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# *"Our fighting heart..."*

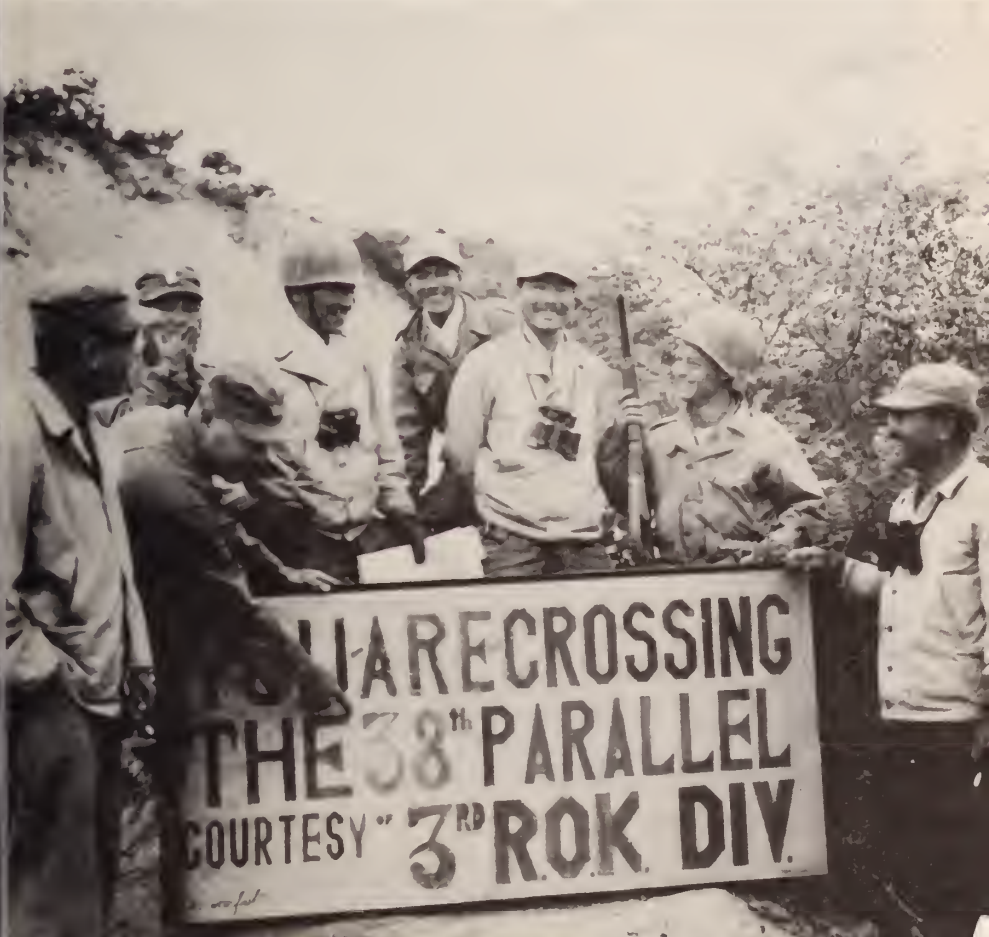


## **The Story of the Republic of Korea Armed Forces**

By JIM LUCAS

*Scripps-Howard staff writer.*

S. Army Photograph



WE ARE CROSSING  
THE 38<sup>th</sup> PARALLEL  
COURTESY 3<sup>RD</sup> ROK DIV.



Chinese Communists surrendering to ROK soldiers.

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# *“Our fighting heart...”*

By JIM LUCAS

The Story of the Republic of Korea Armed Forces, as  
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SEOUL, Korea, Nov. 26—The rebirth and improvement of the South Korean armed forces is one of the most remarkable military phenomena of our times.

A defeated, poorly trained army—hardly deserving of the name—has gone back onto the battlefield to prove its inherent worth.

No army has ever rebuilt itself in more trying circumstances. This happened while the best officers and leaders of the South Korean army were being killed by the hundreds and thousands.

The South Korean army has suffered more than twice as many casualties as the American forces. Yet, today, with U. S. artillery support, the ROKs (Republic of Korea troops) are holding half the battlefield across the waist of Korea.

The American GI on the line still can't quite believe what has happened. Junior officers who once cursed the South Koreans because they broke and ran when the going was tough are now calmly confident the ROKs will be there when needed.

But the Koreans still can't go it alone. However, with adequate arms, far-sighted planning and vision beyond the end of our noses—an innovation in our dealings with the Koreans—we can turn out the kind of army they need to hold their part of the line in the fight for a free world.

How well and how quickly we can do all this will determine how soon Korea can take over her own defenses, as a proud, sensitive people want to, and should.

And that, of course, will determine how rapidly the American and other UN soldiers can expect to be freed for other important jobs in the ceaseless fight against Communist aggression.

## **SO—THEY RAN**

There's no glossing over the fact that the ROKs were once a pretty sorry fighting force. But those who have studied the record say they never were so dismal as they were painted.

They never collapsed entirely; they never disintegrated as a fighting force. Their faults were human faults bred of ignorance, poor training, inadequate leadership, outmoded equipment.

Many South Korean soldiers, for instance, had never seen a tank. They were terrified when they saw their first one at the head of enemy columns. So they ran.

Much that happened to the ROKs in the early days was our own fault. We didn't give them adequate training. We refused to arm them with the kind of weapons needed to resist the Russian-trained and Russian-armed North Koreans. We closed our eyes to the fact that their foes had tanks, artillery, planes and had an army three times the size of the ROKs.

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**Our friends need never worry about our fighting heart.**

### **WE LEARN, TOO**

And, in effect, we invited invasion of South Korea by publicly proclaiming the nation had no strategic value so far as we were concerned. And by publishing maps of Uncle Sam's Pacific defense lines which pointedly—and to the Communists, significantly—left Korea on the outside looking in.

South Korean President Syngman Rhee, a man with a long memory, still has one of those maps, which we'd rather burn and forget.

But we've been learning, along with the ROKs.

About the South Korean as a fighting man, this is what they're saying today:

"He's just as courageous as any other soldier in the world. He'll fight as well as any other soldier. I'm confident the new South Korean army will do a mighty fine job"—Brig. Gen. C. E. Ryan, head of the U. S. military advisory group.

"The South Korean army can fight. It has fought—don't forget that—and it will fight even better in the future. We need arms and training, but our friends need never worry about our fighting heart"—Maj. Gen. Lee Chang Chun, South

Korean Army Chief of Staff.

### **TESTIMONIAL**

Gen. James Van Fleet, commander of the U. S. Eighth Army, is sure they'll deliver.

"You've decisively demonstrated," he told them in a recent message to one ROK division, "your superiority over the Communist enemy."

You have no idea what that brief word of encouragement did for those South Korean boys. I visited them one month after the Van Fleet commendation. Each man had memorized it.

"Give my boys guns and we will take care of ourselves," President Rhee told me.

All these are mere words, perhaps, but words which battlefield records are newly upholding each day.

There is still much to be done. They need tanks and artillery. They need clothing and equipment; they need food, and more of it. But they're on the way, and they know where they're going.

And they're a proud, hard-fighting outfit.

PUSAN, Korea, Nov. 27—"How many men can you put under arms?" I asked President Syngman Rhee of the Republic of Korea in the course of an exclusive interview.

His answer was this:

"Our Defense Minister estimates we have more than a million men of fighting age. Our shortage is not manpower; only equipment—and training in the use of it."

"Are you satisfied with the fighting quality of the South Korean forces?" I asked him.

### 'I AM HUMBLY PROUD'

The Korean President answered with deep emotion.

"I am deeply and humbly proud of them," he said. "No other soldiers could possibly have the motives ours have for defending their homes. Every man and woman in

Korea would rather die than see our country surrendered to a foreign foe. We learned the consequences of that during Japan's occupation of Korea.

"No people will fight for liberty as hard as those who know what it means to lose it."

In a number of informal discussions which extended thru two days at the President's provisional capital here, Dr. Rhee bared his feelings apparently without reserve.

Some of our talks were held in the President's modest office on the side of Happy Mountain, others in the small, formal garden behind the temporary South Korean "White House." Mrs. Rhee, Dr. You Chan Yang, Korean Ambassador to the United States, and Dr. Robert Oliver of State College, Pa., an American adviser to the President, were present during some but not all of our talks.

**Every man . . . would rather die than see our country surrendered to a foreign foe.**

U. S. Army Photograph



## IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION

I asked Dr. Rhee:

"If the present battle line were accepted as a truce line and if it settled into more or less a permanent boundary, do you feel it would be defensible by your forces after they've been suitably trained and equipped for the task?"

He replied: "I shall leave the purely military aspects of that question to military men. Politically and psychologically, the situation would be impossible. No one can predict what our people might do.

"They have borne the horrors of war so far without complaint. But that is because they're fighting for reunification of their beloved country. If they find this nation is to be left divided, what happened in China (prolonged civil war) might be repeated here."

## RHEE BRUSHED ASIDE

Over cups of steaming tea, Dr. Rhee discussed his fears of a re-armed Japan—something he obviously fears almost as much as Communism. He is particularly upset about the U. S.-Japanese mutual security pact. Ambassador Yang, Dr. Rhee said, had asked our State Department for a similar pact with South Korea, but the request was brushed aside.

At one time, Dr. Rhee said, he had heard reports that the United Nations considered using Japanese troops in Korea. He said he told the late Lieut. Gen. Walton Walker, UN field commander:

"If you bring Japanese to Korea, my army will stop fighting the Communists until it has destroyed the invading Japanese."

Unusually spry and active for his 76 years, Dr. Rhee greeted me at the door of his small brick cottage and ushered me into his office, offering me Korean tea and cigars. He wore a brown business suit with a gray sweater for a vest. His tie was loudly decorated with South Korean flags and UN emblems. He said three such ties were mailed to him recently from New York by a Prince Igor.

"A Russian," said Dr. Rhee with a smile, "but very anti-Communist."

## NO NATION ALONE

I asked the President:

"Do you think the Korean army eventually can take over the job of defending the Republic of Korea and let the UN forces go home?"

His reply was:

"'Eventually' is a long time. Korea defended herself for many centuries, and in normal circumstances expects to bear the primary responsibility for her own defenses in the future.

"But the time is definitely past when any nation, no matter how strong or powerful, can stand alone. European nations are insisting they cannot defend themselves against Communism without considerable American aid.

## 'WE WILL STAY'

"The United States itself is deeply conscious of the need for strong allies. Korea too can find safety in the future only where salvation lies for all free people—in a working system of collective security. This can best be accomplished by bringing Korea into the pattern of mutual security pacts already signed by the United States with Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines and Japan."

Dr. Rhee said Gen. Walker informed him last winter that it might be necessary to pull out of Korea. At that time the Chinese Red drive was at its peak. He said his answer was:

"Go home if you feel you must. We did not ask you to come, and we will not ask you to stay. But we will stay and fight. All they can do is kill us."

## UNIFIED KOREA

My next question:

"Do you anticipate the strengthening of your army to the point where you can garrison your northern borders?"

Dr. Rhee answered carefully:

"If we have our ancient and natural northern boundaries along the Yalu and Tumen rivers with the Ever White Mountains between them, nature itself has provided the fortifications which make the boundaries relatively easy to defend. That is why they remained inviolate for 40 centuries.

"No Korean, on the other hand, can feel easy about trying to defend a purely artificial line across the middle of our nation. Dissatisfaction will be rife on both sides of the line. There will always be danger of renewal of the attack. Worst of all, the Chinese are now occupying our northern provinces—something that never happened before in all our history. The situation is far worse now than it was in 1950, and the world knows what happened then."

How large an army would he need to defend boundaries drawn somewhere in the vicinity of the present battle line?

"The size and kind of force we should need," he said, "must depend squarely upon the kind of enemy that confronts us. Shall we be opposed by the entire force of Red China, including Russian-supplied tanks and planes? Will there be 'volunteers' from other Iron Curtain countries? Or will we have to contend only with remnants of North Korean forces restricted to such arms as they can produce for themselves?"

I countered: "Suppose the cease-fire agreement requires withdrawal of all foreign troops from Korea, North and South. In such case, what kind of army would you need?"

Dr. Rhee replied:

"That question, too, defies a simple answer. It depends a great extent on what kind of war we'd be allowed to wage. Would we be required—as a price for securing American arms—to keep our forces well back of the dividing line, as we were before the Communist attack? Would we be forced to sit quietly and watch our enemy build up his strength and even probe across our lines while we were prohibited from any strikes against his build-up areas? I think you'll agree, and that history of our immediate past proves, this kind of defense would be impossible.

"You will remember that when the UN forces advanced into North Korea last winter, they found there almost no real Communists in our country except the Russian-dominated army itself.

## TEARS IN HIS EYES

"The millions of our helpless civilians in North Korea were simply victims, captives waiting and hoping for us to rescue them. If the Chinese and Russians could be forced to keep their hands off, our people—who've been united thru all their history—will flow back together again as naturally as water when a dividing wall is removed."

Returning to the subject of his army, I asked if it hadn't been considerably strengthened in recent weeks by training and additional equipment.

"Yes," said Dr. Rhee, "we got our first modern medium tanks only last week. But we still need more artillery, air power and sea power before our armed forces can operate independently as a modern fighting force."

Dr. Rhee spoke with intense emotion on several occasions as we discussed the division of Korea. His voice broke and there were tears in his eyes.

"A large part of Korea which has been free—below the 38th Parallel—would be left under Communist tyranny," he said. "Our people, our flesh and blood. Many have friends and relatives in that area. They simply couldn't rest quietly and leave their families to suffer without help. Furthermore, several million Northern Koreans have escaped into our territory. They too have friends and relatives back behind the Communist lines. Their feelings are particularly sensitive, for they've learned from harsh experience what Communism really is.

## 'SEETHING TURMOIL'

"Finally, you mustn't forget that last November the armies of freedom liberated almost all of North Korea. The poor people who had lived under Communist terrorism for six years at last saw liberation as an accomplished fact.

"Then suddenly it was withdrawn again. Can you possibly imagine that they will quietly accept their fate or that we will abandon them? The seven million Koreans in the North will face starvation while the Chinese take all the food for themselves.

"If Korea is left divided, one thing is certain. It will be seething turmoil or revolt against this continued division on both sides of the line. And one thing, in my judgment, is even more important. Can you believe the Communist empire will quietly accept any such conclusion as that?"

### **'WE LONG FOR PEACE'**

"If Korea is left divided you may be sure that two things will happen. On the one hand, the Kremlin's rulers will tell their dupes behind the Iron Curtain that Communism has won another great victory by sweeping the Western imperialists all the way from the Yalu River to the new legally established dividing line. And they'll use that claim of victory to stir up enthusiasm for a new adventure in aggression.

"On the other hand, the Russian rulers themselves will remain dissatisfied. They want all of Korea now, just as they wanted it for 75 years. Some Americans once said Korea had no strategic importance.

"But no Russians have ever made that mistake. They cannot remain satisfied without it. They need all of Korea both to consolidate their gains in North Asia and as a base from which to threaten Japan while they build up the Communist Party in that country.

"We all long for peace—but no people more than Koreans who have had to pay the heaviest cost of the war. But we should delude ourselves tragically if we ever think we can win the peace by leaving the Communists where they've planted themselves in full defiance of UN arms.



**WITH ROK FIRST DIVISION IN KOREA, Nov. 28**—Rocky and Jim were up before dawn rustling firewood. Deep in my zippered sleeping bag I could hear them outside the mud hut.

I had come up the evening before to live with the ROKs (South Korean troops) in the front lines. Capt. Louis Jaris of Hartford, Conn., greeted me enthusiastically.

"I'm a hermit in these mountains," he said. "It's not every day I find someone to talk to."

### **UNOFFICIAL BOSS**

Capt. Jaris officially is adviser to a ROK field artillery battalion. Actually, he runs it. An American adviser with South Koreans no matter what his rank is master of his own little realm.

His advice is never rejected. He can countermand an order of the ROK commanding officer. Several times early in the war American advisers deposed panic-stricken Koreans at pistol point and took command, forcing the men to stay in their positions.

Our advisers also fight the battalion's unending battles with headquarters, seeing that it gets a fair share of ammunition and supplies, bullying Ordnance into repairing equipment and making sure of communications. Always, they believe in their particular group of Koreans with a fierce partisan pride.

Capt. Jaris is no exception.

### **A KOREAN HOME**

His battalion is up in the hills overlooking the front lines. His "home" is a two-room mud hut with a thatched roof. In the hill country Korean farmhouses are built over mud ovens which also serve as the foundation for the houses. At one end of the house there is a pit in which a fire is kept burning. At the other there's the chimney. Pipes criss-cross beneath the floor.

Capt. Jaris has done everything possible to make his hut home-like. He had covered the mud floor with boards from shell cases and papered the rough walls and ceiling with old newspapers—including some Russian-language dailies from Pyongyang. He is proud of the effect, but



a little put out that a major with another battalion had sent back to Tokio for some real wallpaper—with violets on it—to pretty up his hut.

### LUXURY IN WAR

Daylight came, and by this time Rocky and Kim had the oven going full blast. It got too hot for me to stay in my sleeping bag. Kim—a tall, cheerful Korean—knocked and came in with a pan of steaming water. Capt. Jaris offered me an electric razor, one that operates from batteries. It seemed out of place in these Korean wilds, but it was welcome.

While I shaved, the Captain twisted the dials of his radio. "This thing," he said "is a piece of extravagance. This set actually cost around \$2500. I guess they had a surplus of them down at the Eighth Army. We need it here like a hole in the head, but they insisted we take five of them. A \$25 portable set would do just as well. I use it to get newscasts."

He kept fiddling with it.

### GRUDGING ADMIRATION

"I can't get anything but Radio Moscow," he complained. "I wanted to get news from Tokio, but I guess I missed it."

At breakfast the captain told me more about life with the ROKs.

"I'm not standing up for these people," he said. That was the standard approach for American advisers. I'd heard it before. "I can't even say I like them," he went on. "They are sometimes stupid, arrogant and opinionated. But they do have guts."

"Maybe they're not good soldiers yet, but they're fast becoming good soldiers. They've been libeled. Hell, every other nation, including ours, explains away its failures by blaming the ROKs. It's damned convenient. They've been made the scapegoats for every blundering general and colonel in half the armies of the world."

Kim and Rocky, he said were soldiers—good ones. He'd picked them as orderlies when a civilian assigned to him had turned out to be less than trustworthy.

"Kim is a college kid from Seoul," said the Captain, "and he's living for the day when he can go back to

school. Rocky is also a college boy and wants to go into politics. He's the battalion's wrestling champion and the others are afraid of him.

### LOYALTY

"He's a good boy to have around. I used to lose things, but not since Rocky joined my staff. These kids are fanatically loyal. The other day I had my boys build me an outdoor toilet. The (Korean) colonel's boy decided his boss ought to have one too. Rocky objected; I guess he figured I had a patent on the idea.

Rocky's solution was very simple. He decided he'd kill the colonel's orderly. The other boy naturally was no match for Rocky and knew it. So he hit Rocky over the eye with a small boulder. I arrived just in time to prevent murder. Rocky still can't understand why I interfered."

After breakfast I started walking toward the front. There had been a battle the night before, but now things were quiet. As Capt. Jaris joined me, he remarked: "By the way, Rocky and Kim dropped in after breakfast and said they thought you were pretty." I must have looked startled. The captain laughed. "That means they like you," he said. "Pretty" is the only word they know in English to express approval."

That night, with the captain's help, I tried to question the two boys. Did they love South Korea? Yes. What did they think of Communists? Very bad.

Did they want the war to end? Yes. How about Koreans, generally? Of course, they wanted the war to end; they were hungry and many were getting killed.

The two boys started to leave, hesitated, and spoke to Capt. Jaris.

"They want to ask you a question," he said. Rocky summoned his most precise English.

"We want to know," he said bringing out his words slowly, "when we'll get to go back to school."

I faltered, told them maybe next year. Both boys looked impressed. Kim's angular face actually shone.

"Pretty!" he said. "Pretty! Pretty! Pretty!"



The ROKs held most of the line in the dark summer of 1950.

TAEGU, Korea, Nov. 29 (Delayed)—Brig. Gen. C. C. Ryan is a professional soldier with a whale of a job on his hands.

It is a job some people think should have been done five years ago. If it had been done, we might have been spared a lot of trouble and bloodshed.

Gen. Ryan's job is to build up a first-class army for the war-torn Republic of Korea. But he doesn't argue about the past. He's concerned about the future.

And he says now the South Korean army is on the way to becoming one of the strongest anti-Communist military forces in Asia, altho it still has a long way to go. It will take two to three years before the ROKs, as they are called, will be able to defend their borders by themselves, assuming there is some sort of peace settlement.

### NEVER THAT BAD

But the Americans assigned to these troops say they never were as bad as they were pictured. They held most of the battleline in the dark summer of 1950 and even today they hold half the line across their beaten-up peninsula.

Gen. Ryan's headquarters is an old two-story stucco building, cold and drafty in the winter, hot in summer. He shares this structure with the South Korean chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Lee Chang Chun.

After four months of sizing up his task, Gen. Ryan says this:

"My combat advisers tell me the South Korean soldier is just as courageous as any in the world. Given the proper conditions, he'll fight as well as any other troops.

"We must admit the Koreans have cracked at times, there is no way of glossing over the fact. But when we examine the reasons, the wonder is they so frequently have done such a good job.

### IT LACKED EVERYTHING

"I doubt whether it is possible for any small nation having a small industrial plant and comparatively few resources to stand by itself against a major power.

"On the other hand, with properly trained forces, it could hold its own against comparable strength. I'd

say we're training an army that would hold at all costs and resist to the bitter end.

"Only two years before the ruthless attack by the Communists, Korea was a new nation, completely lacking in military tradition. It had no officer organization, few arms. The army's mission was simply to handle disorders. When South Korea was invaded it had no heavy artillery and only a few outmoded aircraft. It lacked everything needed to fight a modern war.

"The attack on June 25, 1950, caught the Korean army and its American advisers by surprise."

### UNDOUBTEDLY AN EPIC

Gen. Ryan said that despite all their handicaps and the surprise of the overwhelming attack, the ROK First Corps, for instance, fought savagely, maintained its cohesion and eventually battled its way back. If this had been an American action, he said, it undoubtedly would have gone down in our military history as epic.

While American aid was being rushed from Japan, Gen. Ryan said, this decimated, poorly equipped Korean army stuck together and fought bravely, despite some notable instances of cold feet.

Many Americans lost their lives because of these instances and a handful of uncelebrated American colonels, majors, captains and lieutenants rallied the Korean troops, sometimes at pistol point.

"Our nation will never know the debt it owes this handful of officers," Gen. Ryan said. "But the South Korean army never ceased to exist as an army." It did not disintegrate, as the North Koreans expected.

"Four months after the blitz which was intended to annihilate it, the South Korean army stood at the Yalu River with its friends."

Gen. Ryan said the South Korean army today well deserves the tribute that Gen. James Van Fleet, U. S. 8th Army Commander, paid to one of its divisions—the Sixth ROK. In a message to the Korean division, he said:

"You have decisively demonstrated your superiority over the Communist enemy."

SOMEWHERE IN KOREA, Nov. 30—Kim still finds his rifle strange and awkward to handle.

That's not hard to understand. Kim is only 18, and he looks younger. Two weeks ago he was helping his mother—he hasn't seen his father since the early days of the war—work a rice paddy north of Taegu. Kim never saw a rifle before coming to the army.

Kim was born and spent the first years of his life under Japanese rule. The Japanese imposed the death penalty on Koreans for owning firearms, even if only for hunting.

### **KIM WAS FRIGHTENED**

Like all soldiers, Kim is homesick. Korea is not a big country but many of its people are aliens outside their home districts. Kim has been to Taegu a couple of times, but Seoul and Pusan are as foreign to him as New York or London.

When the draft notice came, Kim was puzzled and frightened. He knew what it was even tho he doesn't read very well and his first impulse was to run away and hide. But his mother went to see the headman, who said that would only cause trouble, so Kim became a trainee of the South Korean army.

Kim is one of the thousands of South Koreans in training.

By our standards, he gets along on very little. He draws a daily ration of five and a half hops of rice—about a pound and a half—and is supposed to get 10 American cigarettes. In addition, the government allows him 300 won—about five cents—daily for supplemental rations, which usually consist of a few stringy vegetables boiled into an unappetizing soup.

### **MEAGER RATIONS**

Cigarettes are few and far between. Kim regards any day he gets them as an event. On paper, he's supposed to rate an occasional issue of dried fish, canned rice, seaweed, pepper sauce and bean mash. But he's always surprised when he gets them. Such rations are issued on "availability basis," which generally is not at all.

Kim will be warmer this winter

than South Korean soldiers were last year. He'll be issued two pairs of cotton-padded trousers and jackets, and three pairs of socks. If he stays in the rear areas he'll get a pair of leather shoes—the South Korean quartermaster corps under American supervision recently made 1000 pairs.

If he goes to the front he'll wear rubber shoe packs comparable to—but hardly as good as—those worn by the Americans. He won't have the tents the Americans have but Koreans have the knack of making excellent shelters for themselves out of whatever is available.

Kim apparently has no feeling about Americans one way or another. He has very little contact with them and it's doubtful whether he has any deep understanding of what the war is about or why the Americans are in his country. There's also the language barrier and the difference in living standards.

Kim sees very little of the Americans and feels his inferior status keenly. Even the Americans assigned to his training camp live, eat and play apart from the Koreans. Kim is a bit shy and ill at ease when Americans are about.

Kim will spend eight weeks in basic training. After that he'll get another two months' advanced training in whatever branch he's assigned to. Today, for instance, he's learning how to take a rifle apart and put it back together. With a half hundred other boys, he's squatting on his haunches tenaciously trying to follow the Korean sergeant's baffling instructions.

Tomorrow, he'll learn something about the bayonet. Before the week's gone he'll toss a few hand grenades. Next week he'll learn how to fire his rifle and what it means to be under fire.

Kim's much better off, however, than the South Korean boys who were thrown into battle against the North Koreans last year. Most of them had less than 10 days' training. Casualties were staggering. In the first weeks of the war—in June, 1950—the South Korean army was cut from 80,000 to 40,000.

As the bravest and the most thoroly trained were killed, recruits were yanked off streets or pulled from their homes and sent up as replacements. There were many cases where boys who had never seen a rifle before went into battle 72 hours after they'd been "re-cruited."

"Is it any wonder there were some cases of poor performance?" asked Brig. Gen. C. E. Ryan, head of the Korean Military Advisory Group. "To me the wonder is that often they did such a good job."

Kim's big problem is leadership. South Koreans fight well if properly led. But good officers don't grow on trees and it'll be years before South Korea has enough of the right kind. Kim's an uncomplaining sort and takes whatever leadership he's given. But like all soldiers he responds to good leaders and falters under poor ones.

"Many South Korean generals and colonels were mere lieutenants in the Japanese army," explains Lieut. Col. W. R. Shurley Jr., of Yazoo City, Miss., who was with the South Koreans before the war. "We've had to take bandit leaders, guerrilla chiefs—whatever we could get. We haven't had a chance systematically to train officers while fighting a war of survival. The big problem's getting rid of the imperialistic caste system they inherited from the Japanese. Many South Korean officers have yet to learn that welfare of their own men comes first. We're getting good officers but it's slow work."

Kim conceivably could become an officer. But it's doubtful. He's

hardly leadership material. There's an officer training school in this town where a thousand selected men undergo a 24-week course. Many fall by the wayside. South Korea is assembling cadre of capable junior officers, but as they go in action they're often the first to fall.

Kim may learn to be a tankman. Every 11 weeks hundreds of men selected undergo tank training. Or he may be sent to any one of a number of military schools established by our Advisory Group.

To fill the pressing need for leadership, the Americans are starting a command and general staff school and a Korean military academy. It's a difficult task. All the South Korean army's military textbooks were burned at Seoul and it is a tedious job to translate American texts into Korean.

The Korean Military Academy will provide a four-year course patterned after West Point's. Instructors are being selected from the ranks of Korean University professors. At the start, 34 American staff officers are handling the administration.

All this, of course, is unknown to Kim. As you watch him sweat over the confusing mechanism of his rifle, it takes you back to your own basic training days and you share his bewilderment. Little Kim has his hands full just learning to be a soldier. But at least he'll have a chance, which is more than many of his countrymen had when the war started.



On guard!

**SOMEWHERE IN KOREA, Dec. 3**—Few soldiers have ever done so much with so little as the South Koreans.

A good yardstick for judging a soldier is how he treats his equipment. A soldier who walks away carrying his rifle—no matter how badly he's been beaten—is a good soldier. A man who throws away his rifle and runs is a poor soldier. A man you can't trust.

"I picked up a South Korean the other day," said Col. John E. Slaughter of Purcellville, Va. "He'd been shot in the mouth. His tongue was so swollen he was choking. I guess he's dead by now. But the boy had his rifle and wouldn't let go of it. He wouldn't even let me hold it while he got in the jeep."

I recently visited a South Korean artillery command post along the Imjin River. They didn't know I was coming so there had been no preparations. Their guns were old ones we'd given them, but they were spotlessly clean.

Capt. Louis Jaris of Hartford, Conn., American adviser to the unit, insisted there was nothing unusual about what I'd seen.

### **GOOD INFLUENCE**

"Those guns were fired today," he said, "but as soon as they cease firing they turn to—no matter what the weather—and clean 'em up. We've learned it's good medicine to put an American artillery outfit alongside these boys. The Americans begin taking better care of their weapons immediately. I guess the Koreans put them to shame."

One of the continuing marvels of the war is how the Koreans manage to keep going on their meager diet. It consists—basically and entirely—of rice. Occasionally they get a few vegetables but it's been months since they tasted meat. The arrival of a few pounds of dried fish in a battalion I visited recently was a major event.

### **WEEDS AND RICE**

"Men in my battalion sometimes boil weeds with their rice," said Capt. Jaris. "It has no food value, but it's filling. And however little they get, it's more than the civilians are getting. Desertions are almost unknown."

Capt. Jaris and other Americans with the ROKs frequently look the other way while troops haul a truckload of firewood to Seoul and sell it to get money for extra rations.

"A truckload of firewood nets them 500,000 won (about \$85) and frequently that's all that keeps a battalion going," Capt. Jaris said.

Americans who contrast their scale of living with that of the ROKs usually argue that the Koreans don't want anything but rice. That's not true. The Koreans in peacetime ate well and are particularly fond of beef and pork. It's simply that they can't afford it now.

Despite the meager diet, the average Korean doesn't seem to lack pep. He's able to scale the highest peaks in rubber-soled sneakers and he can march long distances under arms.

The ROKs depend on us for the bulk of their firepower. Where they provide their own they hardly measure up to our standards. But they are improving. Originally U. S. advisers worked with the ROKs down to battalion level. We've found lately we can exercise proper vision by keeping advisers at regiment.

"As the Koreans improve, we may be able to drop back to division level," said Lieut. Col. Thomas Ross of Birmingham, Ala.

### **BETTER CLOTHED**

With winter almost here the ROKs will be better dressed than ever before. The winter uniform approximates the Chinese and North Korean dress—cotton padded trousers and jackets. The ROKs I saw were delighted with their new clothes and guarded them carefully.

Their camps—semi-permanent now—are well built and comfortable. They throw nothing away. Old boxes provide floors for their dugouts. A sort of central heating system keeps the floors—on which the men sleep—warm as toast. For fuel they burn the heavy cardboard in which artillery shells are packed.

The company's rice is cooked in one big pot.

Korea could—if she had the money—buy rations from us. Other nations do. But the Koreans don't have the money. And the average Korean soldier can't but feel the distinction. He cannot but feel some-

times he's the stepchild in the family of nations fighting in Korea.

He knows only he's frequently hungry while Americans have good eats to throw away. He knows he sometimes has lacked proper clothing and shoes while other soldiers—doing the same job—are warm and well shod.

Far too few Americans bother to learn anything about Korea or its language.

"Every time I read one of their field orders, I split my sides laugh-

ing," an American major told me. "The way they use English is a scream."

Could he read or speak Korean?

The Major was incredulous. Why?

But on the whole Americans and Koreans, despite the gulf between them, work well together. The Americans have come to respect the Koreans. The Koreans hold Americans in something akin to awe. Together, they're putting together an army.

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**SOMEWHERE IN KOREA, Dec. 4—**Leadership is the major difficulty of the South Korean army.

Leadership is difficult to define. The military tradition in the U. S. Army provides an intangible but powerful incentive to uphold the national and unit honor at all costs. South Korea—because she's only three years old and never had an army before—sometimes lacks that spirit.

But some South Koreans are acquiring it. The South Korean Marines, fighting alongside the U. S. Marines, have it. Because they're small — only one regiment — the South Korean Marines have inher-

ited the clannish belligerence and pride and "don't let the other fellow down" concept of their American friends.

The Americans on the other hand, have found real satisfaction in watching their Korean friends develop. In fact on more than one occasion in bar room fights U. S. Marines and Korean Marines have fought side by side against U. S. soldiers or Korean soldiers. The Korean Marines have—and never fail to express — the traditional Leatherneck contempt for fighting men of any other service of whatever nationality.



**The ROK Marines have the belligerence and pride of their American counterparts.**

## ROK MARINES

As far as the ROK Marines are concerned, there's nothing lower than a ROK dogface.

Many factors determine the Korean soldier's attitude and outlook and—far too frequently—we're failing to provide help and encouragement.

"The Koreans at the top are patriots in the real sense of the word," an American officer, a very troubled young man, told me recently. "They detest Communism and hate the North Koreans and Chinese. They don't want to end the war anywhere short of the Yalu River and—given an opportunity—I imagine they'd sabotage a cease-fire.

## NOT GLOBAL THINKERS

"On the other hand, the average South Korean soldier has never had much contact with Communism and I doubt—from my relationship with them—they'd have any real feeling about it one way or another.

"What does concern them—deeply—is the condition in which they and their families find themselves. This war is increasingly distasteful to them and for a very personal reason. Take my battalion commander. He's tormented daily by the knowledge his wife back in Seoul is gradually selling off everything they own—clothing, furniture, heirlooms—simply to get money to eat.

"The Colonel makes 42,000 won a month. With that they could buy enough rice to feed the family, if they had no other expenses. But he has other expenses and they're mounting.

## COLONEL BUSTED

"The colonel before him was court-martialed. We captured some rice up north and he sold part. He claims he sold it to buy other food items for his men. I think he used at least some of that money to support his family. They busted him, and he was one of the best officers the ROKs had."

The American paused a moment. "I am not going sentimental; I

don't think I like them. But I think we ought to. If we had to maintain them in our way of life it might cost too much. But they can get along on so little we would never notice.

"A few dollars well spent here and we would boost the morale of the ROK army so high nothing could top it. I am a married man with children. If I knew my family was suffering—starving, as probably are the families of some of these enlisted men who get 50 cents a month—I don't know what I'd do."

I found that true everywhere I went among the ROKs. An ordnance officer in the South Korean Army, one Colonel Ahn, makes \$8 a month. It isn't enough to rent a one-room apartment in Taegu for Mrs. Ahn and their two children.

It is too much to expect him to devote all his thinking to ordnance when he knows his family is in need.

There's little the Koreans can do about this. They're spending \$22,000,000 to support their armed forces. By our standards that's not much. But by theirs it's a great deal. For some reason we contend that feeding the Korean Army is a Korean responsibility.

Even so, the average Korean soldier fights well—when properly led. They held the line while the UN mustered enough power to push back the Red invaders. The Korean GI loves his homeland and family. He's intensely individualistic. He wants to see Korea unified and free.

Undoubtedly leadership will develop. Three hundred young officers—the most promising in the ROK army—have been sent to the U. S. for training. Others are being trained at home.

"Leadership is bound to be a problem for the South Koreans with less than three years' history as an independent republic," says Brig. Gen. C. E. Ryan of Boston, head of the Korean Military Advisory Group.

"But don't overlook the fact they've already turned out some high-class leadership in this war."



TAEGU, Korea, Dec. 5—Lieut. Col. Thomas Ross of Birmingham, Ala., operations officer for the Korean Military Advisory Group, thumbed thru the papers and reports on his battered desk.

"We know what we want to do and how we're going to do it," he said.

Americans responsible for training and rebuilding the South Korean army look toward the future with guarded optimism. They're not fooling themselves. Korea will be a tinderbox for a long time.

The Korean army now has around 250,000 officers and men. It will be expanded. Just how much can't be revealed.

At present there are 10 divisions. Some of the divisions are good; others could stand improvement.

#### **SMALLER DIVISIONS**

A Korean division has fewer men than an American division. It lacks the balance, firepower and the behind-the-lines support we've come to accept as a matter of course.

There's no plan to organize more divisions. Col. Ross says the present 10 divisions are all the Korean economy can support. Some manpower must be allocated for reconstruction and industry.

"They don't particularly need more riflemen and footsoldiers," he said. "They desperately need good leaders, technicians and nucleus for expansion if they are ever attacked again. What we want to leave behind is a professional army as modern as we can make it and which can defend its country's borders and expand if trouble starts."

#### **TRAINING CENTER**

The rearmament program involves among other things:

- Expansion of replacement training centers to provide manpower sufficient for a peacetime army.

- A military academy patterned after West Point.

- An army training center.

- Expansion of field training centers for divisions.

- A command and general staff college to train future leaders.

- Organization of medium artillery and tank battalions.

- Organization of several more infantry regiments to be used in the field—at least during the initial training period—with American divisions.

Coupled with this goes a construction program. It will involve building military posts from Pusan to the demarcation line. It also envisages permanent buildings for a score or more schools set up by the advisory group, including the military academy and the command and general staff college. It will cost several million dollars.

#### **TANK COMPANIES**

##### **OLD AND USELESS**

Much ROK equipment must eventually be replaced. We have given them what we could but much of it has been old and almost useless.

The South Koreans apparently are trying to do as much as they can. They realize, of course, that their best represents only 1 per cent of the total effort required to keep them in the field—and they are pathetically anxious to do more.

They also are trying to make rifles, pistons, headlights, springs, etc.

"Our mission," Gen. Ryan says, "is to raise the standard of performance of the South Korean army to a maximum level of efficiency. I would say the new South Korean army will do a mighty fine job."

**ABOARD ROK FRIGATE APNOCK, Dec. 6**—A few days ago, the Apnock took three direct hits from Communist shore batteries near Wonsan. Two were above the water line, in the stercage room. The third pierced the engine room at waterline.

Comdr. Shin Jang Sup surveyed the damage as repairs got under way.

"It'll be five weeks before we can fight again," he said sadly.

The Apnock has been in the thick of things ever since she joined the South Korean Navy. Originally christened the U.S.S. Muskogee, she fought thru World War II as a Russian frigate, renamed the Murmansk. When the Russians reluctantly handed her back, we gave her to South Korea.

The Apnock is the only United Nations combat ship to shoot down a Red plane in the Korean War. That happened near Sinmi-do, a small island off Sinuiju last April.

Sinuiju is in northwest Korea, only a few miles from the Manchurian border. When Apnock steamed in to shell highways and rail lines along the coast, five enemy Yaks came after her. The Apnock took two bomb hits, but her anti-aircraft guns clipped one Yak, which crashed before it could get back to land.

### **OTHER SHIPS THERE**

The Apnock was hit last time near Kunman-Ni, a few miles from Wonsan. Comdr. Shin told the story thru Seaman Whang Tong Huen, who speaks English.

"We were only 3000 yards offshore," the skipper said. "That is not very far, but we do not have big guns—only three-inch—and it is necessary to get in close to be sure we do not miss.

"Many other ships are around, and we want to show them the Korean Navy is very good."

First to reach the crippled Apnock was the U. S. Destroyer Hanson. The Hanson supplied electrical power and clamped a temporary patch over the engine room hole at waterline. The Apnock's wounded were transferred to the battleship New Jersey. Meanwhile, the New Jersey

knocked out the guns which had disabled the Apnock.

A few minutes later, our fleet tug Mochtobi arrived with two emergency pumps. The nine-foot-deep water in the Apnock's engine room was lowered to four. With her food supply under water, the Apnock was towed to Pusan. Just ahead of a typhoon.

### **NAVAL TRADITION**

The Apnock is one of four frigates with the South Korean Navy. They're all named for South Korean rivers.

Americans serving with them say the ROKs make excellent sailors.

"They have a naval tradition," Lieut. Comdr. C. J. Oleniacz of Buffalo, N. Y., said recently. "Real national spirit. They like to fight.

"They know they're just as good sailors as anyone. They'll tell you right quick about the Korean Admiral Il Sun Shin, who they claim whipped the American Navy around 1880."

The South Koreans now have more than 60 ships, all on active duty off both coasts. Most of them are small, and they're work horses. One evacuated 7500 civilians from Hungnam last December with only one engine in operation.

ROK ships serve a number of other functions. Our Navy men say they're extremely useful for close inshore blockade work, for supporting guerillas and for transporting troops and supplies between islands.

### **RAIDING PARTIES**

They also carry raiding parties into North Korea. Because ROK skippers are familiar with the Korean coastline, they're particularly valuable at this kind of work.

"If anything," Comdr. Oleniacz said, "they're overaggressive. They'd go into the most impossible situations if we'd let them. It's not unusual for a ROK ship to strip itself of crew members and send them ashore as raiders. That happened at Inchon last year. ROK sailors were ashore 18 hours ahead of anyone else. Did it on their own."

Comdr. Oleniacz believes the South Koreans are capable of defending their own shores and insuring the integrity of Korean waters.

### GOOD SEAMEN

"They've improved 100 per cent since I first saw them," he said. "The thing that impresses me most is their efficiency aboard ship. They're good seamen."

The ROKs maintain a shipyard and naval academy at Chinhae. Three U. S. officers and six enlisted men assist them. Chinhae Naval Academy graduated 71 ensigns in June. All of them immediately

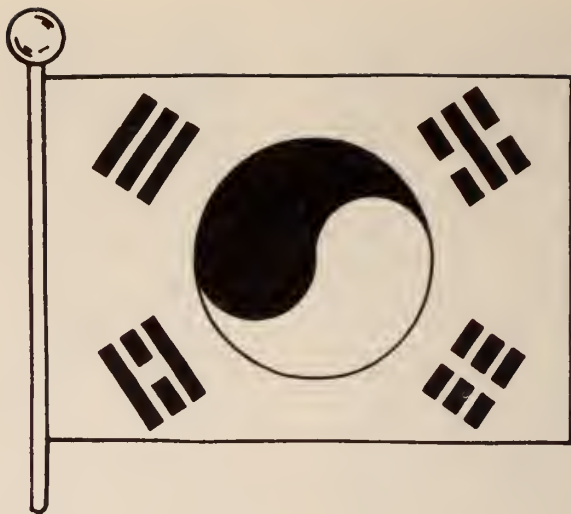
went aboard U. S. ships for further training. Also in June, the ROKs built their first ship, a minelayer, and flew their first Navy plane—a "Fleet Air Wing One."

The ROK navy is headed by Rear Admiral Won Yil Sohn, who served with the Chinese navy and studied in Germany. A number of South Korean officers served with the Japanese navy, and a few were Japanese navy pilots.

Chinhae Naval Academy provides

ROK Navy leadership.





CURRENT INFORMATION ON KOREA and the following materials are available for free distribution:

**"Periscope on Asia," issued bi-weekly**  
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*For a detailed, authoritative, and up-to-date discussion of the Korean question as related to general Asian policy problems, consult:*

**WHY WAR CAME IN KOREA**, by Robert T. Oliver. Pp. xxvi & 260, 1950, \$2.95. Declan X. McMullen Co., 22 Park Place, New York, N. Y.