headquarters. Sprague also chauffeured a General Carter, the 25th Division Commander, on his inspection tours.³⁹

Although Sprague overall believed he was safe traveling through South Korea, one trip reminded him of his possible danger. He recalled how one wrong turn affected him:

One day I got lost. I just drove down this road and . . . just around the end of the mountain why . . . all I could see in any direction going up the side of the mountain . . . [were] little white crosses. This made quite an impression [and I thought], "What am I doing here?" . . . I don't know how many people [were buried] in this cemetery . . . [but] just as far as you could see [were] . . . little white crosses, so I thought, "Well, I don't believe that I want to go here. I better go back and see if I turned the wrong [direction]."

Having left the cemetery behind him, Sprague was still haunted by its sight.⁴⁰

In addition to the cemetery, other incidents reminded Sprague of his potential war-time jeopardy. Ready for an enemy attack, Sprague "rode the ring mount of [a] fifty caliber machine gun [on] a two and [a] half ton truck." Even though he never fired his weapon in combat, he admitted that sporadic fighting broke out for two or three months

after the war ended. But it was not the enemy but friendly troops who almost began another full-scale fight. As Sprague explained, paratrooper units usually informed division headquarters of any night maneuvers but one unit's oversight nearly cost the unit its men's lives. Suddenly awakened after airplanes dropped flares and paratroopers into a nearby valley, the division suspected an enemy attack and immediately sent a tank company to investigate the activity. Luckily, as Sprague stated, before any shooting began, someone finally notified headquarters about the night exercise.⁴¹

After Sprague's service time in South Korea ended, he spent his last days of overseas duty in sunny Hawaii with the rest of his regiment. Having arrived in Hawaii in late November, he left for the continental United States a month later. Sprague was happy to be home for Christmas. Although he contemplated staying in the Army, he admitted, "It was an experience that I wouldn't take a million dollars for [but] I wouldn't give a nickel to do it again."⁴²

Another Kansan who served in occupational duty was Joe L. Klaus. Klaus enlisted in the Army on November 5, 1953, at the age of nineteen. He was in South Korea from April of 1954 to August of 1955. In the 70th Transportation Battalion of the 20th Transportation Company, Klaus spent most of his time working with the 8th Army. He first served as a truck driver and then as a personnel clerk. During his first four months in Seoul, he daily drove food and ice to the ROK soldiers along the Demilitarized Zone. Then, as a personnel clerk, he helped process servicemen's records, typing and completing the shipping orders to and from South Korea. Officially discharged from the Army on November 5, 1961, he noted the lessons he learned: "Serve [your] country . . . and have

respect for anybody else that's doing the same thing in future years.”⁴³

Although the Korean War ended with the June 27, 1953 armistice signing, America's commitment to South Korea did not end. Whether protecting South Korea from another communist invasion or shielding South Korea from its own president's ambitions, at least five Kansans served America in occupational duty. Whether standing a few yards from a MiG-15 or a few feet from a movie star, the Kansans had experiences in South Korea they may not have even dreamed about back in Kansas and certainly would not find back home. Rebuilding the war-torn Far East or traveling through its landscape, they witnessed sights that delighted and horrified them. Among the thousands of men who served in South Korea after the armistice was signed were Kansans Glenn Matson, Charles “Bud” Hoffman, Leo J. Siebenaler, William E. Sprague, and Joe L. Klaus.

NOTES

1. "Memorandum: Discussion at the 168th Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, October 29, 1953," 30 October 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council, Box 4, 168th Meeting of the National Security Council.
2. Ibid. A possible communist invasion was also discussed in the following National Security Council meeting: "Memorandum: Discussion at the 171st Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, November 19, 1953," 20 November 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council, Box 5, 171st Meeting of the National Security Council.
3. "168th Meeting of the National Security Council," 30 October 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, National Security Council.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid. In this meeting, Rhee was described as stubborn.
6. "Memorandum: Discussion at the 172nd Meeting of the National Security Council, Monday, November 23, 1953," 24 November 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council, Box 5, 172nd Meeting of the National Security Council.
7. "Memorandum: Discussion at the 175th Meeting of the National Security Council, Tuesday, December 15, 1953," 16 December 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council, Box 5, 175th Meeting of the National Security Council. In this meeting, Rhee was described as complex, outrageous, incalculable, and conspiratorial.
8. "172nd Meeting of the National Security Council," 24 November 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, National Security Council.
9. "175th Meeting of the National Security Council," 16 December 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, National Security Council.
10. Ibid.
11. "168th Meeting of the National Security Council," 30 October 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, National Security Council.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

14. Ibid.

15. "175th Meeting of the National Security Council," 16 December 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, National Security Council.

16. Kim Yung-kwon and Lee Soo-jung, eds., A Handbook of Korea, with a Foreword by Kim Seong Jin, rev. ed., (Seoul: Korean Overseas Information Service, 1979), 163, 352. According to Kim, Rhee's action marked "the first successful democratic revolution in Korean history." His successor, Chang Myon, took office on August 23, 1960.

17. Weekday Wings: Duel over Korea, produced and directed by John Honey, 60 min., Discovery Channel, n.d., videocassette. Because most of the documents pertaining to this operation are still classified, according to the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, I often had to rely on this source.; Charles "Bud" Hoffman, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays Kansas, 15 July 1997; Glenn Matson, interview by author, Tape recording, Madison, Kansas, 5 March 1997 and 21 September 1997; "Memorandum for the President," 23 September 1953, Under Secretary of State General Walter Bedell Smith, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File; and "Letter from President Dwight D. Eisenhower to Under Secretary of State General Walter Bedell Smith," 21 September 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File. Unfortunately, this is the only information I have for these sources.

18. Duel over Korea, videocassette.

19. Matson, interview by author, 5 March 1997. Matson did not explain how the MiG landed without the tower first noticing it.

20. Hoffman, interview by author, 15 July 1997.

21. Hoffman, interview by author, 15 July 1997; and Charles "Bud" Hoffman, telephone interview by author, 19 January 1998.

22. Ibid.; and Duel over Korea, videocassette.

23. "Letter from Eisenhower to Smith," 21 September 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States. Having noted the importance of this propaganda victory, Eisenhower, nonetheless, acknowledged, "I do not for a moment believe that the defection of this one North Korean will encourage any others to come in.;" Paul Lashmar, "Stalin's 'Hot' War," New Statesman and Society, 2

February 1996, 25. According to Lashmar, the Soviets were equally curious about the American F-86 Sabrejet. Besides interrogating prisoners of war about the jet's capabilities, the Soviets also sent at least two captured, downed F-86s to Moscow for analysis.

24. Duel over Korea, videocassette.

25. "Letter from Eisenhower to Smith," 21 September 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States.

26. Ibid.

27. "Memorandum for the President," 23 September 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States.

28. Matson, interview by author, 5 March 1997. I could not find any document stating whether or not the defector received \$25,000 or any other payment.

29. Leo J. Siebenaler, interview by author, Tape recording, Olpe, Kansas, 7 October 1997; and Leo J. Siebenaler, Discharge Record, Lyon County Courthouse, Emporia, Kansas, photocopy.

30. Siebenaler, interview by author, 7 October 1997. He did not mention any other specific information about the 366th National Guard unit. Palmer L. Brack's occupational duty was discussed in the above chapter entitled "Brothers in Arms: Brothers Fight on the Korean Peninsula."

31. Ibid.; and "GI's in Korean War Entitled to Benefits: Veterans Administration Rules Soldiers Are Entitled to Everything," Emporia Gazette, 6 July 1950.

32. Siebenaler, interview by author, 7 October 1997.

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.; and Leo J. Siebenaler, Discharge Record. According to his discharge record, he received the United Nations Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the Korean Service Medal, and a ROK Presidential Unit Citation.

35. William E. Sprague, interview by author, Tape recording, Eureka, Kansas, 3 October 1997. Suffering from pneumonia and measles, Sprague was transferred from Companies B and C before he returned to duty with Company D. He did not mention to what AFA referred.

36. Ibid.

37. Ibid. Because promotions froze, Sprague remained a corporal even though drivers usually held the rank of sergeant.; “Moxie McGuire Gets Oatmeal Instead of Beer in Korea,” Hays Daily News, 4 March 1951. Sent thousands of miles from home to save South Korean democracy, a Hays, Kansas, soldier named Private Eugene L. “Moxie” McGuire, became upset after he received oatmeal instead of his beer ration. Irritated, he wrote, “There is one thing I don’t like and that is they feed us baby oatmeal and stopped our beer rations. Some of the divisions in Korea are getting whiskey rations and we don’t even as much receive beer rations, and the beer we do receive comes out of the [Battery] fund. I don’t see why they cut out the beer ration. The men in the [Battery] and on the line look forward to received one can of beer every day when they went though the chow line, now we don’t receive it, but get life savers, six packs of cigarettes, and once in a while we do receive a candy bar and one stick of gum.”; and Gerald R. “Jerry” Kline, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 31 July 1997. Kline stated, “When we’d get off [the] front lines, they’d usually bring us beer rations. . . . The mothers at home complained about that situation; they didn’t like their sons getting any liquor . . . so that kinda threw a damper on that, but we did have our beer rations occasionally.”

38. Sprague, interview by author, 3 October 1997. He did not define who “they” were.; David Halberstam, The Fifties (New York: Villard Books, 1993), 568-69. Honeymooning in Japan, Monroe was asked to go to South Korea to entertain the troops while her husband Joe DiMaggio continued his celebrity tour in Japan. Conceding, she was overwhelmed when over 100,000 troops packed an outdoor amphitheater just to see her.; and “Last Scene: Exit Unhappily,” Life, 18 October 1954, 53. In reference to Monroe’s entertaining the troops, this article only showed a picture of her on stage in South Korea.

39. Sprague, interview by author, 3 October 1997. Sprague did not mention the general’s first name.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid. Sprague did not state when he was discharged.

43. Joe L. Klaus, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 21 July 1997; and Joe L. Klaus, Discharge Record, Ellis County Courthouse, Hays, Kansas, photocopy.

Chapter 13

“We’re Not in This Alone.”: America’s Allies in the Korean War

The armed forces that combined to repel communist aggression in South Korea were truly unique. First, on a world-wide level, it was the United Nations’s first major test case to check aggression. Although America contributed eighty to ninety percent of the troops, the action in North and South Korea was clearly a UN action, for in facing what was commonly perceived as a world-wide communist conspiracy, America could not stand alone and would not be required to do so.¹ On the hills of the Korean peninsula, America and other UN forces were fighting not only against communist invaders, but also for the future of collective security. In addition to the UN forces, America had a historically unprecedented military force in the Korean War. The American military had only recently been desegregated in 1948.

Almost from the beginning of the war, the UN was active in its response to this aggression in Korea. Acting almost as quickly as the Harry S. Truman administration, the UN set its course to defend South Korea’s democracy. President Truman praised the UN’s promptness in a press release just one day after the North Korean invasion,

The Government of the United States is pleased with the speed and determination with which the United Nations Security Council acted to order a withdrawal of the invading forces to positions north of the thirty-eighth parallel. In accordance with the resolution of the Security Council, the United States will vigorously support the effort of the Council to terminate this serious breach of the peace.²

(Obviously, the Soviet Union’s delegate to the UN Security Council was absent from this first Korean War resolution identifying the North Korean communists as invaders disturbing the world’s peace.) Covering up its leading role in this and subsequent UN

resolutions, the Truman administration clearly wanted to show the world that America was not the only nation, but one of many nations opposed to communist aggression.³

Ignoring the UN Security Council's first warnings, the North Korean forces continued their advance. Panic ruled, just as in the days of the League of Nations, when it appeared that a world-wide collective security agency was doomed to fail.⁴ In a Presidential meeting on June 27, 1950, chairman of the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee Tom Connally evidenced this fear, "It [is] quite apparent that this [is] the clearest test case that the United Nations has ever faced. If the United Nations is ever going to do anything, this is the time, and if the United Nations cannot bring the crisis in Korea to an end, then we might just as well wash up the United Nations and forget it."⁵ Calming Connally's and much of the world's nerves, the UN Security Council issued another resolution on that very day. Watching the North Koreans neglect its first resolution, the Security Council asked its members to aid South Korea and restore peace by repelling North Korean aggression. As this resolution passed, American intervention was not only expected by approved by the UN Security Council.⁶

But the Security Council, just one part of the United Nations, was not alone in its stand against aggression. In fact, fifty-one of the fifty-nine member nations supported these first two Korean War Security Council Resolutions. Like the Security Council, the following nations also branded the North Koreans as aggressors and advocated aiding South Korea: Afghanistan, Denmark, Paraguay, Iran, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Iraq, Argentina, Australia, Israel, Nationalist China, Ecuador, the Philippines, Sweden, El Salvador, India, Lebanon, Belgium, Bolivia, Liberia, Ethiopia, Panama, Syria, Thailand,

France, Luxembourg, Brazil, Venezuela, Burma, Mexico, Greece, Turkey, the Union of South Africa, Guatemala, the Netherlands, Cuba, Canada, Chile, New Zealand, Haiti, the United Kingdom, Honduras, the United States of America, Nicaragua, Columbia, Norway, Uruguay, Iceland, Costa Rica, Yemen, and Pakistan.⁷

Besides verbally supporting these measures, many nations sent personnel and material to the fighting front on the Korean peninsula (Appendix D). Among the first to respond were Canada, New Zealand, and Australia, nations which offered to send troops to fight as a UN force under the Supreme UN Commander General Douglas MacArthur.⁸ Eventually, twenty-two nations sent ground, air, naval, or medical units to support this U.N. action: the United States of America, the Republic of Korea, Australia, Canada, Belgium, Greece, Columbia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, France, the Philippines, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Ethiopia, Thailand, Turkey, the Union of South Africa, Sweden, Italy, India, Denmark, and Norway.⁹ As America established its world position as a defender of democracy, the UN evidenced its role as an international collective security agency.¹⁰

As the UN forces not only held back the North Koreans but eventually advanced on them, the UN modified its goal for the Korean peninsula. No longer settling for just South Korean democracy, it now vowed to reunite the countries of North and South Korea. An October 7, 1950 General Assembly resolution, introduced by Kenneth Younger, England's UN delegate, called for "the holding of elections, under the auspices of the United Nations, for the establishment of a united, independent, and **democratic** [emphasis added] government in the sovereign State of Korea."¹¹ According to this

resolution, once North and South Korea were reunited in democracy, peace and economic rehabilitation could then return to this tumultuous region.¹²

Unfortunately, peace did not come as the communist Chinese intervened on the North Korean side less than two months after the latest UN resolution. Once again turning to the UN, the Truman administration successfully clamored for a resolution denouncing the Chinese as aggressors.¹³ Passing this resolution, the UN was, nonetheless, splitting, especially over General MacArthur's leadership. As the Truman administration blamed the massive UN losses on MacArthur, so too did other nations. In fact, Secretary of State Dean Acheson stated that the UN was in a "virtual state of panic" over the rapid changes in North Korea.¹⁴ As the Chinese continued their devastating assaults against the UN forces, the UN, along with the Truman administration, turned from reuniting North and South Korea to an honorable end to the fighting.¹⁵

Although the UN Security Council and General Assembly established policies, it was the UN forces from sixteen nations that set these policies in motion.¹⁶ Americans, including some of the Kansans in this paper, saw many ROK, or Republic of Korea, soldiers ably contributing to their country's defense, especially after they were given sufficient training and aid. Unfortunately, the ROK forces had not always fared well, but Army combat engineer Palmer L. Brack explained that it was not necessarily their fault, "They [were] pretty good. They just didn't have any equipment to fight with."¹⁷ These deficiencies were amended somewhat as some ROK soldiers trained and served with American units, like John T. Schuckman's 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division and Leroy P. Dinkel's occupational unit, Company B, 1st Battle Group, 17th Army Regiment.¹⁸

Eventually, ROK soldiers stood on their own on the ground and in the air, and the ROK Air Force flew bombing missions over North Korea.¹⁹

Unfortunately, their training and service did not eliminate fear. ROK soldiers, along with other UN forces, shrank against the sudden Chinese intervention. Sadly, the ROK reaction affected their allies as Signal Service officer Michael F. Metzger explained,

I was with the X Corps on the right, up . . . that far north [in North Korea]. We [had] a unit on the left, the 2nd Infantry Division, and ROK forces in the center. These ROK forces literally evaporated, were decimated by the Chinese so that left the U.S. forces, [the] X Corps to the east and other U.S. forces to the west cut off, left to their own devices. The ones on the left flank fared worse than we did; they began withdrawal in the face of this onslaught and lost a lot of equipment and people. [They] had a bad time.²⁰

Once again, it appeared that the ROK military was the weak link in the UN forces.

As the war continued, the ROK forces continued to suffer despite their progress and efficiency, but according to Supreme UN Commander Matthew B. Ridgway, the biggest ROK deficiency was in its leadership. Chosen for political rather than military reasons, many ROK generals were ill-suited for their commands.²¹ Yet, the person who seemed most ill-suited to lead South Korea was its president, Syngman Rhee. Chosen for his rabid nationalist and anti-communist beliefs, Rhee became something of a totalitarian dictator who literally crushed his opposition. He constantly clamored for more aid and his antics of berating communists and calling for reunification of North and South Korea under his leadership at all costs clearly upset talks at the negotiation table. Supporting South Korean anti-American demonstrations and even recalling his own negotiations delegation paled in comparison to his release of over 25,000 North Koreans from four prisoner of war camps in response to the pending armistice.²² Clearly, this was an act of a calculating man who wanted all of Korea under his leadership.

Nonetheless, the Eisenhower administration did not cower to the South Korean president. Responding to the prisoner release, President Eisenhower first sent a stern letter to Rhee,

I have learned with grave concern that you have ordered the release of North Korean prisoners held by the United Nations Command in camps which are under the authority of the UN Command. . . . Your order has been carried out by the use of open violence by South Korean elements against the authority of the UN Command. . . . If continued, such a course of action can only result in the needless sacrifice of all that has been won for Korea by the blood and bravery of its magnificent fighting forces.²³

In addition to President Eisenhower's letter, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles also sent a strong message to Rhee. Reminding him that he had called for UN assistance when the North Koreans were rapidly advancing against his meager military force, Dulles stated,

The United Nations acted, and the United States responded . . . on your behalf . . . because we believed in the principle of free world unity. . . . Over one million American boys have left their homes and families and their peaceful pursuits, to go to far away Korea. They went because, at a dark hour, you invoked the sacred principle of free world unity to save your country from overwhelming disaster. . . . Your nation lives today not only because of the great valor and sacrifices of your own armies but because others have come to your side and died beside you.²⁴

Eventually, Rhee succumbed to the Eisenhower administration's pressure when it mentioned that American aid to his country could end after the armistice was signed.²⁵

Some Kansans who served in South Korea had mixed reactions to Rhee. Metzger simply stated, "We put him back in power I was impressed with him [because] he seemed like a good man."²⁶ A serviceman who once stood in Rhee's "shot up" office in Seoul, Palmer Brack concurred, "He seemed like a pretty decent guy. . . . He was trying to get peace and law and order and everything in the country."²⁷ On the other hand, Charles "Bud" Hoffman had a different reaction. Not seeing him as positively as other

servicemen, Hoffman did acknowledge, “He wasn’t as bad as what we came across in Vietnam later because he wouldn’t have sold Americans out. Syngman Rhee knew that we were his only salvation.”²⁸ Like other American soldiers, the Kansans had mixed reactions to Rhee. But the South Korean nationalist leader had become a problem for the UN forces in South Korea.²⁹

Notwithstanding Rhee’s outbursts and antics, many nations had come to his country’s aid. For example, serving in the American armed forces, some Kansans saw the UN’s Australian forces. A left gunner on a B-29 bomber, Harley Rowley met Australians who also flew bombing missions, while Jim Lowther’s destroyer served alongside Australian vessels. In addition, John Schuckman and Palmer Brack also mentioned these fighting allies. The person who worked the closest with and became friends with the Australians was Air Force mechanic Charles Hoffman. Since many of his co-workers spend hours drinking alcohol, this non-drinker spent much of his time with a nearby, friendly squadron from “down under.” Yet, among his new-found friends, one pilot shined. This pilot, nicknamed “Black Jack,” had successfully completed over 250 missions when tragedy struck. Hoffman related this unfortunate accident,

If [the Australian pilots] lost an engine on takeoff, they were just killed, and [losing an engine] he said, “Cheerio, ole chaps. I’ll be seeing you around,” and he crashed and bombs and everything just [went] off. They couldn’t get near him because he had so much ammunition and they said, “Let him burn . . . up.” . . . That was scary to us to think anybody would be so casually, “Cheerio, ole chaps. I’ll be seeing you around.”³⁰

Scary in their courageousness, the Australians had clearly made an impact on these Kansas servicemen.³¹

Besides ROK and Australian forces, Kansans also saw other UN allies. Medic Victor Scheck's regiment contained one French battalion while counter-mortar radar man Richard P. Keeling worked with French, Greek, and the British forces. John T. Schuckman also saw the British ally. Of America's allies, the British impressed Marine Ronald Burbridge the most. He explained, "One of the sharpest outfits there was the British Royal Marines and how they kept [their] cleanliness and their uniforms . . . pressed all the time [confounded me]. They were something else and they were a pretty good fighting machine too. . . . They were sharp-looking. They looked at us and told us we lived like dogs."³² Laughing, Burbridge still cannot comprehend how this British unit had time for grooming in the midst of the Chinese onslaught and the bitter North Korean winter. Besides seeing the British, a machine gunner who later worked in communications, Merlin Haselhorst, also saw Filipino troops fighting in the UN forces. Remembering another ally, Metzger recalled seeing a Puerto Rican unit, a unit which had to make quite a climatic adjustment to the Korean winter. Last but not least, Canadian forces also evidenced themselves according to Gilbert F. Dinkel, and Raymond A. Luthi who served near Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry.³³

Yet, despite the massive UN commitment to South Korea, problems arose due to this multi-national, multi-lingual force. As a naval officer, Lowther recalled the language barrier which frustrated a ROK officer's observation and training aboard his destroyer. If the language barrier hampered training, the problems it caused in combat could become monstrous. Keeling cited this danger:

There was a time when the 1st Marine Division [was] called back into . . . the . . .

reserve and . . . they got replaced by an Army unit. The 125th Army Division was made up of all different countries that sent military people to [South] Korea. . . . One time there was some French . . . and then British [there] and since our radar unit was dug in literally, . . . they let us stay. . . . Boy, you [have] somewhat of a [problem] when you have no idea what kind of language you were going to end up . . . [dealing] with. We were supposed to have liaison people who could translate. Two o'clock in the morning that liaison officer, he was asleep so that got kind [of] exciting.³⁴

Obviously, the language barrier did cause untold stresses, but despite this great obstacle, the UN forces performed remarkably well together.³⁵

The language barrier supposedly never hampered the Turkish troops, who apparently let their swords speak for them. Of all America's allies, Kansans Gilbert F. Dinkel, William A. Reynolds, Marvin E. Brack, and Merlin Haselhorst, remembered the Turks the most. A machine gunner, Robert L. Dinkel declared that since the enemy usually knew and avoided the Turks' location, his unit liked to be near this mighty ally. Luthi explained why the enemy chose to avoid the Turks,

They love to get into hand-to-hand combat and had long sabers. Someone once told me . . . that every time a Turk draws that sword, he has to draw blood and if he doesn't do it against the enemy, he will cut himself. . . . I don't know whether that's true or not, but I do know that you would see them in their sector of the line in the morning trimming their beards with swords and [the swords] would just glisten.³⁶

Apparently, the Turks' continued to hold onto their swords. Even in the post-armistice occupation Kansan Leo J. Siebenaler mentioned these "knife" and "bayonet" fighters. Since no other UN force carried this weapon or any other extraordinary weapon, the often realistic rumors of Turkish combat capabilities spread quickly.³⁷

As the UN gained in esteem on the Korean peninsula, so too did America's other "allies," African Americans. Often unfairly seen as second class citizens, generations of

African Americans nevertheless bravely fought in every American war. Yet it was not until the Korean War that America's armed forces were truly and officially integrated. Overall, African Americans, who fought for South Korea's freedom, totaled thirteen percent of the American forces and nine percent of all American battle deaths.³⁸ Despite the racial discrimination African Americans faced at home and abroad the significance of their service extended beyond the Korean battlefield. Historian John Edward Wiltz stated, "[The] conflict in Korea made an important . . . contribution to the gradual erosion of the racial caste system in the United States."³⁹

Serving alongside Kansans Raymond A. Luthi, Leroy P. Dinkel, Gilbert F. Dinkel, and Glenn Conner who observed their ability and dedication, African Americans again and again demonstrated their equality, in courage and valor under fire.⁴⁰ Serving during the stalemate, Raymond A. Luthi could not forget his African American friends whom he met in South Korea. Recalling the system of integration, he stated, "They would only let one-eighth of the infantry be black soldiers 'cause that was the ratio of black to white [in the] United States. They could only have twelve percent [so] . . . they'd put [blacks] in the artillery." Evidencing a more intensive integration, he continued, "In my Baker Battery [we] had fifty-one percent black and forty-nine percent white." Among those African American servicemen was a man whom Luthi still vividly remembered, a jeep driver named Benny. As soldiers and friends, Benny and Luthi "would have done anything" for each other.⁴¹

In many previous wars when African Americans served, they served under Euro-American officers, but this was not necessarily so in the Korean War. Luthi recalled one

specific officer named Master Sergeant Jones, whose greatness and generosity etched itself into Luthi's memory. Describing this officer, Luthi said, "We had a black First Sergeant [, Master Sergeant Jones,] and a white First Sergeant, and I and the black First Sergeant got along much better than the white First Sergeant. . . . He was an excellent man. . . . Before [he rotated home,] he came in one day and he had bought me . . . a Japanese fly rod. He said, 'You know, I'll never forget ya'." Apparently, the feeling was mutual, as Luthi also could not forget him.⁴²

Although they served in South Korea at different times, brothers Leroy P. and Gilbert F. Dinkel also served with African Americans. As the first of three brothers to travel to the Korean peninsula, Gilbert served in a laundry company nearby a service company where African Americans helped repair shoes. Arriving in South Korea to help in the occupation, Leroy recalled his fellow servicemen, "Of course, we had some good colored guys with us."⁴³ Although these two white Kansas men saw no front line action, they were impressed with their fellow servicemen.⁴⁴

After the front line turned to stalemate in 1951, American soldiers had a lot of time on their hands. Glenn Conner reminisced about his service at Osan, especially his baseball-playing days in 1953. Just as the military integrated, so too did his baseball team. Although he admitted, "[You] had a little trouble," overall, these players saw each other for their talent, not their skin color. Yet, this was a remarkable attitude, since many Americans were still reluctant to accept Jackie Robinson's 1947 entrance into professional baseball. It was unfortunate that some Americans were reluctant to follow Conner's baseball team's example.⁴⁵

After just a few years of its existence, the UN firmly established itself and its place in the changing world during the Korean War. For instance, after the war ended in armistice, President Dwight D. Eisenhower examined this international body's response to this international crisis, "I believe that a greater and stronger United Nations is being hammered out on the anvil of experience. . . . It has met the test of aggression. It is now engaged in an effort to demonstrate that free men can make peace together as they checked aggression together."⁴⁶ As millions of UN troops gave their time for South Korea, thousands gave the ultimate sacrifice for democracy and the world's peace.⁴⁷ As the UN strengthened its cause on the hills of North and South Korea, African Americans were clearly making a statement for their equality in America. Undoubtedly, integrationist and Supreme UN Commander Matthew B. Ridgway was correct in saying that it was "both un-American and un-Christian for free citizens to be taught to downgrade themselves, this way, as if they were unfit to associate with their fellow or to accept leadership themselves."⁴⁸ Among the Korean War's many significancies, the great strides the United Nations and African Americas made on the Korean peninsula highlighted the war's magnitude.

NOTES

1. "Letter from President Dwight D. Eisenhower to American United Nations Representative Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.," 25 June 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 24, Henry Cabot Lodge [Jr.] 1952-1953, File 3; and "Save America First," Council Grove Republican, 21 December 1950. Former President Herbert Hoover stated that America had ninety percent of the United Nations forces in North and South Korea.

2. "Statement by the President," 26 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of George M. Elsey. Later, Truman reiterated this in a speech to Congress. "Message from the President of the United States Transmitting a Report on the Situation in Korea to the Congress of the United States, 19 July 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of George M. Elsey.

3. "President's Meeting," 27 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of George M. Elsey. Truman said "that he was going to make absolutely certain that everything we did in Korea would be in support of, and in conformity with, the decision[s] by the Security Council of the United Nations."; and Lawrence S. Kaplan, "The Korean War and U.S. Foreign Relations: The Case of NATO," in The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective, ed. Francis H. Heller, with a Preface by Francis H. Heller (Lawrence, Regents Press of KS, 1977), 98. Deputy American UN delegate in 1950, Ernest A. Gross admitted that the UN force on the Korean peninsula was "American-dominated and American-led." Therefore, overall, America represented and enforced the U.N. resolutions.

4. "United Nations, Major Developments — April - June [1950]," 5 July 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Papers of George M. Elsey, Boxes 1 and 2. This document stated that if nations ignored UN resolutions, then the UN's position in the world would be similar to the League of Nations' position in the 1930s.

5. "President's Meeting," 27 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library.

6. U.N. Security Council, "Resolution of June 27, 1950," in Korea and the Theory of Limited War, ed. Allen Guttman, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 2-3; "Statement on

June 27, 1950 U.N. Security Council Resolution,” 27 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea’s Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of George M. Elsey, Secretary Acheson’s Briefing Book; and Alonzo L. Hamby, Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman (New York: Oxford University Press, 195), 537.

7. “Tabulation of Replies to UN Secretary-General with Respect to Security Council Action on Korea,” 13 July 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea’s Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of George M. Elsey. Declaring this action illegal were the communist bloc states of Byelorussia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the USSR, the Ukraine, and Poland, plus two non-member countries, North Korea and the People’s Republic of China. At first abstaining, Yugoslavia voted against the June 27 resolution while Egypt continued in its abstention of this resolution.; and “Message from the President,” 19 July 1950, Harry S. Truman Library. Truman stated that fifty-two nations supported the resolutions, but he did not specify these countries.

8. “President’s Meeting,” 30 June 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea’s Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of George M. Elsey; and Burton I. Kaufman, The Korean War: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command, America in Crisis Series (New York: Knopf, 1986), 47, 70. MacArthur was appointed to this command by President Truman on July 8, 1950. On July 7, 1950, the U.N. Security Council established its multi-national response as a UN action under an American commander.

9. Military History Section, AFFE, “The War in Korea,” Pacific Stars and Stripes, 1953, 7; and Harry G. Summers Jr., Korean War Almanac (New York: Facts on File, 1990), 290. Although “The War in Korea” lists India as a nation which provided medical personnel, Summers did not.

10. Weekly Review, Policy Information Committee, Department of State, “United Nations Developments,” 5 July 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea’s Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2.. This document declared that both the UN’s and the US’s position were strengthened due to their responses to the North Korean invasion. It also listed nations which volunteered aid, but the document used for Appendix D gave a more detailed list of aid to the UN cause.

11. U.N. General Assembly, “Resolution of October 7, 1950,” in Korea and the Theory of Limited War, ed. Allen Guttman, with an Introduction by Allen Guttman, Problems in American Civilization Series (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1967), 7.

12. *Ibid.*, 7, 8. Although eight countries abstained from this vote, this resolution passed with a margin of forty-seven to five.

13. "National Security Council Meeting," 28 November 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Response to Communist China's Intervention, Box 1, President's Secretary's Files.
14. "Department of State Memorandum of Conversation," Joint Chiefs of Staff Meeting, 1 December 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Response to Communist China's Intervention, Box 1, President's Secretary's Files, Papers of Dean Acheson; and "National Security Council Meeting," 28 November 1950, Harry S. Truman Library.
15. "National Security Council Meeting," 28 November 1950, Harry S. Truman Library.
16. Kaufman, War, 47.
17. Palmer L. Brack, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 22 July 1997.
18. John T. Schuckman, interview by author, Tape recording, Gorham, Kansas, 25 July 1997; and Leroy P. Dinkel, interview by author, Tape recording, Victoria, Kansas, 27 July 1997.
19. Harley G. Rowley, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 27 February 1997. He mentioned ROK bombing crews.
20. Michael F. Metzger, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 13 February 1997.
21. Matthew B. Ridgway, The Korean War: How We Met the Challenge. How All-Out Asian War Was Averted, Why MacArthur Was Dismissed, [and] Why Today's War Objectives Must be Limited (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967), 193-94, 10.
22. Kaufman, War, 326, 327; and "Record of Actions by [the] National Security Council at its One Hundred and Fiftieth Meeting," 18 June 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council, Record of Actions by [the] National Security Council 1953, Box 1, File 1, Action Series 792-917.
23. "Outgoing Telegram, Department of State," 18 June 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, John Foster Dulles Papers, John Foster Dulles Chronological Series. This document contained quoted blocks of Eisenhower's letter to Rhee. This is the only information I have for this source.

24. "Letter from Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to President Syngman Rhee," 22 June 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, John Foster Dulles Papers, John Foster Dulles Chronological Series, Box 3, 1 June 1953.

25. Kaufman, War, 328.

26. Metzger, interview by author, 13 February 1997.

27. Palmer L. Brack, interview by author, 22 July 1997.

28. Charles "Bud" Hoffman, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 15 July 1997.

29. Hamby, Truman, 519. He described Rhee as "a touch dictatorial nationalist [who] was little admired in Washington."; and John Edward Wiltz, "The Korean War and American Society," in The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective, ed. Francis H. Heller, with a Preface by Francis H. Heller (Lawrence: Regents Press of KS, 1977), 185. In response to this article, Ridgway said, "We had a very strong president in South Korea who was death on Communism. Anything I, as the ground commander, asked him for, I got without question and very promptly. Only when the aggressor had been driven back north of the parallel did Rhee become a hairshirt to us."

30. Hoffman, interview by author, 15 July 1997.

31. Rowley, interview by author, 27 February 1997; Jim Lowther, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 February 1997; Schuckman, interview by author, 25 July 1997; and Palmer L. Brack, interview by author, 22 July 1997.

32. Ronald Burbridge, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 19 November 1997.

33. Victor Scheck, interview by author, Tape recording, Victoria, Kansas, 30 July 1997; Richard P. Keeling, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 21 February 1997; Schuckman, interview by author, 27 July 1997; Burbridge, interview by author, 19 November 1997; Merlin Haselhorst, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 16 July 1997; Metzger, interview by author, 13 February 1997; Gilbert F. Dinkel, interview by author, Tape recording, Plainville, Kansas, 19 July 1997; and Raymond A. Luthi, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 10 March 1997. Luthi also saw British troops.

34. Keeling, interview by author, 21 February 1997.

35. Lowther, interview by author, 10 March 1997.

36. Ibid.

37. Gilbert F. Dinkel, interview by author, 19 July 1997; William A. Reynolds, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 March 1997; Marvin E. Brack, interview by author, Tape recording, Ellis, Kansas, 23 July 1997; Haselhorst, interview by author, 16 July 1997; Robert L. Dinkel, interview by author, Plainville, Kansas, 22 July 1997; Leo J. Siebenaler, interview by author, Tape recording, Olpe, Kansas, 7 October 1997; and A.K. Dawson, "Turkish Brigade's Baptism of Fire," p.2 accessed 18 February 1997, available from http://www.thehistorynet.com/MilitaryHistory/articles/1997/1297_cover.htm: Internet.

38. Richard K. Kolb, "Korea's 'Invisible Veterans' Return to an Ambivalent America," VFW Magazine, November 1997, 24, 26. Although gave no number for the number of African American servicemen, he stated that the nine percent of battle deaths equaled 3,223 men.

39. Wiltz, "Society," in Perspective, 157. Responding to Wiltz' essay, Ronald J. Caridi disagreed by stating part of Barton Bernstein's essay entitled "'The Ambiguous Legacy: The Truman Administration and Civil Rights'." Quoting Bernstein, Caridi said, "'Well into the Korea War, the Army retained many segregated units, and integration in Europe did not even begin until April 1952.'" This was on page 160.

40. Those interviewees who made derogatory, racist remarks about African American servicemen asked that I delete those statements from my interview. Expecting and appreciating their honesty, I had to comply with their wishes. Nonetheless, the positive statements about the African American servicemen far outweighed the negative statements.

41. Luthi, interview by author, 10 March 1997. Benny's last name was not given.

42. Ibid. Master Sergeant Jones' first name was not given.

43. Leroy P. Dinkel, interview by author, 27 July 1997.

44. Gilbert F. Dinkel, interview by author, 19 July 1997; and Everett J. Mickelson, interview by author, Tape recording, Ellis, Kansas, 28 July 1997. Mickelson just mentioned that the military was integrated during the Korean War.

45. Glenn Conner, interview by author, Tape recording, McCracken, Kansas, 4 August 1997.

46. "Letter from President Dwight D. Eisenhower to American United Nation Representative Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr.," 10 September 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, Administration Series, Box 24, Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., 1952-1953, File 3.

47. Summers, Korean War Almanac, 76, 77. This source lists 33,629 American battle deaths and 20,617 deaths from different causes including disease and accidents. It also listed the following casualty numbers for other UN forces: England, Canada, New Zealand, and Australia combined suffered 6,080 casualties, Belgium, Ethiopia, France, Columbia, Greece, the Philippines, South Africa, Turkey, the Netherlands, and Thailand combined suffered 8,800 casualties, and the ROK suffered 350,000 casualties. In addition, millions of North Koreans communist Chinese troops were casualties of the war although no official, specific statistics were given.

48. Ridgway, War, 193.

Chapter 14

“I Don’t Think We’re in Kansas Anymore.”: Kansans Face Culture Shock in a War-Torn Country

Sent thousands of miles from home to serve alongside UN allies, Kansas servicemen who fought in the Korean War faced another problem: culture shock. While they fought against hordes of communist soldiers, many also fought against their own prejudices about the “baffling” Korean culture. On and off the battle lines, Kansans, like all American servicemen in Korea, faced a different people with different lifestyles, and a different language. Truly, “GI’s [found the] ancient Korea land [full] of strange and odd customs.”¹

First arriving on the Korean peninsula, many Kansas servicemen were shocked by the South Korean level of poverty. Although Marvin E. Brack and Leroy P. Dinkel mentioned how industrious the South Koreans were, carrying loads of hay five to six feet high atop their heads or plowing their rice paddies barefoot in cold weather, it appeared the South Koreans were engulfed by poverty. Unable or unwilling to buy chemical fertilizers, most of the seventy-five percent of the Korean population engaged in agriculture used human waste as fertilizer for their rice paddies. Therefore, because of the bacteria in the food from the human waste fertilizer, Raymond A. Luthi recalled that American servicemen did not eat Korean food.² If the sight of poverty were not enough to get the servicemen’s attention, the unique smell of South Korea got it. Palmer L. Brack explained, “It just [smelled] terrible over there. . . . It just [had] a terrible odor. I was about sick half [of] the time I was over there from the smell.”³ William E. Sprague simply stated, “Korea . . . [had] an odor all its own.”⁴

Although Michael F. Metzger often heard the comment, “Well, if you have to have a war, this is a pretty good place to have it because there [wasn’t] much to destroy,” South Korea, already a poor nation, was devastated by the Korean War.⁵ Having compared the weather damage in Kansas to what he saw in South Korea, Victor Scheck stated, “The [South Korean] towns were demolished like [tornadoes] demolish them here.”⁶ The South Korean capital, which changed hands four times during the war, looked like “it got the hell blown out of it” when Marvin Brack saw it.⁷ Having driven to war-ravaged Seoul, Glenn Matson recalled that since the homes in Seoul had been destroyed, many South Koreans relocated, burrowing into the hills surrounding the city.⁸ Raymond A. Luthi remembered that other South Koreans lived in six by eight feet lean-tos made of cardboard, with split beer can roofs. Since their lives had been uprooted by the war, South Korean social classes were also in upheaval. Luthi explained, “The richest guy around us was the guy [who] had the garbage concessions and the second richest guy was the one [who] cleaned out the latrines.”⁹ William E. Sprague explained South Korean social classes in another way, “If a person had a house that had all one kind of beer or pop can [covering its roofs], . . . [then the owner was] very, very wealthy.”¹⁰

Facing an almost impossible situation as their town, homes, and lives lay in ruins, many South Koreans changed their behaviors to survive. Clearly for Koreans desperate times allowed for desperate measures. Kansas servicemen, such as Hoffman, Luthi, and Sprague, mentioned that South Koreans stole anything from money and cameras to UN jeeps.¹¹ Glenn Grumbein recalled a depressing story, “The Koreans . . . would slip through [our compound’s fence] at night. If the cooks would happen to leave something

outside the Mess Hall, they'd steal it in order to eat. They even ate - I don't know how many - gallon cans of bad plums . . . and the whole bunch got deathly sick."¹² Matson remembered seeing a heart-wrenching sight:

One night I was sitting in a jeep there in Seoul. We had to sit in the jeep because they [South Koreans] would steal [jeeps]. Three or four of us would go so we'd just take turns. . . . This one day . . . I happened to be sitting in the jeep there [when] . . . a kid . . . about twelve years old . . . [came] by. . . . The back of his legs were just lacerated. . . . They beat the dickens out of that kid. . . . Those people had a crazy idea that . . . the kids had to go out and find something to eat but there was nothing to eat because [nobody had] anything.¹³

Afraid to leave the jeep then, Matson still wished he could have helped the boy.¹⁴

In the war zone, Kansas servicemen saw how desensitized the South Koreans had become to human suffering. For example, Hoffman explained:

[When] we built [the] revetments [to protect the planes at the Kimpo Air Force Base], . . . some of my buddies got the assignment to go get the sand down at the Han River which is the major river in South Korea around Seoul. . . . While they were gathering up the sand, there [were] women down there washing their clothes. . . . A dead soldier's body floated up to [the women] and instead of dragging it out and going and getting somebody to take care of the body, they just [pushed] it on out to the river. Our guys were shocked to think that they would do a thing like that.¹⁵

While some servicemen were shocked by the South Koreans' nonchalance, others were alarmed by South Korean justice. Matson recalled:

There in Seoul . . . they didn't fool around. . . . You'd . . . go by [the Han River and] there'd be bodies hanging there. . . . They'd just . . . put a rope around [the guilty's necks] and throw 'em over the side of the bridge. [It was a] big, great big, long bridge over there to cross the river . . . and [the bodies would] be swinging back and forth in the wind."¹⁶

Yet as South Koreans became desensitized, so, too, did American servicemen.

Although the American armed forces' Pocket Guide to Korea insisted that its servicemen

“treat the Koreans with respect,” not all Americans did.¹⁷ Unfortunately, the language barrier only increased Koreans’ “distrust [of] all foreigners, particularly their trustees and protectors.”¹⁸ Hoffman remembered how one form of communication, honking a vehicle’s horn, led to the death of South Koreans:

When we were driving a vehicle, [we] had to understand [not to] honk because to a Korean, if [we honked], that meant that [we] saw them so [we] were gonna stop. We killed about seventy of them before we found out about that and they [said], “The thing to do is race your engine and then that means you’re coming through and they’d get out of the way.”¹⁹

In other words, while Americans believed that their honking told Koreans to get out of the way, Koreans believed that the Americans’ honking meant that the drivers had spotted them.²⁰ While some angered truck drivers crowded American jeeps off the roads, Sprague recalled the appalling advice his Motor Sergeant gave him and other jeep drivers, ““If you run over one of these people, . . . you back up over him . . . and make sure you kill him. . . . We only pay for him once thataways. . . . If you cripple him, we’ll be paying forever.”²¹ Some servicemen used a reprehensible but somewhat justifiable excuse for their actions. Grumbein explained this excuse: “It was hard to distinguish really who your enemy was because [the] South Korean and North Korean [people], they [were] both the same and the Chinese, they [also] looked the same.”²² As a result, Victor Scheck acknowledged, “A lot of our soldiers, they were not treating the [South Koreans] too good.”²³

Yet not all experiences with the South Koreans were negative. In fact, many Kansas servicemen remembered happy times with South Korean children. Scheck, Conner, and Metzger fondly recalled the dutiful houseboys who did a variety of chores for them and other servicemen, including shining their shoes and making their beds.²⁴ Luthi

spoke of two uplifting experiences with the children. Once out on a reconnaissance mission, he and other men were surrounded by South Korean children. After he gave one child an orange, Luthi watched as the little boy hurried back to his nearby village to give the orange to his father, or Papason. Having returned from the village, the child, who already knew the answer to his question, asked if Luthi had a chocolate bar in his pocket. Surprised by the child's intuition, Luthi gave him the chocolate bar. Having recalled another memory, Luthi could not help but laugh at the words of another South Korean child, "We had this little guy, 'Charlie, . . . [around us]. We gave him a GI belt, you know one of those web belts. 'Charlie' put it clear around him and [again] clear around [him]. [We asked,] "'Charlie,' why don't you cut that belt off like we do?' He said, 'Some day, tauxsan chop chop.' That [meant] 'some day a lot of food'."25

Some Kansas servicemen were saddened by the sight and actions of South Korean children. For example, Palmer L. Brack was disheartened at the sight of scantily-clad children who had sores on their bodies, while Robert L. Dinkel was depressed when he saw naked South Korean children digging through trash cans, rummaging for food.²⁶ Luthi recalled that in the Korean male-dominated society, South Korean families accepted "Oriental-Caucasian or Oriental-Negro" boys, but often put the girls in mixed-race orphanages.²⁷

It was the actions of some North Korean children that troubled brothers Gilbert F. Dinkel and Robert L. Dinkel. While Americans on the homefront read newspaper articles, such as "Korean Reds Use Children in War," some of Gilbert's friends fell prey to a North Korean child's trick.²⁸ He remembered, "[After] they brought some clothes up to

us [to launder], they said they were walking and they saw this Korean kid laying on the road just a cryin' and squirmin' and they thought he was hurt [but] when they got close enough [to him], he shot some of 'em."²⁹ Brother Robert Dinkel heard stories about North Korean children terrorizing and burning prisoners of war by pushing heated sticks through the holes of the prisoner of war huts.³⁰

Despite the horrific sights Kansas serviceman saw through their culture-shocked eyes, many remembered the people for whom they were fighting in a positive way. Merlin Haselhorst recalled the many South Korean civilians who helped American forces any way they could, even carrying loads of ammunition up the steep Korean hills. In addition, both Glenn Grumbein and Leroy P. Dinkel remembered how well the South Koreans treated American servicemen.³¹ But it was Michael F. Metzger who summed up the thoughts of many servicemen, "There [were] always people to help, [and] generally [they were] hard-working people."³² Placed in a country many did not know, Kansas servicemen in the Korean War knew little of what to expect in the war, and much less about the people whom they were to protect.

NOTES

1. "GI's Are Finding Ancient Korea Land of Strange People and Odd Customs," Emporia Gazette, 8 July 1950. Surprisingly, not one interviewee mentioned that the South Koreans had different religions than they had.
2. Marvin E. Brack, interview by author, Tape recording, Ellis, Kansas, 23 July 1997; and Leroy P. Dinkel, interview by author, Tape recording, Victoria, Kansas,, 27 July 1997; Pocket Guide to Korea, Armed Forces Information and Education Division (Office of the Secretary of State Washington, D.C.: 1950), 10. This source came from Harley G. Rowley's Private Collection.; Charles "Bud" Hoffman, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas 15 July 1997; Raymond A. Luthi, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 10 March 1997; Palmer L. Brack, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 22 July 1997; and Gilbert F. Dinkel, interview by author, Tape recording, Plainville, Kansas, 29 July 1997.
3. Palmer L. Brack, interview by author, 22 July 1997.
4. William E. Sprague, interview by author, Tape recording, Eureka, Kansas, 3 October 1997.
5. Michael F. Metzger, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 13 February 1997.
6. Victor Scheck, interview by author, Tape recording, Victoria, Kansas, 20 July 1997.
7. Marvin E. Brack, interview by author, 23 July 1997. Glenn Conner, Robert L. Dinkel, and Glenn Matson concurred with Brack that much of Seoul had been destroyed. Glenn Conner, interview by author, Tape recording, McCracken, Kansas, 4 August 197; Robert L. Dinkel, interview by author, Plainville, Kansas 22 July 1997; and Glenn Matson, interview by author, Tape recording, 5 March 1997.
8. Matson, interview by author, 5 March 1997.
9. Luthi, interview by author, 10 March 1997; E.J. Kahn Jr., The Peculiar War: Impressions of a Reporter in Korea (New York: Random House, 1952), 180-81. Kahn explained that North Koreans prisoners of war and South Korean civilians fashioned many things, such as cigarette cases, wastebaskets, flower pots, children's sand pails, and ash trays out of beer cans. At a Taegu, South Korea, orphanage, Kahn noticed that beer cans

with their tops sliced off served as cups.

10. Sprague, interview by author, 3 October 1997.

11. Hoffman, interview by author, 15 July 1997; Luthi, interview by author, 10 March 1997; Sprague, interview by author, 3 October 1997. Besides seeing South Koreans reduced to thievery, Sprague also mentioned that other South Koreans were forced to resort to begging. He also remembered seeing starving people in this distant land.; Gilbert F. Dinkel, interview by author, 29 July 1997; Robert L. Dinkel, interview by author, 22 July 1997. Both Dinkels just mentioned that South Koreans stole.; and Joe L. Klaus, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 21 July 1997. Klaus recalled that South Korean boys, "slicky boys," swindled American servicemen out of their money and their cameras.

12. Glenn Grumbein, interview by author, Tape recording, Alexander, Kansas, 5 August 1997.

13. Matson, interview by author, 5 March 1997.

14. Ibid., 18 September 1997.

15. Hoffman, interview by author, 15 July 1997. This story was also in Hoffman's hand-written memoir entitled "My Korean War Experiences." He did not mention the dead soldier's nationality.

16. Matson, interview by author, 18 August 1997. Matson did not mention for what offense they were hanged.

17. Pocket Guide to Korea, Armed Forces, 34.

18. Ibid., 35.

19. Hoffman, interview by author, 15 July 1997; and Charles "Bud" Hoffman, telephone interview by author, 19 January 1998. He did not explain who told them about racing their engines.

20. Hoffman, telephone interview by author, 19 January 1998.

21. Sprague, interview by author, 3 October 1997.

22. Grumbein, interview by author, 5 August 1997. William Sprague and Palmer Brack also remembered the difficulty in distinguishing friend from foe. Sprague, interview by author, 3 October 1997; and Palmer L. Brack, interview by author, 22 July 1997.

23. Scheck, interview by author, 30 July 1997.

24. Ibid.; Conner, interview by author, 4 August 1997; and Metzger, interview by author, 13 February 1997. Although houseboys could be any age, Conner's and Metzger's help truly were boys.
25. Luthi, interview by author, 10 March 1997.
26. Palmer L. Brack, interview by author, 22 July 1997; and Robert L. Dinkel, interview by author, 22 July 1997.
27. Luthi, interview by author, 10 March 1997; Pocket Guide to Korea, Armed Forces, 27; and Maija Rhee Devine, "In the Lap of Wars: A Memoir," Michigan Quarterly Review 36 (Summer 1997): 474. Having been raised in Korea's male-dominated society, Devine was practically disowned by her father who abandoned his wife and daughter because he had male heirs with another woman. In her essay, she included amazing statistics from the Census Bureau. For example, in 1994 one hundred girls were born for every 115 boys, creating "one of the highest boys-to-girls imbalance[s] in the world." Also, according to the Planned Parenthood Federation of Korea information in her essay, thirty thousand female fetuses were aborted in 1994 alone.
28. "Korean Reds Use Children in War," Emporia Gazette, 24 July 1950. The article mentioned that the North Koreans were using school children to fight in the war.
28. Gilbert Dinkel, interview by author, 29 July 1997.
29. Robert Dinkel, interview by author, 22 July 1997.
30. Merlin Haselhorst, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 16 July 1997; Grumbein, interview by author, 5 August 1997; Leroy P. Dinkel, interview by author, 27 July 1997.
31. Metzger, interview by author, 13 February 1997.

Chapter 15

“To Be a Marine, You Must Kill a Family Member.”: Unbelievable and Humorous Stories of the Korean War

Having survived the war and culture shock, some Kansans who served in the Korean War carried memorable war stories home with them. Shocked by some and humored by others, the servicemen recalled the war through the stories of their own and other men’s experiences. Separated from their war buddies, these men found reunion with their friends through their stories. Thousands of miles and many years from the Korean peninsula, they remembered the tension, the humor, and the excitement of war.

Of course, there were many stories about the communist enemy. William Sprague, who served in the occupation of South Korea, was informed that North Korean soldiers terrorized South Korean village children by giving the children “gifts” of grenade necklaces or by tying grenades around the children’s waists with communication wire. Before the North Koreans left the village, they ensured that the pins were loosened on the grenades. After minutes or days, the pins would fall out, killing everyone and everything within fifty feet.¹ Counter-mortar radar man Richard P. Keeling heard another story about the enemy, the Chinese. One friend who had served on the front lines left his bunker for a few minutes. Returning, Keeling’s friend discovered that the Chinese enemy had infiltrated to the barbed wire in front of his bunker and had left him a reminder of their visit, pancakes. Apparently, the Chinese had been informed that American soldiers loved pancakes, and believing that the scent or sight of the pancakes would entice the Americans out of their bunkers, they stuck pancakes to the barbed wire.²

Kansans Charles Marin and Ronald Burbridge told other stories about the

communist enemy. While he served aboard the aircraft carrier Bataan, Marin noticed peculiar articles in the carrier's newspaper about his ship's pilots firing on haystacks. Finally curiosity got the best of Marin, who asked pilots about the strange target. The pilots informed him that the enemy hid ammunition in the haystacks and told Marin, "'You ought to see some of [those] haystacks blow up'.'"³

Burbridge remembered two stories about his experiences with the enemy. After some Chinese soldiers had been captured by U.N. forces, he learned that the Marines had quite a reputation with the Chinese. Burbridge remembered, "They were told that the only way anybody could get into the Marine Corps [was] to kill a member of his family . . . and they thought the Marine Corps was something else. They found out they were."⁴ But one enemy tank crew had not been informed of the Marine Corps' reputation. Burbridge explained the tense situation:

We were moving up and our battalion had the point. . . . We had a fire team ahead of us [and] they came back hollering, "Tanks on the road!" An enemy tank was coming . . . right at us. . . . They told us to take cover which we did. They knocked out that tank and about that time a little house came all apart. A big ole tank came rolling out of it. [It] got a couple of shots off at us [but] . . . [they] went over [us]. [After they disabled that tank] then they called . . . "All clear," for us to get back up on the road, to assemble on the road. My fire team, we were laying up by this big brush pile [and] thought we were hid. As we got ready to get up, . . . one of the other three guys got ahold of something to . . . pull himself up and discovered he had ahold of a . . . big tank [which] was sitting in this brush pile and we were right up against it. [My friend] was so scared. He was pointing, trying to say the word ["tank"] but couldn't. . . . Finally [another member of our fire team] was able to stuff a hand grenade down [its] barrel . . . and it exploded and the hatch opened and we took three or four prisoners out of this tank. . . . We thought we [had] hid [but] we [were] right up against this [tank].

Scared then, years later Burbridge laughed about the tank's proximity.⁵

Thanking the Lord for the humorous experiences in the war which sustained him

and other servicemen, Burbridge recalled another event. Being overrun and/or surrounded by the Chinese “Volunteers,” any sound or movement froze him. He felt his nerves had reached their limits. Burbridge stated:

We were dug in around [a] heavy artillery position. . . . We were told to [have] a fifty percent watch. One of us [would] sleep and one of us had to be awake all the time. . . . They told us . . . there [was] a good chance that we [were] going to be infiltrated. . . . It was about two or three o’clock in the morning. That’s when they usually hit you, when you were half asleep and half awake. I was sitting in my [foxhole] and something hit me in the chest. . . . I thought, “Oh, it’s a hand grenade.” I grabbed that thing . . . and when I threw it, it wet all over me. It was a toad and I broke out in cold sweat when I realized what it was.⁶

Two Kansans who served during the Korean War’s stalemate remembered other unique “weapons” of the war. According to Gerald R. “Jerry” Kline and Richard P. Keeling, some C-rations served better as weapons than as food. Apparently some servicemen were trying to “poison” the enemy with the awful C-rations as Kline recalled seeing valleys full of unopened C-ration cans.⁷ Keeling was informed by a friend who had served at the front that disposal of C-rations was a war strategy used against the Chinese. Keeling related his friend’s story:

They were under fire direction [so they could not fire, or thereby reveal their positions, without an order]. . . . They heard noises down in the barbed wire in front of their positions. . . . They didn’t have any hand grenades but they had C-ration cans and one particular C-ration was awful. . . . They threw those [C-ration cans] down in there to make a sound like hand grenades. [My friend] said they threw a dozen cans down there. The Chinese [soldiers who]were supposed to be starving to death threw eleven cans back.⁸

According to Keeling, even “starvation” would not entice the Chinese soldiers to eat these rations.

Glenn Conner and Charles “Bud” Hoffman remembered two episodes of “mis-

communication” in the Korean War. Sent to Rest and Recuperation in Japan, Conner and his friends saw the Japanese emperor and his entourage parade nearby. Trying to harass the emperor by waving and hollering at him, Conner admitted with disappointment that the emperor ignored him and his friends.⁹ On the other hand, Hoffman remembered that one soldier did not ignore an officer’s sneer:

We had an officer come [to Kimpo Air Force Base whom] not even the [other] officers liked because he would try to get people busted. . . . [Once] he was serving as officer of the day [and] one of the [other] officers said, “Somebody ought to shoot him.” Well, this boy from Arkansas took him literally . . . so when the [officer came] down there, . . . he shot [the officer] and all the [other] officers thought it was a good deal. . . . Everybody was happy to see that guy get shot.¹⁰

On guard duty the following night, Hoffman was dismayed when he saw an officer carrying and operating a flashlight in full view of the enemy. Shocked, he was also amused at the officer’s reason for such a dangerous act, “[If] anybody’s going to shoot me, I want it to be the enemy. I don’t want them to say that our own men shot me’.”¹¹

Stories about the homefront also touch the Kansas servicemen’s lives. Hoffman remembered a “true blue” serviceman at Kimpo Air Force Base who religiously wrote his wife a six-page letter every day. Later informed that his wife had sold their house and run off with a traveling salesman to whom she had given their savings, this man “went bezerk” and had to be taken away in a straight jacket.¹² Burbridge heard a more positive story about his loved ones on the homefront. Having returned home, he was informed by a restaurant manager of a bet concerning his service in North and South Korea. Burbridge related this story:

We [lived] in the suburbs of Omaha [Nebraska] and there was this little eating place . . . [which was operated by a man] we all knew. . . . This fellow said to my

dad . . . , “Ron’s going to make it. . . . I don’t [doubt it] a bit. . . . I’ll even bet you a case of beer that Ron gets out of Korea.” . . . [This man later told me] “One morning, the day after Christmas . . . your dad came through the front door with a case of beer . . . [so] I knew you got home.”¹³

Like their action in the war, war stories also shaped the lives of Korean War servicemen. Hearing about North Korean atrocities against South Korean children, they were horrified. On the other hand, they smiled about Chinese impressions of American servicemen and pondered about Communist camouflage techniques. Laughing at themselves or others, many of the Korean War servicemen remembered the war and their service to a distant country with happiness and nostalgia.

NOTES

1. William E. Sprague, interview by author, Tape recording, Eureka, Kansas, 3 October 1997. I realize that some of these stories are unbelievable, but the servicemen often attested to the stories' truth. Unless I otherwise specify, the stories are true according to the servicemen.

2. Richard P. Keeling, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 21 February 1997.

3. Charles Marin, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 February 1997. The newspaper recorded the carrier's activities.

4. Ronald Burbridge, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 19 November 1997.

5. Walter Karig, Malcolm W. Cagle, and Frank A. Manson, Battle Report: The War in Korea, Battle Report Series (New York: Rineheart & Co., 1952), 110. Karig, Cagle, and Manson supported Burbridge's contention about enemy tanks hiding in houses. They stated, "Some . . . pseudo refugees [North Korean soldier] brought to the Americans the answer to the hitherto baffling mystery of how the enemy could bring his tanks invisible through the length of Korea. The Red tank drivers, come dawn, merely drove their vehicles through the walls of an adobe farmhouse. The thatched roof collapsed on the tank's top, the three remaining walls and the rubble at the point of entry all combined to make a perfect camouflage." Karig, Cagle, and Manson also said that the North Koreans hid their trucks in the same manner.

6. Burbridge, interview by author, 19 November 1997. He did not state who "we" were, but I assume "we" refers to his fire team or his platoon.

7. Gerald "Jerry" R. Kline, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 31 July 1997.

8. Keeling, interview by author, 21 February 1997. Although Keeling questioned this story's truth, he stated that his friend "swore it was true." Keeling did admit, "That stuff [C-ration food] was pretty bad."

9. Glenn Conner, interview by author, Tape recording, McCracken, Kansas, 4 August 1997. Conner did not mention his friends' names.

10. Charles “Bud” Hoffman, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 15 July 1997. Hoffman did not state what happened to the Alabama soldier after he shot an officer.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Burbridge, interview by author, 19 November 1997

Chapter 16

“I Did My ‘Bit’ Too.”: Kansans’ Stateside Servicemen

As American foreign policy scattered servicemen throughout the world, including South Korea, North Korea, and Japan, political figures such as former ambassador to England Joseph P. Kennedy and former President Herbert C. Hoover turned to isolationism. While America’s military might emphasized western Europe and, to a minor extent, the Far East, isolationists saw a weak homefront defensive system. Clearly stressing isolationism in a December 20, 1950 speech, Hoover warned America to “make its Atlantic and Pacific shores its frontiers - not continental Europe or Asia . . . [for] only America can defend itself from threatened invasion and occupation by communist armies.”¹ Fortunately for Hoover and other isolationists, many American soldiers, including over 47,000 Kansans, remained stateside during the Korean War and its aftermath.²

Often overlooked in Korean War annals, stateside servicemen were as much a part of the war’s story as servicemen who saw action in the Far East. Because they were devoted to democracy, they accepted the call to arms and trained as vigorously and with as much dedication as others. Although Kansans Ray Schreiner, Everett L. Mickelson, Wallace E. Johnson, Victor Higgins, and Kay “Red” Fear were not sent to the Korean peninsula, they also served their country in a time of crisis.

Having enlisted in the National Guard in 1949, Ray Schreiner joined his brothers and cousins simply “to have a lot of fun” in the military. The First Sergeant initially served in the 35th Division and later in the 195th Transportation Outfit during his nine years of

duty, and eventually won the Eisenhower Trophy for Kansas' best unit. Claiming that the Korean War was simply fought over territory, he mentioned that the North Korean invasion put his unit immediately on alert for overseas duty. Although he was never called to South Korea, two of his cousins went with other medical personnel, the only servicemen in his unit to serve in the Korean War. But he did remember that many of his unit's decrepit trucks made the journey to the Korean peninsula. Schreiner believed that few fighting men would value these six-by-six trucks which "weren't worth a damn." Even though he served his duty in the United States, he knew the weight of the Korean War, "The Korean War was nothing to laugh about; it killed a lot of people."³

Serving stateside, Schreiner shared one experience with few other men: he once was former President Harry S. Truman's chauffeur. He excitedly related an adventure at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, in the mid 1950s:

He came to watch the exercises and the firing of the 105 and 155 millimeter canons and we had to take a jeep out to the firing range because it was so rough . . . so that's where I came in. I had to take the jeep and he rode in the back seat. . . . I enjoyed it. It was quite comical to listen to him back there talking and cussing . . . about how rough it was.

Years later, seeing Truman in downtown Kansas City, he almost met the former president again. Unfortunately, a crowd engulfed Truman, taking away Schreiner's last chance to ever meet the man whom he once chauffeured.⁴

Another Kansan who remained stateside during the Korean war was Everett L. Mickelson. Previously having served in the occupational Constabulary Force in West Germany in 1947 and 1948, he was called up along with other reservists when the Korean War began. Although he received his orders to go to the "pipeline to Korea," the Army

decided that Mickelson could best serve his country as a platoon sergeant training troops at Fort Riley's Camp Funston. During his one-year tour of duty, which began in September of 1950, he trained hundreds, if not thousands of men, including two hometown Ellis, Kansas, soldiers. Still, he was not happy about being called up. He noted, "The first time I went in, I was single then and just seventeen years old, and the second time I got married in August and I got called back in September"⁵ Mickelson's duty at Camp Funston seemed more like a regular civilian job than military service because he had eight-hour days and was off duty on weekends. Of course, during those weekends he rushed home to his wife.⁶

Unfortunately, America's attitude toward their servicemen had already changed as Mickelson explained, "I think they did look down [on the servicemen]. See, so many people [were] against this Korean War . . . and when they're against something, they take it out on you and me." According to him, Americans were frustrated by another war so quickly after World War II. Yet, in some ways, he agreed with the homefront, "We shouldn't have been there . . . but if we [were] gonna be there, we should [have] finished [it]."⁷

Unlike Mickelson, Kansan Wallace E. Johnson believed that "people [didn't] understand that we [were] actually [in] a real war." Even though he wasn't drafted until 1951, this Sante Fe Railroad teletype operator knew the Korean War was heating up, since he saw literally trainload after trainload of military materiel and personnel moved to the west coast. Reluctant to join the Army, he enlisted in the Marine Corps in November of 1951 and went to Telephone School at Tent Camp Two in Camp Pendelton, California,

near Sacramento. Having trained next to a staging area, he watched thousands of soldiers load onto trucks taking them on their way to North and South Korea.⁸

Johnson learned to follow Marine Corps rules, but his parents did not. According to him, while recruits trained, the Marine Corps held their mail. When Johnson was finally allowed to see his mound of mail, he noticed that his parents' return address changed from Illinois to Oklahoma to New Mexico to Arizona. Knowing that his parents had never traveled much before, he was perplexed. As he soon realized, his parents decided to disregard the no-visitors-during-Basic-Training rule, an parental act which not only surprised but shocked this only son. Johnson described the "reunion" with his parents on Christmas Eve of 1951:

[My mother] went to . . . the Hostess House and she demanded to see the commander of the base. . . . She made a big fuss and [the] next thing [I knew] I was out in training and they sent a messenger after me, and my DI [Drill Instructor said], "You've got visitors at the Hostess House." I didn't even know [where] the Hostess House was. . . . He showed [me] and kind of directed me where to go but he [said], "By the time you get there you've got five minutes . . . and then get yourself back." Well, he didn't use those certain terms but . . . when I got there, there were my parents and I said, "Folks, I can't stay. I've got five minutes." My dad said, "Like hell you do," and I thought, "Well, here I go. I'm gonna be dead by morning."

His parents had made such a fuss that a fellow Marine chauffeured Johnson and his parents around the base along with, a colonel and a sergeant major, and gave them a tour. Wide-eyed at this experience, Johnson was dumbfounded when the colonel allowed him to stay with his parents for several hours. When Johnson finally returned to his unit, his Drill Instructor put him through "hell."⁹

Unfortunately, Wallace Johnson's troubles continued. His parents returned on

Christmas day. Not satisfied to stay on the base, his mother “told the officer they [were] taking [him] to [his] aunt’s house in San Diego for dinner.” Almost immediately, this enlisted man who had only been given work clothes and dungarees now had a dress uniform. Astonished, Johnson was told to changed his attire even though he had no idea what was happening. After he was driven to the Hostess House where he again surprisingly met his parents, he was given a one-day pass. Johnson’s Drill Instructor fumed at another rule infraction. Although he gave no specifics about his punishment, Johnson stated, “I never did tell my folks what happened, because that would worry my mom all the more. Then, I didn’t want them to worry that much about me. The rest of my Boot Camp was pretty doggone hard because of that.” Despite his punishment, it was interesting to note how a Marine colonel, in charge of training thousands of men, would accommodate two bold parents during wartime.¹⁰

After he completed his rigorous training, Johnson worked in the communications unit of the 2nd Regiment. Often sent out in the field, he taught other soldiers to fix telephones and switchboards in emergencies. As fellow soldiers and even a cousin went to the Korean peninsula, Johnson was not only placed on alert but was also called up on two occasions to fight in the Korean War. Yet on both occasions, his orders were canceled because, as Johnson believed, of the military’s (hushed up) only-son-won’t-go-to-combat policy. Even though he never fought in the war, the war still personally touched his life because a classmate and many of his friends died in the fighting.¹¹

Despite the punishment and sorrow, Johnson did mention some positive aspects of his service time. First, his employer, the Sante Fe Railroad, continued to send him

paychecks during his time at Camp Pendelton even though the paychecks only amounted to five or six dollars each. Also, driving into Los Angeles, he was able to watch the filming of “Amos and Andy” and other shows on the new technological advancement, the television. Hollywood also impressed him. Stars Dorothy Lamour, Bing Crosby, and Bob Hope entertained the troops at his camp. From his training to his discharge, Wallace E. Johnson’s life was changed by the Korean War.¹²

Of course, Kansans did not stop entering the military when the armistice was signed at Panmunjom on July 27, 1953. Since military planners themselves were not sure when the war would end, they continued drafting young men. Because he knew he would be drafted, Victor Higgins enlisted in the Army on October 23, 1953. He completed his training and took the required immunizations as he prepared to go to South Korea. But the army sent him to Fort Hood, Texas. Instead of preparing to go to battle against the communists, this forward artillery observer admitted he spent most of his days battling opposing teams on the baseball diamond. This soon changed when a Captain Frenot, nicknamed “The Great White Flower,” took command of the base after the sports-loving Colonel Schultz left. Higgins and other servicemen at Fort Hood soon discovered that this new officer did not appreciate sports. The athletes, including Higgins, who were once excused from extra duty now had double duty. Higgins explained, “We’d get off of KP to go on guard duty and get off guard duty to come back to KP.” Luckily, this exhausting duty only lasted six weeks for Higgins. He received his discharge on October 21, 1955.¹³

Although the Korean War was over, America was in the midst of Cold War tension when Kansan Kay “Red” Fear served his country in the 485th Triple A Missile

Battalion from 1955 to 1957. His attitude of “[serving] your country for [however] long” was a family motto since his father served in World War I and his uncles served in World War II. Volunteering to serve in the Army, Fear was sent to Chicago while other servicemen went to occupational duty in South Korea. During his eighteen months in a “hand-picked” guided missile outfit, he helped to establish the Chicago outpost by setting up the racks, doors, and even the missiles themselves. Apparently the Korean War had only fueled Cold War fears. He described his duty, “We [were] just protecting Chicago in case [the Russians] sent the planes over.”¹⁴

Although Kansans Ray Schreiner, Everett L. Mickelson, Wallace E. Johnson, Victor Higgins, and Kay “Red” Fear did not make it to the Korean battlefield, they honorably served their country. Unsure of their destination or their future duty, they trained as vigorously as other servicemen or rigorously trained other servicemen who went to the front lines. Former FBI Director William Sessions once stated “They went not for conquest and not for gain, but only to protect the anguished and the innocent. . . . They added a luster to the codes we hold most dear: duty, honor, country, fidelity, bravery, [and] integrity.”¹⁵ Although this Korean War veteran was describing America’s servicemen who fought in North and South Korea, his words could also easily describe America’s stateside servicemen.¹⁶

NOTES

1. "Save America First, Council Grove Republican, 21 December 1950.

2. John Edward Wiltz, "The Korean War and American Society," in The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective, ed. Francis H. Heller, with a Preface by Francis H. Heller (Lawrence: Regents Press of KS, 1977), 131; Alonzo L. Hamby, Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 559; "Selected Data on Participants and Deaths by Major War Period by State of Pre-Service Residence," Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Kansas, photocopy; and "Estimated Number of Veterans Living in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, by Regional Office and Period of Service, March 31, 1996," Veterans Administration, Washington, D.C., Kansas State Historical Society, photocopy.

3. Ray Schreiner, interview by author, Tape recording, Olpe, Kansas, 17 October 1997.

4. Ibid. He did not remember the exact year when he chauffeured for Truman. He did not mention whether this incident occurred in Kansas City, Kansas, or Kansas City, Missouri.

5. Everett L. Mickelson, interview by author, Tape recording, Ellis, Kansas, 28 July 1997. He summarized his duty in Germany, "It was just a regular police outfit. . . . We confiscated everything that was illegal from the Germans, like any kind of weapons or anything that was illegal."

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

8. Wallace E. Johnson, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 28 February 1997.

9. Ibid. Johnson said, "When I got back again, it was hell."

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid. He served two years of active duty and six years in the Marine Corps Reserves before he was discharged in 1959.

13. Victor Higgins, interview by author, Tape recording, McCracken, Kansas, 30 July 1997. Higgins did not state in which unit he served, but he mentioned playing baseball in a 4th Army tournament at Fort Sam Houston. Only after he completed his training to become a forward observer was he told that men in such roles had a survival time of thirty-nine seconds in combat. The colonel's and the captain's first names were not given. The captain's nickname came from a speech he gave. Referring to Colonel Schultz, he stated, "'The Great White Flower' is gone."

14. Kay "Red" Fear, interview by author, Tape recording, McCracken, Kansas, 30 July 1997. He stated that his outfit was "hand-picked."

15. Korean War Veterans Memorial, accessed 3 April 1997, available from <http://www.nps.gov/kwvm/index2.htm>.

16. Ibid. This source stated that he was a veteran of the Korean War.

Chapter 17

Spies Like Us: “Secrets” of a Stateside Counter Intelligence Agent During the Korean War

Clearly, America had some intelligence and communications problems during the Korean War. First, while “vacationing” in their hometowns of Independence, Missouri, and Sandy Spring, Maryland, both President Truman and Secretary of State Dean Acheson were respectively “shaken” from their respite by the North Korean invasion.¹ Even though a new State Department advisor named John Foster Dulles, who had recently returned from a trip to South Korea, anticipated a coming North Korean attack, Dulles’ warnings had apparently fallen on deaf ears.² Either way, Washington, D.C. was shocked by the communist invasion into South Korea.

If the lack of intelligence for the initial massive surge of the communists into South Korea were not enough, the slighting of the communist Chinese warnings and their subsequent entrance into the Korean War was intolerable. At the Wake Island Conference on October 15, 1950, after President Truman asked General MacArthur whether these Chinese threats should have been taken seriously, the brazen MacArthur simply stated that “the Chinese . . . were probably greatly embarrassed by the predicament in which they now found themselves.”³ On the one hand, MacArthur was not completely at fault for underestimating the Chinese, for his own intelligence officer, Major General Charles H. Willoughby, gravely underestimated the possible Chinese forces, citing numbers up to ten times smaller than their actual complement.⁴ But, MacArthur refused to accept the fact that the United Nations faced a new enemy even after Chinese soldiers were captured on October 26, 1950, almost a whole month before the war in Korea became known as a

“new war.”⁵ Obviously, American intelligence and counter intelligence were lacking, but Kansan Henry E. Herrman, a man serious in action and comical in nature, had yet to leave his mark.

Focusing on pranks, drink, and fun as a college student at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, Herrman’s attention was turned to the Korean peninsula only when he received greetings from his Hays, Kansas draft board.⁶ As graduation loomed, neither “a free bus-ride to Des Moines” nor a chance “for eventual induction into the U.S. Army” were the plans he had envisioned for his future.⁷ Although the open-minded army warmly welcomed him into this new “fraternity,” Herrman stated, “[I] was not quite ready to offer [my] body to the government’s whims and/or wishes.”⁸ Unfortunately, the war escalated.⁹

As the army “invited” him to join its ranks, a Catholic priest named Father Sullivan shaped Herrman’s future with the Counter Intelligence Corps. This priest, a college professor and rabid anti-communist, taught a popular class on communism. In this class, Father Sullivan preached the gospel of anti-communism in the Cold War: “the class learned . . . of Karl Marx through Nikolai Lenin and then through Joe Stalin that Communism was an . . . evil philosophy that threatened the world’s peace and security.”¹⁰ He also taught his Catholic students that if they ever became communists, they would be instantly excommunicated from the religious haven of the church. Finishing this class with high marks, an “A+,” Herrman graduated from Loras College with a Political Science and History degree.¹¹

As he contemplated the Korean War and his draft situation, Herrman realized that the war did have some positives. First, the United States was not fighting the Korean War

alone. In fact, many other nations clamored to support America in its quest to extinguish the communists' fires sweeping into South Korea. Besides sending soldiers, these nations also sent medical personnel. Herrman was quick to notice that among the Norwegian and Swedish personnel were women, personnel additions which "for the most part greatly pleased the American GI"¹² On the other hand, the war's negatives, wounds and death, easily balanced the scales.

After a short "furlough" at home in Hays, Herrman was ordered by the army to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and Basic Training, inducting him on July 24, 1952.¹³

Although the army first decided to train him as a combat engineer by building bridges and attaching communications wire to telephone poles, the army eventually decided to let Herrman woo them with his knowledge of communism. Herrman described his enthusiasm for this challenge,

I was ordered to report to the Office of the Counter Intelligence Corps [CIC] agent. I became somewhat excited as I had always indicated my desire to become a member of the "Corps." On arriving at the office . . . , I was asked if I knew anything at all about Communism. I could have leaped for joy. . . . [The major] ordered me to step into . . . his office . . . and to type up everything I might know about Communism and Joe Stalin's regime in Russia. Again, I jumped for joy as I quickly retired to [his office] and commenced to type everything I had learned in Father Sullivan's class. Upon completion of my typing, I took the paper into the CIC agent's office and advised him that he would read not only everything I had learned in the priest's class, but also in a rather self-gratifying way, advised the agent that I was handing him probably the best paper he had ever read on the subject.¹⁴

Having confidently completed this test, Herrman returned to his Basic Training.

Herrman's overwhelming confidence soon diminished as he continued his combat engineering training. Frustrated, he joined the throngs of the other unsure servicemen in

the field ground to receive their orders. Standing at attention, he listened intently as other combat engineers were ordered to Fort Ord, California, the “pipeline to Korea.”

Nervously awaiting his orders, he nearly fainted when he heard his orders to report to Fort Holabird, Baltimore, Maryland, and to the Counter Intelligence Corps Headquarters. He trained there from October of 1952 to May of 1953 to become an “investigator.”

Herrman’s dream of being in the “Corps” had come true.¹⁵

As a true Counter Intelligence agent, Herrman could divulge little about his training or the qualifying characteristics of agents. Concerning his training, he only revealed, “We were taught to cooperate with the F.B.I., Secret Service, and civilian authorities when necessary.”¹⁶ Years later he divulged the following tongue-in-cheek description of characteristics which every agent had to possess:

He must be a man of vision and ambition, an after dinner speaker, a before dinner guzzler, and night owl; work all day, drive all night and appear fresh the next day. . . .

He must be able to entertain the commanding officer’s wife, his associates’ sweeties, and all other office cuties without become too amorous. Inhale dust, live outside at 10 below, consume exorbitant amounts of bourbon without ill effects, . . . and live through hell, fire, and high water without weakening or become disaffected.

He must be a man’s man, ladies’ man, a model husband, a fatherly father, a devoted son-in-law, a good provider, a plutocrat, Democrat, Republican, a New Dealer, and Old Dealer, a fast dealer, . . . a model of his famous idol Mike Hammer, also a specialist on the black market and other various shady dealings. . . .

He must also be an excellent shot and be able to place 10 shots within a two-inch bulls-eye at 150 yards, with any type of weapon. . . .

He must be able to take dictation and type 150 words per minute in English, German, French, Russian, Bulgarian, Chinese, and Sanskrit as well as read American Indian sign language, Egyptian hieroglyphics, and the deaf and dumb alphabet. . . .¹⁷

Hyperbole aside, counter intelligence agents during the Korean War were rare men.

After discovering that Herrman met the training requirements and possessed the

needed characteristics, the CIC sent him to Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Of course, as an inconspicuous agent, Herrman tried to fit in with the “natives,” to no avail. Among other subjects, this agent was armed with specific knowledge about the Kojedo Prisoner of War Camp uprising on May 7, 1952, when communist prisoners captured the commander, Brigadier General Francis T. Dodd. Fortunately, Dodd’s replacement, General Haydon L. Boatman and his forces ended this turmoil on Kojedo.¹⁸

With peace and order established on Kojedo, Herrman soon faced his own dangerous situation. Inadvertently revealing his knowledge of Dodd’s incident, he ignited a fire that could not easily be extinguished. He explained this, at first, innocent revelation,

I . . . dated the daughter of the U.S. general who had been forced to retire in disgrace from the Army for his actions at the North Korean and Chinese prison camp. As a matter of fact, on my date with that particular girl, I made the mistake of asking the girl if her father was the jackass of a general who permitted those insurrections by captured foreign soldiers. Obviously, she was the daughter of that bumbling idiot. Let me say only that that was the last I ever saw of that girl. I think but cannot be certain that she took offense about her idiot dad.¹⁹

Herrman soon learned that some information should never be revealed.

Of course, not all aspects of CIC work during the Korean War were amusing. After hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers came to the aid of their North Korean ally, these supposed “volunteers” thrust the overwhelmed UN soldiers back to Hungnam and other evacuation points. As the number of the UN casualties soared against the onslaughts of communist troops, the Truman administration faced a massive challenge of its own, deciding what steps needed to be taken next against this new communist invasion. As early as the November 28, 1950, National Security Council meeting at the White House, two new Korean War strategies and goals were being discussed. First, Council

members concurred with American UN representative Warren Austin, “As for the United Nations, we must go forward . . . this morning, by branding the Chinese as aggressors.”²⁰ Once again, the Truman administration hoped for international support in its continuing fight against communism.

Clearly, the hope of reuniting North and South Korea under democratic rule had flickered out. Because communist China had intervened, American policy planners and advisors now simply hoped for an honorable end to this communist snare in the Far East. Secretary of State Acheson summarized the National Security Council’s feelings, “‘We want to terminate it’. We don’t want to beat China in Korea, — — we can’t. We don’t want to beat China any place — — we can’t.”²¹ Once again, advisors evaluated South Korea’s significance in American foreign policy. In a meeting a few days later, Under Secretary of State Robert A. Lovett restated the true object of American foreign policy during the Korean War, “Korea is not a decisive area for us . . . and while the loss of Korea might jeopardize Japan and perhaps bring about its eventual loss, Western Europe was our prime concern and we would rather see that result than lose Western Europe. . . . We might then move in on securing a cease-fire or a truce [in Korea].”²² The great victory over communism on the Korean peninsula had regressed into an armistice.

As a result, American foreign policy advisors turned to the CIC to discover Communist China’s intentions. Herrman revealed how some fellow agents became “turncoats” to their country to obtain valuable communist military strategies,

The agents were first trained by their commanders to slip out of their battle group lines and permit themselves to be captured by the Red Chinese. Upon doing so, they were instructed to pretend to be disgusted with the American government

and its allies then in combat against the “Reds” . . . [and] to present themselves as deserters . . . of their army with a great desire to escape from that damnedable, money-conscious leaders of the American government and wished to be relieved of any obligations they had towards the so-called American democracy. Further, they were to evidence a great desire to be turned over to the new and more democratic government of Russia through the auspices of the “Red” Chinese. Then, the “Red” Chinese were then to be treated as a relief organization freeing the “agent” from any further loyalties to the American authorities.²³

Although Herrman never became a “turncoat” or knew any of these brazen agents, he understood the significance and the danger of this assignment.

This “turncoat” ploy succeeded against the Chinese armies. The Chinese saw communism as the best form of government and expected others to see communism this way also. As agents convinced the communists of their devotion to “true” democracy, they were given key information, including communist battle plans. Escaping to American battle lines, many of these agents believed the worst was behind them, but complications arose as the American government, hoping to make the “turncoats” more believable to the communists, painted them as “Reds” in American newspapers. Apparently, this deception was also successful for Herrman explained, “The only problem . . . was that at least two or possibly three of the ‘turncoats’ were actually treated by the American public as traitors because their pictures appeared in American newspapers and showed them as being surrounded by smiling ‘Red’ captors.”²⁴ Not anticipating this complication, the American government and the CIC knew that they would risk the lives of agents in the field if the true patriotism of these “turncoats” were revealed and did nothing to protect their reputations on the homefront. Unfortunately, these agents only received persecution and heartache from the American people whom they had valiantly worked to protect. Feeling

miserable like other CIC agents at the time, Herrman could not disclose the devotion of these fellow agents to Americans.²⁵

While fellow agents were masquerading as communists in the Far East, Herrman spent his year and a half “tour” with the CIC at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, and later at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.²⁶ At the White Sands Missile Range, he modestly described his duty as the Security Resident Agent, “My successes [included] drunken debauchery with F.B.I. agents and naval personnel. . . . I used [my] weapon mainly to frighten civilian workers and/or workers [and soldiers] at White Sands into being obedient.”²⁷ Although these responsibilities seem apocryphal, one assignment seemed incredible even in its actuality. Speaking frankly, Herrman recalled, “I once proved for the benefit of my chief at White Sands that there were not flying saucers at Kaliborne Hole . . . [near] Las Cruces, New Mexico.”²⁸ Apparently an earthly communist foe was not evil enough, since some Americans looked to the skies for aggressors and invaders from other galaxies.

Although the warring sides signed the armistice on July 27, 1953, Herrman’s duty to his fellow servicemen proved unending. Thousands of American families anxiously awaited their sons’, brothers’, fathers’, or husbands’ return to America, only to be disappointed. Feeling, seeing, and hearing the worry and strain in these families’ lives, the CIC assigned agent Herrman, along with other agents, to discover information pertaining to these prisoners of war held by the communists. On May 12, 1954, Herrman interrogated a former prisoner of war, Corporal Candido Mascarenas, to obtain information concerning his fellow servicemen of the 1st platoon, Company L, 3rd Battalion,

34th Infantry Regiment, 24th Division. Herrman learned that this battle against the North Koreans on July 14, 1950, near Chongju soon turned grim for the American forces.

Outnumbered by their enemy, Mascarenas' platoon lost all contact with its commanding officers. Surrounded and running low on ammunition, a First Lieutenant Thornton saw that his men could only survive by surrendering. The North Koreans then pounced on these eighty-three helpless American soldiers and took them as prisoners of war.

Mascarenas recalled that an American named Moore, who had been shot in the leg, was not even considered a viable prisoner by the North Koreans; so they shot this helpless man where he lay, across the creek from his dead sergeant named Knapier and the other dead.

In the only rescue attempt 1st Battalion in the 34th Regiment failed. Marching a distance to two miles to the cover of a mountain, Mascarenas observed that one wounded American soldier died from the strenuous march. Unfortunately for the prisoners' families,

Mascarenas could give no further information concerning his fellow prisoners of war.

Mascarenas' escape from North Korean forces was remarkable because the North Koreans tied the POWs' hands behind their backs, and then shot the POWs in the back of the head.²⁹ Trying desperately to help the families of missing American prisoners of war, Herrman had his "hands tied" by the lack of information. Receiving a National Defense Service Medal was discharged on July 23, 1954.³⁰

Drafted into the army as a college senior, Henry E. Herrman found his future took a different path than he had anticipated. First trained as a combat engineer, with the probability that he would be sent to the distant land of North and South Korea, he proved himself as a quality candidate for the Counter Intelligence Corps. Having his dream

fulfilled of becoming an agent, Herrman would later share one last memory of his service, “I served my country during the administration of President Dwight D. Eisenhower. I knew I could not fail in as much as I, too, came from Kansas as did ‘Ike.’ We were not particularly friendly correspondents.”³¹ In spite of this disappointment, Herrman served his country and his state well as a Counter Intelligence Agent.

NOTES

1. Alonzo L. Hamby, Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 533; and Walter Karig, Malcolm W. Cagle, and Frank A. Manson, Battle Report: The War in Korea, Battle Report Series (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1952), 18.

2. Gary A. Donaldson, America at War Since 1945: Politics and Diplomacy in Korea, Vietnam, and the Gulf War (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 16.

3. Burton I. Kaufman, The Korean War: Challenges in Crisis, Credibility, and Command, America in Crisis Series (New York: Knopf, 1986), 91.

4. "From Where I Stood: A Panel," in The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective, ed. Francis H. Heller, with a Preface by Francis H. Heller (Lawrence: Regents Press of KS, 1979), 29. American ambassador to South Korea during the Korean War, John J. Muccio said this.

5. "Report from Commanding General X Corps to the JCS," 31 October 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to Communist China's Intervention, Box 1, Naval Aide Files; "Record of the Actions Taken by the Joint Chiefs of Staff Relative to the United Nations Operations in Korea from 25 June 1950 to 11 April 1951, Prepared by them for the Senate Armed Forces and Foreign Relations Committee," 30 April 1951, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to Communist China's Intervention, Box 1, President's Secretary's Files; and Kaufman, War, 107.

6. "20 County Men to Take Physicals," Hays Daily News, 12 February 1951; Henry E. Herrman, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 21 July 1997. Herrman dictated his interview to me.

7. Herrman, interview by author, 21 July 1997.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., interview by author, 23 July 1997.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., interview by author, 21 July 1997.

13. Henry E. Herrman, Discharge Record, Ellis County Courthouse, Hays, Kansas, photocopy.

14. Herrman, interview by author, 23 July 1997.

15. Ibid.; and Henry E. Herrman, Discharge Record.

16. Herrman, interview by author, 21 July 1997.

17. "Almost Nearly Classified Non-Security Poop, Qualifications of [a] Counter Intelligence Agent," Henry E. Herrman, Private Collection, scrapbook. There was no date on this source. Other qualifications include the following: "He must be a sales promotion expert, a good credit manager, correspondent, attend all staff conferences, clinics, labor union meetings, tournaments, funerals, and births, and visit brother agents in hospitals as well as jails; he must contact all other branches of the army every week and in his spare time look out for the interests of the CID, OSI, FBI, ASA, MID, and the Military Police.

He must maintain a huge supply of liquor and a wide range of telephone numbers when entertaining fellow agents and numerous inspection officers.

He must be an expert driver, talker, liar, dancer, bridge player, poker player, nudist, and an authority on chemistry, psychology, criminology, dogs, cats, horses, trailers, hotels, motels, blondes, brunettes, and red-heads. . . .

He must have a memory which involves remembering assorted items of important information such as the mating call of the do-do bird, the height of the leaning Tower of Pisa, and Cleopatra's middle name which will enable him to always be able to answer the sixty-four dollar question to supplement his meager income. He must be able to replace, and do the work of a Major and be happy with the pay of a PFC."

18. Herrman, interview by author, 23 July 1997; and Kaufman, War, 267, 268. Dodd was demoted to a colonelcy.

19. Herrman, interview by author, 21 July 1997.

20. "National Security Council Meeting," 28 November 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to Communist China's Intervention, President's Secretary's Files, Box 1.

21. Ibid.

22. "Department of State Memorandum of Conversation," "Notes on [the] Meeting in [the] JCS Meeting Room," 1 December 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to Communist China's Intervention, Box 1, Papers of Dean Acheson.

23. Herrman, interview by author, 23 July 1997.

24. Ibid. Herrman did not know exactly how many agents became “turncoats” or how many successfully escaped to American battle lines. He did speculate that there might have been five successful spies out of a total of ten to fifteen.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid. Interview by author, 21 July 1997. Herrman did not state the specific location of the White Sands Missile Range.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. “Interrogation of Corporal Candido Mascarenas,” 12 May 1954, Henry E. Herrman, Private Collection, scrapbook. Mascarenas also spelled the sergeant’s name as “Knapper.” Thornton’s first name was not given. Mascarenas did not explain how he escaped from his captors.

30. Discharge Record, Henry E. Herrman.

31. Herrman, 21 July 1997. Unlike their communist allies, the Chinese were more humane to their prisoners; keeping them alive in the hopes of indoctrinating them, the Chinese would release these prisoners to supposedly serve as communist propaganda tools.

Chapter 18

“We’re in This Together.”: One Couple’s Experiences at a Hawaiian Naval Base During The Korean War

My head, my heart, mine eyes, my life, nay, more
 My joy, my magazine of earthly store,
 If two be one, as surely thou and I,
 How stayest thou there, while I at Ipswich lie?
 So many steps, head from the heart to sever,
 If but a neck, soon should we be together.
 I, like the Earth this season, mourn in black,
 My Sun is gone so far in’s zodiac,
 Whom whilst I ‘joyed, not storms, nor frost I felt,
 His warmth such frigid cold did cause to melt.
 My chilled limbs now numbed lie forlorn;
 Return, return, sweet Sol, from Capricorn;
 In this dead time, alas, what can I more
 Than view those fruits which through thy heat I bore?
 Which sweet contentment yield me for a space,
 True living picture of their father’s face.
 O strange effect! Now thou art southward gone,
 I weary grow the tedious day so long;
 But when thou northward to me shalt return,
 I wish my Sun may never set, but burn
 Within the Cancer of my glowing breast
 The welcome house of him my dearest guest.
 Where ever, ever stay, and go not thence,
 Till nature’s sad decree shall call thee hence;
 Flesh of thy flesh, bone of thy bone,
 I here, thou there, yet both but one.¹

Like Anne Bradstreet in early America’s Ipswich, Massachusetts, Margaret Timmons who now lives in Emporia, Kansas, seemed to feel dead in the absence of her husband Lawrence, especially during the first months of the Korean War. Together through World War II when he served in Washington, D.C., she and her children were separated from him in miles and time while he served in a distant land during the Korean War, but they were certainly not separated in emotion. Fortunately, she and her two

children were able to join Mr. Timmons when the government allowed servicemen's dependents to sojourn to the magnificent island of Oahu, Hawaii. They would be there, to join and support their servicemen, who were struggling for democracy and freedom in a troubled world. Unlike other wives of Korean War servicemen, Margaret traversed the restless ocean of loneliness and reunited her family at Pearl Harbor. In the Korean War, as earlier in World War II, Lawrence D. and Margaret Timmons, who were married in 1942, would serve their country together.²

Growing up surrounded by his father, an uncle, and other World War I veterans, Lawrence Timmons saw military service not only as a patriot's duty, but also as a family tradition. He joined the Citizens Military Training Camps, the CMTC, in 1938, and spent one month of each of the next three summers training at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, in infantry and artillery tactics. He recalled, "I didn't want to be in the trenches, didn't want to be in the mud. If it was gonna get me, I'd just sink with the ship."³ Joining the Navy in August of 1943, he was one of Dearborn, Michigan's Machinist Mate School's top ten graduates in the class of 1944. While 430 other graduates were immediately sent to World War II's sea duty, Lawrence's orders sent him to work on a secret project in Washington, D.C.⁴

From April of 1944 to March of 1946, Lawrence worked on a project which still shapes aviation today, IFF, or Identification Friend or Foe. He explained the significance of his work at the Naval Research Laboratory, "It was meant to identify aircraft that were flying over ships or overland so that you wouldn't shoot them down. What had happened in World War II was that our navy had shot down many of our paratrooper planes and

killed a lot of our [own] guys.”⁵ Shepherding this life-saving device through its developmental stages, Lawrence helped form IFF’s first working models based on American, British, and even Chinese scientists’ and engineers’ designs.⁶

Following and supporting him through his training in Dearborn, Michigan, and his duty in Washington, D.C. was his devoted wife, Margaret. As the nation mobilized in World War II, so too did the Timmons as they traveled from their original home in Davenport, Iowa. While Lawrence worked on his project, a project so secret that even his own wife was kept unaware, Margaret trained as a nurse’s aide, helping to give shots and other medical necessities. Establishing their new home with its latest addition, a son, Margaret remembered World War II’s notorious rationing and her shopping strategies: “We’d ration and [had] all kinds of good use for coupons then. . . . My friend and I would go on street cars [or buses] and have to carry our food back. . . . We’d stand in line because . . . when they’d get something the whole store was going to be [full].”⁷ Yet, no matter what obstacle lay in their path - secret projects, a new child, rationing - the Timmons would cross it together.⁸

Leaving Washington, D.C. and Lawrence’s completed secret project behind them, the Timmons moved to Missouri, where he joined Kansas City’s Naval Reserves. Once again the American government called upon Lawrence’s services on October 10, 1950. Knowing his responsibility as a reservist to his country, he did not hesitate, “If the government said [that] you needed to go, you just needed to go.”⁹ Unfortunately, when the government called him to active duty, it failed to mention his service destination, and even as he sailed out of San Francisco Bay, he knew nothing of his future Korean War

duty. Of course, this concealed information only heightened Margaret's fears, "It was not a happy thing when he got his call and his letter, his second letter to leave. It was pretty sad, and, of course, we had no idea where he was going when he . . . left us."¹⁰ Now a mother of two children, first grader Steve and three-year-old Sandy, Margaret could not predict when they would next see Lawrence.¹¹

As it turned out, Lawrence Timmons' future unfolded at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. As a "MR1, Machinery Repairman, First Class Petty Officer" on overseas duty, Lawrence supervised and trained other machine shop personnel, and helped the repair submarines that patrolled the North Korean coastline. With World War II's massive mobilization looming in his memory, he was chagrined by the Navy's lack of preparedness for the Korean War, "What really surprised me was . . . the navy, the state of our readiness which was very poor. The government had moth-balled so many ships and the [number of] men in the navy [was] way low so they really scrounged for people to man their stations. But . . . I was ready whenever they called."¹² Yet despite some initial unpreparedness, Lawrence and his fellow workers successfully repaired periscopes, electronic systems, and other key submarine components. Of course, his critically important mission did not fully distract his thoughts from his family thousands of miles away.¹³

His family also missed him. During Lawrence's first six months at Pearl Harbor's submarine base, their only form of communication was the letter. Although the Navy censored his letters and would not allow him to reveal the specifics of his job, Margaret still cherished his every word, especially since they could not telephone each other. As miles separated husband from wife, Lawrence cultivated his writing skills while she "sure

watched [her] mailman.”¹⁴ Luckily, he discovered that their separation could soon be overcome because the military allowed dependents to join their servicemen at Pearl Harbor.¹⁵

Overjoyed, Margaret, nevertheless, still faced the huge decision of whether or not to leave her own family and take her children to a land supposedly full of “natives.” As she looked for support, her family pulled her in two different directions. While her father worried about the distance between Missouri and Hawaii, her sister objected to Margaret’s leaving her ailing mother. Fortunately, love solved her dilemma, “My mother supported me whole-heartedly,” she explained, “She’s the one [who] said, ‘You should go to be with your husband’. . . . I really didn’t know what I was to [do] but I knew that Larry would not have us come if it wasn’t all right. . . . Besides, pretty soon you get lonely enough and you want to be together.” But the decision to go to Hawaii had only set her course.¹⁶

Soon Margaret began preparing for the voyage. Storing their car and readying their house for renters, she also made sure that she and her children had the needed physicals and immunizations. Yet, the endless preparations did not settle her fears. She cited only overwhelming horror, “Before I left Kansas City to go on that trip, I had nightmares that I couldn’t swim and I kept trying to save the children. This was terrible.” These visions would terrify any mother, but Margaret bravely continued with her journey to Oahu, where she would be surrounded by water.¹⁷

Although their adventure began at the dock in San Francisco, it did not begin as Margaret had anticipated. Waiting their ship’s repairs, she and her children, along with other

dependents, lived on another ship, strangely enough, in dry dock. Surrounded by other wives and children, Margaret soon made life-long friendships. Despite the rather unusual living conditions in dry dock, humor prevailed as Margaret reminisced about a fellow mother, “A funny part of that is that there was one of the women, what a character she was. . . . Here we were on board the ship in dry dock, not even in the water [and] when she looked out [of] the portholes . . . and she saw the ocean out there . . . and the big waves, she got seasick.” Of course, Margaret and this woman’s other new-found friends teased her but only until they, too, became seasick as their ship cruised into the rough waters by the Golden Gate Bridge.¹⁸

Finally steaming ahead on her three to four day journey to Hawaii, Margaret still faced anxiety aboard the ship which flew the flag of a nation engaged in a major international military action. She related one alarming exercise, “It was a beautiful ride . . . , but it was frightening because it was during . . . the war . . . and this was when the submarines were very active. We had [a] lifeboat drill which . . . [signified] . . . what was going on. . . . [The] children had their life-jackets and I had my life-jacket. . . . It’s a wonder [that] my children’s hands weren’t very small because I had ahold of those children’s hands [so tightly].” Luckily, Margaret’s ship safely arrived at their destination.¹⁹

Lawrence was anxiously awaiting their arrival. He took pictures as the ship moved inch by inch, foot by foot to the dock. Remembering his joy at being reunited with his family, Lawrence simply stated, “I was glad to see them, I’ll tell you.”²⁰ He surprised his family by disclosing that he had found them a house, a luxury compared to others’ Quonset huts. After someone answered his newspaper advertisement offering to do

maintenance and repair work in lieu of rent, he had found a house just four short blocks from Waikiki Beach on Tusitala Street, or “Teller of Tales” Street, where Robert Louis Stevenson once read to groups of children. Little did they know that their house was a “tour stop,” as buses often pulled up in front to see their “sausage tree,” one of only two such trees on the entire island. At first startled by the “fame” that this tree gave them, the Timmons family adjusted to life at Pearl Harbor.²¹

Although his family had now joined him, Lawrence’s duty did not change. Working twenty-four hours a day on every third day and working some weekends, plus being on call at night kept him busy.²² While Lawrence was away repairing the submarines that kept the communist North Korean coastline in check, Margaret was busy with her children and domestic activities. While Steve, one of the few Caucasian students in his mixed class of Japanese, Hawaiian, and Chinese students, attended first grade under his Chinese teacher Mrs. Goo, Margaret kept busy with her three-year-old daughter Sandy, yard work, and housework. She also took hula and swimming lessons, possibly to overt the tragedies of her nightmares. Luckily a doctor’s office was nearby for any mishaps and the commissary was open for their provisions. While Lawrence was on the job, he laughingly stated that his wife “was just having fun going out with the kids.” She laughed too, for many reasons.²³

Although the Korean War battles were miles away, Lawrence still saw the vivid reminders of the Chosin Reservoir fighting. Suffering from an infection in his eye which greatly impaired his vision, he was sent to Honolulu’s Tripler Army General Hospital. There he saw men who lost fingers and toes from the ravages of frostbite. One soldier’s

wound etched itself in Lawrence's mind. He recalled,

Every morning they would line the eye ward patients up . . . and an eye specialist would come out . . . to check the fellows and this one morning, we were all line up there and they led a black guy in and he sat down and we could hear a little talking but the only thing that we [really] heard was . . . , "My those are clean sockets." Well, what that meant was that the fellow had no eyes and we asked, "Well, what happened to you?" Well, they hit a landmine and [then] he was blind.

While serving in Hawaii, Lawrence witnessed the horror of the Korean War, not only through his submarine repairs, but also and more importantly through the servicemen's wounds.²⁴

Other wartime stresses impacted Lawrence's and Margaret's lives. Margaret related some fears that they personally faced,

There was always that chance [that he could go] out to sea. . . . It makes you so much aware of military things that you don't [ordinarily] think about . . . and you live on pins and needles while it's going on. You're concerned about what could happen. . . . You, know, there is a strain. You know there's something going on and everything can change so quickly.

Luckily, other naval personnel were in the same boat, so together they formed support groups which acted as their new "family." Thousands of miles away from their own families, the Timmons and other naval families encouraged and supported each other in this tense time.²⁵

Fortunately, the Hawaiian landscape and climate lessened some stresses, but it also brought new frustrations. As some servicemen stayed stateside and saw California's, Texas', or other states' landscapes, or other servicemen traveled to the desolate hilly land of North and South Korea, the Timmons witnessed Hawaii's majestic landscape. Even today Margaret recalled Oahu's grandeur, "It was beautiful. We always had a [rain]

shower every morning and you could see the showers coming . . . towards us. Pretty soon it would rain and then it would go away. . . . Oh, the trees and the flowers were absolutely beautiful.” Unfortunately, the wonderful climate led to the burglary of their house.

Because part of their house only had screens, not windows, someone took the liberty of breaking in. Since Lawrence worked many night shifts, Margaret placed her son’s baseball bat by her bed although she admitted that “[she’d] probably be too petrified to use it.” Nonetheless, the bat was nearby. Also, another feature of Hawaii, the volcanic red soil, posed a problem. First seeing this soil as “wonderful,” Margaret later changed her mind as her busy children’s clothes soon had red soil stains that proved difficult to remove. But overall, the majesty of Oahu exceeded its few downfalls.²⁶

Besides support groups and Hawaii’s landscape, fun and humor alleviated wartime stresses. In their small 1940 Studebaker Champion packed with four children and four adults, Lawrence drove his family and another family around the entire small island of Oahu, going one direction one Sunday and the other direction on the following Sunday. In these journeys, they observed much of the island since this loaded car hit a whopping forty-miles-per-hour going downhill. Also, as Lawrence’s service time continued, he qualified for Rest and Recuperation time. Taking their car with them to another Hawaiian island, the Timmons family enjoyed their time together, but all was not well on their trip to the island of Kauai. The potential for disaster loomed on their LST, Landing Ship Tank, which had no railings to protect innocent, curious children from going overboard. Although the crew had installed netting, Margaret’s mind was not at ease. As a result, she held her children’s hands, keeping her son and daughter near her. Remembering this trip,

they both chuckled as Lawrence stated, “Those poor little kids’ hands hadn’t [yet] recuperated from coming over on the other ship.”²⁷

Although Hawaii was a nice temporary residence, once Lawrence’s tour ended in the early months of 1952, they were ready to return to the Midwest after a year to year and a half of being away from home. Taking a forty-four passenger “sea plane” from Pearl Harbor to San Francisco Bay and Alameda Naval Air Station, they carried the luggage of their lives with them. Stopping outside a nearby hotel, the Timmons could not help noticing the bellboy’s hesitation as he stared at their hill of luggage. According to Margaret, “That might have been the only time [that] anybody looked down their nose at us.” After they moved into another hotel, a family hotel, Lawrence’ parents soon arrived to drive them back to Kansas City, Missouri. Leaving Hawaii and California behind, the Timmons carried their hill of luggage and mountains of memories with them.²⁸

Although Lawrence D. Timmons served his country at Pearl Harbor, thousands of miles from the Korean battlefield, his, his wife’s, and his children’s lives were all shaped by the Korean War. Instantly plucked from their civilian lives, these four “kids” faced the same stresses and fears that other couples faced in wartime.²⁹ Serving in Washington, D.C. and at Pearl Harbor, Lawrence fondly declared, “This lady had been with me in World War II and [the] Korean thing. She’s been just as involved as I [was].”³⁰ Margaret and Lawrence had certainly found the sun of their universes, each other.

NOTES

1. Anne Bradstreet, "A Letter to Her Husband Absent Upon Public Employment," in Anthology of American Literature, ed. George McMichael et al., 4th ed., vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan, 1985), 115. In this poem, a magazine is a storehouse, Ipswich is the Bradstreets' first residence, Capricorn symbolizes winter, and Cancer symbolizes summer. "Flesh of thy flesh, bone of thy bone" refers to Genesis 2:23 when God created Eve.

2. Margaret Timmons, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 29 September 1997. Although this interview focuses on her, it also highlights information from Mr. Timmons.

3. Lawrence D. Timmons, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas 26 February 1997. This interview focuses solely on Mr. Timmons.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid. Mr. Timmons was not the only interviewee to mention this disaster; As a glider pilot instructor before World War II, Glenn Matson saw his army work literally shot down by the navy. He explained, "At one time they made a mistake; the American navy shot down 3000 [men]. . . . Somebody made the mistake [and] in fifteen minutes . . . , they shot [the gliders] down . . . so that killed the glider business." Glenn Matson, interview by author, Tape recording, Madison, Kansas, 5 March 1997.

6. Lawrence Timmons, interview by author, 26 February 1997.

7. Margaret Timmons, interview by author, 29 September 1997.

8. Ibid.; and Lawrence Timmons, interview by author, 26 February 1997. Years later, Lawrence was allowed to inform her of his work activities.

9. Lawrence Timmons, interview by author, 26 February 1997.

10. Margaret Timmons, interview by author, 29 September 1997.

11. Lawrence Timmons, interview by author, 26 February 1997; and Margaret Timmons, interview by author, 29 September 1997.

12. Lawrence Timmons, interview by author, 26 February 1997.

13. Ibid.

14. Margaret Timmons, interview by author, 29 September 1997.

15. Lawrence Timmons, interview by author, 26 February 1997. He did not mention the specific name of the base. Margaret. She still has many of the letters that he wrote her.

16. Margaret Timmons, interview by author, 29 September 1997. Admitting her family, like others, was not familiar with Hawaii, she stated that they saw this distant land “as being a place where there [were] natives.”

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid. Lawrence said this in the September 19th interview.

21. Ibid. Taking on a big and time-consuming project, Lawrence remodeled the kitchen with a new counter top and a new kitchen sink. Margaret described this tree, “It had . . . great big objects . . . , great big long funny-looking green things. These things hung so that the branches came out. . . . Well, anyway these big ‘sausages’ would drop off . . . and hit our house and the garage. It made a terrible noise until we realized what they were.” The Botanical Gardens had the only other “sausage tree.” This is the only information I have about the tree.

22. Lawrence Timmons, interview by author, 26 February 1997.

23. Margaret Timmons, interview by author, 29 September 1997. Mrs. Goo’s first name was not revealed. It made no difference to the Timmons or others that Mrs. Goo was Chinese while Americans fought the communist Chinese on the Korean peninsula. This was a truly wonderful attitude for in World War II hundreds of thousand of Japanese in America were interned, and, Germans and Italians in America faced discrimination.

24. Lawrence Timmons, interview by author, 26 February 1997.

25. Margaret Timmons, interview by author, 29 September 1997. Homesickness also set in as she recalled, “After you’d been there so many months, you’d start thinking [about] how many miles away from home [you] really were. You just couldn’t get on a train or fly there inexpensively and coming from the Midwest, it was quite an expensive thing to think about, going home . . . and frightening in a way too because [of] where we were [and] what was going on.”

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid. They both described the aircraft as a “sea plane.” Unfortunately, just months after the Timmons returned home, Margaret’s mother passed away in July of 1952.

29. Ibid. They both stated that they were “just kids” during the Korean War.

30. Lawrence Timmons, interview by author, 26 February 1997.

Chapter 19

“Where Have All the Boys Gone?”: Wives of Korean War Servicemen Remember the War

While Margaret Timmons moved her children to Hawaii to be with their father, other wives “manned” the homefront while their husbands were away. But the homefront of the Korean War was very different from the homefront of World War II. Instead of working in war industries, conserving material by rationing, and becoming self-sufficient through Victory Gardens, many who initially enthusiastically supported President Harry S. Truman’s decision to send troops to South Korea, soon forgot the distant war. In fact, years later, some wives of Korean War era servicemen, such as Marlene Scheck, Donna Mickelson, Betty Fear, Carolyn Herrman, and Cleota M. Dinkel, admitted they had never been fully aware of the happenings on the Korean peninsula. After the great mobilization efforts of World War II, the limited efforts in the Korean War seemed dismal in comparison.¹

Yet the Korean War homefront did mobilize even though its actions were initially more based on fear than patriotism. With memories of product shortages still in their minds from World War II, many Americans began hoarding goods in response to the Korean War explosion.² Apparently scare buying caused enough shortages that newspapers, such as the Council Grove (KS) Republican, had to respond:

There are a considerable number of persons . . . who are convinced that their country faces the greatest threats to its peace, prosperity and economic pattern of its national existence. They are so concerned that they want to do whatever they individually can to meet these threats. . . .

There is, however, one thing those deeply disturbed can do which individually would ease their consciences and collectively would go far toward strengthening their nation. It is simply to strive to the utmost not to be the human beings that nature made them.

It is human nature to hoard. In easy times it is even highly regarded as thrift. In times like these, check that impulse.³

Apparently, this and other warnings worked because as people stopped hoarding goods, shortages evaporated.⁴

Besides buying consumer goods, Americans' money also went to higher taxes and increased defense budgets. For example, in September of 1950, Truman signed the Revenue Act of 1950, which raised excise, corporate, and personal income taxes. The act was intended to raise \$4.7 billion in its first fiscal year. As more money came into the federal government, the Truman administration put much of it into Defense Department programs, among other purposes, aimed at "accelerating the production of tactical air, air defense, and strategic air weapons, along with anti-sabotage and anti-marine defense mechanisms."⁵ In fact, from the beginning of the war until 1953, the Defense Department's budget had soared over three hundred percent of its prewar level.⁶

Even though the homefront never fully mobilized for the Korean War, many Americans, nevertheless, supported their troops. For example, many helped ship turkeys to the Korean peninsula for the servicemen's and servicewomen's holiday meals. Others donated blood for the wounded, and collected clothing for the devastated South Koreans.⁷ Also, some women on the homefront attended "patriotic food" demonstrations while others served as "Gray Ladies," assisting and comforting soldier-patients at base hospitals.⁸ In addition to the millions of servicemen, thousands of women in the Marine Corps Reserves and in the Women's Army Corps were called to serve their country in the Korean War.⁹

Kansas wives of Korean War era servicemen simply and whole-heartedly supported their husbands in their duty to America. Not only were some of these wives surprised when the war began, but they were also surprised when their husbands were called into the service. Frances Schuckman married her sweetheart John T. Schuckman just two weeks after he returned home from Korea in 1951 even though during the war she "wasn't [his] only fish in the ocean."¹⁰ Although John thought he would simply be relaxing in post World War II occupational duty, the Korean War broke out when he was sailing to Japan, insuring that he would be one of the first Americans to fight on the Korean peninsula.¹¹ Although she had planned to marry Gerald "Jerry" R. Kline earlier, Mary Anne Kline, married him just five days before he was sent to South Korea. Their wedding was delayed by her emergency appendectomy. Even though the war had begun a year prior to their wedding, Kline recalled, "I don't think [that] we really thought about the war until he was drafted."¹² Although Theresa Haselhorst knew the war's violent potential, she never expected the government to draft her husband of two years to go to Korea. She expressed her astonishment, "It seemed like there was fighting going on all the time some place in the world . . . but when we got married, I didn't think he . . . would . . . turn into a soldier. . . . I was really surprised when he got his notice."¹³ Married four years to Glenn Matson, Rose Matson was also shocked that the government sent her husband to war. Even though Glenn was a career serviceman, she stated, "We didn't think [that] he'd be going to Korea so soon."¹⁴

Other wives and sweethearts also revealed their reactions to the war. Elizabeth Conner, who was engaged to her future husband Glenn Conner during the war and

married him a month after he returned home, knew that the Ness County draft board would send her fiance to South Korea. She remembered, "[Glenn and I'd] talked about it in college. We knew what was happening. . . . If you lived in Ness County, there was a certain amount of people [who] were gonna be taken that month and you knew that [when] your name came up, . . . that'd be time for you to go."¹⁵ Married in September of 1951, ten months before Raymond "Ray" Luthi landed in South Korea, Vivian Luthi recalled, "He had been in ROTC and had signed an agreement so I felt that he should comply with that."¹⁶ Yet not one of the Kansas women was more surprised that the government called her husband into the military than Twilla Grumbein. At the "old" age of twenty-six, Glenn Grumbein was officially too old to be drafted. Grumbein described the dilemma that she faced, "Well, at first I wasn't very happy because we had just been married [for] such a short time, [two years], [and] he didn't get to go [into the service] before then."¹⁷

As her husband left for the distant land of South Korea, Luthi faced more uncertainty than other Korean War wives because the Army surprisingly would not allow her husband to reveal the name of the ship on which he was sailing. Yet the Luthis found a way to circumvent this secrecy as Vivian stated, "When Ray called me [from Seattle], he was leaving for overseas. . . . I knew he meant that he was on the General [H.B.] Freeman [because] . . . a neighbor [whom] we had [met] in church . . . was Freeman Fletcher . . . [and Ray] used that name to help me, to tell me what ship he was going to be on." Relieved to know Ray's ship and consequently his position as he sailed to South Korea, she then had to worry about his duty in a distant country.¹⁸

Of course, these women on the homefront faced anxious moments while their husbands and sweethearts were at the front thousands of miles from home. As her husband helped establish the Main Line of Resistance by manning a machine gun and working in communications, Theresa Haselhorst revealed, "That's when you really sit down and listen to the news. . . . It's really scary."¹⁹ As a wife of a construction supervisor and assistant attached to an Air Force base near Osan, Twilla Grumbein agreed, "You [were] always scared [until] they got back. Every time you'd hear something on the news, it was scary even if he was . . . [not at the front]."²⁰

As if Haselhorst's and Grumbein's anxiety were not enough, Rose Matson and Mary Anne Kline faced even more fearful situations. Matson, the wife of an Air Force mechanic stationed twelve miles from Panmunjom, faced a different situation than the other five women; trying to function without her loving, helpful husband, she was a mother of a polio-stricken daughter. She exemplified the misery that mothers faced during the war,

I'm not taking to be alone [she said]. . . . You gotta worry about bills. . . and our daughter [was] in Capper's Center [in Topeka]. . . . She was probably seven. . . . It was kinda lonesome. . . . You never knew [because] you'd hear stuff. . . [about] this one getting killed and then they had a lot of mines. . . . You [heard] of them sending them back in a box or something.²¹

Not only did she have to worry about her daughter, but she also had to agonize over her husband's service in a war-zone. Another wife, Kline, whose husband served as a radio man on patrols, faced even more anguish since a high school friend had been killed in the Korean War:

[I] was always kinda on pins and needles because . . . they were in a lot of really

dangerous situations and I wouldn't hear from "Jerry" for a while and then that would worry me. [Even] though he was trying to write me a little bit every day, he couldn't always mail it. . . . Then I would think something terrible happened . . . [because] a real close friend of mine, [Bill Anderson], had been killed in Korea and this was . . . just the fall before ["Jerry"] went to [South Korea]. . . . It was kind of . . . a nerve-wrecking time.²²

Although she married stateside serviceman Kay "Red" Fear after the war, Betty Fear's Korean War experiences were shaped by her oldest brother's participation in the war. She recalled Americans' phobia about communists surrounding her, though as a twelve-year-old in Arkansas, she was then more preoccupied with school and chores than the war. Still, Fear remembered her parents, especially her mother, worrying about Homer Jr. fighting in the last year of the war. She stated, "I . . . remember mama. She'd be glued to the radio and stuff, [and] waiting at the mailbox for letters." Although Fear never wrote to her brother, her mother and other siblings did. In addition, she remembered that her hometown saw its servicemen as royalty, and treated mothers of servicemen like family, "In town at the stores . . . , they always asked mom whether she'd heard from Homer Jr., where he was, and [stated] that they were glad that he was safe." When her brother finally returned home from overseas duty, Fear revered her brother who was seen as a great war hero.²³ Unfortunately, this was the exception rather than the rule since many returning servicemen were simply ignored by the homefront.

While Fear, a child, focused on her school work and chores, many Kansas women turned to the work-place to keep their minds off of their own despair. While her husband of one month trained troops at Fort Riley, Donna Mickelson went to work for a telephone company in Ellis, Kansas. Moving back into her parents' home in Virginia, Mary Anne

Kline worked for the Brunswick Corporation, which specialized in bowling equipment and bowling alleys. Another working woman, Elizabeth Conner, taught in a Salina, Kansas, school, while Grumbein worked in a dime-store and a J.C. Penney's store in LaCrosse, Kansas. Pregnant with her first child, Vivian Luthi moved back with her parents and assisted them on their Sumner County farm. In addition, she put her Home Economics degree to good use by giving demonstrations to a local extension unit. While living at Forbes Field in Topeka, Kansas, Rose Matson worked as a clerk in the exchange and as a short-order cook in the cafeteria. Theresa Haselhorst was also a working woman; she worked in a Hays, Kansas, hardware store. But, unfortunately, no matter how hard they worked, their thoughts of their sweethearts and husbands never let them divert their attention far from the war.²⁴

Even though many Kansans believed that the media, the television, radio, and newsreels, informed them of the war's progress, they rejoiced to hear about the war from their servicemen. Most of the women and their sweethearts and husbands corresponded often, and some even wrote daily. Letters were so important that Conner can still remember Glenn's serial number, 55259372. Both Haselhorst and Kline also daily wrote a letter to their husbands.²⁵ Yet, Kline admitted that she was not the loyal letter-writer that her husband was, "I probably wasn't as faithful about writing. I tried to be, but he was [really] good about writing."²⁶ Unbeknownst to her, her husband saved each one of her letters "and he drug all [of] those letters around in . . . [a] bag. I mean it was really a big bag."²⁷ Of course, she saved his letters to her, but saving war-time love letters did have its disadvantages, especially if children discovered the letters. Unfortunately, this happened

to Kline. She recalled that after her teenage children found the letters later on, "they were teasing us something fierce about those letters."²⁸ Often exchanging letters with her husband Ray, Vivian Luthi kept him updated about their new baby boy.²⁹

Besides writing letters, some of these women sent their men care packages from home. For example, Frances Schuckman sent John cookies which she admitted probably disintegrated into crumbs before they arrived in Korea. Twilla Grumbein, who saved all of her husband's letters to her, also sent cookies while Theresa Haselhorst sent a monthly package of sardines, Spam, sunflower seeds, and popcorn to her husband, Merlin. Rose Matson, was disgruntled about the military's mail service. Although she enjoyed reading her husband's letters, she did not appreciate the Air Force's censoring Glenn's letters, letters which often arrived home six to eight weeks after he sent them. Nonetheless, she, like her fellow wives and sweethearts, delighted in her correspondence with her husband.³⁰

Unlike most other women, Frances Schuckman had two unique experiences in her correspondence with her sweetheart in South Korea. She received both of the most dreaded letters from South Korea: one was a letter notifying her that her sweetheart was wounded, and the other was letter edged in black symbolizing a soldier's death. She described getting the first alarming letter and its effects on John's family:

[John] sent me a letter and I got his letter before his parents came home. . . . They came . . . and said that they had [gotten] a telegram from the War Department. I said, "Oh, really, well, I got a letter. . . ." They were dumbfounded because I had gotten a letter from him that [said] he was okay because they were worried sick, but they were so happy to see that letter of mine.

Relieved that John had survived his bullet wound, they were dismayed he was once again sent to South Korea after his recovery.³¹

Yet, this letter was not as horrifying as another letter, the infamous black-edged letter, that Schuckman received. She explained the meaning of this terrifying letter, "One time I got a letter edged in black. Do you know what that means? That means somebody died." Fortunately, after she opened this letter, she realized that it was just innovative stationery that her sweetheart and other soldiers had stumbled upon in an abandoned mortuary and had commandeered this stationary (See Chapter 4). Even though she knew the truth behind the stationery, others were terrified when they saw the letter. She related the post master's concern, "He asked me about it . . . but I explained it to him and he thought it was kinda funny." Looking back, Schuckman laughed about this paper, but during the war, she was not happy about it. In fact, dismay and sadness overwhelmed her when she first saw the letter.³²

In addition to the "usual" loneliness and distress that the women on the homefront faced, some of the homefront women also had unique experiences during the war. Unaware of most of the action in the Korean War, Carolyn Herrman witnessed sights that opened her eyes to the fighting. For example, she was distressed by seeing servicemen return to America as amputees. Also, Herrman saw fear in the eyes of Korean brides of American servicemen, women who huddled together as they took their first steps on American soil. Elizabeth Conner had a much different experience. Her fiance gave up a professional baseball career when he entered the Army, but she proudly stated that he joined an area baseball team in South Korea. She exulted, "[He] took the [baseball] club to Japan [where they played two games]. They let [him] be the team leader."³³ Twilla Grumbein also had a unique experience when her husband called her from Japan. She

enjoyed hearing his voice much more than receiving the \$36 bill for this telephone call. Instead of receiving a bill, Mary Anne Kline received money from the Pacific area. Betting on a baseball game's score with fellow soldiers, "Jerry" won \$75 and sent the money home to his wife. To say the least, Kline was excited, "I was just home saving money and when he won that money that time in Korea . . . , I was so thrilled. That was like winning the Powerball [lottery]."³⁴ One bride discovered after the war that her husband had refused to accept a Purple Heart because he knew the news of his wound would upset her. Despite the hardship and constant worry, the women were able to recall some warm memories of the Korean War.³⁵

Of course, family and friends supported these women during anxious moments. First and foremost, bonds of love connected them to their extended families. For instance, Conner recalled the trip home with Glenn's parents after seeing him off at the airport, "When [we] took him to the plane to Dodge [City], we. . . cried all the way back [home]."³⁶ Theresa Haselhorst stated that both families supported Merlin, "[All] my relatives . . . [and] his family wrote [to him]."³⁷ In addition, friends and co-workers joined this "support group." For example, besides the family support that she received, Conner explained that her friends faced similar circumstances too: "All the girls were in the same boat because everybody else's boyfriends [were] gone too. . . . All my friends had boyfriends who were in the service."³⁸ Shirley Higgins, a high schooler during the Korean War who married classmate Victor Higgins after the war, also stated that many of the local McCracken, Kansas, young men were in the military. While living on a military base, Rose Matson developed her own support system with other women on the base. She

remembered this camaraderie: "When [Glenn] was in Korea . . . there was a whole group of us [who] worked at the exchange. Practically all of us were. . . . When your husbands are gone you more or less stick together . . . like a family."³⁹ Like other women on the homefront, the Kansas women did not face the uncertainty of the war alone.⁴⁰

These Kansas women, like other women who knew servicemen in the war, were ecstatic when their servicemen returned to America. Vivian Luthi could not wait to see her husband Ray at their Kansas home, so she and their son Jack met him in San Francisco. Elizabeth Conner and Twilla Grumbein received early Christmas presents when their loved ones arrived home on December 24, 1953. Haselhorst was almost as shocked as she was happy when her husband returned:

He . . . came home without me knowing about it. It was [a] real surprise. I just couldn't believe it. [I was] asleep one night [and] I thought I heard footsteps going by my basement apartment. I thought, "Oh, god, who could be up at this time of the night in the backyard?" About that time [there was] a little knock on the back door [and] there he was.⁴¹

Mary Anne Kline and Frances Schuckman also described their servicemen's homecoming and the subsequent celebrations. Kline remembered that she and "Jerry's" family welcomed him back home at the Hays bus stop while Schuckman recalled an even bigger, if not unusual, celebration for her sweetheart, "We had a wonderful homecoming celebration at LaCrosse. . . . He and one of his other friends [who] had just come back from Korea got to ride in [the Questival] parade."⁴² In fact, the local newspaper, the Rush County News, highlighted his participation, "Floats, western saddle clubs, high school bands, Questival queen candidates, Army equipment, and visiting dignitaries - all made their appearance in the Rush County Questival parade. . . . Rush County veterans home from the Korean War

were given a place of honor. They were T/Sgt. Robert Rodie, Pfc. John Schuckman, and Sgt. Delmar Riffe.”⁴³ Sadly, few homecomings of Korean War servicemen were like Schuckman’s. With their servicemen safely back home, these women had conquered the worst hardships of their Korean War.

Unfortunately, the Korean War did invoke bitter memories. For example, Grumbein recalled how one store took advantage of the poor soldiers who were training to defend the world's freedom,

I felt sorry for some of those people when they went to Fort Leonard Wood. That's something I'll never forget. . . . This grocery store, when they knew the boys would get their check, they would raise [the prices of] the groceries. I never bought groceries when they got their checks because they would raise the [prices]. . . . [When] they knew [the soldiers] hardly had anything to live [on] the rest of the month, they would [have] lower [prices] and that to me was dishonest, but people [were] trying to make money no matter where they [were].⁴⁴

Apparently the Korean War had its share of war profiteers. Even President Truman responded to such unscrupulous ways, “Every businessman who is trying to profiteer in time of national danger - every person who is selfishly trying to get more than his neighbor - is doing just exactly the thing that any enemy of this country would want him to do.”⁴⁵

Like any other American war, the Korean War had its share of people who opposed the war. For instance, Margaret Timmons recalled some who did not support the war, “Yes, there were draft dodgers. There were draft dodgers in almost . . . any conflict we’ve been in.” A Hays (KS) Daily News article entitled “Hays and Russell Youths Indicted on Draft Charges” highlighted the story of three draft dodgers even though the article covered the actions of forty-seven other people who broke the law. Another Kansas newspaper, the Council Grove Republican, emphasized one San Francisco draft

dodgers's supposed greed, "High-salaried accordian [sic] player, Dick Contino, was sentenced to six months in jail and given a \$10,000 fine today on a draft evasion charge. The 21-year-old musician, who drew as much as \$4,000 a week, pleaded guilty to the charge."⁴⁶ Dodging was rare. Most men who were drafted into the military accepted the call to serve their country.⁴⁷

Angered by war profiteers and draft dodgers, many women on the homefront were also shocked by General MacArthur's sudden dismissal. Already upset by America's limited war policy, Rose Matson was enraged by Truman's action, "I didn't like that. . . . That was one of the biggest mistakes the United States ever made. I don't know why they fired him in the first place [because] he was really up on those wars." Although she did not personally have an opinion about the dismissal, Cleota M. Dinkel recalled her parents supported MacArthur. On the other hand, Vivian Luthi supported Truman, "I think people lost a lot of respect for [MacArthur]. He had been quite a hero. I think we just felt like he wasn't as mentally competent as he had been or [he] had this self-gratification. . . . I though he became kind of a pathetic character."⁴⁸ Still in school at the time, Majorie A. Dinkel laughed years later about how one classmate, a devout Democrat, yelled at people who said anything negative about Truman.⁴⁹

In addition to MacArthur's dismissal, other attitudes angered the wives. Recalling another disappointment, many women were upset by the lackluster effect that the armistice had on many Americans. In fact, a Life magazine article about the Korean armistice was appropriately entitled, "No Whistles, No Cheers, No Dancing."⁵⁰ Many Kansas women agreed with this article's title. For example, Elizabeth Conner reminisced

about the World War II celebrations, but not about the Korean War celebrations, "I remember . . . [after] World War II the celebrations [that] we had because I can remember driving around town, pounding on tin cans and hollering, and shouting, but there was none of that for the Korean War. It was kind of low keyed really. I would say really low-keyed."⁵¹ Recalling the World War II ticker-tape parades in which her husband participated, Rose Matson concurred with Conner. Theresa Haselhorst expressed similar sentiments, "There was such a fuss over World War II. They had such terrific celebrations, and then it was almost a let-down. . . . When [the Korean War] ended, it was just kind of 'Oh, well'."⁵² Vivian Luthi, Shirley Higgins, and Cleota A. Dinkel agreed. According to these women, the nation did not applaud nor celebrate their servicemen's accomplishments in the Korean War.⁵³

Although they vividly remembered the Korean War, some Kansas women felt that for everyone else it truly was a forgotten war. Twilla Grumbein and Rose Matson believed that many Americans overlooked this war because it was officially called a "police action." Both women disagreed with this unrealistic definition. Grumbein declared her bitterness: "I don't see how. . . they could call it World War I and World War II but some of them . . . don't believe [that the Korean War] was really a war and to me, that's war when they get killed! They're sent over there. . . . I don't care what you say, it was still war!"⁵⁴ Matson, whose husband "carried the truce papers," was less vocal than Grumbein. She explained that "if it sounded [like] a 'police action,' people thought [the soldiers] were just patrolling."⁵⁵ Another Korean War wife, Vivian Luthi was baffled by the attitude of the homefront, "I never did understand why [there] wasn't more attention

paid to the people [who] served in it because there certainly had been in World War II and they just ignored [the] Korean War.”⁵⁶

Apparently, Defense Secretary George Marshall’s November 11, 1950 promise that “Americans who have died in Korea will not be forgotten” and his request that Americans “keep faith [by] . . . remembering and honoring [the soldiers] sacrifices and doing our very best to support the ideals they courageously represented” fell on deaf ears. Mary Anne Kline, Theresa Haselhorst, and Rose Matson believe that America has not yet honored their servicemen.⁵⁷ In fact, Kline and Haselhorst claimed that the Korean War veterans have never been given “their just due” nor have they ever been “reimbursed” for their service to America. Matson explained why she felt that these servicemen have not been rewarded for their patriotism and dedication, “They don’t say much about the Korean veterans. . . . You hear a lot about World War II and their VFWs and American Legions . . . but you don’t [hear] so much about Korea.”⁵⁸ Apparently, other wars have over-shadowed the Korean War. According to these women, the Korean War is truly forgotten for even in the forty-eight years since its commencement, America has not shown any gratitude to these servicemen.⁵⁹

Whether or not the Korean War was forgotten by all Americans, these Korean War wives will never forget the sacrifices that their sweethearts and husbands made for America. Like others, Conner believed that the soldiers, as all Americans, had an obligation to their country:

When they said [that] the world was in this position . . . [the men] knew [that] they would go into the service and they weren’t against going into the service to do this . . . because they knew the Communists were going to take over . . . and that

would have happened too if they hadn't . . . [stopped them].⁶⁰

She also expressed her pride that the men were not only defending their country but that they were also defending their friends, families, and other loved ones. Rose Matson gave a more aggressive assertion to those who have forgotten the Korean War, "'You can just thank God that there [were] some men who went to war and got killed over it so you could be living and not have any problems'."⁶¹

Even though the Korean War occurred over forty years ago, many of the women still remembered how the war affected their lives and attitudes. Mary Anne Kline simply stated that she and "Jerry" just "put [their] life on hold" during the war while Grumbein stated that the war drastically changed her life, "We had just [gotten] our trailer house and [were] getting started in life and 'Boom!' It changed quite a few things."⁶² In addition, Grumbein also mentioned how this war and her personal relationship to it taught her to dislike any war. Vivian Luthi stated, "[The Korean War] just covers . . . my whole life. That was a big part of it."⁶³ Even though her husband also served in Vietnam, Matson recalled that the Korean War changed her views, "It's given me a different look on life. . . . I think [that] I learned to appreciate what the GIs have gone through."⁶⁴ On the other hand, Frances Schuckman and Elizabeth Conner admitted that the Korean War did not overall change their lives since their lives, nor their careers, were not drastically altered. Schuckman explained her philosophy of the homefront's women during war, "You just pick up and keep going."⁶⁵ Apparently both of the Conners would agree, for "[they] went right on to where [they] were gonna go if the war hadn't have come along. [They] both got jobs in what [they] went to college for."⁶⁶ Faced with different circumstances, these

women's lives and attitudes were changed in various ways and varying degrees.

Although the nation never fully mobilized for the war, many women who lived on the homefront believed the Korean War was an important milestone in our nation's history. Not only did millions of men serve and suffer while in service, but, as the Kansas women have exemplified, millions of women on the homefront suffered right along with them. For every pain that the men endured, their loved ones endured equally in loneliness and the anxiety of the conflict. Although many Americans have forgotten the Korean War, and the women on the homefront during the war have not. Although the Kansas women had differing, individual memories of the war, all of them were thankful their husbands returned safely.

NOTES

1. John Edward Wiltz, "The Korean War and American Society," in The Korean War: A 25-Year Perspective, ed. Francis H. Heller, with a Preface by Francis H. Heller (Lawrence: Regents Press of KS, 1977), 115; Marlene Scheck, interview by author, Tape recording, Victoria, Kansas, 30 July 1997. A nine-year-old during the war, Scheck married her husband Victor years later.; Donna Mickelson, interview by author, Tape recording, Ellis, Kansas, 28 July 1997; Betty Fear, interview by author, Tape recording, McCracken, Kansas, 30 July 1997; Carolyn Herrman, interview by author, Hays, Kansas, 16 July 1997. Having attended college during the war, Herrman married her husband Henry E. after his service time.; Cleota M. Dinkel, interview by author, Tape recording, Plainville, Kansas, 29 July 1997. Cleota M. and Gilbert F. Dinkel were married one year after he returned home from the Korean peninsula.; and "Discussion Outline, Meeting of [the] National Security Council and N.S.C. Civilian Consultants," 31 March 1953, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, Ann Whitman File, National Security Council, Box 4, Documents Pertaining to Special National Security Council Meeting, 31 March 1953. This document stated the homefront's limited mobilization should be continued.

2. "Address of the President," 19 July 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean war: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, Papers of George M. Elsey. In this address, Truman said, "I have been sorry to hear that some people have fallen victim to rumors in the last week or two, and have been buying up various things they have heard would be scarce. This is foolish - - and it is selfish, because hoarding results in entirely unnecessary local shortages.;" Wiltz, "Society," in Perspective, 115. Wiltz mentioned the buying frenzy.

3. "To Aid the War Effort," Council Grove (KS) Republican, 7 September 1950.

4. Alonzo L. Hamby, Man of the People: A Life of Harry S. Truman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 576.

5. "Memorandum for the National Security Council," 16 January 1951, Harry S. Truman Library, Student Research File, B File, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion, Boxes 1 and 2, President's Secretary's File.

6. Wiltz, "Society," in Perspective, 118; and Stephen E. Ambrose, Eisenhower: Soldier and President (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990), 311-12.

7. "Turkey for Yanks in Korea," Council Grove Republican, 21 November 1951; "Blood is Rushed to Korea," Council Grove Republican, 6 November 1950; "Need More Blood," 21 May 1951; "Bloodmobile Visit Set for October 19," Council Grove Republican, 11 October 1951; and "Clothing to Korea," Council Grove Republican, 6 November 1951.

8. "List Patriotic Foods," Council Grove Republican, 14 November 1950; "Want Gray Ladies at Riley Hospital," Council Grove Republican, 11 October 1950. "Gray Ladies" were volunteers between the ages of twenty-five and fifty-five who had special training. They helped at base hospitals at least once a month.

9. "Only Trained Women Will Be Called Up," (this source already checked) Emporia Gazette, 24 July 1950; "Recruiting WAC'S," Council Grove Republican, 8 February 1951; and "Want 30,000 More WAC's Soon," Council Grove Republican, 16 March 1951.

10. Frances and John T. Schuckman, interview by author, Tape recording, Gorham, Kansas, 25 July 1997.

11. Ibid.

12. Mary Anne and Gerald "Jerry" R. Kline, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 31 July 1997.

13. Theresa and Merlin Haselhorst, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 16 July 1997.

14. Rose and Glenn Matson, interview by author, Tape recording, Madison, Kansas, 5 March 1997 and 18 Aug. 1997.

15. Elizabeth and Glenn Conner, interview by author, Tape recording, McCracken, Kansas, 4 Aug. 1997.

16. Vivian Luthi, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 October 1997.

17. Twilla and Glenn Grumbein, interview by author, Tape recording, Alexander, Kansas, 5 Aug. 1997.

18. Vivian Luthi, interview by author, 20 October 1997. She did not explain why the ship's name was not common knowledge.; and Walter Karig, Malcolm W. Cagle, and Frank A. Manson, Battle Report: The War in Korea, Battle Report Series (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1952), 464.

19. Haselhorst, interview by author, 16 July 1997.

20. Grumbein., interview by author, 5 August 1997.

21. Matson., interview by author, 18 August 1997.

22. Kline., interview by author, 31 July 1997.

23. Fear, interview by author, 30 July 1997. Six of Fear's eight brothers served in the military, two of whom served in the Vietnam War.

24. Mickelson, interview by author, 28 July 1997; Kline, interview by author, 31 July 1997; Conner, interview by author, 4 August 1997; Luthi, interview by author, 20 October 1997; Matson, interview by author, 18 August 1997; and Haselhorst, interview by author, 16 July 1997.

25. Conner, interview by author, 4 August 1997; and Haselhorst, interview by author, 16 July 1997.

26. Kline, interview by author, 31 July 1997.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Luthi, interview by author, 20 October 1997.

30. Schuckman, interview by author, 25 July 1997; Grumbein, interview by author, 5 August 1997; Haselhorst, interview by author, 16 July 1997; and Matson, interview by author, 18 August 1997.

31. Schuckman, interview by author, 25 July 1997.

32. Ibid.

33. Conner, interview by author, 4 August 1997.

34. Kline, interview by author, 31 July 1997.

35. Herrman, interview by author, 16 July 1997; and Grumbein., interview by author, 5 August 1997. The serviceman who refused the Purple Heart did not want his name mentioned.

36. Conner., interview by author, 4 August 1997.

37. Haselhorst, interview by author, 16 July 1997.

38. Conner, interview by author, 4 August 1997.

39. Matson, interview by author, 18 August 1997.

40. Shirley Higgins, interview by author, Tape recording, McCracken, Kansas, 30 July 1997. Higgins had two cousins who served in the Korean War. One was Bill "Billy" J. Ogan, who fought at the Chosin Reservoir. I interviewed Mr. Ogan via the telephone, and read his memoir entitled "The Korean War Remembered," an incredible work. Although this Texas man bravely served his country in the hills of North and South Korea, I was unable to use his interview and memoir in my thesis which covered only Kansans.

41. Haselhorst, interview by author, 16 July 1997.

42. Schuckman, interview by author, 25 July 1997. The Schuckmans stated that he rode in LaCrosse's centennial parade but according to the July 7, 1951 edition of the Rush County News, he rode in the Questival parade. It was unusual because she did not remember any other big celebrations for returning soldiers.

43. "Questival Parade One of Biggest Ever Held Here," Rush County News, 7 July 1951.

44. Grumbein., interview by author, 5 August 1997.

45. "Address of the President," 19 July 1950, Harry S. Truman Library, Korean War: Responses to North Korea's Invasion.

46. "Draft Dodger Given Six Months, Fined," Council Grove Republican, 7 August 1951.

47. "Few Are Trying to Dodge Draft," Hays Daily News, 11 September 1950. Although the article mentioned that the cities of St. Louis, Missouri, Baltimore, Maryland, and Indianapolis, Indiana, had fifteen to thirty percent draft dodger levels, it also mentioned that many states, such as Maine, Colorado, North Carolina, and Texas, had a zero to one percent level.; and Richard K. Kolb, "Korea's 'Invisible Veterans' Return to an Ambivalent America," VFW Magazine, November 1997, 26. According to historian Alonzo Hamby in Kolb's article, the Korean War did have protest movements, but they were much different in nature from the Vietnam War protests. Where the Korean War protestors from the political right promoted conventional morality and patriotism against "Administration bungling and a no-win policy," the Vietnam War protestors from the political left asserted ideals of the counter-culture against "the alleged moral depravity of American foreign policy."

48. Luthi, interview by author, 20 October 1997.

49. Matson, interview by author, 18 August 1997; Cleota M. Dinkel, interview by author, 29 July 1997; and Major Dinkel, interview by author, 22 July 1997.

50. "No Whistles, No Cheers, No Dancing," Life, 3 August 1953, 15; Ambrose, Eisenhower, 330. Agreeing, Ambrose stated, "There were no victory celebrations, no cheering crowds in Times Square, [and] no sense of triumph."

51. Conner, interview by author, 4 August 1997.

52. Haselhorst, interview by author, 16 July 1997.

53. Matson, interview by author, 18 August 1997. Neither Rose nor Glenn Matson mentioned in which city he was ticker-taped, but he mentioned that it was down a 5th Avenue.; Luthi, interview by author, 20 October 1997; Higgins, interview by author, 30 July 1997; and Cleota M. Dinkel, interview by author, 29 July 1997.

54. Grumbein, interview by author, 5 August 1997.

55. Matson, interview by author, 18 August 1997.

56. Luthi, interview by author, 20 October 1997.

57. "Korean War Dead Won't be Forgotten Marshall Promises: Nation Will Keep Faith with Them, He Says at Speech at Pershing's Grave," Emporia Gazette, 11 November 1950.

58. Matson, interview by author, 18 August 1997.

59. Kline, interview by author, 31 July 1997; and Haselhorst, interview by author, 16 July 1997.

60. Conner, interview by author, 4 August 1997.

61. Matson., interview by author, 18 August 1997. She also said this in reference to the Vietnam War.

62. Kline , interview by author, 31 July 1997; and Grumbein, interview by author, 5 August 1997.

63. Luthi, interview by author, 20 October 1997.

64. Matson, interview by author, 18 August 1997. The Vietnam War also changed her views.

65. Schuckman, interview by author, 25 July 1997.

66. Conner, interview by author, 4 August 1997.

Chapter 20

“Where Have You Been?": Conclusion

Instead of being welcomed home by the cheering crowds and the ticker-tape parades of World War II or the yelling and spitting protestors of the Vietnam War, many Korean War servicemen returned home to an apathetic homefront. In fact, some Americans did not even notice that their neighbors had left to fight in the war, as was the case when Kansas servicemen George Walters and Raymond A. Luthi returned home.¹ Luthi recalled, “When I came back, people didn’t [even] know I [had been] gone.”² Harley G. Rowley returned home to disdain, “My dad and I went into a beer joint downtown and the guy wasn’t gonna serve me a beer and my dad about put the ole boy on the floor. He said, “You mean to tell me that my son . . . goes and fights a war and then you’re not gonna give him a beer?!” Dad [said], “Come on. Let’s go.” Even though the barkeeper eventually served Rowley a beer, Rowley always remembered the disrespect this man had shown him.³ Although returning serviceman Palmer L. Brack marched in a ticker-tape parade in Seattle, Washington, and Gilbert F. Dinkel was greeted by movie stars when his ship entered the Seattle docks, overall the homecomings of Korean War servicemen paled in comparison to those of their World War II counterparts.⁴ Most servicemen “[weren’t] given any special treatment” from anyone besides their families and their hometowns.⁵ The returning Kansas servicemen evidenced the truth of a quotation in the Army Times, “‘Certainly - in many respects - . . . [Korea] is the most “forgotten war”, and the men who [fought] it [were] lonesome symbols of a nation too busy or too economy-minded to say thanks in a proper manner.’”⁶

Like the homefront they returned to, many Kansas servicemen were also ambivalent about their duty in North and South Korea. While some, such as George Walters and Richard P. Keeling, went to college with the G.I. Bill, most “melted back into [their] communities” and their civilian lives.⁷ Some felt they had mentally matured during the war while others felt the war did not change them, except to take a few years out of their lives.⁸ Years after the war, some servicemen, like Harley G. Rowley, are still upset that Americans are serving in South Korea. Rowley stated, “It just kinda irks me that we still are over there hum-hawin’ around . . . back and forth, back and forth. . . . I can’t quote ya how many soldiers have gotten killed since July ‘53, but there’s been quite a few.”⁹ Yet regardless of the nonchalant homefront then and the forgetful homefront today, most Korean War servicemen agree with Glenn Grumbein, “I’m proud I served.”¹⁰

NOTES

1. George Walters, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 6 March 1997; and Raymond A. Luthi, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 10 March 1997. I got the conclusion's title from Luthi.

2. Luthi, interview by author, 10 March 1997.

3. Harley G. Rowley, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 22 February 1997.

4. Palmer L. Brack, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 22 July 1997; and Gilbert F. Dinkel, interview by author, Tape recording, Plainville, Kansas, 29 July 1997. Dinkel could not remember the names of the movie stars.

5. Jim Lowther, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 February 1997. The quotation came from Lowther.; Ronald Burbridge, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 19 November 1997; Charles "Bud" Hoffman, interview by author, Tape recording, Hays, Kansas, 15 July 1997; and Michael F. Metzger, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 13 February 1997.

6. "Editorial," Army Times, January 1953 as quoted in Richard K. Kolb, "Korea's 'Invisible Veterans' Return to an Ambivalent America," VFW Magazine, November 1997, 27. Kolb gave no page number for the editorial.

7. Walters, interview by author, 6 March 1997. The quotation came from Walters; Richard P. Keeling, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 21 February 1997; Richard K. Kolb, "Korea's 'Invisible Veterans' Return to an Ambivalent America," VFW Magazine, November 1997, 32. According to Kolb, forty-three percent of Korean War servicemen accepted G.I. Bill educational benefits.; and Edwin Fisher, interview by author, Tape recording, Ellis, Kansas, 24 July 1997.

8. Lowther, interview by author, 20 February 1997; Victor Scheck, interview by author, Tape recording, Victoria, Kansas, 30 July 1997. Lowther and Scheck both stated that they "grew up" during their service time.; John T. Schuckman, interview by author, Tape recording, Gorham, Kansas, 25 July 1997; Fisher, interview by author, 24 July 1997; Robert L. Dinkel, interview by author, Plainville, Kansas, 22 July 1997; William A. Reynolds, interview by author, Tape recording, Emporia, Kansas, 20 March 1997; and Leo J. Siebenaler, interview by author, Tape recording, Olpe, Kansas, 7 October 1997.

9. Rowley, interview by author, 27 February 1997.

10 Glenn Grumbein, interview by author, Tape recording, Alexander, Kansas, 5 August 1997.

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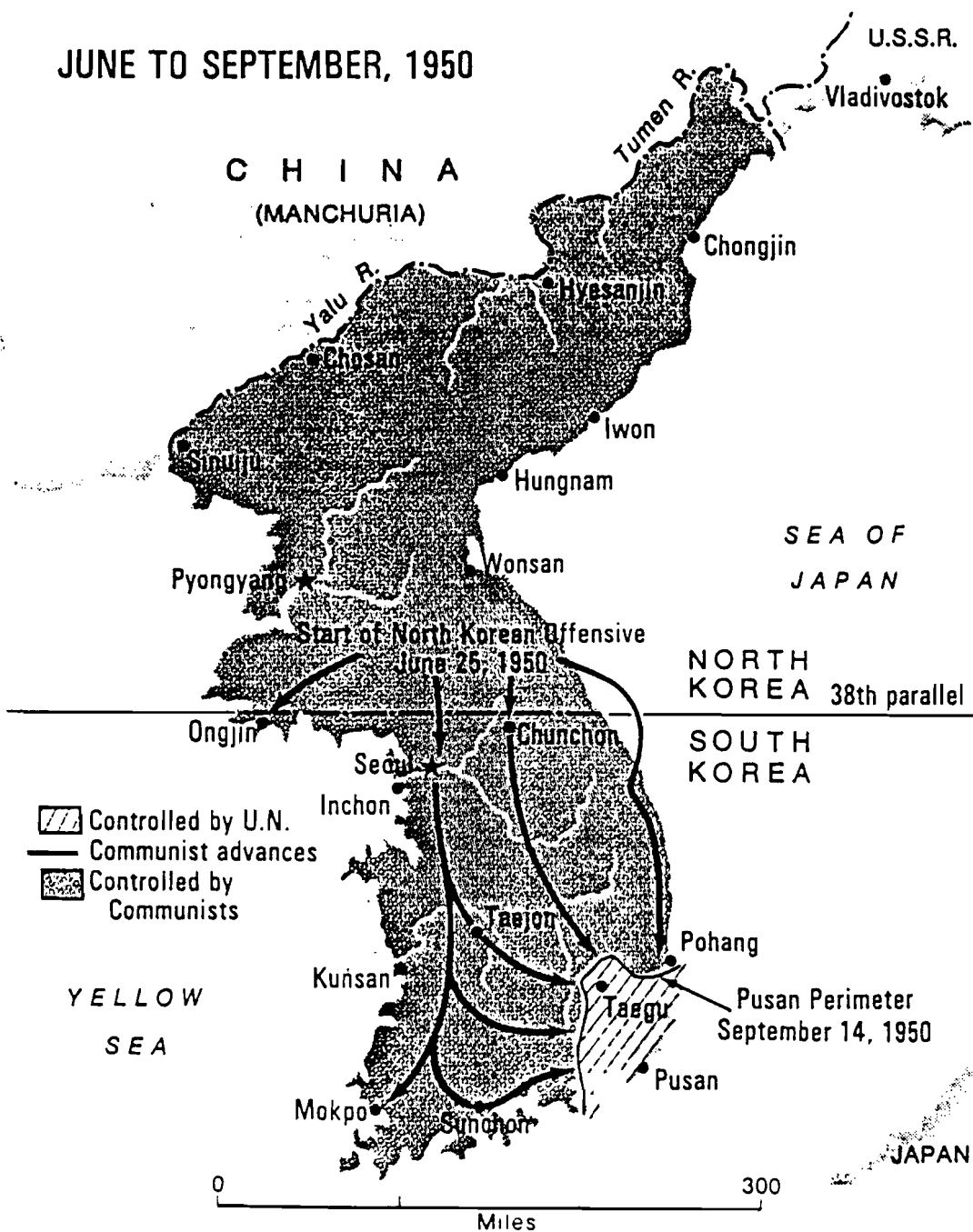
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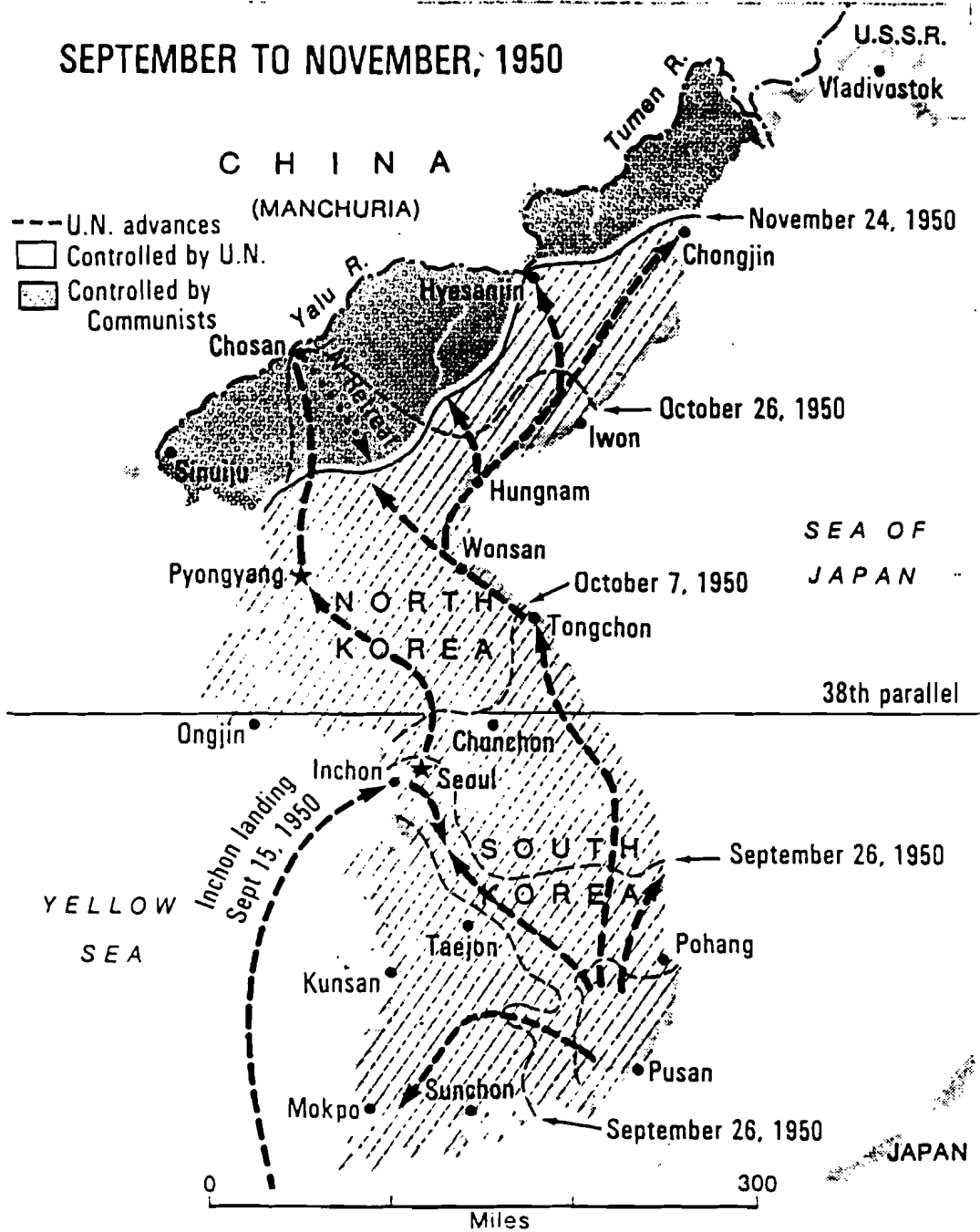
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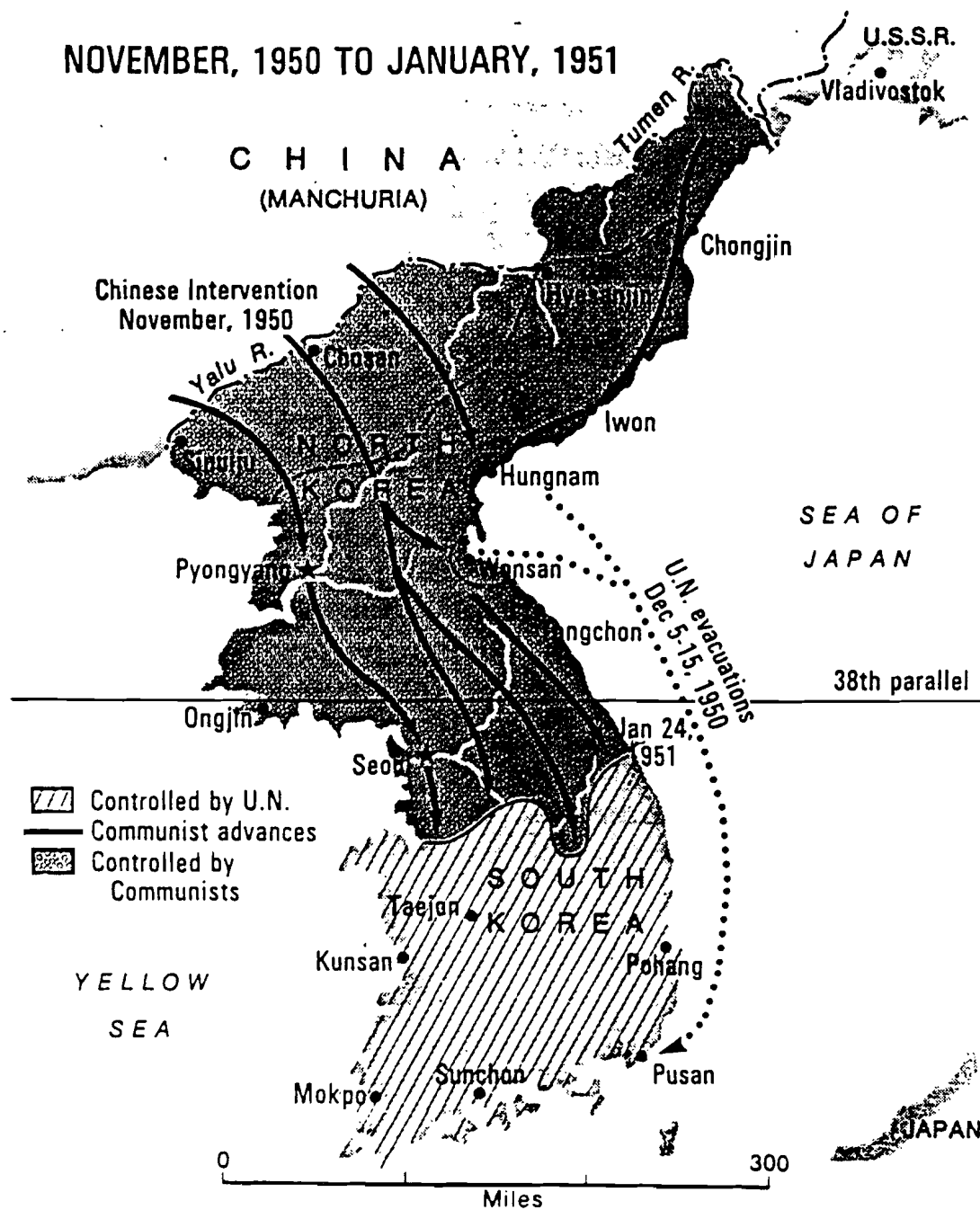
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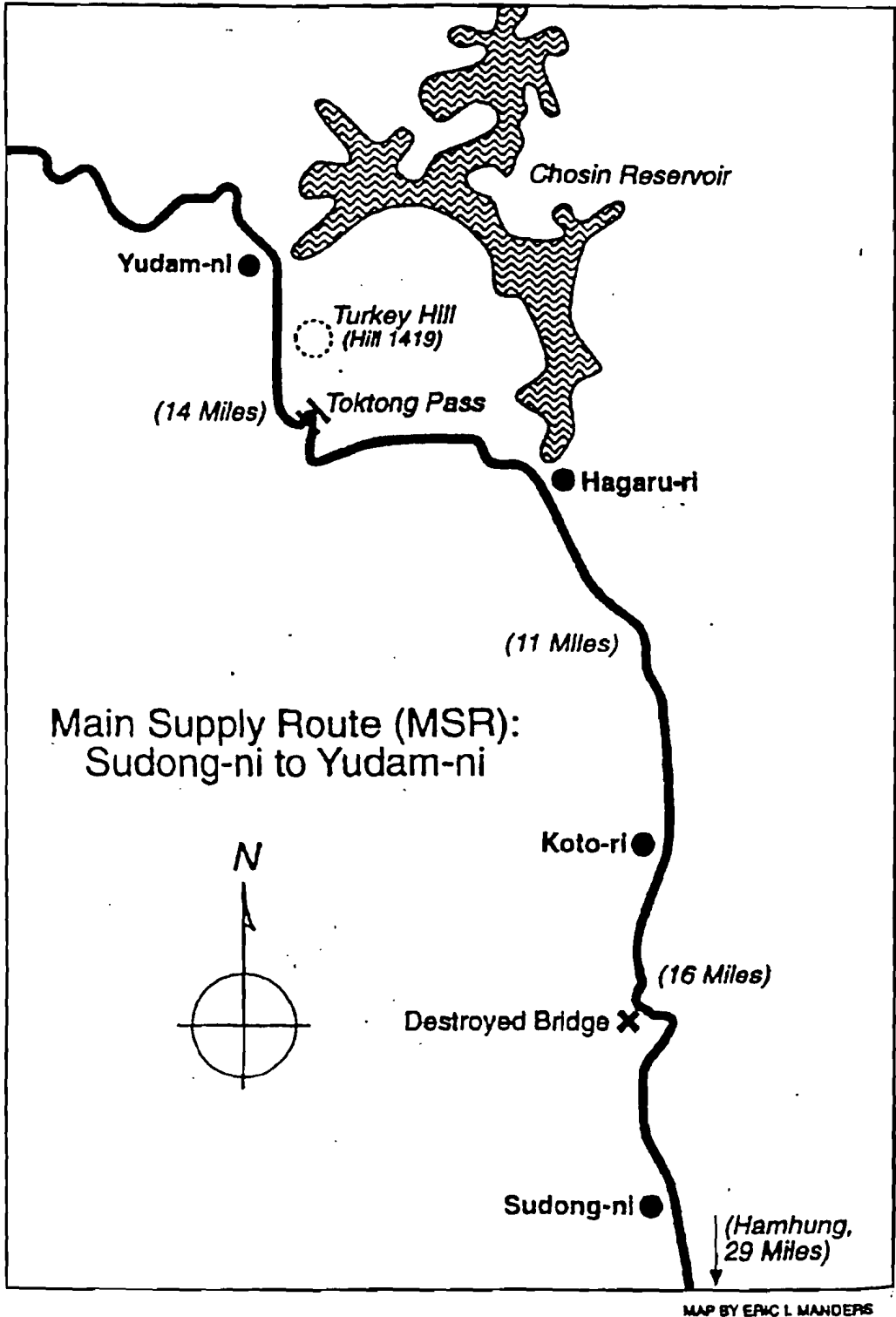
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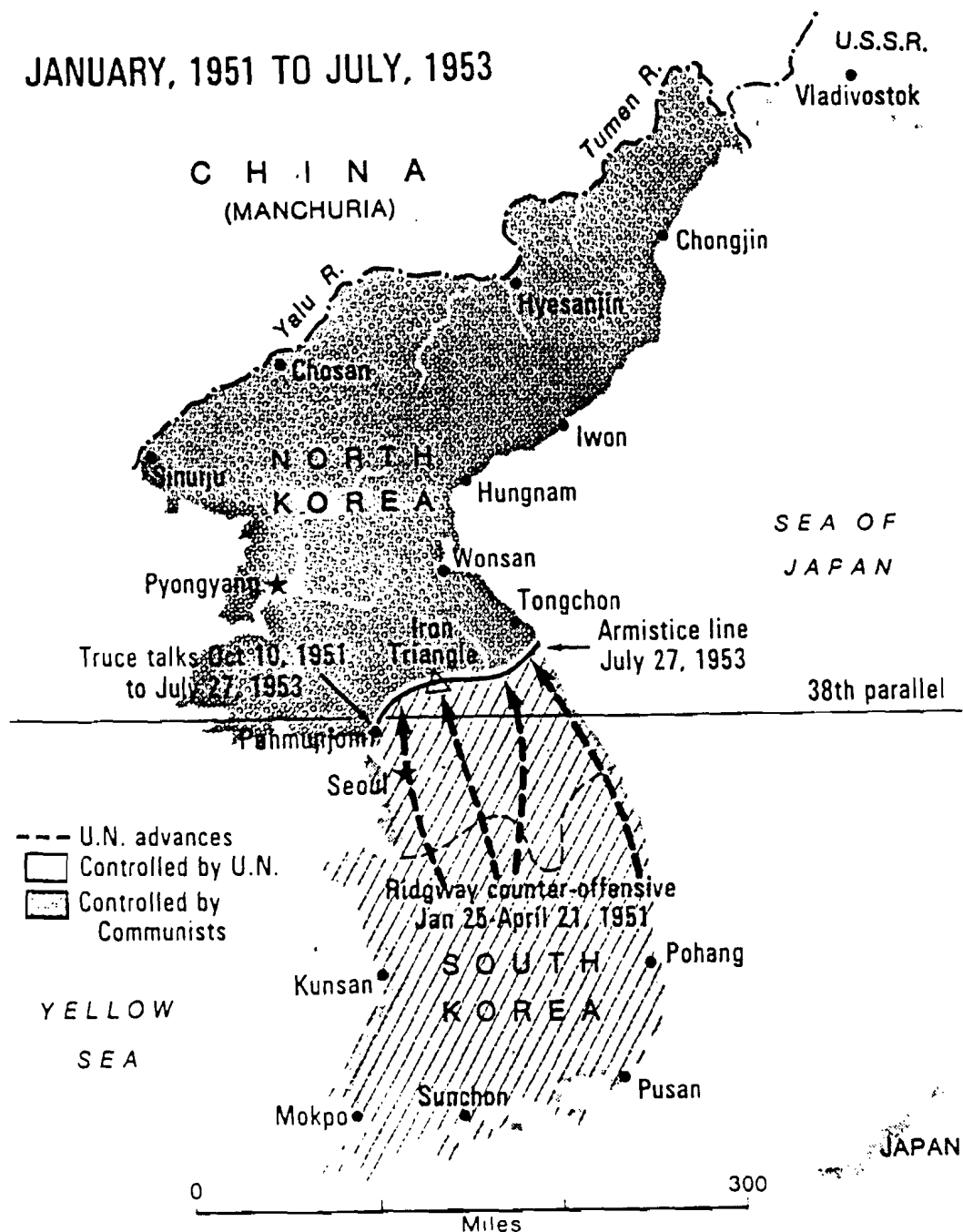
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PVT. WILLIAM A. REYNOLDS, 11, son of Mrs. Freda Reynolds, 134 South Lawrence, who is with the 24th Army in Korea. He writes that the U. S. soldiers are living in Korean houses and wearing native cloth caps. His address: Pvt. William A. Reynolds, RA17267944, Co. F, 31st Inf. Recb., APO 24, care postmaster, San Francisco, Calif. (Gazette engraving)

Emporia Gazette.
30 September 1950.



UN FLAG AWAITS MACARTHUR—A huge UN flag is rigged to a flag pole outside the capital to await the arrival of General Douglas MacArthur, who returned Seoul, South Korean capital city, to the South Korean president, Syngman Rhee, and other government officials Friday. (AP Wirephoto via radio from Tokyo)

Appendix C:
Flight Diary of Harley G. Rowley*

January to July 1953
From Okinawa to North Korea

1st Combat Mission - Flight time 9 hrs.

acft. 732 39-500 lb Bombs - 2 flash bombs.

Light & inaccurate Flak.

3 fighters reported with 14
mile range but never saw them.

Instructor pilot instead of Reg. Pilot

Instructor Radar, E.C.M. [Electro counter measures] Operator.

Take off 18:50 8-Feb-53

landed 03:50 9-Feb-53

Target Kopyongmyon (s.w. of Pyongyang)

2nd Combat Mission - Flight Time 9 hrs 15 min.

acft. 726 40 500 lb. bombs - 2 Bomb runs - 20 to bombs each

370 Sqd. acft. Instructor Engineer Target MPq2 Front line Support

Take off 18:30 - 14-FeB-53

landed 03:45 - 15 " "

"No Sweat"

Front line Support

3rd Combat Mission Flight Line 9:15

acft. 971 39-500 lb bombs 2 flash Bombs.

Very little flak, No Fighters

Take off 22:55 20 Feb-53

landed 08:05 21 " "

Major Sandbagging [sic].

Sopo Supply & Troop Billeting

4th Combat Mission - Flight Time 9:50

acft. 971 12-1000 lb and 2 flash bombs.

Kowan Take off 23:25 - 23 Feb-53

Marshalling [sic] landed 09:15 - 24 Feb-53

yards. No Flak, No fighters

Spare gunner for time.

5th Combat Mission - Flight time 8 ½ hrs.

acft. 209 40-500 lb. Bombs. 2 Bm. Runs 20 bombs. each.

M.P.q.2 Take off 19:15 1 March-53

Front Line Support landed 03:45 2 March-53

Instructor pilot
No Flak. 2 non-firing [sic] passes by enemy fighters

6th Combat Mission Flight time 8:55
acft 971 39-500 lb. bombs 2 flash bombs.
Pyongyang [sic] Take off 16:47 - 7 MARCH-53
Area 01:42 - 8 " "
Lt. Col Bulgin rode for time
light & inaccurate flak, No fighters

7th Combat Mission: Flight time 10:25
acft. 971 34-500 lb. Bombs 2 flash bombs
Choak-Tong Take off 16:52 - 13 MARCH-53
ore processing Landed 3:15 - 14 MARCH-53
plant. near Yalu River Major flying for time - E.C.M.
No flak, No fighters but Search lights

8th Combat Mission Flight Time 10:05 hrs.
acft. 971 30-500 lb. Bombs.
Take off 17:32 17 March-53
landed 3:37 18 March-53
No fighters, but 30 radar controled [sic] Search
lights and flak all over the place.
Target Pungha-Dong 1 mile from Yalu. River
Near Antung.

9th Combat. Mission Flight time 9:10 hrs.
acft. 096 Target - Sinni in Pyongyang Complex
No flak fighters or lights.
37-500 lb bombs and 2 photoflash [sic] bombs
March 20th take off landed March 21

"10th" Combat Mission Flight time 9:25 hr (Air Medal Mission)

acft. 007 Target Tohang-ni- Troop Billeting
No flak fighters or light
Take off 23 March, landed 24 March 53
39-500 lb. Bombs. 2 photoflash Bombs

11th combat Flight Time 10:30 hrs.
acft. 971 - Flight line Support. Secondary target
No flak, fighters or lights
Take off 29 March-53 landed 30 March-53
Went to Itazuke A.F.B. [Air Force Base], Japan for
gas. E.C.M. operator and Col. Caney aboard

12th Combat Mission

acft. 209 Flight time 9:10 hrs.
 No flak, fighters or lights
 Take off 1 April-53 landed 2 April

Lead Crew with airborne commander
 on board
 39-500 lb. bombs, 2 flash bombs.

13th Combat Mission

acft. 732 Flight time 10:10 hrs.
 little flak, No lights and no fighters
 Take off 4 April, 53 landed 5 April-53
 39-500 lb bombs 2 flash bombs.

14th Mission Flight time-9:35 hrs.

acft 096 flak and search lights all over
 the place. No fighters
 Take off 6 April landed 7 April 53
 39-500 lb. bombs 2 flash bombs

15th Mission Flight time 9:55 hrs.

acft 096 a little flak but No
 fighters or lights
 Take off 13 April landed 14 April
 12-1000 lb bombs 2 flash bombs.

16th Combat Flight Time 9:15 hrs. Take off 25th April landed 26 April.

acft 09 No flak, fighters or lights
 39-500 lb. bombs 2 flash bombs.
 20 minutes out of coast off of South Korea out we feathered
 no. 3 engine and came home on 3 engines
 Cause [sic] was bad vibration. "No Sweat"

17[th] Combat Flight time 9:41 hrs

acft 192 39-500 lb bombs and
 2 phothflash [sic] bombs. No flak, lights or fighters
 E.C.M. operators and air borne
 Commander. Lead crew
 May 7, 1953

18th Combat

acft. 184 Flight Time 9:25 hrs.

39-500 lb. Bombs. 2 flash bombs.
 E.C.M. operator and student Engineer
 May 15, 1953 small amount of
 Inaccurate flak and a few non-radar
 searchlights. No fighters.

19 [th] Combat acft 209 Flight time 10:35
 36-500 lb. Bombs. 2 flash Bombs.
 [2nd lead ship / 2nd in the bomb run]
 E.C.M. operator and D.A.B.C. [Deputy Air Borne Commander] Col. Bulgin
 May 18, 1953 Max effort.
 5 miles south of Yalu. River and Mig [sic]
 Alley

20th Combat Mission Flight Time 8 hrs. 45 min.
 acft. 732 Task Force leader Col. Cobb.
 E.C.M. S/Sgt Rogers
 8-2000 lb. Bombs 2 flash Bombs.
 No flak, or lights
 1 Non firing [sic] pass by enemy fighters.
 21 May, 1953

21st Combat Mission Flight Time 10:30 hrs.
 acft. 340 [was supposed to be assigned to his crew but they didn't fly it much, wasn't a
 good plane to fly - it was jinxed] D.A.B.C.
 Went to Itazuke A.B. Japan for
 gasoline.
 No fighters, flak or lights.
 excuted [sic] Plan Murder [went 70 miles north of
 38th Parallel and dropped their bomb load] because
 first Shoran Station couldn't be
 picked up [no target was given]

22nd Combat Mission Flight Time 8:25 hrs.
 acft. 096 June 7, 53 Front line Support 40-500 lb bombs.
 No fighters, flak or lights.

23rd Combat Mission Flight Time 9:10
 acft. 340 12-1000 lb. Bombs.
 a little Flak, 4 search lights
 No fighters
 June 17, 1953

24th Combat Mission Flight Time. 8:45 hrs.
 acft 007 39-500 lb. Boms [sic]. 2 flash bombs
 Air Borne Commander on board
 June 26, 1953 Lead acft of Wing
 No flak, fighters, or lights

25th Combat Mission Flight time 10:05 hrs.
 acft. 192 37-500 lb. bombs 2 flash bombs
 Had to salvo 5 bombs to stay at

Altitude because we were picking
 up ice and couldn't get rid of
 it. No lights, flak or lights.
 Air borne commander on board
 Lead acft of Wing
 July 5, 1953

26th Combat Mission Flight time 9:25 hrs.
 acft. 184 39-500 lb. Bombs 2 flash bombs.
 No flak, lights or fighters.
 ECM operator, Student Engineer.
 July 8, 1953

27th Combat Flight time 9:05 hrs.
 acft. 732 38-500 lb. bombs. 2 pflash [sic] bombs.
 Frontline [sic] Support. "No Sweat"
 July 14, 1953 last Combat Mission.
 "Home Go"

Training Missions [to be lead plane in combat]

7 [th] training Mission Flight time 7:05
 acft. 209 IP [Instructor Pilot], IN [Instructor Navigator], IVO [Instructor Radar
 Operator]
 lead crew check with 5 practice
 Bombs and Navigational leg.
 Take off and landed 28 March-53

8th Training Mission Flight time 8:35 hrs.
 acft. 535 March 31-53
 Lead check with practice Bomb drops
 And crew Navigational leg.

9th Training [Mission] Flight time 4:00 hrs.
 acft 340 Training and Checking New acft.
 Nero acft. April 12, 1953

10th Training [Mission] Flight Time 7:45 hrs.
 acft 007 15-100 lb practice Bombs.
 Navigation to Itazuke[,] Japan & Back.
 I Rode AC seat and Bomb Seat on landing
 about 30 minutes Stick Time.
 23 April, 53

11 [th] Training Mission Flight Time 8:05 hrs.
 acft 340 10-100 lb practice Bombs.
 Capt. Dills Radar in place of our Radar
 Stu. [Student] Radar and E.C.M. Man on board
 29 April, 53 2 low approach go around. [twice flew around landing field, then
 landed]

12 [th] Training Mission Flight Time 8:25 hrs.
 acft. 824 15-100 lb bombs.
 Navigation to Japan & back
 May 23, 1953

13th Training Mission Flight Time 6:25 hrs.
 acft.-732-40 flares droped [sic] on 2 bomb runs of
 June 21, 1953 20 each run
 Shot several landings and several
 G.C.A. [Ground Controlled Approach] = low approach go arounds.

14th Training Mission Flight Time 5:40 hrs.
 acft. 192
 June 28, 1953

our AC checked out two pilots
 Instrument Checks and transition.

15th Training Mission Flight Time 2:10 hrs.
 acft. 184 July 10, 1953
 Dropped 2-100 lb. Practice bombs.
 2 bomb runs.
 Last Training Mission at
 Kadena A.F.B. Okinawa

[Maintenance]

Weight & Balance to Yokota A.B., Japan
 acft 192 Take off Kadena April 17, 1953 Flight time
 Landed Yokota April 17, 1953 4:35
 Take off “ April 19, 1953 Flight time
 Landed Kadena April 19, 1953 4:15

Targets in North Korea Bombed
 by Harley[']s B[-]29 Bomber During
 Korean War - Feb thru [sic] July 1953

- 1st Koyongmyon sw. of Pyongyang
- 2nd MPQ-2= (front line Support
- 3rd Sopo Supply & Troop Billetting [sic]
- 4th Kowan Marshalling [sic] yards near Wonsan
- 5th MPQ-2- (front line Support
- 6th Pyongyang area
- 7th Choak-Tong ore-processing plant
- 8th Pungha Dong (1 miles from Yalu river
 Near An-tung
- 9th Sin-ni in Pyongyang Complex
- 10th Tohang-ni- Troop Billeting [sic] area
- 11th Went Secondary (MPQ-2-(front line Support))
- 12th So-Sang-Ni- Near Wonsan
- 13th NW of Pyongyang
- 14th Sinanju
- 15th Pyongyang Marshalling [sic] yards
- 16th Wonsan area
- 17th Hungnam area
- 18th Tong-San-Dong, above Sinanju
- 19th Tangsi Barracks area, Sinanju
- 20th Kuwonga Dam, 12 miles[s] north of Pyongyang
- 21st Wonsan
- 22nd MPQ-2 (Front line Support.)
- 23rd Saanchan [sic] air field 11 miles Nw. of Pyongyang
- 24th Kuryong-ni supply area 4 miles
 West Northwest Kyomipo Steel Mill.
- 25th Chang-dong Supply area
- 26th Pyongmyong-Ni [sic] Supply area
 3 mi. Southeast Hungnam.
- 27th Front line Support

Flight Time in B-29 type
airplane while stationed at
Kadena Air Base Okinawa
256 hrs & 16 minutes Combat
112 hrs, 20 minutes Training flights.

Test Hop flight time 2:20 hrs.

acft. 971 Compass Swing

Feathered No 4 engine

unfeathered No 4 engine

Capt. Fawcett flew in place of

Our regular AC [Aircraft Commander].

Bomb. didn't go.

Test Hop

acft/ 971 flight time 2 hrs.

Col[.] Neal flew in place of our A.C.

June 15, 1953

* Copied exactly from his written diary

Appendix D:
United Nations Personnel and Assistance for the Korean War

Status of Offers of Military Assistance to the Unified Command for Korea*

<u>Country</u>	<u>Offer</u>	<u>Status</u>
1. Australia	Naval Vessels 1 RAAF Squadron Ground Forces from Australian Infantry Forces in Japan Additional Battalion of Troops	In action In action In action In action
2. Belgium	Air Transport Infantry Battalion Reinforcements	In operation In action In action
3. Bolivia	30 officers	Acceptance
4. Canada	3 Naval Vessels 1 RCAF Squadron Brigade Group Canadian-Pacific Airlines (Commercial Facilities) 10,000-ton Dry Cargo Vessel	In action In action In action In operation In action
5. [Nationalist] China	3 Infantry Divisions and 20 C-47's	Acceptance deferred
6. Colombia	1 Frigate 1 Infantry Battalion	In operation In action
7. Costa Rica	Sea and Air Bases Volunteers	Accepted Acceptance deferred
8. Cuba	1 Infantry Company	Accepted
9. Denmark	Hospital Ship "Jutlandia" Motorship "Bella Dan"	In Korea Acceptance deferred
10. El Salvador	Volunteers if US will train and equip	Acceptance deferred

11. Ethiopia	1,069 Ground Forces	In action
12. France	1 patrol Gunboat Infantry Battalion	Withdrawn In action
13. Greece	7 RHAF Dakota Transport Aircraft Ground Forces Additional Unit of Land Forces	In action In action Pending
14. India	Field Ambulance Unit	In action
15. Luxembourg	Infantry Company (Integrated into Belgian Forces)	In action
16. Netherlands	1 Destroyer 1 Infantry Battalion	In action In action
17. New Zealand	2 Frigates Combat Unit	In action In action
18. Norway	Merchant Ship Tonnage Surgical Hospital Unit	In operation In Korea
19. Panama	Contingent Volunteers; Bases for Training Use of Merchant Marine Free use of Highways Farmhands to supply troops	Acceptance deferred Accepted Accepted Pending
20. Philippines	17 Sherman Tanks 1 Tank Destroyer Regimental Combat Teams	In action In action In action
21. Sweden	Field Hospital Unit	In action
22. Thailand	1 Infantry Combat Team 2 Corvettes and Navy Transport Air transport	In action In action (one Corvette destroyed after grounding). In operation
23. Turkey	1 Infantry Combat Team	In action

24. Union of South Africa	1 Fighter Squadron	In action
25. United Kingdom	Ground troops: 2 Brigades Naval Forces: 1 Aircraft carrier 1 aircraft carrier maintenance ship; 2 cruisers, 4 destroyers 1 hospital ship; supply vessels 4 frigates, 1 headquarters ship Air elements	In action In action In action
26. United States	Ground Forces: 3 Army Corps and 1 Marine Division with supporting elements Naval forces: Carrier Task Group With Blockade and Escort Forces; Amphibious Force; Reconnaissance And Anti-Submarine Warfare Units; Supporting Ships Air Force: 1 Tactical Air Force; 1 Bombardment Command; 1 Combat Cargo Command; all with supporting elements	In action In action In action

*Copied exactly from "Special Report by the Unified Command Under the United States, Letter dated 18 October 1952 from the Chairman of the United States Delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations, Addressed to the Secretary-General," 18 October 1952, Warren R. Austin, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Ann Whitman File, Papers of the President of the United States 1953-1961, International Series, Box 35, Korea: 1952 Trip, Annex B, p. 49-50. Even though this list included personnel and assistance only to October 17, 1952, this is the only detailed list I could find.

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Signature of Author

4-24-98

Date

Where the Boys Are: Kansans and
the Korean War

Title of Thesis

Stacy Cooper

Signature of Graduate Office Staff

May 12, 1998

Date Received