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UNITED STATES

AIR FORCE OPERATIONS
IN THE KOREAN CONFLICT

25 June-1 November 1950

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE

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U S A F H I S T O R I C A L S T U D Y

Director
Aerospace Studies Inst
ATTN: Archives Branch
Maxwell AFB, Alabama

RETURN TO:

101-11
25 June - 1 Nov 1950

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**UNITED STATES
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IN THE KOREAN CONFLICT
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~~DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE~~

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DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C , 1 October 1952.

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SUBJECT (UNCLASSIFIED). USAF Historical Study No 71, "U. S Air Force Operations in the Korean Conflict: 25 June-1 November 1950"

TO: (See distribution)

1. The historical monograph, (title unclassified) "U. S Air Force Operations in the Korean Conflict. 25 June-1 November 1950," one of a series prepared by the Research Studies Institute of the Air University, is published for the information and guidance of all concerned.

2. The basis of issue of the document and the organizations to which it will be distributed are as shown in the list below. Requisitions for and correspondence relating to this publication will be addressed to Director, Research Studies Institute, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE:

K. E. THIEBAUD
Colonel, USAF
Air Adjutant General

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Foreword

This historical monograph on USAF participation in the Korean conflict covers the period from 25 June 1950 to about 1 November 1950. The end of October, which brought the entry of active Chinese Communist troops into the hostilities, has been arbitrarily selected as a terminal to a first phase of the Korean hostilities. The monograph is conceived as an operational history, with no more consideration for administrative and logistical problems than is necessary to understand the employment of air units in combat.

In preparation for the monograph, the USAF Historical Division sent The Air Force Historian (Dr. Albert F. Simpson) and the Historian, Pacific Theater (Dr. Robert F. Futrell), to the Far East, where they spent some 45 days in Japan and Korea gathering documents and interviewing personnel. The Air Force Historian also coordinated the work of the Historical Program within the Far East Air Forces, which, in the press of combat, had been generally neglected. In addition, two other civilian historians (Mr. Alan Bliss and Mr. Thomas J. Mayoock, both of the Air Intelligence Division) spent 90 days on temporary duty, combing USAF Headquarters files in Washington. The monograph was written by Dr. Futrell. For reasons of security, the historians were not permitted unlimited access to JCS and USAF Redline files, but contact officers answered questions of particular importance from the limited files.

If this monograph is therefore not complete from the viewpoint of strategic planning decisions, it has nevertheless some claim to thoroughness as an operational history. For the Fifth Air Force, General Partridge directed each of his subordinate units to prepare, in addition to a monthly unit history required by USAF Regulation 210-3, a comprehensive history of its experiences between 25 June and 1 November 1950. Most of these histories are sober and thoughtful evaluations of problems met and their attempted solutions. Of special merit are the histories of the 3d Bombardment Wing (L), the 18th Fighter-Bomber Group, the 162d Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron (Night Photo), and the unusual 6147th Tactical Control Squadron (Airborne). All of the Fifth Air Force unit histories, however, are of high caliber. The Fifth Air Force Historical Data, 25 June-31 Oct 1950, is a three volume history, which compresses much of the information included in these unit histories together with other headquarters data.

The FEAF Bomber Command has also prepared a superior multi-volume history of its participation in the first phase of the Korean conflict, a work which profited from General O'Donnell's special interest in the historical project. In the hope that the record would be of value to other Air Force officers facing similar problems at a later date, each of the staff sections of this provisional headquarters made an effort to record its experience. The Histori-

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cal Report, FEAF Combat Cargo Command (P), 10 Sept 1950–24 Jan 1951, is an excellent historical coverage, plentifully supported by well-selected documents, of another type of problem, the organization and operations of a provisional air transport command. The Far East Air Matériel Command has completed a history of its activities which meets the usually high standards of that command. A Far East Air Forces history covers the period 25 June–31 December 1950 and, at the direction of Col. Robert H. Warren, Director of Operations, FEAF, a valuable day-by-day history of FEAF Operations has been compiled to cover the period 25 June through 31 October 1950. In addition to these overseas histories, the historical offices of Air Matériel, Strategic Air, Continental Air, and Air Proving Ground Commands, and of the Military Air Transport Service furnished useful studies of their special activities in support of the USAF in the Korean conflict for the period covered by this monograph.

As is the case in all historical monographs, only a small part of the vast store of information included in these command and unit histories could be incorporated in this study. All of these histories, however, are on file in the Archives Branch, USAF Historical Division, Air University, and it is the desire of that unit to invite the widest possible use of these documents. Within limits, the Historical Division is also prepared to furnish brief special studies on topics of interest within the USAF. It must be emphasized that the historical materials can furnish much information of value to most agencies of the USAF having an interest in the Korean conflict.

It is well recognized that the present emphasis on tactical operations in Korea has inevitably slighted the logistics story. The Historical Division therefore plans eventually to issue a separate volume on Korean air logistics. A third volume in this Korean series will continue the story of tactical operations to its termination.

The policy of the Historical Division, Air University, is to welcome any criticisms and comments which may be of value in revising its historical monographs. This present monograph has been circulated widely within the Air Force, and criticisms have been met so far as has been possible. Since this study has been written at such an early date after the events, the Historical Division by no means considers the historical record as closed. Additional criticisms and comments by any reader will remain valuable.

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Introduction

FOR SEVERAL months before the beginning of armed hostilities in Korea the possibility that internal conflict on that troubled peninsula might develop into full-scale war was appreciated by American occupation forces in the Far East. Outbreak of war at the 38th parallel between the Governments of North and South Korea was preceded by five years of internal discord and ill will, combined with international indecision and disagreement. The explosive status of Korea was not new, for control of the peninsula had long troubled the history of the Orient. Korea had traditionally been a state subject to China, a relationship ended in 1894 by the Sino-Japanese war, after a short period of sovereignty, complicated by Russo-Japanese rivalries, Korea came increasingly under the influence of Japan, so that by 1910 she lost her independence in a formal Japanese annexation. After the Japanese had subjugated the peninsula and incorporated it into the economic system of the Empire, Korean refugee nationalists continued to hope for regained statehood.

At the Cairo conference in November 1943, Korean independence was established as one of the war objectives of the Allies, and the 38th parallel was subsequently established as a temporary line of demarcation between United States and Russian zones of occupation in Korea, a line

supposedly useful only to the administration of the Japanese surrender. After World War II ended, representatives of China, Russia, Great Britain, and the United States, meeting in Moscow, again agreed that a Korean democracy be set up and that the United States and Soviet commands in Korea form a joint commission to govern the occupied territory. With increased Russian intransigence, however, further agreements could not be reached, and the peninsula remained divided at the 38th parallel. Elections were held in South Korea during May 1948 under the supervision of a United Nations commission, and in August 1948 the Soviets sponsored an election in North Korea. Though in December 1948 the U N General Assembly declared President Syngman Rhee's government of South Korea to be the only lawful Korean government, the Russians established in the north a Korean Peoples' Republic under Premier Kim Il Sung, a Russian-indoctrinated Communist who had assumed the name of a famous Korean guerrilla leader. By June 1949 most American troops were withdrawn from South Korea; Russia made a great show of withdrawing from North Korean affairs. Two governments thus existed in Korea, each aspiring to unite all of the peninsula under its own authority.

AMERICAN AND SOVIET POLICIES TOWARD KOREA

With the withdrawal of American troops from Korea, the broad policies of the United States in Korea, as stated by the National Security Council and approved by President Truman on 23 March 1949, continued to be (1) establishment of a united, sovereign Korea as soon as possible, (2) maintenance of a government representative of the will of Koreans; and (3) assistance toward the establishment of a sound economy and educational system in Korea. The official policy undertook to secure an armed force in the ROK large enough

to maintain order, but not so large as to strain the country's economy or so powerful as to provide the means for ROK aggression against North Korea. It was therefore decided that the military force was to consist of an army of 65,000 for internal order and border security, a coast guard of 4,000 to prevent smuggling and hostile infiltration by sea, and a police force of 35,000.¹ Sufficient military stores were left behind by American occupation forces to supply the ROK military for about six months, and the United States under-

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took to provide a military mission and some continuing military assistance.

Although the ROK government objected, the United States planned that the ROK army, or "Constabulary," be equipped only with small arms, heavy machine-guns, and 81-mm. mortars, but with no artillery of any caliber.² Ambassador Chough Pyung Ok pressed for a standing army of 100,000 men, a militia of 50,000, an air force of 3,000 men (75 fighters, 12 bombers, 30 training and reconnaissance planes, and 5 cargo planes), a navy of 10,000 men (including two cruisers), and a police force of 50,000. Mr. Kenneth C. Royall, Secretary of War, and Lt. Gen. Albert C. Wedemeyer, visiting Korea in February 1949, emphasized to President Rhee that Korea should not burden its economy with excessive armed forces but should concentrate on economic stability, and General Wedemeyer restressed the point in conferences with Ambassador Chough in April 1949.³ President Rhee, however, remained insistent that the ROK needed a small air force to balance its military strength and to match North Korea's air arm, and, at his request, Maj. Gen. Claire L. Chennault (retired) drew up a plan for a 99 plane complement, including 25 F-51's as the striking force. When General MacArthur's opinion of Chennault's plan was sought, he replied that such a force was not essential to the maintenance of internal order in Korea and would increase the possibility of an all-out war between North and South Korea. MacArthur also thought that it would lend credence to Communist charges that the United States was fostering an armaments race in Korea.⁴

United States policy, however, permitted a few liaison planes for cooperation with the ROK ground troops,⁵ and, using this wedge, the ROK authorities tried to organize an air force. On 10 October the ROK activated a separate air force, assuring the United States that the expansion meant no more than air force representation on the ROK joint chiefs of staff, that it would not affect the economy of their country.⁶ By April 1950, however, they had organized a force of 187 officers and 1,672 enlisted men; 39 of their 57 pilots were trained. The ROKAF's 16 planes (8 L-4's, 5 L-5's, and 3 T-6's) were located at Kimpo and Seoul Municipal Airfields, with detachments at Suwon, Taegu, Kwangju, Kunsan, and Cheju.⁷

Even without the additional military forces desired, ROK security troops were successful in

a campaign against Communist guerrilla infiltration into their country. Ambassador John J. Muccio pointed out that guerrilla strength had been reduced from 2,000 in September 1949 to an estimated 577 in April 1950.⁸ On 24 June 1950, a U.N. commission, having made observations along the 38th parallel, could find no evidence that the ROK was using its military force for illegitimate ends; it reported that ROK troops thereabouts were engaged solely "in rounding up guerrillas and were, in any case, entirely lacking in the armor, heavy artillery, and air support necessary to carry off an invasion of North Korea."⁹

Unfortunately, China and Russia had been preparing the North Korean regime for an offensive war. For its basic combat strength the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) had raised three regular infantry divisions (10,970 men each), an independent mixed brigade approaching division strength, and five constabulary brigades.¹⁰ The divisions had been formed around seasoned officers and non-commissioned officers who had fought with the Chinese Communist Forces (CCF), the commanding general of the NKPA 3d Division, for example, had been a member of the CCF Eighth Route Army. The battle-wise cadres were made up of Koreans who, during the Japanese occupation of their country, had fled to China where, in the Yen-an region, they had been organized into a Korean Volunteer Army for service with the CCF against the Chinese Nationalists. Other Koreans, living in Manchuria, had been conscripted into the CCF. While these veterans of the Red Chinese armies provided cadres for new North Korean divisions, their organization and training was supervised by Russian officers, as many as 15 to each division.¹¹ As the date for hostilities neared, Korean-manned Red Chinese units began to leave China: the CCF 164th and 166th Divisions crossed the Yalu beginning on 20 July 1949 and were secretly reorganized as the NKPA 5th and 6th Divisions, in May 1950 the CCF 12th was passed to Korean control. In addition to these six divisions, the NKPA quickly mustered other strength when combat began south of the 38th parallel. A tank division appeared and no less than 13 rifle divisions were identified; in all, an estimated 150,000 troops were in combat during the first two months of the South Korean campaign.¹²

Supplied with information from a North Korean

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pilot who defected to the ROK on 28 April 1950, American intelligence, which had tended to under-rate the North Korean Air Force, was brought up to date. This information, when correlated with that obtained from a Major Pak Kyung Ok, shot down near Suwon at the outbreak of hostilities, furnished the following North Korean air order of battle, which (with some allowance for variations in plane designations) may be taken as accurate for 29 June

Location	Type	Number
Yonpo.....	Yak-7B.....	10
Yonpo.....	Yak-11.....	12
Yonpo.....	IL-10.....	18
Sinmak.....	Yak-7B.....	10
Sinmak.....	IL-10.....	2
Pyongyang.....	IL-10.....	8
Pyongyang.....	Yak-7B.....	20
Pyongyang.....	Yak-11.....	2
Pyongyang.....	IL-10.....	40

In addition to these 122 combat type aircraft, the NKAF had some 30 other planes, including trainers and possibly a few old Japanese types.¹³ All of the combat types were obsolete Russian models, some of which must have been formally transferred to the NKAF immediately before hostilities two IL-10 aircraft captured at Seoul, for example, had log books with Russian entries as late as 27 June, and then Korean entries.¹⁴ Some North

Korean pilots appear to have had previous combat experience, probably in the Japanese air force, but many of them were young volunteers with limited flying experience. The NKAF appears to have had a total of 15 Soviet advisors, headed by a full colonel with headquarters at Pyongyang.¹⁵

The NKAF possessed good facilities, originally constructed by the Japanese, well north of the 38th parallel, and it was developing some new fields near the 38th parallel in the immediate pre-hostilities period. Airfields with paved runways, repair shops, and refueling facilities were at Pyongyang, Sinuiju, Wonsan, Yonpo, and Chong-jun, and new airfields were being readied at Sinmak and Pyonggang. Pyongyang also had a repair depot, which in 1945 had been the largest in Korea, and there were sub-depots at Yonpo and Hoeryong. Another elaborate depot at Wonsan had been razed by the matériel-hungry Soviets in 1945-1946, obviously before they cast a new policy for Korea, but the remaining depots were more than adequate.¹⁶ Although the aircraft in North Korean hands on 29 June had no great range—only the IL-10 (with a combat radius of some 200 nautical miles) could approach the southern tip of Korea.¹⁷—had the U. N. not intervened in Korea, the NKAF would have possessed a substantial margin of air superiority over the ROK air force

ESTIMATES OF NORTH KOREAN INTENTIONS

Despite the secrecy of CCF Korean troop movements across the Yalu, the U. S. Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG) in Seoul had received some hints of the amalgamation of Chinese trained units into the NKPA order of battle. On 25 May 1950 it knew that the NKPA had six regular divisions located between the 38th and 39th parallels, and it suspected that seven other divisions were being formed from constabulary and recruits near the Manchurian border, an area from which little intelligence could be obtained.¹⁸ On 25 June the Far East Command (FEC) estimated that the NKPA comprised six divisions and five brigades, with an accepted strength of 82,821, plus internal security forces of 43,286.¹⁹ Contrary to the representations of the U. S. press, military estimates of the North Korean order of battle were realistic and well-calculated. If anything was underestimated, it was the state of

training and combat efficiency of the NKPA, and its equipment with Russian armor

By the spring of 1950 the NKPA had reached a size which would permit an attack. On 8 December 1949 the KMAG in Seoul, which had been keeping the U. S. Department of Army advised of the situation, reported that no immediate invasion seemed imminent but that, with the completion of the Chinese Communist campaign in China, additional troops would be channeled into North Korea, to increase the threat to the ROK. Climatic conditions most favorable to military operations, however, would pass with December 1949, before the CCF could be released in China. The next most favorable period would come in April-May 1950. On 5 January the KMAG repeated that the North Korean government had set March-April 1950 as the time to invade South Korea, and on 10 March it gave warning of a

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report that the invasion would take place in June 1950.²⁰ Ambassador Muccio predicted in May 1950 that the ROK would be increasingly threatened by the transfer of men released from the successful Chinese Communist forces.²¹ Yet the FEC G-2 in April 1950 "believed that there will be no civil war in Korea this spring or summer. . . The most probable course of North Korean action this spring and summer is the continuation of its efforts to overthrow the South Korean Government by the creation of chaotic conditions in the republic through guerrilla activities and psychological warfare."²²

Mr Donald Nichols, commander of the Office of Strategic Intelligence District No. 8 in Korea, had collected and forwarded to the Far East Air Forces (FEAF) valuable information gained through close relationships with Korean political, military, and police officials. It was the Nichols'

reports which largely formed the basis for estimates made by KMAG, the embassy, and FEAF. While unable to predict an exact date for the beginning of trouble, FEAF intelligence recognized on 1 June 1950 that the North Korean régime had the military power to undertake a war against the ROK at any time it selected. "South Korea," predicted FEAF, "will fall before a North Korean invasion, which will be initiated whenever Soviet strategy so dictates, rather than upon the occurrence of a legitimate *casus belli*. . . The precise timing of such an invasion depends largely on the progression of events in South and Southeast Asia."²³ U S. military and air intelligence in the Far East thus correctly assessed the build-up of North Korean forces, but they were understandably unable to predict an exact date for the beginning of a Korean war.

KOREAN GEOGRAPHY

The Korean peninsula was an inhospitable site for a war. A 525-mile peninsula extending southward from Manchuria and Siberia to within about 120 miles of southern Japan, it varies in width from 125 to 200 miles, so that its shape resembles that of Florida while its area (85,000 square miles) approximates that of Minnesota. The east coast of Korea faces the Sea of Japan, the west coast fronts on the Yellow Sea; to the south is the Korea Strait. Most of the northern boundary is traced by the winding Yalu and Tumen rivers. Seoul, the capital of the Republic of Korea, lies 340 miles from Kyushu, 730 miles from Tokyo and 800 miles from Okinawa.²⁴

Korea is predominantly rough and mountainous, with peaks rising to 8,700 feet in the northeast; from the mass of northern mountains a long mountain barrier extends southward along the full length of the east coast, and several spur ranges extend across the country southwestward from this main east coast range. Though there are lowlands in Korea, most of them are relatively small, with the principal ones lying near the west coast between the spur ranges. The mountains, because of their location and alignment, tend to restrict movement in any direction across the country, and when the rice paddies are flooded in the summer, the lowlands are virtually impassable to vehicles. With channels 200 to 2,000 yards

wide, the winding rivers of western Korea—the Kum, the Han, the Imjin, the Yesong, the Taedong, the Chongchon, and the Naktong—form somewhat shallow obstacles to north-south movements. From the air, the numerous mountain ridges and valleys look much like a broken-up grey-green washboard, with one ridge and valley so little distinguished from another that target identification is extremely difficult.

Transportation facilities in Korea, shown in figure 1, were well developed by the Japanese occupation. About 3,500 miles of standard-gauge railway lines are the backbone of the overland transportation system. From its southern terminus at Pusan, Korea's best port, the principal rail line extends through Seoul, the ROK capital, to Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, to Sinuiju at the Manchurian border. Another line runs northward from Pusan to Seoul, via Kyongju (with a branch line to Pohang), Andong, and Wonju. Still a third connects Pusan with a terminus on the main north-south line at Taejon, via Taegu and Kumchon. In the north a line connecting with Harbin, Manchuria, proceeds southward along the east coast through Chongjin, Hamhung, Wonsan, and thence to Seoul. Numerous feeder lines had been built to aid the industrialization of North Korea, including six lines which crossed the Manchurian border. The

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Korean Terrain East of Chungju.

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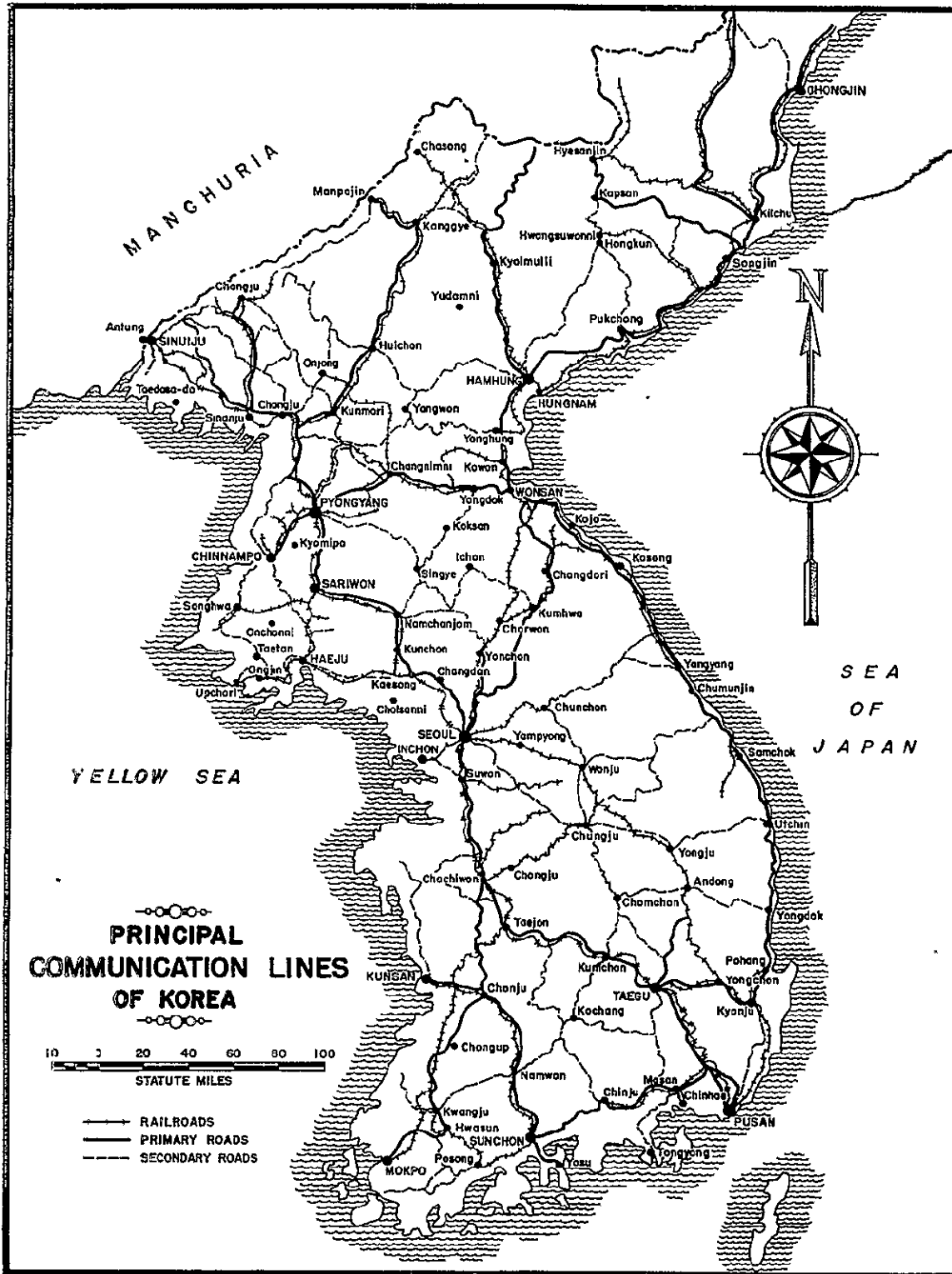


Figure 1.

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major highways of Korea are principally macadam, varying in width from 12 to 24 feet, and follow the same general pattern as the rail system. Both rail and road arteries are characterized by many bridges and tunnels.

In general, Korea's main agricultural areas are south of the 38th parallel, the north had been heavily industrialized by the Japanese, so that the North Korean régime fell heir to a light metal and chemical complex of value to its war effort. Hydroelectric resources were an important part of the industrial establishment, with power lines radiating from dams and power plants along the Yalu and its tributaries.* Korea's ports had been developed to complement the industrial growth, and the best of them was the well-protected Pusan harbor which had berths for about 25 ocean-going vessels and 15 smaller type coastal ships. Inchon, the port for Seoul, has a 27-foot tide, one of the most extreme variations in the world, though its tidal basin can serve small ships, larger vessels have to be lightered ashore. There is another port of some magnitude at Wonsan, on the east coast of Korea.

Korea lies in the same latitudes as the eastern United States between Georgia and Maine. The climate is generally hot and humid in summer, and cold and fairly dry in winter. Summer is the season of heavy rainfall, and in July most of the country normally receives from 8 to 12 inches, while the southern mountain ranges get more than 16 inches. In summer, cloud cover is heavy throughout Korea, averaging 70 to 80 percent in most locations, and radiation fogs and damp haze further reduce visibility during the warm months. With temperatures below 0° Fahrenheit almost every night in the northern interior and between 30° at night and 45° during the day in southern coastal areas, winter, though hard on the ground forces, was generally the most favorable season

*These power lines proved especially hazardous to low flying aircraft, jet pilots learned after several fatal accidents that they must look about them for power line towers before they went down to strafe

for air operations. Since prevailing weather over Korea comes from the north and west, where the Communists were in control, long-range weather prediction was very difficult.

Map problems complicated military operations in Korea, particularly in the air. Names of towns and villages were so confusing that FEAF soon demanded identification of all place names with coordinates. A similarity of place names made for garbled radio transmissions; for example, Pyongyang was the capital of North Korea, Pyonggang was the site of an enemy airfield north of the 38th parallel, while Pyongyong was a town on the railway north of Pusan. Alternate place names appeared on different maps, Pusan, as an illustration, had at least nine alternate names: Fousan, Fu-san, Fusan, Fuzan, Fuzan-fu, Husan, Husan Hu, Pu-san, and Tsauliang-hai.²⁵ For a time, K-3 airfield was described as located at Yongil-wan, Pohang-dong, or Pohang. Official military maps of Korea at the beginning of hostilities, moreover, contained major errors. The Army Map Service (AMS) Japan Road Map, 1:1,000,000 scale, edition of August 1945, showed a railroad line from Samchok to Chechon, via Chang-ni, Yongwol, and Machari, although such a railway had not been built. This map, reproduced by sections in FEC Daily Intelligence Summaries during July 1950, appears to have been used for initial selection of rail interdiction targets in central Korea. Later and more correct information, based upon aerial photography of South Korea, was available in the World Aeronautical Chart No. 290, revision of March 1949, but since no aerial maps of North Korea could be made until after the beginning of hostilities, aeronautical charts were often inaccurate north of the 38th parallel. Figure No 2, an illustration submitted by the 363d Reconnaissance Technical Squadron, reveals corrections made in Aeronautical Approach Charts as a result of aerial mapping.²⁶

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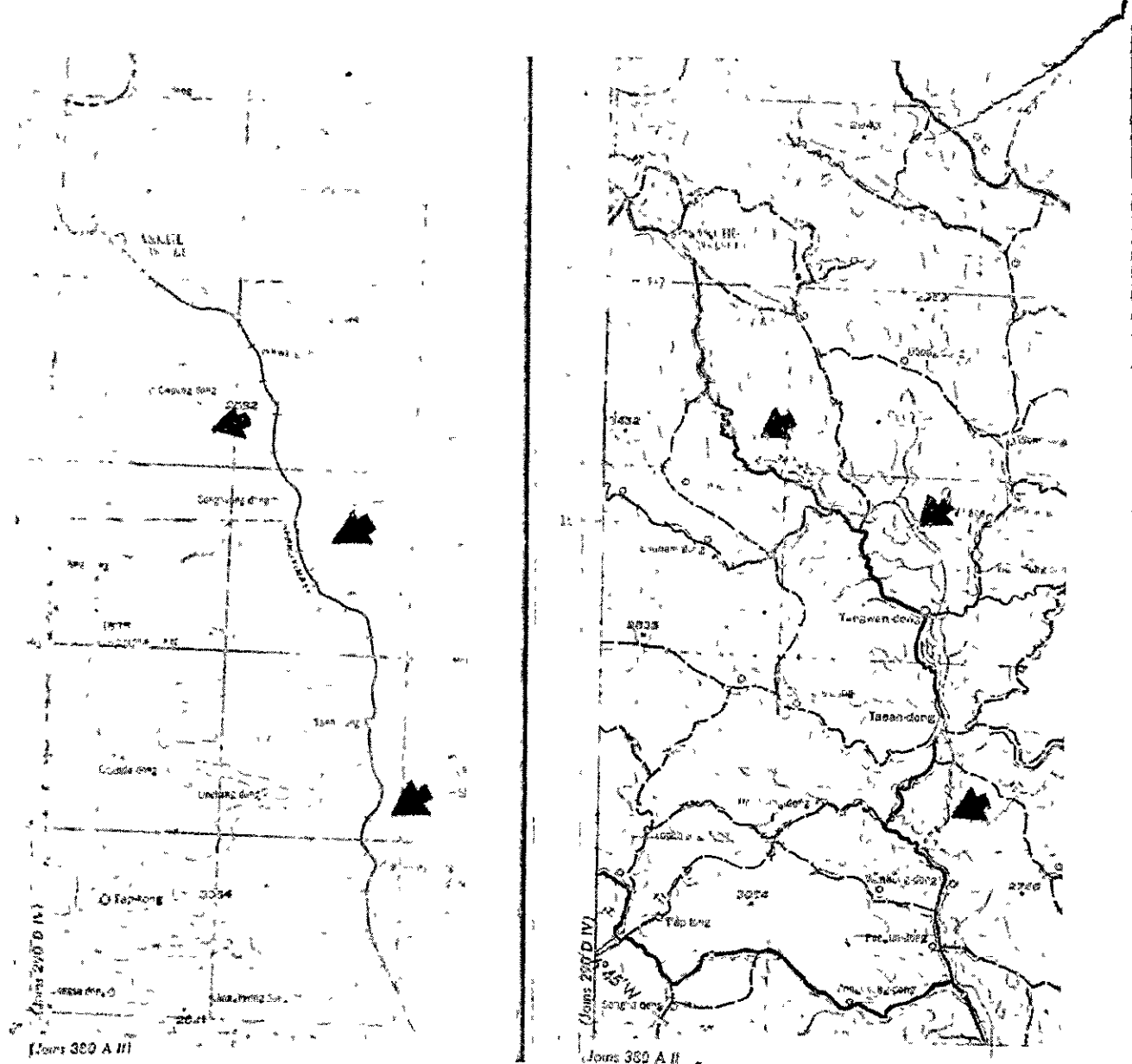


Figure 2. Major Changes in North Korea Maps—May 1945 (left) and August 1950.

Chapter 1

THE OUTBREAK OF KOREAN HOSTILITIES

WHEN THE North Korean Army launched its invasion of the Republic of Korea at 0400 Korean time on Sunday, 25 June 1950, General Douglas MacArthur's Far East Command found itself at a great disadvantage, because, as MacArthur later observed, "until the President's great pronouncement to support the epochal action of the United Nations, [it] had no slightest responsibility for the defense of the free Republic of Korea."¹ At the time of the withdrawal of American troops, the U. S. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) had considered Korea of no strategic value;² nor did the peninsula hold any position of importance in JCS plans for countering a general attack launched by a major power from the mainland of Asia.³ FEC intelligence, smarting from popular charges that it had failed to appreciate the North Korean danger, later reported that it had passed on "relatively timely and accurate" information from Korea but that the "FEC was not charged with any administrative or command responsibilities, negative or positive, for South Korea."⁴ The primary mission of the Far East Command

was the defense of its area, a region including Japan, the Ryukyus, the Marianas, and U. S. installations in the Philippines. The USAF component of the FEC, the Far East Air Forces under Lt Gen George E. Stratemeyer, was charged with maintenance of the air defense of the same region. Among its subordinate missions, however, FEAF was directed to maintain "an appropriate mobile air striking force" and to "provide air support of operations as arranged with appropriate Army and Navy commanders."⁵ The FEC had only one mission regarding Korea: at the time of the outbreak of a general war, it was required to provide for the safety of U. S. personnel in Korea.⁶ An Eighth Army plan for emergency evacuation of U. S. nationals from Korea (SASSAFRAS), issued on 1 March 1950, required FEAF to be prepared to provide air cover for naval evacuation movements from Korea, but FEAF was to attack ground and surface targets in support of such evacuation only with specific instructions from General MacArthur as Commander-in-Chief, Far East (CINCFE).⁷

STATUS OF FEAF IN JUNE 1950

The defensive mission of the Far East Command, General MacArthur had informed General Stratemeyer shortly after the latter assumed command of the FEAF, was to be considered of primary importance,⁸ and the deployment of FEAF tactical units had been geared to such a mission. The largest of FEAF subordinates was the Fifth Air Force, commanded by Maj. Gen. Earle E. Partridge, whose tactical units were based for the defense of Japan on the following fields:

- Itazuke Air Base, Kyushu
- 8th Fighter-Bomber Wing
- 8th Fighter-Bomber Group (F-80)
- 35th Fighter-Bomber Squadron

- 36th Fighter-Bomber Squadron
- 80th Fighter-Bomber Squadron
- 68th Fighter AW Squadron (F-82)
- Johnson Air Base, Honshu
- 3d Bombardment Wing (L)
- 3d Bombardment Group (B-26)
- 8th Bombardment Squadron
- 13th Bombardment Squadron
- Nagoya Air Base, Honshu
- 347th Fighter AW Wing*
- 347th Fighter AW Group*

*The 347th Fighter AW Wing and the 347th Fighter AW Group were inactivated on 24 June 1950 and were not reactivated during the Korean campaign

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- Tachikawa Air Base, Honshu
- 374th Troop Carrier Wing
- 374th Troop Carrier Group (C-54)
- 6th Troop Carrier Squadron
- 22d Troop Carrier Squadron
- Yokota Air Base, Honshu
- 35th Fighter-Interceptor Wing
- 35th Fighter-Interceptor Group (F-80)
- 30th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron
- 40th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron
- 41st Fighter-Interceptor Squadron
- 339th Fighter AW Squadron (F-82)
- 5th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, Photo Jet (RF-80)
- Misawa Air Base, Honshu
- 49th Fighter-Bomber Wing
- 49th Fighter-Bomber Group (F-80)
- 7th Fighter-Bomber Squadron
- 8th Fighter-Bomber Squadron
- 9th Fighter-Bomber Squadron

The Twentieth Air Force, commanded by Maj. Gen Alvan C Kincaid and after 31 July by Maj Gen Ralph F. Stearley, controlled units based for the air defense of Okinawa and the Marianas:

- Naha Air Base, Okinawa
- 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing
- 51st Fighter-Interceptor Group (F-80)
- 16th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron
- 25th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron
- 26th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron
- 4th Fighter AW Squadron (F-82) (Attached)
- Kadena Air Base, Okinawa
- 31st Photo Reconnaissance Squadron, VLR (RB-29) (Attached)
- Anderson Air Force Base, Guam
- 19th Bombardment Wing (M)
- 19th Bombardment Group (B-29)
- 28th Bombardment Squadron
- 30th Bombardment Squadron
- 93d Bombardment Squadron

The Thirteenth Air Force was responsible for air defense and command of U S installations in the Philippines; commanded by Maj. Gen Howard H. Turner, its units were as follows:

- Clark Air Force Base, Luzon
- 18th Fighter-Bomber Wing
- 18th Fighter-Bomber Group (F-80)
- 12th Fighter-Bomber Squadron
- 44th Fighter-Bomber Squadron
- 67th Fighter-Bomber Squadron
- 21st Troop Carrier Squadron (C-54) (Attached)
- 6204th Photo Mapping Flight (RB-17) (T/D)

Flights of the 2d and 3d Air Rescue squadrons, attached to FEAF by the Military Air Transport Service (MATS), were located at various bases where they could best perform emergency rescue services with their SB-17's. The 512th and 514th

Weather Reconnaissance Squadrons (2143d Air Weather Wing) were located at Yokota and Anderson. The 31st Photo Reconnaissance Squadron was a U S Strategic Air Command (SAC) organization, attached to FEAF for operations. The British Commonwealth air component in the FEAF was the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) 77 Fighter Squadron, which was flying F-51's from Iwakuni Air Base, Honshu. This unit was available to General MacArthur as the Supreme Commander, Allied Powers (SCAP), and it necessarily maintained liaison with FEAF, although it was neither attached nor assigned to the American air command.

Altogether, on 25 June 1950 FEAF controlled the largest USAF aggregation located outside the continental United States. USAF budget limitations had nevertheless made inroads into FEAF unit strength. The 90th Bombardment Squadron (L) had been inactivated on 1 October 1949 by USAF direction, leaving only two light bombardment squadrons in the command.¹⁰ The 314th Air Division at Johnson and the 315th Air Division at Itazuke had been discontinued for economy reasons effective 1 March 1950,¹¹ loss of these two units would be felt when the Fifth Air Force needed an organization to servo as its advance echelon headquarters, first at Itazuke and then in Korea.¹²

Had hostilities held off, FEAF strength doubtless would have been reduced still further. During the preparation of Fiscal Year 1950 overseas deployment programs, General MacArthur had protested that the Air Force units assigned to him were so inadequate in number as to reduce his capabilities to defend Japan and his command area beyond the point of a calculated risk—almost, indeed, to the point of a "gambler's risk." Concerned by reports that the 19th Bombardment Wing and the 31st Photo Reconnaissance Squadron were to be redeployed to the United States, MacArthur on 13 May protested that the economy programs did not consider the explosive situation in the Far East, and that loss of the medium bombers would reduce his already limited offensive power.¹³ After negotiations, MacArthur agreed to the proposal of Lt. Gen. Curtis E LeMay, Commanding General of SAC, that the 31st Reconnaissance Squadron be re-turned to SAC for refitting and extended training, while LeMay would maintain six RB-29's in

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FEAF on sixty day rotational duty¹⁴ At the beginning of Korean hostilities, General Stratemeyer also considered his troop basis totally inadequate for anything other than a limited air defense of Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines¹⁵

The aircraft complement of FEAF's tactical units bespoke its primarily defensive mission on 31 May FEAF possessed 1,172 aircraft (including those in storage and a few in salvage or recommended for salvage), of which 73 were B-26's, 27 B-29's, 47 F-51's, 504 F-80's, 42 F-82's, 179 transports of all types, 48 reconnaissance planes, and 252 miscellaneous aircraft¹⁶ To accomplish its defensive mission, FEAF's largest complement was of the F-80C, a versatile jet fighter, of which it held 423 FEAF units had received this type of plane during 1949 and 1950, and by June 1950 only the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Group (which had converted to F-80A's and F-80B's during 1948) was not completely equipped with the new F-80C's¹⁷

Conversion from propellor-driven F-51's to jet aircraft had posed problems inherent in the jet program. For example, FEAF was short in fuel servicing units for jet aircraft. In April 1950 General Stratemeyer had predicted that any dispersal of air units to fields not equipped with base servicing facilities would further dissipate his "already overtaxed servicing equipment to a point of relative combat ineffectiveness."¹⁸ By far the greatest problem of the jet aircraft, however, had to do with wing-brackets for attaching auxiliary fuel tanks and ordnance and with the design of the existing auxiliary wing tanks. Though General Partridge believed it imperative that the F-80C's range be extended with wing tanks larger than the standard 165-gallon tanks, so much difficulty had been experienced with S-2 bomb racks on the F-80's that, in April 1950, some 38 of these fighters assigned to the Fifth Air Force were incapable of carrying either wing-tip tanks or bombs. When the Korean war began, these problems of wing racks and tanks had not been solved¹⁹

Use of jet fighters in Japan, moreover, complicated a virtually static air base situation, for they required a landing strip longer and of greater

load capacity than did propellor-driven aircraft. Since FEAF's tenure of Japanese bases would probably be limited to the duration of the occupation, expenditure of USAF funds for installations which would be eventually abandoned could be justified only with great difficulty²⁰ MacArthur, moreover, had ruled that no resources from the Japanese economy would be used for military construction not involving the occupation of Japan, and accordingly had disapproved FEAF's request for Japanese funds to develop fields for jet fighters²¹ In order to take advantage of the longer runways at Yokota, the 35th Fighter-Interceptor Wing had traded bases with the 3d Bombardment Wing (L) during April 1950,²² but in July 1950 FEAF possessed in all Japan only four airfields with runways 7,000 feet long which could meet the operational requirements for jet fighters loaded with maximum fuel and armaments.²³ On Okinawa, postwar airfield development programs had been stunted by typhoons, a large part of developmental funds had necessarily been devoted to replacement of essential facilities destroyed there by the ravages of storm. While medium bomber airstrips were available, housing, storage, and repair facilities were at a minimum²⁴

FEAF, whose authorized personnel strength was 39,975 officers and men, had assigned 33,625—a little under the Air Force peacetime requirement of 90 percent manning²⁵ At the same time most FEAF units, and all Fifth Air Force units, held their peacetime Table of Organization and Equipment (T/O & E) allotment of aircraft²⁶ The appearance, however, of a satisfactory T/O & E status was deceptive, for there were shortages of particular categories of personnel and deficiencies in training which, compounded by matériel difficulties and shortages, would lower operational efficiency in combat. The light bombardment group, for example, was short of navigators, bombardiers, and gunners, so that its combat crews could not conduct sustained operations efficiently. Armament sections were understaffed throughout the Fifth Air Force.²⁷ Because of the shortage of ground officers, especially for intelligence, their duties had to be performed by flying officers on a part time basis.²⁸ USAF budget ceilings, moreover, had cut into the training program. Cross-country flights in Japan had been curtailed prior to the Korean war, and most of the navigational flights had been accomplished between two well-

¹⁴FEAF was short A-2 auxiliary power ground units required for starting jet engines, A-13A oxygen masks were not completely stocked until early June, a supply of P-1 helmets for jet pilots (some flew with football helmets) required Stratemeyer's personal intervention with the USAF Air Materiel Command.

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known bases, the pilots making full use of radio aids and ranges. When they got to combat, jet pilots thus met conditions for which they were ill prepared. To save fuel, they had to gain altitude, where they usually found themselves navigating by dead reckoning above an undercast in search of some pinpoint target below the clouds, once below the clouds, moreover, a jet flight could not always orbit for reassembly because of heavy fuel consumption at low altitudes, so that wingmen were often separated from their flight commander. Some of these wingmen, inexperienced in navigation, got lost on their way home. The 49th Fighter-Bomber Group believed that two hours each month of dead reckoning navigation practice would have prepared its pilots for the hazardous flying conditions over Korea.²⁹ Rocket training of FEAF fighter pilots was limited by the USAF policy that stocks of 5-inch high velocity aerial rockets (HVAR) were not to be depleted without special permission. Though some practice had been permitted with 2.25-inch subcaliber aerial rockets, pilots once in combat found the trajectory of the HVAR to be entirely different from that of the smaller ones. Since few FEAF pilots had ever fired a 5-inch HVAR, they had to get their rocket training in combat.³⁰

With FEAF's mission primarily defensive, unit tactical training had rightly been preoccupied with interception missions and exercises. All Eighth Army requests for joint training had been met, but maneuvers had been neither realistic nor extensive.³¹ Much of this training was in the nature of a demonstration by Air Force units, in which "canned" problems had been worked out over ranges well-known to air and ground participants. More extended maneuvers, giving some challenge to close support control, were curtailed by a lack of available maneuver areas in populous Japan. On 26 June the Eighth Army had just completed battalion-level training and had begun regiment-level training in its four infantry divisions. At this time two tactical air control parties (TACP's) were preparing for amphibious landing exercises scheduled at Camp McGill, Japan. The two TACP's (large enough for expansion into four TACP's if necessary), however, were special duty units, made up of indi-

viduals taken away from other primary duties, for FEAF had no assigned tactical control group for close support work with ground troops. For that matter, the USAF had only one such group, and it was located at Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina.³²

Problems among Air Force units in FEAF were perplexing, but they were in no way as serious as the personnel and equipment difficulties of the assigned aviation engineer units. Though FEAF had been assigned the 930th and 931st Engineer Aviation Groups, the personnel of these groups was recruited and trained by the Army under the national defense unification agreement. With this administrative complication, the history of the manning of the 930th and 931st Groups had been marked by both inadequate numbers and improper balance of supervisory and operating personnel. Short overseas tours and inadequate rotation personnel had either filled the units to excess, causing serious administrative troubles, or depleted the units so that work projects were curtailed. Assignment of personnel without reference to qualification or specialty numbers had been rife. For example, there were often shortages in machine operators and excesses in cooks and bakers. Engineer units in FEAF had for several years met difficulty in securing all types of engineer equipment and spare parts, and most equipment was war-weary, including obsolete models for which no spare parts could be had. Commanders of the groups estimated their combat efficiency in the spring of 1950 to be only 10 to 25 percent of that usual for such units during World War II. No facilities for depot maintenance of engineer equipment were available in the FEC and although some maintenance had been accomplished through Japanese civilian contracts, it had proved unsatisfactory. If FEAF tactical units were to fight from Korean bases, airfields would have to be prepared, but before Korean airfields could be built, FEAF would have to augment the personnel and equipment of its aviation engineer groups. An important part of the airfield expansion required in Japan would have to be done by civilian contractors.³³

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THE BATTLE FOR SEOUL AND THE HAN RIVER LINE

Selecting the quiet of a Sunday morning to begin its aggression, the North Korean Peoples' Army launched a well-coordinated attack at 0400 hours, 25 June, on the Ongjin peninsula of Korea's west coast. Within two hours other attacks were in progress along the line to the east coast, where amphibious forces were to attack Samchok later in the day. Any idea that this might be no more than another harassing border raid was soon dispelled when the North Korean forces laid down artillery barrages, brought up tanks, and attacked by air. During the day North Korean Yaks strafed Kimp'o and the Seoul Municipal Airfield, damaging several ROK T-6's and destroying a MATS C-54 which was grounded for repairs. The North Koreans evidently meant to exploit their air superiority. Reporting the first day's activities, Ambassador Muccio informed the State Department and General MacArthur that the "future course of hostilities may depend largely on whether the United States will or will not give adequate air assistance."³⁴

Back in Tokyo, FEAF headquarters first learned of the hostilities at 0945 hours, Japanese time, by a message from the OSI office in Seoul, by 1130 hours all key staff officers had been notified. General Partridge at the moment was acting commander of FEAF, while General Stratemyer was en route back from the United States, but pending higher level decisions he had to stand by until CINCPAC issued an order to cover the situation.³⁵ Shortly after noon on the 25th, word came in that Ambassador Muccio had decided to evacuate women and children dependents of American personnel from Korea.³⁶ Mr. John Foster Dulles, special adviser to Secretary of State Acheson, then visiting Tokyo on a mission regarding the Japanese peace treaty, cabled his superior that United States forces should be used to assist the South Koreans even at the risk of Russian countermoves. To sit by while Korea was overrun by an unprovoked attack would start a disastrous chain of events leading, most probably, to another world war.³⁷

In a teleconference between Washington and Tokyo that evening, General MacArthur received his instructions. The JCS ordered him to send any ammunition and equipment to Korea which he believed necessary to prevent the loss of the key Seoul-Kimp'o-Inchon area. He was to give

such supply movements air and naval cover, and take such additional action as proved necessary to safeguard the evacuation of non-combatants from Korea. To augment naval cover, the JCS ordered the U S Seventh Fleet to Sasebo Harbor where it was to report to Vice Adm. C Turner Joy, Commander of Navy Forces, Far East (COMNAVFE). The JCS warned MacArthur that further high-level decisions might be expected as the situation developed.³⁸

On 26 June, the second day of hostilities, U S forces worked at evacuation while the North Korean attack continued southward. FEAF fighters covered two vessels evacuating personnel from Inchon, and during the morning two 68th All-Weather Fighter Squadron F-82's were attacked over the port area by a pair of North Korean fighters. The F-82 pilots, still a bit uncertain as to whether they should return fire, took evasive action and resumed patrols. Evacuation progressed smoothly; in the afternoon a Norwegian ship left Inchon carrying 682 civilians. During the day the North Korean Air Force made a substantial number of sorties in support of their ground troops, but offered no concerted air action.³⁹ Ground fighting on the 26th gave little encouragement to the hope that the ROK army might be able to withstand the North Korean onslaught, and although Ambassador Muccio tried to dissuade him, President Rhee announced his intention to evacuate the ROK government to Taejon. The KMAC reported widespread defeatism among ROK troops, and Muccio added that he held no more than "faint confidence that the Koreans may hold out."⁴⁰

Empowered by a U. N. Security Council resolution of 25 June branding the North Korean regime as an aggressor,⁴¹ President Truman directed more positive action on the evening of 26 June. The Far East Command was to offer the fullest possible support to permit ROK forces to re-form their lines. Specifically, all restrictions previously preventing full use of FEAF to support and assist the defense of ROK territory were lifted as far north as the 38th parallel. Similarly, U S Naval forces could be used without restriction in coastal waters and sea approaches of Korea, against forces found south of the 38th parallel. For good measure, the President ordered

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the Seventh Fleet to prevent any invasion of Formosa and insure at the same time that Formosa would not be used as a Chinese Nationalist base for attacks against the Chinese mainland.⁴²

Immediately upon receipt of the presidential directive, FEAF struck at North Korean targets affecting the safety of American nationals in Korea, and at 0341 hours, 27 June, it sent a message to the Fifth Air Force ordering it to establish air superiority over South Korea and to prevent by aggressive action any North Korean interference with ROK troops or with U.S. evacuations.⁴³ Later, on the 27th General MacArthur assumed formal command of all U.S. military activities in Korea, and GHQ FEC issued instructions designed to execute the President's orders. In addition to the outlined mission for FEAF and NAVFE, the Eighth Army was ordered to support those commands, to support evacuation, and to give the ROK such logistic support as was ordered. In an administrative annex to the instructions, FEAF was also directed to provide aircraft and air technical supplies to the ROK as ordered and to establish and operate an air lift from Japan to Korea to support the ROK forces.⁴⁴

With further deterioration of the ROK army and with refugee-clogged roads hindering motor transportation, most of FEAF's activities on 27 June were necessarily devoted to evacuation and cover for American nationals. F-80's for top cover, F-82's for low cover, and C-46's, C-47's, and C-54's for transportation were off for Korea beginning at 0640 hours. A decision by KMAC to evacuate its administrative personnel added to the load of persons to be flown out of Kimp'o and Suwon during the day. The Fifth Air Force nevertheless received orders to pick up 250 persons at Kimp'o, 313 from Suwon, and when this was completed, 375 from Pusan, all on the 27th if humanly possible. Since Seoul was expected to fall during the day, the Fifth Air Force sent out strong fighter cover, flying 131 F-80 and 32 F-82 sorties during the day. By 2245 hours that night all transports had returned to Japan and 748 persons had been brought to safety. Though F-80's and B-26's had been scheduled to begin ground attacks during the day, bad flying weather in the target area held up take-offs until 2040 hours, when five B-26's got off Itazuke on what could be only a night harassment.⁴⁵

Despite the understandable anxiety of passengers awaiting the transports in Korea, none suffered physical injury. This record of safety was due in part to the F-80 and F-82 fighter cover, which knocked down at least seven North Korean aircraft during the day. Pilots of the 68th and 339th All-Weather Fighter Squadrons scored three definite and two probable victories over the enemy shortly before noon, and during the afternoon jet pilots of the 35th Fighter-Bomber Squadron shot down four Korean planes, later described as IL-10's. All of the enemy planes were encountered in the Seoul area, where the transports were picking up American nationals at nearby Kimp'o airfield.⁴⁶

Weather, which had begun to turn bad late on the afternoon of 27 June, was worse at Japanese bases on the 28th. FEAF planes, nevertheless, began to attack North Korean targets, the F-80's leaving Itazuke in a murk of low visibility and a ceiling of less than 200 feet.⁴⁷ The Fifth Air Force flew 12 missions, including 21 B-26, 11 F-82, and 24 F-80 sorties during the day, while four B-29's of the Twentieth Air Force's 19th Bombardment Group, which was in process of moving from Guam to Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, struck military targets of opportunity.⁴⁸ The 8th Fighter-Bomber Group, 350 miles from its base, found the shooting extremely good; the road nets north of Seoul were crammed with North Korean tanks, trucks, troops, and artillery, and the F-80's left fires visible for 50 miles.⁴⁹ Other planes shot up the railway yards at Munsan. FEAF transports hauled ammunition and supplies into Korean airfields, bringing out enough personnel on their return trips to run the evacuation figures up to 851 persons that day, and to 862 persons on the 29th—figures comparing favorably with the 905 taken out by other means.⁵⁰

With much of the fighter cover off on offensive sweeps, however, enemy air activity got a good chance at the transports. A 22d Troop Carrier Squadron C-54 was destroyed by strafing at Suwon, and during the afternoon a flight of four Yaks damaged another of the squadron's C-54's approaching Suwon. Yaks also destroyed a 68th Squadron F-82 which had been forced down at Suwon, and other Yaks strafed a B-26 at that same airfield. Next day, North Korean planes bombed and strafed a C-54 as it was unloading supplies.⁵¹ Suwon, which the U.N. forces hoped

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to utilize as an advanced airhead, was becoming an embattled zone, and thus far the performance of the North Korean pilots was proving somewhat better than had been expected. One Yak pilot, whose plane was hit and smoking, completed his run over Suwon to destroy the U.S. aircraft he had selected as a target.⁵²

FEAF air attacks began on 28 June at a time of great crisis. Loss of Seoul had so disheartened the South Koreans that Ambassador Muccio believed that ROK resistance would have collapsed overnight had U.S. aid not been extended.⁵³ A KMAC officer urged that receipt of even token amounts of ammunition by air would do much to demonstrate that American aid was actually being given; broadcasts of assistance on the way were of little value to Korean morale since radios were practically nonexistent in rural areas.⁵⁴ On 28 June Maj. Gen. John H. Church, Chief of KMAC, estimated that the ROK army had lost about 40 percent of its numbers and that only a part of the remainder still retained individual weapons.⁵⁵ General Church hoped to hold the Han River line, but he was becoming increasingly pessimistic about Suwon airfield, which enemy Yaks were hitting each time the U.S. fighter cover departed.⁵⁶ Lt. Col. John McGinn, air liaison officer at Suwon, was more optimistic. He had a concrete runway, a store of gasoline, and he was preparing gridded maps for close support. All he wanted was some planes staged up forward. "We will molder 'em," he promised General Partridge.⁵⁷ The American Embassy in Korea asked for as many air strikes as possible for the 29th in order to boost the morale of badly discouraged South Koreans along the Han River.⁵⁸

On 29 June General MacArthur flew to Suwon, held conferences with Muccio and President Rhee, and then drove up the Seoul road to the vicinity of the Han. He found that the Korean army and coastal forces were in confusion, had not seriously fought, and lacked leadership. Organized and equipped as a light force for maintaining interior order, the Korean army had been unprepared for attack by armor and air. South Korean military strength, now estimated at not more than 25,000 effectives, was scarcely enough to defeat the North Korean force, but every effort was being made to hold a line at the Han River, the natural defense barrier essential to the protection of the only airhead remaining in central Korea, Suwon.⁵⁹ Back

in Tokyo, however, FEC staff members had started considering another east-west defense line north of Taegu in the event that the North Koreans penetrated ROK defenses along the Han.⁶⁰

MacArthur saw only one possible hope for holding the Han line and regaining lost ground in Korea—the introduction of U.S. ground combat troops to the battle. Early on the morning of 30 June he asked the JCS for authority to move a regimental combat team (RCT) to Korea immediately and to provide for a possible build-up to two-division strength with U.S. troops from Japan. "Unless provision is made for the full utilization of the Army-Navy-Air team in this shattered area," he concluded, "our mission will at best be needlessly costly in life, money and prestige. At worst, it might even be doomed to failure."⁶¹

Late in the afternoon of 29 June, Washington time, President Truman decided upon more positive action in Korea, and the JCS authorized MacArthur to extend his air operations into North Korea against airfields, tank farms, troop columns, and other targets judged essential in the clearing of North Korean forces from the area south of 38°. These air operations, however, were to keep well clear of Manchurian and USSR borders, and if USSR forces actively opposed such attacks, the U.S. planes should defend themselves without taking aggressive action until Washington could be advised. MacArthur was also authorized to use Army combat and service forces needed to insure the retention of the port and air base in the Pusan-Chinhae area on the southeastern coast of Korea. The JCS noted that this decision was made with full realization of risks, and they cautioned that it did not constitute a decision to engage in a war with the USSR if the latter's forces actively intervened in Korea.⁶² The State Department advised MacArthur to make it clear that U.S. effort in Korea was solely to restore the ROK to its territorial status as of 25 June 1950. Although the U.N. had held the ROK to be the only legal government in all of Korea and had desired peaceful unification of the country, MacArthur was cautioned not to confuse the limited objective by introducing ultimate U.N. objectives for Korean unification.⁶³

Authority for General MacArthur to use a regimental combat team in the Korean battle area required additional consideration by the

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President, and while a teleconference was in progress between General J. Lawton Collins and General MacArthur on 30 June, the Secretary of the Army took the matter to the White House. General Collins urged that the JCS authority to protect the port area at Pusan-Chinhae already constituted authority to use a regiment in Korea, but MacArthur wanted a clear-cut decision on his proposition. Time was important because even then the North Koreans were breaking the Han River barrier. While MacArthur stood by the teletype, permission was given him to move one RCT to the combat area,⁶⁴ and shortly before noon, Washington time, the JCS signaled that his proposition for moving two divisions into Korea was approved, subject only to requirements he judged necessary for the safety of Japan.⁶⁵

In Korea, however, the Communist attack was not to be retarded at the Han barrier, which they had actually penetrated when they captured Kimpo several days before. On 30 June the North Koreans forced numerous crossings, and on the night of 30 June/1 July they began attacking Suwon, whose airfield FEAF had hoped to make an airhead for supplies and an advanced base in central Korea.⁶⁶ MacArthur therefore lost no time in issuing directives for the expanding war. On 30 June he ordered the 24th Infantry Division

to Pusan, whence it was to proceed northward and engage the enemy.⁶⁷ That same day he authorized FEAF to extend its operations into North Korea, keeping well clear of the frontiers of Manchuria and Siberia.⁶⁸ Effective on 4 July, MacArthur formed the US Army Forces in Korea (USAFIK) under the command of the 24th Division's Maj. Gen. William F. Dean, who was ordered to assume control of all US Army Forces fighting there.⁶⁹ The Eighth Army was directed to plan the movement of one additional infantry division to Korea as quickly as possible.⁷⁰

For better or worse, US Army combat troops were to be committed to Korea in an effort to rally the ROK forces. They were ordered to battle in piece-meal fashion, without any comprehensive planning. General Partridge later commented that his TACP's had been forced to catch up with the 24th Division, thereby losing precious time while they looked for the division in the combat zone.⁷¹ From the outset, moreover, political limitations had been placed upon the employment of air power in Korea, first the 38th parallel and then the Manchurian-Siberian border. While the limitations were necessary for political reasons, they imposed a severe handicap upon the US forces which were available to meet the crisis.

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Chapter 2

FEAF PREPARES FOR THE OFFENSIVE

DURING THE first few days of the Korean conflict FEAF was merely "fighting fire" without any overall plan of action, and, operating from an establishment designed for air defense, it was able to place only a small part of its strength over Korea. For example, FEAF could count as available for missions to Korea on 29 June no more than 22 B-26's, 12 B-29's, 70 F-80's, and 15 F-82's.¹ With American combat troops going into Korea, FEAF had to effect redeployment of

its units to the bases where they could bring their maximum strength to bear. Additional aircraft, air units, personnel, and matériel had to be obtained from the United States. Arrival of the U.S. Seventh Fleet and attached British aircraft carriers required some attempt at operational coordination of all air effort over Korea, a matter which was complicated by FEAF's status in the FEC structure of command.

COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS AND DECISIONS

The relationships of FEAF to its superior headquarters, the Far East Command, and to its co-equal commands, the Naval Forces Far East and the Eighth Army (see fig. 3), vitally affected the conduct of air operations over Korea. The command structure in the Far East at the outbreak of Korean hostilities was actually little more than a relic of General MacArthur's World War II command structure. As was the case with other theater commanders, the JCS had directed MacArthur on 14 December 1946: "Each unified commander will have a joint staff with appropriate members from the various components of the services under this command in key positions of responsibility." The main action in the Far East, however, was the establishment on 20 August 1949 of a Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group "to assist and advise the Commander-in-Chief, Far East, on matters pertaining to his exercise of unified command over Army, Navy and Air Force forces, allocated to the Far East Command." Since it comprised three Army officers, three Navy officers, and two Air Force officers, the JSPOG was frequently cited as evidence that GHQ FEC was a joint staff, but it was apparent both from the statement of JSPOG's functions and from the

small number of assigned personnel that the group could not serve in lieu of the joint staff contemplated by the JCS.² Unification, as far as command organization was concerned, had never reached the Far East.

Absence of unification principles was nowhere more clearly demonstrated than in the functioning of FEC headquarters. As revealed in the accompanying organization chart (fig. 3) General MacArthur had never organized an Army Force, Far East to be the coequal command with FEAF and NAVFE. Instead, it was a shadow body, commanded by MacArthur, with the members of GHQ FEC functioning as the staff members of the top Army headquarters. To all intents and purposes, therefore, GHQ FEC was essentially an Army staff, and by no stretch of the imagination could it be considered to be a joint staff equally representing Army, Navy, and Air Force.

During World War II, General MacArthur, observing that he had "found that it takes an aviator to run aviators," had left air matters generally to the control of the FEAF staff.³ In 1950, however, CINCFE's staff subordinates deemed it necessary to direct air operations from the highest staff level, despite the fact that few

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GHQ
FAR EAST COMMAND
16 OCTOBER 1949

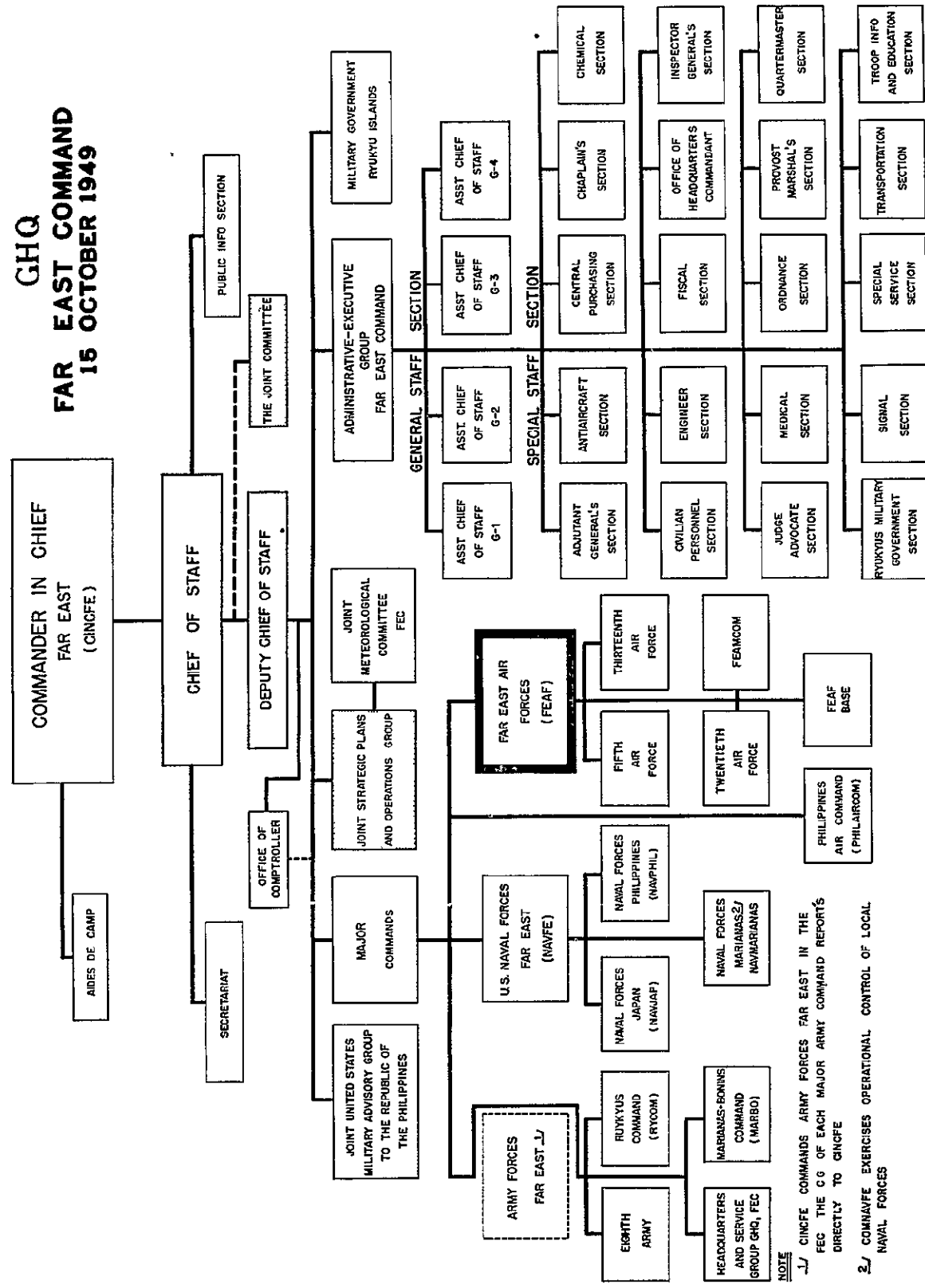


Figure 3.

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NOTE
 1/ CINCFAE COMMANDS ARMY FORCES FAR EAST IN THE FEC THE C.G. OF EACH MAJOR ARMY COMMAND REPORTS DIRECTLY TO CINCFAE
 2/ COMNAVFE EXERCISES OPERATIONAL CONTROL OF LOCAL NAVAL FORCES

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of them had had experience in the employment of air power during World War II⁴. Of the mechanics of Air Force operational procedures some of these GHQ staff officers appear to have met misunderstandings^{5*}. Despite the lack of air representation on its staff and the inadequate understanding of air problems, GHQ FEC nevertheless issued constant directives to FEAF requiring particular air missions.

The problem of controlling air power in General MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Theater (SWPA) during World War II had been essentially simple. General George C. Kenney, commanding both FEAF and the Allied Air Forces SWPA, had possessed either direct command or operational control of all air units normally in the theater, including all naval air units and Seventh Fleet search units. No carrier-based air had been assigned to the SWPA, and on the several occasions when General MacArthur utilized carrier air it had been employed on specific missions. These mismissions, generally strike attacks outside the range of FEAF elements, could generally be handled by simple coordination between FEAF and the fleet.⁶ No such easy solution was permitted in 1950 because both Air Force and Navy air units were assigned to CINCPAC and were controlled by separate, coequal headquarters.

Existence of FEAF and NAVFE on coequal status within the command structure, without a joint representation of Air Force and Navy on the GHQ FEC staff, would prevent any unified command of the air operations over Korea. Without some form of centralized control, the mass of Air Force and Navy Air could not be effectively employed in the attack, and with Air Force and Navy air commanders choosing their targets independently, flying over Korea could actually become hazardous. On 3 and 4 July, for example, Task Force 77 struck targets in Korea, making attacks in an area into which FEAF had ordered a B-29 attack for the same day. FEAF learned of the projected Navy attack on the 4th, too late to draw up another operations order for its B-29's, with the result that the medium bombers had to stand down on this date. Learning that Marine aircraft were also to come to the Far East, General

*One GHQ staff officer instigated an investigation to determine why FEAF did not fly all "combat ready aircraft" every day that CINCPAC ordered all-out air strikes. In this instance, FEAF was able to explain that all "combat ready aircraft" could be flown on an all-out one time operation but that sustained operations could not possibly be maintained at such a rate.

Stratemeyer requested on 8 July that with the exception of units used in air-sea warfare operations, all land-based Navy and carrier-based aviation when operating over Korea would be placed under his operational control. Land-based fighters, based either in Japan or in Korea, would be in turn placed under the operational control of the Fifth Air Force.⁷

Having received no reply to this memorandum, General Stratemeyer sent another to General MacArthur on 10 July. He had no desire to control Navy planes engaged in air-sea warfare and mining operations, but he recommended that all land-based naval aircraft and all carrier-based aircraft, when engaged in attacks against Korean land targets, be placed under his operational control. He would, of course, undertake neither to control nor to direct the movements of carriers into, or out of, operational waters. He construed operational control to mean "the authority to designate the type of mission, such as air defense, close support of ground forces, etc., and to specify the operational details such as targets, times over targets, degree of effort, etc., within the capabilities of the forces involved." Operational control vested in him as commander of FEAF would normally be exercised in the following manner:

Land based Naval air units with fighter and attack type aircraft will be placed under the operational control of the Commanding General, Fifth Air Force, for employment in air defense, fighter cover, escort and close support missions.

Carrier based Naval air units of fighter and attack type aircraft when within the area of operations, will be placed under the operational control of Commanding General, Far East Air Forces, and (1) If engaged in close support of ground forces or in air defense of Japan and of the area of operations, will be placed under the operational control of the Commanding General, Fifth Air Force. (2) If engaged in destruction of the enemy's communications, industry and other facilities, but not in close support, will be employed in target areas, upon targets and within time periods specified by Commanding General, Far East Air Forces. (3) If engaged in escort of bomber formations, will be placed under the operational control of Commanding General, Fifth Air Force. (4) Provided that, once a carrier force enters the area of operations, alteration of the basic mission will not be directed without concurrence of Commander, Naval Forces, Far East.

Under General Stratemeyer's plan, COMNAVFE would retain control of air-sea warfare and mine-laying aircraft.⁸

NAVFE appears to have objected to the degree of control represented in the delegation of operational control of Naval air units to FEAF, at any rate, Maj Gen E. M. Almond, Chief of Staff,

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FEC directed a compromise.⁹ The directive which he signed for CINCFE bore no date other than a file reference of 8 July 1950; although it actually reached FEAF on 15 July, it was thereafter known as the "8 July directive" or the "Almond directive of 8 July." This command letter stated FEC policy on the control of air as follows:

Commanding General, Far East Air Forces, will have command or operational control of all aircraft operating in the execution of Far East Air Forces mission as assigned by Commander-in-Chief, Far East. This includes operational control of naval and land based air when not in execution of naval missions which include naval reconnaissance, anti-submarine warfare, and support of naval tasks such as an amphibious assault.

Commander, United States Naval Forces, Far East, will have command or operational control of all aircraft in execution of missions assigned by Commander-in-Chief, Far East, to Navy Forces, Far East.

Coordination (1) Basic selection and priority of target areas will be accomplished by the General Headquarters target analysis group with all services participating. (2) Tasks assigned by the Commander-in-Chief, Far East, such as amphibious assault, will prescribe the coordination by designation of specific areas of operation. (3) When both Navy Forces, Far East, and Far East Air Forces are assigned missions in Korea, coordination control, a Commander-in-Chief, Far East, prerogative, is delegated to the Commanding General, Far East Air Forces.

In the definition of the control which would obtain when both Air Force and Navy planes were employed over Korea, the GHQ staff had seen fit to coin a new term, "coordination control," which was to result in differences of opinion, misunderstandings of channels of communications, and disagreements over the wording of important operations orders. The term was defined neither in the directive nor in the *JCS Dictionary of United States Military Terms for Joint Usage*. The GHQ staff officer who prepared the background papers regarding this directive for Almond much later reconstructed an unofficial definition, as follows:¹⁰

Coordination control is the authority to prescribe methods and procedures to effect coordination in the operations of air elements of two or more forces operating in the same area. It comprises basically the authority to disapprove operations of one force which might interfere with the operations of another force and to coordinate air efforts of the major FEC commands by such means as prescribing boundaries between operating areas, time of operations in areas and measures of identification between air elements.

This, however, was an advisory opinion, and the

definition of "coordination control" remained a matter of dispute, necessitating sporadic clarifications, as late as October 1950.

It was obviously the view of the FEC staff that most of the coordination should be undertaken at the FEC staff level, through the agency of the GHQ Target Analysis Group, which, according to the 8 July directive, was to accomplish "basic selection and priority of target areas." This GHQ Target Group was established on 14 July* as a part-time organization, composed of a senior officer from the G-2 Section, serving as chairman, an Air Force and a Navy member from the Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group, appointed by the chief of that agency, and a member of the Operations Group G-3, appointed by the G-3. These four men, supported by consulting members from NAVFE and FEAF when requested, were to (1) advise on the employment of Navy and Air Force offensive air power in conformance with the day-to-day situation, (2) recommend selection and priorities of targets or target areas; (3) recommend measures to insure coordinated use of available air power, and (4) maintain a continuing analysis of target systems and priorities assigned. The target group was to meet daily, or at the call of its chairman, and the FEC G-3 was to implement its recommendations with CINCFE orders.¹¹

The GHQ Target Group held its first meeting on 16 July, seeking to define its responsibilities more exactly. At this session, Brig Gen. J. V. Crabb, FEAF Deputy for Operations, flatly stated that FEAF could not accept any concept whereby the GHQ Target Group selected individual targets from the front lines deep into enemy territory. In its draft of responsibilities, written on 17 July, the group therefore agreed that selection of close support targets must become the task of the Commanding General, Eighth Army in Korea in coordination with the Commanding General, Fifth Air Force. Air strikes against targets beyond the area of close support, however, were to be within priorities prescribed by the GHQ Target Group, in coordination with the FEAF Target Selection

*Establishment of the GHQ Target Group on 14 July 1950, offers further evidence that the "8 July directive" was actually written at a later date. It will be noted that this directive of "8 July" refers to the GHQ Target Analysis Group (it was referred to by variations of its proper name during the period) as if it had already been established, although this action did not take place until 14 July. Why the "8 July directive" was undated, and why it was given a file date of 8 July is not readily apparent.

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Committee¹² Before this draft of responsibilities could be acted upon within GHQ, General Almond had already approved a procedure recommended by General Stratemeyer for executing close support requirements of the Eighth Army.* General Almond nevertheless stated that he did not intend thereby to preclude issuance of CINCFE directives for medium bomber missions against targets of opportunity in either a general air support role or in attacks against specific strategic targets. The final paper defining GHQ Target Group duties was redrafted so as to incorporate the newly approved close support procedure and issued for GHQ staff information only. The finally matured directive for the GHQ Target Group was coordinated with neither FEAF nor NAVFE.¹³

Unfortunately, the GHQ Target Group did not prove thoroughly conversant with the problems of target selection. Out of a total of 220 primary and secondary targets designated during the period 17 July through 2 August, some 20 percent of the targets actually did not exist. These mistakes came about in several ways. The principal reason was that the target group used the AMS 1 250,000 map of Korea which showed railroad lines in Korea which had been projected but never built. Subsequent investigation revealed that correct maps had been available in G-2, GHQ FEC at the time of the erroneous selections. In another case the target group was guilty of faulty map reading, for it designated a river crossing for bombing which was marked as a ford on the map consulted. Many bridge targets correctly designated were later shown to span small streams where a destroyed bridge could easily be by-passed, even in the normally rainy Korean summer.¹⁴ An Air Force evaluation board later commented that "the GHQ Target Group was unfamiliar with the time-honored Intelligence principle of confirming reported information by checking several sources. It appears evident that the Group accepted the AMS 1 250,000 map as a complete and adequate basis from which to select targets for medium bombers."¹⁵ It appears that invalid tar-

gets were included in the selections of the GHQ Target Group as late as 2 August 1950.

On 19 July in a conference with Generals MacArthur and Almond, General Stratemeyer had occasion to point out that differences of opinion had arisen as to the relative value of targets selected. He emphasized that FEAF had a large and well organized target section and recommended that target problems could best be handled by specialists. Though all present agreed, no action was forthcoming at GHQ, General Stratemeyer then sent MacArthur a memorandum on 21 July strongly recommending the creation of a Target Selection Committee, to consist of Major Generals Doyle O Hickey, Deputy Chief of Staff FEC, C A Willoughby, Assistant Chief of Staff G-2, and O. P. Weyland, Vice Commander for Operations FEAF, and a Navy representative. It was his idea that both the FEAF and GHQ target selection groups would remain active, forwarding recommendations to the new GHQ Target Selection Committee. General MacArthur approved the memorandum, and the GHQ Target Selection Committee was established on 22 July 1950.¹⁶ The effect of this agreement was to restore the bulk of target identification to FEAF, and for the first time FEAF Bomber Command was able to go to work on a comprehensive interdiction program.*

Problems of command, therefore, initially prevented an integrated program for the full employment of air power, delayed a comprehensive interdiction program by a little more than a month, and hindered full-scale application of carrier- and land-based air power to close support in Korea. The conclusion is inescapable that with a joint headquarters staff, MacArthur might never have encountered the target selection imbroglio. "Whenever combinations of Air Force, Army, and Navy are in a joint command," concluded General Weyland, "it is essential that the Commander-in-Chief have a joint staff with proportionate representation of the services involved."¹⁷

PROBLEMS OF DEPLOYMENT AND AIRCRAFT

The troubles of command, however, seemed less pressing in early July than the matter of bringing FEAF's combat units within range of Korean

targets, a problem involving bases which could be made available and the types of aircraft which would be employed. Until airfields could be

*See chapter 3, p. 23

*See chapter 4, p. 37

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prepared in Korea, fighters and light bombers had to fly from Kyushu or southern Honshu.

During the first weeks of hostilities, when it was not yet evident whether other Communist nations might attempt active intervention in Korea, the air defense of Japan could not be neglected. General Stratemeyer therefore directed that one squadron of F-80's and one flight of F-82's were to be maintained at Misawa, Johnson, and Itazuke Air Bases. As soon as strength permitted, another F-80 squadron would be stationed in the Tokyo area.¹⁸ One F-80 squadron of the 18th Fighter-Bomber Group was to remain in the Philippines, charged both with local air defense and with flying a show of force over Formosa.¹⁹ With so many B-29's on Okinawa, in easy range of Chinese jet-fighter fields, the entire 51st Fighter-Interceptor Group initially had to remain at Naha Air Base.²⁰ Maintenance of this "minimum" air defense establishment was admittedly at the expense of the tactical air effort in Korea, and at the end of August General Partridge had only eight fighter squadrons available to him for combat operations in Korea, while six were deployed for the air defense of Japan and five others for the defense of other parts of the FEAF.²¹ There were, however, extenuating circumstances for FEAF's defensive establishment. Not all of the defensive units were in static employment, for General Partridge rotated crews and units between the defense and the offense, thus giving some relief from constant operations. The eight offensive fighter squadrons, moreover, were about all that could be supported at Kyushu bases.

Situated at Itazuke Air Base, the 8th Fighter-Bomber Group and the 68th All-Weather Fighter Squadron had gone into action on 26 June, the first day that USAF units were permitted to act in Korea. During the few days which followed, other air units were rushed to bases nearest Korea. The 3d Bombardment Group moved to the RAAF base at Iwakuni, on the southwestern extremity of Honshu. The 49th Fighter-Bomber Group (less its 7th Squadron which remained behind**) moved from Misawa to Itazuke. The 8th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron moved from Yokota to

*As late as September 1950, a report was circulated in Communist channels within Aichi Prefecture that on or about 10 September some 1,000 Russian planes would strike U. N. airbases in Korea and Japan.

**On 14 August 1950 the 7th Squadron exchanged duties and station with the 9th Squadron of the 49th Group, a transfer designed to give the latter squadron some rest after strenuous operations.

Itazuke, and the 35th Fighter-Interceptor Group (less its 41st Squadron which moved to Johnson for air defense) moved from Yokota to Ashiya, a second airfield on Kyushu. The all-weather fighter squadrons were shifted, the 339th Squadron moved from Yokota to Misawa and Johnson, the 68th remaining at Itazuke, and the 4th remaining at Naha on Okinawa. Pilots of the 4th Squadron, however, moved to Itazuke on 26 June and operated over Korea until 8 July, when they returned to Naha.²² By 29 June the Twentieth Air Force's 19th Bombardment Group had moved 20 B-29's from Guam to Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa.²³ For the disposition of Fifth Air Force units on 2 July 1950 see figure 4.

At the outset of Korean hostilities many of these units had been engaging in summer maneuvers away from their home bases. So many movements plus the sudden plunge into combat resulted in some confusion, but from the first these units set a standard which has held good during the conflict in Korea. At no time did a unit have to cease combat operations in order to move to another base. The 3d Bombardment Group had been engaged on a FEAF test maneuver at Ashiya, with many of its personnel left behind at Johnson, but even while the two divided elements were concentrating at Iwakuni the group was held to maximum effort each day.²⁴ The 19th Bombardment Group at the beginning of hostilities had just completed an exhausting operational readiness test which had fatigued the combat crews and left the aircraft in need of maintenance.²⁵ The 49th Fighter-Bomber Group had also been divided by squadron maneuvers, with the 9th Squadron at Komaki and the 8th Squadron at Yokota, pilots and minimum ground crews of the 9th flew to Itazuke on 27 June, while minimum echelons of the 8th Squadron reached this base on 29 June.²⁶ The 8th Fighter-Bomber Group, unique in that it began fighting from its permanent base, nevertheless felt the pinch of peacetime manning.²⁷

For the first several days of hostilities, Itazuke was the center of the Fifth Air Force's tactical operations; wanting to take active command, General Partridge took an advance echelon of Fifth Air Force headquarters to that base on 29 June.²⁸ Even this most advanced base was none too close to the target areas in Korea. From Ashiya and Itazuke, the F-80's could

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provide only about 15 to 20 minutes of close support along the battle line of early July, each plane carrying six 50-caliber machine guns and two rockets.²⁹ When weather was bad, moreover, the jets were hard pressed to get back to Kyushu, and weather predictions for Korea continued to be somewhat uncertain. If the Fifth Air Force was to give adequate support in Korea, it was evident that it would either have to extend its jet fighter range or use bases in South Korea. When the war started the prospect for neither was encouraging.

Efforts to extend the range of F-80C's had already been made: Lt Robert Eckman and other officers of the 9th Fighter-Bomber Squadron (49th Group) had increased the fuel capacity of the F-80C by adding two cells to the standard wing tanks. The 9th Squadron, after about 150 sorties over Korea with the big tanks, reported that they "aren't quite so aerobatic," but that "the general attitude of the entire 9th Squadron toward the F-80 is one of confidence and pride."³⁰ During early July, however, it was still by no means certain how the F-80C would work out in combat. The Air Matériel Command did not approve of the use of the "big" 265-gallon wing tanks, because of structural limitations of the wing tips and the bomb shackles. Use of the large tanks did, as a matter of fact, result in numerous cracked wing tips and pulled rivets.³¹ Without the large tanks, however, the F-80's could not have operated effectively in the Korean war.

Movement of tactical units to Korea was the easiest solution to the range problem, but the loss of Kimpo and Suwon during the first days of hostilities cost the Fifth Air Force the two best airfields in South Korea. Pusan had a 4,930-foot runway, and although it was poor even for transports and was surrounded by mountain hazards, it nevertheless seemed the most promising location for jet fighters. Taegu had a 5,250-foot hard clay surface runway, at first suitable only for C-47's. Further reconnaissance showed a 5,000-foot surfaced strip at Pohang, which appeared to have possibilities for expansion, although it was situated in one of the areas of prewar Communist guerrilla activities.³² Having asked the USAF for an initial shipment of one million square feet of pierced-steel plank (PSP) and having set about reclaiming the PSP in Japan to use in Korea,³³ early in July FEAF began expanding

Pusan (K-1), Taegu (K-2), and Pohang (K-3) to meet Fifth Air Force operational standards.³⁴

While these plans were underway, FEAF tried to increase its complement of aircraft, both to augment its tactical effort and to get replacements for expected combat attrition. Since F-51's had a range greater than F-80's and could operate from the rough fields of Korea with greater ease, FEAF Plans proposed to take the F-51's on hand out of storage and assign them to a provisional squadron.³⁵ On 30 June Stratemeyer cabled Washington that he needed 164 F-80C's, 21 F-82's, 22 B-26's, 23 B-29's, 21 C-54's, 15 C-47's, and 64 F-51's which he suggested would be "exceptionally well suited for long-range, low-level missions required in the Korean war."³⁶ Instead of 164 F-80C's the USAF proposed to send FEAF 150 F-51's, which could be obtained from the National Guard or from storage, all in excellent condition. The USAF also foresaw sending F-51's instead of F-82's and recommended use of RF-51's in the tactical reconnaissance squadron if RF-80's could not operate from Korean fields.³⁷ FEAF replied that the F-51's were highly desirable and requested expeditionary shipment; it intended to withdraw F-82's from ground support in order to conserve them for night interceptions. The RF-80's seemed suitable to FEAF for use in Korea.³⁸

The USAF attempt to get F-51's to FEAF became more evident early in July when a party of key members of the USAF staff visited Japan for firsthand observation of operational problems. At a meeting on 7 July Maj Gen. Frank F. Everest, USAF Director of Operations, explained that 150 F-51's could be sent out on an aircraft carrier, to reach the theater within 13 to 20 days after leaving Alameda. In addition to these aircraft, the USAF could still draw on 764 F-51's in the National Guard and 794 in storage. On the other hand, F-80C's were in short supply. Of the 164 F-80C's ordered by FEAF, 44 were en route; the balance could not be met from USAF resources because they simply did not exist. F-82's were similarly limited in number, but FEAF was to get those released by the reequipping of Alaskan air units in the fall of 1950.³⁹ The USAF staff members also urged that conversion of six F-80 squadrons to F-51's would be desirable because (1) F-51's could operate

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from rough Korean fields better than jet aircraft; (2) the F-51's had a longer operating radius especially at low altitudes, (3) propeller-driven aircraft would be adequate in performance against the current NKAF opposition, and (4) use of the F-51's would simplify logistical requirements, since they consumed less fuel than the F-80's. The conferees recognized that the F-80's thus far in combat had given excellent tactical support

with rockets and strafing, and the decision to use F-51's was in no way a reflection of dissatisfaction with the F-80C or jet type aircraft⁴⁰ In the light of actuality, the canard that the F-51 was used in Korea because the F-80 jets were unsatisfactory evidently resulted from misinformation. Unfortunately the USAF could not state the real reasons for use of the F-51 without endangering national security.

INITIAL AUGMENTATION OF FEAF

While the USAF representatives were in Tokyo, FEAF also requested additional tactical units, and the staff conferences made suitable adjustments. For night photographic reconnaissance an RB-26 squadron was to be furnished; this unit, the 162d Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, (NP) began moving from Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, on 12 July and arrived in Japan by 18 August⁴¹ FEAF's request for a tactical control group started the 502d Tactical Control Group, the 934th Signal Battalion, and the 2d Radio Relay Squadron moving from Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina, to Japan⁴² As planning for offensive ground operations progressed, FEAF was to request additional transport units for supporting purposes,* but the conferences in early July provided that the 374th Troop Carrier Group would be re-formed with two C-54 squadrons, and one squadron with C-47's and a few C-119's. FEAF also requested an additional B-26 group which was to be formed by mobilizing an Air Reserve group in the United States⁴³

Although FEAF asked for only one medium bomber group from the Strategic Air Command, USAF had already begun preparations to send two such groups to the Far East on temporary duty. Maj. Gen. Emmett O'Donnell, Jr., Commanding General of the Fifteenth Air Force, was also made available on temporary duty with FEAF to command a new and provisional FEAF Bomber Command. General O'Donnell reached Tokyo on 7 July, selected Yokota as his command post, and prepared to base the 92d Bombardment Group at Yokota and the 22d Bombardment Group at Kadena on Okinawa. With the organization of FEAF Bomber Command on 8 July, O'Donnell assumed control of the 19th Bombardment Group and the 31st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron.

The latter unit was ordered to Yokota on 19 July, and later in the month arrangements were made at Kadena to receive still another SAC group, the 307th, and at Yokota to take a fourth, the 98th.⁴⁴ As organized, FEAF Bomber Command was to be a purely operational headquarters; it was to occupy Fifth and Twentieth Air Force bases on a tenant status, and administration and supply of its groups was to be accomplished by those air forces. FEAF Bomber Command, however, was recognized as a major subordinate command of FEAF.

As far as it was able, the USAF met FEAF's personnel requirements expeditiously and generously. In addition to the arrival of new units, FEAF was assigned 1,369 officers and 12,964 airmen during the period July-September 1950,⁴⁵ a generous increase in strength which permitted augmentation of headquarters staffs and activation of many provisional units. Combat personnel assigned brought the strength of tactical units near the 150 percent of peacetime combat crew strength authorized to FEAF in the war emergency⁴⁶ The USAF, however, could not supply all categories of personnel requested. Unable at first to furnish FEAF as many jet fighter pilots and navigator-bombardiers as were needed, the USAF recommended that FEAF make up part of the shortage by returning all fighter pilots and navigator-bombardiers in the theater to flying status⁴⁷ Navigator-bombardiers, however, remained in short supply in the 3d Bombardment Group, where during July these officers flew three times as many missions as other rated personnel. Not until September would the group receive a full complement of reservist bombardiers and navigators, and even then the new men needed refresher training. FEAF units, moreover, re-

*See chapter 5, pp 64-65

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mained alarmingly short of specialists in aircraft accessories, ordnance, and communications⁴⁵

Unfortunately, the status of Special Category Army Military Personnel with Air Force (SCARWAF), especially aviation engineer troops, was critical at the beginning of hostilities and admitted of no ready solution. On 5 July General Stratemeier "earnestly solicited" General Vandenberg's personal assistance to get the FEAF aviation engineer units up to authorized strength, a matter which USAF immediately began discussing with the Department of Army. Some 870 replacements were scheduled to begin moving by air on 14 July⁴⁹. On 26 July, however, FEAF requested 1,237 additional personnel to bring the units to full T/O&E strength, with a surplus of 685 men which FEAF could use to relieve and

rotate personnel⁵⁰. The USAF was unable to comply with this request, stating as justification that the Army could not bring FEAF engineers to wartime strength without depleting its cadre sources and effort committed elsewhere⁵¹. FEAF nevertheless insisted on full T/O&E strength as an absolute minimum and recommended that airmen with requisite qualifications be dispatched if engineer troops were not available from Army sources,⁵² indeed, General Stratemeier recommended that such units and all responsibilities pertaining to them should be transferred to the Air Force⁵³. Finally, on 12 September FEAF was permitted to reorganize its aviation engineer units to a strength approximating full T/O&E status.⁵⁴

TACTICAL BUILD-UP IN KOREA AND KYUSHU

According to General Stratemeier, if the aviation engineer units with FEAF at the beginning of hostilities had been anywhere near full strength and proper specialty training, Air Force units could have begun operating from Taegu and Pusan as early as 7 July, two weeks before they were able to make a rather hesitant entry into bases in the zone of battle⁵⁵. Though FEAF had laid plans for building six airfields in South Korea by the aviation engineers and by Korean and Japanese contractors, work could be started on only three of these fields, and their completion was delayed. This constructional delay, compounded by ground reverses in Korea early in August, caused a severe backlog of tactical units on Kyushu air bases, thereby negating a part of the tactical air strength which the Fifth Air Force was accumulating during July and early August.

To handle the Korean engineering effort, FEAF established I Construction Command (Provisional) on 11 July and attached all Korean engineer units to it. When FEAF also indicated that its own director of installations was to command the new unit, General Partridge almost immediately objected, quite properly, on the grounds that his responsibility included Korean air operations and that he should therefore control the engineer effort there. FEAF accordingly relinquished control of the provisional command to the Fifth Air Force, and Partridge named his own director of installations as its commander, but did not provide any

staff for the new unit. It appears that this failure to establish an engineering staff in Korea at an early date proved a major deterrent to the construction of air bases there.* As a result of this lack of staff supervision, airfields were selected by very sketchy ground reconnaissance and general intelligence, without soil tests, drainage checks, or exploration of the surrounding area for possible constructional materials. Even with the short constructional deadlines permitted, Lt Col. William S. Shoemaker was of the opinion that some previous ground reconnaissance by an engineer staff would have been possible and of great assistance. As it was, the aviation engineer unit frequently was the first to get on the ground at the work site, and it usually found itself there with only verbal orders and no supply channels⁵⁶.

Pusan in the early stages of planning seemed to offer acceptable possibilities for a jet airfield. However, Colonel Shoemaker on 3 July found that the runway, mere concrete wash on four inches of rubble, was rapidly breaking up under transport traffic. The north end of the runway, moreover, was at the water level of surrounding rice paddies. So situated, the field offered almost nothing in the way of dispersal parking or cantonment areas. Shoemaker set up a small detachment to keep the airfield in some degree of repair and got the field

*When the advance echelon of the Fifth Air Force moved to Taegu on 16-17 July, it included only one engineer officer at staff level, Lt Col. William S. Shoemaker.

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closed to planes heavier than C-47's. Using Korean conscripts and when this proved unsatisfactory locally contracted workers, the detachment kept the airfield patched up on a day-to-day basis until other airfields were available for use.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, FEAF representatives had located another field on the east coast of Korea at Pohang, which had a runway similar in construction to that at Pusan but in better condition. When Company A, 802d Engineer Aviation Battalion reached Pusan, it was therefore diverted to Pohang on 10 July; two days later, the work of placing a 500-foot PSP overrun and constructing taxiways and hardstands was started. Two large spongy areas had to be dug out and refilled preliminary to laying the taxiway planking, and the speed of construction demanded that grading of a part of the taxiway be omitted. The first combat mission was flown from the strip on 15 July, and by 19 July completion of a cross taxiway permitted combat units to use as much of the field as had been completed at that time. Enemy pressure against the Pohang area forced the engineers to evacuate on 13 August.

Prospective airfield sites were lost to the enemy at Pyongtaek and Taejon, so that by early July only the site at Taegu remained practicable as an air base in central Korea. FEAF therefore decided to concentrate the full 822d Engineer Aviation Battalion, plus the 919th Engineer Aviation Maintenance Company, at Taegu. Orders were issued to the units on Okinawa on 8 July, and by 16 July the first elements were unloading at Pusan, on 30 July the last of the battalion had moved northward into Taegu by train from the South Korean port. Here the aviation engineers hurriedly laid down a new PSP runway, seemingly without much attention to the sub-grade, and started renovation of the old strip which had been in use during the month. On 16 August, just as the battalion was returning to work on the old strip and necessary taxiways, word was received that enemy pressure demanded evacuation of all engineer troops except a small maintenance detachment. Some 4,300 feet of the new runway, however, was in use by tactical units.

The engineer units thus labored to meet short deadlines with worn equipment and confused logistical support. Heavier construction equipment had to be left at the Pusan harbor because of the impracticability of moving it forward.

The age of other equipment caused numerous breakdowns, and, with almost no flow of spare parts, the engineers cannibalized some items to keep like items running. Large stocks of construction material were on hand in ECA dumps, and these stocks were drawn upon until Army supplies could begin to arrive from Japan. Pierced-steel planking assumed particular importance because of its world-wide shortage and handling difficulty. Frequently classified as a "portable" surfacing, it was shipped in bundles of 30 planks which would cover 375 square feet but which weighed approximately a ton. Thus a standard runway of 150 by 5,000 feet required 1,928 tons of PSP. The metal planking, moreover, was stored and controlled by the Pusan Logistical Command, and, being of use to non-aviation activities, some of the PSP was diverted to the construction of an ammunition unloading beach at Pusan and an ordnance service station at Taegu.

Although the airfields were barely of minimum standard, the Fifth Air Force rushed temporarily designated units into Korea with a speed confusing to participants. The 6002d Air Base Squadron was organized at Sasebo effective 6 July, with directions to proceed to Pusan on or about the same day and establish a base there.⁵⁸ At Pusan the squadron was directed on to Taegu where it took over establishment of an operational air base. One officer has left a vivid description of the first days at Taegu.⁵⁹

It may be stated without equivocation that many "lost souls" were located at Taegu. Morale was beginning to be a problem for personnel did not know what their mission was and many men skilled in technical specialties in the maintenance of aircraft and equipment found that there were few aircraft to be maintained and many ditches to be dug. We were in an area of filth, amidst rice paddies filled with water and human excreta. We were sleeping and living in pup tents, under shelter halves, in the paddies and on the hillsides. During the rains the hillsides became torrents and the paddies became even more full of filth. The Fifth Air Force redesignated the squadron as the 6002d Air Base Unit on 12 July, but the unit did not learn of its new name until 27 July because communications back to Itazuke were uncertain during the month.⁶⁰ A provisional fighter unit hurried into Taegu after a brief formative period in Japan. The Fifth Air Force established Detachment 1 of the 36th Fighter-Bomber Squadron at Itazuke on 27 June, equipped the detachment—better known by its code name of

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BOUT-ONE—with F-51's, and moved it to Taegu. At the same time the Thirteenth Air Force was forming another F-51 squadron, utilizing the personnel of the 12th Fighter-Bomber Squadron. This so-called DALLAS squadron left Clark on 10 July, was flown to Johnson where it picked up F-51's, and by 15 July it had flown its first missions in combat. These two provisional units were combined at Taegu on 10 July as the 51st Fighter Squadron, Single Engine (Provisional). On 16 July the first echelon of Fifth Air Force Advance headquarters was flown from Itazuke to new quarters in the city of Taegu, and by 24 July the whole body was located at that forward area.* Effective on 24 July the advance echelon was redesignated as the Fifth Air Force in Korea.⁶¹

Movement of additional tactical organizations to Korea awaited the reequipment of those units with F-51's from the United States. The aircraft carrier *Boxer*, which managed an eight-day crossing of the Pacific, brought 145 F-51's which had been assembled for delivery by 27 July.⁶² General Stratemeyer had already prepared to use these F-51's when on 11 July he had approved a plan to move the 18th Fighter-Bomber Group with its 12th and 67th Squadrons from the Philippines for temporary duty with the Fifth Air Force. By 30 July this contingent had converted to F-51's at Johnson, and on 3 August it had reached Taegu, where, next day, the 51st Fighter Squadron (P) was returned to its old designation as the 12th Squadron.⁶³ With the arrival of a fighter group, the air base unit at Taegu was redesignated and expanded to become the 6002d Fighter Wing, Single Engine, comprising temporary duty squadrons typical of a wing organization. Hardly had this new organization been set up on 1 August,⁶⁴ than the threat of an enemy attack at Taegu forced the withdrawal of all heavy equipment and large portions of the personnel. The 67th Squadron went back to Ashiya and on 6-7 August the remainder of the 18th Fighter-Bomber Group followed it there. On 8 August the 6002d Fighter Wing also moved back to Ashiya, leaving behind a newly activated 6149th Air Base Unit to serve 18th Group fighters as they staged through Taegu on combat missions.⁶⁵ Other aircraft managed the same routine, and a total of 2,368 sorties were flown from Taegu during August and early September.⁶⁶

*The Joint Operations Center had already opened at Taegu on 5 July and had moved back to Taegu on 16 July 1950. See p. 25.

Fifth Air Force experience at Pohang was similar to that at Taegu. The 6131st Air Base Unit was organized there on 12 July as a temporary duty organization with personnel and equipment from separate supporting elements of the 35th Fighter-Interceptor Group. Meanwhile, back in Japan the 40th Fighter-Interceptor Squadron (35th Group) began to convert to F-51 Mustangs on 11 July and completed conversion on 16 July. On the latter day this squadron was alerted to move from Ashiya to Pohang, and squadron air crews moved there that same day. At Pohang the squadron was virtually out of contact with the world, since communications could not be established with Fifth Air Force headquarters, only 45 miles away across the mountains at Taegu.⁶⁷ The 35th Fighter Group headquarters and its 39th Squadron remained at Ashiya during July, continuing operations with F-80C's. Finally, on 7 August the 39th Squadron received its Mustangs, and the air crews moved across to Pohang that same day. In token of expanding activities at the east Korean base, the 6131st Fighter Wing, Single Engine was formed at Pohang on 8 August.⁶⁸

Even as the expanded wing operations began at Pohang, however, it was evident that the base was in grave danger from North Korean guerrilla infiltration. The aviation engineers there were directed to pull out their heavy equipment on 8 August, a task which resulted in the loss of a few items of heavier machinery which could not be easily moved. Beginning on 11 August, ground crews worked on their aircraft by day and defended the airfield from slit trenches by night with the assistance of the aviation engineers and a small infantry task force. But by 13 August the enemy pressure was too heavy, and the fighter units were flown out to Tsuiki Air Base on Kyushu. Wing elements moved out by LST next day, joining the 35th Group at Tsuiki. "No equipment was left behind," reported the 40th Squadron; "this was due partly to the fact that we did not have much equipment anyhow."⁶⁹

Flying from Itazuke, the 8th Fighter-Bomber Group had been the first organization to fight in Korea, and during July it continued maximum effort, with many pilots flying three missions each day. The 35th and 36th Squadrons of this group were nevertheless slated for conversion to Mustangs, and on 10-11 August they undertook something new in USAF experience, movement to a new

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base and conversion to different type aircraft at the same time. On 10 August the group departed Itazuke and arrived at Tsuiki early next morning. Pilots bade their "beloved" F-80's goodbye on the morning of 11 August, climbed into F-51's for a mission to Korea, and returned to land at Tsuiki. As a base, Tsuiki had little more than runways and a parking area, for it was an old Japanese naval air base which had been bombed out during World War II and used for nothing more than maneuvers during the occupation. With the arrival of the 35th Group, four fighter squadrons had to fly from a field previously considered suitable for nothing more than emergency landings. Until late September, however, the pilots would fly out of Tsuiki

before dawn, make as many as five missions out of Taegu during the day, and return home after dark. What seems to have bothered 8th Group pilots was not the move from the comforts of Itazuke to the field conditions at Tsuiki, but the loss of their F-80 fighters. They were told that the F-51 was a better ground support fighter than the F-80, but "unfortunately," recorded the group historian, "this idea was not shared by the pilots who had been flying F-80's. A lot of pilots had seen vivid demonstrations of why the F-51 was not a ground support fighter in the last war, and weren't exactly intrigued by the thought of playing guinea pig to prove the same thing over again."⁷⁰

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Chapter 3

TACTICAL AIR CONTROL IN KOREA

ALTHOUGH THE Far East Air Forces possessed an superiority over Korea from the outset of hostilities, this superiority could contribute little to the ground campaign without an adequate system of tactical air control. Establishment of such a system of control was the most trying aspect of the air campaign for South Korea, for, as already emphasized, FEAF was moving from a defensive establishment to an offensive war and lacked the personnel and equipment for a tactical control organization.

Committed to a static deployment for the defense of Japan, a mission which had dictated a troop and equipment list entirely different from

that required in tactical air operations, the Fifth Air Force nevertheless improvised a command and control organization with commendable rapidity and considerable ingenuity. Assuming the mission before it was formally assigned by General Stratemeyer on 12 July, the Fifth Air Force undertook to maintain air superiority in the combat zone, to support USAFIK and ROK forces, to provide fighter escort for B-29 missions when requested, to conduct troop carrier operations, to conduct air reconnaissance, and to destroy enemy ground and sea transport and communications facilities. The Fifth Air Force, moreover, remained responsible for the air defense of Japan.¹

AIR ORGANIZATION FOR TACTICAL OPERATIONS

To meet this bifurcated mission of offense and defense, General Partridge divided his Fifth Air Force headquarters and command. He, together with Brig Gen Edward J Timberlake, Fifth Air Force vice-commander, took to the field with an advance echelon of Fifth Air Force headquarters (designated Fifth Air Force in Korea after 24 July) and assumed the tactical mission outlined. A rear echelon of Fifth Air Force headquarters, under Brig Gen Delmar T. Spivey, also designated Fifth Air Force vice-commander, remained behind in Nagoya; General Spivey, who assumed the duty on 10 August, was to supervise the air defense of Japan, logistical and administrative support of the advance headquarters and its units, replacement training, personnel processing, air-sea rescue for Japan and Korea, maintenance and operation of Japanese andromes, and operational control of antiaircraft artillery in Japan. In short, the Fifth Air Force in Korea fought the tactical air war while Fifth Air Force Rear mam-

tained occupational and air defense responsibilities in Japan.² Unable to break off completely from its old duties in Japan, the Fifth Air Force was forced to divide its headquarters staff just as it had already divided its tactical units.

According to CINCFE orders FEAF Bomber Command was also to support the ground troops in Korea. General Stratemeyer first assigned this medium bomber command a proper mission against enemy transportation systems north of the Han River and against North Korean industrial targets and air installations. Unless ordered by FEAF, Bomber Command was not to operate south of the 38th parallel. This delimitation of mission was based on General Stratemeyer's firm conviction that the employment of medium bombers in attempted close support during the first two weeks of Korean hostilities did blunt the North Korean advance but was nevertheless calculated to be extremely wasteful of air effort in any long war.³ Yet on 9 July, the day that

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General Stratemeyer set out the medium bomber mission, the 24th Division found itself unable to resist enemy armor, and General MacArthur, though he recognized its inefficiency, called for B-29 support for the hard-pressed ground troops.⁴ By 11 July the 24th Division crisis appeared to have been weathered,⁵ and on 13 July Lt Gen Walton H. Walker assumed command of all US Army forces in Korea, announcing his command as the Eighth US Army in Korea (EUSAK), with headquarters at Taegu.⁶ That same day, MacArthur, finding another enemy troop concentration on the center of the EUSAK front, ordered FEAF to employ maximum B-26 and B-29 effort against transportation targets in an area which included Umsong, Changhowon, Chechon, and Changhoi.⁷ On 15 July MacArthur further informed Walker that future emergency use of medium bombers would be directed whenever EUSAK desired.⁸ He evidently meant to continue using medium bombers in the very manner which Stratemeyer had thought wasteful in the first two weeks of hostilities.

At this juncture, FEAF was additionally alarmed by the sweeping authority given to the GHQ Target Group.⁹ On 17 July General Stratemeyer formally proposed methods for fulfilling EUSAK's air support requirements. General Walker was to make his requirements directly to General Partridge, who would honor those requirements within his available means, reporting requirements in excess of his means to Stratemeyer along with an information copy of the message specifying targets to Bomber Command. General Stratemeyer was then to direct O'Donnell's Bomber Command to furnish the required support within its capabilities, while details as to time of attack, target identification, and battlefield control were to be arranged by direct coordination between Partridge and O'Donnell. Stratemeyer argued that this procedure would permit maximum utilization of all combat aircraft and provide the most effective ground support. In his reply, General Almond, quoting the JCS definition for "close air support," approved the

recommended technique with several qualifications. EUSAK requests for general air support—that is, air support operations conducted in enemy rear areas usually beyond friendly artillery range—were to be processed in the same manner as that recommended by Stratemeyer for close support, but when such requests conflicted with preplanned FEAF missions, the matter of priority would be referred to MacArthur for decision. Almond also did not mean to abdicate MacArthur's right to issue directives to FEAF for the employment of medium bombers against either general air support targets or strategic targets. Until otherwise notified, General Almond desired FEAF to continue the majority of medium bomber strikes into the area between the front lines and the 38th parallel, targets north of the 38th parallel might be bombed as secondary objectives.¹⁰

General Stratemeyer issued the approved support plan on 18 July,¹¹ and complying with CINCFE's wishes, he revised Bomber Command's mission by specifying the following priorities of effort: (1) close support operations directed by FEAF and beyond Fifth Air Force capability; (2) enemy air-bases and aircraft on them when intelligence indicated a profitable target; (3) interdiction of the battlefield by destroying and maintaining destruction of highway and railway bridges between 37° and 38° from coast to coast, (4) destruction of petroleum refineries and storage, (5) destruction of enemy industrial targets including electric power plants. He ordered O'Donnell to meet the first priority to the exclusion of all others. All three medium bombardment groups were to be used each day at the rate of seven sorties per aircraft each month, a rate to be raised to ten sorties when logistics permitted.¹² The three medium groups were to continue in close support until 25 July, at which time GHQ would release two of them for a coordinated interdiction campaign. On 4 August all B-29 groups were to be released from close support targets,¹³ but they would be required for special ground cooperation missions later in the month.

THE EXTEMPORIZED TACTICAL CONTROL SYSTEM

Stratemeyer's definition of close support procedures on 18 July was by no means the beginning of close support in Korea, because the Fifth Air

Force had been rendering assistance to the 24th Division from the time of its commitment. General Partridge had already improvised a control

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system which, although it complied with joint air-ground doctrine, was severely hampered by a lack of experienced personnel and a crippling shortage of communications channels¹⁴ The system, shown in diagram in figure 5, was nevertheless working; and no one could ever claim that the Fifth Air

Force had occasioned any delay in Korean ground operations.

The heart of the mechanism for controlling air-ground operations between a field army and a tactical air force is the Joint Operations Center (JOC). Here the air-ground operations section makes known Army requests for tactical air

JOINT POLICY AGREEMENT FOR CONTROL OF AIRCRAFT OPERATING OVER KOREA

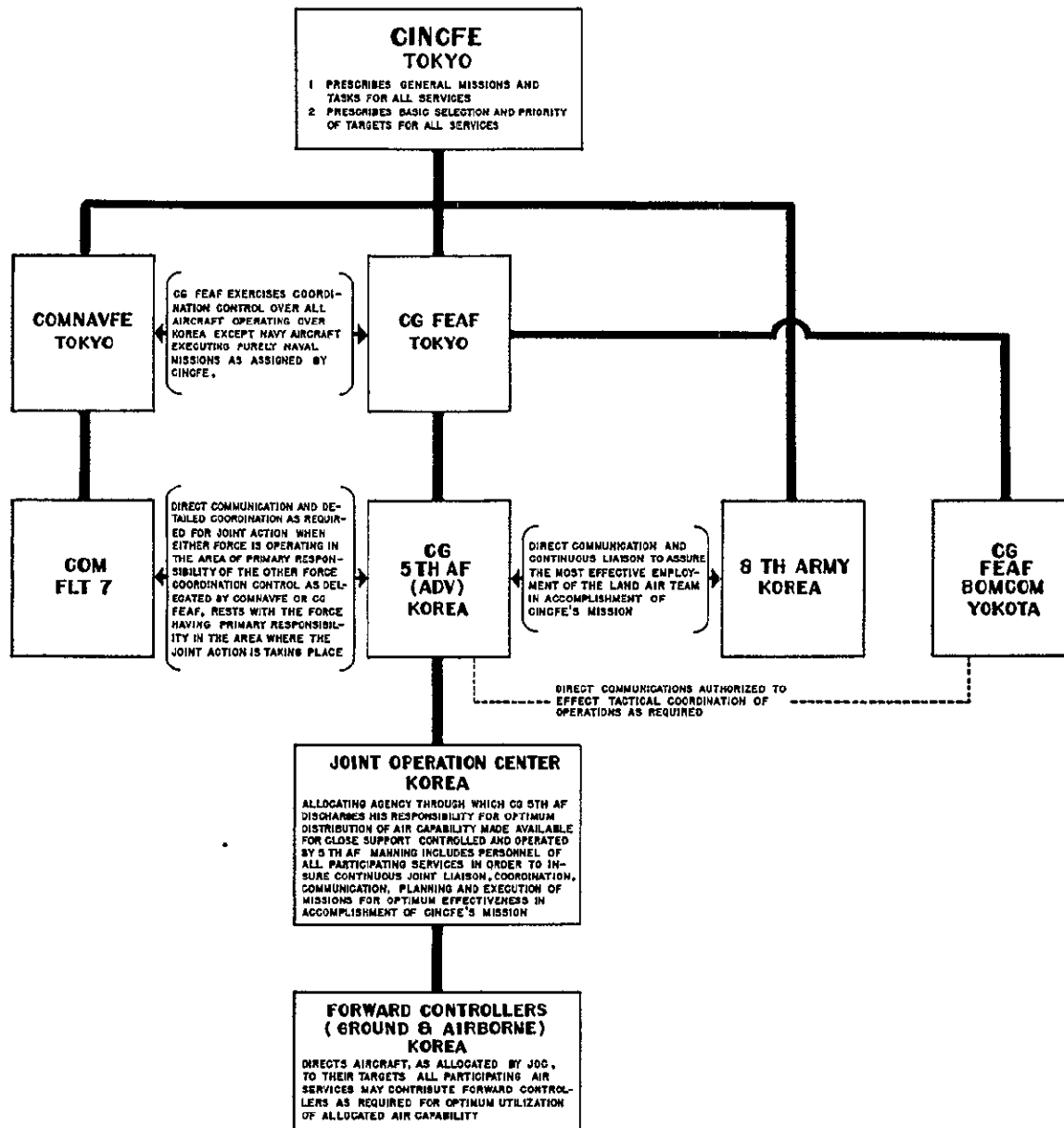


Figure 5.

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missions, and the combat operations section implements these requests with orders to tactical air units for missions. The former section is composed of Army officers and represents the Army commander, the latter is composed of Air Force personnel and represents the tactical air force commander.¹⁵ The Fifth Air Force formed its operations section for the JOC at Itazuke on 3 July, drawing officers from Fifth Air Force headquarters and airmen from the 8th Communications Squadron, in all, 10 officers and 35 airmen. Lt Col John R. Murphy, Fifth Air Force Director of Operations, was named officer in charge of the operations section. Colonel Murphy and the others went to Taejon on 5 July, where a JOC was set up in 24th Division headquarters. This JOC had a VHF radio for air control work and a land-line telephone and teletype to Fifth Air Force Advance. Because of enemy pressure against Taejon, some of the personnel moved back to Taegu on 16 July and began to set up for operations there, while the Taejon section continued to operate, using radio jeeps for communications, until 19 July, when the remainder of the JOC moved back to Taegu.¹⁶

The Tactical Air Control Center (TACC) is the focal point for aircraft control and warning activities of the tactical air force. Through it the tactical air force commander controls all air activity of his air force. Among its other duties, which include air defense as well as offense, the TACC controls aircraft on tactical air missions as directed by the combat operations section. It is desirable for it to be located near the JOC, but it is imperative that it be in an area where VHF communications are most favorable. At Taejon a detachment of the 620th Aircraft Control and Warning Squadron extemporized a TACC, while the 6132d Tactical Air Control Squadron was being organized back at Itazuke, effective 14 July. This squadron, later redesignated as the 6132d Tactical Air Control Group, moved almost immediately to Taegu where it established a full-scale TACC, with AN/TTQ-1 plotting equipment and VHF radio. Since no radar equipment was in use in the field, the principal duty of the TACC was fighter direction control for close support. Enemy pressure forced the withdrawal of the heavy TACC equipment from Taegu to Pusan on 30 July, but a small scale TACC remained operational at Taegu.¹⁷ Headquarters, Fifth Air Force in Korea opened at Taegu on 20 July along-

side the JOC/TACC, thus establishing command and control at one location.¹⁸

The forward elements of the tactical control system are the Tactical Aircraft Control Parties (TACP), which are teams specially organized to control close air support strikes in the vicinity of forward ground elements. Two TACP's were being formed in Japan for an amphibious maneuver at the outbreak of hostilities, and, equipped with AN/VRC-1 radio jeeps, they were flown to Korea, where they were on hand when General Dean's 24th Division command post opened at Taejon on 4 July.¹⁹ The first teams went into operation on 5 July at Chonan, and two other teams, formed from fighter squadron personnel, went into action on 7 July at Chonui, just south of Chonan; the fighter pilots, detached for duty as forward air controllers, normally served on three weeks temporary duty. By 10 August, 18 TACP's were in the field, and the Fifth Air Force undertook to provide 4 to each Army division, a number higher than World War II experience had indicated necessary.²⁰ This number permitted a TACP with each regiment, one with each division headquarters, and additional parties were provided for each ROK division and corps.

The initial control system made no use of Tactical Air Direction Centers (TADC), two of which are usually allocated to each TACC. By doctrine the TADC is a subordinate air operations installation from which aircraft and air warning operations are directed within a restricted area. These centers were not used at first in Korea because of the lack of air opposition, the restricted area of the front, and primarily because of the over-all shortage of tactical air direction equipment and personnel.²¹ The Fifth Air Force also assigned an air liaison officer (ALO) to each U.S. division and each ROK corps. This officer is a personal representative of the air force commander, charged with advising the ground unit commander on air matters, such as the suitability of targets for attack by tactical aviation.²²

Under normal circumstances Army units bear the burden of requesting air support missions and of transmitting adequate intelligence and target information to the air-ground operations section of the JOC. The Eighth Army, retreating during most of the summer, was more often than not unable to identify enemy points of strength on its

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front lines. At the same time, the jet fighters, limited by their fuel to a short time over the front lines, had to have an immediate target if they were to give support. Lt Col Stanley P. Latolais, A-3 Operations, Fifth Air Force, suggested to General Partridge that T-6 trainers be used for tactical reconnaissance and tactical control in close coordination with friendly ground units. Pending the modification of T-6's, Lieutenants James A. Bryant and Frank G. Mitchell on 9 July took two L-5G type liaison planes, modified with four-channel VHF radios, to Taejon where they were joined by Lt Harold E. Morris to form what was called the "Operations Section" of the JOC. Unable to get their radios working because of low generator voltages, Lieutenants Bryant and Mitchell borrowed rides in Army liaison L-17's for that day. Although Bryant was attacked by two Yaks over the road between Ichon and Umsong, the two airborne controllers nevertheless managed about 10 flights of F-80's each during the day. There was some confusion, for the fighters had not been briefed to expect airborne control, but results of the missions brought forth Colonel Murphy's comment that it was "the best day in Fifth Air Force history."²³

Despite continued efforts, it proved impracticable to use the L-5 in airborne control, and Maj Merrill H. Carlton, who had undertaken direction of the airborne control, appealed strongly for unarmed but speedier T-6's, equipped with AN/ARC-3 radio. When these arrived, all airborne control work was shifted to them. Although the trainers were vulnerable to ground fire, the North Koreans proved reluctant to expose their positions by firing, for as the saying among them went "when we hear drone of small bee, we know it will bring soon the sting of the hornet." On 13 July the airborne control organization moved back to Taegu, where it became known as the MOSQUITO squadron, an appropriate name which appears to have come from an early radio call sign for the unit. After three weeks of informal existence, the MOSQUITO squadron was officially organized as the 6147th Tactical Control Squadron Airborne, effective on 1 August.²⁴

With all air elements of the tactical control system in being, the Fifth Air Force ordered the following procedure for execution of a support mission. All pilots entering Korea were to call for MELLOW, the control radio of the TACC, from

which they would receive a mission assignment together with directions for contacting a specific division TACP somewhere near the front. At the division TACP the pilots were to be informed of the specific radio frequency and the approximate location of the TACP with which they were to work. The TACC might, according always to JOC direction, send these aircraft to work with a MOSQUITO aircraft. After completing a mission, the pilots were to fly again in the vicinity of Taegu, call MELLOW control, report their accomplishments, and then check out of the target area. When necessary, USAF airborne or ground control parties could call divisional L-17 aircraft for information on the location of friendly or enemy-ground elements, occasionally, fighter aircraft would work directly with these divisional reconnaissance planes.²⁵

During July the Fifth Air Force had staffed its side of the JOC and the tactical control system, and it had further improvised the MOSQUITO control procedure. Unfortunately, the Eighth Army was unable to complete its side of the air control organization. Although the Eighth was responsible for its own communications between divisions and the JOC, the Air Force had been compelled to undertake this function, an uncertain improvisation with SCR-399 high-frequency radio.²⁶ The Eighth Army, moreover, had been unable to staff the air-ground section with its requisite number of officers. On 13 August General Stratemyer pointed out that this section of the JOC lacked nine G-3 air duty officers, six G-2 air duty officers, and sufficient clerks to process the work of the section. The army had not provided an army photo interpretation center specified in Field Manual 31-35, August 1946, and, while the Fifth Air Force could photograph the front line daily, it could not interpret and reproduce all the photos needed by the Eighth Army. GHQ FEC replied on 1 September that the Eighth Army was aware of the discrepancies and would attempt to remedy them when more personnel arrived. Meanwhile, GHQ professed satisfaction with the control system in effect.²⁷

It is fully appreciated that essential elements of the air-ground system were not available in the Far East Command at the outbreak of the Korean emergency and that substitutes and field expedients were necessary. That such a highly successful and workable system has been developed in a relatively short period of time speaks well of the resourcefulness and ability of the commanders concerned.

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PROBLEMS OF TACTICAL AIR CONTROL

Yet the improvised control system was less satisfactory than the Air Force desired. Air Force control was hampered by a lack of trained personnel and adequate communications channels until early October 1950, when the 502d Tactical Control Group, having arrived from the United States, was able to assume its duties. The 20th Signal Company, Air-Ground Liaison also got into action during October, thus providing the channels required by the Eighth Army request net.²⁸ During the interim of crucial ground fighting for the defense of South Korea, however, many problems arose within the extemporized air control system.

Communications Difficulties There was no easy solution for the lack of adequate communications. Equipment available to the TACP's was scarce and not well suited to their purposes. The AN/ARC-1 radio sets mounted in the forward air control jeeps had only four VHF communications channels, making it necessary for the ground controllers to change crystals before working a part of the fighter groups which used different frequencies. It was possible to work all groups on a common frequency, but excessive traffic made this difficult. The VHF component of the AN/ARC-1 was light and fragile and it was rapidly jolted out of operation on the rough roads of Korea, while lack of spare parts and test equipment prevented complicated repairs in the field. Because of the short life of this VHF component (the SCR-522) under such operational conditions, each TACP was provided two radio jeeps, and the 6132d Tactical Air Control Group kept mobile repair teams in the field. Nor was the jeep a vehicle adequate to shelter and transport a TACP. The Fifth Air Force, in conjunction with the Eighth Army, designed a radio installation in the M-39 armored utility carrier which suited TACP needs, but the vehicles could not be obtained in necessary quantity. The armored carrier was hard to conceal at the front lines, for it kicked up a great deal of dust on the roads, advertising its location to the enemy.²⁹

Because of the lack of ground communications lines, the TACP's had no communications with adjoining parties, the air liaison officers at divisional headquarters, or with the JOC at Taegu. Missions were requested by the divisions, but in

many cases the control parties up forward knew nothing concerning the flights until they arrived to be directed to targets. The TACP's were similarly unable to inform the JOC whether air strikes had been effective or whether they needed additional flights. An effort to provide a high frequency radio net for air liaison officers met with little success because of operational breakdowns of the SCR-399 radio sets.³⁰

Airborne radio communications were equally unsatisfactory. The USAF had promised that the Mustangs would be in good condition before shipment to FEAF, but 18th Group maintenance men found much that was wanting. Communications men were particularly vocal about the SCR-522 air-ground equipment, some of which had received no technical order compliance for at least two years. As a whole, the SCR-522 sets were said to be the "most poorly maintained equipment ever encountered in one group of aircraft." Since some of the younger communications technicians of the 18th Group had been trained in peacetime when it was customary to turn defective radio sets into base repair shops, they found it exceedingly difficult to get the communications equipment into operational condition.³¹

MOSQUITO aircraft initially carried eight-channel AN/ARC-3 sets which remained the standard communications facility for fighter control, although SCR-300 sets were added in August to permit the airborne control ships to work tank columns and forward ground patrols. The radio procedures followed by MOSQUITO pilots made most use of the common "A" channel of the AN/ARC-3. They checked out of Taegu airstrip, reported to division and regiment control, reported to the airborne controller being relieved, requested fighter aircraft from MOSQUITO MELLOW (the airborne relay station between the battle area and Taegu), and received the fighter aircraft—all on the common "A" channel. If another frequency could not be established with the fighters, and such was frequently the case with the Mustangs and their four-channel SCR-522 sets, the MOSQUITO had to work the close support mission on "A" channel. Navy and Marine aircraft, moreover, had only "A" and "H" channels in common with the MOSQUITO controllers and Army liaison planes possessed only "A" and "B"

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channels, thus making clutter inevitable on one or the other channel. During the Pusan perimeter fighting, MOSQUITO aircraft were assigned certain particular areas of operations, thus mitigating somewhat communications jamming from excessive transmissions in a restricted area. But when EUSAK began to break out of the perimeter on 16 September, the massing of ground units brought too many supporting airborne controllers into the same areas, greatly complicating radio reception by numerous transmissions on the same frequencies.³²

If communications were hardly able to cope with the control of supporting aircraft at the front, they were equally deficient between Taegu and tactical air bases in Japan. The Fifth Air Force had partial use of the submarine cable between Pusan and Japan, but there was no rapid means of certain contact between the JOC and Japanese bases. Aircraft from the tactical groups in southern Japan were commonly dispatched on a daily air-alert schedule (normally two planes at 15-minute intervals) to report to the TACC. Because of the inflexibility of the dispatching schedules, aircraft from Japan might stack up over Taegu when there were few missions or prove insufficient to the task when many support requests were on hand.³³ The TACC, however, could scramble planes at Taegu, and for a time at Pohang.

Air Force-Navy Coordination in Close Support. Defects in the control system were most obvious when naval carriers moved into South Korean waters to augment Fifth Air Force close support. On 3 July the fast carrier *Valley Forge*, the first of a number of carriers to be made available to Admiral Joy,* went into action, but it retired to replenish after continued strikes against interdiction targets on the next day. On 19 July the *Valley Forge* was back with orders to support the ground troops, a matter of some surprise to Partridge and Walker since GHQ had arranged it without consulting them. General Partridge insisted that the carrier pilots must follow the same operating procedure as Fifth Air Force flyers, and despite early complaints by Navy pilots that

they could not raise MELLOW control, better liaison produced satisfactory strikes on 25 July and more were scheduled for the following two days.³⁴

Hoping to get continued carrier close support for the hard-pressed Eighth Army, General Weyland asked NAVFE to continue such strikes in coordination with Partridge's headquarters, and at a NAVFE-FEAF conference on 3 August, the Navy agreed to give first priority to close support. The conferees recognized that not all naval aircraft would be used for close support and therefore accepted naval air strikes against interdiction targets south of the 38th parallel as second priority, and interdiction strikes north of the 38th parallel as third priority. It was agreed that the Navy would coordinate interdiction strikes south of the parallel with Fifth Air Force, north of the parallel with FEAF Bomber Command. FEAF also gave the NAVFE representatives a list of interdiction targets for dissemination in their command.³⁵

Back in South Korea in early August, it still seemed impossible to coordinate Navy carrier air with Fifth Air Force effort. On entering Korean waters, the carrier force commander informed Partridge that he planned to send his strikes to contact forward controllers directly, instead of reporting in to MELLOW over Taegu, so as to give his planes more time over the targets and allow them more discrimination in selecting targets. Anxious to secure cooperation, General Partridge did not object.³⁶ On 10 August, however, Task Force 77 observed that there was apparently no further need for carrier aircraft in close support. The naval pilots had reported controllers to be constantly overcrowded, many Navy planes had to wait excessive periods of time for target assignment or else were given no targets. This was undoubtedly true, but FEAF explained that it had already furnished the Navy more than a hundred interdiction targets south of the 38th parallel in order to give carrier aircraft secondary targets in case they could not work a controller. Fifth Air Force planes, failing to get a close support target, were briefed to try for an interdiction objective.³⁷

Early in September EUSAK's critical plight brought naval planes back to try close support again. The difficulties encountered in these strikes surprised FEAF, which had thought most problems solved at the 3 August conference. The Navy, however, seems to have considered this

*The arrival and departure of aircraft carriers in the Far East during 1945 was as follows: *Valley Forge* (CV), prior to 25 June, *Forster* (CV) arrived 14 Sept. and departed 29 Oct., *Philippine Sea* (CV) arrived 31 July, *Leyte* (CV) arrived 3 Oct., *Princeton* (CV) arrived 2 Dec., *Pataan* (CVL) arrived 25 Nov., *Padoeng Strait* (CVE) arrived 31 July, *Sicily* (CVE) arrived 25 July, *HMS Triumph* (CVL) arrived 22 July and departed 25 Sept., and *HMS Thetis* (CVL) arrived 8 Oct. 1950.

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merely an advisory conference, the decisions of which were not mandatory. And, although the Air Force understanding was otherwise, neither this conference nor any current directive actually stated that Eighth Army must make all of its requirements for close air support to the Fifth Air Force through the JOC. As a result, Walker requested naval close support without informing FEAF or the Fifth Air Force, and MacArthur ordered Joy to extend the desired support, again without informing FEAF. Although FEAF learned informally that the carriers were being brought back from North Korean interdiction strikes for close support, and so informed the Fifth Air Force by telephone, the emergency found Task Force 77 unable to secure necessary briefing materials before the mission had to be sent out on 1 September. Since the carriers were not located so as to exploit the optimum range of their aircraft, many of the planes reached the target area with too little gasoline to permit long periods of waiting while targets were assigned. Once again, MELLOW control was badly overcrowded.³⁸ An irate Navy tactical air group commander visited the JOC on the evening of 1 September, complaining of the lack of targets and inadequate control, but after being briefed on control procedures he understood what was needed and helped plan cooperative missions for 2 September.³⁹

The chief difficulties in operational coordination between the Fifth Air Force and Task Force 77 appear to have arisen from three principal factors: (1) Navy aviators checking into the control net did not sufficiently understand Air Force terminology, (2) the task force entering an area of established Fifth Air Force control did not properly undertake liaison with General Partridge, (3) waves of naval aircraft almost invariably swamped the ground control system.⁴⁰ Because of deck loading, the Navy habitually launched most of the carrier aircraft in large strikes, and limitations of carrier operations apparently did not permit smaller launchings of aircraft throughout the day as required for orderly close support. The large carriers, moreover, had to operate in forces of not less than two.⁴¹ In an editorial in the *Baltimore Sun* on 23 August, four naval grievances were set forth: (1) lack of direct communications between the JOC and naval carriers; (2) shortage of properly gridded maps; (3) inability of naval pilots to contact MOSQUITO controllers; (4) refusal of the

Air Force to accept Navy control parties. Partridge admitted the validity of the first charge, but he argued that he had attempted to get the Seventh Fleet to accept a radio-teletype channel. Even with this means of communication, radio blackouts while the carriers were moving would make radio contact difficult and at best spasmodic. As for the second complaint, Partridge said that the Navy had been furnished the Fifth Air Force grid system for maps on 25 July, with a request that it be transferred to naval close support maps. He was unable to explain why Navy pilots could not contact MOSQUITO controllers, but it is probable that they had the same communications problems which beset Fifth Air Force fighters. When he could learn naval intentions in advance, Partridge had attempted to designate sectors of the front for concentrated naval support, a procedure which had been found most satisfactory. To his knowledge, the Fifth Air Force had never refused to accept naval controllers.⁴²

Close Support by Marine Aircraft Marine aircraft furnished a third agency of air support in the campaign for South Korea. A forward echelon of the 1st Marine Air Wing arrived in Tokyo on 19 July, and the remainder of this organization reached Japan on small carriers about 1 August.⁴³ After a short period of orientation at Itami, the wing moved its squadrons to offshore Korea on two escort carriers to support the Marine brigade which went into the Eighth Army line on 5 August. The wing possessed its own organic ground-control-intercept (GCI) and tactical air control squadrons, and while the ground Marines were in combat, it used its 72 F4U's to maintain a relatively constant rate of about 45 sorties until 10 September, when the Marines were withdrawn to make a landing at Inchon. At times during the period when the Marine brigade was not in combat, the 1st Marine Air Wing furnished a smaller number of air sorties along the general battle line.⁴⁴

Without question, the flying Marines, operating from "jeep" carriers close to their concentrated target areas, offered excellent close support, but their advocates failed to appreciate the unusual circumstances of the situation. Small carriers so close inshore had been demonstrated to be exceedingly vulnerable to enemy air attacks during World War II, and had the North Koreans been able to muster an appreciable air effort, such close

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support would have been impossible. World War II experience had similarly shown the gross waste of committing specific air units to the support of particular ground units, in this case a brigade. Yet a surprising number of Army commanders seemed willing to unlearn these lessons for the possession of their *own* support. One reporter hailed the "flying Marines" for the discovery of close air support. "We want no more of those jet jockeys," said Wayne Thomas, purporting to speak for the ground soldiers; "Give us Flying Marines." ⁴⁵

The criticism of Air Force tactical air support in comparison with Marine close support cannot be lightly dismissed or passed over without comment. Because Marine divisions have to be prepared for amphibious invasions in which large amounts of supporting artillery would be impracticable, the Navy has committed to each Marine division one Marine air wing, mustering 75 aircraft with no other mission than that of close support. Marine division communications have been tailored for close support operations, and the ground and air Marines have perfected a high degree of coordination. To support an Army of 100 divisions in such capital style, however, the Air Force would require 7,500 aircraft for that purpose alone. "You hear and read much about the type of support furnished by the Marine air units," observed General Walton Walker. ⁴⁶

It's good, it's excellent, and I would like to have that kind of air support available too—but if the people who advocate that would sit down and figure out the cost of supplying air units for close support only, in that ratio to an army of the size we should have, they would be astounded. Why, even if our economy were many times as strong as it actually is, we couldn't support such a program.

During World War II, when Army divisions had possessed adequate fire support from army, corps, and division artillery, adequate air support was on a much smaller scale than that found necessary in the Korean operation. Because of appropriation limitations, each division of the Eighth Army had been restricted to 12,000 men, a ceiling met by omitting one infantry battalion from each regiment and by corresponding decreases in division artillery, tank, and automatic weapon strength. No army or corps field artillery support was present in the Far East theater. During early phases of the Eighth Army withdrawal, moreover, division artillery was often overrun, and as a result, the divisions pulled their batteries far to

the rear for safety, thereby losing the capacity to bring many frontline targets under fire. ⁴⁷

Division commanders in Korea therefore came to regard air support as just another form of artillery. The commander of the 25th Infantry Division told General Timberlake that he commonly called upon air power for support at times when he was short of artillery shells. He defended his actions as necessary "to conserve our artillery." ⁴⁸ "I think the principal function of air in Korea has been as artillery," stated the assistant commander of the 24th Infantry Division, "it's normal to have at least three or four battalions of some types [of artillery] supporting a division [and since] we haven't had that picture you have had to step in and fill it." ⁴⁹ The commanding general of the 24th Infantry Division remarked, "We use it [air power] to extend and to supplement artillery, I would say; it's something that can come right down on the target once it's located, where our artillery would take much longer to knock the thing out, probably." ⁵⁰ Since it costs many times as much to deliver a bomb by an air strike as to fire an artillery round upon a target, the lack of ground force artillery weapons in Korea severely increased the cost to the American taxpayer as well as causing extortionate demands upon available air units.

Misconceptions of Air-Ground Doctrine Yet it would be an oversimplification to attribute all problems of tactical air employment to shortages of personnel and equipment, for not the least of such problems were failures in execution of doctrine and of many key personages to understand the accepted doctrine of air-ground cooperation. General Stratemeier pointed out that he had no authoritative publication announcing approved policies on joint Navy-Air Force operations and responsibilities for coordination of air activities. ⁵¹ Although Field Manual 31-35, August 1946, was the accepted and approved doctrine for Joint Army-Air Force tactical air operations, an informal survey of key officers in EUSAK headquarters made in mid-July 1950 revealed that only two of those officers had ever read it or were familiar with its contents. ⁵²

On 13 August, a basic misunderstanding of the nature of the Joint Operations Center came to light in a "very crisp but pleasant" discussion between Generals Walker and Partridge. Proceeding on the theory that the JOC's Air Force

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combat operations section was his only means for controlling air support, Partridge assumed that the Air Force had primary interest in the center. By the same token, he viewed the Army air-ground operations section as the agency for the presentation of Eighth Army requirements to the Fifth Air Force. When Marine and Navy air units operated in conjunction with the Air Force, Partridge believed that those components should be represented in the JOC's combat operations section. But Admiral Joy, whose forces were not bound by FM 31-35, assigned his liaison officers directly to EUSAK headquarters, and although General Walker commonly sent them on over to the JOC, the Navy liaison officers still remained attached to EUSAK. Walker believed that the JOC should consist of three sections, Army, Navy, and Air Force, and he seemed to believe that the JOC might be located as properly in Eighth Army headquarters as in that of the Fifth Air Force. General Walker thus overlooked the fact that the JOC relied largely on the Air Force for its communications. He appeared to believe that Air Force, Navy, and Army representatives in the JOC should discuss and agree upon the manner of execution of request for air support missions. On the other hand, Partridge thought that the ground forces should present their requirements through the air-ground operations section, and that he would determine, through the combat operations section, how the requirements were to be met. "To allow such an important decision to be subjected to possible compromise," he asserted, "would be shirking my responsibilities." ⁵³

Happily, the differences of opinion between Walker and Partridge remained largely academic and had no effect on the operations of the con-

trol system. Shortly after mid-August, General Walker evidently lectured his staff on the necessity for cooperation with Fifth Air Force, and from that time on, according to General Timberlake, "the coordination with the Eighth Army-Fifth Air Force was executed perfectly." ⁵⁴ "I am entirely familiar with [Field Manual] 31-35," General Walker stated on 25 November, "and am in complete accord with its provisions." ⁵⁵

Yet with doctrinal procedures misunderstood at the top levels of command in Korea, it is not remarkable that there should have been similar misunderstandings at lower levels. During the latter part of July, a division commander and his artillery officer asked an Air Force observer when he thought the Air Force was going to be able to install the necessary communications lines to provide the air-ground operations request net. Apparently the question was based on World War II experience, and neither officer had heard of an Army air-ground signal liaison company. In another instance, an Air Force observer found a division G-3 frantically searching for the air liaison officer to get him to make out an air support request, the G-3 officer did not understand that it was his responsibility to make the request. All too frequently, battalions telephoned frantic requests for air support to the division G-3, and the requests were passed on to the JOC with no screening at any level. When the many un-screened requests reached the JOC, the inevitable result was an arbitrary decision as to which requests could be honored. "The system," remarked one officer, "had been simulated for so long in training" that the machinery for it did not exist when it was desperately needed. ⁵⁶

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Chapter 4

THE AIR CAMPAIGN FOR SOUTH KOREA

GENERAL MACARTHUR had hoped that American intervention in Korea would rally the ROK forces for a stand along the Han River, but the North Korean Peoples' Army, after pausing to regroup at Seoul, forged across the Han and occupied Suwon in force on 1 July. This day, 374th Troop Carrier Wing C-54's shuttled six loads of 24th Division troops to Pusan before foul weather forced other elements of the division to cross by water. On 4 July one battalion of the 24th Division reached Osan, about ten miles south of Suwon, beginning U.S. ground forces participation in the Korean action. Enemy attacks, spearheaded by some 30 tanks, drove these troops back to the road junction at Chonan on 6 July, and continued enemy pressure made this position untenable on 8 July. Unable to match the North Korean onslaught, ROK and U.S. troops fell back in a series of delaying actions until they reached Kongju and Chochiwon on 11 July.¹

By 16 July North Korean columns were among a pincers movement against Taejon, and when EUSAK held there temporarily, the North Korean command initiated a wide left-flank movement down through west Korean coastal routes, reaching Chonju and Iri on 20 July, Kwangju on 23 July, and capturing the major southwest port city of Mokpo on 24 July. These movements, virtually unopposed except by a few ROK police, opened the way for a drive against the port cities of Masan and Pusan. Meanwhile, on the central front EUSAK was flanked out of Taejon, forced to withdraw to Yongdong on 25 July, and gradually pressed back to Kumchon, where defensive positions were established on 31 July. That same day, on the southwestern front, the 24th Division was forced out of Chinju. On 4 August the bulk of United Nations troops on the west front were withdrawn to positions on the east bank of the

Naktong River, which offered the last good defensive barrier available to EUSAK in South Korea—an 8 to 10 mile wide valley and a stream which was moderately difficult to ford. Only at the southwest end of the line, where the Naktong curves eastward to debouch at Pusan, was the river of no defensive value, but in this area a tributary river, the Nam, offered some cover.²

During July the North Koreans made no serious offensive in the mountains of the east coast front, where ROK troops managed to contain the NKPA 5th Division. Early in August, however, the enemy began massing north of Yongdok, while guerillas formed in the mountains inland from Pohang. By 11 August these irregular troops were down upon the town and airfield at Pohang, objectives of great importance but inadequately defended by Task Force Bradley, a holding force of an infantry battalion, an artillery battery, and a company of tanks. While the North Koreans never managed to secure control in this vicinity, General Partridge had no choice but to withdraw air units from the new base at Pohang, thus reducing his Korean-based air force by half. General Partridge had cautioned EUSAK on 4 August that loss of Pohang would adversely affect air support,³ but EUSAK, threatened on the Naktong, could respond but feebly to the danger.

By 15 August General Walker believed that he was nearing a stabilization along the Naktong line, and although Taegu eventually came under enemy artillery fire, the EUSAK defenses held. In the perimeter line were, from south to north, the 25th Division, the 1st Marine Brigade, the 24th Division, the 1st Cavalry Division, and the ROK 1st, 6th, 8th, Capitol, and 3d Divisions. Division fronts, however, were exceptionally long, and the North Koreans were able to manage

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numerous infiltrations, any one of which, unless contained, might break the UN line. On 1 September the North Koreans unleashed a particularly desperate effort at the southwestern end of the EUSAK perimeter, where natural defensive barriers were weakest. Their heaviest attack was astride the Nakdong east of its juncture with the Nam, and the enemy effected a penetration of the 25th Division, just northward, the 2d Infantry Division, which had replaced the 1st Marine Brigade in the line, was also roughly handled, but it dealt the enemy heavy casualties. Sapped by ground combat and constant aerial attack, the North Korean army had lost most of its vitality, and this last desperate assault was turned back. By mid-September the moment would be ripe for a United Nations counterlanding at Inchon.

The North Korean People's Army managed its attack with ability. It attached tank battalions to assault rifle divisions for spearheading major offensives, and during the first part of the campaign, UN forces lacked the armored power and ground weapons to stop the tanks. Without air action the enemy's armor would have prevailed. North Korean infantry employment revealed a keen appreciation of terrain and guerrilla tactics. Enemy infantry disguised as civilian refugees, often accompanied by women and children, constantly infiltrated UN lines and, once at the rear, effected road blocks, harassments, and ambushes. Deception was common: groups of soldiers would pretend surrender while others attacked from concealed positions, refugees were often driven into UN positions, creating confusion preparatory to frontal or flanking movements.⁴

When exposed to air attack, the North Koreans proved adept at camouflage. Vehicles and armored equipment were concealed in tree-shaded,

dry stream beds and ravines. False haystacks were built on top of tanks, and both tanks and vehicles were driven into houses to prevent their discovery from the air. Destroyed matériel was made conspicuous by an appearance of poor camouflage, a ruse which often caused aircraft to expend their ordnance on unproductive targets. Troops remained hidden during daylight hours and were seen only in the morning or late evening when preparing for an attack or retiring from forward positions. Occasionally, when enemy troops were caught in the open, they would wave at the aircraft rather than disperse, thus seeking to create a doubt in the pilot's mind as to whether they were friendly or hostile. When enemy troops were well dug-in, it was impossible to see them from an altitude higher than 100 to 150 feet.⁵ Such employment of force made the North Koreans difficult to handle on the ground and a confusing target from the air.

That the employment of tactical air power in South Korea was not always in conformity with accepted doctrines has already been noted in reference to many of CINCPAC's directives, issued usually in the heat of a moment when EUSAK troops were hard pressed. The tactical air victory in South Korea involved establishment of aerial superiority, interdiction of the battle area, and direct support for ground troops. Although the USAF doctrine has never maintained that these tasks are mutually exclusive, devoting all air effort first to aerial superiority, all effort next to interdiction, and finally, when the other phases are accomplished, all effort to direct support, USAF doctrine does insist that this sequence represents a logical priority of application of tactical air power. Deviations from the series was to hinder the employment of tactical air in South Korea.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AIR SUPERIORITY

The strangest phenomenon of the Korean war was that the North Korean forces should have been so excellently equipped with Russian armor and ordnance, reinforced with Chinese-trained troops, and yet so meagerly supplied with Russian aircraft. The Communists must have thought that the United Nations would not intervene in

Korea and that the obsolete Russian planes allotted to the NKAF could easily achieve air superiority over the almost nonexistent ROK air force. By the same token, North Korean ground troops at the beginning of hostilities revealed that they had not been trained to withstand hostile air attack. Whatever the reason for the

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paucity of North Korean air opposition, General Stratemeyer called the lack of determined enemy air power the paramount feature of the North Korean operation. It was his opinion that any conclusions to be drawn from the first phase of the war in Korea had to be predicated upon the fact that the U.N. naval forces could operate close inshore, that Air Force planes remained virtually unchallenged by counter-air, and that the ground troops had nothing to fear from enemy air attacks.⁶

After its initial aggressiveness over Kimpo and Suwon in the opening days of hostilities, the NKAF declined rapidly in effectiveness, but not without making determined efforts to assist the ground campaign. Minor strafing attacks were directed against the HMS *Black Swan* and two ROK vessels on 3 July, and four Yaks dropped anti-personnel bombs on ROK troops south of Kimpo, killing 68 ROK soldiers. On 4 July aircraft knocked out a communications repeater station near Osan. Four planes strafed and bombed Chonju on 11 July, and the next day two Yaks destroyed a B-29 near Seoul, while two others shot down an L-4 and attacked F-80's near Chochiwon. On 15 July two Yaks attacked four B-26's, damaging one so badly that it had to land at Taejon. On this day seven Yaks were observed parked on Kimpo, and the speed with which both Kimpo and Suwon had been put back into shape for flying seemed to indicate that the enemy expected reinforcements. After mid-July, however, enemy air attacks dwindled, and the next significant attack took place on 23 August, when two Yaks badly damaged the HMS *Comus*. The CINCFE staff, which had viewed enemy air intervention more seriously than FEAF for some time, saw the attack against shipping as evidence of an intensified North Korean air campaign and ordered FEAF to direct the Fifth Air Force to put field surveillance and attack in first priority.⁷

The small scale of enemy air activity appears to have been due to U.N. destruction of their aircraft, rather than to any lack of aggressiveness on the part of Communist pilots. On 29 June the 3d Bombardment Group sent the first U.S. aircraft north of the 38th parallel on a bombing mission to Pyongyang airfield, where 18 B-26's covered hangar lines, ramp areas, and revetments

with their bombs, claiming 25 enemy aircraft destroyed on the ground, a B-26 gunner destroyed another Yak in the air.⁸ The 8th Fighter-Bomber Group made another successful sweep against the enemy airfield at Pyongyang on 19 July. Led by Lt Col. William T. Samways, the group commander, seven F-80's made pass after pass over the field, destroying at least 14 enemy fighters and 1 twin-engine bomber.⁹ In such aerial combat as they saw fit to undertake, North Korean pilots preferred harassing tactics to concerted action. They usually chose to stay under the clouds, pop up for a quick shot, and then duck back into the undercast. Yet even these conservative tactics cost them planes which they could ill afford to lose, and U.N. pilots seldom had difficulty shooting down such enemy planes as they met in the air.¹⁰

Destruction of their aircraft in the air and on the ground, with some inevitable operational attrition, reduced the North Korean air units nearly to impotence during the first month of hostilities. By 10 August U.N. pilots claimed 110 enemy planes destroyed, leaving perhaps 35 planes of the original North Korean Air Force.¹¹ GHQ estimated on 18 August that the North Koreans still possessed 67 aircraft; General Partridge's aerial reconnaissance of their airdromes revealed far less; and FEAF, attributing the different estimates of enemy strength to a prevalent use of dummy airplanes, estimated that the enemy might have no more than 18 operational aircraft.¹² Except for a few successful sneak attacks against U.N. naval vessels at the time of the Inchon landings, the North Korean Air Force was to be of no additional concern to the war effort in Korea.

The first task of tactical air employment in Korea—establishment of air superiority—had been accomplished without difficulty, and without any great commitment of U.N. air effort. Yet the very ease with which air superiority had been gained was the first of many unrealities of the Korean war, unrealities which must be kept constantly in view in any attempt to evaluate the Korean experience. In any war with a major power the aerial superiority obtained in Korea, virtually by default of the North Korean Air Force, would be dearly purchased in terms of pilots, planes, and air effort.

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INTERDICTION

Faced as it was with a numerically superior enemy, EUSAK required every assistance which the air could give to interdict movement of enemy troops, together with their supplies and equipment, to the South Korean battlefield. According to Field Manual 100-20, *Command and Employment of Air Power*, July 1943, interdiction was the second task of tactical air power.

The disruption of hostile lines of communication (and at times lines of signal communication), and destruction of supply dumps, installations, and the attack on hostile troop concentrations in rear areas will cause the enemy great damage and may decide the battle. This accomplishes the "isolation of the battlefield." If the hostile force is denied food, ammunition, and reinforcements, aggressive action on the part of our ground forces will cause him to retire and the immediate objective will be gained. Massed air action on these targets with well-timed exploitation by ground forces should turn the retirement into rout.

Experience during World War II had demonstrated the phrase "isolation of the battlefield" to be an unfortunate usage, for interdiction of enemy routes of travel far from the combat zone was found necessary to the proper accomplishment of this task. If the enemy got men and material into areas adjacent to the battlefield, he could be expected to bring them the remainder of the way, no matter how bad the travel might be. Experience had also shown that a proper interdiction program must be well planned as to objectives and persistently sustained in its execution.

Interdiction in Korea, however, began with a sporadic designation of targets. On 29 June General MacArthur directed FEAF to destroy the Han River bridges at Seoul, unexpectedly left intact in the initial rout of ROK troops.¹³ General Stratmeyer declared on 8 July that isolation of North Korean forces on the battlefield by the destruction of key bridges was the paramount objective of FEAF at that time.¹⁴ When no enemy aircraft were present, he directed that B-29's bomb individually and continue dropping single bombs until the assigned target was destroyed.¹⁵ Yet FEAF was not permitted to effect any coordinated and comprehensive program for interdiction until 28 July, more than a month after the beginning of Korean hostilities. This delay was due to CINCFE staff insistence that all types of air effort available be devoted

primarily to close support, that such interdiction as was undertaken be in an area so adjacent to the battle area as to be little more than close support, and that targets for air attack be selected by a GHQ target group.

Alarmed by the critical situation of the 24th Division on 9 July, General MacArthur wanted all B-29 effort used for supporting the hard-pressed ground troops, and FEAF was compelled to cancel a mission planned against the marshalling yards at Pyongyang, Seoul, and Wonsan in favor of a medium bomber effort against bridges south of Seoul.¹⁶ On 13 July MacArthur further directed FEAF to use a maximum B-26 and B-29 effort against transportation targets in an area which included Umsong, Changhowon, Chechon, and Changhori.¹⁷ Targets selected by the GHQ Target Group continued FEAF aircraft on missions in the same immediate battlefield area, the list of targets forwarded on 19 July confined medium bomber efforts to critical facilities and troop concentrations between the bomb line and a line well south of the 38th parallel, running from Taean to Samchok.¹⁸ Medium bombers, by CINCFE direction, were taken off interdiction targets on several days during this period and sent against battlefield objectives. On 16 July, for example, eight B-29's, contacting the JOC for a mission, were sent to bomb a concentration of six enemy tanks at a road junction near Konju.¹⁹

By 24 July FEAF figured that its bombers had destroyed 58 bridges and had damaged 31 others during the period in which MacArthur had held all bombers to close and general support of ground troops. "Effectiveness of FEAF Interdiction Plan," Stratmeyer cabled USAF, "is hampered by close and general support requirements necessarily imposed by CINCFE."²⁰ A contradictory opinion was expressed by the chairman of the GHQ Target Group, who forwarded his superior a map of bridges destroyed (see fig 6) and concluded his report as follows:²¹

It is very evident from a study of this map and the road and rail lines, that the operations of the enemy have been seriously impeded by the bombing operations and that his concentration of troops and supplies, had we not hit these centers, would have been so much more easily accomplished that our forces certainly would not have been able to withstand the continued assaults as effectively as has been the case.

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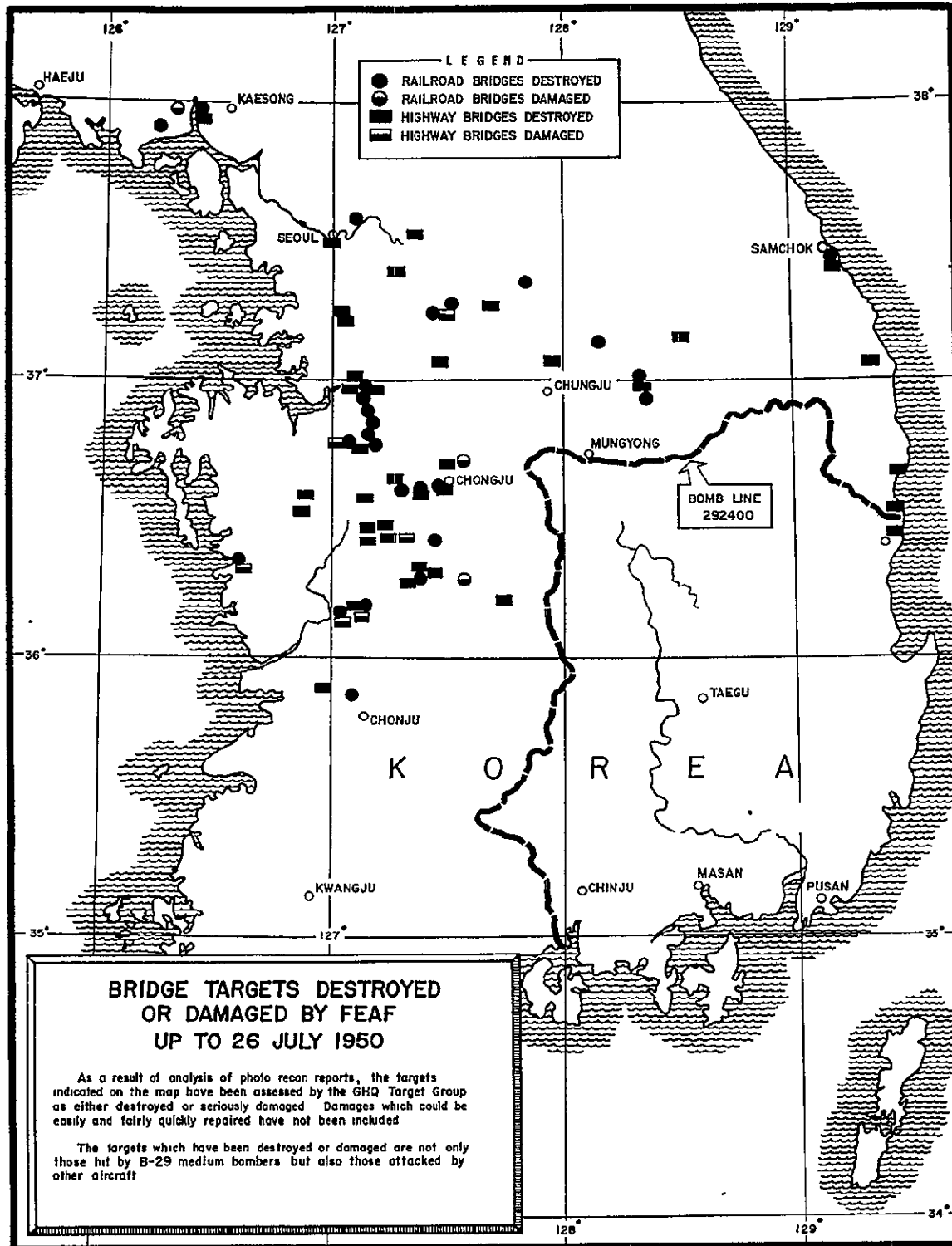


Figure 6.

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In describing results of B-29 activity on 10 July, FEAF stated that they had performed excellently against clearly defined targets like railways, bridges, and towns, but that results against targets of opportunity assigned by ground control (tanks, trucks, and troops on the road from Chonan to Suwon) were unknown, except that the bombs hit in prescribed areas.²² Battlefield control for the medium bombers proved difficult, especially in the fluid ground situation, and on 16 July three B-29's bombed the town of Andong by mistake, killing 22 civilians.²³ Despite the dubious results of medium bombers in close support, General O'Donnell was required to reserve 15 aircraft each day for primary effort against tactical targets along the battle line, and between 10 and 26 July he used 130 B-29 sorties in such activity.²⁴

What was more important, General MacArthur's utilization of medium bombers had been justified as being necessary to relieve a "critical" ground situation, a situation which became critical on 25 June and which showed no signs of improving as the days went by. Under CINCPAC direction FEAF medium bomber effort was concentrated in the area of the front lines, despite the fact that the North Koreans were rushing supplies southward to Seoul over virtually intact transportation systems north of the 38th parallel. With no properly integrated air interdiction program, the North Korean front-line forces were being augmented rapidly and with little interference. "It was like trying to dam a stream," observed General Weyland, "at the bottom of a water fall."²⁵

Following the clarification of target selection and the appointment of a GHQ Target Selection Committee on 22 July, FEAF was quick to press for a settlement upon a proper interdiction program. On 23 July General Weyland sent forward a strong criticism of the existing interdiction effort which, he said, would not keep enemy reinforcements from the battle area, posed a number of targets greatly exceeding the capabilities of the medium bombers, and was characterized by many obscure targets. Following receipt of this memorandum, General Almond called the target selection committee (Generals Hickey, Willoughby, and Weyland) to his office on the evening of 24 July. As one report had it, "The discussion became quite warm." General Weyland emphasized that the target selection committee had been established in order to work out target

selection on a mutually acceptable basis, an impossible mission if all decisions were to be dictated from above. As the meeting went on, Generals Hickey and Willoughby first argued that all B-29 effort should be continued in battlefield support, but Hickey at last suggested that one B-29 group should remain on close support for the time being and that two groups should be released for an interdiction program. Willoughby then added that the B-29's so released should be used against interdiction targets primarily north of the 38th parallel. The whole committee accepted these views and incorporated them into a memorandum which was approved by General MacArthur on 25 July.²⁶

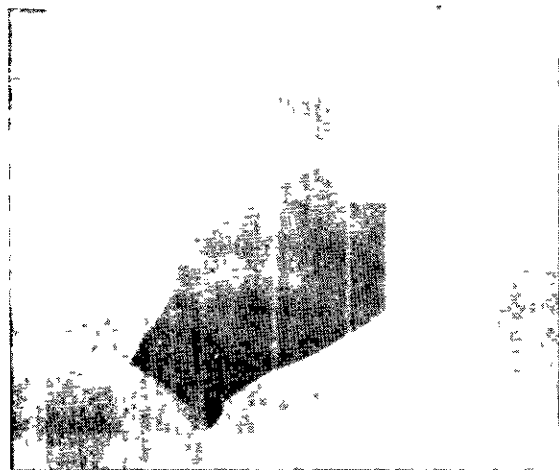
FEAF had been planning a comprehensive program. On 18 July it organized a target planning committee, composed of representatives of its intelligence and operations directorates and responsible for selection and recommendation of targets and target systems to General Stratemeyer.²⁷ By 27 July a comprehensive rail interdiction plan was ready. The plan sought to interdict the flow of personnel and matériel into Korea from the north, within Korea itself, and into the immediate combat area. Two primary cut points would sever rail transport from the north (1) the Pyongyang railway bridge and marshalling yards, and (2) the Hamhung railway bridge and the Hamhung and Wonsan marshalling yards. Interdiction of the Seoul railway bridge, marshalling yard, and another bridge east of Seoul would sever rail movement between North Korea and the battle front. Additional rail cuts on the lines would complete the interdiction.²⁸ FEAF listed targets to Bomber Command on 28 July designed to effect the rail interdiction.²⁹ A second plan of similar scope designed to institute highway interdiction was drawn up on 30 July,³⁰ and the FEAF Bomber Command interdiction list was accordingly revised on 2 August.³¹ On 3 August FEAF issued a list of interdiction targets south of the 38th parallel to the Fifth Air Force, a list which was also furnished to the Navy for coordinated attacks. In general, the Han River divided Bomber Command and Fifth Air Force areas of interdiction, but at Seoul

²⁶General MacArthur's approval of this plan for interdiction was revealed on 3 August, when he called in Generals Stratemeyer, Almond, Wright, and Weyland to discuss a BUSAAC message reporting several enemy convoys moving southward toward Seoul. MacArthur emphasized that he desired "a line cut across Korea, north of Seoul, to stop all enemy communications moving south."

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SINMAK

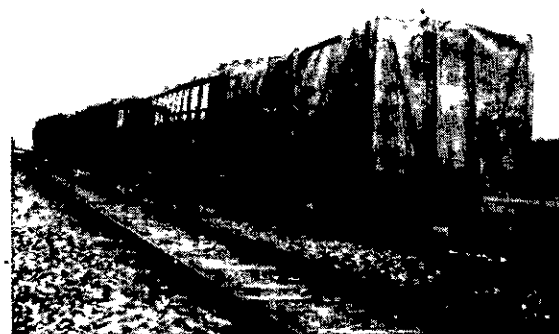


PYONGJOM-NI

One locomotive, three passenger cars, and one caboose damaged by machine gun fire. One passenger car and three box cars loaded with aircraft ammunition blown up.

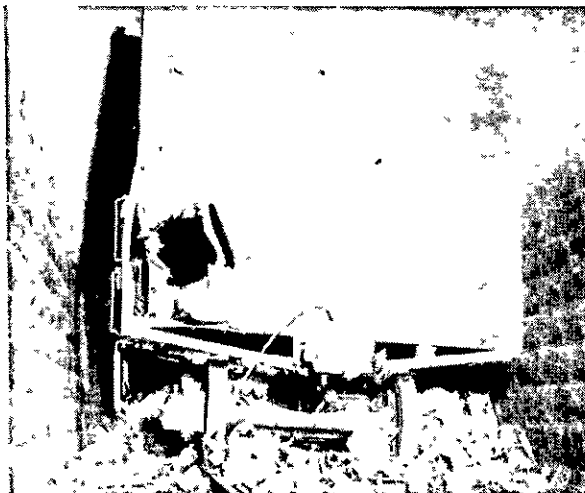
← PYONGTAEK

Twenty-three rail cars of various types damaged by rockets and machine gun fire. One locomotive was strafed with machine gun fire, and sustained a direct rocket hit on the top of the fire box. Several sections of track torn up by bombs. Seven rail cars carrying American 105 Howitzers strafed and destroyed. One box car and supplies on platform burned.



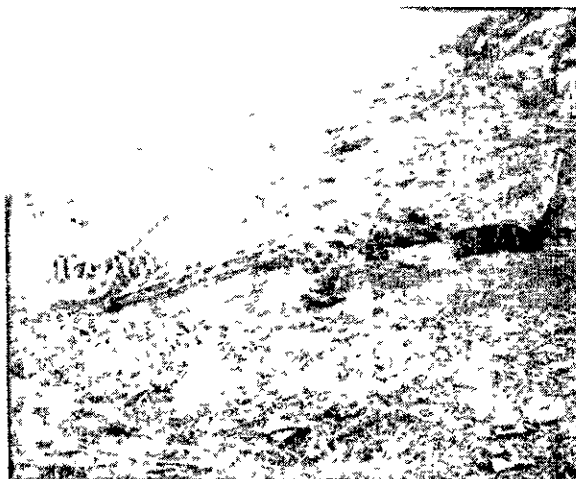
Aerial Destruction of North Korean Rail Stock.

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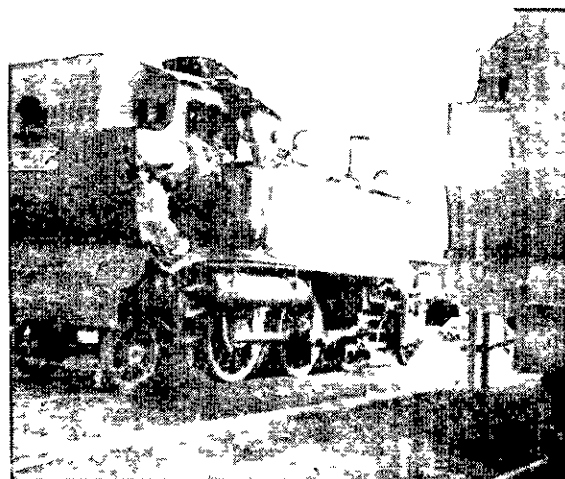
TAEJON

Ammo train strafed with machine guns. Train was approximately 180 feet inside of tunnel when strafed. Train exploded, blocking tunnel and burning ties from mouth of tunnel to train.



TANG BUNG

Supply train strafed and napalmed. According to eye witness one 76 mm gun on flat car burned by napalm. One 76 mm gun next to ammo car burned. Four cars of nine car train loaded with 76 mm ammo destroyed.



CHONAN

One switch engine strafed with machine guns, 20 mm cannon and rockets. Complete left side of cab blown out. One switch engine has 20 mm projectile lodged in boiler. Five locomotives strafed. Boilers of all five badly damaged. One box car carrying 50 gallon fuel drums burned. Several empty box cars burned and destroyed

Aerial Destruction of North Korean Rail Stock—Continued.

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Bomber Command was expected to take out the steel railway bridge while the Fifth Air Force destroyed a pontoon bridge which the enemy ran across the river at night.³² FEAF also suggested that the Navy use gunfire against bridges within 15 miles of both Korean coasts.³³

The lack of a coordinated interdiction program had not been permitted to limit the success of the Fifth Air Force in such endeavor. Its fighters and light bombers, though unable to reach far into North Korea, were able to wreak havoc on every moving enemy target south of the Han—operations of extreme importance to the American ground forces. "Without question the Air Force definitely blunted the initial North Korean thrust to the southward," said Maj Gen William F Dean, commander of the 24th Division, "without this continuing air effort, it is doubtful if the courageous combat soldiers, spread thinly along the line, could have withstood the onslaught of the vastly numerically superior enemy."³⁴

From the beginning of Korean hostilities, the Fifth Air Force employed its fighters on road sweeps of main communications routes, and it briefed fighters who failed to get a close support target to seek moving targets of opportunity on the roads. Once again, however, the lack of a positive program of interdiction for the fighters jeopardized the completion of the desired mission. Fighter pilots, released from close support and seeking targets of opportunity commonly searched the main communications routes, permitting the enemy to use back roads and trails with little difficulty.³⁵ During the early days of hostilities, however, road sweeps were particularly fruitful. During the three days 7-9 July, in the Pyongtaek-Seoul area Fifth Air Force planes claimed 197 trucks and 44 tanks destroyed. Late on the afternoon of 10 July, a day on which bad weather had kept most planes grounded, a flight of F-80's slipped in under the overcast at Pyongtaek to discover a large convoy of tanks and vehicles, lined up bumper-to-bumper, just north of a bombed-out bridge. All available B-26's, F-82's, and F-80's were rushed to the scene, and the attack destroyed 117 trucks, 38 tanks, 7 half-tracks, plus a large number of enemy soldiers.³⁶ On other occasions, Fifth Air Force fighters must have wrought more destruction than they imagined. Late in September, for example, a fighter pilot dropped napalm on a truck at the end of a

tunnel about 13 kilometers north of Andong, and then, to see the task well done, the pilot placed another tank of the incendiary mixture at the opposite end. Although this pilot probably reported no more than one truck destroyed, a ground reconnaissance party, happening on the scene en route northward, discovered that the tunnel had been filled with North Korean equipment, all of which had been destroyed in the fires started by the napalm. The reconnaissance party "conservatively estimated" that ten 76-mm. field guns, eight 120-mm mortars, five trucks, and four jeeps—the table of equipment of a North Korean artillery battalion and a heavy mortar company—had been destroyed. Judging by the smell, the party thought that a number of enemy soldiers had also perished in the tunnel.³⁷

During daylight, the F-80C proved a good weapon against both troops on the march and motor movements. After his capture, Senior Colonel Lee Hak Ku, chief of staff of the NKPA 13th Division, said that the Air Force

should use more jets, that not only did they come in quickly and destroy the target with great element of surprise, but also that the soldiers feared them because of the great speed and way in which the aircraft appeared before the sound of its flight reached them to make them aware of its presence.

He reported that the more ignorant North Koreans soon surrounded the F-80C "with a certain mystery and thus primitive fear."³⁸

Although the Fifth Air Force used its B-26's very effectively in low level attacks with machine guns, rockets, and bombs, the light bombers found it extremely difficult to maneuver at low altitudes in the small valleys of Korea, walled in as they were by hills rising from 500 to 5,500 feet. The moment of level flying needed to launch bombs and fire rockets, moreover, made the light bombers good targets for ground fire, and combat losses early in July forced them to bomb from medium altitude. Operating from such altitude, the B-26's obtained best results against bridges and railway tracks. On bridges of considerable size, formations of four to six aircraft were dispatched to do pinpoint bombing, and on smaller bridges and short stretches of railway track the aircraft split up into two or three plane elements to glide bomb. Once through bombing, the light bombers completed their missions by strafing trains, trucks, and any other targets of opportunity.³⁹

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Tactics employed by the B-26's against railway bridges and road targets were the 3d Bombardment Group's own innovation. In a combination of glide and dive bombing, the pilot of a light bomber, without aid of specialized sights, aligned his plane with the target, compensated for drift, dived at the target with sufficient angle to allow bomb penetration prior to detonation, compensated for rate error, and then released the bomb. Statistics showed the value of the tactics: of a total of 1,140 bombs dropped on 245 rail interdiction sorties between 25 June and 31 October 1950, the B-26's scored 517 direct hits, 52 near misses, and had 85 duds. In prosecuting low level attacks, the pilots learned that it was most desirable to turn off the axis of attack, gaining altitude at the same time, rather than to pull up from the target and gain altitude. With this optimum recovery from a target pass the aircraft had the advantage of altering its course in two directions and also the added safety factor of avoiding rocket blast and debris.⁴⁰

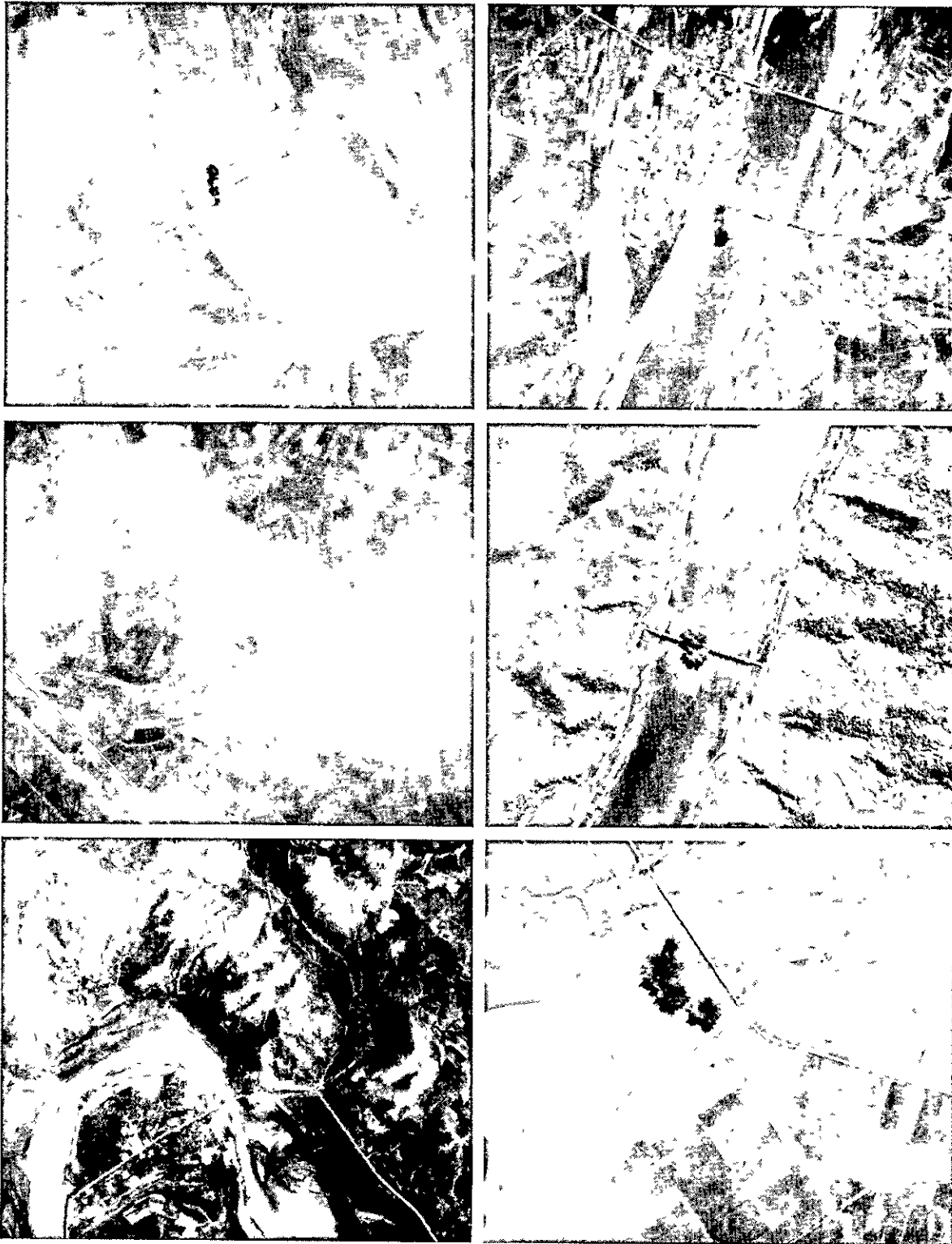
The FEAF Bomber Command dealt expeditiously with communications choke points assigned to it, as is indicated by figure 7. On 13 July the Wonsan marshalling yards had been attacked by the newly-arrived 22d and 92d Groups on their shake-down mission. Seoul marshalling yards were hit on MacArthur's special order on 16 July. On 7 August the two groups, joined by planes of the 98th Group which had left the U.S. only five days earlier, plastered the marshalling yards at Pyongyang. Hamhung marshalling yards were attacked by newly arriving 307th Group B-29's next day. Smaller forces of B-29's also attacked the marshalling yards at Changung-Ni, Chinnampo, Kilchu, Kowon, Oro-Ri, Rashin, Seishin (Chongjin), Sigin-Ni, Sinanju, and Sariwon during August, while additional effort was placed against rail repair facilities at Wonsan and Pyongyang. FEAF recognized that attacks against marshalling yards were chiefly valuable for the destruction of rolling stock concentrated there. Smaller missions attacked the key bridges assigned for Bomber Command destruction, and with a little experience the B-29 crews became exceptionally proficient in such work.⁴¹

The most successful bombing tactic and the one generally used against bridges by medium bomber crews was an individual aircraft attack at an angle of 40 degrees, each plane releasing a

string of four bombs on its run. Two groups adopted a procedure of dropping one bomb in the first run to obtain correct ballistic data and establish target altitude. In several instances the bridge so attacked was destroyed by this one bomb, but other bridges required many direct hits. Bomber Command, in fact, computed that 133 runs were required to destroy an average bridge, this number including multiple runs against a bridge by the same aircraft. For bridge attacks, Bomber Command generally used 500-pound GP bombs, admittedly not always the best ordnance, but crews often had to do their own loading and the command had to be prepared for last-minute changes in mission. In addition, larger tonnages of these bombs could be racked up in the B-29's than the heavier types. The 500-pound bomb, dropped with a minimum intervalometer setting, was found satisfactory for flat concrete spans, but 1,000-pound or larger bombs were required for steel bridges. The degree of proficiency obtained in such attacks was shown in mission accomplishments by 30 August Bomber Command had about completed work on the 44 key bridge targets assigned, and when on 4 September FEAF listed 56 more, Bomber Command destroyed 12 of them in three days.⁴²

Of all targets assigned, none was so perverse as the steel cantilever west railway bridge at Seoul, called by air crews the "elastic bridge" because of its stubborn refusal to fall. Since only the 19th Group possessed bomb racks for 2,000-pound bombs, it drew this critical target which, although no longer suitable for rail traffic, had been planked over for vehicles. For nearly four weeks the bridge was attacked almost daily by B-29's with 1,000-pound, 2,000-pound, and 4,000-pound GP bombs. Blueprints of the bridge were obtained from the Japanese who had designed it, fuse settings were varied to obtain damage to the superstructure as well as the abutments, but, despite numerous hits, the bridge still stood. At last General Stratemeyer offered a case of Scotch to the crew who would take it down. On 19 August nine B-29's placed 54 tons of 1,000-pound bombs on the bridge, expecting surely to finish it off the next day. When they returned on the following day, however, they found that a Navy carrier-based strike had evidently put three spans of the now weakened bridge in the water. MacArthur nevertheless presented a U.N. trophy

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92d Bomb Group Bridge-Busting, 24-26 July 1950.

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KONGJU

Simple girder, truss steel, concrete bridge sustained direct hit by 1000 lb. GP bombs, destroying three spans. Piers were undamaged.



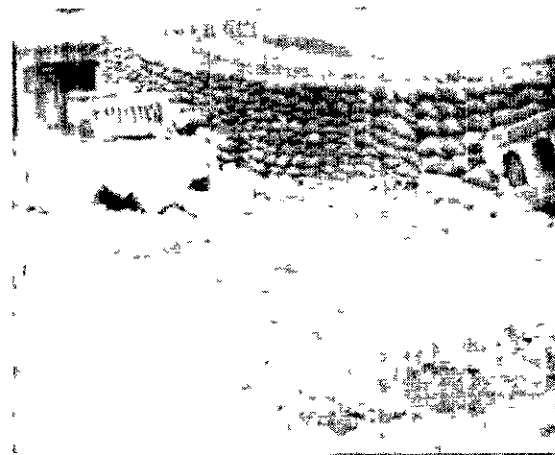
PYONGYONG

Highway bridge sustained direct hit on No. 7 span by 500 lb GP bombs. Span was completely destroyed.



KUMCHON

Railroad bridge hit by bomb of unknown size. Three spans destroyed by one hit. One span destroyed by one HVAR rocket.



TAGAORI

Simple girder, concrete bridge sustained direct hit on west end of bridge. Two spans and one pier destroyed.

Bridge Destruction Viewed From the Ground.

flag to both the 19th Group and the carrier unit for their accomplishments. Destruction of this west railway bridge at Seoul had required 86 Bomber Command sorties and 643 tons of demolition bombs.⁴³

The pontoon bridge at Seoul used at night by the North Koreans caused the Fifth Air Force almost as much trouble. Weyland suggested that

Partridge try to put napalm incendiaries either on the pontoons or directly upstream, but when this was attempted the pontoons would not burn. Photo interpretation later revealed that the pontoon bridge was constructed from sectional ramp extensions (sometimes called pontoon causeways) of U.S. Navy origin.⁴⁴ An experimental B-29 flare mission over the bridge, timed to

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coincide with a B-26 strafing and bombing attack, was attempted on the early morning of 30 August; the area was successfully lighted and eight B-26's bored in—only to find the bridge not in place⁴⁵. On 27 August FEAF directed Bomber Command to lay a string of delayed action bombs along the Seoul bridges, set to detonate only at night, and this procedure seems to have persuaded the North Koreans not to attempt the pontoon crossing⁴⁶.

By 12 September FEAF could claim the Seoul bridges destroyed, 140 additional bridges unserviceable between Seoul and the front, 47 rail cuts established, and 93 unserviceable highway bridges around the perimeter. At the same time, EUSAK, ROK, and FEAF together claimed 875 enemy vehicles destroyed and 560 damaged. U N aircraft also claimed 280 locomotives and 1,314 railway cars as destroyed, and an additional 161 and 1,570 respectively as damaged⁴⁷. The interdiction was, at least, a *prima facie* success. Many of the streams of South Korea, however, could be forded, and destruction of bridges slowed but did not end traffic. At other locations the North Koreans constructed underwater bridges in order to speed their troop movements and avoid detection from the air. Some 2,500 conscripted laborers, who used approximately 700 railway ties and 2,800 sandbags, threw three of these underwater bridges across the Nakdong near Waegwan, each bridge about 160 meters in length, 5 meters wide, and lying about 25 centimeters under the surface of the river. The North Korea army, moreover, appears to have conscripted a large number of porters who were hand carrying supplies through to the front each night⁴⁸.

Cognizant that night movements were permitting supplies to the North Korean battle line, FEAF ordered Bomber Command to conduct nightly visual reconnaissance of Korean routes beginning on 6 August⁴⁹. Two days later General Stratemyer ordered Partridge to step up night attack sorties to 50 a day, using B-26's, F-82's, F-51's, and F-80's⁵⁰. General Partridge had already tried F-80 night intruders, but they had found it impossible to strafe enemy road traffic, which could not be easily identified at fast speeds even on moonlit nights. Night attack missions by F-82's had been of little value except against known and fixed targets, such as airfields and towns. Some F-51 night harassing missions had

been attempted with "almost nil" destructive results, although targets could be located by the Mustang pilots without too much difficulty, rocket or machine-gun fire so blinded the pilots that accuracy was impossible. Night dive bombing was not effective since targets were not easily discernible from any appreciable altitude and faulty depth perception generally induced early release and inaccurate drops⁵¹. Partridge therefore put most of his B-26 effort on night intrusion missions, and by 24 August he was averaging 35 sorties each night⁵². Concurring in Stratemyer's emphasis on night attacks, General Vandenberg proposed conversion of the entire 3d Bombardment Group to night operations, offering the 452d Bombardment Group (L) to make up for the lost day effort. The 731st Bombardment Squadron (L-NA) of this air reserve group had been specially trained for night operations, and General Vandenberg proposed that it be assigned to the 3d Group as soon as the squadron could reach the theater⁵³.

With the decision to convert the 3d Group to night flight, FEAF instituted special experiments in search of an attack technique. RAF Wing Commander Peter Wykeham-Barnes visited the 3d Group at Iwakum to brief them on his experiences as a night intruder pilot in Europe during World War II⁵⁴. During September the group tested British Mark III bombsights, which had been airlifted to the theater, without great success, even in brilliant moonlight, bombardiers found it impossible to locate a target in time to use the bombsight properly⁵⁵. Late in August the 3d Group began cooperative missions with B-29 flare planes. Under this "buddy" system, the B-29 flare planes were expected to orbit at 10,000 feet above an agreed point on roads to be attacked, with their loads of M-26 paraflares set to ignite at 6,000 feet. Two weeks of tests with this technique were largely unsuccessful because of 50-65 percent duds among the American M-26 parachute flares. When one exploded in the bomb bay of a B-29 on 30 September, General O'Donnell canceled all missions with M-26 flares because they were too old and too light, he thought the tactic no more than a harassment, anyway. British 1950 flares were heavier than the M-26's and thus safer for B-29 employment, but 6 out of 48 of these also failed to explode⁵⁶. Still the flare technique was the soundest available at the time,

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and on one occasion during September, 13th Bombardment Squadron B-26's destroyed three moving trains with aid of B-29 flare illumination. The flare procedure would be improved during the U.N. campaign in North Korea,* but on 6 September General Vandenberg thought "the problem of night attack of moving targets obviously . . . one of our greatest weaknesses."⁵⁷

While the bridge interdiction program had been quantitatively successful, FEAF recognized that it was unnecessarily expensive in ordnance and effort. One officer computed that the Seoul west railway bridge, counting expense of munitions and flying hours, had cost at least \$781,080 to destroy. Desiring both to conserve effort and test the ordnance, early in July FEAF asked the USAF for radio-controlled RAZON bombs for use in the B-29's of the 19th Bombardment Group which had racks large enough for the purpose.⁵⁸ A detachment from the Air Proving Ground reached Okinawa early in August to prepare the bombs, but practice missions, begun on 23 August,⁵⁹ soon showed that employment of a RAZON bomb from a B-29 presented numerous problems which had not been met in experimental development in

which B-17 aircraft had been used.⁶⁰ Getting the 19th Group into routine RAZON operations thus proved technically difficult and the first tactical results were disappointing. Three B-29's dropped 15 RAZON bombs on the Pyongyang railway bridge on 23 August, but control was managed on only one bomb hit. Hovering in the area for 40 minutes during the sighting process, one of the B-29's was hit by enemy flak. Technical difficulties of this mission were attributed to storage deterioration of the RAZON radio receivers.⁶¹ On 3 September RAZON bombers made two hits, taking a span out of a bridge north of Pyongyang.⁶² By 27 September the 19th Group had flown 10 combat sorties and 8 test missions, dropping 120 bombs, of which 42 had been completely responsive. Six subsequent missions expended 108 bombs, of which 68 were satisfactorily controlled. Thirteen direct hits destroyed six bridges and damaged four others.⁶³ Although initial results were somewhat disappointing, FEAF hoped that it had found a more efficient method of bridge destruction.⁶⁴ Control problems, however, would continue to plague RAZON bombing techniques.

CLOSE SUPPORT OPERATIONS

Throughout the battle for South Korea, FEAF gave top priority to the close support of the outnumbered U.N. ground forces, and without this close support the Eighth Army would surely have been driven from the Korean peninsula. Table 1 reveals the predominance of close support missions in FEAF's total air effort during the time of the defensive in South Korea.⁶⁵

Table 1
TYPES OF SORTIES FLOWN BY FEAF AIRCRAFT,
25 JUNE-30 SEPTEMBER 1950

Period	Close support	Interdiction	Strategic	Other*
25-30 June.	408	59	0	100
1-31 July.	4,635	1,023	56	1,827
1-31 August.	7,397	2,963	530	4,582
1-30 September.	5,969	3,318	158	5,382

* This category covers all types of reconnaissance, transport, air rescue, and miscellaneous operational flying.

Most of the close support sorties were flown by Fifth Air Force fighters under the direction of a

*See chapter 5, p. 79

MOSQUITO controller or a TACP on the ground. These missions are most difficult to describe in any detail. Very often the fighter pilot was routed to a forward area by the control system and there directed to bomb and strafe a target which he frequently did not actually see because of covering vegetation, consequently, he knew little of his mission accomplishment. The form of intelligence report required for missions over Korea, moreover, was little more than a statistical recapitulation of the mission. Such a report furnished little information from which higher headquarters could determine operational conditions, pilot problems, tactics and technique found profitable, and the many other valuable details incorporated in the narrative missions reports of World War II. Yet in the final analysis, all interpretation of the effect of close support air action must be in terms of its relationship to the friendly ground campaign and to its destruction of the enemy. The South Korean campaign permits such an analysis.

During the critical days of July when the 24th

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and 25th Divisions were being committed to action, the Fifth Air Force employed its full resources in close support. Tactical air control parties joined the 24th Division on 5 July, and thereafter these parties shared the combat life of the infantrymen, two controllers and five airmen had been killed or were missing in action by 28 July.⁶⁶ The emergency action by which FEAF placed primary effort on the main battle line during July has been noted. An air strike along the road near Kiem Dong, reported EUSAK's headquarters diary on 17 July, caused considerable confusion and the retreat of the enemy forces.⁶⁷ Thirty F-80's, 13 F-51's, and 1 B-26 "greatly aided repelling of attack against 10th Regt ROKA" on 23 July.⁶⁸ On 30 July a flight of F-80's with rockets and machine guns blazing, destroyed eight artillery pieces and a number of vehicles two miles northeast of Hwanggan, and when, on this same mission, a MOSQUITO spotted some 2,000 enemy troops southeast of Yongdong, other fighters were called in to work them over.⁶⁹

In managing his retreat southward, General Walker relied heavily upon the maneuverability of air power. He commonly outlined the next day's work at either an evening or early morning staff conference which was attended by Fifth Air Force commanders. If the tide of battle changed during the day, air power moved to some other spot where it was needed.⁷⁰ Early in August, Walker wrote that Fifth Air Force pilots had⁷¹

given all-out support of our efforts and all of our troops including ROK forces are high in their regard for the support sorties, which have averaged 340 fighter bombers a day in the past 10 days. They have destroyed enemy tanks that had penetrated our lines. Their effort has been of tremendous value to our forces and has saved many, many lives of our infantry troops.

By the middle of August MacArthur considered the Korean ground situation stabilized, but General Walker, his forces holding long sections of line in light strength, was still fighting to keep the key city of Taegu.⁷² Enemy troops appeared to be building up across the Naktong for a penetration. In the emergency MacArthur made the entire B-29 strength available to EUSAK⁷³ and on 14 August he called in Stratemyer to suggest that carpet bombing was in order. At a FEAF conference on the same day, O'Donnell laid out his requirements for such a mission as follows: sufficient ceiling for visual bombing, a designated target with a maximum area of from

three to five square miles, a line of attack parallel to EUSAK's front lines, a clearly defined topographic feature, such as a river, to mark the bomb line, mosaics of the area with careful photo interpretation, two or more enemy divisions concentrated in the area, and, if possible, some assurance that the enemy meant to attack.⁷⁴ On 15 August GHQ furnished FEAF a target which by a stretch of imagination met a few of these requirements and area 3½ miles wide and 7½ miles long paralleling the west bank of the Naktong, just opposite Waegwan where the enemy was probing for a weak spot in the 1st Cavalry front. FEAF ordered a five-group mission against the target on 16 August, provided the weather permitted visual bombing.⁷⁵

General O'Donnell fully realized the impracticability of attempting to saturate an area of 27 square miles with 12 squadrons of medium bombers, but he believed the ground situation merited an air attack if for nothing but psychological effect. Bomber Command divided the area into 12 equal squares, assigning each squadron an aiming point in the center of one of the squares. Beginning at 1158 hours, 98 B-29's of the five B-29 groups went over the target, the last plane clearing the area at 1224 hours. They left behind 3,084 x 500-pound GP and 150 x 1,000-pound GP bombs. Only the 307th Group reported ground fire—light, meager, and inaccurate—and most crews could only report that bombs had been released over the target.⁷⁶ After the bombing, EUSAK forces made no immediate effort to advance, so that exact assessment of results was never possible. O'Donnell, over the area for two and a half hours, saw no evidence of enemy activity. Believing that the area set out had been too large, he recommended no more such missions except against more concentrated targets when the ground situation was extremely critical.⁷⁷ General Partridge commented that the ground force commanders had at last learned that air power had limitations,⁷⁸ O'Donnell later observed that high ranking ground officers had gravely asked him to "make a wilderness" of the 27 square mile area with 98 B-29's.⁷⁹ General Walker stated that the strike had an adverse psychological effect upon the enemy and helped the morale of his own troops, but FEAF's final evaluation was that area bombing by medium bombers should be undertaken only under two conditions (1) as a

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desperation measure against identified and definite concentrations of enemy troops ready to assault friendly troops, or (2) in an area through which friendly troops would effect a penetration into enemy territory.⁸⁰

While the Waegwan attack may have had limited effects against the enemy, it appears to have been appreciated by EUSAK ground troops. One sergeant wrote General O'Donnell on 30 August⁸¹

Us dough boy sav hat off to you on your bomb salute to Gen Walker and boys on the fighting front . . . The first cavalry division was holding the line against great odds, when the enemys start to infiltrate our line in the early dawn, also had tanks and artillery to support them, when over our head was bombs away You should of seeing faces lighten up with smiles Yet it was a beautiful sight . . . To some critics and the folks back home it was a complete wash out, but to the boys on the front it was more than morale, it was a coordinated of the ground & air close support operations.

The bombing appears to have occasioned apprehension among North Korean troops. A refugee merchant reported a rumor that the attack had hit some 40,000 conscripted South Koreans, inflicting heavy casualties and scattering them so badly that they never reassembled. While the account was by all available evidence grossly exaggerated, the bombing at least was talked of and feared in enemy camps. A responsible senior-colonel P/W stated that he had seen the bombers but had never been able to find out what damage had been done. He indicated that the enemy surrounded the bombing with much secrecy in order to preserve morale.⁸²

In its recommendations after the Waegwan carpet bombing, FEAF stated that fighters and light bombers were eminently better suited to halting an enemy drive than were medium bombers, a contention justified early in September when nearly seven enemy divisions assaulted the 2d and 25th Divisions southwest of Munsan, at the extreme southwestern end of the defensive perimeter. The Fifth Air Force flew 160 close support sorties there on 1 September,⁸³ and full support was repeated on the next day. On 3 September Maj Gen William B. Kean, commanding the 25th Division, reported that "the close air support strikes rendered by Fifth Air Force again saved this Division, as they have many times before"⁸⁴ On 5 September he further described a part of the action.⁸⁵

The company was dug in on the top of the ridge with the enemy completely encircling them. Planes blazed a circle around the hill with napalm, rockets, and 50-calibre machine guns. From reports which have come in, the air strike hit within 100 yards of the position where the company was entrenched, and knocked out enough of the enemy to ease the pressure. Later we air dropped ammunition and supplies to resupply the company. As a result, it was able to hold its original position.

Maj. Gen Lawrence B. Keiser, commander of the 2d Infantry Division, thanked the Fifth Air Force for the support furnished his command on 11 September, which resulted in a confirmed destruction by air and ground action of approximately 1,500 enemy troops and their equipment.⁸⁶

As is always the case in war, not all of the air action was without mishap, but in view of the confused nature of much of the ground fighting during the summer, incidents in which FEAF planes inflicted damages to friendly forces were amazingly infrequent. Australian F-51's of 77 Squadron strafed ROK vehicles on the road between Pyongtaek and Osan on 3 July, at a time before ROK equipment was marked with the distinctive white star.⁸⁷ On 10 August F-80's strafed elements of the American 19th Regiment, causing three casualties; a newspaper reporter claimed that the strafing forced a withdrawal of the unit, but this was denied by the 24th Division and EUSAK.⁸⁸ On 29 August some 21 U.S. and ROK troops of the 24th Regiment were injured by strafing, but on this occasion EUSAK found the ground troops at fault for improperly marking their lines.⁸⁹ On 10 September a lieutenant of the 68th All-Weather Fighter Squadron bombed a bridge which was in friendly territory, and later on the same day the squadron commander mistook Taegu, headquarters for the Fifth Air Force in Korea, for the town of Kumchon and made three strafing passes through the city. The lieutenant was suspended from flying for a time, the squadron commander relieved, and the squadron grounded for two weeks until a new commander was designated.⁹⁰ At about noon on 23 September four F-51's were misdirected to positions of the British Commonwealth 27 Brigade, about 2 miles southeast of Songju, and inflicted 60 casualties in a napalm and strafing attack. The British, anxious to prevent irresponsible persons from magnifying the incident, declared it "clearly not the fault of pilots in the air."⁹¹ While the accidents were regrettable and happened despite

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FEAF orders for positive identification of all targets before attacking, General Walker after the incident on 8 August summed up a prevalent ground attitude "The casualties reported are

disturbing but they are very far fewer than would certainly occur if we attempted to curtail the close-in ground coordinated support now being furnished by our Air Force"⁹²

ENEMY REACTION TO TACTICAL AIR POWER

In the final analysis it is always the enemy who is best able to judge the effectiveness of air power on his capabilities and will to do battle. In November 1950 when many of the North Koreans captured south of the 38th parallel had been questioned, the FEC G-2 Translator and Interpreter Service issued a research study based upon some 2,000 PW interrogation reports, translated enemy documents, and other related sources. Since the enemy seldom differentiated the type, service, or nationality of aircraft, however, the report must be taken as an analysis of the effect of all U N air effort rather than that of a particular service.⁹³

This report established the fact that unemitting daylight air attacks against enemy ground targets and troop concentrations acted as a disorganizing and disrupting factor on North Korean tactics. Continuous presence of U.N. aircraft during daylight hours forced infantry units to proceed to their objectives without armored support and deprived them of the supporting fire of their own artillery. Unserviceable roads and a high rate of attrition in motor transport contributed to the depreciation of the North Korean replacement system. Rapid deterioration of the supply system deprived the NKPA of much of its mobility. But the most far-reaching influence of U N aircraft on North Korean ground tactics was the restriction of their combat operations to the difficult conditions imposed by darkness. One enemy division issued the following order on 4 September:

Our experience in night combat up to now shows that we can operate only four to five hours in the dark, since we start night attacks between 2300 and 2400 hours. Therefore, if the battle continues after the break of dawn, we are likely to suffer losses. From now on, use daylight hours for full combat preparations and commence the attack soon after sunset. Concentrate your battle actions mostly at night and thereby capture enemy base positions. From midnight on, engage the enemy in close combat by approaching to within 100 to 150 meters of him. Then, even with the break of dawn, the enemy planes will not be able to distinguish friend from foe,

which will enable you to prevent great losses. This is the most valuable battle experience we have gained from the CHINJU operation.

The impact of tactical bombing and strafing was made further manifest by captured North Korean field orders directing combat troops to concentrate upon camouflage, fox holes, and other emplacements to afford protection against air attack. An indication of the fearful effect of tactical air was a field order from the commander of the 25th Rifle Regiment which directed a crossing of the Naktong River:

Antiaircraft defense will be provided by the regimental antiaircraft unit supplemented by one heavy machine gun section from each battalion. When enemy planes appear, 50 percent of the infantry weapons will be diverted for antiaircraft defense.

Even while attempting a river crossing against defended positions, the commander felt justified in diverting half of his infantry fire to antiaircraft defense.

Continuous strafing and bombing of supply routes, installations, and means of transportation resulted in marked attrition of North Korean replacements and supplies. Such shortages became a serious limiting factor on North Korean operations during early September, and only by moving supplies in accordance with a set system of priorities (which gave precedence to ammunition and fuel) was the NKPA able to keep its troops in the field. Enemy prisoners estimated that over half the total tonnage destined for the front was destroyed en route. By restricting enemy convoys to hours of darkness, under blackout conditions, tactical air limited the movement of a convoy to between 20 and 30 miles a night. Disruption of an already strained transportation network served to slow down the movement of supplies to an appreciable degree, but it never caused a halt. Enemy troops moving southward from Seoul noticed few undamaged bridges and roads, but the enemy kept his line of communications open by ingenious such means as the underwater bridges. Even railroads appear to have been kept open, but

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railroad transportation was slowed to a degree incompatible with military operations. One P/W, who arrived at Yongju on 4 September, reported that he had spent a month on the 280-mile journey from P'vongyang, since his train stopped in tunnels to escape air attacks during the day.⁹⁴ A North Korean lieutenant spent two weeks aboard a train on the 220-mile trip between Sariwon and Punggi, his train remained in tunnels during the day or while bridges were being repaired, and on two occasions, when the tunnel was too short for complete concealment, the train was damaged by fighters.⁹⁵ While destruction of bridges did not completely curtail rail transportation, successive obstacles and detours, compounded by the limited capacity of temporary bridges and rail lines, constituted a very real brake on the enemy's logistical support of front line units.

Interrogation reports indicate that U N air must be credited with over 80 percent of approximately 800 trucks which P/W's knew to have been destroyed by U N action. By the beginning of August, the shortage of transport equipment was so acute that the enemy allocated the few available replacement vehicles at GHQ level, in accordance with the most urgent operational requirements. A high casualty rate among truck drivers led to numerous desertions, and at one time the North Korean command used U S prisoners under armed guard to drive its supply vehicles. A transportation officer of the NKPA 8th Division furnished interrogators a description of the decline of motor transportation in his division. The division was activated about 10 July with the troops and 60 trucks belonging to the 1st Border Constabulary Brigade, but by August the division had only 20 trucks remaining. On 25 August 20 new ZIS-151 type trucks arrived, but since by this time air attacks had forced the trucks to operate at night, ammunition hauled to the division was cut from 7½ tons a day in July to about 2½ tons a day during August. Ten additional ZIS-151 trucks received at Usong on 5 September merely replaced losses of the week previous. By 20 September truck strength had dropped to 30, and only seven liters of fuel were on hand per truck, with no hope of replenishment. The transportation officer stated that "constant air attacks, lack of supplies, inadequate training, and heavy casualties have demoralized the unit to the extent that the commanders had little or no

control over the men."⁹⁶ Although reliance on human carriers did enable the enemy to maintain his offensive, shortages were felt everywhere and his operational flexibility was sharply limited by the wholesale destruction of transport vehicles.

The success of the air interdiction program may be best illustrated by table 2 which shows the declining tonnage of supply support for a North Korean division.

Table 2

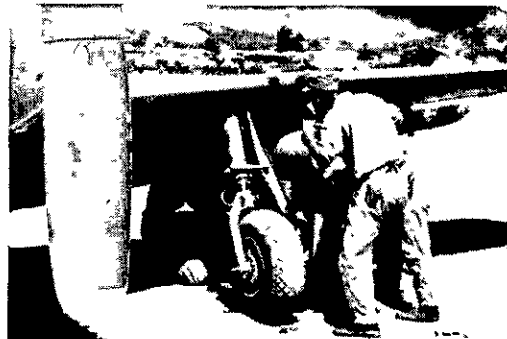
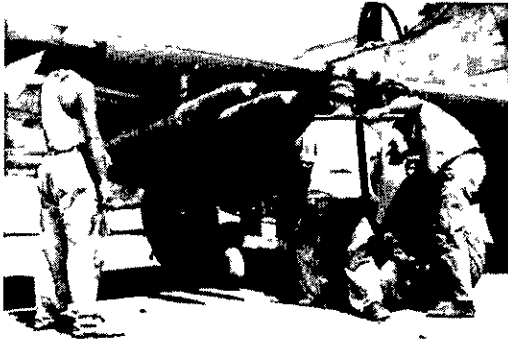
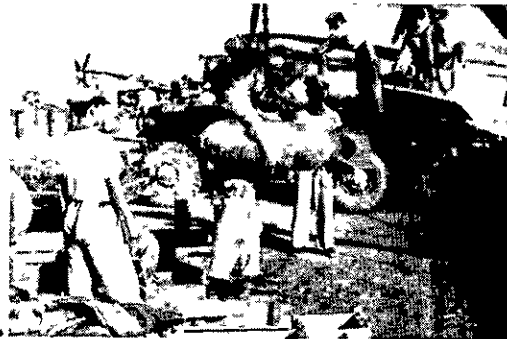
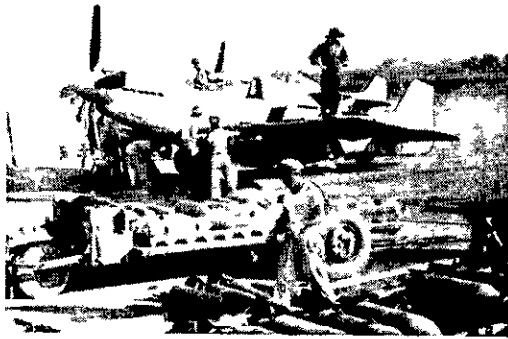
AVERAGE DAILY TONNAGE OF SUPPLIES RECEIVED BY ONE NORTH KOREAN DIVISION 25 JUNE-20 SEPTEMBER 1950

Class of supplies	Period		
	25 June-15 July	16 July-15 Aug	16 Aug-20 Sept
Class I (Food).....	18	9	2½
Class II (Quartermaster)....	10	5	-----
Class III (POL).....	12	7	2
Class V (Ordnance)....	166	30	17
Total.....	206	51	21½

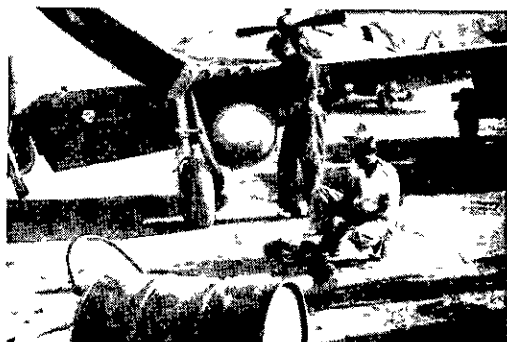
The supply of food admitted of close interrogation check, since nearly all North Korean P/W's remembered their rations. At the beginning of the war these consisted primarily of rice, dried fish, meat, vegetables, and gram, and even during this optimum period, the maximum weight of a daily ration was only 800 grams (1 76 pounds). During the period 16 July to 15 August, rice was about the only form of food permitted, and the daily ration fell to about 600 grams. By the closing month of the South Korean campaign, the rice ration had been further reduced to about 400 grams a day, and "by 21 August," reported the captured chief of staff of the NKPA 13th Division, "50 percent of the personnel had lost the stamina necessary to fight in mountainous terrain."⁹⁷

Of the complex of elements contributing to the lowering of morale in NKPA units, the strafing and rocketing by U N aircraft was the most potent. Initially, while victory seemed assured, the North Korean soldier was in high spirits. However, as he saw heavy casualties and the destruction of his equipment, esprit de corps declined rapidly. A medical officer observed that "the morale of the troops, during the first month of the war, was extremely high. The second month of fighting showed a noticeable decline in morale due to the intensity of enemy

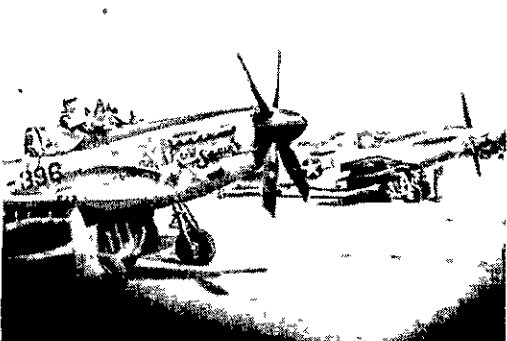
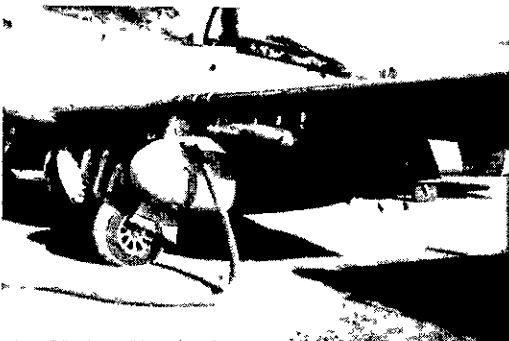
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BOMB HANDLING



NAPALM LOADING



NAPALM LOADING

ON THE READY LINE

Arming Fighters at Taegu, August-September 1950.

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aerial activity and superior fire power” After the latter part of August, he believed that the men had been driven forward only by the fear of being shot by their own officers. “Because there was no defense against Napalm bombs,” he said, “and the men in the area were invariably killed, the men as well as the officers always became disorganized under this type of attack.”⁹⁵ A survey of 825 P/W interrogation reports reveals that air power heavily undermined North Korean morale.

Reason for low morale	Answers	
	Number	Percentage
Shortage of food.....	176	21.4
Fear of aircraft.....	148	17.9
Lack of training.....	93	11.3
Lack of arms and equipment.....	81	9.8
Insufficient rest.....	68	8.2
Forced induction.....	52	6.3
Casualties.....	51	6.2
No cause for fighting.....	40	4.9
Artillery.....	39	4.7
Desertion.....	28	3.3
Harsh treatment by officer.....	13	1.6
Lack of replacements.....	12	1.5
Inadequate clothing.....	10	1.2
Other causes.....	14	1.7
TOTAL.....	825	100.0

It is apparent, moreover, that much of the low morale was due to air activity. A North Korean medical officer attached to the 13th Division stated: “Even during the first month of the war, when subjected to strafing and rocket fire from low-flying aircraft, the men could not be budged from their places of hiding by even the most vicious threats of their superiors.” In its effect upon combat effectiveness, there is some reason to believe that psychoneurosis engendered by UN aircraft may actually have outweighed the actual physical destruction of bombing and strafing attacks.

Without hostile air opposition, UN aircraft wrought heavy damages upon the NKPA. The following excerpts from P/W reports are illustrative: “En route from KWANGNUNG area, the 8th Division was attacked many times by aircraft and lost ten 76 mm field guns, three 122 mm howitzers, 20 tanks and 50 trucks loaded with ammunition and equipment.” A similar comment was made by a captured member of the

105th Tank Division: “At a point 2 or 3 km from HAMCHANG, the unit sustained an air attack in which it lost six tanks, four trucks and 150 men. Four planes participated in the attack.” A P/W from the 16th Tank Brigade remarked that less than 50 percent of his unit’s tanks ever got to combat. These comments may be substantiated by a detailed analysis of the number of tanks, trucks, artillery pieces, and North Korean soldiers observed to have been destroyed by the P/W’s:

	Destruction by aircraft		Destruction by ground arm	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Personnel.....	49,527	47	56,270	53
Equipment				
Tanks.....	452	75	143	25
Trucks.....	637	81	146	10
Artillery pieces.....	301	72	112	28

This table indicates very clearly the immense superiority of unopposed aircraft over other weapons in dealing the enemy a decisive crippling blow, in disrupting his system of supplies, and in disorganizing his troops in assembly area and during the attack.

Testimony of the North Korean prisoners would indicate what Far East Command troops discovered when they landed at Inchon. North Korean offensive power, so invincible in July and August, had been decimated by UN air attack. Cut off from his source of supplies, his equipment being destroyed and his personnel slaughtered by air action on the battlefield, the North Korean enemy was sustaining a continued offensive only by sheer desperation. Attacks against the 2d Division in the Yongsan area on 9 September, for example, were in five waves. The first three waves were armed and the last two were sent into the battlefield unarmed, with instructions to secure their weapons from the dead and dying there.⁹⁶ North Korean power, moreover, had become merely an encrustation around the Eighth Army’s defensive perimeter, with no more than a few security troops in the rearward areas. The North Korean soldier was ready for surrender, and, with the landing at Inchon, he would have that choice or be slaughtered when he took to the roads once more, this time in full retreat.

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SELECTION OF AIR WEAPONS AND TACTICS

Selection of weapons and tactics for its supporting role gave the Fifth Air Force no little difficulty, especially in the early weeks of the war. Having had no practice with the 5-inch HVAR (high velocity aerial rockets), the pilots had to learn to use this weapon in combat, never a very satisfactory training ground especially when friendly ground forces are in dire need of support. Ineffective rocket attacks against enemy tanks caused unfortunate publicity early in the campaign. Such failures were attributed to a low cloud layer, often no more than 1,000-feet high, which forced aircraft to attack enemy objectives with an exceedingly flat angle of approach; this caused inaccuracy in aiming, a tendency of the rockets to ricochet, and a decrease in damage if they did hit the target. When rockets were fired from a flat angle of approach (below about 20°), the aircraft usually flew through the resultant debris, which inevitably damaged the plane and occasionally resulted in fatal accidents. Soon, however, the pilots learned how best to use the HVAR. Using fixed sighting, they found it best to approach a tank from a 4-o'clock position and fire from a 30° angle of approach at about 1,500 feet range. With K-14C sighting, the recommended procedure was a dive angle of 40°, an air speed of 450, 28 mils depression, and a firing range of 3,500 to 1,500 feet. The 5-inch HVAR would normally disable a tank when it hit the rear of its tracks, but pilots obtained the best results when they fired a salvo or a ripple of four to eight rockets.¹⁰⁰ The ATAR (anti-tank aerial rocket) proved very effective in piercing a tank's armor in test missions, but they could not be obtained in quantity. Contrary to press reports, which attributed Air Force success against tanks to the newly developed ATAR, it was increased skill on the part of pilots employing HVAR and napalm that was most effective against the North Korean armored force.¹⁰¹

Malfunction of rockets nevertheless made their employment hazardous. Many defects were due to storage damage, improper construction, or faulty assembly, but rocket motors frequently failed to ignite when the pigtails, shortened and spliced for F-80's, blew loose in the slipstream. Whatever the cause, a dead rocket was an operational hazard. Hung in two banks of four with

the lower bank attached to the upper rocket, it was possible for a bottom rocket to fail while the upper rocket successfully fired, in this event, fins and binding brackets from the dead rocket were thrown out in front of the aircraft, inflicting damage to wings and fuselage. The 49th Fighter-Bomber Group devised a procedure whereby pilots fired their lower bank of rockets and then, after inspecting for dead rockets, shifted their intervalometer and fired the upper bank. Pilots, however, preferred to fly with no more than four rockets when possible. Rocket launchers sometimes failed to release when it was necessary to jettison, and conversely, they sometimes dropped with any slight jar, such as an F-80 braking on the taxiway. Other rockets, which would not jettison in the air, frequently bounced loose as the plane touched down on a landing. When malfunctioning rockets would not jettison the pilot faced a loss of reserve fuel on his homeward flight; the drag from two dead rockets used up as much as 40 gallons of reserve fuel. Malfunction rates were cut down with experience, but as late as October 1950 the 49th Group was still having 5 percent failures, in this group's opinion the 5-inch HVAR, both for operational performance and accuracy, was "the most overrated weapon in use."¹⁰²

Strafers commonly worked on targets at a 20° to 40° dive angle at ranges of from 1,500 feet to a minimum commensurate with terrain, speed, weather, and type of target. Tanks were most effectively strafed from the rear in a 40° dive aiming at engine vents, wheels, and tracks; by continuing strafing passes at vulnerable spots, pilots could "burn" through into a tank. Trucks and small vehicles were best attacked from the front to disable their engines. Dug-in positions and fox holes were strafed from a 50° to 70° dive angle if possible; if low angle attacks were necessary, the direction was varied. Locomotives and trains were subjected to quartering attacks on the front and rear, and it was considered a poor tactic to strafe in line of train cars.¹⁰³ Jet pilots soon learned to capitalize upon the speed of their planes to achieve surprise when attacking troops on the road. jets could often fire on dismounted troops before the enemy discovered them. After one firing pass, it was found most profitable to leave the area and return in about three or four

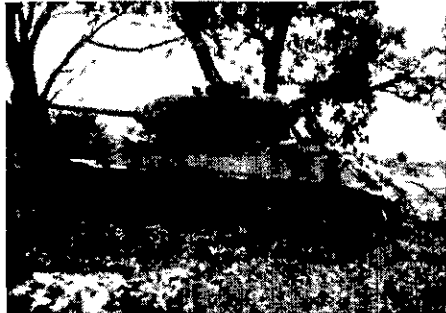
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SEOUL - T-34 tank disabled by rockets



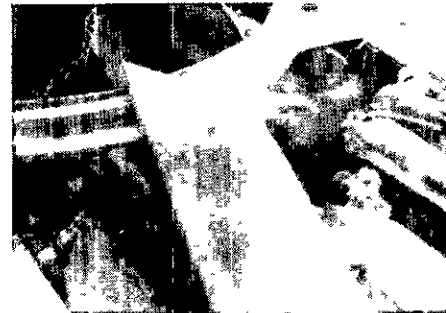
T-34 tank strafed with 20 mm cannon and rockets. Tank was bracketed. No rocket hits. Bogie wheels on left side burned.



T-34 tank hit by napalm bomb which caused an internal explosion. Bogie wheels completely destroyed.



T-34 tank hit by 5 inch rocket in right rear of turret. Ammo exploded. Turret blown off at setting



← HIJINGBU - Damaged T-34 tank with 50 cal hole through gun barrel



NORTH KOREAN TANKS DESTROYED BY AIR ACTION

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minutes to catch survivors reassembling on the road. As the war progressed, jet pilots became more aggressive against enemy gun positions. At first they noted these positions in order to avoid fire, but when they saw that enemy ground fire was relatively ineffectual against jets, which could attack suddenly and then pull off in an almost vertical climb, the pilots undertook to clear out the enemy artillery with strafing and rocket attacks.¹⁰⁴

From the first days of hostilities, General Stratemeyer insisted upon wide use of napalm, which had proved its worth during World War II, but such attacks were not emphasized at first. At low altitudes, Fifth Air Force pilots encountered technical difficulties with faulty igniters.¹⁰⁵ No small part of the initial resistance to napalm seems also to have stemmed from the additional burden imposed upon already overworked armament crews. Group commanders protested that the wing base organization did not permit sufficient personnel to service airplanes with rockets, bombs, and napalm, in addition to normal care of the machine guns. The 49th Group was particularly insistent that its armorers could not possibly perform all the man-hours of work required, and the 49th Supply Squadron recommended that the wing-base plan should include a chemical detachment to handle napalm.¹⁰⁶ By August, however, the technical difficulties had been reduced. The 6002d Fighter Wing double-fused its napalm tanks, thereby reducing duds from approximately 25 percent to less than 5 percent.¹⁰⁷ Once the technical problems were discovered, the 8th Fighter-Bomber Group called napalm "the most effective weapon yet introduced." Whereas pilots had to hit an enemy tank with a rocket, they found that a napalm burst as much as 50 yards short would burn off tank treads and usually explode its internal fuel and ammunition. One 110-gallon napalm bomb would spread over a pear-shaped area about 275 feet long and 80 feet wide, and, burning with a 1500° flash, would normally devastate the area. Tests conducted by the 49th Fighter-Bomber Group, in conjunction with the FEAF Operations Analysis Office, showed that two 110-gallon bombs would cover an area of approximately 50 by 50 yards and that four would burn an area of some 50 by 85 yards. It was concluded that to insure a kill when a tank was the target, the impact of two napalm tanks

should be 50 to 100 feet short, while four might be dropped as much as 200 feet short.¹⁰⁸

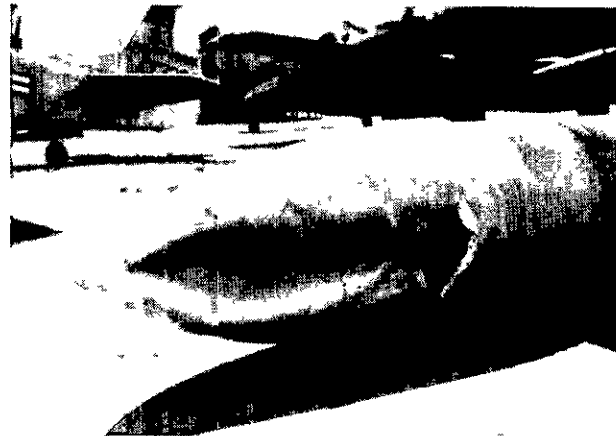
When U.N. forces had retaken South Korea, evaluation parties of the Fifth Air Force Tactical Air Power Evaluation (TAPE) Survey scoured the roadways to determine the effectiveness of Air Force weapons. On the basis of these surveys, the FEAF Operations Analysis Office stated that "the use of Napalm has been more effective in destroying T-34 tanks in Korea than have all other airborne weapons which were used." Of 68 enemy T-34 tanks examined by these field parties, 39 had been knocked out by napalm, 16 by rockets, 3 by strafing, none by bombing, and 10 by indefinite air attack.¹⁰⁹

Napalm was also considered as an effective weapon against dug-in troops, vehicles, and village targets. Airborne MOSQUITO controllers, in fact, thought the incendiary "the most useful and versatile weapon utilized by the air arm of the U.N. forces." Front line troops, observing that the enemy seemed to fear the incendiary more than any other type of weapon, were enthusiastic for its use. In the light of this enthusiasm, answers given concerning the effectiveness of U.N. air weapons by some 50 North Korean prisoners who had been under varied attacks came as something of a surprise. Their answers as to the most effective weapon under a variety of situations are as follows:

Situation	Type of weapon			
	Frag bombs	Machine gun	Rockets	Napalm
Dug-in troops-----	29	17	4	0
Troops in open-----	14	30	1	5
Troops in houses-----	10	5	2	33

The fifty enemy prisoners, however, agreed that a combination of napalm and fragmentation bombs offered the most deadly form of attack, the napalm driving personnel from shelter and the frag bombs killing them. The combination of napalm and strafing was also considered very effective. Since fragmentation bombs, particularly those detonated with proximity fuses, had not been used to a great extent during the South Korean campaign, it must be concluded that U.N. aircraft had failed to exploit their most effective weapon against the hordes of enemy personnel.¹¹⁰

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**8TH FIGHTER-BOMBER GROUP
F-80C's
PROVE THEIR RUGGEDNESS**



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In these supporting operations, jet aircraft proved generally satisfactory. In fact, 49th Group pilots maintained that the F-80's could "do everything that conventional aircraft are capable of and do it more accurately" When asked the hardest thing about flying an F-80 in combat, Lt Col Charles H Williams, commanding one of the 49th Group's squadrons, replied, "Walking to and from the plane before and after missions" The F-80's demonstrated that they could stand heavy damage and yet remain flyable A concentrated firing pattern provided by six nose guns, plus a lack of torque, made the F-80C an excellent strafing aircraft, although its great speed proved a slight deterrent to close support strikes, some of which were made within 50 yards of friendly troops Still the F-51 was no mean aircraft, and it presented far fewer problems than the F-80, which had never before been tried in combat A statistical recapitulation of the F-80 and F-51 in Korean combat is shown in table 3 ¹¹¹

Table 3

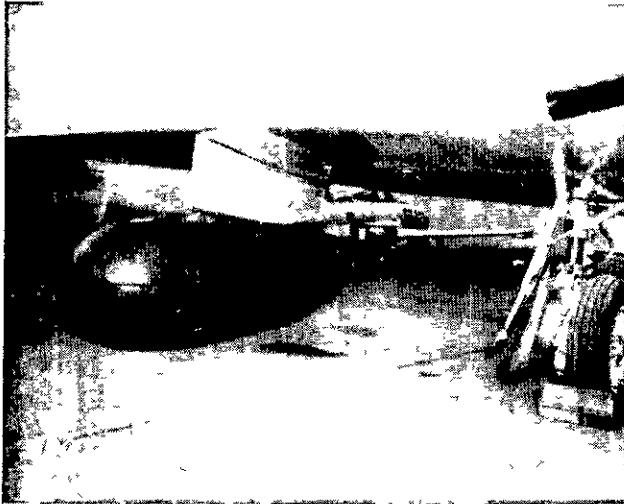
STATISTICAL COMPARISON OF THE F-51 AND F-80, JULY-NOVEMBER 1950

	July	August	September	October	November
Total in combat units					
F-80.....	145	128	138	187	169
F-51.....	20	141	139	144	131
Total sorties flown					
F-80.....	4, 117	3, 633	3, 279	4, 314	4, 013
F-51.....	683	4, 946	4, 196	2, 337	2, 344
Sortie rate					
F-80.....	28	29	24	23	24
F-51.....	34	35	30	16	18
Total combat ready					
F-80.....	60	75	94	123	107
F-51.....	14	93	82	76	83
Bomb expenditure					
F-80.....	34	4	34	19	162
F-51.....	213	1, 540	2, 065	696	930
Rocket expenditure					
F-80.....	7, 761	6, 732	7, 959	8, 662	9, 565
F-51.....	2, 876	15, 581	13, 861	6, 495	8, 367
Fifty-cal expenditure					
F-80.....	24, 494	30, 700	25, 869	25, 758	28, 424
F-51.....	7, 273	47, 336	36, 477	16, 299	15, 372
Aircraft losses					
F-80.....	10	12	21	36	44
F-51.....	12	38	60	80	95

This statistical comparison, for the most part, represents the initial difficulties encountered in getting the F-80C's into full combat usage The major problem of the jets was that which had been anticipated: lack of range under combat loading conditions Equipped with normal 165-gallon wing tanks during the first few days of Korean hostilities, 49th Group F-80's could spend only 15 minutes in combat areas, some 350 air miles from their base in Japan With insufficient time to locate targets, only about 25 percent of the sorties flown were effective, but if permitted as much as 45 minutes in the target area, the pilots were sure that they could make 90 percent of their sorties count The 265-gallon wing tanks, as has been seen, soon provided the extra range needed With these tanks, the 49th Group figured that its F-80C's were capable of successful airfield sweeps at a radius of 525 miles Carrying rockets and a full load of ammunition, the F-80C's could operate against close support targets at a radius of 375 miles Before it departed Itazuke in October, the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Group was flying a majority of its missions at an extreme range of 500 miles, logging as much as 2 hours and 50 minutes per sortie At this distance, however, the jets could allow only a 15-20 minutes flight on the deck over the target area ¹¹²

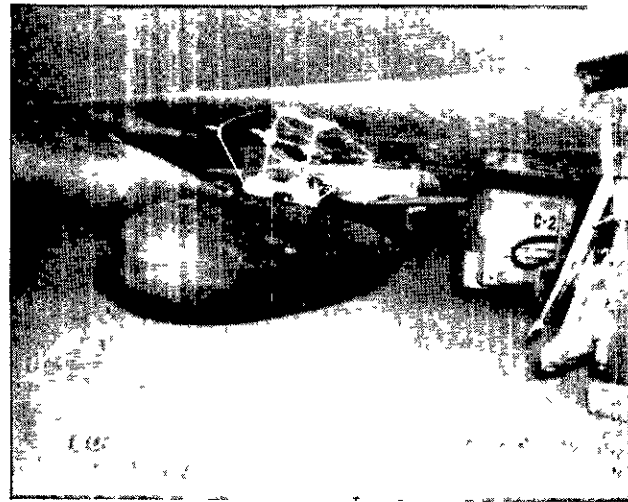
Use of the large tip tanks permitted jets to furnish support in Korea, but since they were attached to wing shackles, the fighters could not carry bombs or napalm tanks without further modification The 8th Group developed bomb racks to be mounted on the two outside rocket posts, but this design was almost immediately superseded by racks designed within the 49th Group to be bolted to the wing structure between the outside rocket post and the wing tip FEAMCOM started production on these racks, but combat tests of F-80's with 500-pound bombs showed that the arrangement appreciably slowed the aircraft in flight and caused a definite aileron flutter At the end of August, the 49th Group design was superseded by factory installed Lockheed pylons which seemed to be best suited for use on F-80 aircraft ¹¹³ The 8th Fighter-Bomber Squadron ran two tests to determine maximum cruise control, one carrying 500-pound bombs and one carrying 100-gallon napalm tanks. With large tips, these loads could be carried 350

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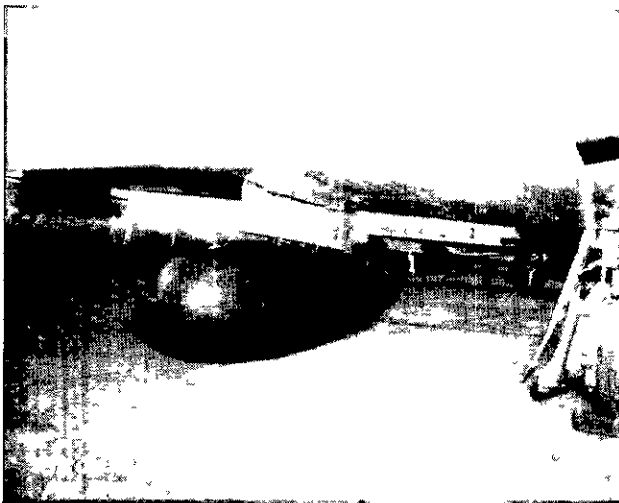
LOCKHEED PYLON

F-80C
PYLON
INSTALLATIONS



FEAMCOM PYLON

AMC PYLON



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miles, allowing 15 minutes in the target area and a 10 percent fuel reserve; with small tip tanks, the radius was reduced to 250 miles, and 50 to 75 miles was the maximum range without external fuel. At the end of September, 3 sets of pylon racks designed by the Air Matériel Command had been received by FEAMCOM and 47 more were on order. As installed on F-80's, they provided three inches more ground clearance than did the Lockheed racks, which had been originally de-

signed for F-51 aircraft¹¹⁴. By the latter part of September, 49th Group jets were carrying two to four tanks of napalm on close support missions with no great difficulties, in fact, jet pilots claimed that they could obtain greater accuracy in dropping at high speeds¹¹⁵. Thus it was that by the fall of 1950 many of the problems inherent in jet aircraft were being solved, and, everything considered, the jet fighter was filling USAF expectations as a fighting aircraft.

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Chapter 5

TACTICAL AIR: INCHON AND NORTH KOREA

WHILE EUSAK forces were retreating southward toward the Naktong, General MacArthur began to plan an amphibious encirclement of the North Koreans. He explained the concept to Gen. J Lawton Collins, Chief of Staff, U S Army, while the latter was in Tokyo during July. Briefly, it contemplated a mid-September amphibious landing by a two-division corps in the rear of the enemy and an attack from the south by an augmented and reinforced EUSAK. An airborne regimental combat team (RCT), flown directly from Japan, was to drop in the target area soon after D-day to seize key communications centers

immediately ahead of the troops advancing from the beachhead. The exact date of D-day was contingent upon North Korean activity during August, but MacArthur was convinced that an early and strong encirclement would sever the enemy's communications and prepare him for a decisive and crushing blow. The only alternative was a frontal attack, which could result in a protracted and expensive campaign to drive the enemy north of the 38th parallel.¹ The amphibious maneuver, on the other hand, was a MacArthur specialty, constantly employed with great success during World War II.

INCHON AND VICTORY IN SOUTH KOREA

General MacArthur's planners considered a number of objectives for the amphibious invasion, and, in the end, they formulated complete plans for two of them. The first objective was the port and city of Kunsan in southwestern Korea from which X Corps could drive northeastward to Taejon, strike the enemy on his immediate right flank, and open the Taejon-Seoul corridor.² The second objective was the Inchon area where exploitation of a beachhead was expected to result in the seizure of Kimp'o airfield and the capture of Seoul.³ This operation was the more ambitious of the two, since it aimed not only at severing all rail routes to the enemy's frontline troops but the encirclement and capture of most of his force. Because of the severe tidal effects at Inchon, however, the operation would require an expensive amount of air supply.⁴ In either operation, EUSAK was to break out of its perimeter and effect a juncture with X Corps.

Deciding in favor of the Inchon-Seoul attack, General MacArthur issued his operations order

on 30 August:⁵ X Corps was to seize and secure Inchon, Kimp'o Airfield, and Seoul, sever all North Korean lines of communications in the area, and, in cooperation with a D plus 1 attack by Eighth Army and available ground, naval, and air forces, destroy the North Korean army south of the line Inchon-Seoul-Ulchin. Maj Gen E M Almond, MacArthur's chief of staff but now temporarily relieved for combat duties,⁶ commanded X Corps, which was made up principally of the 7th Infantry and 1st Marine Divisions, the latter to be rejoined by the 1st Marine Brigade which EUSAK would release on 4 September. NAVFE was to provide the naval and Marine Corps forces, transport the landing forces, seize a beachhead in the Inchon area, and, when Almond assumed control ashore, establish a Naval Support Force for air, naval gunfire, and initial logistical support of the X Corps. FEAF

⁵General Almond officially retained his position as Chief of Staff, FEC until 16 April 1951. During this period Maj Gen Doyle O Hickey was designated Acting Chief of Staff, FEC.

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was to provide general air support as directed, isolate the objective area, and furnish air-ground support as required, its principal effort in support of the Eighth Army. FEAF was also to transport, cover, and drop the 187th RCT Airborne if General MacArthur so ordered as well as to provide cargo air support initially at Kimp'o Airfield, and later at Suwon. The Eighth Army would begin its offensive on D plus 1 in coordination with the X Corps landing, making its main drive along the Taegu-Taejon-Suwon axis to destroy the North Korean army.

For the operation, MacArthur, as CINCUNC (Commander-in-Chief, U. N. Command), established General Walker in command of all ground forces in Korea except for those to be employed in the amphibious and airborne operations in the Inchon-Kimp'o-Seoul area. The X Corps, in its campaign for Kimp'o and Seoul, would therefore be completely independent of the Eighth Army, and General Almond would be directly subordinate to MacArthur. General Stratemeyer, through appropriate commanders, would control the 187th RCT during its air movement to the objective area; following its drop, the 187th would revert to MacArthur or Almond, depending upon circumstances at that time.⁶

No one officer was placed in command of air operations over Korea during the amphibious invasion at Inchon. On 30 August a joint conference, attended by General Stratemeyer, Admiral Joy, Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble (commander of Joint Task Force 7), and others, had discussed a plan for the coordination of air operations incident to Inchon. General Stratemeyer carried with him a copy of the policy statement of 8 July, and Admirals Joy and Struble gave verbal assent when Stratemeyer showed the paper and suggested its continuance.⁷ A portion of the agreement reached at this conference was incorporated in an air annex to the FEC operations order,⁸ this annex also included a map, prepared at the conference, prescribing areas significant to the operation (see fig 8). Admiral Joy, through appropriate commanders and agencies, was to control all air operations in the initial objective work (WET-DAMP-MUD) from 0600 hours on D minus 3 until relieved by order of General MacArthur. For the same period Joy was also responsible for interdiction of transportation and communication directly affecting the objective area in the zone be-

tween the outer limits of the objective area and another line (R-R) encircling it. Five other areas (MIKE, NAN, OBOE, PETER, QUEEN) were designated to facilitate coordination between FEAF and NAVFE in the areas outside the objective. FEAF was to control the operations of all aircraft outside the objective area with the exception of those engaged in missions assigned by MacArthur to Joy; the latter were subject to FEAF-NAVFE coordination. During the period 0600 on D minus 3 until the disestablishment of the objective area, FEAF aircraft were not to operate within the NAVFE area except on missions requested directly by the tactical air commander there, or on such other air transport and air courier operations as were in accordance with agreed procedures. Various airfields lying within a radius of 150 miles from the vicinity of the beachhead (a number which included Pyongyang, Sinmak, Pyonggang, Ongjin, Haeju, Suwon, Kimp'o, Taejon, and Kunsan) were potential threats to the operation, and MacArthur gave Joy the mission of sweeping them to assure air superiority within the objective. During such sweeps, the Navy air elements were to conduct strikes against targets of opportunity and, at the request of FEAF, undertake such interdiction missions as were consistent with their primary purpose.

The FEC annex as finally issued deviated somewhat from the arrangements agreed on at the conference of 30 August, and General Stratemeyer promptly protested on 4 September to General MacArthur. There was no reaction, however, until 6 September, when at a GHQ conference, General Weyland learned that the FEC G-3 had recommended disapproval of all of Stratemeyer's recommendations. Since several of the other GHQ staff members present agreed to the recommended changes, Weyland announced that General Stratemeyer would take the matter to General MacArthur if his recommendations were disapproved. At this juncture, GHQ took no more action for three days; Weyland protested that FEAF could issue no operations orders until some action was taken. Finally, on 10 September FEAF received an undated indorsement, stating that none of the objections raised were vital to the Inchon operation, that all commanders had approved the air annex prior to its publication, and that, in any event, it was now too late to

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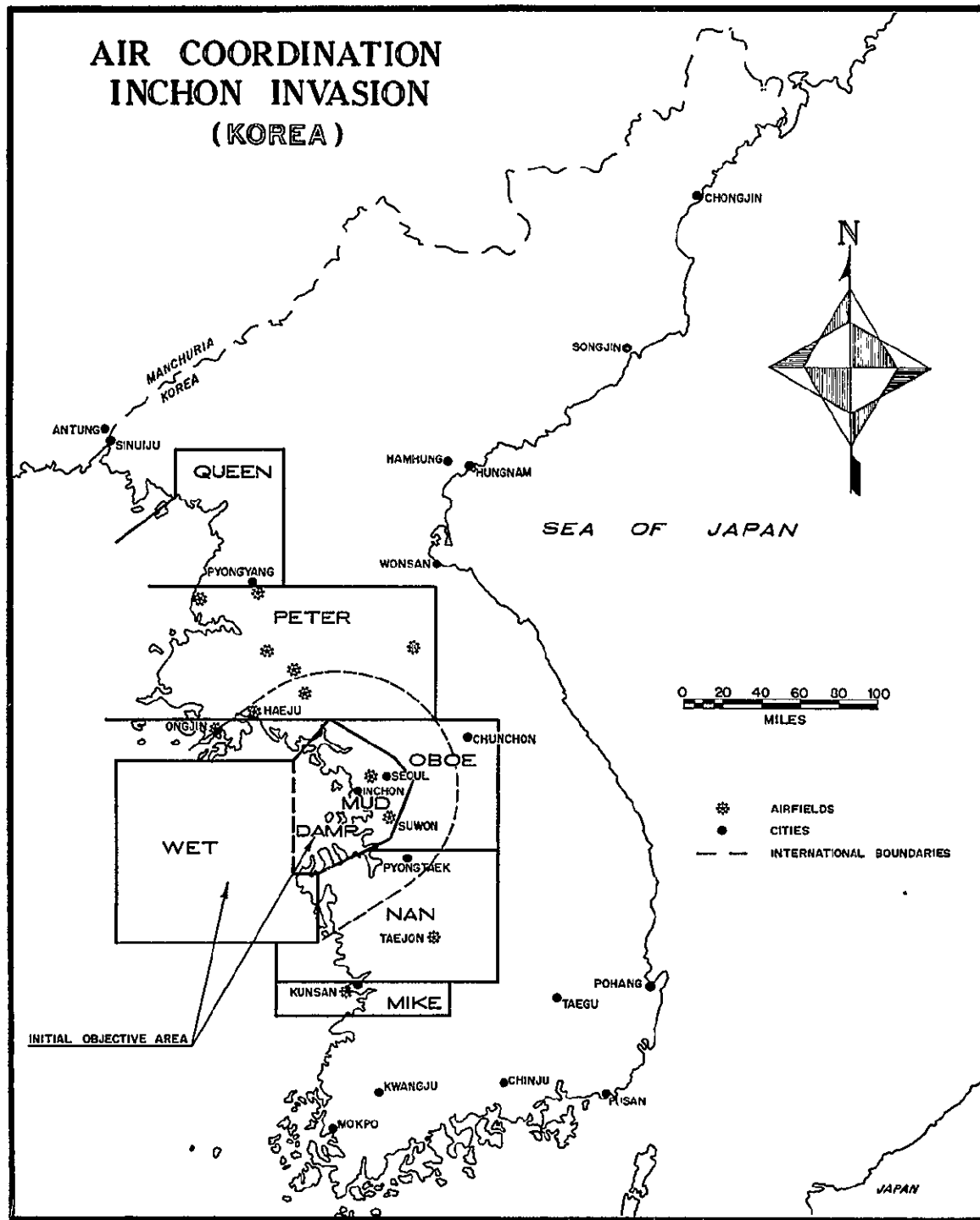


Figure 8.

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amend plans which were already in operation. At noon on 10 September, before the indorsement had reached FEAF, General Stratemeyer visited General MacArthur to discuss his objections to the air annex: no single control was specified for air activities in Korea outside the objective area, and Stratemeyer insisted that it should be his. MacArthur agreed.

The annex had given Admiral Joy the mission of sweeping all Korean airfields endangering the beachhead as of 2 September. Since the carriers would be in port at Sasebo for most of this time, Stratemeyer believed such a mission impracticable; moreover, since FEAF was responsible for the maintenance of air superiority over Korea, its participation in airfield attacks under Stratemeyer's "coordination control" powers would seem a foregone conclusion. MacArthur agreed. Joy had also been permitted to designate the routes to be followed by troop carrier and cargo planes into and out of the amphibious objective area. Stratemeyer pointed out that since Navy commanders were not familiar with the characteristics of USAF planes, such routes must be worked out by mutual understanding. MacArthur gave his nod. Stratemeyer further believed that land-based Navy and Marine air units, when no longer performing a mission for the Navy, should pass to his "coordination control." "Why of course, Strat," MacArthur replied; "there is no other way to do it." After this discussion General Stratemeyer returned to his headquarters and announced his decision to abide by the policy letter of 8 July, despite the fact that orders had been issued by some FEC staff members contrary to it. "I therefore want the necessary action taken, as soon as the current situation is over," he ordered, "to assure that subsequent directives clearly establish the coordination of air efforts of FEAF and COMNAVFE in accordance with the policies agreed to and stated in the 8 July letter."⁹

In its outline of tasks for subordinate units, FEAF was finally able at a somewhat late date to direct the Fifth Air Force to sweep all hostile airfields not in the objective area and to maintain air superiority, to interdict battle areas and provide close air support (primarily to the EUSAK campaign), to accept, when possible, emergency requests for air support from the tactical air

commander in the objective area; to neutralize drop zones and provide escort for the airborne assault; to provide air rescue service, and to conduct limited air evacuation in the objective area. It was to develop, rehabilitate, and maintain Kimpo for use by transport, light bomber, and fighter type aircraft, establish one tactical support wing (less one group) at Kimpo; be prepared to establish an air base at Suwon and other air bases in captured areas; establish airheads in Korea capable of off-loading 400 tons per day with a peak of 500 tons, and be prepared to establish an advanced air force headquarters in the Kimpo-Seoul area capable of assuming operational control over air operations in the Seoul area in addition to the existing Fifth Air Force mission. The 1st Troop Carrier Task Force (Combat Cargo Command)** was to be prepared to transport and drop the airborne RCT, transport the tactical support wing to Kimpo, provide air evacuation, and maintain aerial port operations. FEAF Bomber Command was to continue its current missions, emphasizing interdiction operations to isolate the amphibious objective area, it was also to conduct special missions including tactical air support, photo and visual reconnaissance, and psychological leaflet distribution.¹⁰

These basic plans had already been elaborated in informal discussions. On 31 August General Crabb met with Brig Gen T J Cushman, deputy commanding general of the 1st Marine Air Wing, who was assigned as X Corps tactical air commander for the operation. They agreed that one group of Marine air would be moved from the escort carriers to Kimpo as soon as possible after the field was secured. Since FEAF's current interdiction plan was considered sufficient, a proposal by FEAF that it attack all bridges in a 25-mile wide belt outside of the objective area was not accepted by X Corps. After D plus 3 two B-29 groups were to continue daily on the interdiction program, with the Navy assisting by dive bombing missions, and three B-29 groups were to press attacks against industry and communications. Between D minus 10 and D minus 3, a major B-29 effort was planned against all profitable marshalling yards on the main line leading into Seoul from the north. The conferees also agreed that it might be well to destroy the North Korean capital of Pyongyang with a major in-

⁹General Stratemeyer was later of the opinion that General MacArthur at the time of this discussion had not seen, or heard discussed, the GHQ indorsement to the FEAF letter of 4 September.

¹⁰See below, p. 64.

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secondary attack shortly after the landing, perhaps on D plus 3¹¹

Cooperation with the Eighth Army in its establishment of a bridgehead across the Naktong was discussed on 8 September by representatives of Bomber Command and EUSAK at FEAF headquarters. Although much of this discussion was academic because EUSAK had not decided the exact points which it wished attacked by B-29's, General Crabb emphasized that the Air Force wished to bomb particular objectives within an area, rather than to saturate a geographical rectangle¹². FEAF also committed 40 to 50 B-29's each day to close support of EUSAK until D plus 1 (the date of the Eighth Army attack across the Naktong), when three groups would be available for saturation bombing directly in front of the jump-off area¹³.

Since the Fifth Air Force, charged with close support of EUSAK's attack, would lose the Marine squadrons which had been supporting the 1st Marine Brigade when that brigade was withdrawn for service with X Corps, General Partridge requested additional USAF squadrons. He had been using eight fighter squadrons, while six were deployed for the defense of Japan and five others for the defense of outlying areas¹⁴. General Stratmeyer agreed to part of this request and secured the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing and its group along with the 16th and 25th Squadrons from the Twentieth Air Force for transfer from Okinawa to Itazuke. Squadron aircraft flew up to Japan on 22 September, beginning operations over Korea the same day (some within two hours after landing), and by 25 September the water shipment had reached Japan¹⁵.

Mindful of both its paratroop commitment and the increased need for air-cargo capacity into Korea, FEAF had been making preparations to secure additional transport units and to effect a command organization for them since July. On 25 July General MacArthur asked for C-119 aircraft to implement the employment of one airborne RCT,¹⁶ and USAF made the 314th Troop Carrier Group (M) available to FEAF after 15 August.¹⁷ USAF also called into active duty the reserve 437th Troop Carrier Wing (M) stationed at O'Hare Field, Illinois, and alerted this wing for overseas movement by 1 October.¹⁸ When FEAF requested that the 314th Troop Carrier Wing provide enough experienced personnel for a pro-

visional cargo command headquarters,¹⁹ USAF complied on 22 August and also made available Maj Gen William H Tunner, who by coincidence was in Tokyo inspecting the Military Air Transport Service (MATC) Pacific airlift. Tunner, veteran of the China-Burma "Hump" operations and the Berlin airlift, was thought by USAF to be the best possible commander²⁰.

Elements of the 314th Group began to arrive in Japan late in August, and on 22 August (effective 26 August) the Fifth Air Force organized the 1st Troop Carrier Task Force (Provisional), with headquarters at Ashiya.²¹ The mission of the new command was the conduct of air crew training, planning and execution of airborne assault operations, planning and preparation for aerial resupply and air-landed resupply, air evacuation of casualties, airlift for personnel and supplies, maintenance of liaison with airborne troops, and special missions directed by FEAF.²² On 31 August FEAF announced its decision to assume direct operational control of the 1st Troop Carrier Task Force.²³ General Tunner, who had returned temporarily to Washington, again reached Tokyo on the afternoon of 3 September, where he was briefed by FEAF on the mission of his command which he preferred to call the FEAF Combat Cargo Command (P). This change in designation was accomplished and back-dated to 26 August, the effective date of Tunner's assumption of command.²⁴ As originally established the Cargo Command got operational control of the 314th Troop Carrier Group, the 1st Troop Carrier Group (a provisional unit activated on 26 August), and the 374th Troop Carrier Wing.²⁵ These actions completed the organizational framework necessary to the expanding transport operations into Korea.

Although it became increasingly evident that the airborne operation could not take place as scheduled, General Tunner's staff proceeded with its planning. FEAF was much distressed by its inability to secure the requisite number of C-119's, and liaison officers of the 187th Airborne RCT were "most unhappy over plans to use C-46 aircraft and further do not want to use C-47 aircraft."²⁶ Despite FEAF's failure to get the C-119's by 10 September, General MacArthur announced his intention to undertake the Inchon operation as scheduled. FEAF, however, would still need 700 to 1,000 tons of airlift into Korea each day of the initial phase of the Inchon operation.²⁷

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The USAF remedied this situation somewhat by offering 64 C-119's by 10 September and 32 additional by 21 September²⁸ Although fewer than requested, FEAF promptly accepted the offer, and MacArthur, modifying FEAF's earlier task, provided that the 187th must be prepared either for air landing follow-up or for assault landing by parachute²⁹ General Tunner's solution to the whole problem of adequate aircraft was to make the drop in one day with 87 C-119's and 40 C-47's or to take two days and use all C-119's, the 187th accepted the former alternative on 13 September and two days later Tunner had an operations plan ready³⁰ By this time, however, it was evident that the main body of the 187th could not reach Sasebo before 21 September, and therefore could not be ready for an air drop before 29 September at the earliest³¹ At least, the new Combat Cargo Command was ready for its mission, had the air drop been ordered.

As FEAF began its aerial preparations for the Inchon invasion, air power was called upon to demonstrate its versatility, for during the week of 10-16 September the typhoon "Kezia" created bad weather in southern Japan, while rains drenched South Korea Fifth Air Force units, however, were able to circumvent the weather The 18th Fighter-Bomber Group had moved to Pusan on 7 September, and in preparation for the typhoon the 8th Fighter-Bomber Group took its planes to Taegu and operated there on 12 through 14 September When the typhoon reached Kyushu on the night of 13 September the 8th Group was able to report that its "damage was definitely more annoying than costly." In spite of this bad weather, aircraft under FEAF control flew a total of 3,257 sorties of all types during the week, and on 11 September a new FEAF sortie record was established 634 USAF, 38 RAAF, and 11 USMC sorties, a total of 683 for the day³²

Fifth Air Force fighters, continuing their tactical support of the Eighth Army, met special success on 10 and 11 September. On the former day they destroyed 10 tanks, 19 vehicles, 3 supply dumps, and 4 gun emplacements, on the latter they claimed 7 tanks, 22 vehicles, 17 gun emplacements, in addition to other tactical targets Anfield sweeps destroyed a Yak and damaged an unidentified plane at Sinmak on the 11th The next day a fighter formation caught Communist

ground crews camouflaging four Yaks at Pyongyang, destroyed three of the Red fighters and damaged the other.³³ In order to cut off possible enemy reinforcements, formations of B-29's worked in a triangular area around the objective area, striking along rail lines from Seoul to Wonsan to Pyongyang and back to Seoul On 10 September they hit 10 tunnels, 2 trestles, 8 railway bridges, 2 marshalling yards, and numerous sections of track with generally excellent results Despite typhoon conditions in southern Japan, B-29's attacked marshalling yards at Anju, Kwaksan, Chong ju, Sunan, Hwangju, Chaeryong, Kumchon, Namwon, and Yesong on 13 September; hits were scored on choke-points in all yards, and other single aircraft flew over selected stretches of track, dropping their bombs in small clusters along the right of way.³⁴ Admiral Joy complimented FEAF for "exceptional fine performance" on the 3 days³⁵

With FEAF performing its assigned duties outside the amphibious objective area, the X Corps assault elements went ashore at Inchon at dawn on 15 September in a landing described as a "realistic maneuver"³⁶ By the afternoon of 17 September the Marines had retaken Kimpo and were deploying along the west bank of the Han³⁷ Air cover during the establishment of the beachhead was provided by Navy fighters from three fast carriers, while two Marine squadrons based on the escort carriers *Badoeng Strait* and *Sicily* were available for close support Even with this formidable array of naval aircraft present two Yaks were able to attack the heavy cruiser *Rochester* on 17 September³⁸ After scoring four near misses with light bombs, one Yak escaped, the other was shot down by the HMS *Jamaica* while it was strafing the British vessel In the light of this surprising sneak attack, General Stratemeyer's insistence that the Fifth Air Force be allowed to sweep all Korean airfields preparatory to the Inchon landing appeared to be doubly wise

As X Corps elements went ashore, the 1st Marine Air Wing set up its close support control network. Each of the nine battalions of the 1st Marine Division had an accompanying TACP, with communications to the TADC, located near the Marine division's command post, while a small GCI installation was set up to furnish radar warnings of enemy aircraft FEAF had furnished the 7th Infantry Division a total of nine

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TACP's for managing close support, and the division also had a line to the TADC.³⁹ Following the capture of Kimpo the Marine air wing garrison (two land-based F4U squadrons and a land-based F7F night fighter squadron) moved in on 18 September to cover the assault across the Han at closer range.⁴⁰ Since X Corps controlled its own tactical air, it had little need for FEAF support; but General Almond did request flare missions over Seoul all night on 25 September to enable Marine night fighters to attack enemy troops fleeing north out of the city.⁴¹

The X Corps did have great need, however, for the logistical assistance of the FEAF Combat Cargo Command. The first C-54 of this command landed at Kimpo at 1426 hours on 19 September, and the next day a full-scale lift was begun, with the Combat Cargo Command immediately bettering its required allocation of 226 tons to Kimpo each day. On 21 September nine C-119's made emergency drops of ammunition and rations to front-line troops, and eight C-54's flew 65 tons of ammunition and C-rations into Suwon on 24 September.⁴² Late in September the entire 187th RCT was airlifted to Kimpo when no immediate need for its airborne employment had been presented.⁴³ "The airlift provided by the Cargo Command for the Marines at Kimpo has been the subject of much praise from those who know," cabled Admiral Joy. "The success of our arms was aided greatly by the tremendous amounts of freight and combat replacement personnel airlifted during the most critical period of operations," wrote General Almond on 8 October.⁴⁴

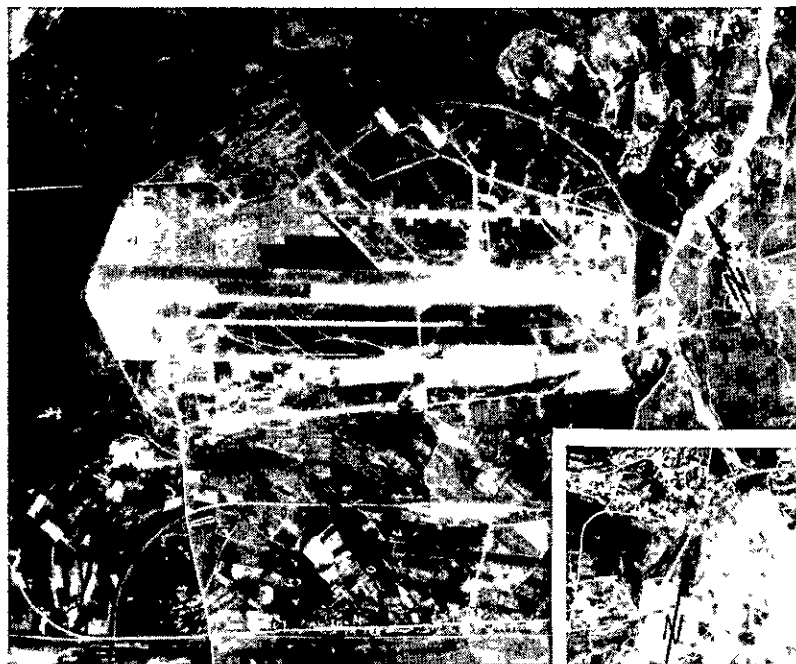
Support of the Eighth Army break-through along the Naktong line was the special business of FEAF units. After hitting key interdiction targets in a concentrated effort between 13 and 15 September, all five B-29 groups went out with 82 aircraft on 16 September to soften a sector of the enemy line east of Waegwan, only to be diverted to other targets by cloud cover. On 18 September 42 B-29's of the 92d and 98th Groups attacked two enemy positions, each about 5,000 by 1,000 yards in area one west and the other northwest of Waegwan. Although the targets were not assigned until 2000 hours the night before the mission, the G-3 Air Officer of the Eighth Army later described the raids as highly satisfactory, with timing and accuracy excellent.⁴⁵ On 24 September 12 B-29's flew armed surveillance of the roads leading north-

ward toward Seoul, FEAF preferring to employ these tactics instead of attacking towns directly in advance of ground elements as Eighth Army requested.⁴⁶ On all fronts the B-29's sought to pin down the retreating enemy. Roads to the northeast of Seoul were mined by B-29's with delayed action bombs set to explode at night. Pilots on surveillance were briefed to seek their own choke-points on roads, where a bomb blast would crater the roadway or bring down a landslide. Three or four B-29's flew along main rail lines dropping 500-pound bombs along the tracks in a continuation of the multiple interdiction procedure introduced on 9 September. When possible, the B-29's tried to hit tunnel entrances, rail crossings, spur and junction sections, railbed fills, and culverts, but bomb craters along the straight rails could cause some delay to the fleeing North Koreans.⁴⁷ Night B-26 attacks with B-29 flare assistance exploded an ammunition train, damaged two other trains, and destroyed a truck on 22/23 September.⁴⁸

At this nadir of their aspirations, the North Koreans were also bombarded with psychological warfare leaflets, 4,000,000 of them during the week of 17-23 September.⁴⁹ And with the United Nations success at Inchon large numbers of the enemy surrendered. On 1 October the Fifth Air Force reported what was probably the first case of an Air Force pilot capturing enemy ground troops. A MOSQUITO pilot, Lt George W. Nelson, spotting about 200 enemy troops northeast of Kunsan, swooped low and dropped a hurriedly scribbled note signed "MacArthur," ordering them to lay down their arms and move to a nearby hill. After they complied, Nelson found U. N. patrols in the vicinity and directed them to the prisoners.⁵⁰ On 7 October a C-47 equipped with four 500-watt audio amplifiers began a vocal campaign to induce enemy surrenders. On 21 October the "Voice" made contact with enemy troops south of Kunmori, troops hiding in houses were ordered outside, some 500 of whom complied, and trucks and troops headed north were ordered to turn around and surrender. On one flight a North Korean lieutenant colonel P/W broadcast to his troops in the region where they were last reported, advising them to throw down their arms.⁵¹

Many North Koreans, however, refused to surrender, and as they headed north Fifth Air

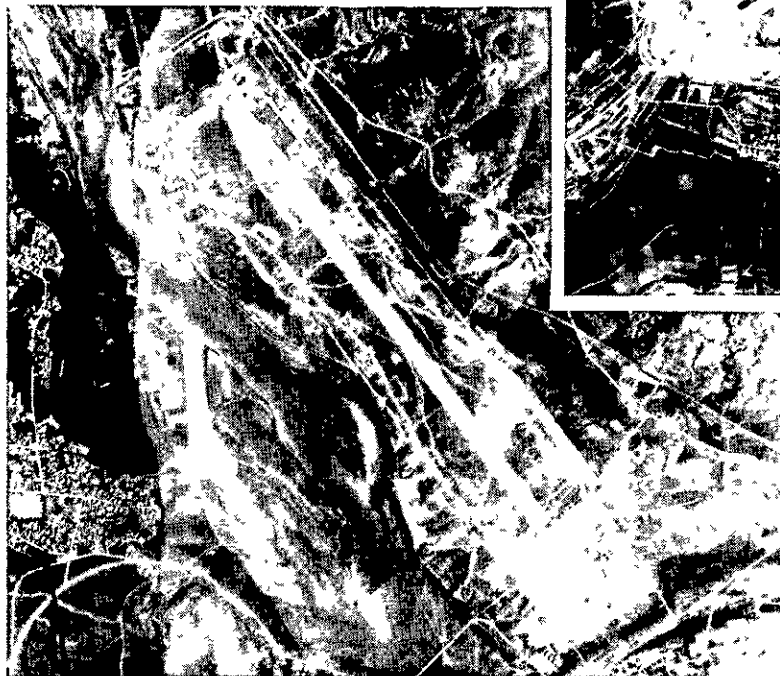
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TAEGU AIR FIELD KOREA 35° 53' N
128° 37' E CONFIDENTIAL UNCON-
TROLLED MOSAIC FROM MISSION
R 497B 8TRS 17 AUG '50 PRINTS
29-33 VV COMPILED BY 548TH
RCN TECH SQDN OCT '50



KIMPO (KENJO W) AIR BASE 37° 33' N ↑
126° 48' E CONFIDENTIAL UNCONTROLLED
MOSAIC FROM MISSION R-209-B 8
TRS 27 JULY '50 PRINTS 23-24 VV
COMPILED BY 548TH RCN TECH
SQDN AUG '50



← PUSAN EAST AIR FIELD KOREA 35°
10' N 129° 08' E CONFIDENTIAL UNCON-
TROLLED MOSAIC FROM MISSION
R-540 8 TRS 21 AUG '50 PRINTS
49 VV-52VV, 90VV-93VV
COMPILED BY 548TH RCN TECH
SQDN SEPT '50.

Principal United Nations Airfields in Korea.

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Force fighter pilots harassed their departure. For the first time since the early days of the conflict, enemy equipment was without camouflage. Pilots returned with tales of North Korean soldiers dragging field pieces down the roads by hand, refusing to disperse even when they were strafed. On the 2d Division front on 17 September, Fifth Air Force fighters dropped 210 x 110-gallon napalm tanks, killing an estimated 1,200 enemy troops as they attempted to retreat across the Nakdong. Other fighters saturated with napalm the "Walled City" of Yongchon, the strong fortification resisting the Eighth Army advance eight miles north of Taegu, and left it ablaze. On 19 September another enemy force of 700 men was bombed and strafed just forward of 2d Division positions, and ground controllers reported excellent results when the enemy, obviously confused by the aerial attacks, ran into the open where they were easy targets for B-26's and F-80's. On 20 September forward observers of the 24th Division noted some 30 enemy tanks moving toward their battlelines. F-80 and F-51 fighters, joining with ground artillery, destroyed 14 of the tanks and forced the remainder to withdraw.⁵² This fluid ground situation, however, complicated target identification, and the 8th Fighter Squadron reported that its hesitancy to attack bodies of marching troops on the road without positive identification caused it to let some enemy personnel escape.⁵³

Fighters also gave strong support to the advancing EUSAK and ROK forces. By 22 September Eighth Army regiments were attacking in column, a tactic which could be used only with strong air assistance. Aerial spearheads, preceding the columns, destroyed five tanks, damaged two, and damaged two self-propelled guns during the day. Other fighters supported ROK troops moving up the east coast. In the ROK sector alone on 22 September, Fifth Air Force fighters flew 125 close support sorties, killing an estimated

625 enemy troops. Rocketing and strafing F-80's pinned down and destroyed more than 430 North Koreans in the same area on the following day. On all fronts, following the Inchon encirclement an estimated 6,500 enemy soldiers had been killed by air action as of 23 September, and the toll mounted with 1,400 more falling before air attacks on 25 September. By 28 September fighters were returning to base with ordnance still in their shackles; most major enemy ground units had been badly broken up and sizeable air targets were fast disappearing.⁵⁴

Victory in South Korea came quickly once the Red Koreans, already reduced to a dearth of logistics by aerial blockade, were outmaneuvered on the ground. At 2315 hours on 26 September elements of the 7th Division made contact with the 7th Cavalry Regiment near Osan, while on the east coast ROK troops were moving toward the 38th parallel.⁵⁵ The government of the Republic of Korea returned to Seoul on 29 September, and General MacArthur informed the U N that "the backbone of the North Korean Army has been broken."⁵⁶

Victory in South Korea entailed immediate modification of air objectives. On 1 October in an effort to preserve what was left of the South Korean communications network, MacArthur prohibited destruction of railway facilities south of 38° unless known to be actively supporting the North Koreans. Rail marshalling yards and bridges south of the 38th parallel were not to be bombed, and any necessary interdiction of rail lines would be accomplished by bombing the roadbeds.⁵⁷ FEAF, also looking ahead, prohibited attacks against runways and air installations south of 40° unless necessary to destroy enemy aircraft. The Joint Chiefs of Staff canceled its strategic targets in North Korea, ordering FEAF to limit all further air attacks to targets having immediate tactical significance.⁵⁸

AIR DEPLOYMENT TO SOUTH KOREA

Establishment of U N control over South Korea permitted the Fifth Air Force to move its fighters over from Japan, thus greatly increasing the amount of ordnance they could carry and enabling them to range into North Korea. Before the air units could move, however, aviation

engineers had to build and rehabilitate Korean air facilities.

During late August, when all engineer activity had been withdrawn from forward airfields and it seemed that Taegu might be lost like the field at Pohang, the Fifth Air Force had located an old

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Japanese airfield site nine miles east of Pusan which, despite surrounding hills, held good possibilities for development into an air base. After negotiations led to the removal of an ammunition storage dump from the site, engineers sank test pits to find the old Japanese runway, reopened and repaired the clogged drainage system, and began work in earnest on a 6,000-foot pierced-steel plank (PSP) runway about 24 August. By 4 September the runway was in use by liaison planes, on 12 September it was fully operational for planes as heavy as a C-54, and by 1 November the field, designated K-9, was nearing completion, with housing for 3,200 troops.⁵⁹

Despite the fact that the airfield at Pohang had been in the battle zone for five weeks, Company A, 802d Engineer Aviation Battalion, found it in a fair state of repair on 27 September—only the north taxiway required extensive repair, including removal of the steel planking and regrading. After this task was completed on 11 October, work was begun on the south taxiway, a project which dragged on until 15 October because of heavy rainfall.⁶⁰ By 17 September the aviation engineer complement at Taegu was also able to resume work, and the new runway there was lengthened to 5,700 feet. Combined jet and C-119 traffic on this strip soon brought difficulties, however: the F-80's blew the fill out from under the steel plank and the C-119's broke the weakened surface when they landed. The use of the runway was threatened until a means was found to lift the steel planking with crowbars, blow in an asphaltic mixture, and thus stabilize the surface. As a part of the base expansion at Taegu, some 100 buildings were constructed of wood and stucco on concrete floors.⁶¹ Kimp'o airfield was taken by X Corps as an early objective, for with a 6,000-foot asphalt runway, it was undoubtedly the best field in South Korea. For its rehabilitation FEAF committed the 811th Engineer Aviation Battalion which arrived from Guam on 25 September—short 90 items of heavy equipment. These followed, but only in a trickle, and low unloading priorities delayed them even longer. The battalion's first assignment was to fill a large bomb crater on the main runway and cover it with steel planking, an expedient which permitted use of the runway but continually gave trouble. Jets blasted up the edge of the patch, and carrier aircraft coming in for landings with their arresting gear down caused

additional difficulty. "Naturally," as the battalion historian put it, "when the hook caught the pierced steel plank either the pierced steel plank was ripped and torn or the plane came to an abrupt stop." On 1 October Company A of the battalion went to Suwon where it laid down a system of PSP surfaced taxiways, but on 24 October it was directed to cease construction and ship all engineer supplies back to Kimp'o.⁶²

Although hampered by shortages of vehicles and dirt-moving equipment, the aviation engineers rapidly rehabilitated the Korean fields and as many of the base facilities, like water lines, as possible. Local procurement of supplies drew upon ECA stocks, the Korean government, and a surprisingly rich local cache of building materials. By early November, when local procurement was dwindling, supplies requisitioned through channels during August and September began to reach Korea. Large numbers of Korean laborers were employed by the engineers, but the best results appear to have come from informal contracts let to Koreans who hired their own labor. Most of the theater of operations housing, a type of wood and stucco construction which Oriental workers could raise with almost unbelievable speed, was built under such contracts.⁶³

Movement of Fifth Air Force fighter groups to Korea closely followed these preparations. The 18th Fighter-Bomber Group went to K-9 at Pusan (which the men preferred to call "Dogpatch Air Base") on 7 September.⁶⁴ The 49th Group had all three of its jet squadrons at Taegu by 1 October, an echelon having begun operations from the base on 28 September.⁶⁵ Advance elements of the 35th Fighter-Interceptor Group left Tsuki for Pohang on 3 October, and on 7 October the group, with its 39th and 40th Squadrons, settled at its old Korean base. The group historian reported that "conditions at the old airbase were much the same as they were . . . in July and August 1950. When the wind blew, it was just as dusty, and when it rained, the mud was just as sticky." The RAAF 77 Squadron joined the 35th Group at Pohang on 12 October.⁶⁶

While it had little difficulty in getting its units into the older Korean bases, FEAF was embarrassed by the continuation of the X Corps zone of operations around Seoul and Inchon. Fifth Air Force headquarters in Korea had moved up to Taegu on 23 September,⁶⁷ but FEAF urged it to

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move on and get the best possible communications established into Kimpo at the earliest.⁶⁸ On 29 September FEAF announced it was necessary to move Fifth Air Force fighters into Suwon (K-13) and Kimpo (K-14), and, since the amphibious phase of the operation was now well past, FEAF also requested that control of all land based aircraft in Korea, including the Marine squadrons at Kimpo, be yielded by X Corps as provided in the policy directive of 8 July.⁶⁹ Operational control of the Marine units was accordingly passed to FEAF and thence to the Fifth Air Force on 4 October,⁷⁰ and FEAF directed the Fifth to continue the 1st Marine Air Wing on its current tasks with X Corps.⁷¹

Seoul having been opened, the Fifth Air Force moved into the area as quickly as it could secure shipping. Headquarters, Fifth Air Force in Korea opened in Seoul on 15 October. The JOC/TACC opened there on the same day, and the 502d Tactical Control Group, getting into action at about this time, vastly improved the control system as it centered in Seoul. One squadron of the group manned the TACC, and the other three manned TADC's at Kimpo, Taegu, and Taejon. These TADC's, however, merely provided early warning and direction-finding facilities and did not enter the control center for offensive fighter direction. The 20th Signal Company, Air-Ground Liaison, reached Korea during the latter part of September, and it immediately assumed operation of the Army request net. One month later the company had established G-3 ground liaison officer nets, but it had not begun to operate a G-2 air net prior to 1 January 1950.⁷²

Immediate efforts were made to garrison Suwon and Kimpo airfields. The 8th Fighter-Bomber Group with its 35th Squadron reached Suwon on 7 October, but upon arrival it found that the field was barely adequate for one squadron. American tanks had lacerated all flight surfaces, only half of the runway was usable because of a large bomb crater, and half of the concrete taxiway was in such bad condition that it could not be used and the other half was kept barely usable with pierced steel plank. On 30 October it was decided to abandon Suwon, and the 8th Group moved to Kimpo where it was joined by its other squadron, the 36th from Tsuki.⁷³ Advance personnel of the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing reached Kimpo on 12 October, and by 25 October

the squadrons of this group (together with the 80th Squadron of the 8th Group) were in place there.⁷⁴ (See fig 9)

With the exception of Kimpo, where the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing provided base services, the Fifth Air Force utilized provisional table-of-distribution wings at its fields in Korea. Most of the organizations had been activated during the summer as air base units and then had been expanded into provisional fighter wings, but in early October they were redesignated as tactical support wings in deference to USAF's instruction that JCS approval was required for a combat appellation such as "fighter" or "bomber."⁷⁵ Therefore, the 6150th Tactical Support Wing went to Pohang, the 6002d went to Pusan, the 6131st to Suwon, and the 6149th to Taegu.⁷⁶

Movement of the fighter wings to Korea severely taxed available transportation, and the movements were further complicated by over-riding priorities granted X Corps to get its matériel into Inchon and then to get it out for staging to Wonsan.* Air movements carried most personnel and about one-third of the equipment, permitting fighter units to get into immediate operations at the new bases, but the heavier equipment which had to move by water brought complications. Tidal conditions at Inchon made unloading particularly slow, since ships had to wait to get into the harbor basin, and because of the X Corps priority, delays of as much as three weeks in unloading Air Force equipment were not uncommon. For example, two transports and a victory ship carrying cargo for the 6131st Wing arrived at Inchon on 10 October; the transports began unloading on 23 and 25 October, and the unloading of the victory ship was not undertaken until early November.⁷⁷ Part of the 8th Group's equipment which lay buried in the hold of a cargo vessel off Inchon during October was finally unloaded only after the ship moved back to Pusan, whence the equipment was hauled back overland by rail and truck.⁷⁸ Symptomatic of the effect of this delay upon air force operations is the 6131st Wing estimate that its operations were no more than 35 percent effective during the period while it waited for heavy equipment.⁷⁹

Although there were problems common to all of the Korean bases, difficult living conditions and the large amount of physical labor required in

*See below, p 74

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preparing for operations, the most serious was the lack of equipment for handling bulk fuel. Although POL facilities would be completed at Taegu and Pohang by 1 November and would be nearing completion at Kimpo, at Suwon aircraft had to be fueled by hand from 55-gallon drums trucked in from Inchon, a slow procedure at best but complicated even more when other flights landed at the base for staging. Most of the 60,000 gallons of jet fuel which the 51st Group used each day had to be trucked to Kimpo, where a drumming process into refueling units was necessary before it could be delivered to the using organization. A limited amount of fuel was delivered by tank car to a railhead approximately 7 miles from the base and some refueling units were dispatched to this tank car. At Taegu, the same problem hampered the 49th Fighter-Bomber Group, additionally complicated by unserviceable refueling units. Thus, on 3 November the 8th Squadron had only 10 aircraft refueled from its previous day's flying although the last plane had landed at 1500 hours. Only bad flying weather on the following day permitted the whole squadron to be refueled for a maximum effort. Use of drum fuel, moreover, brought about contaminated supplies which forced squadrons to pull and inspect low-pressure fuel filters on their aircraft. Some of the contamination appears to have originated with units which mixed napalm in 100/130 grade fuel drums without properly marking the drums for special cleaning prior to refilling with aviation fuel. At Pusan the same refueling difficulties were met by the 18th Group, and even at the end of October the POL system installed there was not working properly.⁸⁰

Lack of communications with the JOC was another common problem of the tactical units as they set up in Korea. At Pusan the 6002d Tactical Support Wing had a direct telephone and teletype to the JOC at Taegu, but when the JOC moved northward to Seoul, the lengthened lines required relay stations which increased maintenance difficulties. Without special generators, Korean low voltage electrical power was unsatisfactory for teletype machines—and the generators were "in generally poor condition because of shortage of parts and . . . just too old for further use."⁸¹ During November communications between the 6149th Wing and the JOC were said to have been inoperative 10 to 20 percent of the

time.⁸² Even at Kimpo the 51st Fighter-Interceptor Wing had difficulty in transferring intelligence to the JOC at Seoul, and resultant delays of flash intelligence permitted numerous tactical targets to escape follow-up air attacks. A direct teletype to the JOC would have alleviated this disadvantage, but equipment could not be had.⁸³

These common problems had been foreseen and would be corrected. The greatest imponderable to the Fifth Air Force, however, was how the jets would stand up under field conditions. Operating its F-80's from rough facilities at Taegu, the 49th Group gained experience indicative of what a jet outfit could expect to encounter under the most extreme conditions. The Taegu landing area comprised two PSP runways laid parallel and immediately adjacent to each other, the longest being 5,700 feet plus 1,000-foot overruns. Laid over recently recovered rice paddies, the runway soon developed sub-surface defects which could not be completely repaired. Seeking to make the best of a rough landing surface, the 7th Squadron operations officer customarily inspected the runway each morning to determine the smoothest portion for take-offs and landings, but even with such precautions one F-80 recorded eight positive and three negative G's during its take-off roll. Irregularities and jagged edges in the steel plank cause such frequent tire failures that main gear tires had to be changed after 7 or 8 landings and nose wheel tires after 12 to 15 landings. With increased landing proficiency, 7th Squadron pilots averaged 22 landings per main tire, with a few exceptional 42 and 43 landings, but one "hot" landing would run a new set of tires.⁸⁴ The short length of the strip cause some concern, but pilots were soon checked out in water-alcohol injection procedures which decreased the take-off roll by 300 to 500 feet and increased rates of climb and acceleration, the latter specially desirable at Taegu where a hill loomed up about a mile from the end of the runway. Indeed, it was current opinion that without water-alcohol injection the jets could not have operated at all from Taegu.⁸⁵ Rough and unpaved taxiways caused damage to wing flaps and dive brakes when the blast from taxiing jets blew up showers of rocks and pebbles. Before briefing on proper taxiing procedures eliminated the trouble, the 8th Squadron had five ground aborts during October when inexperienced pilots snagged their wing tanks on the PSP

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taxiways⁸⁶ Although maintenance units improved the dust problem by towing the jets out to starting position at the edge of the runway, air filter changes were frequently necessary. Parking space was also at a premium and fighters had to be spotted at extemporized locations, an expedient which favored accidents. On 10 October an RB-26 blew a tire on landing and plowed into four F-80's, destroying all the fighters and killing an officer aboard the reconnaissance plane.⁸⁷

Spare parts were practically nonexistent at Taegu for the first half of October, and the 8th Squadron claimed to have kept its planes in the air by using the few parts brought along on the move and others taken from wrecked aircraft. Although all aircraft out of commission, parts (AOCP) were turned in to wing supply which radioed to Japan promptly, the formal requisitions did not come through very fast, and acute shortages were encountered in such items as wing tips, large tip tanks, low-pressure fuel filters, tires, hydraulic fluid, oxygen, and various instruments.⁸⁸ Yet the hazardous operating conditions and severe problems of maintenance and supply were overcome, and the in-commission rate of the 49th Group remained high, as the following table covering July through October 1950 indicates.⁸⁹

	Aircraft out of commission (percent)	Due to maintenance (percent)	Due to lack of parts (percent)
July.....	26 20	91 10	8 90
August.....	20 54	67 69	32 31
September.....	14 33	68 32	31 68
October.....	17 45	67 85	32 15

It was perhaps significant that even with the difficult operating and supply conditions, the in-

commission rate for October was 82.55 percent whereas the average for the four months of July through October was 80.12 percent. Although the high aircraft availability rate indicated the relative ease of maintaining the F-80C, it also reflected the growing efficiency of the ground crews. "The F-80 is bearing up well under the strain of operating under minimum operational and maintenance facilities," reported the 7th Squadron; "from every standpoint it is doubtful whether any other jet aircraft could do the job."⁹⁰

Although the movement of fighter groups to Korea necessitated hard work, pilots were elated because of reduced flying mileage and no more overwater flights. Living conditions at Pohang were primitive, reported the 40th Fighter Interceptor Squadron, but their stay at Tsuiki had conditioned personnel to all forms of hardship; after Tsuiki, Pohang was not so bad. Living conditions at most Korean bases improved within a few weeks, and during the latter part of October personnel of the 49th Group moved from tents to newly built barracks, a welcome change with the arrival of cold weather. On 1 September Fifth Air Force in Korea announced that after 6 weeks in Korea a person would be entitled to 3 days temporary duty in Japan at a station of choice. "This little project has much to do with the high morale maintained in the squadron," wrote the 8th Squadron historian. Although there was some discontent that FEAF had not announced any definite number of missions prerequisite to rotation, in October most personnel were glad to have made the move to Korea where, with the effective strength of the Fifth Air Force brought to bear, it did not appear that the war could be continued long.⁹¹

THE BATTLE FOR NORTH KOREA

Having successfully concluded the defeat of the North Korean forces south of the 38th parallel, General MacArthur broadcast a message to the commander of the NKPA on 1 October, calling upon him to cease resistance, liberate prisoners and internees, and receive the civilized care accorded to all prisoners by United Nations forces. MacArthur asked an early reply to avoid useless shedding of blood and destruction of property.⁹² FEAF had been urging that an all-out

medium bomber attack against Pyongyang, preferably an incendiary mission at about 3 o'clock in the morning to obtain maximum psychological advantages, would do much to encourage a North Korean surrender. The USAF, however, had instructed General Stratemyer that such an attack would have serious political implications and should not be undertaken without specific JCS approval.⁹³ When the North Koreans did not respond to his 1 October message, General

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MacArthur appears to have considered an ultimatum threatening destruction to Pyongyang, but on 6 October Stratemeyer learned that such an attack would be held in abeyance⁹⁴

Instead of using air power to break the will of the North Korean regime, MacArthur planned to invade and occupy that part of Korea north of the 38th parallel, as he was authorized to do by the United Nations resolution of 6 October. His strategy for battle in North Korea, already announced on 2 October, was similar to that which had been successful at Inchon. The Eighth Army was to attack along the Kaesong-Sariwon-Pyongyang axis, secure Pyongyang and effect a juncture with X Corps, establish a defensive line across the Korean peninsula at Chongju-Kunmori-Yongwon-Hanhung-Hungnam, destroy the encircled North Korean forces, and assist in the establishment of ROK control over Korea. Still under MacArthur's direct control, X Corps was to land at Inchon and Pusan and to make another amphibious assault at Wonsan, the port city on the east coast of Korea. Once ashore the corps was to attack westward to effect the juncture with the Eighth Army. D-day at Wonsan was to be about 20 October, but the Eighth Army would not await the landing for its push northward⁹⁵. Until further orders, no U N force other than the ROK was to advance north of the defensive line across the peninsula between Chongju and Hungnam.

The air mission was also to be similar to that at Inchon. FEAF was to continue its current missions, support the advance of the Eighth Army, and support the landing and subsequent advance of X Corps as directed. It was to be prepared on 4 days' notice to drop the 187th Airborne RCT where and when it was needed. In the suballocation of the FEAF mission, the Fifth Air Force was to continue its current mission, provide maximum air support for the Eighth Army, maintain air superiority in Korea (except in the Wonsan objective area), develop Wonsan fields for transports and fighters, be prepared to take over operational control at Wonsan, and rehabilitate the Pyongyang airfields. Bomber Command, in addition to its current missions, was to be ready to execute area bombardment in support of the Eighth Army or X Corps. Combat Cargo Command was responsible for the airborne operation, air evacuation, and emergency airlift to Pyongyang and Wonsan. Fifth Air Force and

Bomber Command were jointly responsible for photography, extensive interdiction and armed reconnaissance of North Korea, destruction of enemy war potential at Wonsan prior to D minus 5 day, isolation of Wonsan, and other special missions.⁹⁶

Air operations incident to the amphibious phase at Wonsan, within the defined limits of the operational area (see fig. 10), were to be under the "coordination control" of Admiral Joy from 0600 hours, D minus 5, until relieved by MacArthur. FEAF was to operate within the area only on air transport and air courier missions or others especially requested by the air commander in the area⁹⁷. Air defense and support for the Wonsan operation would be initially provided by fast carriers, but Maj. Gen. Field Harris, USMC, was designated X Corps tactical air commander ashore. Since the 1st Marine Air Wing was to provide the air garrison for Wonsan, some difference of opinion soon arose as to when X Corps could take control of that part of the wing which was operating from Kimp'o at the time the Wonsan operations order was issued. It was FEAF's contention that these air units should remain at Kimp'o under the operational control of the Fifth Air Force until they were actually needed, or could be employed, at Wonsan. The X Corps, however, wished to stage the control elements of the 1st Marine Air Wing on its amphibious movement to Wonsan, thus, as the Fifth Air Force saw it, immobilizing the wing for some two weeks before the invasion date. On 6 October, the date upon which X Corps requested control of the units at Kimp'o, ROK forces were rapidly advancing up the east coast of Korea, and in view of these circumstances FEAF reasoned that it would be unrealistic to withdraw the Kimp'o-based Marine air units from combat for even a limited time.⁹⁸

Ground and air operations got underway auspiciously during the first week of October. ROK forces, which had to await no authority to cross the 38th parallel, were within 11 miles of Wonsan by 7 October, the day on which the 1st Cavalry Division advanced toward Pyongyang. The ROK units were supported by Fifth Air Force and Marine fighters, and MOSQUITO controllers furnished the advance reconnaissance for the ROK columns. On 7 October, for example, MOSQUITO ANTIDOTE located hostile antitank positions forward of the ROK forces, and although

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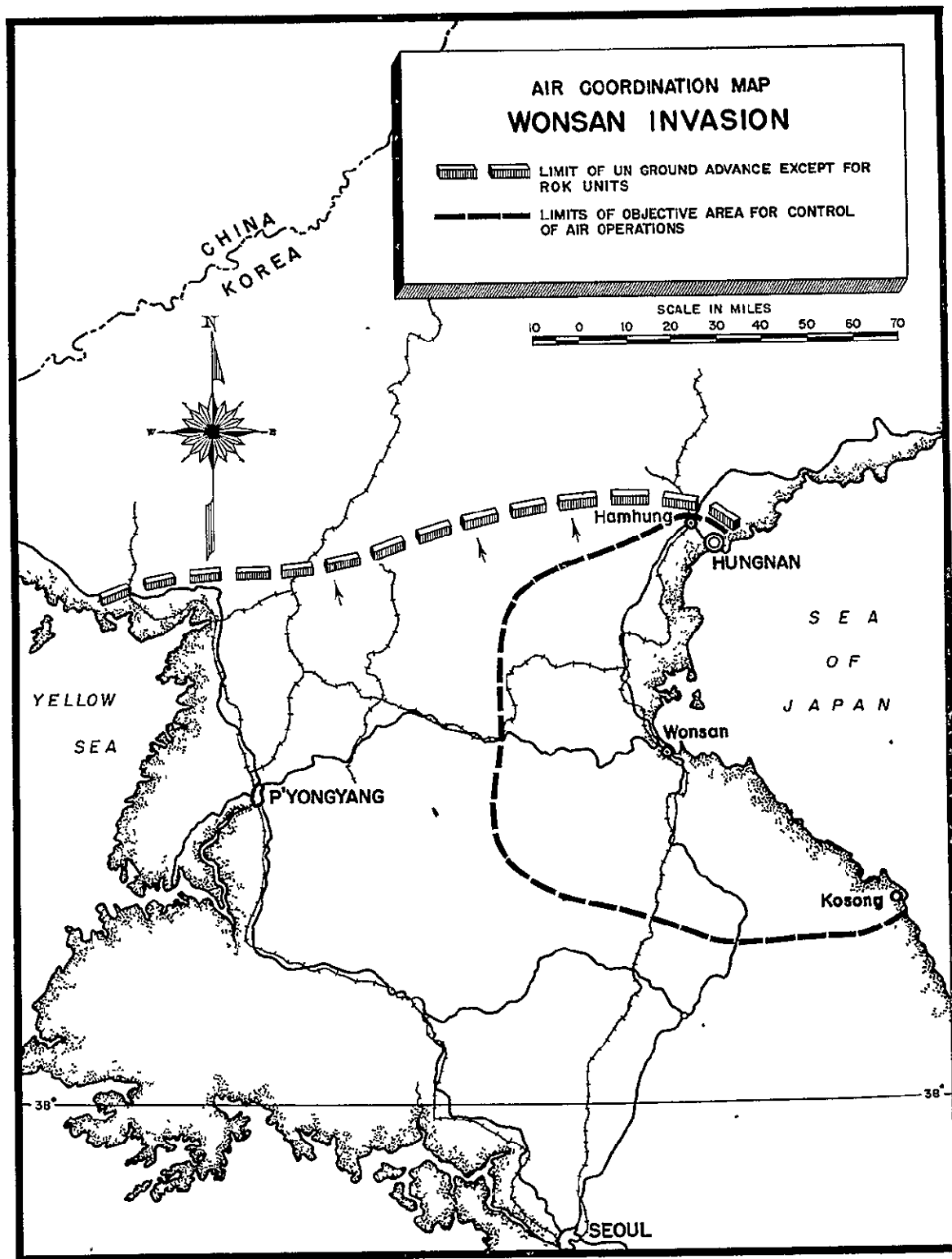


Figure 10.

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he was unable to establish workable communications with the Korean operator in the vicinity, he called in two F-51's and four F-80's to blast out the gun emplacements. ROK troops continued without delay. By 10 October ROK forces were fighting in the city of Wonsan, and that day MOSQUITO POLYGON worked with the ROK Capitol Division, spotting prepared positions and directing Marine and Air Force fighters to them. In one attack, a flight of F4U's destroyed ridge positions which had held up the entire advance. As a result of the day's fighting, the Capitol Division was able to capture Wonsan airfield on 11 October. By the end of the week, ROK troops occupied positions 22 miles north and 12 miles west of Wonsan.⁹⁹

Wonsan had thus fallen well before the X Corps D-day and before the D minus 5 establishment of an amphibious area around the city as provided by General MacArthur's operations orders. General Partridge flew to Wonsan airfield on 11 October and reported its runways in good condition. Next day, Combat Cargo Command flew 22 sorties with 131 tons of ROK supplies there, and on 13 October the transports lifted a detachment of the 6002d Tactical Support Wing to Wonsan in order that 18th Fighter-Bomber Group F-51's might be staged there.¹⁰⁰ On 11 October, however, General MacArthur announced that Wonsan airfield would be used for land-based aircraft under the control of the X Corps Tactical Air Commander, effective as soon as elements of X Corps reached the objective area. MacArthur, moreover, had apparently decided to pass control of the ROK troops in the area to X Corps. General Weyland immediately forwarded a memo to GHQ, pointing to the divergence between the CINCFE message of 11 October and the formal operations order for the Wonsan invasion. He asked whether GHQ intended to pass control of the Marine air units at Wonsan to FEAF under the coordination control directive, or whether two separate land-based tactical air elements were to operate in the restricted area of North Korea under separate air control and different command arrangements.¹⁰¹

Receipt of General Weyland's memorandum at GHQ was said to have caused quite a stir. Apparently GHQ had decided that a separate air command, composed of elements of the 1st Marine Air Wing, was to be set up for supporting X Corps. Weyland, however, pointed out to General Hickey

that this arrangement was contrary to the Key West agreement and to previous policy in the theater. On 16 October, therefore, MacArthur issued another radio directive providing for the disestablishment of the Wonsan objective area as soon as elements of X Corps passed beyond its designated boundaries; at that time the Fifth Air Force was to assume operational responsibility for the 1st Marine Air Wing at Wonsan.¹⁰²

While these high-level conferences were working out command policies, Generals Partridge and Harris met on 13 October to coordinate movement of Marine air elements to Wonsan. They agreed that the Fifth Air Force should furnish the air base unit there, including weather and communications services, that the Fifth Air Force should continue to support the ROK until Marine air elements were in place at Wonsan, and that General Harris should commence moving his units to Wonsan by air transport on 14 October. When the Marine airmen were established, Harris was to take over support of the ROK I Corps.¹⁰³

Meanwhile, the Eighth Army had been driving rapidly toward Pyongyang, with support from the Fifth Air Force which allowed ground troops to forge ahead with scant consideration for their flanks. On 12 October, 146 sorties went out, 81 to the U S I Corps and 65 to the ROK, heavy artillery fire against I Corps units in the Kaesong area ceased after F-80 attacks put 11 enemy field pieces out of action.¹⁰⁴ As the main Eighth Army drive rolled against Sariwon on 17 October, airborne controllers were flying reconnaissance from Haeju, east to Kunchon, back to Haeju, thence to Chaeryong and Sinwon-ni, thus covering the entire left flank of the Army. On this day between Sariwon and Miryok MOSQUITO HAMMER located an enemy train of 40 box cars loaded with troops and military supplies, being pulled by 3 locomotives. It was smashed by four F-80's and the enemy troops dispersed. Three other flights of fighters worked over another enemy troop concentration headed north on the road from Sinwon-ni.¹⁰⁵

Covered by the Fifth Air Force, the 1st Cavalry Division, reinforced by the British Commonwealth 27 Brigade, drove into Pyongyang on 19 October. In an effort to block the enemy's withdrawal, the 1st ROK Division attacked the city from the southeast, east, and northeast, capturing both airfields at Pyongyang. That same day, Fifth

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Air Force fighters, working under the control of MOSQUITO MIGRATE, destroyed 34 trucks, 5 oxcarts, 2 field pieces, a tank, and other enemy equipment on the road between Songchon and Sinchang-ni.¹⁰⁶ Organized resistance ceased in Pyongyang at 1500 hours, 20 October.¹⁰⁷ "The break-through at Hukkyori and the subsequent capture of Pyongyang . . . by this Division," wrote Maj Gen Hobart R. Gay, in command of the 1st Cavalry, "was made possible only by the magnificent close air support given by the Fifth Air Force. The 1st Cavalry Division is, and always will be grateful."¹⁰⁸

Capture of Pyongyang, seat of the North Korean government, was in itself a significant victory, but U. N. strategy also included trapping as many of the remaining Communist troops as possible. The 187th Airborne RCT had been standing by for employment in such an aerial envelopment, and on 18 October MacArthur gave the order. On 20 October the RCT was to be dropped astride the main routes about 30 miles north of Pyongyang, near the villages of Sukchon and Sunchon.¹⁰⁹ The Fifth Air Force scheduled softening-up attacks in the drop zones, and set up close support coordination through MOSQUITO controllers.¹¹⁰ Following this schedule and with MOSQUITO NIGHTMARE flights presiding, 75 F-51's, 62 F-80's, and 5 B-26's worked through the drop area on 20 October, destroying 53 vehicles, 5 fuel and ammunition dumps, 23 oxcarts, 4 tanks, and a field artillery gun. As the 187th RCT hit the ground and took its positions other flights of fighters were vectored out to targets of opportunity. A B-29 and six B-26's were sent to dispatch an enemy vehicle concentration building up at Chongju, to the northwest of the drop zones.¹¹¹

The airborne phase of the operation was well managed by the FEAF Combat Cargo Command, which had been making its plans in coordination with the 187th for some weeks. The paratroopers mounted at Kumpo, and after a 6-hour delay in P-hour because of inclement weather, the first wave of the 314th Troop Carrier Group C-119's began unloading at 1400 hours over Sukchon. Shortly afterwards, drops began on the Sunchon zone, and by 1500 hours a total of 71 C-119's and 40 C-47's (21st Troop Carrier Squadron) had delivered 2,860 paratroopers and 301.2 tons of supply and equipment. Only two C-119's failed

to deliver their equipment loads because of faulty rigging.

On the ground, the operation was equally successful. The airborne operation and fighter attack so startled North Korean troops that they abandoned strong defensive positions, leaving loaded guns with ammunition alongside. By 2000 hours on the 20th, elements of the ROK 6th Division had linked up with the paratroopers at Sunchon, thus closing the trap on enemy forces remaining near Pyongyang. On 21 October in another drop at 1000 hours, 40 C-119's delivered 1,093 troops and 106.8 tons of supplies. On 22 October 22 C-119's dropped 130 tons, and 23 October, the last day of the series, nine C-119's dropped two men and 54 tons of supplies.¹¹² The bag of captured Communists was full between 18 and 21 October 3,115 Red Koreans fell into U. N. hands, mostly on the Pyongyang front. It was unfortunate, however, that the initial jump had been delayed by unfavorable weather, because it was later learned that a train loaded with U. N. prisoners had passed through Sunchon earlier on the 20th and they might have been liberated.¹¹³

Although the airborne operation had been hurriedly matured on short notice, Brig Gen Frank S. Bowen, commander of the 187th, stated that "there has not been any better combat jump." He called the formation and timing "perfect." As an example, equipment for the 1st and 3d Battalions and the 1st Battalion's personnel were dropped together, the 3d Battalion, which jumped later, landed right in its own equipment. Casualties were remarkably light—only 1 man killed and 46 injured. Bowen particularly commended the formation of C-47's, which was the more remarkable since the 21st Squadron had had little airborne training. Bowen did suggest that future formations for heavy drops not be as tight as that employed because large parachutes tended to steal air from the smaller ones, causing the latter to stream. Aside from that, he thought that the only difficulties with the mission arose from faulty matériel or inexperience on the part of his packers. Statistics on equipment serviceability were good. Only 2 of 12 howitzers were not immediately usable—one was a streamer and the other, with a broken axle, had been repaired. Four out of 28 jeeps and 2 of 4 three-quarter ton trucks were lost in the drop. Bowen thought that the use of pathfinder teams to signal for resupply drops would have been

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valuable, but such teams, had they been employed to mark the initial jump areas, would have been killed before they got into action.¹¹⁴

The United Nations campaign to free Pyongyang and Wonsan had thus been successful without aid from X Corps, which had been unable to meet its D-day at Wonsan, enemy mine fields off Wonsan held up the landing of the corps until 26 October. Although his combat troops could not be landed for several days, General Almond nevertheless came ashore at Wonsan by helicopter on 20 October, and he promptly assumed command of the ROK I Corps and the Marine air wing elements there. Four days before this, however, General MacArthur had already provided for the disestablishment of the X Corps amphibious objective area as soon as the leading elements of the corps (in this case the ROK I Corps) progressed outside the area. FEAF was then authorized to assume coordination control over all air operations in the area, including those of the 1st Marine Air Wing which was still assigned to support X Corps.¹¹⁵ Although he acquiesced in the disestablishment of his objective area, General Almond informed MacArthur that his headquarters planned to direct the 1st Marine Air Wing to furnish all close support missions inside the bomb line and all reconnaissance found necessary, this because of poor communications back to the JOC.¹¹⁶ MacArthur promptly replied that the Fifth Air Force controlled all land-based air in Korea and that X Corps must coordinate all requests for air support through the established procedure of the JOC.¹¹⁷

Although General MacArthur had properly vested the coordination control of the Marine air units at Wonsan in FEAF, and FEAF had passed this control to the Fifth Air Force, the existence of two separate and independent ground commands in Korea precluded orderly control of air operations. In other words, a single air commander in Korea, General Partridge, was directed to support two independent ground commanders, Generals Walker and Almond. If air support requests emanated simultaneously from both Walker and Almond, Partridge was placed in the difficult position of having to decide which request was to receive priority, a decision more logically the responsibility of a single commander of all Army operations in Korea. Having had no say as to the establishment of two separate Army commands in Korea, FEAF had sought to meet

the problem at one time by the establishment of two separate tactical air commands in Korea, one to support X Corps and one to support EUSAK, but limited numbers of personnel and stocks of equipment made this impossible. Instead, General Stratemeyer had taken action (1) to place the 1st Marine Air Wing under the coordination control of the Fifth Air Force, (2) to establish the primary mission of the 1st Marine Air Wing as the support of X Corps, (3) to make the Fifth Air Force's vastly superior strength available either to X Corps or EUSAK as needed, and (4) to retain Navy and Bomber Command aircraft in a general support role, to be ordered to either front as required.¹¹⁸

This arrangement was not completely understood by the Fifth Air Force, which on 12 November established the mission of the 1st Marine Air Wing as follows: (1) without further instructions from the Fifth Air Force, the 1st Marine Air Wing was to maintain air superiority and conduct air defense operations within the X Corps area; (2) the wing was to conduct operations in support of X Corps or EUSAK in accordance with daily operations orders issued by Fifth Air Force, (3) in an emergency the wing might honor close support requests from X Corps without reference to the Fifth Air Force, and (4) the wing was to be prepared to conduct armed reconnaissance, offensive strikes against designated targets, escort and cover missions for air, sea, or land forces, and interdiction of enemy ground and sea communications, as directed in Fifth Air Force daily operations orders.¹¹⁹ The Fifth Air Force thus required X Corps to submit a daily list of all air support requirements to the JOC, following receipt of which the Fifth issued operations orders directing the 1st Marine Air Wing to fulfill those that it could. In view of the limited communications channels between Wonsan and the JOC at Seoul, this was a burdensome procedure and an unrealistic compliance with the doctrine of Field Manual 31-35.¹²⁰ It greatly delayed performance of X Corps photographic reconnaissance requests.* The Fifth Air Force did not immediately recognize the awkwardness of its procedure, probably because at that time the capabilities of the 1st Marine Air Wing to provide air support far exceeded X Corps' requirements. When the Chinese Communists intervened, the Fifth Air Force immediately or-

*See chapter 7, p. 101

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dered the 1st Marine Air Wing to assume direct responsibility for close support of X Corps without reference to the JOC, but to report to the Fifth any requests for close support which exceeded that wing's capability.¹²¹

The rapidity of the UN sweep into North Korea greatly complicated any comprehensive interdiction program. It was FEAF's opinion, moreover, that interdiction attacks would probably hinder the Communists only slightly at that point, because they obviously had stored supplies in local dumps where their few remaining divisions could secure at least the minimum 50 tons per day required. Interdiction attacks were continued in certain areas, however, in the hope of hindering possible Chinese reinforcements.¹²² FEAF planners had also come to the conclusion that attacks against marshalling yards were chiefly useful to destroy rolling stock and that bridge attacks furnished the most permanent means of interdiction.¹²³ A new interdiction plan was accordingly issued on 6 October, cancelling attacks south of Wonsan and Pyongyang and putting emphasis on 32 key highway and rail bridges, most of them on the three routes northward from Sinanju, especially the route to Antung.¹²⁴ Eight days later only six bridges remained on the FEAF interdiction list, and on 18 October the B-29's were forbidden to operate south of Sinanju.¹²⁵

Night intruder missions were continued during the drive into North Korea, but on 2 October General O'Donnell recommended suspension of B-29 sorties against targets of opportunity, which he thought to be relatively ineffective. He further recommended cancellation of all B-29 and B-26 "buddy" missions, except those able to use British Mark III flares. Dusk missions with delayed-action bombs were to be continued along enemy lines of communications. General Stratemyer approved the recommendations* and ordered O'Donnell to continue dropping delayed-action bombs along Korean routes up to within 50 miles of the Manchuria-Siberian borders.¹²⁶ The 162d Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron (NP), which had lately arrived from the United States, maintained surveillance of northwest

*An Air Force evaluation board thought curtailment of B-29 intrusion "probably hasty." Presence of a night intruder in an area caused enemy apprehension, fear, and disorder. "Accuracy is of little importance," thought the Board, "the bombing creates fear and fear does the work." (See Barcus Board Report, Vol. I, Book 2, pp. 143-46.)

Korea, providing continuous coverage during hours of darkness. Upon locating targets, the crews reported to a radar station which had moved into position where it could take bearings, after taking the necessary bearings the radar crew dispatched a B-26 night intruder to the location. Early in November the 162d Squadron also cooperated with Marine F7F's of the night fighter squadron stationed at Kimp'o. Reconnaissance planes and the Marine night fighters reached designated areas at about the same time, making contact via radio. The night fighters had a nose search radar which enabled it to trail the RB-26 at about 3 miles and when the reconnaissance plane spotted a target it dropped flares to light the area for the fighter. The procedure worked satisfactorily, but since few targets were abroad during the period, it did not receive a fair test.¹²⁷

As the air war moved further north in Korea it began to encounter difficulties from orders designed to prevent violations to the Manchurian and Siberian borders. There was no question that such an order was politically sound but it was not without detriment to the air war. As early as June 1948 General MacArthur had issued orders prohibiting aircraft from approaching within 40 miles of Soviet satellite countries.¹²⁸ After conferences with the State Department at the outbreak of Korean hostilities, the Secretary of the Air Force directed USAF to stress the importance of briefing all air crews so that there would be no chance of attacking targets beyond Korea's borders.¹²⁹ FEAF ordered all its commands to keep well clear of the Soviet-Manchurian border, and USAF emphasized that bombing in the vicinity of the border be by visual means only, not by radar.¹³⁰ On 2 September General Stratemyer ordered his subordinate commanders to brief their crews that when in the vicinity of the borders, unless positive of their location, they must leave at once.¹³¹

Despite these explicit orders there were some mistakes and compromises of the border by pilots who became lost in the confusing geography of North Korea. Two fighter pilots strafed a Red Chinese airstrip near Antung on 27 August. A 98th Group B-29 bombed near Antung on the night of 22 September when similarity of the topography of Antung and Sinanju, 60 miles south, led the crew to believe that they were bombing in

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the vicinity of Sinanju. Missions of this type up the northwest coast of Korea were necessary because of the large amounts of military supplies brought across the Manchurian border daily from Antung, but the crew had been briefed to remain 50 miles or more from the border.¹³² General Stratemeyer specifically directed that any crew given a mission north of the line Pyongyang-Wonsan should be briefed on North Korean geography and that if they could not positively locate themselves they were not to attack. When two F-80's attacked a Siberian airfield on 8 October, General Stratemeyer removed the group commander.¹³³

As ground operations moved closer to the Yalu River, Stratemeyer had to relax his restriction on attacks within 50 miles of the border to give the Fifth Air Force more latitude. On 17 October armed reconnaissance flights were permitted to attack under visual flight conditions within the 50-mile zone but not closer to the border than a "chop line" connecting Hwatandong-Kanggye-Ounni-Hapsu-Murungdong-Hadan, under emergency conditions and with a full report to FEAF, General Partridge could authorize missions north of the "chop line."¹³⁴ On 25 October close support missions under direct control of TACP's or MOSQUITO controllers were permitted to go as close to the border as necessary, but pilots for these missions were carefully selected and flew under experienced leaders. When Chinese reinforcements began to appear, General Stratemeyer on 25 October cancelled previous instructions limiting bombing of targets within five miles of the border, but he reiterated that the border must not be violated.¹³⁵

To return to the ground campaign in North Korea, the U. N. forces in late October seemed in pursuit of complete victory. The capture of Pyongyang and Wonsan had virtually completed the destruction of the original North Korean military machine, and MacArthur, anticipating

such a success, had on 17 October ordered the Eighth Army and X Corps to cross the defensive line of Chongju-Hungnam and carry victory to the very banks of the Yalu River.¹³⁶ This decision was made with the full realization that Red Chinese armies had been massing in Manchuria all summer, and on 4 October it had been obvious both to MacArthur and the Department of Army that "the potential exists for Chinese Communist forces to openly intervene in the Korean war if U N forces cross the 38th parallel."¹³⁷ The decision to press to the Yalu revealed, moreover, a lack of appreciation for the contributions of air power to the victory in Korea. In the offensive campaign against the NKPA, air power had paved the way for ground force advances by destroying the enemy air force, by interdicting movement of men and supplies from areas beyond the battle lines, and finally by delivering attacks just ahead of U N ground troops. Yet now for political reasons, United Nations air power could not cross the Yalu, and as their supply lines grew longer and longer the U.N. troops would at last be face to face with a powerful enemy untouched by aerial attacks. As the battle line approached the Yalu, there were increasingly diminished opportunities for U N. air employment, opportunities further curtailed by the border restrictions. In short, the United Nations ground campaign had been successful so long as air power had been able to bomb and strafe in front of the ground troops, but now with the ground troops on the doorstep of Manchuria no support could be given at all. The Chinese, however, were not to wait until U N forces reached the Yalu, on 2 November Chinese Communist troops sprang a trap on advance elements of the 1st Cavalry Division near Unsan. The United Nations had won the campaign against the North Koreans, but a new war with the Chinese was in the making.

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Chapter 6

THE STRATEGIC AIR WAR FOR KOREA

THE AIR WAR in Korea was principally a tactical air war. At first the USAF and FEAF had no choice but to stress air-ground cooperation in order to prevent the hard-pressed U N. ground forces, committed to action piecemeal, from being driven into the sea by well trained and numerically superior North Korean armies, that the air war remained primarily tactical was dictated by political considerations designed to isolate the fighting in Korea. Although it was well recognized that the North Korean armies had been trained by other Communist nations and were being actively supplied with war matériel from Chinese and Russian sources, political decisions prevented air action north of the Yalu. As General O'Donnell expressed it "The U N decision to restrict our operations to areas south of the Yalu had obviously given the enemy an inordinate advantage which

will be almost impossible to overcome. We are fighting distinctly 'under wraps'." ¹

While temporary emergencies and political expedients vitiated the essential requirement that strategic air warfare must be a total and sustained effort, the Strategic Air Command (SAC) medium bomber groups detached to FEAF nevertheless managed well planned attacks against such strategic targets as were located in North Korea. The expeditious manner in which the medium bomber groups moved across the Pacific was due largely to the fact that SAC units were directed and controlled by one major command. The consequences of diverting these highly specialized strategic units to tactical missions within the theater merely proved the wisdom of the normal concept that SAC should receive its directives—and targets—from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. ²

MOVEMENT OF STRATEGIC AIR GROUPS TO COMBAT*

On 3 July after General Omar Bradley had obtained approval from the President and Secretary of Defense, the JCS ordered two medium bombardment groups from SAC's Fifteenth Air Force to temporary duty with FEAF. ³ Although their diversion was a considerable cost to the USAF's over-all strategic capabilities, General Vandenberg sent them out primarily because of "the vital necessity of destruction of North Korean objectives north of the 38th parallel." "While I do not presume to discuss specific targets," he wrote General Stratemyer, "it is axiomatic that tactical operations on the battlefield cannot be fully effective unless there is a simultaneous interdiction and destruction of sources behind the battlefield."⁴

*This section is reproduced with slight change from the monograph prepared by the Historical Branch, SAC, The Deployment of Strategic Air Command Units to the Far East, July-August 1950, pp 6-17

On 13 July, only nine days after receiving word 8,000 miles away in the United States that the B-29's were to move to FEAF, General O'Donnell sent the 22d and 92d Groups on a combat mission to Wonsan, an achievement which demonstrated the mobility and striking power of the USAF. To General Vandenberg the mission indicated a "high degree of esprit, mobility, and technical competence."⁵ The swiftness of the movement was possible only because of well-established SAC mobility plans which had been designed for just such an emergency.

In conjunction with the execution of its primary mission, SAC had the responsibility of maintaining air force units "for employment against objectives of air attack in any location on the globe." This mission required (1) the training of "strategic bombardment crews and units for the performance of global bombardment operations",

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(2) detailed planning for combat air operations; (3) training and staging combat, service, and supporting units for theater of operations or other overseas deployment, (4) joint operation with other commands, and (5) the performance of such special missions as the Chief of Staff, USAF, or the JCS might direct. The SAC missions obviously required that units assigned to the command be "highly mobile organizations, capable of being dispatched without delay, to distant bases." Command letters, directives, and manuals gave, in complete detail, the various requirements for carrying out the mobility plan. Unit essential equipment (UEE) was listed and enumerated to assist the individual commanders in preparing for their move to an operating base outside the Zone of Interior.

To get mobility emphasis had been placed upon equipping all units to permit operations away from their home bases for at least 30 days with a minimum amount of support from the operating base; special attention had been given to the flyaway kit, bomb-bay bins, and flyaway engine cradles. The flyaway kit contained Air Force and technical spare parts and served as a kind of airborne base supply, the bomb-bay bins were large aluminum containers utilized to carry essential, non-bulky supplies. The flyaway kits were never drawn upon except during maneuvers or actual combat operations, and each squadron was made responsible for the storage of its own flyaway kit. To provide sufficient build-up engines to meet mobility requirements and support the wing mission, engine quick-change packups and power packups had been furnished; these packups incorporated "all items . . . necessary and practicable to facilitate aircraft engine changes in the shortest possible time . . ." A reserve of packups and build-up engines was maintained by all bombardment wings in accordance with the SAC mobility plan.

The plan had been put to test on several occasions when units were deployed to overseas bases for temporary duty training during 1948-1950. This experience had made possible a better understanding of the problems to be encountered in such large-scale, short-notice movements, and by the summer of 1950 several changes had been made in the plan. All of the units which were sent to the Far East in the summer of 1950 had at one time or another been involved in overseas

activities. the 22d and 92d Bombardment Groups had been in the Far East and the United Kingdom; the 98th Group had been in the Far East, the United Kingdom, and at Goose Bay; and the 307th Group had served temporary duty in the United Kingdom and Germany. Thus SAC had approximated conditions similar to those often encountered in times of emergency activity, when facilities and supplies were limited.

SAC units had also participated in maneuvers and missions in the United States which were designed to simulate combat conditions. In June 1950, for example, a special operation was scheduled to test SAC's readiness to carry out its two-fold primary mission, the deployment of forces and the bombardment strike. The results indicated the command's general mobility, its ability to coordinate with other commands, such as MATS, in carrying out a simulated deployment, and the efficacy of its prevailing emphasis on combat readiness. Bombardment crews had been schooled in the most advanced techniques of radar and visual bombing, and special emphasis had been placed on bomb scoring, with the express purpose of improving bombing accuracy. Crew target study and simulated bombing runs on foreign and domestic targets during training activities had made possible better navigational accuracy and bombing perfection. Formation flying, night and daylight simulated bombing missions, and radar bombing equipment improvements had rounded out SAC unit versatility.

The availability and status of combat-ready units and crews had been subjected to study and analysis from 1946 to 1950. In 1947 operational readiness tests (ORT) were devised to indicate the normal state of preparedness of operational units; by 1949 Lt Gen Curtis E. LeMay had accepted these tests as a reliable determinant of the relative status of SAC units. Combat readiness forecasts, designed to furnish a preparedness estimate for each combat group in the command, and combat readiness daily reports were compiled and made available. This information permitted General LeMay to make quick, informed decisions in times of emergency.

The warning alert, followed by appropriate operations and movement orders, went out to the 22d and 92d Groups on or soon after 1 July. Officers and airmen who had been planning Fourth of July celebrations found themselves packing

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crates, loading cargo planes, or standing in lines before the boarding ramps of planes bound for the Far East. The days immediately prior to departure were hardly long enough for completing all the numerous tasks necessary to carry out the mobility plan and the special orders for the movement. Preparation for the movement of planes and matériel entailed, for one thing, tremendous effort on the part of maintenance crews. The first orders requested that all engines with over 150 hours be changed, but this was later altered to 250 hours. In the 22d Group, of the 67 engines with over 250 hours, time permitted change of only 16 prior to take-off. The remainder made the trip overseas with only intermediate inspections before departure.

In each squadron special project officers had been made responsible for assembling, packing and crating, establishing priorities, and estimating total weight and cubage of matériel requiring airlift. The loading of cargo aircraft presented problems not easily anticipated. The 22d Group was supplied 10 C-54 aircraft with a pay load of 7,000 pounds each, but when the total UEE requirement exceeded the amount authorized, an additional 1,000 pounds had to be added to the airplanes scheduled to leave the second day, and a still greater amount of weight had to be lifted by the planes taking off on the final day of the movement. Some difficulty was encountered by the 22d Group when, due to changes in aircraft departure schedules, several of the project officers departed on early flights. New project officers had to be designated, which complicated the execution of the original loading and priority plan. The 92d Group's movement was confused by the arrival of C-74 cargo planes when its manifests and priority lists had been made out for C-54's. Because of the increased shipment allocations, project officers had to revise their manifests, a shortage of personnel on work projects developed, and general confusion plagued the crews assigned to load the cargo aboard transport aircraft.

After hurried hours of packing and preparation the deployment airlift got underway. The 22d and 92d Groups scheduled flights of 10 B-29's each day, departing on 5 through 7 July. The 22d left from March Air Force Base, stopped off at Hickam

for a 10-hour rest period, then flew on to Kadena, with stops at Kwajalein and Guam. The 92d Group took off from Spokane Air Force Base and followed a similar flight plan, with a final destination of Yokota Air Base near Tokyo. The average time of all flights from the Zone of Interior to the Far East was 5 days, including the rest periods at Hickam and Guam.

It was FEAF's first intention to use Bomber Command for strategic air operations, including attacks against important urban centers, strikes on industrial targets contributing to the North Korean war effort, and destruction of the enemy's transportation system north of the Han River.⁶ Thus, the first mission for the 22d and 92d Groups, 13 July, was a strategic attack against the railway marshalling yard and Rising Sun Oil Refinery at Wonsan, after this initial mission, however, MacArthur demanded that medium bomber effort be employed in close support missions. Nevertheless, on 24 July, General Weyland persuaded the FEC staff that two medium groups could best be employed against communications, while one gave battlefield support.⁷ With only three groups in the theater, no force was immediately available for industrial attacks, but on 29 July the JCS indicated that it was considering dispatch of two additional medium bombardment groups to the Far East to be used against targets north of the 38th parallel, if MacArthur accepted, the JCS was prepared to send a directive indicating the specific targets or target areas to be attacked.⁸

The proposition having been accepted by MacArthur, General LeMay alerted the 98th and 307th Bombardment Groups on 29 July for a minimum of 30 days temporary duty in the Far East. The 98th Group left Spokane for Yokota between 2 and 4 August, and the 307th departed from its home base at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, on 1-3 August, headed for Kadena. Although the experiences of these units in preparing for short notice departures were similar to those of the first two groups, the actual movement benefited from the earlier example. The historical officer of the 98th Group stated that "completion of preparation for the move, personnelwise, was expeditiously accomplished."⁹

⁶See chapter 3, p. 22

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STRATEGIC AIR OPERATIONS

Precision bombardment by medium bombers in Korea required precise selection of targets to avoid waste of flying effort. During the period 1946-49 FEAF Intelligence had prepared some 900 target folders within its area of interest, a region loosely defined as within 1,000 miles of Tokyo. This mass of information had been exploited by the FEAF Target Section for the preparation of the standard dossier system desired by the USAF, but with Siberia apparently the most important area at the time, the section had concentrated on strategic targets there. Consequently, Korea was not covered by dossiers as of 25 June. The old target folder system, however, had coverage for 159 targets in South Korea and 53 in North Korea, and although the data was not in the newest USAF format, FEAF furnished target sheets to its own units, to GHQ, the Navy, and the British, none of whom had target information at the outset of the war. By 25 July the Target Section had completed dossiers for 90 percent of Korean targets,¹⁰ but Bomber Command found the hurriedly prepared target illustration sheets of little value because of poor photography, poor reproduction, and lack of consideration for high altitude target recognition problems. Procurement, screening, cataloging, and filing of radar scope photography also lacked system until the 548th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron was charged with responsibility for radar scope photos as well as for standard photographs.¹¹ While the FEAF Target Section illustration sheets might not have been all that was desirable for strike purposes, the accumulation of data nevertheless allowed FEAF and Bomber Command to project an integrated program for strategic bombardment.

With two additional medium bombardment groups en route, FEAF approached GHQ FEC with a study of the employment of five groups of medium bombers in the theater. Since all groups except the 19th, which had limited radar and no high altitude capacity, were equipped for high altitude radar bombing, FEAF believed that two groups should continue with interdiction, while three groups, augmented when possible, should destroy industrial targets in North Korea. With 140 B-29's FEAF Bomber Command would possess a capability of 980 sorties a month with a

bomb tonnage of 9,506 tons. In choosing ordnance for industrial attacks, FEAF favored incendiaries in the belief that two groups actually could destroy the industrial targets with incendiary and a few high-explosive attacks. Use of incendiaries, coupled with radar aiming, would permit day or night attacks in any weather, and destruction of large urban areas by fire would threaten subsistence of the populace so as to undermine the North Korean government. "The psychological impact of bringing the war to the people," reasoned the study, "is a catalyst that destroys the morale and will-to-resist."¹² These recommendations coincided with the views of General O'Donnell, who stated:

It was my intention and hope . . . that we would be able to get out there and to cash in on our psychological advantage in having gotten into the theater and into the war so fast, by putting a very severe blow on the North Koreans, with an advance warning, perhaps, telling them that they had gone too far in what we all recognized as being a case of aggression . . . and [then] go to work burning five major cities in North Korea to the ground, and to destroy completely every one of about 18 major strategic targets . . .¹³

As it had promised, on 31 July the JCS specified strategic targets which, except for emergencies, were to be attacked by the 98th and 307th Groups. These were (1) the two munitions plants and the railway shops and yards at Pyongyang, (2) the three chemical plants at Hungnam; (3) the oil refinery, railway shops, and railway yards at Wonsan; and (4) the petroleum storage plant at Najun. The JCS promised to name additional targets and suggested that MacArthur direct other similar targets to be hit if he believed they warranted bombing.¹⁴ For large-scale operations Bomber Command recognized that target priorities should be established strictly in accordance with the principles of target selection for strategic air war. Normally, assuming air superiority, direct war-supporting industries would be given first priority in the order of their importance, end products or general industries second priority, and basic processes industries third priority. Because of the relative smallness of the five main industrial complexes in North Korea, however, General O'Donnell recommended attack by areas rather than target systems. Priority targets in these areas were so close together that a minimum num-

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ber of area raids would eliminate all targets more quickly than more specialized and scattered attacks upon targets of industrial similarity.¹⁵

The FEAF plan for medium bomber employment against industrial targets thus recommended five major urban areas for attack:

- (1) *Pyongyang*
 - Army arsenals *
 - Railway shops and yards *
 - Railroad bridges
- (2) *Chongjin*
 - Harbor and submarine base †
 - West harbor
 - Mitsubishi iron works
 - Japan iron works
 - Railway yards †
- (3) *Wonsan*
 - Oil refinery *
 - Railway yards *
 - Port and naval base
- (4) *Hungnam*
 - Chosen nitrogen and explosives plant *
 - Nitrogen and fertilizer plant *
 - Chemical plant *
- (5) *Rashin*
 - Marshaling yards
 - Port and naval base
 - Oil storage areas *

These were the important industrial areas of North Korea. Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, was a key choke point on the main west coast railway, and its arsenals, well exploited by the Japanese, were now in Communist use. Chongjin, whose harbor had been leased to the USSR for 30 years, was the center of North Korean iron and steel production. Wonsan was the center of petroleum refining as well as possessing one of the best harbors on the east coast, and Hungnam was a chemical center of large magnitude. Rashin, on the east coast near the Siberian border, was an important rail center and an oil, gasoline, and explosives area. If weather permitted visual bombing, FEAF believed that two medium bombardment groups could destroy the five complexes in about 30 days, but additional groups would be required to do the job in a similar length of time with radar bombing. Other scattered objectives, not suited for incendiary attacks, included

- (1) *Petroleum facilities*
 - Yongan coal liquefaction plant
 - Aoji-dong coal liquefaction plant

*Indicates JCS targets specified on 31 July 1950
 †Indicates JCS targets specified on 15 August 1950

- (2) *Transportation targets*
 - Chinnampo port and submarine base
 - Chinnampo railway terminal †
- (3) *Electric power facilities*
 - Changjungang hydroelectric plant #1
 - Changjungang hydroelectric plant #2
 - Pu'jon (Fusen) hydroelectric plant

FEAF estimated that these targets would require some 845 tons of high explosives. The destruction of these key industrial targets would undoubtedly strip North Korea of the domestic potential for supporting Communist armies in the field, but it was still recognized by FEAF intelligence that much of the Red Korean war matériel came from areas beyond the Yalu.¹⁶

This well thought out and comprehensive plan for attacking North Korea's strategic industries met approval in all but one important aspect. Washington was very hesitant about any action which might be used for Communist propaganda and desired no unnecessary civilian casualties which might come from fire attacks in North Korea.¹⁷ Indiscriminate use of incendiaries was therefore not sanctioned.¹⁸ High-explosive raids would take longer, but the SAC groups proved so adept with radar bombing techniques that weather was not as much of a deterrent as FEAF planners had expected. On 8 August General Stratemeyer ordered O'Donnell to execute industrial attacks with a maximum effort of two groups every third day while the normal effort of three groups would remain committed to daily interdiction attacks. General O'Donnell was authorized to select the industrial targets for attack.¹⁹

While the prohibition on incendiaries necessitated additional sorties, General O'Donnell privately hoped to improve on the seven missions per B-29 per month which MacArthur had said would satisfy him. With 80 assigned B-29's on 26 July, O'Donnell had already informed FEAF that he meant to drop over 5,500 tons of bombs a month in an average of 1,785 flying hours, thus bettering the peak record of B-29 employment from the Marianas in World War II when the planes were new (with a troublesome untried engine to be sure), maintenance simpler, and replacement crews plentiful. Now his B-29's averaged 6 years of age and 1,000 to 2,000 aircraft hours.²⁰ For the 8- to 11-hour missions, moreover, Bomber Command planes would have no fighter

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escort, since F-80's lacked the range necessary to penetrate to the borders of Manchuria, and the F-82's, not considered effective escorts anyway, were needed for the air defense of Japan. O'Donnell thus announced that he would not ask for fighter escort unless enemy air opposition materially increased.²¹ As good as the commanding general's promise, Bomber Command's B-29's did better the record of World War II, each medium bomber averaging 8.9 sorties per month between 13 July and 31 October. During the period Bomber Command dropped 30,136 tons of bombs.²²

Just as the strategic attacks were getting underway, the JCS assigned additional targets on 15 August. These were the Chongjin railway yards and shops, harbor, and submarine base; the Chinnampo railway yards, Tong Iron Foundry, and Sam Yong Industrial Factory, the Songjin railway yards and repair shops, dock and storage areas; the Hamhung railway yards; and the Haeju railway complex. Although some of these targets were already included in FEAF's strategic target list, FEAF intelligence remained unable to identify the Tong Iron Foundry and the Sam Yong Industrial Factory, either from city plans or aerial photographs.²³ To avoid needless civilian casualties the JCS further advised that Bomber Command drop preliminary warning leaflets enabling people living near strategic targets to escape the bombing attacks.²⁴ On 18 August Bomber Command dutifully dropped leaflets on 11 North Korean cities warning citizens that the bombers were coming and directing them to seek safer locations.²⁵

Once strategic bombing was begun in earnest, the program went rapidly, by 23 August FEAF, perplexed as to the degree of destruction desired in North Korea, had trouble selecting targets. Accordingly, Washington's help was solicited to find out whether the U. N. intended to overrun all North Korea, in which case key industries should be preserved, or whether FEAF planes should freely destroy all industrial establishments

which contributed to the Soviet Far East economic potential. As a case in point, FEAF was considering attacks against the North Korean electric power complex, which was sending an estimated 140,000 kilowatts to Manchuria and the Soviet Far East; as the North Korean industrial consumer plants were successively destroyed, even more of this electric power was channeled across the border.²⁶ Evidently having received no ready opinion to so perplexing a problem, FEAF suspended consideration of the electric power complex until late September. On 21 September, however, a civilian target expert from USAF recommended that four of the five large North Korean hydroelectric plants, together with the transfer station at Pyongyang which distributed a large part of the power from the fifth plant, be given high target priority. Destruction of the plants was expected to lower North Korean morale by putting out lights, bring some electrically-powered industry to a halt, and eliminate most of the surplus power being exported, production capacity would thus be decreased to 700,000 kilowatts, enough for legitimate North Korean industry and export to South Korea.²⁷ Seven B-29's attacked the Pujon Hydroelectric Plant on 26 September, the same day that the JCS suspended attacks on strategic targets.²⁸

By this time, however, General Stratemyer had stated "that practically all of the major military industrial targets strategically important to the enemy forces and to their war potential have now been neutralized." "The FEAF Bomber Command, new as it is in the annals of the United States Air Force," Stratemyer wrote O'Donnell, "has made history for which you and every member of your command can be justly proud."²⁹ The achievements of the FEAF Bomber Command against strategic targets and other facilities contributing to them is shown on the pages which follow.*

*For more detailed information, including dates of strikes, bomb loads, and types of fusing, see History of FEAF Bomber Command, I, 40-54.

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FEAF BOMBER COMMAND ATTACKS ON NORTH KOREAN STRATEGIC TARGETS

Location	Target	Number A/C	Bomb tonnage	Percent destroyed or damaged	Importance of the target
WONSAN	Dock area	27	244 7	50	One of the best natural harbors in Korea—unlimited sheltered anchorage. Can accommodate 7 ocean vessels and 50 anchorage spaces for smaller boats. Approximately 200,000 sq ft of warehouse storage space.
	Locomotive shops	47	372.75	70	Second largest railroad repair and manufacturing shops in Korea. Vital to east coast traffic from Manchuria and Siberia.
	Railroad yards	53	477 5	70	One of the three most important railroad centers in Korea—most important coast center.
	Chosen oil refinery	40	327 5	95	Largest Korea refinery and equal to largest Manchurian refinery (Dairen). Crude capacity 1,650,000 bbls per year. Storage capacity 1,080,000 bbls.
HUNGNAM	Bogun Chemical Plant	91	695 75	70	Largest chlorine and electrolytic caustic soda plant in Far East. In full operation and greatly expanded since World War II.
	Chosen Nitrogen Fertilizer Company	70	563 75	85	Largest chemical plant in Far East. Produced in 1945 Nitrogen Fixation—90,000 metric tons (MT) of nitrogen per year (twice that of any other plant in the Far East). Plant had been expanded. Nitric Acid—prewar production 15,000 tons per year, with capacity of 75,000 tons per year. Also produced glycerine, sulphuric acid, and fertilizer.
	Chosen Nitrogen Explosives Company	55	500 6	85	One of largest industrial explosive plants in Korea, expanded and in full production since World War II.
PYONGYANG	Arsenal	11	99 5	70	Army arsenal center of Korea—most important in Far East except Mukden arsenal. Produced rifles, automatic weapons, ammunition, artillery shells, grenades, bombs and mines, transportation and military vehicles.
	Kan-Ni	56	500 85	15	Ammunition storage area north of Pyongyang used extensively by the Japanese and North Korean forces. Area contained warehousing and extensive tunnelled and revetted area.
	Shunting yards	57	356 5	30	One of three principal western Korean classification yards.
	Railway shops and yards	74	584 5	70	Largest and one of three most important railroad shops in Korea. Manufactured rolling stock and other important equipment. Center of one of the three most important rail and transportation centers in Korea and one of two most important centers on Korean west coast.
CHONGJIN	Harbor and submarine base	30	240 25	5	Some 3,000 ft of berthing space with RR spurs and warehouses reportedly under lease to USSR. The most important Korean shipping center for iron products.
	Mitsubishi	16	132 5	30	Large plant producing sponge iron. Annual capacity 180,000 tons, possibly expanded to 500,000 MT. This iron used for production of special steels.

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FEAF BOMBER COMMAND ATTACKS ON NORTH KOREAN STRATEGIC TARGETS—Continued

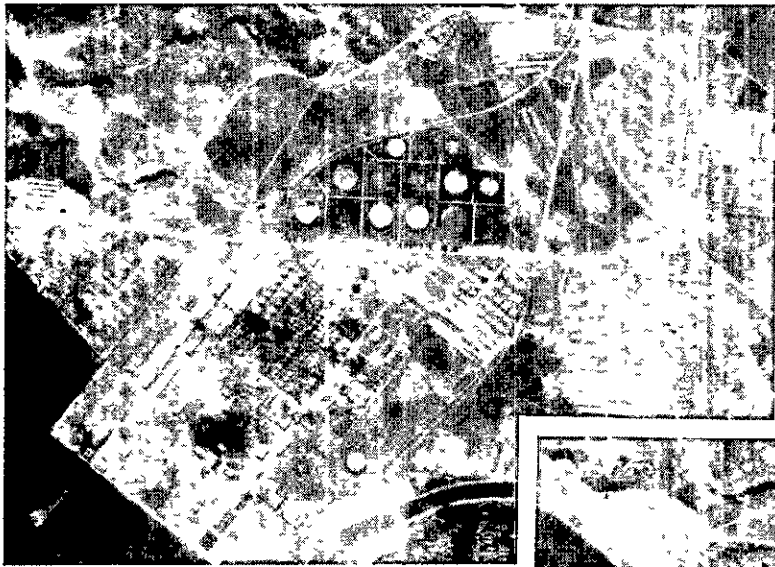
Location	Target	Number A/C	Bomb tonnage	Percent destroyed or damaged	Importance of the target
CHONGJIN	Japan Iron Works	24	203 5	20	Korea's largest producer of pig iron. Planned production for plant 700,000 MT pig iron, 800,000 MT steel ingots, 400,000 MT rolled products per year.
	Railroad yards and shops.	119	1063 8	55	Large RR yards and shops on main lines from Manchuria and Siberia serving NE coast of Korea. Important shipping point from Chongjin Harbor. Only railway shops for repair of rolling stock in NE Korea.
RASHIN	Oil Storage	5	49 1	Neg	Important all-year fueling point for naval units. may be used by the north USSR fleet during winter months.
	Dock area	27	218 25	Neg	Naval station. A principal port of entry of North Korea and Manchuria and formerly for exports to Japan.
CHINNAMPO	Railroad shops and yards	11	110	Neg	Important terminal yards for handling Rashin port traffic.
	Marshalling yards	16	121 5	80	Large rail yards with extensive warehousing for servicing Chinnampo port, harbor facilities, coaling yards, and metals plants.
	Port and sub-base	1	5 5	Neg	Largest and best equipped harbor on west coast of Korea, serving both Chinnampo and Pyongyang.
	Japan Mining and Smelter	25	248	35	Estimated prewar capacity 12,000 MT lead, 6,000 MT copper, and 12,000 MT zinc. Chosen Niesan Chemical Co. within the compound estimated prewar production of 50,000 MT ammonium sulphate and 100,000 MT superphosphates.
CHANGJINGANG RESERVOIR	Chosen Riken Metals Co.	31	284 5	70	Second largest aluminum and magnesium plant in Korea. Estimated prewar capacity of 6,000 MT aluminum and 1,000 MT magnesium per year. Plant in full operation.
	Pujon hydroelectric plant #1	7	39 5	10	Key plant in Pujon electric power development. installed capacity of 128,000 KW.
HAMHUNG	Railway shops and yards	72	547 45	70	Extensive yard for marshalling traffic from Hungnam industrial areas. Lies on the east coast main line and is a switching point for traffic on two short lines leading to the Chosen and Pujon Hydroelectric developments.
HAEJU	Chosen Nitrogen Explosives Company.	67	568 5	10	Large munitions plant. Prewar production 11,000 MT dynamite, 54,000 cases percussion caps, 77,000 cases fuzes, 500 MT glycerol. Large revetted ammunition storage area.
	Railway shops and yards	13	104	70	The yard and shops are important factors in the over-all maintenance and repair of locomotives and rolling stock on the Korean west coast lines traversing through Pyongyang and points northward to Antung, Manchuria, and southward to Seoul.

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FEAF BOMBER COMMAND ATTACKS ON NORTH KOREAN STRATEGIC TARGETS—Continued

Location	Target	Number A/C	Bomb tonnage	Percent destroyed or damaged	Importance of the target
KYOMIPO	Japan Iron Works	30	252	40	Reported Korea's largest steel plant. Second largest pig iron production. Total annual capacity 400,000 MT pig iron, 240,000 MT steel, 175,000 MT shapes and plates. Surplus production from coke ovens 470,000 MT coke. Ammonium sulphate and other by-products.
	Marshalling yard	4	23 5	Neg	Important rail center for shipping, also serves harbor for steel and ore shipment by water.
KOWON	Railway shops and yards	16	102	10	On east coast line between Wonsan and Hamhung and is the important junction point of the only line crossing north Korea from east to west.
SONGJIN	High frequency heavy industry	47	326 5	90	Prewar production 20,000 MT high speed cobalt, manganese, stainless and other high-grade steels. Electric furnaces produce steel from sponge iron. Plant in full operation and formerly under military supervision.
	Magnesite Chemical Industry	23	183	30	One of most important magnesite plants in Korea. Plant represents recent industrial development and was running at full capacity.
	Railway shops and yards	31	280	60	This yard serves Songjin port and the Japanese Magnesite Chemical Industry. Traffic going south from two rail lines originating in Manchuria must pass through Songjin yard.
YANGDOK	Railway shops and yards	10	75	85	Situated on the only rail line traversing North Korea from east to west. Traffic from Antung and Pyongyang had to pass through this yard to reach Wonsan and Hungnam.
NAMGUNGNI	Storage area	7	58	80	Important military storage area.
MUNPYONGNI	Rising Sun Oil Storage	1	2 5	No BDA	Estimated storage capacity of 165,000 bbls. Drum filling plant and separate storage for fuel oil, diesel oil, kerosene, and gasoline.
CHONGJU	Railway shops and yards	25	170 5	10	Located between Sinanju and Sinuju and is the most important rail center in NW Korea. It has facilities for major repairs. The two roads from Manchuria (Mukden) form a junction at this point.
KILCHU	Marshalling yards	18	99 5	50	Largest yard between Songjin and Chongjin. The east coast rail line is joined at this point by another line originating from the northwest out of Manchuria.
SUNCHON	Chemical industry & marshalling yard	16	138 25	30	This plant reportedly produced ammonia, sulphuric acid, and fertilizer in unknown quantities. The yard is the largest marshalling yard on the rail line from Kunmori to Pyongyang.
SARIWON	Marshalling yard	20	81 30	50	Important marshalling yard and junction 30 miles south of Pyongyang. This yard is one of the largest on the double track line from Pyongyang to Seoul. It also serves as a junction point for the alternate rail line running through Haeju.

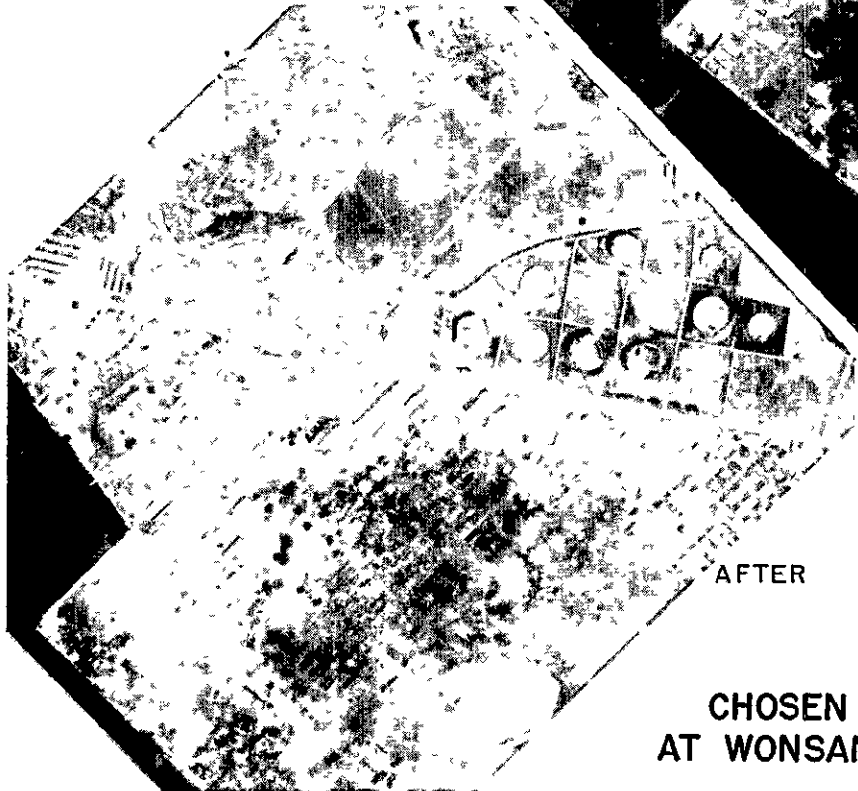
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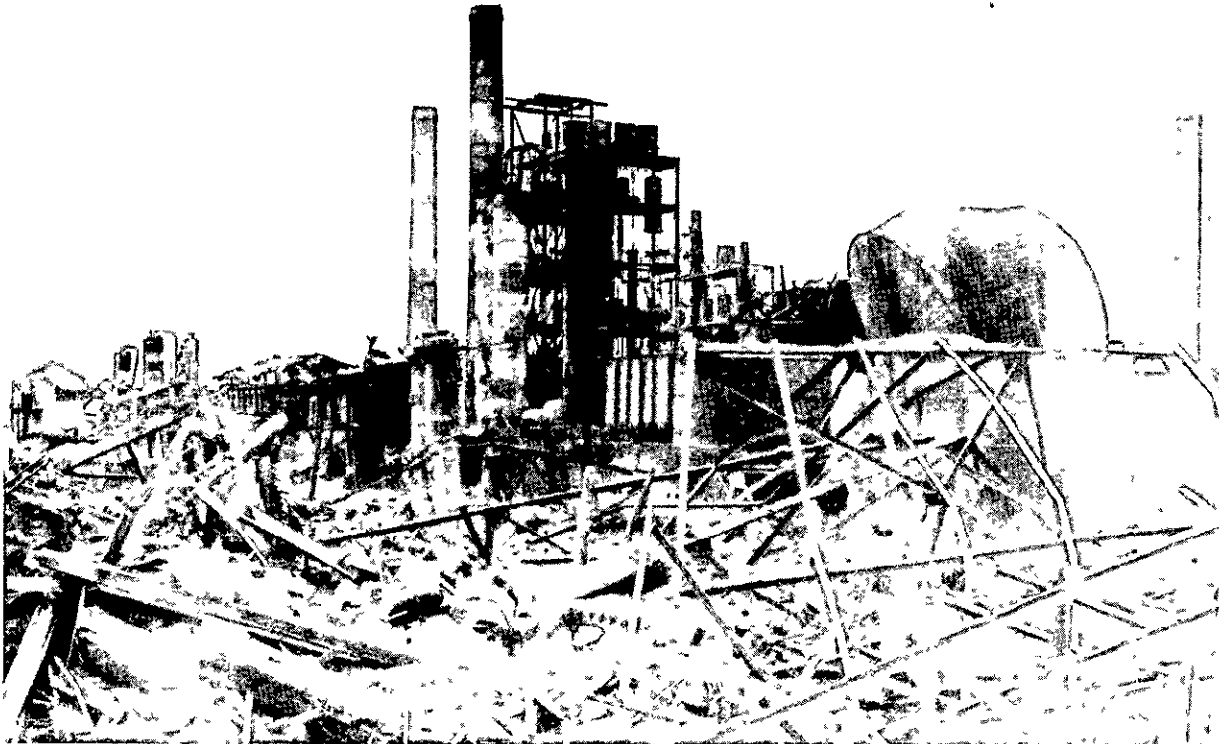
DURING



AFTER

CHOSEN OIL REFINERY
AT WONSAN IS DESTROYED

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Chosen Oil Refinery at Wonsan Is Destroyed—Continued.

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Although physical destruction of industrial targets was an evident success and the industrial plants capable of supporting the North Korean war effort were largely destroyed, it is more difficult to determine the exact effect of the destruction of these industrial targets upon the Communist war effort, because, as everyone knew, most North Korean war matériel came from the USSR and Red China.³⁰ A POL shortage in the North Korean army was attributed by PW's to the bombing of the large petroleum refinery at Wonsan.³¹ It is also reasonable to assume that the North Korean arsenals and explosive plants contributed directly to enemy war effort. The Kan-ni arsenal near Pyongyang, closed between 1946-1949, had been reopened in January 1950 with a stepped-up production goal and was turning out materials of war for the Red Koreans; when attacked by the B-29's the arsenal was employing more than 40,000 persons in the manufacture of shells and some field guns. Before the bombings more than 40 trains a day had been handled in the railway yards at Pvyongyang, and under an accelerated expansion program the railway maintenance shops there had been capable of reconditioning 16 engines at one time. A North Korean yard worker said that more than 1,600 persons had been employed in the Pyongyang railway center before its destruction.³² Three key employees of the Wonsan locomotive works told an Air Force evaluation team that attacks "almost totally destroyed" the expansive repair system and left more than 1,850 workers idle. Normally about 30 locomotives and a greater number of cars could be repaired at Wonsan, and production plans at the time of the bombing foresaw the stepping-up of repair work.³³ It was also evident that a part of the North Korean industrial potential had been incorporated into a general Communist Far-East economic complex. A ROK patriot who had been keeping unofficial books stated that between January 1949 and February 1950 the Songjin steel refinery had shipped 1,027 8 tons of tungsten and large tonnages of high-grade steel to Soviet Russia and Communist China. He asserted that the amount shipped monthly to the USSR after February up to the time of the bombing attacks averaged twice as much as in the previous months.³⁴

Charges made in the United Nations Security Council by the Russian representative that the USAF was conducting barbarous and indiscrimi-

nate bombing of peaceful towns and civilians were not substantiated by fact. Bombing of hostile targets in Pyongyang was extremely accurate; U N forces occupying the city found much of the neighborhood around the railway yards damaged, but the remainder of the city showed few signs of battle damage. Although FEAF had prohibited attacks on both Pyongyang and Seoul radio stations lest such attacks be seized upon for enemy propaganda, the former city was in much better physical condition than Seoul. Wonsan was more badly damaged, and a U.S. State Department representative reported about two-thirds of the city's dwellings destroyed, virtually all of its industry gone, and its population reduced from about 150,000 to not over 20,000. How much of this could be attributed to the B-29's is difficult to determine, especially since Wonsan railway workers testified that after they had received warning leaflets three days before Bomber Command's initial attack, many of them had fled their jobs. Even radar missions were outstanding for their accuracy, for photographs showed the Chosen nitrogen explosive factory to be 35 percent destroyed by one radar mission with practically no damage outside the target area.³⁵ Korean civilians, giving the final lie to the Communist charges of terror bombing, later reported that the North Korean soldiers commonly took refuge in civilian houses or mingled with crowds of civilians when U. N. aircraft were about.

Attacks against North Korean industrial targets were nevertheless exploited for Communist propaganda, and in some parts of the free world, particularly Asia, there was objection to the strategic bombing. The London *News Chronicle* on 19 August speculated that U S B-29's might be doing more damage to the democratic cause than to the Communists in North Korea.³⁶ An American news analyst pointed out that Asians regarded factories as something to lighten their labor and that they felt a personal loss when the North Korean industries were destroyed.³⁷ India's press reaction assumed an alarming racial turn. The usually friendly *India News Chronicle* recalled that during World War II, "Americans and other western people showed special solicitude toward the European enemy, but adopted different codes of conduct in Japan and elsewhere in the

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SITE OF TENT CITY



A STREET BEFORE TENTS ARE BUILT



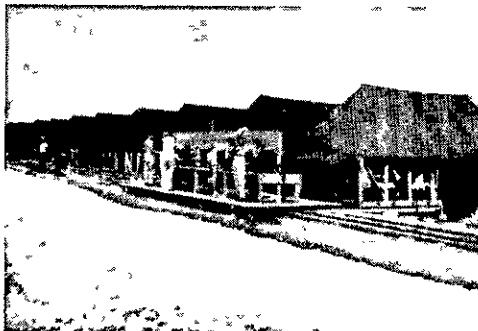
MOVING INTO TENTS



ONE OF MANY FOOTWALKS



OPEN SHOWERS TO LEFT



CLEANING UP



LATRINES



TENT CITY

Tenting on Okinawa With the 22D Bomb Group.

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east, culminating in the choice of Japanese towns as targets for the first atom bombs”³⁸

If it was strange that Communist propaganda exploited U. N. air attacks against legitimate military targets at the same time that the North Koreans massacred prisoners of war and drove helpless citizens to slaughter in order to shield their soldiers, it was almost equally remarkable from a military point of view that the U. N. Command was compelled to preserve the territorial sanctity of Manchuria, source of many of the North Korean soldiers and much war matériel. As has been seen,* FEAF was not allowed to bomb targets near the Manchuria-Siberia borders by radar. When FEAF erred in omitting the provisions from its operations order and Bomber Command bombed Rashin by radar on 12 August, USAF ordered an investigation, although no border violation was involved.³⁹ In effect, Rashin, an important military target, could never be attacked unless its prevailing cloud cover suddenly dissipated.

Cancellation of strategic strikes by the JCS on

26 September and the progress of U. N. ground forces toward the Yalu left Bomber Command without full employment. During late September and early October, a part of the medium bomber effort was employed against enemy training areas. Bomber Command made attacks against P'yongyang cantonments on 23, 24, and 26 September and against training areas at Hamhung, Nanam, Wonsan, and Miruk on 2 and 3 October. On 11 October, however, FEAF cancelled further attacks because it feared that U. N. prisoners were being held in the cantonments. Short of other targets, FEAF informed General Walker that Bomber Command stood ready to lay on full-scale close support strikes for the Eighth Army, but no such strikes appear to have been needed. Targets were so scarce indeed that a 92d Group plane chased an enemy motorcycle rider down a road, dropping bombs until one hit him. On 10 October FEAF accordingly reduced Bomber Command to about 25 sorties a day, and on 25 October MacArthur authorized the release of the 22d and 92d Bombardment Groups for return to the United States.⁴⁰

PROBLEMS OF OPERATIONS AND MATÉRIEL

The success with which the B-29 air and ground crews surmounted operational and matériel difficulties bespoke the high degree of training and steady morale within the SAC groups dispatched to combat. “Probably the most important single factor contributing to our achievement,” wrote General O'Donnell, “was the technical competence and high esprit of our combat crews.”⁴¹ The men were not the over-cocky “Off we go into the wild blue yonder” types often credited to the Air Force, but a mature and responsible lot who approached their tasks in a professional manner. Unit surgeons' reports indicate that the crews maintained their morale despite long hours of daily duty: the average duty time of 92d Group crews at Yokota, for example, was 12 hours and 15 minutes—3 hours before take-off, eight and a half hours on the mission, and 45 minutes after landing. This of course precluded complications. Crews from Okinawa, which flew an average of one flight every third day, had slightly longer hours since their missions averaged 9½ hours in length. Crews of the B-29 units based in Japan

received rest leaves on the basis of one crew per squadron every 3 days and were able to visit Japanese resorts.⁴²

Operations at both Kadena and Yokota were equally complicated by overcrowded conditions. With 78 B-29's at Kadena, traffic control and stringent GCA techniques were necessary; emphasis on GCA training brought control personnel up from a “relatively weak and inefficient” status during initial operations to an “efficient and effective” status. During August the Kadena GCA provided 553 controlled landings.⁴³ Yokota flight control was threatened by the congested traffic of the Tokyo area. Low ceilings, usual over the Tokyo area during the fall, required GCA control, the use of which paid off on 29 August when 24 B-29's were landed safely under a 300-foot ceiling after a nine hour mission to Chongjin.⁴⁴ On large-scale missions, the groups were carefully staggered over the target so that the greatest interval between groups returning to the same bases could be obtained, in fact even the squadrons were often scheduled over the target at 5- to 10-minute intervals. This of course did not bring the maximum concentration

*See Chapter 5, pp. 79-80

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on the target in the shortest period of time, but weak enemy defenses permitted the necessary dispersion of effort. If North Korean antiaircraft and fighter opposition had been greater, such a practice, together with the patterned routes flown to and from Korea, would have been extremely hazardous.⁴⁵

Because weather prediction in Korea was not as reliable as was desirable,* Bomber Command dispatched a weather aircraft† ahead of the main striking force on all formation missions, and the senior officer aboard had authority to direct the method of attack, to decide whether the target could be attacked by radar, or to direct the missions to an alternate target. Strategic attacks were always planned along the best axis for a radar bombing run, and all aircraft in a squadron formation usually dropped on the lead bombardier whether bombing was visual or by radar. When weather prevented formation bombing, a bomber stream system (HOMETOWN) was employed, whereby individual aircraft crossed the target at one-minute intervals, bombing individually by radar.⁴⁶ Although the close pattern desirable against industrial targets was therefore sacrificed, Bomber Command could in this way surmount its constant difficulties with cloud cover. Rashin, however, was too close to the Siberian border for radar bombing and was never successfully attacked.⁴⁷

While FEAF directed all missions for Bomber Command and the Fifth Air Force, Bomber Command usually selected targets and dates of attack depending on weather and other conditions; its intentions were forwarded to FEAF where, if satisfactory, they were incorporated in FEAF operations orders. Bomber Command operations orders, in turn, were issued to the groups as far in advance as possible to expedite bomb loading and mission planning at group level. The location of command headquarters at Yokota greatly facilitated coordination with the two B-29 groups stationed there, but supervision of the three groups at Kadena was more difficult, especially since communications failures of 5 to 6 hours were not uncommon. Concurrent with the arrival of the 307th Bombardment Group on Okinawa,

*See chapter 7, pp 112-113

†After 4 November the Fifth Air Force dispatched a weather plane (usually from the 68th All-Weather Fighter Squadron) to report conditions over Bomber Command targets one hour before mean take off time at Okinawa and Yokota. (Msg, CG FEAF to CG FAFIK, AX-5438, 4 Nov 1950, Hist FEAF BC, I, 178)

however, a Bomber Command Advance Echelon headquarters was established at Kadena under Brig Gen James E Briggs. This headquarters was given enough leeway in mission planning to greatly simplify the coordination of last minute changes in FEAF operations orders. On several occasions when changes were received late at night at Yokota (some of them came in as late as 2000 hours the night before scheduled missions) and communications with Okinawa were out, the burden of changing missions for the next day fell upon the two groups at Yokota. Whatever the last minute target might be, it was standing operating procedure that Bomber Command aircraft not make a change in the bomb load.⁴⁸

Problems of maintenance and supply were complicated by the fact that Bomber Command's groups came from three different Air Forces—the Second, Fifteenth, and Twentieth—and two major commands, SAC and FEAF, and were located at two widely separated bases. Units at Yokota were attached to the Fifth Air Force for administrative and logistical support, those at Kadena to the Twentieth. Emergence of Bomber Command headquarters as more than a purely operational agency settled many of the perplexities of disjointed logistics. When Bomber Command's deputy for matériel received additional personnel, he was able to make command policies and assume logistical supervision for the units at Yokota, while the A-4 section of the command's advance echelon cooperated closely with the deputy for matériel, Twentieth Air Force. Although the Twentieth's 6332d Air Base Wing gave logistical support to the units at Kadena and the 3d Bombardment Wing (L) was available at Yokota,⁴⁹ additional maintenance personnel, not included in the SAC 900-man mobility plan, was required to augment the base maintenance shops, group maintenance docks, and engine build-up sections. Eighteen officers and 269 airmen were obtained from SAC to bolster the 22d and 92d Groups.⁵⁰

Of the many technical problems, that of the maintenance and supply of modernized R-3350 B-29 engines was the most serious; the 92d Group alone had seven engine failures en route to Yokota. The modernized engines, moreover, were critically short throughout the Air Force, and the Air Matériel Command, while anxious to meet FEAF's demands, insisted that requirements for the engines

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be kept as moderate as possible.⁵¹ Immediate action was therefore taken to start engine build-up sections at Yokota and Kadena. Because of shortages in quick engine change kits, whiting stands, and personnel, the work went slowly, but serviceable accessories were removed from reparable engines and numerous parts were manufactured locally in order to keep the engine build-up lines operating. With the 48 flyaway engines obtained from the home stations of the 22d and 92d Groups, the engine build-up sections were thus able to meet their requirements, which averaged three engines a day at Yokota and five a day at Kadena.⁵²

Aircraft maintenance in the four SAC groups made use of a modified version of the dock system. When the 22d Group got to Kadena, however, only three docks were available, all previously damaged by typhoons. The Twentieth Air Force took immediate action to repair these and to build three more for the 307th Group. Although the 92d and 98th Groups had adequate hangar space and moveable maintenance stands and the 19th, which had always dispersed its aircraft, continued to employ the crew chief method of maintenance, facilities for third echelon maintenance were inadequate at both Kadena and Yokota. Both lacked facilities for proper repair and maintenance of electronics, communications, bombsights, and instruments. Yet despite all of this, Bomber Command turned over only one B-29 to FEAMCOM for complete repair during the period July through October, it had made an emergency landing at Kumpo because of extensive flak damage.⁵³

Supply matters were never allowed to become critical. When the B-29 groups were ordered to the Far East, the Air Materiel Command

initiated automatic supply of 45-day Table II station stock levels for 170 B-29's and 90-day Table III depot stock levels for 118 B-29's. Prior to receipt of those supplies, radio requisitions were sent daily by FEAMCOM and the matériel was airlifted to the theater. The SAC flyaway kits proved their worth during the first 2 months of operation, before supply channels caught up with the consumption rate. As a matter of policy, however, each unit was required to exhaust base resources before resorting to the flyaway kits. The 22d Group not only maintained its own operations but furnished many critical items from its flyaway kits to the 19th Group. At Kadena the kits received most of the credit for a low AOCP rate of 13 percent for August and 11 percent for September. During October prop governors, prop feathering pumps, de-icer boots, and bombsights were the only items of supply causing concern to Bomber Command, the flow of R-3350-57M engines improved in late September, and by October supply lines were catching up to the demand so that the stock was adequate at both Kadena and Yokota.⁵⁴

In spite of the logistic shock of introducing so many B-29 medium bombers into the theater, the in-commission rate for the B-29's compared favorably with the over-all FEAF in-commission rate: 68.9 percent for B-29's and 71.1 percent FEAF-wide for the months of July through November 1950.⁵⁵ Most difficulties of medium bomber maintenance and supply were either overcome or circumvented so that normal combat operations were never seriously handicapped. By the end of October whatever logistical problems remained were largely vitiated by the departure of the 22d and 92d Groups.

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Chapter 7

RECONNAISSANCE, AIR TRANSPORT, RESCUE, AND WEATHER

FOUR OTHER aspects of USAF action in Korea—strategic and tactical reconnaissance, troop and cargo air transport, air rescue and evacuation, and weather services—were so identified both with the tactical and strategic air war as to constitute problem studies in themselves

Their story is much the same as that recounted in the preceding pages. initial shortages, hurried expansion, and adaptation to the Korean situation. Of the four aspects of air activity, reconnaissance was slowest to meet the needs of the war emergency

RECONNAISSANCE

Prior to the Korean hostilities the FEAF reconnaissance mission had been to complete the Asiatic-Pacific portion of the USAF post-hostilities mapping program. This mission was apportioned to the following units: (1) the 31st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron, a SAC unit with RB-29's stationed at Kadena and charged with multiplex photo mapping of the Ryukyus and Bonins; (2) the 8th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron (RF-80), assigned to the Fifth Air Force and based at Yokota, with a mission of beach, cultural, airfield, and intelligence photography of the Japanese home islands; (3) the 6204th Photo Mapping Flight, a table-of-distribution organization possessing two RB-17's and four RC-45's, assigned to the Thirteenth Air Force and based at Clark Air Force Base, where it was completing aerial photography of the Philippines; (4) the 548th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron, based at Yokota with detachments at Kadena and Clark. The 548th was assigned directly to FEAF, with operational control vested in the Director of Reconnaissance, Deputy for Operations. Its mission was to furnish quantitative photographic processing, lithographic reproduction, photographic interpretation, and a theater depository for photographic film. The 31st and 6204th had no authorization for per-

sonnel or equipment to process the aerial photography which they accomplished.¹ The reconnaissance units, badly understrength and with old equipment, were therefore a "series of dangling and disconnected minorities,"² and, for want of a common parent organization, FEAF had to perform the normal wing functions of formulating policy, drawing up specifications, and controlling the supply of specialized equipment.³ Overnight, the occupational reconnaissance establishment had to be converted to that required for war. No other type of FEAF aviation was less well prepared for the sudden transition.

The paucity of reconnaissance was also USAF-wide, for concurrent with the economy drive during the spring of 1949, all tactical reconnaissance units except the equivalent of one group (two squadrons in the Zone of Interior and one in FEAF) had been inactivated. Highly skilled personnel of inactivated units had either returned to civilian status or had been scattered throughout the Air Force into whatever duties were available to them. Several months prior to the Korean hostilities Col Jacob W Dixon, commander of the 8th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, had perceived the danger of reconnaissance "being caught with its pants down"

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and recommended that the old RF-80A's of his squadron be replaced with a long-range twin-jet aircraft such as the RF-88. Colonel Dixon felt that severe curtailment of reconnaissance had been a false economy, as a summary of lessons learned from Korea he wrote

Since one of the most critical times in reconnaissance requirements is that period at the very outbreak of hostilities, I feel that our military effort was weakened greatly by trying to save money on reconnaissance between wars and then not having the equipment available in the using organizations when the demand was the most critical.⁴

However ill-prepared, the 8th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron went to work promptly with the outbreak of fighting. Within 72 hours the 8th Squadron had a detachment of 8 crews at Itazuke, supplemented by a field laboratory processing unit and photo interpretation team from the 548th Squadron. By 9 July the entire 8th Squadron had moved to Itazuke where it undertook to provide photo and visual reconnaissance of Korean airfields, cities, communications lines, bomb strikes, movements within the battle zones, and other information required by the Fifth Air Force and Eighth Army. One tactical reconnaissance squadron was manifestly inadequate to perform such a volume of work, and operational problems included shortages of planes and pilots (its RF-80 aircraft strength was increased from 17 to 30 during July and August), difficulty in obtaining intelligence summaries of the ground fighting, crowded facilities (the photo lab finally moved from tents to a theater lobby), and the greatest difficulty in procuring chemicals, film, and printing paper. Aircraft proved difficult to maintain because of parts shortages for RF-80A aircraft, and the one wrecked RF-80A on the base was cannibalized to keep other planes flying; FEAMCOM even used RF-80A noses on RF-80C aircraft to provide the squadron with two more planes.⁵ In spite of the heat and humidity, the 8th turned out a commendable volume of film and prints, but an observer from the Air Materiel Command found that quality was being sacrificed to speed. After weighing the relative merits of saving time and providing more information to photo interpreters through top quality film, the squadron reverted to normal technical order procedures and improved the film, even with its outdated sensitized materials.⁶

The 31st Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron had similarly hectic experiences at the beginning

of hostilities. At first two electronics countermeasures (ECM) crews were sent to Yokota on temporary duty and the rest of the squadron started combat missions by flying from Okinawa to Japan via Korea, photos were processed at Yokota and the aircraft then returned to Okinawa via Korea. This system not only delayed the delivery of information to the tactical units but made the maintenance of aircraft flying from two bases difficult. The squadron therefore started moving to Yokota on 12 July and by 27 July opened headquarters there. Hardly had the squadron settled down, however, than the assignment of another B-29 group to Yokota displaced it. Misawa was designated as the new station, but the squadron commander, arguing the difficulty of delivering photography from this base, succeeded in obtaining a place at Johnson Air Base. This movement was completed on 5 August. With 9 assigned B-29's the squadron flew 382 40 hours in July, and with 13 planes in August it flew 779 45 hours, most of the missions for pin-point photographs of bridges, industrial targets, and airfields desired by Bomber Command.⁷

The 6204th Photo Mapping Flight, with two unarmed RB-17's, was ordered from Clark to Johnson Air Base on 15 July. After much difficulty in getting the two planes armed at Clark and FEAMCOM, one plane was finally ready on 23 August, the same day that two additional unarmed RB-17's flew in from the Zone of Interior. One month and 8 days after the detachment was given the mission of combat-mapping photography for North Korea, it was ready for action, and on 28 August it flew its first mission. Despite the fact that a shortage of operational aircraft naturally impeded the work of the detachment, FEAMCOM was not able to arm the two new RB-17's until the end of October, for the depot had to resort to local manufacture of gun mounts, brackets, and turret mechanisms. By this time one of the two original planes had been sent in for depot repair with mechanical troubles. By 12 September it was evident that the 6204th could not complete mapping before snowfall would bring an end to the work. FEAF therefore directed the 31st Squadron to secure the required photo coverage north of 40° and limited the 6204th to photography south of that line. This action, however, took away a substantial part of Bomber Command's target assessment potentiality, just when the interdiction

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campaign was of particular importance. Weather aborts were responsible for other unsuccessful mapping missions, and a perturbing series of camera malfunctions caused a substantial amount of rejected photography. As a result, Class A photography had been obtained for only 81 percent of the requisite flight lines before snowfall. The 6204th Photo Mapping Flight, without having completed its task, was returned to the Philippines early in December.⁸

In the war emergency the 548th Reconnaissance Technical Squadron expanded its dual mission of photographic reproduction and intelligence evaluation. A detachment went to Itazuke to process and interpret 8th Squadron film, another detachment remained at Kadena until 1 October, while the main strength of the squadron remained at Yokota. With more than a hundred using agencies dependent upon the 548th, its reproduction section was responsible for lithographic reproduction of military maps, radar target charts, mission folders, and other specialized material. Although the squadron produced over 200,000 photographic prints and 2,500 impressions in its printing plant during August, one such unit was manifestly unable to accomplish all the work required. Having no assigned technical reconnaissance squadron at the outset of hostilities, the Fifth Air Force was compelled to improvise a section in its headquarters to undertake the most urgent photo interpretation. It left quantity reproduction of photography to the 8th Squadron, although that tactical reconnaissance unit was not equipped for the work.⁹

The FEAF photographic reconnaissance units, operating with obsolete World War II equipment under trying field conditions, were commendable in their energy, but observers found much lacking for satisfactory reconnaissance. A want of qualified and trained photographic personnel in the units resulted in little interest or enthusiasm for top quality film.¹⁰ In a campaign involving a full Army front, only one tactical reconnaissance squadron was available, whereas doctrine called for three, one photographic and two primarily visual. Although anachronistic use of T-6 aircraft partly eased this problem, the Army G-2 and the Air Force staff were still forced to screen their requests for reconnaissance to the minimum. Most missions had to be preplanned, and immediate requests for battlefield reconnaissance went

to T-6's or fighter aircraft. No successful night reconnaissance was feasible before late August.¹¹

In the case of trained photographic interpreters, the situation in the Far East theater was called the "most obvious and readily observable deficiency in the Intelligence Process." No matter how much photography was flown and at what expense, the intelligence production rate was directly dependent upon photo interpretation personnel. Most of the USAF photo interpreters had left the service at the end of World War II, and since the jobs lacked rank, few Regular Air Force officers had selected the field as a military career. No reserve photographic interpretation unit had been created to provide a reservoir of trained Air Reserve officers for a war emergency. Thus the 548th Squadron had only 32 fully qualified photo interpreters (12 officers and 20 airmen) to share with FEAF headquarters, the tactical units, and to perform its own functions.¹² The scattering of effort coupled with a shortage of personnel prevented the production of specialized photo interpretation reports in any quantity. Through October, the 548th had made about 350 mission-review intelligence reports (second phase photo interpretation) and only 41 special reports (third phase).¹³ Except at division level (some divisions had one photographic interpretation officer, some had one enlisted man, others had none), the Eighth Army had no photo interpreters until two small teams arrived on 6 and 18 September, even then the 548th Squadron had to furnish much of the ground evaluation needed by that army. The Navy had only one or two officers on the larger carriers for photographic interpretation. It appears, moreover, that the few available photo interpreters were at times poorly utilized because of failures in interservice coordination. The interpretation reports of the Inchon area provide a glaring illustration: they were prepared simultaneously by Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force interpreters, each unknown to the other, but using for the most part, duplicate sets of the same photography. Two additional reports were prepared in the United States but arrived after the invasion had taken place.¹⁴ "The over-all lack of qualified photo interpretation personnel", concluded Col Charles P. Hollstem, FEAF Director of Reconnaissance, "required an excess of large-scale photography to be flown, thus causing a waste of photographic supplies and

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expenditure of numerous flying hours of critically short reconnaissance aircraft¹⁵

Action to remedy organizational defects took the form of the establishment of a provisional group headquarters and the acquisition of additional reconnaissance squadrons for the Fifth Air Force. The need for such a headquarters to coordinate the many requests for photography had been evident during the first months of hostilities. In many instances requests for reconnaissance were such that unless immediately performed the resultant photos would be of no value; the tactical reconnaissance squadron commander was thus put in the unenviable position of having to determine which request must receive highest priority, although he was not necessarily informed of future military plans. Much photography, accordingly, was flown in and around Inchon before the 8th Squadron finally learned, 3 days before the operation, what information was desired. To remedy the situation, the 543d Tactical Support Group was organized on 26 September, with the 8th and 45th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadrons assigned and the 162d Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron (NP) and the 363d Reconnaissance Technical Squadron attached. The 543d Group headquarters moved from Itazuke to Taegu on 9 October, and on 27 October it had acquired sufficient personnel to assume operational control of the squadrons¹⁶

The 162d Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron (NP) was sent to the theater in order to provide Fifth Air Force some form of night reconnaissance. Alerted at Langley Air Force Base on 5 July, and hurriedly filled to near peacetime strength (a part of the fillers were jet mechanics with little experience on the squadron's conventional RB-26's), it was shipped to Itazuke where the ground echelon arrived on 19 August. Meanwhile, the air crews had moved to Ogden, Utah for depot installation of flash cartridge equipment on their RB-26's, only to find that but 10 of the squadron's 16 planes could be modified for the new equipment. Then the flash equipment was pronounced too heavy for the old B-26's on the long over-water flight to Japan and was removed to be crated for air shipment. At Fairfield-Suisun, California, the equipment was diverted to water shipment for some reason, so that it was not until 26 August, 53 days after the alert at Langley, that the 162d Squadron was finally ready and equipped for its first mission.

The squadron moved to Taegu on 8 October¹⁷

As a part of the expanding reconnaissance system, the 45th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron was activated at Itazuke on 3 September and sent back to Komaki to await arrival of RF-51 aircraft. Twelve of these planes arrived during November, and the squadron moved to Taegu on 27 December. The 363d Reconnaissance Technical Squadron, like the 162d transferred from Langley to Japan, reached Taegu on 4 October, where it was located in a school compound within the city, approximately 8 miles from the airfield. This squadron became responsible for processing and interpreting Fifth Air Force film on missions north of the 38th parallel. As the 363d began operations, it was found that 12 hours were consumed in getting the exposed film from the airfield, a delay which made processing and interpreting the prints impossible until some 36 hours after the photo was taken. Operations of this squadron, however, roughly doubled the amount of photo interpretation which could be undertaken, and for the first time it gave a substantial photographic interpretation ability to the Fifth Air Force¹⁸

While these organizational changes were salutary, they did not immediately improve Fifth Air Force tactical reconnaissance. The only day reconnaissance squadron it had during the campaign against the North Koreans was the 8th, which moved to Taegu on 5 October and continued its operation under field conditions¹⁹. Once operational, the 162d Squadron encountered most of the difficulties already met by night intruder bombers, with a few additional ones peculiar to its photographic specialty. In night reconnaissance navigational proficiency is especially important, and the 162d Squadron's navigators (approximately one-half of them former bombardiers without extensive navigation training) were hardly able to cope with dead reckoning. This type of navigation was also hampered by the inaccuracy of forecast winds, the lack of accurate small scale maps, and the navigator's dependence on preflight plans which could not be easily changed in the air because of the poor navigation set-up in the RB-26's. Loran skywaves proved helpful, but no Shoran beacons were to be installed in Korea for several months. While navigational difficulties limited night reconnaissance to well-defined and easily discernible routes of travel, illumination problems further complicated night photography.

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For example, the 162d Squadron found approximately 35 percent dud cartridges in the new low-altitude night photographic system, forcing it to reply upon the same M-46 photo flash bombs which had been unsatisfactory in night intrusion. Early in November, however, approximately 2,000 photoflash cartridges were received in a lot which proved to have a dud rate of only 2 to 4 percent, making it possible for the squadron to return to extensive use of the cartridge ejection system. This was fortunate because on one occasion during December the squadron ran out of M-46 flash bombs, and the replacement shipment contained such an abnormal number of duds as to be worthless.²⁰

Expansion of Fifth Air Force tactical reconnaissance thus had been undertaken late in the Korean campaign and was so slowly managed as to be of little assistance in the defeat of the North Korean armies. What reconnaissance had been available during the first months of fighting varied so in degree of timeliness that the aerial photography accomplished was often useless. After many delivery methods had been tried, the 543d Group was of the opinion that it was best to deliver photography by aerial courier. The reconnaissance also had varied in success as well as timeliness. After an Air Matériel Command detachment working in FEAF had learned at 1600 hours on 30 August that the Navy sorely needed to know

the exact height of the sea walls at high and low tide at Inchon, four precisely timed photo missions were assigned to the 8th Squadron for 31 August and 1 September. Results and photography were delivered to the Navy in Tokyo on 3 September. In addition to the basic information desired, the Navy found that the oblique nose camera photographs were of such value to its landing crews for orientation that it ordered 2,100 prints. These were delivered to Kobe in less than a day.²¹ On the other hand, X Corps, also planning the Inchon invasion, had to submit several requests for reconnaissance before it was received, after an average delay of five days. A USAF observer also noted that while at Inchon X Corps had been able to get photographs from Marine Air Group 33 within 6 to 24 hours. After X Corps and the group had moved to Wonsan, where the latter came under Fifth Air Force coordination control, the Corps had to submit requests to an Air Force liaison officer who radioed them to Fifth Air Force in Seoul, which directed performance of the mission. Such a procedure was inevitably slow, and one request for a photo mission was delayed at least three days in perfect weather while Marine Air Group 33 flew only one JOC mission. The incident reminded the observer that "the benefits of centralization of control can be negated by a failure to thoroughly work out administrative details and procedures."²²

AIR TRANSPORT

Air transport participation in the Korean hostilities was so notably successful, both as flown by cargo planes of the FEAF Combat Cargo Command and by the Military Air Transport Service (MATS), that it created extravagant standards which would be difficult for the USAF to maintain in a war of greater magnitude. Apparently the FEC, pleased with the speed and utility of airborne transport, made too few efforts to use the more economical water transport. The FEAF Combat Cargo Command, for example, flew from Japan to Seoul the pontoon bridge needed to span the quarter-mile wide Han River, a project which required 70 C-119 flights. General Weyland feared that from the Korean experience the ground forces would erroneously conclude "that practically unlimited airlift can normally be expected."²³

At the beginning of Korean hostilities the only

transport unit assigned to FEAF was the Fifth Air Force's 374th Troop Carrier Wing, based at Tachikawa with two squadrons of C-54's, the 21st Squadron was on detached service in the Philippines. Other miscellaneous transport aircraft, mostly C-47's, were assigned to the tactical wings. In spite of the hurry and adverse operational conditions, 374th Wing transports flew 757 hours between 25 June and 1 July. They flew the advance echelon of the 24th Infantry Division into Korea and ferried across signal equipment, jeeps, ordnance, maps, Quartermaster stores, and medical supplies to support the division.²⁴ Soon, however, it was evident that the C-54's were too vulnerable and too heavy for operations in Korea. Three of them were lost to enemy action, and the airstrip at Pusan (K-1) deteriorated rapidly under the pounding of C-54 landings. The Fifth Air

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Force thereupon drew in every available C-47 in the theater and reequipped the 21st Troop Carrier Squadron. The 374th Group then began to shuttle troops and supplies down to Ashiya, where the 21st Squadron picked them up for movement to Pusan.²⁵

As the war settled down slightly, the 374th Wing sent airhead teams to Korea for loading and unloading cargo. By 23 July the Fifth Air Force maintained airlift capabilities to land 150 tons of supply per day in Korea, enough for half a division, an estimated two additional battalions could be supported by air drop. During July and August the 374th Wing lifted 30,027 passengers and 22,073.4 tons of freight from Ashiya and Tachikawa.²⁶ Arrival of additional aircraft facilitated some expansion of transport operations, while improved airfields in Korea permitted use of heavier aircraft. Four C-119's, for example, were assigned to the 374th Wing on 22 July, and were able to land in Korea with a load of trucks. In addition, on 26 August the 374th Wing received two new provisional squadrons, the 46th and 47th, each with 29 C-46 aircraft.²⁷

Under Fifth Air Force control air cargo and transport was handled by the Troop Carrier Division's Director of Operational Services. Since the lift was critical and could be used only on high priority or emergency, FEC, EUSAK, and FEAF requirements were channeled to the FEAF Transport Operations Office, which in turn relayed them to the Fifth Air Force Troop Carrier Division. Here, Fifth Air Force requirements were combined with those coming from FEAF, and the Troop Carrier Division established priorities on the basis of total airlift available. The Fifth Air Force daily field order to the 374th Wing carried airlift priorities for evacuation, emergency fuel, ammunition, rations, medical supplies, and special and routine projects.²⁸

By late August cargo-carrying capacity had been built up to a daily maximum of 300 tons, but no really appreciable expansion of transport and cargo capacity was possible until the function passed to the control of the FEAF Combat Cargo Command (P) on 26 August.* This reorganization was undertaken primarily to support airborne operations incident to the Inchon

landings, and it represented an expansion of the transport system as well as the activation of new provisional organizations. Maj Gen William N. Tunner established the newly arriving 314th Troop Carrier Group as a provisional wing to handle four C-119 squadrons; he placed the 21st Troop Carrier Squadron directly under his own headquarters; and he established a 1st Troop Carrier Group (P) which controlled two provisional C-46 squadrons and one provisional C-47 squadron. Since the latter squadron, the 48th, was formed with C-47's borrowed from Fifth Air Force tactical wings, when the projected airborne operation was suspended, the unit was disbanded on 14 October and the planes returned.²⁹ At General Stratemyer's insistence but with some reluctance from NAVFE, Marine Squadron VMR-152 was placed under operational control of the Combat Cargo Command on 12 October,³⁰ the 437th Troop Carrier Wing, just arriving from the United States, was assigned to the command on 28 October.³¹

Since accepted doctrines stipulate that air transport ability must be available to a theater commander for mission assignment and cargo allocation, new machinery was established for the determination of cargo priorities coincident with the activation of the Combat Cargo Command. A theater priority board, representative of all services in the Far East, was established under MacArthur, which made standing tonnage allocations to the using agencies and passed them on to the Joint Airlift Control Office (JALCO) at Ashiya. Acting upon requests from the Army, Navy, Marines, and Air Force against their respective tonnage allocations, JALCO passed firm requirements to the Combat Cargo Command's traffic movement officer. All available air transport was thus placed under control of the theater commander and airlift was properly allocated by the theater. Since surface transportation to Korea was controlled by EUSAK and X Corps, however, the Fifth Air Force had to go to these parallel commands to request water transportation, whereas for air transport the air force and ground commanders both went to higher headquarters. It was General Tunner's opinion that³²

in order to make sure that air transport is properly used, a theater agency, such as JALCO, should be empowered and required to screen all requests for air transportation. This agency should only approve those requests for which there is a military necessity that airlift be used, and should

*See chapter 5, p. 64. For an excellent history of the Combat Cargo Command (P) as well as a perspicacious summary of lessons learned, it is important to see Historical Report, FEAF Combat Cargo Command (P), 10 Sept 1950-21 Jan 1951.

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refuse all that are unjustified. Furthermore, JALCO should have been a sub-office of an overall transport coordinating agency, operated by the Theater Command, not only the Army, and stationed in Korea, which would allocate *all transportation on land, sea and air*, for greatest and most efficient use of all available methods of supply and transportation.

The expansion of transport strength together with good management enabled the FEAF Combat Cargo Command to furnish an airlift second in magnitude only to the Berlin airlift. On 2 October, for example, 120 C-119's, 26 C-54's, 32 C-47's, and 7 C-46's lifted 1,134.4 tons, including 706 passengers, into Korea; 3 C-54's, 14 C-47's, and 1 C-46 lifted 43.5 tons, including 61 passengers and 277 patients out of Korea. Counting intra-Korea and intra-Japan hauling, the command lifted 1,395.9 tons that day, a record total for Combat Cargo Command operations to that date.³³

Air transport to X Corps at Seoul has already been noted, and as the Eighth Army raced north from the 38th parallel it was given close logistical support by the Combat Cargo Command in leapfrog operations. Since the army's motor gas and ration requirements far exceeded surface transport abilities, it tried on the line of march to capture airfields suitable for resupply. On 16 October EUSAK captured the strip at Sinmak, about half way between Seoul and Pyongyang, and although the field was little more than a meadow, the Combat Cargo Command landed 235 tons of motor gasoline and rations there the following day. On 20 October Pyongyang was taken and the Sinmak lift was discontinued, but not before 625 tons of supplies had been flown in. With the capture of Smanju, approximately 40 miles north of Pyongyang, air-transported supplies went there.³⁴

With the opening of fields in North Korea, however, it was no longer possible to make the round trip from Ashiya without refueling the C-119's with gross weight of 70,000 pounds and a landing-weight restriction of 66,500 had an optimum range of approximately 450 miles, while the distance from Ashiya to Pyongyang was 460 miles. Combat Cargo Command therefore decided to station 10 operational C-54 aircraft at Kimp'o to shuttle into Pyongyang. In order to get the most out of their C-119's, they were fueled with 2,200 gallons of fuel for the trip from Ashiya to Pyongyang to Kimp'o and then again

to Pyongyang; there they refueled for the return to Ashiya. Thus it was possible for the C-119's to carry 6 tons from Ashiya to Pyongyang and seven tons from Kimp'o to Pyongyang before refueling was necessary. By late October the command was delivering approximately 1,200 tons daily to Pyongyang, and on two successive days, 24 and 25 October, the Command broke its tonnage records by carrying 1,687 tons on the first day and 1,767 tons on the second. Almost 90 percent of this total tonnage was delivered to North Korea, the great bulk of it being rations and motor gasoline from the Eighth Army.³⁵ Such support brought General Walker's commendation. "The airlift of supplies to the forward elements of Eighth Army, at a time when such an operation was our only means of supply, has permitted ground troops to continue their combat mission in the forward area."³⁶

Granted the increase in transport aircraft, a great part of the success of the Combat Cargo Command was nonetheless due to the organizational ability of General Tunner and his small staff. Air routes were laid out and marked with beacons for all-weather flying (see fig 11), a close system of traffic control was established, and two combat cargo support units were formed and dispatched to coordinate speedy unloading at airfields north and south of the 37th parallel, chiefly Kimp'o and Pusan. Although these units paid their way in Korea by accelerating the turn-around times of aircraft sent there, it was a matter of continuing concern to General Tunner that his command was unable to control the loading of aircraft cargo at Ashiya, Brady, and Tachikawa. There the loading was performed by personnel of the Japan Logistical Command, and without ground handling control at these fields, it was difficult for Tunner to guarantee a certain airlift capacity without first coordinating with another command. It was his contention that Air Force units should be organized, trained, and equipped to handle all air terminal activities on a world wide basis under the air transport command.³⁷

While the Combat Cargo Command was an operational headquarters, problems of organizational manning and aircraft maintenance and supply inevitably affected its functions. Of all

³³On 14 January 1951, CINCPAC approved the transfer of aerial port responsibilities in Japan and in Korea to FEAF. See the monthly histories of the 6127th Air Terminal Group (P).

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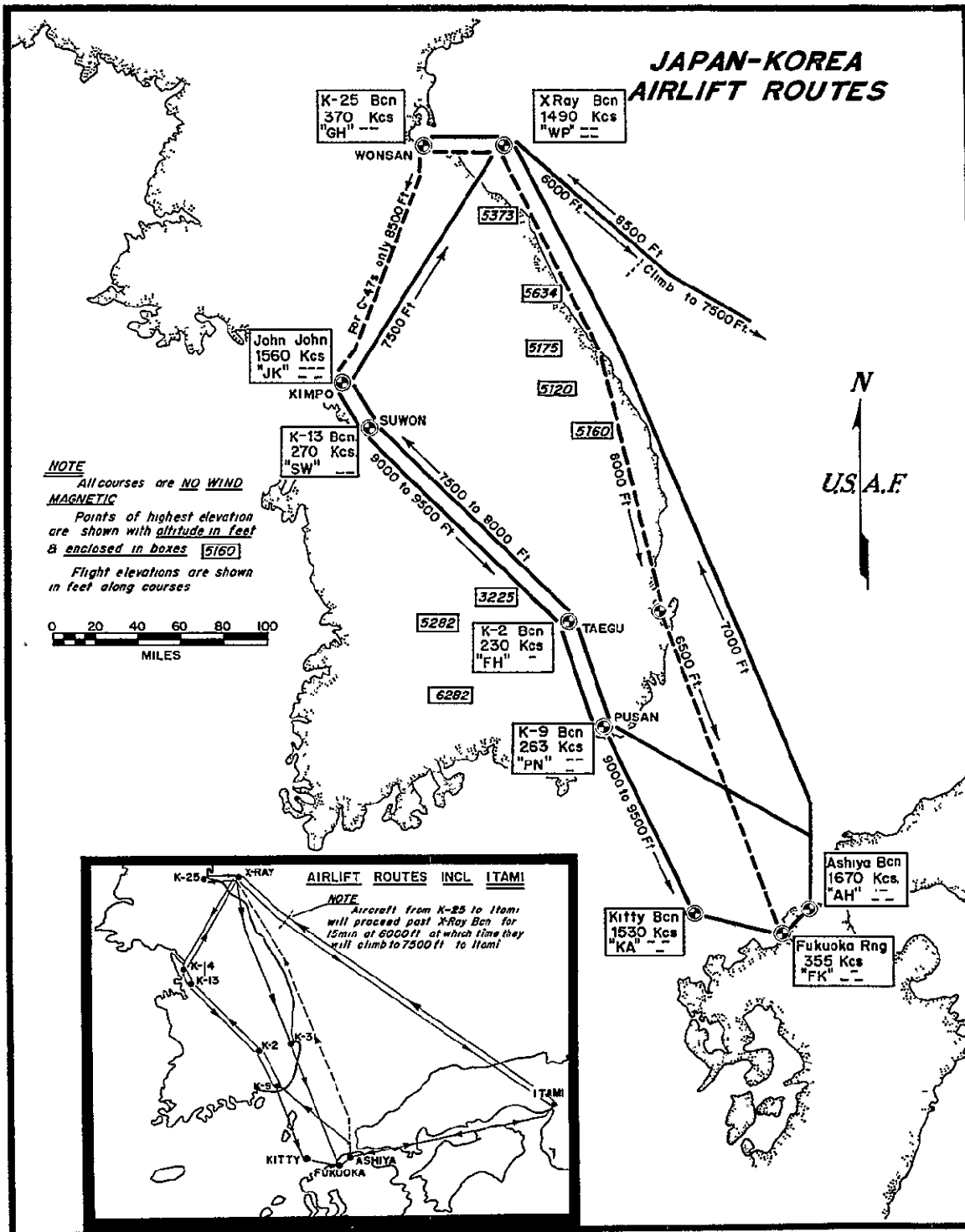
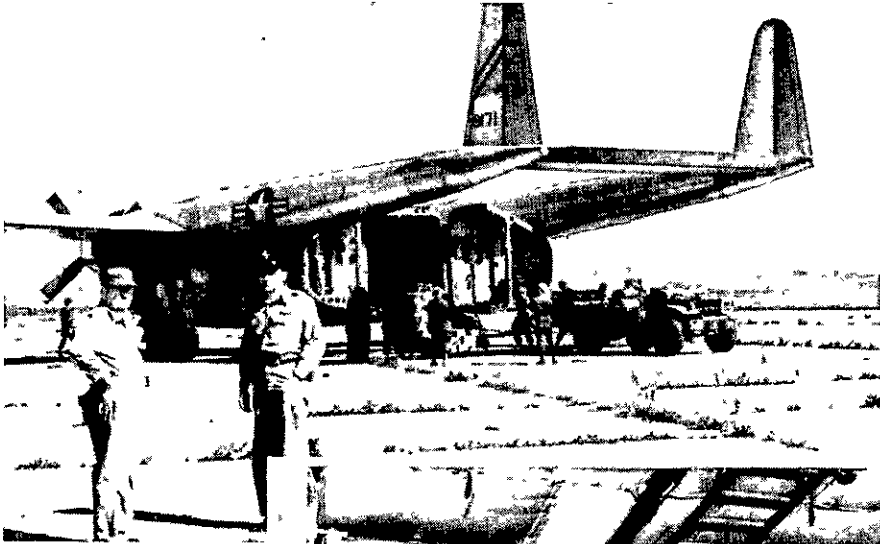


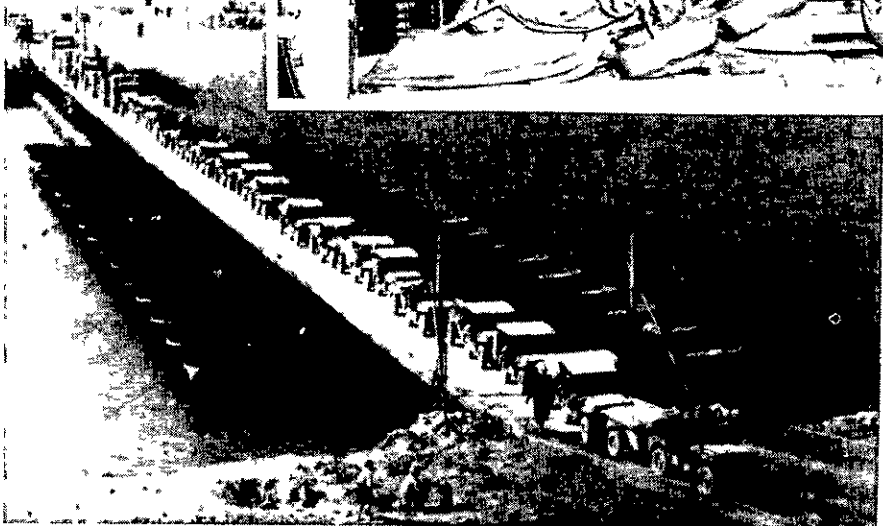
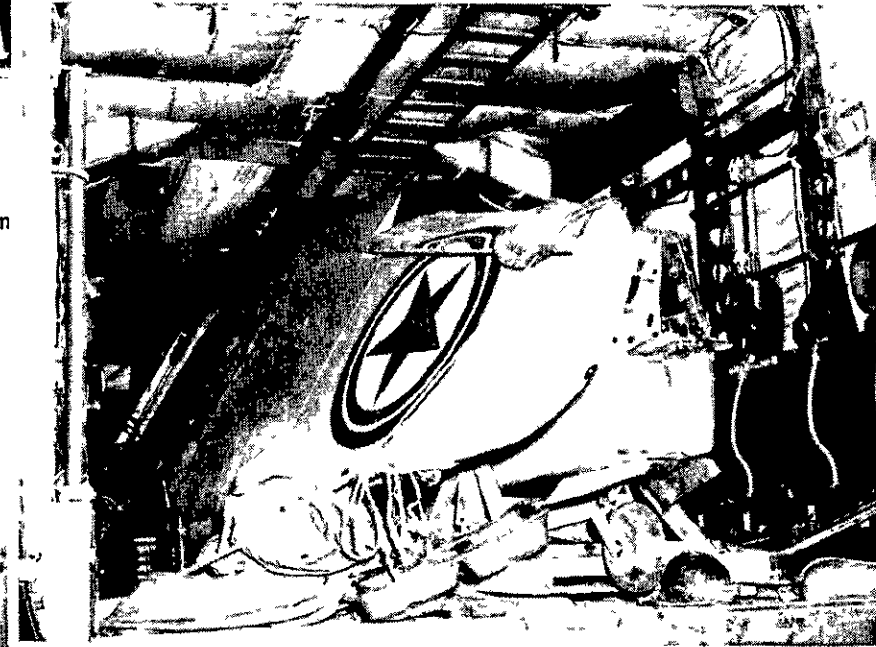
Figure II.

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The first C-119 to land at Suwon



Entire captured Russian fighter transported in a C-119



Pontoon bridge flown to Korea by C-119's

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aircraft on hand, the new C-119's of the 314th Troop Carrier Group presented the greatest mechanical problems. The group had been given these aircraft only 7 months prior to overseas movement, and during that time they had revealed an almost chronic propeller malfunction. A high supply priority had reduced the group AOCF rate from 12 percent in July to 4 percent at the end of August, and the intrinsic deficiencies of the propeller units were believed to have been corrected before the C-119's left Smyrna Air Force Base, Tennessee. After much scrounging for supplies, the group had also been provided three flyaway kits, each containing a prepacked 30-day supply level for 16 C-119's. Originally intended to operate on a temporary and limited schedule primarily with airborne troops, the C-119's, once they reached Japan, were instead consigned to maximum cargo effort, with the result that requirements for spare parts far exceeded resupply phasing established by the Air Materiel Command. Chiefly because of control assembly and propeller shortages, the daily percentage of C-119 type aircraft in commission speedily declined from a high of 92 percent on 15 September to a low of 41 percent on 18 November. In recognition of the supply problem, the use of C-119's was first limited to three hours daily and soon declined to two. Operating eight hours a day with adequate supply and the necessary aircrews, General Tunner figured that the great bulk of the work done with approximately 90 C-119's (with the exception of airborne operations) could have been done with about 30 C-119's.³⁹

Regarding assignment of flying personnel, General Tunner believed that the Air Force had over the years undermanned its air transport units so as to cause inefficient use of aircraft and related facilities. Few successful commercial operators, he pointed out, had an aircraft utilization figure of less than 9 hours a day. During mid-November Tunner secured additional maintenance and aircrews for assignment to the 1st and 374th Troop Carrier Groups, the airlift capacity of the latter jumped 33 percent with the arrival of 22 new flight crews and 279 maintenance personnel. "I believe the Air Force should increase current Tables of Organization and Equipment to permit at least eight hours utilization for each transport assigned if sufficient supplies are available," Tunner wrote to General Stratemeier; "this alone

would cut the transport aircraft requirement in the Air Force and reduce the ton-mile cost by a very appreciable amount."³⁹

Although the amount of airlift concentrated in Korea facilitated a high degree of mobility in the fighting units there, it must be emphasized that many of the tasks assigned to air transport were neither economical nor well thought out. While the Berlin airlift and the air transport feats in Korea have demonstrated that movements of men and matériel by air are no longer to be considered emergency expedients, the fact remains that air transportation is at once the quickest and most expensive of all forms of transportation. It demands careful and efficient planning. It is also highly possible that the practically unlimited availability of cargo aircraft for carrying men and matériel into Korea had a lethargic effect on those responsible for establishing traffic control at the ports of Inchon and Wonsan after the landings. Logistical complications produced by the poor harbor facilities at Inchon have been noted, and when unloading progressed slowly large amounts of airlift into Kimpo became necessary in order to supply X Corps. Then, even before the initial unloading could be managed at Inchon, the decision was made to embark half of X Corps at Inchon for amphibious movement to Wonsan. While the 1st Marine Division was being re-embarked, unloading for the Eighth Army had to be virtually suspended; as a result the Eighth, which was supposed to move northward to Pyongyang, ate into its reserves to such an extent that airlift was required to supplement the few supplies being received through Inchon harbor. At the end of October, moreover, when X Corps unloading at Wonsan was delayed by the mined harbor, Combat Cargo Command was once again called upon to ferry supplies. So the Cargo Command became responsible for airlifting a preponderant share of supply for both major ground force commands, and the Fifth Air Force was compelled to accept cuts in the amount of airborne supply which it needed. Instead of ameliorating with time, as might reasonably have been expected, this situation became chronic, eventually precipitating a logistic crisis when the Chinese Communist forces entered the Korean conflict.⁴⁰

The Korean airlift was only one phase of the story of air transport, for on 2 July the Military Air Transport Service (MATC) had assumed

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responsibility for all airlift into the theater from the United States and within the area comprising Japan, Iwo Jima, Guam, Okinawa, and the Philippines. This airlift was to become the longest in history.* To accomplish this MATS increased its pre-Korean level of about 260 tons per month to the FEC to over 100 tons per day, and plane miles finally eclipsed those of the Berlin airlift: by September 1950 MATS was averaging 252,000 plane miles per day as compared with 242,000 for Operations VITLES.

Fortunately MATS fell heir to already established routes across the Pacific, although two of them had been closed down and reopening the way stations would be troublesome. In June 1950 only the mid-Pacific route was in use. Travis, Hickam, Johnston Island, Kwajalein, and Japan, with a stop at Iwo Jima if necessary, the great circle route—McChord, Anchorage, Shemya, and Japan—had been used by a contract carrier until June 1949 and then discontinued. A third route from Hickam to Japan via Wake had been abandoned in May 1950, when the Navy and a civil airline had ceased operating at Wake. In addition to reopening all three of these routes, MATS' Pacific Division was to make several C-97 flights directly from Hawaii to Japan. On 31 August Midway Island was also opened for east-bound traffic between Japan and Hawaii. Although there were many logistic problems connected with the opening of additional way stations, the most acute was at Wake where gasoline storage facilities were severely limited.

At the beginning of Korean hostilities MATS was in no position to throw its entire air transport fleet into the Pacific airlift. In addition to a lack of aircrew personnel, particularly navigators, the service could not concentrate its entire fleet in the Pacific except at the expense of other commitments. Therefore, the Air Force turned to the civil air carriers for immediate help. In July seven prime contractors—Pan American World Airways, Transocean, Overseas National, United, Seaboard and Western, Flying Tigers, and Northwest Airlines—were given service orders for a total of 190 round trips across the Pacific. With the addition of Alaska and California Eastern Airways in August, approximately twice as many flights

were scheduled as in July, as of 1 September, service orders issued by MATS called for 345 trans-Pacific flights. From the first, this use of civil carriers had been considered a temporary expedient while MATS built up its own aircraft utilization, a period originally estimated at 90 days. The recall and training of reserve aircrew personnel, however, was very slow. Continental Air Command (CONAC) needed 45 days to supply the first navigator and approximately 75 days to recall and train enough aircrew personnel. Nevertheless, by mid-September MATS was ready to phase-out civilian contractors and later reduced October service orders to 264 flights, November orders to 89.* Other United Nations aircraft also provided some assistance to MATS: the RCAF furnished six Northstar transports of the RCAF 426th Transport Squadron, the Canadian Pacific Airlines operated as a contract carrier, and Belgium's Sabena Airlines furnished three DC-4 aircraft.

The expansion of the Pacific airlift is perhaps most graphically illustrated in terms of aircraft employed. At the end of June 1950 MATS had a fleet of 255 major air transports in addition to the MATS Navy squadrons' 27 R5D's. The Pacific division had the smallest number of these, 62 aircraft, the Atlantic had 67, and the Continental was the strongest of all with 126 major transports, in addition each division had one Navy squadron of nine R5D's. Actually the main MATS shortage was therefore not aircraft but crews to exploit them most advantageously. Nevertheless, the Atlantic division sent three C-97's and six crews to Hickam, the Continental division's Navy Squadron VR-3 moved to Moffett Naval Air Station to fly the mid-Pacific route, and the 61st and 62d Troop Carrier Groups were moved to McChord Air Force Base to fly the great circle route. Aircraft utilization rates went up as additional trained crews became available. Augmented by both MATS and civil contract airlines, a build-up of approximately 340 percent in four-engine transports was managed between 25 June and 10 September, as shown in table 4.⁴¹ In a normal month prior to June 1950 MATS had hauled approximately 260 tons to the Far East in about 40 trips, this was increased to 1,445 tons in 250 trips during July and to 3,214 tons and 615 trips during August 1950.⁴²

*For a detailed account of the Pacific airlift see the special study prepared by the Historical Branch, MATS, Military Air Transport Service Participation in the Korean Airlift, June-December 1950. Unless otherwise cited information concerning MATS is taken from this study.

⁴¹ On 28 November, however, the serious deterioration of the Korean situation caused MATS to request 217 flights from the contract carriers during December.

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Table 4
AIRCRAFT TABLE, PACIFIC AIR LIFT
(4-Engine Transport^s)

	Aircraft used 25 Jun 50		Average daily utili- zation	Aircraft used 10 Sep 50		Average daily utili- zation
	No	Type		No	Type	
MILITARY						
MATS	39	C-54	41	C-54		
	9	R5D	14	R5D		
	8	C-97	11	C-97		
	4	C-74	9	C-74		
Total MATS	60 (78)		75 (111)		1 75	
Troop Carrier			57	C-54	3 6	
RCAF			8	C-54	3 0	
Total Military	60 (78)		140 (176)			
CIVIL, all carriers			66 (68)			
GRAND TOTAL	60 (78)		206 (244)			

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate C-54 equivalents, that is, the different capacities of the C-97/Stratocruiser and C-74/Globemaster each translated into C-54 capacity

In addition to its transport activities, MATS helped move unit aircraft to the Far East, the

largest of these projects being the shipment of 314th Troop Carrier Group C-119's to Japan at the rate of 12 a day. Scheduled to begin on 1 September, the first 64 aircraft were supposed to reach Japan by 10 September, the remainder by 21 September. By 8 September 75 of the C-119's had been processed through Hickam at an average maintenance of 52 man-hours per aircraft. Although 2 of the planes had to be held there for engine change, another made an emergency landing at Kwajalein with a sheared pump shaft, and another was delayed by a landing gear collapse. By 15 September 90 planes had been processed through Hickam. The movement of such mass numbers of aircraft was considered an outstanding success, from a logistic as well as an operational standpoint.

The trans-Pacific MATS airlift, however, had achieved its large capacity by channeling its total effort into a single theater of operations, in a war of global proportions such support for one theater would obviously be impossible.

AIR EVACUATION AND RESCUE

The evacuation of casualties from Korea was a joint function of FEAF's air transport services, which brought the patients to Japan, and of MATS, which in September 1949 had been charged with all transoceanic air evacuation. Although there had been evacuation of sick and wounded by air during World War II, it had never been more than supplemental to hospital ships overseas and hospital trains in the United States. There were many advantages to air evacuation: (1) the wounded arrived in the United States in much better condition, (2) patients were moved to centrally located specialists with such speed that the medical personnel shortage and crowded installations were relieved; (3) field commanders were relieved of the responsibility for protecting a backlog of patients awaiting surface transportation, a burden which sometimes threatened support of combat troops; (4) patients flown to hospitals near their homes thus received a morale boost without parallel, and (5) air evacuation could economically utilize the space on cargo planes which had previously been returning empty after delivering supplies to the combat areas. Properly coordinated air evacuation was thus not only beneficial to the patients and the commanders,

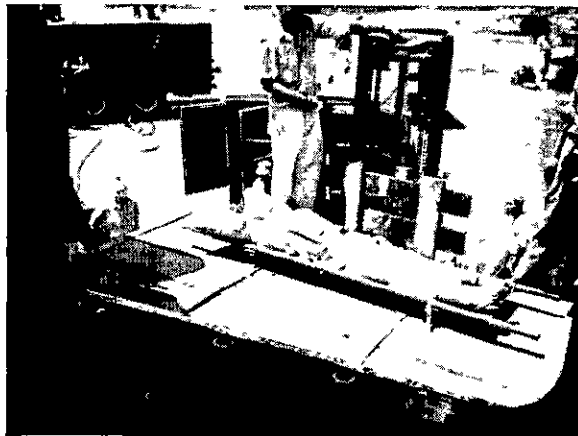
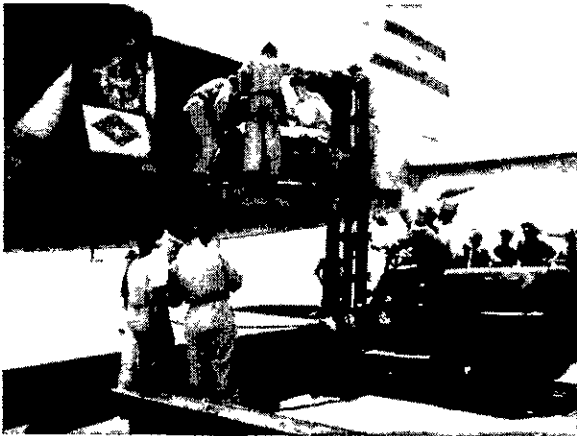
but the most economical method of doing the job.⁴³

Under the management of the Fifth Air Force, the 801st Medical Air Evacuation Squadron, using mostly 374th Wing transports, flew 1,159 patients from Korea to Japan between the beginning of hostilities and 18 August.⁴⁴ Yet when the Combat Cargo Command assumed direction of FEAF transport activity, it judged that air evacuation from Korea had "a rather spotty history." For one thing the air capability was not being fully utilized. At Taegu the airfield was eight miles from town by a very poor road, and the Eighth Army, with a shortage of ambulances, preferred to place its patients on the train at Taegu and move them to Pusan, where they overtaxed the limited hospital space while awaiting surface transportation. Some of the patients were taken to Pusan's east airfield (K-9) for air transport, but they often had to be held there for excessive lengths of time. A trip by Col Clyde L. Brothers (FEAF Surgeon), Lt Col F. C. Kelley (Fifth Air Force Surgeon), and Major George Hewitt (Cargo Command's Assistant Director of Traffic) soon brought about more orderly procedures. They planned to establish a steady flow of 450 evacuees daily out of Korea, as

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MEDICAL EVACUEES LOADED ABOARD A
374th TC WING "SKYMASTER"
←



AMERICAN CASUALTIES BEING UNLOADED AT
TACHIKAWA AFTER BEING EVACUATED BY AIR FROM
KOREA



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follows patients were to be delivered by train to Pusan, where they would be moved by ambulance to waiting planes (routed back through Pusan from other Korean missions or sent over empty from Ashiya) and airlifted to Itazuke for temporary hospitalization at the 118th Station Hospital; from there other aircraft, principally C-46's, were to move patients on to the Tokyo area. In order to care for the more serious cases a special C-54 lift was provided directly from Pusan to Tokyo. Some patients were also flown to Itazuke from Taegu and Pohang.⁴⁶

To care for these patients the 801st Medical Air Evacuation Squadron was attached to Cargo Command for temporary duty, permitting it to assign 6 flight nurses and 6 medical technicians to the Korea runs, and 12 of each to the Tokyo flights. Although the number of patients on each run was practically equal, the flight to Tokyo was three times as long as that from Pusan. The squadron's remaining seven nurses and seven technicians were used on emergency assignments pending the institution of evacuation flights to Inchon-Kimpo. A further decision was to avoid committing any special transport crews to air evacuation, but to brief all crews on the standard procedures. For the trip out of Pusan C-46's and C-47's were to be used, from Inchon C-54's, C-119's were not to be used for such work because their greater capacity was needed for cargo. The Combat Cargo Command, in short retrospect, believed it would have been best to designate and equip certain aircraft for daily air evacuation missions since aircraft repeatedly reported for patients with inadequate litter and heating facilities. By "equip" was meant to obtain a clean, heated aircraft, with litter and emergency equipment.⁴⁶

When Kimpo airfield had been secured, the Cargo Command instituted an immediate flight evacuation plan, including a minimum of three C-54 flights spaced periodically throughout the day. This lift was supplemented as requirements dictated. With the capture of the airfield at Wonsan, Combat Cargo Command made Marine Squadron VMR-152 responsible for evacuation directly to Osaka. On 17 October, when the airfield at Sinnak (K-20) was opened, C-54's began removing patients to Kimpo, where they were turned

over to the 805th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital. On 21 October evacuation began from the airfield at Pyongyang (K-23), but here the process met difficulties because the location of the taxi-strip was such that one delayed airplane could block those behind it. Considerable time was required to load patients, and with the urgent requests for air supply, the traffic control officers hesitated to release a plane from the cargo shuttle for air evacuation early in the day. Fortunately VMR-152 found the solution in a fairly regular schedule from Pyongyang to Osaka, and on 29 October the situation was eased further as evacuation began by C-47 from Sinanju (K-29) to Kimpo. Thus, other than excessive waiting time at Pyongyang and Kimpo, the air evacuation problem was well managed during the attacking phase of U. N. ground operations.⁴⁷ During October 2,840 patients were moved by airlift within Korea, 3,025 were evacuated from Korea to Japan, and 2,590 were moved by airlift within Japan, making a total of 8,455 patients handled by air during the month. From the outbreak of Korean hostilities to 31 October, a total of 24,496 patients had been air evacuated within the Far East theater.⁴⁸

Military Air Transport Service air evacuation began where the Combat Cargo Command left off in the Tokyo area. At the outbreak of the war the Pacific air evacuation operation, under control of the 1453d Medical Air Evacuation Squadron, was moving about 350 patients a month. The first 26 war casualties did not leave Tokyo by C-54 until 20 July, but a total of 535 patients was evacuated during the remainder of the month and the number increased to 3,645 patients in September. The MATS evacuation operation soon employed the routes, facilities, and aircraft regularly assigned to the Pacific airlift, and planes which transported cargoes and personnel to Japan became air evacuation ships on their return. Because of the time which would have been needed to convert civilian airliners, however, they initially carried none but ambulatory patients. The evacuation aircraft, carrying their regular crew plus flight nurses and medical technicians, normally flew eastward from Tokyo, through Guam and Kwajalein (or Wake or Midway) to Hickam, and finally left their patients at Travis. On 29 July the first C-97 inbound flight brought 63

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litter patients from Tokyo to Travis in 23 hours, having stopped only at Wake and Hickam. On later flights, because of the great range of the C-97, it was possible to eliminate the stop at Wake and thus cut some 500-odd miles from the trip. With such schedules, the wounded in Korea knew that there would be no wearisome voyages in ships and no exhausting train rides, the hospitals at which they would be treated would be no more than 72 hours from the war zone and home would be nearby.⁴⁹

The function of air rescue, like that of air evacuation, was not new in the Korean war, but its performance was aided by new plane types and efficient management. The 2d and 3d Air Rescue Squadrons had been assigned to FEAF during World War II, but on 1 May 1949 they had been transferred to the world-wide Air Rescue Service, a subordinate to MATS.⁵⁰ During the Korean conflict the 2d Squadron's flights remained at Clark, Kadena, and Anderson, but the 3d Squadron, participated more directly in the war. The latter was initially divided into four flights—based at Johnson, Yokota, Misawa, and Ashiya—to which another was added when part of the 5th Air Rescue Squadron, at Lowry Air Force Base, Colorado, was dispatched to the Far East on 7 July.⁵¹ A sixth flight, called Detachment "F," was organized with H-5 helicopters during August. In Korea, this detachment provided normal air rescue service and also transported badly wounded ground troops from the front lines to base hospitals at Pusan.⁵² Assignment of additional personnel almost doubled the size of the 3d Squadron between July and November 1950. In its work the 3d Squadron employed SB-17, SB-29, SA-16, C-47, H-5, and L-5 type aircraft. So many different types caused maintenance difficulties, and the newly arrived SA-16's (the first four reached Misawa on 28 July) suffered from supply problems as well. At one time all four of the amphibians were grounded for want of parts, but improved supplies lowered the SA-16 AOC rate from 60 percent in September to 25 percent during October.

Nevertheless, the 3d Squadron was most successful, as the following performance record, covering 25 June through 30 November 1950, indicates

Operation	Total
Helicopter evacuation from front lines.....	585
Helicopter evacuation from behind front lines. . . .	9
SA-16 rescues.....	10
Rescues by all types of aircraft.....	674
Sorties by all ARS aircraft.....	2, 498
Number of hours flown.....	6, 339

A few examples, however, will serve better than statistics to illustrate the success of the 3d Squadron. Seven days after arriving in Japan, an SA-16 on orbit picked up a Navy pilot who had been in the water off Korea less than two hours. On 15 August an SA-16 picked up an F-51 pilot only 5 minutes after he had parachuted into the water. A helicopter picked up another F-51 pilot behind North Korean lines on 5 September, and on 11 October another H-5 crew made a 125-mile round trip to snatch up a severely wounded British carrier pilot from under hostile fire and return him to Kampo.⁵³

Helicopter evacuation of wounded personnel from front lines was a new development in rescue. Since ambulance travel over rough Korean roads was slow and possibly fatal to badly wounded patients, the EUSAK surgeon requested air assistance and FEAF secured additional H-5 helicopters for the purpose. Able to carry two patients and a medical technician, the helicopters shuttled between medical clearing stations and the hospitals; when a patient required treatment in Japan, he was flown to an airstrip for regular evacuation. The new procedure saved time and lives: wounded personnel were transported from clearing stations to hospitals in less than an hour whereas the overland trip had been taking over 10 hours; a medical officer at a Korean field hospital who examined six wounded soldiers flown in by H-5 estimated that five of the six would have died had they been moved overland. Although the helicopters were not equipped for night flying, one pilot answered a call to a clearing station late one night, and by using a flashlight to see his instruments landed in a circle illuminated by jeep headlights. Helicopter pilots also provided medical evacuation for the paratroop drops north of Pyongyang on 20-22 October, and when the task proved too large for the four H-5's, other liaison planes were called in to help. During these 2 days, 47 casualties were evacuated by the rescue aircraft.⁵⁴

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WEATHER SERVICE*

With the outbreak of Korean hostilities, responsibility for providing weather services to the USAF and to U N ground units fell upon the 2143d Air Weather Wing, the major unit of MATS' Air Weather Service in the Pacific. The 2143d Wing consisted of three ground weather squadrons, the 20th in Japan, the 15th in the area of the Philippines, Okinawa, and Guam, and the 31st in the Hawaiian and Marshall Islands; the wing also possessed two aerial weather reconnaissance squadrons, the 512th in Japan and the 514th on Guam. The latter was primarily concerned with flying synoptic reconnaissance and typhoon missions. Additional weather data was obtained from stations of the Japanese national weather service and from the Ryukyuan weather service.

Although the importance of weather in military operations has been increasingly played down as the all-weather potentialities of the armed services have been emphasized, weather remained a major factor in planning and operations in Korea. A multitude of factors increased the need for better weather prediction services: jet aircraft operations require higher altitude forecasting and more accurate, better time interval forecasts; pattern bombing by medium bombers requires good weather and some Korean targets were physically unsuitable for radar bombing, the dependence of the ground forces for air support in Korea made ceiling and visibility information important; and finally, long-range flights of all planes required accurate and extended wind, route, target, and terminal forecasts. The Air Weather Service was also called upon to provide terminal forecasts to ground force units operating in Korea.

On 27 June the first weather detachment was airlifted with a package weather station to the landing strip at Taegu. After this, weather units were among the first organizations to move into new Korean bases and among the last to move out. With the exception of heavy vehicles, the 20th Weather Squadron generally moved its detachments by air transport, normally using the squadron's C-47 for the purpose. On 14 November one observer began operating with an AN/

PMQ-4 set at Sinanju; he was joined by another observer and they transmitted around-the-clock weather reports until the establishment of a weather detachment on 24 November. The value of these two-men team reports was apparent, and the Eighth Army agreed to attach such personnel to each corps headquarters. Normally, however, the weather service utilized detachments, and it consequently expanded its number of detachments from 13 at the outbreak of the war to 32 in November 1950. When this large number of detachments overtaxed the supervisory capacity of the single 20th Weather Squadron, the 30th Weather Squadron was activated in Korea in a reorganization effective on 16 November 1950.

That the 20th Weather Squadron was able to provide weather service in Korea as efficiently and rapidly as it did was primarily due to the fact that enough portable and mobile weather stations were available in the theater. Four portable weather stations were transferred to the 20th from the 15th Squadron and one portable and one mobile weather station were made available by FEAMCOM. The portable stations proved more adaptable to the Korean situation than did the mobile because the former could be shipped by air while the latter could only with difficulty be moved on the roads of Korea; in addition, the mobile station suffered from inadequate maintenance in the field. Of the two mobile vans available to the 20th Squadron, one was used until the basic vehicle was almost destroyed while the other, which became available late in the campaign, was used only seldom because portable weather equipment transported by air or weapons carrier did the job better. Although weather units were attached to the wing or air base unit at their location, the mobility of the units made it next to impossible for them to rely on local bases for all their support. Accordingly, the weather squadron commonly served as the stable supporting unit for its weather detachments. Necessity forced this procedure upon the 20th Squadron, but practice proved the superiority of this method of resupply, especially for technical supplies.

As has ever been the case, communications support for the weather service proved essential. All stations in Korea were furnished with CW inter-

* This section is based upon the Air Weather Service, History of the Air Weather Service, 1 July-31 December 1950, chapter 8. This semi-annual history should be seen for a fuller account of weather problems.

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cept, and, with two exceptions, facsimile equipment for receiving weather collections. Radio facsimile exceeded the expectations of the 2143d Wing as a communications device, enabling the weather service to move with a minimum of equipment and set up operations quickly and successfully. Utilizing radioteletype and facsimile equipment, the field observers broadcast directly from Korean stations to the weather message center in Tokyo. The Tokyo Weather Central then prepared a general area forecast for Korea and terminal points in Japan for broadcast over weather circuits. The central also prepared weather briefing charts for transmission over facsimile circuits for use by staff weather officers.

Aerial weather reconnaissance, flown by the 512th Reconnaissance Squadron, supplemented fixed station observations. On 26 June the 512th flew its first BUZZARD Special over Korea, and from that day through the end of the year the squadron had at least one aircraft over or in sight of Korea each day. By the end of September, the 512th was flying two missions a day, BUZZARD KING over North Korea and either BUZZARD DOG or EASY over adjacent regions. Beginning on 29 June, moreover, BUZZARD Special was required to fly a zig-zag track over the Korean battle area, spotting tactical target information as well as transmitting a weather summary back to the 8th Fighter-Bomber Wing at Itazuke. On 13 July a weather B-29 with General O'Donnell aboard led the first B-29 strike from Japan against North Korean targets. Other reconnaissance flights dropped psychological warfare leaflets. Operation SNOOPER was inaugurated on 28 July, a procedure whereby a weather forecaster was placed aboard bombers and reconnaissance aircraft of other organizations to observe weather data in areas where such data was not otherwise

available. Some 100 of these missions were flown between 9 August and 24 November 1950.

While the 2143d Weather Wing operated with facility under the expansion of the Korean conflict, some tactical commanders expressed varying degrees of dissatisfaction with the forecasts they received. Most of them approved of their own weather personnel, but they thought that the weather service could not forecast well enough for tactical purposes. Col Thomas S. Moorman, Jr., commanding the 2143d Air Weather Wing, nevertheless thought that the weather service possessed the techniques and knowledge to do a fairly good job in Korea. His main detriment was forecaster personnel of lower quality than those in the service from 1944 to 1945. The Air Weather Service, he said, had had an influx of officers who had chosen meteorology as an excuse to remain on active duty and whose main interests did not lie in the field, many possessed insufficient scientific backgrounds and inadequate training. Dependence upon facsimile and the failure to require maintenance of high proficiency standards in map analysis had led to a general deterioration in map analysis skills. Too much emphasis in the Air Weather Service inspection system had been put upon the administrative and logistic phases of weather detachment operations, with the result that the detachment commander, often the only experienced forecaster available, spent too little time in supervising map analysis and forecasting. Colonel Moorman nevertheless computed that 80 percent of the total forecasts had been within the categories of "very good" and "good" forecasts. He assured General O'Donnell that the forecasting service was steadily improving, and with forecasts accurate about three out of four times, he argued that any tactical commander would do well to follow them.⁶⁵

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Chapter 8

A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF
KOREAN EXPERIENCE

GENERAL VANDENBERG stated that "the Air Force is on trial in Korea"¹ To judge its effectiveness there, the USAF instituted an evaluation board at FEAF, composed of Air Force tactical specialists under the direction of Maj Gen Glenn O Barcus. In November 1950 the Secretary of the Air Force sent Dr Robert L Stearns, President of the University of Colorado and a keen student of air affairs, together with Maj Gen Thomas D White, to the Far East to make a second on-the-spot evaluation of USAF effort in Korea. In addition to these two major projects, the Fifth Air Force originated a Tactical Air Power Evaluation (TAPE) group, which was replaced by a Tactical Air Research (TARS) investigation. While the Barcus and Stearns reports and a part of the publications of the TAPE and TARS investigations have been valuable sources for portions of this historical study, a reader interested in a more detailed and technical treatment of the Korean experience must consult the reports themselves. This monograph, therefore, has made little effort toward anything beyond the presentation of the historical record, with no more interpretation than that inherent in statements and evaluations of responsible persons.

It is believed that the record reveals clearly that the Air Force acquitted itself well in the first phase of the Korean operation. Certainly the testimony of responsible commanders justifies this conclusion. "The contribution of the Far East Air Forces in the Korean conflict has been magnificent," said General Douglas MacArthur on 24 July, "they have performed their mission beyond all expectations"² On 7 November General Walton Walker wrote.³

Throughout the trying days in Korea my confidence and the confidence of my troops has been greatly sustained

by the knowledge that the Air Forces in Korea and those elsewhere in the Far East Command were giving us unstinted and skillful support . . . Your officers and airmen have won and shall retain the affection and gratitude of all ranks in the Eighth Army

Representing the views of the fighting men, Colonel George B Peplow, commanding the 38th Regimental Combat Team, wrote as follows on 6 October⁴

Those of us most closely associated with and dependent upon this [tactical air] support should be best qualified to judge its effectiveness. I know that I speak for my entire command when I say that the attitude, willingness, and, most important, the effectiveness of your pilots and your Tactical Air Control Parties have been superb

We have learned much in the use of this air support during the past month. The patience of your pilots while we endeavored to mark targets, their ability to discover, hit and report on targets unknown but of immediate concern to us, and willingness to comply with our desires even when from the air they felt there were no targets, all add up to perfect cooperation

The high degree of competence of the Tactical Air Control officers assigned to duty with this combat team is difficult to describe. That they would establish reliable communication and be courageous was expected. Their willingness, zeal and above all their understanding of each problem presented, and their ability to describe the target and talk the fighter into perfect strikes was almost unbelievable. Every foot soldier soon learned what the presence of the Tactical Air Control jeep near the front line meant, and each face showed appreciation and reassurance

This letter was forwarded through channels where General Walker indorsed it with the comment: "This letter . . . sincerely expresses the feeling of the infantrymen fighting in Korea"⁵

The volume of air support rendered by the Far East Air Forces to the ground troops in Korea left nothing wanting. During the period 25 June through 31 October 1950 FEAF aircraft flew 21,021 close support, 15,233 interdiction, 994

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strategic, 13,432 transport, and 7,448 miscellaneous (reconnaissance, rescue, etc) sorties, for a total of 58,128 sorties⁶ This may justly be called large-scale support when it is compared to the strenuous efforts made by the much larger Ninth Air Force to fly 169,806 sorties between 1 June and 31 October 1944 at the climax of the war against Germany⁷ In the much smaller war in Korea, during which the United States was only partially mobilized, FEAF in a shorter time, flew more than a third as many sorties as the powerful Ninth Air Force at the height of USAF power Although there are too many variables involved for such a comparison to have much value (for example, FEAF flew far more transport sorties than the Ninth), FEAF's record must nevertheless be recognized as outstanding.

While the Korean conflict was primarily a ground campaign, measured in terms of advances on the ground, the destructiveness of air attack upon the Red Korean military machine has already been noted as amazingly effective.* The total losses of FEAF aircraft and personnel while inflicting such substantial damage upon the enemy reveals the efficiency of the air weapon when there is no aerial opposition and sparse anti-aircraft fire. As of 31 October, FEAF had sustained personnel losses totaling 74 killed in action, 78 wounded in action, 95 missing in action, and 3 verified prisoners of war. Aircraft losses amounted to 186, including 128 fighters, 25 bombers, 10 transports, and 23 miscellaneous types; only 101 of these planes were lost directly to enemy action⁸

A comparison of damage inflicted upon the North Korean enemy by air power and the small USAF losses in the process invites some speculation Throughout the campaign it was obvious that the U. N. air forces were the strongest and most powerful weapon available, and it was equally obvious that U. N. ground forces were always opposed by superior numbers of Communist troops. Fed piecemeal into the battle zone, the Eighth Army was hard pressed to defend itself and took heavy casualties as a result In view of the facts presented in this study, then, it is evident that the U. N.'s strongest weapon was not always employed to maximum advantage because it had to be integrated with the operations of the ground force, the U. N.'s weakest weapon This does not

mean, however, that the Air Force maintains its effectiveness only if left an autonomous weapon, World War II was obviously won only through inter-service cooperation and coordination. But when the Eighth Army, committed to action without a long-range campaign plan, found itself retreating southward in a "critical" situation, FEAF was directed to employ its aerial predominance in close support of ground units to the exclusion of all else. This absolutely precluded a proper interdiction program Had FEAF not finally persuaded the CINCFE staff that curtailing the forward flow of Communist troops and matériel was essential to the war effort, the Eighth Army might never have recovered from its "critical" position.

The unfortunate inadequacy of the scheme of "coordination control," proposed by FEC GHQ as the mechanism for control of U. N. air power, has been noted at length In military history there is an old and perhaps fallacious axiom that command failures topside may often be overcome by the combat units in the field Such faith in field combat commanders, who have many other duties in addition to coordinating the employment of their forces, was proved to be overly optimistic in Korea.

Without a doubt, the main failure of the control of U. N. air power in Korea lay in the absence of a joint headquarters at the FEC GHQ level. Korea did not, as one retired Air Force general (who should have known better) termed it, demonstrate the armed forces unified for action During a conference on the Wonsan invasion, General MacArthur is reported to have told General Stratemeyer "that he was one hundred percent in favor of having General Stratemeyer as the controlling head of all air operations in his Command" MacArthur added, however, that "the defense forces aren't organized that way."⁹ He reasoned that he could not afford to take sides in a service controversy at a time when he had a war on his hands. He might, however, have profitably exploited the advantages of unification in his own headquarters.

The initial phase of the Korean experience also demonstrated a lack of doctrine for the employment of Air Force and Navy air power as a perfectly coordinated team Field Manual 31-35 does not concern the employment of Navy forces in close support activity, and as established in this basic manual, the Joint Operations Center

*See chapter 4, pp 49-52

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represents only the Army and Air Force. Since it is reasonable to assume that the Navy in future conflicts may have excess carrier-based air power which can be profitably employed in close support of ground troops, the joint employment of such carrier-based air with Air Force planes will necessitate some unification of terminology and close support procedures. The Navy should be represented in the Joint Operations Center, with a consequent broadening of the doctrine of FM 31-35, but all changes in doctrine must recognize, under the current definitions of mission, the Air Force's predominant interest in the Joint Operations Center.

The experience in Korea offered additional reasons for the predominance of Air Force interest in the agencies of tactical air control. FEAF aircraft flew on every day of the Korean war, no matter what the weather, and its sortie rate exceeded that of other services. Between 29 July and 11 August FEAF averaged 1.1 sorties per day for each light bomber and fighter committed to the Korean operation. For a comparative period 9-28 August, Navy and Marine aircraft averaged 0.6 sorties per aircraft assigned each day. During these 20 days the two large Navy carriers on hand were out of action 9 days, or 45 percent of the time, for replenishment, during the same period the smaller escort carriers were out of action 1 day, or 5 percent of the time.¹⁰ As of 23 August the Seventh Fleet hoped to maintain the following fast carrier strike schedule: strikes for 2 days, refuel 1 day; strikes for 2 days, refuel 1 day; strikes for 2 days; 1 day en route to Sasebo harbor; 4 days replenishing in the harbor, then 1 day en route to the target area. This schedule would employ the carriers against Korean targets only 6 out of 14 days.¹¹ Even with no substantial enemy air opposition, a large part of carrier air sorties had to be devoted to the maintenance of a protective combat air patrol. In November, for example, the escort carrier *Badoeng Strait* off Wonsan could furnish 30 sorties daily, of which 6 were required for its own cover. This factor led the commander of Task Group 96.8 to state: "For close air support where airfields are available, shore based air is more effective, efficient and economical than carrier based air and under present circumstances carriers should not be employed." He subsequently recommended that the two escort-carrier-based Marine fighter squadrons be transferred

ashore at Wonsan.¹² The limitations of carrier-based air support must be recognized in any new definitions of cooperative Air Force-Navy close support doctrines.

It has been the comment of many Air Force officers that the first phase of the Korean experience, in the absence of counter-air effort on the part of the enemy, had few lessons for the future. General Stratemyer prefaced all of his observations relative to this phase of Korean operations with the fact that there was no effective enemy air opposition, a circumstance which could not be expected in any war with a major power.¹³ General Weyland specifically cautioned that the following *erroneous* conclusions must be avoided: (1) that air superiority may be practically assumed, (2) that since propeller-driven aircraft were being used successfully in the Korean conflict, the USAF should decide on them as a standard type, (3) that strategic bombing is unnecessary, (4) that practically unlimited air would always be available for close support of ground forces; (5) that practically unlimited airlift could be expected.¹⁴ Other than the operational experience gained from the combat performance of jet-type aircraft, the first phase of the Korean hostilities actually offered little to be learned that was new. Many novel improvisations had been permitted, but it has to be recognized that in an all-out war strategic air units will not be available for tactical support operations, tactical aviation will be heavily engaged in a battle for air supremacy, and Naval forces will have far less freedom of the seas when operating in the face of strong hostile air and sea power. Certainly, any attempt to build an air force suited only for actions of the Korean type could be fatal to United States success in any future all-out war.

The Korean experience nevertheless revealed that many important lessons based on World War II experience either had never been learned or had been forgotten. Many ground force commanders at first did not seem to appreciate the value of interdiction to their activities, until, like some Eighth Army commanders when their forces broke out of the Naktong River line, they actually began to count the dead tanks and destroyed matériel.¹⁵ On the other hand, the commander of the 1st Marine Division believed that the Air Force thought close air support to be only the isolation of the battlefield.¹⁶ It is possible that misconceptions of Air Force doctrine such as this may

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have given rise to the irresponsible claims that only Marine airmen understood close support. During the first months of the Korean conflict, FEAF commanders were compelled to "sell" their balanced program of air support, including the tasks of maintaining air superiority, interdiction of the battlefield, and close support of ground troops, even though Air Force experience during World War II, especially the Allied campaign in North Africa, had already demonstrated the wisdom of air doctrines. With proper indoctrination of officers from all services, past mistakes should be capitalized upon, not repeated.

If air commanders were generally conversant with the doctrines of aviation in support of ground force, it was unfortunately true that many air officers had forgotten other experiences of World War II, especially in the field of armament. Proper weapons were not always employed against the proper types of targets. Napalm had been extensively used in the Southwest Pacific during 1945, but always in combination with heavy strafing or fragmentation bombs when employed against enemy personnel. It had been found there that the flash fires of napalm would rout the enemy from prepared positions, while the strafing or frag bombs added a lethal effect to the air attack, the intense flame from napalm itself was of such short duration that only direct hits on dug-in enemy troops were likely to be fatal. In Korea, napalm (after some initial difficulties in mixing it in proper solution) was widely employed against enemy personnel positions in the belief that it would burn the enemy to death. Prisoners of war later testified that they considered napalm a poor anti-personnel weapon, since they could run away from it, but that in combination with fragmentation or strafing attacks it was most lethal. A team of ordnance experts nevertheless found Air Force personnel in Korea considering the use of 4,000-pound bomb cases filled with napalm—as well as M-76 incendiary bombs—for anti-personnel strikes. Tests conducted by the Air Proving Ground Command at Eglin Field in 1945 had demonstrated that neither of these was satisfactory against personnel. Another repetition of past experience was the proposal to make

fragmentation bombs by wrapping wire rods around general purpose bombs; tests at Eglin in 1944 had proved such bombs inferior to standard fragmentation ordnance. The ordnance experts also found it disconcerting that the best munitions were not being used against the hordes of enemy personnel. Tests at Eglin in 1945 had shown that a proximity-fused air-bursting 500-pound GP or M-81 frag bomb had a superiority of about ten to one over contact bursting bombs against lightly shielded personnel. Proximity fuses had been used a few times in Korea, but there was little information available in FEAF about their proper employment. A FEAF Bomber Command mission had dropped several frag bombs with proximity fuses, but when one bomb, without the proper arming delay device, had exploded in the air near a B-29, use of such fuses had been discontinued. Army artillery also feared the use of proximity fuses on their shells, fearing an air burst near one of their liaison planes.¹⁷ From these observations it appears that the results of tactical testing and tactical experience must be more widely culminated and understood at every level of the Air Force.

In the first phase of the Korean experience, the Air Force had thus received a powerful demonstration that its own education and its cooperative training with the other armed services must be a continuous process. No service can safely assume that the others automatically realize its capabilities and limitations, and perhaps the Air Force least of all can place itself in that position of complacency in view of the relatively novel weapon that is air power. The Air Force, moreover, cannot assume that Army commanders will automatically understand the strength and limitations of air power, nor can the Air Force assume that commanders of the Naval air arm will, without consultation, either know or agree with Air Force doctrine. Since the Army, Navy, and Air Force must cooperate to assure the successful prosecution of any future war, it is necessary—indeed imperative—that they train together, exchanging experience and learning to understand each other's specialties and limitations.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AFMSP.....	Supply Division, Directorate of Maintenance, USAF.	FECOM.....	Far East Command
AFOOP.....	Operations Division, Directorate of Operations, USAF	FSO.....	Foreign Service Officer
AFOPR.....	Resources Division, Directorate of Operations, USAF	GCA.....	Ground Controlled Approach
AFPMP.....	Director of Military Personnel, USAF	GCI.....	Ground Controlled Interception.
AOCP.....	Aircraft Out of Commission Parts.	HVAR.....	High Velocity Aerial Rocket
ATAR.....	Anti-Tank Aerial Rocket	IFR.....	Instrument Flight Rules
ATIS.....	Allied Translator and Interpreter Service, FEC	JSPOG.....	Joint Strategic Plans and Operations Group, FEC
AW.....	All Weather.	KMAG.....	Korea Military Advisory Group.
CAP.....	Combat Air Patrol	NK.....	North Korean
CCF.....	Chinese Communist Forces	NKAF.....	North Korean Air Force
CIA.....	Central Intelligence Agency	NKPA.....	North Korean People's Army.
CONAC.....	Continental Air Command, USAF	NSC.....	National Security Council.
CS, USAF.....	Chief of Staff, United States Air Force	OI.....	Operations Instructions
CS, USA.....	Chief of Staff, United States Army	OSI.....	Office of Special Investigations
CTF.....	Commander, Task Force	POL.....	Petroleum, Oil and Lubricants
DA.....	Department of Army	ROKAF.....	Republic of Korea Air Force
DEPTAR.....	Department of Army	SCAP.....	Supreme Commander Allied Powers
D/I.....	Deputy for Intelligence.	TACC.....	Tactical Air Control Center
D/O.....	Deputy for Operations	TADC.....	Tactical Air Direction Center
D/M.....	Deputy for Matériel	TC.....	Troop Carrier
D/P&O.....	Directorate of Plans and Operations, USAF	TD.....	Table of Distribution
FAF.....	Fifth Air Force	T/O&E.....	Table of Organization and Equipment
FAFIK.....	Fifth Air Force in Korea.	UE.....	Unit Equipment
		USAFIK.....	United States Armed Forces in Korea.
		USAIRA.....	United States Air Attaché
		USMILAT.....	United States Military Attaché
		VFR.....	Visual Flight Rules

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FOOTNOTES

Introduction

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