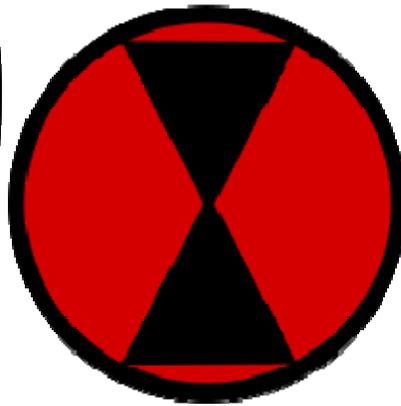


# THE QUIET WAR

The US Army in the Korean Demilitarized  
Zone 1953-2004

Manny Seck

4090116



"There are no memorials inscribed with their names or monuments erected that extol their sacrifice. The battles along the Korean DMZ (1966-69) are for the most part forgotten except by the families of the dead."

Major Vandon E. Jenerette US. Army

"If we're killed on a patrol or a guard post, crushed in a jeep accident or shot by a nervous GI on the fence, no one will ever write about us in the Times or erect a monument or read a Gettysburg Address over our graves. There's too much going on elsewhere; what we're doing is trivial in comparison. We'll never be part of the national memory."

William Hollinger, HHC. 1<sup>st</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> Inf. 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 1968-1969.

"If you have a son overseas, write to him. If you have a son in the Second Infantry Division, pray for him."

Walter Winchell, 1950

The author would respectfully like to thank 1st Sergeant Roy Whitfield, CSM Larry Williams, SGT Ron Rice, MSG Richard Howard, BG Charles Viale, LTC Robert Griggs, SSG Dave Chapman, CSM Jim Howk, SGT Al Garcia, CPT Lee Scripture, Bill Ferguson, Norm Treadway, and many others. These men answered the author's endless questions, provided maps, photos, and documents, and tolerated the author's silly jokes. Without soldiers like these, this work would not be possible, and any mistakes in this paper are solely the author's.

I would also like to dedicate this work to PVT. Ernest Reynolds, "A" Company 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, who as the rear security, could have easily remained hidden while his squad was over run by NKPA infiltrators, but instead chose to engage the enemy with his M14, at the cost of his own life. This young man is a hero.

## ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Quiet War: The US Army In the Korean Demilitarized Zone, 1953-2004

By

Manny Seck

American Public University System, May, 2013

Charles Town, West Virginia

Professor Anne Cipriano Venzon, Thesis Instructor

This paper is a comprehensive study of more than 50 years of combat operations conducted by the US Army in and near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in Korea. This paper will explore the why, when, what and how of America's longest conflict. This paper will also discuss the important lessons that can be learned from this war, and how the Quiet War was a resounding success for the US Army. In addition this paper will discuss why US Army operations in Korea have been largely forgotten.

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*Map of the Korean Peninsula*

On 27 July, 1953 at exactly 1000 hours, Lieutenant General William K. Harrison, the officer in charge of the United Nations Command armistice negotiations party walked into a small, crude building and sat down at wooden table. His North Korean counterpart, Lieutenant General Il Nam timed his entrance to coincide exactly with Harrison's so as not to give the appearance of subservience to the UN, and sat down. The two men signed a series of documents that twelve hours after the signing, would silenced the guns, thus ending the Korean War. At least this is what the vast majority of history books claim.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In reality the Korean War never ended, and the documents that the two men signed only provided for a cease fire. As stated by the UN commander, General Mark W. Clark an "armistice was only a military agreement to cease fire while the opposing sides sought a political solution to the conflict. Until the diplomats negotiated a permanent conclusion, there could be no United Nations Command withdrawal from Korea or any lessening of alertness and preparedness."<sup>1</sup> In reality, the Korean War was moving into a phase that was quiet, and often over shadowed by events else where.

This is unfortunate for many reasons. First, US Army operations in and around the Korean Demilitarized Zone were the biggest and longest low intensity conflict of the Cold War, and by any measurement, a resounding success for the United States of America, and the Republic of Korea (ROK). Today the ROK is a thriving democracy, an economic powerhouse, and a technological and cultural giant in Asia. While it is true that

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<sup>1</sup> Walter G. Hermes, *Truce Tent and Fighting Front* (Washington DC: center of Military History, US Army, 1966), 490

the North Atlantic Treaty Organization stood eye-ball to eye-ball with the forces of the Warsaw Pact, there was never the level of violence in central Germany as there was on the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). There are many lessons in waging a counterinsurgency that could have served the US military well in places like Iraq, and Afghanistan, but were forgotten. Thirdly, the US Army, and its soldiers have performed brilliantly for over 50 years, in what the Army still calls a “Hardship Tour”. They faced a tough, relentless foe, which in many cases would blow him self up rather than allow himself to be captured. US soldiers have patrolled in sweltering heat, and arctic cold, and fought with courage and honor, in skirmishes and battles that were unknown to nearly everyone in the United States.

This paper will document more than 50 years of combat operations conducted in and around the DMZ, and how the United Nations Command won its war, the only large scale counterinsurgency that the US won during the Cold War. Many of these stories in this thesis have never been revealed before, and most of the soldiers who participated have never received recognition for their selfless acts of courage. Many still deal with the physical and psychological costs of their service, and many have never spoken about what they experienced on the “Z” before. Hopefully this paper will shed some light on a fascinating and, long neglected part of US military history.

There has not been a lot of information written about the US Army’s role in the Korean DMZ. However what has been written provides excellent insight into The Quiet War. The most comprehensive work to date is Daniel Bolger’s *Scenes from an Unfinished War: Low-Intensity Conflict in Korea, 1966-1968*. This work covers the period during the late 1960s that was known as the “DMZ War”, and describes the

situation along the Demilitarized Zone, and the concrete steps that the UNC took to successfully stabilize the situation without starting a larger war. An additional source of information is the *Operational Report, Lessons Learned, and Experiences of Units Engaged in Counterinsurgency Operations DMZ, Korea*, dated 31 October, 1969. This is a declassified after action review written by the 8<sup>th</sup> Army, the parent command of US forces in Korea. This report describes practical lessons learned during combat operations in great detail.

This paper also includes many first person accounts by soldiers who were present in and near the DMZ during various incidents, and in the author's opinion these are the most important because first person accounts offer the best perspective. A perfect example of this is *Bucher: My Story*, written by Commander Lloyd Bucher. Bucher was the commander of a US Navy ship that was captured by the North Koreans. In addition, many Army Regulations contain very interesting information about the inconsistent manner in which the Army regards combat duty in Korea. The US Central Intelligence Agency also published a paper which attempted to explain why the leadership of North Korea has always been so belligerent. This declassified document, entitled *Intelligence Report: Kim Il Sung's New Military Adventurism* has fascinating evidence that Communist countries embarked on a coordinated effort to harass the United States. This thesis will also use newspaper articles which also provide excellent sources of information. Another source of information used in this paper is Shelby Stanton's *Vietnam Order of Battle*. This book provides comprehensive information on equipment used by the US Army during the late 1960s, and disposition of US Army units' world

wide, including US Army units in Korea. All of these sources contributed greatly to this thesis.



*Map of the Demilitarized Zone*

## **Chapter One: The Slow Boil**

As mentioned previously, the United Nations Command, the commander of the North Korean People's Army (NKPA), and the commander of the Chinese Peoples Volunteers agreed to cease fire on 27 July, 1953. As part of the cease fire agreement, both sides were to withdraw 2 kilometers from the line of contact to create a buffer zone between the two forces. In the official language of the armistice agreement, "1. A Military Demarcation Line (MDL) shall be fixed and both sides shall withdraw two (2) kilometers from this line so as to establish a Demilitarized Zone between the opposing forces. A Demilitarized Zone shall be established as a buffer zone to prevent the occurrence of incidents which might lead to a resumption of hostilities. 6. Neither side shall execute any hostile act within, from, or against the Demilitarized Zone. 7. No person, military or civilian, shall be permitted to cross the Military Demarcation Line

unless specifically authorized to do so by the Military Armistice Commission.”<sup>2</sup> In addition, a cap of no more than 1000 personnel from each side would be authorized within the DMZ at any one time.<sup>3</sup> These “DMZ Military Police” (DMZMP) would be allowed to patrol the DMZ to monitor violations of the cease fire agreement and to provide civil administration. The DMZMP units, which were almost always composed of infantry units, would be only allowed to carry small arms for self defense. That would mean that automatic and/or crew served weapons would be banned from within the DMZ. The NKPA broke these rules almost immediately, with deadly results.

In October of 1953 the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) signed a mutual defense treaty, which obligated the US to defend the ROK from its communist neighbor, the Democratic People’s Republic of North Korea (DPRK). It was decided by the 8<sup>th</sup> US Army that US forces would control a critical 18.5 mile portion of the DMZ known as the “Western Corridor”. This corridor was the most direct route to the ROK capital of Seoul, and if the DPRK decided to invade again this was the route that was most important to defend.

During the late 1950’s each side carefully fortified their respective positions, and the US divisions were reorganized. The 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry division and the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division departed Korea, and the much storied 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, assumed duties along the DMZ, with the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in reserve. Both China and the Soviet Union had troops stationed in the DPRK, and the NKPA began a program to rearm, retrain, and to prepare for another invasion of the ROK. The DPRK also began gradual probes of UNC forces. In June of 1959, the ROK Army (ROKA) repelled several large scale infiltration

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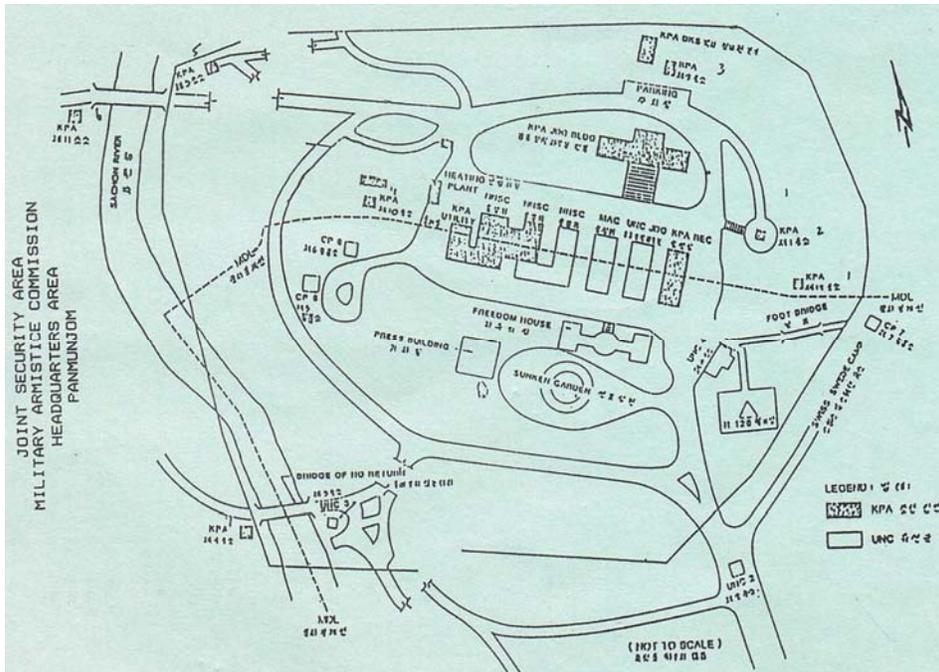
<sup>2</sup> Hermes, 517

<sup>3</sup> Hermes, 517

attempts by the NKPA, and DPRK air force jets attacked and damaged a US Navy aircraft in international airspace, and a small naval battle occurred when a ROK Navy vessel sank a DPRK patrol boat in international water.

## **Chapter Two THE DMZ WAR**

The situation did not improve during the early 1960s. NKPA probes continued. The speculation is that these probes were a test of UNC defenses, and an effort to infiltrate communist agents into the ROK, to establish a network to undermine the South Korean government. On 3 October, 1962 an American soldier from the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division's 15<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Regiment was murdered by an unknown assailant who sprayed the US soldier with rounds from a communist submachine gun, while the American was on guard duty. This is a grim milestone. Before this; the NKPA infiltrators only engaged ROK forces. Over the next several months more US soldiers are killed by NKPA infiltrators, some as far as 35 miles south of the DMZ near the ROK capital of Seoul. This was a bad omen for US and ROK forces in Korea; because it clearly demonstrated that NKPA forces had no problems slipping agents into the interior of the ROK, and that there must be a support system in place for them to carry out their operations.



*Map of Panmunjom, circa 1990.*

The UNC maintained (and still maintains) military-diplomatic relations with the DPRK, in the truce village of Panmunjom. Panmunjom has the distinction of being the only town in all of the Koreas, which is bisected by the Military Demarcation Line (MDL), meaning that approximately half of its area is in the ROK, while the other half is in the DPRK<sup>4</sup>. Both sides could freely move on either side of the MDL, a practice that was halted in 1976, for reasons which will be discussed later. To provide security for their respective delegations, both sides created a security force. The UNC security force came to be known as the Joint Security Force Company-Joint Security Area. During the early 1960s, this unit was composed of both US and ROK soldiers, whose military occupational specialty was Military Police or Infantryman. These soldiers were hand-

<sup>4</sup> The historic village of Panmunjom was slightly north of the current Panmunjom, and no longer exists. The town was moved so that it would be bisected by the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel, so that no side would have to cross into the other's territory to attend meetings.

picked, specially trained and had to be especially disciplined because they literally stood face to face with the NKPA security force.

The NKPA soldiers would deliberately provoke the JSA security guards and fistfights were common. James Howk was assigned to the JSA as a young MP Specialist 4<sup>th</sup> Class in November of 1960. In June of 1961 during a meeting of the NKPA and the UNC, NKPA guards attacked Howk and PFC. Austin Chafee. A brawl ensued, and Howk and Chafee were surrounded by 20 NKPA soldiers and captured. “We were jumped by about 20 NKs, and taken to a room in their guard house,” Howk says, “It took about 3-4 hours before we were released. They beat the hell out of us. It got so bad that all MP's assigned to JSA had to be over 6 feet tall.”<sup>5</sup> To this day the US Army does not consider Howk and Chafee combat veterans for this incident and neither have been recognized for their captivity. As bad as this incident was, the situation was soon to get worse.



*Star and Stripes picture of a JSA soldier engaged in*

*hand to hand combat with NKPA soldiers in Panmunjom. (Photo courtesy of James Howk)*

The mid to late 1960s marked a pivotal time for the US Army in Korea. The 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division was reflagged as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions remained as the only US infantry divisions in the ROK, and their subordinate units continued to patrol the DMZ. In South East Asia, the US involvement in Vietnam was escalating, and this would have serious repercussions in Korea.

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<sup>5</sup> James Howk, email to author, 10 May, 2010.

On 7 August, 1964, The US Congress passed the Gulf Of Tonkin Resolution, which gave US President Lyndon B. Johnson a free hand to drastically escalate US involvement in the long simmering war in Vietnam. The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was tantamount to a declaration of war, and within months several US Army and US Marine Corps combat divisions would be enroute to Vietnamese battlefields with names like the Ia Drang Valley, Bein Hoa, and Da nang. By the end of 1965, the US would be deeply involved in the Vietnam War. What is not widely known is that this involvement was only one of two wars that the US was fighting in Asia, and that these two wars were deeply connected. The ROK would eventually contribute tens of thousands of combat troops to Vietnam, and its nemesis, the DPRK, would send “observers” to accompany North Vietnamese Army units to learn tactics in fighting US soldiers, and the DPRK would coordinate with the North Vietnamese in an attempt to push the US Army to the breaking point.

Kim Il Sung, the megalomaniacal dictator of the DPRK, outlined this strategy in a speech given on 5 October, 1966. He stated, “In the present situation, the U.S. imperialists should be dealt blows and their forces should be dispersed to the maximum in Asia and Europe, Africa and Latin America, in all countries, big and small--in all parts and on every front in the world--and they should be bound hand and foot everywhere they are so that they may not run wild. Only in this way can we succeed in crushing the strategy of the U.S. imperialists to shatter the socialist countries and the international revolutionary forces one by one by concentrating their forces on this or that area or

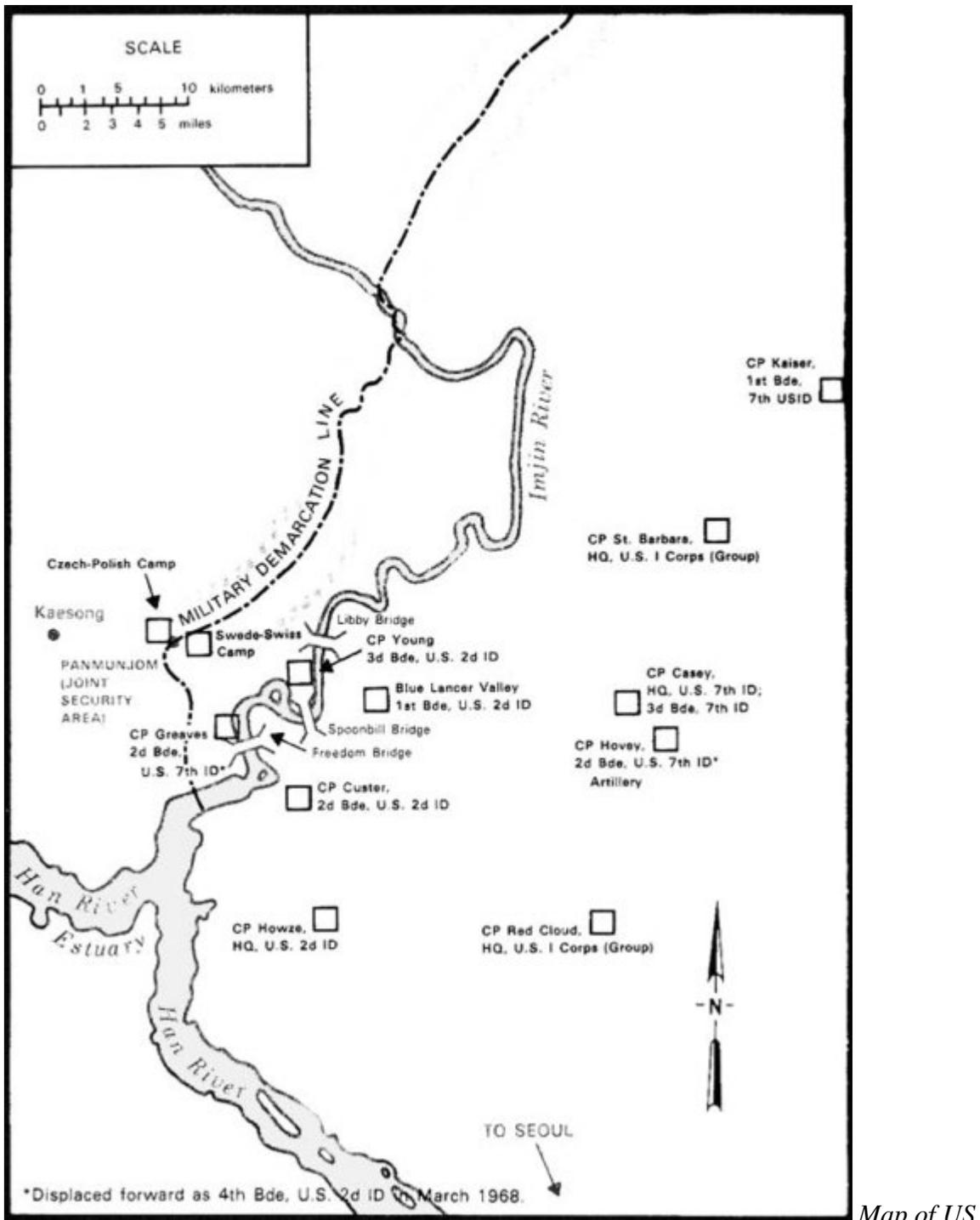
country.”<sup>6</sup> The significance of this speech was underestimated at the time, but in effect this was the DPRK’s declaration of war on UNC forces in the ROK.



*Map of the US sector of the Korean DMZ.*

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<sup>6</sup> Directorate of Intelligence. Intelligence Report: *Kim Il Sung’s New Military Adventurism*. (Langley: Central Intelligence Agency, 1968), 7. Declassified May, 2007



Army camps near the DMZ, pre 1971.

Kim had learned from his ill fated invasion of 1950. He still wanted to reunify the Korean peninsula under his communist rule, but he knew that an all out invasion would

be crushed by the US. Kim hoped to subjugate the ROK by inciting a communist revolution by establishing a 5<sup>th</sup> column in South Korea, similar to the Viet Cong in Vietnam. He also sought to fracture the US/ ROK alliance, by forcing the US to choose to fight in either Vietnam, or Korea. By forcing the US to invest more resources than it was willing to part with, he hoped that the US would tire of being bled in Korea and pack up to go home. To facilitate this, Kim would infiltrate agents into the ROK across the DMZ, and by sea borne insertions. He would attempt to embarrass and harass both the US and the ROK anywhere he could, by using any means short of an all out invasion. Kim would also coordinate his efforts with the actions of the communist government of North Vietnam.

To this end, Kim ordered the NKPA to create Special Operations units whose purpose was to assassinate high value targets, infiltrations/exfiltrations, sabotage, and raids in the ROK. The NKPA stood up two Special Forces units, the elite 124 and 283 Army units. These detachments were manned exclusively by officers who were proven to be politically reliable, masters of small unit tactics, and as physically conditioned as professional athletes. These men were so thoroughly indoctrinated and well trained that they would commit suicide rather than allow themselves to be captured. These NKPA soldiers withstood years of intense training, and were experts in the use of their PPSH-41 submachine gun, AK47, and US/ROK small arms. With these units Kim hoped to create enough instability in the ROK that the government would topple from a communist inspired popular insurgency and thereby drive the US from the ROK due to exhaustion from its efforts in both Korea and Vietnam. Kim articulated this strategy as “the US occupation and its colonial rule over South Korea is the root cause of all misfortunes and

sufferings the South Korean people are undergoing and the main obstacle to unification of our country." <sup>7</sup>

The first battle of this new phase of the Quiet War was fought on 2 November, 1966. Well before dawn, an eight man squad from A Co. 1/23 Infantry left their home station at Camp Young, just slightly east of the DMZ, and crossed the line of departure to conduct a combat patrol within and near the zone. The seven Americans and one Korean augmentee were lightly armed with M14 rifles, an M79 grenade launcher, and one short range radio. The squad included PFCs. David Bibee, and Ernest Reynolds who were both new to Korea, with Reynolds only having been in country for 14 days. It was a cold November early morning with the light of the full moon providing good illumination while the soldiers looked for signs of enemy infiltration, or anything out of the ordinary.

Unfortunately these men were unaware that they were being hunted. A small group of NKPA infiltrators had slipped across the Military Demarcation Line, and their objective was to kill Americans. The infiltrators, who probably were from the NKPA 17<sup>th</sup> Foot Reconnaissance Brigade<sup>8</sup> noiselessly followed the soldiers and expertly set up a hasty ambush along the American squad's line of march. As the doomed men walked into the kill zone, the infiltrators initiated the ambush with PPSH-41 submachine gun fire and grenades, killing or wounding most of the patrol before they knew what had happened. Bibee was blown unconscious, and rolled down a small hill. He had forty-eight distinct holes blasted into his body, but incredibly survived<sup>9</sup>. What was left of the squad

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<sup>7</sup> Daniel Bolger "Scenes from an Unfinished War, Low-Intensity Conflict in Korea, 1966-1968" ( Thesis, Command and General Staff College, 1999), Chapter 2 C:\Users\Manny\Desktop\Scenes from an Unfinished War Low-Intensity Conflict in Korea, 1966-1968.mht (Accessed, 17 July, 2011)

<sup>8</sup> Bolger, Chapter 2

<sup>9</sup> Nicholas E. Sarantakes " The Quiet War: Combat Operations Along The Korean Demilitarized Zone, 1966-1969" The Journal of Military History 64 (April 2000): 439-58

attempted to fight back, but they were quickly killed by the infiltrators. Reynolds, who had been posted to rear security and was safely concealed, made a split second decision. He broke cover, and charged the infiltrators firing his M14, only to be cut down in a hail of gunfire.<sup>10</sup> Bibee who came to bleeding profusely and more than likely with a traumatic brain injury, played dead while the infiltrators mutilated, and looted the dead for weapons and trophies. An NKPA soldier even shined a red lens flashlight into Bibee's face to insure that he was dead, and then ripped the watch from his wrist. "The only reason I'm alive now, is because I didn't move."<sup>11</sup> Bibee would say later, in the hospital. The infiltrators escaped back across the MDL into the DPRK. By sheer coincidence, US President Lyndon B. Johnson was in Korea during this time to visit US troops, and to meet with ROK officials.

Private Reynolds Silver Star Citation

\*REYNOLDS, ERNEST D. (KIA)

Citation:

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the Silver Star Medal (Posthumously) to Ernest D. Reynolds (US-55881470), Private, U.S. Army, for gallantry in action while engaged in military operations, while serving with Company A, 1st Battalion, 23d Infantry Regiment, 2d Infantry Division. Private Reynolds distinguished himself by gallantry in action on 2 November 1966, in the Republic of Korea, by sacrificing his own life in the defense of his fellow soldiers. Private Reynolds was a member of a patrol operating near the southern boundary of the Demilitarized Zone in Korea when his patrol was attacked and overrun by an armed patrol of the North Korean

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<sup>10</sup> Reynolds was posthumously recommended for the Medal of Honor but his medal was downgraded to a Silver Star.

<sup>11</sup> Sarantakes, 443

Army. Prior to the attack, as rear security man, he had occupied a concealed position and opened fire upon the enemy, and he continued to fire until he himself was killed. His indomitable courage, determination, and profound concern for his fellow soldiers, are in the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, the 2d Infantry Division, and the United States Army.

Department of the Army, General Orders No. 16 (April 4, 1967)

Home Town: Virginia

Personal Awards: Silver Star (Korea-1966), Purple Heart



*General Charles H. Bonesteel III, UNC Commander*

Difficult times often call for people who are unorthodox in their approach to solving problems. Such a person was General Charles H. (Tick) Bonesteel. Bonesteel was the UNC commander and commanded all US and ROK troops in Korea. Bonesteel was not the traditional US Army General. He was a born and bred native of New York City, the son and grandson of soldiers. He was a 1931 graduate of the US Military Academy at West

Point and a Rhodes Scholar. Due to many staff assignments Bonesteel was not a field soldier, and he was not known as a troop leader. However his intellectual background provided him with a distinct advantage in his role as the commander of forces in Korea. By all accounts he was a brilliant man who was politically savvy, decisive, paid attention to detail, and most importantly, thought outside of the box. All of these attributes would pay dividends.

As the situation deteriorated along the DMZ, Bonesteel was given a mandate to defend the ROK from an NKPA conventional invasion, defend against a DPRK sponsored insurgency, and to protect the ROK civilian population. He was ordered to accomplish these tasks with out starting a larger war, and he was to do so with limited resources because the lion’s share of US combat power went to first to Vietnam, and then to the US commitment to NATO in Germany. US forces in Korea would have to fight short on men and equipment. Additionally Bonesteel was ordered to restrain the understandably angry South Koreans from launching a war against the DPRK in retaliation for its repeated provocations.

### Strength of U.S. Divisions in Korea, 1 January 1968

	U.S. 2d Infantry Division		U.S. 7 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Division	
	TOE*	MTOE**	TOE	MTOE
<b>Aggregates</b>				
Personnel	16,810	15,057	16,810	11,300
Helicopters <sup>1</sup>	88	20	88	20
Tanks	135	135	135	81
<b>Battalions<sup>2</sup></b>				
Infantry	8	5	8	5
Infantry (Mechanized)	0	2	0	2
Tank	2	2	2	1
Cavalry	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	11	10	11	9

\*TOE: Table of organization and equipment, a model unit.  
 \*\*MTOE: Modified table of organization and equipment, theater alterations to ideal unit organizations.

<sup>1</sup>In Korea, divisions substituted elderly, underpowered OH-23 Raven helicopters for modern OH6A Cayuse and LH-1D Iroquois (Huey) types.

<sup>2</sup>Infantry battalions in Vietnam habitually formed a fourth rifle company; those in Korea retained the traditional three companies.

As demonstrated by the table above, US forces in Korea were chronically under strength, and often used second string equipment. US soldiers served an unaccompanied 13 month tour, and came and went as individuals, rather than rotate in and out as units. The constant turnover produced instability within platoons and companies, and made it difficult for the unit to remain proficient in its mission essential task list. This problem was severely aggravated when the unit took losses in combat. In an attempt to improve leadership through out both US Divisions, Non Commissioned Officer schools were created for soldiers thought to have leadership potential. These new “Shake and Bake”<sup>13</sup> sergeants were given some additional training, and were then expected to lead fire teams and squads in combat.



*SGT Larry Williams, 1967. (Picture courtesy of*

*CSM Larry Williams, USA, Ret.)*

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<sup>12</sup> Bolger, Chapter 1

<sup>13</sup> “Shake and Bake” is slang for noncommissioned officers who had earned their stripes by attending a leadership school after a relatively short period of time in the service. Time in service and time in grade requirements were waived for the “shake and bake” NCOs. This is opposed to NCOs who had been in the Army for years and had more practical experience leading soldiers.

The pattern of DPRK aggression continued in 1967. In one of the biggest battles of the DMZ war occurs in April when a reinforced NKPA platoon slips across the MDL and attacked a ROK Army position within the DMZ. During the six hour battle, the ROKs were forced to call in artillery to repel the communists. This was the first time artillery is used in the DMZ since 1953. On 22 May, NKPA infiltrators planted satchel charges that blew up several of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment barracks killing and wounding 18 US and Korean soldiers. During this time, Ron Rice and Lawrence Williams arrived in country, and were both assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, (HHC) 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment at Camp Dodge, slightly south of the DMZ. Williams was assigned to the Ground Surveillance Section, and Rice was assigned to the Reconnaissance platoon. Williams had mixed feelings about being sent to Korea instead of Vietnam. As an infantryman he wanted to go where the action was, and Korea was not perceived as “being where the action was”. This perception would change very quickly in the next few months.



*SGT Ron Rice, 1967. Note*

*the lack of a 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division combat patch on his right shoulder, and his Imjin Scouts Award on his right breast pocket. (Picture Courtesy of Ron Rice)*

In the early morning hours of 16 July 1967, a four man US fire team was manning a barrier position a few hundred meters south of the DMZ. The soldiers were from 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion,

23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, and these barrier positions were part of a series of fortifications designed to deter infiltration attempts by the NKPA. Every few hundred meters there would be a barrier position manned by soldiers. The GI's called it "manning the meat line" and it was boring, tedious duty. The soldiers were ordered to remain vigilant through out a long, hot night and to watch the darkness for the enemy. The GIs, SP4 Leonard Ashforth 22, PFCs John Gibbs 22, Tommy Boyd 26, and Korean augmentee CPL. Sung Kook Ahn, must have been hot, sleepy and bored. At approximately 0220 hours, the GIs called their command post via field telephone to report hearing noises in front of their foxhole. There was silence, and then positions adjacent to Ashforth's fire team heard small arms fire and grenade explosions echo through the night. The battle was brief and vicious, not lasting more than a few minutes. A mechanized reaction force was dispatched to the position, and when it arrived it found that the fire team had been wiped out. The three Americans were dead, and the Sung was wounded. Lieutenant Colonel Adrian Cloninger, the commanding officer of 3/23 Infantry, estimated that at least 18 grenades were employed against the fighting position, with one actually exploding inside. The fire team had literally been blown to shreds. In an attempt to capture or kill the infiltrators, troops were deployed to sweep the terrain for the NKPA soldiers and to establish blocking positions along likely avenues of movement. The NKPA commandos fought their way past the US forces and made it back across the MDL. It was a bitter pill for the soldiers of 3/23 Inf, to swallow.

Ron Rice, whose Recon Platoon was on quick reaction force duty, was awoken at 0240 at Camp Dodge. Rice could hear the gunfire, and knew something big was going on. As he and the rest of his platoon assembled at the company orderly room to draw weapons and ammunition, the Field Litter Ambulance (FLA) pulled out with the bodies of Ashford, Gibbs, and Boyd enroute to graves registration (what the Army calls a morgue). Rice's squad was ordered to move out to a position near Guard Post Jane to retrieve the body of one of the NKPA commandos who had been killed trying to exfiltrate back to the DPRK after they attacked the foxhole on the Meat Line. After finding the body, they took it to Guard Post Jane where another squad from Recon took it

back to battalion. GP Jane had been taking NKPA large caliber automatic weapons and small arms fire all morning. The frustrated GIs were under strict orders not to return fire across the MDL, and they had to accept being targets for the NKPA.



*Stars And Stripes Article about the 16 July, 1967*

*battle.*

Rice's squad moved out to retrieve another NKPA body. What happened next is seared into Rice's memory. "As we approached within 10 feet of the MDL, all of the sudden we were caught in the cross fire of two .51 caliber Russian machine guns. The grass where we were standing was about four feet tall. We took cover as we received fire from the machine guns; it seemed, for 4-5 minutes. The rounds zipped through the air and ricocheted around us; however as

quickly as the shooting began, it stopped.”<sup>14</sup> Rice had no time to be relieved. He was about to come face to face with the enemy. “Then suddenly, from the tall grass just across the MDL on the northern side, 3-4 North Koreans stood up right in front of us. We immediately stood up and took aim wanting so much to pull the trigger and send them to their after-life or where ever they go. The order I gave next was the hardest thing I had ever done in my young life of 23 years. I yelled at my men to “stand down” knowing that if they fired across the line our lives were “toast” and the men and women behind us were in question also. We were simply outnumbered.”<sup>15</sup> Rice’s squad evaded and escaped under fire back to GP Jane. To this day Rice is amazed that his squad did not take casualties.



*Recon*

*Platoon, 3/23Inf, 1967. (Picture courtesy of Ron Rice)*

Captain Lee Scripture, the brigade S3 (operations) officer and former commander of HHC 3/23 was on GP Jane, as well as a Larry Williams. Rice recalls Scripture was a popular officer, and that he had a bit of a personality. He carried a pearl handled pistol, a rider’s crop, and spoke with a deep southern accent. Scripture was on GP Jane attempting to take pictures of NKPA automatic weapons to document their violations of the cease fire agreement. As the GP

<sup>14</sup> Ron Rice, email to author, 29 January, 2010

<sup>15</sup> Rice, to author, 29 January, 2010

was under sporadic fire, the men stayed below ground in the trenches of the guard post. During a lull in the fire Scripture who had been talking to Rice, stood on a bunker to take a look at North Korea. Rice felt a round whiz by his right ear, and turned to see Scripture fall back into the trench. As Scripture broke cover, an alert NKPA soldier took the opportunity to fire a round into Scripture's stomach. Scripture thought that it was a minor wound, and said "Rice get my camera and take a picture!"<sup>16</sup>

Williams, who was also present, remembers Rice throwing Scripture a bandana to tie off the wound. Still under fire, Rice and a few medics carried Scripture to a waiting FLA, where he was taken to 121 Medical Evacuation Hospital at Camp Casey. Scripture made a full recovery, and calls the Purple Heart he was awarded his "dumbass award".<sup>17</sup>



*CPT Scripture being awarded the Purple Heart for the Battle of 16 July, 1967.*

*(Picture courtesy of Larry Williams)*

<sup>16</sup> Lee Scripture, interview by Manny Seck, 11 March, 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Scripture interview.



*Larry Williams enroute to the DMZ, 1967. The dog's name is Yobo. Dog meat is a delicacy in Korea, so Yobo made sure to constantly stay in close proximity to US GIs.*

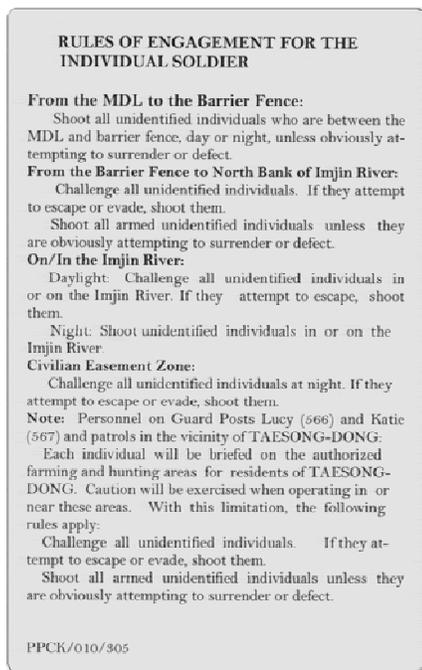
*(Picture courtesy of Larry Williams)*

Soldiers on the DMZ became accustomed to taking fire, and despite the asinine rules of engagement, did manage to return fire on occasion. Once on patrol, Williams's squad encountered NKPA infiltrators attempting to get back into the DPRK. The North Koreans opened fire on the US patrol, and Williams was forced to take cover behind a small tree. Williams remembers being scared, but angry, and raising his M14 over his cover and firing with out aiming. "I still don't understand how I could hide behind a fallen tree (very small) and fire over the rim without really aiming - just holding my M-14 over the log and pulling the trigger."<sup>18</sup> There were times when the irrepressible GI sense of humor shined through, even when the GIs were in mortal danger. Once, when Williams was enroute to GP Beryl, the NKPA opened fire on his vehicle with a larger caliber machine gun. The soldiers wasted no time in dismounting the truck, and dived into a ditch by the road. Williams

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<sup>18</sup> Larry Williams, email to author, 15 January, 2010.

counted heads and came up one man short. He checked the truck, and found the missing soldier still in the cab frozen in fear gripping the steering wheel tightly. “I jumped up, ran to the truck and hit him and told him to move. He beat me back to the ditch on the side of the road. We all laughed about it and cursed the LT who had told us that we could safely drive all the way to the GP before coming into view of the gun (it had the GP pinned down and restricted to the trench line). Again, there was shock when I realized I was under fire, humor when we were all safe and anger that there was NOTHING we could do because they were firing from their side and we were forbidden to fire back across the MDL.”<sup>19</sup> Both Rice and Williams made it through their tour in Korea with out being wounded.<sup>20</sup>



*Copy of rules of engagement for US soldiers on*

*duty within and near the DMZ. (Author's collection)*

<sup>19</sup> Williams to author, 15 January, 2010

<sup>20</sup> Rice and Williams did not know each other in Korea, even though they served in the same company, and fought in the same battle, and must have seen each other. As the author was doing research for this paper their stories sounded strangely familiar, and this author realized that they were both talking about the same events. This author put them in touch with each other 44 years after they served together in Korea.



A GI

*from 3/23 Infantry near the DMZ, 1967. (Picture courtesy of Ron Rice)*



An NKPA

*soldier on the communist side of the MDL, 1967. (Picture courtesy of Ron Rice)*



*An NKPA soldier pointing a pistol at US/ ROK soldiers, summer, 1967. The communist is hiding his face from the camera, and standing on his side of the MDL. Due to the idiotically ridiculous and dangerous ROEs imposed on US soldiers, no GI in this patrol would have been authorized to use deadly force, even though this enemy soldier is displaying the intent and capability to inflict deadly force on US forces. In addition because this is before the arbitrary date of April, 1968, the US Army does not consider the GI who took this picture a combat veteran.*



*Another NKPA soldier hiding his*

*face from Rice's camera. Communist soldiers would often stay on their side of the MDL, and harass US soldiers on patrol, knowing that the GIs were handcuffed by idiotically restrictive ROEs. These ROEs only served to embolden the NKPA and directly led to more communist attacks. (Picture courtesy of Ron Rice)*

1968 was a pivotal year in US history. In Memphis, Tennessee the civil right icon, and brave patriot, Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated, leading to riots across the country. In Chicago the Democratic National Convention was disrupted by riots that were televised world wide. In Vietnam the communists launched the infamous Tet Offensive, by attacking military and civilian targets through out South Vietnam. The city of Hue was over run by the North Vietnamese Army, and the United States Marine Corps combat base at Khe Sanh was surrounded, and the Marines there were fighting desperately to avoid being over run. Viet Cong commandos even managed to penetrate the US Embassy. Hundreds of US troops were dying every week in Vietnam.

What is not widely known is that the situation in Korea was a hair trigger away from transitioning from a "Quiet War" into an all out conflagration that threatened to

consume the North East Pacific. On the cold evening of 17 January, a platoon sized element of NKPA commandos quietly infiltrated through the US 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division lines. They disguised them selves with dark smocks that concealed ROK Army uniforms, and stealthly moved south towards Seoul, the South Korean capital. They were loaded down with weapons, communication gear and explosives. These men were experts in armed and unarmed combat, land navigation, and small unit tactics. In the course of their years of training, they had become experts in the nuances of South Korean culture, and could easliy pass themselves off as South Koreans. There were in peak physical condition, and could easily carry a heavy pack for dozens of kilometers. These commandos were fanatically dedicated to their communist ideology, and they would not accept defeat. They were completely ruthless, and would give, no quarter to any US or ROK soldier that they encountered. Their mission was articulated simply to them as “ go to Seoul and cut the head off of Park Chung Hee”<sup>21</sup>, the president of the ROK. If the circumstances permitted, the commandos would also attack the US embassy.

These commandos throughly embrassed 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division soldiers. As they penertrated the DMZ they came within a few dozen feet of a manned US position with out being detected. Their route of march was directly through the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division’s rear area, and at no time were they spotted. One of the commandos later remarked that “infiltrating the South was quite easy.”<sup>22</sup> Had they wanted to, they could have caused serious damage to US forces, but their objective was even bigger. The commados moved south by night, and occupied patrol bases by day. The NKPA commandos were arrogantly confident that their mission would end in success.

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<sup>21</sup> Bolger, Chapter three

<sup>22</sup> Sarantakes, 447

This arrogance would lead to the undoing of the NKPA assassination platoon. In their years of communist indoctrination, NKPA soldiers have been repeatedly told that the “oppressed proletariat masses” of the ROK would welcome their “northern brothers” as liberators, and scramble to rally to the communist cause. In their blind obedience to communist dogma, it never occurred to the NKPA commandos that this supposition might be false. As they moved closer to Seoul, the commandos encountered ROK civilians cutting trees. Luckily for the tree cutters the commandos did not liquidate them on the spot, and instead forced the men to listen to a speech announcing the impending “liberation” of the ROK from its “imperialist oppressors”. The wood cutters were released with a warning to keep their mouths shut to avoid compromising the mission.

Once they were released, the proudly patriotic South Koreans headed directly to the authorities who quickly deployed the ROK Army and police to find, kill or capture the NKPA commandos. The commandos had compromised the ROK radio network, and knew that they had been discovered. They easily avoided all efforts to intercept them, and outside of the Seoul the team split up into small groups. They would meet at an objective rally point in the suburbs of the capital city, and prepare to complete their mission.

On 22 January, 1968, the commandos removed their smocks and wearing their counterfeit ROK Army uniforms, simply marched into the capital, and headed toward the Blue House, home of the ROK president. Just a kilometer short of their objective, a wary ROK police officer stopped the men and challenged their credentials. The NKPA commandos could not answer the questions properly and the police officer drew his pistol, which drew a burst of submachine gun fire from the northerners. A wild running gun battle erupted in the streets of Seoul, as the commandos scattered into small groups and

attempted to escape and evade back to the DPRK. Over the subsequent days a nation wide manhunt was launched to find the commandos. During the man hunt three Americans were killed, with three wounded and 134 ROK soldiers, police and civilians were killed. All of the commandos were killed or captured save one that most likely made it back to the DPRK.

The Blue House raid was a military failure, but it did have concrete benefits for the DPRK and its allies. First, in late 1967 the ROK had agreed to send a third combat division to Vietnam. The Blue House raid ended these plans, as the ROK wanted to insure that it had enough combat power available should the Quiet War, become loud. This helped the North Vietnamese, because it stopped the ROK from sending additional troops. Secondly, it proved that the DPRK was coordinating its efforts with the government of North Vietnam which demonstrated that Kim was committed to helping other communist countries. The Blue House Raid was timed to coincide with the Tet Offensive in Vietnam. Kim Il Sung, whom Fidel Castro has described as “one of the most distinguished, brilliant, and heroic socialist leaders in the world today”<sup>23</sup> significantly increased his standing in the communist world. As outrageous as the Blue House Raid was, Kim had more unpleasant surprises in store.

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<sup>23</sup> Directorate of Intelligence. Intelligence Report, 9



*A sign posted at an entrance to the DMZ, late 1960s (Author's collection)*

On 11 January, 1968 the *USS Pueblo*, a US Navy electronic intelligence ship pulled out of the small US Naval base at Sasebo, Japan and headed toward the eastern coastline of the DPRK. Her mission was to proceed through the Tsushima Strait into the Sea of Japan and monitor DPRK electronic transmissions and naval activity, and to gather information on Soviet military shipping in the area. The *Pueblo* was lightly armed, and as an intelligence ship, was loaded with classified intelligence gathering equipment, and documents. She had a complement of 76 officers and men, and was commanded by Commander Lloyd M. Bucher.

The first few days of the patrol were uneventful. The weather was frigid, and many times the crew had to break the ice that coated the superstructure of the ship. On 23

January, (the day after the Blue House Raid) a DPRK sub chaser approached the *Pueblo* at flank speed. Bucher confirmed that his ship was in international waters, and ran up the Stars and Stripes when the DPRK vessel inquired about the *Pueblo's* nationality. Bucher noticed that the crew of the DPRK vessel appeared to be at battle stations and the vessels weapons were trained on the American ship. Very quickly three DPRK Torpedo Boats appeared which increased the tension on the *Pueblo's* bridge.

The DPRK hoisted an ensign which communicated HEAVE TO OR I WILL FIRE, to which Bucher replied I AM IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS. The communists quickly surround the *Pueblo*, and were joined by DPRK MIGs circling overhead. Bucher ordered the ship to attempt to leave the area, and to destroy classified equipment and documents. Armed boarding parties were mustering on the decks of the communist ships. It was apparent to the Americans that this was more than harassment. This feeling was confirmed when a DPRK ship opened fire on the *Pueblo* with her automatic cannon. Bucher recalls, "I felt pieces slashing into my legs and buttocks. A sliver of shrapnel seared squarely up my rectum with a red-hot shock of pain."<sup>24</sup> Bucher ordered the destruction of all classified material, but there was too much on board, and the situation was developing too fast for the crew to get to it all. The *Pueblo's* only weapons were two .50 caliber machine guns that were completely outclassed by the firepower the North Koreans had available. In addition, the guns were chained up and under tarps, and could not be brought to bear quickly. To attempt to do so would invite a fusillade of fire from the communists that would needlessly kill the American crew.

The communists opened fire again, and again, and Bucher was forced to stop his ship. The communist fire wounded several men, one, Fireman Apprentice Duane Hodges,

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<sup>24</sup> Lloyd M. Bucher, *Bucher: My Story* ( Garden City: Doubleday, 1970), 180

had his right leg blown off, and his abdomen ripped open, exposing his intestines. As the Corpsman worked on saving Hodge's life the destruction of classified material continued at a feverish pace. The North Koreans signaled the crew that the *Pueblo* was to follow them, and then the communists sent a boarding party to the *Pueblo*. In only the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in history, a US Navy ship had been captured without a fight.<sup>25</sup> Later that night Hodge would die from blood loss and most of the classified material was captured intact by the North Koreans. The National Security Agency described the loss of the *Pueblo's* classified material as "without precedence in US cryptologic history"<sup>26</sup>

The US military was caught completely unprepared for the *Pueblo* crisis. Before they were captured, Bucher had his crew radio for help, but none ever came. Neither Navy or Air Force units in Japan were in an alert status that would allow them to react quickly enough, and US planes in Korea were loaded with tactical nuclear weapons, and would be of little use. Because of this, the crew of the *Pueblo* had to endure 11 months of captivity and torture.

The crew was forced to pose for pictures and to sign phony confessions, and to undergo "political reeducation". The crew did fight back, and bravely defied the North Koreans every chance they could.

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<sup>25</sup> Ed Brant *The Last Voyage of USS Pueblo* (New York: Norton, 1969), 52

<sup>26</sup> "Pueblo Staying in North Korea" *Navy Times*, 25 November, 2002, 2



*Members of the crew display covert contempt for their DPRK captors. (Picture courtesy of the USS Pueblo website)*



*The crew of the Pueblo told their captors that displaying the middle finger was a Hawaiian good luck sign. (Picture courtesy of the USS Pueblo website)*

Unfortunately, *Time* magazine published these photos with a full explanation of what was going on. This resulted in a week of brutal torture that the men called “Hell Week” that was above and beyond the “routine” torture that the men had been receiving. To this day many of the crew still harbors a very justified resentment towards *Time*

magazine. The men were starved, beaten, made to assume stress positions, and withstood verbal abuse. The men still kept faith in their country, their chain of command, the US Navy, each other, and behaved with honor and courage. The crew was finally released on 23 December, 1968. To this day the *Pueblo* is still anchored in the DPRK as a tourist attraction, and the US has never taken any retaliatory actions.

When UNC commander Gen. Bonesteel was notified of the *Pueblo*, he reacted with uncharacteristic anger. "It was a most inexcusable and infuriating thing,"<sup>27</sup> Bonesteel went on record as advocating a nuclear response if the DPRK did not release the crew immediately. Fortunately for all concerned, his proposal was denied.

As the situation in Korea deteriorated, Bonesteel's, brilliance, improvisation and creativity emerged. He created a multi tiered approach to combat NKPA infiltration across the DMZ. First, US and ROK units would step up combat patrols and ambushes in the zone. These patrols would vary in duration and time, to confuse the enemy. Ambushes would be laid along likely avenues of enemy movement, and would operate under relaxed rules of engagement. These patrols would be constant, and relentless. Enemy infiltrators were killed with increasing regularity.

There would also be a physical barrier along the DMZ. A chain link fence would be erected that would span the entire 155 miles of the DMZ. It would have spotlights, mines, and it would be under constant observation. Areas of heavy plant growth would be defoliated with chemicals, including the infamous and toxic Agent Orange. It would slow infiltrators down, and if the fence was cut it would indicate that the NKPA had penetrated the lines. Guard Posts would be created in the Zone that would serve as eyes to monitor the enemy as close to the MDL as possible. Units would have a heavily armed quick

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<sup>27</sup> Bolger, chapter 3

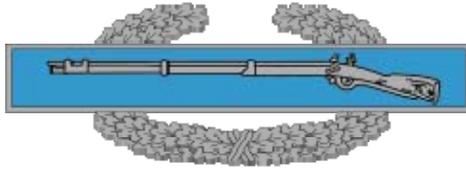
reaction force standing by to deal with any contingencies. These steps were innovative, and brilliant. It focused more on soldiers and protecting the civilian population of the ROK, as opposed to relying on indiscriminate firepower, like Gen. Westmoreland did in Vietnam. There were never cases of aircraft dropping Napalm on civilian villages in the ROK. The vast majority of the ROK civilian population was isolated from NKPA infiltrators, and very few ROK civilians were killed accidentally. By focusing more on deterring the NKPA from attempting infiltrations, than achieving high body counts, there was very little collateral damage. This meant very few cases of enraged civilians rallying to the communist side which happened frequently in Vietnam, and happens frequently in Afghanistan.

It was at this time that the US Army leadership realized the obvious. There was a shooting war in Korea, and the soldiers should be recognized with combat awards and combat pay. Combat pay was approved 1 April, 1968<sup>28</sup>. Before that the only way a soldier earned combat pay was for him to be wounded, or killed. Under the old rules, a soldier could be under fire for days and still not be eligible for combat pay. After 1 April, 1968 all soldiers in close proximity to the DMZ would now be financially recognized.

The Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal was authorized to be awarded on 1 October, 1966, and shoulder sleeve insignia-former wartime service, (commonly called “Combat Patches”) was authorized 1 April, 1968 for personnel drawing combat pay. In addition, Combat Badges were also authorized. A perfect example of this is the highly prestigious Combat Infantryman’s Badge.

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<sup>28</sup> “Korea DMZ Combat Pay Approved” *Army Times*, 10 April, 1968,1.



*Combat Infantryman's Badge, 1<sup>st</sup> Award*

The CIB is a decoration created in 1943 by Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair. The CIB was intended to “to enhance morale and the prestige of the "Queen of Battle," the US Infantry. Then Secretary of War Henry Stinson said, "It is high time we recognize in a personal way the skill and heroism of the American infantry."”<sup>29</sup> As stated in Army Regulation 600-8-22, there are basically three requirements for award of the CIB. The soldier must be an infantryman satisfactorily performing infantry duties, must be assigned to an infantry unit during such time as the unit is engaged in active ground combat, and must actively participate in such ground combat. Campaign or battle credit alone is not sufficient for award of the CIB<sup>30</sup>. The reason the CIB is the most highly coveted badge in the Army is that it identifies a soldier whom did the toughest job in the Army, perform as an infantryman in ground combat. Some call the CIB “The Blue Badge of Courage”.

For soldiers in Korea there was caveat, however. US and Korean augmentees on the DMZ would be judged by a higher standard than infantrymen in other theaters, or to put it bluntly, soldiers that served on the DMZ would be discriminated against. As proof one only needs look at Army Regulation 600-8-22, from 1995. A soldier serving anywhere but Korea earns a CIB by being “(a) assigned as advisor to an infantry unit, ranger unit, infantry type unit of the civil guard of regimental or smaller size, and/or infantry-type unit of the self defense corps unit of regimental or smaller size of the

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<sup>29</sup> Headquarter, Dept. of the Army *Army Regulation 600-8-22 Military Awards* (Washington DC: US Army,2006), 100

<sup>30</sup> Headquarter, Dept. of the Army *Army Regulation 600-8-22 Military Awards* (Washington DC: US Army,1995),50

Vietnamese government during any period such unit was engaged in actual ground combat. (b) Assigned as advisor of an irregular force comparable to the above infantry units under similar conditions. (c) Personally present and under fire while serving in an assigned primary duty as a member of a tactical advisory team while the unit participated in ground combat.”<sup>31</sup> These criteria apply to Vietnam, Laos, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf.

To earn a CIB for combat operations within the DMZ, soldiers not only had to meet the requirements listed above, but also had to “*h. Korea*. Subsequent to 4 January 1969, a soldier must have (1) Served in the hostile fire area at least 60 days and been authorized hostile fire pay. (2) Been assigned to an infantry unit of company or smaller size and must be an infantry officer in the grade of captain or lower. Warrant officers and enlisted men must possess an infantry MOS. In the case of an officer whose basic branch is other than infantry who, under appropriate orders, has commanded an infantry company or smaller size infantry unit for at least 30 days, the award may be made provided all the following requirements are met.(3) Been engaged with the enemy in the hostile fire area or in active ground combat involving an exchange of small arms fire at least 5 times. (4) Been recommended personally by each commander in the chain of command and approved at division level. If killed or wounded as a direct result of overt enemy action, he must be recommended personally by each commander in the chain of command and approved at division level. In the case of infantrymen killed by enemy action, the requirement for at least 5 engagements ((3) above) and the requirement for the incident to have taken place in the hostile fire area, including the 60-day requirement ((1) above), will be waived. In the case of individuals wounded, even though outside the

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<sup>31</sup> AR 600-8-22 (1995), 51

hostile fire area, the 5 engagements requirement and the 60-day requirement may be waived when it can be clearly established that the wound was a direct result of overt hostile action.”<sup>32</sup>

These discriminatory regulations effectively demonstrated that the Army considered soldiers who served on the DMZ only 20% of the worth of soldiers who served elsewhere. No where else was a soldier required to participate in five firefights, and get a recommendation from the entire chain of command up to the division commander. A firefight in the DMZ is just as dangerous as a firefight anywhere else, and NKPA bullet will kill a soldier just as dead as a North Vietnamese bullet. The Army has never explained why it enacted this highly discriminatory regulation, and there has been speculation that the Army wanted to downplay the war in Korea, due to the unpopularity of the War in Vietnam. It has been assumed that the US Department of Defense thought that one unpopular war was enough. Perhaps the answer will never be known.



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<sup>32</sup> AR 600-8-22 (1995), 51

*The View from Guard Post Lucy. The GI in the foreground is armed with the excellent M14 battle rifle. In the background is the DPRK. More than 20 years later the author of this paper would stand in nearly the exact same spot and take a picture with a nearly identical vantage point. The picture is displayed below.*



In an attempt to recognize soldiers who were risking their lives on a daily basis, and realizing that the CIB was nearly impossible to earn due to the discriminatory regulations, both the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, and 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division created badges to award DMZ service. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division created the “Imjin Scout Badge” and the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division created the “Bayonet Badge”. These badges were highly coveted, but once the soldier left Korea, they were not authorized for wear.



*The Imjin Scouts Badge*



*The Bayonet Badge*

Bonesteel's innovative tactics paid dividends. Due to his new tactics, training, and DMZ unit rotation policies, US and ROK units became more proficient at finding and killing infiltrators. Each infiltrator killed or captured was a disastrous blow to the NKPA Special Forces. It took a minimum of two years to train an infiltrator, and as they were being lost in greater numbers, the scale of their operations had to be reduced. US Special Forces, the famous "Green Berets" were deployed from US bases in Japan to help train ROK internal security forces. More US aid dollars flowed into the ROK, and so did advanced US weapons systems. The Army also sent more manpower to Korea, which greatly helped the under strength units there. Scout dogs were sent in, and had a huge impact in finding and tracking infiltrators. As ROK and US forces became more effective, more NKPA infiltrators were killed. In September of 1968 alone, 36 infiltrators were eliminated.<sup>33</sup>

Another key factor in Bonesteel's victory was the creation of the Homeland Defense Reserve Force. The HDRF was similar to the US National Guard. By and large, the vast majority of the civilian population of the ROK was (and continues to be) loyal to their government, and over two million South Koreans, both men and women, joined the

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<sup>33</sup> *The US Military Experience in Korea 1872-1982* (APO San Francisco: Eighth US Army, 1983), 124

HDRF.<sup>34</sup> The HDRF was organized into tens of thousands of local defense units with a nucleus composed of highly disciplined ROK Army veterans. If NKPA infiltrators walked into a rural ROK village and attempted to brutalize and indoctrinate the civilians, they would now have to deal with an armed local militia, which had a visceral hatred of communism. The ROK government also reached out to rural areas with civic action programs to better the standard of living of the local population, which endeared the people that much more to the government.

Kim Il Sung enraged that his plan to incite a popular uprising in the ROK had failed, took his anger out on his generals. Some were executed, while others were sent to rot in gulag. The 124, 283, and the 17<sup>th</sup> Foot Reconnaissance Brigade were all disbanded. There were more shootings within the DMZ, but now the better trained ROK/US forces usually inflicted worse than they received. Kim would seek alternative means to terrorize the ROK.

On 15 April, 1969 a US Navy EC-121 unarmed electronic reconnaissance aircraft on routine patrol in international airspace over the Sea of Japan was shot down by DPRK MIGs. All 31 USN and USMC personnel were killed. The aircraft never ventured closer than 90 miles to the coast line of the DPRK, and the communists never issued any warning. The new US President, Richard Nixon, was aghast. “We were being tested, and therefore force must be met with force,”<sup>35</sup> Some thought that it was only a matter of time before the new administration retaliated. However, once again the specter of Vietnam affected US actions in the ROK. Nixon did not order any retaliation. Nixon would say, “As long as we are involved in Vietnam, we simply did not have the resources or public

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<sup>34</sup> Bolger, chapter 3

<sup>35</sup> Sarantakes, 454

support for another war in another place.”<sup>36</sup> What few realized, is that this mentality only made the DPRK more brazen, and was exactly the wrong thing to do.

On 18 October, 1969 a vehicle from the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division carrying SSG James R. Grissinger, SP4 Charles E. Taylor, SP4 Jack L. Morris and PFC. William E. Grimes departed on a mission into the DMZ. Against regulations, the soldiers were not armed, and their only protection was the white flag their vehicle flew, which according to the terms of the cease fire, supposedly granted them safe passage. The vehicle was stopped by NKPA infiltrators, and each soldier was executed by a gunshot to the head delivered at very close range. Why a Staff Sergeant in the US Army would allow his soldiers into a combat zone unarmed will never be known, but it demonstrated once again the NKPA was ruthless, and still a threat.

Bonesteel was never celebrated as a war hero but his strategies and tactics forced the NKPA to slow infiltration attempts, and to avoid contact unless it was on their terms. The US had just won a major campaign in the low intensity conflict that was Korea. This was done not with massive and indiscriminate use of firepower, or emphasis on body counts, but by using soldiers in an intelligent manner. Bonesteel’s brilliance lay in the fact that he kept the civilian population of the ROK isolated from NKPA political indoctrination, and insured their physical safety. He established and maintained a close working relationship with the ROK military, and gave them the resources to train a thoroughly professional fighting force, and then unleashed them on the communists. Bonesteel resisted pressure from the ROKS, to escalate the situation, and used the minimum force required to accomplish his mission. In addition he maximized his human resources in his under strength units by creating schools to “grow Non Commissioned

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<sup>36</sup> Sarantakes, 456

Officers” and increased the tactical proficiency of his fighting force. These were very important lessons in counterinsurgency.

### **Chapter Three Noncombat**

As the new decade approached, the Army faced new challenges world wide. US troops were being withdrawn from Vietnam, and the US Army was looking for ways to cut the size of its force. Even though Korea was still a flash point, and NKPA infiltrators still attempted to enter the ROK, it was decided that the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry division would be withdrawn. The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry division had served in Korea for 24 years, and its subordinate elements had been conducting combat operations nearly the entire time. The only US division left in Korea, the 2<sup>nd</sup>, had its sector of the DMZ reduced from over 18 miles to a significantly smaller area just around Panmunjom. During this time there are still sporadic firefights within the DMZ. The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division officially left Korea in March, 1971, and was deactivated<sup>37</sup>.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division rotated an infantry battalion to DMZ duties. This battalion manned guard posts, conducted patrols, and had a quick reaction force standing by for any contingencies. Also, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division operated the only active firebase in the Army out side of Vietnam. An artillery battery was ready to perform fire missions with only a few seconds notice, from 4P3, the home of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division alert artillery battery. 4P3, or 4 Papa 3 in GI slang, was a hardened artillery position south of the DMZ where an artillery battery’s guns stood in concrete bunkers ready to fire, should a 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division unit operating in the DMZ need artillery support. In 1973 the Army arbitralily decided that the DMZ was no longer a combat zone and stopped

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<sup>37</sup> The 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division would be stood up in the 1980s as part of the new Light Infantry concept, and would participate in the invasion of Panama in December, of 1989.

authorization for combat pay, and combat patches. The authorization for the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for DMZ service was withdrawn in 1974. These decisions were completely arbitrary, and as subsequent events will prove, totally premature.

On a brisk November morning in 1974 a ROK Army squad was on patrol in the DMZ. Autumn was in full effect, and the leaves of the foliage were vivid. The DMZ, which had suffered during the war, had largely healed, and the zone was rife with trees. As the squad walked, carefully alert for signs of infiltrators or ambush, one of the soldiers noticed something strange. A column of steam was rising from the ground. The soldiers quickly moved in and set up security for a closer look. As the men investigated they discovered air holes form an underground tunnel 18 inches below ground. The tunnel started north of the DMZ and was heading south for at least a thousand meters. Suddenly an NKPA guard post north of the MDL opened machine gun fire on the squad which scrambled to find cover, and returned fire. The ROKs had just discovered a new threat from the DPRK.

The NKPA had covertly dug an illegal tunnel. The tunnel was three feet by four feet, and out fitted with reinforced concrete, electricity, sleeping areas, and a railway system. The tunnel was designed for the NKPA to secretly infiltrate troops into the ROK, both for infiltration, and for invasion. The tunnel was large enough to accommodate the movement of thousands of soldiers and hour, and even had weapons storage areas.<sup>38</sup> This information went up the chain of command and a joint US/ROK task force was created to investigate. As the team was investigating the tunnel, one of them triggered an NKPA booby trap. The resulting explosion killed Commander Robert M. Ballinger, US Navy, and Major Kim Hah Chul, ROK Marine Corps. In the following years, many more

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<sup>38</sup> *The US Military Experience in Korea, 1871-1982*, 178

tunnels would be discovered. DPRK defectors revealed that each NKPA division stationed on the DMZ was tasked with digging and maintaining two tunnels in its area of operation. Some would compare these tunnels to the tunnels the Viet Cong of Vietnam used near places like Chu Chi, but this comparison was not wholly accurate. The Viet Cong used their tunnels as shelter from American Airpower and artillery, and also used them as hospitals for their wounded. The NKPA's tunnels were purely offensive in nature. The NKPA used their tunnels as a method of access to the interior of the ROK. Due to Bonesteel's innovative methods, and the effectiveness of US and ROK units patrolling the DMZ, it had become increasingly difficult for NKPA troops to infiltrate through the DMZ, so alternative methods had to be devised. The tunnels and increased sea borne infiltration became viable methods to get communist agents south. The fact that the communists had to resort to these methods was concrete proof that the UNC was denying the communist access to the ROK civilian population, which is vital in waging a counterinsurgency.

After almost two decades the US was finally free of the albatross of Vietnam, and Americans thought that they had were at peace. Gerald Ford was president, and the US economy struggling under the double burden of inflation and rescission. The draft and been abolished, so the US military was in the process of professionalizing the force, and dealing with severe budget cuts that curtailed the quantity, and quality of training that it could conduct. The term "Hollow Army" was coined during this time because the Army had serious deficiencies that would reveal themselves in the coming years.

In Korea, the low intensity war quietly simmered away. In 1975, NKPA guards physically attacked Major William D. Henderson who was assigned to the US Army

Support Group, Joint Security Area, and beat him severely. The beating was unprovoked, and Henderson suffered a fractured Larynx. As brutal as this incident was, the following year would be worse.

In Panmunjom the UNC Joint Security Force and their communist counterparts manned a series of checkpoints. These checkpoints provided observation on the NKPA, and were manned by JSA soldiers. One checkpoint, CP#3, was obscured by the leaves of a large poplar tree every summer. This checkpoint was only a few meters from the MDL, and this made for a dangerous situation. The reason this situation was dangerous was because the NKPA had a documented proclivity to attack JSA soldiers and to attempt to drag them into the DPRK. The communists also had freedom of movement through out Panmunjom, and could attack CP#3 with the tree blocking sight lines of UNC backup. Due to its isolation, Checkpoint three was called “the loneliest outpost in the world”. It was for this reason that the UNC decided that the poplar tree had to be trimmed.

On the Morning of 18 August, 1976 a work party of Korean Service Corps workers led by Captain Arthur G. Bonifas JSF commander, one of his platoon leaders, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Mark Barrett, and some security guards from the JSF set out to trim the tree. As the work party proceeded to accomplish the task, NKPA Senior Lieutenant Pak Chul and 10 of his soldiers arrived. Chul was well known to the JSA guards. He had a history of provoking UNC personnel, and had earned the nickname “Bulldog” for his propensity for violence calculated to embarrass the UNC. The NKPA soldiers quietly watched for a few minutes, and then Chul ordered Bonifas to stop cutting the tree. Bonifas ignored Chul, and the work continued. Chul became incensed and threatened to kill the Americans and ROK civilian workers if they did not cease cutting the tree. Again Bonifas ignored Chul.



*NKPA Senior Lieutenant Pak Chul.*

Chul summoned more NKPA soldiers, bringing the size of his force to a full platoon, greatly outnumbering the UNC force. The NKPA soldiers were armed with clubs and axe handles. Chul then calmly removed his wristwatch, wrapped it in a white handkerchief and put it in his pocket. He shouted, “KILL THE US AGGRESSORS!”<sup>39</sup> With this command, the NKPA set upon the UNC workforce. Chul dropped Bonifas with a savage Taekwondo chop to Bonifas’s neck. As Bonifas lay on the ground, he was surrounded by several NKPA guards who chopped him with axes taken from the work party, beaten with clubs and stomped with boots. Barrett was also a priority target, and a wild melee ensued. The UNC guards and civilian workers had at the NKPA with fists, axes, axe handles or what ever was available to defend themselves.

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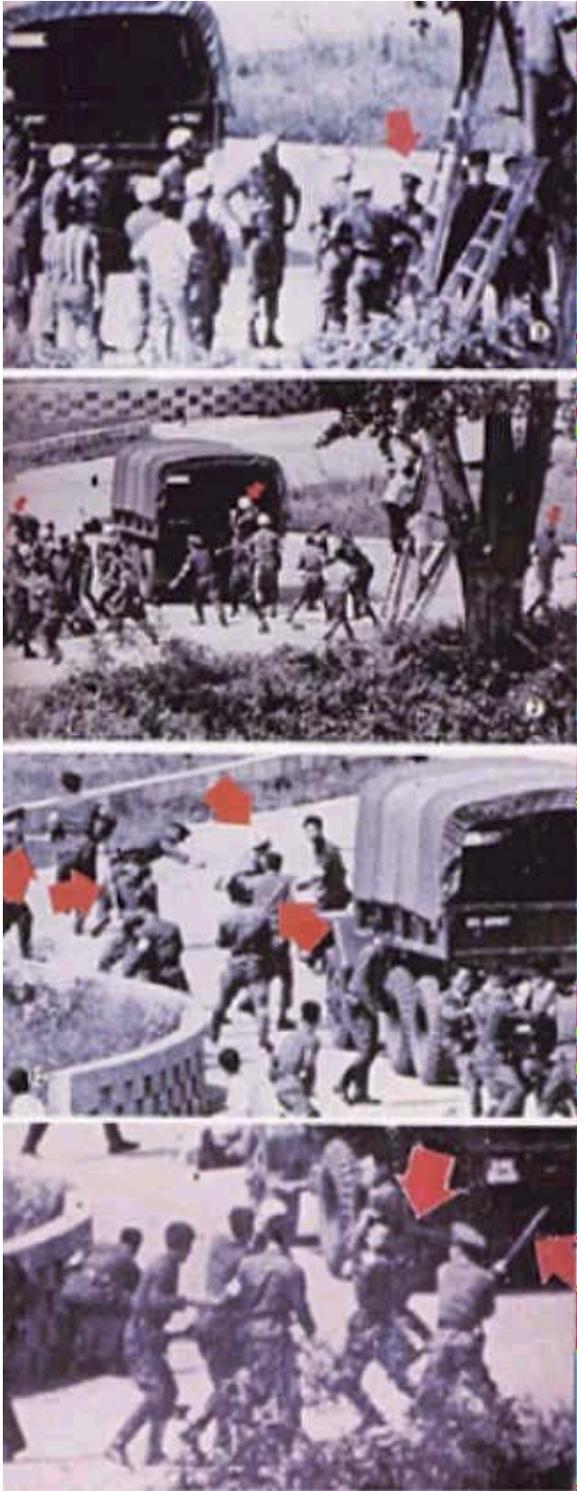
<sup>39</sup> Major Wayne A. Kirkbride, *DMZ A Story of the Panmunjom Axe Murder* (Elizabeth: HollyM International Corporation, 1984), 29.



① A group of north Korean guards start a quarrel with their UNC counterparts while Korean workers are doing their routine trimming of trees in the area. Two workers are seen climbing down ladders.



④ North Koreans wield clubs and axe (see arrow) as they go after UNC personnel running for safety.



*Pictures taken by JSA soldiers as Barrett*

*and Bonifas were murdered. (Courtesy of Operation Paul Bunyan website)*

Bonifas suffered multiple blunt force trauma wounds, and died were he fell. Barrett was chased into a nearby ditch and repeatedly attacked by the NKPA. A

quick thinking guard drove a truck up, and covered Bonifas's body with it to protect him from any further assaults. As quickly as it started, the attack stopped, and both sides scattered. It was estimated that the fight lasted less than a minute. As the dust settled, the JSA guards counted heads, and realized that Barrett was missing. After more than an hour, Barrett was found lying in a pool of blood in shallow depression near the tree. His head had been opened by repeated blows to the skull and his brain was visible. Incredibly, he was still breathing when he was found. Unfortunately Barrett would die enroute to 121 Evacuation Hospital. The UNC had suffered two dead, and nine wounded in the attack. NKPA casualties are unknown, but one UNC guard caught a NKPA soldier squarely in the temple with an axe handle and the communist dropped solidly, and was seen being dragged away by his comrades.



*LT Barrett (L) CPT Bonifas*

Although the JSA guards were armed with .45 Caliber pistols they did not fire a shot during the fight, even though under the rules of engagement it would have been authorized. As the author of this paper attempted to find out why the outnumbered guards in mortal danger had not opened fire, the author was told that the .45 caliber M1911A1 pistols issued to the JSA were nearly unserviceable and were not accurate. Due to the

severe budget cuts that were a hallmark of the post Vietnam Army, US soldiers being issued unserviceable weapons seems very plausible. Also The NKPA were known to keep AK47s, and in one case, a 12.7mm heavy machine gun in their checkpoints, so perhaps the JSA soldiers on the scene felt that they would have been out gunned.

Regardless it was a very bitter day for the UNC. Bill Ferguson was a member of the JSA during this time, and when asked what it was like to go back to Panmunjom the next day, and stand a few feet from NKPA soldiers who might have beaten two US soldiers to death and not be able to do anything about it, he replied, “It was probably no different than if you saw a murderer here on the streets, except at that time (or by that time) they suddenly decided to enforce the MDL within the JSA. So, they were stuck on their side and we were stuck on our side, with no more 'interactions' allowed anymore. The senior leaders on both sides were at least smart enough to realize that it would have been very bad to allow things to continue as they were before.”<sup>40</sup>

The Axe Murder Incident was one of the most brutal provocations that happened within the DMZ, and it was felt all the way to Washington. The specter of another all out war was rearing its head. The NKPA assumed a full war time posture, and US military units increased their alert status across the Pacific. A squadron of United States Air Force F4 fighter bombers from Okinawa and a squadron of F111 fighter bombers from Mountain Home Air Force Base in Idaho were deployed to the ROK on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August. In addition a US Navy Battle Group centered on the aircraft carrier *USS Midway*, sailed for Korean waters. Many were sure that open war was about to break out.

After the murder of Barrett and Bonifas, the tree had to be cut down, not only for pragmatic reasons, but also to prove to the DPRK that their criminal behavior would not

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<sup>40</sup> Bill Ferguson, email to author, 5 February, 2010.

be tolerated. The leadership of the United Nations Command devised a simple plan to retaliate for the murder of the two officers, and to cut the tree down. The plan had three objectives. First was to reestablish UNC rights of movement throughout the entire JSA. Second, cut down the tree. And finally, eliminate anything that would prevent the task force from doing that.<sup>41</sup> The UNC would be ready for any contingency. The unit to enter Panmunjom would be composed of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Engineer Battalion, with JSA and A Co 2/9 INF augmented by ROK Special Forces troops to provide security. C and B companies, 2/9 INF would be circling the JSA in UH1 helicopters ready for insertion if the NKPA decided to fight. Finally, a mechanized battalion of the 1/31 INF equipped with M60 tanks and M113 armored personnel carriers would be standing by in close proximity. Just south of the DMZ, AH1 Cobra gunships orbited, and Guam based B52 heavy bombers left contrails in the sky above, all as extra insurance. Nearly all UNC soldiers were issued a basic load of ammunition, (with the exception of the JSF, who were only issued two magazines for a total of 14 rounds for their M1911A1 pistols) and they were told to be prepared for the worst. The operation was to be called “Paul Bunyan” and the task force was to be called “Task Force Veirra” after the JSA commander Lieutenant Colonel Victor K. Vierra.

The units crossed the line of departure well before dawn on 21 August. The UNC gave the following message to the NKPA exactly three minutes before the task force pulled into Panmunjom: “at 0700 hours a United Nations Command work force will enter the Joint Security Area to complete the task begun on Wednesday. Should there be no interference the work will be completed and the work force will leave.”<sup>42</sup> The security

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<sup>41</sup>. Kirkbride, 47

<sup>42</sup> Kirkbride, 98

and the engineers dismounted, and began working on the tree. The ROK Special Forces, who were fanatically anti communist, and who all processed advanced black belts in Taekwondo, walked close to the MDL, and literally dared the NKPA to interfere. These elite soldiers had actually taped claymore antipersonnel mines to their chests, and holding the detonator in their hands, verbally abused the NKPA soldiers in Korean, and some even went so far as to vandalize NKPA checkpoints. The NKPA soldiers were stunned, and scrambled to man defensive positions.

Not only did the UNC force cut down the tree, they also dismantled several illegal communist roadblocks in the JSA. With such overwhelming firepower arrayed against them, the NKPA demonstrated their cowardice in the face of strength, and did not interfere. By 1630 hours local, all participating units were back at home station. To prevent incidents like the Axe murder from happening again it, was decided that the NKPA would dismantle their checkpoints south of the MDL, and both sides would be would not cross the line. In addition, the DPRK releases a message which expresses “regret” over the murder of Bonifas and Barrett.



*Engineers cutting down the poplar tree, in Panmunjom. (Courtesy of Operation Paul Bunyan Web site.*



*The tree once it was down. The soldiers carried axe handles to avoid violating the cease fire agreement.*



*Unobstructed view of UNC*

*Chekpoint #3. The stump of the poplar tree is in the center of the picture.*



*The*

*stump of the Axe Murder Tree in 1983. (Courtesy of Dave Chapman)*



Killing ground: As workmen begin trimming tree, North Koreans gang up on helmeted Americans near the 'Bridge of No Return'

## The War of the Poplar Tree

The troops moved out just after dawn. At 4 Phantoms and F-111 fighter-bombers circled overhead, a hand-picked patrol of 30 American GIs in full combat gear advanced across the Korean Demilitarized Zone and moved into the true village of Panmunjom. Off to the east, three giant B-52 bombers flew along the southern edge of the DMZ, dropping metallic chaff to blind North Korean radar. A mile from Panmunjom, a quick-moving force of 300 U.S. and South Korean soldiers—faces blacked out with noise-wearing padded flak jackets and carrying automatic weapons—waited for the poplar tree to be cut.

The operation caused hardly a ripple in the United States, but it was the climax of a week in which tension on the divided Korean peninsula rose to its highest point since the Pueblo incident of 1968. Earlier in the week, North Koreans had angrily asserted to death two U.S. Army officers who escorted a South Korean work party crossing the poplar tree. The Americans cut down the South Korean work party crossing the poplar tree. The Americans cut down the South Korean work party crossing the poplar tree. The Americans cut down the South Korean work party crossing the poplar tree.

NO TIME FOR SABER-RATTLING  
The brutal slaying of the two U.S. officers occurred while most Americans and their political leaders were engrossed in the cliff-hanger at the Republican National Convention. President Ford issued a statement accusing North Korea of "murder," and warned that it would bear full responsibility for the consequences. The U.S. also sent 25,000 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea, and ordered a naval task group led by the aircraft carrier Midway to steam to Korean waters. But in his acceptance speech 48 hours after the attack, Ford made no mention of the Korean incident. A year before, his strong response to the Mayaguez affair had been a political plus for Ford, but the kickoff of Campaign '76 was no time for sabre-rattling. Now the President was presenting himself to the voters as the man who had hosted America's wounded and had brought the country peace.

In that case, Jimmy Carter's reaction to the events in Korea was even more restrained. The Democratic Presidential candidate, who earlier this summer had called for a phased withdrawal of 42,000 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea, deplored the killing of the two American officers as a "terrible tragedy." He had no immediate comment on the retaliatory strike.

North Korea with stained as: Whose blood?

Korea, deplored the killing of the two American officers as a "terrible tragedy." He had no immediate comment on the retaliatory strike. The world's Communist superpower, China and the Soviet Union, also seemed anxious for the episode to blow over. For two days, their news media said nothing of the incident, and when they finally published North Korea's version of the events, they added no inflammatory comments of their own. But the two Koreans were in an overvoltage state. "A stick is needed for a mad dog," declared the South Korean President Park Chung-hee. And all week long the North Koreans seemed to be polling for a fight—although not for a showdown with the U.S.

CLEARING THE VIEW  
The war of nerves in the DMZ flared without warning. When a party of nine South Koreans, two of them members of an American MP's unit, walked out to prune the poplar tree, the DMZ was calm. The North Koreans even appeared in a good mood. For a change, a North Korean lieutenant and seven men walked up to Capt. Arthur G. Bonifas, 33, of Newburgh, N.Y., and Lt. Mark T. Barrett, 24, of Columbia, S.C., and asked them what they were doing. The Americans explained that their party was going to trim the tree. The North Koreans were observing the view of a two-man team in U.S. Observation Post 5, "C-22," which marked the North Korean. He sat down to watch.

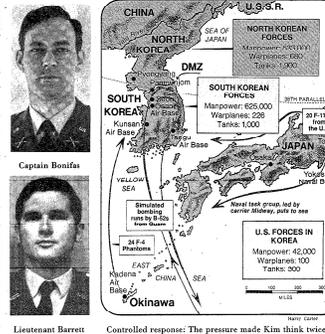
Suddenly, the North Korean lieutenant jumped up and demanded that the work be halted. When the Americans refused, a North Korean guard trotted across the "Bridge of No Return" into his own side of the DMZ and returned with a truckload of reinforcements. The Communist lieutenant carefully took off his watch, wrapped it in a handkerchief and put it in his pocket. Another North Korean officer, who said, "Then we Koreans often say, 'Kill them first.'"

South Korea, and ordered a naval task group led by the aircraft carrier Midway to steam to Korean waters. But in his acceptance speech 48 hours after the attack, Ford made no mention of the Korean incident. A year before, his strong response to the Mayaguez affair had been a political plus for Ford, but the kickoff of Campaign '76 was no time for sabre-rattling. Now the President was presenting himself to the voters as the man who had hosted America's wounded and had brought the country peace.

Going to DeCon 3: U.S. troops turn out in full combat gear south of the DMZ

Newweek, August 30, 1976

Newweek, August 30, 1976



Lieutenant Barrett

Controlled response: The pressure made Kim think twice

Staff raised the readiness level of American forces in Korea to Defense Condition 3 (the lowest level is DeCon 5, DeCon 1 is war). Then Kissinger informed WSAG that the President had decided to send more warplanes and naval vessels to South Korea. From their base on Okinawa, 24 Phantoms flew to Kunsan, South Korea. A carrier task group consisting of the carrier Midway, four frigates and a cruiser sailed from Yokosuka, Japan, toward the waters of Korea.



Kim: Relying on juche and nepotism

## THE KOREAN IRON MAN

He gilded, 60-foot statue dominates the skyline of Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea. In almost every corner of his small, mountainous nation, monuments mark the 2,500 different spots at which Kim Il Sung once gave "personal guidance" to his people. When he is referred to in print his titles include "Respected and Beloved Leader," "Ever Victorious Brilliant

Commander" and "Revolutionary Thinker Without Precedent in East or West in All Ages, the Sun of Mankind." For more than three decades, the tough, basically anti-American leader has presided over a personality cult that dwarfs those concocted on behalf of Joseph Stalin and Mao Tse-tung. He also runs one of the world's most ruthless dictatorships, and at 64, Kim's driving ambition is to put the remainder of the Korean peninsula under his iron thumb.

War II, Kim, then a Soviet Army major, became Moscow's puppet in North Korea. To aid nationalist leaders to his image, he adopted the name of Kim Il Sung, a legendary guerrilla whose anti-Japanese exploits made him a hero earlier in the century. Backed by a Soviet army of occupation, during the Korean War, when two of his eldest Cabinet ministers made the error of disagreeing with him on policy, Kim had both men shot. Little is known about Kim's personal habits, but he appears to live in Mao-style tents, and his inimitable

speeches (some of which are printed as full-page advertisements in Western newspapers) show a lack of polish. Kim's pet political concept is juche, a rather vague do-it-yourself ideology. **Assessment:** Although he was originally a Soviet creature, Kim's self-reliance has made him highly resistant to pressure from Russia or from China, which saved him from defeat in the Korean War. The silence with which both powers greeted last week's clash in the DMZ was evidence that Moscow and Peking were worried about their prickly ally's capacity for launching another conflict. At home, Kim has rebuilt his own economy. His growth rate, however, lag far behind that of South Korea. And despite his talk about going it alone, Kim has run up a staggering foreign debt.

In recent months, Kim has been suffering from a large lump on the back of his neck that makes it difficult for him to turn his head. Outside, he has no way of knowing whether the growth is malignant or merely uncomfortable, but whatever the case Kim has carefully organized his own succession. He has ordered pictures of his 35-year-old son, Kim Jung Il, to be hung alongside his own in the country's factories and offices. Young Kim has officially been awarded the title of "Respected Comrade Leader." That is only the beginning of Kim Il Sung's nepotism. His wife, Kim Song Ae, is his only daughter-in-law. His younger brother is Vice Premier, a brother-in-law is Foreign Minister, and a nephew serves as chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly, the most important man; the powerful national security chief.

PHOTO BY AP/WIDE WORLD

Newweek, August 30, 1976

between the U.S. and North Korean personnel in Panmunjom—the only place in the DMZ where the two armies meet with each other. The Americans are ill at ease. The North Koreans are confident in self-control. The North Koreans are masters of bluff and the Korean martial art of bayononet—and of verbal abuse. "They send every smartass to the North Korean Army down our spit or our boots," said one MP. "But we have to keep our cool."

They also have to swallow their pride, and the 25 years since the Korean War ended in a truce, the Communists have frequently managed—through feints, guile or plain talk—to embarrass the American troops and Washington itself. When two U.S. helicopter pilots strayed across the 38th parallel in 1963, the North Koreans held them prisoner for a year until Washington admitted that it had violated the truce. In 1965, U.S. General signed a document confessing to espionage to win the freedom of the Pueblo's 82 crewmen. Washington quickly repudiated the document, but the next year, an American EC-121 spy plane was shot down off the Korean coast, and the U.S. was forced to confess to yet another criminal act to obtain the release of five South Korean captives who had wandered into North Korea.

WE WOULD HAVE TO FIGHT  
In recent years, the U.S. also has been embarrassed by its association with the regime of South Korean President Park. The 16 years of his rule have brought South Korea unprecedented prosperity and military strength—at the cost of heavy human and political repression. Many American liberals want their country to cut ties with Park and start by withdrawing its troops and its tactical nuclear weapons from South Korea. "American withdrawal will be a slow and cautious affair, and I believe it will take place regardless of this fare-up as it should," Asian affairs scholar Edwin Reischauer said last week.

Most military analysts believe South Korea's ground forces are strong enough to repel an attack from the north—if China remains on the sidelines, which seems likely. But Seoul's Air Force, which still flies outdated F-96 fighters, is at a disadvantage. A sudden and complete U.S. pullout could cause many problems. In a recent study, Nath. N. Clough of the Brookings Institution found that withdrawal would increase the risk that Kim Il Sung would feel emboldened to attack South Korea. It would reduce the willingness and ability of China and the U.S. to restrain him, would undermine the confidence of South Korea and would cause the Japanese to question the firmness of the U.S. commitment to Japan. There is no satisfactory solution for a situation that is a U.S. combat force stationed in Korea as an enemy of U.S. interests.

Perhaps with that in mind, North Korea's iron-willed President Kim Il Sung

(see page 8) has been waging a campaign of his own to push the U.S. out of the south. Last week his representatives at the conference of nonaligned nations in Algiers, Algeria, urged the other delegates to adopt a harshly anti-American resolution (page 11). The delegates on Washington seemed to be part of a coordinated plan to put pressure on Washington.

Given the settlement in Algeria for the two Americans seemed to be presented and major new social reforms would be proposed. Last week, however, heavy new taxes would be levied, many new spending programs would be proposed. Last week, however, heavy new taxes would be levied, many new spending programs would be proposed. Last week, however, heavy new taxes would be levied, many new spending programs would be proposed.

Present: Admiral Fadden across North Koreans of an act of 'deliberate murder'  
Only four hours later, General Han asked for a private meeting with Admiral Fadden, the first such encounter since the Pueblo crisis. The two officers, each accompanied by one aide and an interpreter, talked for thirteen minutes. Han's tone was mild and conciliatory, he admitted that the killing of Bonifas and Barrett had been a mistake and claimed that the fight was an accident. The American representatives took his "I understand" as an attempt to defuse the situation and to return to the status quo.

But the chapter was not necessarily closed. For the past 23 years, Pyongyang has repeatedly challenged the U.S. and South Korea with one nagging border incident after another. For the 42,000 GIs in South Korea, the affair of the poplar tree was only one skirmish in a war of attrition whose end was nowhere in sight.

WILSON B. BELLAMY AND HOLGER JENSEN IN PANMUNJOM AND LLOYD H. WORMAN IN WASHINGTON

## AUSTRALIA: The Party's Over

The contract was starting. While their government was being run by the mercenary Labor Party, Australians had learned to expect sensational headlines on the day the federal budget was announced. Heavy new taxes would be levied, massive new spending programs would be proposed. Last week, however, heavy new taxes would be levied, massive new spending programs would be proposed. Last week, however, heavy new taxes would be levied, massive new spending programs would be proposed.



Present: Treasurer Phillip Lynch, Fraser's economic message signaled a return to the conservative fold  
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WILSON B. BELLAMY AND HOLGER JENSEN IN PANMUNJOM AND LLOYD H. WORMAN IN WASHINGTON

Newweek, August 30, 1976

8

Through out the 1970s the DPRK continued its covert attempts to destabilize the government of the ROK. NKPA infiltrators continue to probe the DMZ, and communist spy rings were continually discovered in the South. The DPRK also kidnapped citizens of the ROK and Japan, to better train its spies in South Korean, and Japanese culture. This was done so that DPRK spies could learn to pass themselves off as either South Korean or Japanese. In addition NKPA continued to infiltrate agents via sea borne insertion. On 27 October, 1978 another tunnel dug by the DPRK was discovered. Like the previous tunnels its purpose was to secretly allow the NKPA to move large numbers of troops south.

Throughout this time the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division continued to rotate infantry battalions to a three month stint of DMZ duty. During the summer, spring and fall the battalions which had all been stationed south of the Imgin River were temporarily billeted at Warrior Base, a sprawling tent city North of Camp Greaves. During the winter months the battalion stationed at Camp Greaves and Camp Liberty Bell was assigned the mission. A DMZ tasking was broken down into three phases, guard post duty, in which a rifle company manned Guard Posts Oulette, Collier, and 128. Guard Post Oulette was only a few dozen meters from the MDL, and bored soldiers had been known to throw batteries into North Korea to try and explode mines. 128 was at the south entrance to the DMZ, and all traffic into and out of the zone had to pass through it. Collier was in close proximity to Taesongdong the only inhabited village left in the DMZ. The guard posts were heavily fortified and offered good observation of the DMZ and North Korea.

Patrolling was the second phase on the DMZ mission. In this phase a rifle company sent out squad sized daytime reconnaissance combat patrols, and night time

ambushes. The patrols also gathered intelligence on NKPA activities, looked for violations of the cease fire agreement, and hunt for infiltrators. The soldiers on patrol went out with a full basic load, with a magazine in their weapons, and the designated marksmen had a round in the chamber. During movements the artillery forward observer called in preplanned targets to the artillery battery so that the gun tubes would literally be tracking the patrol in case an artillery fire mission was needed. At night during the ambushes, the squads set up on likely avenues of approach and deployed claymore mines hoping to catch infiltrators. In the 1980s, out side of brief periods during the invasions of Grenada and Panama, the DMZ was the only place in the US Army where an infantry private could learn his craft in actual combat operations.

The final phase was when a rifle company would be assigned to as the quick reaction force unit. One platoon was on a few seconds notice, which meant that the soldiers literally had to sleep fully clothed and with their boots on. The weapons and equipment were loaded on the trucks, and once the alarm went off the platoon was expected to be within the DMZ in minutes. The other platoons in the company were on stand by, and had to be ready to follow the other platoon.

Each company rotated duty, which meant that the guard posts were always manned, there always were patrols out, and that there always was a QRF. The DMZ itself was a surreal environment. The NKPA constantly blared propaganda from giant loudspeakers, there were abandoned fighting positions, and some still containing decayed human remains. The DMZ was littered with old unexploded ordinance, and random minefields. Often stunned GIs would watch as the NKPA and ROKs would engage in random firefights. The land being largely uninhabited, was also covered in thick

vegetation, and animals, including tigers were fairly common. Soldiers on patrol had to be constantly alert for infiltrators, and had to be extremely careful to know exactly where they were at all times. The MDL markers had rusted out in many places, and it was very easy to stray into the DPRK. If that happened the NKPA would open fire with no notice. Occasionally a mine or old shell would explode, and often amused GIs on patrol or guard post would watch as an unwary NKPA soldiers maintaining illegal mine fields on their side of the MDL would mishandle a mine and blow them selves up. In the summer the temperature could easily reach 90+ degrees, with stifling humidity, and in the winter the temperature could drop well below zero.



*A rifle squad from D co 5/20<sup>th</sup> Infantry, at Warrior Base just before a DMZ patrol, 1990. The author is in the second row, second from the left.*



*A rifle squad at Warrior Base, early 1980s.*



*SGT Al Garcia, (R) SP4*

*Harrington at Camp Greaves, ROK*

In December 1979, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 9th Infantry assumed the DMZ mission. Sergeant Al Garcia was assigned to B Company, and his platoon was tasked to occupy Guard Post Oulette. Shortly before leaving Camp Greaves, Garcia's platoon sergeant,

Sergeant First Class Tom Anderson, a veteran of two combat tours in Vietnam, organized a patrol that would meet with the rest of the platoon at Guard Post Oulette. Garcia was to carry the PRC-77 radio on the patrol, but due to the fact that he had just been promoted to Sergeant his close friend Harrington was assigned in his place. The patrol moved out into the dense early morning fog.



*Guard Post Oulette. (Picture courtesy of Al Garcia)*

The balance of the platoon took vehicles to Guard Post and assumed duties. As the day stretched on Garcia grew nervous, because the patrol was hours late for arriving at the Guard Post. As the fog burned off, Garcia and others heard distant explosions and saw NKPA soldiers running down a nearby hill on their side of the MDL. Suddenly the North Koreans began shooting at unknown targets. The stunned US GIs took cover, while the word went out that Anderson's patrol had become lost in the dense fog, and accidentally crossed the MDL, walking into an NKPA minefield. The "Anderson Patrol" as it became known, had been trapped in a minefield and now was under fire from the

Communists. Garcia asked his platoon leader for the quick reaction force, and/or permission to lead a patrol to try a rescue. The platoon leader did not answer him. Garcia quickly gathered up some men and ammunition and attempted to lead a patrol to help Anderson. Garcia's platoon leader ordered Garcia at gunpoint to stand down. The officer been ordered by the battalion commander to stop the men, in fear of escalating the situation. The Anderson Patrol was on its own.

Eventually the patrol managed to extract itself from the minefield, and had several wounded, and one soldier, SFC Anderson, was missing. Harrington was severely wounded and medically evacuated out. In the subsequent days more details would be revealed. As the Anderson Patrol mistakenly crossed into the DPRK and into the minefield one of the soldiers triggered a mine which severely injured Harrington and another soldier. Anderson tried to probe through the mine field to help Harrington. As he did this, Anderson triggered another mine that blew him deeper into the mined field and killed him. The surviving members of the squad, dealing with several wounded men, and with out backup, were forced to abandon Anderson's body, and probed their way out of the minefield. They called in an unarmed medevac, which crossed the MDL and braved NKPA small arms fire to evacuate the wounded. The squad then moved back into the ROK and made its way to the Main Supply Route where the soldiers were picked up by trucks. After stripping him of all military equipment, the NKPA returned Anderson's body to the UNC in Panmunjom. To this day the US Army does not consider the men of the Anderson Patrol combat veterans, and no one on the patrol has ever received any official recognition.

#### **Chapter Four The Savage Time**

In the 1980s, the familiar patterns of covert NKPA infiltrations and harassment continued. In May of 1980, the NKPA probed Guard Post Oulette, which resulted in a firefight. The level of violence on the DMZ had become routine, and both sides accepted the status quo. Through out the US Army a tour in Korea was something to be avoided at all costs. The soldiers there walked combat patrols, minus the combat pay, and if anything happened, it was nearly impossible to get combat decorations, and when a soldier was not patrolling the DMZ, the training was relentless. It was an unaccompanied tour, so a soldier's family could not come, and the units operated on a war footing. Why bother with that when one could instead go to Germany, where soldiers had weekends off, plenty of leisure programs, abundant attractive friendly women, and the opportunity to travel Europe during off duty hours?

An incident that occurred on 9 December, 1983 was a typical example on a NKPA infiltration attempt. At 2255 hours, a three to four man element of unidentified personnel were spotted by a platoon from 1/9 INF stationed at Guard Post Oulette. The alert GIs were scanning the darkness with TOW thermal antitank night sights and spotted the Unidentified Individuals (UI) south of the MDL. Very quickly two patrols, one from the platoon on Oulette, and a mounted MACE<sup>43</sup> patrol already on station within the DMZ were sent to investigate. One of the soldiers in the MACE patrol was PFC. Wayne Shelton, who as a communication specialist was assigned to the patrol to ensure that the patrol's radios functioned properly.

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<sup>43</sup> MACE was an acronym for Mobile Acquisition Counterinfiltration Element. MACE patrols were built around one of the DMZ battalions Antitank Platoons, and usually consisted of 12-16 soldiers mounted in Jeeps. MACE patrols provided mounted patrols in the DMZ, that could react quicker than foot patrols, provide 2<sup>nd</sup> source visual confirmations, and offered highly mobile firepower if needed. The soldiers were armed with M16s, M203s, and had various night observation devices.

The UIs were intercepted near West Lake, a small body of water near Guard Post Oulette. It was a pitch black night, and the GIs fired M203 illumination rounds to positively identify the UIs as NKPA infiltrators. Once it was verified that the UI were indeed NKPA, the GIs unleashed hell.

With the communists illuminated by the M203 launched flares, the GIs engaged them with small arms fire, and 40mm High Explosive rounds fired from M203 grenade launchers. Young GIs, almost all of whom had never shot anything but inanimate targets, blasted North Korean soldiers with bullets and high explosive grenades. The NKPA infiltrators realized that they were out gunned, returned fire, and quickly broke contact and returned across the MDL. The GIs swept the area for hours looking for bodies and/or lost communist equipment, and at first light found foot prints, and drag marks signifying that at least one infiltrator was killed, and carried back into the DPRK by his comrades. Soldiers manning thermal night sights on Oulette confirmed that at least one infiltrator was killed, because with their thermal sights they could literally see the heat drain from one of the bodies, clearly showing that the communist had died.





*A NKPA soldier in Panmunjom. This soldier was called “Smiley” for his propensity to slip in a sly smile when a GI took his picture. There is a good chance that this enemy soldier was either killed or wounded by the JSA on 23 November. (Picture courtesy of Dave Chapman)*

In November of 1984, DMZ duty entailed vast amounts of boredom, punctuated by moments of sheer, absolute terror. The situation along the DMZ was surreal at times. The DMZ was the most heavily fortified border in the world, but it was also a tourist attraction. Both sides led tour groups to the JSA to get a look at the other side. The JSA even had a specially trained, hand picked section of soldiers whose responsibility was to lead tours of Panmunjom. These soldiers had to be carefully trained because if they said the wrong thing in front of a tour group, it could very well lead to an international incident.

Of course the primary function of the UNC JSA was security, and its table of organization and equipment called for four platoons of infantry soldiers. One of these

soldiers was PFC Richard Howard who was assigned to the JSA in October of 1983.

Under the stern hand of Larry Williams, who by then had made First Sergeant of the Joint Security Company of the JSA, young soldiers like Howard were expertly trained in small unit tactics to avoid a repeat of the Axe Murder Incident.

Howard, a Texan, thoroughly enjoyed duty at the JSA. He remembers the duty as mostly routine, with comical moments of typical GI mischief. At times the GIs would secretly trade with the NKPA. If an unlucky GI was caught doing this by his chain of command, he risked nonjudicial punishment and extra duty for “fraternizing with the enemy”. Still many GIs took their chances to get souvenirs from the communists. At times the NKPA even behaved in a civilized manner. Howard recalls once being on night duty at a checkpoint and nodding off to sleep. An NCO in Howard’s platoon was walking the check points checking on the soldiers, and a NKPA soldier threw a rock at Howard’s checkpoint to wake him up before the NCO discovered him. Once, when Williams was in very close proximity to the MDL in Panmunjom, he stumbled and nearly tripped, but was caught by his NKPA counterpart, who only a few days before had told Williams that if he had to kill Williams he would do it with his bare hands to save a bullet. At times, the situation resembled “a show”,<sup>44</sup>

The JSA commander at the time was Lieutenant Colonel Charles Viale. Viale had been commissioned an infantry officer in 1968 and went on to serve with the “Golden Dragons” of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 14<sup>th</sup> Infantry in Vietnam. His father, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Robert Viale earned a Medal of Honor, (posthumously) with K Co. 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment during the Second World War. Viale was a hands on leader, and he led from the front. Viale was committed to emphasizing and enhancing the infantry skills of the JSA

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<sup>44</sup> Richard Howard, interview by Manny Seck, 12 March, 2010.

security company. To underscore this Viale changed the color of the JSA unit patch from military police colors, green and gold, to the much more masculine infantry blue.

On the evening of 22 November, 1984, there were reports that NKPA infiltrators had slipped across the MDL in the JSA area of operations. Viale personally led the patrol to look for the enemy. The patrol did not find anything, but all hands nearly had a collective heart attack when the patrol stumbled across a pheasant that noisily took wing right in front of the soldiers. Howard was also on the patrol, remembers the situation that night being very confusing, with lost ROK soldiers in the area, and limited visibility. During the hunt, the patrol wandered into tall reeds that were over the 6 foot 2 inch Howard's head, which coupled with the darkness, totally obscured vision. At some point some one opened fire on a real or imagined target, which exponentially increased the tension level. Luckily no one was hurt.

Duty in Panmunjom was serious business, and danger lurked constantly in the background. To prepare for any contingency, Viale had the JSA security company train constantly in small unit tactics under the guidance of 1SG Williams, and the platoon sergeants. Howard recalls relentless patrol training; react to contact drills, skills qualification training, and preparation for the Expert Infantryman Badge test. The JSA security guards also conducted counter infiltration patrols, and maintained a quick reaction force, very similar to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry division QRF. This training would pay dividends.

Friday, 23 November, 1984 started out as a fairly typical day for the men of the 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon of the Joint Security Company of the JSA. Due to the Thanksgiving Holiday, no tours were scheduled for the US/ROK side of Panmunjom. Howard, a member of 4<sup>th</sup>

Platoon and on duty at checkpoint# four, remembers being acutely annoyed that he did not get a Thanksgiving meal the previous night. On the communist side a tour group had pulled in, and the NKPA security guards were delivering the standard tour, showing the tour group the “US Imperialists, and their Korean puppets”. On this tour was a 22 year old Soviet man named Vasily Yakovlevich Matuzok. Matuzok was an employee of the Soviet embassy in Pyongyang, and on this day his actions would start a chain of events that would lead to one of the biggest firefights in the history DMZ.

As the tour neared “Conference Row”, a series of buildings that straddled the MDL in which the two sides held meetings, Matuzok took off from the tour and ran across the MDL to defect to the West. Immediately NKPA security guards drew their pistols and ran in pursuit, shooting at the young Soviet as they went. Other NKPA guards in communist checkpoints opened up on the US/ROK checkpoints in an effort to keep UNC guards from helping the defector. Howard who was on duty in checkpoint four, watched the action unfold in stunned amazement. When asked what the first thing that ran through his mind was as he watched the NKPA soldiers run over the MDL, Howard replied “Oh, f--k!”<sup>45</sup>

Howard’s succinct, and highly appropriate appraisal of the situation was followed by decisive action. He quickly alerted the rest of 4<sup>th</sup> platoon, and then from his exposed position, sent timely information up the chain of command. Within a split second a routine day morphed into a life and death struggle.

Two of Howard’s platoon mates, PFC Michael A. Burgoyne, and Korean augmentee PFC Chang Myung Gi, were near checkpoint four escorting a civilian work crew. Chang was a popular member of 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon, and liked to kid around. He was

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<sup>45</sup> Richard Howard, email to author, 28 April, 2010

affectionately nicknamed “Monkey” for his goofball antics in the barracks. As the two soldiers watched in shocked amazement, Matuzok ran in front of them being chased by NKPA soldiers firing weapons. This is when the hard training that Viale had insisted on paid off. The two UNC soldiers drew their M1911A1 .45 caliber pistols and started firing big 230 grain hardball rounds at the NKPA. Burgoyne hit one, taking the communist soldier right off his feet. The NKPA soldiers stopped chasing Matuzok to return fire at the two exposed GIs, giving Matuzok a few precious seconds to conceal himself in some bushes.

Burgoyne and Chang both were hit by the NKPA return fire, with Chang taking a round below his right eye which exploded out of the back of his head. He was dead before he reached the ground. Burgoyne took a round in his lower face which put him down hard. Burgoyne miraculously survived.

Due to Howard’s timely alert, the rest of 4<sup>th</sup> platoon had time to react to the situation. The men broke out M16 rifles that they had secretly stored in their checkpoints and engaged the NKPA soldiers. Their accurate fire hit several NKPA soldiers forcing them to forget about the Soviet defector, and seek cover. More NKPA soldiers attempted to come over the MDL in an effort to rescue their fallen comrades, but again the hard training the JSA soldiers had undergone paid dividends. Specialist 4<sup>th</sup> Class (SP4) John Orlicki, armed himself with a M203 grenade launcher, and under the close supervision of his squad leader, Staff Sergeant (SSG) Bart Womack, started firing 40mm high explosive dual purpose rounds at likely avenues of approach that the NKPA would have to use to ingress the battle area. Orlicki killed at least one NKPA soldier, and effectively isolated the battlefield from enemy reinforcements. Another UNC soldier, SP4 Timothy

Neigh delivered deadly fire with his .45 caliber pistol pinning down the communists who had crossed the MDL. During this time Howard divided his time by providing intelligence on enemy locations to higher headquarters, and delivering accurate M16 fire on the communists. Howard's reporting gave his chain of command real time intelligence about the NKPA's location and disposition, meaning that his company commander knew exactly where the enemy was at all times, and could deploy the JSF accordingly, which was a crucial advantage to JSA forces. Howard did this from an exposed position, at great risk to himself. His actions, and the actions of the rest of 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon, saved Matuzok's life.

By this time both the JSA and the 2<sup>nd</sup> ID QRF were alerted about the situation in Panmunjom. The JSA QRF, composed of soldiers from 1<sup>st</sup> platoon ran to their trucks and raced toward the battle. The 2<sup>nd</sup> ID QRF, composed of a rifle platoon from 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 38th Infantry, deployed from Warrior Base and took up a position well south of the battle, with the JSA never requiring their assistance. Through out the DMZ, both UNC and NKPA units went on alert. A Mobile Acquisition Counter Penetration Element, (MACE) patrol built around an antitank platoon mounted in jeeps, from Combat Support Company, 1<sup>st</sup>/38 Infantry, on routine patrol in the DMZ, was ordered to stop what it was doing, and take up a blocking position near Panmunjom, and to engage any NKPA elements that tried to reinforce the North Koreans in Panmunjom. The Communists never tried.

The JSA QRF element, 1<sup>st</sup> platoon reinforced with the Joint Security Force company commander, arrived on the battlefield shortly after 1100 hours. The platoon established a perimeter, and deployed a rifle squad augmented with two M60 machine

gun teams in an over watch position on a small hill to provide covering fire on NKPA checkpoints, and to cover the advance of the rest of the platoon. The two remaining squads, led by Staff Sergeant Richard Lamb, and Staff Sergeant Curtis Gissendanner<sup>46</sup>, moved carefully towards contact.

As 1<sup>st</sup> platoon moved forward, it encountered Matuzok, still hiding in the bushes. The Soviet loudly declared his intention to defect, and loudly asked for help. Matuzok was secured, searched for weapons, and turned over to the JSF company commander. Gissendanner's squad was tasked to provide security for the left flank, which effectively surrounded the approximately platoon sized element of NKPA soldiers that had crossed the MDL.

The volume of fire was staggering. Viale would later notice that the buildings in Panmunjom were riddled with bullet holes. Lamb describes the mayhem, "at one point enemy fire became so intense that it shredded small scrub bushes being used for concealment"<sup>47</sup> This was the first time that all most all of the UNC soldiers saw death up close and personal, and it was certainly the first time that these young men had ever killed another human being. "We were close enough to see the look of bewilderment in the faces of the enemy as our bullets struck. We watched them crumple to the ground and were astonished at the amount of punishment the human body could sustain; we listened to their cries for help. We watched enemy soldiers literally bleed to death less than fifteen meters to our front; the blood loss was appalling."<sup>48</sup> Lamb would go on to say.

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<sup>46</sup> In 1988 then Sergeant First Class Gissendanner was an Army recruiter in New York City who was one of the recruiters that enlisted the author of this paper.

<sup>47</sup> Richard Lamb, sworn statement, 19 June, 2000.

<sup>48</sup> Lamb, 19 June, 2000.

As the noose tightened around the NKPA soldiers and their casualties mounted, they realized that there was no way out. The surviving Communists raised their hands in surrender. They were allowed to police up their dead and wounded, and retreat back across the MDL. The JSA had won its battle. The entire affair had lasted less than an hour.

To this day, Viale wishes that he had pictures of the defeated NKPA captured by his soldiers. Viale later confronted Matuzok, wanting him to realize that his actions had directly led to the death of a UNC soldier. When he was told this, Matuzok paused, reflected briefly, and sadly acknowledged the death of Chang. Matuzok would eventually settle in New York City under an assumed name. Burgoyne recovered fully. After the battle the men of the JSA were NOT awarded the Combat Infantryman's badge.



*Members of 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon engaging the NKPA 23 November, 1984. The author thinks that the kneeling soldier is SSG Lamb. (Picture courtesy of BG. Charles Viale)*



*A dead NKPA soldier being attended to by one of his comrades. This picture was taken during the 23 November, 1984 firefight. (Picture courtesy of BG. Charles Viale)*



Two other blood stains left by enemy soldiers during the 23 Nov fight. The trail below the KPA's main position (behind the hedge). The berm initially used for cover by the C





*A picture of Panmunjom taken from Guard Post Oulette in the summer of 1990. In the center a NKPA checkpoint is visible, and in the background, is Propaganda Village. Propaganda Village is a phony village created by the DPRK as a showcase of what life is like in the so called “Workers Paradise” . (Picture from author’s collection)*



*The fields of fire of Guard Post Oulette. The yellow sign in the foreground is an MDL marker, marking the exact border of the two Koreas. Anything past the sign is in the DPRK.*

In the aftermath of 23 November, the men of 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon quietly attempted to get back to the routine<sup>49</sup>. There was little fanfare, and while some soldiers did receive minor decorations for their bravery (they did not receive CIBs) in one of the biggest incidents in the DMZ, the men noticed that they had changed. One of their platoon mates was dead, taken while he was still young, and another was injured. Their courage under fire was barely recognized by the Army and after a three and a half day pass, the men were

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<sup>49</sup> There have been unconfirmed reports that NKPA Senior Lieutenant Pak Chul, the soldier who murdered Captain Bonifas, was still in charge of the NKPA security guards during the 1984 firefight, and because of the outcome of the battle, was summarily executed in Panmunjom. Richard Howard remembers hearing pistol shots after the firefight, and after November, 1984 Chul has never been seen. However these reports cannot be verified. If it is true then the 23 November firefight had some concrete ansilary benefits.

expected to go back to work, and stand a few feet away from NKPA soldiers who just days before had been trying their very best to kill them. Howard remembers being very angry, and a collective depression settle within the platoon. He states that the soldiers “didn’t care” anymore, and some of the men “went off the deep end.”<sup>50</sup> There were alcohol abuse issues, and the JSA chain of command noticed that there was a problem, and reshuffled the platoons in the Company to try and fix the situation. It would take years before the men would consider that they might be suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

As the years stretched on the DMZ remained a very dangerous place. The NKPA still continued to probe UNC positions, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division and the JSA continued to patrol the US sector. In 1988 the Summer Olympic Games were held in the ROK, with a very large number of nations participating. Due to the fact that a legal state of war still existed between the DPRK and the ROK, North Korea boycotted the games. This would be the last Olympics that the Soviet Union would participate, because the USSR would implode in 1991. The ROK conducted unprecedented shows of force to prevent any disruptions of the Olympics by the DPRK. The Olympics were a resounding success and it was seen as a “coming out” party for the ROK by the international community.

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<sup>50</sup> Richard Howard, interview by Manny Seck, 12 March, 2010



*PFC Kim, Korean*

*Augmentee to the US Army. (Author's collection)*

### **Chapter 5 End of an Era**

As the 1990s dawned, the US presence on the DMZ underwent fundamental changes. The UNC was so confident in the ROK army's abilities, it was decided that they would take over the entire DMZ (save for Panmunjom which would still have US Infantrymen in the JSA). In the fall of 1991, after 26 years of combat operations, and hundreds of casualties, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division was pulled off the line. The last full 2<sup>nd</sup> ID DMZ rotation was conducted by 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry, and the last 2ID battalion to set foot in the DMZ was the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 503<sup>rd</sup> Infantry, whom officially lowered the Stars and Stripes over US guard posts and turned the guard posts over to the ROKs.

And the NKPA still attempted to send infiltrators south.

In the summer and fall of 1990, both 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry, and 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion/5<sup>th</sup> Infantry had several confirmed infiltrations into the US sector of the DMZ. Some were even videotaped by cameras on the guard posts.

There was no fanfare or parades for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division; even though its soldiers had successfully conducted combat operations against one of the most dangerous armies in the world for parts of four decades, with little or no recognition from its own country.

The DPRK, still continued its pattern of aggression. In 1992 a running gunbattle broke out as NKPA infiltrators attempted to shoot their way into the ROK. On 15 September, 1996 a DPRK midget submarine with a crew of 11 and carrying 15 commandos accidentally beached itself on a South Korean beach near the town of Gangneung. When the Communists realized that there was no way to free the sub, the infiltrators destroyed all sensitive intelligence material on the ship. The North Koreans were noticed by an alert South Korean taxi driver who went to the police. The communists realized that they were hunted, and to avoid ROK forces sent to capture or kill them, the Communists hid in a remote mountainous area close to where they came ashore. The NKPA commandos killed the sub's crew to prevent them from being captured by the ROK authorities, split into fire team sized elements and then attempted to escape and evade back to the DPRK. During the next two months the ROKS hunted down and killed all of the infiltrators except for one that was able to slip back across the MDL, and one that was captured.



*Picture of the captured DPRK midget submarine (Picture courtesy of ROKDrop.com)*

On 17 December, 1994, a US Army OH-58 Light Observation Helicopter from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division flown by Chief Warrant Officer 2 David Hilemon and Chief Warrant Officer 2 Bobby Hall strayed into the DMZ, and mistakenly crossed the MDL. The NKPA wasted no time, and promptly shot the aircraft down, killing Hilemon. Hall was captured by the NKPA and detained for two weeks before being released. This marked a grim milestone. Up to that point, Enemy action in Korea had been killing US troops in Korea for fifty-four years. Luckily for Hall, the NKPA did not mistreat him as it did past US prisoners of war.

In 2004 the JSA went ROK pure, with only a few Americans in some administrative positions. For the first time since its inception, the DMZ did not have US

infantrymen standing guard. The US's combat role was over, and typically, almost no one knew about it.

When asked about his recollections from his time within the DMZ, Robert Griggs, whos served as a Private First Class and Specialist in 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry, stationed at Camp Howze, Remembers: "I was a PFC with 1-5 IN (M), originally out of Camp Howze, but after the DMZ we moved to Camp Hovey. We had 113s, but of course we parked them for the DMZ missions. I have always been an 11B and came to Korea from the 82nd, having just jumped into Panama, fighting in Operation Just Cause.

What stands out most about the DMZ patrols of course was our dismounted patrols -- recons and ambushes. I remember all the prep work we did on our gear to ensure it was to standard -- tie downs were right, even the length of the 550 cord on the canteens was nearly perfect? As a PFC Team Leader, I really perfected inspections and rehearsals during the DMZ mission. I learned so much about what attention to detail meant and how paying attention to the little things really made a difference on patrol.

I think it was a great experience for all of us to have carried live rounds (including claymores etc.) on patrol and to know that contact was possible, though more often than not it didn't happen. I also remember that I really felt that I was on a combat patrol on each mission -- not a fake training event. Other than some patrols in Panama where there was contact, the DMZ patrols were the most realistic operations I did as a Soldier (until OEF and OIF).<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom, the operational names given to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I also remember Warrior Base operations and how similar what we did there is what FOB life is now in Afghanistan and what we did in Iraq. This is another area where junior leaders really had to be on top of their game because there was so much going on. As a Squadron Commander today, I wish I could get my Squad Leaders that type of real training and real patrolling --I think it really made our junior NCOs so much better.

I changed jobs after my dismounted patrols, so I didn't do any time on the guard towers, (Guard posts) but I did drive in and out of the DMZ multiple times and I spent a great deal of time at the towers -- again, a great experience. To be able to see North Korea, have eyes on their activities -- I think people would be surprised at how much activity really goes on up there.”<sup>52</sup>

## **Chapter Six Conclusions**

The Quiet War was an unqualified success. The US Army, with its ROK allies, held the DPRK at bay for more than 50 years. Because of this the ROK is a thriving democracy, economic powerhouse, and military titan. The ROK went from a country receiving aid, to one that gives it. From the military standpoint The Quiet War was also an unqualified success. The UNC constantly thwarted the DPRK attempts to destabilize the ROK, and did so in a manner that never started all out war, and never drained resources away from other US commitments.

There are important lessons to be learned from the Quiet War that had they been applied to places like Iraq and Afghanistan, could have saved US and civilian lives. The US never used firepower indiscriminately in the ROK. In doing so it spared civilian

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<sup>52</sup> Robert Griggs, email to author, 8 January, 2012

casualties which would have enraged the ROK population, and could have driven a wedge between the US and the ROK. US Army soldiers lived and worked with the South Korean population and (for the most part) were not seen as outsiders, or an occupying force. In many places in the ROK, US Army forces are part of the community, and are treated as such. This offered the ROK civilian population security, and denied the communists unrestricted access to civilians to expand their influence. As Mao Tse Tung stated "The guerrilla must move amongst the people as a fish swims in the sea."<sup>53</sup> To keep the insurgents isolated from the local civilian population is critical. Bonesteel understood this, and made safeguarding the civilian population of the ROK the main priority.

Protecting the civilian population is an important lesson, which was forgotten by the US military in operations in the War on Terror. In 2006, and early 2007 when the US was locked into Iraq, US troops lived in vast Forward Operating Bases where they were detached from the Iraq civilian population. US troops would commute from these bases to conduct combat operations in Iraq villages, and once finished, returned to base. This essentially conceded the villages to the insurgents when US troops were absent, and left Iraqi civilians to fend for themselves. This enabled a Shia versus Sunni civil war which produced hundreds of bodies every day, as well as gave the insurgents that targeted US troops space and time to organize. As the situation spun out of control, Bush, his vice president, Dick Cheney (both of whom went to great lengths to avoid combat duty during the 1960s) and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, decided to reinforce the troops in Iraq, and to get them off of their vast FOBs, and into Iraqi communities, full time. This kept a lid on the simmering violence. Had the leadership on the ground in Iraq

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<sup>53</sup> Mao Tse-Tung *On Guerilla Warfare* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 2000), 46

heeded counterinsurgency lessons from the Quiet War, and the war in Vietnam, many US and Iraqi lives could have been saved.

There was never an emphasis on body counts in the ROK. The main focus was always protecting the civilian population from DPRK intimidation and terrorism. The US and ROK Army did this by old fashioned soldiering. GIs left the vehicles in the motor pool, and walked patrols, set up ambushes, and maintained a visible presence. They looked, listened and smelled for signs of enemy activity, and became closely familiar with the land that they operated in. For many years every spring, US Soldiers and Marines were part of the landscape of the countryside as part of the annual Team Spirit war games. This was contrary to the war in Vietnam where US General William Westmoreland was fixated on fighting the big World War Two style battle with massive, indiscriminate applications of firepower, and getting high enemy body counts. Westmoreland's tactics led to civilian casualties that enraged the South Vietnamese population, and played right into the hands of the North Vietnamese, and their Viet Cong allies. These same mistakes were made again in Iraq and Afghanistan where far too many local civilians were killed or injured by US firepower. An army can kill insurgents all day and night, but if the local civilians do not have security, are regularly inadvertently killed by the counterinsurgent forces, and the enemy can move about them at will, the counterinsurgency is bound to fail, as witnessed by the April, 1975 collapse of the South Vietnamese government.

With the time provided by the UNC, the ROKs were able to develop a highly competent professional military, which came to be feared by its enemies. In the past the only thing that stopped the DPRK from invading South Korea was the US Army. Today,

the DPRK has to starve its own people just to maintain a military, and the ROK military has become a regional power, that has sent troops to places like Vietnam, and Iraq. Today with a civilian population of nearly 49 million, the ROK outnumbers that of the DPRK, which has a population of just over 24 million.<sup>54</sup> The citizens of the ROK enjoy a much higher standard of living than the Northerners, and even though the populations of the Koreas are ethnically homogenous, the average height of a ROK male is three inches taller than his northern counterpart, due to the better diet and living conditions enjoyed in the south.<sup>55</sup> Even though the Communists could inflict horrible damage on the ROK, it is no longer realistic for them to expect to forceably reunify Korea under Communist control. This provides another lesson for Iraq and Afghanistan. If there is enough security for a country to develop, and if the host country has a competent government, a war torn country can develop into a thriving democracy, which is able to defend itself. The critical factor is security. In Afghanistan the people are not safe, so how can they be concerned about developing their country? They are too busy trying to survive. How would Afghanistan be today if the US put 140, 000 troops on the ground in Afghanistan in 2002-2003? Would it have taken ten years to kill Osama Bin Laden? This is why lessons learned in blood in places like the DMZ are so vital. As the saying goes, those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

The issue of recognition for DMZ vets has been a source of contention for many years. Except for a brief period from 1968 to 1973, the US Army steadfastly refuses to acknowledge that the DMZ was a war zone. The vast majority of soldiers who served on the DMZ are not authorized to wear their unit patch as a combat patch, and the vast

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<sup>54</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kn.html> (accessed 7 September, 2011)

<sup>55</sup> Tara Parker-Hope ‘Short North Koreans...and Americans’ *New York Times* 29 September, 2008

majority never collected one penny of combat pay. In 2000, after 16 years of lobbying, JSA veterans of the November 1984 firefight, were finally awarded their highly deserved CIBs, and Richard Howard, Bart Womack and several others were awarded the Bronze Star Medal with a Valor device for their heroic actions that day, but this is the exception not the rule. The US Army's current policy seems delusional to anyone who walked a combat patrol in the Zone.

In 2006 the Army amended Army Regulation 600-8-22, eliminating the highly discriminatory "five firefight rule" pertaining to the CIB, but there are still caveats. Anywhere else in the Army but Korea where soldiers are eligible to be awarded the CIB there is blanket authorization for any soldier that spends as little as one second in the combat zone to wear their unit patch as a combat patch. In Grenada where there was essentially two days of combat, any soldier that set foot on the island from 24 October, 1983 to 21 November, 1983 is authorized to wear a combat patch. Soldiers in the DMZ that were photographed and videotaped engaged in hand to hand combat with NKPA soldiers like Jim Howk, or soldiers who had to fight for their lives when Captain Bonifas and LT Barrett were murdered are not. Another caveat is for soldiers to be awarded the CIB for actions of the DMZ, the burden of proof of contact with the enemy is on the soldier. The Army insists that a soldier must go through ARMY records to find documentation, and track down other soldiers who were present to obtain eyewitness statements. The last 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division soldier left the DMZ over twenty years ago, and some soldiers were involved in incidents dating back to 1954, so how feasible is it to expect a soldier to produce written evidence and eye witness statements from more than half a century ago? In addition, in many cases the National Archives and/or the Army no

longer retain any of these records, anyway. So how can a soldier prove that on a dark night while on guardpost or patrol, an NKPA soldier took potshots at him? Unless someone was hit, what records would be kept? Also, in the 1970s there was a fire in an Army records depository which destroyed tens of thousands of documents, which were irreplaceable. And finally if a soldier does submit the paperwork to request a CIB there is a waiting period that can be as long as a year, and then the request is almost always denied.

In Grenada for basically two days of combat, 3,836 Combat Infantryman's Badges and Combat Medical Badges were awarded<sup>56</sup>. Entire units were issued blanket orders for the CIB, regardless if they actually participated in active ground combat or not. In Desert Storm 25,013 CIBs/CMB were awarded for 100 hours of ground combat.<sup>57</sup>. How much documentation of active fighting could the vast majority of soldiers present in 100 hours of war? It seems nearly impossible that all of those soldiers could have crossed the line of departure and made contact with the enemy in 100 hours. A perfect illustration of this is documented in the book *Death Ground; Today's American Infantry in Battle* by Daniel Bolger. Bolger details an incident in the 1991 Gulf War. On 14 February, 1991 B Company of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ranger Battalion arrived in Saudi Arabia. On 26 February, the Rangers conducted a raid on an Iraqi communication center, totally destroying it in an expertly planned and executed raid. The only problem was that it was completely abandoned by the enemy before the Rangers got there. The Rangers never received one round of return fire. In his book Bolger states "The only people in the complex were US

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<sup>56</sup> US Army Human Resources Command, 24 February, 2011. [https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/TAGD/awards/STATS/Historical\\_Stats.htm#ERA1900](https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/TAGD/awards/STATS/Historical_Stats.htm#ERA1900) (accessed, 18 August, 2011).

<sup>57</sup> US Army HRC

Army Rangers.”<sup>58</sup> The Rangers destroyed the complex and withdrew back to basecamp. The Rangers only conducted that one raid, and spent the rest of the time training.<sup>59</sup> The war ended on 28 February, 1991, and the Rangers returned to homestation shortly thereafter. Even with their lack of contact with the enemy documented, the Rangers all were awarded CIBs, and its combat medic equivalent, the Combat Medical Badge (CMB), Combat Patches, combat pay, medals, and had a welcome home ceremony. None of which were afforded to the vast majority of DMZ vets. So why are DMZ vets held to a completely different standard? How much proof of contact could the Rangers produce?

By no means does this paper intend to insult anyone’s service. Soldiers in Desert Storm, Panama, Etc. fought with honor and courage, just like DMZ veterans did. This paper simply points out glaring inequalities in the Army’s awards policy pertaining to DMZ service. Some would ask if a metal badge is really that important, and point out that the vast majority of DMZ vets are out of the service anyway. It is the position of this paper that yes, the CIB is important, for many reasons. Many DMZ vets suffer from post traumatic stress disorder, and still struggle in their daily lives, some cannot work. Orders for a CIB are a great advantage in seeking service connected disability pay from the Department of Veterans Affairs. To put it bluntly, a CIB might mean the difference between a yes, and a no on disability pay. One must keep in mind that these disability payments are NOT benefits. They are entitlements earned when a soldier was injured performing his duty in the service of his country. Second, an NKPA bullet will kill or maim a GI just as easily as a North Vietnamese, Cuban, or Iraqi bullet. Why shouldn’t soldiers who risked their lives on the DMZ be recognized in a similar fashion as other

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<sup>58</sup> Daniel P. Bolger *Death Ground: Today’s American Infantry in Battle* (New York, Presido Press, 1999), 207

<sup>59</sup> Bolger, 190

soldiers? The US Army is better than playing favorites and judging soldiers by which war zone that they were shot at. The regulations should be enforced consistently across the board.

In conducting research for this paper, the author contacted Army Awards Branch for an explanation of its policies, and was told that the DMZ was “different”. When the author of this paper asked for a definition of “different”<sup>60</sup> in the context of combat operations, and pointed out that a NKPA bullet is just as fatal as any other bullet, the representative could/would not provide an answer. The author of this paper also asked the person at Awards Branch if he had ever set foot anywhere near the DMZ, to which the author was told to “don’t go there”<sup>61</sup>. Apparently the Army feels comfortable having a person who has no knowledge of DMZ operations, and who was not even aware that the two Koreas are still at war, making decisions on whether combat vets who risked their lives (and in some cases, gave their lives) performing their duty, get recognized by their country.

In Army Regulation 670-1, the criteria for a combat patch are: (1) The Secretary of the Army or higher must declare as a hostile environment the theater or area of operation to which the unit is assigned, or Congress must pass a Declaration of War. (2) The units must have actively participated in, or supported ground combat operations against hostile forces in which they were exposed to the threat of enemy action or fire, either directly or indirectly. (3) The military operation normally must have lasted for a period of thirty (30) days or longer. An exception may be made when U.S. Army forces are engaged with a hostile force for a shorter period of time, when they meet all other

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<sup>60</sup> Army Awards Branch representative, interview by Manny Seck ,26 August, 2011

<sup>61</sup> Army Awards Branch representative interview.

criteria, and a recommendation from the general or flag officer in command is forwarded to the Chief of Staff, Army. (4) The Chief of Staff, Army, must approve the authorization for wear of the shoulder sleeve insignia for former wartime service.<sup>62</sup>

A state of war exists between the ROK and the DPRK, as demonstrated by combat patches being authorized for the period of 1968-1973, also the DPRK did not attend the 1988 Olympics because the two countries remain in a state of war. This meets criteria number one. US units actively participated in combat operations by conducting combat patrols, ambushes and quick reaction force duties, were they faced the threat of enemy fire every minute of every day, and often faced actual enemy fire, as documented by the incidents in this paper. In addition, for every documented incident there are hundreds of undocumented incidents that can not be verified, but did in fact occur. The author of this paper was involved in a hostile fire incident in which loss of life occurred, but as of the writing of this paper, has not be able to locate any official documentation. This meets criteria number two. US units rotated to the DMZ for months at a time, and the JSA was permanently stationed in the DMZ so this meets criteria number three. The only requirement lacking is authorization for the Chief of Staff.

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<sup>62</sup> *Army Regulation 670-1*( Washington DC: HQDA, 2005), 239



*The Author before a DMZ patrol.*



*View*

*of the bunker/tower, on Guard Post. At the bottom of the picture is a Claymore Mine for use in case of a ground attack. (Author's collection)*

The Quiet War is a forgotten chapter in US military history. Most People have never heard of the “DMZ War”, *USS Pueblo* or the Axe Murder incident. This is regrettable because there are important lessons to be learned, that are still relevant today. In addition the success of the ROK stands as a symbol of free people’s resistance to tyranny and the power of good over evil. Pragmatically, the Quiet War demonstrates that

the US can fight and win an extended low intensity conflict, and has the skills, both strategic, tactical, and tools: military, diplomatic, and economic, to succeed.

The Quiet War also is another exhibit in the long line of evidence that the US Soldier, who has through out history has been called “soft”, and “privileged” can hold his, or in contemporary times, her own against anything anyone can throw at them.

#### Post Script

On 26 March, 2010 The ROK Navy corvette, *Cheonan*, sunk in the Yellow Sea after and an explosion ripped through her hull. Nearly 50 sailors died. All of the available evidence indicates overwhelmingly that a torpedo from a DPRK submarine caused the explosion. On 23 November, 2010, nearly 26 years to the day after the November firefight, the NKPA fired an artillery barrage that killed and wounded several ROK Marines and civilian personnel on Yeongyeong Island, which prompted swift and overwhelming ROK artillery, counter fire response. The DPRK’s pattern of aggression continues unabated.

#### SITUATION REPORT

Jim Howk is happily retired from the Army, after earning the rank of Command Sergeant Major, and is enjoying life in The South East. Larry Williams also retired as a CSM, having served in Vietnam, Germany, and in a Ranger Battalion, and has started a civilian career with the federal government as a federal police officer. Williams has also served as a detective, patrol watch sergeant, and SWAT officer in the Savannah Police Department. He recently applied to US Army Human Resources Command for a belated CIB. The noninfantry types working there denied William’s request, claiming there was not enough documentation of combat action for him to merit award of the badge.

Ron Rice still struggles with PTSD issues and lives in the South East; he too has never been awarded any recognition for his service. Lee Scripture works for the US Postal Service, and still enjoys talking about his time in Korea. Al Garcia lives in Texas, and has issues with PTSD as well. Charles Viale went on to command the US Army Infantry Training Brigade during the time when the author of this paper went to basic training and his feelings about hard infantry training had not changed one iota. Today he is retired from the Army and lives on the West Coast. Robert Griggs, went on to earn a commission, is currently a Lieutenant Colonel, and commanding officer of a Cavalry Squadron. Richard Howard went on to serve four years in Korea, and left active duty in 1987. He became a police officer attaining the position of patrol supervisor, and went on to become a Master Sergeant in the Army Reserve, where he deployed to Iraq. While he was in Iraq he was attached to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, and as far as the author of this paper has been able to find out, is the only soldier in the history of the Army with both a JSA and 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division combat patch. When Howard was told this he replied with typical Texas humor and modesty, “That and few bucks will get me a cup of coffee.”<sup>63</sup> Even considering the lack of recognition, with out exception every soldier interviewed for this paper is completely without bitterness, and is still quite fond of the US Army, and proudly patriotic, and if given the chance, would not change one second of their military service.

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<sup>63</sup> Howard interview

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